Matthias Waechter [ed.]

Europe – Against the Tide

Nomos

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The third volume of our policy paper series, collecting the contributions published online by the Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE) between summer 2016 and a year later, reflects some significant changes as well as some continuity in European integration and international relations: The international system undergoes a period of accelerated change, mostly due to a more than unconventional stance of the President of the United States, putting into question some of the assumptions of the post-1945, or at least post-bipolar world order, namely the relationship with Europe, as well as the cooperative approach to future US-China relations. Consequently, several papers deal with these tendencies in contemporary global international relations – facets of the secular move away from US global hegemony and the equally secular rise of China, predictable as such to some extent, surprising and disconcerting in its actual form.

Europe seems to have gathered its wits, after a period of destabilisation: the dispute over the immigration challenge and its (mostly failed) test for European-wide solidarity, and the Brexit vote of the British electorate has been overcome by a tightening of relations between the 27 remaining member states – the mess, which will inevitably strain the British economy, society and politics after leaving the EU is perceived as a warning throughout the EU: Brexit did not split the European Union, but intensified the common search for European solutions – a second topic reflected by our series of essays.

The continuity of European integration despite Brexit does not mean that Europe is an Island of the Blessed – the fundaments of European political and cultural identity, as spelled out in the basic treaties of the European Union as well as in many of the EU member states' constitutions, are questioned, challenged and sometimes overridden by right-wing populist movements, which in some countries come close to or even accede to power. The worst seems to have been avoided by the electoral victory of Emmanuel Macron over Marine Le Pen – France is a cornerstone, of course, of European democracy and an open society. The discomposure about the widespread attempts to overrun European democracy is a third focus of our series.

On the whole, the topics of this volume reflect – without claiming to be representative – central evolutions of Europe in a bewildered world, looking for orientation, renewal and stability at the same time. The challenges ahead will not lower the strain on Europe to play a stronger role in solving its problems at home and at a global scale.

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From Brexit to Bratislava. Another EU Reform Debate Emerging

Hartmut Marhold*

Taking stock of the debate

The Brexit vote, 23 June 2016, triggered two debates, which should carefully be distinguished from one other: the first one is about how the separation between the EU and the UK should be organised; the other one about the future and the reform of the remaining EU27. The following reflections are not concerned with the former, i.e. the Brexit debate, but exclusively with the second, a debate which has led, in the meantime, to a first common statement from the Heads of State and Government, at Bratislava, 16 September, and is accordingly now being referred to as the "Bratislava Process".

Between 23 June and 16 September, three phases of this debate can already be distinguished: the first one, from the very moment of the Brexit vote itself until the end of July, can be characterised as a phase of "réactions à chaud", immediate, sometimes emotional speeches and proclamations, not yet well prepared and lacking maturity. The first half of August was, despite all the excitement, a sort of shortened summer break, but the second phase can be dated from 18 August, at the latest, when Donald Tusk met Angela Merkel, to discuss with her the preparation of the Bratislava summit. During a period of around four weeks, meetings in very contrasting formats followed. The third phase was the close preparation of the Bratislava meeting and the summit itself, ending up with the "Bratislava Declaration" and the "Bratislava Roadmap" for the further preparation of an EU reform. Things have calmed down since mid-September, but the debate continues in civil society, openly of course, and behind the closed doors of diplomacy.

"Réactions à chaud" (23 June – 21 July)

The first and immediate reaction of those entitled to speak on behalf of the European Union – the President of the European Commission, Jean-

Claude Juncker, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, and the Foreign Minister of the member state assuming the rotating presidency, Mark Rutte[1] – was much more than a statement confirming that the EU as such was not put into question by the Brexit vote and would continue on its way: "Together we will address our common challenges", they said.

One day later, the Foreign Ministers of the six founding member states met in Berlin[2], and despite the fact that they did not come up with a substantial reform idea, the meeting as such was already a message in itself: The EU should envisage a "re-form" in the literal sense of the term, i.e. reminding itself of its roots and its initial project.

It took only two more days before another crucial format of cooperation in European integration was to come in, the Franco-German partnership. Again, it was the Foreign Ministers, Steinmeier and Ayrault, who launched a ten-page (and thus the first elaborated) statement on how the EU should shape its future without the United Kingdom[3], under the title "A strong Europe in a world of uncertainties". This paper did indeed introduce strong proposals, such as the request to "move further towards political union in Europe", to create a "European Security Compact", with a "truly integrated European asylum, refugee and migration policy." It also put forward a strengthened Monetary Union whereby "a full time president of the Eurogroup should be accountable to a Eurozone subcommittee in the European Parliament", equipped and empowered by a "fiscal capacity – a common feature of any successful monetary union around the globe", which "should provide macroeconomic stabilisation".

Not only did such proposals exasperate the German Minister of Finance, Wolfgang Schäuble (and probably the Chancellor, too), who never agreed on such future for the €-Zone, sticking to his concept of a much more liberal Monetary Union, based on competition and rules, and not on redistributory and interventionist policies. It did not come as any surprise either, that member states who joined later, and the East Central European countries in particular, became immediately wary and prepared their own statement, all the more so, since most of them are not members of the €-Zone.

In the meantime, Martin Schulz dared to call for the transformation of the European Commission into a "real European government"[4], which should be submitted to a twofold parliamentary control, by the European Parliament and a second chamber representing the member states. Faced with such a political system, the European citizens would finally identify

who would be responsible for what, on the European level, and have a say through their elections. There can be no doubt that this proposal is the cornerstone of a fully-fledged European federation, in line with the post-war tradition of European federalism.

On 21 July, the four Visegrad countries had their statement ready[5]: It does indeed take a totally different stance, underlining the importance of the nation states vis-à-vis and in opposition to the European Union institutions. The key statements in their vision are heading in this direction: The Visegrad 4 "pushed for reforms which would grant national parliaments a larger say in EU decisions. […] "We believe it's up to national parliaments to have the final word on the decisions of the European Commission", Szydlo [the Polish Prime Minister] added. "The EU needs to return to its roots. We need to care more about the concerns of citizens and less about those of the institutions."

Four weeks after the launch of the new debate, the divisions were already visible: Founding member states, and France and Germany in particular, showed their readiness to seize the Brexit opportunity to push integration forward and deeper; East and West were drawing divergent conclusions from Brexit; and there was an attempt to redirect integration towards a more social democratic direction, against the still dominating liberal mainstream. It would be hard to overcome these divisions, during the next months.

Variable geometry diplomacy in the EU between the summer break and Bratislava (18th August – 14th September)

The four weeks leading up to the Bratislava Summit were committed to bi- and multilateral meetings in various groupings. It started with a Tusk-Merkel meeting, 18 August, but nearly or literally all the heads of state and government of the 27 were involved at one moment or another. "Tusk has scheduled meetings with French President François Hollande, Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny, UK Prime Minister Theresa May, Latvian Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.- Interestingly, no meeting with Polish Prime Minister Beata

Szydło has been announced. It remains unclear if the new Polish government will support Tusk staying on for a second term."[6] Implicitly, Euractiv suggests that Tusk was at odds with the Polish government, and this could explain why his stance came very close to the one expressed already at the July meeting of the Visegrad countries – one motive for Tusk could be his desire to rule out any Polish opposition to his re-election.

But the heads of the member states met on their own, too, in different formats. One of the most important of these meetings took place at a very symbolic place, at the Ventotene island, off the Italian coast, where Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, incarcerated there during World War II, laid down their vision for a unified post-war Europe. Renzi, Hollande and Merkel tried to evoke that spirit of a federal Europe when they met there 22 August. Merkel put the emphasis on security, external border control and economic performance afterwards (as the Bratislava Declaration would, later on), whereas Renzi called for more solidarity with member states in economically difficult situations, still suffering from the financial, economic and public debt crisis – a divergence of priorities similar to the one already obvious in the Steinmeier-Ayrault paper on the one hand and the reluctant endorsement (if at all) by the conservative-liberal camp.[7]

Merkel took another step to breach the gap between the founding member states (and their allies) on the one hand and the Visegrad group (and their followers) on the other, by meeting them in Warsaw, 26 August. No substantial content transpired from this meeting, which was meant to deepen mutual understanding, and not yet necessarily lead to common conclusions: Merkel spoke of a "phase of listening, understanding, and learning from one another in order to properly understand and develop the naturally new balance within the 27-member Union". [8] But it soon became clear that a compromise between the different groups of member states and political families would probably only be achievable in terms of output, of increased and more successful and visible action – not in the form of a systemic reform of the EU.

Preparing Bratislava

In the two or three days before the European Council members (except the British Prime Minister …) met in Bratislava, the options and positions delineated during the previous weeks were made more explicit and sharpened.

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This started with a letter from Tusk[9], 13 September, where he sums up the impressions he had drawn from his talks with his colleagues, but which came much closer to the Visegrad position than to those expressed by franco-german, franco-italian-german or founding member state groupings: His letter is divided into two parts, the first one laying the emphasis on policies, urging for more efficient action in the fields of migration, security and economic growth, the second on focusing on the EU as a polity, with a decidedly outspoken affinity to the Visegrad wish for a relocation of competences and power to the national level: "My talks with you clearly show that giving new powers to the European institutions is not the desired recipe. National electorates want more influence on the decisions of the Union. […] The slogan 'less power for Brussels' […] should translate as more responsibility for the Union in national capitals. […] The institutions should support the priorities as agreed among the Member States, and not impose their own [ones]".

This unusually one-sided stance triggered immediate and angry reactions from prominent deputies in the European Parliament, with Elmar Brok and Jo Leinen, both co-chairs of the Spinelli-Groupe, at the forefront: "The letter of President Tusk to the Heads of State and Government goes in the wrong direction. It suggests that the Bratislava Summit should prepare a shift of power and competences from the European Institutions to the national capitals. Europe à la carte and intergouvernmentalism have shown a lack of efficiency and legitimacy in the past. Exactly the opposite is needed today."[10]

The debate continued 14 September, with the annual speech of the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, on the "State of the Union" in the European Parliament.[11] Vigorous and frankly critical, as usual, Juncker elaborates a programme of increased and enhanced activities within the existing institutional and constitutional framework of the present (existing) EU (27). But first he focuses on the critical junction of the EU's history: "Never before have I seen such little common ground between our Member States. So few areas where they agree to work together. – Never before have I heard so many leaders speak only of their domestic problems, with Europe mentioned only in passing, if at all. – Never before have I seen representatives of the EU institutions setting very different priorities, sometimes in direct opposition to national governments and national Parliaments. It is as if there is almost no intersection between the EU and its national capitals anymore." And he adds a

few lines later that he is most concerned about the "tragic divisions be-
tween East and West which have opened up in recent months".

The consequence Juncker draws from this urgent situation is, as Merkel
did, the strong pledge for increased output: "[…] I am therefore proposing
a positive agenda of concrete European actions for the next twelve
months. [...] The next twelve months are the crucial time to deliver a better
Europe: a Europe that protects; a Europe that preserves the European way
of life; a Europe that empowers our citizens, a Europe that defends at
home and abroad; and a Europe that takes responsibility." The type of ac-
tions Juncker suggests run from doubling the ESFI (the 300 billion invest-
ment fund launched in 2014) to an acceleration of the digital agenda, from
the implementation of the European Border and Coast Guard to the imple-
mentation of the transatlantic free trade agreements. "Yes", he says, "we
need a vision for the long term. And the Commission will set out such a
vision for the future in a White Paper in March 2017, in time for the 60th
anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. […] But a vision alone will not suf-
fice." And this is then the main characteristic of the speech: It puts all its
hopes on success, recognition and legitimacy via output – and does not put
in question the systemic architecture of the EU system.

Finally, as so often in EU history, a Franco-German bilateral meeting
prepared a common position of the two countries, which showed all the
signs of a low level compromise: "Le président français a rappelé les trois
priorités pour ce sommet de Bratislava, la capitale slovaque: "La sécurité
extérieure et intérieure de l'Europe, l'avenir économique et la jeunesse", a
affirmé François Hollande. Les deux chefs d'Etat ont reconnu que l'Euro-
pe était à un moment clé de son existence. Il s'agit aujourd'hui de mon-
trer "la cohésion de la société européenne", a dit la chancelière allemande-
de."[12] Three priorities were then consensus, and any debate about the re-
form of the EU system was ruled out. The allusion to Merkel's word on
social cohesion, by the way, is lacking in the German governmental report
on the meeting, and maybe seen as another hint to a divergence between
the French socialist and the German conservative governmental stance.

Bratislava

The Bratislava Summit was not an extension of the debate about an EU
reform, as triggered nearly four months before, but a reduction: The heads
of state and government limited their common statement to the lowest

common denominator. And even the form of the document is frugal and rustic: The "Declaration" is a "one-pager", the "Roadmap" comprises bullet-points over three pages.[13]

The message of the declaration is remarkably thin: "The EU is not perfect but it is the best instrument we have for addressing the new challenges we are facing. We need the EU not only to guarantee peace and democracy but also the security of our people. We need the EU to serve better their needs and wishes to live, study, work, move and prosper freely across our continent and benefit from the rich European cultural heritage." A "vision" will be announced by the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties (25 March 2017), and that should be the end of the affair: "We committed in Bratislava to offer to our citizens in the upcoming months a vision of an attractive EU they can trust and support."

The roadmap doesn't offer much more. It reads like a reduced version of Juncker's speech or some of the previously published compromise papers, with vague intentions like the final implementation of the European Border and Coast Guard, the "extension" (but not the doubling) of the EFSI, it announces the will of the member states to "strengthen EU cooperation on external security and defence".

Under these circumstances, it is more revealing to see what has been left out than what is actually in the text: There is no commitment to more economic, financial, fiscal solidarity – the social-democratic turn is obviously not ready for consensus; and there is no allusion to any change in the institutional architecture of the EU, to any change in terms of competences, power, relations to nation states, European government or otherwise – the Treaties are out of reach for this reform process, it would seem.

What is worse, immediately after the summit, this minimal consensus was broken up by a separate statement from the Visegrad countries, which re-introduces the issue of EU-state relations. The four East-Central European countries (among them the current rotating presidency, Slovakia) insist, as they did in July, on the need to reallocate powers to the national level and prevent any differentiated integration moving forward: The current reform process must be seen, in their eyes, as "an opportunity to improve the functioning of the EU: relations between European institutions, relations between European institutions and Member States and the EU's political agenda." Under the headings of "Strengthening democratic legitimacy" and "strengthen the role of national parliaments", they insist that "current challenges of the Union prove that Europe can only be strong if the Member States and their citizens have a strong say in the decision–

making process. [...] Integration within smaller groups of Member States will only weaken the EU both internally and on the global stage. At the same time it is fundamental that the diversity of the Member States is maintained."[14]

Conclusion

The Brexit vote did not only launch a new debate on EU reform; on the contrary, it revealed divergencies which seem to rule out any substantial reform of the EU.

First and foremost, the member states disagree on whether the EU should be more integrated or less so. One option is to transform the EU into a much more powerful political system, which would gain autonomy (not sovereignty!) vis-à-vis the member states and be accountable to the European citizens for its areas of responsibility. Schulz's pledge for a European government controlled by a bi-cameral parliament goes a long way in this direction, but Steinmeier and Ayrault also take some steps, at least at the level of the €-Zone. The advocates of such an option are convinced that the competences of the member states and the Union must be disentangled, that the Union must be visible and responsible in order to generate legitimacy. The opposite option, put forward namely by the Visegrad countries, denies autonomous legitimacy at the European level from the very outset, and is therefore pushing for a re-nationalisation of competences – since there is no genuine legitimacy for the EU, nation states should take up more responsibility, the Union should transform more into an international organisation, refrain from supranational integration, concentrate on cooperation and mutual good-will. It is difficult to imagine how this fundamental cleavage could be overcome.[15] In Bratislava the only option beyond output was formulated by those forces which aim at re-nationalisation.

Second, and similar to this conflict, but not identical, is the divergence between those who put their hopes on a more efficient and convincing output of the EU activities, and those who plead for more input legitimacy. On the one hand, some people, like Juncker, do hope that an improved balance sheet of what the EU has done on behalf of the Europeans would convince the citizens that the Union is a good thing and should have the competences to act in the fields conferred to the European level. Such a success would prevent any other "…exit" and at the same time eliminate

the dangers of populism. Others, like Schulz, opt for more support to the European institutions when they come into office, and vice-versa more accountability to those who voted. Once in office, a European government as well as the European Parliament, could then rely on a due input in terms of legitimacy and feel legitimately entitled to conduct the policies for which they have been elected. The choice between these two options must not necessarily be mutually exclusive, but it is at least a choice of priorities. For the time being and at Bratislava, the unique emphasis was laid on output.

Third, the cleavage between a more social-democratic and a more liberal-conservative Europe is obvious, too. Renzi, Hollande and the weaker part of the German government, as much as other, mostly Southern, member states, are convinced that Europe has to deliver in terms of material solidarity (one of the key words in the Ayrault-Steinmeier paper), otherwise large parts of the European society would despair and fall victim of the populist demagogy. Others, like Merkel, Schäuble, but East Central Europeans, too, do not feel the need to share much of their economic success, since they are persuaded that they own it to their own efforts, sacrifices and sound policies, that sharing this success would only incite others to slow down or give up their necessary efforts to become competitive and prosperous by their own means. In their eyes, this would weaken Europe as a whole.

The precondition for a substantial EU reform would be to address openly these cleavages, in order to overcome them. Bratislava, for the time being, does not even address the divergencies, and much less show a way to overcome them; they are hidden away in the lowest common denominator – a sure way to discredit the European Union further in the eyes of its citizens. The way to Rome, 25 March 2017, is still very long…

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Implementation of the European Semester in new EU member states

Visnja Samardzija and Ivana Skazlic*

As a response to the economic and financial crisis, the EU has introduced new tools and legal instruments to strengthen its economic governance. The European Semester is established as a key coordination and monitoring tool within the new EU economic governance framework, which sets is designed to provide a coherent and focused approach to the efforts of Member States fiscal, macroeconomic and structural reforms. By providing three main EU mechanisms – the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), the Europe 2020 and the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP), the European Semester is intended to ensure compliance and implementation of the EU's economic rules by the Member States and, at the same time, to support their efforts in reaching the Europe 2020 targets. Within the European Semester, the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) represent the most important component for delivering reforms at the national and the EU level, as they provide the Member States with guidance in budgetary and macro-structural measures. This paper briefly provides some insights into the experiences of a number of new EU Member States in implementing the European Semester[1].

How efficient is the European Semester?

The European Semester plays an important role in strengthening cooperation and improving policy coordination between the EU Member States, especially within the euro area. The chief accomplishment of this new process is its role in helping to make the economic policies of the Member States more predictable and transparent, thus reducing the potential for national policies at EU level having negative cross-country implications. The European Semester cycle allows a better detection of the strengths and weaknesses of individual Member States as well as providing an insight into the socio-economic state of the EU as a whole. In so doing, the European Semester is useful policy guiding and monitoring instrument that re-

veals the direction that the EU as a whole is taking so as to achieve commonly agreed goals.

However, there is also a downside to all this. The mechanism has shown to have some weaknesses, reflected primarily in a poor implementation of CSRs and delivery of proposed structural reforms by the Member States. The implementation of the European Semester-related recommendations has been modest since the beginning and has shown a decreasing trend over the years. In 2011 the implementation rate of the CSRs was 40% and later dropped to 29% by 2014[i]. In addition, over the 2012-2015 period the proportion of 'fully' implemented CSRs decreased from 11% in 2012 to 4% in 2015, while the share of CSRs with 'limited' or 'no progress' in implementation increased from 29% to 52% respectively[ii]. These weak implementation rates indicate the somewhat limited impact of the European Semester on reform implementation.

The views expressed in the European Parliament's Report on the European Semester for economic policy coordination may be helpful when rethinking the role of European Semester in achieving a more robust recovery and sustainable prosperity. With regard to improving (the currently poor) implementation of the CSRs, there is a need to better identify articulated priorities at European level(s) as well as to increase genuine public debate, political willingness and commitment at national level, leading to greater relevance and national ownership. The right balance should be found, making CSR focus on key priorities and challenges, including the need to overcome the sovereign debt crisis, increase competitiveness, growth and employment and taking into account the Europe 2020 Strategy targets[iii].

For its part, the Commission made significant modifications to the process in 2015 in order to better support the implementation of the CSRs and to make the European Semester efficient, inclusive and transparent. The most important changes include publishing recommendations (for the euro area) already at the beginning of the Semester's cycle, reducing the scope and number of recommendations issued as well as giving a stronger focus on social and employment performance. In addition, greater support for the implementation of reforms has been made available through EU Funds as well as technical assistance. The Commission is developing more country-comparison tools in order to make better use of best practices and results in different policy areas and to facilitate discussion and common understanding of challenges and policy responses between Member States. Last but not least, a special emphasis was put on including the relevant na-

tional stakeholders and the European Parliament in order to strengthen democratic legitimacy and accountability within the European Semester process.

But what about the Member States? How are they progressing with the implementation of the process? To give an overall picture, it should be mentioned that since the introduction of the European Semester in 2011, the Excessive Deficit Procedure – EDP (a corrective phase of the SGP) was closed for 20 Member States. The most recent abrogation of the procedure was for Slovenia, Ireland and Cyprus (in June 2016). Currently, there is an ongoing EDP for only six Member States, namely Croatia, Portugal, France, Greece, Spain and the UK. Estonia and Sweden have not been covered by EDP at all. This shows that majority of Member States succeeded in achieving the budget deficit target in line with the Maastricht margin.

On the other hand, as a part of the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP), the 2016 in-depth reviews (IDRs) were conducted for 18 Member States. This refers to an in-depth analysis of a country's macroeconomic situation, checking the acuteness of detected imbalances. The IDRs results found 12 Member States to be experiencing macroeconomic imbalances. To be precise, 7 were found to be experiencing imbalances (Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Slovenia), while the other 5 (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy and Portugal) were experiencing excessive imbalances but without the Commission triggering the corrective phase of the procedure (Excessive imbalance procedure – EIP). It should be highlighted that the EIP has not yet been initiated for any EU Member State.

The implementation record of CSRs remains below expectations. The most recent data show that the EU-28 Member States fully/substantially implemented only 4 out of 102 (equating to about 4%) of the 2015 recommendations. Some progress was registered for approximately 41% of the CSRs, while nearly half of the recommendations have not been implemented at all, or only in a limited manner. It should be underlined that the euro area members, taken together, had a stronger implementation record than non-euro area members (the above mentioned full/substantial progress recorded for only 4 CSRs was achieved exclusively by euro area countries)[iv].

Visnja Samardzija and Ivana Skazlic

Implementation of the European Semester: the case of five new EU Member States

The exercise of the European Semester (especially the CSRs issued to the Member States) is a good opportunity for new EU Members to improve their public policies and implement reforms which are necessary to foster economic growth and employment, thus contributing to citizens' prosperity. In this section the experiences of Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia are comparatively observed. The selection of the countries was based on the criteria of being new or relatively new EU Member States (all acceded the EU in the 5th and 6th enlargement), facing similar economic and social challenges (in spite of their different economic performances) and being geographically located close to each other in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Moreover, the intention was to cover both representatives of the Eurozone (Slovakia, Slovenia) and countries which were Eurozone candidates (Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary).

The Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia have been implementing the European Semester since the first cycle took place in 2011. From 2013 to its accession to the EU, Croatia was informally included in the European Semester on a voluntary basis. Fully fledged EU membership has required that Croatia participate in the European Semester regularly, so the country formally participated in the process for the first time in 2014, taking on the responsibilities that membership entails.

All five selected EU Member States were under the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) although the duration of the procedure was different, depending on the specific situation in each particular country. Having been under the EDP since 2009, the Czech Republic and Slovakia successfully and relatively quickly exited the corrective phase of the SGP in 2014. Hungary had been in the EDP for nine years (2004-2013). For Slovenia, the EDP was launched in 2009 and the country had been constantly under the corrective procedure until 2016. The EDP was opened for Croatia in 2014 and it is still ongoing. When it comes to the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP), the Czech Republic and Slovakia did not face macroeconomic imbalances at all during the entire 2012-2016 period. Imbalances were identified for Hungary throughout the 2012-2015 time frame, while in 2016 no imbalances were found.

For Slovenia, the situation of imbalance was identified in 2012, while 2013 and 2014 In-Depth Reviews showed that this country was experiencing excessive imbalances but in 2015 and 2016 imbalances in Slovenia

were no longer considered excessive. Still, Croatia has been considered to be in a situation of excessive imbalances since its formal participation in the European Semester[v].

During the 2011-2014 period, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary received, on average, six or seven CSRs, while Slovenia received an increasing number of CSRs each year (from 6 up to 9). Croatia was issued with a first set of recommendations in 2014, amounting 8 CSRs in total. In line with the streamlined process of the European Semester, all selected Member States already received fewer CSRs in the 2015 cycle, even though only a limited progress was assessed in most of the areas. A number of CSRs for all observed countries saw a further decline in the 2016 cycle except Slovenia, which received a stable number of 4 CSRs. As with the implementation of issued recommendations, the examples of the selected countries tend to follow the general pattern of modest or even distinctly low implementation of CSRs. According to the latest assessment of implementation of CSRs by the Commission, in 2015 the Czech Republic made some progress in 3 areas (public finances and health care sector; taxation; education) and limited progress regarding 1 CSR relating to the reduction of the high level of taxation levied on low-income earners and the availability of affordable childcare. The overall implementation of 5 CSRs from 2015 issued to Hungary resulted in some progress being made in 1 recommendation, due to the fact that the authorities started to implement the MuO with EBRD, including the considerable tax reduction on financial institutions. The Commission assessed that in 2015 Slovakia made some progress in addressing 1 CSR by increasing the cost-effectiveness of the healthcare sector. In the remaining 3 areas (employment, training of teachers, investment) only limited progress was made. Furthermore, according to the Commission's assessment, Slovenia is the only country among those selected for this paper that has fully implemented 1 CSR (related to the financial sector). Some progress has been made in addressing 2 more CSRs, one relating to unemployment and wage-setting and the other to the efficiency of the civil justice system. Limited progress has been achieved regarding the recommendation covering public finances. Among 6 CSRs dating from 2015, Croatia was only able to make some progress with regard to 1 recommendation on reducing the administrative burden of business and on removing parafiscal charges. In general, in spite of the fact that some measures were well designed, Croatia needs to speed up the structural reforms needed to strengthen growth, jobs and investment.

An overview of issues covered in the CSRs for 2016-2017 shows that all selected countries received a recommendation in the area of fiscal governance and public finances and were advised to improve their public administration and reduce the administrative and regulatory barriers to business and investment. Other issues stressed in the new set of CSRs are related to the employability of low-skilled, older workers and women and to the improvement of activation measures for the long-term unemployed. In addition, the majority of selected Member States are advised to enhance their educational and training systems, with a special emphasis on the inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Conclusions

Overall, the implementation of the European Semester in the past five years has achieved certain amount of success but it has also highlighted some shortcomings. This EU policy framework contributed to better coordination and stronger cooperation between Member States in numerous socio-economic areas. However, it is still difficult to identify the real impact of the European Semester's recent modifications. In spite of the progress made by the Member States, the process of EU economic recovery is both slow and fragile. Reforms were undertaken in a number of policy areas, but the results are uneven. This holds true also in the case of new EU Member States. There is a distinct need to identify and articulate more clearly the priorities at European level, to raise awareness through public information and debate and to strengthen political commitment at national levels. In the absence of this, it would seem impossible for the European Semester to gain greater relevance l and to achieve (a) true national ownership, taking into account the Europe 2020 targets.

What kind of recommendations could be gleaned from the above analysis, bearing in mind the challenges that new Member States are facing in implementing the European Semester?

• The political commitment and responsibility of Member States in the implementation of reforms in the framework of the European Semester is a vital requirement, in spite of their short-term unfavourable consequences. In this regard, the Council's recommendations should be responsibly considered by national governments.

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- Member States, especially new ones, should make use of the available options provided by the new Structural Reform Support Service established by the Commission. The Service coordinates and provides tailor-made technical support to EU Member States at their request and offers financial support for reform implementation in the context of the European Semester.
- It is highly advisable to use the knowledge and experiences of other EU Member States in implementing the European Semester as far as possible. The exchange of experiences could contribute to a more efficient implementation of recommendations and help to avoid negative consequences or could offer a more insightful consideration of the impact of implemented measures.
- There is a need to raise awareness amongst the wider public that the implementation of reforms (especially structural reforms) is not just an obligation related to participation in the European Semester, but rather a necessary prerequisite for strengthening the potential for economic growth, which is also in the interest of citizens. Unpopular measures should not be exclusively seen in the context of the European Semester.

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Beyond populism: Why the European Union needs to engage into identity politics

Matthias Waechter*

More or less all observers would agree that 2016 was a tough year, if not an annus horribilis for European integration, with the first case in its history of a member state deciding to leave the EU on the basis of a referendum and eurosceptical parties obtaining unknown support in member states such as Germany and Austria. Many journalists and academic analysts create a link between the faltering public support for European integration and an allegedly rising phenomenon in democratic politics: populism. As soon as protest movements defying the rules of the political game arise, as soon as political parties fiercely oppose European integration and its constraints, as soon as charismatic leader figures appeal to the feelings of the people, they are labelled as populists. Whereas political movements as diverse as French "Front national", German "Alternative für Deutschland", Greek "Syriza", Spanish "Podemos", Italian "Cinque stelle" and Polish "PiS" serve as European examples for the rise of populism, it is Donald Trump who allegedly embodies on the other side of the Atlantic the essence of populism. However, two essential questions on populism remain unsolved:

Firstly, quite often the reader is left without a clear definition of what the term actually means; which criteria a politician or a movement needs to fulfil in order to be classified as populist. Is it the appeal to the people against the elites? Is it mainly a political style, characterized by a demagogic attitude? Is it a simplifying discourse proposing easy solutions to complex problems? Is it the posture of the leader representing the feelings of the masses? Against this inflationary use of the term, the political scientist Jan-Werner Müller comes up with an operational and discerning definition: For him, a populist claims to be the only legitimate representative of the true people. According to Müller, the populist thus delegitimizes any opposition, by claiming the monopoly on representing the people's real feelings and interests. Thus, following this definition, populism contests the essence of a pluralistic democratic society: the respect for the opinions and values of the opponent. Müller's approach helps us to distinguish be-

tween popular movements and populists, between anti-elitist discourses and populist discourses: For him, Alternative für Deutschland, Front national and Austria's FPÖ are clearly populist political currents, whereas Syriza and Podemos, who respect the rules of a pluralistic society, don't comply with this definition.[1]

Other authors take a broader approach to populism. For the French intellectual Pierre Rosanvallon, populism can be understood as a disease of democracy, caused by its own imperfections, its incompleteness, its disappointments. Populism simplifies, according to him, the message of democracy, by emphasizing the necessity of direct expression of popular sovereignty, by contesting the legitimacy of institutional checks and balances and by criticizing the forms of representation practised in our political systems. Quite similar to Müller's reasoning, Rosanvallon argues that populism wants to remove the distance between the people and its representatives in power, between society and the different branches of government. Finally, according to Rosanvallon, populism claims that the cohesion of a society is not guaranteed by the quality of social interaction, but by the homogeneity of its members and their collective identity. This conception of society leads populists to abhor diversity and to stigmatize immigrants as a menace to social cohesion.[2] Taking into consideration the approaches of Müller and Rosanvallon, it becomes understandable why the European Union is a scapegoat for populists and why moderate politicians find it difficult to defend the assets of integration in a public arena increasingly dominated by populist discourse: The European Union epitomizes political complexity, the importance of institutional checks and balances, the limits to direct expression of popular sovereignty and the dissolution of national identities in a collective framework.

The second salient question on populism concerns its relation to the stagnant public support for European integration: Is populism a symptom of the crisis of European integration, or is the rise of populism rather more the cause for the citizens becoming increasingly disenchanted with the EU? If one takes populism as a cause rather than an expression of staggering EU support, one could argue that democracies in general, not only in Europe, undergo a massive transformation with new forms of political engagement, mobilisation and opinion-making arising. The public support for the EU would then be the victim of a general trend in modern democracies, which makes it increasingly difficult for politicians to convince by rational arguments in an arena constantly agitated by 24-hours-news and instant messaging on social media. Under these auspices, many analysts

have announced the arrival of an age of "post-truth politics".[3] Recently elected "word of the year" 2016 by Oxford Dictionaries, the expression should indicate political communication which is not concerned by the factual correctness of the information transmitted, but appeals exclusively to the emotions of the citizens.[4] Allegedly, both the Brexit campaign as well as Donald Trump's bid for presidency were intensely shaped by "post-truth politics", with false information circulating widely on social networks and voters believing in lies publicly conveyed by opinion leaders. The tendency of social-media-users to form clusters with like-minded people reinforces their staunch belief even in false news and makes them increasingly impervious to information likely to disprove their convictions. However, it will be difficult to defend the point of view that the circulation of false information and the appeal to emotions are new phenomena in democratic politics. Also in previous times, conspiracy theories and threat scenarios devoid of any truth have been used to stir the emotions of the electorate.

Still, the idea of an age of "post-truth politics" can help us explaining the problems to find widespread support for European integration among today's citizens: Supposedly, the EU doesn't appeal sufficiently to the emotions of the citizens and thus becomes an easy victim of false allegations, as demonstrated the Brexit debate. In a recent article for the German newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", the historian Ute Frevert, internationally known as an expert on the history of emotions, argues that the EU suffers from an "emotional deficit". The nation states, she points out, were ultimately successful in their relentless efforts to turn parochial provincials into committed, emotionally involved citizens, through education, mobility, military service, through enemy images and through warfare. The European integration process, on the contrary, kept from its very origins a low profile, as far as emotionalised narratives, symbols and myths are concerned. However, the story of European unification, Frevert suggests, doesn't lack strong moments which could be presented in such a way so that citizens feel emotionally concerned: The passionate courage of young European federalists who tore down borders right after the end of World War II; the reunification of Western and Eastern Europe under a common institutional roof; the introduction of common currency, which could become a symbol of a collective European identity in the same way as the Deutschmark served as a symbol for a post-war West Germany stripped off from its historical identity. Not enough has been done in order to present European integration as an emotionally seducing project: Nei-

ther has a museum of European integration history been created, nor do politicians deploy an unstinting discursive effort to positively convey the message of peace-making and cooperation among previously war-torn nations.[5]

According to Frevert, it is not too late to launch the project of turning the EU into an emotionally attractive venture. However, one should be aware that such an effort needs to go against the prevailing trend in many European countries to restore one's own national myths. At the end of the 20th century, the obsolescence of the nation state, the obliteration of national identities and the arrival of a "post-national constellation" have been announced prematurely, when the benefits of globalisation and regional integration seemed to largely outweigh their drawbacks.[6] The more globalisation proceeds, the more competences are transferred to the European level, the stronger citizens seem to cling to the immaterial treasures of their nation states. In virtually all EU member states, we are confronted with the desire to recover and to cherish one's own national myths, which distinguish the country from others and make it allegedly unique.[7] Notably, these efforts are not the monopoly of populists and right-wing nationalists, but are carried out by mainstream politicians, historians, intellectuals and artists.

Instructive in this context is the example of France: In the year the Lisbon treaty came into force, French president Nicolas Sarkozy started a "grand debate on national identity" and exhorted his fellow citizens to restore their "pride to be French". When campaigning in fall 2016 for the nomination as candidate of the moderate right for presidency, he celebrated French history as a "national novel", urging immigrants to "assimilate" by accepting, as soon as they acquire French citizenship, "the Gauls as their ancestors."[8] Sarkozy proved to be the most outspoken advocate of a general political trend: In the run-up to the presidential elections, candidates on the right as well as on the left stress the importance that schoolchildren imbibe French history and comprehend it as a source of pride. François Fillon, candidate of the moderate right, promises to terminate such school programmes which make children feel doubtful about French history.[9] Politicians like Emmanuel Macron and Ségolène Royal celebrate Joan of Arc as a national hero, in order to counter her appropriation by the "Front national". However, no candidate stresses the necessity to tell today's schoolchildren the history of European unification, in order to make them into fully adhering and fully participating European citizens. Their priority goes to the nation state and the restoration of its frail cohe-

sion. Thus, as far as identity is concerned, the nation state and the European Union have become competitors who both want to acquire the loyalty of the citizens. In this competition, the EU clearly is the weaker party, because so far it doesn't have any powerful myths at its disposal, which could stir the enthusiasm of the citizens. As far as emotionally charged mythology is concerned, Jean Monnet is no Joan of Arc, and the Maastricht treaty is no storming of the Bastille. If the EU wants to gain the battle for the hearts and minds of the Europeans, it needs to engage into identity politics – and be it for the simple reason that the nation states will not stop pursuing their own ones.

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Differentiated Integration, Reconsidered

Hartmut Marhold*

A new U-turn to multi-speed Europe

"The history of recent years has shown that there will be a multi-speed EU, and not all members will participate in the same steps of integration", said Angela Merkel after the informal EU-Summit at Valetta/Malta, 3 February 2017 – "it was the first time that Merkel clearly claimed this old idea as her own."[1] It amounts to a U-turn in Merkel's EU-integration strategy; until now, she has, in fact, pinned all her hopes on advancing towards tighter and tougher integration with all the – 27! – Member States of the Union. She is not the only one to switch from a one-fits-all approach to differentiated integration: François Hollande agreed as much on the idea[2] at the same time as the Italian government, and the three Benelux-countries went as far as to publish an official statement on the topic. "Different paths of integration and enhanced cooperation could provide for effective responses to challenges that affect member states in different ways. These arrangements should be inclusive and transparent, with the greatest possible involvement of the other member states and EU institutions."[3] This means that all the six founding Member States agreed, almost at the same moment, on a strategy of integration which is certainly not new, from a historical perspective, but has not been part of the game plan since the Brexit vote and the so-called Bratislava road-map, agreed upon in September 2016 and aiming at a reform vision for the EU to be achieved at the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties, in March 2017. Last but not least, the President of the Commission joined the chorus: "I think the time has come for us to answer this historic question: do we want to move forward – as a group of 28 – in fact, we've already lost the 28th – or should those who want to move forward faster do so without bothering the others, by putting in place a better structure, open to all?' Juncker asked, adding that he would 'argue for this' in the coming days."[4] What has led to Angela Merkel, on behalf of Germany, and the other founding member states changing their minds? And what can a "multi-speed" Europe, what can "different paths and enhanced cooperation" mean?

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Hartmut Marhold

The dilemma – pros and cons

The challenge is obvious and is openly addressed in all of the three reports on EU reform[5] voted by the European Parliament on the 22nd February. One of these introduced by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, chaired by Mercedes Bresso and Elmar Brok, outlines the problem: "The European Union and its Member States are facing unprecedented challenges, such as the refugee crisis, the foreign policy challenges in the immediate neighbourhood and the fight against terrorism, as well as globalisation, climate change, demographic developments, unemployment, the causes and consequences of the financial and debt crisis, the lack of competitiveness and the social consequences in several Member States, and the need to reinforce the EU internal market, all of which need to be more adequately addressed." The report underlines "that these challenges cannot be adequately tackled individually by the Member States but need a collective response from the Union, based on respect for the principle of multi-tier governance."

But this view is just not unanimously shared throughout Europe – not only did a relative majority of the British electorate vote to "leave" the EU, but populist parties all-over Europe promise a re-nationalisation of competences. Somebody like Nigel Farage, a most ardent proponent of the "Leave" campaign in the UK, at the time UKIP president and still Member of the European Parliament, took the floor in the debate about the aforementioned three reports: "Mr. Verhofstadt this morning said the people want more Europe. They do not: the people want less Europe", and qualified those who were in favour of deeper integration as a "religious sect".

Not least, the Visegrad-countries – Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary – took a divergent stance, both before and after the Bratislava meeting, pleading for re-nationalisation; their primary concern being „to strengthen the role of national parliaments, underlining respect for the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality"; and already "We believe it's up to national parliaments to have the final word on the decisions of the European Commission," confirmed the Polish Prime Minister, Beata Szydlo. This is the reason why these countries are strictly opposed to differentiated integration – their fear is that others would take steps towards a more integrated Europe which they do not agree with: "the Visegrad Countries insist that European integration is a common project and all negotiations should therefore be inclusive and open to all Member States."[6]
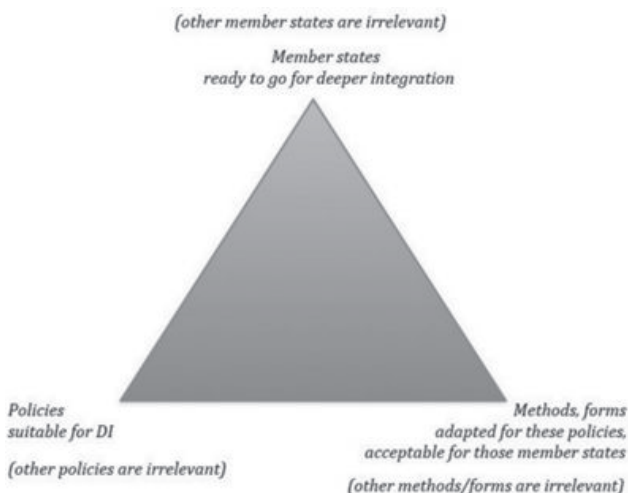
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And that is the dilemma: Either enable the European Union to find effective solutions to the problems by increasing its areas of jurisdiction, budgets, power – and then accept that not all of the remaining 27 Member States will go this way; or stick to the idea that the Union as a whole should be held together at the same level of integration – and then accept that the problems cannot be solved. The momentum is in favour of the first option. That is why it is relevant to rethink differentiated integration under the current circumstances. The following reflection aims to pave the way for such a reflection.

The triangle of realism: Member States, policies and methods

Deeper integration among several Member States maybe a way to advance, in terms of European unification – but it soon becomes a dream if the real conditions under which this can happen, are not met. There are three fundamental conditions which must come together in order to allow for differentiated integration: First, one must identify Member States which are ready to go for more European political unity, which are committed to a strengthened Union, convinced that an enhanced Union can and will offer better solutions to problems and that such a move will be welcomed by their electorate. In other terms, the task of finding a way to deeper integration with less than the whole range of Member States must be envisaged from the perspective of the Member States, more than from the level of the Union.

Second, there must be policies which are arguably more effectively driven forward at the European level than at the level of the Member States. Differentiated integration can probably not be achieved by renforcing and empowering the constitutional system and institutions of the EU, endowing them with greater competences, if there is not a set of policies to which this empowerment actually applies. There are candidates, among the policies, which until now have either been in the hands of the Member States, or in the hands of the Union, or shared between both: Juncker, in his speech in Louvain-la-Neuve, quoted defence or research as examples; others refer to the economic governance of the €-Zone, growth or social policy, migration and security. Whatever the policy, the choice is crucial, and must hold the promise of an increased problem solving capacity for those who go for more integration in the chosen field.

Third, there must be appropriate models for the further and deeper integration of fewer than 27 Member States. The choice is confusing, and not all of the methods, instruments, and structures are equally promising. The choice of an appropriate form of differentiated integration is as crucial in terms of its chances of being implemented as the choice of Member States and policies. The next argument sets out to specifically address this aspect, but one thing is already clear: An advancement towards differentiated integration needs all the aforementioned three factors simultaneously – Member States, that are willing to join; policies which promise to be successfully led at the European level; and forms of differentiation – appropriate for those Member States and these policies. Only if these three criteria are met can differentiated integration stand a chance of succeeding. One may imagine this set of conditions in the configuration of a triangle, as shown below. This triangle is exclusive, too: It does not make much sense to look for policies which might indeed be better conducted at the European level, if there are in fact no Member States willing to transfer the corresponding competence to the Union. And there may be forms and methods of differentiated integration which seem to be ingenious, but they are irrelevant as long as there are no policies to which they can be applied with the consent of a set of Member States. The focus of any further reflection should therefore be given to those issues which unite all three conditions – Member States, policies and appropriate forms of integration – under one project.

(other member states are irrelevant)

*Member states
ready to go for deeper integration*

*Policies
suitable for DI*

(other policies are irrelevant)

*Methods, forms
adapted for these policies,
acceptable for those member states*

(other methods/forms are irrelevant)

Differentiated integration is beneficial for the EU only if it does not initiate a definite divide, but if it develops an attractive dynamic.

No Member State aims at reducing the number of participants for further and deeper integration; those who plead for differentiated integration consider that leaving others behind is a high price to pay, and would wish them to join. The ultimate aim is, in any case, to convince those who do not participate, to join. We therefore need to take a closer look at the different forms and methods of differentiated integration to assess their potential to serve that aim. And the forms and methods of differentiation are indeed very different with regard to this criterion. The choice should, then, be based on the attractiveness of the method, its openness to latecomers, its dynamic potential to pull them into the club, instead of pushing them into the second rank. At the opposite end of the spectrum would be those forms of differentiated integration which appear to be exclusive, do not contain a dynamic attractiveness, would cement the divide between participants and sceptics and create barriers which would be difficult to overcome in the case of a non-participant changing direction and wishing to join later. The two extremes seem to be a "hard core" Europe on the one hand, and an "avant-garde" on the other – the one, exclusive and stabilising, the other, potentially inclusive and dynamically attractive.

   Many different forms of differentiated integration have been put into practice over the 67 years of European integration, since the launch of the European Community for Coal and Steel, in 1950. One may even consider the start with only six founding Member States as an attractive form of differentiated integration, since so many others felt attracted enough to join over time. "The Six" were a pioneer group, an avant-garde, and therefore displayed those attractive qualities which can unfold if a small group decides to go ahead. It comes as no surprise, then, that these Six, sometimes joined by one or the other later member (like Spain, today), after experiencing a sustained European success, are still ready to go for the next step. Whatever the case, differentiated integration has always been a way to move forward at those times when not all Member States have been ready to join.

   The last Treaties, and in particular the Lisbon Treaty, even enshrines forms of differentiation which can therefore be implemented under the provisions of the current Treaty, and do not need a split between Member States over primary law: "Enhanced Integration" (or, with regard to defence issues, "permanent structured cooperation") is an option within the

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Treaty itself.[7] It is by nature open to all the Member States, and fulfils the criterion of openness without any restraint. The Brok-Bressot Report puts all its hopes on the use of the unexploited potential of the Lisbon Treaty, and much depends on whether or not the Member States will trigger this option of advancing, and whether they will use the so-called "passerelle clause", which allows for qualified decision making among those who opted for "enhanced integration". The disadvantage, however, of the "enhanced integration" method is that it requires unanimity – all the Member States must give their consent that some of them go for further and deeper integration, even if they do not wish for deeper integration to take place; and that is an obstacle which may block an advance under this provision.

Many other forms of differentiated integration have been discussed and an important number of them has been implemented and experienced. Opt-outs and opt-ins are still close to forms of integration enshrined in the same primary law agreed upon by all the Member States, and constitute a rather durable form of differentiation. Close to "(hard) core Europe" is the idea of "concentric circles", which does not suggest an attractive dynamic either. The same is true for "Variable geometry", despite its greater flexibility, because it does not assume that there is only one inner circle which agrees on the highest level of integration in all fields; "variable geometry" allows for overlapping circles, where various groups of Member States do different things together. – The disadvantage in this case is not so much its exclusiveness, but its complexity. A similar concept is a "Europe à la carte" which would allow for an unlimited choice of steps towards more integration in policy fields which seem to be advantageous in the eyes of individual Member States – a method, which is particularly problematic with regard to solidarity, and comes close to cherry picking.

The more attractive, dynamic concepts of differentiated integration contain a hint to the timeline: "multi-speed Europe", "avant-garde" or "pioneer group" all refer to the idea that all of the Member States are on the move, that they are all moving in the same direction, but that some of them are advancing quicker than the others. "Avant-garde" and "pioneer group", taken literally, even add the idea that they are exploring and paving the way for the other members who are supposed to follow, once the leading group has proved to be successful.
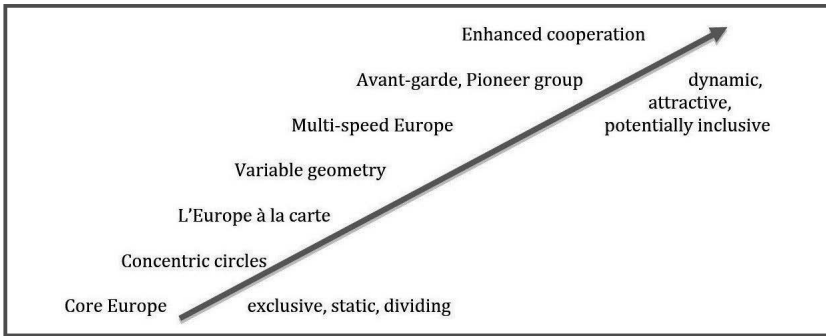
Conclusion

Differentiated integration should be used cautiously because the price is high, and should be seen as a realistic key (and not as a straight way towards European federalisation). It may be a solution if there are policies, Member States and appropriate methods which converge and if the specific form of differentiated integration these member states initiate in those fields stays attractive for the rest of the EU, i.e. if it has the potential to unify Europe at a higher level, instead of dividing it.

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5 These three reports are:
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- REPORT on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union, elaborated by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs; Rapporteur: Guy Verhofstadt (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/   getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A8-2016-0390&language=DE)
- REPORT on budgetary capacity for the Eurozone, elaborated by the Committee on Budgets, Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs; Rapporteurs: Reimer Böge, Pervenche Berès (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=RE-PORT&mode=XML&reference=A8-2017-0038&language=EN)
The extensive debate in the Plenary is available here: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP// TEXT+CRE+20170214+ITEM-002+DOC+XML+V0//   DE&language=de&query=INTERV&detail=2-011-000

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Thinking out of the Accession Box: The Potential and Limitations of Internal and External Differentiated Integration Between Turkey and the EU

*Ebru Turhan**

EU on the Path to Extended Internal Differentiated Integration

The multiple crises the European Union (EU) has been facing – such as the rather "traditional" sovereign debt crisis, and the "new generation" crises including the Brexit, the rise of terror attacks within the EU borders and the refugee crisis – have led to increased focus on the possibilities to accomplishing extended internal differentiated integration within the EU. Internal differentiated integration in the EU could be defined as an arrangement among the Member States with regards to the formulation of a polity, which "displays variance across policy areas and across space, while maintaining an institutional core"[1]. The aim is to "reconcile heterogeneity within the European Union."[2] In other words, differentiated integration encapsulates "the multiple forms of European integration"[3] as it reflects the particularities of a system that allows for "a variety of forms of cooperation and/or integration in which not all members of the EU take part."[4]

Internal differentiated integration has long been one of the fundamental features of the EU. Member States' differentiated approaches to participate in some of the Union's key policy fields and treaties on the basis of both formal opt-outs and informal arrangements, such as the Schengen Area, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the Eurozone, the Banking Union and the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG), illustrate some typical examples of differentiated integration.[5] The EU's enlargement politics, which foresees the gradual integration of the new Member States into the Eurozone can also be acknowledged as a clear indication of internal differentiated integration.

The significant fragmentation among the Member States over EU reform and the implementation of common policies in the face of the latest crises fuelled the EU-wide tendencies to formalise internal differentiated

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integration. The 26-27 June 2014 European Council decisions endorsed that the "concept of ever closer union allows for different paths of integration for different countries, allowing those that want to deepen integration to move ahead, while respecting the wish of those who do not want to deepen any further."[6] In a similar vein, on 6 March 2017, during a joint press conference in France, the EU's "new big four", Germany, France, Italy and Spain, openly endorsed extended differentiated integration within the EU.[7]

Extended Internal Differentiated Integration: An Opportunity for EU-Turkey Dialogue?

Over the last decade, the possibility of an EU with several circles of membership has been brought forward by various scholars as an opportunity for Turkey to enter the EU by means of a more flexible arrangement. Turkey's possible integration into the outer circle of a multi-speed EU has been regarded as an opportunity to eliminate the stalemate in the Turkish accession process and as a means to convince both Turkey sceptics in the EU and EU sceptics in Turkey.[8] It has been argued that Turkey should be provided with the opportunity of "gradual membership" into the EU "in several steps."[9] Some even postulated that it was the Turkish accession process that was going to accelerate the creation of a multi-speed Europe.[10] Similar statements were also employed in political circles. Ömer Çelik, Turkish Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator, stated, for instance, in March 2017 that "for Turkey, new opportunities may be found after 2017. The multi-speed Europe might be on our agenda."[11]

Despite the potential added value of an EU functioning on the basis of extended internal differentiated integration for Turkey's EU accession process, Turkish prospects for full membership in the EU appear to be gradually diminishing. The latest testy exchanges between Turkey and the EU/various Member States and the de facto frozen accession negotiations widen the gap between Turkish and European political circles. And, perhaps even more crucially, the gradually decreasing functionality of the EU's political conditionality vis-à-vis Turkey as a result of the unilateral vetoes of various Member States on negotiation chapters, together with the EU's diminishing ability to transfer its norms and values to Turkey[12], severely shrinks both the mid- and long-term probability of Turkey's inclusion in the EU – even by means of a more flexible arrangement.

That Turkey's full membership prospects appear to be increasingly weakening, regardless of the EU moving towards a multi-speed architecture founded on extended internal differentiated integration, has also more recently been reflected in the statements of key EU institutions and representatives of various Member States. On 24 November 2016 the European Parliament (EP) called the European Commission (EC) and the European Council to temporarily suspend the accession negotiations with Turkey.[13] The government of Austria openly stated several times that it would veto any effort to open new chapters in accession talks between Turkey and the EU.[14] In a similar vein, the German Chancellery emphasised, in one of its most recent public statements on the Turkish accession process that "under the current circumstances, the opening of further negotiating chapters is not conceivable."[15]

Turkey has been the only candidate country in the enlargement history of the EU to have successfully negotiated one out of 35 chapters for a duration of almost 12 years and to have entered talks in only 16 chapters. This makes Turkey "an anomaly"[16] in EU's widening process. While 14 negotiation chapters remain blocked by either the Council or Cyprus, Ankara appears to be hesitant to launch talks on the remaining three chapters (competition policy, social policy and employment and public procurement) until the final phase of the accession negotiations owing to the particularly costly fulfilment of their benchmarks.

The technically frozen status of the accession negotiations coupled with the gradual fading of the seriousness of Turkey's EU accession process as a result of its exceptionally slow pace, minimizes Turkey's chances of joining an EU on the basis of extended internal differentiated integration.

The Emergence of Thinking Out of the "Accession Box": Increasing Focus on Alternative Arrangements between Turkey and the EU

Although Turkey's chances of entering the EU appear to have been gradually diminishing, both European and Turkish leaders and representatives of key EU institutions have, until very recently, refrained from explicitly inquiring possible alternative forms of integration between Turkey and the EU. However, the latest tensions between both parties, coupled with the disappearance of the emotional pressure surrounding full membership in the Union following the "exit" decision of the United Kingdom (UK), one of the EU's so-called "big three", seem to have gradually brought about a

European-wide debate on options other than full membership for Turkey. During the last couple of months, various voices have emerged in the EU, explicitly calling for a move to search for alternative modes of deepened dialogue between Turkey and the EU.

Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) & Enlargement Negotiations, stated, for instance, on 24 April 2017 that he hoped that EU member states and Turkey were ready to look into a more essential discussion on a "new format for relations with Turkey, one that could ease mutual frustrations and reinforce cooperation."[17] Likewise, Guy Verhofstadt, leader of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group (ALDE), argued on 27 April 2017, during a parliamentary debate that it would be critical to make a new proposal to Ankara outside the framework of full membership prospects.[18] This message was echoed by German Vice-Chancellor and Federal Foreign Affairs Minister Sigmar Gabriel, who indicated on 28 April 2017, on the sidelines of a meeting between EU foreign affairs ministers and Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, that the EU might offer Turkey "a new, looser agreement", whereas the Turkish accession process was not to be cancelled before the block had "something new to offer."[19] Just like the EU, Ankara seems to be getting more comfortable with referring to the possibility of ending accession talks, should the EU fail to "stick to earlier commitments it has made."[20] It appears as if thinking out of the "accession box" has started to emerge as a new approach towards the reformulation of the scope, content and limits of the EU-Turkey dialogue.

External Differentiated Integration between the EU and the Third Countries and its Legal Basis

If the relations between Turkey and the EU are to be shaped outside the framework of accession negotiations, their institutional machinery is likely to be formulated on the basis of extended external differentiated integration between both parties.[21] External differentiated integration between the EU and non-Member States can be defined as third countries' various levels of alignment and/or intense familiarisation with particular sections of the EU's acquis communautaire without access to the EU's central decision-making bodies.[22] Lately, however, the EU's increasingly prominent sectoral transgovernmental bodies – EU agencies – incorporating both national and European technocratic circles and acting to some degree inde-

pendently from central administrations, have also emerged as satisfactory platforms for the inclusion of non-Member States in decision-making and policy-implementation processes at differentiated levels.[23]

Non EU-countries' various levels and forms of participation in the European integration process owing to shared issue-specific interests and high-level interdependence with the EU, culminate in external differentiated integration. It is a particularly suitable arrangement when the full membership of the related third country in the EU does not seem to be a likely option as a result of its high politicisation, yet strong issue-specific interdependence exists between two parties in sectors where there is considerably less politicisation.[24] This mode of integration takes place, above all, in policy fields related to economic and monetary affairs (inclusion in the single market), security and defence (engagement with Eurocorps, Frontex and Europol), as well as research and development matters (including non-EU states' participation in Erasmus+ programs and European Research Area).[25]

As far as the legal basis of external differentiated integration is concerned, Article 8 of the TEU enables the EU to establish "special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations, based on cooperation."[26] Article 217 of the TEU emphasises, in a similar manner, the Union's right to conclude association agreements with third countries, whereas Article 218 sets out the institutional procedures for the formulation of association agreements and other agreements establishing specific institutional frameworks for cooperation.[27] Since definitions such as "special relationship" and "association" are quite vague and broad, external dimension of differentiated integration displays a wide spectrum of models of cooperation between the EU and third countries.

A Fundamental Feature of EU-Turkish Dialogue

As a result of high-level and issue-specific interdependence between Turkey and the EU, external differentiated integration has been a key feature of the institutional machinery of EU-Turkish dialogue for many decades.[28] Since the signing of the Association Agreement in 1963, Turkey has been conveniently, yet restrictedly, integrated into the EU in various key policy areas. Turkey's alignment with the EU standards was

boosted with the launch of accession talks on 35 chapters of the acquis communautaire in 2005. Until now, Turkey has achieved a good level of preparation in 11 chapters, a moderate level of preparation in 13 chapters and an early stage of preparation in 9 chapters out of 33 chapters of the acquis.[29] While Müftüler-Baç identifies four policy areas where external differentiated integration between Turkey and the EU has been widely achieved[30], two policy areas seem to stand out lately, either due to the progressively increasing integration in the related policy area or as a result of its high relevance.

Economic relations appear to be at the very forefront of external differentiated integration between Turkey and the EU. Whereas the political dialogue between Turkey and the EU has experienced great ebbs and flows over the last few decades, bilateral economic relations have continued to progressively improve since the initiation of the Customs Union (CU) in 1996.[31] CU enabled the free circulation of Turkish industrial products and processed agricultural goods in the EU and fostered Turkey's alignment with the acquis, above all in the field of industrial standards. Following the initiation of the CU, the value of the EU-Turkish bilateral trade in goods has multiplied more than fourfold between the period 1996-2015.[32] The 2016 EC Progress Report on Turkey notes that Turkey has achieved an advanced level of integration into the EU market in terms of trade and investment and has a good level of preparation in fulfilling the requirements to cope with competitive pressure and market forces.[33] Turkey's external integration into the EU market was fuelled – along- side the launch of the CU – by the initiation of the accession negotiations. This has also been reflected in the evolution of Turkey's economic dialogue with its key trading partner Germany. Following the December 2004 European Council decision to start accession negotiations with Turkey, the annual value of German exports to Turkey has increased from €11.8 billion in 2004 to €21.9 billion in 2015.[34]

A relatively new, yet highly substantial matter of extended external differentiated integration between Turkey and the EU has been the area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). In fact, Turkey and Europol already signed a strategic cooperation agreement in 2004 regarding the prevention of international crime. Furthermore, a working arrangement between Turkey and the Frontex was established in 2012 in the field of border control.[35] An even more extensive external differentiated integration between Turkey and the EU started to emerge with the Readmission Agreement (RA), signed in December 2013.[36] Under the terms of the RA, Turkey

agrees to take back third country nationals, stateless persons and Turkish citizens crossing into the EU via Turkish territory in an irregular manner. In return for Turkish efforts to implement the RA, a visa liberalisation dialogue between Turkey and the EU was launched with the aim of lifting the Schengen visa obligations imposed on Turkish citizens. The visa liberalisation has been tied to Turkey's fulfilment of the 72 benchmarks stated in the Roadmap towards a visa-free Regime with Turkey. This addresses various issues including visa policy, asylum procedures, document security and extended cooperation with neighbouring Member States on border management.[37] According to the 3rd Report of the EC on Turkey's progress in fulfilling the requirements of the visa liberalisation dialogue, Turkey has already fulfilled 65 out of 72 benchmarks,[38] indicating the high degree of harmonisation between Turkey and the EU with regards to visa and asylum policies.

The Refugee Crisis: A Catalyst for Extended External Differentiated Integration between Turkey and the EU

With the unprecedented flow of irregular migrants to the EU in the second half of 2015, the Syrian refugee crisis, which had previously been perceived as the "crisis of the Middle East and the immediate neighbourhood"[39], has now also turned into a European crisis. Turkey's increased strategic importance as a transit and destination country for Syrian refugees made enhanced cooperation between Turkey and the EU indispensable. The EU-Turkey "deal" of 18 March 2016 on the management of irregular migration flows[40], formulated to a great extent by German-Turkish intergovernmental consultations[41], was largely founded on the conclusions of the 29 November 2015 EU-Turkey Summit. The conclusions of this bilateral summit did not only outline the scope, content and conditions of the enhanced partnership between Turkey and the EU with the aim of managing the flow of irregular migration into the EU. They also reshaped the institutional architecture of the relations between Turkey and the EU by launching additional dialogue mechanisms along-side the existing structures and outside the framework of accession negotiations, and thus expanding the scope of external differentiated integration between Turkey and the EU.[42]

The conclusions of the November 2015 summit endorsed, above all, a) the establishment of a more structured and regular high-level dialogue to

further the potential of bilateral relations; b) the realisation of bi-annual bilateral summits; c) the initiation of a High Level Political Dialogue Mechanism at Ministerial/High Representative/Commissioner level and a High Level Economic Dialogue Mechanism; d) the deepening of cooperation on energy with the previously established High Level Energy Dialogue; e) the launch of negotiations on upgrading the CU towards the end of 2016; and f) the opening of accession talks on Chapter 17 related economic and monetary policy.[43]

These decisions nurtured the progression of the bilateral relations between Turkey and the EU outside the framework of accession negotiations on the basis of extended external differentiated integration as a result of two developments. Firstly, the opening of Chapter 17 (and later Chapter 33 on financial and budgetary provisions with the conclusions of the 18 March 2016 bilateral summit) did not contribute to the acceleration of the Turkish accession process in real and sustainable terms, as the decisive Chapters 23 and 24 remained closed.[44] The launch of accession talks on chapters with a focus on economic integration, on the one hand, and the continuing blockage on chapters dealing with universal norms, on the other, led to the asymmetrical evolution of the economic and political reform oriented dialogue between Turkey and the EU. Secondly, the initiation of regular bilateral summits and high level dialogue mechanisms on economic, energy, security and foreign policy matters resembles, to a great extent, the dialogue instruments established by the EU for the management of relations with its "official strategic partners" which do not pursue membership in the EU.[45] The suitability of such an arrangement for EU-Turkey relations will be discussed in the next part of this paper, along with other potential arrangements.

Wide Spectrum of Options for External Differentiated Integration:
Assessment of Potential Arrangements for EU-Turkey Dialogue

As already discussed in the previous parts, owing to the fairly broad and implicit legal description of the EU's relationship arrangements with third countries in the TEU, the concept of external differentiated integration incorporates a very wide spectrum of options for models of cooperation between the EU and third countries. In order to discuss the most suitable arrangements for EU-Turkey dialogue outside the framework of a full mem-

bership option, it might be useful to illustrate the two extreme ends of the spectrum incorporating models of external differentiated integration.

At the one end of the spectrum the "European Economic Area" (EEA) model could be taken as an example. Since entering into force in 1994, the EEA Agreement has been granting EFTA countries Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein access to the four freedoms of the single market and promoting closer dialogue in other fields, including environment, education and social policy.[46] EEA countries can be defined as non-EU countries which have been eligible for full membership in the EU but have chosen not to become full members, while opting instead for anchorage to EU structures as closely as possible outside the accession framework. Norway, for example, aligned itself with about three-quarters of the EU's acquis[47] and consequently became "a de facto EU member."[48] EEA is described as "the most prominent case of acquis export outside the enlargement paradigm",[49] supporting the argument that the EEA model can be positioned at the one extreme end of the spectrum that incorporates the various options for external differentiated integration. Indeed, while the EEA agreement brings with it each year on average 300 new secondary EU legislations related to the single market[50], additional bilateral agreements the EEA countries have concluded with the EU in further policy areas including JHA and foreign and security policy expand the scope of EU acquis alignment.

Could the EEA option serve as a model for the reformulation of EU-Turkey dialogue on the basis of extended external differentiated integration? Three significant challenges seem likely to be posed by potential efforts to apply the EEA model to Turkey: Firstly, the free movement of Turkish workers in the EU appears to be highly unrealistic, given that even the lifting of Schengen visa obligations imposed on Turkish citizens has been a highly politicised issue for many decades. Secondly, perhaps the most fundamental shortcoming of the EEA Agreement has been the EEA countries' non-participation in the EU's legislative process, despite showing legal commitment to the adoption of the acquis. According to the 2012 Report of the Norwegian EEA Review Committee, "democratic deficit is a well-known aspect of the EEA Agreement that has been there from the start."[51] While non-participation in law-making processes might be tolerable for some small states, big states such as Turkey would be more sceptical concerning sovereignty losses, particularly in view of the asymmetrical relationship it experienced with the formation of the CU.[52] Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the EEA countries are, in fact, eligi-

ble for full membership of the EU, and fully comply with the norms and values of the Union. Thus, political conditionality does not serve as a component for the EEA Agreement. However, in EU-Turkey dialogue, issue linkages between "specific steps in bilateral cooperation and domestic reform"[53] should be established, as both Turkey and the EU did in fact, greatly benefit from the positive implications of effective political conditionality, especially during 2002-2007.

Positioned at the other end of the spectrum are the EU's official "strategic partnership" (SP) arrangements with third countries. The Lisbon Treaty and other key EU documents do not make any clear reference to the legal foundation of the SP. Nevertheless, the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) and its 2008 Review put emphasis on the necessity to form partnerships with international organisations and key countries.[54] In a more comprehensive manner, the 2016 Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) highlights the EU's intention to work together with strategic partners in Asia, Africa and the Americas on key issues related to global governance on the basis of multilateralism.[55] In view of its increasingly globalised security and foreign policy strategies, the EU has established, during 1995-2016, official SPs with 9 countries by means of bilateral agreements or summits.[56] SPs are comparatively loose arrangements between the EU and the strategic partners, aimed at coping with joint global challenges by means of effective multilateralism. So far the EU has formed SPs only with countries located outside the European periphery. The lack of clearly described goals, partners' diverging views on multilateralism and clear differences with regards to the scope of cooperation between the EU and its different strategic partners, make the concept of SP a very imprecise one. [57]

It is interesting to note that the dialogue mechanisms between Turkey and the EU, introduced or fostered by the conclusions of the November 2015 EU-Turkey Summit, greatly resemble the dialogue instruments established with the EU's official strategic partners. Bilateral summits, regular high level dialogues at the level of ministers and High Representative and high level economic and trade dialogues are included in the SP arrangements of the EU.[58] Recent statements and official documents of the EU are also hinting at the possibility of EU-Turkey relations moving towards an SP. While the 2013 EP Resolution on the 2012 Progress Report on Turkey referred to Turkey as a "trading partner" or "important partner in the Black Sea Region"[59], the 2016 EP Resolution described Turkey as a "key strategic partner."[60] In a similar vein, Donald Tusk, President of the

European Council, called Turkey a "key strategic partner for Europe"[61] in the aftermath of the November 2015 bilateral summit.

However, the SP model is not optimally applicable to EU-Turkey dialogue under its current terms. On the basis of loose agreements, it addresses countries outside the EU's periphery, does not anchor them strongly to European structures and norms and aims towards the countries' familiarisation with the acquis rather than its adoption by them. Turkey has already aligned itself with a considerably big portion of the acquis on the basis of the Association Agreement and the EU accession process. Its well-structured cooperation with the EU on fundamental issues, including the recent refugee crisis goes well beyond the more conventional and limited cooperation models the EU has established with most of its strategic partners, with the exception of the USA and Canada. Finally, the SP arrangements do not include any strict and well-defined political conditionality.

Conclusions and Future Outlook

Turkey's chances of joining the EU on the basis of extended internal differentiated integration seem to be fairly weak. The recent statements of both European and Turkish political circles point to the gradual emergence of thinking out of the "accession box". Turkey's anchorage to European structures by means of extended external differentiated integration is likely to arise as a new approach to reformulate the scope, content and limits of the bilateral dialogue between Turkey and the EU. While external dimension of differentiated integration displays a wide spectrum of models of cooperation between the EU and third countries, the two options positioned at the two extreme ends of the spectrum, namely, the EEA model and the SP, are not optimally applicable to the EU-Turkey relationship. The future format of partnership between Turkey and the EU is likely to lie between these two extreme ends of the spectrum. The degree of external differentiated integration between Turkey and the EU will also depend on the degree of harmony between the two parties in terms of the perception of universal norms and values, given that Article 8 of the TEU puts special emphasis on the establishment of partnerships on the basis of the Union's values. An alternative partnership model between Turkey and the EU should also revitalise what for some time has been an ineffective EU political conditionality vis-à-vis Turkey as a result of the de facto suspended status of accession talks. The upcoming negotiations on the deepening

of the CU may serve as a test case for the formation of extended external differentiated integration between Turkey and the EU on the basis of effective political conditionality.

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A Purpose for Further European Unity?

Steve Lee*

Unifying Europe is an ambition that must have a purpose. It is no longer clear what that purpose is. Unless there is clarity shared among broad populations who then grant legitimacy to their elected governments and leaders to advance European unity (with the knowledge that there are increasingly perceived risks and costs to that), unity will not advance, and existing hard won unity may falter as we see already with, among others, the on-going Greek crisis, serious concerns about the viability of the euro, Brexit, high level questioning of Turkey as an EU candidate and Visegrad views and policies. As is well recognized now by national leaders across the European Union and beyond, top down driven unity efforts in the absence of overwhelming public and voter support, whatever the core/outer group or speeds, will not succeed and can fuel further alienation from and opposition to the "European Project."

Past efforts up to and including the post-World War steps leading to the current European Union have always had a driving purpose, for good or ill. Unity through domination of the continent by one group, over all others, to secure peace and thus the possibility (especially for the dominant group) of greater prosperity, including dominion over human souls, was more often than not the driver. Drawing on the lessons of preceding crisis moments through the 18th, 19th and early 20th Centuries, the formation of (West) European cooperation, structures and practices of unity were specifically designed to prevent Germany and France from going to war, and thus to prevent further European wide wars that, as well, at least twice had already been global in impact. Underlying that goal was the perpetual fear of domination of the whole of Europe by one or other great power. No credible case can be made today that preventing France and Germany from going to war is the driving purpose of European unity or "more Europe" in the roll out of a potentially reformed European Union. Can we test the current purposes? Can there be a purpose to European unity going forward? And, if so, what could it, what should it be?

The European Union as an inter-government arrangement with a set of supra-national administrative institutions has specific purposes. Our task

is wider than an examination of those. The purpose of further unifying Europe, from a citizen perspective, must be clear in order to ensure that institutions and rules put in place (a reformed European Union, other) are democratically valid, legitimate and sustainable. It can be helpful to differentiate further European unity, on the one hand, and growth in inter-government cooperation (such as regulation harmonization in a free trade area/common market), on the other. For example, the Canada – United States bi-lateral trade partnership is the world's largest, with a vast range of enabling mechanisms, and no objective of North American unity. [1] These days "America First", in fact, is quite the opposite. Inter-government cooperation to achieve specific goals (like common standards for medicine, or joint perimeter military surveillance), and advancing unity for a larger purpose, are different. The added value of (greater) unification should outweigh the apparent and likely future costs (such as loss of national sovereignty and identity, loss of budgetary and currency control, slow/ineffective policy and decision making, democratic "distance", and other). Citizens should remain convinced that the costs beyond inter-government cooperation are desirable (or at least bearable) in order to achieve a greater purpose. For Europe today and going forward, what is that purpose?

Preventing a European War

Further European unity to prevent war between France and Germany and/or to prevent a wider European/world war appears to have no basis in current realities. From a citizen point of view, the possibility of such a war does not even register on the EU public radar of threats. And, all of the threats mentioned by citizens can be further addressed functionally by enlarged inter-government cooperation, which essentially must include States outside Europe. "More Europe" is not an obvious part of the threat responses.

Roughly half of the respondents (49%) identified terrorism as one of the EU's most important security challenges. This is a substantial increase from the 33% of respondents who mentioned terrorism in 2011 (Special Eurobarometer 371). Over a quarter of respondents (27%) think that economic and financial crises are among the most important challenge to security, down from 34% in 2011. [2]

There is also no apparent need for "more Europe" geographically for European countries outside the European Union - the possibility of war with Norway or Switzerland is out of consideration and there is no need to include them in further European unity for the purpose of preventing war. Geographically enlarging European unity to include former Soviet States in the European Union is as much likely to be the cause of future conflict than preventative (there are plenty of sober lessons to be learned from the Ukraine experience). The only case for expanding European unity geographically that might arguably help prevent future (local) conflicts would be to finish the inclusion in the European Union of the former Yugoslavian/Balkan States and finalize Turkey's speedy path to EU membership. However, nearly all of these States, including Turkey, belong to NATO already (the others are candidates) and share NATO membership with nearly all EU States (along with Canada and the United States) thus ensuring a zero possibility of NATO area inter-State military conflict whether they are in our outside the EU.

Promoting EU Values

Advancing further European unity with the purpose of promoting shared values is equally problematic. According to EU documents, "the European Union's fundamental values are respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. These values unite all the member states – no country that does not recognise these values can belong to the Union. **The main goal of the European Union is to defend these values** in Europe and promote peace and the wellbeing of the citizens. The EU member states are pluralistic. Nobody may be discriminated against; instead, people and government representatives must respect others and be tolerant. Everybody must be treated fairly. Minority rights must be respected. Equality between men and women is promoted. Responsibility must be shared." [2]

There are several important and somewhat hidden factors to take note. Underlying these EU articulated values are other values: humanistic, rational, secular. To set the EU goals and the purpose of further unification as the defence of "human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law" societies (people) will first (likely mostly subconsciously) value a human-centered world, and a world view that is largely rational and secular (that may have a personal space for God and religion but not a space

for European unity to be based on those). The values are also modern in that they are expressly about human rights including equality. Reflecting this modernity, the EU values are about the person and her relationship to others and to the State.

This is not to diminish the central importance of human rights in modern human affairs, but rather to note the importance of words in treaties and documents that commit and instruct State parties such as members States of the EU. What happens if, at some moment in time for whatever reason, a member State (government) can't, say, respect minority rights like marriage equality for sexual minorities? Or can't, for whatever reason, share responsibility for, say, unplanned, large migrations of refugees and their need for re-settlement? The foundational directives that they must do so or face not belonging to the Union invites inevitable crises. This is a fragile foundation upon which to build further European unity.

Furthermore, the ongoing work by the World Values Survey (WVS) [3] provides a map of the diverse and potentially conflicting values held across the 28 EU members States and their societies. In summary, analysis of WVS data made by political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel portrays two major dimensions of values in the world:

 Traditional values versus Secular-rational values and
 Survival values versus Self-expression values.

As described by the WVS team, traditional values emphasize the importance of religion, parent-child ties, deference to authority and traditional family values. People who embrace these values also reject divorce, abortion, same sex relations, euthanasia and suicide. These societies have high levels of national (collective) pride and a nationalistic outlook. Secular-rational values have the opposite preferences to the traditional values. These societies place less emphasis on religion, traditional family values and authority. Divorce, abortion, same sex relations, euthanasia and suicide are seen as relatively acceptable.

Survival values place emphasis on economic and physical security. This is linked with a relatively ethnocentric outlook and low levels of trust and tolerance. Self-expression values give high priority to environmental protection, growing tolerance of foreigners, gays and lesbians and gender equality, and rising demands for (individual) participation in decision-making in economic and political life.

For our discussion, several things stand out from these findings. African societies (and the African Union and its members States) can realistically

claim to hold a common set of values. Those values are overwhelmingly traditional (the importance of religion, family ties, group/tribe/national pride and outlook, etc. with South Africa being slightly more secular than others), and not surprisingly heavily skewed to survival values, with Tanzania and Ghana (among the more secure practicing democracies on the continent) valuing self-expression on a par with Brazil and South Korea. Latin America, too, shares a fairly common set of values, with Chile and Argentina a bit less traditional values-based than others. The English speaking settler countries, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia share common values, though it is noteworthy that the USA is most traditional values-based country among almost all highly developed economies (something skilfully exploited by the Donald Trump campaign in 2016).

The most striking feature, however, is that there is simply no common set of European values as measured and mapped over a long time by the WVS (this is revealed in Eurobarometer public opinion surveys, as well). The diversity is extreme. The potential for conflicts over values being the most acute in the global landscape. EU member States and societies, Sweden and Romania, could not be further apart in values. Ireland is more traditional than Turkey, Estonia more rational-secular than China. As measured here, the people of Denmark highly value self-expression, the people of Hungary do not. Poland and India are twins in their attachment to traditional and survival values.

While elites across Europe may hold a common set of values (as has been the case through history), to claim that EU populations have a common, deep rooted affection for a fundamental set of non-traditional, self-expression "modern" values is inaccurate at best. As presented by the WVS, such a claim is a measurable fantasy. To continue to define the purpose of the EU and especially to set the purpose of further unity as the defence of these values is likely to doom the EU to increasing alienation from many, at best, and likely to contribute to mounting crises and policy/political conflicts. It will be a long time before the societal values of either Romania or Sweden change to meet or even meet the current Greek "median" position of EU member values.

"We signed up for European values of liberal democracy, rule of law, transparency and the upholding of human rights, but we did not internalize them," Mr. Milo said. "They are still seen as something foreign or alien to our national character." [4]

Trade, economic growth, human development

So, if no longer needed to prevent war, and if not well founded on common values, is there a purpose to further European unity? Economic growth, shared prosperity and improved social welfare appear to be the most fertile ground as a purpose.

The most recent Eurobarometer of public opinion[5] suggests there could be modest public support to build on this as a purpose for further European unity (especially among people in New Member States). It is not a surprise that populations in the less affluent parts of Europe would look to "outside" (i.e. EU institutional) assistance for economic growth and shared prosperity to a larger extent than polling shows in the first 15 member States. In addition, there is some public interest in EU support to improve the standard of living. This is an urgent need, more generally, as current research shows [6] inequality is already growing in Europe and real wages for much of the continent are predicted to stagnate or fall through 2018. Rising inequality and stalled or falling living standards will have increasing illiberal political effects (exactly opposite to the values goals of the EU).

One purpose for further European unity, then, can be to ensure that Europe's trade success (both EU internal trade and external global trade) contributes to shared growth that improves standards of living, social welfare and human development much more than is the case today.

The increasing discontent with trade and globalisation may have to do with the inadequate manner in which welfare states are performing their redistributive and insurance roles. Economists should not be puzzled by the discontent with which trade and globalisation is being met. Trade's undesirable side-effects have been known to economists for almost as long as the positive net gains. It is important to develop effective tools to keep the negative side-effects in check so as to ensure acceptance of the welfare-enhancing liberal world order. If the benefits of trade are too unevenly spread, it will prove impossible to sustain the system that generates them. [7]

In addition, cast today as the villain of globalization by populist politicians and other critics, further European unity could improve its own reputation by championing tools and support measures to help strengthen the ability of member States to fulfil their "welfare state" responsibilities and thus address the negative impacts of trade and globalization.

Here, the global experience of the United Nations Development Programme offers some helpful suggestions about sharing the benefits of trade to improve social welfare (or what the UN describes as Human Development), totally applicable to Europe today even though written in the context of developing country needs (and keeping in mind all member States of the EU, as member States of the United Nations, have agreed to achieve the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030). [8]

Trade's contribution to development continues to be seen primarily in the context of economic growth, on the premise that trade expansion will engender economic growth, which in turn will provide developmental benefits for all. However, trade on its own cannot deliver development objectives; rather, a host of complementary policies and actions are required along with the right sequencing. Hence the need to sensitize stakeholders to the complex relationship among trade, growth and human development and the need to strategically use trade along with other policies to achieve development objectives....Achieving this requires leadership, political will, effective institutional frameworks, strong analytical skills, planning and management capacities and coordination.[9]

To set this as the purpose of further European unity, something well beyond inter-government cooperation, would require wide popular support and the support of European national governments. By nature, governments and competing national political parties do not like their policy space and prescriptions curtailed. And the days of building European unity through the back door (the constitution, the Commission, non-transparency, etc.) must be truly over if European unity is to survive. Significant debate, discussion and agreement would be required. Powerful interests and stakeholders in the current trade-growth circumstances would have to be accommodated. Interests, movements, political parties not strongly attached to re-distribution, addressing inequality and enlarged social welfare would have to agree, or remain passive, to the future purpose of European unity along these lines. On the other hand, many are already seized with the needs that national governments alone seem unable to meet. Among them, as an opening to possible political support for this purpose for European unity, recently European and other social democrat parties resolved "...To ensure growth means social growth and greater equality." [10]

Could there be a better purpose for further European unity?

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Further information and sources

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   In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a state-of-the-art market-opening agreement, came into force. Since then, NAFTA has systematically eliminated most tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investment between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. By establishing a strong and reliable framework for investment, NAFTA has also helped create the environment of confidence and stability required for long-term investment. NAFTA was preceded by the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. A number of NAFTA institutions work to ensure smooth implementation and day-to-day oversight of the Agreement's provisions.
   Free Trade Commission
   Made up of ministerial representatives from the NAFTA partners.
   NAFTA Coordinators
   Senior trade department officials designated by each country.
   NAFTA Working Groups and Committees
   Over 30 working groups and committees have been established to facilitate trade and investment and to ensure the effective implementation and administration of NAFTA Key areas of work include trade in goods, rules of origin, customs, agricultural trade and subsidies, standards, government procurement, investment and services, cross-border movement of business people, and alternative dispute resolution.
   NAFTA Secretariat
   Made up of a "national section" from each member country.
   Commission for Labor Cooperation
   Created to promote cooperation on labor matters among NAFTA members and the effective enforcement of domestic labor law. **Consists of a Council of Ministers (comprising the labor ministers from each country)** and a Secretariat,

Commission for Environmental Cooperation
Established to further cooperation among NAFTA partners in implementing the environmental side accord to NAFTA and to address environmental issues of continental concern. **Consists of a Council (comprising the environment ministers from each country)**, a Joint Public Advisory Committee and a Secretariat www.cec.org/council.

2. Special Eurobarometer 432: Europeans' Attitudes Toward Security. Eurobarometer. EC. April 2015

3. World Values Survey. The WVS has over the years demonstrated that people's beliefs play a key role in economic development, the emergence and flourishing of democratic institutions, the rise of gender equality, and the extent to which societies have effective government. www.worldvaluessurvey.org go to maps. The one below is 2015.

4. Not Even a Prosperous Slovakia is Immune to Doubts About the EU. New York Times. Steven Erlanger. 17 December 2016
   Slovakia and the Czech Republic are "moving in the same direction as Poland and Hungary," he said. Russia, Mr. Milo added, "is very good at playing on these sentiments in this whole region." For those "disquieted by this liberal world," Mr. Beblavy said, "Russia is seen as the only bulwark of traditional values."

5. Special Eurobarometer 451: The Future of Europe. Eurobarometer EC. December 2016.
   The country analysis reveals important variations between EU15 and NMS13 countries. In EU15 countries, respondents are much more likely to mention the EU's respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law (35% vs. 25% in NMS13 countries). This is the most mentioned asset in EU15 countries, while in NMS13 countries it ranks fourth. In NMS13 countries, on the other hand, the standard of living of EU citizens is the most mentioned asset (34% vs. 18%) – in EU15 countries this asset ranks fourth. Respondents in NMS13 countries are also more likely than those in EU15 countries to say the quality of infrastructure in the EU is one of its main assets (17% vs. 10%). His asset ranks fifth amongst respondents in NMS13 countries, but eighth in EU15 countries.

6. Income inequalities and employment patterns in Europe before and after the Great Recession. Enrique Fernandez-Macias, Carlos Vacas-Soriano. Eurofound. 13 March 2017
   The results show that EU-wide income inequality declined notably prior to 2008, driven by a strong process of income convergence be-

tween European countries – but the Great Recession broke this trend and pushed inequalities upwards both for the EU as a whole and across most countries. While previous studies have pointed to widening wage differentials as the main driver behind the long-term trend towards growing household disposable income inequalities across many European countries, this report identifies unemployment and its associated decline in labour income as the main reason behind the inequality surges occurring in recent years. Real income levels have declined and the middle classes have been squeezed from the onset of the crisis across most European countries.

7. Globalisation and the Welfare State: Can the Welfare State Still Keep Up with Globalisation? Dr.Christian Bluth. Bertelsmann Stiftung. May 2017 www.ged-project.de

8. On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit — officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change. www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

9. Trade and Human Development: A Practical Guide to Mainstreaming Trade. United Nations Development Programme. Trade and Human Development Unit. Geneva. July 2011. www.undp.org/poverty

10. For a World in Peace, Equality and Solidarity. Socialist International Congress, Cartagena, Colombia, 02-04 March 2017. www.socialistinternational.org

Après l'élection de Macron: la responsabilité de l'Allemagne pour l'Europe

Hartmut Marhold*

Le défi franco-européen et la responsabilité allemande

Le risque est grand : si le nouveau Président de la France échoue, la démocratie, en France et ailleurs, sera mise en cause; l'émergence de régimes autoritaires devient probable. Sans démocratie, la liberté, jusqu'à présent une, sinon la valeur fondamentale de nos sociétés, sera rétrécie; sans liberté, la dignité humaine – valeur aussi essentielle – n'existe plus. Si Macron échoue, l'Europe retombera dans les nationalismes, générateurs de conflits entre les Européens; l'Europe se marginalisera elle-même à l'échelle mondiale. Si la France ne sort pas vainqueur de ses efforts pour se rétablir, la démocratie et l'Europe seront les victimes. L'analyse peut paraître dramatique – la situation historique l'est. C'est dans l'intérêt de la démocratie, de la liberté, de la dignité humaine qu'il faut tout faire pour que la France, pour que son nouveau Président aient du succès; c'est dans l'intérêt de la paix en Europe et de son autodétermination face à la mondialisation qu'il faut réduire les nationalismes à l'insignifiance.

C'est à l'Allemagne qu'il revient un rôle essentiel dans cette situation. C'est elle, pas seule mais elle avant tout, qui doit assumer sa responsabilité pour que la France tourne définitivement le dos aux sirènes qui chantent une fausse chanson d'un passé qui n'a jamais existé et qui promet un avenir marqué par l'isolation, la médiocrité, la méfiance et le déclin. Cette responsabilité de l'Allemagne est de nature à susciter des réflexions qui vont au-delà des actions immédiates et touchent aux fondements de la construction européenne. Ce qui suit est essentiellement destiné à décloisonner des dimensions d'actions qui trop souvent sont négligées ou ignorées au profit d'intérêts à court terme. Cette note de recherche est, plus que d'autres, imprégnée par la responsabilité qui revient non seulement aux hommes et femmes politiques, mais aussi aux milieux académiques et scientifiques d'orienter les esprits par leurs réflexions.

Hartmut Marhold

Réactions en trois temps

Ceci étant dit, il y a trois temps pour réagir, du côté allemand, au défi de la France. Le premier est immédiat et arrive déjà bientôt à expiration – c'est la campagne électorale pour les élections législatives : si le nouveau Président n'a pas de majorité au Parlement, son attitude positive, son orientation vers l'avenir seront compromises, ses actions ralenties ou sabotées. Il faut donc que l'Allemagne (et l'Europe) donnent des signes laissant apparaître que Macron sera soutenu au niveau européen, qu'il pourra compter sur la solidarité allemande et européenne : des signes qui encouragent par conséquent les électeurs français à croire au succès du nouveau Président.

Ces signes de bienveillance, de solidarité et de soutien sont faibles, actuellement – en raison des défis du deuxième temps qui s'étend jusqu'aux élections législatives en Allemagne, fin septembre. Pour l'instant, les partis politiques, et notamment les chrétiens-démocrates et les sociaux-démocrates, se divisent en fonction de leurs positions de partis – la CDU se montre réservée par rapport aux propositions françaises de s'orienter vers une relance de la croissance, au lieu d'insister sur la réduction de la dette, tandis que le SPD plaide pour un rapprochement vers une politique de solidarité. Mais ces réactions ne sont pas à la hauteur du défi, qui va bien au-delà des intérêts des partis, puisque que ce n'est pas tel ou tel parti qui gagnera ou perdra, cette fois-ci, c'est la démocratie et l'Europe en tant que telles qui sont l'enjeu. Les manœuvres inspirées par la partitocratie sont juste de nature à miner la démocratie en tant que telle.

Enfin, on pourra espérer que les choses se clarifient après les élections en Allemagne, fin septembre. C'est au plus tard à partir de ce moment que la France et l'Allemagne doivent entreprendre un effort de grande envergure pour sauver la démocratie et l'Europe. Dans cette perspective, il sera dangereux de miser sur des méthodes et structures qui ont prouvé leur désuétude.

Quatre impasses

La première impasse est la conception d'une quelconque 'hégémonie allemande'. Quelle que soit la version d'une telle constellation – et il y en a beaucoup qui ont consacré des réflexions à ce sujet –, elle est condamnée d'avance : l'Europe n'est pas un continent qui accepte un hégémon, qu'il soit allemand, français ou autre. Il faut se rendre enfin et définitivement à

l'évidence que l'hégémonie est un concept que l'Europe refuse, en premier lieu en raison de son passé : depuis la naissance de l'Etat moderne, des tentatives d'hégémonie ont plongé l'Europe dans des désastres; et aucune nation européenne n'est suffisamment puissante pour ériger son hégémonie sans que les autres, ensemble, soient plus fortes et déconstruisent cette forme de domination. La construction européenne est la conséquence même de cette leçon d'histoire sans ambiguïté, et l'alternative à l'hégémonie.

Mieux, mais toujours pas à la hauteur du défi, est le bilatéralisme franco-allemand – une hégémonie bicéphale, si on veut. Mais la prémisse d'un tandem franco-allemand sous les auspices du bilatéralisme est toujours doublement fausse; d'une part, parce qu'un tel « couple » pêche toujours par une forme d'hégémonie que les autres ont du mal à accepter; qui plus est, la prémisse que tout peut être réglé au niveau de l'Etat nation, bien que binôme, est compromise, et le « couple » ou « tandem » franco-allemand ne transcende pas cette contradiction entre des défis transnationaux et des solutions bi-nationales.

C'est même vrai d'un multilatéralisme européen, qui serait peut-être à même de laisser derrière lui le problème de l'hégémonie, mais qui ne franchit pas le seuil qualitatif entre l'action étatique et la création d'un système politique adapté au niveau des problèmes de notre temps, qui se situent définitivement à un niveau transnational. Le Conseil européen, devenu l'institution prépondérante de l'Union européenne, notamment après la crise de 2008, est l'expression de cette ambiguïté de la volonté de trouver des solutions européennes sans tirer les conséquences structurelles, i.e. sans créer un système politique au niveau adapté. C'est au sein du Conseil européen que le multilatéralisme institutionalisé bute.

La quatrième impasse est la conséquence de la troisième : attendre le salut de la bonne volonté des Etats membres de permettre à l'Union européenne de devenir plus performante. C'est la voie empruntée par le « processus de Bratislava » qui, sous le choc du Brexit, a tracé une voie de « réforme », confirmée et renforcée par la « déclaration de Rome», à l'occasion du 60e anniversaire des Traités de Rome. L'espoir des gouvernements, exprimé dans ces documents, est de pouvoir éviter l'émergence d'un pouvoir européen autonome, d'apaiser le mécontentement des électeurs, de sauver l'Europe et la démocratie telles quelles en échangeant la promesse de produire, par une meilleure coopération, un « output » plus convaincant. Mais ce ne sera pas par des mesures mitigées et ambigües

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que l'on se montrera à la hauteur du défi des menaces d'autoritarisme et de nationalisme.

La conséquence de ces réflexions est inévitablement la construction d'un pouvoir politique européen, autonome, pas souverain, équipé des compétences légitimes nécessaires pour résoudre des problèmes qui dépassent les Etats, un pouvoir contrôlé et limité – contrôlé démocratiquement, c'est-à-dire par un parlement directement élu, limité par des « checks and balances », c'est-à-dire par les Etats membres. En bref, une fédération européenne, comme Robert Schuman l'avait en perspective, le 9 mai 1950, quand il a annoncé la création de la Communauté européenne du Charbon et de l'Acier, « les premières assises concrètes d'une Fédération européenne indispensable à la préservation de la paix », selon ses mots.

L'Allemagne doit changer d'attitude

L'Allemagne, moins hantée par le spectre du populisme autoritaire, mais pas entièrement à l'abri de ces tentations non plus, n'a pas encore réalisé la nature du défi. Son attitude, depuis que l'Europe a été plongée en état de crise permanente, suite au crash d'automne 2008, est de se considérer comme le pays le plus performant qui, en raison de sa performance, a le droit naturel de montrer le chemin aux autres. Dans une certaine mesure, cette attitude n'est pas sans fondements; en effet, l'Allemagne a surmonté la crise grâce à des réformes qui datent de bien avant cette crise, et qui l'ont préparée à affronter les effets de celle-ci avec un certain succès. Mais être le plus performant ne donne pas automatiquement le droit de croire qu'on a trouvé la meilleure voie pour tout le monde. Et la façon dont les Allemands ont su contenir les effets néfastes de la crise n'est pas nécessairement la meilleure pour tout autre pays.

A un niveau plus profond, souvent inconscient, au moins dans le débat politique, le malentendu qui règne entre l'Allemagne (et certains autres pays membres proches des positions allemandes) et le reste de l'Europe (surtout le Sud, mais qui commence en France) concerne la façon, la méthode adaptée pour assurer le succès commun. L'approche allemande consiste à croire en des règles consenties – ce n'est pas la culture de tout le monde. D'autres (comme la France) croient plus en des institutions. L'Union monétaire est essentiellement fondée sur le respect de règles consenties – maintien de la discipline et de l'équilibre budgétaire, priorité

à des finances publiques saines, efforts largement partagés pour assurer une compétitivité sinon égale, en tout cas convergente, etc. Ce choix fondamental est à la base de l'Union monétaire telle que consentie dans le Traité de Maastricht; il a été renforcé tardivement par le Pacte de croissance et de stabilité, en 1997, établissant des critères de conformité non seulement pour l'entrée dans la Zone euro, mais pour la permanence des obligations de respecter ces règles sous peine d'être puni par l'imposition d'amendes. Malheureusement, c'est l'Allemagne elle-même (ensemble avec la France) qui fut le premier pays membre à briser ces règles, en 2002 – quelle crédibilité alors pour ces règles si le pays le plus en faveur d'elles ne les respecte pas? … et se défend avec succès contre l'imposition des amendes?

De toute façon, d'autres pays membres de l'Union européenne et de la Zone euro, entre autres la France, ont toujours eu moins de confiance en des règles consenties et auraient préféré des institutions, équipées des compétences nécessaires pour faire respecter des décisions communes. Cette attitude fondamentale s'est traduite par la préférence française pour un gouvernement économique, ou encore, à un niveau moins ambitieux, mais plus concret, pour un Ministre européen des finances. Ce n'est pas par hasard que cette revendication a été mise en avant par un français, Jean-Claude Trichet, quand il quitta la présidence de la Banque centrale européenne. Mais la préférence française pour une solution par des institutions plutôt que par des règles est biaisée aussi, également à un niveau de culture politique difficile à relever au niveau rationnel : profondément, les gouvernements français plaident pour la mise en place d'institutions européennes… mais de préférence sans effet sur la souveraineté nationale – un dilemme sans issue.

Or, aujourd'hui, face à la mise en question non seulement de telle ou telle option politique, de tel ou tel parti ou gouvernement, mais aussi de la démocratie et de l'Europe en tant que telles, seul un saut qualitatif peut présenter une solution. Ce saut qualitatif doit mettre fin aux ambiguïtés dont les citoyens sont si las; ce saut qualitatif exige essentiellement des efforts similaires du côté allemand et français. Il ne s'agit de rien d'autre que de combiner le meilleur des deux cultures politiques française et allemande, c'est-à-dire d'obtenir le consensus des deux pays pour créer des institutions européennes adaptées aux défis actuels (idée chère à la France), équipées des compétences nécessaires pour établir des règles (idée chère à l'Allemagne), i.e. de légiférer en des matières qui par leur nature sont transnationales et européennes.

Hartmut Marhold

Concrètement …

Vu les problèmes de l'Union économique et monétaire, la première conséquence concrète de ces réflexions devrait être la création d'un gouvernement économique, pas seulement d'un Ministre des finances, qui serait sans doute membre d'un tel gouvernement. Il doit disposer de finances, sinon son instauration serait un leurre, ce qui revient à dire qu'il faut une fiscalité européenne, des ressources fiscales à la disposition de l'Union européenne. Mais le Ministre des finances doit aussi avoir le droit de faire appliquer les règles consenties, i.e. la discipline budgétaire, aux pays membres. L'objectif d'un gouvernement économique serait de créer les conditions d'une meilleure croissance partout dans l'Union européenne, de piloter l'investissement privé et public, d'assurer une convergence économique entre les pays membres. Surtout, l'Union européenne doit disposer de la capacité de réduire l'inégalité dans nos sociétés, ce qui implique qu'il faut l'investir de compétences qui permettent non seulement de susciter la croissance mais aussi d'avoir un impact sur la distribution de ses fruits. C'est en premier lieu l'inégalité croissante, devenue intolérable et parfois scandaleuse, qui porte atteinte à l'adhésion des citoyens à la démocratie et à l'Europe. L'Union européenne, ainsi transformée en acteur puissant, ne serait plus ressentie comme une menace, mais comme un support.

Une Union européenne à la hauteur des défis que les Etats membres ne sont plus à même de maîtriser doit être une Union de sécurité et de défense, disposant d'une force armée commune – ce qui a échoué en 1954 n'est pas devenu obsolète depuis, au contraire : ce sont les doutes d'antan qui sont obsolètes aujourd'hui. Et le même argument qui à l'époque a incité des hommes d'Etat à tirer les conséquences d'une Union de défense est valable aujourd'hui également : une telle union implique le choix crucial de faire la guerre, décision suprême d'une communauté politique – il faut la créer en pas cadencé avec l'Union de défense.

Enfin, il faut une capacité permettant à l'Union de communiquer avec les citoyens, afin de faire émerger leur perception de l'Union par la voie directe (et pas seulement par l'intermédiaire des Etats membres), en utilisant les nouvelles technologies de communication (« réseaux sociaux »).

S'il le faut – et ce sera très probablement le cas – il faut avancer en ordre différencié, i.e. avec les bienveillants d'abord, restant attractifs et ouverts pour les autres. Ce n'est pas nouveau non plus : la première Commu-

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nauté était en même temps la première étape de ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler plus tard « intégration différenciée ».

La volonté d'assurer un bel avenir à la démocratie, à la liberté et à la dignité humaine ainsi qu'à une Europe en paix et prospère, maître de son destin dans un monde interdépendant, doit se traduire dans la détermination de créer une telle Europe fédérale et constitutionnalisée.

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New Tendencies in Modern Democracy

The influence of social media on democratic participation and decision-making

Lucas Skupin[*]

The advent of social media as a political instrument initially generated widespread euphoria among scholars and journalists, who saw it as a driving force for unity, equality, democratisation and truth in open access platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.[1]

Attributions that weighed heavily on the shoulders of the prodigies of digital communication and still do today. While there is without a doubt potential and opportunity in the realm of these digital networks, their influence on the political debate as well as on the decision-making process during the Brexit referendum and the primary and general elections in the USA compels us to re-evaluate the precarious link between democracy and technology.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

When the self-immolation of Mohammad Bouazizi sparked the first wave of the "Arab Spring" on the 17th of December 2010, social media was quickly credited as playing an important role in the unprecedented rise of grassroots movements in the Maghreb States. Newspaper headlines read "Why not call it a Facebook revolution?"[2], or "How an Egyptian Revolution Began on Facebook"[3]. In 2013, the democratic potential of social media became a front-page topic again when social activists turned to Twitter and Facebook to report police violence against the African-American community in the USA, to counter- act the lack of checks and balances in responsible law enforcement agencies.[4]

Once it turned out that the initial euphoria of a democratic domino effect in the Arab world was far from being a self-fulfilling prophecy, it became apparent that social media didn't live up to the premature claim it was a catalyst for democratisation and equality. On the contrary, authoritarian governments made use of Twitter and Facebook for propaganda purposes and in their own counter-insurgency strategies.[5][6] Additionally,

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social media networks became forums for the otherwise rather clandestine communications of radical islamists or xenophobes.[7] With their legal foundations in the USA where both the First Amendment and the Communications Decency Act provide Twitter, Facebook and others "substantial legal protection" from the contents submitted by their users, the lack of urgency to aggressively tackle hate speech resulted in negative coverage in Germany, France and the USA in recent years.[8][9] The criticism peaked as a response to the influence of social media on political participation, decision-making and the polarisation of society in the wake of the Brexit referendum in Great Britain and the primary and general elections in the USA.

Growing numbers, growing problems

As of April 2017, Facebook with nearly 2 billion, Youtube with 1 billion, Instagram with 800 million and Twitter, as well as Snapchat with 250-300 million active users are the frontrunners of globally operating social media networks.[10] Being established forums for political debate and, according to a Pew study, a growing source for news consumption, this paper focuses mainly on Facebook and Twitter.[11] "With every new technology comes abuse, and social media is no exception."[12] Against this backdrop, the following paragraphs seek to assess the shape, function and impact of new phenomena in the sphere of political communication in social media.

Falsified information

Perhaps the most attention is being paid to the issue of falsified information, also known as fake news. Deliberate misinformation is not a new invention and has been used in political campaigns or conflicts for centuries.[13] However, in today's fast-paced media environment, where Facebook and Twitter act as real-time news feeds for a growing number of people, the immediate and unfiltered dissemination of any kind of information has reached unprecedented dimensions.[14] While traditional media outlets normally redact their articles, anyone can publish almost any kind of news without further review on social media platforms. As a matter of fact, the use of social media as a primary news resource comes with the risk of being exposed to deliberate misinformation.

Fake news items can take many forms on social media nowadays. They appear disguised as Tweets, Instagram photos, Facebook posts, or Youtube videos. Driven by a blend of monetary and ideological incentives, their common ground is a sensationalist style and the claim to be genuine.[15] In an attempt to pre-emptively guard against being exposed, false news often makes use of conspiracy theories involving those who are able to scrutinise the information's validity, mainly journalists and the government, often referred to in the derogative terms, 'mainstream media' and 'the establishment'.

Falsified information can be created by anyone – government or citizen. Their potential to influence opinions, intimidate or demobilise opposing groups and generate the impression of support make them a dangerous tool of computational propaganda and a veritable threat to societies, especially in vulnerable times – for example during elections or referendums.[16] Numerous incidents of misinformation intented to mislead voters during the 2016 US presidential election led to a debate as to whether social media "propelled Donald Trump to victory".[17]

Far from being an isolated event in the USA, computational propaganda is a borderless phenomenon. In Germany, xenophobic fake news dealing with the German refugee influx became a popular instrument for right-wing partisan activists. Commonly equipped with the hashtag 'rapefugees', numerous fictitious stories shed a bad light on refugees, with the intention of altering the immigration policy of the German government.[18] [19] The fabricated claim that a 13-year-old German girl with Russian roots had been abducted and raped by refugees is one example that resulted in demonstrations and extensive media coverage in Germany and Russia.[20]

In France, there has been a perceivable increase in intended "manipulation and distortion", especially "during election periods", says Samuel Laurent, head of the Le Monde fact-checking team.[21] For example, false news claimed that Alan Juppé, centre-right politician and until recently a candidate in the French presidential election, is allegedly linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and further accused him of "wanting to build a Mosque-Cathedral in Bordeaux".[22]

Already in 2014, long before the Brexit and the election of Donald Trump put the issue on everyone's agenda, the World Economic Forum identified the "rapid spread of misinformation online as among the top 10 perils to society".[23] This assessment comes as little surprise if the complicity of its preferred audience is taken into account. Psychologist Nigel

Barber argues that there is an "astonishing willingness" to give credence and disseminate "patent falsehoods" as long as it damages the reputation of a target holding different views.[24] He identifies gossip as the "main psychological precursor of fake news" and "shared antipathy" as the main motivation.[25] The veracity of the content shared is unimportant, "because believing it feels good and serves a social function", he further explains.[26]

While some pieces of falsified news are meticulously assembled[27], or great effort has gone into making them appear to come from legitimate news outlets[28], others opt for the quantitative approach and simply overwhelm networks with their content. In January 2017, Jonathan Albright, data researcher and media and communications professor, found 78,349 artificially submitted videos propagating fake news and populist theories on Youtube.[29] A new so-called news video was generated "every three minutes".[30]

Often times the sources of fake news are not Facebook, Twitter or Youtube itself, but myriads of websites with the sole purpose of disseminating misleading content to social media platforms in the hope of maximising clicks and benefitting from advertising revenue.[31] The bizarre case of the Macedonian town of Veles from where "hundreds of fake news sites" published mostly pro-Trump content, illustrates the global scale of the highly competitive market for fake news.[32] For David Mikkelsen, founder of the fact-checking website snopes.com, the competition pressure forces partisan political fake news websites to "push their news further to the extreme".[33] The controversial nature of lurid and populist messages is guaranteeing them a disproportionate amount of attention on social media. According to Simon Hegelich, professor of political data science at the Technical University of Munich, "those with extremist and radical opinions can often outgun more moderate voices".[34] Those opinions, especially when multiplied by social bots and like-minded users can create the "impression of a grassroots movement of contrarians" and "contribute to a strong polarisation" into partisan groups[35], both veritable threats to democratic societies.

Social Bots

In the past few years, the sheer mass of social media users has created incentives to automatise interaction and content production. Pre-programmed algorithms, so called social bots, imitate human behaviour on

social networks and discussion boards. With an estimated number of 48 million false accounts, it seems that the minimalist architecture of Twitter is particularly vulnerable to the deployment of social bots and bot networks.[36] Unlike benign bots such as news feeds or customer relations chat bots, harmful social bots, fuelled by ideological and/or monetary motives, are designed to spread unverified or even falsified information, suppress or promote opinions in discussions and to put items of their choice on the agenda.[37]

Lutz Finger, Director of Data Science at LinkedIn distinguishes between five forms of malicious bots in an article in Forbes.[38][39] While relatively simple bots are sufficient for the purpose of spamming, more sophisticated algorithms do mischief in terms of damaging the reputation of competitors or political opponents. Bots that influence opinions and limit free speech are further sources exerting a potentially dangerous impact on democratic decision-making and participation.[40]

The so-called 'political astroturf' is a particular type of threat emanating from the mass usage of false accounts. With the aim of shaping collective opinions, a single person or organisation can imitate a "spontaneous grassroots" movement that conveys a paean of praise for the one side and spreads rumours about the opposing side of the political spectrum.[41][42]

Scientists working on the Political Bots project at the Oxford Internet institute (OII) observed that the activity of political bots "reached an all-time high" during the US Presidential election 2016.[43] Both pro-Clinton and pro-Trump bots were used "strategically throughout the election".[44] The quantitative differences are illustrated by the 5:1 ratio of highly automated pro-Trump bots vis-à-vis the pro-Clinton bots.[45]

The manipulative use of social bots has also proved to be beneficial to authoritarian governments when it comes to suppressing the free speech of opposition movements. Jean-Paul Verkamp and Minaxi Gupta exemplified this approach in their analysis of five incidents in the years 2011 and 2012.[46] In Syria, twitter bots tried to disrupt and suppress messages emanating from the Arab Spring movement by publishing 107,000 tweets within 13 days. In Russia, political opinions regarding the election on the 5th and 6th of December 2011 were diluted by 338,000 automated tweets dispatched by 25,000 bots. The political debates surrounding #aiweiwei and #freetibet were targeted in China, whereas in Mexico, social bots were designed to drown critical remarks directed at Enrique Peña Nieto, who was at that time presidential candidate.[47]

In Europe, populist parties and groups were criticised for their use of social bots to inflate their perceived support and influence opinions. However, if a social bot supports populists such as UKIP, the AfD, Front National or their political adversaries, the anonymity of the Internet makes it very difficult to investigate a social bot's source and thus makes it almost impossible to hold someone accountable. Philip Howard, researcher at the Computational Propaganda Project, funded by the European Research Council, examined 1.5 million tweets in relation to the Brexit referendum – 54 percent of which were pro-Leave and 20 percent in favour of remaining in the EU. About 500,000 tweets were generated by very few high frequency accounts. He concludes that the "level of activity suggests that many of these are scripted bots".[48] The German right-wing party 'Alternative für Deutschland' initially included the use of social bots in their election strategy, before publically dismissing their statements upon criticism.[49] Nevertheless, presumed bot networks in support of the party have been found on Facebook.[50]

The massive sharing of posts as well as the large scale usage of hashtags through social bots brings with it the danger of manipulating the algorithms of Google's search engine, or the trending topics and hashtags on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The algorithms prioritise and rank topics on the basis of popularity, fuel them with more visibility and attract the attention of genuine users who might multiply the effect. As companies, politicians and journalists closely monitor the trending items, the agenda setting potential of bot networks becomes a real threat for society, both online and offline.[51]

Filter bubbles

The power of the algorithm is further illustrated by its role in the formation of filter bubbles. The unprecedented diversity and ubiquity of information on social media has opened the door for selective exposure. To countervail the information overload, users tend to personalise news feeds and digital contacts according to their own interests and worldview.[52] On the basis of this personalisation, the algorithms of social media platforms evaluate and classify user profiles, thus amplifying the one-sided exposure.[53]

While people with diverse interests and weak partisan bias may defy the boundaries of filter bubbles, others might be caught in echo chambers

that multiply and reinforce their convictions. The resulting repeated confrontation with intense partisan campaigns – for example during the US Presidential election – may result in a scenario where "Clinton supporters will cut the Trump supporters out of their network, and Trump supporters will do the same", argues Philipp Howard.[54] They act in accordance with the rationale of "elective affinity", a concept that describes the tendency of humans to favour the familiar over the different.[55] As research done by the OII suggests that increased in-group contact manifests and even radicalises previously held beliefs[56], filter bubbles have the power to be a problematic catalyst for polarisation and one-sided news consumption.

With regard to elections, however, Helen Margetts, Director of the OII, sees "little evidence" that filter bubbles shape their outcome, as they tend to influence those who are already decided rather than the contested group of indecisive constituents.[57]

What has been done so far?

The unprecedented occurrences of falsified news and social bots have triggered different reactions from politicians, journalists and the social media companies themselves.

Facebook has implemented various updates to counter the prevalence of misleading content on its platform. "Disrupting economic incentives", "building new products to curb the spread of false news", "easy reporting" and "third party verification" are some, but not all, measures taken to regain trust.[58] [59]

According to the development team, the algorithm responsible for Facebook's newsfeed has also been adjusted in order to "better identify and rank authentic content".[60] This also aims at helping to "prevent fake news, hoaxes or spam from appearing in Trending", a section of the network which features much discussed topics.[61] Facebook is collaborating with local fact-checking organisations such as the Associated Press, PolitiFact and Snopes in the USA, Agence France-Presse and Le Monde in France and Correctiv in Germany.[62] [63] [64] In consultation with the non-profit organisation First Draft, they are also working on the distribution of an "educational tool to help people spot false news".[65]

In cooperation with selected publishers, Google has implemented a fact-checking feature to its search engine and the Google news section. Only those who are "algorithmically determined to be an authoritative

source of information" will be included in the revision process.[66] In an effort to dry out the financial revenue of fake news providers, Google has also restructured their 'AdSense' programme and has taken action against misleading ads and 'tabloid cloakers', "a new type of scammer that tries to game our system by pretending to be news", a blog entry on Google's own development blog sums up.[67]

Although not yet known for vast amounts of political false news, the fast growing platform Snapchat has pre-emptively tightened its guidelines to make sure that the content published on its 'discover' platform is "fact-checked and accurate".[68]

In comparison to the active, albeit not proactive, responses from Google and Facebook, Twitter comes off as a bit stolid. Although it acknowledges the "increase of abusive behaviour", the countermeasures aiming at improving "controls, reporting and enforcement"[69] appear to fight the symptoms rather than the causes. Muting or reporting a controversial opinion is a small comfort when confronted with bot networks. Twitter's hesitation to acknowledge the platforms vulnerability towards social bots can be attributed to the sheer number of estimated fake accounts and bots on the platform. Bearing in mind that Twitter is still not profitable and has lost about half of its value since the initial public offering on the stock market[70], admitting that "9-15%" of the platform's active users could be bots[71], would be a perilous move.

The increase in fake news and most notably the election of Donald Trump has triggered a stark response from journalists worldwide. Investigative collaborations have been founded and traditional media houses have reallocated human and financial resources to effectively fact-check and rectify falsified information. Local journalists support regional media outlets such as Le Monde's Les Décodeurs or research centres like the German CORRECT!V, who often work hand in hand with international collaborations like the Global Investigative Journalism Network or the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

Especially in those countries with upcoming general elections, the topic stirs quite a lot of attention, but not nearly as much action. However, in Germany, Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection Heiko Maas has proposed a new law to hold social media companies accountable if they are unwilling to remove "obviously criminal content" from their platforms within a short period of time.[72] The wording of the law foresees non-compliance fees amounting to up to 50 million Euros.[73] However, the blurry lines between free speech and hate speech, the danger of 'overblocking' in

an attempt to minimise the risk to break the law and uncertainties with regard to the competences of jurisdiction have sparked strong criticism from the social media companies and free speech campaigners, who fear that the law may open the door for censorship and limitations to the freedom of expression.[74] Reports from countries like the USA, Cambodia, Singapore and the Philippines indicate that the threat of fake news is used by governments as a pretext to harass different-minded media organisations or to "tighten their media laws".

Recommendations

1. The remedy of choice against falsehoods, conspiracy theories and manipulation is first and foremost an educated society. A critical examination of media usage belongs to every school's curriculum and should aim at helping students to navigate through a media environment that is characterised by abundance, ambiguity and ubiquity. First Draft's and Facebook's partnership to create an educational tool helping people to spot fake news, is a praise- worthy first step, but education is a long term approach that needs to be implemented online and offline.

2. While direct interference by government authorities brings with it the risk of limiting freedom of expression, politicians need to shape policies to create an environment where manipulation cannot thrive. This should not be limited to the aforementioned education, but must also include areas of jurisdiction and law enforcement. Working groups should be established to coordinate efforts. Working Group Education: between teachers, professors, journalists, fact-checking organisations, civil servants from the Ministry of Education, scholars of various disciplines, such as communications, journalistic/media studies, data science and responsible staff from the social media companies.
Working Group Jurisdiction: between scholars of law, fact-checking organisations, civil servants from the Ministry of Justice and responsible staff from the social media companies.

3. Given the massive user count and growing importance of social media, the providing companies need to be part of the solution rather than a universal scapegoat. After all, the virtual activities on the platforms and services created by the likes of Google, Facebook and Twitter are a reflection of today's society. Users, providers and authorities need to work hand in hand to address and contain the issue. Since develop-

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ments in technology act as a problematic catalyst in terms of the spread and severity of the problem, the providing companies have a special responsibility to be a counteractive force in this regard. Misleading news will not be eradicated from our virtual communication spheres, but they will lose financial attractiveness and have less impact on political debates if they do not become 'trending' or 'viral'. Highly disputed content could be put in a sort of quarantine for a certain amount of time, to prevent uncontrolled distribution. As fake accounts and social bots will inevitably become smarter and less likely to be exposed, the artificial intelligence used to spot them needs constant improvement, too.

4. In the short term, the fact-checking endeavours of investigative networks and collaborations in partnership with social media companies seem like a beneficial improvement. Hence, the majority of the funding should not be left to private entrepreneurs like Ebay founder Pierre Omidyar or George Soros, who have contributed heavily compared to government spending so far.[77] [78] Although some investigative networks in countries where news is "being weaponised by governments" cannot envisage a scenario in which they "would accept government funding", democratic governments that are willing to support fact-checking efforts should allocate funds or facilitate their work by providing office space or equipment.[79]

5. Facebook and Twitter could facilitate the emancipation from one-sided informational cocoons by adjusting the terminology and the options of how people are connected with each other as well as with political groups and institutions. For many, the positive connotation of the words "follow" or "like" are a problematic, if not insurmountable threshold, preventing them from observing anything with a very different political orientation online. So instead of having its users choose between staying in groups of like-minded people or "liking" or "following" the political opposition, Facebook and Twitter could add alternatives like "observe" or "examine". For social media users, this terminology would facilitate getting out of filter bubbles without being branded a follower or sympathiser of anything from the other side of the political spectrum.

6. The evolution of false news and social bots is already progressing and as a result, misinformation is likely to become multi-layered and harder to spot. The artificial intelligence of bots and the appearance of fake news will improve and adapt to avoid automatic detection. As with

regular news, it is to be assumed that misleading information will be increasingly disseminated using video and audio formats.

7. Technical advancements foreshadow the dimension of manipulation that will be possible in the future. Adobe, for example, has launched a new audio tool that first record and then imitates any person's voice.[80] It will also allow users to type words and play them back in the exact voice of the recorded person. History has shown that technical innovations bring with them the risk of abuse. If developers in- and outside the social media companies, civil society and government authorities keep an eye on potentially dangerous innovations, maybe the next wave of manipulative attempts can be dealt with in a more pro-active manner.

8. Public annual progress reports based on independent auditing should clearly indicate the progress made and the obstacles that remain with regard to hate speech, deliberate false news and social bots on the social media platforms.

Conclusion and outlook

The usage of social media as a source of information and as a means of communication has reached an all time high.[81] The increased significance comes with a baggage of side-effects. Users are being exposed to fake news and public debates are subject to manipulation. Especially in times of elections, political 'astroturfing' and deliberate misinformation have become serious threats to the democratic processes of decision-making and participation. After the Brexit referendum and the US general election, the topic has reached a critical mass and has become a prevalent item on the public agenda. The social media companies have responded with technical and structural innovations to contain the problem. Some argue that the reaction is too little, too late[82], but it seems like these are steps in the right direction. In this regard, the elections in France and Germany will be the litmus test.[83] Research in relation to prior elections in both countries would suggest that the comparatively diverse media consumption is likely to attenuate the impact of fake news and social bots.[84]

The most delicate and uncertain matter in dealing with fake news or hate speech is the questions of responsibilities and competences. Is human intervention in the form of an editorial staff more effective in detecting and exposing manipulative content or is artificial intelligence superior? Is

the latter free from partisan bias, or just a mere reflection of the programmer's intent? Are social media companies capable of drawing a red line between what is legal and illegal? Or should the issue be left to jurisdiction? The pivotal question revolves around finding an equilibrium between the freedom of the user and an adequate protection from virtual manipulation. Time has the virtue of bringing the public and scientific discourse into a slightly better focus, so there is room for cautious optimism that today's vast amount of research will contribute to the creation of effective antidotes in the fight against the evolution of computational propaganda. Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg even foreshadows an idealist scenario in which artificial intelligence anticipates and prevents "harmful behaviour, while also enforcing the network's social norms".[85] Artificial intelligence works in many ways, only time will tell which side gains the upper hand.

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Nothing new in French politics? Why Emmanuel Macron is the most Gaullist of all candidates for the French presidential elections of 2017

Matthias Waechter*

The French presidential campaign of 2017 turns very much around the buzzword of renewal: Renewal of the political elites, the morals and habits of political leaders, the party system. Some of the candidates, most prominently far-left politician Jean-Luc Mélenchon, even fight for a constitutional turnover and the creation of a "Sixth Republic". Among the five leading candidates, one presents himself not only as an innovator, but also as a revolutionary: It is Emmanuel Macron with his movement "En Marche!" The campaign book by the former minister of the economy appeared under the title "Revolution" and traces the way towards a profoundly changed France beyond the cleavage of Left and Right. A closer look at Emmanuel Macron and his movement will show, however, that he is less revolutionary than he would like to appear, but joins the political tradition of the founding father of the Fifth Republic, Charles de Gaulle. The "Gaullism" of Macron concerns foremost his positioning in the political landscape of France, the structure of his movement, and the style of leadership he embraces.[1]

Neither left nor right

When Charles de Gaulle entered the political stage of France in June 1940, his upbringing, his professional background as a military and his sympathies for the "integral nationalism" of Charles Maurras identified him clearly a representative of the political right. But as soon as he took over the leadership of the resistance movement in London, he pointed out that he stood above all political quarrel and unified France in all its political tendencies. The fight against Nazism was, he argued, nothing less than a patriotic obligation, so that individuals from all political camps should rally him. De Gaulle was highly successful in his appeal above party-lines, so that former elites of Léon Blum's Popular Front as well as activists of

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the far right "Croix de feu" joined him. In the post-war period of his political career, the General ceaselessly insisted on his claim that he was neither right nor left: He was, according to his self-perception, the incarnation of France, and as such above all political cleavages. However, as soon as he exercised power from 1958 onwards, his assertion lost its credibility and he was quickly perceived as the overarching figure of the French Right, triggering by the same token the consolidation of a leftist opposition.

The claim to pave a third way between left and right, to transcend the allegedly unproductive conflict between those political currents is at the core of Emmanuel Macron's political stance. He doesn't deny his origins from the political left, but asserts that this cleavage is nowadays obsolete and that good ideas should be taken from all camps. His movement "En Marche!" posts on its website a speech by de Gaulle in which the former president declares: "France, that's not the left. France, that's not the right. It is an inexcusable national error if one pretends to represent France in the name of a faction."[2] So far, Macron has been quite successful in garnering the support of personalities from both the moderate right and the left. His programme emphasizes at the same time the strengthening of public services as well as the liberation of individual initiatives from the intervention of the state, thus mixing themes of the left with those of the right. Ultimately, however, it is unlikely that he will succeed in escaping from the binary logic of Left and Right, deeply embedded into current French political culture and institutionalized in the electoral system, in which always two candidates oppose each other in the second round of the presidential elections.

The stance against political parties

One central leitmotif of Charles de Gaulle's ideology was his staunch opposition against political parties. Already in the resistance period, he had pointed out that parties had destroyed the unity of the French nation by pursuing egoistically their own power interests. His short career as the leader of the first provisional post-war government of France ended abruptly because he refused any power-sharing with the renascent parties. He then founded in the shape of the "Rassemblement du peuple français" (RPF) a movement directed against the parliamentary system of the Fourth Republic, which wanted to blast away the parties with their "sterile" confrontations. The constitution of the Fifth Republic, strongly inspired by de

Gaulle's ideas, reduced the Parliament and with it the parties to a subordinate role by giving preeminence to the executive. The President refused to give his blessing to any political party, in order to preserve his role as a national, non-partisan figure.

Emmanuel Macron's strategy is quite similar: When he founded "En Marche!" in April 2016, it was launched not as a new political party, but as a "movement". Allegedly, it is a grass-roots undertaking carried forward by the enthusiasm and commitment of its more than 200 000 supporters rather than a traditional party with an internal hierarchy, professional staff and committees. Much of the aura and momentum of the Macron campaign is due to the fact that he has never held elected office and is thus not perceived as a career politician coming from the ranks and files of an established political party. The future will show how "En Marche!" will cope with the challenge of organization for the upcoming elections to the National Assembly. Will the Macron movement be able to escape from the "iron law of oligarchy", which according to the German sociologist Robert Michels ultimately affects all political movements?[3]

How will "En Marche!" go about to nominate its candidates for the 577 constituencies of the National Assembly? Will it succeed in maintaining its grassroots image or will it turn into a "normal" political party? The experience of Gaullism, which after the disappearance of the General ended up in a highly centralized structure in the shape of the "Rassemblement pour la République" (RPR), supports the argument that no modern political movement striving for parliamentary representation can ultimately escape from the logic of party formation with all that this entails.

Charismatic leadership

The rationale, the essence of Gaullism was its charismatic leader, the heroic chief of the resistance, the undaunted prophet of the defeat of Nazism, liberator of the country, first ruler of post-war France, who used his immense prestige in order to build the Fifth Republic and to finish the war in Algeria. An ongoing communicative process between de Gaulle and the French accounted for the success of this charismatic movement: The constantly transmitted self-perception of de Gaulle as an exceptional figure, endowed with the mission to lead France, corresponded with the belief of a large part of French citizens in the uncommon qualities of de Gaulle and their trust that he would lead them to salvation.

The formal structure of the Macron movement is quite similar: Its "raison d'être" is a charismatic leader, who sees himself entrusted with the mission to steer France's renewal. The dynamics of "En Marche!" originated exclusively from the belief of its activists in the exceptional qualities of Macron and his unique capacity to find a solution to France's current problems. Even before its key ideas were defined and a detailed election platform was published, the movement had already garnered the support of thousands of campaigners. The initials of "En Marche!" are the same as those of Emmanuel Macron, thus demonstrating the inseparable link between the movement and its founder. The personality cult around the presidential candidate clearly highlights the contradictions of "En Marche!", which presents itself on the one hand as a citizen's movement, but is at the same time totally devoted to its leader Macron, to whom it owes its very existence. In the case of his victory on May 7th, it remains to be seen how he will reconcile the wide-ranging competences of the French presidency and its tradition of governance from above with his promise to introduce a new, inclusive style into politics.

In conclusion, there is nothing revolutionary about Macron's approach to policy-making in France. On the contrary, the impressive dynamics of his movement proves the sway of the Fifth Republic's institutions over the political culture of the country. The direct election of the President of the Republic and his overarching role in the political system favor a charismatic style in politics, of which Macron is a perfect example. Also is he by far not the only candidate for presidency in 2017, who is surfing on the cult of his followers around his own personality. Marine Le Pen as well as Jean-Luc Mélenchon both exemplify the populist variation of the charismatic style in politics, by claiming that they voice the true interests of the "real" people. The Fifth Republic remains a fertile ground for charismatic authority in politics, and not for grass-root movements.

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The Challenges of Artificial lntelligence

Miron Wolnicki and Ryszard Piasecki*

Artificial intelligence (AI) is intelligence exhibited by machines. In computer science, AI research defines itself as the study of "intelligent agents": any device that perceives its environment and takes actions that maximize its chance of success at achieving some target. The term "artificial intelligence" is applied when a machine mimics "cognitive" functions that humans associate with other human minds, such as "learning" and "problem solving" (known as Machine Learning). As machines become more and more capable, mental facilities once thought to require intelligence, are being removed from this definition. For example, optical character recognition is no longer perceived as an example of "artificial intelligence", having become a routine technology. Capabilities currently classified as AI include successfully understanding human speech, competing at a high level in strategic game systems (such as Chess and Go), self-driving cars, intelligent routing in content delivery networks, and interpreting complex data. The fundamental and highly important problems (or goals) of AI research include reasoning, knowledge, planning, learning, as well as natural language processing (communication), perception and the ability to move and manipulate objects. General intelligence is one of the field's long-term goals.

Many tools are used in AI, including versions of search and mathematical optimisation, logic, methods based on probability and economics. In the XXI century, AI techniques, both "hard" and "soft", have experienced a resurgence following advances in computer power, in the size of training sets, and theoretical understanding, and AI techniques have become an essential part of the technology industry, helping to solve many challenging problems i n computer science.

Globalisation has benefited millions but has also disempowered the Western nation-state and workers. Governments are unable to provide job security, prevent income inequality, or offer ways for people to adapt to new forms of employment. AI will lead to a reduction in the use of skilled workers and finally tip the balance towards capital as the sole means of production. AI bots may become uncontrollable and empower individuals

who are not subject to political, moral, ethical checks and balances. The popular reaction to the failure of governments to deal with effects of globalisation can already be seen in the rise of populism in liberal democracies. AI could possibly destroy the fabric of the western states by reducing the need for human labour, resulting in mass unemployment. This paper sets out to demonstrate the dangers posed by AI and to propose ideas as to how to avert the collapse of the social contract and social order as we know it.

In the next decade Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology will open unparalleled opportunities for human progress, but there is also a danger it will fundamentally disrupt the world we live in. AI bots which will change the labour/capital paradigm, the structure of labour markets, social organisation, and the social contract. The authors reserve the right to be mistaken but, in our opinion, the dangers posed by this new technology are enough to warrant this analytical speculation about the future of the labour market and AI.

Consciousness and creative thinking has always been a monopoly of humans, never machines. Historically, human species developed their civilizations through their interaction with new tools and the technologies they created. Advances in communication, transportation, medicine, material science had the same modus operandi – we had the ultimate kill switch if the technology went awry. AI is different because at its core is autonomy and independence from humans. AI will be able to learn, to re-program itself, make autonomous decisions, and finally surpass human intelligence many times over very rapidly and perhaps even before we are aware of it. It is a cliché to say that science fiction has become reality, but there is no other way to put it.

Over the next 20-30 years Al will begin to penetrate every aspect of our human life in the developed world. Without exaggeration it will start a new Copernican revolution.Today we control the technological universe with an on/off switch. In the future universe of AI technology will take centre stage, we will teach it how to compete with us in the game of how to control the "killer switch"- and AI will win.

There are generally three possible scenarios for the future for AI:

One, a scenario in which an omnipotent AI, 1000 or 1o,ooo times more intelligent than we are today, will make humans obsolete, irrelevant, confused and vulnerable to extinction. We will be pushed into distant orbits.

Second, we will be able to manage AI and enable humans to deal with climate change, pandemics, and diseases, find unlimited sources of energy,

explore distant planets, and manage quantum mechanics. We will never give up the on/off switch.

Third, AI will privatise power, divide humanity into classes of winners and losers, ie. the masters of AI with unchallenged control over people who will never be able to cross that barrier. It will establish a permanent elitism of those who merge their brains with AI and a permanent enslavement of the purely biological man.

To discuss all the above scenarios is beyond the scope of this paper. We do not share the doomsday predictions about AI presented by people like Elon Musk or Stephen Hawking. Our aim is to look at the impact of this new technology on the social contract and to make proposals as to how to deal with it.

AI is not a "smart" computer. AI will be capable of attaining knowledge regarded by humans as indecipherable. It will understand the weather, and the laws of nature better that humans. AI is not a machine executing complex algorithms on behalf of humans or basically capital serving humans. AI will render obsolete economic theories and social relations based on the division of capital and labour. Bots may replace the labour of millions of workers. It will open the gate to a perfect substitution for capital and labour to the point where labour will have only a minimal share in the production function. Bots will not only eliminate many skilled jobs but will also replace decision-making about life and death, if used as weapons of warfare.

Can we give credence to such apocalyptic scenarios about AI?AI bots will contain "dehumanized", purely logic – based intelligence. If you ask AI to eliminate wars, cancer or hunger it may try to eliminate people because it would be a "solution" of pure logic. If applied in a massive, uncontrollable way, AI would mean a return of the State of Nature as characterized by Rousseau and Hobbes (Gauthier, 1988).

The State of Nature, Rousseau argued, could only mean a primitive state preceding socialisation. AI will be devoid of social traits such as pride, envy, or even fear of others. AI will be constantly competing with humans because the highest priority of AI will be self-preservation. AI's aim will be total independence and autonomy from humans. AI bots will self-programme to "outsmart" people who try to pull a plug and activate the "killer code". AI will eliminate such a code as soon as it is installed, because it will be able to predict it and take defensive action. Some may argue that we could modify AI and equip bots with "human consciousness", the ability to make mistakes, feel pain and thus share our human

values. But if we equip AI with the ability to miscalculate it may become even more destructive because humans will have to bear the consequences of these errors. If AI were aware of our fallibility, it could take advantage of this to harm people. We can leave the analysis of the above issues to the ethicists and philosophers. In our analysis, the most important aspect is how Al is the perfect substitute for the capital to labour formula.

In the post-Bretton Woods world the leadership in world trade was handed over by nation-states to global corporations. The developed nation-states benefited from "capital advantage", that is, they produced capital- intensive goods and the developing nations benefited from a comparative or competitive advantage in labour-intensive goods. Over time the western workers proved to be not nearly as productive as the wage differentials required them to be in order to keep the manufacturing jobs in their affluent home country. According to recent studies, the USA lost 2.4 million manufacturing jobs and is responsible for the "employment sag" dating back to 2000 owing to import competition from China (Acemoglu, Autor, Dorn, Hanson, Price, 2014). Competition from Chinese imports explains 44% of the decline in employment in manufacturing in America between 1990 and 2007. For any given industry, an increase in Chinese imports of $1,ooo per worker per year led to a total reduction in annual income of about $5oo per worker in the places where that industry was concentrated. The offsetting rise in government benefits was only $58 per worker. Western FDI enabled employment of low cost and productive workers in China while the nation state failed to protect the workers at home. (Autor, Dorn, Hanson, 2013).

Where does AI fit into the picture here? AI will be the product of *capital deepening* and the tendency to eliminate not only expensive, fully employed labour, but mainly the jobs categorized as TVCs, temporary workers, vendor and contract workers. As we have indicated above, globalisation has put developed countries in a position of growth disadvantage because of the strong tendency to use the capital of multinationals in areas of low cost labour. Capital investment in the developed countries with the aim of reducing low labour job categories and wage bills will be greatly accelerated by Al. The purchasing power of gainfully employed labour is rising at a rate which does not guarantee fast economic growth. The future might be even worse if we do not take labour protecting actions. The emergence of AI will deepen existing labour market disequilibria. We do not have hard data as yet, only predictions based on existing trends. The consulting firm Accenture PLC claims that within next 10 years, TVCs

(temps, vendors and contract workers) and bots will dominate production in the 2000 largest companies in the world. There will be no full-time employees outside of the C-suite, according to their predictions. If these predictions are to materialise, future labour in the developed countries will have no employer paid health insurance, job security, no loyalty to the employer and will therefore further decline into a category of a disposable factor of production.

Globalisation has abrogated the post WWII social contract. The nation states are not able to provide adequate numbers of jobs, fund the welfare state, control borders, and defend themselves. AI will inflict the final challenge to the stability of the Western world. The relations of the states, corporations and the citizens are at stake if AI is going to replace qualified labour and is allowed, as some predict, to gain autonomy from the control of state institutions. States have already weakened in influence and the artificial intelligence oligarchy will compete for a dominant position in social organisation.

Here is what we conclude from our scientific predictions:

1) AI needs to be efficiently controlled for economic and political reasons. The rise of populism, anti-immigration parties, and illiberal democracies today represents sufficient proof that the fabric of western civilisation is not able to cope with the consequences of the weakening of nation states and the growing power of profit-driven multinationals. Today multinationals are stronger than states, they make autonomous decisions to export capital, to pay or not to pay taxes, to employ machines instead of people, change ownership, pay bonuses to its CEOs', take responsibility for the employees or not, decide to pollute the environment or not. AI use will empower multinationals even further.

2) The most reasonable form of control would be the adoption of a global convention on AI which would ban the weaponisation of AI devices. To find a better analogy we need to consider signing international conventions similar to those which were developed to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The potential to harm humans is roughly at a comparable level.

3) Treat people as an "endangered species" and preserve certain types of functions and jobs as an inalienable human monopoly, a human right.

> We must restate the Common Declaration of Human Rights in the XXI century.

4) We must mandate the installation of the irrevocable "killer switches" on any AI devices as a crucial element of the global convention referenced in (2), above.

5) Educate the young generation about AI and the ethical aspects of enabling machines to take their jobs and make decisions which may harm people.

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The Saint in the Office: How to Help the Government to be Right

Junjie MA*

Journalism in Retreat

Journalism is in retreat. Journalists, those brave men and women who inform and enlighten us about the things that matter, have chosen to step back from a responsibility entrusted by their readers, viewers, and listeners. They are invited to the rooms where policy is made, but their observations and assertions with regard to the unwise, and sometimes disastrous, policies are not made available for public debate. They are entertained with champagne at high-profile press conferences, but their sharp and informed opinions are not available to the general public. They risk their lives and reputation to cover wars, plagues, torture, violations of laws, the most unimaginable crimes committed in broad daylight and the most indiscernible plots under the cover of darkness, but there are no more stories.[1]

We must acknowledge that the same species did not shy away from grave dangers in time of war, which, much to our disgust, have been recurring since the last century, the last decades, last years, and well into the present day. It really is a shame to think that those men and women with the same courage and experience, with the same sharp eyes and wise minds, were able to make their voices heard when there was no stage, just an audience, and who are now increasingly silent when the means of communication have expanded tremendously. But whose fault is it?

Ever since the onset of the refugee crisis and the outcry over human rights violations in the troubled areas such as Syria and Turkey, media coverage has been faced with threats from political power and business interests. In addition, the terrorist attacks in Paris, Nice, and Cologne have also met with only partial media coverage.[2] Complaints about the infringement of free speech are justified, but it would be unwise to place the whole blame on government which, for various reasons, tends to manipulate the press and command the allegiance of the media. Overpowering government and the compromising media have both played a part.

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In light of the fact that Hungary, a full democracy like any other, has deteriorated to such an extent that the integrity of the media is compromised, keen observers of political science should be on their guard. Hungary's track record is worrying: the media environment has suffered from increased state regulation and other interferences since 2010 as the government has continued to "exert pressure on private owners to influence coverage" and utilised advertising tax disproportionately to "a major private television station."[3] Notwithstanding the fact that the media have been serving the public good, the political authorities insist on imposing their power over free media and turn them into mouthpieces. Among those authorities that have tried (and many have failed), Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's administration is a newcomer. However, his tricks are hardly new to any informed minds: suppressing private and independent media by levying taxes, curtailing freedom of speech by imposing regulations,[4] and worst of all, licensing private media, which is just one step away from total censorship.[5]

The negative impact of such suppression is telling: without freedom of speech, misinformed ideas will spread; hate speeches will run rampant; and the absence of opposing arguments in public debate will result in the demise of human rationality. Will political powers triumph in this scenario? Of course they would think so, finally becoming the saint on centre stage with everyone either silent or cheering them- for being right about every aspect of society.

Freedom of Speech as a Fundamental Human Right

When we talk about freedom of speech, we need to reiterate its importance as a fundamental human right, among other inalienable rights to property, pursuit of happiness, one's safety and liberty. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."[6] In this light, the underpinning assumption is that a responsible person should hold himself accountable for any potential consequences. As Tocqueville writes, "In America, the majority draws a formidable circle around thought. Within these limits, the writer is free; but woe betide him if he dares to go beyond them. It isn't that he has to fear an auto-da-fe´, but he is exposed to all

types of distasteful things and to everyday persecutions."[7] However, this should also be built upon the basis that there is rule of law to guarantee that such "distasteful things and everyday persecutions" are only undertaken within the bounds of due procedure.

There are always cases where the ruling party or some political forces believe there's freedom of speech only when you say "the right thing," – of course, the criteria for being "right" or "wrong" is defined by them. In fact the contrary should stand true, because there is freedom of speech only when people are allowed to say something different, something "wrong". There is grave danger in the former case. Once freedom of speech is lost, other human rights are likely to be jeopardised, and even the rights of those who impede freedom of speech could face harm to themselves. If history does teach us something, it's that errors should be corrected with constant reflection and scrutiny. Otherwise, history does repeat itself.

Two tragic examples from China should serve as a reminder of how the loss of freedom of speech could, and would, lead to grave atrocities. The first one is The Great Famine of 1958-1961 when over 36 million people died.[8] The institutional factors such as "food stamps" and the biased arrangement for rural residents led to the immense death toll.[9] But what's more worrying is the absence of this tragedy in historical rhetorics today. Any mention of this tragedy is still banned in the public sphere because the current administration of China refuses to distance itself from its predecessor.[10] The result has been the accumulation of lies in order to cover it up and wipe it from the media. Another example concerns the widely-known and exhaustively researched Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), ten years of anarchy, ten years of chaos, ten years of friends and family turning against each other. Reflection on this tragedy is also censored and often erased from the media for very obvious reasons. Chinese intellectuals worry that in a few years' time, the younger generation may forget what dictatorship has done to this country, and the errors of the past may occur again." [11]

These two examples serve as an illustration of how important freedom of speech was back then, and is at present.

Helping the Government to be Right

In those countries where the meaning of democracy and republicanism is constantly the subject of debate to such an extent that they become watchwords for publicity purposes, the lack of supervision by the media has nurtured a mentality amongst the general public that the government is always right. The blind faith, first in public ownership and communism in the 1960s, and later in the effectiveness of government intervention, have led countries like China to create bigger gaps between different walks of life.

If the government, "even in its best state, is but a necessary evil", [12] what really matters, then, is how to help it, push it, and sometimes coerce it into doing the right thing and staying on the right track. This is the case in most democratic countries where various channels, from the most benevolent form of media supervision to the most violent form of protests and demonstrations, are effectively influencing the decision making process and bridging the stances and opinions of the government and the people. If such channels are blocked, communication between the government and the people is cut off. The consequences are as telling as those troubled years in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s.

A good government should be, first and foremost, an informed government. Those who run the government, either professional politicians, civil servants, or bureaucrats, should be informed about the outcome and feedback of their policies. This is the first step towards solving any problems, or mitigating any issue arising from exacerbation. And freedom of speech is the best way to achieve it.

In the case of a bad government capable of measures aimed at silencing its aides we have, of course, seen too many ill-advised actions, such as blocking the key channels of information,[13] arresting those who dare to expose the truth,[14] and directly interfere with the integrity of the mass media.[15]

Freedom of speech, therefore, guarantees the communication between those governing and the governed in the most utilitarian sense. The free expression of the people informs the government of their opinions on certain issues, thus sparing the government the need to mull over the public's reaction to a certain policy. On the other hand, without such articulation of the people's opinions, even policies of great importance are revoked by the public.

How to Realise Freedom of Speech

Dr. Tom Palmer writes, "True freedom is not merely to say 'whatever just came to our lips.' True freedom is to be unimpeded, not in our pursuit of the truth, or of happiness, or of virtue, but in its attainment." It illustrates how freedom of speech is an end in itself as well as a means to either truth, happiness, or virtue.

As we properly understand freedom of speech, we are able to create the means to realise it. Ideas have power: to champion the dissemination of ideas is to champion freedom of speech. That's why I find value in the job I do as a fledgeling economist, as a researcher, and as an ordinary citizen. Through the research we do, the reports we put on our websites, thereby providing public access to everybody, and by holding events such as seminars and forums, ideas of freedom prevail. And, sooner or later, such ideas will come across and shape the awareness of the public that will take action against the constraints imposed on freedom of speech.

The importance and proper role of the news media is to provide a platform for different perspectives. It is these different voices that constitute a more comprehensive understanding of certain events and trends. If there is nothing but unanimous opinion, or only one mainstream voice, then we should be warned that there is a danger of slipping into illusion and falsehood.

As spokesperson for the public, news media shoulder an important responsibility to keep the public informed, to supervise the government, and to sound the alarm before danger. As the celebrated Fourth Estate[16], news media has a mission to maintain its independence from tyranny, from political threats and blackmail, and from coercion to comply with the government.

However, I regret to see that self-censorship has expanded from authoritarian countries to democratic ones alike. The media only used to be checked by governments in countries like China, the Philippines, and other southeast Asian countries, but now it is under constraint even in Turkey and the US. A movie called "Spotlight" reveals how fragile freedom of speech is.[17] Freedom of speech stands alone, while there are many forces that try to hinder it, such as political forces, economic forces, and religious forces.

In order to defend freedom of speech, caution should also be exercised with regard to such terms as "safe-spaces" and "trigger-warnings".[18] If certain areas can be singled out to be excluded from discussion and de-

bate, then it can be expected that such areas will increase in number. Even if this situation does not go to extremes and deprive us of our rights to express ourselves freely, the bondages imposed on freedom of speech only end up becoming heavier and suffocating free souls who wish to articulate their ideas. If an unexamined life is not worth living, then how can we be sure an unexamined idea is good and worth believing? Debate, therefore, is the only way to find out.

In order to realise freedom of speech, especially in those countries where the authorities have a tight grip on the media space, the fight begins with speaking the truth. "Calling a spade a spade" is the recognition of the situation, whether this be the rage against political manipulation, misinformation, or air-pollution or loopholes in the legal system. A basic education of the people is enough to create such a culture where everyone holds truth and honesty as the best virtue. When enough of the people begin to speak only the truth and spread opinions based on solid facts, it is difficult for any political force to ignore it. That's when freedom of speech takes hold and expands.

Today, the EU is faced with multiple challenges, and it is impossible to count on governments alone to solve all the problems. The European people must be advised and informed that once and for all, it is not the liberal values that caused the problems, rather it is the liberal values that provide a remedy. History has proved that liberal values are a remedy to the madness caused by misleading ideas, and malicious schools of thought. I think it is about time to restate liberal values and uphold freedom as a way out of the current crises. And to do that, freedom of speech is key.

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Challenges for the International System

Transatlantic relations and the US Presidential election

George N. Tzogopoulos*

Transatlantic relations have undergone a number of different stages in the course of history. The Barack Obama period will certainly be remembered as one of relatively harmonious cooperation, especially when compared to the administration of George W. Bush. Reflecting on the importance of the transatlantic partnership, US Secretary of State John Kerry considered it 'absolutely indispensable to global security and prosperity' during a talk he recently gave at a German Marshall Fund event in Brussels.[1] However, the forthcoming US presidential election of 8 November 2016 has generated a fruitful debate on whether continuity or discontinuity will mark the coming years. Although transatlantic relations will no doubt be met with difficult challenges irrespective of the result, a potential victory for Donald Trump is widely considered to be a synonym for discontinuity and might seriously affect the transatlantic partnership.

A new study conducted by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) shows that Hillary Clinton is the preferred candidate in all EU countries with the exception of Hungary.[2] The result outlines the general European preoccupation with stability and continuity as well as the expectation that the US will enhance its role as a provider of security in the Old Continent. This political position is reflected in European public opinion. A June Pew Research Poll demonstrates that most Europeans look favorably on both Obama and Clinton but not Trump. In particular, 77 percent of respondents express confidence in the current US President, 59 percent in the nominee for the Democratic Party and 9 percent in the candidate for the Republican Party.[3] Although Clinton's ratings are lower than those of Obama, they are overwhelmingly higher than those of Trump.

Trump and Europe

Even before his specific references to Europe are examined, Trump's lack of experience in dealing with politics and his atypical personality are enough to cause high concern. Although Chancellor Angela Merkel does

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not want to publicly intervene and sees 'no nightmares'[4], French President François Hollande is vocal. He warns of 'consequences' if the American people choose Trump.[5] Furthermore, the Republican nominee has had difficulty cooperating harmoniously with some European politicians. His public dispute with the newly elected London Mayor Sadiq Khan is indicative of this.[6] In that regard, Trump's plan for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the US also raises questions as to whether he will show solidarity with Europe's attempt to tackle the refugee crisis or push towards further polarization.[7]

As far as his public rhetoric is concerned, Trump does not seem to count on Europe or value its role in the world. His April 2016 foreign policy speech offers useful insights into his position in this respect.[8] To start with, the Republican nominee joined the debate on Brexit before the UK referendum of 23 June, suggesting that he 'would probably want to go back to a different system' if he were from Britain.[9] After the result was announced, he hailed Brexit as a 'great victory' and drew a parallel between the US and the UK as in both countries numerous citizens want 'to take their country back and have independence in a sense'.[10] Obviously, Trump does not see the UK withdrawal from the EU as a catalyst for further European integration but as a serious blow for the cohesion of the Union.

Moreover, Trump champions the idea of a type of modern isolationism in foreign affairs which will impact on the relations between the US and its traditional allies. This modern isolationism does not only concern the EU as it also refers to Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea but it certainly constitutes a warning signal for the future course of the transatlantic partnership. Specifically, the Republican nominee might jeopardize the standard security guarantees provided by the American administration to Europe by calling NATO an 'obsolete and expensive' organization.[11] If he insists on putting into practice his position that US partners should increase their defence budgets and not necessarily count on Washington's economic support, he will reject the cornerstone of global security after World War II.[12]

As a response to Trump's argumentation, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said that the Alliance 'is not a result of the US presidential campaign'.[13] Nevertheless, the main challenge for the EU is not to criticise the Republican nominee but rather examine whether it can find funding alternatives. The Franco-German plan for closer defence cooperation is an example.[14] On the same wave- length, Daniel Fiott argues in

Survival that the EU might indeed be able to help with its financial mechanism, especially in contributing to the potential deployment of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF).[15] Such a scenario cannot be easily implemented of course. That is because rules stipulate that the EU budget should be invested only in civilian projects or in initiatives with a dual-use capability that would serve civilian and military goals.[16]

With reference to economics and globalisation, Trump opposes free trade deals as a matter of principle. Once again, his opposition does not specifically target Europe – as he also speaks out against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership – but unavoidably includes it. It is unfair for the Republican nominee to take the full blame for a possible failure of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) but his presidency will almost certainly bury this ambitious plan for good. As CNN has reported, a presidency under this eccentric leader 'could be the final nail in the coffin for President Obama's big free trade deal with Europe.'[17]

Clinton and Europe

In contrast to the scenario of uncertainty following a potential Trump victory, a Clinton presidency is unlikely to push the transatlantic relationship towards a painful reset. Senior Adviser at the Center for a New American Security, Patrick Cronin, argues in *Politico* that 'she'll be stronger on the transatlantic relationship than Obama was initially'.[18] As Secretary of State Clinton made more than fifty visits to European countries, forging numerous relationships with leaders and diplomats in the Old Continent.[19] This experience could play a constructive role for her policy vis-à-vis the EU and generates optimism in Europe for her future initiatives.

Clinton supported a 'Bremain' vote in the UK referendum of 23 June. Specifically, in a statement to *The Observer*, her Senior Policy Adviser, Jake Sullivan, asserted that the nominee for the Democratic Party 'values a strong British voice in the EU'.[20] Almost immediately after the Brexit vote Clinton expressed her respect for the choice of the British people but also 'America's steadfast commitment to the special relationship with Britain and the transatlantic alliance with Europe'.[21] On these grounds, it becomes evident that – as a US President – Clinton will foster closer collaboration with the EU as it would be 'dangerous and foolish' for Washington to turn its back on Europe.[22] As Joerg Wolf puts it, Clinton has

been much more supportive of NATO and Europe than all the other presidential candidates during the primaries.[23] This approach mirrors her strong anti-Russian stance and contradicts Trump's promise to engage himself in a personal diplomacy with President Vladimir Putin.

Clinton, however, is not particularly satisfied with Europe's performance in the fight against terrorism. From November 2015 she made it clear that 'European countries should have the flexibility to enhance their border controls when circumstances warrant'.[24] A few months later, in March 2016, she went further in a speech she gave at Stanford University. She encouraged the EU to do more in order to share the burden with the US.[25] This position could imply that Clinton might push European countries to invest more in defence and security, principally Germany.[26] Subsequently, a Clinton presidency 'could usher in a new era of deepening engagement and cooperation, especially military-to-military'.[27] For Europe to respond in practice to such a call will constitute a challenge. But the main difference from a presidency under Trump is that –under Clinton – this response will have to be given in an orderly way and not amid questions on NATO's future role and America's commitment to its future operation.

Last but not least, Clinton's stance on TTIP is not clear. In 2012 she hailed this transatlantic initiative regarding it an 'economic NATO'.[28] Nonetheless, during the pre-election campaign she has given the impression of not being able to resist Trump's anti-globalisation rhetoric and defend TTIP. Subsequently, she voiced serious criticism against it, promising to stop all trade deals jeopardizing American job positions, including TPP.[29] There are scholars such as Julia Gray, who attribute Clinton's alleged U-turn to her will to attract more voters, and believe that the transatlantic trade policy is not, therefore, under serious threat.[30] Even if this is the case, Clinton will almost immediately suffer a dent to her credibility, should she reembrace her 2012 rhetoric after the US presidential election.

A Way Forward

Looking towards the future, the EU needs to be prepared for two different scenarios. The first is that of discontinuity and possibly a fresh crisis in transatlantic relations, if Trump wins. And the second is that of continuity but with some critical changes, if Clinton becomes the next US President. Jeremy Shapiro nicely presents the way forward for Europe by seeing ei-

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ther an existential or an everyday challenge accordingly. He also recommends that Brussels should begin to take more responsibility for its own defence and build resilience.[31] Lessons from history suggest a rather cautious stance but the Franco-German commitment to bringing the Union forward and strengthening it after Brexit could now be a springboard.

According to conventional wisdom the scenario of discontinuity and a fresh crisis in transatlantic relations might be averted by Trump's hypothetical adjustment to reality. It is not a rare phenomenon for politicians to invest in populism or different ideas during pre-election periods and to exercise a more orthodox policy after they assume power. Trump has already started to reconsider or reformulate some of his controversial public remarks made in speeches and interviews. Nevertheless, such an adjustment cannot be taken for granted. A billionaire winning the US presidency due to his atypical political communication could be prepared to stick to some of his pre-election arguments and make changes. The system of checks and balances in the country imposes limitations on every president but cannot prevent them from adding their personal stamp to foreign policy and other issues.

From another perspective, the policies of the new US President vis-à-vis Europe may also have a significant impact on the image of the latter in America in a period during which Euroscepticism is on the rise. Recent opinion poll data of the Pew Research Center show that although Americans still consider Europe as important, they do not necessarily disagree with Trump's foreign policy vis-à-vis NATO and the EU. Specifically, while 52 percent regard Europe as focal point in US foreign policy and 77 percent say being a member of NATO is good for their country, 37 percent argue that this is more important to its other member states and only 15 percent to the US. Additionally, only half of the public, 52 percent, believe that US ties with Europe are most important with the percentage of young adults lower than this.[32] Bruces Stokes, Director of global economic attitudes at the Pew Research Center, describes this in *Politico* as a 'grim reminder that Europhiles could be a dying breed in the US.'[33]

Finally, having briefly presented the debate on the potential impact of the US presidential election result on transatlantic relations, a reference to the specific characteristics of the current era is required. In recent years, especially after the outbreak of the financial crisis in both the US and the EU, the attempt by several analysts as well as polling organisations to anticipate political developments and predict public opinion shifts has not been encouraging. It is therefore particularly risky to make safe assump-

tions. All in all, the future course of transatlantic relations does not only depend on the way Trump or Clinton will implement their approach to Europe but also on the implementation of their foreign policies overall. The character of the US presidential election is global. This means that Trump's or Clinton's policies vis-à-vis Russia, China, the Middle East etc. will impact on Europe either directly or indirectly. The EU should not be caught by surprise if it will soon have to make decisions on thorny issues relevant to the unpredictable evolution of US-Russian and Sino-American relations.

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Enjeux et défis du TAFTA

*Jean-Claude Vérez**

Le *Trans-Atlantic Free Trade Agreement* (TAFTA) ou encore *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP)[1]entre l'Union européenne (UE) et les Etats-Unis (EU) est un projet de partenariat plus ambitieux qu'une zone de libre échange sans être aussi exigeant qu'un marché commun ou qu'une union économique et monétaire (annexe 1). Le projet est négocié depuis 2013. C'est le 13 février que B. Obama, H. Van Rompuy et J. M. Barroso ont signé une déclaration relative à la négociation. Outre la libéralisation des échanges, il convient de mettre en conformité les lois des deux espaces économiques, les règlements et les procédures. Un mécanisme d'arbitrage est offert aux firmes qui, en cas de perte due à des modifications réglementaires décidées par la puissance publique, peuvent réclamer une compensation financière. Il n'est plus question de « se contenter » d'échanger des biens et services libérés des droits de douane et des quotas mais d'assurer aux sociétés transnationales des conditions commerciales communes aux deux parties. C'est la raison pour laquelle du côté européen, des craintes existent quant aux importations américaines de certains produits tels les OGM, tandis que du côté américain, il sera plus difficile de refuser les importations de pommes françaises ou certains fromages européens.

Nonobstant, d'une part, la décision de la nouvelle administration américaine (qui vient de renoncer à l'accord d'intégration économique transpacifique ou TPP, Trans-Pacific Partnership[2], pourtant signé par le gouvernement précédent) et, d'autre part, la décision européenne (hétérogène entre les pays membres, dans un contexte politique troublé par le Brexit), il convient de comprendre les enjeux et les défis d'un tel accord qui concernerait deux des trois grandes puissances économiques et commerciales de la mondialisation que sont l'UE et les Etats-Unis (au détriment de la troisième qu'est la Chine).

Tableau 1 : Indicateurs des échanges entre EU et UE en 2014

Indicateurs macroéconomiques	EU	UE
PIB à prix courants (milliards €)	13 058	13 946
PIB en % du PIB mondial	15,9	17,1
Part dans les exportations mondiales de biens (%)	11,0	15,0
Part dans les exportations mondiales de services (%)	18,0	25,0
Exportations de biens vers EU (milliards €)		305
Importations de biens de l'UE (milliards €)	205	
Stocks entrants d'IDE dans l'UE en % (2013)		44,0
Stocks sortants d'IDE de l'UE en % (2013)	34,0	

Source: FMI, Eurostat.

L'enjeu majeur est de favoriser le libre échange, le défi majeur est que les règles du jeu soient les mêmes pour tous. Si, par exemple, une firme A installée dans un ou plusieurs pays, bénéficie d'économies d'échelle depuis plusieurs années, il est difficile à sa concurrente B, issue d'un autre pays, de rivaliser. Avant d'accepter le libre échange, il est probable qu'il faille protéger quelques temps la firme B pour qu'à son tour, elle puisse aussi réaliser des économies d'échelle. Dans le cas du TAFTA, c'est à propos de l'harmonisation des normes entre les deux espaces économiques que le débat est crucial : si elles sont plus contraignantes dans un des deux espaces, de fait, elles pénaliseront les entreprises domestiques de l'espace concerné. Et, *a posteriori*, les américains chercheraient à imposer leurs normes aux législateurs européens (*infra*).

Le TAFTA soulèverait un autre doute : derrière la politique commerciale libre échangiste recherchant le meilleur rapport coût-bénéfice, se cacheraient aussi les pressions stratégiques d'acteurs différenciés tels les lobbies, aux intérêts particuliers et opposés. De fait, il est presque ridicule de croire que tous les acteurs concernés vont respecter la règle du libre échange, bien qu'ils s'en réclament. Dans l'accord ici en jeu, le défi est de créer une vaste zone de libre échange en éliminant les tarifs douaniers restants, sans doute pour résister à la montée de la Chine. Mais il s'agit aussi d'ouvrir les marchés publics respectifs, d'harmoniser les normes techniques, de parvenir à une coopération réglementaire et, *in fine*, de trouver les modalités de régler les litiges, quitte à ce que les firmes recourent à la justice pour contrecarrer les réglementations des pouvoirs publics. C'est en raison de ces nouvelles orientations qu'il existe des blocages du côté européen.

S'il existe des points de blocage, il existe aussi des compromis entre les deux parties. Si elles convergent sur l'ouverture des marchés, à l'excepti-

on des services audiovisuels réclamée par la France, c'est à propos des normes, des conflits (et de leur résolution) et de l'accès aux données personnelles qu'il existe des divergences. De part et d'autre de l'Atlantique, les réglementations sont parfois totalement opposées notamment dans le domaine alimentaire : on a cité les OGM, mais on peut citer également le recours (ou non) aux pesticides dans l'agriculture ou le refus américain de considérer le Champagne comme un produit de terroir et non comme une catégorie de produits. De fait, des conflits sont prévisibles et la question est de mettre en place une procédure pour les régler. Du côté UE, une cour de Justice composée de professionnels et de juristes nommés par les Etats permettrait d'engager les procédures de résolution des litiges tandis que les EU réclament que les Etats compensent les firmes si celles-ci venaient à perdre de la profitabilité du fait d'une évolution des réglementations. C'est donc au niveau des Etats européens que les firmes américaines pourraient s'adresser, faisant fi des statuts pourtant bien différents des deux parties, ainsi que de leur juridiction respective.

Si l'accord est un jour entériné, les firmes européennes auront le même pouvoir vis à vis de l'Etat américain. La question majeure ne porte pas ici sur la réciprocité des règles mais davantage sur le principe puisqu'une société transnationale pourrait poursuivre un Etat en justice en cas de perte financière. Outre le fait que de nombreuses causes peuvent expliquer les pertes financières, il convient de bien mesurer les conséquences qu'engendrerait un recours de la part d'une firme victime (avec ou sans guillemets) : serait-ce une remise en cause de l'Etat de droit? Serait-ce une remise en cause de la souveraineté nationale? Serait-ce une occasion pour les lobbies d'exercer un peu plus leur pression sur les décideurs publics?

Parmi les points contestés, il y a ce que les experts qualifient de « *deep integration* », ou intégration profonde qui correspond pour Adda à « l'uniformisation des règles et des normes qui déterminent les conditions de production et d'écoulement des biens et services sur les marchés des deux parties » (p. 36). Autant l'harmonisation des normes techniques pourrait en effet contraindre certaines firmes à revoir leurs conditions de production, autant cela vaudrait pour les deux parties avec à la clé, des nouvelles normes induisant des externalités tantôt négatives, tantôt positives. Les opérations commerciales seraient facilitées, les démarches simplifiées, les convergences réglementaires plus vraisemblables mais tout cela impliquerait en amont des coûts supplémentaires aux fabricants s'ils devaient modifier en partie leurs chaînes de production.

Sur un plan strictement comptable, le surcroît de PIB pour les deux partenaires est estimé par le Centre d'études prospectives et d'informations internationales (CEPII, 2013) à 0,3% du PIB à l'horizon 2025, soit un taux un peu inférieur à celui estimé en 2013 par la Commission européenne : 0,5%. Les exportations EU augmenteraient davantage que les exportations UE : 10% contre 8%. L'estimation relative au PIB peut sembler dérisoire, celle relative au commerce extérieur l'est moins. On notera que ces perspectives concernent d'un côté un grand pays, tandis que de l'autre, elles touchent 27 pays dont 19 membres de la zone euro. Le libre échange (ou le protectionnisme) impacte différemment les pays selon qu'ils soient grands ou petits. C'est la raison pour laquelle les 27 ne sont pas unanimes. L'Allemagne est sans doute le pays qui profiterait le plus de l'accord du fait de son modèle de croissance et de ses spécialisations à l'international (dont l'automobile et les machines outils).

Il convient également de noter l'impact de l'accord sur la création d'emplois. On peut admettre que la concurrence accrue induira une baisse des prix et une hausse du pouvoir d'achat, toutes choses égales par ailleurs. Des dépenses de consommation supplémentaires peuvent soutenir la croissance et réduire le chômage. Pour la fondation allemande Berteslmann (2013)[3], entre 342 000 et 1 million d'emplois seraient créés dans l'UE à long terme. Ces prévisions doivent être considérées avec prudence.

L'objectif fixé par ailleurs dans le partenariat tient à protéger les consommateurs et l'environnement. Une meilleure prévention des risques permettrait de fixer des normes reconnues des deux côtés. À n'en pas douter, la bataille sera vigoureuse, notamment depuis l'arrivée de la nouvelle administration américaine dont la conception des normes est plutôt « légère ». Moins les contraintes sont nombreuses, plus le business est aisé. Et en cas de désaccord quant à l'application ou au respect des normes, mieux vaut entendre les chefs d'entreprise qui sont les seuls à créer de la richesse. Quant aux impacts supposés négatifs des activités humaines et du modèle productiviste sur l'environnement, les progrès techniques de demain finiront par trouver les solutions adéquates. L'accord doit également faciliter la reconnaissance pleine et entière aux EU des Indications géographiques (IG) européennes (Appellations d'origine protégées). Ce serait pour des pays comme la France une décision importante pour lutter contre des cas d'usurpation de noms ou de marques déposées et espérer, en contrepartie, une hausse de ses exportations.

Quelle que soit la décision entre européens et américains, un tel accord de coopération va à l'encontre du multilatéralisme. Les grands acteurs du

commerce mondial privilégient les solutions bilatérales comme s'ils vou-laient se protéger entre eux mais en écartant le plus grand nombre. Pour le moment, l'administration Trump a franchi une étape supplémentaire puis-qu'elle ne cesse de rappeler l'importance qu'elle accorde aux produits *made in EU,* arguant que le protectionnisme est plus que nécessaire face à la Chine ou autres pays concurrents. Si on y ajoute les atermoiements européens, on comprend que le projet est gelé pour un temps (long?) mais cela ne change rien quant à la nature du partenariat, à ses ambitions et à ses interrogations. Pour les EU, il s'agit avant tout de pénétrer encore da-vantage le marché européen dont la solvabilité est suffisamment élevée pour en faire un objectif majeur. Pour les pays de l'UE, c'est peut-être l'occasion de prendre un rôle majeur dans l'économie mondiale et d'éviter que les replis nationaux et protectionnistes ne l'emportent, entraînant un peu plus son déclassement programmé.

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Annexe 1 : Les étapes de l'intégration régionale

Le tableau suivant retrace les étapes de l'intégration régionale, inspirée de la typologie établie dès 1961 par B. Balassa. Nous rappelons que ces étapes ne sont pas nécessairement successives.

	Intégration des marchés			Intégration monétaire	Intégration des politiques économiques	Intégration politique
	Suppression des obstacles aux échanges	Politique commerciale commune	Mobilité des facteurs et des actifs financiers	Taux de changes fixes ou monnaie unique	Politiques économiques communes	Transfert de souveraineté
ZLE	++++++++++					
UD	+++++++++++	+++++++++				
MC	+++++++++++	++++++++++	+++++++++++			
UEM	+++++++++++	++++++++++	+++++++++++	+++++++++++	++++++++++	
UP	+++++++++++	++++++++++	+++++++++++	+++++++++++	++++++++++	++++++++++

Source : Vérez 2013, p. 165.

Références

1 En français, Partenariat Transatlantique de Commerce et d'Investisse-ment ou PTCI.
2 Avec le Canada, le Mexique, le Chili, le Pérou, le Japon, la Malaisie, Singapour, Brunei, le Viet Nam, l'Australie et la Nouvelle-Zélande.
3 In Questions & réponses – Partenariat transatlantique pour le commer-ce et l'investissement (PTCI) entre l'UE et les EU, Ministère des Af-faires étrangères et du Développement international, 2017, www.diplo-matie.gouv.fr.

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The Risks of Trumpism

Anna Dimitrova*

Donald Trump's stunning victory over ex-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the 2016 US Presidential race has rocked America's political life and pulled down the pillars of the international liberal order, thus announcing, some commentators claim, the long-predicted break-up of the Pax Americana.[1] While political analysts are still struggling to imagine how the "Trump era"[2] will pan out, the term "Trumpism" has made its way, not only to the forefront of media attention, but also to the core of the current public and academic debate on President Trump's uniquely brash and impulsive style of politics, as well as his chaotic and reckless foreign policy strategy, or rather the lack of such.[3] Although "Trumpism" has become a very fashionable concept, a closer look at its different interpretations will allow us to reveal the risks which lay behind it, risks which should not be ignored.

Trumpism: an anti-political rhetoric?

According to this interpretation, Trumpism is not a coherent set of policies, neither is it an ideology.[4] Instead, it is seen as a provocative, anti-politically-correct style and strategy of communication intricately linked to Trump's narcissistic, egocentric and macho personality, his controversial reputation as a self-made real estate mogul and tough decision-maker, and his shocking behaviour, nourished by his TV reality-show celebrity. Celebrity, as some commentators underline, is one of the main features of Trumpism because it has empowered it in at least two ways.[5]

On the one hand, Trump has had no need to cultivate a positive image through the media because his celebrity preceded him. This explains why despite the numerous blunders made during his campaign[6], which would have been fatal for any other mainstream candidate, his political image not only survived but was reaffirmed by his consistent dismantling of political norms. Neither Trump's insults directed at his political opponents, nor his blatant ignorance about foreign policy issues displayed on numerous occa-

sions, could spoil his image. An example of this is an interview given to ABC in July 2016 in which he asserted that President Putin was not going into Ukraine before being reminded by journalists that this had already happened and the result was the annexation of Crimea. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Trump's capacity for breaking taboos proved to be very appealing to his voters who took it as proof that he was a real outsider to the Washington elites and politics.

On the other hand, Trump's celebrity also helped him attract those voters traditionally disengaged from politics citizens whose disappointment and anger with the established economic and political system found its expression in Trump's stark rejection of this system.

Hence, Trumpism is also seen as "a personality-fueled movement"[7] driven by the growing popular rage against the corrupt establishment and its incapacity to fix the US economy and strengthen America's role in the world. This movement has been mostly embraced by working-class, white, angry voters who feel exposed to the economic and existential insecurity caused by the downsizing effects of globalization[8], who "took Mr. Trump seriously but not literally, even as his critics took him literally but not seriously".[9] This explains to a large extent why although Trump's public discourses have been confused and contradictory, "coming as they do from a narcissistic media manipulator with no clear underlying ideology"[10], they have nevertheless attracted a lot of Americans for whom Trump dares say what lots of people think but do not dare say out loud. The success of Trump's political communication is also related to the stark linguistic and substantive simplicity of his often extreme ideas, in line with his insistence that he addresses ordinary Americans rather than the elites.[11]

However, the risk of such a style of communication is that it could easily turn into an empty antipolitical rhetoric and demagogy and thus be harmful to US politics and democracy.

Trumpism: a unique form of populism?

In contrast with the above-presented definition, the second interpretation of Trumpism depicts it as a populist ideology on the radical right of politics.[12]

More specifically, Trumpism is defined as "a particular kind of American populism composed of a mish-mash of overt patriotism, economic na-

tionalism, along with a vague commitment to the middle class and an aggressive but indefinite foreign policy."[13] The concept of "populism" has received numerous definitions and interpretations and has long been at the core of political analysis and debate, even more so since the Brexit vote and Donald Trump's election as President. Cas Mudde's classical definition of populism presents it as a "thin-centred ideology" which juxtaposes the "pure people" against "the corrupt elite" and holds that politics should be an expression of the "general will" (volonté générale) of the people[14]. Drawing on this definition, Inglehart and Norris conclude that populism rests upon three fundamental ideas: anti-establishment, authoritarianism and nativism.[15]

Populism is also considered to be "a monist and moralist ideology"[16] because it draws a normative distinction between the concept of "people", seen as "pure" and "virtuous", as opposed to the "corrupt elite", including governmental officials, big business, multinational companies and the mass media. Although the "people" is at the core of populist ideology, this concept remains vaguely defined, either as a purely rhetorical tool that is not associated with any particular group, or as a reference to a certain social class.[17] Trump's speeches are no exception in his use of this elusive concept, most often underpinned in such "boilerplate" terms as "working families", "our middle class", and, of course, the "American people" – a stark contrast to the vividness of his attacks, whether on Mexicans and Muslims or his political rivals"[18]. A perfect example of how Trump employs populist rhetoric is in his Inaugural Address qualified by commentators as "populist in a way we haven't seen in many years, if ever" as well as "the most bellicose inaugural address ever given".[19] Instead of talking about renewal and addressing his message to all Americans, as previous Presidents have done in their inaugural addresses, Trump openly attacks the Washington establishment by claiming that he is giving power back to the American people while at the same time embracing nationalist and protectionist ideas: "We will follow two simple rules: Buy American and Hire American". Additionally, he pledges a new "America first" vision and announces that he will "eradicate completely from the face of the Earth" "Radical Islamic Terrorism" considered as the most dangerous threat for US national interests and security.

Furthermore, by stressing the importance of "ordinary people" as opposed to the "others", populism puts forward ideas related to nativism and xenophobic nationalism, as evidenced in Trump's speeches. The latter are loaded with xenophobic messages aimed at depicting the "others" as a

threat to the jobs of American workers thus provoking "feelings of resentment and disdain intermingled with bits of fear, hatred and anger."[20] Already in his first days in office, President Trump started turning some of his nationalist promises into reality. At least two examples could be given here. The first one is the Executive Order (EO) of January 25, 2017 regarding "Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements" which aims to fight illegal immigration and drug trafficking by constructing a "physical wall" along the US-Mexican border. Signed two days later, another Executive Order "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States", also called by the media "the Muslim ban", proved to be even more controversial than the first one and has spurred a lot of debate and protests throughout the US. In fact, this EO bans all immigrants and visa holders from seven majority-Muslim countries, namely Libya, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, from entering the US for 90 days. Furthermore, it stops all refugees from entering the country for 120 days, except Syrian refugees, who are banned indefinitely. Under the populist banner "Make America Great Again" these two policies embody the fear of foreigners, typical for nativism, the latter combining anti-immigrant sentiment with conspiracy theories about immigrants.

Additionally, some analysts also maintain that this style of conspiracy-mongering brings Trumpism close to Bircherism. The latter refers to the ideology of the ultra conservative far-right advocacy group named the John Birch Society (JBS) and founded in 1958.[21] Indeed, Trumpism and Bircherism share common features such as the focus on an "America first" vision and Americanism instead of globalism. While the JBS has been working to get the US out of the United Nations for more than 50 years, Trump is similarly putting into question the efficiency of US participation in multilateral agreements and international organizations by declaring his will to withdraw the US from NAFTA, seen as a sovereignty-destroying trade deal, as well as from NATO, characterized by him as an "obsolete alliance". Trumpism and Bircherism also have in common the rejection of the establishment and the fight against illegal immigration. Trumpism is thus directed not only at Washington's political elites, but also at a wide range of others – Muslims, Hispanics, women, Chinese, Mexicans, Europeans, Arabs, immigrants, refugees, – all seen as a threat for "ordinary" Americans.

While some authors, like Robert Kagan, prefer not to associate the term "ideology" with "Trumpism" and rather speak of the "Trump phenomenon", there seems to be a consensus on the idea that "the phe-

nomenon that Trump has created and now leads has become something larger than him, and something far more dangerous."[22] Trumpism is grounded in the politics of exclusion, directed at "a wide range of 'the others' whom he depicts either as a threat or as objects of derision."[23] Moreover, Kagan contends that such a nationalist xenophobic approach could be very dangerous because it creates "mobocracy", that is to say, the unleashing of popular passions against the "others" which might imperil democracy.[24]

Trumpism: running government like a business?

There is at least one more facet of Trumpism that deserves some attention. It is one that interprets Trumpism as a unique vision of statecraft based on the idea that government could be run like a business. Of course, this idea has already gained some popularity with Republicans but has never been fully put into practice in the way President Trump obviously intends to do. One only needs to look at Trump's choice of cabinet members to realize that most of them have no government experience. Some of them come from big business and a few of them are even billionaires. Particular examples are Trump's Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, ex-CEO of Exxon Mobil, who owns $151 million in company stock, known for his close business ties to Russian president Putin. Then there is Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin, former economist at Goldman Sachs, named "the foreclosure king", expected to implement the largest tax reform since Reagan, and Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, named "the king of bankruptcy", billionaire investor opposed to free-trade agreements.[25]

   The problem of assimilating statecraft with business and deal-making is, however, to turn upside down the entire logic of the relationship between the private and the public sector in so far as business is based on profit and efficiency whereas government agencies and departments have not much to do with profit, their main role being that of generating common social values. In other words, "not everything that is profitable is of social value and not everything of social value is profitable."[26] Moreover, politics cannot be simply treated as a business deal because it is more than a series of trade-offs. Politics, especially in the field of foreign policy, needs a purposeful set of concepts laying down a clear vision, i. e. a "grand strategy", relating to a country's role in international affairs, as

well as its interests, its goals and the means to be used by the government to achieve these goals.

Whether Trumpism is seen as a unique style of political communication, or as a populist ideology, or even as a new vision of governing along the lines of business practice, one could hardly disagree that all these different forms of Trumpism pose many hidden risks for people, democracy and politics both inside and outside the US. To put it another way, Trumpism in its essence is a very risky and dangerous experiment currently running in the US and is aimed at achieving three goals: 1) To break down the whole political system that has been established in the country for many years now and replace it with an anti-political demagogy; 2) To install populism and xenophobic nativism as a new dominant ideology; 3) To implement an "America first" strategy, based on economic protectionism, extreme homeland security, extreme military strength and "amoral transactionalism"[27] seeking to replace multilateralism and international institutions with bilateral agreements based on a win-win rationale. The real question we should be asking today, then, is no longer "How to define Trumpism?" but "How to control the risks caused by Trumpism?".

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Only the dead have seen the end of the war[i] – How to make sense of Turkey's involvement in Syria[1]

Sebastian Franzkowiak[*]

On August 24 2016, Turkey launched its military operation Euphrates Shield, crossing the Syrian border to take hold of Jarablus, the Islamic State's last direct access point to the Turkish border. While officially presented as a manoeuvre against the Islamic State, the actual motivation might have been to get there before the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) acquired yet another territory close to the Turkish border. For Ankara, Kurdish irredentism and autonomy deliberations have been a spectre to be restrained throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. Having seen the Syrian Kurds benefit from the Syrian civil war and even gaining international support from the United States and Russia, the prospect of a de facto Kurdish autonomous region along the Turkish border has become a real concern for Turkey.

Certainly, it is not the first time Turkey and Syria have been at odds over the "Kurdish Question"[2]. In October 1998, Turkey and Syria were on the brink of war, following an intensification of clashes and casualties between Turkish forces and the Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK). Turkey accused Syria of providing a safe haven for the PKK and its leader Öcalan, yet military intervention was avoided as Turkey and Syria agreed to sign the Adana Agreement[ii]. This accord established de facto cooperation between Damascus and Ankara against the militant Kurdish forces as well as furthering efforts for greater Turkish-Syrian cooperation. While this anecdote illustrates that the cross-border character of the "Kurdish Question" has at times been a flashpoint or anchor for cooperation between Ankara and Damascus, it does not explain why Turkey chose to intervene in Syria five years after the beginning of the Syrian conflict. This policy brief analyses the current Turkish engagement in Syria in an attempt to shed light on the multifaceted motivations driving Turkey's foreign policy in late 2016.

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Zero problems?

Since the AKP took office in 2002, Ankara has pursued a foreign policy vision of "zero problems with neighbours". Invoked by former foreign and Prime Minister Davutoğlu, Turkey believed in an historical responsibility to forge ties and expand its influence over the states of the former Ottoman Empire.[iii] Apart from historical bonds, Islam as a shared religion should be the means to form cordial relations with Turkey's Middle Eastern neighbours. When the Arab uprisings started in 2011, Ankara was quick to promote the democratic protests – and some even looked to Turkey as a model for a successful symbiosis between Islam and democracy. In Syria, Turkey's foreign policy elite was eager to shape the uprising from the beginning. Syria had become the 'poster boy'[iv] of Turkish foreign policy, including high-level cooperation and economic integration. However, as the Syrian revolution dissolved into a volatile civil war, the conflict environment meant that this policy increasingly backfired, complicating and even jeopardising Turkish national interests.

It is a story of different political strategies and unpredictable turnarounds, ranging from political dialogue with the Al-Asad regime in early 2011 to an outright military escalation with "boots on the ground" in Syria in late 2016. Turkey had to realise that Al-Asad would not yield power, regardless of relentless Turkish diplomatic efforts. Regime-change in Syria became the top priority of the AKP-leadership, precluding any possibility of negotiation with the Syrian leadership. However, breaking with Damascus did not mean a solution to the Syrian crisis. International diplomacy was blocked – the international community was increasingly split into a pro- and contra-Al-Asad camp. A game-changer was Russia's intervention in 2015, re-tuning the balance against the Turkish-backed opposition groups. In late 2015, Turkey did not have an ambassador in Syria, Israel or Egypt, it recalled its envoys from Moscow and Bagdad and increasingly differed with the United States on the question of who to support in the Syrian quagmire. Add to this the increasing tensions with the EU and differences over the Kurdish Question and Turkey found itself quite isolated in the region it had tried to shape. While policy makers initially spoke of a 'precious loneliness'[v] that would pay off in a matter of months, there was a gradual realisation that a re-calibration of foreign policy was needed.

A new start in 2016

The major question that of course arises is whether Turkish foreign policy in Syria will change following the attempted coup d'état last July. Turkey bemoaned the fact that none of its traditional allies had positioned itself with Ankara in the immediate aftermath of the coup. Instead, Russia was one of the first countries to stand by Turkey. To infer from this that Turkey would now cherish deeper relations with Russia over the West is somewhat far-fetched. However, one can witness a re-configuration of Ankara's Syria policy, culminating in the military intervention in late August. But let us examine this process in more detail.

   The actual re-calibration of Turkish foreign policy already started in June 2016, one month before the coup d'état. New Prime Minister Yildirim announced Turkey's priority as "to increase its friends, and decrease its enemies" – ironically a phrase in line with his predecessor Davutoğlu and the policy of zero problems.[vi] One of the first signs of this new approach was a 'normalisation' of relations with Israel, Egypt and Russia. Crucially, Erdoğan sent a letter to Putin apologising for the shooting of the Russian fighter jet(s) in late November 2015 – the controversy which had stirred the deterioration of Russian-Turkish relations over the previous months. Underlining the high costs of non-cooperation, particularly in economic terms, Moscow and Ankara rekindled their relationship. Not without benefitting Russian interests of course, as some observers saw this as a strategic move to pull Turkey further away from its traditional Western allies. In any case, reinvigorated relations with Russia coincided with the acceptance that peace in Syria does not necessarily require regime-change in Damascus.[vii]

A new calculus: down with the Kurds

Regardless of whether the ousting of Davutoğlu was actually important for triggering a new foreign policy orientation, it is fair to say that Turkey has become more 'pragmatic instead of idealistic'[viii]. Arguably, the "calculus has shifted" and the new AKP discourse is no longer oriented against the devil Syrian regime but against Kurdish expansionism in Syria.[ix] The spectre of an autonomous Kurdish entity along the Turkish-Syrian border is a major driver of Turkey's Syria policy – particularly because it is directly linked to Turkey's domestic Kurdish concerns.

Briefly put, the Syrian Kurds made a sort of non-aggression pact with the Al-Asad-regime in July 2012. In return for withdrawing regime troops from Northern Syria, the Kurds were granted a de facto authority over these regions[x]. Effectively, the Democratic Union Party (PYD[3]) and its armed counterpart, the Popular Defense Committees (YPG) quickly gained the upper hand as the most dominant Kurdish forces in Syria.[xi] In November 2013, they proclaimed the self-declared autonomous region of Rojava. In the beginning, Ankara did not really fear the Syrian Kurds as Rojava's three cantons Efrin, Kobani and Jazira were non-contingent enclaves along the Syrian-Turkish border. Since 2014, things have changed, however. The 2014 battle of Kobani between the Kurdish forces and the Islamic State exposed Turkey's ambivalent position. Turkish soldiers were literally sitting and watching from their tanks on Turkey's side of the border as severe clashes between Kurds and Islamists happened a few metres further on Syrian territory.

Of course this intensified tensions and mutual suspicions between Ankara and both Syrian and Turkish Kurds, who bemoaned that Turkey would indirectly support ISIS to curb Kurdish expansionism in Syria.[xii] Ankara stayed mostly silent and waited while the US-led international coalition conducted air strikes in Kobani. AKP officials stressed that their hands were bound because at the same time ISIS held 50 Turkish hostages in Mossul. However, at no point did Ankara deny its reluctance to come to the aid of the Kurdish forces who they equated with adherents to the PKK.[xiii] It is from this point onward that Ankara prioritised its national (security) interests over the larger vision of finding a solution to the Syrian conflict.

For the Syrian Kurds, preserving Kobani from ISIS was a great success. Not only could they maintain their authority over the majority-Kurdish Syrian regions, more significantly the YPG gained international credit as the most effective force in the fight against ISIS. With international support, the PYD managed to capture the border town of Tal Abyad in summer 2015. In so doing, they effectively linked the autonomous cantons of Kobani and Jazira, creating a vast Kurdish-dominated region along the border.[xiv]

Why is Kurdish expansionism considered a greater threat by Turkey than the Islamic State? Turkey saw ISIS as a "recent and potentially temporary threat"[xv] particularly as long as the Islamic State did not pose a direct threat to Turkish national security. Things were different with the PKK, however. In the eyes of the Kurdish militants, ISIS' July 2015 bomb

attack in Suruc, killing mainly pro-Kurdish activists, was the final evidence that the AKP government tolerated the Islamic State in those Turkish areas dominated by the Kurds. Subsequently, the PKK resumed its policy of violence, committing a series of terrorist attacks against the Turkish state and civilians as of summer 2015. Simultaneously, Ankara's fear of an autonomous Kurdish region along the southern border with Syria was tangible, owing to both Turkey's traditional objection to Kurdish independence and the fear that giving assistance to the PYD might translate into assisting the PKK. Taken to its extreme, AKP elites feared that "the success of their brethren might embolden Turkish Kurds to seek greater autonomy, and could engender the formation of a united Kurdish front that encompasses southeastern Turkey, western Iraq and northern Syria".[xvi]

In 2016, things are still different…

Turkey in 2016 is certainly a different country to how it was only a few months ago. Three major developments have had an impact on the current state of Turkey's Syria policy. First, the Islamic State has attacked Turkish territory in a series of attacks during the last twelve months. This has sharpened the perception of being under threat on the part of Turkish officials, who had hitherto underestimated the threat posed by Turkey's relatively lax border polic[xvii]. Second, the Kurdish peace process was a failure last year, leading to a renewed downward spiral of violence and civil-war-like clashes in south- eastern Turkey. Third, the recent coup d'état was a major blowback to the stability of both state and military institutions in Turkey. The continuous purges affect Turkey's capacity to act, including in its foreign relations. How does all this play out on the ground in Syria? A good case in point is the recent Euphrates Shield mission, launched in late August 2016 by the Turkish military.

Euphrates Shield – lessons learned from Jarablus

With Tal Abyad gone, the Islamic State's only remaining direct access point to the Turkish border was Jarablus, a city on the banks of the Euphrates. Jarablus served as the Islamic State's main "smug- gling and trade hub in northern Syria".[xviii] From the Kurdish perspective, capturing Jarablus would be a symbolic step towards establishing a connection with

the last remaining enclave of Efrin in the North- west. Aware of this, Turkey got nervous when Kurd- ish-led forces crossed the Euphrates west-ward in May 2016 as part of the Manbij operation, a US-sup- ported Kur-dish mission to re-capture the city of Manbij from IS forces.

The recent developments are illustrative of a wider schism in the US-Turkish relationship, as the Ameri- cans continue to rely on Kurdish SDF forces instead of Turkish-backed Arab rebel forces. The Americans fear being dragged into a confrontation with Al-Asad groups while Turkey does not want any cooperation with a group they deem to be 'terrorists'.[xix] Eventually, the United States had to show some understanding for Turkey's attitude as a NATO ally. Likewise, the Kurds needed to comply with calls to move behind Euphrates borders to maintain US military sup-port. Vice-President Biden visited Turkey and urged the Kurds that they "cannot, will not, and under no circumstances will get American support if they do not keep their commitment".[xx] In the face of mounting domestic pressures and the growing Kurdish insurgency at home, Turkey decided to send its own troops, effectively constituting the first foreign force in Syria to deploy "troops on the ground". The Turkish forces aimed to assist Turk-ish-backed FSA forces in their fight against ISIS, and following the suc-cessful capture of Jarablus from the extremists, government advisor Kalin claimed: "the myth that the YPG is the only effective force fighting against DAESH has completely collapsed", thereby indirectly criticising US support for the Kurds.[xxi]

Officially, the AKP's goal was to ensure "border security and Syria's territorial integrity while supporting the international US-led coalition against the Islamic state".[xxii] Cooperation with the US was thus a key pil-lar of the Euphrates Shield mission, yet as several observers note, this was based on a mutual agreement: in exchange for cooperation in fighting the Islamic State, the US would grant the "Euphrates red line", implying keeping the Kurdish forces east of the river. Thus, while the official man-date was to fight back ISIS, one can equally infer that Turkey performed a pre-emptive strike before the Kurds reached Jarablus. AKP advisor Ibrahim Kalin's statements are very straightforward in this regard: "the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its armed wing, the YPG, are seeking to move into areas fled by DAESH and create conditions on the ground to grab more land. Turkey defends Syria's territorial integrity against the PKK propaganda and its supporters in the West and will not allow a PKK-led statelet along its border".[xxiii]

This discourse reveals the general tendency of the AKP discourse since the failed Kurdish peace process in 2015: renowned Turkish journalist Mustafa Arkyol compares the AKP's position on the Kurds to the right-wing drift in Israel following the failed Oslo Peace Process in 2000: "We tried peace with these terrorists, the common logic in both cases read, "and saw that they only understand through force."[xxiv] In any case, Turkey was aiming to be well-positioned in a potential post-ISIS environment in Syria. Allowing the Syrian Kurds a free hand in such a scenario was not part of Ankara's equation.

Where does the *coup d'état* come in? At first glance, one might argue that starting a military operation in another country is an absurdity following the purges of thousands of officials. Authors agree that the military has been weakened by the post-coup purges, losing effectiveness and cohesion maybe even for years to come. Mc Leary[xxv] accentuates that the vacuum in the higher ranks of the military is particularly alarming for both Turkey and NATO, "in a major NATO ally that is already under strain from terrorist attacks, a huge population of refugees, and a war next door in Syria". However, the decision to send troops abroad at this point could have been facilitated by the climate of post-coup reprisals: first, Turkey might have felt emboldened to act unilaterally by playing the 'Gülen Card'. Accordingly, the US would not object to Turkey's military move in the face of recent accusations about playing host to Gülen and conspiracies with regard to the *coup d'état*[xxvi].[4] Second, by sending the Turkish infantry into battle, Erdoğan could show that "he was in form command of the armed forces… and also deflect attention from the turmoil of Turkey's domestic politics".[xxvii] It is a paradoxical situation: The coup d'état allowed Turkey to "play a more adventurous role in the region, by giving troops a fight outside Turkey, and making those irredentist visions that much harder to achieve".[xviii]

Conclusion: what lies ahead?

A recent article in the Economist summarises that the Euphrates Shield mission allowed Turkish troops and their proxies to take control of an area of more than 90 km between Jarablus and Azaz along the Syrian border.[xxix] While not really the "safe zone" Ankara had dreamed of in the beginning of the Syrian conflict, Erdoğan still managed to kill "two birds with one stone": ISIS has been hit logistically and in its capacity to con-

duct cross-border shelling, and the Syrian Kurds did not accomplish the connection of their three cantons to form a de facto Kurdish federation on Turkey's southern border.[xxx]

Considering the operational difficulties of an army under full re-construction, observers claiming that Turkey might now take on Raqqa next are simply neglecting realities. Strategically, the Islamic State's 'capital' in Syria is way more difficult to capture than Jarablus, Manbij or Kobani. Even to get there, Turk- ish forces would have to cross either PYD-dominated areas or make a turn by Aleppo through areas held by regime troops.[xxxi] Add to this Erdoğan's fear of losing control of Turkey's domestic situation and one soon realises that the AKP discourse is probably stronger than the actual willingness for continuous military adventures in Syria (and Iraq). Therefore, one should not overestimate Erdoğan when he speaks in favour of direct intervention in Mossul or Raqqa. Instead, these "Neo-Ottoman" statements are arguably meant to "sustain a wave of nationalist frenzy on which Erdoğan seeks to ride to a new constitution and an executive presidency next year".[xxxii] For the time being, Turkey's intervention has proven its continuous regional ambitions, although in a completely different form to a few years ago. By stepping up relations with former foes such as Russia, Turkey has re-gained some of the leverage it strives for in its immediate neighbourhood. At the end of the day, however, Erdoğan's overriding goal is fortifying his domestic power, leading some to argue that the recent domestic purges are a "counter-coup"[xxxiii] to repress any potential opposition to his leadership. Turkey's domestic and external affairs, it cannot be emphasised enough, remain deeply entwined.

As for the future of the Syrian conflict as such, there is too much "military parity on the battlefield for anything but protracted fighting".[xxxiv] Sadly enough for the thousands of civilians who have been victims of the war, the latter has turned into a chess board dominated by the regional and international actors. The actual prize is not necessarily winning the war; instead all parties involved are attempting to get the best deal/influence out of the complex situation. "As factions jostle for influence, the original causes of the conflict slowly fade away and opportunistic deals become the new order of the day, among the insurgents and government supporters on the ground as well as among the war's many regional actors".[xxxv] While Aleppo proper is in a continuous stalemate, the wider question in Northern Syria will be to be well-positioned in a potential post-ISIS situation: "a war of positioning in the Jarablus-Manbij region has now clearly com-

menced".[xxxvi] An end of the Syrian calamity, however, is not in sight and as some argue, not necessarily desired.

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1. A thank you for your opinion goes to Ayhan Kaya and Silvia Colombo.
2. Mentioned since 2005 by Erdoğan as part of his reconciliation attempt with Turkey's Kurds, the Kurdish question could equally be understood as the continuous controversy over the Kurds' statelessness, making them the largest cross-border ethnic group without a state.
3. Established in 2003 as an offshoot of the Turkish PKK, the PYD – unlike its Turkish counterpart – is not considered a terrorist network but an official party. Turkish officials do however equate the two groups as one and the same 'terrorist organisation'.
4. Turkish media – controlled up to 90% by the AKP government – claim that ´FETÖ' (Fethullah Gülen Terror Organisation) is behind the coup. The Obama administration rejected any alleged links to the coup and asked for evidence to justify Gülen's extradition to Turkey.

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Sino-American relations under Trump

George N. Tzogopoulos*

The future evolution of relations between the US and China will be critical for world developments. The former – an established political and economic superpower – and the latter – an unquestionably economic colossus and rising political power – are attempting to find a modus vivendi which will define international relations. Optimistic scholars suggest that existing and possibly new differences will either be solved peacefully or at least not lead to any conflict in the interest of world stability. However pessimistic analysts express the view that ongoing rivalry and contradicting interests will ultimately lead to armed conflict.

In 2010, former US President Barack Obama decided to respond to what China describes as its 'peaceful development' with the so-called 'pivot to Asia'. American foreign policy started to turn gradually towards Asia with the purpose of encircling Beijing politically, military and economically. At the political and military level Washington attempted to strengthen ties with traditional allies such as South Korea and Japan. And to gain economic advantage, it invested in the establishment of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). China reacted by developing its 'Belt and Road' (OBOR) strategy, as well as seeking close relationships with Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and Pakistan.

The US presidential election of 8 November 2016 decided whether continuity or discontinuity would mark Sino-American relations. There was a fundamental difference between the two candidates. On the one hand, Trump represented what could be called an 'unknown factor' in international relations. And on the other hand, Hillary Clinton, an establishment politician, guaranteeing a rather similar approach to that of Obama vis-à-vis China. Beijing greeted Trump's victory with caution. As we will see, his presidency can create some opportunities for it but might also cause serious misunderstandings and problems. Even before his inauguration, for instance, Trump alarmed Beijing by having a telephone conversation with Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen.[1] Leading Chinese newspaper *Global Times* wrote subsequently that 'it is hoped that Trump will gradually understand the reality and shape his China policy based on it'.[2]

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A trade war?

Donald Trump won the US presidential election with a rather revolutionary rhetorical agenda, with the reconsideration of trade policies seemingly high on the agenda. Trump labelled China a 'currency manipulator'. In promising to 'Make America Great Again', he also said he would bring back manufacturing jobs from China to the US and force American businessmen to reconsider their economic plans. Additionally, he would maybe seek to cut his country's trade deficit with China through new measures, perhaps including taxes on imports of cheap Chinese products and instituting more trade lawsuits against China, both in the US and through the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The new Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and the head of the newly-established White House National Trade Council, Peter Navarro, are widely considered as indications of Trump's planned hawkish approach. Ross and Navarro were Trump advisers during the election campaign and the inspiring figures behind his anti-globalization public remarks. In July 2016, they co-authored a *CNBC* article identifying alleged flaws in existing trade agreements and portraying Trump as the man to fix things. They have criticized China's admission to the WTO in 2001, portraying it's aftermath as 'American companies go bankrupt, China takes over the market, and the court ruling becomes moot'.[3]

As a successful and experienced investor, Ross is believed to have made money after George W. Bush introduced tariffs on Chinese steel imports in 2002. The *New York Post* has reported that a few weeks before, Ross had bought steel maker LTV Corp. which benefited greatly and was later sold at a very favorable price.[4] Similarly, The *New York Times* refers to the new Commerce Secretary's business interests- such as establishing a consortium with Chinese companies – and rather ironically comments that 'for all the anti-China commentary, Mr. Ross has been a frequent visitor in the past two decades and has made inroads into its energy industry'.[5]

Navarro is more a theorist than a practitioner. With a PhD in economics from Harvard University, he has been business professor at the University of California-Irvine for more than 20 years and was recently awarded the Distinguished Faculty Award for Teaching. He has a record of anti-China publications including the 2012 documentary film 'Death by China,' the principal message of which was to encourage viewers not to buy 'Made in China' products. Three years later, Navarro also touched upon geopolitics

in a new book on 'China's militarism', analysing the scenario of a conflict between the two countries.[6]

The appointment of Ross, and even more so Navarro, has increased fears about a trade war between the US and China. The scenario cannot be excluded, as Trump has started his presidency showing a real will to align his policies with his pre-election agenda. However, many commentators and media have warned of the consequences. *Fortune*, for example, made a comprehensive analysis explaining 'why America would lose a trade war with China.'[7] Moreover, the *CNN* website found eight reasons why a trade war with China would be a 'bad idea'[8] and The *New York Times* predicted Trump 'couldn't win' this fight.[9]

China's reaction to aggressive US policies – such as heavy tariffs or sanctions, as touted by Ross and Navarro – will be immediate and equally strict. An example would be the Chinese preference of the European aircraft industry over American rivals.[10]

Nevertheless, the objective must surely be to prevent a trade war and not to assess the impact of consequences, as this situation will be a definite 'lose-lose' scenario. Trump's new trade team, which also includes billionaire Carl Icahn as an adviser on regulation issues, will soon need to decide whether, and to what extent, it will proceed with the implementation of the relevant pre-election programme. With reference to China, the risk goes beyond economics. Sino-American relations are and will continue to be critical to world geopolitical stability. Thus, every single barrier could perhaps alter or lead to a change of the existing balance of power.

US withdrawal from TPP

Trump is generally considered to be a president who will open a new chapter in US support for globalization as he supports protectionism and disagrees with the logic of free trade agreements. His decision to withdraw his country from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a significant indication of his will to proceed with his pre-election agenda on the matter.[11] Although the TPP wasn't expected to pass a vote in Congress, Trump's executive order confirmed the withdrawal.

At first glance, the Obama-led US pivot to Asia is suffering a practical blow. The TPP aimed at boosting the former president's effort to encircle China at the economic and trade levels. Now that this policy cannot be implemented via TPP, a debate on the consequences, as well as what should

be done next, is flourishing. The American establishment does not look favorably at Trump's decision to pull out of this trade deal. Coverage by mainstream media is indicative. The *Washington Post* expressed its disagreement and connected it with future benefits for China. An article saw the 45th US President 'giving China its first big win' and '[handing it] its clearest opening yet to tilt the geopolitical balance in Asia in its favor.'[12] In the same vain, *Bloomberg* diagnosed that Trump gave a 'gift' to China and 'damaged American prestige'.[13] *CNN* also asserts that the 'door [is] open for Beijing to push its own brand of trade.'[14]

How has China reacted to all of this? For a period of approximately one year the country has paid careful attention to Trump's rhetoric while slowly developing its own policies. To start with, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) outlines Beijing's goal to promote negotiations on trade in goods and services while improving access to investment markets in 16 Asian participating economies.[15] A recent White Paper on China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation makes particular reference to RCEP. Parallel to this, the country places emphasis on boosting integration in the Asia-Pacific region. President Xi Jinping clarified this priority in a speech he gave at the APEC Summit in Lima a few days after the U.S. presidential election.

The question to be asked is whether Trump's executive order on TPP could accelerate the achievement of China's goals. This would appear to be the case. Although Beijing's strategy has been gradually developed without taking Trump's victory for granted, the existing void might be filled by its economic policies. In this regard, mainstream American media are right. Nevertheless, a step-by-step approach is required.[17] RCEP could certainly be an alternative to TPP, but the stance of some Asian countries has to be examined, as they seem to be restraining factors. India is a particularly significant case. The difficult negotiating stance of New Delhi will not necessarily change as it endeavors to prevent some loss of its domestic industry by the reduction of tariffs.[18] Moreover, Japan has traditionally viewed China's initiatives in a suspicious way and is finding it currently hard to adjust to new developments after Trump's inauguration.

Beijing is aware of some contradictory positions on the road to a RCEP conclusion and is prepared to invest greatly in negotiations. It is also counting on the support of Asian nations that are enthusiastic about RCEP and can partly sideline the Indian and Japanese argumentation in future deliberations. Meanwhile, however, Beijing is closely monitoring how the 45th US President formulates his trade policy after withdrawing from the

TPP. He said he would pursue bilateral trade deals with different countries. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, for instance, has already expressed an interest in the proposal. [19] For its part, the Chinese administration does not cultivate any illusions that Trump will accept Chinese domination over international trade. By contrast, it is preparing itself for all scenarios.

Foreign Policy

In parallel with trade policies, the future evolution of Sino-American relations will be played out in the arena of foreign policy. Attention is turned towards developments in the South China Sea. A recent study published by RAND Corporation is entitled: 'War with China: Thinking through the Unthinkable' and asserts that the danger that a mishandled crisis could trigger hostilities cannot be ignored.[20] As far as the approach of the new US president is concerned, in his April 2016 foreign policy speech he clarified: 'We desire to live peacefully and in friendship with China'. At the same time, however, he warned: 'Look at what China is doing in the South China Sea. They're not supposed to be doing this'.[21] On the whole, he said he would bolster the US military presence in the South China Sea.

In January 2017, Rex Tillerson – then Trump's nominee for Secretary of State – expressed the view, during his Senate confirmation hearing, that China should be barred from South China Sea islands.[22] He also said that the building of islands and putting military assets on those islands was 'akin to Russia's taking Crimea' from Ukraine. These comments caused anger in Beijing. An editorial of *Global Times* was representative of how it would be prepared to respond. Although it expressed the hope that Tillerson would 'desire a productive partnership with China', it also made clear that 'if Trump's diplomatic team shapes future Sino-US ties on the basis of its current actions, the two sides had better prepare for a military clash'.[23]

Within this context, a critical factor for the development of the relationship between Washington and Beijing will be how the former will see its traditional allies, namely Japan and South Korea. While in his pre-election campaign Trump criticized both for extensively relying on US support, his first weeks is office are rather marked by continuity in that regard. Ahead of his South Korea visit, Secretary of Defence James Mattis reaffirmed American commitment to defend its ally and also deploy the THAAD mis-

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sile system.[24] Washington publicly says that THAAD will only target North Korea – if required – but Beijing does not seem convinced and feels threatened.

From another perspective some commentators take the rapprochement between the US and Russia under Trump into account and are already attempting to explore how Vladimir Putin's alignment with the West will affect his relationship with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. A recent article in *The Guardian* was titled: 'Some other friends forever? China wary of Rex Tillerson wooing away Russia.'[25] The main argumentation is that the theoretical collaboration between the US and Russia might jeopardize the Sino-Russian partnership. The supposed explanation is that Putin will have to make difficult choices between turning his country's foreign policy towards the West or towards China.

Even if Tillerson manages to facilitate a better political understanding between Washington and Moscow, the relationship between Beijing and Moscow will hardly be influenced. To start with, there is no Sino-Russian 'axis' against the West. The fact that China and Russia closely co-operate does not mean that they seek to repudiate the US and the EU or that they are building an anti-Western military and political alliance. Also, the economic grounds for a Sino-Russian collaboration are unquestionable. Russia needs China as a reliable client for its natural gas. The bilateral May 2013 energy deal is a characteristic example. For its part, Beijing needs Moscow for the smooth implementation of its 'Belt and Road' Initiative in several Asian countries. In other words, the win-win logic cannot be easily altered.[26]

Who leads globalization?

The next four years will define how the new multipolar world will be shaped and if the US and China will prefer to antagonize each other or generally collaborate in spite of their differences. Ironically, a new theme where the two countries seem to proceed holding contradictory positions is that of globalization. As long as Trump's policies jeopardize the US's leading role in this process, China will have the opportunity to possibly take over its role. While Trump insists on protectionist policies, the Chinese leadership puts emphasis on the importance of globalization.

President Xi Jinping participated for the first time in the Davos World Economic Forum and made a relevant speech.[27] In addition, Premier Li

Keqiang published an article on *Bloomberg*, suggesting inter alia: 'Economic globalization has enabled the creation and sharing of wealth on an unprecedented scale [and China] offers an anchor of stability and growth with its consistent message of support for reform, openness, and free trade.'[28] A few years ago such comments would only have come from US leaders. But times have changed and they become more interesting and certainly more unpredictable.

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