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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

We are pleased to present the second issue of the journal *Studia Territorialia* for 2022. This issue features three research articles that offer insight into contemporary history and transborder developments in the macro-areas covered by our journal.

The opening article is a contribution to the field of transatlantic relations. Clara V. Juncker explores the #MeToo movement in Denmark and how it traveled to Scandinavia from overseas. Framing the phenomenon as essentially the product of a fourth wave of Americanization, she traces how this culture of dissent has been adapted to the local conditions of the Scandinavian welfare state. She provides ample evidence that the Danish #MeToo movement centers primarily on men as perpetrators and on issues of social class.

The second contribution to this issue gives us an original reading of Russia's war on Ukraine, seen through a postcolonial lens. In her essay, Valeria Korablyova argues that the structure of coloniality in the region is tripartite and includes the West, which serves as the dominant "Other" for both Russia and Ukraine. For its part, Russia is acting as a "subaltern empire" engaged in a "catching-up imperialism" in its quest for recognition from the West. Korablyova sees Ukraine as a "double subaltern," which is attempting to break away from its peripherality to Europe with Volodymyr Zelensky's "populism of hope."

Finally, the third article is a study of the politics of decolonization and memory on the Korean Peninsula. Based on archival sources, Natalia Matveeva persuasively shows how after World War II North and South Korean leaders worked to create different, lasting historical myths in the national consciousness, which are linked to their chosen models of economic development.

We hope you will find the content of this issue worth your time and that it will inspire you. Enjoy your reading!

Jan Šír and Lucie Filipová, on behalf of the editors
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ARTICLES

GENDERING DISSENT: #METOO TRAVELS TO SCANDINAVIA IN THE EARLY TWENTY- FIRST CENTURY

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Abstract

In May 2018, the #MeToo movement picked up wind when Harvey Weinstein was charged by the New York County District Attorney's Office with rape and sexual misconduct. But #MeToo was slow to take hold in Scandinavia, specifically in Denmark, where the consensus seemed to be that inequality and sexual harassment had long been overcome. Both the Women's March, which Ralph Young includes in *Dissent: The History of an American Idea* (2015), and the belated #MeToo movement in Denmark demonstrate the importance of American dissent, though the American Studies community has ignored national differences within #MeToo. Taken together, #MeToo protests in the United States set in motion a fourth wave of Americanization in Scandinavia, though the movement changed as it traveled across the Atlantic. Recent examples from Danish media and monographs suggest that the local #MeToo movement focused on the men involved and on class and the Danish Welfare State, which might topple if trade unionists did not take sexual violence seriously. Even the royal family would ultimately feel the sting of #MeToo and its relentless demand for equality.

Keywords: #MeToo; dissent; Americanization; masculinity; class; Denmark

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Introduction

On May 25, 2018, the #MeToo protests intensified when movie mogul Harvey Weinstein was charged by the New York County District Attorney's Office with rape and sexual misconduct of various kinds. Tarana Burke, a New York activist for women's rights, had launched the movement in 2006 on social media with the MeToo phrase, hoping to empower victims of sexual violence by sharing her own story of sexual harassment and letting other victims know that they were not alone. In a 2017 *New York Times* article, actors Ashley Judd and Rose McGowan had accused the powerful Hollywood producer of sexual misconduct, and on October 15, actor Alyssa Milano asked other survivors of sexual assault to come forward in a now famous tweet: "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet."¹ The responses flooded in, and over the following weeks, #MeToo became a popular hashtag for those maintaining that sexual violence was the rule, rather than the exception, for millions of women and many men as well. In the wake of the #MeToo movement, powerful men were accused, and some criminally charged, like the frail-looking Harvey Weinstein hunched over a walker entering the New York City courtroom, where he was sentenced to twenty-three years in prison on March 11, 2020.²

The election of Donald J. Trump and his blatantly unapologetic misogyny had already lit the fire among activists for gender equality. On January 21, 2017, the day after the inauguration of the 45th President of the United States, the Women's March made visible women and their sympathizers' dissatisfaction with the election of this new president, and sexual abuse in general. Demonstrators with pink hats and inventive signs marched against gender discrimination and violation from Africa to Antarctica, from Cape Town to Copenhagen. The struggle for gender equality was on, again, and had joined other radical movements focused on dissent, defined in the *Cambridge Dictionary* as "a strong difference of opinion on a particular subject, especially about an official suggestion

¹ Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, "Harvey Weinstein Paid off Accusers for Decades," *The New York Times*, October 5, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/us/harvey-weinstein-harassment-allegations.html>; Alyssa Milano (@Alyssa_Milano), Twitter, October 15, 2017, https://twitter.com/alyssa_milano/status/919659438700670976?lang=en.

² "Full Coverage: Harvey Weinstein Found Guilty of Rape," *The New York Times*, February 24, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/24/nyregion/harvey-weinstein-verdict.html>; Colin Dwyer, "The Harvey Weinstein Trial: A Brief Timeline of How We Got Here," *NPR*, January 22, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/22/798222176/the-harvey-weinstein-trial-a-brief-timeline-of-how-we-got-here>.

or plan or a popular belief.”³ The demonstrators protested patriarchal privilege, which shielded powerful predators from consequences, legal and otherwise, of their crimes. In his introduction to the paperback edition of *Dissent: The History of an American Idea* (2015), Ralph Young includes “Reflections on the Women’s March,” which he observed as a recent manifestation of American dissent.⁴ As he watched the many imaginative signs of the protesters nationwide, Young “was struck again by the essential truth that democracy in America didn’t just happen; it was fought for.”⁵ The Women’s March and the #MeToo activists expressed dissent in terms of sexuality and gender, which also the publications on the US #MeToo movement highlight. The dissenters sought to call out predators, cozily enmeshed in patriarchy, the social and ideological belief system that enables men to control, dominate and exploit women.

This article aims to demonstrate that despite the continuing problems in Trumpland, the #MeToo movement began a fourth wave of Americanization, starting with Weinstein and Trump and the widespread dissent they (and their allies) inspired. But when the #MeToo movement reached new transatlantic contexts and audiences, ideologies and protests did not follow the same path as in the US. Both the global Women’s March and the local #MeToo movement in Scandinavia indicate the importance of American dissent, but the configuration, the time frame and the mood of these US-inspired protests changed as they crossed the Atlantic Ocean. The #MeToo movement was slow to take hold in Denmark. In August 2020, however, this initial complacency changed and a #MeToo 2.0 began, prompted by a well-known TV host. Soon the heads of prominent politicians and media celebrities began to roll. As in US protest movements such as Black Lives Matter, the focus eventually shifted from individual transgressions to a more general approach. In Denmark, #MeToo activism also led to discussions of systemic sexism within educational institutions, local and state politics, health-care facilities, and the media. But to a higher degree than in the US, attention focused on the plight of men, and on class as an important ingredient in discussions of gender and sex.

The theoretical foundation for the analysis of #MeToo in Scandinavia will be the concept of Americanization, the notion of US influence outside its own borders, and Edward Said’s influential “Traveling Theory” (1982), which traces the

³ “Dissent,” *Cambridge Dictionary* (online), <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dissent>.

⁴ Ralph Young, *Dissent: The History of an American Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 2018), xii–xiv.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xiii.

changes a theory or an ideology – a protest – might undergo as it takes off from its original setting or framework. After introducing the theoretical underpinnings for analyzing the arrival of #MeToo in Denmark in sections titled “Americanization” and “Traveling with #MeToo,” the next section, “Writing (about) #MeToo,” will cover significant literature about the movement and its main figures, published on both sides of the Atlantic. “You Know Who You Are” introduces #MeToo from its sluggish start in Denmark to #MeToo 2.0, when all hell broke loose for the powerful – usually male – predators, who from prestigious positions in Danish society had been on the prowl for decades. The section “Big Boys Fall” traces their demise in various Danish institutions, while others scramble to fit the New Normal of gender relations, as described in the “Appropriating #MeToo” part of this analysis. But the Big Boys also prepare a come-back to power, as the section “Big Boys Fight Back” will show. With the gender struggle on, writers such as Kristina Nya Glaffey enter the boxing ring in “Those Modern Men,” and Glaffey finds in her corner also an Ex-Prime Minister and young trade unionists, who bring to the gender equation the concept of class and the future of Danish welfare, as the “#MeToo and Class” section explains. Based on recent revelations about abuse in an elite boarding school, Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary find themselves in a dilemma and must take sides, since also royals meet with a public demand for equality. “Of Gender and Gaps” discusses the World Economic Forum’s *Global Gender Gap Report* and takes a quick trip across Øresund to Sweden, where #MeToo brought even more havoc. The final section, “In/Conclusions” suggests that #MeToo in Denmark is on-going, and that predators hide in bright daylight as well as in darker corners. Overall, the article finds that masculinities – victimized or predatory – take up more space in the Danish variant of #MeToo than in its point of origin, and that class becomes a more important ingredient in #MeToo in the Danish Welfare State than in the US. But #MeToo also revives the Americanization of Danish society and ideas and thus splashes into the fourth wave of superpower impact that flows across Europe.

Americanization

#MeToo would have enough back wind to arrive in Scandinavia and revive American influence, which had waned because of issues and developments that alienated the public in the Nordic countries: Trumpism, guns and mass shootings, election denials, vaccine hesitancy, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more. Historian Nils Arne Sørensen notes in *Det amerikanske Forbillede* [The American

Role Model] (2011) that the term “Americanization” comes with heavy historical baggage and numerous meanings, but he still finds a scholarly consensus in defining the word as “a transfer of American goods, knowledge, values and norms, technologies, organizational structures and institutions to other countries.”⁶ Building on the Norway-based economic historian Harm Schröter, Sørensen identifies three waves of Americanization, which he sees as the most significant transatlantic phenomenon ever. The first wave culminated in the 1920s but lost its momentum when the Great Depression set in with the stock market crash in 1929. The second wave rolled in the 1945–70 period, with the US coming victoriously out of WWII as the only nation with a prosperous economy. During the Cold War, the US consolidated its power as its economic, political, and cultural influence became intertwined. Political and economic disruptions – the Vietnam War and protests among them – caused the second wave to ebb, but the Reagan years renewed the US economic and political momentum and prepared the third wave of Americanization, which lasted into the early 1990s.⁷ Though Americanization was cornered by globalization discussions in the decades before and after the Millennium, German and European History professor Volker Berghahn sees the concept of globalization as a continuation of Americanization due to innovations in bio- and information technologies, especially on the West Coast, and inventive measures in the financial world of the East Coast.⁸ The scholarly community to which Sørensen and Berghahn belong explains the end of the third wave of Americanization with the US decline as a superpower during the second Bush Administration and the financial crisis from 2007–08.⁹ But a fourth wave began with Donald J. Trump and the unrepentant sexism of the 45th President of the United States and his allies, which energized dissent also outside US borders. This time, the wave rolled from Hollywood and actors who called out Weinstein to international communities of women and their supporters. Unlike Vietnam War protests, this fourth-wave dissent was gendered, as demonstrators in pink hats took on sexual predators in board rooms, institutions, media, and politics. The fourth-wave feminist movement had shown the way with its access to social

⁶ Nils Arne Sørensen, *Det amerikanske Forbillede: Dansk erhvervsliv og USA, ca. 1920–1970* [The American Role Model: Danish Business and the US, approx. 1920–1970] (Odense; University of Southern Denmark Press, 2011), 9, translated from the Danish by the author of this article.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9–10.

⁸ Volker R. Berghahn, “The Debate on ‘Americanization’ among Economic and Cultural Historians,” *Cold War History* 10, no. 1 (2010), 120–121, doi: 10.1080/14682740903388566.

⁹ Sørensen, 10–12.

media and its emphasis on intersectional empowerment for marginalized groups of all colors and genders.¹⁰

Traveling with #MeToo

In “Traveling Theory” (1982), Edward Said investigates the transfer of ideas and theories from one person to another, from one era to another, and from one geographical location to another. His focus was literary theory, but his argument might equally well apply to social and cultural movements such as #MeToo. In his important essay, Said argues that movement from one setting to another is never unobstructed, since representational codes and institutions will differ from the point of origin. Nonetheless, he identifies four characteristic stages in the travel of ideas from one geographical or ideological context to another. First is the set of circumstances that sparked the idea, in the case of #MeToo Tarana Burke’s internet initiative and the Hollywood actors who took on Weinstein and co. Second, Said mentions the “distance traversed,” the various pressures and changes that the idea encounters as it relocates from one setting to another. One such change might be the media coverage of #MeToo as it moves into a global context and enters new discourses. In the third stage, the transplanted idea meets “conditions of acceptance,” or, inevitably, resistances, which accompany its introduction, acceptance, or “toleration” in a different culture. In the Danish context, #MeToo first confronted the widespread belief that gender relations in this Nordic country needed no help from outside influences, since women had already entered a fair and welcoming job market and men, unlike their fathers, were engaged in housework, childcare, and other domestic duties. In Said’s fourth stage, the fully or partly adjusted idea is somewhat transformed in the new surroundings with new users, as was the case when #MeToo finally arrived in the seemingly egalitarian Danish society.¹¹ In a country officially committed to gender equality and with an employment rate for women between 16 and 64 at 76 per cent in 2019, the consensus seemed at first to be that inequality and sexual harassment had long been overcome, or that Danish broad-mindedness in sexual matters legitimized certain transgressions.

¹⁰ For an introduction to fourth-wave feminism, see for ex. Nicola Rivers, *Post-feminism(s) and the Arrival of the Fourth Wave: Turning Tides* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

¹¹ Edward W. Said, “Traveling Theory” (1982), reprinted in *World Literature in Theory*, ed. David Damrosch (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 115.

Writing (about) #MeToo

Innumerable books and articles have now exposed sexual predators and analyzed the #MeToo movement in an American context. Ronan Farrow took on the media world with *Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators* (2019), which became a New York Times bestseller and declared the NPR Favorite Book of 2019, the Washington Post Best Nonfiction Book of 2019, and the Los Angeles Times and the Chicago Tribune Best Book of 2019.¹² Farrow exposes the predatory, controlling behavior of influential men in media and charts his own exposé of Harvey Weinstein that led to his article in the October 23, 2017 issue of *The New Yorker*, “From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Harvey Weinstein’s Accusers Tell Their Stories.”¹³ Another prominent #MeToo publication and also a *New York Times* bestseller appeared with *She Said: Breaking the Sexual Harassment Story That Helped Ignite a Movement* (2020) by the Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporters Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey.¹⁴ As a companion piece to Farrow’s book, *She Said* exposes Weinstein through often reluctant or circumspect victims or survivors, and it takes on the systems that legitimized men like him. *The Education of Brett Kavanaugh: An Investigation* (2019) showcased #MeToo issues in the world of law, at a time when protesters sided with Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, who accused Kavanaugh of attempted rape when they were both teenagers and testified against him during the congressional hearings on his Supreme Court nomination in September 2018.¹⁵ At the hearing, Kavanaugh performed a specific kind of hegemonic masculinity – rhetorically, visually, and affectively – that again brought issues of sexual abuse to the forefront.

Within the literary and cultural establishment, the #MeToo movement has prompted reconsiderations of canonical American writers, with Vladimir Nabokov and Philip Roth among the most prominent examples, and of American movies and TV series, Kevin Spacey only one among many Hollywood actors blacklisted in the wake of #MeToo. Confessional autobiographies and

¹² Ronan Farrow, *Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators* (London: Fleet, 2019).

¹³ Ronan Farrow, “From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Harvey Weinstein’s Accusers Tell Their Stories,” *The New Yorker*, October 10, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/from-aggressive-overtures-to-sexual-assault-harvey-weinsteins-accusers-tell-their-stories>.

¹⁴ Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, *She Said: Breaking the Sexual Harassment Story That Helped Ignite a Movement* (New York: Penguin, 2020).

¹⁵ Robin Pogrebin and Kate Kelly, *The Education of Brett Kavanaugh: An Investigation* (London: Portfolio, 2019).

essays followed, such as Tarana Burke's *Unbound: My Story of Liberation and the Birth of the Me Too Movement* (2021) and Laura Gray-Rosendale's anthology *Me Too, Feminist Theory, and Surviving Sexual Violence in the Academy* (2020), which, as the title suggests, blows feminist theory and higher education into the #MeToo storm.¹⁶ American Studies scholars in Scandinavia have published on #MeToo developments in the US, for example with articles by the present author on Philip Roth (and his biographer) and the Kavanaugh Supreme Court nomination hearings. But so far, the American Studies community has not explored the differences between the American and the Scandinavian #MeToo responses.¹⁷

With the delayed #MeToo reaction in the country, scholarly interpretations of the Danish #MeToo situation got off to a slow start. Somewhat surprising to local feminists, Professor of Gender Studies at Roskilde University, Kenneth Reinicke, opened discussions with the first academic monograph on #MeToo, *Mænd der krænker kvinder: Refleksioner i kølvandet på #MeToo* [Men Who Violate Women: Reflections in the Wake of #Me Too] (2018).¹⁸ Primarily interested in masculinity studies, Reinicke zoomed in on men and their reactions to #MeToo, with media appearances following his publication. He stresses the need not to demonize men, not to go on a witch-hunt, and he mentions that men may find themselves in worse positions or situations than women. He also mentions a suicide in the wake of #MeToo, but overall, he sides with the violated women, against the few male predators.¹⁹ He criticizes the masculine resistance to problematizing predatory behaviors and points to men's blind spots. In his book, women are victims, with no agency. Recently, Reinicke has re-entered #MeToo discussions with *Men After #MeToo: Being an Ally in the Fight Against Sexual Harassment* (2022).²⁰ Through interviews with twenty-five Danish men,

¹⁶ Tarana Burke, *Unbound: My Story of Liberation and the Birth of the Me Too Movement* (New York: Flatiron, 2021); Laura Gray-Rosendale, ed., *Me Too, Feminist Theory, and Surviving Sexual Violence in the Academy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020).

¹⁷ See Clara Juncker and Marianne Kongerslev, "Tårer i Rovdyrenes Klub: Hvide Følelser og Maskulinitetsmyter i Trumpland" [Tears in the Predators' Club: White Emotions and Masculinity Myths in Trumpland], *Økonomi & Politik* 92, no. 1 (2019): 56–66; and Clara Juncker, "Teaching Philip Roth in Denmark: It's Complicated," in *Contemporary American Fiction in the European Classroom: Teaching and Texts*, ed. Lawrence Mazzeno and Sue Norton (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 185–200.

¹⁸ Kenneth Reinicke, *Mænd der krænker kvinder: Refleksioner i kølvandet på #MeToo* (Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur, 2018).

¹⁹ Reinicke, *Mænd der krænker*, 73, 190.

²⁰ Kenneth Reinicke, *Men After #MeToo: Being an Ally in the Fight Against Sexual Harassment* (New York: Springer Nature, 2022).

he examines men's socialization processes and discusses how men might combat sexual harassment, not only by refraining from predatory behaviors but also as empowered bystanders. His male-focused approach to #MeToo debates has provoked considerable criticism, not least in Kristina Nya Glaffey's *To the Modern Man: A Portrait* (2022), a vitriolic attack on male feminists and their smug navigations in #MeToo terrain, inspired by a primary interest in themselves.²¹

“You Know Who You Are”

At first, the fourth wave of Americanization in Denmark did not cause a tidal surge, though it began, as in the US, in the entertainment industry. The Danish reaction to American #MeToo revelations hit headlines in November 2017, when actor Dorte Rømer joined her Hollywood colleagues by sharing her experiences of sexual harassment in the Danish film business. More actresses joined in, and on November 13, the President of the Danish Actors' Guild, Katja Holm, stated that she found it depressing and grotesque that people use their power to harass others.²² By then, 241 members of the Actors' Guild had told to the Danish newspaper *Politiken* that they had been harassed by their bosses.²³ Subsequently, Minister of Equality Karen Ellemann and Minister of Culture Mette Bock wrote an open letter to the culture industry, in which they admonished the recipients to take this problem seriously and change a work environment characterized by secrecy and taboos.²⁴ Peter Aalbæk, founder, producer and owner of Zentropa, where the famous Dogme 95 movement resulted in film successes such as *Festen* (1996, Eng. *The Celebration* 1998), remained unapologetic. He had allegedly humiliated female employees with cigar parties, butt-slapping, nude swimming and strip competitions, accusations that resulted in his exclusion from board meetings and teaching. Two years later, he was still at Zentropa and declared:

²¹ Kristina Nya Glaffey, *To the Modern Man* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2022).

²² Martine Stock, “MeToo (#MeToo),” *Faktalink*, January 18, 2018, https://beta.bibliotek.dk/en/materiale/metoo-metoo-_martine-stock/work-of%3A870971-faktalink%3A37697451?type=artikel.

²³ Torben Benner, “Mange kvindelige skuespillere har oplevet sex-chikane,” *Politiken*, November 12, 2017, <https://politiken.dk/kultur/art6203209/Mange-kvindelige-skuespillere-har-oplevet-sexchikane-fra-chefer>.

²⁴ Karen Ellemann and Mette Bock, “Åbent brev til Kulturbranchen fra ligestillingsminister Karen Ellemann og Mette Bock,” Facebook, November 21, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/karen.ellemann/photos/%C3%A5bent-brev-til-kulturbranchen-fra-ligestillingsminister-karen-ellemann-og-kultur/1843361782359844/>.

“I have humiliated my students, but almost everyone got back up and stronger as well. I apologize for nothing and regret nothing.”²⁵

But in August 2020, the Danish #MeToo complacency came to an end. TV-host Sophie Linde took the stage at the annual Zulu Comedy Gala and told, in graphic details, a stunned audience about the sexual harassment she had experienced as a newly hired 18-year-old intern at the Danish National TV station, DR. A prominent TV personality had taken her aside and threatened to ruin her career if she did not deliver the sexual act he asked for. “I am pretty sure you are watching me now,” she said, and “You know who you are.”²⁶ Though Linde’s speech was not appreciated by all members of the audience and beyond, 615 women in Danish media soon signed a declaration of support for her views, and her courage.²⁷ #MeToo 2.0 had begun, and heads began to roll. The fourth wave of Americanization had reached Denmark, and local versions of the Harvey Weinstein narrative washed in. As Said theorizes, the passage across the Atlantic resulted in certain changes, discernible in a gentler tone overall and maybe less violent – but still unacceptable – transgressions, though at least one completed rape allegedly took place.

Big Boys Fall

The first head to fall belonged to prominent politician Morten Østergaard, the leader of the Radical Left, despite its name a centrist political party with liberal views on equality and women’s rights. Following weeks of denial, false claims of innocence and promises of an investigation within party ranks, Østergaard admitted that he himself had violated Member of Parliament Lotte Rod by placing a hand on her leg ten years previously. He confessed to this transgression after a crisis meeting on October 7, 2020, at the Black Diamond Library. On October 10, Østergaard admitted on Facebook that more women had suffered his indiscretions, and an investigation of Østergaard, his party behaviors, and

²⁵ Anders Højberg Kamp, “Peter Aalbæk to år efter sexchikane-sag: Jeg undskylder intet og fortryder intet,” *B.T.*, December 21, 2019, <https://www.bt.dk/kendte/peter-aalbaek-to-aar-efter-sexchikane-sag-jeg-undskylder-intet-og-fortryder-intet>.

²⁶ TV2Nyhederne, “Sofie Linde deler MeToo-øjeblik: – Du ved godt, hvem du er,” Facebook, August 27, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/tv2nyhederne/videos/sofie-linde-deler-metoo-%C3%B8jeblik-du-ved-godt-hvem-du-er/354739329257691/>.

²⁷ Ritzau, “1615 har skrevet under på Sofie Linde-brev om sexismen,” *Jyllands-Posten*, September 12, 2020, <https://jyllands-posten.dk/kultur/ECE12409711/1615-har-skrevet-under-paa-sofie-lindebrev-om-sexisme/>.

the sexual culture in the Radical Left began.²⁸ Next came Frank Jensen, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen and a prominent Vice Chair of the Social Democratic Party, who was forced to step down and give up all his posts on October 19, 2020. Several women, including 30-year-old Maria Gudme, also a Social Democrat and a member of the Copenhagen regional council, went public with a series of sexual violation accusations against the then 59-year-old Jensen. Most memorable among his wrongdoings were perhaps his habit of licking women's ears or necks and his come-ons towards pregnant women at Christmas parties.²⁹

In Nyborg, a provincial town on the island of Funen, a whistleblower zoomed in on Vice County Director Søren Møllegård and his behavior at a December 3, 2021, Christmas Party. Details surfaced about female managers and chairs being French-kissed against their will, non-consensual touching, and some partygoers wearing signs saying “violated” and “not violated.” Apparently, these incidents were only the tip of the iceberg in Møllegård's career and at Nyborg City Council. Møllegård was fired a few days later, and HR Chief Manager Lars Svenningsen took a sudden, stress-related sick leave. Yet in late April 2022, Danish news media revealed that Jesper Nielsen, a council member for the Social Democrats in Nyborg, had tried to buy nude photos from a local 17-year-old minor, Chelsea. Newspapers and websites brought his Snapchat correspondence: “Are you interested in selling nude pictures?” he wrote to Chelsea, a student at a local high school. “Or could we meet one day and talk about it? I also know a good photographer in case you want to have some great pictures taken.” On April 27, after a crisis meeting with only his behavior on the agenda, Nielsen was relieved of all his posts and expelled from the City Council, undoubtedly due to the new zero-tolerance policy on sexual transgressions in many Danish institutions and workplaces. The following day, Funen police decided to investigate.³⁰

The new #MeToo wave also hit Jesper Nielsen's namesake, a celebrity TV realtor selling upscale properties in fashionable Copenhagen neighborhoods, who was fired from his own firm, Jesper Nielsen Realty, allegedly for predatory behavior during a Christmas lunch at the high-class Hotel d'Angleterre

²⁸ The Editors, “Politikere står frem med vidnesbyrd: ‘Han ville mere, så da hun sov, penetrerede han hende,’” *Alt.*, September 26, 2020, <https://www.alt.dk/artikler/politikere-laeger-og-journalister-om-sexisme>.

²⁹ Lærke Sofie Bonke, “Mistet overblikket? Her er en tidslinje over Frank Jensens krænkelssager,” *Alt.*, October 27, 2020, <https://www.alt.dk/artikler/frank-jensen-og-sexisme-den-fulde-oversigt>.

³⁰ Peter Bergman, “Politiker afsløret: – Vil du sælge nøgenbilleder?” *Avisen.dk*, April 27, 2022, https://www.avisen.dk/politiker-afsløret-vil-du-saelge-noegenbilleder_689665.aspx.

the previous December.³¹ In March 2022, a top (female) manager in 3F, with its 260,000+ working-class members the most influential trade union in Denmark, took a leave of absence and was relieved of all political duties after a male employee had reported her to the acting chair of the 3F Union.³² On April 19, 2022, Michael Bojesen, renowned composer and former director of the Danish National Girls' Choir, then Director of the Malmø Opera and Theater Division, was fired immediately after a Danish newspaper published an email from the already-tainted choir director about a talented young singer: "She sang in the DR Girls' Choir and I know her fine. She has developed quite wildly as a singer – and apparently has nipples, but no breasts with which to back them up."³³ More Big Boys, mostly men, were axed between August 2020 and the present than can be discussed here.

In a turn from individual predators to toxic work cultures, revelations about sexism and sexual transgressions unnerved Danish institutions. Christiansborg, the Danish Parliament, had 322 women complain of sexual violations – from one completed rape (so much for gentler transgressions) to condescending behavior and verbal and physical abuse.³⁴ Hundreds of medical doctors signed a statement about sexism at Danish hospital wards and clinics,³⁵ and 1600 women complained of gender discrimination and encroachments in the media world, followed by the departure of two prominent anchors at the second-largest

³¹ Peter Bugge, "Medie: Derfor blev Jesper Nielsen fyret," *Avisen.dk*, June 17, 2022, https://www.avisen.dk/medie-derfor-blev-jesper-nielsen-fyret_695679.aspx.

³² Jonathan Lundgren Larsen and Mads Klitgaard, "Kvindelig 3F-leder sendes øjeblikkeligt på orlov på grund af #metoo-sag mod mandlig medarbejder," *Berlingske Tidende*, February 2, 2022, <https://www.berlingske.dk/virksomheder/kvindelig-3f-leder-sendes-oejeblikkeligt-paa-orlov-paa-grund-af-metoo#:~:text=Virksomheder-,Kvindelig%203F%2Dleder%20sendes%20%C3%B8jeblikkeligt%20p%C3%A5%20orlov%20p%C3%A5%20grund%20af,en%20konkret%20%23metoo%2Dsag.>

³³ Ritzau, "Bestyrelse vil mødes, efter Michael Bojesen skrev mail om sangers bryster," *TV2News*, April 14, 2022, [https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2022-04-14-bestyrelse-vil-modes-efter-michael-bojesen-skrev-mail-om-sangers-bryster.](https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2022-04-14-bestyrelse-vil-modes-efter-michael-bojesen-skrev-mail-om-sangers-bryster)

³⁴ 322 Co-signers, "Sexisme, seksuel chikane og magtmissbrug er overalt i vores samfund, også i de politiske partier," *Politiken*, September 25, 2022, [https://politiken.dk/debat/debatindlaeg/art7938422/%C2%BBsexisme-seksuel-chikane-og-magtmissbrug-er-overalt-i-vores-samfund-ogs%C3%A5-i-de-politiske-partier%C2%AB.](https://politiken.dk/debat/debatindlaeg/art7938422/%C2%BBsexisme-seksuel-chikane-og-magtmissbrug-er-overalt-i-vores-samfund-ogs%C3%A5-i-de-politiske-partier%C2%AB)

³⁵ Lisa Seidelin, "En strøm af sexismendberetninger starter opgør på hospitalerne," *Politiken*, October 2, 2020, [https://www.rm.dk/api/NewESDHBLOCK/DownloadFile?agendaPath=%5C%5CRMAPPS0221.onerm.dk%5CCMS01-EXT%5CESDH%20Data%5CRM_Internet%5Cdagsordener%5Cden_gode_arbejdsplad%202020%5C04-11-2020%5CAaben_dagsorden&appen DixId=286682.](https://www.rm.dk/api/NewESDHBLOCK/DownloadFile?agendaPath=%5C%5CRMAPPS0221.onerm.dk%5CCMS01-EXT%5CESDH%20Data%5CRM_Internet%5Cdagsordener%5Cden_gode_arbejdsplad%202020%5C04-11-2020%5CAaben_dagsorden&appen DixId=286682)

TV channel, TV2: Jens Gaardbo and Jes Dorph-Petersen.³⁶ 1689 university professors signed a manifesto revealing sexual threats and violations in academia, and employees in trade unions and the Copenhagen restaurant scene followed with stories of sexism – from constant masculinist jokes to more physical attacks. First in *Atlas* magazine and then on national TV, Lisa Lind Dunbar went public with abuse and toxicity in several Copenhagen Michelin restaurants, where this young woman had waitressed.³⁷ And the Danish Girls' Choir, where Michael Bojesen had taken his pleasures, kept coming up in the news.

Appropriating #MeToo

With the unpleasant revelations about powerful males transgressing sexual boundaries, a new male figure entered the political and cultural scenes. “The Modern Man” appeared as a Scandinavian revision of American #MeToo villains, a type walking the streets of urban Denmark, a café latte or a baby in hand. This man felt no fear of his feminine traits and often subscribed to fluid gender categories. The *Vogue* photos of singer and pop icon Harry Styles wearing dresses received a great deal of attention and approval among Danes sick of old boys and their vices.³⁸ But the photos also inspired appropriation of feminine or feminist ideologies among traditional men with power, for example in the “Respect High Heels” campaign. In this push for more female board members in Danish businesses, some of the most influential men in Denmark wore high heels to express their solidarity with gender equality in Danish board rooms. Running over twelve days up to International Women’s Day on March 8, 2022, the shoe company Roccamore sought to kick through the glass ceiling with a team of powerful men modeling four limited-edition women’s shoes. The posters appeared everywhere in public spaces and featured Bjarne Corydon, former Minister of Finance and now Chief Editor of *Børsen*, the Danish Wall Street Journal; Brian Mikkelsen, President of Danish Industry; Morten Strunge, philosopher and CEO of Podimo, a podcast platform, and Morten Albæk, financier-writer. On

³⁶ Mette Stender Pedersen, “To kvinder står frem om sager, der kostede Jes Dorph jobbet: – Det var væmmeligt og voldsomt,” *TV2News*, November 29, 2021, <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2021-11-29-to-kvinder-staar-frem-om-sager-der-kostede-jes-dorph-jobbet-det-var-vaemmeligt-og>; Andreas Wentoft, “Tv-vært Jens Gaardbo stopper på TV 2,” *Se og Hør*, December 11, 2020, <https://www.seoghoer.dk/kendte/tv-vaert-jens-gaardbo-stopper-paa-tv-2>.

³⁷ Lisa Lind Dunbar, “Bon Appétit,” *Atlas*, January 20, 2022, <https://atlasmag.dk/kultur/bon-app%C3%A9tit>.

³⁸ Hamish Bowles, “Playtime with Harry Styles,” *Vogue*, November 13, 2020, <https://www.vogue.com/article/harry-styles-cover-december-2020>.

a pink background, these men all wore stilettos, though with a distinctly male body language, legs spread wide and all. Supposedly, they promoted feminism and women in board rooms, reduced iconically to high heels, but reactions were divided, especially because the four men presided over boards with women in a distinct minority. One review headlined “Yak, femiwashing?” noted: “In Roccamore’s shoe campaign #RespectHighHeels Overdenmark’s macho men have taken out stilettos. Sympathetic but also a double standard act, as they all have completely or partly male-dominated boards. Are they to be forgiven for good intentions or punished for their lack of action?”³⁹ An Instagram commentator responded to Roccamore: “Only 20% of all board members in Danish companies are female – 1 woman for every 4 men. It’s 6%, if you remove family connections. This is a poor reflection of what the world outside the boardrooms looks like in 2022. It’s a waste of talent and potential. And an opportunity to do better! 🍊”⁴⁰ The powerful men donning heels might not be motivated by beliefs in women in boardrooms; instead, their facial expressions and body language suggest their humorous approach to feminism, presenting an amusing excuse to brand themselves differently in a non-committal gesture towards Danish women’s equality. The images remain advertising – for Roccamore, and for the men themselves, who present themselves as subscribing to a softer, more sensitive masculinity, Scandinavian style.

In fact, this high-heels campaign might help privileged white men consolidate their power. Revising earlier work by Robert W. Connell, Demetrakis Z. Demetriou argues in a *Theory & Society* article that elements of subordinate groups may be appropriated to create “a less overt way of patriarchal domination.”⁴¹ In a process he labels “dialectical pragmatism,” a hegemonic masculine *bloc* transforms itself into hybrid forms in a response to “new historical conjectures.”⁴² He sees hybridization as “a strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy.”⁴³ The masculinities at the top rung of social ladders incorporate diverse and seemingly opposite elements from marginalized groups – be it women, other ethnicities or LGBT+ communities – so as to create hybrid figurations of power

³⁹ Timme Bisgaard Munk and Anita Zhao, “Føj for en femiwashing?” *Kommunikationsforum*, March 9, 2022, <https://www.kommunikationsforum.dk/artikler/Talk-the-talk-then-walk-the-walk>.

⁴⁰ Roccamore_shoes, “RESPECT HIGH HEELS IN THE BOARDROOM,” Instagram, March 7, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/CayrGjnqPUw/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=68666dc8-9897-4d81-9292-426cc74895aa.

⁴¹ Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, “Connell’s Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique,” *Theory & Society* 30, no. 3 (June 2001): 352, doi: 10.1023/A:1017596718715.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 348.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 349.

aimed to enhance traditional structures of dominance. The elite men in Roccamore ads accordingly respond to a renewed twenty-first-century demand for gender equality by making it their own brand but otherwise changing nothing. The heels work as “camouflage” to produce “something new and *unrecognizable*” that does not come across as opposition or resistance to claims for equality.⁴⁴ This camouflage consolidates dominance by appropriating the look – and the power – of protesting groups.

The #MeToo disclosures and the attention to gender influenced as well the jury of the 2021 Press Photo of the Year Competition, who announced in March 2022 that Jacob Ehrbahn won the “Open Section” competition with his photo series “Et liv efter voldtægt” (A Life after Rape), in which ten women agreed to be photographed in the nude in the setting where their rape had occurred, as a way to narrate the crime. In the most reproduced photo, a woman is leaning on a wall in a dark, enclosed space resembling a prison cell or a basement storage room, her lack of freedom also apparent in her passive, resigning body, seen from the back to suggest a more general, universal gender violation involving anonymous, powerless women. The jury noted a painterly quality to his work, and also Ehrbahn’s passion for storytelling. The plight of women harassed, raped, and abandoned filled the pages of newspaper reviewers and photographic arts jurors.

In the same competition, Martin Bubandt won “Portrait of the Year” with “Ulf Pilgaard,” the name and face of the most famous comedian in Denmark. The eighty-one-year-old performer, photographed from the waist up, is wearing nothing but big pearl earrings and a matching pearl necklace across his hairy, suntanned chest. The Jury explained its choice: “It is a photo that draws you in, because he looks back at us, and he is enormously present, while simultaneously there is a hint of teasing, a small ‘smirk’ in his eyes.” Amidst discussions of fluid gender definitions, Ulf Pilgaard (and his photographer) rely on his obvious masculinity and strength to carry an ambiguous message. As a comedian, Pilgaard signals laughter and humor, perhaps even mockery of new, more feminized masculinities, while also appropriating the fashionable abandonment of binary gender categories. Or is he simply performing? The photographer had caught Pilgaard on camera at the close of his last circus show and received the verdict from the unanimous photography jury: “It is a great idea that a different identity is created with quite simple props, inspiring the viewer to start a discovery

⁴⁴ Ibid., 355.

process.”⁴⁵ #MeToo in Denmark had inspired this exploration, though its outcome remains unclear in the prize-winning photo. That Pilgaard, or his photographer, would embody a feminist message in this photo seems improbable, since he is also famous for impersonating (and gently mocking) the Danish Queen Margrethe in summer circus performances. He seems funny to popular audiences as he steps onto stages walking unsteadily on high heels and dressed in skirts and wigs. Rather than changing ideas about masculinity and restoring agency to women, he reinscribes masculinity not only with his hairy, naked chest, but also with his shows that stress the incompatibility of male bodies and female attire to make his audiences laugh. In fact, the pearls become almost insignificant on this hypermasculine body, or they gesture towards his Queen impersonations rather than towards any kind of gender fluidity. Instead, he confirms a socially significant hegemonic masculinity that shapes our distinction between “acceptable” and “unacceptable” gendered behavior and thus, as James W. Messerschmidt and others argue, legitimizes unequal gender relations.⁴⁶ With an Americanized inscription, his image mixes robust American and softer Scandinavian masculinities into a transatlantic cocktail, in which resistance to – or fascination with – monarchy adds extra flavor.

Big Boys Fight Back

Fourth-wave Americanization resulted as well in the strong reaction to political correctness that influential members of the Danish business community share with the US political right. Ulf Pilgaard’s hint of humor, or mocking, did not extend to other Danish powerful men, who united behind male #MeToo so-called “victims,” all defamed by their accusers and public opinion. In *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, Kate Manne calls this phenomenon “himpathy,” which she defines as “the excessive sympathy sometimes shown towards male perpetrators of sexual violence.” Manne finds this “overlooked mirror image of misogyny” so common that it constitutes the rule rather than the exception, but she notes that this reaction rarely enters discussions of sexual violence: “It is so overlooked that it is a ‘problem with no name,’ to use Betty Friedan’s famous phrase from *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).”⁴⁷ Thanks to himpathy, former

⁴⁵ Ida Sejersdal Dreisager, “Her er vinderen af Årest Pressefoto,” *Jyllandsposten*, March 4, 2022, <https://jyllands-posten.dk/kultur/ECE13797053/her-er-vinderen-af-aarets-pressefoto-2021/>.

⁴⁶ James W. Messerschmidt, “The Saliency of ‘Hegemonic Masculinity,’” *Men and Masculinities* 22, no. 1 (March 2019): 91, doi: 10.1177/1097184X18805555.

⁴⁷ Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 197.

Copenhagen major Frank Jensen now runs a consulting business advising management and is on the boards of many public and private businesses in green energy, SDG, and the energy supply sector overall.⁴⁸ In August 2021, after an eight-month sick leave, the now-divorced Morten Østergaard, Ex-Chair of the Radical Left party and former Minister of Taxation, began his new job as a climate consultant in cBrain, whose Administrative Director announced that he has no interest in or knowledge of Østergaard's previous sexual transgressions.⁴⁹ New employment in the green energy sector might constitute not only himpathy but also a "greenwashing" of past predatory behaviors, in the hope – and maybe the reality – that global warming threats override feminine and feminist grievances.

Only seven out of twenty-five politicians in the local Nyborg City Council have asked to see the whistleblower report about the notorious December 3 Christmas party, with the Chair of the influential Health and Prevention Committee, Jan Reimer Christensen, declaring: "I don't need to know more of anything relating to this. (...) Let us move on."⁵⁰ The City Council moved on by commissioning an investigation of the work culture at Nyborg City Hall. Issued on August 9, 2022, by Komponent, a counseling company owned by the National City Council Association, the report concluded that no culture of sexual harassment or transgression existed in Nyborg City Council.⁵¹ In a bad case of Manne's "denialism," Nyborg mayor Kenneth Muus expressed his gratitude for this valuable knowledge and declared himself relieved that he and his colleagues did not operate in a toxic work culture.⁵² In the US, this sort of himpathy, or forgiveness, does not extend to #MeToo figures such as Harvey Weinstein or singer R. Kelly, perhaps another indication of a revised fourth-wave Americanization in Denmark.

⁴⁸ Uffe Dahl, "Her er Frank Jensens nye job," *NewsBreak*, April 26, 2021, <https://newsbreak.dk/a-historier/her-er-frank-jensens-nye-job/384024/>.

⁴⁹ Kristian Magnus, "Morten Østergaards nye arbejdsgiver: – Jeg har ikke talt med ham om krænkelse," *TV2Østjylland*, June 18, 2021, <https://www.tv2ostjylland.dk/oestjylland/morten-oestergaards-nye-arbejdsgiver-jeg-har-ikke-talt-med-ham-om-kraenkelse>.

⁵⁰ Ole Frank Rasmussen and Frederikke Lysbjerg Sørensen, "Nyborg-politikere vil ikke læse whistleblowers nødråb: Under halvdelen har bedt om at se korrespondance," *TV2Fyn*, February 25, 2022, <https://www.tv2fyn.dk/nyborg/nyborg-politikere-vil-ikke-laese-whistleblowers-noedraab-under-halvdelen-har-bedt-om-at-se-korrespondance>.

⁵¹ See Komponent, *Kulturanalyse i Nyborg Kommune: Afrapportering* [Culture Analysis in Nyborg City Council: Report], August 9, 2022.

⁵² Manne, *Down Girl*, 198; Frank Weirsøe, "Undersøgelse konkluderer: Der er ingen krænkelseskultur i Nyborg," *TV2Fyn*, August 9, 2022, <https://www.tv2fyn.dk/nyborg/undersogelse-konkluderer-der-er-ingen-kraenkelseskultur-i-nyborg>.

Professor Emeritus at the National Center for Work Environment Tage Søndergaard Kristensen pointed out, however, that as a member of the National City Council Association, Nyborg City Council co-owned Komponent, whose conclusions accordingly seemed less than objective, and that an independent company would have been preferable.⁵³ Jesper Olsen, Chair of Transparency International Denmark, states that “cases about a rotten culture or problematic behavior are made into a legal issue [only] when a board or a CEO feels sufficiently pressured.” Associate Research Professor at the Danish School of Media and Journalism Roger Buch notes that legal investigations into regional council cases rarely have direct consequences. Psychologist and business culture expert Mille Mortensen finds that organizations handling cases of sexual harassment and bullying only through legal investigations often result in “cover my ass-strategies.”⁵⁴ An article with this suggestive title in *Akademikerbladet*, a union publication for academics, ends with a list of ten recent illustrious individual or institutional cases that have prompted investigations by legal teams.

The list does not include the Danish military, though stories of rape and harassment have surfaced here as well. In “Rape, Nude Photos and Hands on Thighs”, Susanne Baden Jensen lists violations inside the military from 2018 to the present and concludes that out of twenty-four individuals who had been fined for sexual transgressions, ten still retained their positions as of February 2022.⁵⁵ This situation evokes a body typology Arthur W. Frank identifies in “For a Sociology of the Body: An Analytical Review,” his contribution to Mike Featherstone’s *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*: the disciplined body. In Frank’s body typology, the disciplined body seeks control so as to eliminate the threat of its contingency through predictability, which it approaches by following a regimen such as a diet or a fitness program. As long as this regimentation remains successful, the body is predictable to itself. When internal control fails to check the physical contingency, however, the disciplined body may resort to domination in a need to control other bodies, rather than its own. It tends to place itself in hierarchical structures, such as the military, and it may perform among others, but it does not sustain relations with them. Frank calls it

⁵³ Weirsoe, “Undersøgelse konkluderer.”

⁵⁴ Pernille Siegumfeldt, “Cover My Ass-Strategies,” *Akademikerbladet* 22, no. 4 (2022): 25–26.

⁵⁵ The Danish title has been translated by the author. See Susanne Baden Jensen, “Voldtægt, nøgenfotos og hænder på lår: Se listen med Forsvarets sager om overgreb og krænkelse,” *Alt.*, July 28, 2022, <https://www.alt.dk/artikler/sager-om-kraenkelse-og-overgreb-i-forsvaret-fra-audioerkoerpssets-aarsberetning>.

“a virtuoso in the practice of the regimen.”⁵⁶ Should the disciplined body begin to break its isolation and relate to others, it may do so by force, since it needs to impose its own regimen on other bodies. Discipline here flips into domination. Curiously, Trine Bramsen, the Danish Minister of Defense, was demoted to Minister of Transportation just as the Russian war on Ukraine broke out, replaced by a politician with a well-trained male body, Morten Bødskov, who immediately felt at home with his European colleagues. He is now instrumental in expanding the harbor in Esbjerg, on the coast of western Jutland, so that it may receive and accommodate heavy military equipment and transportation vehicles directly from the United States. A war in Europe necessitates a robust, masculine response, it seems, and a male body belongs within the military-industrial complex in full gear. That some male bodies within the military have not respected the boundaries of other soldiers and resorted to sexual violence, as Baden Jensen documents, moves into the background or may simply be tolerated, or expected.

Those Modern Men

A venomous attack on masculine self-righteousness, Kristina Nya Glaffey’s *To the Modern Man: A Portrait*, appeared in book stores, supermarkets, libraries, and book cafés in April 2022, distributed by the most respected publisher in Denmark, Gyldendal, which had sensed its marketing potential. But if Glaffey’s tone suggests aggression, American(ized) style, her villain seems Scandinavian in looks and demeanor. Beginning with a description of this new man’s fashionable living quarters and lifestyle choices, Glaffey ends her slim volume with a sarcastic invocation for the new feminist males that deserves a lengthy quote:

May you *read in public* at the debate for more pregnancy leave for men.

May you imagine that you are making a difference.

May you consider your place in the public debate.

May you take pride in regularly using your column to praise female artists...

May you try to make the statements that many men consider shrill feminism relatable to them. (...)

May you insist on giving space to statements by the many men who claim that they too are to be pitied.

⁵⁶ Arthur W. Frank, “For a Sociology of the Body: An Analytical Review,” in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1991), 55.

May you go on about the complicated world in which men must now *navigate* these days.⁵⁷

Interviewed on the TV evening program *Deadline*, with an audience of Danish intellectuals, the ruffled male anchor asked a stone-faced Glaffey what a modern, well-intentioned man was supposed to do. “Shut up,” she responded, “and give space to voices other than your own.”⁵⁸

Helle Thorning-Schmidt, the first female Prime Minister of Denmark (2011–15) and the first female Leader of the Social Democratic Party (2005–15), likewise asked all men to listen instead. After her term as Prime Minister and subsequent Head of Save the Children International in London (2016–19), she published *Blondinens Betragtninger: Om Køn, Feminisme og #MeToo* [Blonde Reflections: On Gender, Feminism, and #MeToo]. Its cover was Barbie-pink and its easily misunderstood title was apparently inspired by the film *Legally Blonde* (2001), in which Reese Witherspoon battles gender stereotyping.⁵⁹ The Ex-Prime Minister rode a fourth wave of Americanization by referencing American pop culture, presumably to enhance book sales. In her first chapter, Thorning-Schmidt emphasizes that listening to other people’s experiences would be instructive: “Are you a man who believes that Denmark has long ago achieved gender equality, then try to ask a woman close to you if she agrees. Listen to what she has to say.” Men need to begin by asking open questions, she repeats, that do not require women to prove their lack of equality “every hour, every day, and every week.”⁶⁰

The former Prime Minister stresses the importance of work cultures. Looking back at her time in the Social Democratic Party, she saw in the back mirror a “very homogeneous, masculine culture.” She learned to be one of the boys, or she would run into trouble. As for sexual transgressions, it was understood that women should keep at a distance the men with loose hands or fond of sexual innuendos. Nobody, she writes, thought this culture might be different or abusive. People, herself included, dismissed it, shrugged, or chuckled. For this reason, she now supports the #MeToo movement wholeheartedly and credits it

⁵⁷ Kristina Nya Glaffey, *To the Modern Man* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2022), 94–95 (author’s translation).

⁵⁸ Deadline-DR, “Er den moderne mand en hykler?,” Facebook, April 2, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/DR2Deadline/videos/er-den-moderne-mand-en-hykler/655848732159683/>.

⁵⁹ Helle Thorning-Schmidt, *Blondinens Betragtninger: Om Køn, Feminisme og #MeToo* (Copenhagen: 28B, 2021), 11.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 19, 25 (author’s translation).

with changing mentalities and vocabularies in recent years. She gets tired, she continues, of men claiming to be victims of a different era. They could also, she suggests, stress that for twenty or thirty years they have benefited from a time when predatory behavior was tolerated and nobody held them responsible.⁶¹ She promotes new visions of femininity and masculinity, including fluid gender categorizations, the dismantling of patriarchy, and the existence of inner bias in everyone on the gender continuum.

Nonetheless, she herself did little to raise awareness of gender discrimination during her term as a Social Democratic Prime Minister, nor does her Barbie-pink book and its title necessarily promote her message. In a gesture towards Americanization, Thorning-Schmidt compares herself to Barack Obama, who stayed away from race issues for most of his presidency, and she feared during her time in power that her gender, rather than her qualifications, would take center stage.⁶² Reviewers noted that Thorning-Schmidt had all the politically correct views on gender and #MeToo, but offered no political solutions whatsoever.⁶³ For this reason, perhaps, Danish politicians have ignored her pink book, while TV talk shows have taken an interest in her daughter's gender confirmation surgery and Thorning-Schmidt's own feminine demeanor rather than in her explicit feminist and political views. A public library in an affluent part of Copenhagen had acquired eleven copies of her book, ten of which looked remarkably unread. As the first female prime minister, she offers interesting views into the workings of power, both in Denmark and in the EU, but her chatty, humorous tone makes it only too easy to dismiss her experiences as irrelevant or, yes, just a blonde's reflections.

#MeToo and Class

The most thorough revision of American #MeToo came out in trade union circles across Denmark, which generated discussions of class. #MeToo matters to young Danish people and a lack of response to its push for justice for victims of sexual violence might result in dwindling numbers of trade union members, mostly Social Democrats, and a weakening of the Danish Welfare State. La-wand Hiwa Namu, a twenty-something former speechwriter for the Danish

⁶¹ Ibid., 121.

⁶² Ibid., 8.

⁶³ Gry Inger Reiter, "Helle Thorning-Schmidt afslører, at hun har mistet troen på, at politik kan ændre verden," *Information*, October 5, 2021, <https://www.information.dk/indland/anmeldelse/2021/10/helle-thorning-schmidt-afslorer-mistet-troen-paa-politik-kan-aendre-verden>.

Trade Union Confederation of 1.3 million members, argued in *Deadline* on May 1, 2022, International Workers' Day, that trade union indifference to, or neglect of, #MeToo violations will cost 3F a whole generation of members. By passing up an opportunity to reach young people, 3F comes across as an old-school, old-boys network, out of touch with those who also belong in a job category that trade unions overlook: the temporary, precarious work that many young people prefer or can get. Danish trade unions, he argues, see only employers and employees but not the new precariat. On several counts, then, including #MeToo, trade unions will lose power and will no longer be able to defend the rights they originally won for wage-earning Danes: the thirty-seven-hour work week, pregnancy leave, five weeks of vacation, and free health care. Namø tweeted that seeing "MeToo as hostile to men is a misunderstanding. But the masculine role is changing and the responsibility for the outcome is ours."⁶⁴ As a Modern Man, he works for change and equality, but as a trade union reporter, he includes class as a neglected category in the debate. He reminds us that Danish welfare might vanish if we do not take #MeToo seriously. To address the concerns of a younger membership or to clean up its image, 3F forced its long-time President, Per Christensen, to resign for living a double life with two families, each unaware of the existence of the other. The case was initially addressed as a private matter outside the influence and interests of 3F, an attitude that changed after intense media scrutiny and an executive crisis meeting on January 25, 2022. Per Christensen left his positions but announced on Facebook that his secret bigamy had never impacted his professional life.

Class also determined the outcome of a recent #MeToo scandal in Denmark. In May 2022, a TV2 documentary titled "The Secrets of Herlufsholm" revealed cases of bullying and sexual violence at this elite boarding school, which dates back to 1565, when Herlufsholm was founded as a school for the aristocracy on beautiful grounds formerly occupied by a Benedictine monastery from the twelfth century. Fifty students testified about the abuses they had suffered, often from groups of older students who had been assigned as prefects, and often at night in their dormitories. The Crown Prince couple immediately issued a statement about the school their oldest son, Christian, attended and where his sister Isabella was also headed: "As parents of a child who goes to Herlufsholm, we are deeply shaken by the testimonies that appear in the current documentary about the school. It is heartbreaking to hear about systematic bullying and about

⁶⁴ Lawand Hiwa Namø, Twitter, February 2, 2021, <https://twitter.com/lawandnamo/status/1363385476615389186>.

the culture of abuse and violence that many have been a part of,” they wrote on Instagram.⁶⁵ A closed parliamentary session with Education Minister Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil followed; the school principal was asked to resign, and the prefect system abolished. After intense criticism from the National Agency for Education and Quality, the full board resigned the following month. But the royal couple hesitated, despite the Crown Princess Mary’s Foundation against bullying, partner abuse and loneliness that she founded in 2007 and still actively promotes. Their long hesitation and the time it took for them to decide about their own children’s school choice resulted in accusations of hypocrisy and royal elitism, with murmurs about abolishing the monarchy in their wake. Finally, in late June, they announced that Prince Christian would not continue at Herlufsholm and that his younger sister would not be enrolled there either.⁶⁶ The Danish public had managed to establish that no exceptions, royal status included, could be tolerated in #MeToo situations. Once again, class and #MeToo went hand in hand in Denmark, though this time at the top rungs of the social ladder. The fourth wave of Americanization threatened, not so surprisingly, royal power and privilege, if not with quite the revolutionary fervor of colonial soldiers fighting against the sovereignty of King George III.

Of Gender and Gaps

Ex-Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt mentions in the first chapter of her book that Denmark year by year sinks further down the list of countries in the World Economic Forum’s *Global Gender Gap Report*.⁶⁷ In 2022, Denmark reached number 32, below Albania, the Philippines, and Burundi.⁶⁸ The report is usually met with criticism of its methodology, as well as its failure to interpret correctly the education, employment numbers, life expectancy, and number of children that certainly place Denmark above Burundi or Rwanda, but still below

⁶⁵ Ritzau, “Dybt rystet kronprinspar forventer ændringer på Herlufsholm,” *Berlingske Tidende*, May 5, 2022, <https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/dybt-rystet-kronprinspar-forventer-aendring-er-paa-herlufsholm>.

⁶⁶ Louise Bolvig Hansen, “Kronprinsparret trækker prins Christian ud af Herlufsholm,” *TV2News*, June 26, 2022, <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2022-06-26-kronprinsparret-traekker-prins-christian-ud-af-herlufsholm>.

⁶⁷ Thorning-Schmidt, *Blondinens Betragtninger*, 8.

⁶⁸ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report*, July 13, 2022, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/>.

other Nordic countries, all in the top five.⁶⁹ The director of KVINFO, a research and information center devoted to gender issues, finds the report revealing. It shows, Henriette Laursen argues, an unequal gender distribution in politics and in board rooms, where only half of the biggest five hundred companies have any women at all. She notes in July 2022 that only 14 out of 98 mayors are women and concludes that Denmark is not in the vanguard but in the rearguard of Nordic gender equality.⁷⁰ Compared to Sweden, even the second #MeToo wave in Denmark seems cushy and forbearing.

Thorning-Schmidt explains this difference with the long-standing and polarized Swedish gender debates, with the fact that Sweden is hampered by more violence and crime, and as a rule-based society generates more conflict and intense responses.⁷¹ The Swedish #MeToo movement took on the Swedish Academy, which awards the Nobel Prize, with accusations over transgressive sexual acts, rape included, by a prominent member of the Nobel committee.⁷² The director of Stockholm City Theater was held responsible for a culture of silence that enabled predatory actors to harass and humiliate actors and staff at the theater. He committed suicide during a trip to Australia at the age of fifty-eight, his death causing some moral hangovers in the Swedish media industry.⁷³ Thorning-Schmidt ascribes intense responses to #MeToo accusations in Sweden to the country's rigid rules concerning everything from alcohol consumption to crime. The long tradition of feminism, including militant variants, might also help explain the stormy #MeToo weather in Sweden. Despite her somewhat flimsy post-Prime Minister credibility, reduced by blinding and botox, the former Head of State knows Scandinavia well and pinpoints accurately the differences between her own country and the big neighbor across Øresund. She could also

⁶⁹ Karen Sjørup, "Er Danmark virkelig dårligere til ligestilling end Burundi?" *Akademikerbladet*, November 25, 2016, <https://www.akademikerbladet.dk/debat/karen-sjoerup/er-danmark-virkelig-daarligere-til-ligestilling-end-burundi>.

⁷⁰ Kvinfor, "Kritisk blik på årets Global Gender Gap måling og Danmarks dårlige placering," *Webmagasinet Kønsinformation*, July 26, 2022, <https://kvinfor.dk/2022/07/26/kritisk-blik-paa-aarets-global-gender-gap-maaling-og-danmarks-daarlige-placering/?lang=en>.

⁷¹ Thorning-Schmidt, *Blondinens Betragtninger*, 106.

⁷² Silas Bay Nielsen, "Nobel-akademi i kaos efter #metoo-anklager: Nu venter alle på svar," *DR.DK Kultur*, April 17, 2018, <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/kultur/nobel-akademi-i-kaos-efter-metoo-anklager-nu-venter-alle-paa-svar>.

⁷³ Ulrik Støjer Kappel, "Bærer svenske medier noget af ansvaret for selvmord i kølvandet på #MeToo?," *Kristeligt Dagblad*, March 21, 2018, <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/kultur/baerer-svenske-medier-noget-af-ansvaret-selvord-i-koelvandet-paa-metoo#:~:text=Den%20tidligere%20teaterchefer%20navn%20blev,operasangerinde%20Anne%20Sofie%20von%20Otter>.

have pointed to the influence of American superpower, which has intensified Swedish intolerance towards alcohol, crime, and non-Western immigration.

In/Conclusions

The first Danish #MeToo movement quickly fizzled out in 2017, when #MeToo in the US had taken off with charges against Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, Woody Allen, and others. Perhaps most Danes felt that they belonged to the forefront of gender equality and smugly concluded that this battle had already been won. After all, the Danes had legalized visual pornography in 1969, a move that cemented Denmark as a free-spirited sexual environment. In 1984 men could by law take paternity leave, a right that was repeatedly consolidated and expanded through the 1990s. Images of men walking baby carriages or scrubbing the toilet increased the belief that men and women were equal on all counts. Women had entered the work force, with only a quarter of all women – especially immigrants – outside the labor market. Thorning-Schmidt pointed as well to Danish complacency and provincialism. Because of the communal spirit and the “hygge” culture, Danes get so self-satisfied that they – we – cannot give up our own beliefs about the state of the world, and these beliefs – open-mindedness and equality, for starters – rarely get challenged by outside influences or events.⁷⁴ But a fourth wave of Americanization did travel across protected Danish borders.

In August 2020, the #MeToo movement exploded with TV host Sofie Linde’s story of sexual threats from a prominent, if unnamed, media figure, and #MeToo activism began for real. Big Boys fell in its wake, and few institutions escaped accusations about sexual and verbal transgressions in the workspace – TV and media, hospitals, health care centers, universities, political organizations and the Danish parliament, the Copenhagen gourmet restaurant scene, the Danish Girls’ Choir, and lately the National Lutheran Church.⁷⁵ Efforts at appropriation have nonetheless met with some success, with superficial support for #MeToo combined with efforts to maintain the status quo. Such efforts empowered the formerly disgraced men, who in many cases have reentered the communities of their peers. Responses in academia, with Kenneth Reinicke at the forefront, zoomed in on masculine responses and dilemmas, but self-proclaimed feminists

⁷⁴ Thorning-Schmidt, *Blondinens Betragtninger*, 47.

⁷⁵ Niels Hein, “Ekspertter advarer om mørketal for overgreb i kirken,” *Kristeligt Dagblad*, June 16, 2022, <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/kirke-og-tro/ekspertter-advarer-om-moerketal-overgreb-i-kirken>.

such as Kristina Nya Glaffey and Ex-Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt entered the gender battle with unforgiving or more conciliatory analyses of both men and women in Danish #MeToo 2.0. They were joined by spokespersons in younger generations stressing class in #MeToo discussions and adding to the spicy mixture the future of the Welfare State, which trade union indifference to sexual harassment might jeopardize. Indeed, Crown Prince Frederik and his wife, Crown Princess Mary, found themselves immersed in #MeToo dilemmas when they hesitated to move their children from Herlufholm, the elite boarding school now stigmatized by reports of bullying and sexual violence. They found out that high class did not protect them from the Danish public's insistence that they take #MeToo revelations seriously. Finally, the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report* for 2022 brought home that gender equality in Denmark lagged behind other Nordic countries, where Sweden, for example, had fared better. Across Øresund, Denmark's Scandinavian neighbor had also been hit by #MeToo, but outcomes had often been more severe than in laid-back, complacent Denmark.

#MeToo 2.0 is not over. Thorning-Schmidt revealed in her take on the movement her worry that it has not come far enough, even in its latest version: "Have we learned enough? Have we changed enough? Have we enough depth and scope in the discussion to implement lasting changes in the relationship between men and women?"⁷⁶ These discussions still focus on individual transgressions, rather than on systemic enabling. In the most recent revelations, Simon Spies, travel agency king extraordinaire and founder of the Spies concern that sent millions of Danes to sun and fun from 1956 onwards, has been toppled from his status as iconic businessman and role model by a reevaluation of his habit of keeping a harem of fourteen-to-eighteen-year-old working-class girls both in his private quarters and in public appearances. He paid the girls for sex and allegedly, to beat them up or break an arm. One girl especially, Heidi, has entered the news stream, with photos of a smiling, apple-cheeked teen juxtaposed with a dying AIDS-infected heroin addict, Heidi at twenty-five.⁷⁷ A Simon Spies sign in a square named for him disappeared briefly in Helsingør (Elsinore), where he was born and raised, and was later returned with angry, derogatory inscriptions. This case has also prompted a call for new, less euphemistic terminology for abuse and violence overall, inspired by American inclinations towards calling

⁷⁶ Thorning-Schmidt, *Blondinens Betragtninger*, 7.

⁷⁷ "Spies og morgenbølle damerne," produced by Gitte Hasseltoft Hansen and Lau Rabjerg-Eriksen (DR1 2022), three episodes of 43 minutes, https://www.dr.dk/drtv/serie/spies-og-morgenbolle-damerne_323550.

a spade a spade. In *Deadline*, the late-night TV program, and in a just-published book, Niels Frank recounts his sister's murder by her ex-husband and calls for a new vocabulary, for example by changing the media's "family tragedy" to "wife murder," and by replacing references to Simon Spies' young sexual companions from "ladies" to what they actually were: very young or underage working-class girls.⁷⁸ Ultimately, however, #MeToo, in all its global manifestations, takes on power and the institutions legitimizing its abuses. Radical activism of the kind Ralph Young describes and promotes in *Dissent: The History of an American Idea* is obviously still necessary and the battle far from won.

#MeToo has rolled across Denmark in forms that the US movement inspired, but it has also helped along a fourth wave of Americanization. From 2016, Danes read daily news reports about Trump's outrageous behaviors, about the Muller report and the two impeachments of the 45th President, about his continued popularity among voters in his base, about school shootings, the spread of the corona virus, police violence against defenseless black men, and mass incarcerations. This social and political scene in the US caused Danes and other Scandinavians to distance themselves from the nation that had previously commanded respect during three waves of Americanization. But #MeToo changed this view, if slowly. By 2020, the US had taken first place in the fight for women's rights, and dissenters marching against predatory power structures became valued, admired role models. Accordingly, a fourth wave of Americanization was already spraying Danish shores when Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. This fourth wave is gaining momentum in Scandinavia, as the US moves military equipment in and announces still another huge donation to the Ukrainian resistance. With Ukrainian women and children fleeing to countries such as Denmark, gender will hardly be forgotten. #MeToo violations might, however, fade from public view in Scandinavia and elsewhere as streams of catastrophic developments flood into the twenty-first century.

⁷⁸ Niels Frank, *Fanden Tage Dig* [May the Devil Take You] (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2022). Interview by Niels Krause-Kjær, Deadline, DR4, August 29, 2022, https://www.dr.dk/drtv/se/deadline_-hvorfor-maa-folkekirken-diskriminere_333154.

RUSSIA VS. UKRAINE: A SUBALTERN EMPIRE AGAINST THE “POPULISM OF HOPE”

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Abstract

This article discusses the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine from a postcolonial perspective. It argues that the structure of coloniality in the region is tripartite: besides Russia and Ukraine, the “West” is present as the main significant Other for both sides. With regard to the West, Russia is a “subaltern empire” and Ukraine is a “double subaltern,” peripheral to more than one center of power. Within this complex of imperialism and subalternity, Russia is engaging in a “catching-up imperialism” driven by resentment against the West. Russia has subsumed neighboring states, or parts of them, in brutal violation of the existing international order. Its leaders claim it is only mimicking the hegemon’s (i.e. the West’s) imperialist modus operandi. This geostrategic pattern is captured by Erik Ringmar’s notion of “recognition games.” Fighting in those “deadly games,” Zelensky’s Ukraine is breaking out of its place as a mute subaltern. The rhetorical aspect of Ukraine’s response to Russian aggression can be called a horizontal “populism of hope.” Ukraine has attained global visibility and recognition in the Northern hemisphere as a beacon of grassroots democracy, resilience and freedom. Russia, however, has rebranded itself as the spearhead of a global fight against Western hegemony. The outcome of this military and discursive standoff will largely define a future normative international order displaying new hierarchies of symbolic power.

Keywords: postcolonialism; catching-up imperialism; populism of hope; recognition games; normative order; Ukraine; Russia

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Introduction: A Tripartite Structure of Coloniality, or Ukraine and Russia Under the Western Gaze

As soon as the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, international experts started looking for theoretical frameworks into which to fit it, predominantly focusing on the geopolitical and security issues. Putin's infamous speech defending his decision to invade put forth two justifications, one dwelling on the "fault of the West" for expanding NATO's borders eastwards after the end of the Cold War, and the other denying the existence of the Ukrainian nation itself. In his speech, Putin went at great length into alleged historical wrongdoings that resulted in the emergence of the Ukrainian state.¹ Putin's two justifications were the basis for the main objective of Russia's "special military operation": the "de-militarization" and "de-Nazification" of Ukraine.² Finding fault with NATO's expansion was a handy argument for Putin's sympathizers to rationalize his actions. However, Putin's argument about Ukraine's legitimacy was drenched in the rhetoric of conspiracy, which opened up the possibility that the Russian leadership was an irrational geopolitical actor. The very fact of the invasion questioned a rational explanation, given that a full-blown military assault on its face was not beneficial to Russia's state interests, whether geopolitical or geoeconomic.

This bit of context explains renewed interest among scholars in alternatives to realist approaches to analyzing Russia's foreign policy. As Erik Ringmar argues in a breakthrough article, "states not only pursue their 'national interest', but also – and before anything else – they seek to establish identities for themselves."³ He calls campaigning for an identity "recognition games," in which states that perceive themselves as lagging behind their counterparts in the world strive to improve their geopolitical standing using all available means, peaceful or military. In other words, the international struggle is not primarily about "who should get what" but instead about "*who should be who*."⁴

¹ "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," February 21, 2022, official website of the President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828>.

² "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," February 24, 2022, official website of the President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/67843>.

³ Erik Ringmar, "The Recognition Game. Soviet Russia against the West", *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 37, no. 2 (2002): 115–136, here 116.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

From that perspective, Russia has always been seeking to establish its identity as an equal power in its competition with the Euro-Atlantic “West.”⁵ Madina Tlostanova calls Russia “the Janus-faced empire” because it is itself “Orientalized” by the West. She says Russian policy toward its subalterns is influenced by a “caricature secondary Orientalism,” by which it attempts to compensate for an “inferiority complex vis-à-vis Europe.”⁶ The importance of Ukraine to Russia’s self-identity exceeds that of an internal colony that simply provides resources for imperial adventures.⁷ It also represents an “internal West” that must be subjugated, controlled, and incorporated to prove both the empire’s grandeur and its Europeanness. Without the westernmost lands of the former Russian empire, contemporary Russia is a largely Eurasian entity with vast natural treasures but less symbolic capital.

The main objective of this research is to develop a postcolonial vocabulary for analyzing the Russian war in Ukraine. This vocabulary must account for the specific tripartite structure of coloniality in the region, where Russia’s imperial expansion and the anti-colonial resistance to it unfold under the Western gaze. Arguably, Russia’s objective is obtaining recognition as a world power at eye level with global players. For that reason, the West is directly implicated in this war: since the primary goal of Russia’s military endeavor is gaining global recognition, any attempts to refrain from engagement with Russia, as promoted by various “peace” supporters, would arguably goad Russia to further escalation until the recognition it seeks is achieved or is utterly lost. Moreover, Russia cannot achieve the full recognition it desires from a subaltern position to the West. Any concessions the latter might make would likely entail a further raising of the stakes – that is, Russia would have to make even higher-level demands.

Various structural positions on the scale of colonial difference and alternative visions of the world order attached to them will be discussed in this paper. The Russian leadership apparently initiated the war in Ukraine in order to disrupt a symbolic order with which it was uncomfortable. The Ukrainian authorities seemed to be doomed to a reactive position, being forced to fight for their

⁵ The words “Russia” and “Ukraine” are used in the article as shorthand for their ruling elites and their strategies, whereas the “West” is used as a loose collective noun meaning an otherwise quite heterogeneous ensemble of states in the Global North. I chose the latter term due to its broad currency in Russian (and, to a lesser extent, Ukrainian) public discourse.

⁶ Madina Tlostanova, “The Janus-faced Empire Distorting Orientalist Discourses: Gender, Race, and Religion in the Russian/(post)Soviet Constructions of the ‘Orient,’” *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise* (Spring 2008): 1–11, here 2.

⁷ Cf. Serhii Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom: The Quest for Empire and the Making of the Russian Nation* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

country's very existence. Counter to that, Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelensky, has seized a proactive position from which he is actively seeking to define the global agenda for confronting Russia's aggression.

I shall proceed as follows. First, I will describe the theoretical premises of the present study by introducing the concepts of a "subaltern empire" and a "double subaltern" nation. In the case of Ukraine, Russia seems to be operating with a resentful, imitative imperialism that mimics the Western hegemon's military and normative expansionism. I will then focus on Putin's rhetoric, his anti-Western sentiment and his justifications for the war as presumably replicating the U.S. justifications for its military incursions, and the Western *modus operandi* overall. The paradox inherent in the position of Russia as a subaltern empire will be highlighted in that context. The next part of this paper focuses on Volodymyr Zelensky's public rhetoric after 24 February 2022. It argues that his public speeches exhibit a successful attempt to escape Ukraine's position as a "double subaltern," to fight Russia discursively, and to revamp the existing hierarchies of domination. The paper will put forward a vision of a future world based on the concepts here discussed. I will conclude by noticing a shift in Putin's recent rhetoric, which has started to emulate Zelensky's agenda. This may represent a tactical victory for Ukraine, but it harbors further challenges for a future normative order.

Theoretical Framework: Recognition Games in the Post-Soviet Terrain

A postcolonial approach to Russian–Ukrainian relations started emerging in academia right after the breakup of the Soviet Union. This appeared in literary studies⁸ but also in social and political thought.⁹ Vitaly Chernetsky remarks, "Of all the subjects of the former Russian empire, Ukraine has had one of the most complicated and difficult relationships with the metropoly. Its subaltern, marginalized position was also reflected in the similarly subaltern and marginalized position of Ukrainian studies vis-à-vis Russian studies in the West."¹⁰ Chernetsky

⁸ Marko Pavlyshyn, "Ukrainian Literature and the Erotics of Postcolonialism: Some Modest Propositions," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 17, no. 1–2 (June 1993): 110–126; Myroslav Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Vitaly Chernetsky, "Postcolonialism, Russia and Ukraine," *Ubandus Review* 7 (2003), Empire, Union, Center, Satellite: The Place of Post-Colonial Theory in Slavic/Central and Eastern European/(Post-)Soviet Studies: 32–62.

⁹ Mykola Riabchuk, *Dvi Ukrayiny: real'ni mezhi, virtual'ni vijny* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2003).

¹⁰ Chernetsky, "Postcolonialism," 37.

goes on to compare the “brutal and lengthy history of colonial suppression of the Ukrainian culture in the Russian empire” with England’s domination of Ireland, where the colonial model melded with the provincial model because of the assimilation and cooptation of the Irish elites (and the mass extinction of those who resisted to it). Mykola Riabchuk emphasizes the “othering” and social/cultural racism practiced by Russians, where the ethnic marker is conflated with the social one in order to ridicule the Ukrainians as a “peasant nation.” This attitude is captured in the pejorative label, *khokhol* [presumably, referring to the traditional hairstyle of Ukrainian Cossacks, with offensive stereotypes attached to it], applied by Russians to Ukrainians.¹¹ Riabchuk paraphrases the title of a book by French political philosopher Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* as “white skin, black language” as he argues that the structure of cultural oppression between Russia and Ukraine is similar to European coloniality, despite the absence of the racial angle.¹²

Russia’s all-out invasion of February 2022 was quickly dubbed “a colonial war” in the West. Timothy Snyder argues that “Putin took a pronounced colonial turn when returning to the Presidency a decade ago. In 2012, he described Russia as a ‘state-civilization,’ which by its nature absorbed smaller cultures such as Ukraine’s.”¹³ Indeed, the Russian war of aggression appears to be based on an urge to recapture Ukrainian land, which corresponds to the logic of imperial territorial expansion. The newly acquired (occupied) lands in Ukraine are immediately and forcibly assimilated: billboards with iconic figures like Pushkin and Suvorov were erected in the streets of Kherson under Russian occupation, and special summer classes with the Russian curriculum were set up for local children.¹⁴ Forced relocation of Ukrainians to Russia and legally questionable adoptions of Ukrainian children by Russian families are examples of the extraction of human resources to fill some demographic gaps in Russia.

Russia–Ukraine tensions spilled over in 2022 to threaten nothing less than the existing global order. Russian spin-doctors interpret the “special military

¹¹ Mykola Riabchuk, “Ukrainians as Russia’s Negative ‘Other’: History Comes Full Circle,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49 (2016): 75–85, doi: 10.1016/j.postcomstud.2015.12.003

¹² Riabchuk, *Dvi Ukrayiny*, 60–67.

¹³ Timothy Snyder, “The War in Ukraine Is a Colonial War,” *The New Yorker*, April 28, 2022, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/essay/the-war-in-ukraine-is-a-colonial-war>.

¹⁴ Alina Olikhovs’ka, “Okupanty v Khersoni rozkleyily propahandysts’ki bilbordy: absurdni foto,” *24 kanal*, May 30, 2022, https://24tv.ua/okupanti-hersoni-rozkleyili-propagandistski-bilbordi-absurdni_n1991218. “Himn Rosiyyi ta uroky rosijs’koyu: okupanty ‘vidkryly’ shkolu v osadzhennomu Mariupoli,” *Vil’ne Radio*, April 19, 2022, <https://freeradio.com.ua/himn-rosii-ta-uroky-rosiiskoju-okupanty-vidkryly-shkolu-v-osadzhennomu-mariupoli/>.

operation” as a war against the “collective West,” conducted on the territory of Ukraine. For those reasons, the colonial lens through which we view Russian actions must be refined to account for these important changes. The notion that Russia is a “subaltern empire,” most extensively elaborated by Viatcheslav Morozov, has heuristic potential in that context.¹⁵ The structure of domination in Eastern Europe is tripartite: the imagined “West” is the main significant Other that wields the symbolic power of recognition, based on its cumulative political, economic, and cultural clout. Late twentieth century revisionist interpretations of Europe’s complicated colonial legacy vis-à-vis the global South did not concern themselves with the states on Europe’s eastern periphery, which were largely perceived as second-rate Europeans.¹⁶ Ironically, the recent rise of populism in Central and Eastern Europe was in part fueled by that perception, but also it further reinforced it. The imperial/colonial difference in Europe¹⁷ seems to suggest only the *catching-up logic* of development for its eastern part, in which the frustrations generated by catching-up democratization and modernization can lead to a kind of catching-up imperialism. Russia is pioneering the latter and seeking like-minded allies within the EU.

Applying political psychology to international relations explains why the hunger for recognition is insatiable. Subalternity is rooted in self-colonization, or an inferiority complex, and purely external actions taken by others cannot eliminate it. Erik Ringmar observes that the Soviet Union repeatedly raised the stakes: every act of recognition on the part of the collective West simply resulted in a higher-level demand – from recognition as a “legitimate state” to a “great power,” and then to a “superpower.”¹⁸ One might take heed that although Russia’s dissatisfaction with the existing hierarchies may be the root cause of present tensions, historically, concessions to aggressive revisionists never bear fruit.

Within this complex of imperialism arising from subalternity, Russia engages in “catching-up imperialism.” It subsumes all or part of neighboring states in brutal violation of the existing international order. In that way, it allegedly mimics

¹⁵ Viatcheslav Morozov, *Russia’s Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in the Eurocentric World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

¹⁶ Cf. Attila Meleg, *On the East – West Slope. Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2006).

¹⁷ Manuela Boatcă and Anca Parvulescu, “Creolizing Transylvania: Notes on Coloniality and Inter-Imperiality,” *History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History* 10, no. 1 (April 2020): 9–27, doi: 10.1215/21599785-8221398.

¹⁸ Ringmar, “The Recognition Game.”

the hegemon's modus operandi.¹⁹ Russian history provides multiple examples of keeping up with the great powers by mimicking their behavior within the hegemonic logic set by them. In the history of Russia, that logic has included the logic of antiquization in medieval times (seeing Russia as an ancient empire rooted in the Kyivan Rus), the logic of industrialization and technological progress in the twentieth century (the armaments race and the space race), and the logic of "responsibility to protect" in the post-Cold War period (taking military control of areas with Russian-speakers while sidestepping international institutions).²⁰ Russia's quest for hegemony has always been accompanied by attempts to prove that it is "a better Europe," superior to the "rotten" states of the West that have allegedly betrayed European ideals.²¹ Russian *messianism* assuages the humiliation of lagging behind the West and displaces the hegemon in its alleged "hegemonic decline."

In the wake of the current war, Russian officials have made repeated references to the U.S. invasion of Iraq and its bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 as justifications for Russian aggression. These comparisons are not just whataboutism. They are the standard of true hegemony that Russia aims to live up to. The inherent paradox of this strategy of legitimization is aptly described by Tlostanova: "It is symptomatic for the subaltern empire, which even claiming the global spiritual and transcendental superiority is still looking for the approval and love of the West."²² On the one hand, Putin attempts to rise above international

¹⁹ Danijela Čanji and Aliaksei Kazharski, "When the 'Subaltern Empire' Speaks: On Recognition, Eurasian Integration, and the Russo-Georgian War," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* (February 2022), doi: 10.1080/15387216.2022.2040375.

²⁰ Quite symptomatically, Ukraine was in the crosshairs of all of those attempts: 1) not only did the intellectual elites from Kyiv help in rebranding Muscovy into the Russian empire in the eighteenth century, but they also promoted the legacy of Kyivan Rus' and Christianity to prove the ancient roots of the empire (Serhii Plokhyy, *Lost Kingdom: The Quest for Empire and the Making of the Russian Nation* [New York: Basic Books, 2017]; 2) the exploitation of the agricultural potential of the fertile Ukrainian lands through forced collectivization and confiscation of grain crops provided the material foundations for Stalin's project of industrialization, even if it resulted in the mass famine in Ukraine known as the Holodomor (Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* [New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2016]); 3) the Russian leadership compares its current military intervention in Ukraine with interventions of the United States in the Middle East and North Africa (Čanji and Kazharski, "When the 'Subaltern Empire' Speaks").

²¹ "During the nineteenth century, the Russian state represented itself as 'true Europe' in a situation where the rest of Europe had failed the best in its own tradition by turning away from the past values of the anciens regimes. During the twentieth century, the Russian state represented itself as 'true Europe' in a situation where the rest of Europe had failed the best in its own tradition by not turning to the future values of socialism" (Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations* [Abingdon: Routledge, 2nd edition, 2016], 184).

²² Tlostanova, "The Janus-Faced Empire," 2.

law, by which he wants to manifest Russia's sovereignty. On the other, he seeks recognition from the West. By that token, he inadvertently reinforces his subordinate position and his dependence on the Other.

The "recognition games" approach for analyzing international conflicts prioritizes symbolic capital over other kinds of capital. By putting greater value on recognition than on material gains and losses, the Kremlin elite is less vulnerable to economic sanctions than the EU elites. This enables it to weaponize the market logic of economic interdependence against the West, which results in what Mark Leonard calls "the fall of Davos man."²³ The war with Ukraine is a game-changer because it moves the global community from the win-win game of mutual trading to the zero-sum game of achieving recognition. Those who still prefer material profit over strategic objectives lose the game.

Ukraine, for its part, is attempting to escape the position of a double subaltern imposed on it from both sides. The initial stages of Russian aggression in 2014 were met with anti-colonial rhetoric in Kyiv. In tune with that rhetoric, then-President Poroshenko attempted to invert the hierarchies of domination, portraying Ukraine as the shield of the civilized world, protecting the West from attacks by Russia, a chaotic, uncivilized Asian power. Poroshenko's anti-colonial political agenda of "the army, the language, and the faith" was ardently supported only by roughly a quarter of Ukrainian society – generally the most active part. The majority of Ukrainians preferred a more conciliatory approach to Russia, associated with Zelensky's presidential candidacy in 2019. The latter's landslide victory can be interpreted as a mandate to break the obsessive fixation on Russia as the oppressor, which, in a way, picks up on the spirit of the Maidan of 2013–2014. Ilya Gerasimov persuasively argues that the Maidan demonstrations were not anti-colonial but post-colonial, because they were aimed at "reinvention of [a] positive, 'post-transition' sense of belonging" and a "quest for a new collective self not in the invented past or someone else's present, but in the unknown future."²⁴ This new Ukrainian self-perception was not based on any pre-existing identity but on a new, performatively established one – hybrid, horizontal, and inclusive: the community that emerged out of the Maidan was built on horizontal networks, and it incorporated Ukrainians

²³ Mark Leonard, "The Decline and Fall of Davos Man," *Project Syndicate*, May 30, 2022, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/fall-of-davos-man-geopolitics-replacing-globalization-by-mark-leonard-2022-05>.

²⁴ Ilya Gerasimov, "Ukraine 2014: The First Postcolonial Revolution," *Ab Imperio* no. 3 (2014): 22–44, 23.

of various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, united around shared values and visions for the polity's future.

When Poroshenko's rhetoric degenerated into a binary anti-colonialism, Zelensky picked up on the demand of the Maidan and re-framed it in a populist way. He refrained from revisionary condemnation of the past in favor of future-oriented rhetoric. He conspicuously avoided defaming the Kremlin authorities.²⁵ To this day, the defining features of Zelensky's rhetoric is positive emotional mobilization, horizontality, and inclusivity. After Russia began its full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian president expanded his audience beyond the state borders while retaining his main themes: hope, solidarity, humanism. Most importantly, he is now engaging with world leaders on par, ignoring geopolitical hierarchies and building the chain of equivalence of "Ukraine, Europe, the world."²⁶ Thus, instead of pleading for recognition, he speaks from a position that assumes Ukraine deserves attention. He horizontally connects developments in Ukraine to a larger scheme that will define the world's future.

To conclude, given the revisionist goals Russia has for this war, broader questions arise about the future of the European project and the foundations of the global order. Will we return to a world of great powers, where small nation-states are forced to bandwagon with the powerful ones and electorates simply affirm pre-determined policies when they cast a ballot? Is military intervention in a sovereign neighbor-state an acceptable tool for elevating one's geopolitical status? Is it feasible to reinforce democratic values as the benchmark in international relations? Can Europe preserve its unity against the attempts of various actors to exacerbate its internal cleavages? Those questions go far beyond the scope of this article but they should be kept in mind as we zoom in on the public rhetoric coming from the Kremlin and Bankova street in Kyiv. The leaders of the two warring countries are not addressing each other so much as the international audience, and they both would like to be validated by it. The public sphere is the battlefield on which a future normative order with new hierarchies of symbolic power will be negotiated. The more Zelensky gains the sympathies of the West, the more actively Putin engages the global South with widely-shared anti-U.S.

²⁵ Valeria Korablyova, "Why Zelenskyi Is Downplaying the Threat of Escalation in Ukraine," *ZOiS Spotlight*, #5, <https://www.zois-berlin.de/en/publications/zois-spotlight/why-zelenskyi-is-downplaying-the-threat-of-escalation-in-ukraine>.

²⁶ Volodymyr Zelensky, "Russian Evil Will Lose When Our Peace Formula Prevails — Speech by the President of Ukraine at the Meeting of the Leaders of the European Political Community, October 6, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/rosijske-zlo-prograye-koli-nasha-formula-miru-peremozhe-vist-78329>.

sentiments. The outcome of this discursive fight is far from settled. It will not only be determined by Ukraine's military success or failure, but also by developments elsewhere, most importantly, by a looming confrontation between the United States and China.

Russia: An Imitative Imperialism of Resentment

The speech by Vladimir Putin aired on February 24, 2022 fits neatly into the logic of Russia as a subaltern empire. At first glance, it is striking that the speech was delivered on the first day of the invasion, as multiple rockets were striking Ukrainian targets across the country, but Putin barely mentioned Ukraine at all: its name pops up only in the sixteenth minute of the 28-minute speech, with a reference to the Donbas. The speech focused instead on the U.S.-led collective West, calling it an “empire of lies” and identifying its neglect of Russia as the *casus belli*.²⁷ The structure of the speech is indicative. Putin starts from a place of resentment and a sense of humiliation. His word choices (“hypocrisy,” “arrogance,” “cynical deception”) reflect political psychology and postcolonial studies rather than international relations realism:

I will begin with (...) the fundamental threats that irresponsible Western politicians created consistently, rudely and unceremoniously from year to year. (...) Where did this insolent manner of talking down from the height of their exceptionalism, infallibility and all-permissiveness come from? What is the explanation for this contemptuous and disdainful attitude to our interests and absolutely legitimate demands?²⁸

Putin blamed the United States and its “satellites” for succumbing to “a state of euphoria created by the feeling of absolute superiority, a kind of modern absolutism, coupled with the low cultural standards and arrogance of those who formulated and pushed through decisions that suited only themselves.” He also implies that the West’s disdain of Russia is based on a “monopoly on civilization” it allegedly claims: “the so-called civilized world, which our Western colleagues proclaimed themselves the only representatives of.”²⁹

Putin proceeded to list U.S. interventions that bypassed international institutions and resolutions. The bombing of Belgrade in 1999 seems to Putin to be

²⁷ “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” February 24, 2022.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” February 21, 2022.

the turning point, the most traumatic international event since the collapse of the Soviet Union. He made several points: the “bloody operation” was waged “without the UN Security Council’s sanction (...) in the heart of Europe”; the bombing of “peaceful cities and vital infrastructure went on for several weeks”; Putin’s “Western colleagues [still] (...) prefer to avoid speaking about international law, instead emphasizing the circumstances which they interpret as they think necessary.”³⁰ These complaints set the template for Russia to follow when listing its excuses for the invasion. Putin reinforces his thesis with reference to the invasion of Iraq on the pretext of chemical weapons being developed in Iraqi laboratories. However plausible those accusations may be, I suggest focusing on the fact that they were used to justify an attack on Ukraine, one that Putin framed not as a war but as a “special military operation,” that is being conducted under false pretenses in the heart of Europe. When it comes to Ukraine, the Kremlin leadership mimics the hegemon almost *ad litteram* – massively shelling cities and their populations (as NATO did in Belgrade in 1999), advancing allegations of bioweapons development in Ukraine under U.S. guidance, and, most importantly, taking action without any regard for international institutions, international law, and multilateral agreements.

Danijela Čanji and Aliaksei Kazharski rightly point out that Russia’s putative “humanitarian interventions” in Georgia and elsewhere under the pretext of protecting ethnic Russian population demonstrate no concern of international legal norms, because the Russian authorities perceive that as “the great power privilege.”³¹ Morozov says this is consistent with the logic of a “subaltern empire,” where Russia is “almost completely dependent on the West in both economic and normative terms, and (...) is increasingly trying to justify its foreign policy conduct by accusing the West [of] neocolonialism.”³² At the infamous meeting of the Russian Security Council televised on February 21, 2022, the commander-in-chief of the National Guard troops of the Russian Federation, Viktor Zolotov, went so far as to claim that “we do not border on Ukraine, we have no border with Ukraine. This is the Americans’ border, because they are the masters in that country, while the Ukrainians are their vassals.”³³ Putin agrees that Ukraine “has turned not even into a political or economic protectorate but has been reduced

³⁰ “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” February 24, 2022.

³¹ Čanji and Kazharski, “When the ‘Subaltern Empire’ Speaks”, 17.

³² Viatcheslav Morozov, “Subaltern Empire?” *Problems of Post-Communism* 60, no. 6 (2013): 16–28, here 16, doi: 10.2753/PPC1075-8216600602.

³³ “Security Council Meeting,” February 21, 2022, official website of the President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67825>.

to a colony with a puppet regime.”³⁴ Ukraine, he accuses, has been “taken hostage” against Russia and the Russian people.³⁵

The next chapter of Putin’s February 24 speech makes the Kremlin’s goals even more clear. It provides a list of events where the Russian authorities could rightfully secure their power and support their loyal allies by taking military measures in Chechnya, Syria, and, most recently, in Kazakhstan. Defending that understanding of sovereignty is the ultimate goal of the war in Ukraine – the right to use violent means against dissenting entities within Russia or its neighbors, without constraint by foreign partners. The necessity to preserve Russia’s “sphere of influence” is hard-wired into the undisturbed authoritarian governance of the country.

The following part of Putin’s address brags about the resources that prop up his ambitions: “Today’s Russia remains one of the most powerful nuclear states. Moreover, it has a certain advantage in several cutting-edge weapons.” This is followed by threats against anyone who might consider intervening: “No matter who tries to stand in our way (...), they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history.”³⁶

Putin’s entire discourse constructs the position of Russia as an unhappy Western subaltern – largely self-colonized – that aspires to a hegemony of its own (and that has enough resources to obtain it). However, his desire for recognition from the hegemon only fixates Russia’s subalternity. The crucial question is whether any coherent foreign policy can be constructed from the position of a subaltern empire, or is Russia doomed to wedding two irreconcilable agendas – forging an alternative world order (the “empire” part) and seeking recognition from the international community (the “subaltern” part). Putin concluded his speech with two points that illustrate this inherent contradiction. On the one hand, he affirms one of his favorite notions, that Russia is simply defending its sovereignty by unleashing warfare on Ukraine (“It is our strength and our readiness to fight that are the bedrock of independence and sovereignty”). At the same time, he wraps this decision in self-pitying rhetoric about being forced into action by circumstances (“We had no other choice (...). They did not leave us any other option.”³⁷)

³⁴ “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” February 21, 2022.

³⁵ “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” February 24, 2022.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

Imagining themselves to be game-changers in the international arena, top Russian officials are fighting de facto for a better position in the existing hierarchies that have already been defined by others. Ex-president Medvedev demonstrates this when he says: “Let us face it, Russia means a lot more than Ukraine for the international community and our friends in the United States and the European Union, and everyone understands this, including the Ukrainians.”³⁸

Another important trope in Kremlin officials’ speeches is the lack of agency of minor actors, i.e., small nation-states and the citizenry outside of high office. They treat the “disobedience” of neighboring states towards Russia as that of mere puppet regimes installed by the USA, while anti-war or anti-authoritarian protests in the post-Soviet domain are framed as Western-instigated attempts at a coup d’état. Time and time again, signs of grassroots activism in Russia and elsewhere are decried as “terrorist underground movements” that receive direct Western support:

The Kiev authorities (...) opted for aggressive action [in Crimea], for activating extremist cells, including radical Islamist organizations, for sending subversives to stage terrorist attacks at critical infrastructure facilities, and for kidnapping Russian citizens. We have factual proof that such aggressive actions are being taken with support from Western security services.³⁹

This psychological projection of its own actions, wrapped in conspiracy, supports a worldview where the sovereignty of states prevails over the agency of ordinary people and small states. It expresses a belief in the immunity of leaders who are entitled to rule over people without responding to their demands. The recipe for those countries who lack the resources or the stamina to ignore the world order and manifest their sovereignty through violent oppression of others was stated by Putin in quite a vulgar way: “Like it or don’t like it – it’s your duty [to surrender – V.K.], my beauty!”⁴⁰

Putin’s rhetoric met with a lukewarm reception in the West (at best). However, his criticism of the West was far better received in the global South because it tapped into a well of anti-U.S. sentiment around the globe. The support he received produced a salient shift in Putin’s public pronouncements: he started

³⁸ “Security Council Meeting.”

³⁹ “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” February 21, 2022.

⁴⁰ “Putin and Zelensky Trade Insults at Press Conferences,” *CNN*, February 8, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2022/02/08/putin-insults-zelensky-crude-language-russia-ukraine-lead-marquardt-vpx.cnn>

actively using critical theory vocabulary like “hegemony,” “racism,” “the ruling class,” and even flirting with the ecological agenda. The title of his speech to the 2022 Valdai forum was “A Post-Hegemonic World: Justice and Security for Everyone.” It is an example of Putin’s conspicuous transition from a conservative to a progressive vocabulary. His listing of U.S. humanitarian interventions motivated by a “responsibility to protect” changed into a list of Western colonial exploits motivated by capitalist greed. Putin was silent about Russia’s similar endeavors. He mentions Western atrocities against Native American tribes, African colonies, and China, where “entire nations [were] hooked on drugs and purposefully exterminated (...) for the sake of grabbing land and resources, hunting people like animals.”⁴¹ The shift in rhetoric from eschatological, militant messianism to what might be called “pragmatic sovereigntism” has been accompanied by pious assertions that Russia is “minding its own business” and seeking a multi-polar world of dialogue and pragmatic collaboration.

Taking a closer look, however, one will find the same old resentment, conspiratorial mindset, and Russian messianism, along with the heroization of “activists” of the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk People’s Republics.⁴² It is telling that the Valdai speech, trimmed as it was with leftist logic, was published on the Russian Presidency’s official website in English, while Putin’s subsequent three-hour question and answer session, delivered in a more improvised and typical Putin manner, was not. It was in the Q&A that the Russian president reiterated his anti-Western conspiracy theories and his manipulative tropes about a Donbas genocide, Maidan as a coup, and a nuclear threat allegedly emanating from Ukraine. He aimed some offensive barbs at Western politicians as well. For example, he commented on a visit to Taiwan by U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi: “Why did that granny drag herself over there?”⁴³

Another shift, which is less obvious but still indicative of the context, is that Putin has begun emulating Zelensky by evoking more positive tropes of “unity,” “the future,” and “constructive and positive solutions.”⁴⁴ This change stands in drastic contrast to previous outbursts like “Who needs a world where there is no Russia?” One after another, a parade of representatives of Asian states who

⁴¹ “Signing of Treaties on Accession of Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics and Zaporozhye and Kherson Regions to Russia,” September 30, 2022, official website of the President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69465>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Priamaia transliatsiia vystupleniia Putina na “Valdae,” *Real’noe vremia Live*, October 27, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyvi0VaUeNs&t=16592s>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

attended the Valdai Forum Q&A session declared their admiration for Russia and reported on their compatriots' great love for Putin. Their adulation might have been intended to compensate for the fresh humiliation of Zelensky's successes on the global stage. Ironically, while it provided much needed support for the Russian President from the Global South, it also reconstructed his positionality as now subaltern to Ukraine. Perhaps unconsciously, Putin recognized a kind of Ukrainian hegemony by following in the footsteps of its leader. He even labeled Ukraine's actions in the Donbas as "special operations," Putin's moniker for military actions designed to assert a nation's sovereignty.

Ukraine: The Horizontal Populism of Hope

Since the beginning of the Russian aggression, the Ukrainian leadership has faced a challenging task in the international arena, that of disentangling itself from the country's image as a perpetual Russian subaltern. In so doing, they need to prove that there are universal implications to a seemingly local conflict and engage more than just the West's humanitarian sympathy. To that end, Ukraine needed to shed its status as a *double subaltern* located in one of the world community's blind spots. Russia has long attempted to erase Ukrainian idiosyncrasies,⁴⁵ and as a result Europe has not had much knowledge about it or even interest in it. As one art critic has noted, "Amidst all the notable capitals of central-eastern European countries (and not just capitals), a glaringly blank space appears in the place of Ukraine."⁴⁶ That observation applies beyond the art world as well. Until recently, the global hierarchies of knowledge production affirmed Russia's privilege to define and articulate the identities of the regions it claimed as its own. Professor Myroslav Shkandrij invokes a lesson from history: "Realpolitik, it was said, dictated that only one powerful voice should speak for the Slavs and demanded the removal of Russia's historical competitor for this role."⁴⁷

Russia, in its long-standing role as mediator of both academic and everyday knowledge production about the former Soviet Union, presented most of the post-Soviet states as upstart statelets with limited agency – "unexpected"⁴⁸ and not full-fledged countries. As a result, Ukraine, along with other former

⁴⁵ Vladimir Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," July 12, 2021, official website of the President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>.

⁴⁶ Kateryna Botanova, "A Blanket of Snow," *Various Artists*, June 2, 2022, <https://various-artists.com/a-blanket-of-snow/>.

⁴⁷ Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine*, 3.

⁴⁸ Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

subalterns of the Russian empire, was denied its history, its specificity, and – ultimately – a distinct place on mental maps of the world.⁴⁹ In a peculiar mirroring, Ukraine was treated in the West as being an “under-Russia,” i.e., a Russian periphery. Inside Russia itself, rhetoric that speaks of Ukraine as being the “anti-Russia” has been gaining momentum.⁵⁰ Only a few people were genuinely interested what Ukraine is on its own.

The catchy phrase, allegedly said by Volodymyr Zelensky on the very first days of the full-scale invasion, that “I need ammunition not a ride” brought about a landslide change in the public perception of Ukraine. It epitomized an unexpectedly steadfast (and irrational, in the eyes of many) resistance by Ukrainians to Russian aggression. It also performatively established Ukraine’s agency before the Western audience. Reports of a mass murder of civilians committed by Russian troops at Bucha shook the West’s willingness to tolerate Russian actions and opened space for new interpretations of both of the antagonists in the war. Zelensky used this window of opportunity to speak up on all possible platforms, from the Davos forum to the Cannes International Film Festival, from the European Council to the Grammy Awards, and in the parliaments of various countries from India to Estonia. He aimed to build bridges with the local contexts he found there and expose the universal meaning and broader implications of the ongoing war.

Several smart moves by Zelensky contributed to the success of his speeches. He avoided falling into the victim trap. Despite the scope and content of atrocities that traumatized not only those involved but distant observers as well, the Ukrainian President is not indulging in self-pity or excessive self-heroization. He avoids the language of revenge and retaliation, and for the most part refrains from mentioning the Kremlin directly. Set against the multiple challenges his country faces, Zelensky’s narratives are geared towards *positive emotional mobilization*, dwelling on hope for a brighter future. He calls for “a complete restoration of normal peaceful life” rather than retaliation and punishment. He chooses to talk about freedom and care: “Take care of yourself, your family, loved ones, friends. Take care of the world.”⁵¹ He even frames the current situation

⁴⁹ Olesya Khromeychuk, “Where is Ukraine?”, RSA, June 13, 2022, <https://www.thersa.org/comment/2022/06/where-is-ukraine>.

⁵⁰ “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” February 24, 2022.

⁵¹ “Ukrainians and Americans Have Become Much Closer: We Equally Understand the Word ‘Freedom’ – Address by the President of Ukraine to the Stanford University Community,” May 27, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayinci-j-amerikanci-stali-znachno-blizhchimi-mi-odnakovo-75421>.

as “the largest opportunity for [an] economic leap in Europe since World War II.”⁵² While sharing the horror at war crimes committed by the Russian soldiers on Ukrainian soil, Zelensky repeatedly focuses on the positive: “Ukraine has set another precedent in these three months. A precedent for the unprecedented unity of the democratic world around the emotion of genuine admiration for Ukrainian courage and around the understanding that freedom must be fought for.”⁵³ A telling, small detail is his claim that although some EU member states are skeptical of Ukraine’s push for EU membership, they are only “future optimists.”⁵⁴

Zelensky notes that current Russian policies have a salient colonial flavor, and he ridicules Putin’s neo-imperial aspirations as outdated:

The Russian leadership believes that Ukraine should be a colony of Russia. And the Ukrainians? If the nation does not want to submit, it is decided to destroy it. The occupiers are also deporting our people to Russia and settling them in various remote regions. The number of such deported Ukrainians is hundreds of thousands. And this is also one of the ways to conquer the people. In fact, it is shocking how frankly Russia is trying to bring back to world life the order of the old days, when colonizers and empires imposed their policies or their domination on other nations.⁵⁵

The above quotation demonstrates how Zelensky’s public rhetoric has gravitated towards a postcolonial approach. The Ukrainian president frames the warfare in universal terms. He is performatively establishing Ukraine’s right to participate in negotiations of a future European order. He deftly plays on the sensitivities of local audiences (different in every country) and exposes the broader implications of the crisis. Most recently, he has warned about the threat of famine in Africa and Asia caused by Russia’s blockade of Ukrainian sea ports,

⁵² “We Should Not Be Afraid to Set New Precedents – Speech by the President of Ukraine at the World Economic Forum in Davos,” May 23, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/mayemo-ne-boyatisya-stvoryuvati-novi-precedenti-vistup-prezi-75293>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ “Speech by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy During the Joint Participation with President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda in the Plenary Session of the Verkhovna Rada,” May 22, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-pid-chas-sp-75261>.

⁵⁵ “Russia’s War Against Ukraine Affects Global Situation – Address by the President of Ukraine to the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI),” May 27, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/rozvyazana-rosiyeyu-vijna-proti-ukrayini-vplivaye-na-globaln-75401>.

and a wave of migration from those regions that might affect southern Europe especially.

Zelensky calls out the hypocrisy of global decision-makers and invites them to act upon their self-declared democratic values:

There are people – and many of them among the powerful of this world – who believe that not all nations matter. Who believe that a nation can simply be forgotten to try to keep peace (...). [W]e must restore full respect for the fundamental values on our continent. We must fight absolutely clearly and at all levels for the principle: *every nation matters*. The interests of any nation cannot be ignored, betrayed or exchanged for something in a relationship with those who want to make that nation dependent on themselves. When this principle is truly respected by all, in full, then European unity will work.⁵⁶

Zelensky's own actions and the impeccable courage demonstrated by Ukrainians on a daily basis prove that European values must be practiced in real life and manifested in action.

Zelensky presents himself as a spokesperson for the Ukrainian people, but also as an advocate for neglected entities – small nations and ordinary people deprived of genuine political participation. He reminds us that people should be allowed to “choose the rules of life for themselves.” He projects that ideal onto the Russia–Ukraine standoff: “Ukraine differs from Russia *and other tyrannies* [yet another universalizing statement – V.K.] with the fact that not one person decides everything for the whole nation.”⁵⁷

The stylistic difference between the public personae of the two presidents, Zelensky and Putin, is salient. Zelensky's casual outfits, personal and emotional storytelling, and his overall self-representation as “one of us” (the “us” being now extended to ordinary people supporting universal human values everywhere) create an image that reflects the horizontal structure of Ukrainian society⁵⁸ and its appeal for cross-national solidarity. By contrast, Putin and other Russian officials stick to business suits and to highly bureaucratized vocabulary. Putin's

⁵⁶ “Speech by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Saeima of Latvia,” May 26, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-u-saejmi-la-75385>, emphasis added.

⁵⁷ “Address by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Students and Rectors of Higher Educational Institutions of Ukraine,” May 19, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/zvernennya-prezidenta-volodimira-zelenskogo-do-studentiv-i-r-75173>, emphasis added.

⁵⁸ A “flattened” social structure with a weak power vertical and strong network connections.

mouthful of proclaimed goals for the “special military operation” in Ukraine (demilitarization, de-Nazification, etc.) is a telling example. The frequent references to domestic and international legal codes in Putin’s public speeches reflect a truism from Soviet times that those who know the laws are exempt from compliance with them. All in all, the image of the Russian leadership is that of the nomenklatura and not the Russian people.

Zelensky’s strategy of siding with “the people” – rhetorically and stylistically – is essentially populism, but the messages he conveys differ importantly from right-wing populist narratives. They are inclusive, horizontal, future-oriented, and dwell on hope, not fear. I suggest that Zelensky’s rhetorical strategy can be called the *populism of hope*. Zelensky claims to articulate the position of Ukrainian people, and he often provides space for their voices in his public interventions. On top of that, his public persona is that of a “human being,” not a professional politician. This allows him to speak emotionally and display “normal” human reactions when confronted with overwhelming atrocities the entire world is observing along with him.⁵⁹ Zelensky’s positionality, that of a citizen speaking on behalf of his nation that is resisting unwarranted aggression, allows him to address the populace and the political class alike, bypassing the hierarchies of power. His appeal is horizontal. He rhetorically constructs a chain of equivalence – “Ukraine – Europe – the World,” which reassembles the international community horizontally as a flattened entity. Former cleavages lose their importance. Cross-national solidarity is a prerequisite for common survival. Starting from the warning that “Russia is doing everything to break the resistance of Ukraine, the resistance of Europe and the world in 90 days of this winter,”⁶⁰ Zelensky sets the goal: “Justice for Ukraine, for Europe, [and] for the world must and will be restored.”⁶¹ He adds, “We’re consolidating the world. And I feel that the world is with us.”⁶²

⁵⁹ “Volodymyr Zelensky Interview with the Turkish Channel Habertürk,” Youtube, accessed December 14, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YXojo0Nox4>.

⁶⁰ “Currently, The Geopolitical Configuration in the World Is Changing, But the Completion of the Unification of Europe Is Impossible Without Ukraine – Speech by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Annual YES Meeting,” September 10, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/zaraz-vidbuvayetsya-zmina-geopolitichnoyi-konfiguraciyi-u-sv-77637>.

⁶¹ “If Occupiers Flee, This Will Be the Best Option for Them – Address of President of Ukraine,” October 8, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/yaksho-okupanti-vtechut-ce-bude-najkrashij-dlya-nih-variant-78373>.

⁶² “Ukraine Cannot Be Intimidated, We United Even More Instead – Address by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy,” official website of the President of Ukraine, October 10, 2022, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayinu-nemozhливо-zalyakati-tilki-she-bilshe-obyednati-zve-78401>.

Those positive messages have been received enthusiastically by Zelensky's audience in the West, and are setting a trend for public political communication overall. Among other instances, Zelensky's vocabulary of "unity," "modesty," and "hope" can also be found in a resonant speech by Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Steinmeier openly named Russia a state "opposed" to Germany and a challenge to European democracy and universal values, which must be defeated, not compromised with. Admitting an epochal shift of the world's course into bitter "headwinds," the German president nevertheless employed the rhetoric of hope connected with solidarity, popular activism, and resilience: "Despite the many challenges I have mentioned, this age truly holds great opportunities for our country (...). To prevail in this time, we can build on the strength and power that we have worked to gain over the past years."⁶³ Arguably, Steinmeier's speech signified not only a landmark shift in German foreign policy, it also jumped onto Zelensky's bandwagon: the war is a challenge, which – if met with a consolidated response of those who share common values – could strengthen our democracies and bring a better future for our children.

Conclusion: Is Ukraine Winning the Recognition Game?

The ongoing Russian war of aggression in Ukraine is unfolding on the margins of the Western normative order. Kremlin officials openly claim they are waging the war against that order. Alas, it is impossible to isolate this threat. Both Russia and Ukraine recognize the normative hegemony of the West and in turn aim to be recognized as "true Europe," which entails changes in this order. While Russia calls for the re-emergence of a Europe of traditional values and national sovereignties, Ukraine campaigns for more space for the grassroots and the agency of minor nations. Russian "dark power"⁶⁴ has long played on internal weaknesses and inconsistencies in the West, effectively calling it out for the cleavages between its declared values and real practices, or, to put it differently, between material values and spiritual virtues. The Kremlin "special military operation" seeks to prove that democratic values at the core of the international liberal order are given only lip-service, and that decision-making in the West is every bit as corrupt and negligent of ordinary people's lives as in any other place labelled as "authoritarian." Russia's strategy is to expose the underlying

⁶³ Frank-Walter Steinmeier, "Strengthening Everything That Connects Us," official website of the Federal President, October 28, 2022, <https://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/EN/Frank-Walter-Steinmeier/Reden/2022/221028-Strengthening-everything-that-connects-us.html>.

⁶⁴ Mark Galeotti, *Russian Political War: Moving Beyond the Hybrid* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

hierarchies of domination, where some countries are deemed “more important” and the loss of lives in other places is “less lamentable.” The Ukrainian response pokes at the same inconsistency but instead of calling for abandoning the values altogether, it calls for realigning them with actual modes of conduct and leveling geopolitical hierarchies to reassemble them horizontally in cross-national networks of solidarity.

The peculiarity of this complex interplay of imperialism and subalternity is as follows. Russia, despite having the initial advantage in terms of resources and global sympathies, has failed to obtain the recognition it desires from the West. Yet, paradoxically, it has succeeded in rebranding itself as the avant-garde of the anti-Western postcolonial movement in the global South. At the same time, Ukraine, which before 2022 was a multiple subaltern for which others spoke, has attained global visibility and recognition by rejecting the usual *modus operandi* of a subaltern and giving itself recognition first. The freshness of the Ukrainian cause comes from the fact that – in an age of identity politics – the Ukrainians are building their polity and identity not around ethnic markers but around the very idea of democracy,⁶⁵ and national and international solidarity. By demonstrating courage and genuineness in their everyday actions, but also sticking to the idea of democracy as a people’s endeavor, Ukrainians expose the bright side of nationalism and populism, which I in this paper have called the populism of hope.

Zelensky reminds Europe: “Right now you can determine whether everything that the European Union says about itself is true. About unity in diversity, common values and the same approach to all European democracies (...). [T]his is not just a question of the aggressor’s responsibility for a particular war, but of protecting humanity as such.”⁶⁶

Slavoj Žižek seconds him on that:

What Russia is offering is a world without hypocrisy – because it is without global ethical standards, practicing just pragmatic “respect” for differences. We have seen clearly what this means when, after the Taliban took over in Afghanistan, they instantly made a deal with China. China accepts the new Afghanistan while the Taliban will ignore what China is doing to Uyghurs – this is, *in nuce*, the new

⁶⁵ Olga Onuch, “Why Ukrainians Are Rallying Around Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 33, no. 4 (October 2022): 37–46.

⁶⁶ “Address by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the European Council,” May 30, 2022, official website of the President of Ukraine, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/zvernennya-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-do-yevr-75465>.

globalization advocated by Russia. And the only way to defend what is worth saving in our liberal tradition is to ruthlessly insist on its universality. The moment we apply double standards, we are no less “pragmatic” than Russia.⁶⁷

These are the two offers on the table, between which the West has to choose. It has become clear that no return to the past is feasible. Frank-Walter Steinmeier admitted this in his “epochal shift” speech, where he said that Germany’s long-cherished pacifism is no longer a solution, and his country needs “resilience and a spirit of resistance.” Moreover, he went so far as to say: “The Russian attack is an attack on all the lessons that the world had learned from the last century’s two world wars.”⁶⁸ Steinmeier’s speech signaled Zelensky’s symbolic victory in the Western public sphere. Germany has long been a strategic supporter of cooperation with Russia in the EU. The German President adopted much of the vocabulary that is omnipresent in Zelensky’s speeches: resilience, solidarity, the future, cooperation, democracy as the people’s joint endeavor. He also evoked the same chain of equivalence described by Zelensky above, where Ukraine, Germany, and the “world” are effectively “all together in this.”

Global debates around the ongoing war have exposed that Zelensky’s idea of the equivalence of national interests is desired but hardly actual. The world is no longer Eurocentric. It is striking that a resentful empire waging an unwarranted war of aggression against a former colony and peripheral state, and which seeks in its rhetoric and its actions to extinguish the Ukrainians as a separate nation, has managed to garner support among some subaltern nations around the globe. This reaction in the global South, rallying behind the figure of Putin, enables several important conclusions. First, Putin’s claim that he is fighting against the West, not just against Ukraine, has been taken either at face value or as a welcome opportunity to weaken Euro-Atlantic hegemony – and arguably both, depending on who is speaking. Secondly, in the contemporary geopolitical turmoil, coalitions are being built against common enemies rather than around shared principles. Both of these conclusions foretell grave danger for future that is being decided on the battlefield in Ukraine and on public stages across the globe. The jury is still out, and the verdict remains to be seen.

⁶⁷ Slavoj Žižek, “We Must Stop Letting Russia Define the Terms of the Ukraine Crisis,” *The Guardian*, May 23, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/23/we-must-stop-letting-russia-define-the-terms-of-the-ukraine-crisis>.

⁶⁸ Steinmeier, “Strengthening everything that connects us.”

THE FORMATION OF THE MEMORIES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA

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Abstract

This article focuses on the state-sanctioned and state-led formation of memories related to economic development in the service of post-colonial nation-building. Looking at North and South Korea in the 1940s through the 1960s as a case study, it examines the different strategies utilized by the “pedagogical states” on opposite sides of the Cold War divide to create in the national consciousness a lasting historical myth, in this case – the myth that both countries’ economic development was truly national and had no relation to their former metropole Japan. Based on primary sources, including public speeches by North and South Korean leaders and archival documents, this article explores the importance of public historical education to the formation of memories related to economic development, ways of achieving that, and the role played by nationalism in each country as the memories were formed. Finally, it assesses the role of public historical education in nation-building, its long-term efficacy, and its influence on the present day.

Keywords: memory formation; colonial legacy; economic development; South Korea; North Korea
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Introduction

The decades after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Eastern bloc have seen a rise in interest towards studies of historical memory and memory formation all over the world, in Asia as well as in Europe or America. Historical memory can be defined as a socially transformed version of the past, constructed to suit the needs and interests of the social group doing the construction.¹ Benedict Anderson defines the nation itself as an “imagined political community,” imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of a group.² Thus, historical memory does not necessarily equal the historical truth but often creates an alternative version of the past, a historical myth.

As historical memory is “imagined” and constructed, special attention in scholarship has been given to the politics of memory, the ways the past is re-constructed and represented in the present, and to those who are doing the construction.³ The politics of memory can be understood as the “contestation of meaning” that occurs within and between the various forms and practices of organization of historical memory by political actors, and the struggle to “install particular memories at the centre of a cultural world, at the expense of others which are marginalized and forgotten.”⁴ Different actors can be distinguished in the construction of historical memory, such as the state, the civil society, social groups and individuals.⁵ Yet if we speak about East Asia in the Cold War, it was most often the political elites who had both the agenda and the need to shape historical memory, and the means to do it.

However, if memory can be constructed by the nation-states and other political and social agencies, it can also be contested by and among them. The

¹ Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 6–7.

³ Among such studies can be named Alexandra Barahona de Brito, Carmen Gonzalez-Enriquez, and Paloma Aguilar, eds., *The politics of memory: Transitional justice in democratizing societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds., *Contested pasts: The politics of memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, eds., *The politics of memory in postwar Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Gabriel Ricci, ed., *Justice and the politics of memory* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2017); Kamila Szczepanska, *The politics of war memory in Japan: Progressive civil society groups and contestation of memory of the Asia-Pacific war* (London: Routledge, 2014).

⁴ Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, eds., *The politics of war memory and commemoration* (London: Routledge, 2000), xi.

⁵ *Ibid.*

way the past is understood and interpreted has political, economic, and ethical consequences for the present. As Jan Assman puts it, “the present is ‘haunted’ by the past and the past is modeled, invented, reinvented, and reconstructed by the present.”⁶ Thus, contests over the past, over which version of history should be considered as true, become also the contest over the present. And the focus of contestation is often not so much the conflicting accounts of what actually happened in the past so much as the matter of who or what has the right to speak for that past in the present,⁷ whose or what version of the past will be dominant in a given society. For that reason, memory is often contested at the highest level between nation-states and involves political leaderships.

In East Asia, the matter of historical memory and how the shared past is and should be remembered has after the end of the Cold War emerged as one of the major contentious issues between the countries of the region. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo point out several factors contributing to that rise.⁸ Strategic interests that used to unite the countries like Japan and South Korea against a common communist foe gave way to nationalism and reemergence of unresolved disputes around the issues of Japanese aggression and colonialism in the late nineteenth – first half of the twentieth centuries and during the Pacific war.⁹ Social changes within the countries of the region and political liberalization in some of them allowed for social groups and previously muted voices to be heard and to become actors in the politics of memory formation. And the economic rise of China and South Korea challenged not only Japan’s economic supremacy in the broad East Asian region but also the historical narratives which had been dominant during the Cold War.

The studies of memory and memory politics in East Asia tend to look at the war memory and issues surrounding it, at how the war is remembered in Japan, its former colonies, and China, and contested between them.¹⁰ This article, on

⁶ Jan Assman, *Moses the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 9.

⁷ Hodgkin and Radstone, eds., *Contested Pasts*, 1–2.

⁸ Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo, eds., *East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2008).

⁹ For studies on it see, e.g., Jungmin Seo, “Politics of Memory in Korea and China: Remembering the Comfort Women and the Nanjing Massacre,” *New Political Science* 30, no. 3 (September 2008): 369–392, doi: 10.1080/07393140802269021; David Hundt and Roland Bleiker, “Reconciling Colonial Memories in Korea and Japan,” *Asian Perspective* 31, no. 1 (2007): 61–91; Claudia Schneider, “The Japanese History Textbook Controversy in East Asian Perspective,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617, no. 1 (May 2008): 107–122.

¹⁰ Seo, “Politics of Memory in Korea and China”; Jan Sýkora, “Collective (historical) memory and national identity in contemporary Japan: Contested war narrative and myth making in Japan’s

the other hand, aims to focus on the aftermath of the war and of the dissolution of the Japanese Empire on the Korean Peninsula, and explore the less studied topic of construction of memory related to economic development and economic strategies. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea (or, as they are more colloquially known, North and South Korea), as two of the few remaining "divided nations," present a unique comparative case study of how on opposite sides of the Cold War divide the leadership strived to get rid of colonial legacies and create in the national consciousness a lasting historical myth of the "truly national" character of their countries' economic development.

Economy is considered to be one of the key foundations, "backbones" of any country. In both South and North Korea in the first decades after the liberation from the Japanese colonial rule the leadership attributed extreme importance and paid great attention to the matters related to economic development. In the words of the South Korean leader Park Chung-hee, "in human life, economics precedes politics or culture." He went as far as claiming that "the hope for the wholeness of a nation without its economic independence is literally to look for fish in a forest."¹¹ His North Korean counterpart Kim Il-sung echoed that sentiment, saying: "If we bow to the hardships and difficulties and fail to reconstruct [the national economy] speedily, we shall be unable to build a prosperous, independent and sovereign country, and our people will be reduced to statelessness once again."¹²

Rapid and successful economic development was in the leaders' eyes necessary not only for purely economic reasons but also for nation-building. It was seen as a means to unify the people and to instill in them a sense of national independence and self-worth damaged during the Japanese occupation and later events.

However, the development of national economy for both countries required a certain degree of Japanese involvement. In North Korea, all the industrial capabilities necessary for building socialism were created during the Japanese colonial period and by the Japanese. For South Korea the matter was less tangible yet arguably trickier: there, the very model of development which the leadership intended to implement was essentially copied from the former metropole.

Longest Day," *Identity, Culture and Memory in Japanese Foreign Policy*, ed. Michal Kolmaš and Yoichiro Sato (New York: Peter Lang, 2021), 131–146; Szczepanska, *The politics of war memory in Japan*.

¹¹ Park Chung-hee, *The Country, the Revolution and I* (Seoul: Hollym, 1963), 26–27.

¹² Kim Il-sung, *Works*, vol. 3, *January–December 1947* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 48.

The anti-Japanese feelings still ran extremely strong in both countries, to a point where it could possibly endanger the regime. Such, for example, was the case with mass public protests in South Korea in 1964–65, when the talks on normalization with Japan were nearing conclusion. In these circumstances, ensuring public support and shaping public opinion became vital for both the South and the North Korean regimes. The goal was similar for the both of them, but the differences in ideology, political regime and domestic situation determined the variations in the strategies used to shape historical memories. Dependent on circumstances, the leadership chose to mask, downplay, or misrepresent the role of Japan in the countries' development after the liberation.

To explore the formal and informal political practices and empirical spaces states use for citizen-formation, to manage, administer and shape citizens, scholars introduced the concept of pedagogical states.¹³ It assesses the state as an “educator” that uses essentially pedagogical means to govern, mold and shape the society. Schools, universities and other institutions within the formal educational system serve as fertile ground and vehicle for the state to achieve that, as they are “designed to induce consent to a dominant political order.”¹⁴ However, the pedagogical state policies are not limited to the formal educational framework. Entities existing outside the formal educational system, like news and entertainment media, press, television, channels of elite and popular culture such as advertising, books can also serve as pedagogical sites for the state.¹⁵ Pedagogical power is not repressive in itself; it lies more in the cultural or even ideological domain but it creates conditions for making the citizens governable.¹⁶

While the concept of pedagogical state is more often applied to countries in the broadly defined Euro-North American area and their development in the recent decades, this article suggests that it can also be extended to Asia and applied to South and North Korea in the Cold War. In their memory formation practices both Koreas acted as pedagogical states, using pedagogic strategies to govern the people, educate them on the state's policies and entrench among them the leadership's chosen position. In the case explored in this article, it was

¹³ For more detail on the concept of pedagogical state, see, e.g., Ian Hunter, *Rethinking the school: subjectivity, bureaucracy, criticism* (St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1994); Sam Kaplan, *The Pedagogical State: Education and the Politics of National Culture in Post-1980 Turkey* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007).

¹⁴ Kaplan, *The Pedagogical State*, xvii.

¹⁵ Jessica Pykett, “Citizenship Education and Narratives of Pedagogy,” in *Governing Through Pedagogy: Re-educating Citizens*, ed. Jessica Pykett (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2012), 5–20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

the position on economic development, its background, trajectories, and Japan's role in it (or lack thereof).

This article focuses primarily on the “outside-the-formal-educational-system” side of pedagogical state in North and South Korea in formation of memory of economic development. The authoritarian political regimes in both countries in the first Cold War decades were conducive to propagation of the sole government position on the issue, expressed in the leaders' public speeches, publications, and through the press. The strong government power and political control over all spheres of life also facilitated distribution of information that the government wanted to distribute to the majority of the population. Since the political systems did not allow for alternative political voices, the words of the leaders can be taken as expressing the official and unified position of the government and state at the time, which they wanted to “teach” to and impose on the society. For that reason, this article bases its analysis primarily on books, articles, and public speeches of the North and South Korean leaders, and on archival sources. Admittedly, there have been discussions on the actual authorship of the speeches and books attributed to Park Chung-hee and Kim Il-sung.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it can be assumed that since the leaders at some point in time made those speeches and authorized the publications in their names, those sources reflect their and the ruling elite's positions, attitudes, and visions for the development of their countries.

This study is, to the best of the author's knowledge, the first to look in detail at the strategies used by South and North Korea in the first Cold War decades to make, or at least make it seem that the economic development after the liberation in 1945 had no ties whatsoever to the former metropole, Japan, and create the historical myth that it was Korean in nature. This article also aims to assess the efficacy of the state policies in the long run, and the role played by nationalism in both cases to help entrench the myth of the “national character” of development in the people's consciousness.

The differences in circumstances of the two countries account for time discrepancies, as for North Korea the formation of the historical myth took place in the second half of the 1940s–1950s, whereas South Korean leadership at that time was preoccupied with other issues. It was not until the early 1960s,

¹⁷ The US officials especially questioned the authorship of Park's “program” book, *The Country, the revolution and I*, published in 1963, saying that it was written not by him but by the intellectuals close to him. See Gregg Andrew Brazinsky, “From Pupil to Model: South Korea and American Development Policy During the Early Park Chung Hee Era,” *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 1 (January 2005): 83–115, 87, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2005.00460.x.

after General Park Chung-hee's successful military coup d'état, that the matters of social perception of development started attracting the government's attention.

South Korea: Omission and Downplaying

General Park Chung-hee came to power in South Korea in 1961 as a result of a military coup, which overthrew the previous legitimately elected government and further unbalanced the already unstable political and economic situation within South Korea. In economic terms, the country was one of the world's poorest at the time. According to the World Bank, in 1961 the per capita GDP in South Korea was below 100 dollars, less than even in some of the newly independent African countries, about 30 times lower than in the US and six times lower than in Japan, the former colonizer.¹⁸ Politically, just the previous year, in 1960, South Korea saw wide-spread protests which resulted in the so-called April revolution ousting the corrupt Syngman Rhee regime. The two aspects combined meant that the position of the new regime was precarious, and it desperately needed to find ways to legitimize itself to the people in order to avoid being overthrown. Providing rapid economic development and high growth rates is often considered to be an effective means to achieve that and to appease the people. However, for rapid economic growth a plan, a strategy of development, was needed.

Park Chung-hee and his advisors were aware of the economic experiences of other developing countries from both sides of the Cold War but had the most knowledge, and even first-hand experience, of the Japanese interwar and post-war economic development. The majority of them grew up and received education under the Japanese rule, either in colonial Korea or in Japan itself. And Park himself, who before the liberation of Korea in 1945 was an officer in the Japanese army, is believed to have embraced the Japanese mentality and approach to matters, including economic development.¹⁹ Given all this, it stands to reason that what came to be the South Korean development model was strongly influenced by, and reminiscent of, the inter- and – even more significantly – post-war Japan, what the scholars have come to call “developmental state.”

¹⁸ For exact figures, see World Bank National Accounts Data, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?end=2018&locations=KR&most_recent_year_desc=true&start=1960&view=chart.

¹⁹ Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development under Park Chung Hee: Rapid Industrialization, 1961–79* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 16, 20.

The term “developmental state” refers to the model of state-led macro-economic planning, where the state has considerable power and control over the economy. It was initially conceived to describe Japan’s post-World War II economic development and later extended to other East Asian states that followed Japan’s example in the second half of the twentieth century, including South Korea. The economists distinguish four key components of the developmental state: high-quality, low-cost meritocratic bureaucracy; a centralized planning agency; authoritarian regime and the right of the government to intervene into market processes; and market-conforming methods of government intervention.²⁰ All those elements are also characteristic of South Korea’s economic model. Some of them already existed in South Korea before 1961, shaped by both traditions and colonial experience, while others were specifically created for the purpose of facilitating the Japanese-style rapid economic development.

Traditionally, in Korea, a Confucian country, education was held in high esteem, and official positions were assigned based on it. Thus, the state officials and public sector workers were generally well-educated. To make the bureaucracy more effective and reduce corruption, shortly after the coup Park Chung-hee initiated a large-scale reshuffle of all government personnel, excluding only those “serving in fields requiring specialized knowledge and experience.” The government also invested in training programs to “equip [the government personnel] with development-oriented management techniques.” Around the same time, just several months after the coup, the military government established the Economic Planning Board to deal with matters of economic planning. It became “the highest economic planning agency of the government” charged with controlling, supervising, and providing administrative support for the economic development plans.²¹ The political regime Park established, with himself at the head and rigorous suppression of any possible opposition, had many commonalities not just with the Liberal Democratic Party regime in post-war Japan, but also with Japan between the wars, of which Park had first-hand knowledge, yet was even more authoritarian. In justification, he claimed that Western European democracy and system of political and economic freedom was “unworkable” for Korea at that time and enjoying “complete political freedom in this

²⁰ On the concept of developmental state in more detail, see Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982).

²¹ Park Chung-hee, *To Build a Nation* (Washington, D.C.: Acropolis, 1971), 126–127.

revolutionary period” did not meet social or political reality or economic needs of the country.²²

Admittedly, this resemblance could seem like a coincidence or a result of cultural and historical similarities between Korea and Japan, and Park Chung-hee himself never publicly acknowledged it. However, his close associates later recalled that Park had been greatly influenced by Japan. They pointed out that Park’s economic and socio-political model was “largely the product of self-taught lessons” based on Japanese inter- and post-war experience.²³ Yet perhaps the most clearly that influence can be seen in the export-oriented character of South Korean development, which was adopted around 1963–1964. In the mid-twentieth century the general consensus among the economists had been that to achieve development and economic autonomy developing countries should adopt import-substituting strategies. Japan in the 1950s was the first country to disregard that advice and introduce export-based externally-oriented development. Thus, as Tadashi Kimiya points out, “one cannot assume that the Park regime would adopt an export-oriented industrialization simply because it was the wisdom of the day” – because it was not.²⁴ In fact, that decision went against the economic consensus and advice of the USA, South Korea’s main ally, and international institutions, but closely followed Japan’s example.

However, in the 1960s all matters related to Japan were still a highly sensitive topic with the Korean public, as the memories of the colonial period were still fresh and raw. In such a situation admitting to the public that the economic model proposed by the government as a way to bring the country out of poverty and restore the national pride damaged by colonial period was based on the example of Korea’s colonizer and oppressor of 36 years could very well be the downfall of the regime.

For this reason, Park Chung-hee made conscious effort to avoid ever mentioning Japan in connection with South Korean economic development, carefully balancing his speeches. On the one hand, he was basically talking of creating and implementing the elements of the Japanese model: the high-quality, low-cost meritocratic bureaucracy; indicative economic planning, which he was

²² Park Chung-hee, *Our Nation’s Path: Ideology of Social Reconstruction* (Seoul: Hollym, 1962), 198–199.

²³ Kim, *Korea’s Development under Park Chung Hee*, 20.

²⁴ Tadashi Kimiya, “The Cold War and the Political Economy of the Park Chung Hee Regime,” in *Reassessing the Park Chung Hee Era, 1961–1979: Development, Political Thought, Democracy & Cultural Influence*, ed. Hyung-A Kim and Clark W. Sorensen (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011): 66–84, 67.

very fond of and called an “urgent necessity” for the reasonable allocation of all resources. Private big businesses were to be the leading mechanisms of development. Strong authoritarian government facilitated state interventions into the market structure, extensive mobilization in the social sphere, and export orientation. At the same time, Park carefully did not link any of those features to Japan. Instead, he made it sound as though the external-oriented industrialization and development strategy focusing on exports and based on the elements of the developmental state was created in Korea and specifically for Korea. Publicly, he claimed to derive inspiration from a variety of sources – but not from Japan.

“To prepare [the First Five-Year Economic Development Plan],” Park later said, “the revolutionary government mobilized all the wisdom and knowledge available and set clear goals, the primary goal being to found a self-supporting national economy.”²⁵ Park cited Sun Yat-sen’s China, the Mustafa Kemal reforms in Turkey, Gamal Abdel Nasser’s Egypt as cases of successful national and economic restoration. And most frequently he emphasized his admiration of West German post-war development, drawing compelling parallels between South Korea and West Germany. Both countries, he said, were parts of previously unified ones (with their other halves “occupied” by communist forces), destroyed by war, “condemned” to stay non-industrial agricultural nations, which “hardly suited” them. Yet Germany managed to not only overcome the circumstances, but become one of the “mighty economic powers of the world,” and so could Korea.²⁶ In regard to export promotion, he emphasized the necessity of its implementation, saying that rapid increases in production would contribute towards the improvement of living standards, but presented it as the government’s invention and initiative for improving the people’s standards of living. “Increased production is directly connected with a better life for all of us,” said Park Chung-hee, the inaugurated head of the now-civilian government in his address to the nation at the start of 1965.²⁷

While he could not completely avoid any mention of Japan, since it played a significant role in South Korea’s history and politics, Park Chung-hee repeatedly stressed that he himself, as many Koreans, was anti-Japanese: “I myself would not hesitate to express my indignation with Japan if you asked for my personal feelings about that country. And if you asked me whether I am pro-Japanese or

²⁵ Park Chung-hee, *To Build a Nation*, 107.

²⁶ Park Chung-hee, *The Country, the Revolution and I*, 144–151.

²⁷ Park Chung-hee, *Major Speeches by Korea’s Park Chung-Hee*. Compiled by Shin Bum Shik (Seoul: Hollym, 1970), 305.

anti-Japanese, I would choose the latter for my answer.”²⁸ He spoke harshly of the colonial period, a “thirty-six-year-long national degradation” and oppression during which Korea was economically, socially, and politically exploited for the “benefit of Japanese capitalism.”²⁹

Yet at the same time, Korea desperately needed external funding and assistance for development. In the 1950s it had been provided by the US and the United Nations agencies, but in the 1960s the American policy shifted towards providing assistance to Korea through Japan. That fact forced Park Chung-hee to modify his rhetoric and start trying to convince the public (without alerting it to Japan’s role as inspiration for the Korean economic model) that in the face of a new and much more serious threat – communism – the past could be forgiven if Japan made amends for its past aggressions. An important part of these amends would be economic.

Like West Germany in Europe, Japan was expected to provide aid to underdeveloped free nations and to participate in containing communism. Park said that “funds invested by the United States, West Germany, Italy or *even by Japan*” would contribute towards the rapid and successful development of the South Korean economy.³⁰ He presented it to the public as a compromise: in order to win against communism, Korea needed to align politically, economically and militarily with the “Free World” and Japan as its part. And between communism and normalization with Japan, the latter was the lesser evil. From then onwards, Japan started to appear from time to time in Park’s speeches and writings – but only in a context favorable to Korea. For example, he claimed that South Korea’s development “compare[d] favorably with the achievements of Germany and Japan.”³¹ Yet at the same time he never mentioned any resemblance between Japan’s and Korea’s economic development strategies, not to mention the former being a role model for the latter.

A somewhat similar approach was taken towards the more tangible reminders of the colonial period, the businesses founded under the Japanese rule, with Japanese involvement or influence. They, like the Japanese financial aid, were needed to pioneer and champion economic development, and just as Japan’s assistance, were presented to the public as a necessary evil. Despite the fact that Park Chung-hee himself called them “illicit profiteers” and accused them of

²⁸ Ibid., 39–40.

²⁹ Park, *Our Nation’s Path*, 111–113.

³⁰ Ibid. Italics added.

³¹ Park Chung-hee, *To Build a Nation*, 114.

exploiting the country and the people,³² they were among those private enterprises that he designated to lead the economic development of the country under the control of the state. In 1961 a number of prominent businessmen were arrested and later released on parole dependent on their willingness to “serve the nation,” cooperate with the government, and on their business performance,³³ thus persuading those who had started business under the Japanese during the colonial period to contribute to development. In a sense, the government’s policy served as legitimization and rehabilitation for the businesses started under the Japanese rule in the public eye. It made them assist and actively participate in economic rehabilitation and development, reinventing them as truly “Korean” and part of the country’s economy.

North Korea: Transforming and Reclaiming

But where South Korea did not have that many businesses that traced back to the colonial days – a lot of the South Korean *chaebol* that became the “engines” of economic growth were founded after the liberation³⁴ – for North Korea the situation was vastly different. Its entire industrial base, the foundation of the economy, was built during the colonial period under and by the Japanese. On the other hand, it was only the material legacy, not the issue of following the Japanese economic model that the North Korean leadership had to deal with. And that made the topic of Japanese involvement in economic development less tricky for Kim Il-sung than for Park Chung-hee, turning it into a matter of reclaiming the past for North Korea.

For the socialist bloc countries, where the state had tight control over society, shaping social memory and public opinion was to a certain degree easier, yet in their eyes no less important than for those on the other side of the Cold War divide. The socialist leadership, just like their capitalist counterparts, made effort to reconstruct the past in accordance with the new state narratives, redefine historical events, “friends” and “enemies,” in order to legitimize the new socialist regimes.³⁵ And North Korea was no exception. It also, like South Korea, had to

³² See Park Chung-hee, *The Country, the Revolution and I*.

³³ This episode is described in detail in Kim, *Korea’s Development under Park Chung Hee*, 81.

³⁴ For more detail, see Ūn-mi Kim, *Big Business, Strong State: Collusion and Conflict in South Korean Development, 1960–1990* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 126.

³⁵ Holubec and Mroziak, for example, provide a study of this issue in application to Eastern Europe. Stanislav Holubec and Agnieszka Mroziak, *Historical Memory of Central and East European Communism* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

deal with colonial past, but its leader Kim Il-sung chose for that a different strategy than Park Chung-hee. Where Park merely omitted and downplayed the role of Japan, Kim actively attempted to create a new historical myth and entrench it in national consciousness. The ideocratic regime created in North Korea in the 1940s–1960s, where the state essentially equaled the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, facilitated achieving that goal. So did certain policies which were adopted in North Korea after the liberation.

Of the latter, arguably the most important for the purpose of re-establishing the country's economic development as truly 'Korean' was nationalization. Ironically, it was adopted before the foundation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and not by the North Korean government but by the Soviet Civil Administration (1945–1948). The Decree of the Soviet administration from June 19, 1946, stipulated the transfer of all the industries, banks, communications and infrastructure existing in the northern half of the peninsula, as well as of all former Japanese property, into the possession of the Provisional People's Committee when it adopts the nationalization law, which was done in August 1946.³⁶ To the North Korean public, Kim Il-sung made it sound as though it was done by the Koreans of their own initiative. He proudly called nationalization an element of not only class struggle, as was typical for Marxist rhetoric, but also of national liberation, saying that it deprived the "Japanese imperialists, the pro-Japanese and national traitors" of their economic foothold and enabled the Korean people to reinstate their rightful control over the economy and overthrow the colonial yoke.³⁷

Historical experience shows that economic development of the colonies, be it in Africa or Asia, has typically been uneven and dictated not by the requirements or capabilities of the colonized economies, but by the needs of the colonizing powers, and has more often than not been focused on extracting resources.³⁸ The metropolises developed only those economic areas and industries that were beneficial for their home economies or goals in the colonies, with little concern for balanced development.³⁹ The case of Japan and the Korean peninsula was not an exception. While in the southern part, with its bigger population and better

³⁶ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (hereinafter: AVPRF), Fund 0480, Register 3, Folder 4, File 11, p. 77.

³⁷ Kim Il-sung, *Tenth Anniversary of the Liberation of Korea. Speech Delivered at the Celebration Meeting of the City of Pyongyang, August 14, 1955* (Pyongyang: "New Korea" Press, 1955), 7.

³⁸ See e.g., Candice Lee Goucher and Linda Walton, *World History: Journeys from Past to Present* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 675.

³⁹ The case of British India can be named as one typical example here, with India's economy becoming disbalanced due to its subordination to British economy. See Bipan Chandra, "Colonial India:

climate, the focus was on agriculture and light industry, in the northern part the Japanese focused on mineral resources extraction. Thus, after the liberation and division North Korea was left with mining, heavy and chemical industry, but with underdeveloped agricultural sector and light industry.

Throughout the pre-Korean War and several post-war years, Kim Il-sung repeatedly stressed the lopsided and unbalanced nature of the colonial industrial development and the need to compensate for it. However, looking at what had been done after the liberation, it can be seen that the main focus had been on reconstruction (first after the Japanese, who, retreating, damaged many of the enterprises, then after the Korean War) and enlargement of the existing heavy industry, rather than on remedying its imbalances. Since 1946 and throughout the 1950s Kim Il-sung spoke of the same enterprises, many of which, such as the Hŭngnam Chemical Factory, Hwanghae Ironworks, Suan and Komdok mines, are even now among North Korea's key industrial enterprises. And the development they undertook did not diversify their production; they still focused on extracting natural resources as they had under the Japanese.

For various reasons – part of them financial, part ideological, as it was Kim Il-sung's belief that prioritized development of heavy industry was the road to socialism⁴⁰ – not many systemic changes were introduced, and the economic structure continued to reflect its colonial past. However, after the nationalization Kim embarked on a linguistic and much less resource-intensive campaign aimed at 'Koreaifying' the industry, making it domestic at least in the public's perception. This campaign started even before the official foundation of the DPRK, almost straight after the liberation, once Kim was established as the leader of northern Korea.

In the beginning, in 1946–1947, Kim Il-sung did admit that the Japanese had built – although with much “sweat and blood of the Korean people” – the backbone of North Korean economy, the heavy industry, its foundation for development.⁴¹ He stated that the restoration of the enterprises which had been destroyed or damaged by the Japanese retreating from the peninsula would create an ideal base and conditions for fast development.⁴²

British versus Indian Views of Development,” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 81–167.

⁴⁰ Kim Il-sung, *Works*, vol. 17, *January-December 1963* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1984), 323–326.

⁴¹ Kim Il-sung, *Works*, vol. 2, *January-December 1946* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 303.

⁴² Kim Il-sung, *Works*, vol. 3, 123.

However, it would not do for the independent North Korea to be indebted to its colonial past and owe its economic successes to imperialist aggressors who had been exploiting the Korean people for 36 years. Reflecting this, Kim's rhetoric changed.

In 1948 the restoration of the enterprises and infrastructure damaged by the Japanese retreating from the Peninsula back in 1945, was considered almost completed. However, where a year before it had been considered as solid base for rapid development, now it was no longer viewed as sufficient. "We took over a backward colonial industry from Japanese imperialists, and the factories, mines and other enterprises were skeletal at that," stated Kim Il-sung in 1948,⁴³ justifying the push for rapid industrial construction. Thus, the Japanese were downgraded from the builders (if through exploitation and "sweat and blood" of the Korean people) of a strong industrial base suitable for building socialist economy from, to colonial aggressors who could not even create a viable economy and whose faults the North Koreans were now forced to rectify.

Yet another year later, in 1949, and from then onward, Kim Il-sung no longer spoke of the North Korean industries as even having been built by the Japanese. Rather, he proclaimed that they had been merely "owned" or "controlled" by Japan during the colonial period. This gave Kim's audiences a strong (and lasting) impression that the industrial base of the country was inherently "Korean," created by Koreans and for Koreans and merely seized and exploited during the colonial period by the Japanese who had no part in its construction and development.⁴⁴

The entrenchment of the idea that the Japanese had no relation to Korean industries was further sped up by the Korean War. It comes as little surprise that after the war, which had disastrous effects on North Korea and left half the country in ruins, the image of the "Japanese imperialists" was overshadowed and largely replaced by a more serious adversary, the US, both in the people's consciousness and the leaders' speeches. So much so that by the 1960s Kim Il-sung almost ceased to speak of Japan in connection with North Korea's industrial development at all. He only mentioned the "colonial yoke" on occasions such as the National Liberation anniversary, and "American imperialism" in his speeches took up the role previously belonging to "Japanese imperialism." It seems also

⁴³ Kim Il-sung, *Works*, vol. 4, *January-December 1948* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 143.

⁴⁴ Kim Il-sung, *Works*, vol. 5, *January-December 1949* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 141, 345-346.

that by that time he deemed the public sufficiently convinced of the Korean origins of North Korean industrial development.

But re-invention of the past through the leader's speeches and press was not the only technique employed to break up the connection between development and the colonial past. Like many countries throughout history, including the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union itself, North Korea turned to renaming as part of its historical myth formation. In the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc this usually took the form of assigning cities, streets, landmarks and industrial and infrastructural objects new names in honor of the revolutionary heroes and events.⁴⁵ Thus, for example, in line with that idea Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) in the USSR became Leningrad, named after the "leader of world proletariat" Vladimir Lenin; a confectionary factory in Moscow, originally founded by a German entrepreneur, was after the Revolution re-baptized "Red October" in its honor; Bulgarian city of Varna was renamed Stalin to commemorate Joseph Stalin's seventieth anniversary.⁴⁶ In Korea as well, under the joint supervision of the Soviet administration in northern Korea and the emerging North Korean authorities, shortly after the liberation the cities, towns, other administrative units, and landmarks were given back their Korean names. They replaced the Japanese versions which had been in use during the colonial period, for example, Pyongyang instead of Heijou or Kaesong instead of Kaijou, the Korean readings of the same hieroglyphic characters. This move literally erased the colonial legacy from the maps, reclaiming cities, villages, landmarks back as Korean.

However, the Soviet administration in 1945–1948 did not go beyond changing the geographical toponyms. So, after the establishment of the DPRK the North Korean authorities had to take the matter into their own hands. Using the experience of "fraternal countries," they extended the renaming campaign to industrial objects created under the Japanese rule. Those factories and plants were given original Korean and suitably revolutionary names to further distance them from their colonial past and make the public think they were wholly Korean. Thus, the Chongjin Ironworks established by Japan's Mitsubishi Corporation became the Kim Chaek Iron and Steel Complex, named after the national resistance activist and Kim Il-sung's comrade-in-arms Kim Chaek. The Kangsŏn Steel Works, one of North Korea's main and largest steel mills, which was constructed

⁴⁵ See, e.g., G. R. F. Bursa, "Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 63, no. 2 (1985): 161–193; Zlatan Krajina and Nebojša Blanuša, eds., *EU, Europe Unfinished: Mediating Europe and the Balkans in a Time of Crisis* (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016).

⁴⁶ Though after the denouncement of Stalin's personality cult in 1956 the original name was restored.

and launched into operation under the colonial rule, was turned into the Ch'öllima Steel Complex in honor of the Ch'öllima movement, a state-sanctioned Stakhanovite movement promoting rapid economic development through the workers' own strength and dedication.

No less peculiar a transformation happened to the Sup'ung dam on the Yalu (Amnok) River on the northern border of North Korea. It was built by the Japanese and using forced Korean labor in the 1930s during the colonial period and at that time was the largest in Asia. Though it did not receive a new name after liberation, the former symbol of Japanese exploitation and oppression was given a new life and meaning as an important part of an independent North Korea's socialist construction. It was included into Kim Il-sung's "Grand Plan to Remake Nature," along with tidelands reclamation, irrigation for agriculture, and rapid increase in electric power production. In an ironic twist, Kim Il-sung's words about the Sup'ung dam echoed the sentiments expressed by the Japanese-language colonial newspaper *Keijō nippō* which after the dam's inauguration stated that "through humanity's power to boldly take on Mother Nature, the Yalu River's eternal flow has been completely subjugated and transformed into electricity, the driving force of modern industry."⁴⁷ After the foundation of the DPRK in 1948 the Sup'ung dam, a colonial remain, was made a national emblem, and it is claimed that Kim himself was behind the decision.⁴⁸ It is still depicted on the North Korean coat of arms, now symbolizing self-sufficiency in electricity – and not only in electricity, but in politics and economic development as well.

The new names and symbols, backed by the press and the proclamations of the leadership, quickly overshadowed the old, effectively replacing in the people's perception the colonial past with bright revolutionary images.

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Memory Formation Strategies in the Long Run

North and South Korea, two of the few remaining examples of divided nations, provide a useful case study of approaches to forming historical memory in Asia in different political and economic systems, and of the different strategies utilized by the leaders to create an historical myth favorable to the countries' regimes. In South Korea, Park Chung-hee, taking into consideration the strong

⁴⁷ Aaron Stephen Moore, "'The Yalu River Era of Developing Asia': Japanese Expertise, Colonial Power, and the Construction of Sup'ung Dam," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 1 (February 2013): 115–139, 115, 132.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

anti-Japanese feelings in the country, paid great effort to avoid and omit mentioning Japan in relation to economic development policies. His North Korean counterpart Kim Il-sung also had to deal with the colonial aftermath and Japanese involvement in industrial and economic development. But he, for his part, chose a different strategy and attempted to actively change the social memories and the people's perceptions of industrialization during and after the colonial period.

Two important questions inevitably arise here. First, while in both countries significant effort was put into shaping historical memories of economic development, how effective actually were those efforts and strategies in the long run? And second, what factors contributed to their entrenchment in the people's consciousness?

It comes as little surprise that in the isolated and closed-off North Korea, with the state's and the party's control over all spheres of social life, the effect of state policies was quick and lasting. Already in 1959 the diplomats from the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang on visit to Sunch'ŏn county in central North Korea noted that the administrative and managerial workers on the industries they visited attributed all the successes in industrial reconstruction and development to the party's and personally comrade Kim Il-sung's efforts.⁴⁹ They claimed that economic development of the region and the country as a whole only started after the liberation and was made possible by the determination of the people, whereas in fact the county, and the South Pyongan province it is part of, are known for anthracite fields and coal mines which were established and developed under the Japanese colonial rule. Yet no mention of the Japanese, or for that matter the USSR, the PRC and other "fraternal countries" that largely helped to restore the mines and industries after the war, was being made.

Five years later, in 1965, the time by which the state ideology, including approaches to history and economic matters, was all but finalized, Soviet diplomats recounted their trip to South Hamgyŏng province, where they talked to people in cities and at industries. At the Hŭngnam Chemical Fertilizer Complex, the main and largest fertilizer complex in North Korea, initially constructed in the 1920s by the Japanese Nichitsu conglomerate (*zaibatsu*), the deputy director stressed that the plant was constructed after the Korean War (1950–1953) with "the Korean people's own effort."⁵⁰ The factory museum claimed it was built

⁴⁹ "A Report on a Visit to Sunch'ŏn County," March 9, 1959, AVPRF, Fund 0102, Register 15, Folder 84, File 34, p. 6.

⁵⁰ "A Report on a Visit to South Hamgyŏng Province," March 13, 1965, AVPRF, Fund 0102, Register 21, Folder 106, File 18, p. 1.

under the personal guidance of the great marshal Kim Il-sung, whose decision it was that chemical industry should be developed to improve the lives of the people.

The North Korean press and publications have contributed and continue to contribute to the view that the North Korean economic development is inherently Korean and not linked in any way to the Japanese imperialists and colonial past. For example, the official *History of the Workers' Party of Korea*, published in Pyongyang in 1991, makes no mention of industrialization under the Japanese. Instead it says that in the 1940s the Great Leader Kim Il-sung declared the creation of an independent national economy a priority and mobilized the Party, the workers and the whole people on the struggle for its establishment.⁵¹ It presents the matter as if the development of the northern part of the Korean peninsula started only after the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea there, and under the careful personal guidance of the Great Leader himself.

In contrast to North Korea, in South Korea the fact that the country's development started during the colonial period under the Japanese rule is, while not widely broadcast, also not denied, since that had not been the issue for the regime. The problem lay with the fact that the South Korean development model itself was essentially copied from Japan. During the period of authoritarian rule, from the 1960s till the late 1980s, the state had a great measure of control over what was being said and published in the press and in scholarly research. The South Korean economists, following the state's official position, stated that the Korean development model was unique and truly "national," a successful example of an ingenious model for economic modernization. Instead of admitting its similarities to the Japanese model, they said that the Korean one should be followed by other developing countries striving for economic development.⁵² When discussing the concept of developmental state, originally introduced to describe Japan, Japan being the classical example and reference for it, Korean authors, unlike the Western ones, avoided drawing parallels between Korea and Japan and used the term only for Korea. Some even stated that South Korean economic model was closer to the American rather than to the Japanese one, and thus was better.⁵³

⁵¹ *Chosŏn Rodongdang Ryŏksa* [History of the Workers' Party of Korea] (Pyongyang, 1991), 225–226.

⁵² See Chuk Kyo Kim, *Planning Model and Macroeconomic Policy Issues*, vol. 1, *Essays on the Korean Economy* (Seoul: Korea Development Institute, 1977).

⁵³ E.g., T. W. Kang, *Is Korea the Next Japan? Understanding the Structure, Strategy, and Tactics of America's Next Competitor* (New York and London: Free Press, Collier Macmillan, 1989).

The South Korean government's official position even after the democratization and the shifts of power from right- to left-wing political parties and back again has not changed much. The Internet portal of the National Institute of Korean History, the government organ in charge of promoting the study of historical materials on the history of the country, in the articles related to the economic development of the 1960s does not mention Japan or its role as a model. Instead, it says that it was President Park Chung-hee who created the South Korean "economic miracle."⁵⁴ An article in the English-language newspaper *The Korea Times* commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the first five-year economic development plan states that "it is hard to believe that Korea embarked upon an outward-looking and export-oriented economic development strategy in the early 1960s amid the then-prevalent inward-looking development doctrine of backward nations."⁵⁵ According to it, "there were a few exceptions – Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong," with no mention of Japan, despite it being the first to implement export-oriented industrialization strategy back in the 1950s, before all the others. And while there are those that point out that the South Korean model was, in fact, an emulation and imitation of the Japanese one,⁵⁶ that is arguably still not the dominant point of view in South Korea.

Factors of Success

Thus, it can be concluded that in both North and South Korea the governments in the first Cold War decades succeeded in shaping the historical memories of economic development as inherently Korean in character and nature. Moreover, the effect of the state policies was lasting in both countries, despite the differences in their circumstances. This leads us to the second question posed at the start of the previous section: what were the reasons for such efficacy?

Arguably, this was due to a combination of factors. In North Korea, the autarkic nature of the state and its basically totalitarian regime with control over all spheres of life essentially not allowing any alternation from the established state narrative ensured that the effect of the state policies of memory formation was lasting. The South Korean case up till the 1980s and democratization and

⁵⁴ National Institute of Korean History, June 15, 2020, <http://www.history.go.kr/>.

⁵⁵ Choong-yong Ahn, "First Five-Year Economic Plan of Korea," *The Korea Times*, November 25, 2012, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/biz/2013/08/602_125468.html.

⁵⁶ E.g., Tae-dong Kim et al., *Pijöngsang Kyöngje Hoedam* [Non-Summit Economic Talks] (Seoul: Oktang Buksü, 2019).

the end of military regimes was not completely different. The strong authoritarian military governments could successfully suppress opposition and control what was being said within the country. But with time, given the country's openness and inclusion into the world affairs, the public's access to information also broadened.

Yet apart from political factors, there was another one, more ideological and notably common for both North and South Korea – nationalism. As Benedict Anderson rightly states, nationalism, “nation-ness,” is a feature of both capitalist and socialist states, and since the end of World War II every successful revolution defined itself in national terms, legitimizing itself through the sense of social unity and “nation-ness.”⁵⁷ The socioeconomic and political changes that occurred in North and South Korea in the first post-liberation decades were broad and fundamental enough in their scale and impact to deserve to be called revolutionary.⁵⁸ The changes in North Korea after liberation especially have been labelled as a “revolution” in scholarship⁵⁹; and the military government that came to power in South Korea in 1961, itself considered its coup d'état a revolution (and even a “national” revolution), which is reflected even in the name of one of the “program” books by the coup's leader Park Chung-hee, *The Country, the Revolution and I*. Nationalism has been an important factor in the formation of social consciousness and state ideology in both North and South Korea.

The rise of nationalistic feelings on the (then unified) Korean Peninsula is often traced back to the late nineteenth century and the forceful opening of Korea by foreign powers. But undoubtedly the major contribution to their development was made by Japanese colonial domination and great power intervention and division that followed it. Throughout modern history Korean nationalism has been aimed at the outside, against external actors and encroachment on Korea's sovereignty, self-sufficiency, and autonomy.⁶⁰ It has also been centered around ethnic, rather than civic, principles, contributed to by the fact that Korea has historically been a monoethnic country, and focused on restoring in the people the sense of national confidence and self-worth. As Brian Myers claims, “paranoid, race-based nationalism,” rather than communism or Marxism-Leninism,

⁵⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2–4.

⁵⁸ See Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) for a detailed discussion on social transformation and social revolutions.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

⁶⁰ Seo-Hyun Park, “Dueling nationalisms in North and South Korea,” *Palgrave Communications* 5 (2019), article no. 40, doi: 10.1057/s41599-019-0248-3.

lies at the base of North Korean state ideology.⁶¹ Details can be disputed, but it is undeniable that indeed nationalism has almost from the start of the North Korean state played a major role in it, in all spheres of its life including ideology, politics and economy.

In South Korea as well nationalism has been an instrumental feature of nation-building from the very first years, when not only the economy, but national consciousness also required reconstruction and restoration, and independence not just from Japan but from the United States as well.⁶² The ideological “decolonization” and re-establishment of the sense of national pride and self-worth in the people was in the leadership’s eyes necessary for successful development of the country. Park Chung-hee lamented that before his “national revolution,” the South Koreans “had lacked a true sense of independence,” of national pride,⁶³ and his government actively propagated and encouraged nationalist feelings in the people.

While they have diminished since the Cold War, nationalist feelings are still strong in the present-day South Korean society.⁶⁴ They are fueled by the unforgotten memories of the colonial past that still complicate relations with Japan. And while South Korea, unlike the North, re-established diplomatic relations with Japan back in 1965, unresolved issues such as forced mobilization and military prostitution during war-time continue to mar them.⁶⁵ It is also reflected in the public opinion of Japan. According to polls, even now, more than 70 years after the end of the colonial period, over 60 percent of South Koreans have a negative attitude towards Japan.⁶⁶ This creates a fertile ground for nationalist feelings and fuels the desire to prove that Korea’s successes have no ties to the former aggressor and colonizer.

⁶¹ Brian Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2011), 16.

⁶² Park, “Dueling nationalisms in North and South Korea.” As for the US, it, while not strictly a colonizer, has been an occupying power after the liberation from Japan, the superpower with influence on the domestic policies, and still maintains military presence in South Korea. All of this led to dual feelings of dependence and resentment towards the US.

⁶³ Park Chung-hee, *The Country, the Revolution and I*, 167.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., Gi-wook Shin, “‘Kuksujuūijōk p’op’yullijūmt’e pumerang mannūnda” [‘The Perils of Populist Nationalism’], *Shindonga*, August 19, 2019, <https://shindonga.donga.com/List/3/all/13/1819513/1>.

⁶⁵ See, e.g., Eun A Jo, “Japan and South Korea Are Still Haunted by the Past. Confronting a Legacy of Forced – and Failed – Reconciliation,” *Foreign Affairs*, November 23, 2022, <https://www.foreign-affairs.com/japan/japan-and-south-korea-are-still-haunted-past>.

⁶⁶ East Asia Institute, *Korea-Japan (East Asia) Public Opinion Survey 2021*, http://www.eai.or.kr/main/english/program_view.asp?intSeq=20810&code=54&gubun=program.

Seo-Hyun Park notes another trait of Korean nationalism, present in both Koreas, which facilitated formation of historical memory of economic development and the longevity of the created historical myth. It is the desire to achieve economic prosperity and become advanced and developed like the great powers, but without revering them. This further explains, on the one hand, the necessity of concealing the role of Japan in economic development of the two Koreas after the liberation, and on the other hand also the long-lasting effect of the state's efforts to shape social memories that can be seen decades after the initial stages of economic development. The leaderships' memory policies were perhaps so efficient because they gave the people what they wanted and needed to hear and believe in the times of nation-building: the image of a strong, independent, and self-sufficient country that can achieve prosperity on its own, by its own effort.

Conclusion

In both South and North Korea in the first decades after the liberation from the Japanese colonial rule the matters related to economic development were at the forefront of the governments' agenda. The leadership of both countries was preoccupied not only with the actual issues of development, such as investment, resource allocation, or trade balance, or with drawing up economic strategies and plans; it was also concerned with how the economic development was perceived by the public. The issue lay with the fact that to a certain extent the economic development of both countries was tied to Korea's former colonizer, Japan. Memories of the colonial period and of Japanese aggression were still fresh, so the leaders of the two Korean states needed to "divorce" their countries' development from any connections to Japan in the people's consciousness.

This article aimed to analyze the set of mechanisms behind the formation of national identity through the economic agenda in North and South Korea in the first Cold War decades. In their memory policies, both countries acted as pedagogical states, using pedagogic strategies to govern the people, educate them on the state's policies and entrench among them the leadership's chosen position. While the goal of creating the myth of the truly national character of economic development was common for both countries, the means of achieving it differed. In South Korea, President Park Chung-hee in the 1960s paid great effort to avoid and omit mentioning Japan in relation to economic development policies. In the North, his counterpart Kim Il-sung took a different path, attempting to actively change the historical memory through replacing Japan's economic role

the people's perceptions of industrialization during and after the colonial period with the role of the Party and of the North Korean people.

However, as this article aimed to draw attention to, there were not only differences, but also similarities in the South and North Korean approaches, positions, situations, and the results of their efforts to shape historical memory of economic development. Looking at the present-day situation and accounting for differences in regime and circumstances, it appears that the efforts put forward by the South and North Korean leaders to shape historical memory and create the myth that economic development of the two Korean states in the post-liberation decades was Korean in nature and had no ties to the former metropole, Japan, have paid off in both cases. In both countries the effect of memory policies turned out to be long-lasting, reaching even into the present day not only in the closed-off North Korea, but also in the developed and democratized South Korea.

There were several factors that contributed to the success of the memory policies in both countries. Strong authoritarian (if not to say dictatorial) political regimes in both of them at the time of the intensive formation of memory facilitated the entrenchment in society of the leadership's position on economic development. At the same time, the assessment of the economy and economic development as truly Korean with no connection to Japan corresponded to the people's aspirations for a strong, independent and economically self-sufficient Korea. Thus, economic development (or at least its interpretation) has become a fundamental factor in building of national myths, and contributed to the rise of nationalism and nationalistic feelings which, in turn, helped entrench the leadership's position on economic development as the dominant one in society.

Thus, research shows that the matter of economic development can also be a part of memory formation and memory politics, and that for communist states, in this case North Korea, the formation of historical memory was just as important as for capitalist ones like South Korea.

REPORTS

Conference Report

The Bavarian-Czech Borderland as an Innovation Space in the “Long” Nineteenth Century, May 27, 2022, Prague

On May 27, 2022, the Bavarian Representation in Prague hosted a scientific conference entitled *Die bayerisch-tschechische Grenze als Innovationsraum im “langen” 19. Jahrhundert* (The Bavarian-Czech Borderland as an Innovation Space in the “Long” Nineteenth Century). The conference organizers started out from the perception that the Bavarian-Czech border region is a space of transnational and transregional innovation, which provides positive examples of regional cooperation. The conference not only highlighted the particular social practices and natural dynamics of border regions but also pointed out gaps in academic research on border areas.

The conference was organized by Universität Passau, represented by Professor Thomas Wunsch and Eliška Wöfl, and Charles University, represented by Professor František Stellner. Other partners of the conference were the Bavarian Representation in Prague, which provided organizational support, and the Bavarian-Czech Academic Agency (Bayerisch-Tschechische Hochschulagentur, BTHA) in Regensburg, which supported the event financially.

The conference aimed to summarize and evaluate research on Bavarian-Czech relations in the borderlands, part of the overall research complex of borderlands studies. Lively discussions of the various forms of contact, relationships, connections, and network structures in the Bavarian-Czech borderlands followed the lectures at the conference. The participants approached the subject matter from various theoretical and methodological points of view in historiography and related disciplines (economics, economic policy, and ethnology). They explored various approaches to doing research, identified gaps in the existing research, and suggested new possibilities for collaboration across disciplines.

The conference was opened by Hannes Lachmann (Prague), who evaluated the work done by the Bavarian representation in Prague to deepen relations between Bavaria and the Czech Republic. Thomas Wunsch then outlined the theoretical and conceptual framework of the conference. He described the transborder identity as a special form of collective identity and explained the concept of “transborderness,” which originated with Polish sociologists Zbigniew Kurcz and Andrzej Sakson. Transborderness is a spatial concept that has a processual character and a particular internal structure that emerges from the network of relations and cross-border activities in two neighboring states. The term captures a collective self-concept held by both local elites and broader segments of the population. Furthermore, it makes clear the distinction between the border region and the hinterlands of the two neighboring states. Spatially, it focuses on the territory on both sides of the border, which can be described as a “transborderland.” According to Wunsch, the social processes in this space of encounter and communication are prime examples of “transculturality” as it is defined by the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch.

During the conference, concrete examples were discussed against this theoretical background. It became clear that the German-Czech and Bavarian-Czech neighborhoods

are a worthy field of study. In his contribution, Wünsch answered the question of how to give real-life expression to theory and listed several categories of cross-border social action: exchange of goods and/or ideas, neighborly relations, temporary and permanent migration, transport, economic dependencies, and others.

The next paper, by František Stellner, was a comprehensive assessment of the research to date dealing with Bavarian-Czech relations at various levels. In that regard, he noted 2005 conference proceedings edited by Robert Luft and Ludwig Eiber¹ on confrontations and parallels between the Czech lands and Bavaria. He also highlighted other scholarly contributions in the following disciplines: political and military history, deportations and expulsions, memorial sites, collective memory and regional identity in the borderland (self-determination, mutual perception, tradition), local history and museum cooperation, memorials, Jewish history, ethnography, literary history, and linguistics. He also presented some new cross-border cooperation projects and the possibilities for funding them. Finally, Stellner discussed possible directions for future joint research projects in the fields of economics and education, including products manufactured in the Bavarian-Czech border region and leisure activities.

Eliška Wöfl concluded the introduction of the conference theme by presenting the most important hypotheses, questions, and theoretical frameworks related to it. In addition to the aforementioned notion of “transborderland,” she argued that the terms “transculturality” and “regionality” can be used to describe historical regional characteristics. The perception of the Bavarian-Czech borderlands as a space of transnational and transregional innovation is derived from the social practices and natural dynamics of the border region. According to Wöfl, the regional cooperation, relations and contacts she cited are examples of “networking,” and should be the starting point for determining the direction of future research.

The first part the conference was entitled “The Bavarian-Czech Border Region as a Cultural Space with Its Own Value.” It began with a look at the region’s historical geography. Under the title “Continuity or Caesura? The Region on Bavaria’s Eastern Border and the Epochal Year 1918,” Patrick Reitingger (Bamberg) presented his research project on the Bavarian-Czech border region, which primarily takes the Bavarian perspective. Using conceptual methods of historical geography and Bavarian regional history, he investigated the extent to which the Bavarian-Czech borderlands can be considered a common space of innovation in the “long” nineteenth century and how their spatial aspects have played a role in that. Furthermore, Reitingger considered the impetus the Bavarian-Czech border gave to innovation in the nineteenth century.

A contribution by Mikuláš Zvánovec (Prague) belongs to the second thematic area of the conference, titled “The History of Entrepreneurship and Technical Innovations in the Borderland.” His paper, “School Education and Identity Formation in Šumava Around

¹ Robert Luft and Ludwig Eiber, eds., *Bayern und Böhmen: Kontakt, Konflikt, Kultur: Vorträge der Tagung des Hauses der Bayerischen Geschichte und des Collegium Carolinum in Zwiesel vom 2. bis 4. Mai 2005*, 2nd ed. (München: Oldenbourg, 2007).

1900,” dealt with the border region of the Šumava – the Bavarian Forest at the turn of the twentieth century. Zvánovec focused on identity-forming mutual relationships and on the “intermediate identity” of the inhabitants of Šumava. It turns out that regional traditions and modernizing and nationalizing tendencies clashed particularly sharply in the border area. Entire villages, communities, churches, cultural heritages and, last but not least, the border areas’ inhabitants themselves, were confronted with new trends that had a centripetal nationalizing influence. A growing gap between regional customs and national policy objectives resulted in a pragmatism of everyday life. On the local level, national policies were interpreted and implemented in a way that better served the well-being of the people of the borderlands and, as far as possible, did not constrain them. Zvánovec also dealt with civic associations before 1918. He emphasized that while Czech associations were privately funded initiatives, German associations received support from the governments in Munich and Berlin. After Czechoslovakia’s independence in 1918, things changed. The Czech associations became full partners of political actors in setting the orientation of national education. The school system on the Czech side around 1900 was considered very advanced for its time, so much so that children from the German borderlands often attended schools on the Czech side.

Marek Vokoun’s (Ústí nad Labem) paper, “Innovation at the Turn of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the Austro-Hungarian and German Context,” reviewed several studies on the patent system, including an explanation of ideal heuristic and statistical research methods. On the one hand, he pointed out how difficult it is to obtain reliable statistical data, while on the other hand, he illustrated the advantages of this methodological approach to researching innovation in the nineteenth century.

The last two lectures elaborated on the third thematic area of the conference, which was entitled “Comparative Regions – ‘Transborderness International.’” First, Radek Soběhart (Prague) presented the Czech-Saxon border region from a diachronic perspective. In his contribution “Borders and Possibilities for Czech-Saxon Cooperation,” he briefly discussed the common history of the Czech-Saxon region, and then focused on the present. It turned out that the Czech-Saxon region has always had its specificities, such as the legacy of heavy industry, its demographic structure, and the consequences of the departure of young educated graduates. According to Soběhart, populism arises easily in the region, not only because of cultural influences, but also because of a general lack of interest in innovation, the environment, sustainability, and digitalization in the region. Soběhart presented some positive examples of cross-border creative arts projects in the cultural center in Řehlovice, in the transformation of mining areas into lake landscapes with developed infrastructure, and in joint Czech-Saxon school projects and school partnerships. Overall, communication in certain areas along the Czech-Saxon border is deepening, especially in the private sphere, e.g., with “Saturdays for Neighbors.”

The last contribution to the conference was a lecture by Tobias Weger (Munich) on the topic of comparative regional history. Under the title “Between Empires, States, Ethnic Groups and Religions: Dobruďja as a Border Region in the nineteenth century,” the author addressed the social, political and economic factors that have played a role in the

development of the border region of Dobrudja (the historical region between the Danube Delta and the Black Sea, now divided between Romania and Bulgaria). He identified some trends in the development of the region. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Dobrudja was a tolerant multi-ethnic, multicultural area. It was also an economically strong region whose exports included grain, wax, and honey. Thanks to the construction of strategically important bridges in the nineteenth century, Dobrudja became a transport hub and connecting point between Europe and the Orient. At the micro-level of social practice, a necessary “everyday pragmatism” developed in the region. This resulted in a natural multilingualism and interest in learning other languages, and a regional culture and cuisine based on diverse influences. The inhabitants tried to organize daily life for themselves and regulate the interactions associated with it. Both bottom-up and top-down processes played a role in creating the specific character of the region. Overall, Dobrudja can be described as a region in which periods of neglect and central-state efforts at development constantly alternated. Dobrudja may provide a general paradigm for the study of multilingual transcultural borderlands.

Following the presentations, a roundtable discussion was held to discuss unresolved issues and ideas for further research. In addition to the conference speakers, guests from Passau (Britta Kägler) and Prague (Tomáš Nigrin, Zdeněk Nebřenský) also participated in the roundtable, which proved beneficial for further defining and concretizing the Bavarian-Czech meeting space as an object for research. The conference showed that the interconnection of general history, Eastern (Central) European history, and Bavarian regional history, along with sociology, and economics, has the potential to explain a complex topic like the Bavarian-Czech neighborhood. That interconnection will provide a historical cross-section that can lead to new insights.

Eliška Wölfl

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REVIEWS

Keir Giles, **Moscow Rules: What Drives Russia to Confront the West**. Washington, DC and London: Brookings Institution Press and Chatham House, 2019. 234 pages. ISBN 978-0-8157-3574-8.

Even after eight years of military aggression by Russia against Ukraine, it was only in 2022 that the relationship between Russia and the West took a decisive turn for the worse. That shift did not result from a new, groundbreaking evaluation of Russia's behavior by the West, however. Instead, it was forced upon the West by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Now, many EU and NATO countries are beginning to realize that a reassessment of their existing approach to Russia is more urgent than ever. The change in the overall perception of Russia, the former superpower, was inevitable.

What made this recalibration of the West's perception of Russia necessary is the central theme of the 2019 book *Moscow Rules: What Drives Russia to Confront the West*, written by Keir Giles. Giles is a senior consulting fellow at the Russia and Eurasia Programme of Chatham House and the director of the UK Conflict Studies Research Centre. He has profound expertise on issues related to Russia and its military. The main objective of his book is to explain the many ways in which Russia is different from the Western world. In so doing, he avoids complex theoretical concepts, preferring to describe the reality on the ground, based mainly on accounts by people who have had the chance to experience Russia directly.

Giles's book consists of four main parts, encompassing ten chapters in total, as well as a conclusion. Each part sheds light on a set of the realities of today's Russia. Specific aspects of each set are elaborated in detail in the individual chapters.

Entitled "Russia's Place in the World," the first part of the book describes where Russia stands in the post-Cold War international system, both in reality and in Russia's own, somewhat different perception. The opening chapter is an introduction to a topic that frequently recurs in the rest of the book: the assumption that Russia simply cannot be considered a European or Western-style country and must be viewed through a different lens than is commonly used by Western policymakers. Citing historical accounts and contemporary sources, Giles shows how the understanding of politics, the world in general, and basic terminology such as "democracy" or "respect" diverges between Russia and the West. In part, Giles blames the West's misperceptions of Russia on the fact that most of Russia's communication with the West is mediated by Russia's "liberal intelligentsia," an insignificant and unrepresentative group within Russian society (p. 4).

In the second chapter, Giles elaborates upon Russia's obsession with its status as a superpower. This, he maintains, manifests itself in several ways. Firstly, unlike the Western powers in the twentieth century, Russia never detached itself from the concept that, as a state, it has greater rights than other states (p. 14). Thus, the understanding of sovereignty is significantly different in Russia than it is in the West, as evidenced by the Kremlin's actions abroad (p. 27). Also, Russia seeks to have its say in a number of international matters despite not having any real relation to them (p. 17). Based on Russia's patterns of international behavior, Giles argues that the West finds itself in a repeating cycle of failed

attempts to engage Russia positively as a partner. He cites U.S. President Barack Obama's fruitless attempt to reset relations in 2009 as an example (p. 25). Giles contends that Russia will only start coming to terms with the reality that it is past its former greatness after it experiences its first military defeat (p. 29).

The third chapter analyzes Russia's persistent belief that the West poses an eternal threat to its existence. According to Giles, every move by the West is viewed in Russia as a part of a great conspiracy seeking regime change in Moscow. This includes the "color revolutions" in the post-Soviet space and even events as remote as the Arab Spring. Importantly, Giles addresses the commonly posed question of whether Kremlin actually believes in this narrative or only exploits it to support its domestic interests. He points out how prevalent this narrative is in the Russian information space, and argues this prevalence actually prevents Moscow from restraining it, should it ever want to (p. 38). Giles warns that with Putin's achievement of a third term as President in 2012 and its increasing energy revenues, Russia finds itself in a position where it can take action to address its security concerns, real or feigned, through military means, as it has done in Syria and Ukraine (p. 53).

In the final chapter of the first part of his book, Giles demonstrates how differently Russia and the West experienced the end of the Cold War. As he suggests, Russia perceives the dissolution of the Soviet Union as its own choice and a concession that the West has exploited to Russia's detriment (p. 60). According to Giles, Russia adamantly refused to be "absorbed" by the West in the 1990s and continued building up a distrustful attitude towards NATO and the EU. When he took over from Boris Yeltsin, Putin encouraged this trend and sought to renegotiate the post-Cold War order on the basis of that distrust (p. 68).

Part II of the book provides insight into Russia's unique system of governance and the interaction between the state and its citizens. In the first two chapters of Part II, Giles explains why Putin is not exceptional in Russian history. He describes Putin's rule as following in Russia's traditional line of autocratic governance, which the Soviet era also represented (p. 75). Giles describes how the historical rulers of Russia have been perceived by its citizens, contending that Russian leaders are considered the embodiment of the state itself, and its owners as well, who enjoy the right to profit from ruling the country (p. 78). Giles also argues that the success of Putin's regime and its increasing assertiveness abroad is directly related to limits on the flow of information from the West to Russia. He expects Russia's hostility to the West to increase, no matter how the West responds to its actions (p. 80). One of the strongest points Giles makes here is his claim that any sort of debate about the legitimacy of Putin's power is irrelevant because given present realities, his legitimacy is beyond question (p. 81).

In the second chapter of Part II, Giles develops his claim that the Russians are subjects rather than citizens of Russia. He says that they are being used en masse to achieve the ambitions of the state. As evidence, he cites the Kremlin's indifference to losses among its soldiers and to civilian casualties in conflicts (p. 91), as well as the state's cavalier attitude to property rights. Giles regards the Kremlin's lack of accountability to the Russian

public as one of the most important misunderstandings under which the EU operates when it considers imposing sanctions on Russia (p. 93).

The author also explains the history of the rule of law in Russia. He elaborates on “suspended punishment,” the ad hoc, selective enforcement of laws, which means that Russian “subjects” can find themselves on the wrong side of the law at any moment (p. 96). Giles emphasizes that this system has existed since the Russian empire. He points out that the consequence is the role of informal structures and practices in the country, which make Russia’s system incompatible with the West and most of the international community as a whole (p. 99).

The third part of Giles’s book discusses the heritage that has formed contemporary Russian society and its system of values. In chapter 7, Giles observes several situations that prevail in Russia, yet are marginal if they exist at all in the West. Among these are the Orthodox church, an important proponent of state power. Another, he asserts, is the tendency of Russians to avoid taking personal responsibility for their actions (p. 104). Giles, however, especially stresses the ubiquitousness of lies in Russian politics and among the public, as opposed to rational thought and respect for objective facts embraced in the West (p. 115). The author also emphasizes the crucial role of the myth-ridden “Great Patriotic War” (1941–45) in the creation of a guiding philosophy for Russian society after 1991 (p. 105). Giles believes that Russians’ overall resistance to liberal values is a means of protecting a treasured Russian worldview. He further develops his thesis in chapter 8, where he focuses on Russia’s history. He says that Russia’s future can be predicted to a certain degree, because the arc of the country’s history follows a cycle of “revolution-breakdown-consolidation-stagnation” (p. 118). The author stresses the importance of officially approved historical narratives as a unifying factor for Russia’s society under Putin. These narratives provide Putin with justification for his foreign policy actions. For that reason, the Russian leadership seeks to ensure that its favored narratives go unchallenged, even though they are based on obvious fabrications, most clearly in regard to the origins of Russia and the role of Ukraine in its history (pp. 121–122). Giles believes Russia and the West approach their histories entirely differently, in that other countries tend to face up to their history and learn from it, while Russians refuse to do so (p. 123).

Part IV provides a historical account of attempts to change the status quo in Russia and current trends that, according to the author, might foretell changes for the Russian state. In chapter 9, Giles argues that Westerners tend to overrate the potential of liberal movements in Russia, in spite of their obvious suppression by the state and the general political disengagement of the Russian population. He develops the idea of Russia as a “decorative democracy,” i.e., a state where western-style institutions exist but really serve only the interests of the leadership (p. 129). He recognizes, however, that the mass murders of citizens of the Soviet era do not take place any more. Repression now only targets the most prominent figures that pose a threat to the regime (p. 133). Despite all this, Giles sees a glimmer of potential in Russia’s youth. He thinks that improving their

access to online communication is a possible road to increasing their political engagement and putting pressure on the regime (p. 137).

The last chapter of the book warns against “groundless optimism” in the West regarding future developments in Russia, especially since many predictions of Putin’s downfall have come to naught. Giles attributes the West’s optimism to a lack of institutional memory and its failure to understand the fundamental incompatibilities between itself and Russia. He cites the events of 2014 as only a partial wake-up call (p. 141). For Western hopes to be realized, Giles emphasizes that society must change in Russia. In that context, he again stresses the potential of the post-2000 generation in Russia. He portrays it as completely different from its predecessors. Whilst knowing nothing but Putinism so far and therefore prone to seek change, it is also gradually being exposed to more open sources of information via the internet and generally is less fearful than previous generations (p. 150). Unfortunately, Giles doubts that Russia’s economic suffering is sufficient to bring another revolution to Russia. In the end, however, he hedges his bets by saying that such events can be rather unpredictable (p. 156).

In his conclusion, the author insists that if one is aware of the patterns of Russian history, Moscow’s behavior can be predicted. Putin, he says, is following in his predecessors’ footsteps rather than blazing a new path (p. 160). Giles proposes a long-term strategy for the West in managing its relationship with Russia, one which requires comprehension, confrontation, and containment. In order to maintain peace, Giles states, the West must recognize how Russia is different and take those differences into account as it tries to cooperate with Russia on the interests that both sides share. He counsels strategic patience (p. 174).

Giles does not seem to want to enrich the topic of the West’s relationship with Russia with new, never-before-seen discoveries. Instead, the main value of the author’s work lies in his ability to arrange existing knowledge into a logical mosaic that puts Russia’s often very contradictory behavior into perspective.

Giles’s book has the potential to radically change a Westerner’s perception of Russia in less than 200 pages. Making full use of historical sources, he explains why the areas of incompatibility between the West and Russia are inevitable. He provides an exhaustive account of Russian leadership and, perhaps more importantly, Russian society. Ultimately, he compiles a tremendous amount of evidence to support his point that Russia simply cannot be viewed as any other European country.

Furthermore, Giles rather impressively maintains the clarity of his text despite the extensive and diverse nature of its topic. He creates an easily understood glossary of the repeating patterns that can be observed in Russia’s political and societal behavior. Accordingly, his work resembles in many aspects that of George Kennan, whom he often references in his text.

The author does, though, present some of his arguments with a certainty that at times seems unfounded. This especially applies to some social phenomena which he tries to portray as unique to Russia and absent in Europe, such as the tendency of Russians to avoid personal responsibility. While he does explain the reasons for their presence in

Russian society, their implied exclusive Russian-ness appears inconclusive as no elaborate probe to the Western society is provided by the author, leaving such claims open to question. That failure is, however, excusable, given that his book focuses on Russia, and does not have much room for the specifics of Western society.

Overall, Giles has produced a work of major importance both to his academic peers and to Western policymakers who deal with matters regarding Russia. Giles's decision to focus mainly on the reality on the ground rather than to construct a grand theoretical framework gives weight to his explanations of Russian behavior, and also to his tailored design for an approach to counter it. Moreover, despite the fact that the text was published in 2019, the amazing accuracy of Giles's descriptions of the inner drivers of Moscow's actions and the foreseeable threats they pose to the West have been proven by Russia's brutal full-scale invasion of Ukraine three years later. With the Russian army now poised on the doorstep of the West, a straightforward analysis of contemporary Russia such as this one is needed more than ever.

Jiří Růžek

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6. Reference Examples

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One Author or Editor

Philipp Ther, *The Outsiders: Refugees in Europe since 1492* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 121–123.

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