European asymmetry
Visible and invisible borders in the new Europe

The EU enlargement in retrospect:
- Shattered memories
- Female migration
- Minorities united

Illustration: Karin Sunvisson
Stratified relations in Europe

Women from the Eastern part of Europe traveled to the Western part to work in households, to clean, to take care of children and the elderly. They perform the domestic work that Western women no longer want to do. We might say European relations have tilted; the vertical dividing line running along the Iron Curtain has become a horizontal line dividing citizens – the second-class citizens below are often from the East, and, as Oksana Shmuliyar Gréen and Andrea Spehar write in a peer-reviewed essay, are often women. Today, ten years after the enlargement of the EU, there is a hidden side of the enlargement process, they argue: the feminization of migration.

This flow from East to West had many implications. One of the most significant has been that East European women leave their home countries to work in households in the richer parts of Europe – so that women in the West can leave the domestic sphere. Meanwhile, life for women from the Eastern part of Europe travel to the Western part of Europe and in particular their memory of Soviet Communism.

In our first article in this issue, the philosopher Edward Kanterian states that instead of adapting to reality, the Communists set out to adapt reality to their doctrine. The Party was always the most worthy of protection: “There is no room in communism for a confrontation between the rights of the individual and the actions of the ideological police and hence no room for the possibility of a wrongdoing by the ideological police against the individual”. Thus communism was based on an extreme kind of asymmetric relation.

In another peer-reviewed essay, Anne Wæhrens argues that there is still an asymmetric relation between East and West in Europe, although the dividing line now seems to be shifting, placing some citizens in EU member countries in less favorable positions, such as female domestic workers, the Roma people, and all those who nowadays could be considered members of the proletariat. Yet others would argue that the EU is a protector of minorities.

Thus, it appears that an asymmetry still exists between “East” and “West”, a hierarchy of EU citizens based on the old divisions in Europe, transformed from vertical to horizontal divisions. But some divisions have always been horizontal: the memory of communism for instance. In another peer-reviewed essay, Anne Wæhrens examines the perspective that exists in the EU in the Holocaust and on Soviet communism. The Holocaust was seen as a trans-European experience that could unite all the citizens of the EU by functioning as their constitutive Other. However, after the eastward enlargement of the EU in 2004, this master narrative came under pressure. EU politicians started to reshape it to include the new members from Eastern Europe, and in particular their memory of Soviet Communism.

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Some would contend that there is still an asymmetric relation between East and West in Europe, although the dividing line now seems to be shifting, placing some citizens in EU member countries in less favorable positions, such as female domestic workers, the Roma people, and all those who nowadays could be considered members of the proletariat. Yet others would argue that the EU is a protector of minorities. With ten years’ hindsight, one can conclude that membership in the EU has given an additional benefit to citizens of the post-socialist countries: a second identity as European. If you belong to a minority in your own country, being a European could be a way to transcend and escape discrimination. Moreover, the EU may bring minorities in one country closer to their kin in other countries, as shown in a peer-reviewed essay in this issue. Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Magdalena Góra argue that the EU is a powerful normative force for the betterment of national minorities: “The pressure that the EU put on the candidates for membership to adapt to norms on minority protection and to solve their potential border conflicts had a positive effect.”

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What you read in the footers is the voice of the editor. Not that of the authors.

Ten scholars from six countries have contributed to this issue. Among them are seven women.
Twenty-five years ago, communism, the political system dominant in Eastern Europe, collapsed. Two years later, in 1991, the Soviet Union was dissolved. The People’s Republic of China remained the sole communist power, but throughout the 1990s its anti-capitalist party line was watered down through the introduction of market-oriented reforms. Today, only one country can be said to be truly communist. North Korea. Communism, in the 1980s a mighty geopolitical force holding half of Europe and roughly one third of the world’s population in its grip, is today confined to an internationally isolated prison state, one of the poorest countries on the planet. How are we to remember the past of a utopia? By recounting the utopian dream? Or maybe by still dreaming the dream, hoping for it to come true? After all, as Alain Badiou puts it in his book The Communist Hypothesis, “Communism is [still] the right hypothesis”, and those who disagree “resign themselves to the market economy, to parliamentary democracy” – the true evils of our time, in Badiou’s eyes.

But was communism just a dream, just a hypothesis? Did it not affect many people? Were not millions of lives destroyed in its name? According to The Black Book of Communism, communism claimed about 100 million victims around the globe, including some 65 million in Mao’s China and 20 million in the Soviet Union. Well, one might say: Communism is a beautiful dream, hoping for it to come true? After all, as Alain Badiou puts it in his book The Communist Hypothesis, “Communism is [still] the right hypothesis”, and those who disagree “resign themselves to the market economy, to parliamentary democracy” – the true evils of our time, in Badiou’s eyes.

Since 1989, we have witnessed two quite different ways of remembering communism in Europe, almost two disjoint cultures, with no relation to each other. The first way is commemorative and retributive – it is backward looking. The second way is affirmative and reconstructive – it is forward looking. More precisely, the first way looks at the past of communist utopia as a past utopia, a utopia that has been here, has left its mark, and is now gone for good. This way is concerned with the burdens and liabilities that the passing of communism through the world has bequeathed us. The second way looks at the past of communist utopia as a failure to realize the utopia’s full potential, as something that never fully arrived. This way is concerned with the past only as a signpost for our still bright communist future.

In one sense, Marxism was of course the underlying ideology of all communist states, a comprehensive theory of human society, history, and economics, purporting not only to explain our past, but also to predict and determine that the future will bring a classless, egalitarian communist society. This perfect society, in which the exploitation of man by his fellow men would cease to exist, was to be achieved, according to Marx, by the proletariat, the driving force of the redemption of humanity, and essentially through the abolition of private property (a phrase Marx himself used to summarize communism in The Communist Manifesto).

In another sense, Marxism, or communism, was indeed a fantasy, since its utopian project was never realized. But in another sense it was a very real political project pursued by many countries. If we compare the real achievements of communist states with the predictions found in Marx, Engels, and Lenin, communism failed in a political sense. Not only did the classless communist society never arrive, but the standard of living in communist states was considerably lower than in capitalist states, and eventually communist regimes came to an end.

North Korea is a communist country – the only one? Cuba still exists of course.
Today, there is a popular argument employed to deny that communism has been refuted by the failure of the Soviet Union and its allies. The Soviet Union, the GDR, the People's Republic of Poland, the Socialist Republic of Romania, etc. were not communist countries, because they were oppressive states. And since there never was a communist state, the argument goes communism has never been refuted by history.

It is not a very good argument. It is not in the interest of a communist to turn his doctrine into a mere irredeemable ideal: communism would then be comparable to certain religious doctrines; it would be removed from the sphere of the science of politics and lose its redemptive core, the aim to solve once for all the problems of human society. In principle, there needs to be a method to check whether a certain political system has been realized or not, independently of our own political preferences. In other words, we must be able to specify descriptive conditions for the realization of a political system. These descriptive conditions must be independent of a normative evaluation of the system.

Here is an analogy. An architect announces that he will build a house that can resist any earthquake. He finishes his work, an earthquake occurs, and the house collapses. The architect can't escape criticism by saying, “This was not the house I intended to build, since it was not earthquake resistant!” This would be a feeble attempt to reject responsibility. Clearly, there are descriptive conditions of the house being erected (it is of a certain size, made of certain materials, etc.) and we have a “normative” evaluation (it is or is not earthquake resistant). In the case of the house, the descriptive conditions are satisfied, but the normative evaluation (it is not earthquake resistant). In other words, we must be able to specify descriptive conditions for the realization of a political system. These descriptive conditions must be independent of a normative evaluation of the system.

Similarly, in the case of communism we have descriptive conditions for the establishment of a communist state (abolition of private property, dictatorship of the proletariat, one-party rule) and a normative evaluation (is it or is not a communist state). The descriptive conditions of communism were certainly satisfied in Eastern Europe: private property was nationalized everywhere and the dictatorship of the proletariat (industrial or not) was in all likelihood a reality. So what is the result of the normative evaluation of the societies constructed by these measures?

As Anne Applebaum has demonstrated in her recent book Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944–1968, communism was imposed by the new Soviet rulers after the Second World War according to a more or less identical pattern, consisting of four stages.2

In every country, the NKVD first created a secret police, the chief tool of repression. Aillac has described in his book The Committee (officially, the “Security of the People”) was founded by a decree sent to labor camps; and a system of informers was installed everywhere, especially radio, given its extensive reach in those years. Moreover, since society was resisting communist rule, more aggressive measures were taken to bring society into conformance with this doctrine. All these measures were taken to bring society into conformity with Marxist ideology. All forms of opposition were prohibited, especially traditional “bourgeois” parties; strict political censorship was instituted; opponents and “enemies of the people” were arrested; show trials were held and the convicted executed or sent to labor camps; and a system of informers was installed to survey and control the population. The net effect of these first years of “Stalinization” was that half the continent was effectively stripped of basic political and economic rights.

There is something puzzling about this outcome. Marx had stated that the proletariat was the engine of historical progress and Lenin had added that the Party was the vanguard of the proletariat. These claims were meta-historical claims, stating the necessary and indubitable truths about the historical direction of mankind and its ultimate redemption. Men will become free and equal in communism, by necessity, and they will want communism, by necessity. This prediction was an essential part of Marxism, derived with the scientific certainty of dialectical materialism. But in fact, the “proletariat”, once given the choice, i.e. free elections, did not bring the communists to power. The Marxist prediction failed. Society displayed a tendency to take a development different from what a communist state was predicting. Given this choice, many workers and peasants voted for non-communist parties, such as the Peasants’ Party in Romania, the Polish People’s Party, etc. The Communists could have accepted this outcome and adapted their policies to the will of the people. But this would have meant adapting to a reality contradicting their ideology, in which there was no room for several political parties. Therefore, the Communists had to abolish free elections. Since no communist government represented the will of the people, none was democratically legitimate. Interestingly, this fact stood in contradiction to the nominally democratic constitutions the Communists installed. For example, Article 3 of the Romanian constitution of 1948 stipulates that all state power emanates from and belongs to the people, and that the people exert their power through universal, equal, and secret elections. This basic contradiction between the constitution and the will of the people on the one hand and the ruling power and ideology on the other indicates that there was something paradoxical about the communist project. For this was a contradiction arising from within the core of the doctrine itself, its claim to bring liberation to all.

Before trying to understand this paradox, I will first give some examples of how the doctrine clashed with reality. One concerns my own uncle, also named Edward Kanterian. He was born in 1913 in a small village in what is now in eastern Turkey. At the age of 17, to escape over the border one night, a few months later, when he would have turned 18, his conscription order into the army should have arrived. Instead, he was shot by the police somewhere in Istanbul as thousands were. (Herta Müller describes such a shooting of an innocent citizen by Communist guards at the Romanian border in her novel The Appointment.) The state knew there was no point sending a conscription order to a ghost. My family has never heard anything from Edward. His name does not appear in any archives we have consulted (but there are others, still inaccesses). In the Armenian cemetery in Bucharest there is an empty grave with his name on it.

Another example, again of a Romanian Armenian, was recently recontacted to rejoin my family. This was the case of a young man named KANTARIAN, Manuk. Born on December 27, 1892, in Asia Minor [Turkey]. Arrested in 1951. Died during detention in one of the camps at the Canal, on December 26, 1952.

The “Canal”: in the early 1950s this was a name of horror, connected with the construction of an artificial shortcut between the Danube and the Black Sea. Much of this canal was built by political prisoners, slave workers really, people like Manuk Kan- tarian who had been identified as internal enemies of the communist economy. Manuk, born in Turkey, escaped the Armenian genocide in 1915 only to die in a communist camp, for the mere possession of a collection of watches. Was communism the right hypothesis?

Tens of thousands of these slaves were held in labor camps at any given time. We don’t know their precise numbers, nor the precise numbers of the casualties. But we have a pretty clear picture of the inhuman conditions in which they lived and died: like the Nazi camps, they have been described by survivors. Here is a related description of political prisoners in a Siberian Gulag camp:

There behind the barbed wire was a row of creatures, distinctly reminiscent of human beings [...] there were ten of them, skeletons of various sizes covered with brown patches like skin, all stripped to the waist, with shaved heads and pendulous withered breasts. Their only clothing was some pathetic dirty underpants, and for shirts some thin cloth received from the public. There was also some emptiness. Women! Hunger, heat and hard toil had transformed them into dried specimens that still, unaccountably, clung to the last vestiges of life.

Many other examples could be given, from many other places. One of the worst was the educational camp on the outskirts of the Romanian city of Piteşti, where in 1949—1952, a barbaric experiment was undertaken to blur the distinction between victim and perpetrator. The experiment was based on the recruitment of inmates as torturers and “reeducators” of their fellow inmates, of both sexes and all ages. The experimenter, Dr. Cicerone Ioniţoiu,11 the editor of Communist prisons, Cicerone Ionituskj. The entry reads:

KANTARIAN, Manuk. Born on December 27, 1892, in Asia Minor [Turkey]. Arrested in 1951. Died during detention in one of the camps at the Canal, on December 26, 1952.

"Today, there is a popular argument employed to deny that communism has been refuted by the failure of the Soviet Union and its allies."
my master, my brother, the man for whom I was ready to give my life."

One of the main leaders of this experiment, Eugen Târcanu, initially a member of the Communist Party, kept a meticulous diary of nearly 2000 pages in the Stalinist period, in which at least 800,000 people were arrested for political reasons, and another 2.6 million for so-called "petty bourgeoisism", and "trade unionism", and thus succumbed to forms of capitalism. Another agent was therefore needed, professional revolutionaries, the intellectual vanguard of the proletariat, as well as a revolutionary "petty bourgeoisie" and "trade unionism". This was because the last names of his eyes were as well as a revolution, with the advent of the proletariat, mankind becomes fully conscious of these laws, and their necessity turns into our freedom. The species as a whole is able to progress, with the species' ability to redeem itself. If Christ had gone through these hands, he would not have had the messiah Christ, but would have had a messiah man, a messiah man. The species cannot be resurrected, there would not have been any Christ's resurrection.15

"There cannot be any doubt, then, that communism has failed, not only on political and economic, but especially on moral grounds. Every communist state was a far cry from the paradise of freedom, dignity, and property against others and against the state. But for Marx, this liberty is worthless, just an expression of capitalist alienation. By contrast, in communism, money and property will be abolished, and thus any need for mediation and regulation between these individuals and society will disappear. The needs and desires of all citizens will be in perfect harmony. Instead of freedom being conceived in the liberal fashion as the private sphere of non-interference with others, it becomes the voluntary unity of the individual with his fellow men", writes Kokowski.26 A communist society will embody the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", as Marx wrote in Critique of the Gotha Program in 1875.27

Communist Party, kept a meticulous diary of nearly 2000 pages, and a favorite word of Lenin's.26 To be sure, Marx's writings, especially his early ones, are more open-ended than Lenin's political doctrine. But the path from Marx to Lenin, and then to Stalin and beyond, is not entirely spurious. Arguments to this end have been offered by various analyses, including Alein Besançon, Martin Malia, Richard Pipes, Hans Kelsen, Hermann Flesser, and Leszek Kołakowski. I shall here review one argument to make my case. It is found in Book One of his monumental Main Currents of Marxism, a book originally published in Polish in 1976, translated in 1978, and revised in 2005, but unfortunately on the verge of being forgotten.28

According to Kokowski, there are three fundamental motifs in Marxism: the Romantic motif, the Faustian-Promethean motif, and the Enlightenment motif.29

(i) The Romantic motif protests against the advent of modern, liberal society. In this society, citizens live in external relations to each other, each seeking his advantage, and are prevented from harming others by entering into a social contract in which each citizen gives up part of his freedom. The realization of such a society entails coercion and resistance between individuals and between personal and social life, and thus the separation between citizens as private subjects, a separation regulated and secured by power relations and the abstract forces of markets and money. Of course, in liberal democracies, such legalism is also meant to produce freedom, dignity, and property against others and against the state. But for Marx, this legalism is worthless, just an expression of capitalist alienation. By contrast, in communism, money and property will be abolished, and thus any need for mediation and regulation between these individuals and society will disappear. The needs and desires of all citizens will be in perfect harmony. For instead of freedom being conceived in the liberal fashion as the private sphere of non-interference with others, it becomes the voluntary unity of the individual with his fellow men", writes Kokowski.26

(ii) The Faustian-Promethean motif is less theoretical. It involves faith in humanity's unlimited powers of self-creation, in its ability to redeem itself. Nota bene: faith in humanity's powers, not the individual's. The species as a whole is able to progress, with the advent of the proletariat, mankind becomes fully conscious of these laws, and their necessity turns into our freedom. The species cannot be resurrected, there would not have been any Christ's resurrection.15

(iii) The Enlightenment motif relates to Marx's belief in the existence of a deterministic society in which the laws of nature are the laws of nature. The laws are studied by dialectical materialism, Marx's version of social science. As long as they are not recognized, these laws impose themselves on humans with utmost necessity. But with the advent of the proletariat, mankind becomes fully conscious of these laws, and their necessity turns into our freedom. But even if these three motifs capture key aspects of Marx's doctrines, how do they explain communist terror? After all, Marx developed a social philosophy, one open to a variety of interpretations. There is no obvious path from him to Lenin, to Lenin's creation of the Cheka and the Gulag, and then to Stalin's excesses and beyond.

But we need to look more closely. One thing these three motifs presuppose or express is an incredible confidence, without any sort of actual evidence, in the necessary arrival of a final point in mankind's development, in which all societal evils will be abolished and all conflicts will end. The Romantic motif articulates...
motif expresses the voluntarist confidence in bringing about this paradise even at the cost of human lives. And the Enlightenment must give this belief the necessity of a scientific theory, only adding to the conflict with which we are supposed to believe in it. There is a combination of utopian faith with scientific certainty, a rather good mixture for fanaticism and social engineer-
ing. Witness Lenin:

The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true. It is comprehensive and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world outlook.9 Since the appearance of [Marx’s] Capital – the materialist conception of history is no longer a hypothesis, but a scientifically proven proposition.10

KOLAKOWSKI WORKS OUT this Marx-Lenin linkage in greater detail. It all relates to the Romantic motif of a unity of all society, the abolition of all antagonisms (property, law, state) and external relations between its members. Freedom is hereby determined by the degree of unity in a society: “In a perfectly united community (communism), there cannot be any manifestation of the freedom of the individual that is not at the same time an expression of the unity of society. In particular, since the unity of society is represented by the proletariat, there cannot be any individual freedom that goes against the actions of the proletariat. If such resistance nevertheless arises, it will lead to the only possible freedom that goes against the actions of the proletariat. If such resistance nevertheless arises, it will lead to the only possible freedom that is compatible with the actions of the proletariat.”26

According to Kelsen, a liberal state will involve a minimum of coercion and alienation, as endured by our fellow Europeans in the East. According to Kelsen, a liberal state will involve a minimum of coercion and alienation, as endured by our fellow Europeans in the East.

And that was the essence of communism. Marx, Engels, and Lenin denounced all oppression and coercion, dreaming and desiring a society devoid of them. By a bewildering paradox, precisely the attempt to abolish all societal coercion and the memory of all state coercion, as the great enemies of all evils, led to the establishment of a state containing the highest degree of coercion and repression, a true and terrible Leviathan. It is to this end that we must cultivate the memory of communism, in a variety of ways, theoretical, historical, legal, or political.

The memory of communism suggests the necessity of some coercion, some alienation, in our liberal democracies, in order to avoid the continuity, the calamity of total coercion and alienation, as endured by our fellow Europeans in the East.

I say this is a troubling verdict, for if some coercion and alienation is needed to sustain a human society, then this reflects a deep flaw in man as a social animal. Additionally, in order to pay tribute to the dead, the memory of communism helps us understand, first, the character of our own, liberal societies, second, our own social nature, and finally, the limits of all social religions, of all disorganized political theology.27 We should guard against the temptation to redeem mankind by political means, a temptation that was at the root of communism, and will no doubt return in other forms in the future.

This text is based on a lecture delivered at the Romanian Cultural Institute in Stockholm on November 4, 2014, to mark the 25th anniversary of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

references


4 Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto, 1848.


6 Applebaum discusses these four stages only with respect to three countries: Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, but the pattern is repeated elsewhere.


9 Ibid.


11 Cícero Lopes Júnior, Livro de um devoto comunista (São Paulo, Brazil: Cortez, 2008).

12 See Romuald Kania, Crimologia je gospodarstvo represije v Romuniji [The chronology and geography of communist repression in Romania] (Budapest: Editura Polifon, 2003), 64.


14 The Nazis first used gas vans in 1941, to ensure euthanasia program.

15 Rayfield, Stalin and His Hangmen, 74.


19 See Kelsen, The Political Theory of Bureaucracy, 6.

20 Ibid.

21 For more on this, see Helmut Peitner, The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism, trans. Andrew Wallace (New York: Prometheus, 1995, originally published in 1961). I have focused this essay on the political, moral, and ideological aspects of communism.


24 For Him


27 The need for the proletariat to weed out relics of the past was a constant worry, indeed a kind of paranoia, of communist states. This worry about relapsing into a pre-communist state can be seen as one way to understand the phrase “communism and its memory.” Thus emerged, right from the start, the need, of first, a special agency which has full class consciousness and knowledge of the march of history, the Party, and, second, an executive branch of the Party put in charge of confronting individuals, reactive forces, petty bourgeois (kulaks and trade unionists). Thus also emerged the need for the Cheka, the Secretariat, the State, etc., as an ideological police force, “the battle organ of the party of the future” in Martin Laci’s words, applying not the liberal rule of law and individual responsibility, but the ideological categories of class struggle. “What class does [the accused] belong to?” asked Martin Laci. The ideological police being the articulation of the will of the Party, and the Party being the articulation of the necessary march of history, there is no room in communism for a confrontation between the rights of the individual and the actions of the ideological police, and hence no room for the possibility of any wrongdoing by the ideological police against the individual. And so the Cheka, as Laci told us, “annihilates without trial” and isolates the class enemy “from society by imprisoning [him] in concentration camps.” This logic explains the continuous presence of oppression and surveillance in communist states, the Party’s paranoia, its language of war, and the existence of the ideological police. Communism ultimately approximated a war conducted by the Party against the recalcitrance of human reality of existence. This verdict is true, if for it presents communism as an amazing and terrible paradox.

28 In important, but forgotten essay on communism from 1949, the legal theorist Hans Kelsen defined the state as a legal order, i.e. an order that “tries to bring about the desired human behavior by providing coercive acts as a correction for the contrary behavior.”28 According to this definition, every state must necessarily involve some degree of coercion, or at least an implicit reference to coercion in case the law is violated. According to Kelsen, a liberal state will involve a minimum of coercion, just as much as is required to protect “certain vital interests, such as life and property.”29 A totalitarian state, however, will involve a maximum of coercion, providing little or no basis for the protection of life and property. Kelsen writes, “Nationalization of economic production [. . .] is the characteristic measure of expanding the scale of a state order towards totalitarianism.”29 And that was true of communism. Marx, Engels, and Lenin denounced all oppression and coercion, dreaming and desiring a society devoid of them. By a bewildering paradox, precisely the attempt to abolish all societal coercion and the memory of all state coercion, as the great enemies of all evils, led to the establishment of a state containing the highest degree of coercion and repression, a true and terrible Leviathan. It is to this end that we must cultivate the memory of communism, in a variety of ways, theoretical, historical, legal, or political.

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30 Main Currents of Marxism (Harvard University Press, 1978), 1206.


34 For more on this, see Helmut Peitner, The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism, trans. Andrew Wallace (New York: Prometheus, 1995, originally published in 1961). I have focused this essay on the political, moral, and ideological aspects of communism.

The Holocaust has tended to be understood as an event that acquired its current cultural and political significance only several decades after the war. In support of this narrative, it has been emphasized that the full scope and coherence of the Nazi program of extermination was recognized only gradually and belatedly. It has also been assumed that traumatized survivors remained silent, at first. Such assertions on the early postwar silence surrounding the extermination of European Jewry remain influential, but in recent years they have been exposed to a sustained challenge. A substantial body of scholarship has appeared that offers a plethora of evidence on the extensive documentation of what we now call the Holocaust as early as the 1940s. This new wave of scholarship emphasizes that Jewish survivors were anything but silent during the early postwar period. David Cesarani, editor of one of the most important collections demonstrating this point, insists that Jewish survivors, “if anything, succeeded too well, too soon” in commemorating the Holocaust (avant la lettre). It would therefore be much more appropriate to critically explore the causes of the deafness of the surrounding world than to continue discussions on the supposed silence of survivors.

Survivors actually created manifold historical sources on the Holocaust and even completed a broad array of relevant publications before the end of the 1940s; these sources were largely neglected afterwards and have remained underexplored to this day. As Collect and Record!, the 2012 monograph by Laura Jockusch, argues, Jewish agents of memory in Europe had in the late 19th century developed modern techniques of documenting anti-Jewish violence and come to understand the collection of witness accounts as an essential part of their scholarly commemorative response to human-made catastrophes. Jockusch’s book shows how Jewish survivors of the Holocaust subsequently applied these techniques to the unprecedented crimes committed during the Second World War. The collection of witness accounts was thus an important part of the agenda of the historical commissions and documentation centers that were launched as soon as the Nazi genocide was over — or even while it went on, as in Poland and France.

Due above all, to its large and active group of Jewish survivors, Hungary was among the countries that made an impressive start in producing detailed knowledge about various facets of the Nazi program of extermination, with a clear focus on the fate, or the fatelessness, of Hungarian Jewry. Massive quantities and a broad variety of historical sources were created as early as the second half of the 1940s. Crimes committed against Jews during the war years figured prominently in postwar trials. Publications by the Hungarian Jewish journalist-turned-historian Jenő Lévai provided substantial overviews of the Hungarian Holocaust. And Hungarian Jewish witness testimonies took various forms. Jewish survivors published dozens of memoirs in Hungarian before the consolidation of Stalinist rule in the late 1940s, while thousands...
of Hungarian Jewish survivors articulated their experiences in the offices of the Deportációs Gondolkodó Országos Bizottság (the National Relief Committee for Deportees or DEGOB) in 1945 and 1946.

The three main tasks of the National Relief Committee for Deportees were to help with the repatriation of survivors to Hungary, provide social aid, and pursue projects of documentation. The committee alone recorded interviews with over 5,000 survivors as early as 1945–1946, making its records one of the largest pools of such sources from the earliest postwar period in the world.1 Yet witness accounts remain heavily underrepresented in mainstream historiography of the Holocaust in Hungary, and these sources have not yet been systematically analyzed. This article is an effort to begin to redress this imbalance by examining the DEGOB collection as a documentation project, analyzing two partly overlapping corpses in particular: the 349 witness accounts that discuss the Buchenwald concentration camp and the hundreds of accounts in the collection that used the expressions annihilation or death camp or explicitly referred to the gas chambers.

The records also reveal that a number of interviewees understood that Buchenwald right next to one of the symbolic centers of Germany, the major location of the Hungarian Holocaust was indubitably Auschwitz-Birkenau, or with their horrific train journeys.

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The amount of horror in one camp made the horror in another camp seem less terrifying. Hell varies by degrees.

The resulting thousands of early post-Holocaust Hungarian Jewish witness accounts were thus the result of semi-structured interviews. The interviewees were born between 1887 and 1933 and a large majority of them were still under thirty at the time of liberation. Regarding the location of their ghettoization, the results prove both unequivocal and striking: the ghetto names most commonly appearing are those of the cities Munkács, Ungvár, Beregszász, and Szeklence, all four of which are in Karpačsija (Zukarjuti kül), a region that Hungary re-acquired from Ukraine after the Soviet-German peace treaty of September 1939. For 362 individuals, the camps they were deported to are listed at the beginning of their files. From this information, the entries can be divided into three major groups: those sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, while 123 were not. Most of these were taken from Hungary directly to Buchenwald. There are also 41 records in which Buchenwald is not included in the list of camps at the beginning, but is referred to in the text.

The analysis has revealed that Hungarian Jewish returnees described, remembered, and passed on their experience of the camps in varying ways. The accounts are replete with descriptions of freezing, severe hunger, and brutal violence; nonetheless, the overall assessment of the camp was far from uniform. The perspectives of those who recollected their experiences depended not only on factors such as when and where they had to stay in Buchenwald and what they had to endure there but, also on which camp they had arrived from and the conditions under which they had to travel. While numerous survivors described their own condition in Buchenwald as being close to death and no longer fully alive, others compared it favorably with other camps, particularly Auschwitz-Birkenau, or with their horrific train journeys.

The records also reveal that a number of interviewees understood their escape from the group of Jewish prisoners in the camp as the key to their eventual survival—an insufficiently studied phenomenon in scholarship on the Nazi camps and the Holocaust. For instance, one explained, “I got hold of a Yugoslav badge, which I put on my coat. From that moment onwards, I qualified as an Aryan.” At the same time, several interviewees tended to use ethnic labels to identify the perpetrators of everyday violence against them. These were usually references to Eastern Europeans, mostly Poles and Ukrainians, who served as their barracks leaders in Buchenwald.

Regarding the liberation of the camp, two major narratives were articulated. The first discussed the Nazis’ accidental failure to complete their program of extermination and the chance survival of the interviewee.

There were altogether 80,000 people in the camp. 35,000 were taken away at the beginning of April. They wanted to murder the 24,000 weakened and sick ones, including me, who stayed in Buchenwald. They did not manage to do this since the Americans arrived an hour earlier and hindered the execution of their plan. 10

The other narrative described the resistance and the successful uprising of Buchenwald inmates against their tormentors—a story that would soon be canonized under communist rule:

We took rifles into the camp from the external factories and finally rose up against the SS. There were 200 of us and many of us died. The SS consisted of around 400 men but we took many of their rifles. This way we acquired more weapons and were ultimately victorious. 11

Acknowledgement of the existence of annihilation and death camps

The major location of the Hungarian Holocaust was indubitably Auschwitz-Birkenau, but large groups of Hungarian Jews ended up being deported to almost all major camps within the territory of the Nazi Reich. The word Auschwitz can indeed be found in the majority of the DEGOB records, in 1935 files. 12 With the sole exception of Neusengamme, which was mentioned in only four records, each camp in the territory of Nazi Germany that had over 100,000 inmates during the Nazi period was referenced in more than one hundred accounts. 13

The collection suggests that even those interviewees whose primary language was Hungarian encoded facets of their terrible camp experiences in German. Whereas the significant minorities of German-language accounts found in the collection rarely draw on Hungarian expressions, the Hungarian-language accounts do employ certain German terms, including Vernichtungslager (extermination camp). Annihilation camps were developed in 1941–1942 and the German term for them appears in 144 of the DEGOB files. Notably, only 45 of these files are in German and the others, more than two-thirds of the 144, are in Hungarian. However, the almost systematic use of this term suggests its recurrence was at least partly the result of editing policies. The Hungarian adjective megsemmisítő (literally: annihilation) was also used in combination with the word for camp in thirteen instances, though it was spelled in four different ways—indicating how novel the term must have been in Hungarian in 1945–1946. On the other hand, the German term Todeslager appears in just nine files. The Hungarian equivalent halálhír was used 33 times. What is more, seven alternative forms of the Hungarian expression appear in a further 44 records.

unsurprisingly, Hungarian Jewish witness accounts most commonly used Vernichtungslager and its Hungarian equivalents in their accounts. In total, a camp that was operated on the former site of the Nazi camp after 1945. The offices of the National Relief Committee for Deportees or DEGOB were situated on the third floor of the former办公 building, which was used by Nazis to be sent to the gas chamber at the Auschwitz concentration camp, May-June 1944. Right: Budapest, Hungary – Captured Jewish women in Wesselyi Street, October 20–22, 1944.
The horrific knowledge of the gas chambers

It is evident that confronting the existence of the gas chambers imposed a heavy psychological burden. Knowledge about the gas chambers was so terrible and so unsettling that many, although already aware of them on some level of consciousness, refused to acknowledge what they had come to know. Characteristically, one former inmate of Auschwitz-Birkenau recalled his enraged protest when he was first told about the gas chambers. One survivor used an especially apt phrase when she said that she had gradually “started to believe what at first seemed unimaginable.” For witnesses, leaving testimony was further complicated by the problems of communication and of conceivability.

Nevertheless, many interviewees discussed when and how they found out about the gas chambers and how they related to this horrific knowledge. Such awareness could, of course, make inmates aware of the need to avoid selections or, if that was impossible, at least do their best not to be selected. However, some who had known about the gas chambers expressed jealousy of others’ ignorance. One explained to her interviewer that it was better to die without prior knowledge of what lay ahead. Some others discussed additional negative consequences of being aware of the gas chambers, such as constant fear and occasional panic attacks.

Reporting on the operation of the gas chambers also posed a complex problem because the Nazi perpetrators purposefully sought to prevent detailed reports of them. Not only did the great majority of witnesses perish there – in keeping with the very purpose of the gas chambers – but the Nazis also murdered most of the chief Jewish witnesses, the members of the Sonderkommando.

Despite these complications, more than two hundred interview records include references to the Nazis’ most notorious means of annihilating European Jewry. At the same time, however, even when the interviewees discuss the conditions and genocidal practices in Auschwitz-Birkenau in some detail, they do not often contain explicit mentions of gas chambers. Survivors who were able to offer more detailed descriptions tended to have had certain tasks and corresponding locations in the camp complex. The question therefore is why survivors made explicit reference to the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau and what kind of information did they convey about them? Since whole families were deported and only few family members managed to escape, the gas chambers were frequently mentioned as the place where close relatives were murdered. This group of interviewees usually did not offer, and probably could not have offered, detailed descriptions of how the annihilation was carried out. Some of them even mentioned that they learned of the gas chambers only upon liberation. Second, some reported that they had come extremely close to being murdered there. Several witnesses discussed their escape from what they called the Vorraum, the vestibule, of the gas chambers. Moreover, two smaller groups reported on the gas chambers because they were forced to take part in dismantling them or were shown what remained of them upon liberation.

By far the largest number of testimonies discussing the gas chambers were given by those who had to work, as one of the survivors put it, in the “separate world of the crematorium and the gas chambers.” This could mean working in the Aufraumungskommando or in the Sonderkommando. The most typical testimony offered by members of the Aufraumungskommando, frequently (and imprecisely) called Brezinka, the Polish name of Birkenau, and less often Kunaue, was given by a female interviewee who had been made responsible for the selection of clothes or packages. As a result she had had to work in close proximity to the gas chambers, but the interview record does not state whether she had been to the actual area of the gas chambers. However, a few of the interviewees belonging to this group did mention that they had moved between the area of the Aufraumungskommando and that of the gas chambers.

One of the most atrocious aspects of Auschwitz-Birkenau was that the Nazis forced Jews, on pain of death, to participate in the destruction of their own people. This horrific policy was enforced, most infamously, through members of the Sonderkommando, who had to help, with the operation of the gas chambers and crematoria. During their DEGOB interviews, a significant cohort of survivors reported they had been members, and specified some of the tasks involved. For instance, two survivors reported that they had delivered wood and a third that he had delivered coal to the crematorium. There was even a survivor who admitted that he had brought the living to the gas chambers and the dead to be burned in the crematoria. Another witness reported that for three days he was personally responsible for bringing people into the gas chambers and for removing their corpses. He added that for another six days he was assigned an easier job, by which he meant work at a “more modern” gas chamber where he “merely” had to rush and beat people.

In conclusion, the DEGOB witness accounts recorded in Hungary in 1945–1946 provide a large sample of the generally horrific but also diverse experiences of witnesses of major Nazi camps such as Buchenwald. The protocols also include largely accurate descriptions of the unparalleled features of the Holocaust by Jewish survivors, such as the creation of annihilation and death camps and, more specifically, the operation of the gas chambers. As a whole, these records show that, alongside profound mass traumatization, a substantial number of Hungarian Jewish witnesses were able and willing to articulate details of their terrible knowledge about the Holocaust shortly after their liberation. If widespread silence was imposed postwar Hungary regarding the history of the Holocaust, it was certainly not due to the silence of all survivors – it was rather a consequence of how difficult it has proved to confront the responsibility of perpetrators.
For reports on demolishing the gas chambers, see DEGOB Records.

See e.g. DEGOB Records nos. 1267 and 1547.

See DEGOB Records nos. 1, 595, 614, 908, 1149, 1181, 1526, 1547, 1631, 1784, DEGOB Records nos. 1087 and 1885.

DEGOB Record no. 3487. The interviewee also claimed to have left some of DEGOB Records nos. 1802 and 3526.

DEGOB Record no. 2961.

DEGOB Record no. 1748.

DEGOB Record no. 2197.

DEGOB Record no. 1851.

The camps were Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenburg, the name Birkenau also appears in 426 records, some of which do not refer to Auschwitz. Monowitz is mentioned in 44 files.

DEGOB Record Number 3497.

DEGOB Record Number 1582.

DEGOB Record no. 289. All translations are mine. I have relied on the Hungarian-Czech-German dictionary, Jaksa, Tocnálba, and Nemes (Budapest: Aposztróf, 2013).

For the history of the Jews in this region, see Zsidók Kárpátalján: Visszatérés az időkbe, ed. Viktória Banyai, Csilla Fedner, and Szorpa Rébfel Kismeret (Budapest: Aposztróf, 2013).

DEGOB Record no. 289. All translations are mine. I have relied on the digitized version of the collection found at www.degbh.hu, last accessed July 12, 2014.

DEGOB Record Number 58.

The same Bekman also appears in 406 records, some of which do not refer to Auschwitz. Monowitz is mentioned in 44 files.

DEGOB Record no. 1802 and 3510.

Selecting clothes is specified in DEGOB Records nos. 135, 407, 1426, 1763, 1063, 1513, 1569, 1938, 2280, and 2817.

The task of members of the Aufräumungskommando was to sort and help recycle the possessions taken from inmates on arrival.

IS SOVIET COMMUNISM A TRANS-EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE?

by Anne Wæhrens

E especially since the beginning of the 1990s, politicians in the EU have tried to create a master narrative depicting how the EU, thanks to its founding fathers, rose from the ruins of the Second World War and the Holocaust and forged a unique and successful cooperation. In this master narrative, the EU stands in contrast to the Holocaust, which is portrayed as a fundamental break with basic values such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law — values that the EU stands for, protects, and promotes.

The master narrative became visible in and was used to legitimize the fight for human rights and against racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism in the EU. The memory of the Holocaust was used as an extreme example of what uncontrolled racism can lead to and thus as an argument for the need to prevent it from happening again by fighting racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, and by promoting human rights. But the memory of the Holocaust became more than that, since the memorialization of the Holocaust could be used to strengthen the EU’s identity and inner cohesion. It may sound paradoxical, but the memory of the Holocaust also served a positive purpose since the Holocaust was seen as a trans-European experience that could unite all the citizens of the EU — an experience that all citizens could use as their constitutive “Other”.

By using the Holocaust as a negative counter-image, the politicians in the EU created a narrative that focused not on the national conflicts of the Second World War, but on the ideological conflicts of the war and the fight between democracy and dictatorship. It was a narrative in which the Holocaust was a shared European responsibility, and thus a narrative that tried to circumvent the question what role the different member countries had played in the war: it tried to avoid portraying some nations as worse or more responsible than others. In this way, EU politicians created an ideological image of membership in the EU’s community of memory. The Holocaust narrative was separated from the narrative about the Second World War. It was dehistori- cized and turned into a symbolic narrative about good and evil, about democracy and dictatorship, rather than a historic reality.

ON MAY 1, 2004, the EU admitted ten new member countries, eight of them former Communist states in Eastern Europe whose 20th-century history differed considerably from that of the “old” EU members. While the countries in the West had established stable
and wealthy democracies after 1945, the countries behind the Iron Curtain had experienced dictatorship and planned economy. And while Western Europe had built a community based on a desire for peace and prosperity, the countries to the East were subordinate to a Soviet regime that closely controlled the Eastern bloc.

The post-communist countries did not see the Holocaust narrative and its relation to the history of the EU as part of their own narrative. On the contrary, they saw it as a Western European narrative and its relation to the history of the EU as part of their own prehistory — a prehistory that would no longer be associated only with the Second World War and the Holocaust, but also with the Cold War, the division of Europe, and the crimes committed by Soviet communism. Creating a unified narrative and a shared memory was a way of integrating the new member states and thereby strengthening the EU. It was important for the parliament to include the new members and send a signal that the Union accepted them and acknowledged their history.

The call to make August 23 a European Day of Remembrance for “the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes” was such a signal. The European Parliament proposed the date in 2005 in a resolution on “European conscience and totalitarianism”, which can be seen as the culmination of the prior efforts to create a shared memory in the EU.

A number of countries in the EU commemorate the victims of the Holocaust on January 27, the day that Auschwitz was liberated in 1945. Moreover, the European Parliament observes that day, and has encouraged all member states to do so. In 2008 — and again in 2009, with changed wording — the parliament proposed another European Day of Remembrance on August 23 for the victims of both Nazism and Stalinism. The Nazi Soviet Nonaggression Pact, which facilitated the Nazi assault on Poland of September 1, 1939, and the Soviet occupation of the three Baltic countries in 1940, was signed on August 23, 1939.

The proposal to remember these two groups of victims was put forward after a hearing held by the Slovenian presidency in April 2008. In May 2008, the European Parliament followed suit with a written declaration that was adopted in September 2008. In the meantime the proposal had also been put forward in the “Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism”, which proposed honoring the victims of “Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes”. Finally, in a resolution adopted in April 2009, the European Parliament called for the proclamation of August 23 as a “Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes”.

Designating August 23 as a Day of Remembrance was not new. In the 1980s, a Western protest movement used August 23 in an effort to attract attention to human rights violations in the Soviet Union, including the occupation of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. In number of demonstrations in Western cities on August 23, then called “Black Ribbon Day”. In 1987 the protest movement also spread to the Baltic States where it culminated in 1989 in a human chain through all three countries.

The Soviet occupation of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia also left its mark in the European Parliament. In 1987, the parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which condemned the Soviet occupation of the three countries and drew attention to their struggle for freedom, and to “the thousands of victims of this struggle and the 165,000 Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians who have been resettled and removed to labor camps in Siberia by the Soviet rulers since 1939”.

August 23 was also associated with Soviet oppression of the population of Eastern Europe during the Cold War. Especially in the Baltic States, but also in Poland, the date was of great importance since it was understood both as the beginning of the war and as the beginning of decades of repression. “But the date does not seem to have attracted much attention between 1989 and 2008, when it came up again repeatedly in proposals to make it a Day of Remembrance for the victims of Stalinism and Nazism and for the victims of totalitarianism. The resolution “European Conscience and Totalitarianism” in particular, adopted in 2009 by the European Parliament, sparked debate about August 23 and about European memory in general.

Strong opposition to the resolution came from Yehuda Bauer, a key figure in the international and transnational efforts to confront the Holocaust, and a strong advocate of memorializing the Holocaust. Bauer called the resolution “totally unacceptable”, and wrote further, “[T]o compare this (communist brutality) with the murder of many millions of Europeans by the Nazi regime, and especially with the state-planned genocide of the Jews (Holocaust) in the context of Nazi crimes generally — although the EU statement makes specific mention of the Holocaust, no doubt as to make the acceptance of the comparison easier — is a distortion of history.”

Bauer’s viewpoint was also put forward in the European political arena, including the European Parliament, where a small group of mostly left-wing parliamentarians opposed the resolution, mainly because they, like Bauer, thought that the two regimes could not be compared and that such a comparison would challenge the uniqueness of the Holocaust. Others, and especially the Eastern European right wing, thought that the two groups of victims ought to be put on the same footing and should be remembered together.

The purpose of the resolution and the call to make August 23 a European Day of Remembrance was to create a more inclusive memory in the EU: a memory that could encompass the victims of Soviet Communism and of the Holocaust, as well as the victims of other regimes. For parliamentarians who were categorized as totalitarian. The parliament tried to take into consider- ation divergent national memories in Europe, and to adapt to them by the creation of a shared narrative about the EU as a story of success. But the question remains whether it succeeded.

In the resolution, the European Parliament pointed out that the EU was an answer to both Nazism and Stalinism and that European integration was “the integration of a Europe that was characterized by a lack of democracy and respect for human rights and the legal system, and by a lack of freedom of speech and association”. It emphasized that Europe could not be reunited unless it is “able to form a common view of its history, recognizes Nazism, Stalinism and fascism as regimes of a common legacy and brings about an honest and thorough debate on their crimes in the past century.”

The parliament tried to encompass what they labeled “all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes” in European history, as opposed to the previous 2008 “Declaration on the Proclamation of August 23 as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stal-
ism and Nazism”. Despite the new title, Nazism and Stalinism were given special attention in the resolution, while the fascist regimes in Greece, Spain, and Portugal were only mentioned once.

The main purpose of the new resolution was to correct the asymmetry in the commemoration of Stalinism and Nazism. However, the result was a new asymmetry in which Stalinism received greater emphasis.

The Parliament pointed out that the Europeans should have special understanding for the situation in Eastern Europe and expressed regret that it is still a primarily Eastern European Day of Remembrance.

The European Parliament, in 2010 and 2011. Among the member states, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Hungary, and Sweden observe August 23, which indicates that the victims of the Holocaust, and no separate Day of Remembrance to recognize and come to terms with Eastern European memory of “crimes committed by totalitarian and undemocratic regimes” can be read as a paraphrase of the appeal to collect information on communism that was put forward in the Prague Declaration. Furthermore, the resolution ends with a reference to communist crimes, attesting to their special status in the resolution.

In general, Soviet crimes and the memory of them received special attention during the debate, in which the majority of the speakers focused on the need to recognize and come to terms with Eastern European memory in particular. Thus the parliament did not succeed in balancing different memories in the EU.

Considering the history of the date – both the severe consequences of the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact for Eastern Europe and the fact that the date had taken on a further meaning – there are two points that the victims of the Holocaus were secondary to the victims of Soviet communism. On the other hand, the memory of Soviet communism could be seen as secondary, especially since their accession to the EU, to oppose “the hegemonic ‘core European’ narrative of what ‘Europe’ is all about.”

Mäkki points out that “Polish and Baltic members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have been particularly vigorous in criticizing the imbalance of the EU’s historical approach that grants the victims of communism a ‘second-class status’, calling for a common European effort to urge Russia to assess its own history and to apologize for the crimes of Soviet totalitarianism.”

Polish and Baltic members of the European Parliament have actively participated in the parliamentary debates and contributed a number of motions for resolutions dealing with memory politics.

The Czech Republic and Czech politicians have also been very active in drawing attention to the memory of Soviet communist crimes after taking up the issue during the Slovenian EU presidency. An international conference was held in Prague in June 2008 at which the Prague Declaration was adopted. In contrast to the European Parliament, the point of departure for the Czech Republic was a focus on the crimes of Soviet communism, while Nazism and Nazi crimes played a minor role. The conference was organized by Martin Mejeřík, a senator in the Czech parliament, and Jana Hybášková, as well as Martin Mejeřík, who had also coordinated the previous events in Prague. The Robert Schuman Foundation for Cooperation between Christian Democrats in Europe also contributed funding.

These activities have affected the European Parliament. Nevertheless, it is still a primarily Eastern European Day of Remembrance in the European Union. The phrase from the Prague Declaration for example, “whereas Europe will not be united until it is able to form a common view of its history, recognizes Nazism, Stalinism and fascist and Communist regimes as a common legacy and brings about an honest and thorough debate on their crimes in the past century.”

The resolution was adopted by the European Parliament, and it is an important step in the EU’s recognition of the suffering of victims of Soviet totalitarianism.

In addition to Eastern European right-wing organizations, politicians, and members of the European Parliament, various institutions concerned with memory in Eastern Europe have also contributed to putting Eastern European memory on the agenda in the European Parliament. These include the Czech Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, and the European Conservatives/Christian democrats. Hence the European Conservatives/Christian Democrats and especially the PPE-DE Group in the European Parliament seem to have played a significant role both at the conference and in planning it.

The conference was followed by a hearing on “European Conscience and Crimes of Totalitarianism: 20 Years After”, held during the Czech presidency in March 2009. The hearing was organized by the Czech Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, the Czech government, and the Parliamentary Group of the European Parliament. The material from the hearing does not tell who the twelve were, but according to the program, several Eastern European members of the PPE-DE participated as panelists and in the panel debates. Among these were Tunne Kelam, an MEP, and Vytautas Landsbergis, who had also participated in the Prague conference; Sandro Kalsi, later MEP for PPE-DE, Jana Hybášková, MEP, and Martin Mejeřík, not an MEP, who was also one of the organizers.

The same picture emerges at another conference, “Crimes of the Communist Regimes”, held in Prague in February 2010, where the Czech EU presidency. The conference was organized by the Study for the History of Totalitarian Regimes and a number of members of the PPE-DE were among the organizers, including Sandro Kalsi, Tunne Kelam, and Jana Hybášková, as well as Martin Mejeřík, who had also coordinated the previous events in Prague. The Robert Schuman Foundation for Cooperation between Christian Democrats in European Union also contributed funding.

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The title of the official document of the Declaration, “Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Consensus”, is likewise comparable to the title of the resolution cited above, the “Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism”. In addition, the parliament repeated the proposal to create a “Platform for European Memory and Consensus” and a pan European documentation center or place of memory.

The activities of these institutions also underscore the fact that attitudes toward the memory of recent European history are influenced not only by political standpoints, but also by nationality or geography. Furthermore, Annabelle Littou Monnet considers the new member states’ wish for recognition of their sufferings under Soviet rule as an expression of their endeavors to build stable democracies.

In Eastern Europe and the fact that the date had taken on a further meaning considering the history of the date – both the severe consequences of the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact for Eastern Europe and the fact that the date had taken on a further meaning. It is often said that the European Union will not be united unless it is able to form a common view of its history, recognizing Nazism, Stalinism and fascist and Communist regimes as a common legacy and brings about an honest and thorough debate on their crimes in the past century.”
It is understandable that there are different views on Soviet communism, as the concept of communism and life under Soviet rule is a shared memory of communism and life under Soviet rule. Adopting experiences of those who are not necessarily your own is an important part of shaping a community of memory, which consists of a group of people who share certain memories of events that at least one individual may or may not have experienced personally. Creating such a shared memory might not be so straightforward in the case of the EU. The question is whether it is possible to create a united European memory, and what role the EU can and should play in this, still remains to be answered. Perhaps it is not so important to create a single shared memory. Instead, it might be more fruitful to focus on accepting one another’s different memories and creating a community of memory based on heterogeneity and diversity, especially after 2004.

United in diversity?
The differences described above show first and foremost that the question how to interpret and remember the past is always political in some sense. It is significant that both left and right found it difficult to distance themselves from an ideology that reflects different attitudes towards the communist regime in groups of different political orientations. The PPE-DE and the Communists are the primary sufferers, with Soviet communism as an additional factor. The PPE-DE, on the other hand, did not see Soviet communism as an “added experience,” while the right-wing nations, nothing was “added” by communism: most of them had communism first, then Nazism, and then communism again.

The contrast is apparent in another amendment. The PSE proposed changing the following paragraph: “The European Parliament is convinced that the ultimate goal of discussion and assessment of the crimes committed by the Communist totalitarian regimes is reconciliation, which can be achieved by admitting responsibility, asking for forgiveness and fostering moral renewal” The proposed amendment would have deleted the last clause and changed the first part to read, “is convinced that the ultimate goal of discussion and assessment of the crimes committed by all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, including Communist dictatorships, is reconciliation.” The same amendment asked for the demand for reconciliation at the cost of de-emphasizing the memory of Soviet communism. The amendment was not adopted, and it is interesting to note who voted for and who against it. The majority of the liberal ALDE, the conservative/Christian democratic PPE-DE, the liberal/progressive UP, the EU-skeptical IND/DEM, and the unaffiliated members voted no. The majority of the communists, the socialists, the Greens, and the Greens (Verts/ ALDE) voted yes. In short, the right-center parties and the EU-skeptical IND/DEM opposed toning down the emphasis on communism, while the left wing voted favorably the amendment. It is understandable to draw different views on Soviet communism in East and West: European does not share the Eastern European experience of living under Soviet rule. However, as illustrated above, the discussions also showed a different approach between left and right.

words were changed to “have experienced both Communism and Nazism”.39

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35. Party of European Socialists (PSE), “Amendment 28; Tabled by Hannes Martín Martín, Justas Vincas Paleckis on Behalf of the PSE Group; Joint Motion for a Resolution: European Conscience and Totalitarianism; Rteclă b (my emphasis)”, cf. Art. 10 in the resolution as adopted, ART(2012).


38. Party of European Socialists (PSE), “Amendment 28, tabled by Hannes Martín Martín, Justas Vincas Paleckis, on behalf of the PSE Group; Joint Motion for a Resolution: European Conscience and Totalitarianism; Rteclă b (my emphasis)”, cf. Art. 10 in the resolution as adopted, ART(2012).


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42. PSE, Amendment 28 (emphasis in original).


In May 2014, in commemorating the first decade since the European Union’s eastward enlargement, well-wishers pointed out that earlier divisions between the “old” and “new” EU member states, and in particular between “Eastern” and “Western” Europe, have become outdated. Many authors see the opening of European labor markets and the free movement of goods, services, and labor within the EU as a means of facilitating such a process. These gaps legitimize the need to outsource the social welfare systems of the receiving countries of the West, causing the aging populations, low birth rates, and rising numbers of women in gainful employment. These gaps legitimize the need to outsource domestic tasks to other women, and in many cases migrants.

What remains less explicit in the existing research is that the gaps in social welfare in the receiving and sending countries are interconnected. One factor that causes the European women to migrate to the West is the erosion of their own social and economic situation at home, which cements the asymmetry in economic prosperity between “East” and “West” and perpetuates inequalities between the “old” and “new” EU. In order to address this tension between the EU and its neighbors further east, creating very different kinds of opportunities for migrant workers in the enlarged EU.

Our key research question concerns the relation between the status of domestic work and the migrant status of the women working that perform, which we frame in terms of work status– migrant status vulnerability. We argue that the phenomenon of paid domestic and care work in the EU is now the most important category of employment of female migrants from the new EU member states and the non-EU countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Analyzing this trend often highlights the gaps in the social welfare systems of the receiving countries of the West, caused by the aging populations, low birth rates, and rising numbers of women in gainful employment. These gaps legitimize the need to outsource domestic tasks to other women, and in many cases migrants.

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Post-enlargement labor migration to and within the EU

Labor migration from CEE countries to and within the European Union has been a topic of growing academic and political interest over the last decade. Since the fall of communism, migration, and especially economically motivated migration, has become a characteristic of all post-communist countries. In the early 1990s, migration from the region was an immediate reaction to the deteriorating economic and social conditions of the post-socialist period. Rising unemployment and high risk of poverty were the main incentives for going abroad in search of temporary jobs. Russia, and to some extent the Czech Republic and Hungary, became the “growth poles” for irregular labor migrants who preferred to look for better opportunities within the CEE region. Many other CEE migrants went to the more affluent countries in the West, crossing the borders as tourists and then engaging in low-skilled and low-paid jobs in petty trade, agriculture, and construction. The major labor migration flows at that time were from Poland, Romania, Ukraine, and Albania to the southern European countries of the European Union, where tolerance for clandestine work and irregular residence has been the major attraction.

Since 2004, freedom of movement and the end of transitional restrictions on citizens of Romania and Bulgaria, the EU’s newest member states, has dramatically changed European migration. Several researchers observe the emergence of a “new migration system in Europe” characterized by sharply different from permanent immigration in favor of a proliferation of temporary migrant workers’ programs. In keeping with the global trend, there is an absolute growth in circular, irregular, and increasingly transnational flows towards and from the East and West. Post-enlargement labor migration still takes place in a European space, but with more distinct tendencies towards exploitation and exclusion, so that “new European flows depend in danger of becoming second-class migrants in the EU.” Favel bases this assessment on a large number of studies, accentuating the finding that migrants from CEE “accept sharp downward mobility in [...] status and quality of data in order to fill some labor market gaps that is grimly justified [by] its pay-off for family back home.”

Other scholars argue that migration from CEE can be characterized as different stages in a migration process which progresses from an initial stage of temporary work abroad to transnational commuting and then to permanent residence. However, not every migrant goes through these phases. As Anderson argues, it is difficult to define the transition between settled and temporary migrants, since their status strongly depends on immigration regulations and on the organization and type of work available in the receiving countries.

A decade after the enlargement, it is still difficult to provide a comprehensive account of actual post-enlargement labor migration to the EU. To begin with, only three member countries of the EU—Sweden, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, have adopted a free-access regime for migrant workers from the A8 countries which calls for the registration of such workers and so provides nationwide data for migration research. Yet even in Sweden, Ireland, and the UK, many migrants register neither their departure from nor their arrival in the receiving country, so that the data is still inaccurate. Furthermore, the nature of the current migration flow from the post-socialist countries is “that of a large pool of migrants as both a structural necessity” for many of the EU’s welfare societies and “an arena of social exclusion.”

At the same time, migrant workers from the A8 countries have become receiving countries for labor migrants from non-EU nations. In keeping with the global trend, there is an absolute growth in circular, irregular, and increasingly transnational flows towards and from the East and West. Post-enlargement labor migration still takes place in a European space, but with more distinct tendencies towards exploitation and exclusion, so that “new European flows depend in danger of becoming second-class migrants in the EU.” Favel bases this assessment on a large number of studies, accentuating the finding that migrants from CEE “accept sharp downward mobility in [...] status and quality of data in order to fill some labor market gaps that is grimly justified [by] its pay-off for family back home.”

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working in unstable jobs with no formal benefits. The immense economic restructuring processes that began in the 1990s have deepened the gender gap in most of the CEE countries. As a result, growing unemployment and underemployment, reduced social services, labor displacement, increasing poverty and inequality, and violence against women continued and contributed to create increasing pressure on women to look for new survival strategies for themselves and their families. These changes seem to be the main push factors driving increasing female migration from CEE to the wealthier countries of Europe.

Moreover, women, especially mothers, migrate without their spouses and children in an effort to improve their own and their family’s well-being. Many migrate out of pure necessity; that is, in order to ensure their own or their family’s livelihood, health, and security. In this capacity, women often assume the role of the principal caretaker in the family left behind. Others take employment or study abroad as a way to improve their standard of living and career opportunities. Recent estimates indicate that there are around three million immigrants from Eastern Partnership countries, Central Asia, and Russia in the EU and EFTA member countries. The majority of these migrants are women. Taking a closer look at the countries nearest the EU borders, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) finds that 20 percent of the Ukrainian working age population works abroad every season. Other sources observe that Ukraine “is the major supplier of migrant labor to Europe, [and] the major sending country of irregular immigrant workers.” Women comprise 33 percent of all labor migrants, but over 50 percent in the Western regions bordering on the EU. Various concerns are expressed about the exodus of men and women — in equal numbers — as every sixth adult in the country migrates abroad in search of work. A mobility agreement signed between the EU and Moldova raises concerns about the current “demographic theft” can be discouraged in favor of legal, temporary migration.

It is important to emphasize that the economic crisis of 2008 had different policies in Poland, Moldova, and the other CEE countries since the independence of these countries and the development of the EU. Studies from the mid-1990s, in which women have traditionally performed domestic services predominate. In addition, migrant domestic labor in which the private sphere was an invisible and undervalued domain, in which women conventionally took responsibility for the care of the elderly, children, and disabled persons. Since the European Institute for Gender Equality clearly observes that “optional familialism,” in which care is largely provided by state institutions. At the same time, Sweden, unlike many other EU countries, offers unrestricted access to its labor market to both citizens and non-citizens of the EU. This is one reason why most migrant domestic labor is performed by a female-dominated sector. The two main models of domestic work are informal and formal. The first model is characterized by the absence of any formal remuneration and benefits, as well as the lack of any legal protection. In the second model, migrant domestic workers are employed in the EU by private households since the mid-1990s. There is no uniform definition of “domestic work”. Different legal frameworks specify different member states show distinct approaches to the issue of domestic and care tasks at home. This is what several feminist researchers describe as the failure of a new gender order in Europe — that is, “outsourcing (part of) their care work to migrant women” represents a failure to reconcile family and work responsibilities equally between the sexes.

In spite of the common factors driving the need for migrant domestic and care workers in the EU, legislation and policy in the different member states shows distinct approaches to the issue of domestic and care work. The increasing participation of migrant women in the European Commission’s recent Green Paper on Domestic Work, in which care is largely provided by state institutions. At the same time, Sweden, unlike many other EU countries, offers unrestricted access to its labor market to both citizens and non-citizens of the EU. This is one reason why most migrant domestic labor is performed by a female-dominated sector. The two main models of domestic work are informal and formal. The first model is characterized by the absence of any formal remuneration and benefits, as well as the lack of any legal protection. In the second model, migrant domestic workers are employed in the EU by private households since the mid-1990s. There is no uniform definition of “domestic work”. Different legal frameworks specify different member states show distinct approaches to the issue of domestic and care tasks at home. This is what several feminist researchers describe as the failure of a new gender order in Europe — that is, “outsourcing (part of) their care work to migrant women” represents a failure to reconcile family and work responsibilities equally between the sexes.
domestic and care work on an informal basis.71 Table 1 indicates, using just a few examples of EU member states, that the institutional arrangements and policies for performing domestic and care work in the EU correspond with an interplay between the roles of family and market in providing care, care migration regimes that encourage or restrict inflows of migrants, and the ways in which the different nation states choose to finance domestic services. The national policy responses also suggest that migrants’ domestic and care work in private households has become a “structural necessity” of family life, economic development, and the maintenance of welfare systems in the EU member states. At the same time, however, domestic work remains a socially undervalued and poorly regulated area of work which has yet to receive adequate recognition, both nationally and internationally. The International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations (UN) are among the strongest international advocates of the protection of human rights, and the protection of migrant workers’ rights in particular. However, as several researchers point out, most of these organizations’ instruments for protecting international migrant workers’ rights are not adapted to the specific context and characteristics of migrant domestic work.72 Some of the earliest efforts to address such issues, the Migration for Employment Convention (C82) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (C139), were designed to ensure that national and international migration laws concerning migrant workers’ rights by spelling out regulations for migrant workers’ entry and return, working hours, pay, and social security issues. Both of these documents became important catalysts for further international instruments for protecting migrant workers. 

The NEWEST TREATY setting standards for domestic workers’ rights is the ILO Right to Organize and Domestic Workers Recommendation (R201), adopted in 2011. The Convention requires governments to bring domestic workers into the scope of labor law on minimum wages, working hours, weekly rest, overtime wages, terms of employment, social security and maternity protection. It also contains detailed requirements for governments to regulate private employment agencies and investigate complaints, and establishes special provisions for migrant workers.73 Both the European Commission and the European Parliament have endorsed the Domestic Workers Convention and authorized its ratification among EU member states.74 So far, only two of the EU member states, Italy and Germany,75 have ratified the Convention. Research on the implementation and possible implications of the Convention is very scarce, yet the few studies that exist have already criticized the Convention for not covering undocumented migrant domestic workers, who clearly predominate among migrant workers in the world.76

The limitations of international instruments for safeguarding the rights of migrant domestic workers, especially by addressing the issue of growing undocumented and illegal labor migration, which is highly relevant to most of the domestic workers in Europe and globally,77 is evident by the fact that the ILO conventions named recognize the specific problems of migrant workers on temporary visas, nor provides absolute rights for migrant workers. The limitations of international instruments for safeguarding the rights of migrant domestic workers, especially by addressing the issue of growing undocumented and illegal labor migration, which is highly relevant to most of the domestic workers in Europe and globally,77 is evident by the fact that the ILO conventions named recognize the specific problems of migrant workers on temporary visas, nor provides absolute rights for migrant workers. The limitations of international instruments for safeguarding the rights of migrant domestic workers, especially by addressing the issue of growing undocumented and illegal labor migration, which is highly relevant to most of the domestic workers in Europe and globally,77 is evident by the fact that the ILO conventions named recognize the specific problems of migrant workers on temporary visas, nor provides absolute rights for migrant workers. 

The relationship between migration and labor standards enforcement is a particularly challenging problem for the protection of domestic migrant workers’ rights.78 The migration of migrants to receiving countries is determined first of all by national regulations, labor market laws, and immigration policies, which may or may not conflict with international instruments. Furthermore, the implementation of international human rights law depends to a large extent on states’ political will (and, often, in regard to economic, cultural, and social rights, on their economic capacity) to comply with international human rights instruments.79 

A new effort aimed specifically at the protection of temporary migrant workers’ rights was undertaken by the ILO in the Multilateral Framework on Labor Migration,80 adopted in 2006. This framework emphasizes the values of the Decent Work Agenda and goes beyond other international conventions in advocating national labor legislation covering the rights of migrant domestic workers and other vulnerable groups. However, like their precedents, the International Convention and the Multilateral Framework on Labor Migration are not binding legal documents, and thus they do not fundamentally challenge the sovereignty of national states to impose restrictions on temporary migrant workers’ rights.

The experiences of migrant domestic and care workers from different European countries show that domestic services in private households are a particular challenge for women in Europe. Moreover, the lack of formal guarantees for workers with irregular status, are not considered as “work” in the full sense of the term. Despite the existence of regulatory frameworks on migrant labor in most European countries and the international conventions on decent work for domestic workers,81 those working in this sector are excluded from basic labor standards and rights. Work performed in the home is regarded as a family affair, and the regulation of rights and entitlements is left up to the informal providers.

At the same time, the lack of professionalization of this sector makes it harder for migrant women to leave the informal sector, in which they pursue the low level of qualifications demanded by the employer, to regularize their positions, or to move on to other careers better suited to their education and previous work experience.82

This situation also impairs the compensation of domestic work, both in money and in social advantages. A global tendency observed by Goldring and Landolt is that irregular work has a lasting effect on precarious employment: once migrant workers with irregular status enter precarious jobs, they find it “difficult to jump over or to move out of” precarious employment, even if their migration status becomes more secure. This tendency is found among migrant domestic workers from the CEI region in particular; whether or not they are now EU citizens, women from the CEI region are disproportionately concentrated in precarious, low-paid, and devalued employment as domestic servants.83

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PITFALL of low work status for domestic workers is that migrant women who work in this area are often well qualified, yet the job they perform is usually seen as a low-skill occupation. The systematic devaluation of their professional and educational background is a common problem faced by migrant women in the EU, and results in “deskilling” and loss of human capital among migrant domestic and care workers.93 Those working in this sector are excluded from basic labor and social security benefits such as pensions, unemployment insurance, and health care.94 There are important reasons to argue that domestic and care work is not just another labor market, but that one stands out by the following important characteristics: the intimate nature of the social sphere in which the work is performed; the social construction of the work as women’s work; the special relationship between employer and employee, which is highly emotional, personal, and characterized by mutual dependency; and the logic of care, which is clearly different from that of other employment.95 Notwithstanding the increasing tendency towards commodification of domestic and care work, paid work performed by migrant women, like the unpaid care work of all women, remains under-valued and deprived of social and economic recognition.96 Based on the analysis of her research findings, Leenhouts identifies two major groups of reasons why domestic and care work performed by migrant women in the EU, in spite of the high demand for such labor, is either not counted as employment of migrants from the European economy and European societies.

The first group of factors are the pitfalls of low work status. These factors are related to a tension between the nature of domestic and care work as work on labor migration policies and in collective agreements. The average earnings of migrant workers are particularly disadvantaged: in France, their earnings are 38 percent lower than those of native-born workers.97 In some countries, TCN migrant workers are particularly disadvantaged: in France, their earnings are only 52 percent of those of native-born citizens, and in Sweden, only 36 percent of the average earnings for most TCNs.98 Furthermore, the increasing demand for cheap and flexible labor is not accidental, but a result of the gendered construction of the domestic and care sector, and of the gendered gradation of labor markets in general.
However, migrants’ experiences in the domestic and care sector vary depending on their country of origin and on the country in which they live and work. The research shows, for example, that a high level of dependency on the employer is common in Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, and Sweden, where residence and work permits are tied to a specific employer, while such dependency remains lower in Greece. Yet another pitfall of migrant status is what Krzyzstosz describes as “a staircase model of rights,” in which women from non-EU Eastern European countries, for example, have only a limited set of social citizenship rights compared to EU citizens moving to another country for work. According to findings by Dowd and Timons, women EU citizens who migrate experience their migration experience and the long-term goals of their migration as somewhat more secure because they can visit their families back home or bring their spouses and children with them. Some may even bring along their own parents to look after their children while they work.

Notwithstanding, the domestic work sector in the EU and globally is highly ethnicized, and employers tend to apply negative stereotypes, categorizing women from certain countries as only suitable for low-status and low-paid jobs. According to a report of the European Network Against Racism, the systematic association of migrant women with care and domestic work tends to further the professional and personal development of women.”

Concluding remarks

The present article argues that EU enlargement and the consequent freedom of mobility have meant increasing migration flows from Eastern Europe (EEU) and the earlier EU member states. In the example of migrant domestic and care work, we aimed to highlight the twin processes taking place in Eastern and Western Europe as an explanation for the increasing numbers of women among recent migrants to the EU. The rapid growth of migrant domestic work in Europe coincides with the change of political and economic systems in Eastern Europe, the enlargement of the EU, the collapse of the former Soviet bloc, the opening of borders, and increasing female employment in Western Europe. Women from EEU countries in order to be able to provide for themselves and their families. In the EU, they tend to find work in traditional women’s roles: as cleaners, carers, personal assistants, etc. They perform jobs that local women often avoid because of low pay, poor working conditions, and limited prospects.

As numerous studies show, migrant women’s work in private households is an essential part of the family life of many European and Eastern European, the European economy and the European welfare system.

Indeed, many women in today’s Europe are able to pursue both career and family commitments thanks to the presence in their country of immigrant women from the poor regions of Central and Eastern Europe and beyond, to whom they can delegate their family and household related caring work and chores. The central argument of this paper is that migrant domestic and care workers in Europe face serious challenges due to a number of structural and institutional disadvantages that we call the pitfalls of migrant status.

The protection of migrant status in the EU should allow a systematic analysis of the reasons and political dimensions of this sector. Furthermore, another important challenge is to comprehensively examine the contradictory logic of paid domestic and care work, which is both a necessary part of life and a job performed by migrants whose rights are undermined. Failure to do this further impedes the recognition of migrant domestic and care work’s importance to middle-class Europeans’ goal of balancing work and family.

References


2. In this article we use the concepts of “East” and “West” rather than “ancestors” of “Eastern Europe” in a similar way to citizenship and political rights. However, in this paper, we use them in a way that is not explicitly based on the fact that the very different countries are not EU member countries, while acknowledging the fact that very different countries are emerging in these groups of countries.


In November 2013, weekly jobs fairs were held in the capital Bucharest in expectation of the opening of Britain’s border in January 2014. British companies are actively recruiting Romanians to come and work as midwives, waiters, and hotel staff in the UK.
Domestic and care work includes duties performed in the private sphere and is predominantly carried out by women. Recent work on migrant domestic work focuses predominately on the increased demand for handymen: 'The “A8” are the eight countries in the CEE region among the ten that have joined the EU on May 1, 2004. As Ayres et al. note (in “Profiling Female Migrants in Europe”, 18), EU member states still use different definitions in producing migration statistics, and do not always record the gender breakdown. This complicates the assessment of migration.

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The EU as a Normative Success For National Minorities

by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa & Magdalena Góra

illustration Ragni Svensson

I n the early 1990s, the EU concluded Association Agreements with a number of CEE countries that had been isolated for decades behind the Iron Curtain: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The early 1990s were not only a time of “hope” in CEE; however: they were also a time of anxiety during which a number of long-submerged ethnic and national conflicts surfaced. Czechoslovakia divided. So too did Yugoslavia, and long and bloody wars ensued. These events warned the political elite in the West that a possible enlargement might entail the risk of importing ethnic trouble spots and border conflicts into a wider EU. The Western European countries had long traditions of stabilizing relations in the CEE region. After each World War, the Western powers were involved in reestablishing order in this part of Europe. The great powers were also interested in protecting minorities in the region, especially in the aftermath of WWII. However, 1989 brought new actors to the stage, namely the EU and NATO. European integration made new modes of cooperation much more attractive than earlier propositions. The offer of association with the EU was perceived as a strategic attempt to stabilize relations not only between Western European states and the newly independent states in the CEE region, but also between the countries emerging from the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The conviction was widespread at that time that the situation in CEE might follow the insidious pattern of the Yugoslav war. The fear of such a “Balkanization” of CEE had already been stressed by the Polish intellectual and former dissident Adam Michnik, who wrote:

“This European mosaic of nationalities could be swept by a conflagration of border conflicts. These are unhappy nations, nations that have lived for years in bondage and humiliation. Complexes and resentments can easily explode. Hatred breeds hatred, force breeds force. And that way lies the path of Balkanization of our “native Europe”.”

Fortunately, that dark scenario did not occur. How can we explain this peaceful development in CEE? In the present article, we would like to contribute to the discussion of this question by highlighting the role played by the EU, and to some extent by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe (CoE). We will focus on the EU’s impact on the situation of national minorities in those CEE countries that became members of the EU as a result of the enlargements of 2004 and 2007. Our aim is to describe and analyse how the EU approached and influenced the protection of national minorities in CEE during the process of European enlargement, and to evaluate the durability of the changes during the decade since the enlargement. Much has already been written on national
minorities in specific CEE countries, not only in connection with the enlargement, the quality of democracy, and human rights. However, there have been relatively few comparative, theoretically driven analyses. We would like to contribute to this body of scholarly literature, since we find that there is a need for a general assessment of the EU’s influence on CEE, especially now that the ten years that have passed since the enlargement allow us to assess the durability of that influence. In order to measure the influence of the international actors, and of the EU in particular, on minority issues in CEE, we will first map the situation of the minorities in the region, and provide a brief explanation of the various factors that shape the current situation. We will employ Roger Brubaker’s model of a triadic nexus to explain the dynamics of the minority situation in CEE. In the second part, we will analyze the influence of the EU on the situation of minorities in CEE using Albert, Dier, and Stetter’s concept of the EU’s impact as composed of four pathways: compulsory, enabling, connective, and constructive. In each case we will compare the EU’s mechanisms for influencing the minority situation in the CEE before and after enlargement.

**National minorities in Central and Eastern Europe**

CEE is not a homogeneous and coherent region. Its major characteristic is its location on the edges of civilizations, and definitions of the region often refer to it as a borderland. “This part of Europe is characterized by several crucial traits, including the instability of statehood; ever-changing and permeable borders; a variety of political systems over the course of history, from totalitarian to democratic constructions; the legacy of communism; and finally, a diversity of religions, languages, and cultures that transcends borders.”

A deeply rooted Western European stereotype notwithstanding, the minority populations of the Eastern Central European states that became EU members in 2004 and 2007 are not massive. Only the Baltic states and Bulgaria are truly multinational states: minorities comprise about 20% of the total population in Lithuania and Bulgaria, and more than 30% in Estonia and Latvia. In Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Hungary, minorities do not exceed 10% of the population; in Romania they are about 15%, and in Slovakia about 12%.

In the EU overall, the proportion of minorities, according to official statistics, has risen to 8.5% of the total population, from 6.1% in the EU15. It is not the size of the minority groups that created the interethnic problems in CEE. A characteristic of CEE, however, is that most of the minorities have a connection with neighboring kin-states. This causes significant tensions with regard to possible interference between neighboring countries, and raises the risk of the interstate conflicts.

Although the constitutions of all new member countries contain guarantees of national minorities’ rights, the situation of national minorities in CEE differs from country to country. Germans and Jews have relatively good standing, thanks to the support of the West, although resentments still exist. “Those minorities that can generally count on backing from their kin-states, such as Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia, or Poles in the Ukraine, Belorussia, and Lithuania, have the advantage of a certain political weight. The politically weak are those minorities that are small, like the Ruthenians in Poland and Slovakia, and/or lack the protection of a kin-state, like the Roma. The Roma in CEE are both the largest minority and the most exposed to discrimination. Their problems remain unsolved in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania, where they comprise major groups.” The status of the Roma is a politically and socially sensitive issue which poses challenges to the fragile democracies in CEE.

Moreover, in a number of CEE states, the norms for minority rights formulated by the CoE and formally accepted by CEE countries lack broad support. Instead, there is support for assimilation policies. Minorities are often perceived as a potential threat to the identity of the majority population. There is no sign that the accession states wish to promote multiculturalism. The national minorities have individual rights – that is, each individual has the right to maintain and develop his or her language and culture – but there is a general unwillingness to discuss minorities’ collective rights, such as that of positive discrimination in favor of all who belong to a given ethnic group, extended language rights, or regional autonomy, to say nothing of ideas about transforming national states with large minorities into federative states. In this respect there is a profound difference between the EU’s old member states and its new members in the CEE region. Most of the old EU member states have multilingualism inscribed in their laws (four have more than one official language throughout the country and four are multilingual at the regional or provincial level), but none of the CEE members does. Furthermore, all CEE members of the EU are unitary states, while three of the EU15 – Austria, Belgium, and Germany – are federative states, and seven of the old EU members – Italy, Spain, Finland, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Denmark, and most recently France – include autonomous regions.

**WHAT ARE THE REASONS for such profound differences between the Western and Eastern members of the EU?** To understand them, we must go back in history and examine the roots of today’s political behavior. In the following discussion, we will indicate the historically grounded factors that have influenced the processes of nation-building and nationalism in CEE and shaped the region’s specific development in relation to Western Europe.

In Western Europe, the long-standing nation-states are an accepted political reality, and it is common to equate the concepts of state and nation. In CEE, however, there is a profound awareness of the distinction between the two. That is because the

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*A The Roma people have no kin-state, no autonomous region. Their collective rights are weak.*
emergence of most nations in CEE preceded the emergence of the region’s modern states, whereas in Western Europe the state often preceded the people. The modern nation states in CEE were created not through integration within existing states, but through the disintegration of states into smaller units based on separate ethnic and cultural groupings. The losses of state building in CEE were discontinuous and the states underwent radical territorial changes. When the modern nation-states finally came into being, they found themselves under constant threat for long periods. The existence of the nation-state had therefore never been taken for granted in CEE in the way that it has in the West. On the contrary, the nation-state is seen as desirable, but still fragile, weak, and exposed, a goal that has value in itself which requires protection.

Until the early 20th century, the social and economic situations in CEE were not fundamentally different from those in Western Europe, even if culturally they were imbued with a sense of the impending threat. These sentiments that were interpreted as threatening, and as a result, political and national identities were able to reintegrate social and economic conflict as national antagonism. That allowed national movements to draw from the strong sentiments resulting from injustice and economic oppression.

These sentiments facilitated the democratisation between different ethnicities in the late 19th century, and then the ideology of equality and democracy took root in CEE, assimilation into the culture of the dominant group (“gentry culture”) became an ever less attractive option, and national identities were expected to provide an easier path to social advancement. Indeed, many ethnic groups found it important to make their language and culture equal in status with the language and culture of the dominant group. By accepting a higher value on the language and culture of the common people, national ideologues offered their people a feeling of pride and a new self-respect based on the newly created national identity and state. At the same time, the peoples in CEE did not arise from the state as the point of departure, but from a basis of ethnic cultures. Culture became a store of national markers and symbols used in the construction of national identities. Culture took on the function of creating and preserving national identity, defining what is “ours” and what is “theirs”. As a result, culture became highly politicised. The national cultures of CEE developed in circumstances that were quite similar to the conditions in which the cultures of other nations were imbued with a sense of the impending threat. These cultures, which have a bias towards creating cohesion within an ethnic group, tend to be excluded. Given Bohuslav Brubaker’s hypothesis, that those who do not share a dominant national culture risk becoming undesirable minorities whom the dominant group regards with suspicion.

The triadic nexus and drama in CEE

Historic development in CEE has resulted in a lack of congruence between identity and state. At the same time, the peoples in the area see such congruence as an ideal. This is a source of frustration. The majority populations feel that their states are not completely developed nation-states, and that they are therefore not a community. In the status of the minorities, the fresh memories of the Soviet occupation, and Russia’s nonchalant attitude towards Baltic sovereignty. The Russians regard the Baltic states as “near-abroad”, a concept of Russian foreign policy that stresses the importance of neighboring regions to Russian security and claims a sphere of influence over certain territories. The conflict potential inherent in the “triaxial nexus” complicates relations between states in CEE, and between CEE and its neighbors on the one hand and Russia and Germany on the other. However, despite the minorities’ problematic attitudes towards minority states in the new EU member countries in this region did not experience any outbreak of violent conflict since the early 1990s. Relations between minorities and majorities developed relatively well in spite of some confrontations. How can we explain this development?

External actors and the minority situation in CEE

One of the specific characteristics of the transformation in CEE in the late 20th and early 21st centuries was the unprecedented role of external actors. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EU, became more closely engaged in national minority issues. At the summit in Copenhagen in 1993, the European Council formalized political, economic, and legal conditions, known as the Copenhagen criteria, that the applicant countries would have to meet in order to become EU members. Respect for human rights and the protection of national minorities were among them. The Helsinki Final Act of 1975, in particular the issue of German minorities in Polish and Czech relations, provided a framework for the protection of national minorities in CEE. CEE countries could emulate solutions and templates of high protection of minority rights. At that time, the EU did not have legislation of its own, except for regulations prohibiting discrimination in access to the labor market. At first, the CoE became the main organization to provide a minority rights standard for these countries. Membership in the CoE became the initial goal of the CEE countries, and really the only institution that could claim to have a certain degree of influence in the area. The CoE has a dense institutional network between the countries, including mechanisms and procedures for the promotion of National Minorities. These conventions were incorporated into the legal systems of all members of the CoE, including the new member states in CEE. The important problem of minority rights in CEE, however, was the relationship between CEE countries and EU member states, including in particular the issue of German minorities in Polish and Czech relations with the newly united Germany.

NATO was also involved in CEE relations from the early 1990s on, promoting democratization through the NATO-led institutions that were introduced in the Western Balkans in the name of peace. The Oslo Peace Agreement was signed on May 13, 1995, and the Dutch-led International Military Observer Group for Peace. The OSCE established the special post of High Commissioner on National Minorities, whose task is to watch over the rights of national minorities in Europe. Moreover, the states in CEE felt a need for cooperation and common platforms of communication if they were to become members of Western structures. In addition to the external democratization, the institutionalization of cooperation in the region created a dense institutional network between the countries, including such organizations as the Central European Initiative, CEPTA, and the Visegrad Group.
The EU’s influence on the candidate countries involves the use of a complex set of instruments to achieve desired changes in the domestic context. The literature on the topic proposes several explanations for the function and mechanisms of that influence. Studies on the role of external actors in democratization stress an unintended effect of comparison with regard to the acceptance of the desired norms. \(^2\) At the same time, authors studying democratization state that external actors have a set of tools to influence targeted states, mainly through leverage and linkage. \(^3\) This external-actors model has been adapted to explain the EU’s success in influencing CEE countries. \(^4\) Leverage is at work when conditions are attached to political goals, such as high standards of minority protection as a condition for EU membership. Linkage is seen in the diffusion of norms through formal and informal contacts.

**LITERATURE ON CHANGE IN THE CEE COUNTRIES**

The EU’s compulsory influence is the most important mechanism for change. It has a transformative effect which can produce more significant long term results. The EU has a connective influence by its use of mechanisms which strengthen the social structures of the societies in question more than the first two mentioned. Finally, the EU has a constructive influence which is designed to foster deep changes in identification. In the following analysis of these four paths of EU influence in the CEE countries, we start with the period before the new members’ accession with the years after the EU enlargement. The main aim of our analysis will be to discern how the EU’s various mechanisms facilitate the possible conflicts in CEE that arise from the triangle drama. Brubaker’s triadic nexus. We have adapted the four path model to map the EU’s various influences on the situation of minorities and on minority-related conflicts in CEE.

### Table 1: The EU’s influences on candidate countries

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target of Influence</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Actor driven</th>
<th>Integration process</th>
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<td>(1) Compulsory influence</td>
<td>(2) Enabling influence</td>
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<td>Society</td>
<td>(3) Connective influence</td>
<td>(4) Constructive influence</td>
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**The EU’s approach**

The EU has a compulsory influence through its conditionality policy. This influence is actor-driven and aimed at the policy-making level. It is designed to enable influence through political and financial mechanisms which strengthen the social actors who support the desired change in the candidate countries. Third, the EU has a connective influence by its use of mechanisms which strengthen the social structures of the societies in question more than the first two mentioned. Finally, the EU has a constructive influence which is designed to foster deep changes in identification. In the following analysis of these four paths of EU influence in the CEE countries, we start with the period before the new members’ accession with the years after the EU enlargement. The main aim of our analysis will be to discern how the EU’s various mechanisms facilitate the possible conflicts in CEE that arise from the triangle drama. Brubaker’s triadic nexus. We have adapted the four path model to map the EU’s various influences on the situation of minorities and on minority-related conflicts in CEE.

### The EU’s compulsory influence

The first path of the EU’s influence is compulsory influence. It keeps in the external incentives model, this influence is based on the assumption that a candidate country “adopts EU rules if the benefits of EU rewards exceed the domestic adoption costs.” \(^5\) As the literature on the policy conditions shows, the stronger and more credible the incentive, the more likely the actor is to comply. \(^6\) The promise of membership was the strongest incentive for the CEE countries to change. For the EU’s policy of assimilation, the EU dismantled all the minority institutions and rights in the EU. \(^7\) As the result of a reflection on possible conceptions of security and security threats is justified the use of military means to ensure national security. \(^8\) Conventional, securitization means reaching normality in politics and overcoming a dichotomy of security/insecurity. The concepts of securitization and desecuritization are useful in studying the situation in CEE during the EU enlargement. Following Atsuko Higashino’s argument, the enlargement in CEE countries was securitized for the sake of further desecuritization. \(^9\) To paraphrase McDonald, the logic as follows: a failure or delay of the enlargement process was positioned as a threat to survival. The societal’s agreement to this proposition enabled leaders to take emergency measures and suspend “normal politics” in dealing with enlargement. \(^10\) An interesting effect of this logic occurs in connection with the issue of minority rights. As noted above, one of the preconditions of enlargement was solving the border conflicts and normalizing relations between CEE states. From the Ballard Plan on, the main aim of the EU was to stabilize relations in CEE. Some authors have written that the EU’s primary role in regard to the situation of minorities in CEE was to desecuritize ethnically motivated conflicts. \(^11\) In this way, the mechanism of securitization mitigated the effects of Brubaker’s triangle drama.
interwar period, these two countries had quarreled about their border and the territories inhabited by the two nationalities. Immediately after the First World War, Poles forcibly attached the Vilnius region to the newly independent Poland. The Polish-Lithuanian conflict was deep and involved military operations and economic issues related to resource-sharing. Poles thereby attacked the Vilnius region to the newly independent Poland. The Polish-Lithuanian conflict was deep and involved military operations and economic issues related to resource-sharing. Poles thereby attacked the Vilnius region.

Once the candidates obtained membership, the problems of minorities and the threat of separatism were largely mitigated. However, the issue of the treatment of the Polish minority in Lithuania — the country’s largest minority group — was never fully addressed. In 2000, the Lithuanian government formally acknowledged the second type of influence exerted by the EU, as spelled out by Brubaker’s model. This path of EU influence is intended to strengthen cooperation between neighboring states in which minorities and to create a situation in which the minorities perceive the impact of EU enlargement in CEE countries varies depending on how integration influences their lives.

The EU’s enabling influence

The second type of influence exerted by the EU, as spelled out by Albert, Diez, and Stetter, is an enabling influence. Through various mechanisms, the EU supports those actors or groups in the target countries which are involved in domestic change. Among such groups, transnational non-governmental organizations involved in improving the human rights situation of minorities play a special role. This influence has been particularly visible in activities undertaken to improve the situation of Roma minorities in various CEE countries. The advantage of the EU is that it facilitates the transnational cooperation of the EU reinforces those actors which promote the further integration of minorities in the domestic setting and provide a much broader perspective on the problem of identification. This mechanism works in part through greater access to funds provided by the EU, including both pre-accession financial instruments such as PHARE and structural funds after 2004/2007. These funds were aimed at reducing the “conflict entrepreneurs” responsible for increasing tensions.

The EU’s connective influence

Because it lasts much longer than compulsory influence, retaining its effect after enlargement, the EU’s connective influence is particularly important for sustainable change. National minorities mostly inhabit border regions, and connective influence changes the nature of the borders that divide a minority from its kin-state. In this way, connective influence also contributes to solving the triangle drama of Brubaker’s model, by eliminating the “conflict entrepreneurs” responsible for increasing tensions.

The EU’s constructive influence

The fourth path of EU influence is constructive influence. This is especially important in regard to minority issues in CEE countries. As we have seen, European integration can change inter-state relations, and many studies on emerging European identity also argue that it changes relations between people.

How minorities perceive the impact of EU enlargement in CEE countries varies depending on how integration influences their relation with the country they live in and their contact with their kin-state. For Germans living in Poland, for example, integration and Polish membership in the EU finally enabled them to attain a secure position in the Polish political system and stable contacts with Germany. All of this was due to freedom of movement in the Schengen zone. Moreover, democratization and the more pluralistic model of political life made their participation in the political processes on various levels more comfortable.

However, this policy was largely successful not so much because of the EU’s direct involvement, but because the enlargement of the EU generally resulted in a diminishing significance of the borders between the members, which allowed people to move relatively freely. In 2007, the Bielorrussian border changed from a barrier between Poland and the kin-state. Such fears had already been expressed before enlargement. Members of the Ukrainian minority were also affected less by the financial benefits of structural funds directed to Poland.

Finally, the Silesian minority in Poland, a minority which has experienced difficulties in attaining recognition and which has benefited from the process of European integration. The democratization of political life not only contributed to the process of recognition of the Silesian cultural identity, but also relaxed divisions facilitated Silesians’ access to resources.

An interesting case is that of the Polish minority in Lithuania. The enlargement encouraged discussions of the Polish minority in Lithuania which in recent years have involved not only the EU and the Lithuanian government but also representatives of the EU in the Baltic states and Russia. In that case, the EU offered a useful forum to Lithuanian politicians to adopt the law on dual citizenship. Generally, it should be noted that the EU, realizing the sensitivity of collective minority rights, did not force the candidates and members to adopt them.

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Conclusions
The EU’s multifaceted influence on the situation of minorities in CEE shows that the role of external actors in CEE has been indispen-
sable. The EU’s compulsory influence, through secularization based on conditionality, immediately mitigated the destructive
erup expressive potential of Brubaker’s triangle. The main reason why we have not seen more severe conflicts between minorities and
minorities in the new EU member states is, in our view, the EU’s success in regard to national minorities. This is why the EU put on the
candidates for membership to adapt to norms on minority rights, based on conditionality, immediately mitigated the destructive
cwstions between states and minority issues goes as far as to overcome
tach them from purely interstate conflicts.

Germany’s reaction is only one example of how the discussion of minority rights prompted by the situation in CEE influenced policies on minorities in the Western European countries. Many
previously silent minorities in the West discovered the value of ethnic politics and started to push for changes. As a result, in
Spain granted regional autonomy to Basques and Catalans, for ex-
ample, and France granted regional autonomy to Corsicans. Thus, while the concept of ethnic politics and legislation concerning minority rights is a field that illustrates well how European integration takes place. The process
deserves deeper analysis that the scope of this article allows. To sum up, the worries and black scenarios about the eruption of border and ethnic conflicts jeopardizing European integra-
tion in the process of the EU’s eastward enlargement were not fulfilled. The potential conflicts were staved off and tensions
between minorities and diminished. There are still minorities who feel themselves ill-treated, but their problems are being addressed in the context of legislation that conforms to the EU norms, and we can see the patrimony of summations that monitor the minorities’ situation. The commitment of the CEU, the OSCE, and the EU to improve the situation of minorities in CEE in the 1990s has had a significant effect. The minorities are not excluded from participation, and attention has been drawn to the many problems in their relations with the majority populations. Today, the minorities organization know that they can count on support from highly prestigious interna-
tional actors in their struggle for both cultural and political rights. Generally, contemporary policies towards national minorities in the EU are a good example of the EU’s success as a normative power.

references
9. It should be emphasized, however, that all minority statistics are inherently uncertain due to different ways of counting. The numbers given here are based on the Lebed’s estimate, ibid.
11. For a more detailed description of the situation before the enlargement, see Fredrik Folkeryd and Ingvar Svanberg, Gypsies (Roma) in the Post-
12. See e.g. a series of reports by the European Center for Minority Issues (http://www.ercmi.de). The reluctant attitudes towards minority rights, especially towards their particular forms such as territorial autonomy, are also discussed in the scholarly literature: see e.g. C. Ashley, “The Politics of Tolerance: Minority Rights under EU Expansion in East Central Europe”, Eastern European Politics and Societies, 9 (2005): 89–113.
16. Ibid., 80.
20. Ibid., 80.
21. See “Europe Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and the States of, on the one part, and the Republic of Poland, of the other part”, 1991.
Multilateral cooperation and coordination are crucial for the security and well-being of the region. The regional integration process has made significant progress, and the European Union (EU) has played a key role in promoting peace and stability.

**The EU’s Role in the Region**

The EU’s involvement in the region dates back to the early 1990s, with the establishment of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The EU has been the largest donor to the region, providing financial support for a range of initiatives aimed at improving the living standards of citizens and strengthening the region’s economic and political integration.

**Economic Development**

The ENP has been instrumental in promoting economic development and growth in the region. The EU has provided support for infrastructure projects, education, and health services, as well as for the modernization of the region’s economies. This has helped to attract foreign investment and create job opportunities for the region’s citizens.

**Political Integration**

The regional integration process has also been facilitated by the creation of the European Union’s Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative. The EaP aims to promote closer integration between the EU and the Eastern partner countries, including Poland.

**Security and Stability**

The EU has also been active in promoting security and stability in the region. This has included the provision of military and police training, as well as support for border security and anti-terrorism efforts.

**References**

3. **The EU’s Role in the Region**
4. **Economic Development**
5. **Political Integration**
6. **Security and Stability**

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**Protests are suppressed**

Many Russians in Kaliningrad oppose this development, but they have a difficult time getting their message through. Very few descriptions of what is happening in Kaliningrad or other parts of Russia have been allowed to reach the outside world. Many protesters have been arrested and detained, and the authorities have imposed strict control over the flow of information.

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**by Pål Ruin**
are provided to the public. The veteran opposition politician Salomon Ginzberg is frustrated over the state of Russian media: “We in the opposition have other ideas on how Russian foreign policy should be carried out. But we have no means to get our message out; all TV channels are closed for us.”

But there are other means and channels: “Of course we use the Internet; I am writing a blog which has 10,000 visitors. But compared to the impact of television, it is nothing. ”

In Kaliningrad, thousands of people took to the streets in 2010 criticizing both Putin’s handpicked governor and the leaders in Moscow. But the protest was stopped by hooligans who most likely were paid by the government. A demonstration of such insignificance compared to the impact of television, it is nothing. “

The day I meet Shabunin, he had just interviewed one of the men beaten badly by the mob that interfered in the demonstration against the war in Ukraine. Shabunin concluded that the police did very little to stop the beating. “To my piece I will probably have to focus on the inactivity of the police, I can mention the message of the demonstrators, but not develop the criticism.”

He concludes, with great sadness, that many people who were critical of the national government as late as February this year are now supporters of the government. The propaganda has been so successful that friends and families who used to be united in their criticism of Putin are split and have stopped talking to one another. Many simply avoid talking about Ukraine altogether.

Yet the surge in President Putin’s popularity after the annexation of Crimea is slightly lower in Kaliningrad than in the country as a whole: in September, Putin had a 79 percent approval rating in the exclave, compared to 84 percent in the whole country. It’s a small difference, but nevertheless supports the trend of the last 10 years, which shows that Putin’s United Russia party is somewhat less popular in the exclave than in Russia as a whole.

Furthermore, in the city of Kaliningrad, support for the government has been somewhat lower than in the surrounding towns and villages. But even in the city Putin supporters constitute the majority even taking into account the high level of uncertainty that all polls in Russia contain these days.

Given that their region is more negatively affected by the recent sanctions than most Russian regions, it seems a bit strange that most Kaliningraders joined the wave of support for the government’s Ukraine policy. The Kaliningrad region imports more products from the EU than any other region in Russia. When these imports stopped, the prices of domestic food products rose. In September meat prices jumped 50 percent, more than anywhere else in the country. This same situation happened with several locally grown fruits and vegetables. At the same time, Belarusian exporters increased their prices. For the poorest, the price increases created another problem: for those who can go to Poland to buy their groceries the situation is not acute, because the terms of the sanctions permit them to import food for personal use.

Another reason for the Kaliningraders to remain somewhat critical of the national government is the lack of vision for the future of the exclave, says the editor Alexei Shabunin. “Moscow has had 23 years to figure out what to do with this detached region, but no sustainable ideas or solutions have come up. The only thing they know is that we should remain a part of Russia. People feel forgotten here, they don’t feel that the federal government cares about them. The current nationalist frenzy might temporarily distract people, but the problems remain.”

He doesn’t dream of huge projects like a new Hong Kong or casinos along the Kaliningrad shores. “Why”, he asked, “are we Russians such megalomaniacs? Why these huge absurd projects such as the construction of the arenas for the Sochi Olympics? The Ukraine policy falls into this pattern: why suddenly grab a big chunk of another country?”

Shabunin would like to see more funds to build basic infrastructure such as roads, railway tracks, and bridges. He also fears that Kaliningrad will have even less money in the years to come, since Crimea will be a very expensive project. And EU sanctions are already hurting the state economy.

The Special Economic Zone

Moscow has had problems figuring out how best to develop the exclave. According to George Dykhanov, an ombudsman who helps Russian and foreign companies that want to invest in the Kaliningrad region, one hindrance is the lack of a direct connection with the rest of the country. “You must remember that Russia had no experience of having territories detached from the rest of the country. So when a country like China, or any colonies the British or the French; it was a totally new situation for us back in 1991.”

He explained how, in the 1990s, the industry of the region was closed down completely in former Soviet republics. Kaliningrad had, for example, several subcontractors for a big radio factory in Riga, which was shut down soon after Latvia gained its independence. In addition, Kaliningrad’s factories depend on materials of other EU countries, so for example, the authorities in Moscow have put their hope in a more export-oriented strategy: the more you invest in Kaliningrad, the lower your taxes will be. Nobody knows whether the new tax rules will lead to more investments in the long run. For the moment, investments are going down, primarily because of the sanctions and the global uncertainties.

Some companies already active in the region face problems when they can’t import crucial components. One Lithuanian company, for example, can’t get the right meat for its sausage production, and a German company can’t import the right vegetables for its baby food production.

But the lack of growth in the Kaliningrad region has also to do with basic structural shortcomings. Dykhanov argues: “We are fairly few living here, less than a million, and we are far away from the majority of Russian customers. This makes it difficult for companies to place big production units here, such as full-cycle car plants. Additionally, in a workforce of less than half a million, car companies and other big firms would have problems finding enough skilled labor in the short run. And on top of that, we have some of the worst railway connections with the rest of Russia.”

Tourism: hope for the future

An area of grand hopes in the Kaliningrad region has been tourism. Some years ago the regional authorities asked the American global management consulting firm McKinsey about Kaliningrad’s tourist potential. Five million tourists, the firm answered, which kept the dreams alive. Last year half a million came, of which less than 100,000 were foreigners. This year, probably even fewer visitors will come because of the tensions between Russia and the West.

Left: “Ausgang”. Sixty-eight years have passed since Königsberg turned into Kaliningrad – but the German heritage is still clearly visible in every day-life. Right: “The Rocket” or “The Monster”. Whether you love it or you hate it, the House of the Soviets in central Kaliningrad has many names. The building was begun in 1970 but has never been finished.
I asked Alla Ivanova, a minister in the regional government and responsible for international affairs, if it was time to down- grade the expectations. “No, definitely not,” she answered. “Our tourism potential is still great. The main obstacle is the visa regime. If EU citizens want to visit the picturesque seacoast and the Curonian Spit, it is, of course, easier for them to go to Palanga in Lithuania than to any of our resorts. But we are working on it. Hopefully, an Italian cruise company will make weekly stops here, and passengers will have the right to make three-day visa- free visits to the country. We also need to develop more tourist attractions in our region.”

I asked if she had anything special in mind. “Why not build our own Disneyland?”, she said, “I actually think that would be a very good idea. I haven’t been to Disneyland myself.”

Ivanova agrees with other critics that the federal authorities have done little to help the regional government develop the region. But, she said, over the last couple of years, more funds have been allocated, partly for developing the tourism industry. Svetlogorsk is one of the health resorts along the coast that could be developed further.

FOR THREE WEEKS I TRIED, even with the support of the Swedish consul in Kaliningrad, to arrange an interview with the mayor or someone else who could describe the strategy to attract more visitors. But they refused to meet me, without giving any reason. I told Ivanova about the city’s attitude. “That was not very smart of them, of course. If they want more foreign tourists, they have to tell Ivanova about the city’s attitude. “That was not very smart of them, of course. If they want more foreign tourists, they have to tell Ivanova about the city’s attitude. “That was not very smart of them, of course. If they want more foreign tourists, they have to tell Ivanova about the city’s attitude. “That was not very smart of them, of course. If they want more foreign tourists, they have to".

The German heritage
My local taxi driver, Edvard Eduardogis, gave me a tour of the town. We couldn’t speak German, which he had learned in the 1990s so that he could give German tourists nostalgic tours in the neigh- borhoods where they grew up in the ’20s and ’30s. “Of course, there are very few left,” he said. “But one old lady, who had a German friend, came back again this summer. She is in her 90s but she still gets on her bike and pedals the streets of her childhood Rauschen.”

Eduardogis still uses the German name of the town, Rauschen. While driving around on the hills above the seashore, he points out house after house from German times — beautiful and often well-preserved wooden homes. In front of the municipal offic- es, we see a mural with the inscription “Rauschen”. The authori- ties want to lure tourists with the German history of the town. “But neither the town nor the regional and federal authorities are doing enough to help us develop tourism here,” says Eduardogis, who nonetheless did show me at least one major investment: the German Heritage Feature Museum. Pärtel spoke of plans to build a new museum on the history of Königsberg on the top floor of a fairly run-down building, a stone’s throw from the former stock exchange, designed by an architect from Berlin in 1865. For him the city has only one name: “Just as Viktor is my name, Königsberg is the name of my city. It’s as easy as that.”

The search for identity
The search for a regional identity has also to do with the large turnover of the population: very few families have lived in Ka- liningrad for more than a generation or two. By the end of the 1940s, almost all the Germans were gone, replaced by 400,000 Soviet citizens. And after 1991, many moved there from other parts of the crumbling Soviet empire, especially families of mili- tary personnel from the Baltic countries. Almost one third of today’s population in the Kaliningrad region arrived after 1991. For many Kaliningraders — especially the young — mainland Russia feels far away. As school children, they are on sponsored trips to other parts of Russia to learn more about the coun- try. And when they decide to move more trips to EU countries — especially Poland — than to mainland Russia. They actually say that they “travel to Russia”, even though they are already in the country.

THE KALININGRAD CULTURAL PROFILE
and writer Alexander Popadin has delved for many years into the mysteries of the Kaliningrad region. “I have found that the Kaliningraders come here from other parts of Russia, trying to understand our identity. But they never succeed. And liberal activists have come here to get support for their struggle for a more democratic Russia. But they haven’t found much backing. Yet, we have had protests here and we have forced governors to resign. But we protest to solve our own everyday problems; very few of us are interested in joining the battle to change Russia.”

He points to the current sanctions, which have resulted in higher food prices and the lack of certain foreign products. “Kalin- ingraders are not happy with this; something has been taken away from us and we want it back. We are pretty clever and can find quick solutions to new problems. That is why you find trucks filled with smuggling Polish fruit and vegetables in the middle of the street. But you don’t find major protests against the Putin regime.”

Crossing borders
Before 1991, when the region was closed to foreigners, very few Kaliningraders traveled to neighboring European countries; since then, a new generation has become used to crossing bor- ders. This may change. No borders are being closed, but there is already a decline in people-to-people contacts. Since the tensions have grown between Russia and the EU, the neighboring coun- tries of Poland, Lithuania, and Sweden have noticed a somewhat lower level of mutual contacts, according to World Bank sources in Kaliningrad. The trend is not dramatic, but it is there.

The writer Alexander Popadin has observed a tendency for partners in neighboring countries to be more cautious than before. “We are not as welcome as we used to be; they have postponed planned projects. Everybody is waiting to see what happens.”

What about the dream of Kaliningrad as a bridge to the west? “No, we can forget that metaphor,” said Popadin. “Meta- phors have life cycles, and that one’s life cycle is over. A new metaphor? Impossible to say; the global context is changing so quickly now.”

A couple of weeks after I left Kaliningrad, the Swedish navy launched an operation in the Stockholm archipelago because they had detected underwater activity. Speculation arose about a Russian submarine in the area — from the naval base in Kalinin- grad. It’s yet another indication that the words of the opposition politician Salomon Ginzberg might become reality: “It looked so promising; we were supposed to turn into Russia’s window to Eu- rope. Now we can end up being the gun pointed at Europe, just as it was before.”
Local and regional cooperation in the Szczecin area. An act of political debordering

Traditional notions of “borderland” suggest a space of transition between communities and cultures that predates the imposition of physical borders, and hence a more “organic” element of the social landscape. European history also testifies to the fact that borderlands have frequently been a target of mistrust, precisely because they have been seen as threatening—spaces of ambiguous identity, allegiance, and historical memory. Attempts to eradicate borderlands have taken place through armed conflict, ideological creation of Cold War borders, disembentemnt of states and other territorial shifts, and, most drastically, ethnic cleansing. In recent decades, with the expansion of the European Union, borderlands appear to have reemerged as a political project of local/regional integration as a result of new patterns of social interaction. Hence, there is new interest in regional and local cross-border cooperation.

Peter Balogh’s recently published book, *Perpetual Utopia: German-Polish Cross-border Contact in the Szczecin Area, Meddelanden från Kultur-geografiska institutionen vid Stockholm University Number 145*, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Press, 2017, 204 pages, is a compilation exploring the German-Polish border region. The book is a collection of several essays plus a substantial introduction that shows how the German-Polish borderland and its borders and borderland interactions that have constructed it have been deeply influenced by a political agenda of post-Cold War rapprochement and a desire to develop a new culture of mutual understanding and respect for a region that has been deeply marked by conflict and suffering. At the same time, the European Union’s ambitious goals of “debordering” have contributed to a new sense of common border region identity, and fostering economic cooperation and “good neighborliness”. The reason for this political orchestration of a German-Polish border region can be found in the post-1989 needs to create a context of trust and to deal with the basic structural problems of the areas on both sides of the border. Steps were taken soon after the signing of the German-Polish Border Treaty in 1990 to establish a variety of binational planning institutions including, at the local level, Euroregions. At the regional level, the message of political goodwill also served to highlight economic development objectives. The German State of Brandenburg was particularly active in promoting the notion of an integrated economic space based on the other energy. Although the notion of a common history along the Oder and Neisse line was evoked, there was an understandable avoidance of any reference to pre-1945 borders in order to de-politicize the notion of a “shared” region. Instead, the regions were presented as “German and Polish”, and the notion of common German and Polish identity and fostering economic cooperation and “good neighborliness” took on a more prominent place.

AS BALOGH INDICATES, cross-border cooperation in the German-Polish case has achieved much in bringing together regional stakeholders. It has empowered local governments in the border region to act in a more forceful and active manner to improve the quality of life for their citizens. TheAndersson project evidence suggests that national and regional identities are particularly accentuated in border situations, where the “other” is more frequently encountered. In the Szczecin area, heightened awareness of national identities and the border has gone through several phases, culminating in the relative stability of good relations since 2010. The book concludes that the border that no longer divides Germany and Poland remains an important barrier. At the same time, the borderland has become a resource in everyday life, for shopping, services, and housing.

This book is well researched and offers a number of interesting insights for border scholars and for readers more generally interested in German-Polish relations. It provides both a wealth of information on local patterns of cross-border cooperation and important theoretical reflections on the evolving social, political and cultural significance of borders in Europe.
After World War II, around 70,000 Russian prisoners of war were released from German camps in Norway and transported to Russia. The photos are from their stop in 1945 in Kalhäl, outside of Luleå, Sweden, where they were given food and gifts.

the Second World War and was noticeably affected by ethnic considerations. During the period investigated, the judicial framework was initially very loose and gave the bureaucracy a wide margin in which to maneuver. The international framework that increasingly came into influence Swedish legislation regarding refugees in the direction of more clearly defined individual rights.

Notini Burch shows how asylum rights were more clearly defined, which meant the government needed to intervene less often and bureaucrats managed implementation themselves.

The year 1948 was an important one for refugees who, for some reason, were not welcomed by the Swedish authorities after they had received asylum. From 1948 on, recognized political refugees were treated in accordance with international law and received extensive protection even if they were guilty of theft or prostitution or were deemed unreliable. Unlawful intelligence activities were an exception: persons found guilty of espionage were deported.

Among refugees from the Soviet territories, Notini Burch identified a tendency for Baltic refugees to be treated somewhat more generously than Ugrians, and Ugrians somewhat more generously than Russians. This pattern was evident not only in situations where deportation decisions were discussed, but also when residence permits were granted or denied. Balts received residence permits earlier, for longer periods, and with fewer restrictions.

A RESULT WITH IMPLICATIONS for Sweden’s overall security policy during the Cold War was that the Soviet Union sought to force the return of dispersed Soviet citizens from the Western territories. Soviet personnel argued that they had a right to meet with refugees and try to persuade them to return to the Soviet Union. Once again, 1948 was a watershed. After 1948, Swedish authorities dealt with the demands from the Soviet Union on a lower bureaucratic level and denied access to political refugees who were in custody.

Many interesting conclusions could be drawn from the thesis. One is that all the explanatory factors discussed in Notini Burch’s thesis had some importance for Swedish refugee policy after the Second World War. In this respect, the thesis is a corrective to the monocausal models that have been applied in earlier research.

The special importance of some of the factors is worth emphasizing. External and internal security considerations were especially prevalent in the demands put forward by the Soviet authorities. The importance of ethnicity was another factor that merits special attention. Before 1948, Swedish refugee policy was more ethnically sensitive, and became less so when the judicial framework was put in place by the Swedish politicians. The international conventions on political refugees made an important impact on the Swedish framework.

Notini Burch has without doubt written a very insightful thesis using a multifaceted empirical foundation. It is certainly useful reading for social scientists interested in refugee policies. The thesis also provides the reader with new interesting questions: How did the government’s discussions on immigration take place on a detailed level? How did the state in political science de-politicize the refugee issue in relation to Soviet Union? What role did immigration and human rights networks play in the remaking of Swedish refugee policy during the late 1940s?

Finally, if there is anything one might put on the wish list, it would be to have a somewhat more explicit discussion of the possibilities and limitations of generalizing the results to liberal democracies. Is it possible that Swedish refugee policy during the post-Second World War period may have been more influenced by security concerns than policies in other countries? Are economic concerns more prevalent in periods when the need for labor immigration is less acute? A more coherent discussion on the theoretical factors would have been welcome, since some factors are mainly discussed in terms of policy change, while others are discussed in terms of policies. This makes the focus of the scientific problem somewhat blurred. And, secondly, the distinction between some of the factors is not clear (e.g., ethnicity and social control are defined in similar terms), and this causes problems in the empirical chapters when Notini Burch wants to draw inferences from the data. Despite these minor objections, I would strongly recommend this thesis to anyone with an interest in refugee issues and in bureaucracy and Cold War issues.

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The workshop “Parental Movements: The Politicization of Motherhood and Fatherhood in Central and Eastern Europe and the Post-Soviet Region” covered various movements in various post-socialist countries. “Parental movements” include struggles to influence policy and public opinion while strengthening parents’ rights, mothers’ movements for the rights of disabled children, fathers’ movements for their rights in custody disputes, future parents’ movements for the right to have children and the right to medical treatment, and movements against mandatory vaccination.

Conservative values are sometimes the basis, and movements promise to secure the survival of the nation by propagating conservative family values in the face of the demographic crisis going on in several countries in the area. The parents’ movement in Russia focuses mainly on the demographic decline of the country and on traditional Russian family values and Russian family policy. The Ukrainian case presented also stressed declining birthrates, abortion rates, and depopulation as a threat to the nation. The foremost task, some argue, is to impede this development by propagating the model of the two-parent family with children as a norm. Moreover, the movement identified the European Union, homosexuality, and LGBTQ rights as major threats to the proliferation of traditional families and to the nation’s survival.

The traditionalist perspective of parental movements in the post-socialist region was further reflected in the Czech fathers’ movement. The focus was almost solely on the issues of divorce and custody, and the movement encountered some difficulties in framing its argument convincingly: activists were challenging a norm by presenting fathers as capable of caring for their children, and at the same time arguing for conservative gender roles and limited rights for women.

ACCESS TO AND the use of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) are a subject of public debate in many post-socialist countries. In Poland, the stigmatization of children born after in-vitro fertilization (IVF) is widespread, and includes characterizations of IVF children as “monsters” and the thesis that embryos are unborn citizens with rights, and hence the freezing of numerous embryos as part of IVF is immoral. Polish parental organizations strategically shifted their line of argumentation to the question of citizenship, discussing their rights as patients or citizens in need of medical treatment. The Bulgarian mobilization around fertility and the right to ART treatments meanwhile argued that its members deserve parenthood. They make divide parents into those who do and those who do not deserve to be parents. A concern for the purity and survival of the nation is shown. Among the underserving parents mentioned are ethnic minorities, who are seen as a threat to the nation. The issue of access to ART treatment for willing, wealthy, and responsible Bulgarians was raised in this light.

Another type of parental movement was based mainly on a division construed between parental practices in the past and in the present. Such movements promoted a more natural and humane approach to the relation between parents and children. The past was associated with authoritarian practices in medicine and health care. Among these mobilizations is the Czech movement advocating natural birth and limitations on medication and intervention in childbirth, and opposing vaccination programs. Dominant knowledge and practices in health care were also opposed by parental movements in Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. These movements focused on making the system of care for disabled persons more humane, and at the same time changing attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

Another example of new norms being developed in the post-Soviet area was the activism of fathers in “daddy schools” in northwestern Russia. This activism was seen as a factor in the change of fatherhood norms in the region. The schools’ focus was to create a new norm of fatherhood in which fathers take a more active role in their children’s upbringing and care.

THERE WERE TWO DISPARATE and somehow polemic tendencies, or overarching discourses, in the presented cases. The first was the nationalist discourse, in which the interests of the nation are superior to those of parents and particularly women. The other predominant discourse was concentrated on promoting new norms in parenting.

The workshop organizers, Elżbieta Korolczuk and Katalin Fábián, stressed that social movements have been the drivers behind the major societal changes of the last few decades in Central and Eastern Europe.

Note: The workshop was held at CBEES, Södertörn University, in May 2014. A full report can be found on Baltic Worlds’ web site.