

The Editor's foreword: The concept behind this issue

By Péter Marton

A naive attempt at merging Small State Studies and the study of securitisation – a prospectively productive encounter – could take place based on the hypothesis that small states may be particularly sensitive to issues related to which their size seems to aggravate a given threat.

Processes of migration and the implications thereof may in this respect be interesting to inquire about. This is in line with Buzan, Wæver, Kelstrup and Lemaitre's fundamental assumptions (1993: 23): they conceptualised societal security as stemming primarily from the stability of a society's identity (and its ability to actively preserve it). In the context of migration, small states may thus be expected to see the greatest challenge for the simple reason that even small population changes may visibly bear on their societal make-up.

A cursory overview of the different responses to recent European movements of migration suggests, however, that this assumption may be either erroneous (and „state smallness” may have nothing to do with the securitisation of migration) or that the role of other variables needs to be understood and assessed to explain the diversity found in policies as well as rhetoric.

In this issue we were therefore interested in receiving contributions looking either (1) at a particular country of choice where the author could comprehensively assess the impact of migration and the related presence, character (or absence) of processes of securitisation; or (2) at what insights may advance our general (theoretical) understanding of what determines processes of securitisation and migration-related policies and measures in small states.

The reader shall be the ultimate judge regarding this, but we believe that we can declare provisional success in this respect. Three of the articles in the issue (by Tibor Hargitai, Bogdan Ferrario and Tamás Dudlák) introduce cases where the hypothesis above is proven false for various reasons. In the Dutch and Irish cases it seems that the

power of norms and values, interwoven with identities, with the latter in turn embedded in historical narratives, has great significance in explaining deviation from the hypothetical expectations – although, with a view to the unity across the political elites concerned, perhaps the role of social conformity shall not be discounted either when seeking to explain individual representatives' or leaders' positions on the subject.

As to northern Iraq and the Kurdish Regional Autonomy (KRA) there, it seems that instrumental calculations may play a somewhat more important role in the political strategy of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), but even in this case – as Tamás Dudlák shows in his article – the experience of the Kurds as refugees, general norms of hospitality, and intercommunal ties also influence the attitudes of the host population. Thus securitisation is found to be lacking in all of the three cases examined here.

That may leave us pondering the reasons for the presence of processes of securitisation in Hungary. The article by Eszter Kirs addresses this, through interviews-based research, by way of a very original approach: introducing the views of Hungarian human-rights and humanitarian organisations' representatives on the subject. Even as the interviewees point out that the official/government-driven securitisation of the issue of migration (and, along with it, refugees and other migrants) is based on a biased and distorting framing of the subject, many of them stress that certain fears should be seen as legitimate and addressed in practical ways and by practical means – regarding the latter, the interviewees also discuss certain best practices.

Here is hoping therefore that the contents of the issue will please our readers in terms of asking – and satisfyingly answering – questions that were worth asking.

Reference

Buzan, Barry – Wæver, Ole – Kelstrup, Morten – Lemaitre, Pierre, eds. (1993): *Identity, migration and the new security agenda in Europe*. Pinter: London