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The revival of 'Central Europe' among Hungarian political elites: its meaning and geopolitical implications

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Abstract

Over the past years, the concept of 'Central Europe' has been revived by Hungarian political elites and this study aims to find out how and why. It is based on a content analysis of political speeches and communications, compared with actual policies and statistical data. It is observed that the government is the only political force to engage in the new discourse of 'Central Europe'. The study finds that both the geographic extension and the connotations of 'Central Europe' have changed fundamentally. Often associated with the territories of the Dual monarchy up until the early 2000s, the notion today appears to be used synonymously with the likewise reinvigorated Visegrad Four. Yet while the latter has kept its geographic confines intact, 'Central Europe' has no clear boundaries. Such a malleable concept can more flexibly serve various geopolitical goals, such as Hungary's intention to include Croatia and Serbia. The meanings associated with 'Central Europe' have changed just as much. Not long ago a symbol for Hungary's (and its neighbours') 'return to Europe', Central Europe has re-emerged as a 'channel of protest' vis-á-vis the West. Disillusioned by the EU following the financial and refugee crises, Hungarian political elites have been envisioning 'Central Europe' as the continent's new growth hub and a safe space free from migrants. Economic data contradict the former vision. As Euroscepticism and a hard-line stance against refugees are no (longer) unique stands of the Visegrad Four, the question is what remains of 'Central Europe'.

Keywords: 'Central Europe', Hungary, Visegrad Four, geopolitical narratives, 'channel of protest'

Introduction

A dormant concept following the eastern enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004, 'Central Europe' has been revived over the last years in the Visegrad Four countries[2] but most noticeably in Hungary. Whereas references to Central Europe[3] have been omnipresent lately, the Hungarian government appears to have no explicit 'Central Europe policy'[4]. We thus need to put the bits and pieces together in order to see if there is any coherent logic appearing. This study therefore aims to find out which connotations Hungarian political elites attach to the notion today, why they employ it, and what the geopolitical implications are. It is based on a content analysis of political speeches and communications, especially of key decision-makers of the government. This delimitation is not only justified by the fact that Hungary's current government coalition has had an overwhelming majority in the last seven years, but also by the observation that it is the only significant political power lately to engage in the narrative-building of 'Central Europe'.

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[2] The Visegrad Four cooperation consists of Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, and Hungary. It has historical roots dating back to the 14th century, but was more recently re-established in 1991.

[3] The Hungarian term is *Közép-Európa*. The denomination *Köztes-Európa* refers to a much larger area (*cf*. Mező, F. 2001) and has not been used by Hungarian policy-makers in the past years.

[4] There are of course policies related to the Visegrad cooperation. Also, a macro-regional strategy was developed during the Hungarian EU Presidency in 2011 for the countries located around the Danube, thus covering a rather different area than the Visegrad cooperation.

Geopolitical narratives

By containing distinctive "geopolitical orientations toward certain states and regions of the world" (O'Loughlin, J. *et al.* 2006, 130), geopolitical imaginations and narratives serve to provide indications for a given society regarding where it belongs, or ought to belong (Balogh, P. 2015, 194). At the same time, concepts such as 'Eurasia' (Bassin, M. 2012; Erşen, E. 2013), 'Central Europe' (Mező, F. 2001) or 'Eastern Europe' (Wolff, L. 1994; Romsics, I. 2014) do not possess over a fixed meaning or territorial shape but are constantly evolving in time and space. As such, they can be seen as 'empty signifiers' (Laclau, E. 1996), i.e. notions that mean little per se but that can be filled with almost any content, for instance to legitimise pragmatic policy purposes (*cf.* Erşen, E. 2013).

Especially in societies undergoing rapid change – as in post-cold war Central and Eastern Europe – such narratives are often adopted by elites to reorient their subjects towards new areas and geopolitical constellations (Bassin, M. 2012, 553), with significant implications on foreign but also domestic policies. Accordingly, answers to questions such as 'who we are' and 'where do we belong' have been sought after with a particular intensity in times of major crises in the region (Mező, F. 2001, 82; Romsics, I. 2014, 59).

The concept of 'Central Europe' in a nutshell

Of all European macro-regions, defining Central Europe has been among the most difficult and the concept has come and gone throughout history[5] (Miletics, P. and Pál, V. 1998, 217; Mező, F. 2001, 81). In the 1970s and 1980s, 'Central Europe' became a symbol of anti-Communism especially among the more rebellious intelligentsia in the Eastern Bloc (Mező, F. 2001, 92). Understanding the notion as a 'channel of protest' against major

powers (*ibid*, 98) is particularly important and will be returned to.

Kundera, M. (1984) saw in Central Europe a culturally homogenous region artificially divided by the Iron curtain, hence in need of reintegration. The region was largely equated with the areas of the pre-WWI Habsburg lands not only by him but also by numerous Hungarian intellectuals (e.g. Hanák, Konrád, Fejtő) and soon-to-be Czechoslovak president Václav Havel (Miletics, P. and Pál, V. 1998, 221), although Polish intellectuals were keen to add the whole of Poland (Neumann, I.B. 1993). What they all agreed on was that Central Europe was also to be defined against Russia (*ibid*) and perceived as an unquestionable part of the West. These ideas led to shaping a narrative on the need to 'return to Europe', eagerly adopted by politicians as a legitimacy for these countries' integration into various western alliances such as the EU (Moisio, S. 2002). Yet once 'Central Europe' filled that purpose, it was much less invoked.

The revival of 'Central Europe' in Hungary

Despite the relative silence around 'Central Europe' in the 2000s, the notion was occasionally referred to by Viktor Orbán (president of the party Fidesz, in opposition between 2002–2010). A few months ahead of EU enlargement, in 2003 he claimed "there exists a Central Europe outside the Union" whose countries possess over unique "cultural and intellectual roots and background", and among which one can observe a "willingness for (mutual) understanding" (Orbán, V. 2006, 225–226). Yet the ambiguity of this perception is well indicated in a 2004 statement he made: "in spite of all my respect and love of the Central European idea, a sturdy Central European cooperation is not an appropriate method for pursuing interests within the European Union" (Orbán, V. 2006, 353). In 2009 he even said "many things bind us Central Europeans together. Not just nice days, but – as with old married couples – also antagonisms and feuds between our countries" (Orbán, V. 2010, 64).

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[5] On Hungarian uses of 'Central Europe' and related terms in the 1930s and the 1940s see Hajdú, Z. (2013).

A few months following his re-election as Prime Minister (PM), Orbán claimed in Cairo that "the economic future of entire Europe depends on Central Europe" (MTI 2011). He said the EU has a lot of internal, especially economic problems, and stressed the main goal is the defence of the euro (*ibid*). Moreover, Orbán emphasised "we do not believe in a clash of civilisations, which is very dangerous... Instead, we believe in human dignity" (*ibid*). He also claimed to adhere to Christian-Muslim coexistence and the possibility of cooperation (*ibid*).

In 2012 in Balvanyos, Romania, Orbán explained: "we are starting to study our entire history from new, earlier unknown perspectives", thus constructing a "brand-new interpretation of reality". In this the main role goes to the Central Europeans, who possess over shared roots: in contrast to the West, we did not live through those forty years of a welfare society", therefore "the principle of responsibility has not disappeared from politics" (orbanviktor.hu 2012).

In 2013, the Prime Minister claimed "the next decade will be Central Europe's", envisioning that the region's weight will significantly grow within the EU (Mandiner 2013b). He said it is a "serious responsibility and duty for Central Europe to increasingly contribute to the Union's efforts to manage the challenges the continent is facing" (*ibid*).

In 2014, in the company of incumbent Polish PM Donald Tusk, Orbán went further with a statement that "the Central European region *can* be one of the engines of the continent's economic and cultural revival" (my emphasis), adding that "this mission may bring the two countries even closer together, carrying the possibility of a great era for both" (Magyar Nemzet 2014). He also emphasised the centuries-old bond between the Hungarian and Polish peoples, referring to a number of historical events. Orbán said Poland's leadership and people "have stood on our side at every difficult moment even in recent years", and expressed his gratitude to the Polish friends (*ibid*).

By October 2015, Orbán already envisioned that "Central Europe *will* be the EU's growth engine in the coming decade and a half" (MTI 2015, my emphasis) at the opening ceremony of the International Telecommunication Union World conference, that year held in Budapest. He stressed that Hungary has the fastest developing digital economy in the Union, employing 15 per cent of the labour force that places the country only behind Ireland and Finland (*ibid*). At the same time, Orbán has explicitly foreseen a special role for Hungary within the region at least since the expansion of the Bank of China in the country: "Hungary is capable of becoming Central Europe's centre of growth" (KamaraOnline 2015). The PM added the expansion is strengthening an alliance that can facilitate a new Silk Road between China and Hungary (*ibid*).

During the refugee crisis of 2015, Hungary and especially its government received massive attention due to its strict policies against refugees and migrants, including the building of a fence along its southern borders (Svensson, S. *et al.* 2017, 7). Instead of going into details here, one can quote Hungarian government spokesperson Zoltán Kovács: "we need not to manage the migration situation, but must stop migration at the borders" (MTI 2016). Kovács stressed the increased weight of the Visegrad Four (V4) within the EU due to its consensus and common policies related to the issue (*ibid*).

Following the terrorist attacks in Munich and Nice in summer 2016, Orbán said "it is entirely clear that migration means danger", and "a common European army must be established" (Felvidék.Ma 2016). Orbán further emphasised the need for the Central European states to represent that Europe needs fundamental changes (*ibid*).

In September 2016, in the company of the Prime Ministers of the V4 and Ukraine Orbán stated that "the European dream has moved from Western Europe to Central Europe" (NOL 2016). In his view, a generation of European politicians had a "secret dream", according to which the EU can achieve that the Member States forget their national and religious identities; their historical identi-

ties can be weakened and replaced by a European identity. "Yet it has become clear that there is no identity that can replace the previous one" (*ibid*).

Following talks with his Serbian colleague Aleksandar Vučić in November 2016, PM Orbán predicted that "Central Europe – the Visegrad bloc of countries – will be a great success story: it is here where thoroughly great economic opportunities are and will be present, to which Serbia can also connect" (Tóth, P. 2016). Discussing Hungarian investments in Serbia, both Prime Ministers confirmed bilateral relations have never been better (*ibid*).

In his lecture dedicated to Polish historian Wacław Felczak at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków in December 2016, Orbán said "Central Europe is experiencing a renaissance, and is growing and developing continuously and dynamically" (COPM 2016). Moreover,

the Hungarians and the Poles have come to understand that they must seize control of their fates, and by uniting their efforts history has given them the chance to make Central Europe the most successful region in Europe and the world. This is what the V4 are working on, and there is no point in aiming for a lesser goal (*ibid*).

According to the PM "economically and politically Central Europe is Europe's most stable region", adding that "we should not allow our critics to shroud accurate assessment of the situation" (COPM 2016). In today's "Europe stricken by immigration", there is continuing relevance for Felczak's principle of "back to our roots": in other words, back to our Christian, national and European roots. Orbán stressed Felczak was a true Central European citizen who felt very much at home "in the intermediate world between the West and the East" (*ibid*). He further claimed "the Western and Eastern dictatorships which sought to cast their shadow over Central Europe always had to reckon with the close bond between the Hungarian and Polish peoples, as this was an obstacle to their plans for oppression. They did their best to try to destroy this bond" (*ibid*). Lamenting Hungarian losses in Russian trades due to the sanctions, in January 2017

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó stated in an interview that "Central Europe has always been on the receiving end in conflicts between East and West," accordingly, Hungary seeks to be one of the "pillars" of the re-establishment of European-Russian relations (MTI 2017a). Hungarian-Russian initiatives for the near future include the enlargement of the Paks atomic power station; negotiating with Gazprom to cooperate beyond 2021; contemplating action against persecution of Christians; and the refurbishment of four Orthodox churches in Hungary (*ibid*).

That same month, in a conference speech Orbán said that from a Central European angle the continent can barely be recognised: "Europe is struggling with four major crises at once" – migration, competitiveness, demographics, and foreign policy – and recently it has been unable to respond to any of them satisfactorily (miniszterelnok.hu 2017a). The Prime Minister claimed that "[o]n the path to competitiveness… Central Europe is not doing badly… Hungary is in a fair position among Central European countries, and we are performing fairly well in terms of the sum our central budget devotes to innovation as a proportion of GDP" (*ibid*).

In his latest State of the Nation Address, Orbán asked himself what is wrong with Western Europe: "From here in Central Europe, the first thing that comes to mind is that prosperity has made them all mad" (miniszterelnok.hu 2017b). According to the PM:

Until now, we have been taught that mature Western democracies are of a higher quality than Central European democracies… This may once have been true, when the European democracies were at their zenith. But since then the era of "open societies" has been established in the western half of Europe and across the Atlantic. And with this came its system of policing political thought: political correctness. A few years ago democracy in the European Union was still based on argument… This is one reason it was also so attractive to us Hungarians… (*ibid*).

As a reaction then,

[w]e announced our own Hungarian political and economic system… [T]he cast-iron guarantee for tax

reductions and wage increases must always be the competitive Hungarian economy. The mortar which binds the walls of the Hungarian model is courage: something without which no political structure can remain standing – especially here in the windswept openness of the Carpathian Basin (miniszterelnok.hu 2017b).

Praising his government's policy to have stopped 'the migrants', Orbán said "[w]e will of course be letting in genuine refugees: Germans, Dutch, French and Italians, terrified politicians and journalists, Christians who have been forced to leave their homes and who here in Hungary want to find the Europe they have lost in their homelands" (*ibid*).

Later in February 2017, Orbán claimed "Central Europe is competitive compared to Western Europe, and – thanks also to the tax system – many Western companies accordingly feel it is better to establish a factory here than at home" (COPM and MTI 2017a).

A day later, in his speech at the Memorial Day for the Victims of Communism, Orbán said "today people no longer talk about the fact that communism, like national socialism, emerged in the 20th century as an intellectual product of the West, but that in the end it was we Central Europeans who were forced to live under this originally Western idea" (MTI 2017b). Further, "it is no accident that Europe has a guilty conscience when it comes to the crimes of communism, but here in Central Europe, even after a quarter of a century we still remember the nature of tyranny – the reminders of which are everywhere" (*ibid*).

In a speech in early March 2017, Orbán explained why he saw it necessary to create a national banking system in Hungary following the financial crisis: "when lending opportunities in the world began to shrink, lo and behold, the banks didn't start disinvestment in their own countries, but here in Central Europe, repatriating their money to Austria and Germany" (miniszterelnok.hu 2017c).

Also in early March this year, the Visegrad Four adopted a declaration on the future of the EU, a document that Orbán said "enjoys Hungary's support one hundred per cent" (MTI and kormany.hu 2017). According to the Prime Minister "everything is in flux",

because in our era a new world order is coming into being, and at times like this everyone has an obligation to establish their place in the new order (*ibid*). Further, in recent years there has also been a progressive "creeping withdrawal of powers" from the nation states. This, however, is a bad development, and must be stopped: "we must firmly stand by our national interests", adding that on this issue Hungary found its V4 partners to be understanding (*ibid*).

At a conference in late March 2017, Orbán stated that the European future lies in the Visegrad Four, expecting the centre of gravity of European growth to shift from the continent's western region to its central region (MTI 2017c). The PM explained everywhere to the west of the V4 the ethnic and social compositions of societies are changing significantly. In his view this is a negative development: "We are protecting ourselves against this and this is a major advantage for us" (*ibid*). At the same time, "the countries of the V4 continue to have strong cultural foundations, the essence of which is that while they are modern societies, they continue to insist on their Christian roots *(ibid)*. In addition, the PM continued, "in Central Europe we have unwavering faith in the strength of families, and this is also an enormous competitive advantage in economic growth" (*ibid*).

At the same event, the Prime Minister predicted that in 8–10 years the V4 will be spoken of as Europe's most powerful economic engine; praising the cooperation by expressing the belief that "the Visegrád states will be able to renew European democracy and the whole of the European Union" (MTI 2017c). Further, Orbán stressed that while Hungary has overcome the financial crisis, economic growth stands at around 3 per cent – a level trapping countries in a state of average development. The question he proposed is how to move from this range to a growth bracket of around 5 per cent (*ibid*). The Prime Minister observed "there is a need for innovation and a completely different economic mentality". He added that "[i]f we are not more innovative than the Western European

countries … our state of development will remain at an average level" (*ibid*).

A day later, at the congress of the European People's Party Orbán claimed "Central Europe's position is that if matters continue like this, in our generation's lifetime there will be a Muslim majority in Western Europe" (COPM and MTI 2017b). He added "the West is keeping us under ideological pressure", while Central Europe wants to reform migration policy (*ibid*).

A few days ahead of Hungary taking over the V4 presidency on July 1, Minister of Prime Minister's Office János Lázár said migration will be at the heart of Hungary's presidency as "Europe's future is at stake"; Central Europe has a major role in this area, he said, calling on the region to live up to its "serious obligations" (MTVA 2017, 2). Lázár called the European Commission's latest procedures launched against Poland "unfair"; Hungary will always be prepared to defend Poland's interests in the "European political theatre of war" (*ibid*). Lázár further claimed the EU "is in trouble, given that one of the most important member states is leaving the bloc" (*ibid*).

Most recently, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said Central Europe must play an important role in restoring Europe's security and competitiveness, adding that "concerning migration, it must be made clear that the wave of migrants can and should be stopped…" (MTVA 2017, 5). Hungary urges cooperation between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union, Szijjártó said, arguing that western Europe is home to the continent's advanced technologies while eastern Europe is rich in minerals and raw materials. "If we can align these two … then Europe's competitiveness on the global economic stage will receive a significant boost" (*ibid*).

Analysis

Geographies of the 'new' Central Europe

Despite frequently referring to 'Central Europe' over the past years, no Hungarian po-

litical elite has really defined exactly which territories (should) form the region. Nevertheless, a number of references have been made in this regard that together provide a clearer picture of what they have in mind.

The clearest demarcation of 'Central Europe' is against the West in general, and Western Europe in particular. The latter is almost never spoken about in positive terms, but is on the contrary a source of a number of evil political ideologies. Moreover, the PM's statement that Austrian and German banks repatriated their money from Central Europe during the financial crisis implies that the former countries are not part of the region.

Central Europe is sometimes also demarcated eastwards by Hungarian politicians, but this is more difficult due to the country's varying relations with Romania (24.hu 2016) and Ukraine (MTI 2017d) and the presence of ethnic Hungarians there. While Hungarian-Russian relations have never been better, some of the quotes above testify to a continued fear of East-West confrontation, which has deep historical roots (*cf.* Hajdú, Z. 2013, 76). At the same time, the PM's choice to commemorate Polish historian Felczak as someone who felt "very much at home in the intermediate world between the West and the East" suggests Central Europe is not imagined to belong to either, however, defined. Similarly, the Foreign Minister's visions reflect a region potentially connecting the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union.

Further spatial delimitations of 'Central Europe' are even more ambiguous, in particular towards south. We saw above that Serbia was invited to link up. Hungary's previous foreign minister János Martonyi (Chmiel, J. 2017) but also Viktor Orbán shall have suggested to expand the V4 to include Croatia (Foy, H. and Byrne, A. 2016), a country whose EU-scepticism is increasingly binding it to the new 'club' (Anastasijevic, D. 2016). Moreover, Hungary's and Slovenia's economic ministers have recently called for closer Hungarian-Slovenian economic relations, believed to improve the competitiveness of Central Europe (MNE 2017).

The label V4+2 has proven particularly malleable. Initiated by Austria in 2001, it aimed to intensify the V4's cooperation with Austria and Slovenia particularly on issues related to the Western Balkans (Nádas, N. 2011, 15). Later, however, V4+2 referred to the Visegrad states' cooperation with Romania and Bulgaria on territorial planning, resulting in a vast Common Spatial Development Strategy for the six countries (ISD 2014).

Geo-economics of the 'new' Central Europe

Over the past years, Hungarian political elites have been trying to 'sell' Central Europe as an increasingly coherent region and a prosperous market in places like Jordan (Mandiner 2013a); India (MASZOL and MTI 2013); Japan (Magyar Nemzet 2013); to Azerbaijan (MTI-Eco 2014); and China (profit7.hu 2014). Given that all these countries lie in Asia, this is also consistent with the government's foreign policy of 'Opening to the East' (Farkas, Z.A. *et al*. 2016; Balogh, P. 2015). Increased trade with emerging markets is certainly not a bad idea per se, and the government has also set up a worldwide network of Hungarian National Trading Houses since 2012 (Index 2016). Yet unfortunately, the company operating the network is running with huge losses (*ibid*), thus the global ambitions of Hungarian trades still need to bear their fruits. Instead, 80 per cent of Hungarian exports are going to the rest of the EU (*ibid*).

The reality is that East Central Europe is tied to the German economy in a multitude of ways (KSH 2017), and this is often an asymmetrical relationship. Companies from Germany (and elsewhere) have invested heavily in East Central Europe primarily due to lower labour and other costs. The activities they typically engage in (such as manufacturing, lower-skilled services) often have a lower added value in the supply chain than the ones that remain in the company's mother country. East Central European economies are thus highly dependent on

Germany – they are doing okay when the German economy is doing well (Benz, M. 2014), but are obviously not the ones to reap off the lion's share of the profits.

Whereas the Visegrad states' combined population is equivalent to that of France (Schmidt, A. 2016, 122), its share of the EU's GDP was in 2016 estimated at 5.26 per cent; France's at 15 per cent, and Germany's at 21 per cent (*cf. ibid*, 121). In the latest Global Innovation Index Germany ranked 9th and France 15th, with the Visegrad countries' position ranging between 24th and 39th (Dutta, S. *et al*. 2017, 14). At the same time, the V4 are spending a significantly lower share of their already lower GDPs on research and development (R&D) than Western Europe, let alone South Korea (Pálinkás, J. 2016). It is therefore unclear how Central Europe could become the most successful region in Europe – let alone in the world – in 8–10 years, as Hungary's PM prophesises.

It is also unclear why Hungary would be leading the way forward in that process. The country's position in the region has already weakened during the economic crisis (Egedy, T. 2012, 171), and this trend has continued ever since. Hungary is in fact the only Visegrad country that fell back in the Global Innovation Index since 2011, ranking 25th that year (Dutta, S. 2011, 18) but 39th six years later (Dutta, S. *et al*. 2017, 14). The country was ranked the most innovative among the Visegrad countries in 2011 (Dutta, S. 2011, 18) but the least innovative in 2017 (Dutta, S. *et al*. 2017, 14). Hungary also has the lowest GDP per capita PPP among all the Visegrad countries (Dutta, S. *et al*. 2017, 215–287). Whereas the country is spending a slightly higher share of its GDP on R&D (1.4%) than Slovakia (1.2%) and Poland (1%), it is clearly outnumbered by Czechia where this figure stands at 2 per cent (*ibid*).

Further, Hungarian National Bank chief György Matolcsy and PM Viktor Orbán believe that in Hungary industrial corporations can find labour and low taxes (miniszterel-nok.hu 2017c). In reality, Hungary is experiencing its worst labour shortage on record

(Szakacs, G. and Kasolowsky, R. 2016). It is true that the government is planning to introduce the EU's lowest corporate tax rate (Byrne, A. 2016), but the effects on the national budget and welfare are yet to be seen.

It is therefore not too surprising that one can note an – otherwise very untypical – uncertainty of the Hungarian PM in one of his recent speeches (MTI 2017c) regarding the future of the Hungarian economy. Leaving his own question of how to move from a growth bracket of 3 per cent to 5 per cent unanswered ("there is a need for innovation and a completely different economic mentality"), he recently requested the National Bank chief to compile a book on how to make Hungary competitive (miniszterelnok.hu 2017c). Contrary to his earlier statements about Hungary and Central Europe already being competitive (miniszterelnok.hu 2017a; COPM and MTI 2017a), this can be seen as an admission that they are not.

Ideologies and geopolitics of the 'new' Central Europe

From its beginning up until 2004, the single main goal of the V4 was to help each other in joining western alliances as soon as possible (Chmiel, J. 2017). The ideological elements implied were the adoption of standard EU norms related to human rights, democracy, etc. Whereas such norms indeed stemmed from outside, the V4 countries readily adopted them at the time.

Following EU enlargement, it is clear that it was the refugee crisis of 2015 that really pulled the Visegrad Group together; i.e. the clear consensus among these countries to go against the (then-)mainstream European – and especially German – policy towards refugees and migrants (Kaniok, P. 2015). It is also in this light that the growing emphasis on the need to "go back to our Christian roots" by the Hungarian PM needs to be seen. At a major conference in Poland, accompanied by the head of Poland's ruling party Jarosław Kaczyński, Viktor Orbán even saw the pos-

sibility of a "cultural counter-revolution" to reform the post-Brexit EU, calling for more power to be devolved to national parliaments (Foy, H. and Buckley, N. 2016). After their discussion, the Hungarian PM was named "Man of the Year" by the Polish organisation that runs the conference (*ibid*).

It is true that Hungary's[6] – and the V4's – migrant stance, once denounced, has gained some acceptance across Europe (Higgins, A. 2015). Further, V4 cooperation on issues like energy[7] or pushing for the equal quality of seemingly identical consumer products across the EU may well be necessary (Chmiel, J. 2017). Finally, the lamentation of Brexit by Orbán, Lázár and some other V4 leaders also reflect their concerns with being left in a multi-speed Europe.

But while the Visegrad Four may have re-emerged as a sort of an 'opposition bloc' within the EU (Buckley, N. and Foy, H. 2016), Central Europe is not as a united front as Hungarian leaders (and some others) like to see it. It is clear that the incumbent Hungarian and Polish governments are the main drivers behind this revived alliance; yet their completely opposite approach towards Russia for instance has been hampering their cooperation (Nič, M. 2016). According to Wieclawski, J. (2016, 1), "[t]he Russian-Ukrainian conflict confirms a deep divergence of interests among the Visegrad states that seems more important for the future of the Visegrad cooperation than the recent attempts to mark the Visegrad unity in the European refugee crisis". Further, in European institutions Fidesz has more often voted together with the previous than with the current Polish government party (VoteWatch Europe 2017), to which it allegedly stands much closer. Finally, these two governments' harsh EU-criticism is

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[6] Although controversial for its religious bias, the Hungarian government has recently donated more than a billion HUF (3.2m EUR) to help Christian communities in the Middle East (About Hungary 2017).

[7] Opposing Nord Stream 2, a second gas pipeline planned to connect Russia and Germany by circumventing East Central Europe (Buckley, N. and Foy, H. 2016), is a good case in point.

somewhat puzzling considering that Poles and Hungarians still have the most favourable view of the EU of any Member States (Buckley, N. and Foy, H. 2016).

Yet the increasingly Eurosceptic rhetoric is distancing Hungary and Poland from Slovakia and Czechia, which as a result have started emphasising their close relationship with Brussels and Berlin (Foy, H. and Byrne, A. 2016). Slovakia is in the Eurozone that makes it more integrated in the bloc, and Czechia has traditionally seen itself as the most "western" of the group, and values its relations with Germany more than any of its allies (*ibid*; Nič, M. 2016). Two diplomats from the region said Prague and Bratislava could start showcasing alternative alliances, including with Austria (Foy, H. and Byrne, A. 2016). There is also resistance to Hungarian suggestions to include Croatia in Visegrad (Chmiel, J. 2017), seen as an attempt to tilt the group's ideological balance towards Budapest and Warsaw (Foy, H. and Byrne, A. 2016). As one diplomat expressed: "We don't want to kill off the Visegrad co-operation, we see great value in it. But we don't want it to be used as a shield for some kind of crazy cultural revolution" (*ibid*). Besides a varying appetite for radical reforms, such statements can also reflect the strongly varying importance of religion among the Visegrad countries. Either way, as Nič, M. (2016, 281) put it "the honeymoon period seems to be over".

Conclusions

Over the past few years, the notion of 'Central Europe' has undergone fundamental shifts among Hungarian political elites both geographically and in its meanings. Imagined to consist of more or less the historic territories of the Dual monarchy up until the 2000s, the concept is today often a synonym for the Visegrad states. Yet the very fact that both denominations are invoked may well reflect a conscious choice. Unlike the Visegrad cooperation, which has after all maintained its clearly defined geographical delimitation since its re-establishment (1991), 'Central Europe' has no clear boundaries. Such a malleable concept can more flexibly be adopted for various geopolitical projects (*cf.* Bassin, M. 2012, 555), such as excluding German-speaking areas or Hungary's intention to include countries like Croatia and Serbia.

While underpinning Hungary's and its neighbours' 'return to Europe' up until the early 2000s, 'Central Europe' recently serves to demarcate them vis-á-vis the West. Unlike a decade or two ago, when focus was on adopting the principles of democracy, rule of law, checks and balances, human rights and equality, 'Central Europe' now emphasises Christian roots, national sovereignty and ethnic homogeneity. Hungarian leaders also envision the region as Europe's future growth engine, and – relatedly – as a safe space without migrants. Considering that 'Central Europe' can be filled with such a variety of ideas qualifies it as an 'empty signifier' (Laclau, E. 1996).

The fact that 'Central Europe' has re-emerged as a 'channel of protest' (*cf.* Mező, F. 2001) can reflect a certain insecurity among Hungarian leaders regarding the future of Hungary and its neighbourhood. As numerous data presented have shown, the state of the V4 economies – and Hungary's in particular – is far from as bright as some of the statements of Hungarian leaders would suggest. Further, Hungarian leaders increasingly present Central Europe as a victim of East-West confrontation and interests. While there are indeed several common challenges ahead of the V4, its key driving force is the alliance of the incumbent Hungarian and Polish governments, which are still divided on Russia. Slovak and Czech representatives are clearly less enthusiastic about Visegrad recently. In fact, the V4's recent revival was largely a reaction to the refugee crisis. Thus if debates around migration will lessen, or – more realistically – various pro- and con-alliances within the EU emerge, the question is what will remain of 'Central Europe'.

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Kin-state politics stirred by a geopolitical conflict: Hungary's growing activity in post-Euromaidan Transcarpathia, Ukraine

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Abstract

In the last decades, as a result of intensified migratory movements, scholars have globally witnessed the proliferation of transnational migrant and diaspora communities in many cases challenging the traditionally conceived sovereignty of nation states and inducing policy answers in the field of migration and citizenship politics. In Central and Eastern European countries, citizenship issues have been embedded in kin-state politics due to the existence of great number of ethnic-kin communities living in the territory of a neighbouring or nearby host countries. That is especially true to Hungary that has elaborated a sophisticated system of kin-state policies composing inseparable factor both in its domestic and foreign politics. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine generated such push factors that resulted in boosting out-migration in its westernmost region, Transcarpathia, where sizeable ethnic Hungarian community resides. The out-migration is further facilitated by pull factors manifested in intensified political presence and kin-state politics of Hungary, Poland and Czechia, three Visegrad countries in need of fresh labour force. The present paper – after reviewing recent migratory processes – offers an analysis on the interrelatedness of migration, geopolitics and kin-state politics in Transcarpathia. We argue that Ukraine's crisis resulted in a major shift in regional geopolitical power relations opening the floor to the Visegrad countries to intensify their presence and influence in Western Ukraine, primarily seeking for human resources to satisfy their demographic and workforce needs. Focusing on Hungary, we intend to prove that the out-migration of Transcarpathian Hungarians posed a serious challenge to the well-built system of Hungarian kin-state policies resulting in major modification of measures targeting Transcarpathia. We point to the ambiguous nature of the prime kin-state policy measure, the dual citizenship without residency introduced in 2010 by Hungary, arguing that following 2014 in the post Euromaidan Transcarpathian context it represents a tempting pragmatic tool embodying practical opportunities, even material benefits attractive for all Transcarpathians, including non-ethnic Hungarians. Finally, we conclude that Hungary's kin-state politics not only contribute to the decrease of the number of Transcarpathian Hungarians, but there is a high risk that – with their Hungarian citizenship – they will resettle in Western Europe, not in Hungary.

Keywords: kin-state politics, migration, Ukraine crisis, Transcarpathia, Hungary, Poland, Czechia

Introduction

Globalization poses various challenges to the nation states. With the intensified spatial mobility of people more and more nation states have found themselves in a situation in which they need to tackle the effects of losing ethnic-kin citizens due to emigration or demographic decline, while at the same time new, non-ethnic immigrants settled in their territories. Many scholars claimed that "The growing international mobility of people questions the basis of belonging to

the nation state" (Castles, S. and Davidson, A. 2000, vii–viii) and called attention on that traditional understanding of citizenship are needed to be reframed taking into consideration the multiple and multi-layered links people connected to more than one state and society. While some envisioned the erosion of traditional understanding of nation state sovereignty opening the floor to post-national or transnational state formations and cosmopolitan or transnational citizenship (Pogonyi, S. 2011), others pointed out that the proliferation of multiple citizenship still

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suggests the importance of nation state as a political entity and citizenship as a legal and symbolic form of belonging to it (Perchinig, B. and Bauböck, R. 2005).

Research on migration and politics of citizenship issues in Europe often articulate the difference between Western and post-communist Eastern European countries in this sense. While multiple citizenship has been more and more generally accepted in many European states, there is a major Western–Eastern diversion in the aim and scope related regulations. The citizenship policies of post-communist Eastern European states focus primarily on co-ethnics and diaspora living abroad, while pay very limited attention to the immigrants and the integration of immigrants. In Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, due to the frequent geopolitical changes, ethnic boundaries and political borders do not overlap, that provides a whole different context and actuality to citizenship and kin-state politics. In contrast, dual citizenship in Western Europe is rather treated as a tool to mitigate and enhance the integration of immigrants (Howard, M.J. 2009, 177–178; Sievers, W. 2009, 455; Pogonyi, S. 2011, 693). Furthermore, in many CEE countries dual citizenship is seen as a "threat by an external kin state to the jurisdiction of a neighbouring state over a part of its citizen population and over the territory in which these minority citizens live" (Bauböck, R. 2007, 74). Conceiving dual citizenship as a tool for "expanding the national community beyond state borders" (Bauböck, R. 2007, 70) is well-grounded in the rich literature revealing the politics of citizenship in post-communist countries (Kulu, H. 2000; Faist, T. and Kivisto, P. 2007; Bauböck, R. et al. 2009; Iordachi, C. 2013; Agarin, T. and Karolewski, I.P. 2015)[2]. These studies reflect on the implication of dual citizenship as an element in the toolkit of kin-state politics, which is in the focus of present research.

According to one definition, kin-state politics cover actions to engage and protect the so-called ethnic kin communities in neighbouring or nearby states (Waterbury, M. 2014). Kin-state politics can cover various actions that can be grouped as political-legal (legal and diplomatic advocacy), economic (launching financial aid or other business oriented programme), cultural (establishment and funding of kin community educational, cultural, etc. institutions, scholarship programme) and symbolic (the inclusion of co-ethnics e.g. by offering citizenship) (Waterbury, M. 2010).

In general kin-state politics target two groups: transborder ethnic communities and ethnic diasporas. The main difference among these groups is how they are formed: transborder ethnic minorities emerge due to geopolitical changes and/or shifting borders (e.g. Poland, Hungary, Germany) thus these communities became mere victims of political reordering many cases living en masse along the redrawn borders (Pogonyi, S. 2011); while ethnic diasporas are rather formed through migration (e.g. Armenian, ex-Yugoslav or Turkish diasporas in Germany) and many cases settled far from their homeland. Kin-state politics, including citizenship politics, are sculpted by interests and preferences of at least three involved parties, namely the state, the kin-state and the co-ethnic group (Brubaker, R. 1996). Primarily the fear of insecurity and maintenance of territorial sovereignty explains the heated debate about citizenship and kin-state politics as it "raises fundamental questions of loyalty and identity, and in many cases perceived as threats by the state on which territory the co-ethnic group resides" (Waterbury, M. 2010, 2–4).

It is important to highlight that offering non-resident citizenship by a kin-state to the co-ethnics is often a tool serving opportunistic purposes typically applied by nationalist parties to gain domestic political support. This is especially true when non-resident citizenship comes with voting rights that is suitable to influence parliamentary elections in the kin-state (e.g. Croatia). On the other hand,

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[2] See also the thematic issue of Minority Studies published in 2013: http://bgazrt.hu/npki/folyoiratok_en/minority_studies_2012_2015_en/minority_studies_16_szam_1/

any sign of political activation of co-ethnics in the host state is perceived a risk as "no sovereign state welcomes the political mobilization of its minorities by its kin-states" (Pogonyi, S. 2011, 692). Considering ethnic minority and diaspora, non-resident citizenship unquestionably conveys a symbolic value, quasi incorporating them to the majority society, but it would be naive to deny the practical side citizenship carries, as it makes available the incorporated benefits (e.g. health care system, free education, free travel).

Furthermore, kin-state policy interventions are formed by domestic politics and external threats and opportunities (Waterbury, M. 2010, 16). Any change in any of the factors will result in modification of the whole system, generating response. For instance, in case of Romania, the EU accession as an external factor, required some fine-tuning in the system, which resulted in the drop of the number of dual citizenship granted to Moldovan citizens (Iordachi, C. 2013).

Among the diverse systems of kin-state politics described in CEE countries, Hungary is an extraordinary case due to the wide net and complexity of such politics provided by the country. This is a consequence of the existence of more than 2 million transborder ethnic Hungarians once belonged to Hungary but now forming minority communities mainly along the state border in the neighbouring countries (Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia). Consequently, kin-state politics have been essential factor in Hungary's domestic and foreign politics (Bárdi, N. 2011; Kántor, Z. 2014). In the past couple of decades, after the collapse of socialism, Hungary has developed a well-grounded system of kin-state politics offering cultural-economic programmes and providing political advocacy to the co-ethnic communities. Naturally, similar kin-state politics are in operation throughout Europe (e.g. Fowler, B. 2002; Csergő, Z. and Goldgeier, J. 2004; Tóth, J. 2006; Hatvany, C. 2006; Pogonyi, S. *et al*. 2010; Waterbury, M. 2014). What makes the "Hungarian model" slightly different is the level of activity of state policies, complexity of programme, and high level of institutionalization (Kántor, Z. 2014).

Hereby, we would like to call attention to the reconfiguration of Hungary's kin-state politics towards Transcarpathia, Ukraine following 2014. Primarily driven by domestic political motivations in 2010, the Orbán government's kin-state politics became stirred by the geopolitical conflict in Ukraine requiring prompt response to mitigate its consequences. The crisis in Ukraine started in 2013 when the pro-European Euromaidan protest heightened the tension dividing Ukraine to its breaking point (Karácsonyi, D. *et al*. 2014). Following the deadly clashes, the Russian friendly president, Viktor Janukovich left the country in February 2014. The new government not only had to manage the devastating economic situation, but soon it had to tackle the loss of Crimea and the hybrid war in Donbas. Three years have passed since the beginning of the weaponry conflict in Donbas, but every day shootings still take their victims, while two non-recognized puppet states were established in Eastern Ukraine. The political crisis and the armed conflict have soon turned into economic crisis as well; as a result, Ukraine as a state has weakened.

In this paper we will focus on the westernmost region of Ukraine, Transcarpathia, bordering Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. Transcarpathia (Zakarpattya, in Hungarian Kárpátalja, literally Subcarpathia) belonged to the Hungarian Kingdom, later to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. After the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, the region was granted to Czechoslovakia, but between 1939 and 1944 Hungary regained it back. Between 1945 and 1991 it was part of the Ukrainian SSR within the Soviet Union, and since 1991 it has been the part of independent Ukraine.

Although the ethnic diversity, characteristic of Transcarpathia hundred years ago, has decreased, still ethnic minorities constitute about 20 per cent of the 1.25 million inhabitants according to the 2001 census. Hungarians (152,000) and Romanians (32,000) live mainly *en masse* along the bor-

der, but Russian, Roma, Slovak, and German communities also found home in the region. Even though the state authority has changed several times during the 20th century, the peripheral position of Transcarpathia remained constant under any state formation. Its ethnically diverse population structure made Transcarpathia susceptible to and subject of neighbouring states' politics, out of which Hungary's kin-state policies are in the forefront of present article.

Our goal is to identify the push and pull factors that trigger recent socio-economic and political processes in Transcarpathia (Western Ukraine) and the Visegrad Countries (V4). By analysing the case of Hungary's kin-state politics targeting post-crisis Transcarpathia we intend to show (1) how and in which ways a geopolitical conflict and its consequences may influence neighbouring or nearby states' kin-state politics; (2) how migration, both emigration and immigration, interfere with kin-state politics. Furthermore, (3) we briefly discuss the political and kin-state policy activities of neighbouring and nearby states, sometimes competing with each other, facilitated by the diminished power of the Ukrainian nation state in its westernmost periphery, Transcarpathia.

We argue that it was the consequences of Ukraine's geopolitical crisis generated such push factors that resulted in boosting out-migration from Transcarpathia, further facilitated by pull factors manifested in intensified political presence and kin-state politics of Visegrad countries are in need of fresh labour force.

The study is based on 26 semi-structured expert interviews conducted in spring 2016 in Transcarpathia and Budapest, complemented by information deriving from statistical data, policy documents, and field observation.

Hungary's kin-state politics after 2010

Hungary implemented wide net of policies for supporting Hungarian communities abroad even before 2010. Its basic, consensual goal was to maintain transborder co-ethnic communities in their homeland (see details in Bárdi, N. 2011). The change of government in 2010, when right-wing Fidesz[3] came into power, was accompanied by shift in Hungary's kin-state politics manifested in more diverse policy measures. The new government's very first measure serving the new paradigm in kin-state politics was the amendment of the Hungarian Citizenship Law resulted in a simplified naturalisation procedure coming into force in January 2011. This made it possible for people living in the former territory of the Kingdom of Hungary (i.e. the Carpathian basin) to acquire Hungarian citizenship without residing in Hungary. Anybody is eligible for preferential (re)naturalisation who or whose ancestors held Hungarian citizenship once, and who proves his/her knowledge of the Hungarian language – thus the Law does not exclude individuals with non-Hungarian ethnic background from the benefits if they are able to speak Hungarian.

This law served both symbolic goals in the field of domestic politics like compensation for the failure of referendum about dual citizenship for kin-minorities abroad held in 2004 (see details in Kovács, M. 2007) supported by Fidesz (opposition party at that time) or the re-emerging nation-building project ("national reunification", Pogonyi, S. 2015), and pragmatic goals such as to expand the governing Fidesz's voter base with new non-resident citizenship. The latter was made possible with the amendment to the Act on Electoral Procedure adopted in 2012, which allows non-resident Hungarian citizens to participate in Hungarian parliamentary elections. As studies (in keeping with our recent field experiences) have pointed out, this might be seen as a mere export of home affairs to the transborder Hungarian communities (Pogonyi, S. 2014) with less consideration of its effect on specific minority identities or emotional consequences of the transborder Hungarian communities. Instead, dual citi-

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[3] Fidesz: *Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége* – Federation of Young Democrats.

zenship can be seen as a tool for the power to manipulate transborder communities using them to tackle its legitimacy demand (Papp, Z.A. 2017; Pogonyi, S. 2017).

Beyond the extended citizenship and voting rights, post-2010 kin-state politics contains several old or only redesigned policies. For example, the main goal of the policies for Hungarian communities abroad still aims at facilitating prosperity of Hungarian communities and preserving their identity in their homeland. Beside the aims in the field of identity politics, economic goals are becoming more and more important especially since 2014: "Hungary and the neighbouring countries have to strive to achieve positive economic developments in the region, which will motivate both younger and older generations to stay and work in their homelands" (MPAJ 2011, 13). From economic point of view, ethnic kin became valuable for Hungary for two reasons: they constitute a valuable asset, whose migration to Hungary would satisfy the country's demographic and labour force needs in the most cost-effective, smoothest way. At the same time, they are considered to be an asset as well if remaining in their homeland, because Hungary's kin-state politics can rely on them to fulfil Hungary's regional economic and geopolitical goals. As a Hungarian representative of kin-state politics put it:

"… these [transborder Hungarian] communities are considered to be a bridgehead in Hungary's economic expansion in the Carpathian Basin." (Representative of Hungarian kin-state politics regarding Transcarpathia, Budapest)

This calls attention to the (long-standing) conflict of interest of Hungary's kin-state politics: whether to help transborder Hungarian communities to stay in their homeland or enhance their migration to Hungary to satisfy the country's demographic and labour needs. Since the political transformations in 1989, all political forces in Hungary have explicitly supported the first goal; however, some of the measures implemented implicitly served the second aim. The amendment of the Hungarian

Citizenship Law reflects such controversies: however, it does not support directly ethnic kin's migration to Hungary but still facilitates it. Nevertheless, kin-state politics lacking a clear, coherent, one-way road, they serve both aforementioned directions instead. As Çağlar and Gereöffy noted "it is the controversies in Hungarian diaspora politics which impeded the development and the implementation of a comprehensive migration policy in Hungary" (Çağlar, A. and Gereöffy, A. 2008, 333). Contemporary kin-state politics are not without such controversies although they clearly communicate welfare in the homeland as a final goal together with collective rights and autonomy, which reflects that nowadays the balance between migratory and diaspora (ethnic) politics shifted towards the first one, primarily as a consequence of the extension of the Hungarian citizenship.

Migration from Ukraine to Hungary: driving forces permeated by kin-state politics

After some years of slightly declining number of migrants during the time of global economic crisis, the migration from Ukraine to Hungary has risen again since 2011. As 70 per cent of the migrants are ethnic Hungarians and 97 per cent are able to speak Hungarian (Kincses, Á. 2015), human mobility between Ukraine and Hungary can be considered as ethnic migration (see Feischmidt, M. and Zakariás, I. 2010). The migratory process is concentrated in geographical terms: 90 per cent of the migrants originate from Transcarpathia (Karácsonyi, D. and Kincses, Á. 2010). Based on the statistics on birthplace, one can see a boost in the number of people born in Ukraine in the last five years, from around 20,000 in 2011 to 48,000 in 2015 (*Figure 1*). This increase can be explained only by the migration of Hungarian citizens from Ukraine triggered by the possibility to apply for non-resident Hungarian citizenship, as the number of Ukrainian citizens in Hungary did not reach this rate before 2011.

As a result, approximately 70,000 new citizenships were granted to Ukrainian citi-
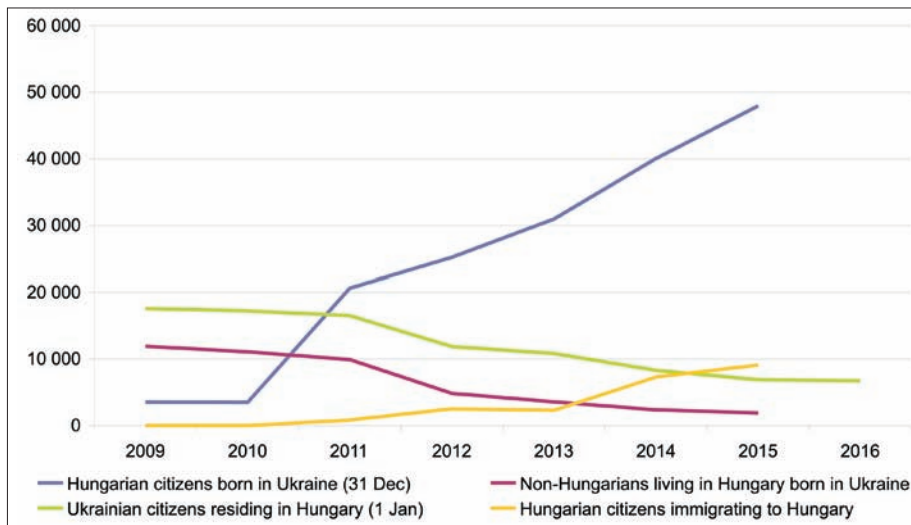
Fig. 1. Migration from Ukraine to Hungary by birthplace and citizenship.
Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office

zens between January 2011 and April 2014 (Soltész, B. and Zimmerer, G. 2014, 125); moreover, another 79,000 applications were submitted by June 2016. This means that application for Hungarian citizenship from Ukraine reached 149,000 (Kántor, Z. 2016), approximately the same number as that of ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine according to the 2001 census. This implies two conclusions: (1) as the number of ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine is estimated to have fallen to cca. 140,000 by 2010 due to the high rate of emigration (Molnár, J. and Molnár, D.I. 2005; Karácsonyi, D. and Kincses, Á. 2010), Hungarian citizenship must have been applied for by several non-Hungarians;[4] and (2) more applications were submitted in the two years between April 2014 and June 2016 than in the previous three years. This shows that the Donbas conflict has triggered new wave of interest towards the simplified naturalisa-

tion process (mostly in Transcarpathia). Even though Ukraine does not recognize dual citizenship, and those who acquire Hungarian citizenship risk to lose Ukrainian one, no sanctions have been applied against it in general (unlike in Slovakia) (Shevel, O. 2010).

Naturally, gaining citizenship is only the tool that facilitates migration, but the reasons for emerging wave of emigration from Ukraine should be traced back to several push and pull factors. The most important push factors are economic and security reasons. Main goals of Euromaidan, namely cleaning up corruption and putting the country's economy back on a fast track, seem to fall behind,[5] while the devaluation of hryvna, the unleashed inflation, or the seven-fold increase of gas price laid extreme burden on population.[6] Due to

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[4] In line with these figures, news estimate the number of Ukrainian and Russian citizens who paid for fake language proficiency and fake Hungarian ancestors to gain Hungarian citizenship to tens of thousands. http://index.hu/gazdasag/2016/09/22/kettos_allampolgarsag-biznisz_200_vadlott_kisvardan/

[5] Ukraine's GDP fell by 7 per cent in 2014 and more than 10 per cent in 2015. This could not be counterbalanced by the slight increase (2%) in the GDP in 2016.

[6] Meanwhile, food prices have multiplied, and the increase in wages and pensions (by 8% to 10% on average) have not followed the unleashing inflation. Inflation rate was 25 per cent in 2014, 43 per cent in 2015 and 12 per cent in 2016.

the devaluation of the hryvnia, the value of the anyway low wages further decreased. In addition, war tax was levied and the wages of the public employee was frozen.

Even though Transcarpathia lies more than 1,000 km far from Donbas, the war has a heavy effect on the region as well. In Transcarpathia the wages are even 20 per cent lower than the Ukrainian average,[7] while living costs are constantly increasing. Due to the devastating economic breakdown and the ongoing war in Donbas, the everyday living circumstances deteriorated rapidly in Transcarpathia. Thousands of men, especially Transcarpathian Hungarians, escaped to Hungary and later on to other EU countries to avoid the conscription and/or to seek job opportunities.

Since the central government in Kyiv is preoccupied with the ongoing hybrid war and its domestic consequences, Transcarpathia, as periphery both in geographical and political sense (Jordan, P. and Klemenčić, N. 2003), receives limited attention from the centre. While, on the one hand, it imposes heavy burden on the regional administration, on the other hand the limited attention of Kyiv and the proximity of border has its advantages as well: since the control of central power over Transcarpathia has been diminished and the Ukrainian state is not providing or not able to provide basic public duties (e.g. in the fields of education and health care) that increased the scope of action of the region's authorities to attract and accept external sources (i.e. funds by the Visegrad Countries, primarily Hungary, Czechia and Poland) to maintain the basic public services or launch development programmes.

All in all, the above factors like unemployment, economic downturn, falling living standards, feeling of insecurity and hopelessness contributed to the intensification of – already high – emigration of Transcarpathians.

We argue that the migration has become the new normal. This phenomenon threatens the existence and future of the Transcarpathia Hungarians:

„Lot of people left. For us to sustain the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia would have been essential. But the dual citizenship simplified their emigration. Not only to Hungary, but they simply left to England, Germany, Czechia. Wherever." (University lecturer, Uzhhorod)

At the same time, Hungary, similarly to other V4 countries, has been also facing serious and long-term demographic loss, which is exacerbated by heavy emigration to Western Europe in the past years resulting in a shortage in the skilled labour force in some sectors (Blaskó, Z. and Fazekas, K. 2016). This threatens the economic growth. The fastest way for the resupply of the missing labour force could be immigration (EMN 2015): for instance, according to the Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists Hungary should attract hundreds of thousands of skilled labour force from abroad.[8] But hundreds of thousands of immigrant ethnic kin would threaten the future of transborder Hungarian communities and the main goals of Hungary's kin-state politics, thus only non-Hungarians would meet the criteria. The missing labour force could be substituted with migrants and refugees, who have been arriving in the EU in the last couple of years, but the Hungarian government follows a radical anti-immigration campaign and consistently refuses to accept non-European migrants or refugees (see Melegh, A. 2016).

Under such circumstances Ukrainians, physically and culturally closer to Hungarians, have become valuable assets; in addition, due to the crisis in East Ukraine thousands of underpaid, skilled workers became internally displaced to whom working in Hungary might represent a reasonable choice (e.g. due to the geographic vicinity in comparison to Czechia, for instance:

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[7] According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, per month average salary in Transcarpathia as of January 1, 2016 reached only 3,419 UAH (129 EUR) lagging behind Ukraine's average (4,362 UAH = 165 EUR).

[8] http://index.hu/gazdasag/2016/07/05/magyar_gyarosok_varganak_250_ezer_vendegmunkas_kell_ide_azonnal/ (2016-08-15)

"It is a fact that lack of skilled workers in Hungary has reached an alarming level. And Hungary would not wish to rely on the recent middle-eastern migration wave when looking for replacement (…), thus, looking around in the region, and learning from the examples of other Visegrad Countries, we find the Christian Ukraine, with an enormous size of skilled labour force." (Representative of Hungarian kin-state politics regarding Transcarpathia, Budapest)

Summarizing the migratory processes from Ukraine to Hungary, we conclude that the amendment of the Hungarian Citizenship Law eased and speeded up emigration of Transcarpathia Hungarians to Hungary immediately after it came into force. Although this consequence of the law did not coincide with official principles of Hungary's diaspora (ethnic) politics, we argue that it was not unexpected for the legislator in 2010 as policy documents (indirectly) refers to it: Hungary and the whole region "cannot and does not intend to resist international trends of increasing mobility" (MPAJ 2011, 13). Nevertheless, this slight change favouring Hungary's migratory policies was only acceptable for decision-makers until the persistency of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia was not threatened by serious emigration flow of ethnic Hungarians.

Hungarian policy measures and emerging competition for human resources in Transcarpathia after the Euromaidan

Policies for sustaining Hungarian community in Transcarpathia („staying in homeland")

Transcarpathia did not receive special attention in the frame of the Hungarian kin-state politics in the first years after 2010. But the concatenation of events unfolded in Ukraine since the end of 2013, mainly the armed conflict in East Ukraine, dramatically changed the region's geopolitics and the migratory processes, which challenged Hungary's envisioned politics and enforced instant actions. Thus in the past years, the support for Transcarpathia by the Hungarian

government was overrepresented compared to other neighbouring regions inhabited by Hungarians.

One of the main goals of the programmes implemented by the Hungarian government aimed at fostering prosperity of minority Hungarians in their homelands. However, in the background of these projects one can find other motivations than to help sustaining of ethnic Hungarians in regions they were born to namely to create clientelistic and patronage relationships extend across the border (Waterbury, M. 2010; Nagy, B. 2014; Pogonyi, S. 2017). Nevertheless, due to the limited available resources this goal can only be achieved in less developed, non-EU regions such as Vojvodina (Serbia) and Transcarpathia (Kiss, T. 2015; Bárdi, N. 2016). In addition, beyond supporting ethnic kin, the Hungarian government recently seems to buy influence in the whole region. The main purpose of this expansion is to actively engage in the quest for the most important resource of the weakened Ukraine, the labour force. In the followings, these two, simultaneously existing, sometimes closely intertwined strategies are divided into projects for „staying in homeland" and projects for "channelling labour forces to Hungary", although the dividing line in between is sometimes quite blurred.[9]

Even though it is quite difficult to separate, we try to structure the so-called „staying in homeland" policy measures according to their proposed target groups. Some measures are beneficial for the wider community (including subsidies for institutions), while others target individuals. For instance, taking over some of the Ukrainian state functions in the fields of education, economic development and health care is considered to be valuable for the whole community. At the same time, it also means an opportunity for Hungary to strengthen its power position in Transcarpathia. With funding such tasks instead of the Ukrainian state, Hungary (like Czechia and Poland) – driven by their

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[9] Only projects and policies started in the last five years are highlighted in this section.

own urgent need of labour force replacement – were ready to jump into the slight power vacuum and have intensified and diversified their presence in Western Ukraine.

Among community support by Hungary the "Egán Ede program" should be highlighted, which provides 12 and 20 billion HUF (39 and 65 million EUR) non-refundable subsidy and preferential loan for enterprises in Transcarpathia in the fields of agriculture, tourism and manufacturing industry between 2016 and 2018.[10]

There are also numerous renovation projects since 2014, but especially from 2015, that were exclusively financed by the Hungarian state. To offer one example: in 2015 the dormitory in Uzhhorod University was thoroughly renovated (see more details in Erőss, Á. *et al.* 2016). Beside the development of the Hungarian Department of Uzhhorod National University, the Transcarpathian Hungarian College in Berehove, numerous schools, kindergartens or small health care units got refurbished. Due to the fact that Ukraine's economy is in a critical condition and regional funds and other support are very limited, such developments are appreciated by the local inhabitants, regardless of ethnicity.

Considering the second big group of supports, several applications are available for individuals. This includes for example the various educational scholarships which have been long time present in Hungarian kin-state politics or the novel form of financial subsidy – salary supplements. Latter was introduced in 2015/2016 school year and at first it was granted to those teachers and other administrative staff that work with Hungarian classes in Transcarpathia. Individual applications for this grant are collected in dedicated offices of the foundation of KMKSZ, one of the two

Hungarian ethnic parties in Ukraine.[11] The aim of the salary supplement is to offer better living circumstances for those who work in Hungarian schools and it wished to reduce the emigration of teachers, which is by now a common problem in Transcarpathian schools (Kovály, K. *et al.* 2017).

Later on series of government declarations were accepted to offer similar individual financial aid for doctors, nurses, art teachers, journalists and clergymen who visibly indicate to offer patient care, courses, and any other services in Hungarian. Given the fact that neither Hungarian citizenship nor any statement of belonging to Hungarian community is a precondition, the subsidy cannot be considered as ethnically exclusionary. Rather it mirrors the double endeavour to look after the co-ethnic community in need, while at the same time, next to the quite easily accessible Hungarian citizenship, offers a tempting additional reason for non-Hungarians to set up links with local Hungarian community.

Policies for attracting Ukrainian workers to Hungary („channelling human resources to Hungary")

Policy measures aiming to attract Ukrainian labour force to Hungary can be divided into two main categories: pragmatic and symbolic ones. The most important pragmatic measures were introduced in Hungary in 2015 and 2016: Hungarian Government implemented the necessary law amendments to be prepared to the reception of tens of thousands of non-EU-member (preferentially Ukrainian) guest workers (Élő, A. 2016). Besides, another brand new phenomenon is the education of Hungarian language for Ukrainians. While in case of ethnic Hungarians to acquire Hungarian citizenship has become pure formality, for non-Hungarian speaker Transcarpathians proving the mini-

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[10] Albeit non-Hungarians are also eligible for application, applications should be submitted in Hungarian, furthermore applicants or the representative of enterprise have to prove his/her knowledge of the Hungarian language with Hungarian Certificate or documents proving Hungarian educational attainment or language certificate. http://www.eganede.com/

[11] KMKSZ (*Kárpátaljai Magyar Kulturális Szövetség* – Ukrainian Hungarian Cultural Federation in Transcarpathia) has been strongly patronized by Fidesz in the last years.

mal necessary language proficiency entails the only impediment. In recognition of this, in the 2015/2016 school year free-of-charge language courses were organised by Hungary. Thousand pupils study Hungarian as foreign language, 500 as extra-curricular activity while courses run on 105 sites throughout the region. The increasing interest towards Hungarian language has aroused business interest as well: Hungarian language courses are mushrooming in private language schools all around Transcarpathia (see *Photo 1*).

We argue that the motivation of Hungary in organizing free-of-charge language courses is quite clear: to attract desperately needed labour force. At the same time, the motivation of ethnic Ukrainians when learning Hungarian is to gain Hungarian citizenship which serve as a golden ticket to enter the EU job market:

Photo 1. Poster advertising Hungarian language course in Mukacheve (May 2016). (Photo by Popovics, P.)

„Who is enrolled in a Hungarian class has a different motivation. Those who choose to learn English, German, or even Polish need the language either for business reasons or because they intend to find job in Poland. Those who visits Hungarian classes only wish to take the auth to the citizenship. Their only ambition with the classes is to learn enough to be able engage in a small talk while submitting the paperwork." (Language teacher, Uzhhorod)

The second group of actions belongs to the symbolic politics (or gesture politics), which aims at winning the sympathy of the Ukrainian population towards Hungary and Hungarians, thus increasing their interest in job opportunities in the western neighbour, non-Slavic country. As part of gesture politics Hungary financially covers such tasks and projects which would generally be the responsibility of the Ukrainian central or regional government/administration (for example, infrastructure development of various Ukrainian schools and establishment). To offer an examples, a statue of Taras Shevchenko, the Ukrainian national poet, was installed in Berehove, the cultural centre of Transcarpathian Hungarians with a 50–50 per cent Hungarian–Ukrainian ethnic ratio, financed by the Hungarian state.

The examples of the numerous projects listed above might illustrate that via diversified kin-state activism, Hungary is not merely nurturing good neighbourly and interethnic relations but taking actions in order to recruit a fresh active labour force among Transcarpathian Hungarians and Ukrainians, to buy influence and setting up a clientele:

„Essentially, the Hungarian presence substituting or replacing the Ukraine state in Transcarpathia has an ever growing influence." (Representative of Hungarian kin-state politics regarding Transcarpathia, Budapest)

This policy resonates to the features of trans-sovereign nationalism described by Csergő, Z. and Goldgeier, J. (2004). According to their description, kin-states apply tools and rhetoric of trans-sovereign nationalism to project a certain identity and political influence externally into neighbour-

ing states. It does not merely target co-ethnic minority groups offering them the feeling of being incorporated to the nation, but at the same time it can be seen as a way to "settle score" with neighbours, shed light on the uneven power position between the states (Waterbury, M. 2014). Such a "petit imperialism" has been present in CEE states' politics. As Melegh, A. (2002, 129) described when analysing the discursive framework of Hungarian Status Law "frustrated political communities classed as inferior find their own Easterners to exclude, to control and to civilize" thus inviting post-colonial critique to the explanation of kin-state politics.

Competing kin-state politics: quest for the labour force

The geopolitical shift and the relative power vacuum created by the diminished power of the Ukrainian state induced activity of Poland and Czechia as well. These activities mostly aimed at attracting human resources from Ukraine, as from agriculture to IT or tourism, both Czechia and Poland are in demand of labour force (Leontiyeva, Y. 2014; Józwiak, I. and Piechowska, M. 2016).[12] In addition, the Visegrad Countries "openly state that they prefer migrants from Ukraine due to their cultural affinity" (Jaroszewicz, M. 2015, 5). Before the introduction of simplified naturalization, Hungary was more of a blind spot on the map of Ukrainians seeking a job abroad due to the serious linguistic barrier (Hungarian, unlike Polish and Czech, is not a Slavic language) and offering lower wages than Poland or especially Czechia. In the quest for a Ukrainian labour force by the Visegrad countries, Hungary, thus, has been in a handicapped position. Furthermore, both Poland and the Czech Republic have been traditional destination countries for Ukrainian migrants looking for short or

long term occupation (Lendel, M. 2015). Due to cultural, geographical and linguistic vicinity, the attraction of Ukrainian workers seems obvious choice, thus both countries elaborated complex procedures to enhance migration from Ukraine.

In Poland Ukrainians compose the biggest immigrant community. The recent crisis in Ukraine triggered new wave of migration which is clearly reflected in Polish statistics (Józwiak, I. and Piechowska, M. 2016). Poland has accepted series of administrative measure to facilitate migration. Polish Charter (Karta Polaka) came into effect in 2008 offers unrestricted stay and access to the Polish labour market, education and social services targets only foreigners of Polish origin; and it should be evaluated as quasi-citizenship (Waterbury, M. 2009; Karolewski, I.P. 2015). But since the most of the immigrants to Poland is ethnic Ukrainians (Józwiak, I. and Lugosi, N. 2016) who cannot apply for Polish Charter, Poland introduced the simplified procedures of gaining short or long term work permits opened for Ukrainians as well (Jaroszewicz, M. 2015). That procedure makes the relatively cheap workforce available for Polish business sector while – since the Polish state does not carry the costs of integration programmes or migrant's social accommodation – it is also a cost effective solution to tackle the labour shortage in certain segments of Polish economy (Józwiak, I. and Piechowska, M. 2016). Furthermore, Polish universities offer tuition free education and scholarships for Ukrainian citizens. As a result, in 2015, 20,000 Ukrainian students have pursued studies in Polish universities. Even though Poland is more active in Western Ukrainian territories once belonged to Poland, in the last couple of years Polish educational institutions so as companies intensified their presence in Transcarpathia as well (*Photo 2*).

Despite major immigrant or refugee influx is not reported in Czech statistics from post-conflict Ukraine (Uherek, Z. 2016), the earlier existing migration trends and numbers seem to stabilize. Nevertheless, certain new fea-

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[12] As Uherek phrased Czechia (at least until the period of 2008 economic crisis) "treated Ukraine as a reservoir of inexpensive flexible labour force" (Uherek, Z. 2016, 5).

Photo 2. Advertisement of a Polish university in Uzhhorod, the seat of Transcarpathia. (Photo by Erőss, Á.)

tures have evolved, for instance the increase of permanent residence permit holders in Czechia might suggest the growing intention among Ukrainian migrants to settle for a longer period in the country (Drbohlav, D. and Seidlová, M. 2016). Relevant to present article is the appearance of the so called "Polish route": it refers to a recently reported phenomenon when Ukrainian citizens – to avoid the expensive and far more difficult Czech visa procedure – apply for Polish visa to enter Czechia, their original destination (Drbohlav, D. and Seidlová, M. 2016, 122).

Although the Czech Republic did not introduce any measure like Polish Charter, but it also intensified its presence in Ukraine: in 2014 five new visa issue offices were opened in the country, out of which one is in Uzhhorod, Transcarpathia. At the same year, after Kyiv and Lviv, the third Czech consulate was opened in Uzhhorod. Furthermore, there is an on-going negotiation about a centre that would assist Ukrainian citizen to access the Czech labour market.[13] Czechia financially supports the teaching of Czech language in several schools in Transcarpathia.

Recently, the plan of opening a Czech Cultural Centre in Uzhhorod also appeared in press.[14] The Centre would offer Czech language courses and the language exam issued by the Centre would exempt students taking another language exam when applying for Czech universities. Similarly to Poland, Czechia also offers a variety of scholarships for Ukrainian youth. Next to the close linguistic ties, historical contacts from Czechoslovak times between 1919 and 1939, and the already functioning migration networks the above policies also contribute to that among Transcarpathians Czechia is the most popular migration destination (see Čermáková, D. 2014; Drbohlav, D. and Valenta, O. 2014;

[13] http://zak.depo.ua/ukr/zak/v-uzhgorodi-vidkriyut-tsentr-dlya-poshuku-roboti-v-chehiyi-08092015131700 (2016 -10-10)

[14] http://uzhgorod.net.ua/news/79760 (2016-10-15)

Kоvály, K. and Čеrmáková, D. 2016) offering various job opportunities (*Photo 3*).

Other countries neighbouring Transcarpathia (Slovakia, Romania) does not attract significant number of guest workers from Ukraine. Romania offer non-resident citizenship on request for ethnic kin (primarily in Moldova and Ukraine) since 1991, expanded to third-generation descendants of former Romanian citizens in 2009 (Iordachi, C. 2013; Waterbury, M. 2014), but in Transcarpathia, gaining Romanian (as EU) citizenship encourage for working in western countries, chiefly in Czechia, rather than in Romania (Jóźwiak, I. 2014).

Conclusion

The Ukraine crisis and its consequences, the overall geopolitical shift in regional power relations generated novel threats and opportunities for the Hungarian kin-state politics in which its flagship project, the preferential (re)naturalization, plays a crucial role.

When in 2010 the Hungarian parliament accepted the amendment of Hungarian Citizenship Law, enabling former citizens of the Hungarian Kingdom to acquire Hungarian citizenship without residing in Hungary, it was communicated by the government as a gesture, the symbolic reunification of the nation, rather than a policy with practical and direct effect. We argue that following the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis this has changed in regards of Ukraine due to the boosting out-migration of ethnic Hungarians and emerging slight power vacuum in the western peripheries of Ukraine. Moreover, severe demographic and labour shortage in Hungary also contributed in re-evaluating aims and tools of Hungary's kin-state politics in Ukraine. The new circumstances simultaneously provided opportunities and posed a threat to the well-built system of Hungarian kin-state politics that was necessary to tackle, thus it resulted in major modification of policies targeting Transcarpathia.

Following 2014, the Hungarian government has elaborated several economic

Photo 3. Bilingual (Ukrainian and Hungarian) billboard in the outskirts of Uzhhorod offering legal job opportunities in Czechia. (Photo by Tátrai, P.)

and cultural programmes and projects in Transcarpathia targeting Hungarian and non-Hungarian communities as well. These projects, measures, and occasionally the takeover of some of the Ukrainian state functions – favouring not only the ethnic Hungarians but the whole population of Transcarpathia – simultaneously serve Hungary's ethnopolitical goals (i.e. maintaining the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia), the expansion of Hungary's positions in Ukraine and the enticement of the Ukrainian workforce to Hungary. The policies of "staying in homeland" and "channelling human resources" have reproduced the traditional conflict of interest in Hungary's kin-state activism sometimes neutralizing each other.

Beside Hungary, Poland and the Czechia has also been interested in expanding their influence in Ukraine to attract human resources. As a consequence, competing kin-state politics emerged among V4 countries. In this race, in which previously Hungary occupied a disadvantageous position, the easily accessible Hungarian citizenship might be suitable tool to reposition Hungary among V4 countries in the emerging quest for the Ukrainian labour force. Thus we argue it is not by chance that Hungarian authorities turn a blind eye to the tens of thousands of individuals with non-Hungarian background who applied for (and gained) Hungarian citizenship.

All in all, the status of Hungarian citizenship as an element of kin-state politics targeting transborder Hungarian communities has been enriched in Transcarpathia where – especially following 2014 – it rather represents a pragmatic tool embodying practical opportunities, even material benefits tempting for non-Hungarians as well. Nowadays in Transcarpathia Hungarian citizenship helps to escape conscription and serves as a golden ticket to enter not only the Hungarian, but more the European Union's job market or education system.

However, up until nowadays these policy measures by Hungary stimulated almost exclusively the emigration of Transcarpathian Hungarians, rather than attracting ethnic Ukrainian workforce, opening a new mobility channel that leads directly to Western Europe. Consequently, Hungary's kin-state politics not only contribute to the decrease of the number of Transcarpathian Hungarians, but there is a high risk that – with their Hungarian citizenship – they will resettle in Western Europe, not in Hungary.

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Ethnic, confessional and cultural patterns of regionalism in the post-Soviet Russia

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Abstract

This paper is focusing on the ethnic, confessional and cultural background of regionalism in Russia. On the one hand, the historically evolved spatial structures are considered; on the other hand, the emphasis is made on transformation processes of the post-Soviet period. The analysis covers: 1) the historical framework of ethnic settlement and ethnic identity patterns in Russia and their dynamics at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries; 2) the linguistic diversity of the country and the linguistic division of the Russian Federation; 3) the spatial pattern of confessional groups in Russia; and 4) the phenomenon of regional/local identity as one of the key driving forces of regional development. The cultural space of Russia is characterized by mosaics of various regional and local communities; its transformation is still going on and entails the permanent genesis of new regional structures and clusters as well as some risks, tensions and threats. The "horizontal" socio-cultural differentiation of Russian space is based on huge discrepancies between various historical and cultural regions, their ethnic and regional diversity. The "vertical", hierarchical differentiation of cultural space is predominantly characterized by the increasing stratification of various population groups within the Russian regions. The inherited spatial patterns predominate both in ethnic settlement structures and in configurations of regional identity and cultural distinctions. Nevertheless, changes in the cultural geographic pattern could also be observed in the investigated period. The growing share of "titular" ethnic groups in the total population of national republics of Russia, as well as their growing concentration within the corresponding national units were the main trends in ethnic-geographical redistribution of population in the Russian Federation between 1990 and 2016.

Keywords: cultural regionalism, regional identity, ethnic geography, linguistic groups, confessions, Russia

Introduction

Regionalism is one of the most important research issues in contemporary human geography. This is often interpreted as a set of social practices and attitudes of people living in the region, through their interests, priorities and needs. Furthermore, this implies the "shaped" and built-up political ideology that focuses on the interests of regions and presumes the implementation of various institutions counterbalancing the trends towards unification and centralism. Keating, M. (1998) argues that the so-called "new regionalism" as a specific ideology of political elites emerged (in Western Europe) during the era of Modernity, representing the peculiar reaction on industrialization, internationalization and, partly, secularization of social life, both in ethnically relatively homogenous and in multi-ethnic countries. Others consider the issue a little bit differently, interpreting regionalism first of all as political movements within the regional communities aimed at achieving a certain institutional status (struggle for the political or cultural autonomy, self-governance of the provinces, ensuring the civil and cultural rights of ethnic minorities, local and regional social groups etc.) (Hueglin, T. 1986; Schmitt-Egner, P. 2002).

In my view the "political-geographical" dimension of regionalism is really very important, hence I interpret regionalism first of all as a *phenomenon of culture* (Streletsky, V.N.

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2011a, 2012). Cultural dimension of regionalism is *primary*, its manifestations in various political forms is always (or nearly always) *secondary*. Cultural regionalism could be divided into two major strata. The objective stratum, based partly on physical and economic indicators, includes a combination of various cultural features of the region: the original, often unique and inimitable traits. The second, "reflexive" (subjective) stratum is a purely "mental space" (perceptions of the region held by its inhabitants, their regional identity and regional solidarity, local patriotism etc.). Regional identity, relating to the concept of "us – and the others" is a key element of regionalism from a cultural-geographic point of view (Hard, G. 1987; Pohl, J. 1993; Yaeger, P. 1996; Paasi, A. 2003).

The idea of regionalism as a cultural phenomenon is the core issue of the present paper. The vast territory of Russia, its geographical and cultural diversity, the country's location at the junction of different cultural realms resulted in a complicated history and a mix of different ethnic groups and cultures (Bassin, M. 1991, 2003; Kappeler, A. 2008). Migrations of peoples and ethnic groups, their cultural assimilation, interethnic mixing and language transfer, colonization of new lands became important features of the country's regionalization. The main aim of this paper is to analyse the ethnic, linguistic, confessional and regional identity patterns of the Russian Federation at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. On the one hand, the historically inherited and evolved spatial structures are considered; on the other hand, the focus of analysis is on the changes of the historically evolved patterns at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries.

Ethnic settlement pattern in Russia and its dynamics

Ethnic diversity and the spatial configuration of ethnic differences are among the main driving forces of the cultural-geographical diversity of Russia. Namely the ethnic differ-

entiation of the country is reflected especially well in the regional consciousness of people living in different parts of the country.

According to census data of 2010, there are about 160 different ethnic groups in the Russian Federation (listed in the census); 40 among them have more than 100 thousand people. Ethnic Russians account for about 77.7 per cent of the total population of the Russian Federation which is gradually decreasing. In 1959 it was 85 per cent (in the former RSFSR), in 1989 – 81.5 per cent, in 2002 – 79.8 per cent *(Table 1)*.

The main cultural geographic feature of Russia is the huge so-called Russian ethnic mega-core, stretching both on the European and Asiatic parts of the country. Its historical nucleus, being located primarily in the central part of the East European plain, had largely expanded, partly to the North and South, but predominantly eastward, during the Russian colonization of Northern Eurasia in the previous centuries. The dominant ethnic mega-core includes the majority of Russian administrative units (so-called "oblasts" and "krays") where the share of ethnic Russians in the total population is much above the average of the country (above 80%). Exceptions are relatively rare; some examples are Orenburg oblast, Astrakhan oblast and Ulyanovsk oblast where the share of ethnic Russians is below the national average. The geographical location of the ethnic mega-core is well illustrated by maps showing the share of ethnic Russians in the total population by administrative units of the Russian Federation *(Figure 1)*.

As it is shown the spatial pattern is relatively stable in time; the comparison of the results of the population censuses 1989, 2002 and 2010 shows that the boundaries of the Russian ethnic mega-core did not significantly change during the last decades.

The Russian ethnic mega-core of the country is much larger than the ethnic peripheries of the Russian Federation, both in surface area and in demographic potential. A situation like this is extremely rare for multi-ethnic and multicultural countries. On the other

Table 1. Ethnic composition of population of the Russian Federation according to the population censuses 1989, 2002, 2010

Ethnic groups	1989		2002		2010	
	1,000 persons	%	1,000 persons	%	1,000 persons	%
Russians	119,866	81.5	115,868	79.8	111,017	77.7
Tatars	5,522	3.8	5,558	3.8	5,311	3.7
Ukrainians	4,363	3.0	2,943	2.0	1,928	1.3
Bashkirs	1,345	0.9	1,674	1.2	1,585	1.1
Chuvashs	1,774	1.2	1,637	1.1	1,436	1.0
Chechens	899	0.6	1,361	0.9	1,431	1.0
Armenians	532	0.4	1,130	0.8	1,182	0.8
Avars	544	0.4	757	0.5	912	0.6
Mordvins	1,073	0.7	979	0.7	744	0.5
Kazakhs	636	0.4	655	0.5	648	0.5
Azeri	336	0.2	621	0.4	603	0.4
Dargins	353	0.2	510	0.4	589	0.4
Udmurts	715	0.5	637	0.4	552	0.4
Mari people	644	0.4	605	0.4	547	0.4
Ossetians	402	0.3	516	0.4	529	0.4
Byelorussians	1,206	0.8	815	0.6	521	0.4
Kabardians	386	0.3	520	0.4	517	0.4
Kumyks	277	0.2	423	0.3	503	0.4
Yakuts	380	0.3	444	0.3	478	0.3
Lezghins	257	0.2	412	0.3	474	0.3
Buryats	417	0.3	445	0.3	461	0.3
Ingushs	215	0.2	412	0.3	445	0.3
Germans	842	0.6	597	0.4	394	0.3
Tuvinians (Tuvans)	206	0.1	280	0.2	264	0.2
Komi people	336	0.2	293	0.2	228	0.2
Jews	537	0.4	230	0.2	157	0.1
Total population	*147,022*	*100.0*	*145,164*	*100.0*	*142,857*	*100.0*

Sources: Results of the All-Union 1989 Population Census. Ethnic Composition of Population of the RSFSR. Moscow, Respublikanskiy inform.-izdat. tsentr. 747 p. (in Russian); Results of the All-Russian 2002 Population Census. Vol. 4. Ethnic Composition of Population. Languages. Citizenship. Moscow, IMTS "Statistika Rossii." 2076 p. (in Russian); Results of the All-Russian 2010 Population Census. Ethnic Composition of Population. Moscow, Goststatizdat, 2234 p. (in Russian).

hand, the share of ethnic Russians in the total population is below 80 per cent in almost all national republics. The only exception is the Republic of Khakassia in Southern Siberia where ethnic Russians accounted for 80.3 per cent of the population in 2010 *(Figure 2).*

Outside the Russian ethnic mega-core there are three large cultural regions in the Russian Federation characterized by striking ethnic specificities: Northern Caucasus (to be more precise, its highland part populated by so-called mountain peoples), the Volga-Ural multicultural area and the Turkic-Mongolian belt of Southern Siberia (Buryatia, Tuva, Khakassia, Altai).

The most important changes in the ethnic structure of the Russian Federation at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries can be summarized as follows. The first tendency is a gradual and slow transformation of the ethnic structure, due to demographic changes and migration processes *(Table 1).* Ethnic groups with high birth rates increase their number and share in the total population of Russia.

Other factors of shifts in the ethnic structure were the assimilation processes and changes in ethnic self-identification, but their impact was in the post-Soviet period relatively weak.
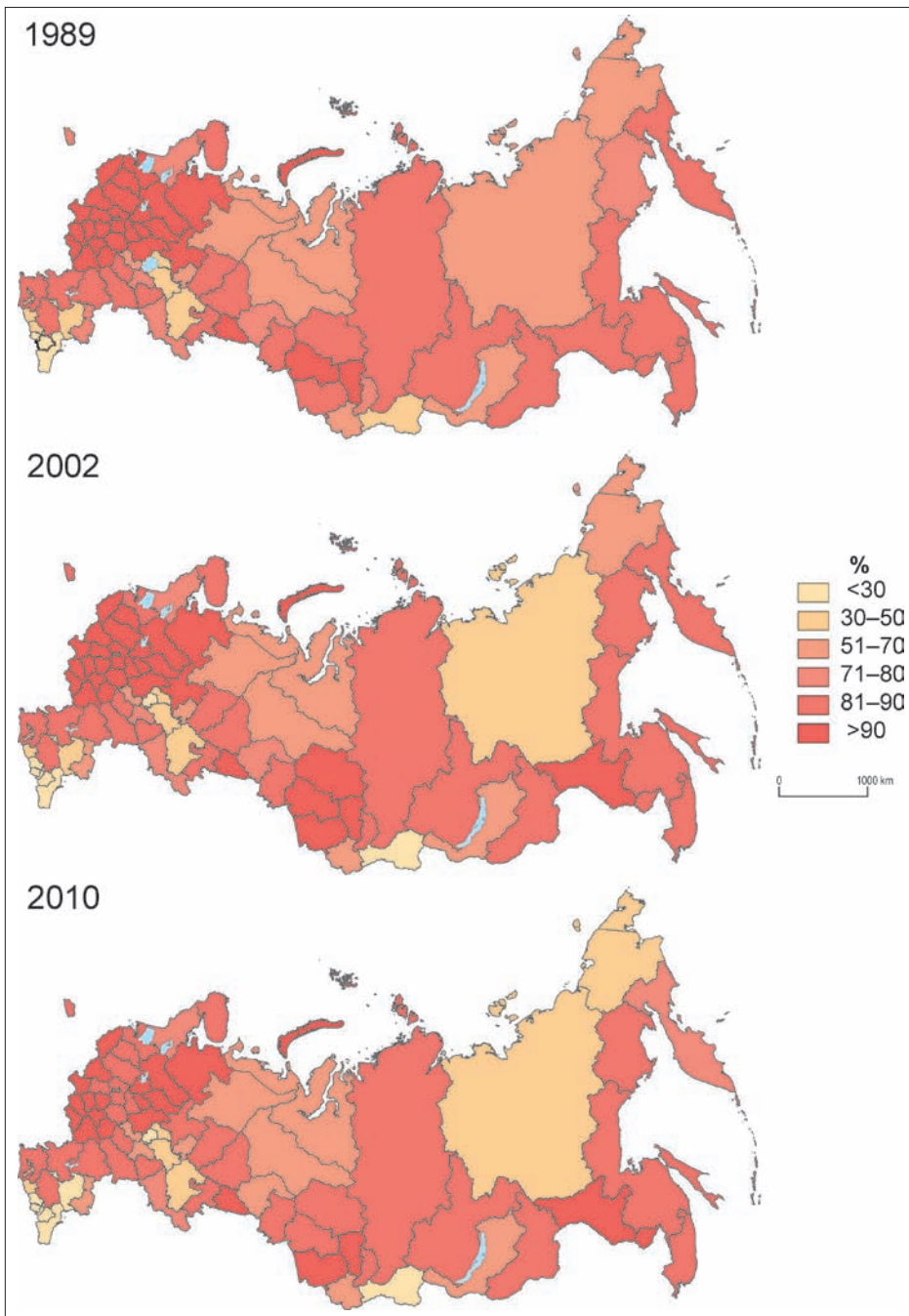
Fig. 1. Share of ethnic Russians in the total population of administrative units of the Russian Federation, 1989, 2002 and 2010. *Sources*: Results of the All-Union 1989 Population Census. Ethnic Composition of Population of the RSFSR. Moscow, 1990. Results of the All-Russian 2002 and 2010 Population Census. Ethnic Composition of Population. Moscow, Goststatizdat (in Russian).

Fig. 2. Share of ethnic Russians in the total population of national republics and autonomous units of Russia, 1989, 2002 and 2010. Data refer to the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic in 1989 and separately to Chechnya and Ingushetia in 2002 and 2010. *Sources*: Results of the All-Union 1989 Population Census. Ethnic Composition of Population of the RSFSR. Moscow, 1990. Results of the All-Russian 2002 and 2010 Population Census. Ethnic Composition of Population. Moscow, Goststatizdat (in Russian).
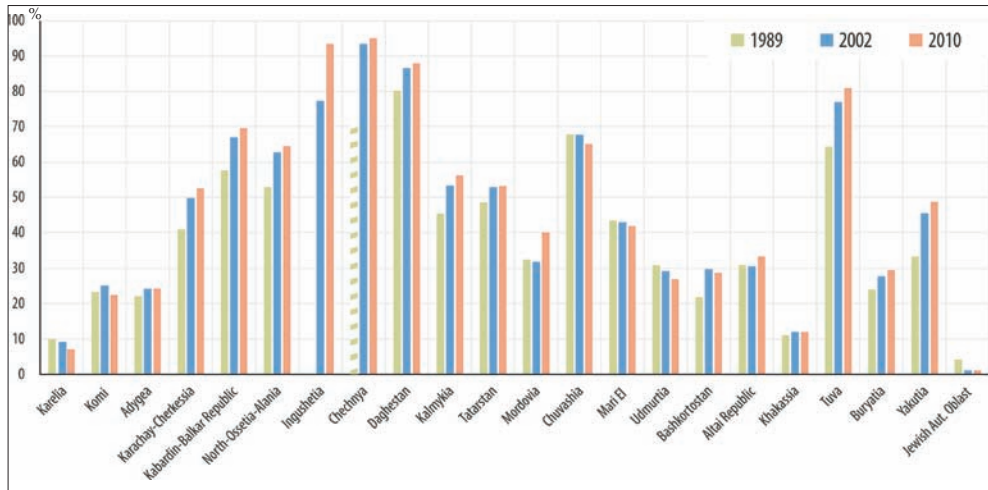
The second clear tendency is the growth of the share of "titular" (indigenous) ethnic groups in the total population of national republics of the Russian Federation. Between 1989 and 2010 the share of Tatars increased from 48 to 53 per cent in the Republic of Tatarstan, similarly the share of Kalmyks rose from 45 to 56 per cent in the Republic of Kalmykia, the share of Ossetians increased from 52 to 65 per cent in the Republic of Northern Ossetia, and the share of Yakuts grew from 33 to 49 per cent in the Sakha (Yakutia) republic *(Figure 3).*

Main reasons for that are the significant differences in demographic conditions of ethnic Russians living in these national republics and the "titular" people (especially Muslim groups with higher rates of natural increase). In some cases, for instance in Sakha-Yakutia, the transformation of the ethnic structure was influenced significantly by the considerable out-migration of ethnic Russians to other regions of the country. The outflow of Russians from the autonomous republics of the RSFSR began already in the late Soviet time, but after the collapse of the USSR it strengthened significantly.

The third tendency is the growing concentration of "titular" (indigenous) ethnic groups within "their" political units (national republics). The rate of concentration of "titular" people within their national republics is very different among the ethnic groups. In some case we find high concentration rates, for instance 94 per cent of Tuvinians live in Russia in the Republic of Tuva (2010), 89 per cent of Komi people in the Komi Republic etc. But there are also ethnic groups with more dispersed settlement patterns. For instance, 62 per cent of Tatars live outside Tatarstan in Russia, 55 per cent of Mordvins live outside Mordovia. Nevertheless, the general trend is now the increasing concentration of ethnic groups in their own national republics. This trend is relatively new. Before the disintegration of the USSR the concentration rates of "titular" ethnic groups tended to decrease (with some exceptions), however, nowadays it is increasing everywhere *(Table 2, Figure 4).*
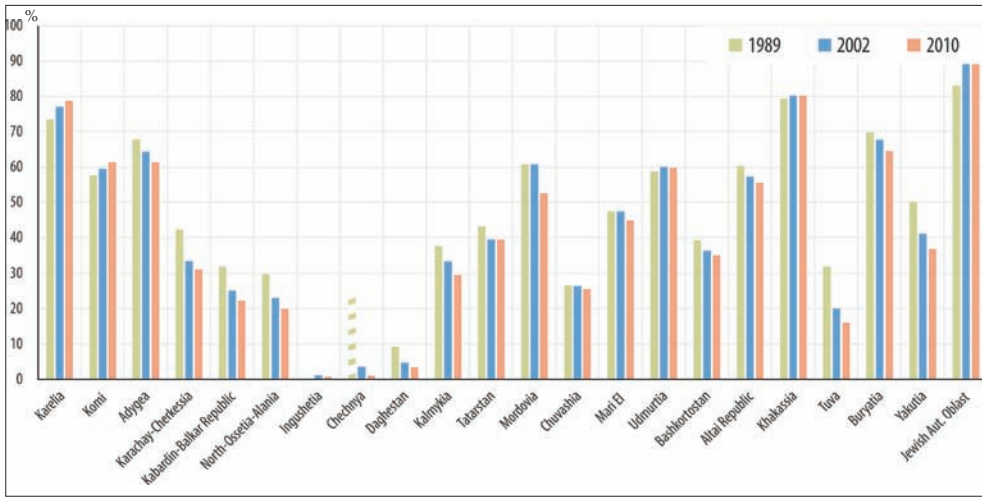
Fig. 3. Share of "titular" peoples in the total population of national republics and autonomous units of Russia, 1989, 2002 and 2010. For additional data and sources see *Fig. 2*.

Fig. 4. Concentration rate of "titular" peoples of national republics of Russia within "their" national administrative units, 1989, 2002 and 2010. For additional data and sources see *Fig. 2*.

Linguistic diversity and spatial linguistic patterns

The spatial configuration of linguistic differences within the Russian Federation is very similar to that of ethnic differences. There is

an evident contradiction between the exclusive linguistic diversity of Russian cultural area and the predominance of the Russian language in the country overall. According to official data of the 2010 Population census, approximately 98 per cent of people living in
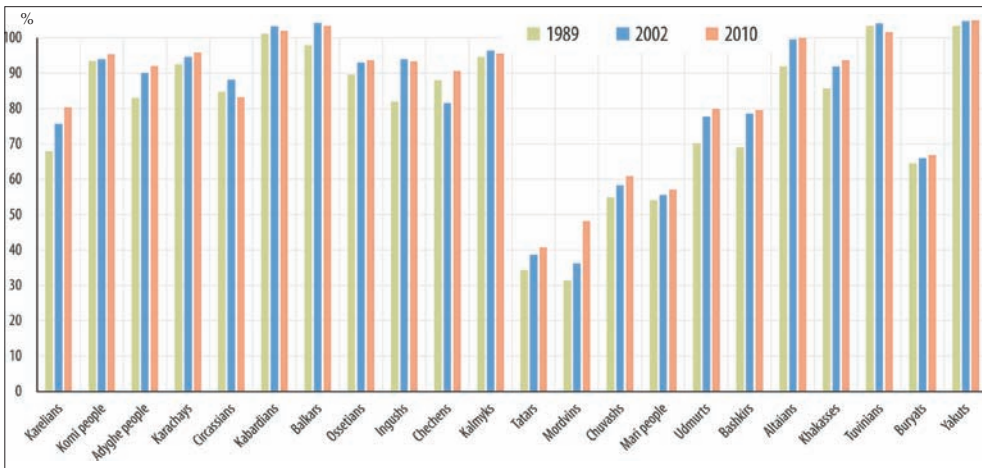
Table 2. Concentration rate of "titular" peoples of national republics of Russia within "their" national administrative units according to the population censuses 1989 and 2010

"Titular" peoples of national republics of Russia	Total number within "their" national administrative units	Total number in RSFSR	Concentration rate within "their" national administrative units,	Total number within "their" national administrative units	Total number in Russian Federation	Concentration rate within "their" national administrative units
		1989			2010	
	1,000 persons		%	1,000 persons		%
Karelians	79	125	63.2	46	61	74.8
Komi people	292	336	86.9	202	228	88.7
Adyghe people	95	123	77.2	107	125	85.6
Karachays	129	150	86.0	194	218	89.1
Circassians	40	51	78.8	56	73	77.4
Kabardians	363	386	94.0	491	517	94.9
Balkars	71	78	91.0	109	113	96.1
Ossetians	335	402	83.3	460	528	87.1
Ingushs	164*	215	76.2	**386	445	86.8
Chechens	735*	899	81.8	***1,207	1,431	84.3
Kalmyks	146	166	88.0	168	183	88.9
Tatars	1,765	5,522	32.0	2,013	5,311	37.9
Mordvins	313	1,073	29.2	333	744	44.8
Chuvashs	907	1,774	51.1	815	1,436	56.7
Mari people	324	644	50.3	291	547	53.1
Udmurts	497	715	65.3	411	552	74.4
Bashkirs	864	1,345	64.2	1,172	1,585	74.0
Altaians	59	69	85.5	69	74	93.0
Khakasses	63	79	79.7	64	73	87.1
Tuvinians (Tuvans)	198	206	96.1	249	264	94.4
Buryats	****250	417	60.0	*****287	461	62.2
Yakuts	365	380	96.1	432	443	97.6

*In the Chechen-Ingush ASSR; ** in the Republic of Ingushetia; *** in the Chechen Republic; **** in the Buryat ASSR; ***** in the Republic of Buryatia; taking into account the former Aginski and former Ust-Ordynski Buryat autonomous districts as well. the concentration rate of Buryats within "their" national administrative units in 2010 should account for 84 per cent. *Sources*: Results of the All-Union 1989 Population Census. Ethnic Composition of Population of the RSFSR. Moscow, Respublikanskiy inform.-izdat. tsentr. 747 p. (in Russian); Results of the All-Russian 2010 Population Census. Ethnic Composition of Population. Moscow, Goststatizdat, 2234 p. (in Russian).

Russia understand and speak Russian fluently; this share exceeds 95–96 per cent also for the majority of the ethnic groups in the Russian Federation. These figures illustrate the enormous importance and integrative role of the Russian language in the Russian cultural area. Three clusters of ethnic groups are less integrated into the Russian speaking area and the level of Russian language fluency is far below the national average among them.

a) The first cluster is made up by some small indigenous nationalities living in the Russian North, Siberia and Far East (e.g. Yukaghirs, Teleuts, Telenghits etc.). But it should be emphasized that the contrary situation among small nationalities is also frequent. Many of them know Russian much better than their own languages. The oblivion of native languages, ethnic traditions and customs, the inherited land use and nature

management patterns are the "reverse" of long-term social integration and cultural assimilation of small nationalities of the Russian North and Siberia.

b) The second cluster includes the former migrants (or their descendants) from some Asiatic and other Non-European countries outside the CIS region. Good examples are migrants of Chinese or Vietnamese origin, living in the Russian Federation. As a rule, this group does not include migrants from the former Soviet republics, involved and integrated for several decades or even centuries into the Russian linguistic space.

c) The third cluster embraces some smaller ethnic groups of Northern Caucasus, particularly in Dagestan (e.g. Ghinoukhs, Andians etc).

Compared to the national average, this share is relatively low for some more numerous peoples of the Eastern Caucasus; it varies between 80–90 per cent among the Dargins, Avars, Lezgins, Chechens, Ingushs and is a little bit higher among the Laks and Kumyks.

More than 80 among the 150 main languages of the ethnic groups living in Russia represent the cluster of the so-called "literary languages" (or, in other words, written languages). Approximately one third of the total number of ethnic languages in the Russian Federation are specific for ethnic groups that have the main area of their settlement outside Russia. 94.7 per cent of the inhabitants living in Russia have their own ethnic native languages as mother tongues.

The main focuses of linguistic assimilation in the Russian Federation (including substitution of native languages for the Russian language) are the following:

– Dispersal of ethnic groups in cities.
– Ethnic groups living outside "their" administrative territories (republics, autonomous districts) and surrounded by other (more populous) ethnic groups.
– Small-numbered aboriginal (native, indigenous) peoples in areas of their settlement.

The "titular" ethnic groups inhabiting the areas of national republics in the Russian Federation preserve their own native languages, as a rule, more effectively than other ethnic groups. So, the ethnic native languages are mother tongues for 98–99 per cent of Karachais, Kabardians, Ingushs, Chechens, Tuvinians. This share is much lower for some "titular" peoples constituting ethnic minorities even in "their" national republics. It accounts for approximately 70 per cent among Udmurts, Komi and Mordovians, 60 per cent among Bashkirs and less than 50 per cent among Karelians.

Confessional landscape of Russia

The main features of the confessional landscape of Russia are the following:

– Exclusive confessional diversity (heterogeneity);
– Predominance of the quantitatively prevailing confession (the Orthodox Christianity) over the majority of the country's territory;
– Confessional cleavages and gradients as basic elements of the Russian cultural space;
– Sustainability and historical continuity of main spatial patterns of confessional landscape;
– Different ways of spatial self-organization by various confessions (Streletsky, V.N. 2011a).

The revival of religious life in post-Soviet Russia and the growth of confessional consciousness of various population groups have moved the confessional issue into the foreground in cultural studies. Many academic papers have been published since the early 1990s focusing upon the geography of the leading Russian confessions, local and specific ethnic-religious groups, providing holistic and complex studies of confessional regions. Some research was also devoted to the principal pattern of confessional space in contemporary Russia as a whole (Krindach, A.D. 1996a,b; Safronov, S.G. 2001a,b).

The description of the confessional landscape of Russia cannot be based on official statistics. It is necessary to use indirect indicators and results of various surveys and researches.

Sociological polls show that the share of religious people (believers in traditional sense) is somewhere between 6-8 per cent to 13–15 per cent of the total population. Religious people are identified as people going to church services at least once a month (the share of the so-called passive believers is much higher). The share of the religiously indifferent people is about 11–15 per cent (Streletsky, V.N. 2011b). At the beginning of the 21st century it is slowly decreasing (at the end of the 20th century it had declined abruptly).

From a cultural geographic point of view, it is important to emphasize that different confessions have different patterns of spatial self-organization. On the one hand, there are confessions closely linked with the ethnic composition of population, and geographically spread in areas inhabited by distinct ethnic groups. On the other hand, there are also confessions whose geographical distribution is not ethnically determined.

Examples of the first group are confessions traditional for Russia: Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism. The Russian Federation ranks first in the world regarding the number of Orthodox Christians (up to 65 million believers, according to calculations of the Service Ortodoxe de Presse, 2015)[2]. But at the same time, among all the countries of the so-called Orthodox realm (i.e. the states where Orthodox Christianity is a dominant religion), the share of Orthodox Christians in the total population is smallest in the Russian Federation.

The ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians account for about 95 per cent of the believers of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Russian Federation. The Finno-Ugric peoples of the Russian Federation are predominantly Orthodox Christians as well (up to 3% of the Orthodox Christians in Russia). The Finno-Ugric ethnic groups were converted into Christianity considerably later; the Orthodox faith has taken root among the Karelians and the Komi-Zyrians

since the 13th–14th centuries, among the Komi-Permyaks since the 15th century. Peak of conversion of the Volga-Ural Finnish peoples (Udmurts, Mari people, Mordvins) as well as the Ob-Ugric ethnic groups (Khanty and Mansi people) took place in the 18th–19th centuries. The Finno-Ugric peoples have preserved their Pre-Christian beliefs for a long time; and signs of revival of paganism as a new trend in religious life in Russia became evident at the end of the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st centuries. Orthodox Christianity is also traditional confession for Ossetians, Georgians, some groups of Abkhazians and widely spread among some peoples of Turkic origin – Chuvashs, Yakuts, Altaians, Shors and partly Khakasses. As a consequence of Russian colonization, the Orthodox faith was also adopted by Samoyedic ethnic groups, including the biggest among them – Nenets people and some dispersed smaller groups living in different areas of Siberia, the Russian Far East and the Euro-Asian North.

The second most wide-spread confession in Russia is Islam. The majority of Muslims in the Russian Federation are Sunnis. Shiism is less spread (being confessed, first of all, by Azeri people living in Russia). Small groups of Shiites also live in Dagestan, in towns of the Lower Volga, in Moscow. The Muslims inhabit, first of all, the Northern Caucasus and the Volga-Ural region. Islam has been penetrating into the Volga-Ural region since the 10th century, but became firmly established in the 14th century (in the age of Golden Horde). It has conserved up to now as a traditional confession for Tatars and Bashkirs. Tatars are the biggest ethnic group among peoples of the Islamic cultural realm in Russia.

In the Northern Caucasus Islam has been partly rooted since the Arabic invasions of the 7th and 8th centuries, nevertheless, the Islamization of aboriginal mountain peoples has lasted until the 18th century. Most peoples of the region are of the Mohammedan confession nowadays, except for the Ossetians who remained (predominantly) Orthodox Christians. The peculiarities of cultural evolution of abo-

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[2] It should be mentioned that, according to alternative calculations, this figure might be over-estimated or, vice versa, under-estimated.

riginal highlander societies in the Northwest Caucasus and the Northeast Caucasus were associated, to a considerable extent, with different madhhabs of Islam, historically rooted in those large areas (Radvanyi, J. 2011).

In the Northwest Caucasus the Hanafi madhhab is rooted, being widely spread among all Circassians, or Adyghe peoples – Adygeans in the Republic of Adygea, Cherkessians in Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardians in Kabardino-Balkaria and Shapsugians in the Krasnodar kray; all the four are essentially the same people residing in different administrative units. The turkic peoples of the Northwest Caucasus (Karachays and Balkars) are also predominantly Hanafi Muslims, as well as several smaller groups of Ossetians.

At the same time, ethnic groups of the Northeast Caucasus, including Nakh peoples (Chechens and Ingushs), as well as Daghestani peoples (including Turkic-speaking Kumyks, but excluding also Turkic Nogais – followers of Hanafi school) are mostly Shafi'i Muslims. That's why Sufism, which is organic to Shafi'i madhhab, is rooted much more in the Northeast Caucasus; the region was the main focus of Muslim resistance against Russian expansion in the 19th century. Islamic traditions were conserved in the Northeast Caucasus (though not officially declared) even in the Soviet times, and the post-Soviet renaissance of Islam developed here much faster and more significantly than in the Northwest Caucasus.

The main regions of Buddhism in Russia are Kalmykia (the only compact area of Buddhist culture in Europe) as well as Tuva and Buryatia in the Asiatic part of the country. Buddhism is represented in all three regions in the form of its northern derivate – Lamaism. Buryatia is more heterogeneous than Tuva in confessional dimension. On the one hand, western Buryats have been practicing the settled way of life for a long time; and the share of Orthodox Christians is considerable among them. On the other hand, the eastern (Transbaikal) Buryats are predominantly nomads and keeping Lamaism.

The list of confessions closely connected to ethnic composition of population has to be supplemented by Catholicism. It is predominantly confessed in the Russian Federation by ethnic Poles, Lithuanians and partly by Germans (about one third of the Russian Germans are Roman Catholic). Some protestant denominations can also be mentioned e.g. Lutheranism is practiced in Russia mainly by ethnic Germans, Estonians, Finns.

The most important changes in the geographical distribution of confessions in the Russian Federation at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries are as follows:
– The first tendency is a rapid expansion of Islam due, predominantly, to demographic shifts. According to some estimations (Malashenko, A.V. 1998), the total number of Muslims in the Russian Federation exceeded 15 million people at the end of the 20th century; nowadays it should be as high as 20 million persons.
– The second tendency is a long-term revival of paganism (including shamanism) in some areas of Russia. This trend is typical not only for smaller indigenous ethnic groups in Siberia, but also for some peoples (of Finnish origin particularly) in the European part of the country (in the Republic of Mary-El, Udmurtia etc.).
– The third tendency is the reinforcement of some protestant denominations, especially in Siberia and in large cities in the European part of Russia.

Development patterns of cultural regionalism in Russia

Cultural regionalism is a historically rooted phenomenon in Russia and its study has a long academic tradition. The famous historian Kostomarov described the origin of the historical Russian regions as far back as in the 19th century (Kostomarov, N.I 1860, 1995 [1863]). The cultural peculiarities of the "parceled" Russian lands have emerged and developed under conditions of political division processes in Eastern Europe as long as

since medieval feudalism. A similar point of view was shared by many other historians (Shchapov, A.P. 1861a,b; Milyukov, P.N. 1896; Lyubavsky, M.K. 1909) and geographers (Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky, P.P. 1892; Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky, V.P. 1910). According to this viewpoint, cultural regions in the historical core of Russia are predominantly successors of ancient Russian lands. This means that cultural regionalism is an old phenomenon in Russia, at least in its European part. The historically rooted regional identity is a strikingly distinctive feature of its cultural geographic space.

Nevertheless, to be compared with other countries, other nations, other cultures, various regional identity patterns are in some cases overlapped in Russia by national and ethnic identity patterns. Some authors (Smirnyagin, L.V. 1999) argue that Russian culture is, in a certain sense, "a-spatial" (that implies the absence of significant regional cultural contrasts within the space of Russian ethnic settlement structure and, as a result, weak point of local patriotism). Russian people settled within an enormous space, on a vast territory with relatively small natural barriers and borders. Russian people did not have to fundamentally change their way of life in the process of long-distance migrations. Due to these conditions the cultural traits did not change significantly from place to place, from area to area. In other words, the Russian culture remained to be relatively uniform in spatial dimension, "a-spatial" in terms of the aforementioned concept (Smirnyagin, L.V. 1999).

This idea has equally strong and weak points. On the one hand, the arguments in favour of this concept are the predominance of all-Russian cultural features on a huge territory of the ethnic mega-core of the country and its relatively small variability among Russian cultural regions. In comparison to other cultural realms, the distance between contrast cultural regions in Russia is very long. The vast and relatively homogeneous cultural areas in Russia could exceed, sometimes, the aggregate surface of several

European countries with strikingly different cultural patterns.

The Russian geographical space is also characterized by strong "vertical" socio-cultural differences: urban areas – rural areas, big city – small town etc. While these distinctions emerged long ago, they have significantly strengthened during the 20th century, under conditions of the Soviet over-centralization. The "vertical" socio-cultural contrasts are marked in the Russian geographical space more strongly than the "horizontal" distinctions between various cultural regions of the country. Sometimes the over-centralization really hinders the cultural regionalization of the society, erodes the territorial integrity of local communities, entails slackening of regional consciousness, and even contributes to "frustration" of certain regional identity patterns, especially on the local level. People living in large cities (like Omsk and Irkutsk, Perm and Vladivostok etc.) often have much more common cultural features among themselves as urban residents than between them and inhabitants of the surrounding rural areas located closely to the major regional centres.

The excessive, hypertrophied significance of administrative division in various strata of Russian society is also to be mentioned in the context of the "a-spatiality hypothesis". Administrative boundaries often divide up the organically evolved cultural and historical regions of the country, strongly determining regional development processes. To some extent, administrative division is a phenomenon that significantly influences regional consciousness and regional identity patterns in Russia.

But on the other hand, the historical experience of the development of cultural regionalism in the European part of Russia also contradicts the hypothesis of "a-spatiality" of Russian culture. The cultural originality of historical Russian lands, which emerged in medieval times, is a real and strong precondition of Russian regionalism. Spatially changeable patterns of the role of traditions shape the contemporary regional identities of Russians (for example, Krylov, M.P. 2010).

In my view, the real phenomenon interpreted sometimes as "a-spatiality" is not a "genetic," ancestral, inherited feature of Russian culture. It is rather the result of the deformation of traditional rural culture during the Soviet period (Streletsky, V.N. 2011b).

The main factors determining the development patterns of cultural regionalism in Russia are the following:

1. The crucial role of the inherited cultural geographic distinctions within the historical core of the European part of Russia.

2. The long-distance transfer of people and their cultural traits from the historical core in Eastern Europe into Northern Asia and the impact of that process on regional identity patterns.

3. Cultural borrowings from aboriginal populations.

4. A continuing cultural interchange between the ethnic "megacore" of the country and the ethnic peripheries of the former Russian Empire.

5. Drastic social transformations during the Soviet period and their impact on the erosion of local consciousness, regional identity and cultural regionalism patterns.

The end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is a new period in the cultural regional development in Russia. This new period is characterized by the evident revival of regional and local identity in various parts of Russia, including both the European part of the country and Siberia.

The increase of cultural geographic distinctions within the space of Russian ethnic settlement is a gradual new phenomenon. The revival of regionalism in the Russian Federation in the last decades was accompanied by strengthening comprehension of *regional interests* by the local population. Slogans of regional interests were broadly adopted by local authorities and regional political elites. The transition from the unitary centralized state to the federal political system also influenced the upsurge of regional consciousness in ethnically "Russian" oblasts and krays. The constitutional fixation of "titular" distinctions between "ethnic" republics and "Russian" oblasts stimulated the search for their own regional identity in areas that were devoid of specific ethnic patterns and attributes.

After the breakdown of the USSR, the cultural regionalization of Russia embraced first of all two vast areas (macro-regions). One of them is *European South of Russia* (predominantly the belt of steppes and forest-steppes) where some groups have been preserving their local consciousness even during the Soviet period. The Steppe Caucasus as part of the European South of Russia is at the same time a spacious and extended contact zone that links cultural "heartland" of the country with diverse and mosaic cultural realm of Mountain Caucasus. Ethnic and cultural interaction of both realms was also promoted by their economic complementary reciprocity.

In historical retrospective, the interactions between North and South in the European part of Russia were always complicated. Traditionally, the South of Russia accepted endless streams of fugitive peasants from the historical core of the country, becoming a refuge and asylum for different groups of religious and political dissidents and being at the same time the main hearth of disturbances and revolts. The political culture in the so-called "Cossack regions" of Southern Russia has been determined for a long time by ethos of military democracy, and the social institutes were often based, to a certain extent, on principles of self-organization.

During the Civil War (1918–1920), the Cossack population in the European South of Russia was politically divided: numerous groups of Cossacks were involved into the Red Army and fought for it, but the majority of them (especially in the Don region, the Kuban region and the Terek region), on the contrary, participated in the White movement. The policy of so-called "decossackisation" (in Russian – *raskazachivaniye*) pursued by the Communist authorities in Soviet Russia and the USSR after the Civil War was aimed at the extermination of Cossacks as a separate subethnic, cultural and military entity. According to some historical interpretations (Holquist, P. 2002), the Cossacks had disap-

peared as a relatively secluded regional entity in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The collectivization campaign of the 1920–1930, pursued by Bolsheviks on fertile Cossack homelands of the European South of Russia, could be regarded as a turning point. Nevertheless, the Cossack identity survived in latent forms for several decades of the Soviet epoch.

The rapid revival of Cossack consciousness appeared only at the end of the Soviet epoch. Several groups of Cossacks nowadays tend to position themselves as separate ethnic entities. According to the Russian Population censuses in 2002 and 2010, some of them were registered as ethnic groups (nevertheless, being included in generalized statistical data into the total number of ethnic Russians). According to the last Population Census, more than 95 per cent of Russian Cossacks live in the European south of the country (in the Southern Federal District and North Caucasian Federal District). The Rostov region (which embraces the Don area, the traditional and most important territory of Cossack settlement) contains 62.5 per cent of all Cossacks currently living in Russia.

On the other hand, the cultural peculiarity of the European South of Russia is not reinforced by the common and broad indivisible regional identity of "Southern Russians." In the European South of Russia, local consciousness patterns prevail over the "common" (for a whole region) regional identity patterns. Furthermore, the crucial cultural geographic feature of the European South of Russia is the lesser integration of ethnic minorities in the regional society in comparison with the situation in the Russian North.

The other macro-region, permanently generating its particular and specific identity, is *Siberia*. Being an important part of Russian cultural space, Siberia belongs in terms of geopolitics and geo-economics to the Asiatic-Pacific area. Historically, it has experienced, in its essential territorial parts, the deep cultural influence from civilizations of Central Asia, China, Korea and Japan. The originality of the ethnic and cultural development processes in Siberia due to the intensive mixture

between Russian colonists and aboriginals became a mighty driving force for consolidation of the regional identity and cultural regionalism, strengthening of the so-called "regional tendency" (in Russian language – *oblastnicheskaya tendenciya*).

The views of Russian geographer and ethnologist POTANIN, G.N. (1906) and other Siberian regionalists ("*sibirskiye oblastniki*"), for example, YADRINTSEV, author of the book "Siberia as a colony" (YADRINTSEV, N.M. 1882) became very popular among the Siberian intellectuals on the eve of the 20th century, which connected the future welfare and development prospects of Siberia with the level of its autonomy. Separatist aspirations of certain groups etc of Siberian intellectuals as well as representatives of some other strata (landowners, Cossacks, merchants, entrepreneurs) continually strengthened at the beginning of the 20th century and that process was not without importance for the course of the Civil War in Siberia and the Russian Far East.

New tendencies became apparent again in Siberia towards the end of the 20th century. The unity of the country was reinforced during the socialist period, not least due to the so-called "iron curtain," which separated its regions from external cultural, economic and political impacts. Under the circumstances of the globally-oriented market economy, the vast macro-region of Siberia should focus its outer linkages, to a certain degree, upon neighbouring countries. Simultaneously, cultural expansion from the neighbouring states into Siberian geographical space is gradually increasing. And last but not least: the crash of the communist project entailed a search for alternative "modus" of public consciousness, and in this context the "Siberian idea" has chances for success.

As we demonstrated the revival of cultural regionalism is a new and important trend of regionalization of Russia in the 1990s–2000s. It should be emphasized, however, that cultural regionalism is something quite different from regional separatism. Despite several forecasts of disintegration of the Russian Federation recently, it can be ascertained

that the secession of some regions with an ethnically predominating Russian population (in Siberia etc., similar to the scenario of self-determination of settlers of Anglo-Saxon or Spanish origin in the New World in the 18th–19th centuries) is rather unlikely in the foreseeable future.

Regional and cultural diversity, multiculturalism, historically rooted regional identity, territorial solidarity, and local patriotism are important aspects of the sustainability of society. Political separatism is rather a pathology of cultural regionalism, but on no account a natural stage or grade in its development.

Conclusions

To be considered as a whole, the ethnic and cultural space of Russia is characterized by evident patterns of steadiness and sustainability. The inherited spatial patterns predominate both in ethnic settlement structures and in configurations of linguistic, confessional and regional cultural characteristics.

Nevertheless, there were also some cultural geographic changes and shifts in Russia at the end of the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st centuries. On the one hand, some of these shifts can be explained by newest demographic trends. The great differences in the reproduction of population belonging to various ethnic and confessional groups are becoming more and more important factors of ethnic and cultural transformation.

On the other hand, the cultural geographic transformation of the country is caused by processes of modernization of the society. The increasing spatial mobility of population entails the erosion and destruction of ethnic and cultural barriers, the formation of zones of cultural diffusion and ethnic contact areas, and increases the ethnic and confessional heterogeneity of the society.

Regional identity in Russia is based on historical roots, being the result of the long-term interaction between mobility and sedentism. Unlike the situation in many other countries (including the European nation-states as

well) where the perception of historical regional identity is gradually decreasing under conditions of globalization (see, for example, Vaishar, A. and Zapletalova, J. 2016), post-Soviet Russia experienced a real boom of regional consciousness and the revival of regional identity at the end of the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st centuries. In a certain sense, this process can be regarded as a response to the previous erosion of regional identity in the Soviet period. There is no doubt that regional identity is one of the most important preconditions for sustainability of the Russian society, ensuring its capacity for modernization.

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Re-bordering of the Hungarian South: Geopolitics of the Hungarian border fence

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Abstract

The Hungarian borders have been at the centre of political and social discourse since the 20th century. Subject to whichever government dominated at a given time, border policies strengthened and disappeared frequently. During the summer and autumn of 2015, a fence was constructed in effort to discourage migration at the southern borders of Hungary. Building on collective social memory which links Hungary's southern borders with divisionary actions, the government organised a campaign effective in convincing voters that more aggressive border control measures should be enacted. Opposition parties had no effective tools to counter the government's actions; thus, popular support for the government increased significantly. This paper examines how the attention and resources concentrated on the southern borders do not directly correspond to purported objectives. In fact, this paper argues that the issues related to securing the southern border of Hungary are merely used as political resources to achieve domestic political- and power-related goals. Taking into account specific international trends of border research, this work aims to illustrate how the border itself (more concisely, the policy of strengthening the southern border) became a political resource, through the remarkably efficient communications campaign of the ruling Hungarian government party.

Keywords: bordering, borderwork, debordering, re-bordering, migration crisis, Balkans

Introduction

In the summer and autumn of 2015, a fence was constructed at the southern borders of Hungary in order to halt migration. Up until earlier that year, public attitudes toward refugees reflected the sentiment of Europe as a whole: cautiously sympathetic. Non-governmental organisations and churches provided support for people who were arriving primarily from the Middle East. However, the Fidesz-KDNP[2] government organised a campaign in the early months of that year, resulting in the change of political attitude which garnered attention throughout Eu-

rope. The Hungarian campaign to protect the country was extremely efficient in earning the support of both pro-government and opposition voters. Jobbik[3] attempted to outbid the government, whereas left-wing parties avoided taking part in the dispute. Although minor liberal parties opposed the campaign, they were unable to significantly increase their support among voters. The Hungarian example had a powerful impact in East Central Europe, particularly among the Visegrád Four countries. In developed Western democracies (particularly Western Europe), the campaign and subsequent shift of public opinion earned attention and support only among radical, populist and anti-establishment parties and their voters.

This paper aims to examine all these phenomena according to the theoretical framework of *border studies*, a field gaining promi-

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[2] Fidesz (Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance) is a national conservative centre-right political party which in coalition with KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) has been governing the country since 2010.

[3] Jobbik – Movement for a Better Hungary is a radical nationalist party established in 2003. Jobbik is the leading opposition party in Hungary.

nence around the last turn of the century which highlights the social construction, nature, and dynamism of the border through the complex evaluation thereof (including O'Dowd, L. 2002; van Houtum, H. and van Naerssen, T. 2002; Kolossov, V. 2005; Newman, D. 2006a,b, 2011; Scott, J.W. and van Houtum, H. 2009; Paasi, A. 2011; van Houtum, H. 2011).

This paper argues that the perception of borders (by the governing political elite, and thus of society as well) changed after 2015 as a result of conscious political decisions and their widespread communication and dissemination by the government. The protection of the southern borders (and reinforcing the *need* to be protected) serves to other those who might otherwise come across, thus, threatening the national identity of Hungarians inside Hungary. By increasing attention focused on the borders through the physical strengthening of the borders and controlling discourse, political profit can be gained. This became a dominant element of identity policy in Hungary at the centre of public debates and discourses; furthermore, the narrative reinforces the belief that "Hungary has been the bastion of Europe for a thousand years." Meanwhile, the political opposition has no effective answers, and thus the national borders have become political resources for the parties in power.

This paper intends to outline the shifting political actions of Hungarian (primarily, but not exclusively) political elites in regard to Hungarian borders since the 20th century, with particular focus on changes taking place after 2015. We argue that borders have always been an important subject of 20th century Hungarian politics as political objectives (e.g. revision) or the means of achieving such objectives (e.g. Iron Curtain, cross-border cooperation). Furthermore, this paper also shows that the primary role of the southern borders has always been protection, ensuring a high degree of division. Finally, the paper also evaluates how the current Hungarian governing elite uses borders as resources to reach their domestic political goals in the course of competition between parties.

Regarding borders as a resource is not a new approach (O'Dowd, L. 2002; Balogh, P. 2014, Sohn, C. 2014); however, in most cases the resource in question is used along the border (through cross-border activities) and the nature of each territory divided by the border characterize the resource (e.g. legal/illegal flows, cooperation, position). However, in the Hungarian case, using political discourse and building on society's existing assumptions and ideas through identity-building, the border becomes a resource used for an objective independent from the borders (i.e., power) and territorially not linked to them.

Literature review

The evaluation of national borders has seen its renaissance over the last few decades (O'Dowd, L. 2002; Newman, D. 2011; Paasi, A. 2011; Laine, J.P. 2016). This can be primarily attributed to rapidly changing activities and subsequent impacts related to borders at both the global and the local level. Firstly, the rapid pace of globalisation, particularly since the early 1990s, has made borders increasingly insignificant in the creation of a "world without borders." This includes the disassembly of traditional member-state borders, establishment of cross-border co-operations in the framework of the European integration (O'Dowd, L. 2002; Scott, J.W. 2011), the creation of institutions and networks less dependent on geographical locations, and the emergence of sophisticated forms of overcoming distance. Secondly, *de facto* or *de jure* changes of borders took place after the fall of the bipolar world generating tensions and sensitive geopolitical situations (e.g. Kosovo, Kaliningrad). As a reaction to the security challenges of increasing international migration and global terrorism in the early 2000s, many developed countries have introduced stricter border control measures through legal, institutional, physical or other types of obstacles. Thus, borders have been put at the forefront of politics, public discourse and scientific interest (with both negative and positive connotations).

Due to the complexity of border issues and how they affect societies, researchers from different academic backgrounds examine borders (Newman, D. 2006a), applying different, often interdisciplinary tools to evaluate their characteristics and functions. The group of researchers explicitly considering themselves "border research/study professionals" has emerged and expanded, using the aforementioned interdisciplinary and critical approach.

In addition, research works which used to focus mostly on national (and to a lesser extent subnational) administrative borders have become extremely diversified. Nowadays, the representatives of border studies view each segment of society as a range of borders that divide different groups of people (according to citizenship, ethnicity, assets, caste, job position, etc.) based on the constructed *us-them* distinction which strengthens group identity (either consciously or not). According to van Houtum, H. and van Naerssen, T. (2002), some regional differences are caused by the established borders themselves, and the process of bordering creates a certain type of territorial order inwards (ordering) and causes exclusion and distinction outwards (othering).

Today, most representatives of border studies accept that the world is not progressing toward a borderless world despite the impact of globalisation, the significance of classic political borders does not fade, and the importance of social borders continuously increases (Newman, D. 2006a; Paasi, A. 2011). However, experts also accept that borders are constantly transforming and becoming more complex while other functions remain constant (O'Dowd, L. 2002; Balogh, P. 2014). In accordance with the approach of critical (political) geography, borders are increasingly considered social constructs (Newman, D. and Paasi, A. 1998; Newman, D. 2006a; van Houtum, H. 2011) where borders are modified continuously by the discourses and actions of various actors. In addition, debordering and *re-bordering* occur simultaneously and continuously, through the discourses of different interest groups.

In this paper, bordering (re- and de-bordering) is used to refer to efforts aiming to change the significance of borders which are not exclusively performed by those in power and do not exclusively mean official policies. Recently, the concept of bordering has gained a wider meaning; the creation of borders based on territorial social characteristics has become its most important aspect, in which the media, economy, ideologies, differing identities, shared values, and individual decisions are also included. However, in East Central Europe elites in power remain the most important actors of bordering, thus, we focus here on their activity.

In addition to theoretical approaches, case studies focusing on specific border sections are also important elements of the growing body of literature. As border studies are explicitly such a field of research where local specificities and contexts have a significant role, most researchers do not believe that a "final border theory" can be constructed (Paasi, A. 2011). While conceptualisations are possible, some argue that generalised border narratives conceal more than they show (Laine, J.P. 2016) and, thus, the operation of borders should be understood through a large number of case studies. This paper supports this argument; we intend to examine the specific discourses surrounding the southern borders of Hungary and draw related and general conclusions for other border sections as well. Although this work focuses on Hungary, we are convinced that this is a global issue since efforts to strengthen borders are increasingly on the agenda all over Europe, America, and Asia. Therefore, we expect that discourse and disputes related to borders will escalate in the future, especially in relation to the US-Mexican border, the internal and external borders of the EU, as well as borders in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. From a global perspective, the discourse surrounding Hungary's border issues are arguably relevant.

The number of Hungarian publications focusing on border issues has been growing steadily. After World War I, academic works

focusing on the issue of borders gained prominence as the Treaty of Trianon significantly reorganised the territory of Hungary (e.g. Olay, F. 1930). During this period, Hungarian research primarily sought territorial revision (Hajdú, Z. 2008). When the Communists seized power, the examination of borders became a political/military issue; aspects of scientific accuracy could not prevail and (political) geography was restricted to examining the new state territory (Hajdú, Z. 2008). During the 1980s research increased in the field which progressed further after the transition to democracy. The Hungarian academic literature from this period is also unique: in Western scientific works a critical approach appeared in the research during the 1990s and borders were seen as social constructs rather than spatial lines of division; however, in Hungary the classic geographical approach remained dominant (Timár, J. 2007).

This type of research focusing on cross-border cooperation dominated the field and became rather unique to the Hungarian situation; due to the large number of Hungarians living outside of the Hungarian borders, cross-border cooperation has both economic and national policy implications. Authors of this paper discussed several aspects of this issue in previous publications (see Pap, N. *et al.* 2014, Glied, V. and Pap, N. 2017; Pap, N. and Glied, V. 2017a,b).

Research methods

During our research we monitored the communications regarding strengthening and protecting borders using the method of political discourse analysis. We analysed the messages and channels used by parties and politicians, political discourse and the construction of symbolic realities. We relied on the theory of Edelman, M. (1967) who discussed the articulation of abstract terms and meanings, such as the use of language and symbols.

The dominance of texts in politics is evident and as Bourdieu, P. (1991) explained, politics produces speeches rather than institutions.

According to Oakeshott, M. (1991), politics are three quarters text; one of the founding fathers of empirical political science, Lasswell, H. and his associates (1949) conducted extensive research regarding the language of politics. However, discursivity is more complex than linguistic analysis since the entire reality of politics is generated and modified in a public process of creating interpretation, which is significantly influenced by the channel between the sender and the receiver.

Swartz, D.L. (2013) further developed this idea, arguing that political symbolism relaxes the rigidity of politics and finds links between the different levels of political socialisation. Based on the work of Burke, K. (1969), we sought insight through distinguishing between politically active (government), politically passive (opposition) and passive observer (society) groups, including their discourse in a historical/political narrative. This paper examines the geopolitical utterances of the leading politicians of major Hungarian parties (Viktor Orbán, the chairman of Fidesz, and Gábor Vona, the chair of Jobbik) and the text of the 2015–2016 Hungarian campaigns on borders, "others" and "internal order".[4]

Changing perceptions of the Hungarian borders

In Hungary, national borders have always played a major role in public discourse due to historical and identity-related reasons; the independent state and its divisive borders are extremely important institutions. Early Magyar tribes arrived from Asia to Europe and this has historically served to separate Hungary from its neighbours as the "odd one out" (i.e., no precise connections to Indo-European languages or ancestry in the region). (Hardi, T. *et al.* 2009).

The territorial consequences of the Trianon Peace Treaty which ended World War I highlighted this perception of the borders, a central element of Hungarian public dis-

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[4] A more exhaustive analysis of this issue can be found in Pap, N. and Glied, V. (2017a) and Glied, V. and Pap, N. (2017)

course (shifting depending on the dominant political directions) since the early 20th century. During the interwar period, clear and unilateral debordering was the aim of the Hungarian public discourse and politics which manifested in efforts taken to enable territorial revisions. To different extents, territorial claims were articulated against each of the neighbouring states, leading to unilateral efforts to modify the borders. This was not only true at the level of international and national politics, but also at the levels of everyday life, education, and ordinary routines (public, private and church). The border revisions achieved with the assistance of Nazi Germany prior to and during World War II were short-lived and the Paris Peace Treaties (1947) annulled all of them.

During state-socialism unilateral re-bordering was the most typical approach. Several border sections were strengthened by technical barriers, filtering and blocking both outward and inward access, and the communist regime systematically increased isolation. The most well-known example for that is the Iron Curtain, separating the West and the East at the western borders of Hungary. To a similar extent, the southern border of Hungary, shared with Tito's Yugoslavia (which had been expelled from the communist community), was also militarised from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s. The Hungarian Maginot Line was constructed here in the late 1940s to prepare for armed conflict between Yugoslavia and the Warsaw Pact countries (Horváth, I. and Kiss, J. 2008). Border control became stricter, and in lieu of the Interior Ministry, the State Protection Authority (ÁVH) took control of the border zone. In general, the period of state-socialism increased the dividing role of borders (in a military, ideological, and economic sense), and not only toward the West, but with the "friendly" socialist countries as well (Hajdú, Z. 2008).

After the change of regime in Central and Eastern European countries, multilateral debordering was initiated in accordance with liberal European values. At this time, experts began documenting the development

of a "borderless world" created by globalisation and European integration which had spread to East Central Europe. The ending of the Cold War, the subsequent opening of borders and the restoration of the freedom to travel became symbols of liberalisation. In addition, several city partnership agreements and cross-border institutional cooperations emerged, and the construction of the missing cross-border infrastructure was initiated. On the path towards EU accession Hungary and its neighbours had interest in deconstructing borders at both international and local levels. This was generously supported by the integration institutions in accordance with the vision that Europe would become a "Europe of regions" instead of a "Europe of nations" (O'Dowd, L. 2002). Despite minor setbacks, the aforementioned processes dominated Hungary right until the 2010s. Interestingly, the globally significant events of 11 September had no major impacts on border discourses.

However, the new government taking office in Hungary in 2010 enacted many changes which shifted the approach of the political elite toward borders through measures such as passportization, support of symbolic causes (e.g. the flag of Szeklerland) and functional actions (e.g. foreign political campaigns, investing in the economic zone of the Carpathian Basin, cross-border financial supports of various national goals).[5] This led to protests from

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[5] Pursuant to Section 3 of Act XLV of 2010: "*all members and communities of the Hungarian nation, subjected to the jurisdiction of other states, belong to the single Hungarian nation whose cross-border cohesion is a reality and, at the same time, a defining element of the personal and collective identity of Hungarians*". The double citizenship regime (2010) allows ethnic Hungarians who are citizens of a neighbouring state to obtain Hungarian citizenship easily, which is seen as one of the most important means to reach the virtual reunification of the nation. The flag of Szeklerland, a historical region in central Romania with predominant ethnic Hungarian population, has been flying over Hungarian parliament since 2013 despite being the focus of several debates between Hungary (or ethnic Hungarians of Romania) and Romania. The Wekerle plan of the Ministry of National Economy aims (among others) to strengthen the positions of Hungarian enterprises in the Carpathian basin, etc.

the neighbouring countries in many cases which did not deter the Hungarian government to further defining their borders. In this period, a new approach toward borders appeared: national borders were assigned political roles and tasks related to domestic politics, power and identity. Hungarian border politics had previously been typically practical in its approach; measures of revision or militarisation of borders and debordering had been the subject of politics and problem-solving political issues. However, after 2010 the border became a tool and a resource to achieve goals less related to borders themselves.

After 2015, the European migration crisis became the new international challenge and brought about political changes which also affected borders. The perception of borders shifted in political narratives, the southern border became the front line, protecting not only Hungary, but Europe and the entire Western World. Unilateral re-bordering was launched, with open protests from the affected neighbours in many cases. However, with regard to the other borders, virtualisation remain the dominant approach, at least on behalf of the Hungarian party. In addition, the typical characteristic of politics related to borders after 2010 is still true: border protection is not of concern due to problems related to the borders themselves, but due to goals independent of the borders; border issues have become a political resource.

It is important to emphasise that members of the society do not view all of Hungary's borders identically. The social values, ideas and associations related to specific border sections (strategic directions) are historically quite different. Hungary's western and northern border regions are regarded as being occupied by groups with similar cultures (western Christianity), Europaism, traditional modernisation and innovation (German regions, shopping and tourism, guest workers, investors) and shared fates (Poland). Historically, these groups have had positive connections with Hungarian people and their traditions became Hungarian traditions and vice versa. Despite military threats (the age

of the Árpád Dynasty in the 11–13th centuries, 1703–1711, 1848–1849 and in 1944) and rivalries (e.g. Poles in the Middle Ages, the Czechs and the Slovaks in the 20th century), the traditional Hungarian collective memory about the western and northern neighbours is positive. However, the social stereotypes associated with the eastern borders are more negative, attributed to the vicinity of the Russian sphere of influence, the perception of backwardness. Although the border of Romania and Hungary is eastern in geographical sense, the related attitudes are more similar to those toward the southern Balkan neighbours.

In regard to the southern border, according to the 1993 and 2000 surveys of Gallup, two-thirds of Hungarians (71% in 2000) agree with the following statement: *Hungary has been the bastion protecting the West for a thousand years, and they have not been grateful (even now)* (Száraz, O. 2012). Thus, the role of the "bastion" of the West, Europe or Christianity is still a living concept in the minds of many Hungarians.

In this paper we focus on the issue of how this "bastion" role applies to the southern borders of Hungary, where they also function as the boundary towards the Balkans. The Hungarian perception of this border is centred around the narrative of protection from the inevitable clash of cultures. *Table 1* explores how different political events affected the functions of Hungary's southern borders.

The current southern border of Hungary is a result of the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920. Throughout the 20th century the Hungarian-Serbian, Hungarian-Croatian and Hungarian-Slovenian borders changed on multiple occasions, however, they were reverted back to the 1920 division.

The majority of the southern borders of Hungary is linked to (and divided from) territories of the (Romanian, Serbian and Croatian) nation-states which are considered by the Hungarian public as the "Balkans". This Balkan identity serves to other the nation-states south of Hungary as being "different" than the Hungarian state. From a religious point of view, this difference initially meant Islam (for centuries, the Ottoman

Table 1. Characteristics of the southern borders after the First World War*

Year	Political background	Dominant characteristic	Reason
1918	Dissolution of Austria-Hungary; Kingdom of SHS, Greater Romania created	divisive	Regions formerly in the internal zone of the Hungarian state become external, cross-border and foreign territories. A hostile relationship develops with the new states.
1921	Most of Baranya County returns to Hungary	connecting	Within framework of border correction, Pécs and Baranya are returned to Hungarian state, borders solidified, most Serbs leave region.
1941	Hungary enters war with Yugoslavia	connecting	Bačka, Prekmurje, Međimurje, the Baranja Triangle annexed to the Kingdom of Hungary; the border is moved south at multiple sections.
1945	Hungary loses World War II	divisive	The Trianon borders are restored; acquisitions of 1938–1941 are lost.
1951–1953	Open hostility with Yugoslavia; fortification, arms race	divisive	Certain elements of the Southern Defence System are constructed.
1989–1990	Transition to democracy in Central, Eastern Europe; end of Cold War	connecting	The border ceases to act as a Cold War boundary.
1991–2001	Period of the Yugoslav War	connecting	Southern regions of Hungary are near war areas; refugees arrive; Hungary joins NATO.
2004	Slovenia's accession to EU	connecting	Border of Hungary and Slovenia becomes internal EU border in 2004 and Schengen internal border in 2007.
2007	Romania's accession to EU	connecting	The border of Hungary and Romania becomes internal EU border.
2013	Croatia's accession to EU	connecting	The border of Hungary and Croatia becomes internal EU border.
2001–2015	Serbia's integration with EU	connecting	Accessibility within the cross-border region gradually improves; the EU integration aims of Serbia are increasingly determined.
2015	Migration crisis erupts at Serbian, Croatian border; partially with Slovenia, Romania	divisive	At long sections of the Serbian and (partly) Croatian border, and at a short section of the Romanian border, fences are constructed.

*Edited by Pap, N. 2017.

Empire occupied the other side of the border), then Orthodoxy (regarding Serbia and Romania), against which Hungarians and Hungary served as the "bastion of Europe" for "a thousand years." In addition to these religious associations based on historical traditions, the southern border is also known for being lined with threat and protections (border fortifications and the remains of Ottoman conquest still survive here, as well as the *Militärgrenze* i.e. military frontier established by the Habsburgs in the 18–19th century). Indeed, this is the site of the anti-Hungarian Serbian movements of the freedom fights against the Habsburgs and the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s and has historically been the most unstable border section of Hungary (Rónai, A. 1945). It is apparent that the narrative created by the Hungarian government effectively relied on this as well *(Figure 1).*

gration particularly dangerous.[6] There are no major immigrant groups in Hungary, religious citizens typically follow a Christian denomination, and cultural identity is based on Judeo-Christian cultural cornerstones.

After the change of regime, numerous studies examined xenophobia and discrimination in Hungary. TÁRKI Social Research Institute has systematically studied xenophobia and attitudes of Hungarians toward foreigners and minorities since 1992. Based on these surveys it can be said that almost half of all Hungarians (two-thirds after 2015) expressed prejudice towards immigrants from third-world (i.e. less developed) countries. The higher rate of xenophobia compared to other countries[7] in the region can be partly attributed to problems caused by co-existence with the Roma minority. In addition, people project problems of Western Europe to their

Fig. 1. Barriers along the southern border of Hungary in 2015 (ed. by Pap, N., graphics by Simon, B.)

The migration crisis and the importance of borders

In Central and Eastern Europe immigration did not cause problems that would have affected the everyday lives of people until very recently (Kocsis, K. *et al.* 2016). Several researchers confirmed that until 2015 the citizens of Hungary did not consider immi-

[6] Poverty, fear of an uncertain future, and emigration all ranked higher in the polls than fear of immigration. However, the degree of xenophobia is extremely high in Hungary compared to other Central and Eastern European countries. This is supported by the Eurobarometer surveys – Standard Eurobarometer 82, Autumn 2014. http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_anx_en.pdf

[7] On the eastern part of Germany see Glorius, B. 2017, on other post-socialist countries see Sík, E. *et al.* (2016).

own country and the issue has been further exacerbated by the traditional approach that Hungarians – with their unique language, culture and history – are an island in Europe and must fight to protect their sovereignty.

Among the voters of Jobbik, the rate of Hungarians expressing open xenophobia is above average; however, according to surveys from 2015–2016, party preference played only a very small role in rates of xenophobia. For this reason, it can be concluded that the migrant crisis and the anti-migrant government campaign played an important role in the widespread rejection of immigrants and migrants (Simonovits, B. and Szalai, B. 2013).

Interestingly, Hungarian radical nationalists (supporters of Jobbik) are sympathetic toward followers of Islam and the largest organisation of Hungarian Muslims (Magyar Iszlám Közösség) has shown support for Jobbik. Party chairman Gábor Vona has emphasised his appreciation for Islam on numerous occasions. This phenomenon has complex cultural reasons, but is primarily attributed to the historical context of early Hungarian Turanism[8]. Jobbik's pro-Muslim approach was advantageous to Fidesz who tried to use

nationalist rhetoric to win back its earlier popularity and influence hundreds of thousands of voters who had switched to Jobbik.

The political discourse and communications emerging in relation to the 2015 migrant crisis balanced on the verge of reality and semi-reality when it expressed and conveyed powerful messages (in multiple stages) to both Hungarian citizens and migrants. Initially this caused a great divide in public opinion. The main semantic element of the discourse was the idea that there existed a *need to protect* Hungary and its residents from the unfavourable impacts of the migrant wave and that Hungary would resist the invasion of hostile people and their culture. The word protection utilises the people's need for safety, capitalises on their instinctive fear, and legitimises the importance of preventive actions. The protection of the country and national sovereignty effectively directed the attention of people to the issue of borders and border protection. In addition, the phenomenon of social (re)bordering was also carried out by the government: it tried to construct physical borders, as well as new social ones.

Discursive and physical strengthening of national borders (re-bordering)

In order to achieve its objectives, the government had to demonstrate that a threat existed. By mixing up legal and illegal migration, as well as the categories of refugees and immigrants, the Orbán government was able to blur the social and legal lines between them (which might be considered a type of partial top-down debordering). In addition, by appropriating the word protection, the government strengthened the coherence of its own communication, since political, legal, and policing means were available to control the wave of migrants. On the other hand, opposition parties did not have any possibility for action. When the crisis erupted, they remained hesitant and did not have access to a realistic assessment of the ongoing process.

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[8] Regarding Islam, Hungary has a special and unique history in Europe. A minority of the Hungarians (Magyars) settling in the Carpathian Basin during the 10th century were the followers of Islam, which was preserved as a base of royal power for centuries (Pap, N. *et al.* 2014). Later, in the periods between specific instances of assimilation, Muslim communities appeared. Sometimes co-existence had severe social and economic consequences, such as during the period of Ottoman occupation in the 16–17th century. The Battle of Mohács in 1526 lead to the demise of the Kingdom of Hungary in the Middle Ages. The 150-year Turkish occupation and then the destruction of the liberation wars resulted in a changing ethnic structure in the central part of the Carpathian Basin, which is considered the primary reason for the decline of the country according to the mainstream explanations. However, Turanism, as an ideology linked to the Hungarian far-right, emphasises family and cultural ties to Turkish peoples, as well as cultural links, and it is sympathetic toward Muslims. The most significant Turanist group of our times is organised within Jobbik, which makes it clear why party leader Gábor Vona acted sympathetically toward the Muslim world on numerous occasions.

The largest governing party, Fidesz was successful in constructing its own narrative of what was happening, in effect forcing the opposition to merely follow governmental communication after the summer of 2015. Hungarian Prime minister Viktor Orbán surprised Paris with his statement given right after the attack on the head office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in January 2015. The Hungarian premier had already emphasised protection against the dangers threatening Europe. Initially, this looked like an effort to divert attention from internal political and social problems, but later proved to be an efficient political weapon in the competition with Jobbik for popularity and the restoration of the governing party's popularity.

In summer 2015, countries of the Balkans, Central Europe, and Western Europe blamed and criticised each other for the failure of the migration policy through political statements and messages. Meanwhile, at the Keleti and Nyugati Railway Stations of Budapest, thousands of refugees demanded permission to proceed to Austria without registering in Hungary, further deepening the crisis *(Photo 1* and 2) In addition to its practical function, the temporary barrier (fence) erected on the southern borders of Hungary by mid-2015 also served as metaphor in Hungarian and European public discussions.

That same summer Viktor Orbán argued that the failed politics of Western Europe cannot protect the continent from migration, and therefore, Hungary must protect its borders independently by constructing a physical barrier.[9] The official government communication built on the historic concepts of "Hungary, the fortress of Christianity" and the "bastion of Europe" and the fence became a token of protection, an important concept omnipresent in Hungarian political thinking.

On 19 September, the Hungarian premier attended a meeting of the conservative German CSU party state legislature group in the Banz abbey in Bavaria, where he argued that the European Union and the Schengen Agreement make Hungary a border fortress for Bavaria. As such, he asserted that Hungary is currently the protector of the southern border of Europe, and therefore he is the fortress captain.

Fortress captains are important parts of the Hungarian collective memory; all Hungarians are taught to remember the heroic resistance of fortress soldiers in the 15–17th century who fought against the Ottoman forces despite being outnumbered. They have memorized the name János Hunyadi, the victorious protector of Belgrade; they remember the men and women defending the fortress of Eger (and their captain, István Dobó) and the sacrificial sortie of Miklós Zrínyi who held the Szigetvár fortress till his dying breath. An obvious parallel exists between the struggle of the intruding Muslim "forces" (i.e., refugees, illegal migrants) and the handful of Christian defenders (i.e., Hungarian police and army). However, combat surrounding Hungarian border fortresses historically also meant suffering. For this reason, Viktor Orbán attempted to neutralise the correlation by adding that although Hungary is not keen on the role which it has been given, Hungary must accept its duty as protector of the southern border. A billboard campaign launched in mid-September 2015 reinforced this idea with a primary message centred around the word *protecting*: "*The people have decided: the country shall be protected*". The governing political elite created this campaign in order to make the concept of protection the central element of the dominant narrative. This saw to the commencement of the strengthening of the division function of the southern borders in regard to legal aspects and human resources as well as technically and theoretically.

Distinction of migrants ("othering") through strengthening social borders

In March-April 2015, the governing political elite attempted to explain why hundreds of

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[9] Viktor Orbán: If we do not protect our borders, several other tens of millions will come and Europe will end – In the programme "180 perc" of Kossuth Rádió. http://www.hirado.hu/2015/09/04/hallgassa-itt-eloben-a-miniszterelnoki-interjut/ (4 Sept. 2015)

Photo 1. Migrants at the Keleti Railway Station of Budapest, September 2015 (Photo by GLIED, V.)

Photo 2. Migrants near the Nyugati Railway Station of Budapest, September 2015 (Photo by KONKOLY THEGE, G.)

thousands of migrants with a different culture and religion had arrived to cross Hungary to Western Europe. Billboards and television commercials addressed to migrants were launched in early summer, the main message of the campaign being, *"If you come to Hungary, you have to respect …."* The Hungarian public became more and more aware of the issues since previous to this they had not (and could not) have any personal experience related to the phenomenon and could have only encountered migrants themselves in very limited geographical spaces.

By early autumn 2015, the discourse had elevated to a new level and the central narrative also changed. These messages highlighted the issues of co-existence with Muslims and the failure of multiculturalism in Europe. In addition, Europe-wide questions were being raised about whether successful coexistence was possible. An extract from a book of Nobel laureate Hungarian writer Imre Kertész, published in 2014, went viral; Kertész argues that based on the liberal immigration policy of Europe, Muslims had spread, would take over and destroy Europe with their own means.[10] These ideas are echoed in the book *Submission*, published by French writer Michel Houellebecq in January 2015 proving to be highly controversial.[11] Rather than a physical barrier preventing the flow of potential danger, the government's narrative centred around the highlighting and construction/strengthening of a religion-based social border. The main message pushed discourses to highlight and emphasize differences, thus, constructing the "other" which differs from the majority.

In October 2015, Lajos Kósa, head of Fidesz parliamentary group, argued that *Muslim culture is so radically different from European culture that integration is hopeless.* This message countered Gábor Vona's assertion that Islam was the last hope of mankind[12]. By highlighting the hopelessness of integration policies, Kósa suggested that the solution underlies in stopping the migration wave, rather than dreaming of co-existence. He claims that migrants are economic immigrants, who travel to Europe in order to "occupy territory" and that the Western left sees them as future voters.[13] These pro-government politicians' messages were in perfect alignment with the expectations of the majority[14].

Several political conflicts could be attributed to the flow of migrants (e.g. domestic political struggles, disputes within the European Union, conflicts with Hungary's neighbours including Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Austria), further supporting the government's arguments. Although initially hesitant, the Hungarian society eventually adopted a negative approach to the migrant situation, represented through assumptions that migrants were dangerous and/or inferior (e.g. dirty, leave their garbage around, break laws, travel free of charge, spread diseases, harass and rape Hungarian women, take over the country).

A small number of civil organisations, politicians, and minority parties and a significant number of individuals expressed their opposition to the government's campaign, some by guerrilla actions against anti-migrant bill-

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[10] Many media outlets reported on the extract of the controversial work in Hungary and abroad as well (Kertész, I. 2014).

[11] Published a day after the attack on Charlie Hebdo, *Submission* has a new approach to the issues of Islam spreading in Europe. It has become practically unavoidable in related discussions (Houellebecq, M. 2015).

[12] Vona Gábor about Islam. http://www.jobbik.com/vona_g%C3%A1bor_about_islam

[13] Interview with Lajos Kósa, the head of the Fidesz parliamentary group, in the pro-government daily Magyar Idők. http://magyaridok.hu/belfold/remenytelen-muszlim-bevandorlok-integralasa-29803/

[14] While the issue of constructing the fence slightly divided the public in the summer of 2015 (60–65% of the residents supported it on the average), by December, after the Paris terror attacks, 85 per cent of the respondents believed that the physical barrier at the border was a good decision. The communication of the governing party was successful. This is clearly reflected in the fact that the proportion of those who reject the acceptance of refugees grew to 83%, and almost half of the citizens thought that Hungary was going to be affected by terror. For more on this, see Bernát, A. *et al.* (2015).

boards and others through directly helping migrants/refugees. However, their narratives were overwhelmed by the official discourse of the government and their initiatives stayed local and, thus, invisible to the wider public who was not in direct contact with refugees (e.g. majority of people living in parts of the country away from migrant routes).

Increasing othering: Enemisation

After the Paris terror attack in early November 2015 (Bataclan), the Hungarian government went a step further. According to the Hungarian premier, the link between immigration and terrorism is undisputed because all terrorists are migrants. Furthermore, since the West is at war with Islamists in the Middle East, it is no surprise that enemies would send warriors among the arriving migrants. By allowing millions of people into Europe without identifying them, we risk increased threat of terrorism. Therefore, according to Orbán, external borders must be secured, Schengen must protected, and considering any other alternative is futile.[15] Thus, the othering which had characterised the government's official stance was now being replaced by the creation of enemy scapegoats (*enemisation*). Now, not only were people on the other side of the social border "others", but dangerous, threatening and hostile others; the narrative had undergone militarisation.

By strengthening the anti-Muslim narrative, Fidesz-KDNP effectively exploited Jobbik's unique pro-Muslim policy. Because the radical-right party had no means to counter this, the radical nationalists began to lose the migration crisis debate and were overtaken by the centre-right governing party (slowly shifting toward the right)[16]. After summer

of 2014, voters originally supporting Fidesz who had switched to Jobbik again returned to the governing Fidesz party. Skilfully applied communications earned large political profit in the short run.

The government had managed to not only protect Hungary from terrorists, but to show the West that it had taken the wind out of the sails of the radical-right Jobbik party, as it had left no room for argument. Opposition forces remained passive, they had no proposed solutions, and thus Fidesz-KDNP was the single power that could take real action. Based on discourse analysis, this can be evaluated as significant political triumph: the governing party kept the leading role in political discourse, strengthened its positions, and polls were clearly in their favour (*Figure 2*).

According to the surveys of TÁRKI and Závecz Research, the level of xenophobia in Hungary had reached unprecedented heights by October 2016. By then, Arabs had replaced the gypsies as the most rejected ethnic group. 58 per cent of respondents considered themselves xenophobic, evidently a consequence of the anti-migrant political campaign which hit its peak through the anti-quota referendum of 2 October 2016.[17] This referendum campaign was built upon two narratives. The first focused on blaming Brussels, and thus the liberal European elite and its *"willkommenskultur"*, which had rendered itself de-

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[15] All terrorists are migrants. http://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-interview-terrorists-migrants-eu-russia-putin-borders-schengen/

[16] The 16–17th century is the period when the two different historical narratives were born which made reaching a consensus in the issue of Muslims impossible in Hungary. The mostly

Catholic, pro-Vienna and pro-Habsburg faction, favouring a Western orientation instead of national independence, sees and represents the place and role of Hungary as a European/Catholic/Western "bastion". The other faction is mostly Protestant (Calvinist), pro-independence, anti-Habsburg, emphasises national sovereignty, and considers a Turkish (Muslim) alliance suitable to reach key national objectives. The latter group emphasises the importance and eastern origin of Hungarian traditions. In the political fights of the 18–19th century both narratives regularly appear. Their modern age impact is suggested by the fact that these themes have also appeared in the communications of the politicians of Jobbik and Fidesz as well.

[17] Sosem látott mértékű a magyarországi idegenellenesség. (Xenophobia at an all-time height.) http://index.hu/tudomany/2016/11/17/soha_nem_latott_merteku_az_idegenellenesseg_magyarorszagon/
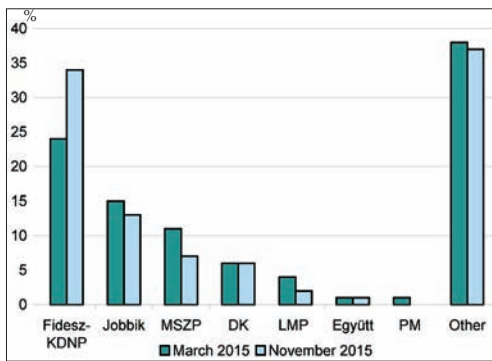
Fig. 2. Polling data on the support of major parties in Hungary, March and November 2015. (*Source*: Medián) *On Fidesz and Jobbik see footnotes 2 and 3. MSzP (Hungarian Socialist Party) is the leading socialdemocratic party in Hungary, governing from 1994 to 1998 and from 2002 to 2010. DK (Democratic Coalition) is a centre left party formed by secessionist politicians from MSzP in 2011, led by former PM Ferenc Gyurcsány. Együtt (Together) is a social liberal minority party formed in 2012. PM (Dialogue for Hungary) is a green liberal party founded in 2013 by secessionists from LMP. LMP (Politics can be different) is a green liberal party founded in 2009.

fenceless and unable to find effective solutions. This narrative urged voters to "*send a message to Brussels*" that Europe might "*understand*" that Hungarians would pioneer efforts in forcing leading European politicians to explicitly state that their migration policies (or lack thereof) and multiculturalism had failed. Fidesz politicians asserted that their government would not carry out "*dangerous relocation plans*" but instead would reinforce border protection. They fought against the quota package mandated by Brussels, arguing that it would involve "*significant economic, cultural and safety risks.*" They predicted a "*catastrophe*" and claimed that there are "*more than 900 no-go zones in Europe*".[18]

The second narrative aimed to reinforce the existing public attitude towards the Muslim migrants. Through a "*Did you know...*" campaign with questions on billboards, television, and radio commercials, the government

emphasized the risks of migration through Hungary and promoted the fortification of the border. The campaign asserted that Hungary was on the right track, protecting the country and Europe from terrorism. The government claimed that its "*…foremost reason for rejecting the relocation quota is that it would significantly destruct the security of Europe. Events of the last few months have reassured us that there is a link between immigration and terrorism.*" The government claimed that "*protecting our communities, families, culture and everything that defines Hungary are all at stake*" and "*if we fail to act, we will not recognise Europe in a few decades.*" The government even asserted that "*in Europe, terror and violence have become a part of everyday life.*"

The referendum was held on 2 October 2016 and the result was invalid, as less than 50 per cent of those eligible to vote participated. Despite this, the government claimed that the referendum was successful in the political sense. 3.2 million voters (98% of referendum voters) expressed their support for the actions recommended by the government, proving that a number of Hungarians agreed with the government's stance on the migrant crisis. It is likely that the 98 per cent who voted against the quota did so due to the overwhelming anti-quota campaign efforts; moreover, the satirical Hungarian "*Two-Tailed Dog Party*" was also extremely successful (through guerrilla efforts) to convince others to invalidate their vote. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP) also asked the voters not to vote since the powerless referendum held no meaning.[19]

Conclusions – "Hungary, the bastion of Europe"

The borders of Hungary have been in the focus of political and public discourse since the beginning of the 20th century. Depending on the political regime in power, politics and policies related to borders often

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[18] http://kvota.kormany.hu/

[19] See GLIED, V. and PAP, N. (2017).

changed, sometimes aiming at strengthening them, sometimes to make them disappear. Actions taken regarding the borders alternated between unilateral and cooperative approaches, corresponding with changing (border-related) interests.

This changed in 2010 when borders became resources used by the governing party to achieve its goals; after 2015, these objectives were not connected to the real problems of the physical borders themselves, but primarily based on prejudices existing in society which influenced public discourse with the aim of strengthening political positions. Social memories built throughout Hungary's history continue to connect the key function of protection to the southern borders, which the official narratives can easily exploit in order to improve public approval of strengthening the border. This same narrative also asserts the Hungarian national duty of protecting borders as self-sacrificing, morally obligatory, and performed for all of Europe, thus also contributing to the approval thereof. The metaphor "*bastion of Europe*" has become frequently used in both Hungary and the international media, and the Hungarian government has used it to increase its own approval and support.

Hungary's Fidesz government was the first within the EU to openly call for closing the borders and to take practical steps towards international migration. However, Hungary is not the only country demanding border fortification and utilising tensions related to borders as a domestic political tool. After 11 September 2001, stricter border control regulations and the construction of a safety fence indicated that a new approach was gaining ground in the US (ACKLESON, J. 2005). During the last presidential campaign, the current president famously espoused the additional physical strengthening of the Mexican border, using the border as a resource in domestic politics, for objectives unrelated to the border itself. Similar to the southern border of Hungary, the southern border of the US also plays an important symbolic role in the life of society. It is a border created through war, exposed to migration, plagued by illegal flow,

and argued to be a safety threat (whether accurate or not) (CHACÓN, J.A. 2010). Immigrants can be "*othered*" as compared to the majority US population and as such, the border can become a political resource as well.

Many European populist/right-wing parties aim to seize power through the restriction of migration and the strengthening of the protection of borders (e.g. the National Front in France, the Dutch Freedom Party). In fact, the entire European border control system serves to protect Europe and is supported by political forces and social groups. Therefore, the Hungarian case is not without predecessors, and the spread of similar solutions can be expected in the near future.

A key characteristic of the top-down bordering at the southern Hungarian border is the government-controlled discourse constantly represented as self-sacrificing for the wider community and a higher good. Thus, according to the official narrative, the government not only protects Hungary, but also Europe, the West, Christianity … (as opposed to other border fences primarily constructed to protect national interests). Important traditions throughout Hungarian history reinforce this narrative; thus, historical parallels can be made supporting society's acceptance of a narrative constructed to strengthen Hungarian identity.

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Islam in Italy: insights from a Europe-Mediterranean perspective

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Abstract

This paper explores the changing role of Islam in Europe, via the case of Italy. The focus is on the contemporary geographies of the changing identities and relationships in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The article intends to challenge the continuous representation of Islam in Europe between homogeneity and otherness. Indeed, the approach considers that relationships which shape places (and are shaped by places) do not stem only from media narratives, from powers and ideologies in general, but also from people's everyday inter-ethnic, inter-cultural, and emotional interactions. The latter do not occur in a vacuum, but rather in places and digital communication channels under grids of power. They are sometimes characterized by behaviours of self-caging and last but not least they always develop in light of geographical transformative power of encounters as 'situated' dynamics of people. Encounters are further shaped and have transformative potential within realms of 'moral geographies' of people and society's values and beliefs while dealing with 'difference'. The paper is based on a series of fieldwork carried out by the author over the years including expert interviews (inter-religious dialogue associations, religious leaders, and researchers) and surveys/interviews with immigrants from across the Mediterranean, and on available data and literature for Italy. Main findings for policy-making can be summarized as follows: Europe is a periphery for *Umma,* not a central place, but in contrast to *some* origin countries, Islam versions as Islam as predominant not a minority religion. Conversely, the European tradition of human rights, universalism, and democracy should be re-examined and practiced not only in the abstract but in the concrete form of engaged human relations with 'empathy', while laissez faire multiculturalism, aggressive assimilation or 'culturalism' exceptions should be avoided.

Keywords: Islam, mobility, assimilation, xenophobia, Italy, Europe, Mediterranean

Introduction

Taking into account the current scenario of global mobile communications, the paper explores the 'Islam(s)' in Europe, via the case of Italy in a global mobile perspective, as an initial approach to contemporary geographies of the Euro-Mediterranean changing identities and relationships.

The approach in scrutinizing emerging spatialities and networked space considers that relationships which shape places (and are shaped by places) stem not only from media narratives, powers and ideologies in general, but also from everyday people's inter-ethnic, inter-cultural, and emotional interactions. The latter do not occur in a vacuum, but rather in places and digital communication channels under grids of power à la Datta, A. (2009), and sometimes with the behaviour of self-caging (Eva, F. 2015). Last but not least, they always occur in light of geographical transformative power of encounters as 'situated' dynamics of people (Valentine, G. and Sadgrove, D. 2012). Encounters are further shaped and have transformative potential within realms of 'moral geographies' of people and society's values and beliefs while dealing with 'difference'. Such interactions are often charac-

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terized by blockages of inter-ethnic or inter-cultural exchanges, as well as by inequalities among people, legacies in political approach and institutions, and emotional geographies in terms of ambitions, hopes, expectations, fears. Thus, the complexity of interconnections – interconnected places and subjectivities – stimulates us going beyond categories which are too reductive of subjectivities and to adhere to Gill Valentine's (2007) approach of 'intersectionality' in terms of belonging and identity construction.

The paper deals with the topic by re-positing it as both a geopolitical imbricate site of encounters and currents: new hegemonic and counter-power discourse(s) and alliances; new identity formation and quest of legitimacy as well as the 'humanistic' locus of (mobile) people's narratives. Altogether pose many implications for European new spatialities and changing relationships (see Kocsis, K. *et al.* 2016 for assessing mobilities to Europe). Here, mobility is meant in its recent paradigm of both spatial and virtual mobilities of people (Kellerman, A. 2006; Cresswell, T. and Merriman, P. 2011; Montanari, A. and Paluzzi, E. 2016). In addition, the paper conceptually includes mobilities of personal and collective emotions injected in places (Paradiso, M. 2013), the phenomenon of people 'moving' from one religion to another (the 'new Muslims' of Europe), and ideas and discussions in inter-religious dialogues and encounters.

In parallel, dynamics of encounter and change are typified by a variety of personal and virtual mobilities in terms of gender, motivations, interreligious dialogue, emotional geographies, and their impacts and circulation rather than a binary origin/destination spatial path. They are also produced, reproduced, and transformed in digital mobile communications.

There is no assumption of 'Islam' as a whole, nor a binary logic à la 'burquini or not burquini'. The challenge and implications are subtler, pervasive and should not be left only to media, Ministers of Interior, or religious leaders' narratives and practices. Instead,

geographies of practiced Islam should be scrutinized in light of individuals' mobilities and lives in light of contexts, emotions, encounters, power grids, and emancipation.

The paper is based on a series of field work carried out by the author which included interviews with experts (inter-religious dialogue associations, religious leaders, researchers), questionnaire surveys and interviews with immigrants from throughout the Mediterranean region *(Photo 1)*.

In what follows, this paper first tries to unpack the concept of 'Islam' and its lexical variations. Second, it frames the elements of analysis and interpretations. Third, it highlights the narratives and practices of developing the Italian Islam geography. Then, alternative thinking is presented including voices from the 'inter-religious dialogue' and, author's knowledge from fieldwork in Italy with Muslim migrants and in a Muslim country with migrants from Europe. In the concluding section, the paper proposes some alternatives beyond the binary dialectic à la 'burquini or not burquini', in order to stimulate ideas for better encountering both sides and avoiding social blockages.

Problems of definitions and categorization

This paper intends to challenge the continuous representation of Islam in Europe between homogeneity in se and otherness vis à vis Europe. This representation happens in this paper's view because the Islamic world is discussed as an unpacked concept with problems of categorization and disrespect of geographical contexts where it develops.

Categorization problems have been increasingly posed by media and sometimes by an irresponsible political manipulation of popular emotional geopolitical imagination after hegemonic violence, images and fundamentalist geopolitical actions. All this is even amplified and exacerbated by the viral digital communication which globally intersect with all geographical space: domestically, nationally, internationally, individually.

Photo 1. Wrecks of migrants' ships in Lampedusa Island (Photo by Paradiso, M.)

Categories we use to narrate about people who move across space have the potential to inflict epistemological violence (Hyndman, J. and Giles, W. 2016 quoted in Erkhamp, P. 2016). This happens because they can induce problems of 'diorthosis' (Farinelli, F. 1998). A 'diorthosis' arises when a category mistakenly reduces the diversity of those being categorized. A process of 'diorthosis' stems from a cognitive and operational approach which arrives at a firm judgment about the nature of things and functionality modes before realizing a proper image. Thus, a dissonant geography arises or a conflictual one. This can apply to abstract categories such as 'Islam', 'Western', race…

In contemplating the topic of Islam in Europe, the author was struck by the lexical shift that occurred in very recent years: in Italy the most frequently used words shifted from Muslims and the Muslim world to Islam or 'Islamics' despite the fact that using the word Muslims (musulmani), sometimes in ancient times 'maomettani' (Mahomettans), had been traditional for more than a millennium. On the one hand there is probably an influence of news content in English, where there is a predominance of the use of the word Islam as against Muslim, but on the other hand, satellite TV channels which are based in the Arab peninsula may also influence the wording in that direction.

This is not a neutral language use but, rather, a non-neutral reality distortion. It is far from the traditional cultural and language nuance in Italy: Muslims or Muslim world would drive the attention to people seen in their heterogeneity and individual lives instead of an overwhelming religious belonging under the word 'Islamic'. The word 'Islamics'

covers under one explanation (religious belonging) all ethnic, personal, class, gender, language, culture, ambitions, customs, emotions, influences of experience on identity construction, relationship, and belonging bonds. These bonds indeed shape human lives and places, but attempting to fit them all under the umbrella of 'Islamic' induces a reduction of meaning and understanding; it borders people, places, meanings, communications, perceptions, anchorages for mutual understanding, acceptance and emancipation.

Moreover, the word Islam is extensively used (and abused) in all violent and criminal propaganda about bloody so-called religious war and terrorism, which produces a process of 'diorthosis' in people's perception of media contents: the reduction of an interpreted religious world to hegemonic and violent ones. Thus, 'diorthosis' reduces rights, bridging points, and emancipation tendencies and, conversely, increases dissonance, violence, closure, and (on both sides) intolerance.

It must also be noted that there is also a good share of migrants who declare no religious belonging when they come to Europe, atheism or not observing status cannot be declared and observed in a predominant Muslim religion country. This per se should avoid the use of Islamic people or Muslim when referring to people coming from MENA countries at large (North African, Maghrebine, Middle East or Mashrek, Turkish people).

A parallel discourse can probably be constructed for racists and xenophobic people and the psychological, socio-economic and personal factors that shape their exclusionary mindset and violence. What are their multiple anchorages in life about if Muslims' identity is reduced to a one and only 'faith' and identity factor? Which factors or forces produce reductions '*ad unum*', blockages, or borders? For whom and what?

Thus, the *first challenge is to avoid a geopolitical discourse neglecting human variability. Secondly, one should consider 'European' Islam's potential impacts* within the 'Umma', internally in Europe and thus globally for 'Umma' in new societies as well as within origin countries' religion.

Thus, comes a first issue for science and 'good' politics: focusing on human subjectivities and multiple belongings (Sen, A. 2006; Malouf, A. 2010), ways of flourishing in new contexts and emancipating from some origin contexts of Islam practice.

The second problem of definition (challenge) is: which Islam is Islam? There is a high degree of ethnic variability in the Islamic world itself, with different 'moral geographies' of Islam and its potential for integration. There is a geopolitical competition within the Sunni/Shiite cleavage and within the Sunni world. Obviously many of these fractures can be softened or mediated by political élites (for example, Moroccan Islam vis à vis Saudi Wahhabism; Sunni-Shia (see Pap, N. and Glied, V. 2017), on the role of political élites in the Hungarian case). Actually, emotional geographies stemmed from satellite TV showing people who are killed by bombing in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen reduced traditional intra-religious borders.

Moreover, there is another stake to Islam internal and external dialectic: European Muslims, former Christians or atheists who became Muslims and precisely their dialectics with their religion, countries of origin and 'Umma' at large.

Therefore, the topic reveals a web of geographic issues oscillating between two poles of geopolitical pressure and human subjectivities of emancipation and identity building. They can be initially critically examined along a series of questions and axis of interpretation summarized in *Table 1*.

Author spent four months in Morocco and engaged in extensive fieldwork focusing on migrants from Europe, local NGOs, residents, and experts. In addition, she carried out fieldwork in Italy comprising of ca. 200 interviews and 120 questionnaires. This paper builds on this body of work. Interviewed people are kept anonymous (three leaders from Italian Muslim organizations; three people from Nigrizia/Confronti association).

At large, the Islamic community is increasingly considered to be deviating from 'the ordinary body of knowledge' (Berger, P.I.

Table 1. Framing questions and axis of interpretation*

1	Which Islam from which country? (ethnic variability and geographies of culture, identity, language of Muslims).
2	Which Islam from which tradition? Sunni, Shiite? Arab or non-Arab Islam? (Islam of Mosques and two way relations with the European location).
3	Which Islam from which State? (The issue of Islam of States).
4	Migrants brought faith? (issues of migrants' encounter and subjective lived difference; issues of religious and secularized people).
5	Which generation and where?
6	What about gender relations and agency?
7	New Muslims as Europeans who moved to Muslim faith and implications: what about their dialectic between their background and feedbacks with country of origin for their religion? (Geopolitics of change from Europe within Umma).

*Compiled by the author.

1969 quoted in Allievi, S. 1999, 171), thus, a knowledgeable minority because of the weight of religion in shaping human identity in secularized societies such as those in Europe. However, this broad definition includes too many definitional problems (what is the 'ordinary' about?) and too much reductionism. Conversely, it is perhaps a definition which can serve mass media sensationalism. Moreover, this reductionism probably reinforces narrowed self-identification by people with Muslim faith.

These are starting point to argue that there is a differentiated Islam in Europe. Europe is indeed a stake for Islam(s) but in multiple ways not only the supposed 'conquest' one or 'Eurabia'. Simultaneously, Europe is a periphery for 'Umma', not a central place, but the Islam of Europe contradicts some religious versions of Islam as the predominant status (majority religion) tolerating 'dhimma' (minorities) and not as a minority religion. Indeed, Muslims of Europe can induce changes both for European spatialities and identity and push for innovating Muslim world, Islam of States. Currently Muslim people are under enormous geopolitical pressure. Internally, in countries with large immigrant populations, they are facing increasing Islamophobia and xenophobia in a cadre of lacking integration state policies and training about local civic values, language, culture of residence countries or citizenship. Outside Europe,

Muslims are targets, vehicles, tools for geopolitical states' Islam competition, conservative charities and non-governmental entities which perpetuate traditions or allow social spaces' aggregation which 'de facto' increases 'closed' communities. Altogether, this pressure drives Muslim migrants towards ghettoization paths with problems of self-caging and deviance rather than integration.

Conversely, there can be communities set up in Europe to establish stricter communities of observance which are not permitted in their country of origin. One must also remember the case of niche mobilities from Europe to non-European countries for religious training, political and cultural exchanges and converts' organizational political tours both for networking and participation in internationally organized political groups (Allievi, S. 1999).

With these initial conceptual issues, interviews aimed first to raise the question of the rising equivalence in popular language and popular geopolitics visions of the lexical use of Muslims or Islamic: 'what is the difference, if any, between the Islamic and Muslim words' to both Christian and Muslims interviewees in Italy (or in Morocco).

The responses to the question about Islamic variability and wording use can be summarized as follows: 'people are 'the' Muslims, things and institutions are Islamic' (Abdel, nick name for a Moroccan journalist working

in an interethnic-interfaith dialogue magazine.) Moreover, 'Islam itself is generally brought by mobile people who bring their faith with themselves' (Riccardo, nick name for a person involved in interreligious dialogue and director of a specialized magazine). Incidentally, in the paradigmatic view of mobility, everything changes: the person, the identity, the relationships, the faith itself the origin and destination context, all realms and practices by the mobile person interacting with others.

Summarizing, all the argumentation stigmatizes a simplistic reductionism by media and some politicians of Islam as an unpacked whole: this homogeneity has no neutral or positive effects for society's stability. The human individual freedom of thinking and action margins are reduced in a cage where subjectivity and life are narrowly impoverished along the dominant discourse of faith. Thus, the individual can become victim of a deficit of identity, frustration, and possibly with other factors ground for fanatic Islam as well as his/her interlocutors.

Overall situation of Islam in Italy: data and surveys

According to the Unar/Idos 2014 report, From Discrimination to Rights, there are about 1.6 million Muslims in Italy. They are the second biggest community of faith after Catholics. The majority of Muslims in Italy are immigrants. This situation greatly affects the relationship of the Italian government with Islam, which, like immigration, is managed by the Ministry of Interior. It is no coincidence that many now-defunct Muslim organizations have been established by Ministers of Interior Pisanu, Amato and Maroni. Immigration and Islam are treated as a single emergency phenomenon and a security issue.

This approach, which combines the two phenomena, is very close to a part of the plural Islamic reality, especially that arc of naturalized and natives converted to Islam, who denounce a clear violation of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of worship to all citizens.

Ethnic variability, legitimacy

This section refers to people from countries with Islamic majorities and an Islamic cultural background. The percentage of Muslims attending mosques varies between 10 and 20 per cent (El Ayoubi, M. 2015); 28.6 per cent consider themselves not practitioners or laic (Gritti, R. and Allam, M. 2001). The distribution of people from Muslim countries in the study included people from Northern Africa, the Middle East, a large proportion of sub-Saharan countries and a growing proportion of people from Bangladesh. North Africa and the Balkans represent the largest shares. The Bangla is a particular phenomenon of the capital and Lazio, and is not yet studied or at its very beginning.

Indeed, the political legitimacy for representing Islam in Italy with the state is at stake for several Muslim associations, since in Muslim communities some groups can benefit from market of donations and services like translations and all issues linked to Arab language. Italian converts were indeed the ablest to be visible in public opinion and to give voice to Muslims' concerns and be listened by the state. Some of them also proposed the re-opening of *ijtihad*, the interpretation of Scripture in light of spatio-temporal evolutions (Allievi, S. 1999; Lano, P. 2005).

The composition of Muslim immigrants is mixed, the vast majority is Sunni, but they are also divided along lines of social and linguistic identity: mono-ethnic mosques for kthuba in any ethnic language; the geopolitical cultural competition for the kthuba in Italian by some converts or different ethnic Muslims who intend to escape the Arabization or Arab protection of the practice and transmission of their religious meanings. The language question also intersects with securitizing attention of the Ministry of the Interior or the need for creation of local political consensus.

Moreover, many Muslims are also first-generation immigrants and speak only a bit of Italian. This factor along with ethnic variability leads to fragmentation, heterogeneity, and congregation according to national affiliations. In Italy, there is a certain discrepancy between the fact that the only mosque recognized as a charitable organization (Ente Morale) by the state is the Mosque of Rome (the largest in Europe until 2012), which originated with the support of Saudi Arabia, and the geopolitical and cultural gravitation from the Sunni Gulf area (despite developments coming from Moroccan Islam) and the fact that the majority of the faithful people are of Moroccan origin. This is the subject of contention and rebalancing in the legitimacy game to represent the interests of Muslims in Italy vis à vis the Italian State.

There is a striking political will not to legislate in order to ensure that the Muslim community is inserted adequately into the Italian social fabric. And this comes from a declared ideological aversion by a not irrelevant fraction of the political world against Muslims/immigrants, who strongly opposes any form of legal recognition of Islam in Italy. To date, the only recognized worship institution as a legal entity to the terms of the Law on 'allowed' cults (the law dates to the fascist period) is the Islamic cultural centre in Italy. There are four official mosques in Italy in the sense of ad hoc-made constructions, complete with minaret: Ravenna, Rome, Colle Val D'Elsa, Segrate Milan.

A second major discrepancy is the weight of (Italian) converts in interlocutions with the public (state, cultural production, translations, publications), who are in charge of relations with media and local Islamic centres (the public face of Islam) but not in charge of spiritual leaderships (amir) in mosques. This is of relevance for Italy and with national difference for Europe at large (Allievi, S. 1999).

In order of opening, while there are more than 1,000 Muslim places of worship, the location of mosques includes four in the North, two in Central Italy, and three in the South. Five mosques were opened in 2012 and 2013. The recent mosques have been financed by Qatari sources.

Associations and representation of Islam

Regarding Muslim associations, Islam in Italy does not have a single representative institution. Numerous associations claim to represent the interests of Muslims who live in Italy. According to the website www.arab.it (quoted in Nigrizia 2015, 24–25), the number of mosques and Islamic centres in Italy is 205, distributed throughout the peninsula. Of these, only 10 are registered as mosques in all respects, while 7 have the name 'Mosque and Cultural Center'. 57 sites of worship and cultural centers have been registered officially between 2013 and 2014. The cities with the greatest increase are Rome and Bologna. Several Islamic organizations claim to have the role of representative of Muslim interests. The most important numerically are the Center of Islamic Culture of Italy (Cici) and the Union of Communities and Islamic Organizations of Italy (Ucoii). Between these two organization there is a strong polarization and a quasi-absence of dialogue, stemming from their respective ideological positions (Lano, P. 2005; Bombardieri, M. 2011; El Ayoubi, M. 2015). The Islamic centre is linked to Saudi Arabia; the Ucoii is in the sphere of influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, from Qatar and hated by the Saudi government. Cici and Ucoii not only struggle for representation of the Islamic community but also for control of the hundreds of prayer rooms scattered throughout the country.

Among these associations of 'mosques Islam', multinational and multi-ethnic (Lano, P. 2005; Bombardieri, M. 2011). Only the largest or influential is quoted here: UCOII, close to the Muslim Brotherhood; the Muslim World League, with Saudi influence; COREIS is a community only of Italian converts to Islam, one of the principal interlocutor with the State. Other associations gathering ethnic diversity and gender issues (again linked to different 'Islam' origin approaches).

Next to 'Islam of the mosques', several observers reported the existence of an 'Islam of States' in Italy: countries such as Morocco, Egypt, which are worried about Saudi in-

fluence and the Muslim Brotherhood, have organized themselves to follow its nationals abroad and to delegate representation to grassroots organizations at risk of becoming fundamentalist. There are also smaller Islamic sects with their own associations (Zannini, F. 2013).

In 2005, Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu appointed a 'Council for Italian Islam' (socalled Islamic Council), composed of 16 members, half of them Italian citizens, including members of both the cultural and the secular Muslim associations as well as leaders of religious associations.

Discussion

The Italian experience with Islam is rather unique compared to other larger European countries, since growth in the Islamic population and migration are a relatively recent phenomenon. This is also the key to the interpretation of the state policy towards the issues posed by the Muslim world in Italy.

Another influencing factor is the fact that except for people coming from the Horn of Africa, migrants do not come from countries with a past colonial relationship with Italy. In this respect, Italy is more similar to Germany, or to Hungary (Pap, N. et al. 2014) than to France or the UK. However, some recent intransigent or terrorist versions of Islam deliberately use the word and category of West or Infidels to categorize non-Muslims (or different sects of Muslims) as an enemy and dehumanize them.

According to influential commentators in Confronti (2015) and Nigrizia (2015) journals and associations, the integration of Muslims into the society certainly passes through an advanced integration model by the state (policies, school); nevertheless, Islamic worship places can play a decisive role in this direction as aggregation and socialization places and, as such, can affect those who attend them. It can also be added that more attention and efforts should be put on non-religious NGOs and other actors and their role in integrating migrants into the social fabric.

The mosques' role can be negative or positive, vis à vis the receiving country. The negative role of mosques occurs when they tend to marginalize the community by preaching hatred and contempt for the host society. So, those who attend them isolate themselves and avoid contact with outsiders, because the 'others' are considered hostile to Muslims. Another negative role of mosques (or families one would say) is when they perpetuate and reinforce gender segregation and the marginalization of women as a minority within the minority *(Photo 2)*.

As Iannucci, M. (2015) discusses the 'geographic approach' to mosques as a place of power reproduction but misunderstood or taught under the 'religion' imperative (own translation):

Photo 2. Generations of Muslim women
(Photo by Paradiso, M.)

'Multiculturalism of these Muslim communities is definitely a positive factor, but difficulties stemming from the imposition of non-shared models that affect religious practices have to be overcome. This is the case in the mosques, where the leadership is predominantly foreign, and this involves the persistence of cultural patterns – religious, but also management and participation – which hardly accommodate indigenous Muslims. In particular, women are often facing a vision of gender relations – in contrast to the role of women in the community and society generally – based on the very patriarchal and sexist culture of many Muslim immigrant communities. The macho culture is a common feature, and the leadership of Islamic centers is entirely male. The operating revenue, the smallest and residual places are reserved for women, who have a marginal role in the centers' activities and must be limited to targeted initiatives focused on the same women and children. These spaces are organized in a manner that facilitates segregation, with plenty of walls, tents and the like between men and women, which prevents the faithful from fully enjoying religious and cultural activities' (Iannucci, M. 2015, 57).

This occurs, for example, when the imams come directly from Islamic countries, ignorant of the language and culture of the context in which they preach, and they sometimes convey negative messages against non-Muslims. This happened, for example, in the Grand Mosque of Rome on June 6, 2003, when a young Egyptian imam, during kutbah (sermon) on Friday, launched anathemas against 'the infidel', Christians and Jews. Following the strong controversy raised by this case, the preacher was sent to Egypt by the heads of Cici. Quoting again Iannucci (own translation):

'Delivering (to practitioners) a vision of Islam that has at its center human dignity and freedom is a tool to combat discrimination and Islamophobia, as well as the religious fanaticism that can captivate youth in our country, if they continue to live in what apparently is a cultural vacuum in the community, but in reality is bridged by an increasingly Muslim vernacular sub-culture among migrants: patriarchal, self-referential and repetitive, impervious to dialogue and change' (Iannucci, M. 2015, 57).

The problematic aspect of the mosques is related to the training of imams, which is often improvised, and lacking rigor theologically and in other respects. In many cases

imams do not know the Italian reality and do not speak Italian, or poorly. The sermons are given in the language of the preacher and Arabic predominates even when the mosque is attended by Senegalese, Turks or Pakistanis ... This has encouraged the flourishing of 'ethnic' mosques in Rome. The Italian language is sometimes used to summarize a Friday sermon to the faithful non-Arabic speaking people. A problem is seen in the training of imams: in Italy this is something claimed by converts with the only exception of Naples where some imams are not foreigners and where multiculturalism has a long time tradition *(Photo 3).*

The unresolved questions in Italy and at large with different nuances as well in many European countries concern: the State approach in integrating Muslims into the social fabric; the right to freedom of worship; the 'problematic' aspects of mosques; the theological issues concerning hermeneutics of Scriptures and 'ijtihad' reopening; internal issues within the broader Islamic community and third countries' interference in their social life and religious identity (Allevi, S. 1999, 2012; Gritti, R. and Allam, M. 2001; Bombardieri, M. 2011; Naso, P. and Salvarani, B. 2012; Naso, P. 2013; Zannini, F. 2013; Idos, Unar and Confronti 2015);

Photo 3. Multicultural confectionery in Naples at the Central Railway Station (Photo by Paradiso, M.)

the issue of a sexist and patriarchal influence of country of origin injected in immigrants' mindset and misunderstood as being part of Islam per se; the issue of converts and their dialectic for 'ijtihad' and their international networking. Furthermore, recent manipulation or propaganda stemming also from individuals, associations or non-State entities such as terror groups, via the Internet, complicate geopolitical struggles and promote violence and death. Satellite TV from Arab countries has been playing a role over the years in the information and opinion making realms and is serving geopolitical as well as cultural realms.

Religious freedom is not really assured as in many European countries. Actually, in Italy there are other elements that explain the issue of the freedom of worship and, properly, religious liberty at large: the legacy of the Fascist period in terms of laws which define the freedom of worship that remains a Ministry of Home Affairs task; Parliament's inability to reform the legislative framework on the subject due to vetoes that occur every time when there is a law proposed on the topic; the political discourse of some formations, especially the Northern League, a partner in many national governments in recent years and head of regional governments, which solicits the citizens' emotions in terms of migrant invasion, Eurabia, Islam as a religion of conquest and holy war. This has motivated a political approach which delegates to the local level approval of criteria for the opening of mosques; actually, the criteria that often prevents the opening of mosques.

Thus, geographies of religious practices consist of a misleading and not evident landscape of cultural associations. They are often located in claustrophobic spaces which may expand feelings of frustration and isolation. Often their leaders are not trained as imamsnor along which law or democratic procedures the leadership arises; permits to open mosques are highly variable around the country. These circumstances can drive concerns about ongoing problematic situations involving unclear power formation and reproduction in religious communities.

In Italy, in contrast to UK for example, the right of freedom of worship (or better religious liberty) is guaranteed by the Constitution but in practice it should be regulated by an agreement with the State which is on its way. This is a pending issue not only with Muslims but with other religions.

The conflicting Muslim associative world in itself for its internal diversity, pressures from outside and emancipation trends raised by converts and native Muslim people are seen as the salient elements of Islam in Italy (Gritti, R. and Allam, M. 2001; Naso, P. and Salvarani, B. 2012; Bombardieri, M. 2015). Recent trends show less pressure and it is clear that the State will not give supremacy in representing Muslims in Italy to any association. Thus, the Muslim struggle is driven by the broader action of a religious freedom law gathering all religions still waiting for an Agreement with the State.

Many places have numerous unresolved issues concerning prisons, mosques, schools, and cemeteries. The vision of religious pluralism in Italy is that of a yard with no project (Naso, P. and Salvarani, B. 2012). Conversely, the approach is one of creation of platforms for dialogue, first promoting active pluralism, a 'good' pluralism not a 'bad' pluralism (not multiculturalism as in the UK) (Naso, P. 2013). It is aimed at involving intermediate actors in the public discourse, as a civil dimension of interreligious dialogue. However, reality can be different: increasing support to religious NGOs is evident and it is far less evident that one to civil non-religious society in the dialogue. Finally, a growing weight in relations with the state and society is ensured by the growing number of converts and also with international realms.

According to the journal Confronti (2015), an authoritative think-tank and publication venue for interreligious dialogue, religion, politics and society, Muslim people in Europe can be influenced by the geopolitical situation in the Islamic world at large, and the Arab world in particular. The lack, in many European countries, of legal protection and appropriate policies for healthy integration of Muslims, exposes them to recent interfer-

ence in their religious life from Arab-Islamic regimes. Non-governmental Islamic organizations, through financial support to communities, tend to directly or indirectly exercise religious and political control over them. For example, the Qatar Charity in recent years has provided several million dollars in funding to build mosques around Europe. The same applies to NGOs supported by Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf countries. These countries are known to have a marked aversion to the democracy and secular values of – with some imperfections – Western countries. This interference, under the eyes of European governments, does not help the Islamic communities to achieve a 'healthy' growth and to develop a European vision of their faith, El Ayoubi, M. (2015) summarizing an Italian interreligious debate.

Conclusions

This paper argues that we need to avoid unpacked and overwhelming categorizations. Instead, we should use a geographic approach in terms of fixity-mobility dialectics and origin-destination-circulation scales of shaping places, networks, and ideas.

First, the paper pointed to 'human subjectivity' and intersectional identity as a first element of interpretation and engaged policies. Then, the influence of the country of origin was discussed and it was called as an ethnic factor. This relates to other geographical elements of interethnic relationships globally and locally, from the interethnic mosque to the home realm. The country of origin is often conjugated with a religious and political cleavage in terms of Islam traditions (wahnabism, Sufism) and geopolitics of States for Islam(s) in Europe. Then, the paper focused on issues of 'geographies of mosques': Are they externally controlled and financed? How much do they represent people migrated to Europe?

Based on an overall approach in terms of 'subjectivity and human factors', ethnic variation and interethnic and intra-faith relation-

ships (geopolitics of mosques and States), the paper disclosed issues of quests and competition for legitimacy of representation with the European State and margins of being or becoming political actors in Europe.

The boundaries of political communities may frame a discussion which stems from some central issues: Who are Muslims in Italy or Europe? What about their identity building along different cleavages and belonging (intersectionality)? What about differences between 'new Muslims' (converted) and born Muslims? What about future generations of Muslim people in Europe? What is about the dialectic of Muslims of Italy and origin religious tradition?

One thesis is that of European Muslims (the 'converted') who 're-culturalise' by integrating new ideas from a cultural world 'other' in a previously 'Western' background (Islam 'occidentalement' – van der Broeck, L.O. 1990; Allievi, S. 1999). Another thesis is of Islam as an ideology of resistance not only in a post-colonial frame but in terms of European marginalized people being abandoned in a welfare State in crisis or under increasingly corrupted politics. Thus, people may be motivated to escape into Islam as an oasis of 'purity', as an occasion of salvation, safety, redemption, escape, anchor, refuge. Finally, more efforts should be put into dialogue and based on the involvement of non-confessional civil society strata.

Today, it is necessary to address the issue of training imams in Italy with adequate theological and linguistic preparation: a training which takes into account the Italian social, cultural and legal context. 'Good' mosques and well trained imams are needed to ferry the Islamic reality towards an integrated Italian Islam that remains strongly based on its Koran spirituality and the Sunna, but that is capable of facing without fears reforms which the religion needs (see special issues: Confronti, 2015; Nigrizia, 2015). From the Italian interreligious dialogue and individual intellectuals, the thesis for integration is about Islamic doctrine in *the practical (not theoretical) sphere of human rights*, etc.

In Italy, as elsewhere in Europe, conditions of democracy and freedom of worship and expression prevail. They may allow Muslims to reopen the gates of ijtihad (Hermeneutics) and then the contextualization of the main sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and the Sunna. A modern Islam and a reformed one according to the Italian interreligious dialogue debate is the remedy for diseases of fundamentalism/Jihadism and Islamophobia/xenophobia of which Muslims today are the first victims.

The challenges that concern primarily Muslims also concern institutions and civil society, who have the civic duty to promote this difficult process of building a multi-religious society where Muslims and their faith can find adequate 'citizenship'. This should not be left only to religious associations, interreligious dialogue in itself or communities of faith. Bridges among people in civil situations and places are really needed (universities, school activities, non-religious NGOs, women involved in multi-ethnic activities and realms).

Issues of Italian language teaching for women and men, attention to equal opportunities, multi religious, and non-religious multi-ethnic realms should be forcefully pursued. Self-caged communities and non-Muslim no-go zones are an obstacle for gaining opportunities and status by Muslims. Finally, the lack of integration, rising Islamophobia, and xenophobia, are also linked to the diminution of the Welfare State creating new poverty among Europeans, thus, causing deviance and intolerance, among other outcomes.

Again, the keys to achieving and maintaining well-being are the human factor and identity building which increasingly are made more difficult by adverse material conditions, ignorance, and fears on both sides: new Europeans or hosted people and 'old' Europeans. Identity is an intersectional process, and the weight of a single cleavage cannot be determined *a priori* (Sen, A. 2006; Malouf, A. 2010). The problem lies in contemporary societies with a schizophrenic approach: being exposed to global communication and information, but being educated, raised, and nurtured as 'small' human beings (Sen, A. 2006). Fundamentalism is indeed a 'political' 'party' with a solid financial basis often obtained via crime and geopolitical influence; conversely, individuals hardly or do not find nationally responsive politics and politicians.

Agencies for open discourse, integration, and bridging gaps between people have no solid financial basis or media attention. Warfare police surveillance, martial law thus can become a temptation in European States, as can walls against refugees' families and people in search of peaceful conditions for life.

The European tradition of human rights, universalism, and democracy should be re-examined and practiced not only in the abstract but in the concrete of engaged human relations with 'empathy' while avoiding the laissez faire of multiculturalism, demagogic 'hate' discourse and xenophobia, aggressive assimilation or 'culturalism' exceptions.

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BOOK REVIEW

Lampland, M.: The Value of Labor: The Science of Commodification in Hungary, 1920–1956. Chicago–London, The University of Chicago Press, 2016. 368 p.

Martha LAMPLAND has been conducting research on Hungarian agriculture since the early 1980s. Her latest book, 'The Value of Labor' is a summary of research about how scientists and the state bureaucracy worked in Hungary on determining the value of agricultural labour in a scientific and rational way. The author conceives of 'The Value of Labor' as a prequel to 'The Object of Labor' (LAMPLAND, M. 1995), in which she summarised her ethnographic work in the village and agricultural cooperative of Sárosd, Hungary, in the 1980s.

Although at the first sight 'The Value of Labor' might be read as an intellectual history of how the value of agricultural labour was measured (and remunerated) in the interwar period and during early socialism in Hungary, the book offers in fact a broader social history of agriculture in the country. Therefore, it has conceptual and methodological lessons for both an audience outside Hungary and outside the discipline of anthropology.

The book consists of two parts which are divided into four chapters each, framed by the 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion'. The orientation of the reader within the book is eased by a list of abbreviations (in case of Hungarian institutions meanings are given in both Hungarian and English), a glossary of all Hungarian terms used in the book, a detailed bibliography and references to archival sources, as well as a handy index. The first part covers the material between 1920 and 1945, whereas the second part analyses the era between 1945 and 1956.

Chapter 1 sets the scene by looking at scientific debates in the interwar period on how to modernise Hungarian agriculture, including questions of economies of scale or how to calibrate wages of agricultural workers. Chapter 2 discusses the infrastructure of such a modernisation: agricultural work science studying "what farmers were actually doing and with what effects" (p. 10), formal institutions such as higher education in business management, as well as accounting as business practice, and shows why this professionalization failed or succeeded only partially. Calculating wages is the topic of Chapter 3, where the author outlines standardisation measures and research calculations of agricultural work science (i.e. how scientists tried to 'objectively' quantify a standard worker's daily achievement in terms of output), including discussions about commensuration. Chapter 4 elaborates the latter issue in detail and shows in a longer historical account why the monetary wage form (instead of in-kind payments or sharecropping) could not find an easy way into remunerating agricultural labour.

Part Two in Chapter 5 starts with discussing infrastructural limits to changing state administration by the Communist Party in 1948. The next chapter analyses the way agricultural wage policy was crafted after the change, which led to the introduction of the work unit system in collective farms in 1949. Mastering collectivisation with the use of coercion and class warfare, thus, disciplining workers through propaganda and labour competitions, as well as expropriation of private farmers is the topic of Chapter 7. The last chapter discusses the period between 1953 and 1956, the eve of the Hungarian revolution, when the new government in the post-Stalin era aimed at mediating conflicts of the work unit system and tensions around the dismantling of collective farms. As the book shows, although administrative infrastructures had already been stabilised by then, inherent conflicts over defining the value of labour could not be solved.

One important claim of the book is the intellectual continuity of scientific practices and institutions in the case of valuing agricultural labour in Hungary. The author shows how for example German business management was influencing Hungarian agricultural work science in the interwar period, which formed the basis for introducing the work unit system as quantifying outputs of human labour in the newly established collective farms after 1948. In this way, the book questions the common assumption about a "swift and comprehensive" (p. 5) Stalinist transition in Hungary, under the rubric of Sovietisation. The author's approach would also help rethink some accounts of the intellectual history of Hungarian and Eastern European human geography after World War II, which concentrate more on ruptures than on contingencies (see for example Gyuris, F. and Győri, R. 2013).

Consequently, the book opens up comparative work not only across time (Lampland outlines striking parallels between agricultural transition in the early 1990s, when she started reading materials for this book, and the Stalinist agricultural transition she was reading about), but also geographically and across production systems. Her conclusion is that "[i]ncorporating the role of interwar work science and agricultural economics into the history of collectivization also allows us to compare a phenomenon usually limited to the history of socialist states with other schemes for modernizing agriculture at the time, such as colonial plantations and capitalist latifundia" (p. 268). Therefore, the book is also at the forefront of global labour history's intellectual inquiry (van der Linden, M. 2008; see also the book review of Gagyi, Á. and Gerőcs, T. 2017), and extends recent geographical literature on policy mobilities (*cf.* Peck, J. 2011), which until now has mostly built on contemporary case studies of 'neoliberal capitalism'.

Lampland's rich empirical analysis might be linked to debates about labour geography and geographies of marketization. The term 'geography of labour' emerged in the Hungarian economic geography literature in the interwar period, although in a slightly different context to what the book analyses. Agricultural economists and work scientists were struggling with how to measure agricultural labour and how these calculations might be incorporated into the accounting practices of agricultural firms, which represented 'modern' scientific considerations. At the same time, geographers were looking at Hungarian agricultural labour as investment into the 'national landscape' which labour supposedly resulted in revisionist property claims with regard to territories outside of the borders of Hungary, defined by the Treaties of Paris (Prinz, G. and Teleki, P. 1936; for a discussion see Czirfusz, M. 2015). Scientific exchange of ideas about labour in Hungary is a research field in the literature yet to be explored, at least in geography.

Social relations of labour, property and landscape have been in the core of labour geography since it has radically been reconceptualised in the Anglophone geographical tradition since the 1980s (Herod, A. 1997). In this vein, and following the former thoughts on comparative studies, it might also be interesting to read the formation of capitalist agriculture in the interwar period in Hungary in Lampland's account against classic studies of Mitchell, D. (1996, 2013) in California. Whereas Mitchell's political-economic agenda, and that of mainstream labour geography research as well, are about how cheap agricultural labour was established and kept in the normalised wage relation, Lampland's Hungarian case study unfolds a story about dead-ends of the commodification of labour as well. One aspect of this is the use of the work unit (i.e. "discrete units of activity of a specific duration performed by specific categories of social actors with certain skills or physical attributes" – p. 135) as a commensurable measure of labour value. For scientists in the interwar period, as well as the state during the collectivisation of agriculture after 1947, work unit was meant to be part and parcel of how workers would be rewarded. There had been considerable debate about lacking infrastructure of putting work unit into practice (such as lack of expertise about the new system at the local level), which could not be solved easily. Furthermore, as Chapter 4 shows, work unit also substituted for the monetary value of labour. In the interwar period (and as the book shows, since the mid-19th century modernisation of Hungary) money was regarded by the general public as inappropriate remuneration because of periods of rapid inflation, several changes of the official currency, or a supposed result in 'dehumanising' social relations between farm owners and labourers.

Commodification of labour, as the author concludes, might take place without the capitalist wage relation and without 'proper' labour markets. This tenet is an important contribution even against the backdrop of recent discussions on diverse economies within economic geography, especially with empirical work on post-socialist countries. The diverse economies research strand (Gibson-Graham, J.K. 1996) argues that the concept of economy has to be extended in order to include non-capitalist and alternative capitalist forms of labour. Gritzas, G. and Kavoulakos, K.I. (2016) confirm with a review of recent articles that this understanding deepened analyses of economic transformations in post-socialist countries. 'The Value of Labor' directs our attention to the fact that the normalcy of wage labour has never been fix, and that there have been continuous struggles around defining, measuring and establishing infrastructures of the 'capitalist' labour form.

Lampland's discussions on how commodification takes place without markets and how markets as so-

cial relations advanced commodification of labour build on recent accounts of science studies and economic anthropology (for an overview of current debates see Pellandini-Simányi, L. 2016). This research programme also influenced economic geographers who directed the attention to the spatial and territorial character of markets, building mostly on assemblage and performativity theory within social studies of marketization (Berndt, C. and Boeckler, M. 2012). Within these studies in economic geography, however, as Ouma, S. (2015) points out, most research "have so far focused on so-called advanced capitalist economies" (p. 10). Martha Lampland's book offers an insightful case study from the European periphery and from two different eras. Agriculture (moreover, 'productive' agriculture) was at the forefront of 19th and 20th-century modernisation struggles, for agricultural exports were crucial in the international division of labour. How this integration into the world-economy might be achieved was contested throughout the timeframe of the book. Are family farms, large manorial estates or socialist agricultural collectives the most effective form of property to achieve this project? The author moves beyond the usual conceptual framework by looking at the infrastructure (the "institutional scaffold") of commodification of labour and also at bottlenecks of commodification. In her analysis, infrastructure does not only mean material things, but includes human actors (scientists, bookkeepers, government officials, etc.) and a "variety of implements and practices" (p. 9) as well. Among others, the weekly newspaper *Köztelek (Commons)*, which was widely read by landowners, research institutes and universities promoting new business practices in agriculture, manuals of the calculation of work units, party/state bureaucracy managing collectivisation after World War II were all elements of this infrastructure. Compared to Eastern European research on the role of technocrats in advocating for and conducting social change (see for example Bockman, J. and Eyal, G. 2002 as well as Gagyi, Á. 2015) this book puts more emphasis on material devices and technologies of commodification.

A main methodological lesson to be learned for economic geographers after reading 'The Value of Labor' is taking an ethnographic method. Ethnographic work has been established lately within economic geography in general, and also within geographies of marketization and commodification (Cook, I. 2004; Ouma, S. 2012). Lampland's fieldwork is largely confined to archival sources and expert interviews. The main corpus of the first part of the book is constituted by published materials, namely newspapers, academic journals and books as well as some archive documents of public institutions. Public debates over commodification, and struggles for building the infrastructure for commodification are reconstructed

predominantly with the close reading of *Köztelek* and other public materials, which somewhat, as both the author and Balogh, R. forthcoming argue, limits the scope of the analysis. The second part, dealing with the processes between 1945 and 1956, draws on archival sources, primarily on previously confidential party and government documents (pp. 19–22).

At this point it is important to mention from a geographical point of view how Lampland constructs her narrative at different geographical scales from this material. The book, although never mentions it, follows to a large extent the method of global ethnography, which is interested in the global particular, the locally specific globalized socio-spatial relations (for an empirical study of different Hungarian cases see Gille, Z. 2016). The author often refers to the global context in which the modernisation of agriculture has been a crucial motive for the commodification of labour, and draws short parallels with other countries. The importance of the national scale is self-evident as large part of the analysis deals with such institutions or regulations which had to be established at the national scale in order to make commodification of labour possible. As many accounts would claim, this project was swayed by the Sovietisation of Hungary. A main argument of the book is, however, that if we look at the local scale (county and district level, as well as the local councils and cooperatives), the power of the state to drive commodification of labour was simply missing. The three counties in which Lampland looks at the functioning of lower level administration (Győr-Moson-Sopron, Hajdú-Bihar and Zala) represent different trajectories of socio-economic development throughout the capitalist modernisation of Hungarian agriculture. Therefore, the author is able to show how geographical location and local social histories matter (p. 189) in how the infrastructure of commodification was built, maintained or enforced. In both parts of the book, the firm (manors of the interwar period and agricultural collectives after World War II), the person (the agricultural worker or the landowner) and the household also represent important analytical scales.

Scientific management prevailed all over the world in the first decades of the 20th century, both geographically (in different places and spaces in the world) and in various facets of life (for example in the firm, in the world of labour, in the state administration or within the household). Yet, actual forms of modernist techno-political rationalisation were quite different in different countries and in different parts of the economy. 'The Value of Labor' covers one case study, namely commodifying agricultural work in Hungary between 1920 and 1956. Lampland refers to connections with other forms of commodification, other forms of labour in Hungary and commodifications in other countries in several parts of the book. I can only wish that

studying these parallel stories in detail will also be taken up by economic geographers in Hungary, and comparatively, elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

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Meusburger, P., Werlen, B. and Suarsana, L. (eds.): Knowledge and Action. Dordrecht, Springer, 2017. 300 p.

There have been several attempts to question disciplinary borders over the last decades, marked by, for example, different 'turns', such as the 'spatial-turn' in social sciences or the 'affective-turn' in social sciences and geography, and the emergence of sub-disciplines such as behavioural economics. Yet, attachment to disciplines as well as disciplinary agendas and disciplinary 'pride' are still limiting research, so collaborations, such as the volume to be reviewed here, are important contributions to a more out-of-the-box way of approaching research. "Knowledge and Space" is a book series focusing on the relationship between knowledge and power, and the spatial disparity of both. Within this series, the volume "Knowledge and Action" aims to collect a variety of papers from different disciplines, including psychology, geography, philosophy and anthropology, in order to discuss the interconnected nature of knowledge, space and action. The volume draws on the idea of Nico Stehr (1994) that "parts of knowledge can be defined as ability, aptitude, or

'capacity for social action" and on the concept "that the production and dissemination of knowledge are always embedded in specific environments (spatial context, spatial relations, and power structures)" (p. 1). I believe that the book series, and especially this particular volume, can also provide refreshing inquiries for research in post-Socialist countries and (semi-)peripheral contexts in general by suggesting a more critical approach to the existing status quo and the dominance of 'Western thought'.

The geographers Peter Meusburger and Benno Werlen, who are both editors of the volume, start the introduction with highlighting the shortcomings of the traditional 'Rational Choice Theory' and the 'Homo Oeconomicus' concept. Their critique is based on the ethnocentric nature of these theories, their neglect of the spatial dimension, their lack of empirical foundation, and their psychologically unrealistic approach. Meusburger and Werlen also link the insufficiency of these concepts to the general subordination of 'space', to 'time' in modern social theory, and they call for research questions that are more integrative, in terms of both space-time relations and disciplinary background. Drawing on Giddens (1984), they highlight that time is overemphasised at the expense of the spatial dimension and even when "space is taken into account, the word 'space' is often not understood as a theory-dependent term, but rather as a given fact" (p. 4.) and space in this sense is seen as a container, without considering its socially constructed nature. While following the works of Giddens, Bourdieu or Soja, social sciences claimed to take a 'spatial turn' and to overcome the "spatial ignorance identified in their field" (p. 4), the editors of "Knowledge and Action" argue that in fact, the spatial turn is incomplete and in its current state may even lead to 'geo-determinism'. As they suggest, the mere appropriation of the spatial dimension without its re-conceptualisation from the perspective of social sciences will not improve social research, but only "falsify the real nature of sociocultural realities" (p. 5). With reference to Meusburger's earlier work, they argue that "an environment's impacts on action must not be regarded deterministically [and] an environment should not be thought of as an independent variable that directly influences all relevant actors through a direct cause-and-effect relation (if A, then B). It depends on processes of evaluation based on learning, knowledge, and experience whether spatial structures, physical space, or social environments have an impact on human action" (p. 13).

The fifteen studies presented in the volume are disciplinary diverse, and approach the central topic
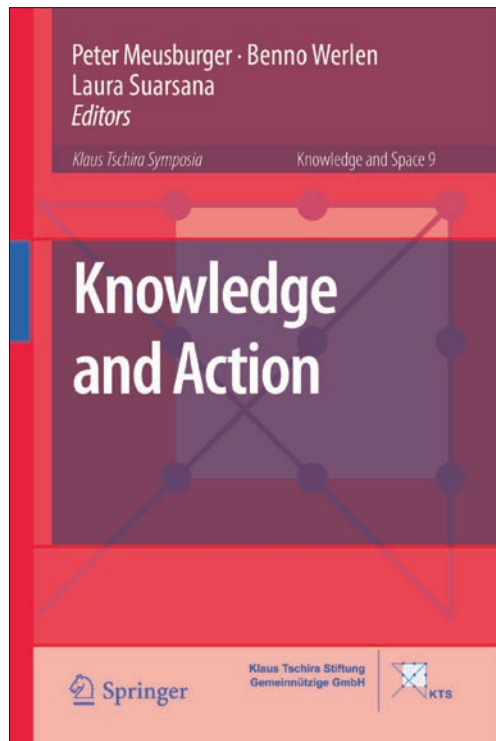
of the book on different scales, from individual micro-scales to global macro-scales, and while some authors look at "knowledge as a social construct based on collective action", others "as an individual capacity to act" (p. 8). Chapters 2 to 5 and Chapter 7 focus on macro-scale analysis; Chapters 6, 9 and 10 investigate the micro-scale; Chapters 11 and 12 are taking a philosophical approach to knowledge, whereas Chapter 13 studies the bodily ways of knowing through an artistic approach. Finally, in the last two chapters knowing as cognitive capacity is discussed in relation to mobility in space. One of the major strengths of the book are the research questions the editors put forward in the introduction, including the following ones: "To what extent is knowledge a precondition for action? How much knowledge is necessary for action? How do different representations of knowledge shape action? How rational is human behaviour? What categories of rationality should be distinguished? Why do people occasionally act against their knowledge?" And more specifically in relation to space: "Which concepts of space and place are appropriate for analysing relations between knowledge, action, and space? How much are the spatial conditions of actions exposed to historical transformation? How does the digital revolution change the historically established society–space relations? What are the spatial implications for the formation of knowledge?"

Many of these questions are addressed throughout the individual studies. In the second chapter, which follows the introduction, Benno Werlen further details the shortcomings of the 'spatial turn' in social sciences and calls for more integrity among disciplines that are more reflective of the 'digital age'. His focus is on the corporeality of the actors and the difference between mediated and direct experiences and communication, in order to highlight the "socially constructed relations of space" (p. 16). This has become particularly important in the new digital age, he argues, where socio-spatial conditions are inevitably redrawn.

Huib Ernste provides in Chapter 3 a historical overview of the transformation of the philosophy of rationality. The chapter starts with introducing the early stages of the separation of rationality and reason in philosophical thought by drawing on Immanuel Kant, and continues with the critique of positivist rationality, underlining that there is not a single type of rationality, but there are different types, "which cannot be reduced to each other" (p. 58). By reflecting on phenomenological schools (of geographical action theory and language pragmatic approaches) and poststructuralist theory, Ernste argues that „rationality could be reconstituted as a culturally contingent phenomenon, and critical geographical analysis could again contribute to concrete problem-solving, albeit in a culturally much more informed and embedded way than hitherto" (p. 16).

Gunnar Olsson in Chapter 4 similarly takes a historical approach on philosophical thought focusing on functionality and rationality in planning and social engineering in Sweden during the 1950s and early 1960s. He begins with discussing the influence of the central place theory and location theory of Christaller (1933) and Lösch (1954[1943]) in Nazi Germany and the "principles intended to forge a happy marriage between scientific knowledge and political action" (p. 66). Olsson points to the similarly positivist thinking and mathematical calculation of the politically motivated Swedish experts of planning, who "took it as their mission to turn Sweden into a People's Home, a state of rationality in which the maximizing principles of utilitarian ethics were institutionalized" (p. 69).

In Chapter 5 Richard Peet provides a neo-Marxist analysis on a global scale by looking at the role of expertise in financial institutions. Drawing on Marx, Engels, and Gramsci, he emphasises that knowledge production serves a class interest and that class forces lead, direct, and control the production of knowledge. He refers to this form of knowledge (production) as perverse expertise, as the bright minds of the financial sector, who do the intellectual and practical modelling and are well paid and respected for doing so, accumulate knowledge to maintain the existing social order. While the elites are practicing perverse expertise, masses remain in social unconsciousness maintained by trivialising their life to overconsumption. Peet concludes that the "intersecting economic and environmental crises will continue *ad infinitum* because the existing hegemonic knowledge cannot guide effective social action" (p. 91).

In Chapter 7 Nico Stehr also discusses the role hegemonic knowledge plays in the production of spatial disparities (although he does not discuss hegemonic knowledge *per se*). According to Stehr "significant asymmetries of knowledge exist" and "knowledge gaps are growing", and he rejects "the interpretation that nonknowledge is the opposite of knowledge", aiming to avoid falling into a theoretically and empirically unproductive dichotomy. He instead sees knowledge as a "context-dependent anthropological constant representing a continuum", and there are only "those who know something else" (p. 123). Therefore, the problem or the difference arises from the usefulness of the knowledge one possesses in a given situation, and thus, the key sociological question from this perspective is how to address the issues of "knowledge asymmetry and knowledge gaps in various spheres of modern society, such as the economy, politics, the life world, and governance" (p. 123).

Chapter 6, 8, 9, and 10 are covering psychological researches that address questions on knowledge and action from the perspective of the individual actor. In Chapter 6 Joachim Funke poses the ques-

tions: how much knowledge is necessary for action, whether action is possible without knowledge, and why people sometimes act against their knowledge. In other words, Funke focuses on problem-solving that he understands as the intentional generation of knowledge for the ability to act. His research is based on the 2012 cycle of the worldwide PISA study and suggests a clear connection between the generation of knowledge and action, and his final conclusion is that "it is not possible to act *without* knowledge, but people can act *against* their knowledge" (p. 109). Frank Wieber and Peter M. Gollwitzer take a slightly different perspective, as they approach the question from a goal-attainment perspective, while also emphasising the direct connection between knowledge and action. They distinguish between spontaneous and strategic planning, from which the later explains processes similar to that in Funke's study, thus, processes involving the systematic search of knowledge for critical situations, whereas spontaneous planning means the activation of the existing goal-relevant knowledge.

Ralph Hertwig and Renato Frey investigate the way different representations of knowledge influence human action. Their focus is on the comparison of description based and experience based knowledge in relation to decision making. They suggest that neither research on description based or experience based knowledge should be prioritised, but instead attention should be given to the difference between the two as the "contrast between the two is enlightening" (p. 19).

Chapter 11 addresses the relation of knowledge and action from a philosophical perspective. Tilman Reitz misses the mutual reflection on the understanding of knowledge between social sciences and philosophy and suggests that in fact both have overlooked "the spatial dispersion of knowledge" (p. 21.) Reitz's main interest, however, is "which understanding of knowledge makes sense in what kind of everyday circumstances" (p. 189).

The last two chapters focus on the link between knowledge and mobility in space. Thomas Widlok (in Chapter 14) studies the relationship between rationality and action in the movement of Southern African and Australian hunter-gatherer societies and argues that the rationality of the movements in the researched context cannot be sufficiently described through categories of Western (ethnocentric) philosophical thought as it is contained in the features of the environment. The psychologists Heidrun Mollenkopf, Annette Hieber, and Hans-Werner Wahl (in Chapter 15) scrutinise the way different factors, such as age, mental and physical handicaps, personal resources and environmental conditions can separate actions from intentions. Based on their interviews with older adults about their out-of-home mobility three times over 10 years, they argue that out-of-home mobility remains important throughout and have a strong effect on overall life satisfaction.

As it has been outlined, the volume "Knowledge and Action" covers a variety of ways to approach its focus of topic through 15 chapters. This unavoidably means that its strength is also its weakness. "Knowledge and Action" incorporates different scales, approaches and disciplines to address the relationship between knowledge, action and space, and consequently power. Yet, most of the individual chapters do not talk to each other significantly due to the wide scope of the issue, and they tend to remain within their own discipline, what often makes it challenging for readers outside of the field to deeply engage with the text. Limited communication between different fields in both the academia and practice is, however, not the shortcoming of this volume *per se*, but a general burden of contemporary science that requires more attention and more works similar to this book, and with even more disciplinary self-reflexivity and openness.

The volume raises important questions and inspires further research, even in the Central and Eastern European region, where the hegemonic production of knowledge, both in space and on disciplinary basis, could constitute exciting research topics. Amongst others, Judit Timár (2004) for instance, highlights inequalities in the production of geographical knowledge focusing on East-West relations and the general hegemony of Anglo-American knowledge. Other areas of research may include social movements studies (in terms of both acting and non-acting), migration studies (in relation to both immigration and emigration, domestic and international) or the extensive use of public spaces for both political propaganda and commercial advertisement – just to mention the most conspicuous issues currently affecting the region.

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Creativity has become a central issue in urban development since Richard Florida (2002) published his book entitled "The Rise of the Creative Class". As knowledge and information have become more and more important in developed societies, policymakers are increasingly focusing on investments in technology intensive industries and aim to attract and retain highly skilled labour. According to Florida, creativity is the main driving force of the contemporary urban economies, and the most important source of growth and competitiveness. Education, research, arts, cultural and creative industries are all parts of the creative industries which take the place of the traditional industries such as car manufacturing, textile industry etc. Florida claims that this changing economic landscape has led to the emergence of the so-called creative class – people whose work centres around creating new ideas, services or goods. For him, cities should attract these people, since they create, operate and attract innovative enterprises, thus, become facilitators of economic growth and urban restructuring. As Florida argues, the creative class seeks vibrant cultural scenes which are parts of the

'creative milieu'. In order to become more competitive, cities have to focus on the creation of this milieu – through urban revitalisation programmes, organising colourful events, provision of non-traditional office spaces, tax policies and new urban regulations in relation to transport and entrepreneurship. As a result, new visual urban frontiers and images are produced to constitute the brand of the creative city (Colomb, C. 2012).

Florida's book has become seminal for not only researchers, but policy makers as well; cities started to analyse their creative potential and centred their development measures and aims around creativity (Hague, E. 2016). Thus, the book served as a kind of 'blueprint' for urban development at the beginning of 21st century. Even international organisations adopted the idea of the creative city. The European Union Green Paper entitled "Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries" portrays creativity as a basis of innovation and economic growth (European Commission 2010). However, as empirical analyses (Van Winden, W. et al. 2007) show, the effects of knowledge-based economies can be variegated in space – still, actions and investments in relation to the creative city often follow very similar patterns.

The book entitled "Inequalities in Creative Cities: Issues, Approaches, Comparisons" focuses on the ambiguities of creative city agenda, which were criticised by several authors from various aspects. This volume offers a comparative analysis of the contradictions, presenting the connection between the urban policies focusing on creativity and inequalities within societies, thus, providing empirical insights for the previous critiques.

There are several important literature antecedents of this edited volume which often served as starting points and theoretical bases for the authors. For example, the distinction, or the link, between creative, cultural and knowledge-based industries is not elaborated clearly in Florida's work. Furthermore, questions arise regarding the adaptability of creative city and creative class concepts outside of North America. Are these concepts applicable in other contexts as well? The different cultures within Europe and the lower level of labour mobility compared to North America create different environment, in which the hyper-mobility of creative workforce can hardly manifest itself (Van Winden, W. et al. 2007; Martin-Brelot, H. et al. 2010). The notion of the creative class has received several critiques as well. For example, the conceptualisation of class seems to be problematic. The broad definition of creative class leaves doubts about its empirical applicability (Krätke, S. 2010).
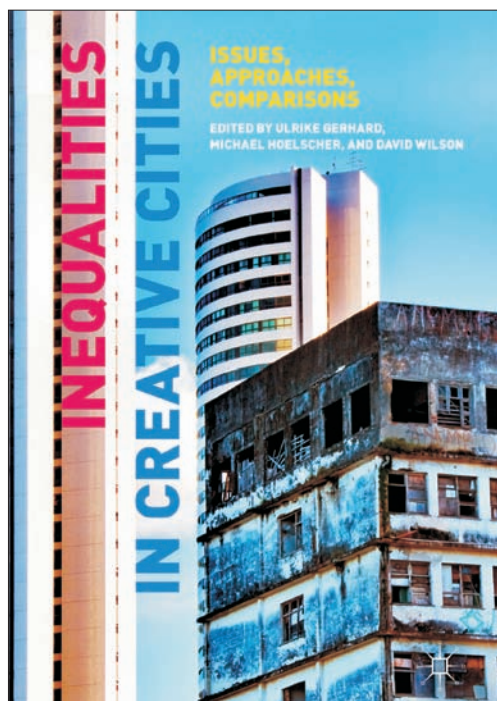
The members of this supposed class have different positions in society with different resources, interests, political values and attitudes (Markusen, A. 2006).

Other critiques highlight that the creative city and creative class arguments centre around certain types of people – this is also highlighted by the contributors of "Inequalities in Creative Cities: Issues, Approaches, Comparisons". As a result, urban policies can produce enclaves for urban elites and create new forms of segregation and exclusion (Peck, J. 2005). These policies leave only a supporting role for the majority of society, assuming that in the end, creativity-led strategies would be automatically beneficial for everyone – but this 'rising tide raises all boats' logic is not justified by the empirical findings (Leslie, D. and Catungal, J.P. 2012). Creative workers are often criticised for pushing out the long-term residents from certain neighbourhoods and pioneering gentrification (Vivant, E. 2013). The cases of Cleveland, Montpellier or Groningen presented in the volume support this assumption. Furthermore, the racial and gender aspects are often neglected in the creative city. It seems that the discourse is quite progressive, since the supposed new creative class is not determined by gender or race, and as Florida writes, everyone is creative in some way – thus, anyone can become a member of the creative class. In theory, diversity is highlighted as a crucial resource for cities – but as the case of Heidelberg in this reviewed volume shows, the creative class itself can be quite homogenous. This supports those claims made by earlier researches that beyond the diversity discourses, creative class discourses champion a certain type of person. Besides being creative and talented, they have to be fit, flexible, independent and adaptive. Furthermore, the discourses simplify and neglect inequalities which are based on gender, race or nationality (Parker, P. 2008), but as the case of Delhi presents in this book, patriarchal policy can still be strong in the creative city. Florida's theory is linked to human capital theories, therefore it assumes that the labour market is a neutral arbiter and operates objectively and fairly, what downplays the significance of structural elements, power relations and other factors (Leslie, D. and Catungal, J.P. 2012).

As the contributors of the reviewed book also demonstrate convincingly, the creative city discourse also has strong connections to neoliberalism. This kind of discourse focuses on individuals, and inequalities are often explained as individual failures, e.g. cities or people are in disadvantaged position because they are not creative enough. The idea of the creative class fits to the logic of neoliberal urban policies which follow entrepreneurial agendas, emphasise the importance of competition, promote consumption and favour less regulation and intervention from local and national governments (Leslie, D. and Catungal, J.P.

2012). To sum up the above, although it seems that being creative is the solution for urban development challenges, the concept and agenda of go-creative cities are ambiguous and the downsides of such agendas should be explored.

As the editors state in the introduction, so far we have little knowledge on how the creative city agenda affects urban demographics, urban land-use and socio-economic processes. The book aims to overcome this gap by analysing various forms and sources of inequalities in creative cities. In addition, the authors assume that creative city policies may increase inequalities – and even create new forms of inequalities. Moreover, as their results show, the creativity argument is often used to legitimise social differences. Thus, the analysis of old and new forms of inequalities in cities where knowledge-based industries are in the centre of urban policy is a crucial task in order to have a deeper understanding of contemporary urban societies.

The main focus of the book is on 'ordinary' cities, which can be justified by two arguments. The first one is that these cities are often neglected in urban researches, which tend to focus on global cities and capital cities. This is especially true for the creative city literature (Pratt, A. and Hutton, T. 2013). The other is that middle-sized university cities (e.g. Heidelberg) or cities going through economic restructuring after the decline of traditional industries (e.g. Cleveland) often find the creative city agenda very appealing when forming their development policies. Ordinary cities are in a particular position since they are interfaces of various processes, structures, functions and spatial forms, thus, offering unique opportunities for analysis (as the city of Cachoeira does in this book).

The volume consists of three major parts. The first part presents the theoretical background starting from the notion of creativity and the cultural economy to approaches to inequalities. The editors, Ulrike Gerhard, Michael Hoelscher and David Wilson, introduce the main topic and the rationale of the book. After the introductory chapter, Tom Hutton overviews the concepts of culture, creativity and the cultural economy as well as how their role has changed in the past decades. He distinguishes the most important analytical domains of urban cultural economies which are crucial issues for future analyses. He also presents the labour aspects of the cultural economy. Ferenc Gyuris presents the key approaches to and narratives of urban inequalities, emphasising the deeply political nature of such discourses. As he stresses, studies on inequality should include the political instead of employing naturalising attitudes.

The second part elaborates the topic through empirical case studies from the Global North, focusing on different dimensions of inequalities. Gender, race, housing and class related inequalities are all presented in this part, and the questions that arise

in relation to social justice and urban restructuring are also discussed. These case studies demonstrate the connection between earlier, neoliberal growth machine policies and contemporary creativity agendas. By adopting these policies, cities are not passive receivers of globalised ideas, but as Justin Beaumont and Zemiattin Yildiz emphasise in Chapter 8 using the notion of policy topologies, they are contributors to them. Their approach is built on Actor-Network Theory and highlights the significance of human and non-human actors in the flow, creation and adoption of creative city agendas. Furthermore, all of the contributors of the volume underline that urban inequalities not only persist in the creative city, but they are systematically and constantly being re-made. Several chapters emphasise the importance of visions in the city. Urban design, architecture, vibrant public spaces have crucial role in establishing or enhancing the creative image. The tools of this image (re)creation vary from new tram lines to neighbourhood regeneration and public space redevelopment and regulation. The contradictory role of diversity or knowledge is also an important issue in many cities as Gerhard and Hoelscher demonstrate through the case of Heidelberg, Germany. Strategies often have a quite narrow understanding of knowledge and education, thus, equal opportunities mainly appear only in the narratives, but they are not manifest in practice.

While the second part is focusing on 'Western' cities, the third part aims to expand our knowledge by presenting case studies from Brazil and India. Wendel Henrique Baumgartner and Eberhard Rothfuss analyse the interaction between urban and rural spaces in Cachoeira, Brazil. As they emphasise, urbanisation processes of the Global South are still 'unfinished', what results in the mixing of urbanity and rurality. As a result, these cities are getting integrated into the global flows on the one hand, while preserving their connections to the local countryside on the other. Brazil, as one of the most unequal nations, is an ideal country for the implementation of creative city agendas, thus, interpreting inequalities as natural elements of society. In Chapter 10, Christiane Brosius presents the ambiguities related to the mobility and access to work and consumption possibilities of women in Delhi, India. Because of economic development and the opening up of education possibilities, women have increasing chance to become members of the creative class. The representation of women in popular culture is changing and new gender models are emerging (e.g. that of the single, independent woman), but there are tensions between traditional social expectations and the new roles. As the authors state in this chapter, Delhi as a world class city should foster their inclusion and acceptance and should provide equal rights. Meanwhile, the fear and vulnerability of women are often neglected by decision makers, so

the idea of an inclusive city cannot be implemented. The new spaces of Delhi reinforce patriarchal urban planning and politics. The volume is closed with a conclusion chapter, in which the editors highlight the most important messages of the book. They emphasise the importance of narratives which are transnationally produced and circulated. The narratives of creativity centred strategies transform cities along neoliberal principles. Therefore, they have significant role in legitimising and creating a Gramscian 'common sense', in which the aims and measures of urban development are indisputable.

To sum up, the book is an extremely valuable contribution to the creative city discourse. It is a theoretically informed and empirically grounded collection of papers with comparative focus. Hence, the volume moves beyond a mere description of ambiguities about the creative city. As the editors emphasise in the conclusion, cities are connected through various flows (e.g. migration, the flow of commodities, ideas etc.), thus, they share common visions and ideas – let those be go-creative, sustainability or smart growth. The book demonstrates the role of different institutional and cultural settings as well as diverse trajectories in the adaptation and implementation of creative city policies, and how these policies maintain and create various forms of inequality and exclusion.

This collection of contributions bears a special significance for Eastern and Central European countries, where due to the economic restructuring process after the regime change make the new, 'creative' ideas of development appealing for decision-makers. These ideas are often seen as indispensable measures for rapid economic development and catching up. Despite critiques regarding the importance of the context and doubts about adoptability, many cities in the region focus their policies around the creative economy and the creative class. Therefore, the cases presented in the book offer valuable insights for decision-makers in post-socialist countries. The case of Cleveland or Glasgow can be useful for cities going through economic restructuring or decline, while the chapter focusing on Delhi offers insights for capital cities which aim to enhance their international significance. The examples of Heidelberg and Oxford provide important experiences for medium-sized university towns, where creativity and knowledge constitute the most important source of development. As the most important message of the book suggests, inequalities can increase during creativity-led urban development, since investors and policymakers privilege certain social groups and locations in the city. Hence, adopting this policy cannot solve quickly existing economic and social problems. Moreover, it can create new inequalities and tensions, and might even reinforce the existing ones.

But the creative city narrative, although as powerful as it is, is not determined to end up in the same de-

velopment path in every context. Whereas it has clear connections with neoliberalism, creativity can open up new, progressive and less elitist ways of urban development as well. According to Vivant, E. (2013) creativity should be considered as the ability to find alternative means in order to tackle precariousness in contemporary urban societies. Thus, the go-creative agenda offers not only challenges but possibilities as well. To take advantage of these possibilities, one should gain a better understanding of the contradictions of creative city politics – and this volume is an important step towards fulfilling this goal.

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