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Introduction: Fighting for Security from a Minor Perspective and Against Securitisation of Minorities in Europe

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Sharing spaces among different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in diverse societies is a major problem globally, particularly for minority communities, as states are often inclined to perceive minorities and indigenous groups as a threat, meaning that their presence evokes a sense of insecurity. This attitude departs from a premise that “[s]ecurity is about what *is* a threat...” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 204), which means that the societal inclination towards “[p]ursuit about the freedom of threat” (Buzan, 2008, p. 37) determines approaches towards minorities. However, security should not be considered as a reverse of insecurity, although “...[h]ow security is defined conditions what is considered as insecurity (risk, threat)” (C.A.S.E., 2006, p. 257). Perceiving minorities as threat is often reflected in the state policy agenda; it affects representation and leads to unfair competition and negative attitudes of majority groups towards minorities that easily turn into other forms of injustices and discrimination (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, 2005). As a result, minorities can be exposed to exclusionist political attitudes, discriminatory or xenophobic attacks, and intolerance or violence by a majority group (Côté & Erickson, 2009; Dustmann & Preston, 2001; Vergeer et al., 2000).

This is more likely to happen in places where minorities are numerically larger groups or where long-term, historic grievances between minority and majority communities are present (Zenner, 1987). Such situations pose a threat to the state, to societal stability, equality, and peaceful coexistence and lead to securitised responses¹ against minorities (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2008; Smith & Holmes, 2014). However, this is not always the case, as numerically stronger groups can also be in a position of subordination² and lack basic rights and protection. Majority-minority relations are therefore not mechanical and cannot be reduced to group numbers, laws, or means of governance because they involve a strong element of emotion, which is also manifested at a behavioural level. As George Simmel noted in one of his early works on the nature of human interactions, “[n]o one would give him-self the trouble to gain or to maintain superiority, if it afforded him no advantage or enjoyment” (Simmel, 1896, p. 169).

In discussing religious minorities, Apostolov points out that the problems of minorities in the European context are the “fruit of the division of the world into nation states” (Apostolov, 2018, p. 9). It is true that before their ideological and practical emergence in the nineteenth century, diversity was managed through acceptance and different models of free, borderless flow. The rise of the nation state created a sense of fear towards anyone that is different and lacking membership of the nation or a sense of belonging to it. One form of expressing fear was construction of “predatory identities” among majority groups who were concerned that a mere presence of minorities may lead to them trading places (Appadurai, 2006, p. 52), with the majority adopting traits of the minority group and becoming excluded from their own nations. Such constructed predatory identities made it easier to justify a variety of strategies ranging from making minorities less visible (policies of integration) to directly denouncing one or more of their traits through discourses, actions, or direct violence. This fear has led to some of the biggest atrocities³ against members of other communities whose identities were perceived as a threat because they were residing in territories where national or religious homogeneity suddenly represented a primary safety net. Discussions about nation states and “ethnic cleansing” are thus unavoidable when it comes to situating minority issues across European countries (Pan et al., 2018, p. 3).

Furthermore, the vicious ethnic conflicts of the late 1990s created a sense of fear in the international arena and required a response (Kymlicka, 2007, p. 587) to address challenges of the modern nation state. The bloodshed witnessed around the world in the post-Cold War era exposed continuing “[s]evere pathologies in the sacred ideologies of nationhood” (Appadurai,

2006, p. 1) and went against the anticipated progress and multi-level connecting in the globalised world. Appadurai further argues that a modern nation state, despite globalised developments, prefers to construct itself around some form of a national genius that struggles with its fear of relatively small numbers of minorities residing within its national boundaries. The last three decades have seen two opposing developments when it comes to situating minorities; there was an expansion of international frameworks for securing minority rights and minority protection among increasing pressures of deadly conflicts, but it was accompanied by an expansion of neo-securitisation of minorities. All resulting strategies and actions such as tolerated or intentional assimilation, infiltration, exchange of populations, deportation, mass expulsion, and even the diminution of peoples through ethnocide and genocide stem from the mistaken starting point that minorities pose a threat, and from the quest for homogeneity as a form of safety. Surprisingly, both the field of security studies, particularly the new security paradigm in international relations (IR) which portrays the nation as a security unit within the concept of societal security (Buzan et al., 1998), and the substantial scholarship focusing on minorities remain disconnected theoretically and conceptually.

In short, attitudes towards minorities, but also migrants and refugees (new minorities), appear to be grounded in shared security concerns stemming from a perceived threat and a conflict potential where these groups are present. These concerns are about the possible clashes with minorities, destabilisation, and ultimately the disintegration of a country and a nation itself (Malloy, 2013, p. 284). The notion of perceived threat is crucial here because in most cases minorities, particularly those with long historical presence, do not pose the type of threat that requires a securitised response. In reality, the problem only becomes potent when the conflicts among communities turn to violence and become a predominant way of their engagement, thereby challenging previously established multicultural harmony. Why, then, do minorities continue to be securitised?

There is an evident need for a deeper conversation to capture the nexus between security and minorities. In this day and time, it must also consider the dominant political regimes under which minorities live and seek to fulfil their demands in the competition with majority groups. The recent rise of populism and global democratic decline have highlighted the necessity of broadening the discussion about populism and security (Wojczewski, 2020). Populism claims to represent the interest of people undermined by state elites, while populist securitisation has emerged as a discursive practice that follows the logic of securitisation for political mobilisation of 'the people' Wojczewski further argues. However, the problem of minorities

remains unaddressed in this populist wave because, as we have seen in the case of the Black Lives Matter movement which grew increasingly popular in 2019 and 2020 (Pew Research, 2020), minority groups remain excluded from ‘the people’ which populists claim to represent. On the contrary, populism as a wide social movement leads to resentment of minorities, despite having class struggle and inequality as the main drivers for mobilisation, which should speak for all discriminated and marginalised groups (Kaul & Vajpeyi, 2020).

The discussion about a security-minorities nexus also needs to be broadened by incorporating communities not directly linked to nation states through identity arguments, such as Travellers, Roma and indigenous peoples of Northern Europe, and racial minorities. Their position can be, and often is, equally precarious as that of national minorities due to both attempts to diminish their presence through state policies or securitise them. First, there is overwhelming evidence of the securitisation of racial minorities, for instance, through extreme policing of racialised neighbourhoods and estates (Braga et al., 2019). Second, religious minorities must be included in the analysis considering the extensive securitisation of Islam in the past two decades, and violations of human rights when it comes to freedom of thought, belief, and religion⁴ that occur as part of the securitisation process. This issue of JEMIE—despite focusing on traditional, national minorities who are protected under the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 1995* and despite having only one window, created by Hirschler, drawing parallels to asylum seekers and asylum policies—offers theoretical and empirical expansion of the security-minorities nexus.

This special issue further aims to tie contemporary security and minority debates in a stronger conceptual argument by exploring securitisation of minorities and security challenges for minorities, termed ‘insecurities from a *minor perspective*’, in the European countries. Authors in this issue explore different case studies, investigated in a rigorous manner, to analyse securitised responses by states to real and perceived security threats coming from minorities and, in some cases, present conceptual or policy solutions for them. The interplay between theoretical and practical aspects of security and securitisation across different levels of social organisations capture the complexity of debates surrounding the security paradigm. Furthermore, I argue that connecting the two fields provides a ground for creating a new ‘minority paradigm’.

The ontology of minorities is already put forward in Will Kymlicka’s work on liberal multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 1995, 2007, 2010) and the subsequent criticism under left-Herderian ontology (Wimmer, 2008). The discussion of securitisation of minorities further

contributes to ontological enquiry by moving the discussion outside of the rights-protection framework to acknowledge other modalities of the treatment of minorities. In addition, the contribution to epistemological enquiry into the securitisation of minorities made by the articles in this issue takes the discussion far beyond the focus on language, and communicates the need for further and far-reaching research. Finally, the interdisciplinary aspects of methodological enquiry, both in terms of empirical approaches and defining the unit of analysis (i.e., which minorities and where), underpins the systematisation of the research presented here in a way that clearly points towards the formation of a minority paradigm that is situated at the nexus with security.

With the aim of offering new theoretical and practical approaches for research on securitisation of minorities, the articles in this issue delve deeper into the role of politics, the state, and the rights frameworks, alongside exploration of how minorities perceive (in)security. The new knowledge presented in this issue challenges the notion that securitised responses to historically and socially natural phenomena of living together in shared societies is an acceptable state of affairs.

The Focus of this Special Issue: Security Paradigm - Minorities as a Threat

The meaning of and analytical approach to security expanded and transformed significantly in the past two decades. This resulted in the setting of a new paradigm; a quest driven by a changing global order and a need to overcome the focus on national security. Many felt that in the post-Cold War era, security required more attention and better harmonisation with the dramatic changes that were taking place.⁵ Buzan points out that this expansion was about the “intellectual development of security” to explore historical, philosophical, and politico-linguistic aspects of the concept (Buzan, 2008, p. 34). The changing world order, alongside new economic and environmentalist agendas in a globalised arena, initiated a scholarly front that brought about a broadening of the security concept (Booth, 2005; Buzan, 1991; Buzan et al., 1998; Sheehan, 2005) and challenged an existing “narrow” realist approach more suited to the Cold War era. In this expansion of meaning, some authors enquired about what should constitute security (e.g., Rothschild, 1995) and assumed a critical stance towards its simplification, while others investigated what kind of concerns and threats security should address.

Emergence of critical approaches to security in Europe happened simultaneously at several hubs of knowledge that became known as the ‘Copenhagen’, ‘Aberystwyth’, and

'Paris' schools (C.A.S.E., 2006), each of which offered a different and yet related take on security.⁶ Despite their diverging directions, it is wrong to view them as completely separate entities as they exhibited a great degree of dialogue and exchange between them in formulating the new security paradigm (C.A.S.E., 2006). Important here, particularly for conjoining theoretically the fields of minority studies and security, are the multidisciplinary approach to security and emphasis on the importance of returning the discussion to the domain of politics and society. Often, partly because of the international relations background of the Copenhagen school, it is assumed that the new security paradigm has been conceptualised specifically under this academic discipline, which poses limitations for interdisciplinary transfer of knowledge. However, the process incorporated contributions from other disciplines and scholars like Johan Galtung who, a few decades earlier, remodelled the meaning of peace, and whose work established a pathway for dialogue between new concepts of peace and security. This led to the incorporation of protection from direct and structural violence, as well as other existential threats like epidemics, starvation, and climate change into the security concept. The critical project extracted security from the field of IR studies and allowed development of a 'non-traditional' security agenda and a focus on insecurities such as human rights abuses and oppression of minorities and marginalised groups including women (Booth, 2004, p. 7). At the same time, Booth argues, a significant shift in security studies followed a growing recognition of the security of individuals and interest in citizens, while the conventional realist paradigm became less relevant (Saleh, 2011). This recognition of the importance of protection and its conceptual grounding is particularly potent in the discussion of the relationship between minorities and majoritarian attitudes.

Rothschild offers a useful typology for understanding the extension of the security concept in the 1990s which helps connect it to issues of securitisation of minorities and the violent ethnic conflicts that became so dominant at the time (Rothschild, 1995, p. 55). First, the concept extended from the security of nations to the security of groups and individuals; that is from macro to micro level. This expansion is perhaps the most pertinent for the field of minority studies as it offered new methodological and conceptual framing of security at the subnational level, while also capturing identity debate that I address later in this introduction. A second expansion moved from the security of nations to international systems i.e., supranational physical environment, the biosphere. The third expansion, based on the premise that different entities cannot be secure or insecure in the same way (1995, p. 55) went horizontally; from the military to new sectors of political, economic, social, environmental,

and ‘human security’. Human security as a paradigm emerged from the broadening of the security field and was firmly set as a concept in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ‘Human Development Report’ in 1994 (UNDP, 1994), subsequently becoming embraced by the key development actors. It marked an analytical shift in how both individuals and citizens are secured, and in expanding security to embrace an emerging pluralistic understanding of the concept. The final and fourth expansion included diffusion upwards to international institutions, downwards to governance systems, sideways to nongovernmental organisations, and outwards to public opinion and the press as well as the markets. As I show later in this introduction, both the diversification of actors with political responsibility for providing security and of the concept itself in terms of what needs to be secured connect with the discussion of the rights and protection of minorities, their treatment by states, and their securitisation.

The concept of security became “...[f]ounded not on material factors but only on sedimented patterns of security practice...” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 207) in both a theoretical and methodological sense. This revision also allowed for the formation of security constellations (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 201) which enabled the addition of subnational and subregional units to analysis, and the incorporation of aspects of security other than military. In other words; the system opened to “nonregional security formations” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 203) which created possibilities for linking locality with the concept of security—setting the ground for investigation of geographically bound communities that often tend to be delineated by ethnic, cultural, or religious identity (Djolai, 2016). The new framing of security, which focused on individuals and groups, became much better placed to conceptually address the perception of threat constructed around identities and homogenisation in nation states. Linking security with concepts of state, sovereignty, and democracy reflected more accurately the strained relations and the differences between minorities and majority groups, both of which contribute to constructing each other as a threat.

The security concerns built around locality became embedded into the vernacular security concept, which treats “[s]ecurity’ as a socially situated and discursively defined practice open to comparison and politically contextualised explication, rather than merely an analytical category that needs refined definition and consistent use” (Bubandt, 2005, p. 275). The notion of vernacular stretches across different disciplinary fields in the same way that the notion of quotidian experiences does, while its multifaceted features give it the ability to portray endless combinations of the everyday and its challenges. The concept of vernacular

security is much better suited to investigate security concerns and deliberations of minority communities that are conventionally marginalised or securitised in the states where they reside but is almost completely excluded from the scholarship. It provides an opportunity to the field of IR and the policy agenda to learn about how (in)security is perceived and experienced in the context of the quotidian life of minority groups and individuals. Subsequent conversations about who should be secured as a matter of priority have to include minorities as ordinary citizens and be within parameters of their guaranteed rights. State policies and interventions that are supposed to deliver security at the community level and appropriately assess quotidian security concerns must take into account the position of those with lesser articulation power.

Over the past 15 years the vernacular security concept grew, becoming distinguishable from other approaches with similar focus such as human security, ontological security studies, and everyday security studies in what has been termed a “vernacular turn” (Jarvis, 2018). Vernacular security managed to permeate the IR field in a way that Croft and Vaughan-Williams explain “[h]olds considerable promise as an empirical research agenda for bringing together the future of ontological security studies and everyday IR” (2017, p. 27). Meanwhile, Lind and Luckham refer to the term as “security in the vernacular” and describe it as a perspective of those who are vulnerable and insecure, who are “[n]ot just social categories but real people, groups and communities who respond to, cope with, and challenge the social conditions which make them vulnerable and insecure in many different ways” (2017, p. 92). Nevertheless, scholars still struggle to arrive at a consensus on the meaning of “everyday”, which is an obstacle in further developing everyday security and deepening its methodological applicability to specific communities (Nyman, 2021).

Debates around human security and vernacular security both appeal for closer scrutiny of the ontology of security or its ‘ontopolitics’ (Bubandt, 2005). The emergence of the ontological security concept reflects the need of states to protect their self-identity and preserve a sense of continuity (Herrington, 2013) in addition to physical security. Ontological security is engineered “[...] by routinizing relationships with significant others, and actors therefore become attached to those relationships” (Mitzen, 2006). This analytical innovation which emerged with the new security paradigm can be used to better understand security challenges of minorities, and why they are perceived as posing a threat in nation states.

The securitisation approach emerged within the same review of the security concept. This approach considers that “[s]ecurity issues are made security issues by acts of securitising” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 204). It focuses on the threat declarations and perceptions of threat; both

socially constructed through a process of mutual agreement about an object, an individual, or a group. Because it occurs through interaction and affirmation of beliefs, ideas, or feelings stemming from being threatened (where anything can constitute the perceived threat), securitisation is easily manipulated, and any related action aimed at decreasing threat can be legitimised. Securitisation is a two-step process: it first requires an audience that will believe the narrative, and then involves extraordinary “[e]mergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 23) to tackle the alleged threat or the securitised object. Buzan (1998) proposed to distinguish the process of securitisation from other political processes. However, this proved difficult to apply to circumstances of political disorder, instability, and fragility, which subsequently created grounds for the criticism of securitisation theory. A discursive construction of security allows for its parallel; discursive deconstruction, although further investigation of the meaning of exceptional politics as a contrast to normality has been called for (C.A.S.E., 2006, p. 455). Earlier works of Buzan and Wæver treat security as socially constructed and framed around identities of individuals which they also consider socially constructed and, as a result, encounter limitations of the security foundation (Buzan, 1991, 2008).⁷ The constructivist approach led to criticisms of their work, particularly Buzan’s, which ‘forced’ them to orient the expansion of security exploration more towards identities in response to the series of bloody, ethnic conflicts of the 1990s (McSweeney, 1996). In this regard, the key innovation was an introduction of identities as integrative analytical concept in the IR field, allowing for a connection with broader notions of security.

However, securitisation theory does not really investigate whether some issues are a threat or not. Instead, it analyses the discourses, perceptions, and constructions of the security narrative. Despite criticism of the Copenhagen School, its approach of securitisation through discursive practice has become the dominant lens for understanding securitisation of minorities, who are perceived as a threat primarily to a societal security that rests on identity constructions (Buzan et al., 1998). Subsequent expansions of the concept took a turn towards understanding how processes of securitisation occur, including who are the securitising actors, how securitisation is placed on the agenda, how it is legitimised, as well as its timing and facilitating conditions. The Paris School⁸ emerged as a criticism of the Copenhagen school and argued for a stronger emphasis on societal security, as well as analysing both practices and speeches to strengthen securitisation theory. Scholars of the Paris School, most notably Bigo and Huysmans, drawing on the works of Foucault, argue that securitisation is an outcome of a

series of contextualised practices rather than a speech act. As such, it is affected by structural factors, including methods of social control and deployment of surveillance technologies used by specific power agents, the importance given in decision-making processes to professionals, the dominance of expert knowledge over political knowledge, and prevailing rationalities of governance and security apparatuses. More recently, securitisation has been approached through process-tracing in an attempt to overcome sharp delineation between speech acts and practices. Its distinctiveness “[c]urrently lies in its capacity to articulate a specific approach to security – influenced by the speech act – with an ‘analytics of government’, which emphasises practices and processes” (Balzacq et al., 2016, p. 521). To enable applicability of securitisation theory to empirical enquiry, it is grounded in three important elements: an audience who play a central role in embracing securitisation discourse, the co-dependency of agency and context, and an understanding of power struggle as a driver of securitisation (Balzacq, 2005, 2010).

As previously mentioned, theoretical development of the securitisation theory also extended its application to the concept of desecuritisation (Wæver, 1993). This involves the return from an emergency, securitised situation to the area of normal negotiations within the political sphere. In other words, desecuritisation is not a speech act failure but rather a more complex reflection of the conditions of the audience, the context, the power of securitising actors, and the agency of the securitised object. It tends to be seen as normatively positive, but “[i]ts temporally immanent enaction alongside securitising moves might introduce more violence into security politics and, in fact, exacerbate protracted conflicts” (Austin & Beaulieu-Brossard, 2018).

The concept of desecuritisation provoked a discussion, concerning its applicability in the area of minority rights, among authors who questioned the possibility of desecuriting minorities in a state striving for societal security. Roe argues that minority rights, which de facto contribute to identification of minorities as a distinctive community can only be ‘managed’ (Roe, 2004, p. 292), while also adding an element of threat to their distinctive presence. Upholding and implementing minority rights frameworks also does not allow for Wæver’s proposal to simply ignore the object of securitisation to desecurite it. When minorities are given a special status, it confirms their exclusion from a dominant nation, religion, or culture, which cannot be ignored. Minorities are thus viewed as distinctive groups or communities with a wish and intention to preserve their distinctiveness, which can cause responses from a state and majority group on a scale ranging from recognition and acceptance to full securitisation and political violence. Meanwhile, Jutila challenges Roe’s argument and

strongly disagrees with his claim that “[t]he need for a distinctive minority identity would necessarily form some kind of societal security problem” (Jutilla, 2006, p. 182). She proceeds to argue that there are always groups who see ‘their’ state as the state of and for only ‘their’ nation (p. 181), and it is these conditions that prevent the desecuritisation of minority rights (p. 182). Consequently, it is the context within which securitisation actors come to dominate the treatment of minorities through their control of power and discourse which is crucial. For example, we already have significant empirical evidence pointing to increased securitisation of minorities in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic (Carla & Djolai, forthcoming).

To situate this discussion, we need to acknowledge an organic parallel between the expansion of the security concept and developments related to minority rights and protection, which happened as part of the same transformation in Europe and globally. With the collapse of the Cold War era, several international human rights instruments that included minority rights were introduced and adopted.⁹ In Europe, the Copenhagen Document (1990), followed by the Council of Europe treaties, the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1992* and the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 1995* represented a milestone in this regard. In the context of EU enlargement, Copenhagen criteria laid down in 1993 included reference to “respect for and protection of minorities” demanding that candidate countries formally commit to securing their minorities but falling short of including a clear definition of minorities. Despite positive developments in respecting the rights of national minorities, combating discrimination, promoting equality, and preserving minority culture and identity, these instruments also emphasised intragroup differences between minority and majority groups in nation states and underlined a security dimension of their presence. While the frameworks sought to reduce rising ethnic tensions and to promote security, they de facto created situations that Roe argued place minorities in a precarious position. Ultimately, while they have failed to transform interethnic relations in a meaningful way, they have the potential to reconstruct societal security (Galbreath & McEvoy, 2012). Securitised responses against minorities, as speech act or practice, and securing minorities can in fact be seen as “the two sides of the same coin” (Sasse, 2005, p. 689) as traditional and new minority issues have both security and rights dimensions in contemporary Europe.

The problems partly stem from a fluid and inconsistent definition of minorities. In Europe (from the Atlantic to the Urals), there are currently 360 larger or smaller minorities with a total of 107 million members, which corresponds to one seventh of all Europeans (Pan

et al., 2018). Migrants, or new minorities, are not included in this number and they often go unrecognised in the countries of their permanent or temporary settlement. The absence of a universally agreed upon definition of minorities reflects the struggle with the act of defining a social group, which often tends to be restrictive in its nature and intention. Identity itself, which remains at the core of conceptualisation of a social group, is a contested category, prompting a constantly changing enquiry about people's struggle to situate themselves and the communities they belong to in the circumstance of everyday life and global socio-political currents. Religious identity for example is viewed as "...a discourse of boundaries, relatedness and otherness, on the one hand, and encompassment and inclusiveness, on the other – and of the powerful forces that are perceived to challenge, contest and preserve these distinctions and unities" (Werbner, 2010, p. 233). Drawing on sociological use of the term 'minority' (van Amersfoort, 1978) and Brubaker's criticism of ethnic groups (2000), I argue that minorities should be approached as a concept rather than a specifically defined entity or specific analytical or social category against the backdrop of security. I further argue that we need to rephrase definitions that speak of 'subordinate group' in relation to actions of a dominant group,¹⁰ as this indicates unequal treatment or some form of collective discrimination. Scapegoating theory is broadly used in the analysis of securitisation of minorities as a reflection of a behaviour toward subordinate groups.¹¹ Therefore, in this issue I consider minorities to be non-dominant groups, not always numerically inferior to majorities, whose members possess ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics that differ from the rest of the population and whose presence provokes securitised response. Nevertheless, it is clear that the concept of a minority remains intrinsically interlinked with identity.

Jenkins argues that "identity and identification are ubiquitous aspects of human life" (Jenkins, 2004, p. 176) which are necessary for better understanding relationships between collective and individual. His argumentation that both individual and collective identity are an interactional product of 'external' identification by others and of 'internal' self-identification is important for conceptualising behaviours and attitudes towards, and othering of, minorities. Identity, however, is not an ultimate categorisation, particularly when it comes to understanding collective bonds between individuals in a group. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that other categories such as "interest" play an important role in shaping relationships within and between groups (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). However, this debate relates more to issues of self-identification, which Tajfel argued arise from belonging to a group, rather than through external identification by others, which instead becomes a point of contestation related

to security concerns. Here, a debate about the treatment of minorities by ‘others’ i.e., by outgroups, can be positioned within Jenkins’ argument about ‘identity’ and ‘interest’, where he asks a question of utmost importance for the minorities-security debate: “Is a threat to one’s identity really more serious than a threat to one’s interests?” (Jenkins, 2004, p. 178).

The argument of this issue is that instead of situating the security paradigm solely against the background of minority rights and protection frameworks, the quest should focus on developing analytical parallels between securitisation, ontological security concerns, and vernacular security that lead to fear of minorities and, analytically, constitute a new paradigmatic approach. Such challenges, meanwhile, must not only be approached in a normative sense (in terms of ‘insecurities’), but should also consider how minorities cope with being perceived as a threat in a state represented by a majority group, which makes it necessary to introduce the *minor perspective*.

Brief Outline of the Collection

Articles in this issue cover case studies of Northern Ireland and Kosovo, as well as comparative analysis between Germany and Austria, and a case comparison between Greece and Italy. Three of the articles observe treatment and securitisation of minorities in post-conflict circumstances (Kosovo and Northern Ireland), while the other two provide examples of the struggle of nation states to find a middle ground, with the least possible damage to the state, to accommodate at least some minority traits. Identity, as argued earlier, remains a central point of the struggles between minority groups and a state, given the real and perceived differences that consistently feature as a potential threat to the state and to societal security.

Within this scope, Pipyrou argues that ‘Otherness’ poses a threat. In a comparative anthropological study of Greece and Italy, she observes how the two states tolerate minority communities permanently settled in both countries. In one case study, she observes a community of people known as Grecanici who live in Calabria, Southern Italy, and speak a local Greek dialect (Grecanica). The other community are the Pontian refugees from Anatolia, who were displaced from the Black Sea region and settled to Greek Macedonia after the Lausanne treaty in 1923. Upon arrival in Greece, they started reshaping their collective identity because, in order to feel secure, they had “...[to] declare their belonging by leaping into the collective fantasy” of the Greek nation state (this volume).

The focus of Pipyrou’s article is minority status in these two countries and the extent to which the states are prepared to stretch themselves, symbolically and legally, to recognise some

of the minority's traits. She continues by concluding that, from a minor perspective, attempting to belong is often tailored to fit rather than premised on objective resemblances with a majority group. To explain acceptance or rejection of minorities from the state perspective, Pipyrrou uses Freud's concept of the narcissism of minor differences. She notes that "alterity relies upon the degree to which Otherness is, or is not, tolerated" (this volume), whereby minority identity, with all essential qualities, is linked to (in)securities that these groups face in quotidian life. Her paper highlights both the graduated frameworks for minority protection in Europe, and the multi-layered nature of identity, both of which allow the states to recognise only the traits that are not deemed dangerous. She concludes by stating that "[t]o avoid this, nations develop their agendas through an operation of opportunistic narcissism; the process of underscoring minority differences, territorialising, and finally nationalising them". Pipyrrou's article is implicitly about securitisation, while exploring and broadening the new concepts of security frameworks and building a case for how to develop solutions for accommodating the political conundrum of minorities in Europe. Her rich, ethnographic data highlights the paradox behind nation states' fear of minorities, and their portrayal as continual challenge to national homogeneities.

Some societies with experience of recent conflict are not only nationally heterogeneous but remain deeply divided along national or religious lines. In the case study of Northern Ireland, Carla investigates "who or what is perceived as a threat, according to which terms, and how this affects majority-minority relations" (this volume). The intention of his article is in line with Pipyrrou's, in that it aims to find a solution for dealing comprehensively with diversity. Carla argues that (de)securitisation frameworks continue to be isolated from minority scholarship while observing that "there has not been much dialogue and knowledge transfer with the extensive scholarship on policy tools to address ethnic issues and deal with minorities". The article explores how institutional and legal/policy solutions in post-conflict societies interact with (de)securitisation processes. The author carries out a critical discourse analysis of political discourses of the dominant political parties (more specifically, their electoral programmes) that have been maintaining representation in the Northern Ireland Assembly since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA). He finds that despite consociational agreements, self-identification along faith-based community lines remained dominant and continues to affect different aspect of everyday life such as education and living arrangements. Furthermore, these troubles are shown to continually find ways into the electoral rhetoric of the political parties who, in turn, reinforce them.

Northern Ireland is an example of coexisting numerical majorities,¹² with an almost

even split along faith lines which emphasises complications of categorisation when national identity is taken into account as well. Interestingly, the author finds that even before the GFA, Northern Ireland has been characterised by a variety of desecuritising discourses that include reference to shared traditions, rather than juxtaposing them as a threat. The trend of desecuritisation in the electoral programmes of the main political parties, to a varying degree, continued since the consociational arrangements were put in place. Carla's analysis shows that both securitisation and desecuritisation are not linear or isolated processes with clear cut-off points. This notion encapsulates the main message of this entire special issue, which is that diversity always comes with a varying degree of securitisation and often with a conflict potential, even if specific policies are put in place that allow desecuritisation. Despite such policies, in Northern Ireland, society is still unable to be rid of expressions of fear and perceptions of threat within and across the two main faith communities.

Two other articles in this volume both discuss post-conflict developments in Kosovo, but approach solutions for coexistence in this divided society from a different perspective when it comes to minorities. Concerns about security issues as well as securitisation are always present in the aftermath of wars, particularly internal ones. There are threats to the civilian population, both in terms of military and vernacular security, and there is fear and continuation of hostility between the warring parties, reflected in hate and long-lasting lack of trust. Calu focuses on the destiny of non-dominant minority groups in Kosovo after the war, arguing that they are placed in a precarious position as a result of the main societal dynamics revolving around a dominant group; Albanians, and the largest dominant minority group; Serbs. This article puts forward that the adoption of a multi-ethnic, state-building model of governance which includes consociational power-sharing arrangements has triggered unintended consequences for the (de)securitisation of non-dominant minority groups in Kosovo (other than Serbs). The normative neglect of these non-dominant group led to their permanent securitisation. Calu further argues that both processes of desecuritisation and the employment of a one-size-fits-all approach to managing minority rights will always struggle to develop 'normal' politics of diversity, which is a foundation of desecuritisation.

Trupia's paper, based on data collected through extensive fieldwork, explores the everyday experiences, perceptions, and practices of Kosovo Serbs residing in the rural fabric of Southeast Kosovo when it comes to their security. It investigates how local responses of ordinary Serbs reflect a certain "pragmatic performativity" in the face of Kosovo Albanians. The study's findings from Central Kosovo confirm that local Serbs neither displayed nor

unfolded forms of vernacularism or disloyalty toward Kosovo Albanians. Conversely, they were found “reflecting on potential creative solutions for tackling poverty and underdevelopment” (this volume) in the hope to avoid replications of post-1999 Kosovo War ideologies emanated by respective national media coverages and political rhetoric. In fact, results also show that Kosovo Serbs pragmatically perform an account of quotidian practices daily for restoring a sense and self-image of ‘personhood’ in the eyes of the ‘ethnic other’. Employing a research approach that aimed at avoiding unnecessary ethnicisation, this paper sheds light on a peace potential and true civic responsibility that emerged spontaneously from Kosovo Serbs’ voices. The paper, like Pipyrrou’s, offers perceptions of security from a minor perspective, and furthermore frames the research within a vernacular security approach—building on the exploration of experiences of people from the Serb communities in Kosovo, and their responses and coping strategies under post-war conditions that make them vulnerable and insecure.

In the final article by Hirschler, this special issue extends the analysis to asylum seekers (new minorities) in Germany and Austria and examines the indirect impact of populist radical right parties (PRRP) on the securitisation of asylum policy. The author explores connections between the increase in power of PRRP and changes in asylum policy and considers, by means of a legal analysis, whether the securitisation of asylum policy can be understood as an effect of the political strength of PRRP. Multiple scholars have emphasised the policy connections between minority and migration issues, although segments of minority scholarship still maintain separation in terms of keeping traditional and new minorities as distinct objects of analysis. The author makes an important point by highlighting synergies between these two groups for the policy agenda and argues that “...[l]egislation concerning refugees and asylum seekers plays an important role for the position of migrants within a society [and] how they are consequently constructed as minorities” (this volume). Observing changes in the European social and demographic landscape during the past decade, it is clear that academic investigation of new and traditional minorities needs to be brought much closer. This article takes an important step along this path by successfully demonstrating securitisation of the asylum policy field both in Austria and Germany with a rise of PRRP.

To conclude, the articles in this special issue offer a variety of interpretations for how and why minorities pose a security threat, and securitisation approaches that affect them. They analyse the processes of portraying minorities as a threat in a novel way, as well as securitised responses through discourses and policies dominated by the state and majority groups. Despite

strengthening of the minority rights frameworks in the past, the presence of minorities, particularly those whose existence is guarded by certain status and frameworks, continues to be perceived as a threat within the variety of political and societal contexts presented in this issue. The authors address the puzzle of why this continues to be the case and, in doing so, they offer fresh contribution to epistemology of minority securitisation and work to shift the analytical and methodological focus towards a minor perspective.

Notes

¹ Smith and Holmes (2014, p. 85) for example argue that there is a linear relationship between percent minority and the use of excessive force in street-level police behaviour, because they represent concerns of the majority groups. Furthermore, Canetti-Nisim et al. (2008) provide example of the logic behind the perception of minorities as different forms of threat (economic, security) in Israel.

² Examples: South Africa where the majority (but non-dominant) group is the black population, and in Northern Ireland, where the population is equally distributed across the two dominant faith groups.

³ For example, Armenian genocide.

⁴ See Article 9 of *The Human Rights Act 1998* (United Kingdom, 1998).

⁵ Barry Buzan and Ole Waever are among the most prolific contributors to the development of the new security paradigm and founders of Copenhagen School of security. Most scholars investigating securitisation of minorities draw on their work.

⁶ A comprehensive review of this development is available in the output from a workshop entitled 'Critical Approaches to Security in Europe' (C.A.S.E.), which offers a critical examination of contemporary security practices. It has been published as a networked manifesto in *Security Dialogue*, 37(4), 443–487, and is referenced in this article several times.

⁷ Buzan (1991) in the 2nd edition with a new introduction, addresses these conceptual limitations, including the foundation of the security foundation.

⁸ For example, work of Didier Bigo, Jeffrey Huysmans, Anastassia Tsoukala, Ayse Ceyhan. Also see review in C.A.S.E. Collective (2006).

⁹ An extensive review of the relevant legal frameworks of the 1990s can be found in Fastenrath (1997).

¹⁰ Sociologist Louis Wirth offered a first definition of minorities and conducted extensive work on their categorisation e.g., Wirth (1941).

¹¹ It is embedded in Dollard's Frustration-Aggression theory, dating back to Wirth's investigation of minorities. See further Dollard et al., (1939).

¹² In the last census, held in 2011, 45.1% of the population specified that they were Catholic or from a Catholic background, while 48.4% were from a Protestant or other Christian background. The results of the new national identity question were more complicated: 39.9% considered themselves British only, 25.3% Irish only, and 20.9% Northern Irish only, with others specifying multiple national identities. See further Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2011).

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