

The East as an Object of Governance: Journalism and Spaces of Power

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ABSTRACT

Since the collapse of communism and the European Union's enlargement, the debate on "Europeanization," its dimensions, features and geographies, has broadened notably. Organizing Europe spatially and symbolically has only just begun and it is still unfamiliar territory where media representations and elite discourses have a salient role in the construction of social space. Modern media practices can be understood as technologies of new political entity formation and border implementation. This paper analyses the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) as objects of knowledge and power through the international press. Those concerned with participation in this objectifying process are not only international institutions such as the European Union but also media in general. Empirically, the article analyzes how the Baltic States were produced in the discourses of the *Financial Times* during the last five years. It shows how the Baltic region is constructed as an object of power-knowledge through the "normalizing" Western gaze. The Baltic states' emergence is captured by two different sides of the same story: a) as "Good students of Europe," where observed countries and societies are monitored and measured by the West against parochial economic and military benchmarking; and, b) as the "Border Zone": an alternative narrative where adapting systems in their complex local surroundings are seen as unpredictable and in a state of liminality. The article argues that in producing a European common space, it is essential to acknowledge the different spatio-temporal genealogies designed to domesticate new territories.

INTRODUCTION

A DECADE AGO, FEW PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE to place Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on a map. Although awareness of these countries grew after they regained independence from Russia in 1991, it was not until 2004, when they all joined the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, that the West started to learn about those countries that now form the EU's eastern frontier. However, the story of the Baltic nations after the collapse of the communism was nothing less than heroic as, in each case, their size, income and sparse natural resources did not lead to any expectation of excellence. Yet, within a decade these countries peacefully reintegrated into Europe by joining the EU and NATO, built stable democratic systems, and, overall, had an annual economic growth of close to 10%. Their return to the Western world was applauded widely and the long division of the continent was over: the West had won.

From a scientific point of view, the collapse of Soviet rule and its broader effects on Europe may have been among the most valuable research contexts available to the social sciences. According to many analysts, 1989 marked a break in the continuum of European history. As Robert Cooper states (2004, 3), it re-ordered alliance systems and fundamentally changed the European state system itself. The collapse of communism also had a dual impact on Europe. It affirmed European identity vis-à-vis non-Europe (Islam) or "semi-Europe" (America and Russia) but also brought back into the open a number of intra-European divisions. As Rupnik noted (1994, 93-4), "there are different ways of belonging to 'Europe' and one is always someone else's 'barbarian'."

It was evident that communism left behind many social, spatial and, especially, economic inequalities (such as between urban and rural areas, and between different cities and regions). Policies that would have smoothed out such differences were sacrificed in many cases to service the more pragmatic and economic goals of the new states (Gwynne *et al.* 2003, 68). Learning the new rules of capitalism did not always go smoothly and, in a social and political sense, the traditional capitalist class that was used to taking risks and seizing new business opportunities was mostly absent.

Culturally, Eastern Europe remained the second-hand Europe that Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Hrytsak (2005) claimed it to be. Whilst the population comprised 'normal' Europeans, in the sense that they shared European values, they did it, however, with one important qualification: most of these values were not native to the region. Whilst the region had experienced the impact of Christianity, the Renaissance, the Baroque period, Romanticism, Modernism, Marxism and Liberalism throughout its troubled history, none of these "isms" had emerged there; they were all imported from the West. During the 1990s, Eastern Europe imported one more ideological framework: Euro-capitalism with new European values and requirements for democracy crafted for the purpose of the single market.

As Saskia Sassen (2000, 372) has argued, even the global economy mainly materializes in national territories. Although most transactions are taken care of virtually,

material exchange takes place within nation-states and their cultural boundaries. Nation-states as spaces of capitalism act as essential unities of the European and global economy by producing multiple necessary utilities for the system. These are jurisdiction-protecting investments, guaranteeing the services of the constitutional state, educated labour and providing a possible market area for services and product. Thus, how these national territories develop are of primary importance to the political and economic actors of the larger economic entity: Europe. Therefore, monitoring Eastern Europe as a new space of capital and investment is particularly salient to financial journalism.

JOURNALISM AND OBJECTS OF GOVERNANCE

Thinking about socio-economic change or any kind of new order requires a conceptual map, which simplifies the landscape and focuses on the main features. Media are often considered to offer a map that is based on the principal current events of the world. Thus, media practices, and especially journalism, can be seen as producing a type of 'spatial history'. Journalism is mapping the present by revealing the exercise of power in its various topographies. Space is fundamental to the use of power and research into the exercise of power allows us to recast the spatial history of the conceived ideological spaces in the process of representation.

The assemblage of media offers an arena, a communicative space, that reflects networks of power, capital and politics from a certain point of view by making visible the main agents of power and the relationships between them. Power, in this view, lies in the heterogeneous materials assembled in media in accordance with the need to make actions durable through time and space. An approach to discursive power thus directs our attention to the means whereby spaces are made inside networks of journalism and it shows how spatial scales are distinguished from one another in line with the priorities of different ideo-economic networks or network builders. However, when we direct our attention to the means by which spaces are made (materialized) inside networks, we can see how spatial scales are distinguished from one another in line with the priorities of those networks and network builders (Murdoch 1998).

The thin layer of media that can be categorized as international (e.g. BBC, CNN, *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *Time*, *Newsweek*) acts to organize spaces of capital within spaces of European/global territories. In the European context, *The Financial Times* has acted as the official voice of neo-liberal Europeanism. For example, through *The Financial Times's* liberal gaze the region is produced as an object of the power/knowledge matrix. At the same time, new member states are often categorized in different object positions according to their relative power.

How then is this mapping conducted? That is, how are language and space connected? Jensen & Richardson (2004, 58-66) have divided discursive mapping practices into three different categories: 1) mapping languages (key words, metaphors, "conceptual history" and changes, new concepts, genre and style and cartography, graphics

and maps), 2) mapping practices (agents, institutions, contextualization and conflicts, who is constructing truth and knowledge claims) and 3) mapping power-rationalities (interests, dominant values and norms in the field, mapping relations between power and knowledge and the conceptualizations of truth criteria).

The newspapers' coverage of the spatial formation that surrounds us is not only providing facts about the world, but in a general sense, ideas and propositions relating to what is going on and what countries are like. Language, the selection of news items, values expressed in editorials, news items and columns are also highly constructive mediators in the ideological sense of constructing identities, borders, frontiers and divisions within space. This explains how knowledge of places, groups and institutions in different communities is maintained through time.

It is good to keep in mind that in terms of the journalistic practices of the international media, knowledge production is always situated somewhere outside the represented objects. Voice and access to define oneself are very seldom given to those who are objects of power. Thus, how the international media formulate an object of knowledge is crucial for the political and economic claims one makes about the object under inspection. How, in other words, *The Financial Times* formulates "East" as a geographical, political and social construct is not innocent but shapes our understanding of the social and political world and how to effect transformation.

ORGANIZED SPACES, TIMES AND AGENTS

In the following analysis, the focus is on new spaces and borders (how the Baltic States are conceived and perceived by *The Financial Times*) and agency (who are the main agents vocal on Baltic issues, i.e. who is in and who is out?). The news landscape is relational space where contextualization and agents have to be organized by the interests of the audience and news criteria. News criteria are inherently built around the economic and political order of the Western world. News production is a particularly sensitive gauge of the power structure of the global arena. News has very specific spatialities and temporalities that are historically linked to reporting about wars and conflicts (areas of security) and trading opportunities (areas of potential markets).

News stories usually proclaim their news value by basing it on such attributes as negativity, immediacy, proximity, lack of ambiguity (clear roles and actors), novelty (unpredictability), personalization, the elite status of the news actors (persons and countries) and, of course, conflict.

The Financial Times works within the aforementioned traditional Western news criteria. It was founded in the late 1880s when the "globalization" period of the media started (increase in demand, number and forms global communication took place) (Hamelink 1995, 22; Rantanen 1997, 615; Robertson 1992, 59), during a time when investors started to need more information about domestic and international markets. According to David Kynaston, from the 1960s onwards, "internationalization" became

the single major direction of the newspaper (1988, 4). The next decade was the era of Europeanization, when the newspaper was described as “Europe’s business newspaper” and launched an international edition that had more foreign correspondents than any other newspaper except *The New York Times* (Kantola 2009). Circulation of *The Financial Times* is reported to be second only to that of *The Wall Street Journal* among financial newspapers (see Anonymous 2006).

A genealogical history of the newspaper’s role and policy line thus explains some of its weight as an organizer of the European political and economic space. Looking at the relational space of *The Financial Times* can be a kaleidoscopic experience. Paul Veyne (1984, 282) has suggested that history has more in common with comparative geography than with literature. Thus, journalism, as any other form of social communication, can be approached as comparative geography by asking how spaces and borders are constructed and how journalism creates its own relational space.

The data used for the analysis of *The Financial Times*’s relational journalistic space is derived from international affairs items where either “the Baltic states” or “Estonia,” “Latvia” or “Lithuania” were used as keywords in an electronic search of the news archive of *The Financial Times* between January 2002 and December 2007. There were 688 news items in total in two different search categories. The Baltic States as a region appears 318 times when searched for with the keywords “Baltic States” and “International Affairs.” During the same period, 370 articles result from a search with the keywords “Estonia Lithuania Latvia” and “International Affairs.” These two searches are partly overlapping because Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia are often contextualized by locating them within the Baltic region. The topic category chosen was “International Affairs” because, as a news genre, it best reveals how territorial power-rationalities and mapping practices are conducted through journalism. However, there were also news items in the categories of “Summits and Talks” and “Strategy,” but these remain outside the scope of analysis.

At the structural and ideological level, the narrative structure of domesticating the East follows a predictable course. The first decade of this transformation separated former countries of Eastern Europe into two categories: winners and losers. The winners were granted an entry ticket into the European Union and allowed to leave Eastern Europe; the losers have been told to stay in an Eastern European purgatory for an indefinite time. In this case, the Baltic States and other post-socialist nations that have entered the accession stage are the winners, whereas Turkey still remains in the category of losers. In the ideological narrative of forming “New Europe” there are actors (the United States, NATO) who support capitalism and democracy-building, disciplining institutions (EU), and there are adversaries (Russia, internal conflicts). The journalistic arena is mostly organized through the aforementioned actors, relationships, conflicts and material/social issues stemming from these processes.

As for the contextual framework, three different levels of action can be distinguished through which the new communicative spaces of *The Financial Times* and

the genealogies of the agents were formed within the regions. Table 1 contains the main characteristics of *Financial Times* journalism on the Baltic States. This contextualised viewpoint seeks to interpret journalistic activity in the context of time, space and agency at three different levels (ideological, economic and cultural).

Table 1 shows us how the Baltic region is contextualized and narrated in the stories of *The Financial Times*: 1) Temporally and ideologically (how transitional societies move from ideological state-socialism to market capitalism), economically (what kind of temporalities capitalism imposes upon the studied countries and how countries deal with the challenges) and culturally (what cultural, time-related issues are brought to the agenda when reporting on the Baltic States); 2) Spatially and ideologically (how the collapse of communism changed the geopolitical position of the studied countries), economically (how the market economy restructured the space) and culturally (how new types of cultural and social capital are distributed in space); and 3) Through ideological agency (who are the actors/places now interacting with the studied countries and where do they come from?), economically (who are the economic agents and organizations doing business with the studied countries?) and culturally (what cultural issues affecting agency are brought to the fore by *The Financial Times*?).

As can be seen in the table, the main international actors (persons, institutions and companies) that appear in news items reveal the rather passive role of the region. The actors in news texts are the normal players of international politics, i.e. the heads of powerful nations (Vladimir Putin, George W. Bush, Gerhard Schröder, Angela Merkel, Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac). These actors, as representatives of the nation-states, construct the traditional power matrix of international affairs known since the Cold War era. The three most frequently mentioned organizations and companies that appear are the oil company Gazprom, the European Union and NATO.

It is very seldom the case that the Baltic countries themselves speak for themselves. In certain cases and especially during referendums and political conflicts, the 'panopticed gaze' of *The Financial Times* focuses on the trajectory of a country, strengthening or weakening the expectations concerning the preferred development benchmarked by the West. On these occasions, ordinary people are given a voice as witnesses in the process, illustrating how the social and political system is functioning in these countries. Mainly, however, the Baltic region is measured against Western cultural standards and values that are somewhat indifferent to anything but the political-economic dimension.

Each social change and periodization can be seen as a demarcation in the history of a specific chain of events. Conversely, each sequence of events demands its own specific periodization. How this periodization is perceived, conceived and made public affects conversely the chains of events. In general, the studied period of the Baltic can be divided into three different phases: the accession period, enlargement, and socio-economic "Europeanization."

Table 1.
Spatio-temporal context of the Baltic States produced by *The Financial Times*

Level of Narrative	Temporalities	Spatialities	Agents
Ideological Level	Rupture in <i>longue durée</i> ; from occupation to 'freedom': 'crafted' democracy suitable for market economy; 'new' spirit of capitalism(s) applauded; WWII commemorations and memorabilia; history of atrocities	Changing geopolitical positions (East/West), Cold Front and transatlantic climate shift; Europe as unified; West and the rest; sensitized borders of New Europe; Internationalization; Europeanization; new urban-rural stratification	'Soviet satellites'; NATO and Trans-Atlantic alliance; Russia; 'New Europe' (Bush, Putin, Schröder, Chirac); New/Old Europe; Kremlin, Moscow; Germany's Ostpolitik; Axis (Germany-Moscow-US); elite/citizens
Economic Level	Time of global capitalism; new modes of privatized economy; cycles of growth and crisis; space of the constitutional state;	Deregulation of market space; capital concentration in urban centres, open economic space attached to global market, growth areas, energy frontiers: Western colonization of markets and institutions, new spaces of capital; new forms of capital concentration in space	Investors of West; Gazprom, EU; Brussels: EU Commission small nation-states; second-hand Europe; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries corrupted politicians and business men; foreign owners
Cultural Level	Post-socialist vs. capitalist practices; conflicts inside the countries; mobile communication networks; mobility and flows of ideas, migration to West; abilities to transgress borders	Changing demographic patterns in space (urban-rural); citizens and non-citizens imageries and topographies of social and emotional featured; individual spaces of new type of cultural and material capital	Branding the nation (Estonia); eroding old types of 'nationalisms', new strategies of agents (individualism over collectivism), clash of generations and values; cyber-sabotage (Estonia) new linguistic, electronic and social forms of interaction

Note: Table is adapted from Ekiert & Hanson (2003)

Taking a look at the chronological order, crafting democracy and capitalism are in the fore during the years 2002-2003. During the accession period, "diversity" became part of the vocabulary in cultural and economic terms. Whilst NATO enlargement took place, the military-ideological discourse of diminishing the former Soviet sphere of influence was paramount. The accession phase can be described as a time of economic and cultural "haggling." The enlargement Big Bang took place in 2004, creating a burst of historicized accounts of the unification of Europe. In many cases, *The Financial Times* acted in drafting the first sketches of history. During and after 2004, economic performance was in the fore. Between 2006 and 2007, the euphoria of enlargement waned and the focus shifted towards the difficulties of modifying democracy with economic requirements. When one looks at the analytical level of how *The Financial Times* organized the relational space of journalism, the mapping practices of financial journalism act more to conserve the old borders than create new ones.

Spatial, temporal and agency categories at the ideological level refers to the *longue durée*, i.e. the enduring geographical and historical features that journalism produces by showing fundamental environmental constraints on social, economic and institutional development. This level focuses on historical systems and people as well as understanding nations and communities as historical processes including, for example, traditions, the social memory of the people, national master narratives and landscapes. This level of news items has, in general, been surprisingly frequent when reporting on the former Eastern Europe. *The Financial Times* traditionally perceives international relations through the hierarchy of nation-states and, in particular, military and economic alliances between the actors. Thus, the Cold War is not over on the pages of *The Financial Times*, and the constant re-bordering of trans-Atlantic relations is configured between Bush and Putin, NATO and countries within that alliance.

An alliance in search of a role (Judy Dempsey, *The Financial Times*, April 10, 2002). As NATO presses the case for enlargement, there is growing uncertainty on both sides of the Atlantic about its purpose. This should be a glorious year for NATO. By November, when the military alliance holds its summit in Prague, it hopes seven countries from the Baltic to the Balkans will be ready to join. George Robertson, the organization's secretary-general, has been putting the case for enlargement to lobbies in Washington and has received strong support from George W. Bush, the U.S. president, whom he met last night. Yet for all the growing support for Nato's 'big bang' enlargement, the alliance is in crisis. There is little consensus in Washington or Europe as to exactly why the alliance should expand. Indeed, the Bush administration is divided over what role NATO can usefully play in the future.

As the above excerpt reveals, Cold War Europe was much about dividing spaces between the communist and capitalist blocs; reconstructing 'Unified' Europe and conflicts follow a similar path. Washington, NATO and the former Eastern bloc are conflicted entities

of conceptual history. When the Cold War ended, the military alliance based on the earlier geopolitical order was forced to find a new role. NATO is largely personified as U.S. military machinery and a localized Pentagon-driven extension of world politics. In this type of power politics constellation other European counterparts are overshadowed by an emphasis on U.S. military supremacy.

However, when Donald Rumsfeld, the former U.S. defence secretary, coined the term “New Europe” to emphasize the division of Europe between those “new” countries that backed the U.S. and the “old” countries who aligned themselves with France and Germany, *The Financial Times* acted as a European voice to argue against this division. The division was a strong semiotic act to reorganize Europe in terms of an American sphere of influence that was condemned by the newspaper.

Europe will not divide into old and new (Quentin Peel, *The Financial Times*, May 12, 2003). The new members are set to join what has hitherto been a club of the rich. All will end up as big net recipients from the EU budget. For the eight emerging from the democratic desert of the former Soviet empire, the EU represents a guarantee of prosperity and political stability. It will make the continent a safer and more predictable place. It will underpin democracy and reinforce the rule of law. In short, it should be a good thing for all - and not just in Europe. Yet negotiations have been painful, slow and bruising. Instead of being greeted with acclamation, the new members have been treated grudgingly and forced to accept every dot and comma of the EU rules from day one, with very few exceptions.

And now the new Member States suddenly find themselves caught in the middle of the transatlantic divide. It is not just about Iraq. It is also about the longstanding U.S. hostility towards the International Criminal Court (ICC), the EU-supported institution supposed to try international war crimes. Washington is stepping up the pressure. The splits are in danger of souring the entire enlargement process just as it is about to happen. It could yet upset a few of the votes.

The eastern part of Europe, in many cases, preserved its role as “developing” Europe in *The Financial Times* discourse. Although the European integration project was strongly supported by the newspaper's editorial policy, conflict between U.S. military interests and European “democratic” values was reported frequently. Eastern states cited fundamental differences in the way Brussels wanted to deal with Russia, with the dividing lines often marked between “old” and “new” Europe. States like Germany, recalling Russia's decisions to interrupt natural-gas supplies to former allies, sought a careful balance in dealing with Russia. The Eastern states wanted tougher action against a bullying Kremlin. In the words of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves of Estonia, the “two European goals are incompatible: European integration and appeasement of a rogue-like and threatening Russia.”

Traditionally, the largest EU founder countries, France and Germany, have guided the European policy of prioritizing relations with Russia, anchored by a few remarks chiding Russia for its recent record on democracy. Karl-Theodor von Guttenburg, a deputy in the German Bundestag, borrowed a line from U.S. President George W. Bush, who described America's relationship with Russia as "a complex friendship." Guttenburg said it was also a fitting euphemism for European relations. The commemorations of the end of the Second World War saw a staged play of diplomacy running alongside the obvious new divides of a complex Europe. As the following excerpt shows, the present tense was constantly interpreted through political history and the post-wwii geopolitical constellation.

EU claim that 1945 did not end repression in Europe likely to upset Russia (George Parker, *The Financial Times*, May 7, 2005). The European Union yesterday risked antagonising Russia when it said the fall of the Berlin Wall, not the demise of Nazi Germany, marked the end of dictatorship in Europe. The statement came as world leaders prepared to travel to Moscow to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe. The expansion of the EU to 25 members last May, to include such former Soviet satellite states as the Baltic Republics, Poland and the Czech Republic, has forced the Union to revise its traditional approach to the VE Day commemorations. The new eastern European members argue that May 8 may have marked the end of Nazi oppression, but for them it was the beginning of more than 40 years of domination by Moscow.

The history of atrocities and oppression was a topic that was brought up by the Eastern countries themselves. Perhaps for the first time, the role of collective memories of oppression took on the role of an independent political issue. As an ideological network, oppression had faces in many countries: politicians and intellectuals with political credits. Thus, integrating did not mean only meeting the social or economic criteria but cleansing domestic backyards as well.

Lifting the curtain: Eastern Europe takes aim at its former oppressors (Stefan Wagstyl, *The Financial Times*, Jan. 29, 2007). Quickly banned ex-KGB officers from state jobs. Archives opened in Lithuania and Estonia; Latvia following in March. Strong fears of Russian intelligence influence. Key case - Lithuanian president Rolandas Paksas impeached over ties to Russian intelligence (2004).

In many cases, members of the elite formerly connected to the KGB had to face critical Western news coverage when historical justice was sought in the studied countries. At the cultural and interactional level, the Baltic States were seen both as victims of the historical atrocities of Communism as well as unpredictable and crime-filled spaces of illegal practices (corruption, human trafficking, prostitution, etc.). The romanticized

picture of the struggle for freedom was mixed with uncertainty and so-called “Eastern” features of business and democratic practice—especially at an institutional level and not the least because of former KGB-connected political rulers.

The economic structuring of space, time and agency through journalism represents different regimes and enforcement of boundaries by generating specific political and/or economic cores within existing times and spaces, affecting how countries are placed in the political-economic field and how interrelations between these two fields are organized. This has an effect mainly on how systems are represented between state and transnational governance, what accountability measures will be established, and what ideologies, norms and practices become commonplace (social responsibility, market liberalism, etc.).

The enlargement process was a success from an economic point of view but the East is nonetheless seen as a risky prospect because of being in a liminal and transitory phase. Here the path dependence of inherited communist practice is the formative framework of the news. At this analytical level, countries were organized through the governance and benchmarking system of the European Union. At the institutional level, “Europe” (i.e., older member states) also had to adjust to the disorder created by the enlargement.

In this way the new archipelago of global finance was intertwined with the archipelago of Europe’s cultural diversity. New spaces did not always follow the traditional lines of nation-states and, in many cases, path-dependency logics were used to explain the situation. Path dependence in this case can be understood as the dependence of economic outcomes on the path of previous outcomes, rather than simply on current conditions. In a path-dependent process, history matters—it has an enduring influence. Choices made on the basis of transitory conditions can persist long after those conditions change. Thus, explanations of the outcomes of path-dependent processes require historical study, rather than simply at looking at current conditions of technology, preferences, and other factors that determine outcomes. Risks were also compared with the gains of colonizing the new space for capital and measuring how “clean” (Western) or “dirty” (Eastern) a place the Baltics were.

How to Clean up Dirty Money (Jonathan Winer, *The Financial Times*, March 23, 2002). Fraudulent pyramid schemes decapitalised nations in transition such as Albania, Bulgaria and Latvia. Meanwhile, taking advantage of the archipelago of global finance, kleptocrats were able to steal and sequester the national territories.

The next investment wave: companies in east and west prepare for the risks and opportunities of an enlarged EU (Stefan Wagstyl, *The Financial Times*, April 27, 2004). The second big attraction of the ex-Communist states for investors is as an export base, given their pool of reasonably well-educated, low-cost labour. While productivity levels are only a third of those in the

current EU, hourly wages are even lower, at about 20 per cent of EU levels. As well as offering low-cost labour, the region is trying to create a business-friendly environment by cutting red tape, reducing taxes and providing investment incentives. The World Economic Forum, a business research group, already ranks Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic above Portugal and Greece in terms of competitiveness. The ex-Communist states score well on flexibility, since the drive to dismantle communism has created a more open administrative environment than in much of the EU.

At the economic level, in many cases the Baltic States were seen to make the leap to advanced capitalism with flat taxes and a corporate-friendly environment. These types of mapping practices were used for opening roads to capital in more regulated older member states by flagging favourable practices by new entrants. In its desire to support a neo-liberal economic regime, *The Financial Times* used the Baltic States as good examples of how to adopt the right economic policies.

Europe's newest members challenge the old (Carl Bildt, *The Financial Times*, March 2, 2005). Take flat taxes. Estonia got the bandwagon rolling in 1991, but the flat-tax principle has since proven its worth in other 'Baltic tiger' economies. Estonia started with a 26 per cent income tax; it has since reduced that to 24 per cent and is aiming to cut it to 20 per cent. Lithuania just announced its intention to lower its 33 per cent flat tax rate gradually to 24 per cent. The big question is when the third wave—which would see this flat-tax bandwagon roll into one of the 'old' EU states—will come. It is not imminent—but on present trends it may well be unavoidable.

At the institutional level, for the first time European common policy lines were also constructed to aid the craftwork of democracy in the East, and this was part of mapping norms and values of the field. There was, however, a thin line between sentimental stories contextualising the Baltic states against former divides and frictions stemming from Cold War history, and a new type of bureaucratized, institutional-driven journalism of the European model.

The European Union has maintained a more aloof attitude to Baltic concerns as it moves towards concluding a set of far-reaching agreements with the Kremlin—even though the three Baltic states have been EU members for five years. Despite internal pressures from the EU's Nordic and Central and Eastern European members, the bloc's biggest countries are keen to improve diplomatic and economic co-operation with Moscow and do not want problems in the Baltic states to stop that. Thus, political events that hit the headlines during Spring 2007 were the result of long-standing historical tensions.

A bully's behaviour (Leader, *The Financial Times*, May 7, 2007). The return of Cold War attitudes and rhetoric to poison many aspects of Russia's relations with its former rivals in the West is both alarming and depressing.

The latest confrontation between mighty Moscow and the tiny former Soviet republic of Estonia provides a sorry excuse and example. The war of words over the removal of a Soviet war memorial might be dismissed as absurd, if it had not already cost one life and caused considerable violence and the threat of more in both Tallinn and Moscow. Responsibility for the present stand-off lies on both sides. The bronze statue of a Soviet ‘liberator’ in the centre of the Estonian capital had become a focus for Russian nationalist demonstrators mourning the passing of the Soviet Union. That infuriated Estonian nationalists and had caused clashes between the two groups. Moving such a divisive symbol was probably inevitable, but it should have been done in careful consultation with the local Russian community. Instead, it has allowed Moscow to find yet another excuse to threaten and destabilise one of its former colonies.

As the above excerpt shows, historical tensions were not removed by EU enlargement or Commission bureaucracy. Tension was also caused by a lack of integration between Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities: an issue both Latvia and Estonia had struggled with during their 16 years of independence. The move to shore up an effective integration strategy gained new impetus after late April, when the fragile facade of co-existence was shattered by the Bronze Soldier riots in Estonia. Over three nights, young Russians clashed with police and ransacked the downtown in protest over the relocation of a Red Army monument.

Fate of Soviet statue sparks Tallinn riots By (Stefan Wagstyl, *The Financial Times*, April 28, 2007). Estonia is bracing itself for possible violent unrest and a potential break in relations with Russia after the government removed a Soviet-era war memorial amid riots that left scores injured and one man dead. Toomas Ilves, president, yesterday appealed for calm in a television broadcast made as the authorities were clearing up the streets of Tallinn and trying to brush aside threats of political and economic sanctions from Moscow.

Before Estonia joined the European Union in 2004, Brussels urged the country to integrate the Russian minority and to respect non-Estonian speakers. However Estonia remains forthright—the protection of its language is not open for negotiation. It is not hard to understand the state’s determination. Estonia is a nation that lived under occupation for centuries; it was frequently invaded by stronger neighbours eager to gain strategic advantage. When independence was finally regained in 1991, the principle of preserving the Estonian language as a sign of national heritage and freedom was embedded in the new Constitution.

The spatial, temporal and inter-actional dynamics of agency refers to the new networks of the political and cultural agents, and interactions that transcend formal boundaries and facilitate processes of diffusion and imitation of new norms, values and ideas. This mainly affects individual trajectories of countries and strategies of different agents within countries: how they can modify their relative freedom within new spatial,

cultural and ideological constellations. Those types of stories where countries were represented as independent were rare in the sample. However, when the countries were represented as independent and not as part of the heterogeneous group, the internal divides appeared. Moreover, these like other stories displayed either the nationalistic sentiments of the countries or the cultural idiosyncrasies that made them different from their Western counterparts.

Estonia struts and sings for Europe (David Atkinson, *The Financial Times*, April 20, 2002). The average Estonian knows how to hold a tune. Music was the Baltic state's lifeblood during the dark days of Soviet occupation, when music festivals were the only means for Estonians to voice dissent. In 1988, for example, about 500,000 people (a third of Estonia's population) gathered at an enormous concrete amphitheatre in a park on the outskirts of the capital, Tallinn, to sing national songs in the so-called Singing Revolution.

Golden years: Europe's child may look sickly at fifty but it lives and prospers (George Parker, *The Financial Times*, March 23, 2007). For nations such as Latvia, entry marked the final break from Russian domination and put it in line to receive hundreds of millions of euros in EU support. Surely the Latvians must love Europe? In fact, a recent poll found that only 28 per cent of them thought membership was 'a good thing,' making Latvians one of the EU's most eurosceptic peoples. Dace Akule of Providus, a think-tank based in the capital Riga, says she was shocked at a recent European seminar by the number of people who compared the EU with Soviet-style central planning and bureaucracy—a theme recently endorsed by Mirek Topolánek, prime minister of the Czech Republic, another 2004 entrant. "On every table there was someone saying it was like the Soviet Union," Ms Akule says. "That is not a minority opinion."

During the waning of the euphoria of integration towards the end of the period, the unfinished, multiple and contradictory nature of the European project surfaced frequently in the news. News journalism in a sense was an act of *regere fines* in its attempt to construct new spaces and trying to make them accommodate the same values, expectations and practices preferred by *The Financial Times*. How these narratives and real borders are domesticated are usually parts of journalistic processes. Therefore, the term "topological" captures the sense of space as being constructed through relations between its parts. The European topology of *The Financial Times* recalls a slightly outdated map where the dichotomy between East versus West, clean versus dirty, abnormal versus normal and dangerous versus safe, were reconstructed as part of the narrative of the Baltic States.

CONCLUSIONS: TRAJECTORIES OF EAST AND WEST

Eastern Europe, in its new form, is a very controversial and largely unfinished project. Thus, the challenge for any research is to reflect on how regions and places come

together and what kind of spatial imaginaries and ideologies are involved in this process. In other words, we need to contextualize historically the diverging spatial imaginations of journalism in order to understand their contested nature. When talking about Europeanization or any other sociopolitical change, perhaps some of the most interesting questions that arise empirically are: Where does it take place? What are the determinants of forming an area of governance?

International journalism plays with the agency of things as well as the agency of temporalities and spatialities: how space and its internal divisions (regions, borders, networks and power) can be connected. From a Foucauldian point of view, the panoptimized gaze of *The Financial Times* can be seen as an analogue for the organizing knowledge that is used by those who are observing the transitional societies but that also control the change and try to normalize deviations, anomalies and aberrations. According to Western cultural values, practices and benchmarks, *The Financial Times* creates its own landscape of agents and power-relations that is very specific to its mapping practices.

The emergence of the Baltic region can be captured by two different sides of the same story. The first is a panoptimized transition that is politically correct, where observed countries and societies are monitored and measured by the West against parochial benchmarking: economically and militarily. Countries appear in the object positions of the “good students of Europe.” Their agency as good capitalists is based on the single trajectory fallacy in which countries are queuing up to reach a higher stage of development. This “single trajectory” is based solely on a Western master narrative, an evolutionary fallacy that implies positive development towards the next stages of economic wealth, democratic development and freedom through knowledge and discipline. In this narrative, the East is catching up with the West in terms of political and social modernization (e.g., flat tax, liberalization, economic growth). This narrative does not recognize the conflict that results when imported innovations cannot be implemented in the same manner in Eastern Europe.

The other side of the same narrative can be labelled an “alternative capitalist” narrative where adapting systems, in their complex local surroundings, are seen as unpredictable and in a state of liminality. New member states act as boundaries and the function of border guarding is at their core. Whether catching up with the West or as actors in the heroic resistance to communism, these countries appear as small pawns on the gaming board of larger powers within an international arena of relational space of power/knowledge. This way of narrativization denies independent trajectories and these countries are always defined in relation to other, more powerful players. Ethnocentric values and norms are imported as being part of the setting and journalism does not recognize the deeper conflict of its own colonizing practice of making spatial politics.

The production of space as ways of thinking (analyzing, studying, organizing) emphasizes the activity of a human agent in conceiving spatial categories and “East”

and “West” are good examples of that. Single-trajectory fallacies, teleological outcomes, path-dependence explanations and Western ethnocentricism work towards the same end. When the East is tamed, trained and controlled, it will be normalized, and security will be restored through governing news practices. This type of news journalism is not free from conservatism, although its nature as a practice of being on the ball and living in real time could allow one to think so. Indeed, it is apparent that the news topography of *The Financial Times* is inherited from the Cold War era where the West is progressive and the East is regressive. Thus, making sense of changing space requires a familiar narrative where new meanings can be implemented. As long as “East” can be seen to follow a trajectory in order to catch up to the “West,” the ideological high ground of the newspaper remains intact.

The processes of integration have caused extensive changes in how we think about Europe as a unity. This process of integrating Europe as a spatial unity has not been entirely harmonious, balanced or unanimous. In addition, old social, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and economic legacies have constantly surfaced in this discussion. Many of the processes overlap but also consist of partly contradictory political, economic and cultural trends and developments. Historically, different actors have been manufacturing unity in diversity and, while the classic constellation of international relations has been mostly deconstructed, new frames need time to solidify themselves. Western Europe still does what it does best: monitoring the others and believing that it is still at the core of governance.

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