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**INTER-DEMOCRATIC SECURITY INSTITUTIONS
AND THE SECURITY DILEMMA:
A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST MODEL OF THE EU
AND NATO AFTER THE END OF THE SOVIET UNION**

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Abstract
Realism has traditionally not devoted considerable attention to the role of ideas and institutions. Neoclassical realism can respond to this deficit by exploring their impact on the decision-makers as an intervening variable between the international distribution of power and foreign policy. Decision-makers are assessed by their aptitude to act strategically in accordance with the balance of power logic to maximize security. Ideas and institutions can both support and prevent states from acting 'rationally' to systemic pressures. A neoclassical realist model is developed that assesses the EU and NATO as inter-democratic security institutions after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. While ideas and institutions enhanced their ability to mobilize resources to absorb and engage with Eastern Europe in response to new security challenges, it also reduced their 'rationality' and subsequently aggravated the security dilemma with Russia.

Keywords: Neoclassical realism, Ideas, Institutions, EU, NATO, Russia

Introduction
A puzzle for realists is that some alliances persist long after the rationale for their existence has expired. It will be argued in this article that the flawed assumption of NATO's immediate decline was ingrained in the rational actor assumption, which assumed that states always act in accordance with the balance of power logic to maximize security. Instead, following the demise of the Soviet Union, the EU and NATO evolved as 'inter-democratic security

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institutions'. With a power vacuum and an uncertain democratic future in Eastern Europe, both the EU and NATO posited that their mission was to advance security by promoting liberal democracy and European integration as a positive-sum game. This implied that Eastern Europe would become a stable region that would bridge the West with Russia, rather than a new frontline creating uncertainty by moving incrementally towards Russian borders.

During the Cold War, the EU provided stability mostly through economic and political cooperation, while NATO ensured military security. Their roles, however, are becoming more alike in the post-Cold War era as the EU develops its Common Security and Defense Policy to counter external security challenges, NATO depicts itself as having transformed into a political institution, while both claim to be 'socializing actors' by promoting and cementing liberal democratic values in Eastern Europe and beyond. The 'inter-democratic' format implies that they are 'exclusive' since membership is conditioned by a state's possession of acceptable liberal democratic credentials and adherence to related principles. With no foreseeable prospect for Russian membership in neither of these institutions, realist theory should explain inter-democratic security institutions in terms of the impact of ideas and institutions on the security dilemma.

Revised realist explanations suggest that the West's increased engagement in Eastern Europe constitutes expansionist policies to obtain 'collective hegemony' that were caused by the skewed balance of power, and thus consistent with realist theory. This article will argue that neoclassical realism can contribute further to this argument by assessing the EU and NATO as inter-democratic security institutions. This involves exploring both the structurally induced foreign policy and the ideational and institutional influence on decision-makers as an intervening variable between the international distribution of power and foreign policy. Neoclassical realism challenges the rational actor assumption in terms of states always pursuing their own interests by acting in accordance with the balance of power logic to maximize security. Ideas from classical realism explore unit-level variables that influence the rationality of states. While ideas and institutions can augment security by enhancing the ability of states to mobilize resources to respond to systemic pressures, they can also diminish the capacity of decision-makers to act strategically by diverting attention away from the balance of power logic.

This article presents a neoclassical realist model that conceptualizes these inter-democratic security institutions as expansionist collective hegemonies with reduced rationality. The theoretical assumptions in the model suggest

that power imbalances create incentives for adopting ideas and ideologies that link perpetual peace to hegemony. The paradox is that ideologies repudiating the balance of power logic by suggesting that the international anarchy can be 'transcended' provide ideational support for more offensive means to achieve zero-sum ends, while having a diminished capacity to maximize security when balanced. The rise of the EU and NATO as the dominant and hegemonic European institutions after the dissolution of the Soviet Union reflected the severely skewed balance of power, while the prevailing institutions and ideas that support collective hegemony were products of this distorted equilibrium.

The model developed builds on Herz's (1950a) article 'Idealist internationalism and the security dilemma', and suggests that inter-democratic security institutions have followed the same idealist path as the French nationalists and Soviet communists. Four stages are identified in this model which explains inter-democratic security institutions in terms of idealist internationalism and the resulting impact on the security dilemma with Russia. First, the acceptance of idealist belief that 'realism' can be transcended by promoting security through the advancement of ideals as positive-sum means and ends; second, linking ideals to a unit competing for power as hegemony is deemed necessary to advance these ideals; third, accepting the need for offensive means to pursue more 'just' ends; fourth, the inability to compromise when eventually balanced since conflicts are viewed through a Manichean prism where perpetual peace is achieved by victory over the other.

Neoclassical realism and the repudiation of the 'rational actor' assumption
Neoclassical realism does not constitute a deviation or departure from either neorealism or classical realism, but instead builds upon core precepts and ideas from both. Neoclassical realists 'draw upon'

> the rigor and theoretical insight of the neorealism (or structural realism) of Kenneth N. Waltz, Robert Gilpin, and others without sacrificing the practical insights about foreign policy and the complexity of statecraft found in the classical realism of Hans J. Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger, Arnold Wolfers, and others (Lobell, et al. 2009, p.4).

Neoclassical realism is consistent with the basic assumptions of neorealism. It recognizes that the international distribution of power creates systemic pressures that impose constraints and incentives that decision-makers must respond to strategically in order to maximize their security. It also includes ideas from classical realism by considering unit-level variables in terms of affecting the ability of decision-makers to respond to these systemic pressures.

Decision-makers are defined as those contributing to the development and implementation of a state's policies.

Neoclassical realism adds value to neorealism because it opens the 'black box' by assessing decision-makers as an intervening variable between systemic pressures and foreign policy (Toje and Kunz 2012, p.5). While being consistent with the notion that power produces systemic pressures, these systemic incentives and constraints do not automatically translate into foreign policy because 'systemic pressures are translated through unit-level intervening variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and state structure' (Rose 1998, p.152). Unit-level variables are relevant to the extent they support or 'impede states from pursuing the types of strategies predicted by balance of power theory' (Taliaferro et al. 2009, p.1). These unit-level variables can be domestic power competition, or as explored in this article, ideas and institutions.

Neoclassical realism addresses a gap and inconsistency in realism, the rational actor assumption. Rationality suggests that states will act according to their own interest. In realism this implies acting according to the balance of power logic in order to maximize security (Rose 1998, p.150; Rathbun 2008, p.305; Mearsheimer 2009, p.242; Kitchen 2010; Reichwein 2012; Quinn 2013). The systemic pressures created by the international distribution of power provide incentives for rationality. Acting according to the balance of power logic entails *recognizing* systemic pressures deriving from the international distribution of power and *responding* strategically with the ideal level of balancing or bandwagoning to maximize security. 'Reduced rationality' implies that states 'ignore balance-of-power logic and act in non-strategic ways', and as a result, security is impaired since 'the system punishes them' (Mearsheimer 2009, p.242).

Several theorists nominally associated with other variants of the realist spectrum have demonstrated inconsistency concerning the rational actor assumption. Taliaferro, Lobell and Ripsman (2009) argue that *some* realist scholars have claimed that states are rational, though it should not be considered to be a fundamental assumption of realism. Herz (1981, p.189) drew attention to the role of decision-makers by arguing that the key weakness of realists lies in uncritically 'considering those in charge of a nation's foreign policy "rational actors".' Waltz (1986, p.330), Mearsheimer (2009, p.242) and Rose (1998) argue that governments that do not act rationally by steadily failing to respond to systemic pressures will put their country in risk and possibly undermine the survival of their state. Mearsheimer (2009, p.242) aptly recognizes that 'Waltz's decision to eschew the rational actor assumption is an

important matter to which scholars have paid little attention'. Questioning the rationality of states complements rather than contradicts neorealism. Waltz (1979, p.202) specified that structural realism is not a foreign policy theory, but rather a theory on the incentives and limitations imposed by the international distribution of power in an anarchic system. While structural realism outlines the distribution of power and the resulting systemic pressures, it does not claim that states always act rationally and thereby maximize security.

Rational states are more capable of mitigating the security dilemma since they recognize that the system will punish excessive power accumulation. They acknowledge it to be in their interest to switch from advancing relative power when they are balanced against, and instead attempt to reach a compromise to increase mutual security (Jervis 1982). Waltz (1988 p.161) also posited that 'the ultimate concern of states is not for power but for security'. Thus, the 'morality' of realism is for states to act prudent (or rational) in terms of prioritizing security by accumulating an 'appropriate amount of power' (Waltz 1979, p.40). Status quo powers are defined as seeking 'self-preservation and the protection of values they already possess', while revisionist powers pursue 'non-security expansion' (Schweller 1996, p.92, p.99). States with reduced rationality are often revisionist since the reduced ability to recognize and respond to systemic pressures results in the continuing expansion of power. The security dilemma is therefore less manageable with less rational actors, as they maximize power instead of security, or weaken their own strategic position by not responding sufficiently to constrain other powers.

The impact from ideas and international institutions on rationality

Challenging the rational actor assumption enables an exploration of the impact of ideas and institutions on security, while remaining consistent with the core assumptions of realism. Ideas/ideologies and institutions can have a positive effect on the security dilemma to the extent they improve the ability of states to respond to the systemic pressures. Ideas and institutions can provide support to mobilize resources domestically and internationally in order to balance an adversary. However, they can also reduce rationality and aggravate the security dilemma. Ideas and ideology may limit political pluralism by establishing a narrow frame for interpreting events and shaming opposition. This is especially detrimental for ideologies propagating that realism can be 'transcended', as a repudiation of the balance of power logic. Similarly, international institutions can entangle a state in commitments, with cultural or material dependency encouraging over- or under-balancing. Decision-makers that do recognize the balance of power logic between competing powers may nonetheless not find it politically expedient to act on it since institutional

solidarity and conformity to the established ideological narrative is required to retain political and professional credibility.

Figure 1: The theoretical model of ideational and institutional influence on 'rationality'
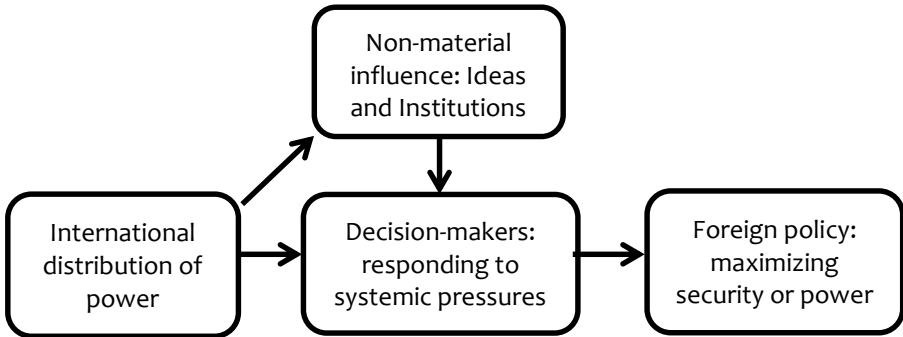
The model in Figure 1 theorizes that international distribution of power creates systemic pressures that decision-makers must respond to in order develop a foreign policy that maximizes security. These systemic pressures also create incentives for embracing ideas and institutions that mobilize support for power ambitions, which can impede the rationality of decision-makers.

Ideologies, norms and ideas can play an important role in terms of how a security dilemma develops since they affect the capacity of states to mobilize material power domestically to carry out foreign policy. Neoclassical realism recognizes constructivist concepts in the social and ideational dimensions of politics, accepting that, in addition to material power, decision-makers may be affected by ideas, ideologies, and beliefs (Herz 1981; Kitchen 2010). The key distinction between neoclassical realism and constructivism is that neoclassical realism assumes that ideas and ideology are reflections of power and they can only assist to mitigate the security dilemma to the degree they strengthen rationality. Ideologies proposing that power competition can be transcended if ideals of liberal peace are privileged serve the purpose of augmenting hegemonic ambitions and reducing rationality.

Ideology and normative framing can enhance decision-makers' ability to *respond* more persuasively to opponents, as political identities can be assigned to allies and opponents in ways that unite and enable decision-makers to mobilize resources. However, this ideological inference can also undermine rationality due to a weakened ability to *recognize* the systemic pressures from the international distribution of power, since allies are perceived to be 'just like

us' while opponents are perceived as the exact opposite. Ideas and ideologies can therefore undermine security maximization and cause conflict to the extent that they draw attention away from the primacy of power. Classical realists like Carr, Morgenthau, Butterfield, and Kennan warned that ideology and norms can produce beliefs in the inherent goodness of one's own political system, which manifests itself as destructive 'self-righteousness', 'moral crusades', or 'nationalist universalism' (Booth and Wheeler 2008, p.98). Policies directed by ethics may divert attention away from the balance of power logic and cause under- or over-balancing. Institutions that priorities normative policies will either 'be left as a weak and ineffective actor[s] unable to further the shared interests of its member states, or [they] will indulge in quixotic moral crusades - with the attendant risk of hubris leading to nemesis' (Hyde-Price 2008, p.29).

Powerful states seek to influence the rationality of decision-makers by shaping identities and perceptions in accordance with their power interests, to encourage bandwagoning behind them and balance opponents. Herz (1981, p.187) argues that due to the importance of perceptions and misperceptions, 'image-making' and 'diplomatic symbolism' non-material factors have become a significant part of power politics. A critical aspect of a foreign policy is to promote 'a favorable image to allies, opponents, neutrals, and last but not least, one's own domestic audience' (Herz 1981, p.187). Jervis (1976) also insists that decision-makers perceptions and misperceptions affect policies. Common ideology, culture, or political systems can strengthen internal cohesion in alliances through 'ideological solidarity' (Morgenthau 2006; Walt 1997, p.168). Exclusive security institutions dependent on external enemies therefore have incentives to promote misperceptions about the intentions of the other, and to portray them as being inferior, threatening, and the ideological opposite from 'us'.

Institutions also impact the ability of states to respond to systemic pressures. With the increasingly prominent role of international institutions after the Cold War, realists have become more engaged in debates concerning their relevance. While offensive realists such as Mearsheimer consider international institutions to be of marginal importance, traditional and modified structural realists propose that international institutions affect international relations (Schweller and Priess 1997). Institutions reflect state interests and are therefore only as strong as states allow them to be. States will only voluntarily accept constraints on sovereignty by institutions either to form larger units of power to collectively advance relative gains against another state, or alternatively for positive-sum gain when there is a balance of power and they

desire to maintain the status quo. Whether international security institutions aggravate or mitigate the security dilemma therefore depends on the extent they reflect the balance of power. When the discrepancy grows between an international institution and the actual distribution of power, the international system will destabilize and the prospect of conflict and war increases (Schweller and Priess 1997).

Inclusive institutions reflecting the balance of power and a desire to maintain status-quo can increase rationality by facilitating cooperation between decision-makers of various states for the purpose of managing changes in the international distribution of power and mitigating the security dilemma. Such institutions may resolve disputes at the institutional level before they escalate to military conflicts. Inclusive institutions chiefly serve the purpose of security *with* others by *constraining* member states from pursuing zero-sum gains against other members. Realism accredits the success of the United Nations to realist foundations as it reflects the balance of power by delegating privileges to the great powers that ensure their interest in preserving the system. However, inclusive institutions such as the UN or OSCE lose their significance if the balance of power is skewed, since states do not constrain themselves.

Exclusive institutions can become instruments for states to compete for power by pursuing security *against* others by *enabling* a group of states to pursue relative gains against competing powers. Exclusive institutions are more aggressive when there is an imbalance of power due to reduced costs of opportunistic expansionism. Booth and Wheeler (2008, pp.188-189) labelled the 'Mitrany paradox' as the phenomenon of exclusive integration projects that attempt to develop new institutional superpowers depart from functional cooperation among extant actors and instead construct fewer, larger, and less compatible entities of power. While integration is usually considered a positive-sum game, it can become a zero-sum game for states excluded from an initiative, which instigates a security dilemma. Exclusive integration initiatives can de-couple a state from its neighbors and harm its security and prosperity (Charap and Troitskiy 2013).

Institutions reduce the rationality of states if they impede the ability to balance or bandwagon according to the balance of power logic. Institutional 'stickiness' or entanglement caused by cultural or material dependency can induce policies to maintain 'institutional solidarity' even when it does not harmonize with the balance of power logic. The aforementioned institutional influence can prevent the balancing of an expansionist state or replace a state's *right* to make war with a *duty* to make war (Herz 1942, pp.1046-1047). A powerful state will

institutionalize their power over a weaker state, and collectively they both gain privileges by increasing power over a third state. The weaker state becomes more vulnerable and develops dependency, while the competing strong state is weakened since its influence over the weak state is contained (Walt 1985, p.6). The stability provided by hegemony depends on constructing a common external threat in order for weaker states to voluntarily yield some sovereignty (Kindleberger 1986). Thus, the sustainability of this relationship has a confrontational bias since the removal of a perceived threat diminishes the privileged position of the powerful state.

A neoclassical realist model of inter-democratic security institutions and the security dilemma

The neoclassical realist model outlined in this article assumes a structurally induced foreign policy, with ideological and institutional support for hegemony that undermines the rationality of decision-makers. The genuine belief that realism can be transcended by proliferating one's own ideals implies that security can be maximized without de-coupling these values from an entity competing for power. As a result, these ideals create incentives to employ offensive means to advance zero-sum ends, while the subsequent balancing by competing powers will be perceived in uncompromising terms as a conflict between good and bad virtues. As the competing units of power are organized according to distinctive internal characteristics in terms of religion (theocracies), race or nationality (nationalism), or the form of governance (communism / liberal democracy), rivalry for power can easily become interlinked with notions of inequality and superiority. Through an ideological prism, concepts like sovereign equality and the balance of power are deemed to be immoral and illegitimate. Peace is then not believed to be dependent on the realist assumptions of mutual constraints on all actors, but instead the prospect of perpetual peace is believed to be achievable through victory by containing / converting or defeating the 'other'. 'Extreme realism' therefore ensues as ideology supports militarism and sovereign inequality to advance hegemony.

This neoclassical realist model is based on the work of the classical realist, Herz (1950a), concerning the role of ideology and institutions on the security dilemma. Herz has been widely influential in international relations theory by introducing the concept of the 'security dilemma'. Remarkably less attention has however been devoted to his work on ideology and institutions, despite this being his main focus in terms of factors that can adversely impact the security dilemma. Herz (1950a) warned that ideologies claiming to 'transcend realism' would reduce rationality of decision-makers and increase

confrontation. He also suggested that the measure of 'human progress' had historically not been to reduce wars by institutionalizing 'collective security', but rather to transfer the competition for power from smaller to larger units and thereby elevating conflicts and destruction to higher levels (Herz 1942; Herz 1950a).

Herz (1950a) drew a conceptual comparison between French nationalism and Soviet communism as 'idealist internationalism'. They both represented liberal/idealist ideas of benevolent domestic values of human freedom being externalized as peaceful behavior in the international system, which would allow them to 'transcend realism' and power competition. However, instead of transcending power competition, the advancement of norms depends on and is interlinked with the accumulation of power and hegemony. This can also be referred to as a geo-ideological paradigm, which is when imbalances in the international distribution of power produce support for an ideology advocating that the survival of liberal norms essential for perpetual peace is dependent on the advancement of hegemony (Pleshakov 1994).[1] Linking such ideals to a unit competing for power and hegemony causes a return to national causes manifested by exclusion, expansionism, aggression and imperialism (Herz 1950a).

The model and hypothesis presented here suggests that the EU and NATO, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, share the structural and idealist mechanisms with this idealist internationalism. A possible compromise for mutual security had been developing as the Cold War had been declared over in 1989, and in 1990 the 'Charter of Paris for a new Europe' stipulated that peace in Europe would be established on the principle of ending dividing lines. However, the charter lost much of its clout and meaning the following year as the collapse of the Soviet Union greatly skewed the balance of power and removed constraints for collective hegemony by the Western bloc. Less than a month after the collapse of the Soviet Union, President Bush discursively revised the history of how the Cold War ended and the subsequent significance in the State of the Union Address: 'By the grace of God, America won the Cold War' and 'the leader of the West [that] has become the leader of the world'.

Systemic incentives emerged that favored an ideology portraying NATO and the EU as geopolitically neutral and value-based institutions that rise above

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[1] The 'geo-ideological paradigm' was initially used by Pleshakov (1994) to explain the Soviet Union's shift from internationalism to a national cause. Here it is used more broadly by also describing inter-democratic security institutions.

power competition. The rhetoric in the West changed diametrically as ending *division* in Europe was no longer the key prescription for peace, but rather harmony on the continent was dependent on ensuring that Russia respected the *sovereignty* of Eastern Europe to freely choose membership in exclusive blocs. Concurrently, spheres of influence are not portrayed as *exclusive influence* cemented by bloc-politics, but instead defined as denying states the *sovereignty* to join 'Europe'.

Without a post-Cold War political settlement that accommodates Russia on the continent, the ability to mitigate the security dilemma deteriorates as security institutions become a tool for power competition rather than an instrument for mitigating power competition. NATO's enlargement and non-mandated intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999 ended the prospect for Gorbachev's 'Common European Home', and the unconstrained unipolar moment further accelerated after September 11. The exclusive conception of 'Europe' that demotes the largest state on the continent to the only non-European European state, results in 'European integration' and 'democratization' becoming a zero-sum geopolitical project since states must choose between 'us' or Russia. Realist theory expects Russia to balance Western expansionism and unilateral interventionism as it recovers from the perilous 1990s, which has become evident in Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and other parts of the world. When balanced and further expansion of power reduces security, rational decision-makers are expected to accept a compromise to maximize security. However, ideology conflates security maximization with power maximization as a Europe 'united and free', anchored in the EU and NATO, which is perceived to create sustainable peace.

Stages of idealist internationalism
The first stage of idealist internationalism is the conviction of one's own benign and normative means and ends, which are believed to be capable of transforming the international system. After the French Revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution and the Western bloc following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the expectation was a consensual acceptance of their universal ideals and leadership. These movements would transcend power competition and bring about a 'totally and radically different situation', which would separate 'the present evil world from the brave new world of the future' (Herz 1950a). The French Revolution embraced the idea that with the rise of sovereign nation-states the domestic advancement of human freedom would be externalized and manifested as a harmonious international system with free, equal, and self-determining nationalities. The Bolshevik revolution envisioned that with the rise of socialism the domestic advancement of human freedom in

a classless society would produce a harmonious and post-sovereign international system.

Similarly, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became common to expect that the acceptance of liberal democratic norms would be externalized in an increasingly post-sovereign and liberal democratic international system. This new order was expected to be spearheaded by NATO and the EU, which are portrayed as a 'force for good' with inherently positive-sum policies since security is promoted through European integration and democratization. This shared similarities with the utopian Wilsonian expectations about the contributions of democracy to human progress in terms of ending wars. The teleology based on Immanuel Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' also bore similarities to Georg Hegel's view that the French Revolution was bringing about the 'end of history'. Such expectations about human progress became a recurrent position in discussions and interpretations of Fukuyama's (1989) essay on 'the end of history'.

NATO and the EU envision their means to be benevolent by offering the prospect of membership as an incentive for democratic reforms, while the end of a democratic and stable Europe is a positive-sum game for the entire continent, including Russia. This logic is also applied to conflict management. The 'Europeanization' of conflict resolution suggests 'linking the final outcome of the conflict to a certain degree of integration of the parties involved in it into European structures' (Coppieters 2004, 13). The model implies that the possibility of membership encourages conflicting sides to make compromise, and membership as an end ensures sustainable peace by adding a tier of governance that does not divide and a shared identity.

The second stage of idealist internationalism is the recognition that power accumulation is an end by linking the survival of the ideals/norms to an entity of power. Promoting universal norms is perceived to require hegemony in order for the ideal to become attractive to other states and to marginalize alternatives presented by challengers. The French, Soviets, and NATO/EU members considered themselves to develop an international aristocratic structures as a selfless act by taking on the burden of leading the rest of the world towards universal ideals. It was deemed to be necessary and a responsibility to defend the norms, while explaining their actions as being driven by external demand.[2] However, internationalism becomes 'subservient

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[2] This resembles Waltz (1979) comparison of the US international democratisation mission with the colonial 'white man's burden' and 'civilising missions'.

to a primarily "national" cause, or rather, the maintenance of the regime of one specific "big power"' (Herz 1950a, p.171).

Democracies are no exceptions as the leadership will perceive it as their duty to control and dominate international institutions to defend the democratic norms from the control of the majority (Herz 1950b, p.165). The states that most vigorously advocate the virtues of democracy at the domestic level are therefore more likely to reject proposals to democratize decision-making within international institutions (Hurrell 2003, p.42). By linking democracy with Euro-Atlantic institutions, liberal democratic norms are presented as both a constitutional principle and an international hegemonic norm (Rosow 2005). The EU needs to accumulate power to promote values and in order to have an attractive appeal to states that motivates reform (Youngs 2004; Diez 2005). EU and NATO effort to develop an international system that transcends power competition is also dependent on a hegemonic position to constrain challengers such as Russia (Cooper 2007). Consequently, conflicts ensue since 'the security dilemma is at its most vicious when commitments, strategy, or technology dictate that the only route to security lies through expansion' (Jervis 1978, p.187).

Concerning European integration as a means for enhancing security, Mitrany (1948, p.1965) contrasted functionalism with federalism. Functionalism implies that *form follows function*, that is, integration should be issue-based in terms of having functional value by for example enhancing security. In contrast, by aiming to develop or preserve a pre-determined form and power structure, the basic functions of these institutions are subordinated to power consideration. During a debate on NATO enlargement, the former US Ambassador to NATO outlined a key perspective in the US: 'NATO will not be the NATO that brings in the United States to Europe in the way that it needs to if Russia is in it' (Taft 1997). The need to preserve the form was the point of departure rather than discussing function, as the debate focused on the need to find a new reason to exist, a *raison d'état.* The argument was that without an adversary NATO had to get 'out-of-area' or 'out-of-business'. The notion that power and hegemony in itself was required for security was also reflected in the US National Strategy, which stipulated that 'our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States' (White House 2002). Waltz (2000) argues that NATO's enlargement that excluded Russia was consistent with realist assumptions since, just like victories in great wars, the collapse of the Soviet Union left the balance of power skewed which resulted in unconstrained and offensive behavior that produces future enemies (Russia).

With the focus on form, the EU is also convinced that strengthening and preserving its dominance is a source for peace. The European Council President, van Rompuy, asserted that Euroscepticism could cause war as without the EU there would be a return to nationalism, and nationalism leads to war (Waterfield 2010). Similarly, German Chancellor Merkel proclaimed that the outbreak of war in Europe cannot be ruled out if the EU project were to unravel as a consequence of the Euro's disintegration (Pop 2011). Others dismissed war between EU members, but rather linked power to the ability of the EU to be a 'force for good' beyond its borders. The former French President, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, a key architect of the rejected EU Constitution, proclaimed that 'over the decades, the basis of the EU's existence has changed. We've moved from seeking peace to seeking greatness' (Rettman 2013). Tony Blair defended the EU in similar vein:

> The rationale for Europe in the 21st century is stronger than it has ever been. It is essentially about power, not about peace anymore. We won't fight each other if we don't have Europe, but we will be weaker, less powerful, with less influence (Scheuermann 2013).

When extending the EU's external governance to the 'shared neighborhood', the focus on form or function has contrasting effects. In the post-Soviet space the populations are deeply divided in terms of viewing Russia as the main strategic partner or the chief threat. In Moldova and Ukraine the populations are split down the middle and marginal election results determine which zero-sum policies will prevail in terms of integrating with the West or Russia. A 'functionalist' approach to European security suggests that harmonizing integration efforts with Russia would mitigate divisions within these states as relations with Russia are maintained, while balancing an excessively dominant Russian influence. An approach that seeks to maintain a pre-determined form, an EU-centric Europe, would effectively align the EU with anti-Russian political groups at the expense of both domestic and international security.

The EU's Association Agreement presented Ukraine with an ultimatum and a civilizational choice of belonging either with Russia or the West (Mearsheimer 2014). The Association Agreement outlined areas of economic, political and military integration towards the EU and away from Russia, which would not be made compatible with the Russian-led Customs Union. After a combination of carrots and sticks by Russia, Ukraine walked away from the Association Agreement. Ukraine and Russia instead proposed a trilateral EU-Russia-Ukraine agreement that would harmonize tariff-levels and remove the zero-sum format

for European integration. The European Commission President, Barroso, equated the multilateral approach to granting Russia a sphere of influence and a 'veto' in its relations with neighboring states: 'When we make a bilateral deal, we don't need a trilateral agreement… the times for limited sovereignty are over in Europe' (Marszal 2013). Instead, the Association Agreement would 'free' Ukraine from Russia.

An EU and NATO-centric Europe supports 'pro-European' political groups that aim to de-couple from Russia and marginalize the Russophone population domestically.[3] The EU and NATO do not perceive themselves to divide Europe and promote exclusive influence, but rather believe that these institutions eliminate dividing lines and spheres of influence by uniting 'Europe'. Condoleezza Rice explained the Cold War as a 'zero-sum' conflict since 'every state was to choose sides' (US Department of State 2008a). She contrasted this to the current situation in which 'Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, the Baltic states, Slovenia, Slovakia, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, are members of NATO and Europe. The Cold War is over' (US Department of State 2008b). From this perspective, accommodating Russia does not end divisions and spheres of influence, but would instead grant Russia a 'veto' in Europe which is equated to a sphere of influence. Russian proposals for harmonizing integration efforts and ending the division of Europe has thus been rejected, which includes the proposal for a new European security architecture, a EU-Russian Union for free trade and free movement of people, an inclusive energy complex, and common peacekeeping operations.

The third stage of idealist internationalism is the proposition that the presumed benign ends justify and morally compel offensive means. When the ideals are not adopted as expected and/or states do not align themselves behind the leaders of the ideals, sovereign equality is challenged and de-legitimized due to the belief that the incumbents of the old world has to be defeated to give way to the new world. Constraints on projecting power are reduced, setting the conditions for perpetual war to achieve perpetual peace. Natural law is granted precedence over legal positivism, which invites conquest and hegemony by claiming responsibility for the freedom of other peoples.

Since ideologies and norms are reflections of power, expansionist powers tend to embrace norms promoting sovereign inequality and clauses of

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[3] The lack of voting rights for Russian-speakers the Baltic States is widely perceived in Moscow to have set the precedent for how a Europe without Russia would be sustained.

exceptionalism in international law, while status quo powers are inclined to support norms advocating sovereign equality and constraint. The French professed that the universal values of the revolution were to be imposed on humanity by force. Thus the French National Convention declared in 1792 that France would 'come to the aid of all peoples who are seeking to recover their liberty' (Herz 1950a). The Bolsheviks declared in 1917 'the duty to render assistance, armed, if necessary, to the fighting proletariat of the other countries' (Herz 1950a).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO and the EU began to shed the notion of security being dependent on mutual constraints. The right and responsibility to defend liberal democratic norms and the freedom of other peoples was claimed, through an increasingly militaristic and interventionist interpretation of human security. This reflected Wilson's justification for a shift in the US posture from a *passive* beacon of democracy to be emulated, to taking on an *active* missionary duty where the military defeat of Germany would be the 'war to end all wars' and make the world 'safe for democracy'. This militaristic missionary duty has revived since 'democracies promote war because they at times decide that the way to preserve peace is to defeat nondemocratic states and make them democratic' (Waltz 2000: 11).

The normative position has changed diametrically to support an offensive approach to security. Europe's violent history is no longer a reason to pursue security by *constraining* the use of force, but instead it creates a responsibility to *enable* the EU and NATO to prevent others from committing similar crimes. In Germany, the prevailing sentiment among the political class was that it had a responsibility to use force in Kosovo to 'prevent genocide', even without a UN mandate (Wood 2002). Former German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, stated that he had been raised on two principles: 'never another war and never another Auschwitz'. He suggested that because of the Kosovo crisis 'these two maxims came into conflict, and I had to give up the notion of never another war' (Sultan 2013).

NATO enlargement and unilateral interventionism after the Cold War set the precedent for an offensive approach similar to that of earlier unconstrained victors that became expansionist and threatening while believing that they were 'acting for the sake of peace, justice, and well-being in the world' (Waltz 2000, p.28). Humanitarianism has become increasingly militarized and treated as synonymous to regime change, and as in the case of Libya the humanitarian intervention ended after Gadhafi was toppled irrespective of the deteriorating situation that followed. NATO's dominant position in Europe is conceived as an

'insurance policy' against a possible future challenge from Russia, which the former US Secretary of State, James Baker (2002), warned might become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The expert group that drafted the recommendations for NATO's new Strategic Concept advocated that NATO should prepare for potential future conflicts with Russia 'because Russia's future policies toward NATO remain difficult to predict, the Allies must pursue the goal of cooperation while also guarding against the possibility that Russia could decide to move in a more adversarial direction' (NATO 2010).

The EU has also demonstrated increasing willing to use its soft power and hard power through the CSDP for democratization and 'European integration'. Exclusive institutions establishing unilateral 'external governance' to disseminate norms will predictably demonstrate that with a demagogic hammer for power competition, every nail will be depicted ideologically as democracy and human rights. Russian Foreign Minister, Lavrov (2007), refers to 'instruments as "democratorship"': 'Let us be frank, the main criterion used to measure a nation's level of democracy seems to be its readiness to follow in the footsteps of other countries' policies'. EU and US support for 'color revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine revealed that popular anti-corruption and pro-democracy demonstrations could be high-jacked by zero-sum geopolitical interests as both Ukraine and Georgia linked their 'revolutions' directly to NATO membership. The Russian perception of a *coup d'état* were considered to be validated as Yushchenko named the European Parliament the 'godparents' of the new Ukraine due to the support for the 'Orange Revolution'..

The degree of intervention in the internal affairs of neighboring states reached new levels in 2013 and 2014 as the EU and US backed the toppling of the corrupt, but democratically elected, President of Ukraine. The EU and the US had from the onset sided with the protesters against the government following the rejection of the Association Agreement, and several top officials emerged in Kiev to demonstrate their solidarity with the opposition. The solidarity with Western Ukrainian political groups implied neglecting that the revolt was not supported by the Eastern regions, from Kharkov to Odessa. Support for 'Ukraine' also involved tacit consent for the opposition seizing government buildings and right-wing groups spearheading the violence against the government of Yanukovich.

The EU eventually claimed to promote stability by negotiating a unity government. However, when the President was unconstitutionally toppled the following day, the EU did not defend the unity government it had signed under

or call for adherence to the constitution.[4] Instead, EU officials flew to Kiev to boost the legitimacy of the new government and signed the political chapters of the Association Agreement that the democratically elected government had refused. The EU's support for the new Ukrainian authorities involved denying agency and legitimacy to the Eastern regions that refused recognizing the new authorities, and denouncing their similar counter-revolutionary strategy of seizing government buildings. The narrative of a 'democratic revolution' has since sustained irrespective of corruption levels not lowering, the de-facto banning of the main two political parties in Eastern Ukraine, and the use of an 'anti-terrorist' military campaign against the Donbas region.

The last stage of idealist internationalism is reduced rationality impeding the ability to manage and mitigate security dilemma. The privileged and unconstrained position of inter-democratic security institutions is a temporary condition. Wars or the collapse of states can skew the balance of power, leaving one side unconstrained and in a position to expand their power at the expense of the security of others (Waltz 2000). However, expansionism exhausts resources and creates an incentive for others in the international system to balance. 'The international equilibrium is broken; theory leads one to expect its restoration' (Waltz 2000, p.30).

Rational decision-makers are expected to accept a compromise to maximize security gain when they are balanced. However, with a prevailing Manichean prism, balancing is perceived as an attempt to disrupt normative positive-sum policies in favor of a return to *realpolitik*. Perpetual peace is sought through victory over balancing powers as the idealist 'opposes all the natural forces and trends which are the direct or indirect consequence of the security and power dilemma' (Herz 1950a, p.178). Since the assigned political identities are morally dichotomous, decision-makers considering a compromise can be shamed and discredited for betraying of their virtues and undoing the foundation for sustainable peace. Waltz (2000a, p.11) questions the rationality of Western democracies in which 'citizens of democratic states tend to think of their countries as good, aside from what they do, simply because they are democratic'. Similarly, 'democratic states also tend to think of undemocratic states as bad, aside from what they do, simply because they are undemocratic' (Waltz 2000, p.11). Aron argues that:

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[4] The Rada did not receive enough votes for impeachment, the impeachment process had not been followed, and there had been a presence of armed groups.

Idealistic diplomacy slips too often into fanaticism; it divides states into good and evil, into peace-loving and bellicose. It envisions a permanent peace by the punishment of the latter and the triumph of the former. The idealist, believing he has broken with power politics exaggerates its crimes (cited in: Schweller and Priess 1997, p.11).

The 'Manichean trap' suggests that dividing states into good versus evil in order to mobilize support and resources to counter an adversary will obstruct the ability to resolve a conflict though a compromise that ensures a sustainable post-conflict resolution. Wilson evoking rhetoric and imagery of an evil German empire to mobilize support for the US entering the war created a 'Manichean trap', as it became difficult to accept a compromise with 'evil' in a peace treaty. Instead, it led to support for excessively punitive conditions for surrender, which ensured that a Germany would reject the post-conflict resolution when it recovered (Junker, Hildebrand and Schroeder 1995).

The West has similarly created a Manichean trap with Russia. Competition with Russia for influence in the 'shared neighborhood' is consistently portrayed as a conflict between 'European integration' and Russian 'spheres of influence'. Implicit in this perspective is that there are no legitimate independent role for Russia in Europe, which obscures the conceptual distinction between Russian influence and Russian spheres of influence. Russian reactions to enlargements and interventionism are perceived to confirm the importance of NATO and the EU to maintain peace, rather than de-legitimize them. George Kennan offered his prediction on NATO enlargement in 1998:

I think it is the beginning of a new Cold War... Of course there is going to be a bad reaction from Russia, and then [the NATO expanders] will say that we always told you that is how the Russians are - but this is just wrong (Friedman 1998).

Russia considers it necessary to its military and peacekeepers to remain in adjacent conflict regions due to the West's averseness to accept common peacekeeping initiatives and to compromise on political solutions that accommodate all relationships. At the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit, which called for elevating the role of the OSCE in European security, Russia committed itself to withdrawing its peacekeepers completely from Georgia and Moldova. However, the parallel NATO and EU enlargements diminished the potential role of the collective OSCE and the prospect of establishing a pan-European security system. The absence of multilateral alternatives led Russia to revise this withdrawal as it would merely be replaced by zero-sum initiatives (Author interview 2011). A Russian official suggested that Russia had to respond to 'a

completely new reality [that] has been created since', where the rise of unilateral and often anti-Russian approaches made the withdrawal pledge impossible to fulfil (Author interview 2011).

This had also been the lesson from the Western Balkans. In June 1999, Russia sent troops to Pristina airport unannounced to establish an independent presence to ensure that Serbia's territorial integrity would be preserved in accordance with UN Resolution 1244, given that Russia would not receive a peacekeeping sector independent of NATO (Rutland and Dubinsky 2008: 265; Author interview 2011). These troops had to be withdrawn later, and the painful lesson learned in Kosovo was that in the absence of an equal and common security arrangement operating on the ground, the West would not honor its commitments or international law. The EU and NATO consequently lost much legitimacy in Russia due to their conduct in the Balkans. This has resulted in an unwavering stance as, for example, in Transnistria (Samokhvalov 2007). The Russian intervention in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 were also anchored in the firm belief that a strong military presence is required in the absence of a European security system that accommodates Russian security interests.

Russia reacted to the events in Ukraine by annexing/reuniting with Crimea to secure its Black Sea Fleet, and by supporting Eastern Ukrainian groups that repudiated the legitimacy of the new government. Instead of recognizing Russia's actions as a reaction and critiquing it on this ground as excessive and illegitimate, the dominant narrative was that of an offensive expansionist Russia plotting to re-establish the Soviet Union, while drawing comparisons between Putin and Hitler. Diverting attention away from Russian security interests with the use of emotional rhetoric constrained political pluralism and contributed to unify the Euro-Atlantic community against Russia. However, it also had the effect of reducing the capacity to debate Russian security concerns and to reach a compromise on what Russia considers to be a red line and an existential threat.

Institutional entanglement also diminishes the rationality of EU and NATO members. Various states may perceive it as harmful to their security to overbalance Russia as this can instigate fears and aggravate the security dilemma. However, the capacity to act strategically in accordance with the balance of power logic is impaired due to institutional dependency. The EU limits political pluralism by pushing for a 'common voice', while NATO demands alliance 'solidarity'. Irrespective of being highly critical of NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999, the new Eastern European conformed to the position of the alliance. Similarly, while Germany and France had been at the forefront to

critique the destabilizing potential of missile defense and subsequently acted as mediators between the US and Russia, this critique was muted once missile defense became a NATO asset. The deliberate focus on solidarity to limit political pluralism was more evident in terms of overcoming Norway's opposition to missile defense and expression of empathy with Russian concerns. The US ambassador to Norway reported that they were pressuring the Norwegian government '*to a minimum counter Russian misstatements and distinguish Norway's position from Russia's to avoid damaging alliance solidarity*' (Wikileaks 2007). When missile defense was to become a NATO asset, the US Ambassador argued that Norway had to 'adjust to current realities' since it would have a 'hard time defending its position if the issue shifts to one of alliance solidarity' (Wikileaks 2008). Following the Norwegian U-turn on missile defense, it was declared in the Norwegian Parliament that 'it is important for the political cohesion of the alliance not to let the opposition, perhaps especially from Russia, hinder progress and feasible solutions' (Stortinget 2012).

Conclusion

Realist theory suggests the distorted power equilibrium following the collapse of the Soviet Union incited expansionism due to the lack of constraints on the West. Prominent realists such as Waltz, Kennan, Walt and Mearsheimer thus cautioned against NATO and/or EU against enlargements and unilateral engagement of Eastern Europe as a power expansion that would undermine security by aggravating the security dilemma with Russia. This article explored the implicit or explicit repudiation of the rational actor assumption by various realist scholars to address the tendency of NATO and the EU to conflate power maximization with security maximization.

It has been argued here that neoclassical realism provides further theoretical implications as structural imbalances also create incentives to embrace ideas and institutions that can imperil the capacity of decision-makers to act rationally. The demise of the Soviet Union encouraged the revision of ideas by even discarding what had previously been considered conventional wisdom, notably the security benefits from embracing former adversaries in inclusive institutions. The lessons from the inclusion of France in the Concert of Europe to the embrace of Germany after the Second World War have thus been replaced by new ideas of exclusive inter-democratic security institutions 'transcending realism' with positive-sum policies. It is concluded that the Kantian theory of democratic peace is instrumental to and has been incorporated into power politics. Subsequently, the ideological binary world

view has been revived that again divides the continent, encourages moral crusades and obstructs compromise.

The model developed on inter-democratic security institutions and the security dilemma suggests that states harboring the intention and capacity for [collective] hegemony are structurally induced to adopt ideas that equate power expansion with perpetual peace, and to strengthen exclusive institutions that facilitates collective hegemony. The paradox presented in this model is that the inability to de-couple ideals of human freedom and progress from entities competing for power results in 'extreme realism', as ideals of human freedom and sustainable peace mobilizes resources in favor of more offensive means to achieve zero-sum ends. Reduced rationality also has the adverse effect of impeding the aptitude to compromise to enhance security when balanced due to the 'Manichean trap' and institutional entanglement that require peace through victory.

While this model largely limited itself to the theoretical assumptions for the 'rise' of inter-democratic security institutions, further in-depth research is needed into the inner-working of decision-making. This entails exploring the extent to which ideas and institutions limit political pluralism and marginalize 'rational' decisions that would have maximized security in accordance with the balance of power logic. The conflict in Ukraine can provide ample of evidence for future research based on this model as the EU and NATO engage in strong normative rhetoric that weakens the prospect of establishing a common narrative and defining shared security interests with Russia.

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**NATIONALISM VERSUS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION:
THE CASE OF ATAKA**

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Abstract
Since the Maastricht Treaty (1992) much research has been engaged in the study of Euroscepticism, mainly in its typology and varieties. This article sheds light on one of the most significant, decisive and formative determinants of euroscepticism: nationalism. It explores the brand of ethnic nationalism that ATAKA, a far-right political party of Bulgaria, espoused in the aftermath of Bulgaria's accession to the EU (2007-2009). It argues that such nationalism is incompatible with the economic and political internationalization that the project of European integration and unification generates. Indeed, even though ATAKA did not openly demand the withdrawal of Bulgaria from the European Union, it advocated a totally different, strongly intergovernmentalist, scheme that a priori excludes any ceding of national sovereignty to a supranational body.

Keywords: nationalism, Bulgaria, European Union, ATAKA, Euroscepticism

Introduction
European integration is not smooth and unchallenged. Since the Maastricht Treaty (1992), opposition to European unification fuelled by Eurosceptic parties from all sides of the political spectrum has gained ground. An incremental scholarship pursues to understand and classify the diversity of the opposition to European integration: from hard/principled versus soft/contingent Euroscepticism (Szczerbiak & Taggart 2008) to scepticism versus rejection (Kopecky & Mudde 2002) to rejectionist versus revisionist versus minimalist approaches (Flood & Usherwood 2007) to political versus instrumental Euroscepticism (Lubbers & Scheepers 2005). Indeed, far-right parties have

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articulated several Eurosceptic discourses on European integration drawing on a variety of theories, ideologies, and jargons (Mudde 2007). Turning to the rather under-researched area of ideologies and discourses which reinforce and sustain opposition to European integration and unification, this article intends to refine Euroscepticism studies and explain the centrality of nationalism in the far-right opposition to European unification. It argues that the discursive centrality of ethnic and cultural identities and the prominence of nationalism prove to be incompatible with a supranational vision and the economic and political internationalization that it generates. More specifically, this article explores and investigates the stance of the Bulgarian extremist right political party, ATAKA (Attack), towards the EU by shedding light on the decisive and formative determinant of its Euroscepticism: nationalism. Besides, it argues that ATAKA availed itself of and made an extensive use of national discourses, and, more especially, discursive strategies and topoi such as the construction of an internal frontier, the re-drawing of social boundaries, cultural confrontation, the shift of blame and responsibility, victimization, threat-phobia-disaster, treachery, external constraints and dependence. Such a systematic national discourse advances and flourishes Eurosceptic attitudes and discourses.

To investigate the dimensions of ATAKA's nationalism, I rely on primary sources such as ATAKA's official newspaper and website, Siderov's books, European Parliament documents (speeches, motions, declarations, and questions), speeches and texts of prominent politicians and journalists affiliated to ATAKA, and ATAKA's manifestos of the 2005 national, 2007 EP and 2009 national and EP elections. To gather, study, and interpret ATAKA's partisan texts, I used qualitative content analysis, critical discourse analysis, and interpretative textual analysis to investigate both themes that ATAKA shares with other European far-right parties as well as its particular discursive strategies and topoi. Indeed, several core far-right themes were adopted and articulated by ATAKA: preservation of the "heartland", that is, a conception of an idealized and romanticized community untainted by globalization, Europeanisation, intellectuals, politicians, and bureaucrats; defense of national sovereignty; national narratives; territorial nostalgia; nativism; monoculturalism; anti-Semitism; religious fundamentalism; economic nationalism and protectionism; and welfare chauvinism (Taggart 2003, p.6-7; Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2008; Arter 2010; Pelinka 2013, pp.10-13). Yet, ATAKA did not promote themes characteristic of Western European far-right parties: anti-immigration discourses, New-Right theses, and Europhobic utterances. ATAKA is not openly and expressly against EU membership as several Western European far-right parties, even though it espouses only negative views on the EU.

My analysis focuses on the aftermath of Bulgaria's accession to the EU (2007-2009), a period brimming with euphoria and seemingly unpropitious to Eurosceptic discourses, when the Bulgarian society was rather favorably disposed towards the EU (81% and 52-67%, depending on the issue: Pew Global Attitudes Survey and Standard Barometer 68, respectively). In this context, nonetheless, ATAKA's Eurosceptic, nationalistic discourse proved successful in attracting considerable support in successive elections for the European Parliament[2], as ATAKA availed itself of a set of factors conducive to the electoral swelling of the far-right. First, Bulgarians mistrusted the domestic elites (83% of Bulgarians were discontent with the state: Pew Global Attitudes Survey; slightly over 10% trusted the Bulgarian political system: Standard Barometer 68); as a result, a far-right rhetoric, replete with anti-establishment, anti-liberal, and anti-corruption references was cast before a receptive audience. Second, most possibly due to the so-called 'Bulgarian ethnic model' the far right of the political spectrum was marginal; however, by 2007 the "Bulgarian ethnic model" ebbed (29% of Bulgarians considered Turkey as the major threat, while 56% and 15% were unfavorable towards Roma and Jews respectively: Pew Global Attitudes Survey). ATAKA made significant inroads by mainstreaming issues related to Roma and Islam as well as value issues such as culture and "law-order-punitiveness" (demand and supply-side models on the rise of the far-right: Mudde 2007, ch.9-11; Pauwels 2011, pp.63-66). Third, in the so-called transition period, Bulgarian society witnessed low turnouts in elections, uncertain party loyalties, weak political allegiances, rapid upturn and decline of fledgling parties, electoral wonders and a high level of voter volatility (Lewis 2000, pp.83-87; Spirova 2007; Gherghina 2014). These political circumstances have been explained by the impact of sharp welfare retrenchment, unemployment, social marginalization, impoverishment, and social status loss (modernization theory: Betz 1993; Mudde 2007, p.297 ff). Fourth, a dearth of either a moral or a strategic cordon sanitaire in a country which had not experienced the rise of the far-right left the electoral success of ATAKA unabated.

Within such a fertile breeding ground for the rise of the far right, ATAKA took advantage of the reconfiguration of the political field due to the end of the bipolar political model, the emergence of new social cleavages caused by globalization and Europeanisation, the disillusionment of voters with the transition elites, and the flourishing of national discourses that Bulgarian society had been coached in long ago (Azmanova 2009; Sygkelos 2010; Efremova 2012;

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[2] ATAKA gained 14.2% of the vote and three seats in 2007 (Slavi Binev, Desislav Chukolov, and Dimitr Stoyanov) and 11.96% of the vote but two seats in 2009 (Slavi Binev and Dimitar Stoyanov). However, in 2014 its percentage declined dramatically to 2.96%.

Gurov and Zankina 2013), and gained popularity by stereotyping and polarizing perceptions of the Self and the Other. In the period under question, another fledgling but moderate right-wing party, *Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria* (GERB), had adopted nationalist discourses similar to those of ATAKA[3]. Apart from the intensity of nationalist discourses, ATAKA clearly differed from GERB in its deployment of Eurosceptic theses. Eventually, albeit for a few years only as it later split, ATAKA managed to voice and dominate the far right but lost less radicalized voters, while GERB, in the event, functioned as a strategic *cordon sanitaire*, albeit unwittingly (Pauwels 2011, pp.78-79; Pirro 2015, pp.88-90).

The first section of this article presents ATAKA's origin and political inclinations. The second section conceptualizes the substantive element and major source of ATAKA's Euroscepticism: a peculiar brand of ethnic nationalism that comprises discourses of claiming the homeland back, national self-determination, defense against foreign enemies and national apostates, autochthonism, economic nationalism, and an etatism flagging a mono-cultural state capable to realize national interests and goals. The third section introduces the argument that this peculiar nationalism is rather incompatible with the political and institutional edifice of the European Union and most importantly, with its constitutional base, goals and values. What is more, the EU is portrayed as a threat to the nation. The fourth section explains why in some instances ATAKA appears as favorable towards Bulgaria's membership of the EU: only as a means for promoting nationalistic demands and castigating the domestic elites. Actually, ATAKA strives for a peculiar type of a highly uncompromised intergovernmentalist project, namely a *Europe for Europeans*, a scheme that a priori excludes any ceding of national sovereignty to a supranational body.

The political profile of ATAKA
In 2005, an alliance of far-right groupuscules[4] formed ATAKA, a self-proclaimed nationalist/patriotic leadership party of a post-communist-variant under the charismatic but controversial Volen Siderov[5]. In Brussels, ATAKA joined the

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[3] Borisov readily adopted discursive topoi such as the re-drawing of social boundaries, cultural confrontation, threat-phobia-disaster, and Romaphobia; his branding of Roma, Turks, and retirees as "bad human capital" is telling (Efremova 2012, pp.47-48)

[4] The National Movement for the Salvation of the Fatherland, the Bulgarian National Patriotic Party, and the New Dawn circle.

[5] He began his political career as a *Union of Democratic Forces* (UDF) candidate and the editor-in-chief of its newspaper, *Democracy*, with a poor performance. In 2001, he became involved in the *National Movement of Simeon II* (NDSV) and, later on, campaigned for

transient far-right and nationalist group "*Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty*", along with the French *National Front* of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the *Greater Romania Party* of Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the *Social Alternative* of Alessandra Mussolini, the Austrian *Freedom Party* and others. After the group's dissolution, ATAKA remained non-inscrit. According to researches, ATAKA attracts small-city dwellers, the middle class, the elderly and people apathetic to politics (Ghodsee 2008, p.31; Genov 2010, p.42), a rather heterogeneous electorate.

ATAKA's discourse is fraught with pathological nationalism, anti-Semitism (Siderov n.d; 2002; and 2010), ethnic and religious intolerance as well as Islamophobia and Romaphobia, that is, a xenophobic reaction to indigenous minorities caused by the belief that it is 'natural for people to live among others of their own kind' (Mudde 2007, p.19; Rydgren 2008, p.740). ATAKA identifies itself with Bulgarian nationalism/patriotism, as its own emblem manifests. The central mantra of ATAKA, '*to take our Bulgaria back*'[6], crystallizes the spearhead policies of its manifestos: genuine national self-determination by the cleansing of the government from "anti-Bulgarian" elements; the abolition of ethnic parties and 'separatist organizations'; the safeguarding of territorial integrity against an alleged systematic and deliberate Turkification of the country; economic nationalism, encapsulated in a project of constructing a "pro-Bulgarian economy"; and the development of a genuinely national foreign policy. Embarking on a quasi-anti-imperialist discourse, ATAKA demands the withdrawal of Bulgaria from NATO, the withdrawal of the military bases from Bulgarian territory, the cessation of relations with the IMF and the World Bank, resistance to EU directives detrimental to Bulgarian interests, such as those requiring the shutdown of two units of the Kozloduy nuclear plant, and the interdiction to foreigners to buy land in Bulgaria. As for symbols, ATAKA is careful enough to refrain from Nazi symbols, style and phrasing, despite Siderov's inclination towards Führerism[7] and his book title, *My Battle for Bulgaria,* which is reminiscent of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Instead, the name of the party invokes Siderov's popular TV talk show at SKAT TV and connotes the Bulgarian

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Sofia's mayorship with pitiful results. His popularity, though, was catapulted by his TV broadcasting, laden with nationalistic, anti-Turkish, anti-Roma and conspiracy rhetoric at SKAT channel.

[6] Similar slogans have been deployed by the Dutch Pim Fortuyn List, "*to give the country back to the people*" and the Latvian National Alliance, "*Latvians must feel at home in their ethnic homeland*".

[7] He constantly overemphasises his personal role and dynamics in the leadership of ATAKA, e.g. "ATAKA will not be the same without its leader" (Siderov 2008a).

attack and capture of Edirne in 1913, alluding to the national struggle against the Turks (Genov 2010, p.44).

ATAKA's nationalism

ATAKA conceives Bulgarian nationalism as defensive; neither aggressive nor chauvinistic. It claims that Bulgarian nationalism neither implies hatred nor strives for the capture of other people or territories except for unredeemed lands. It rather strives for the unification of ethnic Bulgarians within state borders. It is argued that Bulgarian nationalists are motivated by Levski's aphorism: "*We do not want anything foreign, we do not give ours*". Nationalists, it is argued, are all those who love and defend their homeland, who want national independence and a firm and responsible national government.

ATAKA, in effect, uses the reclaiming-the-country metaphor by suggesting that for some reason Bulgarians were devoid of their homeland; it addresses a calling for a national liberation movement against those who plundered and ruined Bulgaria, against those who committed genocide against the Bulgarian people, against separatists and those who impose aggressive forms of Islam by coercion and deception, against impoverishment, misery, and corruption (*Program of ATAKA for Parliamentary Elections 2009*). Indicative of the nature of ATAKA's nationalism are slogans such as "Bulgaria uber alles!", "neither left, nor right, but Bulgarian", "Bulgaria is once again under the Turkish yoke! The liberation must keep going on" and "we want equitable, honest, free, people's Bulgarian Bulgaria!" and ATAKA's oath:

> we, Bulgarian nationalists, take the oath... to serve the national interest, to defend the Bulgarian nation and faith from foreign hands, to prevent partition of Bulgaria, to place liability on national traitors, to work for a unified Bulgaria, ruled by Bulgarians, under Bulgarian rules, in the name of all the Bulgarians.[8]

ATAKA's nationalism conflates religious, anti-Semitic, and anti-Western aspects. ATAKA presents itself as the genuine defender of Orthodox Christianity and a party protected and blessed by God (Siderov 2009a). The Orthodox Christian faith is considered to be indispensible for the Bulgarians to obtain their freedom and become invincible (Siderov 2008b). Sofia is depicted as one of the oldest centers of Christianity, "where even today churches and ruins of temples dated back to the 4th and 5th century are visible" (Siderov 2008c). ATAKA insisted on the introduction of the teaching of the Orthodox doctrine into school curricula

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[8] The oath was taken in front of Levski's monument in Sofia on the occasion of its anniversary on the 19th February, (*Torches Lit up...* and *New Membership of ATAKA...*).

(Binev 2008a).[9] Orthodox Christianity is perceived to be in an eternal collision with Judaism (Siderov 2010 and 2002), personified by the cult of Mammon that is the usurious capital. Speculative, money-lending capitalism, it is argued, is situated outside the Greek-Orthodox East, whose foundations lay in the Byzantine Empire, and is associated with the "cult of Mammon" (Siderov 2010) that is a Jew-ridden economic model. Privatization was seen as a side-effect of Jew-ridden "unbridled capitalism" seeking to colonize the Orthodox East (Siderov n.d.). Encapsulating globalization as well as international legal, economic and military institutions, the West is seen as a threat to Bulgarian sovereignty. Within a discursive framework of "threat-fear-disaster", the West is seen as the birthplace of "all perverted ideologies, such as materialism and communism" (Siderov 2010). ATAKA called for the breakdown of Bulgaria's dependence on the "pillars of the Judeo-cosmopolitan conspiracy", the IMF and the World Bank, whose policies ATAKA denounced as colonial, genocidal, plundering and restrictive to the sovereignty of Bulgaria (Program of ATAKA for Parliamentary Elections 2009; Siderov 2010; and Siderov 2008d). Neutrality and equal footing in the international arena were interpreted as a guarantee of sovereignty and national security, while the purportedly servile attitude toward NATO and the USA was castigated as a policy incompatible with national interests, since it leads to the deterioration of Bulgaria's military capacity (Tasheva 2008a; Siderov 2008e). By and large, any membership to international entities is seen as a curtailment of sovereignty and, hence, an anathema.

Significant instances of ATAKA's national discourse are its own narrative of Bulgarian history, irredentism, and a national struggle against a treacherous political establishment. The nationalist-inspired narration of the past has a twofold purpose. First, an 'as-then-so-now' theme is unfolded, in which ATAKA's nationalists are portrayed as the heirs of Bulgarian national heroes such as Levski, Rakovski, Botev, and Hitov, all "fighters for liberty and for a homeland free from foreign influence and Turkish yoke" (Siderov 2008f), whereas the political establishment is compared to historical national enemies (Siderov 2008g). Second, a discourse of Bulgarian genocide committed by the Ottoman rule (1396-1913), which was described as unparalleled in world history in terms of scale, time, and effects, was effectively deployed. This genocide, it was argued, choked off the population growth and the cultural development of Bulgaria.

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[9] "For we remember the prophetical statement of the bishop Kliment, better known with its secular name, Vasil Drumev: If there is Orthodoxy, Bulgaria exists! If there is no Orthodoxy, Bulgaria does not exist!" (*Why the Holy Synod…*).

ATAKA articulated irredentist claims as it laid claims to "unredeemed lands", that is, the Western Outlands and the region of Strumitsa (currently part of Serbian and Macedonian territories, respectively) lost by the "shameful and onerous" Neuilly Treaty in 1919 (*ATAKA Insists in the Neuilly Treaty's Annulment*). Irredentism also concerned the Bulgarian (sic) churches in Kosovo built by "our [Bulgarian] great rulers such as Ivan-Asen II" and raised reparation demands of over 10 million dollars from Turkey for the "forfeited properties of Thracian Bulgarians, who were slaughtered and chased from their lands in 1913" (Siderov 2008h; Siderov 2008i).

The last but not the least instance of the national discourse of ATAKA concerns a strategy of constructing an internal frontier as well as topoi of treachery and threat-fear-disaster, which call for a national struggle to prevent the danger of national devastation and calamity threatened by an indeterminate treacherous amalgam of political elites, the economic oligarchy and the mafia. Drawing on a Schmittian-style friend-foe distinction (Mouffe 1993), ultra-nationalists embarked on a Manichaean division between the Bulgarian people, consisting of peasants, farmers, miners, workers, pensioners--all Bulgarian patriots-- and the ruling coalition of "Stanishev, Dogan and Simeon", the Turkish mafia, the "gypsy criminals", the drug dealers, the oligarchy of millionaires--all exploiters of the Bulgarian people (Siderov 2008j). Hence, ATAKA opposes "us" --the unprivileged and oppressed Bulgarian nation-- to "them" --the oligarchs and the privileged at home or the bureaucrats in Brussels (Laclau 2006). More specifically, treacherous political elites are blamed for Bulgarophobia (Siderov 2003) and a peculiar type of genocide they committed in the transition period against Bulgarians by depriving them of educational and medical access (Siderov 2009a). The so-called Turkish-communist tripartite government of the *Bulgarian Socialist Party* (BSP), the *National Movement of Simeon II* (NDSV), and the *Movement for Rights and Freedoms* (DPS), as well as the President, Georgi Parvanov, were all demonized. More specifically, the BSP was historically linked to the terrorists who blew up the Sveta Nedelia church and the "communist executioners of over 200,000 people"; the DPS to the Islamist terrorist act of 1985; and the NDSV to the national catastrophes of WWI and WWII, since Simeon is the son of Boris, who collaborated with the Nazis, and the grandson of "bisexual Ferdinand" (Siderov 2008k; Siderov 2008l; Chukolov 2008a). Thus, ATAKA portrayed itself as the opponent of communism, Islam, and fascism respectively. Having been empowered by the Bulgarian patriots and aiming at implementing a "clean-hands-policy", ATAKA promised to render the ruling national apostates accountable "for all their scandals – for plundering, for banditism, for mafiotization of Bulgaria, for Turkification of Bulgaria". The advance of ATAKA to power, it is argued, will mark a new, patriotic period for

Bulgaria, in which the corrupt and traitorous ruling government would be severely punished (Siderov 2008a).

Bulgaria is seen as belonging to Europe par excellence, notably "one of the oldest European nation-states and the founder of the first state" in Europe (Siderov 2008m). It was proclaimed that "Christian, European Bulgaria delivered the Orthodox gleam and literature, faith and script to over half of Europe" (Program of ATAKA for Parliamentary Elections 2009; Siderov 2009a); whereby, it reputedly realized a civilizing mission to Europe. Siderov was explicit that the autochthonous Bulgarians lived in the same lands for 7,800 years, where they created the most ancient culture in Europe and civilized the largest part of Europe. He stated that Bulgaria had already been founded when [other European] states did not even exist; Bulgaria is the only country all over Europe that has not changed its name for over a millennium, it is praised of, and has survived under historical adversities (Siderov 2008i).

ATAKA's nationalism contests Europeanization

"Being European" is, of course, at its best a contested identity construction. Interpretations of Europe decisively depend on political, social, and cultural institutions as well as discourse agents. The European identity could be described as a "tradition of argumentation" (Shotter 1993, p.200), a "work in progress" (Duchesne 2008, pp.400-401), or a battlefield for hegemony. Yet Europe has already acquired tangible symbols, such as a flag, an anthem, an official day, and a common currency, which all provide citizens with shared images; it also lays its institutionalization on texts, such as the Lisbon Treaty and the Copenhagen criteria. The process of European unification implies values and principles, such as peace, cosmopolitanism, diversity and pluralism, the rule of law, free market economy, democratization, free movement, and human rights (Gastelaars & Ruijter 1998; Pagden 2002; Bruter 2003; Chiara 2005; Risse 2005).

ATAKA presents the EU as the new center of globalization, deploying topoi of external constraints and dependence that inflict sovereignty loss. Due to the necessary relinquishment of sovereign rights, Brussels is portrayed as "the master of the Bulgarian territory" (Chukolov 2008b) or the center of Directives. Siderov depicted the EU as a "new Roman Empire with a President and a Foreign Minister", a centralized, inertial and highly bureaucratized supra-state. He also maintained that a new council or a latent Masonic lodge has been established to determine the domestic affairs of member-states and render national parliaments' will and intentions void. Therefore, Bulgaria, deprived of its sovereignty, would be transformed into an ordinary province (Siderov 2008n; Siderov 2008o; Siderov 2010). The EU, it is argued, regulates the national

economies even more decisively than COMECON, and serves the interests of multi-national corporations (Siderov 2008p). For all these reasons, ATAKA wholly rejected and voted against the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Shopov, the deputy chair of ATAKA, contended that MPs who voted for the Lisbon Treaty "stitched twelve five-pointed stars [on Bulgarians], but this time they are not red but yellow" (*MPs ratified the Lisbon Treaty 2008*). Drawing parallels between the EU and the accursed Soviet Union is a core theme of far-right leaders such as Istvan Csurka, Umberto Bossi, and Jean-Marie Le Pen (Mudde 2007, pp.160-161). The same skepticism was demonstrated concerning joining the euro-zone which, it is argued, was used as an instrument to weaken national economies. Reservations against the euro were grounded in its incapability of safeguarding euro-zone economies from a deep financial crisis. All in all, the Maastricht Treaty with its goal of an "ever closer union", the Lisbon Treaty with its further institutionalization and the euro were vehemently opposed as major threats to national sovereignty.

Skepticism over Bulgaria's membership of the EU was articulated by ATAKA's nationalists. First of all, unmet expectations for economic development and increased living standards allowed for severe criticism of the doctrine of the "common European home". This triggered complaints on low incomes, low purchasing capacity, poor health care and a poor-quality education system as well as a populist outcry to Commissioners to try to live with 100-200 leva, as Bulgarian pensioners do (ATAKA's 20 Principles; Siderov 2008q). Taking advantage of the frustration caused by the high expectations of Bulgaria's accession to the EU, Siderov embarked on capitalizing on its alleged repercussions for the national economy, e.g., the losses Bulgaria suffered in the domains of energy, food and textile industry (*We Became Sponsors of the EU*). Within this framework, the function of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant[10] acquired connotations of national pride and sovereignty. In one of his twenty principles, ATAKA demanded the "cancellation of any agreements, accords or memoranda implying or demanding the decommissioning of the Kozloduy NPP" (ATAKA's 20 Principles). ATAKA's MEPs were mobilized to achieve a revision of clauses relating to Kozloduy and petitioned the EP on the re-opening of Kozloduy, which would guarantee Bulgaria's energy independence and stability. Siderov maintained that Bulgaria is the only member-state, which is a "net donor

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[10] The Kozloduy nuclear plant was launched in 1974 with crucial Soviet assistance. Simeon Saxecoburggotski conceded the closure of two reactors amid BSP's opposition and the public perception that this was a European directive. To mitigate reactions, Saxecoburggotski's government, then, took the initiative to build a nuclear power plant near Belene, but eventually Borisov's government opposed the project.

to the EU" (sic), since it gives more than it receives, if suspended funds and the imminent contribution of Bulgaria to the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) are counted. The EU is also criticized for non-interference with rapacious privatization of public assets. This is why, Siderov explains, the *Ode to Joy* is not listened to in Bulgaria (*We Became Sponsors of the EU*). Thus, accession to the EU, having proved to be harmful for Bulgaria, and the process of European integration were both castigated.

The topos of external constraints was used to frame pivotal European values, such as diversity and multiculturalism, which were explicitly seen as endangering partition of Bulgaria along religious, ethnic or cultural lines. ATAKA understands Bulgaria as a unitary, homogenous and monolithic nation-state (ATAKA's 20 Principles). ATAKA is an exponent of the monocultularist norm of "*our own state for our own nation*", marking internal homogenization along with external exclusiveness, which many far-right and fascist parties have propagated: "Britain for British" (British National Party), "Slovenia for Slovenes" (Slovene National Party), "Denmark for the Danes" (Danish People's Party), "Hungary for Hungarians" (Jobbik) and "Greece for Greeks" (Golden Dawn).

One other essential European value that ATAKA is skeptical of is the international protection and promotion of minority and human rights. Not only did ATAKA underestimate the gross violation of human rights committed in the so-called "Renaissance Process" of the mid-1980s, but also characterized the post-communist transition "political saturnalia" which gave the DPS the opportunity to loot and partition Bulgaria (*An Islamic Wave Overflows*). Using a victimhood narrative, minority rights have been translated into concession of privileges to minorities, which entails the establishment of double standards and the consequent discrimination against the Bulgarians. Siderov opposed the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, which under the Lisbon Treaty is now enforceable by the EU and its member-states, and Stoyanov applauded the UK, Poland, and the Czech Republic for opting-out from the Charter (Stoyanov 2008a).

Within this framework, ATAKA demanded bans and rigorous sanctions against ethnic parties (ATAKA's 20 Principles), first and foremost the DPS. In addition, the Macedonian organization, OMO "Ilinden Pirin", was portrayed as anti-Bulgarian, secessionist, anti-constitutional and treacherous for having ostensibly been financed by Serbian (sic) intelligence (Siderov 2008r). A political party representative of Pomaks was implicitly portrayed as being backed by the USA and supervised and funded by Ankara with the assistance of the DPS; this was denounced as an anti-constitutional action, requiring the interference of the

public prosecutor. Siderov claimed that the thesis of a separate Pomak identity relies on the speculative fusion of religious faith and ethnic origin, which constitutes a falsification of history (Siderov 2008s; Siderov 2008t). In this way, religious and ethnic diversity, as well as initiatives conducive to free political expression, were presented as induced by foreign speculation and destructive to the loyalty owed to the ethno-cultural state regime. In contrast with ATAKA's mono-culturalism, Europe has witnessed the flourishing of ethnic, even separatist, parties such as the Flemish Vlaams Belang, whose alliance ATAKA has sought. The protection of minority linguistic rights within the context of EU's regional policies is realized in autonomous regions, such as South Tyrol, where three official languages have been institutionalized: Italian, German, and Ladin.

By upholding cultural racist schemes, which perceive national culture as natural, homogeneous and unchanged and stand for mono-cultural societies, ATAKA was seeking the elimination of any manifestation of cultural diversity. It demanded the prohibition of fifteen-minute broadcasts in languages other than Bulgarian from state-funded media (ATAKA's 20 Principles). Furthermore, ATAKA strongly opposed the introduction of Turkish in Bulgarian administration. As Siderov (2008i) stated:

> I am against speaking Turkish in the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture [under Nihat Kabil of the DPS]. I am against speaking Turkish in the regional administration and municipalities of Kardzhali, Razgrad, Targovishte, Shumen and Silistra

ATAKA presented cultural sites for minorities as hotbeds of fundamentalism, espionage, treachery and would-be insurrectionism. The President and the leaders of the tri-partite government were accused as Turkey's abettors in its strategy to introduce Turkish as a second official language in multi-ethnic Bulgaria and subsequently to reform the Bulgarian administrative system by establishing autonomous areas along ethno-religious lines (*Stanishev Prepares a Pogrom*). Inaction and ineptitude of the executive and the judiciary to cope with gypsy criminality is, inter alia, attributed to EU directives and minority policies. Impunity of "gypsy criminal gangs", it is argued, is owed to deterrence of ethnic conflict and the responsibility for such a favorable treatment of minorities lays with Europe (*ATAKA: the EP should not Want Gypsy Privileges*), which eventually bolsters the ever-growing gypsyfication of the country. Under the topos of the shift of blame and responsibility, the high unemployment rate of Roma people is used as proof of their "parasitic nature" and the Roma were blamed for evading taxes and payment of public utility bills, escalating criminality, impunity,

and indolence.[11] Racist discourses were intuitively cloaked in a victimhood narrative according to which, Bulgarians were falling victims of discrimination in their own country (Chukolov et al. 2009) owed to double-standard policies imposed by the EU.

Economic nationalism and state protectionism, promoted by ATAKA,[12] collide with the EU concept of an internal market, as this concept was introduced by the Single European Act 1986 and is now described in Article 26 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as "an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured". ATAKA favors a type of "nativist economy", which is neither purely liberal nor purely socialist (Mudde 2007, p.122) and encompasses policies such as: national monopoly on production, commerce and banks; state protectionism "until Bulgaria's living standards reach the average European level"; renationalization of privatized companies; and state intervention in favour of Bulgarian businesses (ATAKA's 20 Principles). Therefore, ATAKA depicted the privatization of national assets, such as the national BGA Balkan airlines to a "fraudulent firm"[13] and electricity distributors to so-called "foreign suspicious firms", as treacherous. A more extreme nationalist economic ideal is the pledge that ATAKA would ban foreigners from buying agricultural land in Bulgaria (ATAKA's 20 Principles).[14] ATAKA's manifesto stands for a "state-regulated, nationally sovereign, and socially just economy" which ensures positive entitlements in the fields of education, health care and pension system (Program of ATAKA for Parliamentary Elections 2009), but unequivocally for Bulgarians only (welfare chauvinism). This form of economic nationalism is reminiscent of the infant-industry doctrine and of economics adjusted to nationalist ends advocated by

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[11] The comment of Yuvev, the speaker of Citizen's Initiative Committee, is revealing of grass-roots racist prejudices: "Gypsies remain hungry and thirsty, because they have no money to buy water; therefore, they drink rakiya (a traditional strong alcohol drink)", cited in *Zaharna Fabrika again in Riots against Gypsies*. For a series of anti-Roma theses, see Siderov 2007.

[12] Similar approaches are shared by other populist ultra-right parties, such as the Czech Republicans and the Slovak National Party, in Mudde 2007, p.126.

[13] In 1999, BGA "Balkan airlines" was sold to a unique international bidder of questionable profile, which was interested in selling out the company's property. Certain UDF ministers (1997-2001) were enriched through the privatization process, in Ghodsee 2008.

[14] During Sakskoburgotski's premiership (2001-2005), foreign investors bought coastal properties and agricultural land from impoverished rural Bulgarians. Similar theses have been articulated by other far-right parties, such as the Freedom Party of Austria ("our land for our children").

List, whereas prohibition of ownership of land and industries by aliens invokes a core theme of early National Socialism.

A nationalism taking advantage of EU membership for short-term ends

Instances where ATAKA articulates a discourse placatory to the EU constitute, in essence, opportunities for promoting the role and the image of Bulgaria or serving national demands and goals or opposing the elites. To begin with, Bulgaria is conceived of as a cultural fault line that divides Europe and the Islamic world and the spearhead, both in the past and the present, in the battle against the Islamification and Turkification of Europe and its "cultural contamination" resulting from Turkey's potential accession to the EU (Nationalism – ATAKA 2007; Siderov 2008u). From this perspective, ATAKA develops a topos of cultural confrontation. Attuned to this strategy, Desislav Chukolov argued that Bulgaria is once again at the front line of Europe, where the advance of Islam should be contained (Chukolov 2008c). Tasheva speaks of an "Islamist aggression in [Europe, which comprises] the primordial lands of Christian civilization" (Tasheva 2008b; Tasheva 2008c). To resist, ATAKA suggested the adoption of regulations concerning the building of non-Christian religious edifices and the removal of loudspeakers from mosques (Siderov 2008v). ATAKA condemned the construction of a second mosque at the centre of Sofia, presenting it as part of an Islamification project aiming to make Bulgaria resemble a Muslim state or to forcibly transform Sofia into a multi-religious center, and the foundation of an Islamist educational institute, presenting it as a Trojan horse of Islamic fundamentalism (*ATAKA Stops the Construction*).[15] The local group of ATAKA in Stara Zagora opposed even the conservation and restoration of the local Eski mosque built in 1409, which has been declared as a national monument of culture (Declaration of ATAKA-Stara Zagora). To make this stance convincing, ATAKA glosses over the inner conflicts and deep divisions of Islam in Bulgaria, notably a generation gap manifested in traditional forms of Islam backed by aged hodzhas versus "purified or orthodox" forms (the so-called "Wahhabism") evidenced in the worldviews of young imams who studied in Arabic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Jordan (Ghodsee 2009). The moderate strand of Islam is consistently downplayed to allow for Islam's projection as inherently fundamentalist, intolerant, aggressive, and violent - that is totally inconsistent with European values.

With regard to the EU, the outmost goal of ATAKA is to prevent Turkey's accession. Turkey, it is argued, is incompatible with European values and

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[15] Not being unique in its stance over Islamic edifices, ATAKA's views reflect those of the British National Party, the Lega Nord, and the Vlaams Belang.

principles; incapable of progress; racist and xenophobic; ruled by Islamists; a transgressor of human rights; the perpetrator of an illegal war to destruct the Kurds; militarized; and the occupier of territory of another EU member-state, Cyprus.[16] What is more, Turkish politics turn against the Christian peoples in the Balkans, and the Bulgarians in particular, who are threatened by Turkification.

This project is supplied by a narrative of fifth column in which the DPS is presented as the putative orchestrator of methods of infiltration and assimilation: construction of mosques; employment of symbols such as the Crescent Moon and fezzes; opening of more Muslim schools; use of Turkish in Bulgarian schools; cleansing of school textbooks and of the public discourse from any term or concept hostile to Turkey; funding of projects aiming to falsify Bulgarian history, e.g., the project "the myth of Batak" or the movie "Stolen Eyes" (Abramov 2008a; *An Islamic Wave Overflows; Mockery! They Exculpate Turkish Terrorists*). All in all, this so-called project of Turkification is likened to a counter-Renaissance Process under the auspices of the DPS, which was systematically described as an ethnic, anti-constitutional, Bulgarophobic and separatist political formation, and was often being reproached for involvement with Turkish intelligence services and mafia (Abramov 2008b; Siderov 2008w). As a result, ATAKA called for a struggle to liberate "Bulgaria from the new Turkish yoke, from the Turkish rule of the DPS" (Siderov 2008i). To make its allegations plausible, however, ATAKA masks the contentious relations between Muslim figures and the DPS, which is criticized for political speculation, as well as the reluctance of Pomaks to be represented by Turks due to their hybrid and fluid identity (Ghodsee 2009, pp.115-129). By resisting Turkification and Islamification in Bulgaria, ATAKA allegedly defends the cultural purity of Europe.

The EU is also manipulated into a forum where Bulgaria strove to secure and promote its own national interests. As Binev (2009a) has stated, ATAKA "has neither left, nor right, nor centrist orientation; [its] colors are the white, the green, and the red… we struggle to promote Bulgaria's interests in the EU". Siderov (2008i) employed a similar socio-biological perspective, pointing out that "[the national idea] is above the political spectrum, because an organism cannot have only right or left hand or centre". Indeed, even the most far-fetched nationalist demands were placed before the EU institutions, such as the recognition of a Bulgarian genocide committed by the Ottoman rule (1396-1913). Binev pointed out in the European Parliament that

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[16] ATAKA's MEPs held firm in speeches and debates on the floor of the EP that Turkey is totally unqualified to accession into the EU, see Stoyanov 2009a.

for almost five centuries, under the rule of the Ottoman state, the violence against the Bulgarian people was marked by the features of genocide. A considerable part of the Bulgarian population was taken away into slavery, exterminated or forcibly converted to Islam, which is basically a purposeful ethnic cleansing (Binev 2008b)

In the same vein, all ATAKA's MEPs embarked on making their colleagues aware of the "unacknowledged Bulgarian genocide" (Stoyanov 2009b; Binev et al. 2009). Chukolov also demanded that negotiations for the accession of Serbia and Macedonia to the EU should be conditioned on the return of the Western Outlands and the region of Strumitsa, where ethnic Bulgarians live, to Bulgaria (Chukolov 2008d; *ATAKA will Demand the Return*).

European elections were manipulated for the promotion of nationalist purposes and the articulation of nationalist slogans. The fundamental motto in the elections of 2009 was "No to Turkey in Europe", while the election campaign opened up in Batak, a place of high national symbolism. The campaign for the EP elections focused plainly on national priorities, e.g. blockade of Turkish accession to the EU, recognition of Bulgarian genocide, payment of Turkish reparations, defense of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and energy independence. Within this framework, Stoyanov was presented as an advocate of the re-commission of the Kozloduy nuclear plant, Binev as the proponent of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and Chukolov as an activist for the cause of Bulgarian pensioners (Chukolov 2009; Siderov 2009b). On the contrary, candidate lists of other parties were presented as treacherous and anti-national, e.g. BSP's list was ostensibly controlled by the Jews and comprised of candidates indifferent to national causes; *Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria* (CEDB) candidates were criticized for espousing globalization, federalism and Turkey's integration; NDSV candidates were presented as brokers who had betrayed national interests in the course of EU negotiations; and proponents of the "Turkish cause" comprised DPS's list (Tasheva 2009a; Tasheva 2009b). Bulgarian MEPs, by default, ought to serve, raise and defend national interests.

Whenever it was politically beneficial, ATAKA effectively manipulated incidents of divergence from European standards and the *acquis communautaire* in the fields of the legal and judicial reform, prosecution of corruption, and the rule of law in order to undermine the coalition government and to condemn the domestic political elites. Within this framework, European Commission reports relating to organized crime and corruption in Bulgaria were often exploited to

criticize the tripartite government[17] and more specifically the Home Department and the leader of the DPS, Ahmed Dogan. MEPs of ATAKA also deployed allegations for Dogan's illegal business engagements, his association with corruption, and his involvement in vote-buying (*The Nationalists in the EP*). In the EP, they also reported the sluggishness of the coalition government to reform the judiciary and the legislation related to the public order, as well as vote-buying (Binev 2008c).[18] One other field conducive to criticism against the political elites and the DPS, in particular, is the embezzlement of EU funds and the suspension of EU funds from PHARE and SAPARD programs which, it is argued, deprived the ordinary people of essential funds and led creative entrepreneurs to immigration (Binev 2008d; Stoyanov 2008b). Nevertheless, the fact that European subsidies imply relinquishment of part of national sovereignty is purposefully omitted.

Conclusion

Between 2007 and 2009, when Bulgaria relinquished part of its sovereignty to join a supranational organization in exchange for growth, stability, safety and better living standards, ATAKA espoused an ethnic nationalism informed of nativism, economic nationalism, cultural racism, monoculturalism and ethnocracy, welfare chauvinism, religious fundamentalism, autochthonism, anti-imperialism, reclaiming-the-country arguments, and defensive motives against putative regional and global enemies. In parallel, an obsession with national sovereignty fostered a principled opposition to the transfer of competencies to a supranational institution and a rejection of European integration and unification. Similar to the stance of other Eastern European far-right parties, ATAKA did not oppose Bulgaria's membership of the EU, given that it was taken for granted from the overwhelming majority of the Bulgarian people. This overarching consensus, though, did not deter ATAKA from advocating the halting of the EU project and, most interestingly, from taking the opportunity to assail the domestic political establishment for multiple shortcomings in crucial political domains and promote national goals using the EU as a forum of national contest. The case of ATAKA offers explanations of how long-established national themes and "common-sense truths" can be used to break a pro-EU consensus and accommodate opposition to an "ever closer union among the peoples of Europe". It also demonstrates how nationalism, and more especially its ethnic version, is antagonistic to European integration and unification. Most

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[17]The following headings are indicative: *A Devastating Report by the European Commission is in the Process*; *MEPs are shocked by the Corruption in Bulgaria*.

[18] In his speech, Chukolov even suggested Pöttering to take measures rather than to "sit apathetically and support neo-communists in Bulgaria" (Chukolov 2008e).

interestingly, national discourses convenient and expedient for adroit political agents are very well embedded and entrenched in all European societies.

Instead of the current EU model, ATAKA favoured an alternative highly and strictly intergovernmentalist scheme, an international forum of co-operation and partnership between sovereign and equal nation-states: a *Europe of nations* consisting of Christian national communities (Binev 2008e). This scheme of *Europe for Europeans* is reflected in the "*Vienna Declaration of Patriotic and National Movements and Parties in Europe*", with ATAKA being among its signatories, and encapsulates a confederation of fully sovereign nation-states which will protect Europe against "dangers of terrorism, aggressive Islamism, superpower imperialism, and economic aggression by low-wage countries" (Liang Schori 2007, pp.13-16). Within such a peculiar intergovernmentalist project, ATAKA sought alliance and partnership with other eurosceptic, nationalist, far-right parties, such as the French Front National, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Flemish Vlaams Belang, the Italian Lega Nord, the Dutch Party for Freedom, and the British National Party. The culmination of these efforts was the Vienna conference in 2008 with the goal to establish a *European Patriotic Party*. Common denominators and goals were the opposition to Turkey's accession to the EU, the containment of Europe by Islam, and the frustration of US plans in Europe. Hence, ATAKA's nationalism advanced a xenophobic, Islamophobic, racist, ethnicist, naitivist, fundamentalist, and authoritarian Europe: a Europe-fortress.

Thus, without explicitly rejecting Europe as a concept and European integration as a strategic scheme, ATAKA as other eurosceptic, far-right parties capitalizes on phobias latent in European societies to a greater or lesser degree, such as anti-communism in Eastern Europe, anti-Americanism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, cultural contamination, threats that immigration from Asia and Africa, and militant Islam ostensibly pose. At the same time, they articulate discourses on cultural re-birth and integrity, ethnopluralism, (re)Christianization, traditional family values, ethnic homogeneity and purity, national identity and sovereignty. Within this framework, nationalism substantially deters European identity-building. Each member-state champions its own narrative concerning its invaluable contribution to the entire European civilization, which, of course, is portrayed as so dignified that it overrides by far any contribution of other nations; thus, sustaining national myths of civilizing mission or myths of being the first Europeans.

There is a misleading asymmetry between the electoral support and popularity of far-right parties on the one hand and the level at which their discourses have

actually been ingrained in society. Very often, far-right rhetoric is adopted and addressed by mainstream parties in their attempt to attract or repatriate a part of the electorate that has gravitated towards the far-right; as a result, far-right rhetoric is getting increasingly legitimate and popular. Further research needs to be conducted to study and detect the extent to which far-right discourses have shaped the "common sense" and re-mapped social boundaries on a country basis. Besides, an in-depth research of the discourses of mainstream parties would be interesting to explore the scope of contagion effect that far-right themes and strategies may result in. For instance, the leader of GERB, Borisov, the Mayor of Sofia at the time under research and the next Prime Minister, articulated the topos of '*bad human capital*' to shift the blame for Bulgaria's hardships onto Roma and Turks (Efremova 2012, pp.47-48).

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MAINSTREAMING ISLAMOPHOBIA:
THE POLITICS OF EUROPEAN ENLARGEMENT
AND THE BALKAN CRIME-TERROR NEXUS

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Abstract
This article examines Islamophobia not as an exclusive feature of far-right politics in Europe but as a constitutive part of mainstream European Union enlargement processes. Looking at EU commission and parliament reports, as well as enlargement strategies, I examine security practices and policies that stem from recent policy debates on the "crime-terror nexus." Specifically, I look at how EU taxonomies of Islamophobia come to influence broader securitization and bordering practices that mark and produce Muslim populations in the Western Balkans as suspect communities in need of disciplinary violence under the promise of EU integration. As the EU instrumentalizes the fight against organized crime and terrorist networks to demarcate its geopolitical frontiers in the Western Balkans, it also labors in the enactment of physical and political borders that divide Muslims in the Balkans from the larger Muslim world.

Keywords: crime-terror nexus, EU enlargement, Islamophobia, Balkans

Introduction
In 2012, the European Parliament's Directorate-General for Internal Policies issued the report "*Europe's Crime-Terror Nexus: Links between Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the European Union,*" outlining the "crime-terror nexus" concept as an overarching framework addressing existing or potential alliances between organized crime and terrorist networks inside the EU and its peripheries (European Union Parliament 2012, p.10). The crime-terror nexus conjectures gained credence in the larger context of European Union securitization politics of the last decade, particularly in the context of EU

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enlargement in the Western Balkans. Converging multiple security issues—such as the inflow of migrants and refugees, trans-border organized crime, and terrorist threats—with "the spread of radical Islam in the [Balkan] region" (European Union Parliament 2012, p. 49), the crime-terror nexus exemplifies the heightened concerns over the integration of Muslim majority countries of the Western Balkans into the EU. The geopolitical coordinates of the crime-terror nexus operate through a securitization logic that seeks to shield the European Union from security threats that can emerge from its borderlands and soon-to-be members. In a similar report in 2006, the Council of the EU, for instance, warned that "With Bulgaria and Romania joining the EU, the Western Balkan region will be entirely surrounded by EU Member States. Fighting organized crime, corruption, illegal immigration and terrorism in the region will therefore become even more important, also with a view to further developing the area of justice, freedom and security within the EU" (Council of the European Union 2006, p. 3). In other words, the potential integration of countries from the Western Balkans into the EU, particularly Muslim-majority Balkan countries, has increasingly been projected as a potential security threat to the overall safety and stability of the EU.

This article examines how concerns over the convergence of organized crime with terrorist networks have come to encompass and represent a shift in the EU enlargement politics in Eastern Europe: the enlargement strategy has shifted from the primary concerns over (post)socialist democratization and Europeanization in the first decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall to securitization and bordering strategies in the last decade of integration involving the rest of the (post)socialist and post-conflict countries in the Western Balkans. Specifically, the article looks at how the crime-terror nexus discourse has come to assemble multiple EU anxieties over security, borders and multiculturalism in the process of integrating Muslim majority countries into the EU whose very integration, according to this logic, makes the EU vulnerable from the potential convergence of organized crime and terrorism. I argue that the nearing integration of Muslim majority countries of the Western Balkans into the EU, and their subsequent projection as a threat to EU security, relies on multiple Islamophobic premises that produce Muslims in the Western Balkans as suspect communities.

This concern has proliferated through various EU bodies involved in enlargement and security strategies beyond the EU Parliament's Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Europol, the EU's law enforcement agency, has warned the EU in its Organized Crime Threat Assessments (OCTA) that "[the] Balkan axis, comprising the Western Balkans and South East Europe, will

assume an even more prominent role in the trafficking of illicit commodities to E.U. markets" (Europol 2011, p. 49), whereas the Terrorism and Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) notes that "religiously-inspired elements have attempted to establish connections with Eastern European OCGs [organized crime groups] involved in the trafficking of human beings" and that "religiously-inspired terrorists have sought to enter the EU through this region, often by claiming refugee status" (Europol 2012, p. 18). Moreover, frequent remarks made by EU representatives and elected officials—coupled with media and academic discourses on the converging threats from refugees, migrants, organized crime, human trafficking, and now terrorism along the "Balkan Route"—have continued to cast the Western Balkans more generally, and Muslim-majority Balkan countries in particular, as a threat to EU security. The *Charlie Hebdo* and Paris terrorist attacks of November 2015, coupled with the rise of far-right Islamophobic movements that project Islam as the biggest threat to the EU (De Genova 2015), have all come to constitute an assemblage of Islamophobia that is not exclusive to isolated and marginal far-right movements but also part of mainstream public discourse.

While the steady rise of far-right parties across Europe in the last decade has been examined as a part of a larger neoliberal de-politicization of social problems, the securitization politics influenced by these parties, which now constitute a major part of the European Union enlargement politics, have been overlooked. Moreover, in the process of linking Muslim populations inside the EU with terrorism and fundamentalism, counter-terrorist securitization measures have woven anti-Muslim politics into the EU enlargement process in Muslim-majority countries in the periphery, particularly Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo (Fekete 2004, pp. 3–29; Bernhard 2010, pp. 175–192; Tufyal & Fenwick 2011; Bonefeld 2012, p. 51; Wodak 2013; Liang 2013).

In the first section I examine the mobilization of the crime-terror nexus in enlargement politics that not only frames EU's incorporation of Muslim-majority countries as a preventative measure against a potential security threat to Europe but also exposes a dramatic shift in the enlargement discourse from "return" and "re-unification" with Europe, in the case of (post)socialist Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia, to expectations of hostility and preventative securitization, in the case of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. I look at how in the last decade, the concern about the Balkans has gone from a focus on ethnic conflict and (post)socialist *transition* to concerns over organized crime and terrorism; the new focus coinciding with the integration of Muslim-majority countries into the EU. I question the existence and significance of a "crime-terror nexus" by examining the premises and validity of the sources

utilized in articulating these security threats, arguing that the allusion to organized crime, terrorism and radical Islam in Muslim-majority countries does not oppose or confront the proclivities of the far-right but is in fact premised in them.

In the second part, I explore the academic and policy knowledge assemblages that the crime-terror nexus policies rely on. Here, I look at how academic and policy work on security in the Balkans have frequently linked Muslim populations, explicitly and implicitly, with organized crime and terrorism. Tracing the shift in representation of Muslims in the Balkans in the process of EU integration, I examine how after 9/11, political activities of Muslims in the Balkans have been frequently registered in the grammar of Islamist fundamentalism, organized crime and terrorism. Here, I examine the impact these discourses have had on the identity and practices of Muslim communities in the Western Balkans. Specifically, I examine the emergence of "Balkan Islam" as a representational mandate that seeks to distance Muslim communities in the Balkans from terrorism and fundamentalism by defining Islam in the Balkans as a European and secular against the allegedly more religious and unsecularized Islam coming from the Middle East. I argue that the categorization of Muslims in the Western Balkans under a broader representation of Balkan Islam seeks to establish a depoliticized and compliant Balkan Islam, defined against the un-European and unsecularized Middle Eastern Islam, a discourse that overlaps with EU geopolitical borders that divides Muslims in the Balkans from those in the Middle East both spatially and politically.

Finally, in the last part, I examine how EU securitization measures employed in the enlargement process, through various conditionality mechanisms, are appropriated by local governments in Bosnia, Albania and Kosovo in their attempt to meet the EU integration criteria. Examining recent wholesale arrests of suspected Islamic terrorists and extremists, I look at how these measures have resulted in, and legitimized, the increased surveillance and discrimination of Muslim communities in the Balkans.

European enlargement fatigue and the crime-terror nexus
The EU positions itself geo-politically by designating borders, particularly according to the identification of who and what it considers to be rightly European (for more, see Kostadinova 2008, pp. 235–255). The identification of EU borders is closely tied to securitization in the form of measures that must be institutionalized before applicant countries can join. These requirements seek to pre-emptively address any potential security threats that may result

from removing national borders. As national borders merge with the EU, a division of "inside" from "outside" materializes in terms of the designation of new borders on the periphery—an act that at once hierarchizes suspect populations and seeks to allay anxieties about ideological threats and the construction of an EU-wide identity. These processes of identification and bordering, as Doty notes, are grounded in the "desire to overcome ambivalence and unpredictability, to make the numerous and diverse points of order, e.g., geographic, ethnic, moral, economic, and so on resonate to affect a coherent whole" (Doty 1999, p. 593–594). EU border securitization is thus closely linked to European integration and enlargement, while the call for the protection of current EU borders works to produce a more coherent EU identity. Additionally, the policing and possible inclusion of EU borderlands into the EU, operate through enlargement measures being utilized as extraterritorial management of security beyond the EU borders. The recent establishment of refugee and migrant receiving camps in the Western Balkans, along with earlier similar EU external refugee and migrant control centers outside the EU, serve as examples of what has come to be known as the European Neighborhood Policy (Lavenex 2015; Menz 2015; for more on the characteristics of the European Neighborhood Policy, see van Houtum & Boedeltje 2011). Indeed, D'Appollonia notes that the EU, like the United States, now operates through "[a] zero-tolerance approach to immigration offenses, tougher controls on borders, and even extraterritorial controls beyond borders" (D'Appollonia 2012, p. 77).

The geographic imaginaries through which the EU seeks to build these borders are primarily informed by securitization strategies. Ensuring security and tackling organized crime have been key issues in the politics of EU enlargement in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. The EU has almost always linked its warnings of the potential danger of organized crime and terrorism associated with bringing these countries into its fold to the fear that because of their Muslim majority, these three countries either are, or have the potential to become, part of a transnational Islamic network that cooperates with organized crime (European Commission 2011. p. 17). This has been particularly visible after 9/11. Frequently, the factual basis of these security threats rely on anecdotal and unsubstantiated evidence solicited in various online news-portals of far-right and nationalist media outlets. For instance, the EU Parliament's Directorate-General for Internal Policies report "*Europe's Crime-Terror Nexus: Links between Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the European Union*" relies on the ultranationalist web-portal *serbianna* to support its claim of the convergence of organized crime and terrorism in Kosovo and Macedonia (European Union Parliament 2012, p. 49). Statements regarding the

existence of a crime-terror nexus in the Balkans are frequently attributed to "senior EU ministers" or "several sources from the intelligence community," without explicitly specifying the sources (European Union Parliament 2012, pp. 12, 25).

The reports are also characterized by vague language that produce the Balkans as providing "natural synergies for cooperation" between organized crime and terrorism, leaving open questions of what may constitute such "natural synergies" (European Union Parliament 2012, p. 25)? It is important to note here that these reports are produced by, and inform, EU decisions on enlargement mechanism as well as securitization policies. When lack of evidence is addressed, is frequently justified through various orientalist tropes of the inaccessibility of information due to the traditional nature of these societies. For instance, in a report by the Council of Europe, Rapporteur Dick Marty who led the EU Special Investigative Task Force (SITF) in Kosovo and Albania to investigate claims of organ trafficking, in failing to confirm most of the allegations, Marty reported that "The structure of Kosovar Albanian society, still very much clan-orientated, and the absence of a true civil society have made it extremely difficult to set up contacts with local sources. This is compounded by fear, often to the point of genuine terror, which we have observed in some of our informants immediately upon broaching the subject of our inquiry" (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2010). Marty further concludes that the prime minister of Kosovo, Thaci, "reportedly operated with support . . . from the formidable Albanian mafia" (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2010). The deployment of various tropes includes, but is by no means limited to, Albanians being clannish, backwards, and therefore prone to organized crime—thus reinforcing the notion of what Marty has come to see as a "formidable" mafia. This expedient narrative of an Albanian mafia has recently been supplanted by Islamic extremism and fundamentalism as a readymade Islamophobic ideological formation that locates the crime-terror nexus in the Balkans. The new policies with which EU enlargement politics are approaching Muslim communities in the Balkans betrays a stark similarity to the broader Islamophobic discourse, operating, as Sheehi notes "by a culture that deploys particular tropes, analyses and beliefs, as facts upon which governmental policies and social practices are framed" (Sheehi 2011, p. 131).

In Muslim-majority countries in the Balkans, the EU control beyond its borders has been an accompanying feature that precedes their integration process. Since the end of the conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo for instance, the EU has engaged both countries in the Stabilization and Association Pact

(SAP); a process through which various post-conflict, state-building mechanisms, and direct EU interventions, have been conceived under the "rule of law" and "security" mission (*Council Joint Action 2008/124*; EUFOR 2015). The direct involvement of the EU in the construction of state infrastructures in these countries seems to have been guided by fear based assumptions of their incompetence or indisposition to meet the security dimensions of the EU integration process. A relevant fear rooted in this objective can be found in research funded by the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, where Mincheva and Gurr warn:

> Trans-state Islamic advocacy networks have used Bosnia-Herzegovina as a "gateway" for militants moving between Europe and the Middle East. The political-criminal linkages among Bosnian Islamists are characterized as exclusively ideologically driven, while in the Albanian/Kosovo case it is characterized as "political-criminal hybrids." (Mincheva & Gurr 2010, p.5)

Although organized crime and political-criminal hybrids are not exclusively Bosnian or Kosovar problems, the tacit employment of them that occurs in the EU enlargement discourse appears to appease both populist and mainstream Islamophobic discourse at home as well as overall EU enlargement fatigue while justifying direct EU involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo as post-conflict security and justice missions.

The rise of anti-EU and anti-immigration far-right political parties into mainstream politics (the proclamation of Merkel and Cameron on the failure of multiculturalism is one example) has contributed to the process of containing perceived Muslim threats from the Balkans and policing Muslim populations living within the EU (Jura 2012, pp. 107–16). As anti-immigration rhetoric has become deeply intertwined with broader EU securitization, enlargement and bordering politics, references to fighting organized crime and terrorist networks have taken a central role in stimulating support of EU enlargement as a securitization and bordering measure.[1] Beare and Naylor, among other researchers, have noted that the "mention of the words 'organized crime' has the power to draw the press, win votes, acquire law enforcement resources,

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[1] On this subject, see for example, the statement of the Polish Minister (in waiting) of European Affairs, Konrad Szymański, after the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015: "Wobec tragicznych wydarzeń w Paryżu Polska nie widzi politycznych możliwości wykonania decyzji o relokacji uchodźców [In view of the tragic events in Paris, Poland sees no political possibility of reaching a decision regarding the relocation of the refugees]" [Szymański 2014].

gain public support for various legislative or enforcement crackdowns" (Beare & Naylor 1999, p.1).

Central to the EU's fears is the presence of second- and third-generation Balkan Muslims already inside its borders who have ties to those Balkan Muslims seeking to merge with the EU. Based on the European Parliament's 2012 report, a direct correlation has been drawn between the crime-terror-nexus threat and Balkan Muslims living inside the EU:

> The region raises another concern in relation to the crime-terror nexus. This relates to a current trend—more specifically witnessed in Germany, Austria and Switzerland—of third generation Balkan diaspora youth becoming involved in radical Islamism. Given that the previous generation were involved in criminality, law enforcement officers in some European states have expressed their concerns over the potential for natural ties to develop between family/community members with both criminal connections and those who have adopted a militant Islamist agenda. (European Union Parliament 2012, p. 25)

A triangulated link is hereby made among third-generation Balkan Muslims living inside the EU, their family and community ties with Balkan Muslims, and the perceived threat of the ties between their Balkan connections and the rest of the Muslim world. This essentialist reading of Muslim communities both inside the EU and in the Balkans and the ties between them constitutes an institutionalized Islamophobia within EU enlargement channels. Indeed, El-Tayeb points out how the ongoing reading suggesting that second- and third-generation Muslims in the EU are migrants despite being citizens of these countries—shown in the continuous questioning of their loyalty to Europe by virtue of their religion and origins—continues to render Muslims as suspects and a threat to the EU (2011, pp. XXXII–XXXIII). As such tactical interpretations suggest, anti-Islamic expression cannot be dismissed as a far-right populist discourse but must instead be recognized as part and parcel of institutional EU politics that conflate Muslim communities—at both the center and periphery of Europe—with the crime-terror nexus. Although EU enlargement is widely seen as a technocratic process that does not take into consideration the national politics of its core countries, the presence of EU policies that are enforced by security strategies such as the crime-terror nexus, wherein a connection is drawn between Muslim-majority communities in the Balkans and terrorism and criminality, exposes the presence of Islamophobia in the EU enlargement processes.

The links between European Union security and Islamophobia are not an entirely recent phenomenon, nor an exclusive feature of the EU. While its contemporary origins can be traced in the post-Cold War "clash of civilizations" debates, academic research and media, particularly studies on terrorism and counter-terrorism after 9/11, have played a considerable role in connecting Muslims and migrants to organized crime and terrorism.[2] It is in this larger context that we can observe a shift in academic, policy and mediated representations of Muslims in the Balkans from being projected as threatened *Europeans* in the 1990s, to a representation of Muslims posing a threat to Europe in the 2000s. The following section examines the establishment of the representational praxis of Muslims in the Balkans constituting a threat to the European Union in the post-9/11 securitization discourses that were characterized by the larger "Islamic threat."

The Balkan Route, Balkan Islam and the crime-terror nexus

In 2005, following the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), the Council of the European Union adopted the European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism (Council of the European Union 2005). During the Slovenian Presidency of the EU in 2008, the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism was expanded to the Western Balkans with the objective to "facilitate the development of the counter-terrorism arrangements in the Western Balkans" (Council of Europe, Committee of Experts on Terrorism 2008, p. 6). A counter-terrorist team with experts from Europol conducted visits in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Macedonia (Council of the European Union 2010, p. 3). The EU enlargement strategy was increasingly shifting from concerns over good governance and democratization to securitization and counter-terrorist measures. The establishment of the "International Law Enforcement Coordination-Units" a trans-border police project undertaken between 2008-2012 in the Western Balkans is an example of EU efforts to establish "new instruments in the fight against cross-border crime … in particular against the drug-related crimes and economic crime and the related financing of terrorism," the objective of the project being the establishment of "structures which allow the law enforcement authorities and the judicial authorities to cooperate more closely and more swiftly in the fight against terrorism and organized crime" (Criminal Intelligence Service of Austria 2012).

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[2] For more on the relationship between academic research on terrorism and Islamophobia, see Kundnani 2014; 2015.

This general shift towards securitization in the EU enlargement processes in the Western Balkans, and particular concerns articulated around the crime-terror nexus, need to be examined from the perspective of the broader EU politics of the last decade. EU attempts to bolster the enlargement process in the Western Balkans at the Berlin Conference in August 2014 were shaped primarily around the necessity of security measure against the spread of radical Islam and the possible security threats that may emerge from the convergence of radical Islamic networks with migrants and refugees moving through the Balkans on their way to the EU. Addressing EU enlargement fatigue and security fears, the Albanian Prime Minister Rama warned that "Europe needs the Balkans today as much as the Balkans need Europe … because enlargement into the Balkans is, first and foremost, an issue of security for Europe" and that if "the EU is not able to show up in the way that is expected, there will be a huge space for radical Islam" (Barber 2015). Whereas the Kosovar Prime Minister Thaci reassured the EU to undertake the "necessary structural reforms, especially in the field of rule of law, fight against corruption and organised crime and the fight against all forms of extremism and terrorism" in the path towards EU integration (Embassy of Republic of Kosovo in Germany 2014, n.p.). The reassurances offered by the Albanian and Kosovar prime ministers to the EU here, seeking to address Islamophobic discourses inside the EU, illustrate the impact that far-right populist formations have had in both EU mainstream politics and in framing EU enlargement politics along security issues.

While the fatigue over EU enlargement and integration manifested in the abandonment of the EU Constitution in 2007 after the Netherlands and France voted against it in 2005, the Eurozone economic crisis of 2009 produced a rise in far-right political parties across the EU that have come to influence mainstream politics. The case of Denmark is perhaps the earliest and most evident example of this phenomenon, where the liberal Venstre Party formed a coalition with the far-right Islamophobic Danish People's Party from 2001 to 2011 (Roemer & Straeten 2006). Similar coalitions between far-right and conservative right parties and liberal ones have characterized the last decade in most of the EU countries.[3] Moreover, the recent surfacing of far-right populism, such as the English Defense League in the UK and the Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA) in Germany, while considered marginal, nonetheless continue to influence mainstream European

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[3] See, for example, the September 2015 coalition between SYRIZA and the nationalist Independent Greeks Party. For more on this, see "Syriza's Tsipras regains Greek leadership, confirms coalition with nationalist party" 2014.

politics. (For more on this, see: Ansari & Hafez 2012; Messina 2015; Mancuso 2015; Cushion 2015; Nordensvard & Ketola 2015.)

This trend cannot be considered separate from larger neoliberal reforms inside the EU and the subsequent influence they have in prioritizing security, immigration and enlargement debates in the broader shift from government to governmentality. Doyle has observed how the shift from government to neoliberal governance has "designated a presumably hostile 'Other' through which the collective could re-assert itself" (Doyle 2013, p. 278). In the European context, the construction of Muslims as the ultimate Other has been employed: (1) as a counterpoint by which to construct a cohesive EU identity and thereby overcome enlargement fatigue; and (2) to ease enlargement anxieties by assigning Muslim-majority countries to the periphery for EU integration, a preventative measure to secure broader EU geopolitical bordering and securitization politics.

The projection of Muslims in Balkans as the hostile Other and as a potential threat to Europe does not comprise a single discursive space; rather, it operates through multiple Islamophobic modalities and assemblages that converge in academic research, official EU polices, think-tanks, media reporting, and civil society. (See, for example, Tziampiris 2009; Erjavec & Volčič 2007; Bardos 2002; Kohlmann 2004.) While Islamophobia has been studied extensively in the United States, in the EU it has been limited to immigration debates and the internal EU secular-religious divide. Analyzing its presence in the United States, Sheehi, for instance notes:

> Islamophobia does not originate in one particular administration, thinker, philosopher, activist, media outlet, special interest group, think tank, or even economic sector or industry though indeed, these actors are collectively responsible for the virulent dissemination of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab stereotypes and beliefs, circulated in order to naturalize and justify US global, economic and political hegemony. (2011, pp. 31–32)

If in the case of the United States Islamophobia is employed to naturalize and justify US global hegemony, in the EU it is employed to normalize and justify the union's regional hegemony in the enlargement process as well as its geopolitical bordering and security strategies in the Western Balkans.

Whereas academic research projecting the Balkans as a geography of violence is rooted in Orientalist discourse—the Balkans featuring as Europe's internal Other—the crime-terror nexus is based in Islamophobic discourse that sees

Muslims in the Balkans as responsible for both organized crime and terrorism. Building on the academic research on the crime-terror nexus in the Balkans, Rom, for instance, notes how "the Balkans are an ideal location for terrorism as well as organised crime black market activities. Both of these illegal activities thrive on an ability to find a market (people who are willing to engage buying/selling of goods or ideas) and an ability to evade detection by the law" (Rom 2010, p.105). Similarly, in a report published by Clingendael, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, van Ham suggests that

> A simple glance at the map indicates that the Western Balkans are uniquely positioned as a gateway between Europe on the one hand, and Asia and the Middle East on the other. Weak regional governance (from law enforcement to the judiciary) makes it easy for organised criminal networks to engage in the heroin (as well as cocaine) trade, human trafficking, counterfeiting and contraband, as well as weapons smuggling. (2014, pp. 10–11)

The convergence of all these sources, as Sheehi points out, allow for Islamophobia to act concurrently on two levels: the level of "thought, speech and perception" and "the material level of policies, violence and action" (2011, p. 32). Various security measures in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, appropriate the crime-terror-nexus discourse related to the Balkans and materialize the threat suggested therein in the policing of Muslim communities. The crime-terror nexus and the production of the Balkans as a threat to European integration allows for what Ahmad has already observed to be a counter-terrorist measure inside the EU: "a rise in general discrimination against Muslims and a requirement on Muslims to distance their connection of Islamic practices and traditions" (Ahmad 2011, p. 437). Moreover, when specific communities are linked to organized crime and terrorism, their representation comes to rely on binary opposites that create good and bad subjects. In a comparative study that examines this pattern in Irish and Muslim communities in Britain, the authors argue that:

> The frequent juxtaposition in the press, in political debate and policy documents of 'the innocent Irish' and 'moderate Muslim' with 'terrorist' and 'extremist' effectively leads Irish and Muslim communities to be constructed as a two-faced Janus, with the 'law-abiding' always defined in relation to the 'extremist.' Irish and Muslim communities are simultaneously and ambiguously depicted in public discourse as victims, allies and suspects, and the boundaries between the three are seen as shifting and permeable." (Hickman et al. 2007 [1974], p. 24)

Similarly, in the Balkans, Muslim communities have come to distance themselves from certain Islamic practices in a distinctive manner by articulating

the belief that Balkan Islam is an exceptional type of Islam, that is secular, European and compatible with EU integration, unlike non-European, radical and fundamentalist Islam that may be found in the Middle East or Africa. Seeking to ease European proclivities over Muslims in the Balkans interacting or identifying with Muslims in the Middle East or Muslim migrants traveling through the Balkans, Bosnian Islamic scholar Karčić for instance argues that "the traditional Islam in the Balkans is an autochthonous Islam . . . an Islam of the local cultural roots" (Karčić 2014, n.p.). Whereas the head of the Albanian Muslim community suggests that Balkan Islam is "very acceptable to Europe and the West because it is civil" (Merdjanova 2013, p. 121). Additionally, the visibility of radicalism in Muslim communities in the Balkans is generally externalized and denunciated as attempts by foreign Middle Eastern extremist groups attempting to radicalize local Balkan Muslims. The deputy minister for European integration of Kosovo for instance, addressing the influence of foreign extremist groups on local Kosovar Muslims points out that "their first purpose is to take over the Muslim community of Kosovo" (Ramadan Ilazi, quoted in Landay 2015). The externalization of radicalism to the Middle East allows for the differentiation of Balkan Islam from other Islams while simultaneously calling for the policing of the interaction of Muslims from the Balkans with those of the Middle East. Addressing the spread of Islamic extremism in the Balkans for instance, a recent report suggests that, "most of the Albanian imams from Albania, Macedonia, and Kosovo, who have studied together in the Middle East, began their ideological division" (Kosovar Center for Security Studies 2015, p. 89). These discourses not only essentialize Islam in the Balkans as monolithic and unchanging but also contribute to the institutionalization of political borders of the EU that divide Muslims in the Balkans from those in the Middle East. Indeed, during a televised interview on the danger that Islamic extremism poses to Europe, the Kosovar President Jahjaga explained how the country's surveillance and arrest of extremists now operate as "steel doors," preventing these people from using Kosovo "as a corridor moving toward the East or West" (Atifete Jahjaga, quoted in Snyder 2014).

The crime-terror-nexus language is also appropriated locally in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania to define and designate which Islamic practices and traditions are acceptable and which can be considered threatening to security and European integration. As Muslims in the Balkans are interpolated and hail the call to belong to Europe, the designations of "suspect," "terrorist" and "fundamentalist" are shifted from them to their fellow Muslims in the Middle East. The concession that Muslims in the Balkans are prompted to make in appropriating the ideological exclusion of other

Muslims not only divides them from the rest of the *Ummah* but also leads them to condone the surveillance, incarceration and policing of those Muslims who are considered to be operating outside the boundaries of Balkan Islam.

As EU-oriented elites reiterate the notion of Balkan Islam as a depoliticized and secular religion, they reinforce the idea that the EU representational mandate for Balkan Islam will serve as a defense measure against the Balkans operating as the gateway of the crime-terror nexus to Europe. This defensive iteration of the difference between Islamic communities also functions as a normalizing tool for policing Muslim communities in the larger civilizational debates that continue to project Islam in opposition to the West. Referring to the recent wholesale arrests of purported Islamic extremists, for instance, the president of Kosovo, Jahjaga, released a statement arguing that, "the government of Kosovo is determined to protect the Euro-Atlantic civilizing values" in the face of radical extremism (Vani 2014). The governments of Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia have all engaged in materializing this discourse by engaging in sweeping-arrest campaigns and legislative measures that seek to accommodate EU pressure to strengthen the surveillance of religious extremism and the control of their borders. The following section examines how EU external governance and bordering mechanism impose the appropriation of the crime-terror nexus in Western Balkans applying for EU membership.

Local appropriations of the crime-terror nexus
Countries in the Middle East, North Africa and the Western Balkans are particularly concerned by the threat of foreign fighters and the radicalisation of their young population. However, such phenomena do not respect borders and the international community therefore [the EU] needs to support these countries in their efforts to stem the flow of foreign fighters and counter radicalisation. The EU has allocated €10 million for a new programme providing such support. (European Commission 2015 [Brussels])

In March 2015, the Council of the European Union and Western Balkans applicant countries organized "Fighting Jihad Together" conference in Vienna to address "possible connections between illegal migration and terrorism" where the "Western Balkan Partners [would] commit themselves to the full implementation of the existing operational and strategic agreements with Europol" (Council of the European Union [Brussels] 2015). By April 2015 the European Commission promoted the European Agenda on Security, its three key elements being the fight against organized crime, terrorism and cyber-attacks (European Commission 2015 [Strasbourg]). In addition, that same day,

the EU Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations declared a €10 million for counter terrorist measures in the Middle East, North Africa and the Western Balkans (European Commission 2015 [Brussels]). In August 2015, gathered in Vienna, representatives of the Western Balkans "convinced that the threat posed by radicalisation, terrorism and violent extremism and in particular by foreign terrorist fighters travelling via or from Western Balkan countries to Syria and Iraq," had to once again reiterate their commitment to "strengthened cooperation and increased exchange of information and best practices in the areas of shaping common values, preventing radicalisation, facilitating de-radicalisation and responding to terrorist activities" (Vienna Western Balkans Summit 2015 [Vienna]). The 2014-2015 refugee and migrant crisis have intensified EU engagement of the Western Balkans in the securitization of its borders. While the primary concerns have been guided by the desire to seal and strengthen EU borders from further inflow of migrants, these initiatives have relied on the conditionalities mechanisms that the EU has used in instituting various security measures on non-EU member states. In the Western Balkans, the measures are generally undertaken under an overall framework of future EU membership.

The two main mechanisms that have facilitated the securitization process in the Balkans are the EU Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Whereas the SAP only includes countries that have been identified as potential candidates for joining the EU, the ENP designates neighboring countries that, as part of a security buffer zone, cannot become members of the EU. Van Houtum and Boedeltje have noted how the "perceived occurrence of potential terrorists, drugs smuggling, human trafficking and illegal immigration . . . all imply for the EU that the ENP partner states need to adopt the European values as soon as possible" (van Houtum & Boedeltje 2011, p. 123). The dramatic distinction between countries in the Balkans that might be integrated into the EU and those countries that are excluded is a symmetrical process that, by extension, designates which countries the EU considers acceptable for membership. According to such strategization, Albahari, for instance, notes how the EU border "becomes the iconic and spatialised container of sacredness and of national and EU 'democratic citizenry' to be safeguarded, and as such it needs to be continuously constructed, maintained, and related to certain popular perceptions and experiences" (2006, p. 28). Institutional and popular discourse that imbricates illicit crime and fundamentalist Islam within the Balkans acts as part of a concerted effort to produce and present EU space as supposedly safe, democratic and contained. The notion that the "democratic citizenry" of the EU must be safeguarded from extreme fundamentalist Muslims and criminals

also justifies the continued presence of EU and NATO missions in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo on the pretext that their governments lack the ability or willingness to tackle this threat.

These missions include various police and security mandates in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo with executive powers to establish or train local law-enforcement and security forces. In Kosovo, the police counter-terrorism units of the European Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) have trained and advised the Kosovo Police Force in its counter-terrorism efforts since 2009 (United States Department of State 2010). Similarly, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the EU Force Althea and NATO forces have been employed with the responsibility of providing overall security and "undertak[ing] certain operational supporting tasks, such as counter-terrorism" (Kim 2006, p.4). Moreover, SFOR (Stabilization Force) and KFOR (Kosovo Force), the respective NATO military presences in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, have been set up to enable the EU and the United States to engage directly in contra-terrorist measures. In addition, the governments of Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina have recently engaged in campaigns to fight Islamic extremism. In a statement for the media, after a wide-net arrest of alleged extremists, Dusanka Majkic, chairman of the Joint Committee on Defense and Security of Bosnia, notes that the "pressure from the EU on BiH [Bosnia-Herzegovina] to solve this issue urgently is obvious. Domestic authorities and agencies must work on the repression of radical Islam. This operation is just the beginning of that process and it should be hailed" (Remikovic 2014, n.p.). These campaigns against Islamic extremism have escalated, particularly as pressure from both the EU and the United States has increased in the continued "war on terror."

Several recent actions exemplify such campaigns. On 4 September 2014, Bosnian authorities arrested 16 citizens suspected of "having recruited, organised and financed the departure of Bosnian nationals to Syria or Iraq, or of taking part in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq alongside foreign radical terrorist organisations and groups" (Smajilhodzic 2014, n.p.). Three weeks earlier, on 11 August, the Kosovo Police Force arrested 43 alleged Islamic radicals and placed two imams under house arrest (Jihad "made in Kosovo" 2014). Before guilt was proven for any of the arrested individuals, the action was saluted by a joint declaration of the French, German, Italian, UK and US embassies in Kosovo, stating that the

fight against the spread of extremist ideologies requires the engagement of all segments of Kosovo society, as well as strong international cooperation. We are committed to working with Kosovo authorities as they exercise their

responsibilities for ensuring public safety and security within the rule of law. We call on all relevant Kosovo institutions to enhance the legal tools available to fight such security challenges. (GazetaExpress 2014)

In a further effort to respond to the call to subdue extremism, on 17 September 2014, the Kosovo government arrested another 15 persons for charges of "terrorism, threatening the constitutional order, [and] incitement of religious hate speech" (Bytyci 2014, n.p.). Among the arrested individuals were nine imams of the grand mosques of Prishtina, Peja and Mitrovica, including Fuad Muriqi, the leader of the political party LISBA (Islamic Movement to Unite). Similar to the previous incident, before any of the arrested individuals were proven guilty, the US ambassador to Kosovo, Tracey Jacobson, tweeted, "Once again, I commend Kosovo on its proactive approach against foreign fighters and extremism" (Bytyci 2014, n.p.). While the Kosovo Court of Appeals rejected the basic court's request to keep the majority of the arrested men in custody due to lack of evidence (Kursani 2015), the European Union Commission, in the *Kosovo Progress Report 2014*, makes no reference to the violation of these citizens' human rights. Rather, the commission notes, in the subsection on religious freedom, "there has been sustained progress in the field of freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (European Union Commission 2014 p. 18).

Arrests of prominent members, imams, and leaders of the Muslim communities in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina act to discredit leaders and communities that have been identified as a threat to the EU, while promoting a homogenized hierarchical leadership of Islam in Kosovo that speaks on behalf of the Muslim community as whole. More demonstrably, whether intended or not, these arrests act to secure and institutionalize the separation of Muslims in the Balkans from the rest of the Muslim world. In this context, it might be considered that the EU assigns the political leverage of conditional membership by imposing and enforcing expectations on the governments of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. These countries must thus prove their EU political orientation by policing the EU borders in the periphery and separating Balkan Muslims from the rest of the Muslim world.

Seeking to address the proclivities of EU fears of a constellation of the crime-terror nexus in the Balkans, the governments of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, in addition to making sweeping arrests of purported Islamic fundamentalists, have institutionalized various legal frameworks that explicitly make reference to and target Muslim communities. The *Republic of Kosovo National Strategy against Terrorism*, for instance, explicitly states:

> The geostrategic position of Kosovo creates the possibility to make our country as a target transit country for illegal activities and various trafficking, this position also poses a risk for spreading the terrorist syndrome particularly the one based on the religious fundamentalism. In this light, the religious composition of our population with Muslim majority can be used as an alibi to change the focus from other elements that are present in Kosovo and in region for various political purposes. (Republic of Kosovo 2012, p. 7)

Similarly, the *Strategy for Combating Terrorism in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, submitted by the BiH Delegation to the European Council, notes that the geostrategic position of Bosnia-Herzegovina makes it susceptible to international terrorism by virtue of being

> placed on the intersection of routes that originate in areas whose instability may reflect on B&H. This is especially true for the South Mediterranean and Northern Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus region. In these regions, destabilized by crises, conflicts and high demographic growth, and by decreasing energy resources, crises are transferred more and more toward the European continent and its weakest links. (Committee of Experts on Terrorism 2006, p.3)

Similarly, the Albanian National Strategy for the War on Organised Crime, Trafficking and Terrorism designates the National Security Services to

> focus on those objectives which are considered a priority of the state in the European integration process of Albania, specifically in dealing with potential terrorist threats, characterised primarily by Islamic fundamentalism, or organised crime, drug trafficking. (Republic of Albania, Ministry of Finance, 2008, n.p.)

Existing fears of "home-grown terrorism" are being extended from the euro zone to the Eastern frontier as part of implementing the ideals and enforcement of EU enlargement. This happens by way of expanding to the periphery the security strategies and structures used to police Muslims in the center; on the periphery, however, they are assembled under the broader framework of EU enlargement processes.

Conclusion
This article has challenged the EU securitization and enlargement policies in the Western Balkans as unproblematic processes of combating cross-border organized crime and terrorist networks. Examining EU's explicit and implicit linkage of Muslims in the Balkans with organized crime and terrorism, I have attempted to demonstrate how Islamophobia is not just limited to far-right movements, but constitutes an extension of mainstream EU enlargement

policies. I suggest that this is particularly visible in the shift of EU enlargement debates from the 1990s, which were predominantly framed around post-conflict and (post)socialist instability, toward increased concerns over organized crime and terrorism that has accompanied the integration of Muslim-majority countries. This shift is not just relevant in exposing EU Islamophobia but more importantly revealing how the securitization policies that the EU has pressed on Muslim majority countries in the larger enlargement processes have contributed to the surveillance and violence on Muslim communities and in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo has suspended sovereignty through the continued presence of EU police and justice missions in the name of EU integration and security.

Moreover, when appropriated locally, EU securitization measures influence the local policing of what are acceptable Islamic practices, which frequently results in the establishment of suspect communities and the depoliticization of Muslim communities by relegating Islam only to the private sphere. The defensive articulation of Balkan Islam as secular, peaceful and European against the "newer" radical strains of Islam allegedly coming from the Middle East is one such example discussed in this article. This tacit externalization of radicalism and its interpellation as un-European allows for the partition of Muslims in the Balkans from the larger Muslim world in the name of EU integration while simultaneously producing the EU as a space free of radicalism, violence and extremism. Last but not least, Islamophobia prevents the emergence of common narratives of oppression and resistance among peripheries, particularly of those communities with common historical pasts. As the crime-terror nexus report suggests, the spatial and temporal configurations of the political borders of the EU seek to limit the connections among Muslims inside the EU with those outside its borders, particularly the Western Balkans, the Middle East and Africa.

It is important to note that since the focus of this article is primarily Islamophobia located in the EU enlargement security strategies and their impact on Muslim communities in the Balkans, its scope is too limited to make broader generalizations about Islamophobia in the larger EU enlargement processes. New research that examines non-self-evident manifestations of Islamophobia imbricated not just in enlargement politics but also in internal EU policies is needed. Particularly critical interrogation of EUs claim to not see religion at the expense of silencing Muslims while positioning its secular standards on Muslims as the invisible universal norm, against which particular Muslim others are constructed. This research would complicate the understanding of secularism as a universal and neutral norm by questioning its

unproblematic employment by the EU which allows for an assimilationist discourse that renders those Muslims who resist the secularist notions of EU citizenship, as problematic, threatening, extremists, suspects, etc. There is also need for field based research that will systematically examine the impact of EU counter-terrorist and external migrant control measures on Muslim majority countries, not just in the Western Balkans but also in the Middle East and North Africa where the EU continues to fund various counter-terrorist and migrant control projects.

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DIRECT DEMOCRACY NOTES

THE 2014 ELECTORAL CODE INITIATIVE IN BULGARIA

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Outline
- Civil protests in 2013 signal the delegitimization of Bulgarian policy-making process.
- President's initiative for electoral code referendum in 2014, aimed to engage citizens in national politics and bring more transparency into political process.
- Campaign for referendum gains significant popular support.
- Referendum initiative fails in the Parliament due to resistance of governing parties.
- Short-term and long-term implications of the initiative.

The proposal for electoral code change was one of the results of the 2013 political protests in Bulgaria. The proposal was put forth by the President and aimed at engaging citizens in national politics by bringing more transparency to the electoral process. The initiative gained significant popular support; the Initiative committee collected almost 500,000 valid signatures. However, the initiative was blocked in the Parliament by the governing parties. Nevertheless, the referendum proposal and campaign continue to exert influence on Bulgarian political process. Some changes have already been introduced, and new referendum is being discussed.

Background
For Bulgaria, the year 2013 was full of political events. The government of Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) resigned in February after weeks of protests in different cities of the country against the high electricity bills. After GERB's resignation, a caretaker government came into power in order to prepare elections for a new National Assembly. After the

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elections of May 2013 new coalition government was formed jointly by Bulgarian Socialists Party (BSP) and Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS), unofficially supported also by a nationalist party Ataka. But with this, the political turmoil in the country did not finish: a new wave of protests demanding structural political change, came in spring 2013, leading to months of political instability.

The protest wave that began in spring 2013 was set off by the apparent use of nontransparent and corrupt practices by the coalition government in the governing of the country. In this context in January 2014, after months of political instability, Bulgarian President Rossen Plevneliev proposed to the National Assembly to hold a referendum on changes in the electoral system. Formerly Minister of Regional development in the first GERB government of 2009, he was elected as President in 2012. In this capacity, he had striven to maintain equal distance from all political forces in the country. The three issues raised in the framework of the proposed referendum included: obligatory participation in elections for all voters, as is the case in other EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Greece, Italy); change of the electoral system from proportional to mixed or fully majoritarian; and the possibility of online voting, especially for Bulgarian citizens living abroad.

The rationale behind these proposals was to calm down the political tension and to reverse the tendency of decreasing turnout and to give the opportunity of more Bulgarians to take part in national political process. The low turnout has recently become a significant problem, especially when combined with the practice of vote-buying and corporate voting. In this situation, relatively small groups of population mobilized by some political parties receive disproportionate representation and power in the Parliament. Among Bulgarian political parties, DPS is known to have especially profited from such practices over the course of last four parliamentary elections. Thus, increasing the turnout and preventing corrupt electoral practices would have an impact not only on the whole electoral arena, but would specifically target influence of DPS as a king-maker party. It was hoped that the electoral changes would give more legitimacy to political institutions and political parties (see Table 1 for data about trust in political institutions).

It is worth noting that this was not completely new agenda for Bulgaria; thus, obligatory voting was already discussed by the Parliament back in 2006, but it was rejected at that time (National Assembly of Bulgaria 2006). In the Parliament of 2009, 32 MPs (out of 240) were elected according to majoritarian voting. However, the practice was abandoned in the next elections of 2013. The issue of online voting is an actively debated topic in the context of growing Bulgarian

diaspora abroad. Most of these people, especially those living in the EU (Germany, Greece, Spain, UK) and the US face difficulties in exercising their voting rights due to limited access to Bulgarian consulates (Lalov, 2009). At the same time, Bulgarian citizens living in Turkey, who are overwhelmingly DPS supporters, are already engaged in the electoral process due to the well-developed DPS network in Turkey. Thus, introduction of online voting is hoped to reverse the situation when only supporters of one party are privileged among Bulgarian diaspora. However, despite the relevance of the referendum issues for Bulgarian society and their popularity among the protesters, the proposed referendum faced many political and bureaucratic obstacles.

Table 1. Trust in political institutions in Bulgaria (%)

	Spring 2009	Autumn 2009	Spring 2010	Autumn 2010	Spring 2011	Autumn 2011	Spring 2012	Autumn 2012	Spring 2013	Autumn 2013	Spring 2014	Autumn 2014
Political parties	13	12	15			14	16	14	15	12	18	10
Government	17	44	43	34	30	38	28	25	16	20	18	19
Parliament	10	27	25	20	20	25	17	18	13	14	14	14

Source: Standard Eurobarometer.
Answers to question: 'I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions; for each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust or tend not to trust it'.

Campaign
Initially, the referendum proposal was submitted to the Parliament for review. Legislative commission of the Parliament which reviewed the proposal, rejected it. It was the BSP and DPS MPs who blocked the proposal in the Commission. In this situation, the only way to hold the referendum was to collect half a million citizens' signatures in support of President's initiatives. According to the law, these signatures must be collected within three months period. After signatures are collected, the President is legally obligated to set a date for the referendum.

Against the background of the protests, it was not very difficult to gather sufficient support for the proposals. According to a survey carried out by Alpha-Research at the end of February 2014, 54% of the population of Bulgaria

supported President's initiative, and only 15% were against the referendum (See table 2) (Alpha Research, 2014). Even among BSP supporters, 45% were in favor of referendum, and 30% against. After the rejection of the proposals by the parliament, a group of Bulgarian intellectuals close to democratic opposition parties established an Initiative Committee who issued a petition to the citizens to support the proposed changes to electoral law. The President was among the first to sign the petition, not as an official but as a regular citizen (Lalov, 2014). The petition was received as an outcome of the political protests of the previous year, and it received impressive popular support; lots of volunteers inside and outside Bulgaria took part in collecting the signatures. The Initiative committee collected the necessary number of signatures in very short time, well before the legally allowed three months. The Initiative committee was chaired by a Bulgarian legal scholar, professor Georgiy Bliznashki. Formerly BSP MP, he had left the party before the initiative and later became the Prime Minister in the care-taker government after the fall of the coalition government of BSP and DPS.

Table 2. Public opinion survey regarding electoral code referendum

Question/Opinion:	Positive %	Negative %	Without opinion/do not vote, %
What is your opinion on the President's initiative on the electoral code referendum?	54	15	31
In referendum, how would you vote on the issue of obligatory voting?	44	35	21
In referendum, how would you vote on the issue of electronic voting?	43	29	28
In referendum, how would you vote on the issue of majoritarian voting?	55 (28% for part of the MPs; 27% all MPs)	9	36

Source: Alpha-Research, Public Opinion survey, 28 February 2014

Having in mind high level of political tensions in the country in 2013-2014 main political parties actively participated in the debates during the collection of signatures. As mentioned above, government parties opposed the proposals. Their arguments were multifold. In the first place, BSP rejected the referendum because it would be too expensive. Coming to the substantive issues, they contended that according to the Constitution, voting is a right, not an obligation. Citizens should be free to use or not to use their right to vote. Some BSP members thus suggested that the matter should be resolved by the

Constitutional Court before it can go to referendum. Another argument was that electronic voting opens greater opportunities for electoral fraud. Interestingly, there were no objections about the changes from proportional to majoritarian system, as this idea is very popular among the voters, including those of BSP and DPS, and government parties were afraid to oppose such a popular idea openly (see Table 2). Finally, as some analysts pointed out, the government parties were afraid that the proposed electoral changes can benefit the opposition parties in the future elections. In this sense, the electronic voting presented the biggest threat for the government: potential users of electronic voting are Bulgarians living abroad and young people, and they usually vote for GERB and the parties which formed the Reformists' Bloc (Dnevnik, 2014).

On the other side, GERB and Reformists' Bloc supported the initiative; they actively participated in the campaign and even offered their logistical support during collection of the signatures. Their main argument in favor of the initiative was that with obligatory voting the impact of vote-buying on the elections outcomes will considerably decrease. With regard to majoritarian voting, GERB and Reformists argued that this will improve the legitimacy of electoral process, political parties and Parliament. Finally, online voting would help to attract young people and Bulgarians living abroad – two groups that are currently largely disengaged from politics. Among the latter group, GERB and Reformists were especially interested in Bulgarians living in EU countries (Germany, Greece, Spain, UK) and the USA, whom they perceive as potential supporters, as opposed to Bulgarians living in Turkey, who are already included in the electoral process and traditionally support DPS. According to the last data, the number of Bulgarians living abroad is close to three million (24 chassa 2013). If fully mobilized, they can significantly impact the voting results.

Another issue of contention during the campaign was the date of the proposed referendum. President and Initiative committee suggested to hold the referendum simultaneously with European Parliament elections of 2014. Their argument was that this would decrease significantly the costs of the referendum. This also raised objections from the government coalition. The government parties were afraid that if the two causes were combined, the number of voters in EP elections would increase due to popularity of the referendum issues. In this respect, since the popularity of the coalition was very low, governing parties were afraid that they would be outvoted in the European Parliament elections. This would also signal the fall of the coalition government itself. Their goal was therefore to postpone the referendum till after the European Parliament elections results would be announced. In other words, governing parties sought to, first, avoid the referendum altogether. If that was

not possible, their second option of choice was to downplay the likely unfavorable results of the referendum, by either postponing it, or by including economic questions, such as the issue of flat vs. progressive taxation, which would distract voters' attention from electoral issues (Paunova, 2014). In an effort to make the referendum more difficult some MPs even suggested to increase the number of signatures needed for initiating a referendum from 500,000 to 750,000 (Paunova, 2014)

Output

In total, the Initiative committee had collected 571,612 signatures. Upon completion of the campaign the signatures were delivered to the parliament for authenticity check. The parliament then submitted them to Directorate General of Civil Registration and Administrative Services (GRAO), which was obliged to check the authenticity of the signatures. The check revealed that 108,276 signatures were invalid, and thus the total number of valid signatures fell short of the number that would make summoning of the referendum obligatory. The Initiative committee then requested to collect additionally 36,000 signatures, but the Parliament rejected this request referring to missed deadlines. These protracted checking procedures and the debates around missing signatures in any case made it impossible to hold the referendum at the same time with European Parliament elections. Nevertheless, the number of already collected valid signatures was so large that it could not be ignored, and in this case, it was up to the Parliament to decide to call referendum or not. In the discussion around the voting, GERB expressed full support for the three issues of the proposed referendum; BSP eventually decided to support only the obligatory voting, DPS was against all three issues, and ATAKA was against holding the referendum altogether. Thus, after eight hours of debates, the referendum proposal was rejected by the Parliament, and DPS opposition to the Referendum played the decisive role in the voting (National Assembly, 2014).

Although the referendum was not held, the issues raised by the Initiative were taken on by the political parties and the Government. Thus, although majoritarian voting has not been introduced, in both European Parliament elections 2014 and National elections 2014 electoral code was changed to introduce preferential voting in the proportional system. For the first time in national elections, candidates from party lists had to organize individual electoral campaigns and fight for their right to be included in the party lists. This created serious tensions in BSP and DPS parties, which urged their supporters to ignore the preferential lists and to vote for parties only.

Conclusion

The referendum initiative of 2014 has important implications for Bulgarian politics, despite the fact that the referendum was not summoned. In the short term perspective, the initiative has failed, and the questions that were proposed by the President remain unresolved. However, the referendum initiative should be evaluated not as a single, isolated event, but in the larger context of the protests that began in 2013. These protests have changed the political landscape of Bulgaria in many ways. First, these protests transformed from socially to politically motivated, as the original social agenda (e.g. utilities and electricity bills) was replaced in the second wave of protests with political demands of transparency and accountability in the decision-making process. The campaign for the referendum grew out of this background. And although the referendum initiative has failed, the questions that it raised were put on the political table. They received significant popular support, and were discussed and debated at the highest levels of political system in the country. All of this makes them impossible to ignore; any future government will have take them into account and every political party will need to develop and express a position on these issues. Thus, the idea to hold a new referendum, possibly simultaneously with local elections in the autumn of 2015, is currently being discussed. In late February 2015 President repeated his original proposal and shared his plans to submit the proposal once again to the new National Assembly (Zumbjulev, 2015). And in the long term perspective the President and Boyko Borisov, the leader of GERB who is currently Prime-minister expressed hope that referenda would become a regular practice in Bulgaria (Gospodinova, 2015)

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THE 2014 REFERENDUM IN SLOVENIA

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Outline
- The 2014 referendum was the first referendum organized after the introduction of new constitutional rules in 2013.
- The question of the date on which the referendum would be held triggered huge disputes.
- The topic of the referendum was overwhelmingly presented as the choice between opening and closing the archives of the secret intelligence service of the old, socialist regime.
- Only two referendum campaign groups were visible and engaged in the campaign. These were the government and the main opposition party.
- Given the many political events that occurred in 2014, low voter turnout was not a surprise.

In 2014, Slovenia had several elections. These included European Parliament (EP) elections in May, early parliamentary elections in July, and local elections in October. Among these political events, the nation-wide referendum was also held. As is the case in many modern democratic countries, some forms of direct democracy are established alongside bodies of representative democracy in Slovenia. For more than two decades, Slovenia followed the 'liberal' approach to the regulation of referendum initiatives and referendums in general. The ability to demand that a referendum be held was granted to 40,000 voters, one third of MPs, and the National Council (the upper house of the parliament). There were no restrictions on the issues which could be put to a referendum, although in the past, different governments asked the Constitutional Court to decide whether a referendum on a specific question could be held. There was

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also no regulation on voter turnout since a referendum would be valid with any level of turnout, and only the voters who cast a vote would decide the issue. Mainly due to generous institutional arrangements, over a period of 20 years, 23 nationwide referendums were organized, and there were many more at a local level. Referendums have also occasionally been important obstacles which have limited the effective power of governments and have increasingly been treated as influential 'veto players' (Krasovec 2014).

In recent years, the high number of referendums held had been criticized for obstructing the legislative process and contributing to political instability. These criticism sparked a debate on how legislation on referendums could be changed to ensure, on one hand, the right to demand referendums as a necessary and appropriate means of direct democracy and, on the other hand, policy-makers' ability to govern effectively. In May 2013, the parliamentary parties agreed to make some constitutional amendments which limit the 'liberal' regulation of referendums. Since 2013, a referendum can be held only if 40,000 voters demand so, and a set of issues has been proscribed from being put to a referendum. A referendum may reverse legislation if the latter is voted against by the majority of valid ballots, but only if at least one fifth of all eligible voters vote in that way. The constitutional amendments also restrict the range of issues upon which a referendum may be held: referendums may not be held for laws concerning the implementation of the state budget; emergency provisions for national defense and security or natural disaster response; the ratification of international treaties; and unconstitutional affairs in human rights and other areas.

Background

Given that a referendum on the archives and document material was held already in 2011, it seems that the topic is controversial in Slovenia. In 2011, a referendum on the amendments to the Law on Archives and Document Material was held simultaneously with a referendum on the Law on the Prevention of Undeclared Employment and Work and a referendum on Pension Reform. In 2011, the referendum was demanded by the party that had dominated right-wing political spectrum in the past decade, the Slovene Democratic Party (SDS), which was at the time in opposition, together with the opposition Slovene National Party (SNS), a representative of the Italian minority in the parliament, and an independent MP. The initiators of the referendum claimed that amendments to the Law on Archives and Document Material (this Law was passed in 2006 under the SDS-led government), would (again) restrict access to the archive material of the secret service of the old, socialist regime. Although representatives of the government and of the Archive of Slovenia explained that only archive material on the activities of the former regime's secret service abroad would be restricted

due to national security reasons, people overwhelmingly voted against (70%) the amendments that were passed by the government majority in the parliament (according to the legislation in such a situation the parliament is oblige not to pass any law which would be in contrast to the will of people expressed at the referendum; for a period of one year after the referendum was held). Such a result did not come as a big surprise since the government was at the time faced with huge unpopularity and distrust, and was indeed heavily defeated on all three referendums that were held simultaneously on 5 June 2011 (Haughton and Krasovec 2013).

In January 2014, the government majority in parliament passed amendments to the Law on Archives and Document Material, and the opposition SDS party again launched a campaign for a referendum on the amendments. The referendum initiative was soon predominantly, or even exclusively, characterized as a referendum on the opening or closing of the secret service archives from the socialist era, although data presented on public television during the campaign revealed that only 2% of the archive material is concerned with the secret service of the old regime (RTVSLO 2014). Due to the above-mentioned constitutional amendments passed in 2013, the SDS had to launch a campaign to collect the signatures of at least 40,000 voters. According to the regulation, the initiator has to collect this number of votes in 35 days; since the SDS managed to collect enough signatures, the parliament was obliged to call a referendum.

The question of when this referendum would be held triggered huge disputes between the government and opposition parties. The SDS, which initiated the idea of a referendum, demanded that it be held simultaneously with the EP elections, mainly to help mobilize its supporters, while the coalition parties strongly opposed the idea (Haughton and Krasovec 2014). The SDS clearly expected that a referendum quorum would be achieved if the referendum was held simultaneously with the EP elections. The party representatives advised several times that expenditure for the state budget would be lower if the EP elections and the referendum were organized on the same day. The government, on the other hand, insisted that the EP elections and referendum could not be held simultaneously, since the mixing of the electoral and referendum campaigns would not be appropriate (Slovenia Times 2014b). Additionally, the government's representatives claimed that the question of the archives was very important and needed to be subject of a separate campaign. Given this governmental stance on the importance of the archive question, the decision of the parliamentary majority to hold the referendum on 4 May was a surprise. 27 April and 1 and 2 May are national holidays in Slovenia, and it is a custom for many Slovenes to 'make a bridge' between the two holidays and to

be away from home for several days. The SDS appealed the decision and was backed by the Constitutional Court's unanimous decision that the parliament should set a new date. The Court namely upheld the claims of the applicants that holding the referendum on 4 May would disenfranchise voters since many of them won't be at home also on 4 May, simultaneously also part of the voting in advance (which is legally possible in Slovenia five days prior to referendum day but no later than two days prior to referendum day) would be held during the May Day public holiday; consequently, setting 4 May as polling day would threaten the fairness of the referendum proceedings and undermine the legitimacy of the referendum result – as decided by the Court. The decision on the date of the referendum was therefore found to be incompatible with Article 90 of the Constitution, which sets down referendum rules, and with Article 44, which gives every citizen the right to participate in the management of public affairs (Slovenia Times 2014a). The Court did not specifically rule upon the date on which the referendum would be held; it said only that a new decision must be adopted by the parliament within a week. A new decision was made to hold the referendum on 8 June 2014; two weeks after the EP elections.

Referendum Campaign
Referendum campaigns, as well as election campaigns, can officially start 30 days prior to polling and must finish 24 hours before polling. Contrary to election campaigns, referendum campaigns remained largely unregulated until 2007. The last amendments to the Law on Election and Referendum Campaign were passed in 2013 and banned several previously permitted financial sources. Largely due to international pressure, mainly from the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (Fink-Hafner and Krasovec 2013), donations from companies were ruled out, while donations from individuals of up to 10 times the average monthly salary are still allowed, and parties are still allowed to make transfers from their ordinary bank accounts to special referendum accounts. The law sets the spending limit in referendum campaigns to 0.25 EUR per voter. Since there was a total of 1,712,733 voters at the time of the referendum, the organizers of the campaigns were allowed to spend 428,183 EUR. Given the scarcity of the financial sources of Slovene parties (Krasovec and Haughton 2011) and that three elections would be held in 2014, none of the organizers of the referendum campaigns decided to invest an amount of money close to the permitted amount. For example, the Governmental Office for Communication, which was authorized to lead the governmental campaign, was granted 5,000 € (STA 2014).

Several actors were formally involved in the organization of the referendum campaigns. These included two out of the four governmental parties (Positive

Slovenia, which was the leading governmental party, and the Social Democrats), the SDS, and two non-parliamentary parties (the Christian Socialists of Slovenia and the Greens of Slovenia), two non-governmental organisations, and the Governmental Office for Communication (UKOM). Among these groups, the most active were the UKOM and the SDS.

During, but also before the campaign, there was a bitter bipartisan debate, predominantly on the question of whether the latest amendments to the Law on Archives would indeed make access easier and further open the archives of the secret service of the old regime, as the government claimed, or restrict access or even close them, as the SDS argued.

The dispute focused on the expansion of the restrictions governing access to sensitive personal data (for example, concerning sexual orientation, religion, or health problems) of the victims and members/collaborators of the secret service of the old regime. While the government argued that this is required in order to adhere to human rights standards and that, in reality, additional segments of the archives were being declassified, the SDS and several researchers of the socialist regime who are close to the SDS, claimed the censoring of this data would take so much time as to prevent any serious research. As exposed by MP Irgl, who was the front-runner of the SDS's campaign, the process of anonymisation (withdrawing sensitive personal data) will indeed make access to these archives impossible, since two employees of the Archive of Slovenia cannot do this within a foreseeable timeframe, especially if we consider the huge amount of material, for example some files can be about 65,000 pages long (SDS 2014a). While the Law on Archives from 2006 had been protecting the personal data of victims only, the amendments to the law will indeed in this sense equalise victims and perpetrators, and this is unacceptable to the SDS (SDS 2014a).

The government acknowledged that the process of strict anonymization will possibly introduce some delays in acquiring the archive material, but stressed that, under the provisions of the 2006 Law, researchers could not receive requested archive material immediately. The archive material was under the scrutiny of the Archive of Slovenia employees, and they were obliged to prepare the archive material within 60 days of receiving a request (Mladina 2014a). It was also exposed that processes of anonymization are common to all post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, with the exception of the Czech Republic, where all the archive material is completely open. However, the Czech Republic has faced law suits due to the abuse of sensitive personal data (Mladina 2014a).

It is interesting that, in January 2014, amendments in the parliament were supported by New Slovenia (NSi), the party which has clearly and vehemently disapproved the socialist regime and the practice of its secret service. NSi and the SDS have frequently taken common stances on the socialist regime and violation of human rights in post-war socialist Slovenia/Yugoslavia. According to NSi representatives, the 2014 amendments indeed ensure greater access to the archives, as was done by the 2006 Law, which was also passed in the parliament with NSi help. NSi's support of the amendments in 2014 triggered some sharp conflicts between the SDS and NSi, which led NSi to evaluate the demand to call a referendum as simply a tactical maneuver by the SDS to mobilize voters prior to the EP elections.

Since the question of human rights was exposed during the campaign, the Ombudsman prepared a statement (Varuh človekovih pravic 2014). It established that the amendments passed in January 2014 followed the recommendations issued by the Ombudsman in 2012 regarding the implementation of the Law on Archives and Document Material from 2006. Therefore, it stated that the referendum, considering constitutionally assured human rights and respect for the rule of law, was unnecessary. This statement is followed by the Ombudsman's evaluation that the referendum would only deepen ideological and political cleavages, which are not needed in a sharpened economic and social situation.

Results
Although 67% of those who cast a vote agreed with the SDS's arguments, turnout was only 11.7%, and, as mentioned above, according to the new legislation, a referendum can reverse adopted legislation if it is voted so by the majority of valid ballots and only if at least one fifth of all eligible voters vote in this way. Therefore, it is true that the majority of voters who participated, casted a 'no' vote, but, according to the results, only 7.8% of all eligible voters did so.

In her first statement after the referendum results were announced, MP Irgl, who led the SDS's referendum initiative, said that one of the reasons for the low turnout was the lack of awareness among Slovenians about the importance of voting, which showed that Slovenia was still not a mature democracy (Slovenia Times 2014c). She also blamed what she said were extremely irresponsible calls by the media for a boycott of the referendum and the refusal of the government to hold the referendum alongside the 25 May EP election (Slovenia Times 2014c). MP Irgl also added that people still feel fear when it comes to such issues and are afraid to make decision (SDS 2014b).

The Minister of Culture declared his happiness with the referendum results and evaluated that citizens followed the arguments of the government and experts to support the most widely-open access to archives in Europe. He added that 'by not voting people say whether this issue is key for them or not' (Slovenia Times 2014c).

Table 1: Results of the 2014 referendum

Date of referendum	8 June 2014
Electorate	1,712,733
Referendum question	Do you agree that the Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Archives and Archival Material passed by the National Assembly (ZVDAGA-A) on 28 January 2014 is implemented?
Totals votes cast	201,087 (11.7 %)
Total valid votes	197,918 (98.5 %)
Valid votes in favour	64,571 (32.6 %)
Valid votes against	133,347 (67.4 %)

Source: Slovenian Electoral Commission 2014

Conclusions

The referendum on the amendments to the Law of Archives and Document Material has again sharpened ideological divisions in the Slovene political arena and society, but still remained of low importance in the broader context of the several elections held in Slovenia in 2014. The referendum results were soon almost completely forgotten since the then-up-coming early parliamentary elections in mid-July had already started to attract the majority of political and public attention. Given such a situation, referendum did not have important consequences for inter-party competition for the up-coming parliamentary elections although it has indeed further strengthened divide among Slovene parties on questions over socialist past, but along already well-established party-competition lines.

Political analyst, Mr. Uhan, estimated that voters witnessed the political arrogance of the SDS since political instrument was abused for political aims. He added that low voter turnout can be a consequence of the abuse of the referendum or the content of the referendum issue itself (Mladina 2014b). Despite referendums in Slovenia were marked by rather low voter turnout also in the past (the only important exceptions were EU accession and NATO referendums with 60% turnout) such low turnout was recorded only in the case of consultative referendum on regions in 2008 (11%). It is also obvious that new constitutional rules (2013) have brought a new concern an initiator of a

referendum has to take into account in the future – referendum campaign has to be oriented not only to persuade people how to vote as it was the case until 2013, but to mobilize them to cast a vote as well.

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THE 2015 REFERENDUM IN POLAND

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Outline
- The factor determining the call for referendum was the result in the elections for the President of the Republic of Poland.
- The circumstances of calling the referendum, as well as the choice and content of questions caused a lot of debate.
- The Civic Platform and Paweł Kukiz encouraged the citizens to participate in the referendum and to vote for changes.
- The quality of the campaign preceding the referendum resulted in a low level of knowledge and interest on the part of the citizens.
- A low turnout made the referendum a negative instance of applying the mechanisms of direct democracy in Poland.

Background and legal framework
In the history of Poland after 1989, the citizens have had an opportunity to express their opinions in nationwide referendums five times. The most recent took place on September 6, 2015. The circumstances in which it was held, the choice of questions and its results will bear upon the attitude of citizens towards direct democracy initiatives for a long time. The cause which directly led to calling the referendum was the result of the elections for the President of Poland, which took place on May 10, 2015. The leader of pre-election opinion polls, the current President Bronisław Komorowski, received fewer votes (33.77%) than his main opponent Andrzej Duda (34.76%). However, it was the third candidate's, Paweł Kukiz's, result (20.8%) that mattered the most. This active rock musician, so far not involved in political activity, participated in the presidential campaign with a postulate to implement single-member constituencies in the Sejm elections, generally gathering the voters disappointed with the present politics.

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A day after the May elections, President Komorowski made an instantaneous decision to hold a national referendum. Justifying his initiative, he explained that he saw high support for Kukiz as a signal that the citizens want changes. He understood Kukiz's result as a necessity to transform the citizen-state relationship, and pointed out that politicians should pay attention to opinions of their voters. It is thus difficult not to perceive the referendum as part of the presidential campaign. The impulse to call it, as well as the choice of questions were aimed at winning higher support and polarizing the positions of the two remaining candidates. It was an important circumstance that Komorowski wished to win the favour of Kukiz's supporters. Taking such a decision, the current president was influenced by the fact that Law and Justice (PiS) and candidate Duda, who was to compete with Komorowski in the run-off, were against the proposed solutions. Moreover, Komorowski's position was in agreement with the postulates of Civic Platform (PO), which were voiced but not implemented in the previous years.

The legal frame for the referendum is regulated mainly on the basis of two legal acts, i.e. the Constitution (Constitution 1997) and Act on the Nationwide Referendum (Act 2015). Moreover, the Senate proceedings concerning the referendum are determined by its rules (Rules 2015). The course of voting by the citizens is regulated in turn by Election Code (Election Code 2011). The Constitution makes it possible to call a referendum concerning matters of particular importance to the State (Article 125, p. 1). The right to call a referendum is vested in the President, who has to be granted the Senate's agreement, which is expressed by an absolute majority with at least half of the statutory number of senators present (Art. 125, p. 2).

All citizens of the Republic of Poland who have come of age (18 years old) are entitled to vote in a nationwide referendum, including those whose permanent or temporary place of residence is abroad. The voting is universal, equal and secret. Ballots can be sent by post and given by proxy, and the blind are provided with Braille overlays. The very act of voting consists in the voters marking Yes or No on the ballot form. The result of a nationwide referendum is binding if more than half of the citizens entitled to vote have participated in it (Art. 125, p.3). The validity of such a referendum is determined by the Supreme Court (Art. 125, p.4). Having informed the public about his initiative, President Komorowski started the procedures described above. On May 13, 2015 he sent the Speaker of the Senate a bill of resolution calling a nationwide referendum which contained the questions and the proposed date. On May 21, 2015, the Senate agreed for the President of the Republic of Poland to call a nationwide referendum. 57 senators took part in the ballot and all of them voted for the resolution. They represented

the governing coalition of PO (52) and the Polish People's Party (PSL, 2), as well as Independent Senators Circle (2) and PiS (1). The latter voted 'for' by mistake and the remaining PiS senators did not participate in the ballot although they were present in the room. Consequently, President Komorowski signed the documents on the 17th of June and the resolution of the President of the Republic of Poland on Calling a Nationwide Referendum was published in the Journal of Laws (Resolution of the President 2015).

The nationwide referendum consisted of three questions: 1. Are you in favor of introducing single-member constituencies in elections to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland? 2. Are you in favor of maintaining the current system of financing political parties from the state budget? 3. Are you in favor of introducing a general principle whereby any legal doubts in interpreting tax law would be resolved in favor of taxpayers? All three questions raised problems in relation to an unconstitutional nature of the first question, lack of precision of the second question, and irrelevance of the third question. Especially the first question, politically most crucial, caused the most serious legal doubts. Concerning the bill of the referendum published by the Analyses and Documentation Office of the Chancellery of the Senate, three out of five lawyers pointed to the unconstitutional character of the referendum. The reservations referred primarily to the first question.

The question concerning single-member constituencies was the main pretext to initiate the referendum. It has to be emphasized that such constituencies have been a rule since 2011 for the elections to the Senate, and since 2014 in elections to the commune councils in communes which are not district towns. Hence, they are not unknown or a completely new solution. However, implementing the proposed solution is not possible according to the present law. It is against the statement in the Constitution (Article 96, p. 2), saying that the elections to the Sejm shall be universal, equal, direct, proportional, and conducted by secret ballot. Conscious of that, President Komorowski sent to the Sejm on May 12, 2015 a bill proposing to change the Constitution by removing the word 'proportional.'

The second question was quite general and did not suggest any precise solution. It is thus difficult to determine the range of changes that would have to be implemented as a consequence of the citizens voting 'for'. The intention of the question which was discussed publicly pointed to abolishing the financing of political parties from the state budget. However, the question itself did not point to such a solution. Answering 'yes' suggests only that the source of financing would change, with no direction or range of the changes.

The third question referred to the relationship between the taxpayers and the state. It was supposed to initiate changes in the attitude towards the citizens in the case of doubts about tax laws, which had so far been decided in favor of the state's institutions. One cannot forget, however, that on July 10, 2015 the Sejm passed an amendment of the tax statute which granted such a solution.

Considering the choice of questions, it must be noted that they were part of a public debate about the role of political parties in Poland. The first and third questions referred to diminishing the role of political parties as they bear negative connotations for Polish citizens. The general postulate of tightening the relationships between the citizens and their representatives, in line with diminishing the role of parties in the process of compiling slates, as well as abolishing the public funding all converge with the feelings of the citizens.

Campaign

The major political parties were the main actors entitled to take part in the referendum campaign. Moreover, Kukiz assumed the role of a mobilizing force as the proposals included in the questions were close to his ideas. When it comes to the views of particular political parties on participation in the referendum, two main factions can be observed. The PO and Kukiz were clearly for, while the PiS politicians claimed that they would take part in the referendum but the party did not pay much attention to mobilizing their voters. The Representatives of PSL, Alliance of Democratic Left (SLD), and Your Movement (TR) announced that they were not going to vote.

Looking at the questions, one can see that single-member constituencies were the main axis of debate. They were supported by the PO and Kukiz, while the other parties were against. The second question reflects a similar division, with the PO, Kukiz and the TR being against the financing system used so far. No controversy was caused by the third question, as everybody supported strengthening the position of the citizen. When analyzing the views of the public about the referendum, it is visible that they changed as time passed. In the polls conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS 2015), Polish citizens said they knew/rather knew what the referendum was about (June – 17%/22%; July – 20%/29%; August – 22%/29%). The number of people who declared they were/rather were going to participate in the voting dropped over time (June – 41%/19%; July – 41%/21%; August – 32%/20%). The number of people supporting the implementation of single-member constituencies also decreased (June – 54%; July – 45%; August – 41%). Small fluctuations occurred when it comes to 'yes' answers to the second (June – 15%; July – 13%; August 14%) and third question (June – 82%; July – 81%; August – 76%).

In the course of the entire referendum campaign there were proposals to add more questions. Some political actors pointed out that the scope of the nationwide referendum should be bigger. They wanted to ask the citizens about, among other issues, returning to the previous retirement age (PiS), financing religion classes from the state budget (TR), or reintroducing death penalty (KORWiN). The only opportunity to ask the citizens about the above mentioned issues would appear if the President or the Sejm called for another nationwide referendum. Two referendums could even be organized on the same day, as it happened in 1996. However, this would not be in any way opportune for President Komorowski and the governing coalition of PO and PSL.

While there was still some discussion about the selection of questions to be asked in the referendum, the newly elected President Duda used his powers and proposed another referendum. He came up with a motion for the Senate to agree to call a nationwide referendum to be held on October 25 together with the already planned parliamentary elections. On September 4, the second chamber of the Polish parliament did not grant its permission to do so.

Formally, a referendum campaign starts on the day when President announces his resolution and finishes 24 hours before the referendum day, when electoral silence commences. All expenses of the entities which take part in the campaign are financed from their own means. Formally, the National Electoral Commission registered 133 out of 157 applying entities, mainly unknown societies and foundations, which received the right to participate in the campaign. Such a formality makes it possible for them to gain two benefits. Hence such huge interest is motivated by an opportunity to delegate their representatives who work in referendum commissions and receive remuneration, as well as being granted free airtime (75 entities confirmed that they wished to broadcast free publicity materials).

Having in mind the approaching October parliamentary campaign, parties were not eager to invest their resources in the referendum campaign. It is thus difficult to say that a true campaign took place, one which would be based on presenting views in publicity materials on TV, in the radio, press or billboards. Unlike in the presidential or parliamentary campaigns, there were no incessantly broadcast TV commercials, posters hanging on every surface or letter boxes blocked with leaflets. One of the very few campaign-like undertakings were posters on billboards, on which PO showed that it was for abolishing of financing parties from the budget while PiS was against such a solution.

Radio and television were the main sources of information during the campaign. This is due to the fact that every entity was entitled to have free airtime to broadcast referendum-related content on Polish Television (TVP 1, TVP 2, TVP Polonia, and regional TV branches), and in the Polish Radio (Channel 1,2,3,4 and the channel for Poles abroad). Altogether, the airtime amounted to 25 hours of TV content and 30 hours of radio content, including divisions between particular channels and various times of the day (Resolution 2015). In the case of parliamentary elections this is 15 and 30 hours, although one needs to remember that then the airtime is divided between a smaller number of entities.

Results

The result of the referendum was unambiguous, although it has to be analyzed from two perspectives (Announcement 2015). First of all, the answers to the questions provide a certain picture, namely the voters were for single-member constituencies (78.75%), against the current system of financing political parties (82.63%), and for deciding doubts concerning tax laws in favor of the taxpayers (94.51%). Secondly, and fundamentally for the assessment of the referendum, the low turnout – only 7.8% – reflected a clear attitude of the citizens towards the referendum.

Voting took place in 27,788 polling stations in Poland and 189 abroad. The act of voting could be performed in three different ways: personally, by proxy (406 people), and by post (3,734 valid ballots). The total number of invalid voting forms amounted to 181, with a close number of invalid votes depending on the question (1 – 2.55%; 2 – 2.36%; 3 – 2.63%). Thus the result of the referendum, due to the low turnout, is not binding.

Table 1. Results of the 2015 referendum

Date of referendum:	6 September 2015		
Electorate:	30,565,826		
Referendum question:	Are you in favor of introducing single-member constituencies in elections to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland?	Are you in favor of maintaining the current system of financing political parties from the state budget?	Are you in favor of introducing a general principle whereby any legal doubts in interpreting tax law would be resolved in favor of taxpayers?

Total votes cast:	2,384,780 (7.8%)	2,384,780 (7.8%)	2,384,780 (7.8%)
Total valid votes:	2,323,930 (97.45%)	2,328,509 (97.64%)	2,322,084 (97.37%)
Valid votes in favor:	1,829,995 (78.75%)	404,515 (17.37%)	2,194,689(94.51%)
Valid votes against:	493,935 (21.25%)	1,923,994 (82.63%)	127,395 (5.49%)

Conclusions

Conclusions are to be drawn not on the basis of the results but the level of the turnout. Unfortunately, there are no empirical studies on the topic of referendum abstention. It seems, however, that the picture of the referendum presented here resulted from lack of subject-matter-oriented campaign and the way of implementing the referendum, rather than from the attitude of the citizens or the content of the questions. Considering particular politicians, it can be said that Komorowski and Kukiz are those who lost the most. Komorowski initiated the referendum, and Kukiz had it as his most prominent postulate, encouraging the citizens to vote.

When one analyzes political consequences for particular parties, the PiS won the best position, being the main opposition formation which is aspiring to take over government. The party gained arguments confirming that the referendum was a defeat for PO and Kukiz. The whole situation revealed the weakness of the government as well as the main candidate who wanted to contend for the votes of the disappointed people who wanted changes. For the country these results can be interpreted in two ways. The circumstances of calling the referendum, the course of the campaign and the results did not win any supporters for this form of direct democracy. This generates difficult conditions for any further attempts to encourage the citizens to participate in such initiatives. However, on the other hand, the politicians might not apply direct democracy instrumentally in the future, and they will limit the use of a nationwide referendum to matters and circumstances which are really crucial. What is most important, such referendums shall not be part of presidential or parliamentary campaigns, but they shall be preceded by an informed and wide-reaching campaign to show advantages and disadvantages of particular solutions.

In a comparative perspective, three factors differentiate the present referendum in a negative manner. This is attendance, the importance of questions as well as the circumstances of calling it. Comparing it to the four previous nationwide referendums, we see that for the first time the result of such a referendum is not binding because of low attendance. Although the

attendance threshold was established at 50% in 2003, in all the previous referendums attendance was not as low as now (the first referendum– 32.40%; second – 32.44%; third – 42.86%; fourth – 58.85%). The importance of questions also seems to be lower, especially when compared to two last ones, namely accepting the Constitution in 1997, or joining the EU in 2003. Finally, the decision to call the referendum was primarily a result of presidential rivalry rather than a need to get acquainted with the will of the citizens. The referendum took place in line with the constitutional rule of "particular importance for the state." It definitely got such a status, going down in history as a negative instance of applying direct democracy in Poland.

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