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The World in 2050

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Introduction

Since the first astrologist looked to the stars for answers or the fortuneteller peered into her crystal ball, humans have been searching for a way to predict the future. Over time, however, we have learned that only one thing is certain: that the future never will be.

For our winter edition, experts, historians and philosophers were given the task of envisaging what the world will be in 2050. Foretelling such as this has always been an arcane task for social scientists. Despite historical analysis, scientific experiment or sheer psychic clairvoyance, we unnervingly predict wrong. Even short-term auguries are quite often fallacious – look at Egypt and the revolts sweeping North Africa and the Middle East.

Predicting 40 years into the future, therefore, is a task fraught with danger. The odds of error are extremely high. And yet predicting the future is a task that must be surmounted. Some may say it is even a necessity for humankind. We must forecast what may come, if we are ever to seek a clear path forward.
Polar Possibilities

William A. Cohn

The panelák is back, as is a variant of communism; one in which pragmatism trumps ideology. Following The Great Waves of 2039, massive forced migrations altered human demography and geography, necessitating a transformed social order.

In 2050, well more than half of the world’s 5.2 million surviving humans live in societies governed by centralized powers—through panel-bureaus or public-private partnerships established by the state.

2039 provided a wake-up call to world leaders. The proverbial tipping point catalyzed new alliances and ways of doing business. At the Oslo conference, the international community convened an interdisciplinary council of independent

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1 An alternative scenario is of course possible and perhaps even likely: a tragic scramble for survival at the Poles as humanity descends into xenophobic resource wars. Climate change and severe weather would see mass migration responded to with closed borders and force as people are told to die in place. Competition would trump cooperation, and fortress-nation demagoguery would see personal freedoms largely eviscerated. Those societies that built renewable energy infrastructure in the 2010s would be at the top of the heap; followed by those who delayed and then desperately tried to catch up; and then, by those societies that are failed and destitute. What will come of the Gulf States when the oil money stops? Will hedonism and nihilism win the day? Will the less fortunate exact revenge on the privileged when facing the end? If so, security concerns in the top-tier states would trump civil liberties in an era of global resource wars.
respected experts from the physical and social sciences to offer guidance on how to proceed. This culminated in the October 24, 2039 signing of a charter of principles and commitments for a sustainable future.

The Great Waves caused unparalleled human displacement and migration. In the early 2040s taxes, much higher than those that preceded the floods, were enacted, along with state control over industry in order to ration the limited supply of water, housing and food. Public works programs served to rebuild damaged infrastructure and reduce unemployment. Saline Solutions, Inc. became a powerful firm yielding great influence over the panel-bureaus as a result of its commercial success addressing acute shortages of potable water.

During 2040-2042 residents were given ration cards for food, water, and housing allotments. Paneláks today appear much like those of the mid-late 20th century, but are made mainly of cem-ten-plex, an eco-friendly durable synthetic composite, rather than cement and asbestos. And buildings today use solar panels for hot water heating, the collection and treatment of rain water for non-potable uses, and cellulose insulation. The late 20th century privatization of state-ownership has been reversed. Privately-owned real estate was seized by the state using free-falling currency as ‘just compensation’.

While individual freedoms have declined in some respects (privacy, due process of law), civil liberties in other areas have flourished (freedom of speech, lifestyle choices). The so-called family values agenda of the late 20th and early 21st century is now seen as anachronistic and fringe extremism. Gays can now marry and adopt, women have absolute control over decisions concerning their bodies, and individuals can choose when and how to medicate themselves and end their lives.
The global unemployment rate is more than 15 percent, health coverage is mandatory, and healthcare, like most goods and services the world over, is rationed. Universities abound, bricks and mortar colleges are exclusive and expensive; most earn their degrees online. Almost all educational materials have been published by Gig-pro-plex, the successor of Google. Whereas Google posted more than 8 million books to its virtual library in 2010 to 2012, today the pro-plex digital library exceeds 35 million books and manuscripts. Many of the unemployed produce manuscripts as an aside to their freelance work as content providers for sell-buy-plex.

Conventional thinking that access to more information makes people better informed is subject to great debate today. Palm-sized mobile devices give people access to vast quantities of data, but the commercial interests controlling that data, Gig-pro-plex being the largest, are the de facto media gatekeepers. Diverse viewpoints are available, but largely drowned out by the commercialized mainstream sources of information prioritized by the owners of the scanners which people rely upon to sort
through digital data. And, human psychology remains the same -- people seek out and absorb information that confirms their initial beliefs and tend to discount the rest. As the popular 20th century songwriter Paul Simon put it, “Still a man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest.” The phenomenon once called cyber-polarization is today referred to as Gig-ing.

Gig-gly-plex offers the downtrodden diversion from hard times. Along with its partners MyOpiate, Holly-plex and diverti-plex, interactive and passive media abounds, including gaming, networking, film, song, arts, drama and fantasy. Contrary to predictions, a thriving commerce in printed material remains, as do a diversity of publishers. Most publishing platforms are found online but they vie for relatively small market-share as the plex-complex dominates online content at present. This is perplexing for advocates of digital media competition and free speech. Copyright has been reduced from giving creators exclusive control of their work for well-beyond their lifetime to a period of 180 days.

The renaissance of the Catholic Church following its early 21st century pedophilia scandal offered succor to those ravaged by the extreme weather which swept the globe in the late 2030s into the 2040s. The tarnish of the sex scandal delegitimized the Church’s values-agenda (and diminished their property assets as a result of the many legal settlements paid) resulting in a more ecumenical Church, calling for community and public service. Islam was weakened by the wars fought between Sunni and Shia from 2015-2018, and its extremists lost appeal following the adaptations made by the world after 2039. Judaism remains, but Zionism was altered when the Knesset relocated to Minsk in a land-for-arms-and-finance deal struck between the former-Israel, former-Belarus and Russia in 2041, defusing global hostilities. Interfaith religion is stronger today than exclusive denominational religiosity.
Displacement of peoples of the Americas, Western and Central Europe, Africa, the Middle East, North Australia, and Central, South and Southeast Asia led to new global alliances over the past decade. The inability of world leaders to develop an effective international law response to the well-understood dangers of unmitigated greenhouse gas emissions, most notably in the 4th assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007, made the great global calamity inevitable and resulted in widespread deforestation, rising seas, severe weather, drought, famine, disease, malnutrition, death and displacement. Denial of climate-change science was rampant among those pro-business-as-usual advocates known as head-in-sanders, titanic-top-deckers, and today referred to mainly as fossil fools. The ignored warnings signs included flocks of birds falling out of the sky and large schools of fish dying in 2010 and early 2011.

World leaders had no choice but to respond creatively to the disaster of 2039. The Sino-Scandinavian alliance attained primacy by placing survival over ideology. China’s investments in Africa, Asia and Latin America provided access to resources needed to implement strategies utilizing sustainable values and models of Scandinavia. Scandinavia’s knowledge and experience combined with China’s resources and pragmatism established a natural partnership, with the clout to compel recalcitrant states like the U.S. to follow and cooperate. As humanity was at risk of

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4 Mindful of the failures of the old paradigms, and the devastating costs of the old ways of conducting business and politics, a council of elders convened to study the omissions of policymakers and make recommendations to the Oslo Conference. The Council looked back in order to chart a path for progress moving forward. They studied the warnings of Sir Nicholas Stern (http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2007/nov/29/climatechange.carbonemissions; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6096084.stm) and Bill McKibben (http://www.350.org; http://www.commondreams.org/view/2009/03/25-10) amongst many others in order to show the need for new ways of doing business and politics in order to mitigate the Lord-of-the-Flies-like present, to prevent a brutal struggle for survival at the Poles, and offer hope of a sustainable future.
drowning in its own garbage, it was the Danes who led the way of turning waste into energy in the early 21st century, thus leading to a Scandinavian political renaissance.

As the Northern Alliance between China, Northern Europe and Canada gained power and influence, militarism was disfavored and American power declined. The early 21st century bogeyman of terrorism was soon replaced by banditry, a catch-all for lawlessness. Military morale declined as losses mounted and support waned. Among the notable results of the past decade are: innovative energy (biomass, wind, solar) and transport policies (e-rail, ferry), sustainable manufacturing (hydro, turbo, thermo, geothermal) and finance strategies (community credit boards), and the prominence of women in leadership positions in both the public and private sector.

Before The Great Waves, the world was divided between the haves and have-nots, more so than at any time since medieval times. Darwin and John Rawls have won the day, as ideology has given way to the reality of a struggle for survival and the need for cooperation in order to meet the great challenges of the 21st century. Today, allocation of resources is driven by arguments over efficiency, with both laissez-faire and socialist economic paradigms viewed with general skepticism. The wealth gap has been greatly reduced by tax, accounting and finance reforms, along with the growing influence of ecological economics on law and policy.

Now, policymakers measure economic well-being using the EROI (Energy Return on Investment) and GPI (Genuine Progress Index) rather than GDP (Gross

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6 See, for example, the writings of: Herman Daley (For the Common Good, Beacon Press, 1989; [http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=775](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=775); [http://dieoff.org/page88.htm](http://dieoff.org/page88.htm)); James Gustave Speth (The Bridge at the End of the World, Yale Univ. Press, 2008; Global Environmental Governance, Island Press, 2006); Richard Heinberg ([http://richardheinberg.com/](http://richardheinberg.com/)).


Domestic Product). People today cannot fathom how a car crash, oil spill or war could be measured as enhancing the economic strength of a society using GDP as the main economic barometer. Whereas deforestation was the norm and people were visiting ‘tree museums’ in industrial societies in 2039, today reforestation is valued. The financial industry has been transformed to remedy the bad incentives and social ills fostered by what was then called “short-termism” and today is known as The Grubby Grab and The Great Myopia.

Entrepreneurs raise capital through community investment boards rather than private financing. Private finance was a major source of corruption before the 2040s as inside information begat unbound greed and aristocratic privilege. Today’s investment boards are public-private partnerships licensed and overseen by the state for purposes of enabling optimal allocation of funds to cohere with community values as measured by the panel-bureau election results. Candidates for the panel-bureaus are required to present in their platforms detailed business plans approved by the state accounting board. Technocracy is the nature of politics today, and corruption has been greatly eroded by mandated techno-transparency and strict controls over campaign financing and advertising.

2017-2025 saw American resources drained by war-fighting – in Yemen, Uzbekistan, Venezuela and Mexico, along with its ongoing proxy wars in the Middle East. As global economists came to discount military output the American economy sputtered, its credit-worthiness reduced as its deficits ballooned, and in 2022 the dollar ceased to be the world’s reserve currency (the renminbi-krone-euro-Canadian dollar-SDR index taking its place). No longer able to dictate favorable terms of trade, U.S. power waned. American output and influence then relied on media, technology, science and medicine, and later agriculture.

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The financial losses of 2007-2025 saw ownership of American corporate and real estate assets assumed largely by Asians, such that firms such as Disney, Boeing, Pfizer and Fox were American in name only. The branding of America remained commercially profitable by reason largely of consumer nostalgia and desire for memorabilia. Faded Glory and Banana Republic North jeans are now favorites in Asia, Coked is popular amongst South American youth, and Chevy is now a leading brand of antique furnishings and vintage clothing.

Michael Pollan’s writings have helped to guide 21st food policy towards efficiency and health. Soy, barley, rice, seaweed and carrots are main sources of human nutrients. Today, people cannot understand how 20th century man consumed so much unhealthy and wasteful beef. The only meat today is game and fish. Whereas natural fish stocks were depleted to near extinction before 2039, the Scandinavians led the way in protecting and restoring fish. Advancements in science have enabled genetically modified agriculture to overcome its early trials and errors such that GM foods now help to mitigate malnutrition.

Norway transformed the calamity of melting glaciers into a tremendous source of hydro power, meeting the energy needs of some 2 billion people. Nuclear arms were decommissioned and prohibited at the Oslo Conference, where the more than 70-year old nuclear non-proliferation treaty was finally actualized. There has been a resurgence of creative communities in the North, where innovation and the arts have blossomed during this age known as Waterstock.

Many challenges and uncertainties exist today, yet most people on the planet have a feeling of purpose and hope. Sacrificing for their progeny has given people a spiritual foundation which was absent in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

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absorption had many harmful effects, both personal and societal. Although the full impact of the loss of biodiversity resulting from ecological degradation is still unknown, the earth has shown remarkable healing powers. Humankind has begun to show powers of adaptation and wisdom by being more attuned to the natural world.

The author's predictions (intended to offer hope and models for it, not just a happy ending) draw upon the teachings of, amongst many others: Kurt Vonnegut, George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Gary Shteyngart, Eric Zencey, Cesar Chelala, Elizabeth Kolbert, Ronald Dworkin, William Golding, Dennis Brutus, Czeslaw Milosz, Jane Goodall, Kishore Mahbubani, Chinua Achebe, Bill McKibben, John Cassidy, Pablo Neruda, Chalmers Johnson, Bill Moyers, Naomi Klein, Lester Brown, Richard Goldstone, Sam Harris, and Howard Zinn.
The Possibility of a Sustainable Energy System in 2050: Predictions and Analysis of the Battle between Clean Energy and Fossil Fuels

Kyriakos Anastasiadis *

Since the discovery of fire, energy sources have been a primary factor determining the course of human history. In our era, nations are able to exploit alternative sources like solar, wind, and geothermal energy. Consequently, a battle has begun between fossil fuels and renewable energy sources. Its outcome will determine many aspects of life on Earth, including the quality of the environment, as well as issues of international relations and security.

Oil remains the current primary energy source of most nations and many analysts believe that its reign will not end until the year 2100 the earliest. Their belief is backed by the discovery of new enormous deposits and the unwillingness of most countries to commit in the formation of a sustainable energy system. Furthermore, technological innovations allow drilling in difficult locations like the Arctic and the deep sea. At the same time, the evolution of alternative energy technologies seems stagnant, especially with regards to storage.

Evaluation Energy Possibilities for the Future

2050 is seen as the crucial year in determining the future of energy sources for the foreseeable future. Oil companies, governments, think tanks, and private institutions

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are developing different scenarios that will help them adjust and ultimately gain a competitive advantage. Several comprehensive scenarios are presented in the Shell Report and the project of The Global Scenario Group (GSG) at the Stockholm Environment Institute in Boston. They are examining the possibility of a sustainable energy system by 2050. By studying this research, it becomes clear that their predictions are at the mercy of numerous uncertainties, among them population increase, technological innovations, security, the environment, oil and natural gas scarcity, consumers’ willingness to pay a premium for cleaner energy, social and personal priorities, especially regarding climate change, all of which could alter their predictions drastically. For example, if population growth slows, then demand will decrease as well, and fossil fuels prices will drop, limiting the attractiveness of renewable energy sources. On the other hand, if policies toward environmental protection become a major priority in many societies, there will be pressure on governments to create of a sustainable energy system and consumers will be more willing to pay the unavoidable premium.

The GSG study examines additional aspects that are even more difficult to predict like cultural preferences, social visions and psychosocial factors. In addition, the GSG suggests that uncontrollable variables like natural disasters, pandemics, breakthrough technologies, and even the breakdown of climate systems must also be taken into account.

According to the Shell Report, in 2050 Earth will have a population of 8.50 billion people. Urbanization will reach an alarming level (80 percent of the population will live in cities); income will continue to grow although at a slower rate (3.5 percent per year), and there will be ageing population profiles even in developing countries. As a result, energy demand will triple in the same period and, if fossil fuels remain the main power source, the consequences on the environment will be severe if not permanent.
Both studies produced several scenarios, which predict that a sustainable energy system is possible by 2050. Renewable sources will gain a significant share in energy consumption, but fossil fuels will remain the primary source of power. It seems that there will be a compromise between demand, politics, and environmental factors. So, is it possible for renewable energy to prevail?

**The Possibility Of A Sustainable Energy System**

For renewable sources to gain dominance, the world must change. Governments and individuals must rethink their priorities, make difficult compromises, and establish long-term commitments that will be costly and in some cases may lead to conflicts. It is quite difficult for countries with rich oil deposits like Norway, Canada or Venezuela to commit to renewable energy. The economic cost is enormous and may be seen as superfluous by citizens. Greece and Turkey have fought for decades for the exploitation of the Aegean Sea’s deposits.
If America commits to a sustainable energy system, its short-term growth will decrease, and if fossil fuels consumption decreases, there may be a destabilizing effect on Middle Eastern countries, for whom oil and gas are the primary source of income. Alternatively, a lack of foreign demand could result in increased stability in the region, as foreign influence has served to upset legitimate regimes. Either way, a global initiative seems improbable, and it therefore falls to a single or small group of countries to take action. Maximizing profit and global presence often drives the United States and other smaller powers like China and India, so it takes quite a large payoff to convince the countries to commit to long-term and expensive projects. These facts explain American unwillingness to invest heavily in renewable sources. The above scenarios reflect global realities and their predictions, even given the aforementioned uncertainties, seem reliable.

**Current Efforts In Renewable Energy Sources**

However, some countries have dedicated themselves to the development of renewable energy programs. Germany has an ongoing plan to cover more than 50 percent of its energy demands through renewable sources by 2030. The project is so successful that according to The World Watch Institute, it is believed that the country will achieve this goal by 2020. Germany has also made investments in solar energy, despite the fact that the country does not have an exceptionally sunny climate. This interesting situation must be seen as an example to follow, especially for countries of the European south and developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America who can utilize their climates in even more productive ways. In addition, Germany’s car manufacturers are pioneers in Hydrogen powered vehicles.

Denmark invested in wind power, which now produces 20 percent of the country’s electricity. The grid is strengthened constantly in order to achieve a 50 percent share in power consumption. An added bonus is that electricity prices have decreased
significantly via the merit order system, a system that allows the energy plants with lower marginal costs to go online first. Only if demand increases do more expensive plants go online. Therefore, most of the time power is produced by the least expensive sources, and since there are no marginal costs associated with wind energy (there is no need to use electricity to produce more electricity), the farms are always online and fossil fuel powered plants operate only in peak hours or during emergencies. This results in lowered electricity prices.

Benefits of Committing to a Low Carbon Economy

In additions to environmental benefits, renewable sources offer countries important political and strategic advantages. Germany provides another good example. During the early 20th century, Germany’s lack of energy sources contributed to its need for, as Hitler phrased it, “living space” (lebensraum) which would provide Germany with the manpower and oil to sustain the country’s growth and rearmament. Currently, the needs of this industrial giant are enormous and Germany is at the mercy of fossil fuels suppliers and distributors. The recent problems with Ukraine unveiled Germany’s strategic deficit regarding energy. Ukraine controls the pipeline.
that supplies Germany with incoming Russian gas. Ukraine, in order to pressure Russia for discounts on its own supply, closed this pipeline temporarily. As a result, Germany’s factories and households experienced severe problems and the economic cost was significant. By reducing this dependency Germany can grow faster and avoid political compromise.

Renewable sources can be a major growth force for developing countries. Through them partnerships can be formed with companies and other countries by offering tax benefits and land respectively. They will benefit from cheap energy, job creation, and political support in the international arena. Germany is currently considering fostering these kinds of partnerships with several North African countries. Their initial plan consists of creating giant solar parks in the desert.

Developed countries can reap the above benefits as well. Greece is blessed with more than 300 days of sunshine per year and strong winds in its islands and northern regions. Greece covers its energy demands by exploiting both its lignite deposits and through importing fossil fuels. Lignite is a cheap mineral (a form of carbon), but when used in electricity production it pollutes the environment considerably. Therefore, for the past five years Greece has been following through on an initiative to use renewable sources for 25 percent of energy consumption. The program offers tax benefits and guaranteed low interest loans to individuals and companies who participate. As a result, Greece will soon benefits from hundreds of solar parks and wind farms. Data has yet to be compiled regarding their share in energy production, but the plan is considered highly successful, with a 10-year extension recently announced.

Furthermore, in January 2011 the Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou announced the development of the biggest solar park in the world. It will be constructed in central Greece where the lignite-powered plants now operate. When it goes online, the park will allow many lignite plants to shut down, with workers being transferred
to the park, preserving 100 percent of the jobs. Other countries of the troubled European south can implement plans like these. The sunny climate and strong winds are a strategic asset to be utilized by these governments. It is no accident that international organizations, think tanks and financial institutions started to propose long-term strategies in renewable energy sources investments; the United Nation’s 2010 World Investment Report includes a comprehensive guideline for establishing a low carbon economy.

The Decisive Factors in the Battle Between Fossil Fuels and Renewable Sources

By analyzing the above facts and the scenarios proposed by the GSG and Shell, it becomes evident that the decisive factors in the battle between fossil fuels and renewable energy sources are the political commitment and the willingness of individuals to invest in a sustainable energy system. People must recognize the environmental and strategic benefits of renewable sources and foremost accept that these advantages will profit mostly future generations and not themselves. The current generation is burdened by the decision and the cost of the formation of a low carbon energy system. If people accept this task, then governments will have no choice but to accelerate their efforts, as history illustrates that rulers cannot ignore the will of their people for too long a time. The current scenarios predict that renewable sources will be a realistic power solution, but without terminating the dominance of oil and natural gas. If global commitment remains at the current level renewable sources will reach a 30-40 percent share in power consumption by 2050.

The environmental benefits are questionable since according to the Energy in 2050 report by the International Energy Agency, fossil fuel production will at least double in the same period due to the increased energy demands. According to BBC News, in order to have a significant and lasting effect on the planet’s environmental status, the expansion of renewable sources combined with a decrease in oil consumption
must achieve a 60 percent reduction of carbon emissions. To succeed in this goal, renewable sources must answer to the well-established arguments of oil companies, as well as fossil fuels and nuclear power supporters. They claim that the formation of a complete sustainable energy system is not possible by 2050, due to the unprecedented cost and the limits in technology. They are right. The cost is enormous and the current rate of the evolution in renewable sources technology will not allow the formation of a low carbon energy system in this time frame. For these reasons a global initiative is imperative. The combined efforts of many countries will accelerate the evolution in technology and eventually will lead to an affordable energy system.

There is also the matter of nuclear energy. The scenarios predict that their power production will double, but since energy demands will probably triple, there will be no major change in its significance. Many analysts started referring to nuclear power as a clean energy source, as it produces no carbon emission. Nuclear energy is attractive, due to its efficiency and the long term low per unit cost. The risk of an accident like Chernobyl, as well as the difficulties of storing nuclear waste, are major factors that prevent developed countries from investing heavily in nuclear power. Developing countries cannot commit to it due to the initially steep costs and technological know-how, but, by accepting the uncertainties of the same scenarios, there is no guarantee that there will not be a shift in global perceptions, or technological breakthroughs that will lead to an increased commitment to nuclear energy in the expense of renewable sources and not fossil fuels. And of course, more plants increase the possibility of an accident. Despite improvements in safety, especially in post-Soviet countries, it is impossible to eliminate completely the chance of an accident. And in the case of nuclear energy, the consequences are severe, long lasting, and affect many regions on the planet.
Finally, one must always take into account the global balance of power. Since the US is heavily dependent on fossil fuels and has not made a commitment to renewable sources, it will be impossible to establish a global initiative in favor of a sustainable energy system. Besides the obvious economic consequences, control of energy resources breeds economic dominance as well. If renewable sources prevail over fossil fuels, America may lose much of its global influence and there could be a significant shift in the balance of power. Today America can greatly influence the Middle East and other countries rich in oil and gas deposits. The US also controls, directly or indirectly, the majority of the pipelines and the shipping routes, including the Panama and the Suez canals. The only major fossil fuels producer that is completely out of the US sphere of influence is Iran. These facts, along with their military and economic power are important factors for American hegemony. Therefore, a sustainable energy system denies the country a strategic branch of its international presence, thus reducing its power and capacity to impose or dictate its will. It is evident that the US will not risk this and may explain US aversion to the creation of a global initiative for renewable energy sources.

On the other hand the renewable sources share in power consumption will at least double and one might think that people should be quite satisfied. But these scenarios do not account for the fact that due to the huge increase in energy demands and without an alternative source of energy, oil and gas companies will have to invest enormous amounts of resources in long-term projects in order to satisfy them. Furthermore, by allowing a greater share in renewable energy, they can retain their control on fuel prices and flexibility in production levels. In addition, the controlled share of a sustainable energy system will never make it cheaper than fossil fuels, thus preventing consumers and countries from investing in them. And of course, the world will have the illusion that the environment is protected. A false perception that will decrease the pressure to oil companies in taking security and environment protection measures, in favor of their profits. The Exxon Valdez accident, the
Prestige off the coast of Spain, and the recent BP rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico prove the dangers of fossil fuels drilling and transportation. If production doubles or even triples as the scenarios predict and safety measures are fewer, then accidents will occur more often and the consequences on the environment will be even more dramatic.

The Outcome

2050 is not the year that renewable sources will prevail over fossil fuels. Besides a few countries that are committed to them that will benefit, the planet will not gain much from their increased share in power consumption. Oil will dominate the world until its deposits are depleted. And this will likely not happen for at least two centuries. Even the US Department of Energy states that oil production might peak as late as 2112. And since the universally accepted “peak oil” theory dictates that oil will run out 50 years after its peak then it seems that fossil fuels will be around for some time. Although oil deposits are not infinite, its scarcity is a relevant term. In order to be important, it must be presented as scarce. During the 20th century analysts predicted that oil deposits would be exhausted by 2070. These same analysts now predict exhaustion in 2150. But, as anyone can see new, enormous fields are discovered every year. The recently discovered Tupi and Libra deep waters fields in Brazil have the potential to produce 8 billion barrels each. They are second only to Kazakhstan’s Kashagan field of 17 billion barrels discovered in 2000. And the majority of the known offshore and Arctic deposits cannot be exploited with today’s technology. Although the safety risks of exploiting remote fields are high, the lure of profit will likely urge oil companies forward. As it stands, the world must wait for a few hundreds years to enjoy the benefits of a completely sustainable energy system. We must hope that our blue planet will not become black by then.
Greening the Future: An Argument for Sustainable Cities

Jacy Meyer*

Walking through the streets of Chrudim gives the impression that it’s like any other Czech city. With a population of about 24,000, Chrudim, 110 kilometers east of Prague, has a long, pretty square dominated by a large church. A mix of modern and baroque buildings, the requisite textile stores and herna bars - you could be in any one of a number of small towns dotted across the country. But underneath its typical appearance lies an award-winning sustainable community.

In the 2010 International Awards for Livable Communities competition, Chrudim was awarded three times: gold in its population category, bronze for a millrun revitalization project, and the Healthy Lifestyle Award. LivCom Awards, as they are nicknamed, is a competition focusing on outstanding international practices in the management of the local environment. LivCom’s objective is to develop and share these practices in order to improve citizens’ quality of life through the creation of ‘livable communities.’

“The motto we would like to follow is, act locally, think globally, or in other words, keep the future in mind,” says Šárka Trunečková, Chrudim’s coordinator for Healthy Town and Local Agenda 21. “The aim of the Healthy City of Chrudim is to increase the quality of life and promote health, while respecting the principles of sustainable development.”

* Jacy Meyer is a Prague-based freelance journalist specializing in culture and architecture.
Sustainable living isn’t a passing trend for Chrudim – the city joined the Healthy Cities Project (a program of the World Health Organization) in 2001. The Healthy Cities Project focuses on the principles of sustainable development and active public participation in discussions about current city plans, as well as future local and regional development. But that’s not all. Chrudim is participating in a slew of other internationally recognized programs like Local Agenda 21, Health for All in the 21st century (Health 21), EMAS (the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, a management tool for companies and other organizations to evaluate, report and improve their environmental performance), and Healthy Schools and Safe Communities.

“Chrudim is also involved in the global campaign for sustainable development,” says Trunečková. “Since 2009 we’ve complied with the Aalborg Commitments which are an international group of municipalities trying to put the principles of sustainable development into practice.”
Programs for Sustainable Development

Sustainable development isn’t just about recycling plastic bottles, minimizing driving and having a city council that supports parks. The Aalborg Commitments focus on ten development areas, ranging from public administration to responsible consumption, lifestyle choices and equality and social justice. Under Chrudim’s Healthy City plan, there are school programs that teach children how to brush their teeth properly and follow a healthy diet. Every year, the city holds a public debate on the “Top Ten Issues of Chrudim.” Additionally, there is a volunteer program which facilitates citizen help in hospitals and on landscaping projects.

One particularly successful project Chrudim recently completed was the regeneration of a “leisure point” called Pod Zbrojnicí. Set in the midst of an area of apartment blocks, the goal was to construct a relaxing place to promote intergenerational living. There’s a play area for children and a quiet spot for their parents, the elderly and disabled citizens. The project won the LivCom 2009 Bursary Award and the organization presented a 10,000 GBP check to Chrudim when it was completed in October 2010.

“The project itself was not mere ‘construction,’” Trunečková says. “We wanted to emphasize the genius loci and idea of generations meeting.”

It’s projects like these that architect Jan Šépka, owner of Šépka architekti and a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture at Czech Technical University, can relate to. His work with architecture students is focused on urban development.

“With students, it is possible to deal with visions or projects that should be dealt with in the Czech Republic, however, for some reason, unfortunately, are not addressed,” says Šépka. He does, however, foresee changes on the horizon at a more tangible level.
“In the Czech Republic, it is more a matter of details and particulars before any major design work can be done on environmental sustainability despite the fact that under the new Building Act, sustainable development should be an integral part of planning,” he says. “At least a little has changed in the approach to landscaping, for example, a standard part of the planning is for ecological stability, like landscape corridors that connect natural habitats.”

British author Philip Monaghan has recently written *Sustainability in Austerity*, a book which addresses how to develop cities sustainably in a cost neutral way. He believes it comes down to education.

“Education about the desirability of change is the biggest barrier, both amongst city leaders and the general public,” he said. “We need to make sure everyone is properly informed about the many ways we can make our communities more sustainable that is beneficial for all, for example, less burden on local taxes, a better local environment, etc.”

**Different Programs Around the Region**

Šépka says that many architects, developers and planners, take their cues from Germany, where the subject of sustainable development is already established and more widely known. For example, city planners in Munich discovered industrial areas in the city area can be transformed into vibrant neighborhoods. Theresienhöhe used to be the city’s trade fair site. As these activities moved elsewhere, the city seized the opportunity to revitalize the area in a sustainable way. They turned some of the old buildings into museums and focused on combining business and residential space to create a lively atmosphere. The residents were also highly involved in the process, which led to greater acceptance of the planned projects. In researching his book, Mr. Monaghan found some interesting examples in sustainability from Central and Eastern Europe.
“A key insight is that there are many examples of good practice in Central and Eastern Europe from which the rest of the world can learn, as opposed to Central and Eastern Europe importing lessons from the rest of the world” he says.

Two projects Monaghan discovered in his research are a “festival of recycling” in Krakow, Poland and “walking weekends” in Craiova, Romania. “These are both innovative ways to bring communities together to minimize pollution from waste and road transport respectively,” he says. Chrudim believes that involving its residents in these kinds of projects is ideal.

“We want to have active citizen involvement in the city’s development activities to create a sense of belonging to the place where they live, work and spend their leisure time,” echoes Trunečková.

**Concerns and Suggestions**

The global economic crisis and continuous budget cuts put town halls in a tough position. When police and school budgets must be cut – how can they justify solar panels and a new park? Trunečková says this is not a factor for Chrudim.

“Money is not our first concern,” she says. “Our plans are long-term and we have as our main goal to set the direction for the introduction of environmentally friendly behavior and thinking. This will lead to savings of both renewable and nonrenewable resources.” She adds that the city has received grants in various forms for its work associated with Local Agenda 21, as well as for investment projects.

The current economic situation is why Monaghan wrote his book.

“I was inspired to write the book as a response to the global financial crisis and the expectation that local councils would have to manage with much reduced budgets at the very same time as environmental problems like climate change were at their most problematic,” he says.
Trunečková says city councils that are looking to go this route need to commit.

“Very important is political support throughout the process and the promotion of innovative ideas; for these innovations you must find someone who is willing to devote extra time,” she says. “You also need plenty of patience, since the results don’t appear for some time.”

Monaghan has some suggestions as well.

“City planners need to factor in environmental criteria to how they design and redevelop communities, for example ensuring new buildings are water or energy efficient. Concerned citizens can do their bit too by ensuring they monitor and manage the way they consume energy and water in their home or travel by car for work and leisure, for example spending less time in the shower or walking to work.”

**What the Future May Hold**

Trunečková says Chrudim is committed to daily operational activities that will alleviate pressure on the environment and human health. She cites their Integrated Development Plan as one ongoing initiative.

“The focus is based on a strategic development of documents and tools for the coordination and implementation of selected activities leading to sustainable urban development,” she explains. “This plan contains a set of time related projects that are implemented in a selected area of the city and aim to achieve the common vision and goals of the city.” The plan is notable in that it is drawn from the town’s strategic and development plans. Chrudim uses it as a tool to coordinate and implement a variety of projects, ranging from their municipal plan to the town plan to the health and quality of life plan. The hope is that by putting together a broad overview the town will be able to better capitalize and mobilize public and private resources. To properly manage costs and oversight, a database is used to reflect who
is responsible for what and how it links back into the municipal budget.

Chrudim took the initiative many years ago to focus on a sustainable quality of life for its residents. They’ve proven that big changes can happen if the political will and involvement of the residents is there – and councils are willing to stick it out for the long haul. Chrudim isn’t the only city out there quietly doing what it thinks is right for a greener and more sustainable future. The changes they and other forward thinking cities have made though are often at the policy level – and not particularly newsworthy. Raising the collective conscience of citizens everywhere to the possibilities of a greener future is greatly needed.

For his part, Monaghan sees two options for communities of the future.

“If the human race is clever, nations will have already begun to decarbonize national economies, by switching to super-insulated buildings, renewable forms of heating and power, using electric vehicles and consuming locally produced food. Smart grids will be the norm here, whereby super computers ensure we are as efficient as possible with the use of limited resources, at home or at work. Further to this, more and more people will be asked to live in our 'mega cities,' in recognition of the eco-efficiency benefits,” he says. “If the human race is stupid, then the sustainable city landscape will be in ruins as over population/consumption will already be out of control and climate change will be irreversible.”
The Shale Gas Factor (and what it means for global politics)

Dobromir Kazmierczak*

New technologies, which enable cost-effective shale gas extraction, have initiated a global energy revolution. A large number of shale gas deposits located in regions outside global energy politics are making dominant gas producing countries, like Russia, face new competition. Could utilizing shale gas lead to new a foreign policy, one where energy is not a main bargaining chip?

In the Beginning

The existence of and possibilities for utilizing shale gas have been known for quite a long time. It was mined in the United States in the first half of the 19th century and used to power street lamps and other domestic needs at the time. In the mid 1800s, however, shale gas was trumped by conventional gas, as its resources were far easier to extract.

The potential of shale gas extraction was raised again at the beginning of the 1980s, but at that time conventional gas giants were not interested in a new energy source, mainly because of the large production costs. Thanks to this attitude, new firms, such as Chesapeake Energy, East Resources, XTO Energy and EOG were able to

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easily take on this niche, creating businesses to rival those in the existing energy industry.

One of the first entrepreneurs of the shale gas industry was George Mitchell. He and a group of his engineers developed the technology for shale exploitation in the Barnett Field in North Texas. Pioneer drillings began in 1981, but the results were largely unknown until the early 1990s. Mitchell, who is called the father of shale gas, sold his Mitchell Energy & Development for $3.5 billion USD in 2002 to Devon, a company from Oklahoma City. Today, Devon Energy Corporation is one of the biggest players in the US shale gas industry.

An increase in conventional gas prices in recent years and the development of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal completions have made shale gas more competitive. While in 2000, shale gas accounted for 1 percent of the gas supply in the United States, today it accounts for 20 percent; it is anticipated that by 2035 this number will increase to 50 percent.

Infographic by the US Energy Information Administration. This image is in the public domain.
Conventional vs. Unconventional

Gas is classified as a conventional or unconventional resource depending on the extraction and production technique used (conventional gas is much easier to extract than the gas described as unconventional). Conventional gas reservoirs are typically underground formations composed of sandstone, created over millions of years from decaying organic matter. This becomes oil, or if evaporated, into gas which we call conventional. This gas is quite easy to extract, as its reservoir is simply opened and exploited by drilling vertical wells.

The genesis of gas described as unconventional (coal bed methane, tight sand gas and shale gas) is much more difficult to extract. For example, the sedimentary rocks (shale) containing shale gas have very low permeability and only recently technologies of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling were introduced which make the extraction process comparatively easier and more profitable.

US Leader

More than 60 billion cubic meters of gas were recovered from shale rock in the United States last year (that is 10 percent of the natural gas reserve extracted in the US during this period). This achievement allowed America to surpass Russia in natural gas production, becoming a world leader for the year.

According to estimates by the US Energy Information Agency (EIA), shale gas production will account for 62 percent of all natural gas extraction in the U.S. in the next 20 years. It is expected that gas consumption in the United States power sector will double by 2035.

An important feature of natural gas is its low carbon content (there is more than twice as much carbon in coal as in natural gas). Therefore, its use can also be an
important factor in accelerating the transition towards a low carbon economy.

Shale Gas in Poland

The rising importance of shale gas production has led Americans to invest in this new resource. This holds true in Poland as well, where up to 12 percent of the country’s territory may hold shale gas deposits, potentially representing the largest area of shale gas mining in Europe.

In its 5 April 2010 issue, the British daily The Times reported estimates of shale gas deposits from experts at the company Wood Mackenzie. According to their figures, Poland may have up to 1.36 trillion cubic meters of shale gas, with a market value of $240 billion dollars.

This gas volume could make Poland independent of Russian gas supplies for the next century. If the resources in Poland are confirmed, this would mean an increase in natural gas resources in Europe by 47 percent, the daily concluded.

These estimates require drilling for confirmation. Andrzej Maksym, from the search office of Polish Oil and Gas (PGNiG), believes the industrial launch of shale gas production will only be possible in about 20 years. And that is assuming that foreign companies do not give up on the investment.

What about Russia?

American achievements in shale gas extraction caused the price of natural gas to drop. On the first Monday of 2011, the New York Stock Exchange reported the cost of 1000 cubic meters of gas to be $164. This price was more than two times lower than what the average European customer pays to Gazprom, the largest extractor of
natural gas in the world — controlled by the Russian government. The average price for Gazprom’s gas in the EU was $318 in the third quarter of 2010. Twenty-five percent of the EU’s gas import in 2010 came from Gazprom.

These high prices have caused Gazprom to lose EU customers for the second consecutive year. In 2010 Gazprom sent only 138 billion cubic meters of gas to the EU, about 2 billion cubic meters less than in 2009 during the height of the economic crisis. Meanwhile, gas sales in Europe increased last year by nearly 8 percent and returned to the pre-crisis levels.

These statistics show that competitors have begun to displace Gazprom from the EU market.

In a report to its top officials issued at the end of January last year, the Board of Gazprom warned that increased production from unconventional gas deposits in the U.S. could radically change the global gas market and endanger its plans. The heads of the company have downplayed these warnings.

Russia started to take the matter more seriously when the first American shipment of LNG (Liquid Natural Gas) arrived to the United Kingdom mid-December 2010. As the Russian daily Vedomosti noted, it was directly after this occurrence that President Dmitry Medvedev decided to introduce shale gas into the Russian energy security doctrine.
If Russia, which has the largest gas reserves in the world and is one of the largest resources of coal and oil, creates an energy security doctrine, it means that it expects trouble from competition. Competition could be a serious problem for Russia, given that the Kremlin uses gas as an instrument in its foreign policy – as noted by Gazeta Wyborcza, Poland’s second-largest daily newspaper.

Analysts say that between 2010-2012 Europe will reduce its purchase from Gazprom by 15 billion cubic meters. Gazprom’s situation is now more difficult since it also failed to sign contacts with key customers in Asia (including China) in 2010.

**Polish-Russian relations**

According to Viktor Suvorov, a former agent of Soviet GRU military intelligence and the author of several books about the history of the USSR, Russian authorities are afraid that shale gas extraction and production in Poland will be successful and Poland will become a major exporter of this fuel.

“Polish threat of competition is the main cause of last year’s warming relations between Moscow and Warsaw. If your country has conquered a significant part of the gas supply to Europe, Russia would have to change its policy and would have to be very friendly,” he told the Polish newspaper Nasz Dziennik. Warming relations will probably be continued in 2011. For example, in the beginning of February, Russian Ambassador to Poland, Alexander Alexeyev, told the Interfax news agency that the Kremlin was considering the repatriatation of the Polish officers killed by Stalin’s security service. If the Suvorov’s conclusions are correct, shale gas could prove a boon for Poland’s economy and general Polish foreign policy.
The Global Dimension

It is estimated that substantial shale gas resources are found not only in Central and Eastern Europe but also in South and Eastern Asia. Of particular importance is the potential for shale gas production in China and India because of their rapidly growing energy demand and the scale of their coal consumption in power generation.

Unconventional gas is one of the most diversely distributed energy resources. Its sources lie beyond the geo-political divisions. This can consequently lead to a more free gas market.

Shale gas could have special meaning for Poland. If the resources in Poland are confirmed, this could lead to a higher Polish GDP and, even more importantly, greater energy independence.

Twenty years after collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia is still seen in Eastern Europe as a superpower seeking to recover its former sphere of influence. As the main gas supplier to Poland (about two thirds of gas consumed in Poland in 2010 came from Russia), Gazprom, controlled by the Russian government, raises suspicion about its political background and the motivations of the company’s decisions (for example, although very expensive in realization, its decision to bypass Poland in the construction of the North Stream pipeline connecting Russia and Germany – just beyond the Polish border).

Shale gas is thought to be present in Ukraine and Hungary as well. If the prognosis proves true, Europe (especially Central Europe) will have a chance not only to better its energy security, but also to elevate its foreign policy position with Russia.
Bringing on the BRICs

Melissa Rossi*

In 2001, Jim O’Neill, Chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, published a thesis that argued in favor of the growing influence of emerging markets in Brazil, Russia, India and China – these being most commonly known for their acronym: the BRICs. According to projections, the BRIC nations are in a ruthless race to occupy the positions of the four largest global economies by 2050.

Under a heavy rainfall newly elected center-left Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, of Bulgarian descent, waved to her supporters as she was driven through emotional crowds before her presidential induction. As the cloudy sky opened, in what many Brazilians called a good luck omen, the event organizers managed to have Ms. Rousseff complete the parade in the traditional manner, standing up in the back seat of the presidential Rolls-Royce as millions of Brazilians watched from their homes the first woman to rise to the country’s highest democratic rank. For those who were present during that memorable day, awe and contentment permeated the crowds as Rousseff, escorted by several female bodyguards, drove through the streets of Brazil’s modern capital, Brasilia. Leaders from around the world, including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, paid their respects in person, sending clear messages of Brazil’s central role in Latin America. President Rousseff’s first speech after being sworn in helped to put into

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words what this important day seemed to convey: although there are many difficulties still to be overcome, Brazil is finally on its way to being included in the ranks of developed nations in the world, a country which is turning into a fierce economic competitor in the Unites States’ backyard.

For those who are a little more in tune with global developments, this might not come as a total surprise. In 2001, Jim O’Neill, Chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, published a thesis that argued in favor of the growing influence of emerging markets in Brazil, Russia, India and China – these being most commonly known for their acronym: the BRICs. According to projections, the BRIC nations are in a ruthless race to occupy the positions of the four largest global economies by 2050. O’Neill observed patterns in GDP growth, per capita and direct investments, which suggested that these four economic powerhouses are rising to the forefront of worldwide economic growth and overriding old notions of strictly Northern economic hegemony. O’Neill’s thesis not only changed the way in which the world
perceived the level of development of such nations (i.e. moving from the notion of Third World to emerging economies) but also fueled the BRIC leaders to organize yearly meetings from 2009 onwards, carving out common strategies related to a multipolar world order.

In Brazil’s case, it is no coincidence that President Rousseff, elected democratically in one of the nations most followed presidential races, was elected with such strong consensus. The Latin American giant enjoys for the very first time in its history positive growth in the midst of a worldwide economic crisis. Direct foreign investments continue to flow into Brazil and large economic partners such as China remain loyal commodity buyers. Most importantly, the country seems to have finally put into place social policies that aim at rising from poverty millions of families previously abandoned by the state, giving them a renewed sense of dignity and generating millions of new consumers. These socio-economic changes have become a strong trend in these emerging nations.

Indeed, Goldman Sachs’ projections show that some of the economic indicators of the BRICs present potential for incredible growth in the immediate future. By 2025, it is estimated that the rising middle class in these nations will account for an extra 200 million people in the world, with a per capita income of $15000, a number that will inflate global consumption and boost a struggling world economy.

Take China for instance. According to 2010 projections, China’s economy is destined to surpass that of the United States by 2027 in terms of GDP growth. In this decade alone, China’s middle class, with earnings in between $6000 and $30000, is expected to increase by millions. As stated by Dominic Wilson, Alex L. Kelston and Swarnali Ahmed in *Is this the BRICs Decade*, China and India “will have a much greater impact on global demand than any other countries could.” The same article points to the fact that by 2018 the BRIC nations as an aggregate will surpass the US and “in terms of size, Brazil’s economy will be larger than Italy’s by
2020; India and Russia will individually be larger than Spain, Canada and Italy.”
This data predicts the contingent rise of a different world order than that predicted in Francis Fukuyama’s famous essay *The End of History?* Fukuyama stated that the American model would eventually be acclaimed as the final ideological framework of liberal democracy after the end of the Cold War. Not only was this theory off the mark, but it also expressed the dangers of relying on the notion of American exceptionalism, a view that has been deeply criticized for its narrow view of global dynamics.

Besides the rise of the BRICs, it is important to note that in January 2011, Jim O’Neill declared in an interview with the *Financial Times* that the term “BRIC” might need to be updated, as countries like Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey and South Korea are presently on the same path to becoming economies with a significant say in world affairs. This new group of nations has been clustered by O’Neill into the *growth markets* category. A shift in the balance of political and social influence worldwide is an undeniable outcome of economic growth. But what exactly will a shift in the current geopolitics mean? Is it really fair to speak of a new multilateral world order at this point considering that many of these nations still struggle with social inequalities?

According to Parag Khanna, senior research fellow at the New American Foundation and Director of its Global Governance Initiative, the world has already begun to encounter this new geopolitical shift, as countries like China extend their global influence to regions such as Latin America and Africa, which have historically been under European or American spheres of influence. In his *The Rise of Second World: Empires and Influence in the New World Order*, Khanna argues that countries known as part of the Third World no longer fall into such categorization, but rather share characteristics of both developed and developing nations. The term Second World, in Khanna’s work, is not applied to post-
communist nations once isolated behind the Iron Curtain, but instead encompasses the new emerging world, thus losing its connotation of Cold War rhetoric. In other words, the meaning for “second world” shifts from an ideological classification to that of a strictly economic one. Not surprisingly, the list includes, although it is not limited to, countries such as Brazil, India, and Russia China, is classified by Khanna as one of the world’s three major superpowers, along with the United States and the EU.

The rise of the Second World and the consolidation of China as a major world player have evident implications in geopolitical and social terms. On the geopolitical front, Second World nations are much more prone to “pick and choose” where business is more advantageous, because they are no longer pressured by colonial, imperialist or ideological spheres of influence. According to Khanna, countries from the Second World also show a tendency to form regional blocks in order to strengthen their identities and protect their common interests, an example being the realization of larger international unions in South America and Asia. Another important characteristic outlined by Khanna, coined by him as the “anti-imperial belt”, is the purposeful increase in diplomatic, economic and political relations amongst these Second World nations without the influence of global superpowers.

On the social front, these nations no longer linger far behind the developed world. As the middle classes grow in societies previously known for great social inequalities, the overall consumption of value added goods (e.g. cars, technology) continues to rise, increasing imports and shifting international commercial flows. Internally, the level of education and salaries rise and the social effects of globalization permeate households that, only a few years ago, might have been struggling to have enough food for the month. As education standards rise, so does the interest for foreign companies to invest in these younger economies, where labor is cheaper and qualified. This leads to outsourcing practices from developed nations
to emerging markets, and is a further sign of the changing tides. Not only do people become better consumers, but also more appealing employees.

Several of these changes can already be observed in the BRICs as their economies consistently attract foreign investments. American and European companies have begun investing heavily on these emerging markets in order to guarantee profits and maintain their standings in the competitive global game. An example of such shift can be seen in car companies such as the Italian Fiat, whose largest market currently lies in Brazil. With a population of 190 million and a growing middle class (Brazil was the only nation in the world last year that actually decreased its inequalities) Brazil has become Fiat’s largest market and a cheaper option for industrial investment. On the other side of the globe, China has also announced a multibillion dollar deal with General Electric, the US’ largest industrial group. The deal, which was reinforced after Chinese President Hu Jintao’s formal visit to Washington this January, includes investments in innovation centers and the development of energy, rail and aviation industries in the Asian giant.

It is important not to forget that the US and Europe still have vibrant economies that, despite the ongoing economic crisis, along with increasing unemployment and decreasing consumption, are not expected to decline immensely in the future. Indeed, although the BRIC economies may eventually surpass the developed world in terms of GDP growth, the expected purchasing power of their populations will not easily reach those of developed nations- not even by 2050. An important lesson to draw from these global changes, however, is that the global economy will become more competitive and never remain static. To this extent, the US and Europe need to brace for such change if they want to remain on top of the global economic game.
Further Reading:


Lula’s Legacy: Governance in Brazil and its implications for the future of Latin America

Rachel Danna*

There is no denying that Brazil has had a good few years. Named the “twenty-first century power to watch”\(^1\) in 2009, Brazil rose from the ashes of the global economic downtown relatively unscathed. Recently, Brazil received the largest initial public offering of the year when Spanish bank Banco Santander raised $8 billion dollars by selling shares of its Brazilian subsidiary. And, it was just two years ago that the country was given the honor of being the first South American country to host the Olympic games.

Former Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, known affectionately around the world simply as Lula, deserves much credit for making these things happen. With his star-like status balanced by responsible policies, many are wondering if Lula’s tenure represented a potential change in Latin America’s political climate – the calm waters of true social democracy, greatly contrasting the “supremos and populist demagogues who abound in Latin America.”\(^2\)

Still, as we consider what steps have brought the country to this point, examine what changes have been realized, and what Lula can and does represent, Brazil’s modern reality will become clear: raving and recent reviews, while deserved, should not overlook the obstacles Brazil still faces.

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1 “Latin America’s new alliances: Whose side is Brazil on?” *The Economist.* 13 August 2009.; Skapinker, M.
Lula often receives much of the credit for the Brazilian economy’s current state. As asserted in the *Economist* magazine, “Brazil has been democratic before, it has had economic growth before and it has had low inflation before. But it has never before sustained all three at the same time.” Under Lula’s administration, these conditions materialized.

Lula was able to sustain fiscal stability while also implementing new social policies. When oil was discovered off the coast of the country in 2007 Lula was reported saying, “God is Brazilian.” The economic position of the country has hoisted it onto the global stage. Brazil, now a member of the G-20, is a force to consider. Lula used this new esteem and economic clout as a springboard to create social policies at home. Perhaps this can explain his high approval ratings – reaching 80 percent even in his last months of presidency. Likewise, world leaders ranging from U.S. president Barack Obama to Cuba’s Fidel Castro have endorsed and embraced the politician. However, Lula did not let this go to his head: “Popularity is like blood pressure,” he said in an interview with *Newsweek* magazine. “Sometimes it’s high and sometimes it’s low. What you need is to keep it under control.”

This sentiment sets him apart from other leaders in Latin America, taking on populist policies have used their influence to amend state constitutions and extend their terms. The most well known example of this is Venezuela’s president Hugo Chavez who called for a referendum which has enabled him to govern the country indefinitely. Not taking this typical route is one more mark to Lula’s strong belief in democracy and fair play.

Personifying tenets of social democracy in many ways, while embracing capitalist strategies for his country, Lula represents a different path in Latin American

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4 Margolis, M.
governance (The only comparable leader perhaps being Chile’s Michelle Bachelet who was succeeded by Sebastian Pinera in March 2010).

New Policies

When Lula came to power, many feared that his leftist ideologies would endanger the progress Brazil had made under the previous administration. Lula responded to this with a “‘Letter to the Brazilian People,’ pledging to honor contracts, pay down the country’s debts, abide by the International Monetary Fund’s requirements, and generally play by the rules of the market.” Lula was true to his word and continued sound fiscal policies: “He may be the head of Brazil’s Workers Party, but he’s proven himself to be as much a capitalist as a socialist in his drive to modernize the world’s tenth largest economy.”

In his first term, Lula increased the primary budget surplus (the amount of funds put aside to pay debts), upped lending rates to 26 percent a year in order to discourage inflation, and kept pensions and government wages under control. Lula selected Henrique Meirelles, former boss of BankBoston and known for his “monetary rigour,” to head the Central Bank. This allowed the banking system to remain well regulated, building overall confidence in the financial system and facilitating the growth of foreign direct investment (FDI). Today, despite its overall decline worldwide, FDI continues to flourish in Brazil. In 2007 Lula unveiled the Growth Acceleration Program, which aimed to make Brazil more business-friendly through tax breaks and designated government spending to improve the country’s infrastructure.

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5 Margolis, M.
6 Padgett, T.
Along with these pragmatic policies, Lula focused on social reforms, which he reportedly linked directly to the country’s economic growth. This was the first time a president had made any substantial changes in social policy. As of March 2009, the government had paid more than $20 billion dollars in aid to families in need through the Bolsa Familia program. Families receive funds when they send their children to school and ensure that the children are vaccinated. Lula called this program a “social stimulus.” He also revitalized and enhanced Fome Zero, an anti-hunger campaign which guaranteed a minimum amount of money for the poorest families, and supported a wide variety of programs ranging from encouraging family agriculture to providing access to micro credit. One cannot argue that great progress has been made: “His ambitious social policies have helped to lift 13m Brazilians out of poverty; searing inequalities of income are narrowing steadily.”

This, along with the growth of Brazil’s middle class, has contributed to Brazil’s quick recovery from the global economic crisis through sustained domestic demand. As reported in *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Its domestic market has remained strong throughout the crisis, in large part because government aid programs and rises in minimum wage mean more people have more money to spend.”

Another key factor in Brazil’s quick emergence from the recession can be found in its variety of trading partners. Since it is not dependent on the demand of one nation, namely the United States, demand for Brazilian products did not fall as drastically as it did for other countries. Compared to Mexico where more than 80 percent of exports go to the US market, only 15 percent of Brazil’s total exports go to North America. The rest is dispersed throughout other developing countries, Asia, and the EU. In fact, Brazil has made a point of focusing on south-south relations and cooperation between developing countries. This can be seen in its devotion to

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7 Padgett, T.
9 Miller Llana, S. and A. Downie.
Mercosul, the South American trading bloc, as well as its blossoming relationships with China and Africa.

In 2003 when Goldman Sachs economists named Brazil as an emerging economy that would come to dominate the world, many doubted the Southern behemoth’s abilities. Today, that possibility seems very real. Still, despite its incredible feats, Brazil still has a number of Achilles’ heels.

**Barriers**

This can be seen in the corruption that is still endemic in Brazil’s government. In 2005, the scandal known as “Mensalao” or the “big monthly payoff” threatened to bring down Lula’s administration. Resulting in the resignation of many of Lula’s top advisors, including his former chief of staff, reports surfaced that PT party members bribed opposition congressional deputies to vote in favor of PT legislation. While Lula was never directly tied to the scandal, this demonstrated the fragility of the administration. The scandal greatly tarnished the Worker’s Party’s reputation. Reviewing the country’s history, it is clear that great strides towards democracy have been made. But, with corruption charges emerging so closely to the president, one must question the integrity of the institutions and whether the public can have confidence in the government’s abilities.

Another cause for concern is the country’s economy. While Brazil’s current performance seems to be promising, many problems still remain. Interest rates in the country are some of the highest in the world. Likewise, productivity growth is slow moving, which reveals the country’s dependence on commodity exports. These exports are important in their own right in terms of GDP growth, but they do not “buoy all people or sectors.”

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the country. In recent years the Gini index, which measures the dispersion of wealth, has shown improvement, but poverty is still a barrier to the country’s potential. Government spending and public debt are still high and growing “faster than the economy as a whole.”¹¹ Schooling and infrastructure are other issues that need to be improved.

Crime is widespread and in some areas rampant. Just two weeks after winning the Olympic bid, Rio de Janeiro witnessed an upsurge of violence with alleged drug traffickers shooting down a police helicopter. Three policemen were killed. This event brought attention to other conflicts between police and drug dealers the same weekend, collectively resulting in the deaths of 26 people, including several bystanders. This is just one example of the drug-based violence that is pervasive in the city, especially around the favelas, or city slums. This ushers concerns about the host of the world’s two largest sporting events (the World Cup will be held in Rio in 2014). It also illustrates the divergence of two separate worlds that might be emerging – one of growing wealth and modernity and another of poverty and stagnation (according to a 2004 United Nations report, the richest 10 percent in the country receive 46.7 percent of earnings, while the poorest 10 percent people get only 0.5 percent; Of the 113 million people living in urban Brazil, 75 million are without proper sewage treatment¹²). Lula’s policies are a start, but much more needs to be done.

There is also the question of what will happen now that Lula has left office. His reputation, locally and abroad, granted him certain privileges: “Lula’s popularity helped him make risky decisions that often required sacrifices,” says José Dirceu, a former Workers’ Party commander who fell to a corruption scandal.¹³ New Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff has big shoes to fill. Under Lula’s leadership Brazil

¹² “Brazil Case Study: Analysis of National Strategies for Sustainable Development.”
¹³ Margolis, M.
gained international status. Despite its shortcomings, by 2050 it is easy to say that Brazil could emerge as a major global player.

However, if this is to happen, Rousseff must risk making bold changes within the country and projecting strong views and attitudes abroad if she hopes to impact the current regional and international political and economic paradigm.

There is the hope that the legacy of Lula’s governance, with its balance of economic prosperity and social responsibility, will continue and even be improved upon. And maybe even inspire other developing countries in the region as well.
Latin America in 2050

Pavla Holcová *

Predicting the development of a continent as diverse as Latin America is a complex issue. With a bit of generalization, wild fantasy and raw courage, I will explore the issues that could shape Latin America in the year 2050. Economic growth, political power and Christianization will be the main areas assessed.

Economic Growth and Latin America’s increasing Political Influence

While today Latin America lives in the shadow of its more powerful neighbor, the United States, in the next decades the region will step into the limelight. Upcoming superpowers such as China, India and Russia will slowly diverge from their current investment tracks and search for new opportunities. Latin American will take advantage of these geopolitical changes.

China has already started to establish itself as a key player in the region. This can be seen in its oilrigs now located in the Caribbean and its trade relationship (technology exports) with Venezuela. Likewise, Russian investments are growing and favorable relationships between Russia and leaders in Latin America are well established (as seen through bilateral agreements between Russia and some Latin America countries and developing military and energy relationships between the Kremlin and leaders such as Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez and Bolivia’s Evo Morales). India still remains absent from Latin America, but has made its intentions known.

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With new financial incentives from developing nations, resulting in higher foreign direct investment, Latin America will realize its full potential.

The possible expansion of the labor force can also improve the region’s economic strength. How changes in the population pyramid of the workforce will manifest itself, we cannot predict nor can we anticipate the sociological impact a growing workforce may have, but it is possible that the higher number of working people in Latin America will result in a higher economic turnover and therefore stimulate the economy.

Even if we assume that the number of people living below minimum wage will decrease in Latin America, monumental social differences will not be wiped out by economic growth alone. There is always the possibility that growing national economies and social differences will deepen populist political preferences. Often the result is fast albeit short-term solutions. This may win the elections, but it may also have a devastating effect on economic development in the region.

**Brazil and Mexico**

Within the next two generations Brazil, an aspiring superpower will embrace this role and all that goes with it: political influence, economic competence, national self-confidence and higher defense spending. Brazil did not arrive at this position of power only because of its great natural resources supplies, but also because of the clever policies of former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. He had an extraordinary instinct in forecasting trends. This is why Brazil became one of the world’s leading producers of bio-fuels and alternative energy sources. His genius attracted investors and kick-started the Brazilian economy, which is predicted to grow by 4.1 percent annually until 2050.
Mexico is expecting a similar annual GDP growth and is slated to overtake stable economies such as Germany, Great Britain and France. As cited in the *Economist* magazine, “Governments, households and companies [in Mexico]…are less indebted than those in many developed countries.” Additionally, as of 2009, most countries in Latin America have per capita GDPs greater than that of China. In 2010 five countries in Latin America were classified as high-income countries. These facts show the great potential of Latin America in coming years.

This continued growth will coincide with the loss of power and influence by the traditional G20 countries. What impact this will have on global politics is very hard to predict, nevertheless it is almost certain that it will have a dramatic effect on all countries of the world.

Forty years from now, the advantages of the Euro will be weakened by the creation of similar currency models in Latin America. The region perceives the Euro as a stabilizing and sustainable financial model, increasingly so with the popularity of online shopping and international travel. For regional markets this model brings price harmonization and increased competitiveness. According to various financial analyses, Canada, the US and Mexico will adopt a unified currency and form one monetary region, while Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile will form another. At a lecture at the London School of Economics, da Silva claimed that the concept of a common currency for Mercosur (the Southern Common Market) already exists; it is only necessary to finalize it, fine-tune it and launch it.

**Latin America – A New Catholic Center**

Christianity is a strong social factor that must be acknowledged when predicting the development of Latin America. It is expected that by 2050 one half of all the world’s
Catholics will be of Latin American origin. Already today it is possible to see how the Catholic tradition has shaped the region’s politics and culture.

The large Catholic presence (according to the CIA Factbook, 71 percent of the population in Latin America considers themselves Catholic) will continue to grow and will facilitate conservative policies. This growing faith will affect all spheres of public life including politics, education and social issues. While the 19th and 20th centuries brought secularization to Latin American societies, the mid 21st century will see politics and the Church closely align. Politicians will attend Sunday masses, loudly declare their affiliation with the Catholic Church and ostentatiously contribute large sums of money to churches to gain voter support. Within the next few decades the concentration of Catholics in Latin America will be five times higher than anywhere else in the world, and people across the social spectrum will be followers of the faith. This will be reflected in culture, which will adopt the individual symbols of the Catholicism and transform them to create a new kind of Catholic pop art. This art will become a popular export item.

Of course, any prognosis about the future of Latin America can look completely foolish in a few years time, given its complexities. The region has been a melting pot of civilizations and social experiments for hundreds of years. Historical experience shows that Latin America is just as varied, diverse and unpredictable as any other region in the world, despite the common perception of South America as one monolith, where political and economic trends influence the course of events far beyond individual borders.
A Spark of Hope or a Sheaf of Worries? Africa in 2050

Vilém Řehák *

What will become of Africa in the coming decades? Pessimists, whether they are policymakers, academics, politicians, Africans or Europeans, predict dark times ahead. Optimists, however, envisage a bright tomorrow and future prosperity. Will the African Union succeed like the European Union? Will the continent increase economic growth, eradicate poverty and secure peace? Or will widespread wars over power, natural resources, water and religion continue? Will Africa in 2050 be a continent of democracy or a paradise for dictators plundering its natural riches?

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A Dismal Vision

The pessimist sees it with clarity. The number of failed states will increase in Africa, beginning with the break-up of Sudan and the political immaturity of the South Sudanese elites. In the second decade of this century, the Sudanese area around the source of the Nile will experience what the rest of Africa already went through before 1990: an initial elation over their independence that will fizzle out with increasingly unsound economic management and authoritarian tendencies of the ruling Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement (SPLM). A new, armed movement will rise against the government. It will receive support from the surrounding states and the country will fall into another bloody civil war. The violence will spread through

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other Central African regions. Sudan will support an anti-government rebellion in Chad, which will in return intensify support of anti-government groups in Darfur. Darfur will disappear from the viewfinder of the international community and likely experience another genocide. The mutual support of anti-government rebels will affect relations between Sudan and Ethiopia, Uganda and the Congo. Long-standing disputes about water resources, especially the commercial utilization of the Nile, will result in a far-reaching armed conflict. East Congo will entirely abandon its central government and will break up into separate dominions ruled by various warlords. Similarly, the Central African Republic will experience endless armed uprisings and coups. A definitive collapse of the state will occur in Somalia. A weak central government will only control small portions of the country and eventually lose the last remnants of power to Muslim radicals from Al-Shabab. Kenya will suffer significantly due to the instability of its neighbors. It will spend vast sums of money to seal its border from Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia in order to retain continuous profits from tourism. And as a result, the promising East Africa Association project will fall apart.

Instability Across the Continent

Latent conflicts will also break out in other parts of Africa. Zimbabwe will fall apart after the death of Robert Mugabe. The country will be thrown into a bloody civil
war between Mugabe’s ZANU-PF and the opposition. The South African Republic’s (SAR) intervention will at first ease the situation, but later SAR will be forced to retreat due to its own internal tensions. Radical left-wing organizations and unions will achieve far-reaching land reform and business nationalization. The country’s economy will collapse together with its system of public services. As in many other African countries, the informal economy will generate more profits than the official economy. Zimbabwe will cease to be a leader of developing countries and all integration projects in the region will fail due to political and economic problems.

The situation will not be much better in the western part of the continent. Religious disputes will escalate in Nigeria and there will be repeated armed conflicts between Muslims and Christians. The army will fall apart and individual units will join the local armed rebels. The weak federative structure of government will not stand a chance and the country will break into a Muslim and a Christian state. This arrangement will not last and the oil-rich delta region and Yoruba region will separate as well. After the successful referendum in Sudan, the international community and the African states will abandon the hope of a unified Africa and fragmentation of the continent will continue in order to avoid further armed conflicts.

Cote d’Ivoire will see the Muslim north declare independence. The economic crisis will significantly weaken governments of poor nations of the Sahel Belt and terrorist organizations will set up bases and training grounds in the remote desert regions. Only small islands of democracy will be left on the continent: the island nations of Cape Verde and Mauritius, and the small isolated states of Liberia, Benin, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.
Economic Bankruptcy

Africa will not flourish in the economic sphere either. The effect of the global economic crisis will be felt by the developed world for many years to come, which will result in the end of the global trade liberalization process. Africa will experience a trade regression because the European Union and the USA will stop the duty-free trading regime with the poorest states of the world. The flow of foreign investment will slow and official development aid will also dry up. Africa will be economically and politically isolated and its influence on global politics and the economy will decrease to naught. Only China will remain active in Africa, but only in countries where it will be able to acquire cheap oil reserves and other natural resources. It will strive to keep local dictators in power in order to ensure continuous resource exports – for instance Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Southeast Nigeria and Zambia.

In other countries the official economy will essentially collapse and the entire economic activity will take place in the sphere of grey or even black economy. The majority of African currencies will face thousands to tens of thousands percent inflation. Economic growth in Africa will fall into negative numbers, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita will drastically decrease and the number of people living in poverty will double.

Further reason for economic decline will be climate change. Global warming will increase average temperatures, change rain cycles and decrease the quality of soil, which will in turn significantly reduce agricultural production on the continent. Subsequently, African deserts will grow; not just the Sahara, but also deserts in South Africa. The number of inhabitants will rise from the current one billion to two and a half billion, which will result in an acute shortage of basic food items. However, there will be no money to go towards the import of food. Petty crimes, fights for food and the killing of the local wild fauna will be commonplace. Natural diversity will be irreversibly destroyed. The bankruptcy of the health care system
will also have dramatic social consequences. Many diseases that have been practically eradicated in the last decades will return. The AIDS epidemic will explode, spreading across the continent due to migration waves during wars. The average lifespan for Africans will fall below 40 years and almost every African person will try at least once in their life to leave the continent. However, their attempts will be largely unsuccessful due to reinforced EU naval patrols around African coasts. Global governmental and non-governmental organizations will stop monitoring quality of life indicators. There will be no point.

Or the Continent of the Future?

Optimists will not agree with the grim picture above. The African community is already striving to abandon its long-term practice of recognizing current corrupt leaders as legitimate rulers, and soon communities will begin to uncompromisingly tackle unconstitutional power changes. The international community will also give more support to better the African continent in order to maintain peace. The first test will be the situation in Cote D’Ivoire, where focused diplomatic pressure and the threat of military intervention will resolve the current deadlock. Alassane Ouattara, the politically discriminated economist, will become the new president of the country. He will succeed in uniting the broken state and kick-start economic development.
The largest world cocoa producer will significantly increase coffee production and other export plant production. Due to higher agricultural product prices on the world market, Cote d’Ivoire will reap high profits and save in a newly established investment fund intended for infrastructure development and human resources.

Further finances will be acquired from the petrochemical industry. Significant economic development will bring extensive foreign investments, which will in turn further support the growth trajectory. The local stock market will become the second largest African stock market and the headquarters of the African Development Bank will return to Abidjan (it was moved to Tunisia due to war). The volume of trade will increase after signing a bilateral trade contract with the European Union and the country will become the leader of economic integration in West Africa. Neighboring countries such as Ghana, Benin and Liberia will benefit from this situation.

Liberia and neighboring Sierra Leone will begin a fast post-war recovery. Foreign investment, intraregional trade and the European Union’s intervention will help to renew the destroyed infrastructure and significantly increase the quality of life. Regional integration will have positive effects on other states. The discovery of new oil fields, foreign investment and economic growth will strengthen the power of the countries’ central governments and lead to political stability. Economic development and political stability will also pacify religious disagreements and disputes. Poor states from the Sahel Belt will benefit from stability in the region.

Flourishing Congo, Zimbabwe and a Stable East Africa

The second test will be the referendum for independence in South Sudan. Sooner or later South Sudan will become independent. African diplomacy and Western development aid will ensure that the new state will be economically self-sufficient and politically stable. A new pipeline to Mombasa will decrease dependence on the
current pipeline running across Arab Sudan, however, both states will still profit from the production of South Sudanese oil. Mutual economic relations will take the edge off the historical reminiscence and after fifty years of armed conflict, Sudan will finally experience long-lasting peace.

Domestic disturbances within the North and South Sudan will be more threatening than the possible conflict between the two states. The state in the North will be based on Islamic Sharia law. However, radical Islamism and continuing discrimination of the black population in Darfur will lead to the fall of the current government. Changes in political elites will also occur in neighboring Chad, Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea, which will lead to the stabilization of the whole region. While today local governments support anti-governmental rebels in neighboring countries, new governments will begin to cooperate and massive military operations will eradicate armed movements in the region. The indirect result of military cooperation will be a limited influence of militant Muslim militias in Somalia, allowing the current provisional government to function properly (Congo and Rwanda started to cooperate this way recently, immediately decreasing tensions in the region. For the first time in its history the Congo government has been able to achieve effective control of the entire country). With the aid of the West and the African Union, South Sudan will establish a new administration and limit corruption in the country. Despite the gloomy predictions it will prove its economic and political self-sufficiency.

The third test for Africa will be the unrest in Zimbabwe after the death of Robert Mugabe. The South African Republic will intervene immediately and lead the country to free elections and change in governmental elites. SAR itself will become one of the leaders of developing nations and will achieve a significant position in international political and economic organizations. It will also receive a permanent seat at the Security Council of the United Nations. South African politicians will
succeed in diminishing the criticism of left-wing unions and keep land reform under control. The number of landowners and the black middle class will increase, and the economic potential of the nation will be sustained.

**Liberalization of Global Trade**

External economic conditions will also be profitable for Africa. The world will quickly overcome the consequences of the economic crisis and, on the contrary, it will greatly increase its effort to liberalize global trade. New World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations will lead to complete market liberalization, whereby the less developed states will temporarily receive an asymmetric protection right for its developing industrial production. The cost of labor in Asia will increase significantly and Western companies trying to cut costs will move to politically stabilized and economically growing Africa. Large African cities will become the new ‘assembly shops’ of the world. New technologies will also help the development of local industries. In most African countries, agriculture will cease to be the major sector in the national economy and the formal sector will employ a much larger number of Africans. Gradually, the flow of development aid will stop and will be replaced by foreign investment, which will in turn significantly reduce corruption in African states. Regular free elections will become the norm, not an exception. Ethnic background will still play a large role within society; however, political parties and systems will be organized on an ideological basis. Dictators will gradually abandon the African political scene and Africa will extricate itself from isolation, becoming a key player on the global field.

The social sector will also experience extensive positive changes. The controversial land lease trend will become normalized and vast regions of high quality soil in Africa will be leased to Asian companies on a long-term basis. Investments in
mechanization, fertilizers and good quality crops will considerably increase food production. Some of the food will be exported to Asia. However, part of the production will remain in Africa. The predicted demographic explosion will slow down. Even though the number of inhabitants will rise, there will be more food per capita than today. Scientific cooperation will lead to successful projects to tackle increased desertification, protect rain forests and natural diversity and stifle the AIDS epidemic. Africa in 2050 will be dramatically different than it is today and will slowly reach the living standards of the Western world.

Conclusion

Indeed, both of these predictions are extreme. Most probably, neither of these visions will become reality, but we must ask, what will the future hold? Africa is a dynamic continent and it is very complicated to forecast. The future of Africa depends not only on its governments and citizens, but also on the developed world – the United States, the EU and China. In the 1920s through 1940s, few people believed that after World War II Africans would have the right to elect their representatives in colonial organizations, let alone the French parliament. Similarly, in 1945 not even the most fervent pan-Africanists believed that within twenty years the big colonial empires would fall like a house of cards. In the euphoric 1960s, no one considered state bankruptcies, bloody armed coups and repressive dictatorships which became the norm ten years later. In the mid-1980s, almost no one could have forecasted the massive democratization wave of the 1990s. And who twenty years ago imagined that Africa would successfully host the World Cup? We can assume that the reality will fall somewhere between the two above mentioned scenarios, and that the future will bring positive as well as negative changes.
Further Reading:


Possibilities for East Asia: A Quick Evaluation of What May Come in the Region in 2050

Yu-Chin Cheng *

Political Scientist Kenneth N. Waltz suggests that states accomplish political and military goals through economic means, and likewise use political and military means to further economic interests.

This analysis provides an overview for the direction of East Asian countries through the year 2050. China, the Korean Peninsula and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), all highly influential players in the East Asian sphere, are facing heavy political and economic change. If recent trends are any indicator, the center of world politics could be shifting from West to East.

China’s Regional Hegemony

Political giant Deng Xiaoping is the force behind China’s move towards free-market economic policies since the 1990s. The decision set China on a path towards economic recovery, as well as a recovery of its former status as a world power. During the Taiwan Missile Crisis, China realized its need for military modernisation to deter foreign intervention, as well as its need to assert its dominance in domestic affairs, particularly regarding Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Tibet. China has long lamented the

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inability of Western powers to recognize China’s sovereignty in such affairs; future steps taken towards economic and military modernisation will be essential if China hopes to prevent further Western intervention.

The stated principle of Chinese military and foreign policy is to never seek hegemony. In reality however, national interests cause China to repeatedly violate its own principle. China must be more willing to compete in world politics with Eastern countries, not Western. China must increase its influence in East Asia by expelling Western intervention.

If China were to become a hegemonic power by 2050, it would become the region’s political and economic center. China would prosper economically, but also bear responsibility for international security in the region. Countries will progressively begin to request that China function as the peacekeeping agent in the region. Certainly, China will need to further develop militarily if it wishes to protect both its country and its economic interests. Many East Asian countries predict that the United States will be too weak in 2050 to keep order in East Asia, and China will therefore fill the void to foster stability and growth.
Korean Unification

As the President of South Korea said recently, 2011 is the year for Korean unification. Both western powers and China have prepared for the collapse of North Korea, and believe that South Korea will lead the unification effort. Kim Jong-un, thought to be the successor to North Korean rule, has promised to return North Korea to the state in which his grandfather left it, wherein every citizen could enjoy meat, soup and rice. The irony lies in that the promise to the 21st century is a return to the 20th. The speech was a wake-up call to political experts, a realization that North Korea is not a permanent fixture. The collapse of North Korea could, however, have disastrous consequences for the rest of East Asia. In the interests of regional stability, countries, like China, will pressure North Korea to abandon its aggressive military policy and accept unification with South Korea.
An Asian Community

ASEAN was established in 1967 in order to create a pro-US alliance to counter the expansion of communism, and continued operation after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. Since the 1990s, its focus has shifted towards political and economic integration. The successful model set by the European Union has inspired South-Eastern countries to focus on regional integration and partnership programs, with the goal of creating a self-sufficient Asian Community, focusing on “Asia for Asia.” Like the EU, the proposed Asian Community would create common policies to fully utilize diversity among its nations while maximizing common regional interest.

Expectations for the Asian Community are high. Hopefully the community can manage economic integration as well as regional security. Asian countries have complained increasingly that international organisations such as the United Nations emphasize western goals rather than what Asian countries need. The Asian Community is expected to rectify this, managing regional affairs without Western influence.

Conclusion

The fate of East Asia in 2050 is dependent upon Korean Unification, Chinese hegemony, and the budding Asia Community. Throughout modern history, the dominance of world powers has been decided upon the strength of their economies. While East Asian countries can anticipate a bright future in 2050, they face significant threats, such as the territorial dispute over the South China Sea, China’s conflicts with neighboring countries, and the possible dissolution of ASEAN. Hopefully, through the birth of the Asia Community, member states will be able to negotiate around these problems rather than enter conflict over them.
Autocensorship: Are we scared to speak about European Muslims?

Jakub Janda*

An analysis of Muslim assimilation and integration as a key political and social problem in Western Europe in the 21st century.

The integration of Muslim minorities in European Union states is a pressing issue. In many countries, as shown in the five examined in this article, friction between local inhabitants and Muslim immigrants is very strong – and therefore, problematic. The aim of this article is to assess the current situation, place political discourses into perspective and subsequently analyze the situation at hand. The unsuccessful integration of Muslims into European social structures and possible future developments to address this problem will also be evaluated.

The number of Muslims in Europe is on the rise, and European civilization has not until recently addressed the difficulties this demographic revolution might cause. The general methodology of any problem-solving can be divided into three parts. The first part is to acknowledge the problem’s existence. The second is to plan a solution; and the final part is to implement that solution. I believe that European civilization is currently in the first phase. Political elites have just gathered enough courage to speak openly about the protection of European values (or pragmatically – European jobs and social welfare) in the context of minority protection as a fundamental part of modern democracy.

I would like to introduce the following paragraph with a twist on a famous quote by

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Nietzsche – “Multiculturalism is dead. And we have killed it.” Let us see how European political leaders – those who, according to traditional democratic values, express the opinion of the majority and protect the minorities – acknowledge this fact. I will substantiate my claims about this major problem for Europe in the 21st century and justify this paper’s populist title.

As this article continues, I will explain the anticipated demographic rise in the number of European Muslims, especially in West European states. Furthermore, I will draw some conclusions based on the given data, analyze politicians’ silence, assess the negative side of modern ‘politically correct’ Western democracy and outline a number of ways to move forward.

**Muslims in Europe**

While strongly connected, Europe is still searching for a stable form of integration. Internal conflicts (about the form of federalization of a European super state according to Winston Churchill’s ideas) and the two-speed division of the continent (in connection with the Euro crisis and the North/South divide) will not allow it to act strongly and jointly for a few more decades. The world will not be ruled by the G-20 structure, but by the G-2 (Washington – Beijing) or G-3 (Washington – Beijing – the Arab world) until the mid-21st century when the oil reserves are expected to run out. Naturally, this will bring about a rise in power for the owner of this precious natural resource (the economic rule of shortage and high demand). It is clear that Europe will experience a form of internal struggle: a search for its own identity.

During the so-called ‘open era’ (1945 – 1973), individual West European states prepared programs to tackle the lack of labor force on the labor market. Germany adopted the ‘Gastarbeiter system’, which originally invited Italian and Greek workers, but eventually replaced them with a cheaper Turkish and Iranian workforce. Great Britain remained open to citizens from its colonies. Even after gaining independence, many Indians and Pakistanis had the opportunity to acquire British citizenship either as soldiers or within the scope of the European Voluntary Worker Program. Similar programs were set up in France (Algeria, Morocco),
Belgium (Morocco, Turkey), Switzerland (Turkey), the Netherlands (Indonesia, Turkey, and Morocco) and Luxemburg (Turkey). Muslim workers abroad began to settle down and due to insufficient immigration laws, were able to achieve citizenship for themselves as well as for their family members. The original idea to employ foreign workers for a limited period of time, after which they were supposed to return home, had to be abandoned because the European economies needed them.

The number of European inhabitants has risen from 422 million in 1900 to 727 million in 2000. However, birth rates among non-migrant Europeans have been on a steep decline since the 1960s, and today the number of children born is not even enough to keep the number of inhabitants on a steady level. The reasons for lower birthrates are very complex, because it occurs all across the continent, in Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox states, and in rich and poor countries alike. According to United Nations estimates, if this trend continues, Europe will have a mere 60 million inhabitants by 2300. According to a UN migration report, Europe will need at least 700 million immigrants to renew its age balance. Based on 2007 data, 25 percent of inhabitants in Marseilles, France are Muslim. Russia has, with its 140 million inhabitants, 23 million Muslims - that means that every sixth Russian is a Muslim. In 2008 the most popular boy name in the four largest Dutch cities was Mohammed. In Spain, which was known for its de-Islamisation tendencies at the end of the 15th century, the number of Muslims has risen twenty-fold in the last ten years. The number of Muslims living in Europe today is possibly as high as 25 million. In some cities, such as Birmingham, England, it is expected that the non-Muslim population will become a minority by 2026.

According to demographic estimates, high birthrates among Muslim immigrants in Europe will result in Muslims becoming the majority of the population in a number of European states in less than 40 years.

The First Voices

Five European nations are currently in the state of ‘awakening’ – a state where the Muslim minority issue receives more press from individual national politicians and the citizens themselves (in Switzerland). The situation in all five countries can be
generalized in the following phrase: helpless democracy. In all European countries the integration policies are the least effective with immigrants from Muslim cultures. Many of them conform to the new social system, but very few really adopt it. The majority of Muslim migrants create a parallel society, existing within and outside mainstream society simultaneously. Not fully integrating with other members of society creates a potential breeding ground for various militant ideas.

Germany

Currently, immigrants and their children represent approximately one fifth of German citizens, which is, globally, the second highest number of immigrants after the United States. Immigrants from Turkey and other Arab nations are disadvantaged in social and economic spheres. It seems that children of manual immigrant workers who remained in Germany find it hard to assimilate within the mainstream German society. In large cities they often attend schools that local children no longer attend (due to ethnic community segregation), which makes integration even more difficult. As a result, the Turkish minority lives a parallel life to the rest of society.

Germany practices the so-called Anglo-Saxon model of multi-ethnic integration, which is also referred to as communitarian. It offers an alternative identity for immigrants. In short it says – if you will uphold our laws, we have nothing against your customs, even if you practice them in public. The same model is applied in the UK. The so-called laïque model is an alternative approach and is used in France, a fiercely secular model which prioritizes the laws and interests of the country over those of individual religious beliefs. I believe there will be a debate over which of these two models is best, as well as a search for an ideal solution.

German Suicide

Germany fully recognized its problems with immigration more than ten years ago. It was then that Germany decided to reform its rigid immigration law, which was based on ethnic origin. Immigrants and their children have access to integration courses, where they learn more than just the German language. Former politician and banker Thilo Sazzarin published a controversial book called Germany is
Destroying Itself, which has been torn into pieces by literary critics and commentators. Within two months the book took the second place on the political bestseller lists just behind Helmut Kohl’s and Gerhard Schröder’s memoirs. The controversial work includes the opinion that “Muslim aliens and their high birth rates will destroy Germany.”

The former member of the Federal Bank’s management suggests that the country should freeze social welfare benefits for immigrants for ten years so that the lower classes will no longer move to Germany. As the Economist states, Sarrazin’s work created a cultural war. His advocates uncompromisingly reject any benefits of immigration, including economic ones. They demand national consciousness and love for the nation without immigrants. Indeed, it would be commendable if immigrants would cultivate sentimental connections to their new homeland and its dominant culture, but is it really necessary?

To further illustrate the public debate, I would like to note that the head of Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) party, Horst Seehofer, has called for all immigration to be stopped at once. Sentiments such as this caused the most powerful person in Germany, chancellor Angela Merkel, to state at a meeting in Potsdam of her conservative party youth organization– the Christian Democratic Union, “Attempts to create a multicultural society in Germany have failed entirely.”

The sad truth is that Germany is punishing its immigrants precisely when it needs them the most. There is not enough labor force and the recovering economy requires a constant influx of new professionals. “The lack of qualified workers cost the economy 15 billion Euros in the last year,” complains the Minister of Trade Rainer Brüdele, whose ministry advocates imports of workers on the basis of the Canadian point system.

Great Britain

As mentioned, the United Kingdom applies the Anglo-Saxon model of multi-ethnic integration. Its roots can be found in imperial Victorian England in the second half of the 19th century, when large groups of religiously and culturally different Indians poured into the country and it was necessary to create a coexistence model with the
local inhabitants. In 2009 the British government quietly allowed Muslim religious courts to decide in civil matter such as divorce, financial disputes and home violence. Some fear that Muslims will create a parallel legal system with the same authority as the British legal system.

Muslim clerics have reacted to the critics claiming that there are also Jewish courts. Inayat Bunglawala, the media secretary of the Muslim Council states: “if Jewish Courts are allowed to flourish, the same must be allowed for Sharia courts too.” The issue of these courts has been analyzed thoroughly by Petr Horký in his work At an Islamic Court in London. A public debate about the roots of terrorism within the domestic society was initiated after the terrorist attacks on the London tube, which were carried out by Muslim UK nationals. This has resulted in the serious public reactions.

For example, the British Prime Minister wants to decrease the number of immigrants coming to Britain. His claims came only a few days after the governmental immigration advisory committee, which should determine the limit of qualified immigrants outside of the European Union, stated that the number of such immigrants should be lowered by more than one fourth. “In the last years we have had about 200,000 immigrants per year, which means two million more people every ten years,” said Prime Minister David Cameron for Sky News. He continued by saying that number is unacceptably high and must be lowered accordingly.

British business representatives have voiced their fears that governmental plans could threaten the competitiveness of the British economy. Cameron stated that he wants the number of immigrants decreased to tens of thousands, rather than hundreds of thousands. He believes that his promise to limit immigration was one of the main factors why his Conservative Party succeeded in the last election. The UK also intends to dramatically limit the number of work permits and student visas issued to people from third countries. This was announced by the British Cabinet. Home Secretary Theresa May said in the House of Commons: “Starting in April 2011 the number of work permits for people from outside the EU will be decreased to 22,000 – in comparison with 2009, it is an 80 percent decline. We will reserve 1000 visas per year for talented scientists, academics and artists.” Those who request
visas due to marriage will have to pass language tests. Families of people who have residence and work permits in the UK receive 20 percent of all visas given out. Non-EU students coming to universities represent 60 percent of all immigration to Britain.

The Home Office is working on plans to dramatically reduce the number of international students. The police and security forces claim that the education system is abused by terrorists attempting to acquire a residence permit in Britain. To sum up we can say that the UK has decided to tackle the Muslim question rather aggressively and the next years will show whether the declared strategy to reduce visa options and measures established to force adaptation of minority members has been successful.

**The Netherlands**

Similarly to Britain and Germany, the Dutch concept of an “open state and society” practiced since the 1960s had an economic sub-context. After the murder of Theo Van Gogh (the creator of the controversial film *Submission*, which highlighted violence against women in Islamic societies), the Dutch began asking themselves
whether they still live in a free country. The Dutch national consciousness and anti-Muslim mood popularized Geert Wilders, the head of the Party for Freedom, who demands assimilation of Muslims or their deportation. Wilders has become one of the loudest critics of non-adaptable Muslim minorities in Europe. His speeches and documentary, _Fitna_, have breached a number of Dutch laws and he has been charged for inciting hate and discrimination towards Muslim. Wilders believes the trial itself is a “hammer to silence his freedom of speech” and claims that charging someone who is only saying the truth is a crime in itself. This phenomenon is analyzed in detail in _Silenced_, a publication which will be published in 2011 by the Hudson Institute’s Center for Religious Freedom.

The cancellation of Wilders’ speeches in Germany and the Czech Republic only twenty years after the fall of the repressive Communist regime does not paint a nice picture about the freedom of speech the Czech and the Germans have been waiting for since the 1940s.

**Switzerland**

Switzerland is a country with a multitude of cultures. In a referendum in November 2009 the Swiss decided to amend their constitution. Fifty-seven percent voted for a ban on further Minaret construction. The Muslim minority in Switzerland represents 4.3 percent of the population. If a country with such a small minority democratically votes for a ban of religious building construction, we can interpret it as a Swiss declaration of not wanting more Muslims in their country. Switzerland has 7.7 million inhabitants. There are four minarets in the country and the construction of two more was stopped on the basis of the above mentioned referendum.

**France**

The French are trying to implement the so-called _laique_ model for immigrant integration. It is based on a republican way of thinking, and stems from the tradition of the 1789 revolution – the basic values are citizenship and equality in front of the law and the state. Students in French schools cannot wear any religious items, crosses or burkas. In my opinion, this is a form of religious standardization or temporary neutralization of differences. One of Europe’s prominent integration
experts, professor Gilles Kepel of the London School of Economics, voiced his support for this model (as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon). We can perceive the decision of the European Court of Human Rights to ban crosses in Italian schools as a preference for the French model. The ban of burkas and nikabs in France is now a reality.

Nicolas Sarkozy’s leadership has increased the pressure on inadaptable immigrants. The French government prepared a law that permits citizenship removal from someone who has committed a crime – such as attacking a police officer or so-called “aggressive begging” - and was not born in France. According to my interpretation, this is an attack on the very essence of integration. If a person moved to France, worked his or her entire life, paid his taxes, passed the complex process of receiving citizenship, and could then be relieved of this earned status so easily, I consider it nothing short of bullying and excessive neo-mercantilism.

Awakening (Admitting that there is a problem )

Let us remember one of the basic terms in the Koran – the jihad. The definition is the struggle within – a struggle with weakness. I believe the fear of naming the problem concerning Muslim integration in Europe is that weakness. Political correctness, strategic partners in Saudi Arabia and strategic non-enemies - the leaders of our time have decided to ignore known and statistically proven facts. Democracy is almost defenseless to those who threaten it; its tolerance is often bordering with hara-kiri. Self-preservation kicks in only once the problem gets out of hand – then we need brave individuals, who are not afraid to point out the inadequacies – I mean people like Geert Wilders or Thilo Sarrazin.

Angela Merkel made a major step towards freedom of speech in the public sphere when she publically supported the right to publish caricatures of the prophet Mohammed by Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard in September 2010. Through her public approval, the German chancellor took the first step towards fostering openness and debate about this topic.
The second extreme step forward was the attempt to publically burn the Koran by American reverend Terry Jones. He rightfully received public condemnation from most leaders of the democratic world. But like the above-mentioned Thilo Sarrazin, he brought attention to the issue and offered society a way to speak up and speak out. Acts, like those by Jones, caused journalists and politicians to further examine the situation.

Suddenly we saw how many politicians were aware of the critical situation but did not have the courage to speak out. Jerome Vignon, EU Commissioner for Integration, Employment and Social Affairs said in August 2009, “[The situation] has certainly been underestimated - there is a general rhetoric that social integration of migrants should be given as much importance as monitoring the inflow of migrants.” He continued by saying that the rhetoric, however, rarely led to policy.” Islam expert Georgij Engelgard expressed the issue in another way: “The problem is that a number of communities, especially Turkish and Arab immigrant communities, exist within Europe with a right to a parallel society. This in turn makes the locals highly irritated. Let us look at Germany – a heated debate related to this topic began two months ago. While the political elite supports the multicultural approach and coexistence of varying communities; citizens, voters, have objections to this policy.”

The Heart of the Problem

A prominent European political scientist, Professor Jacques Rupnik, defined the problem of our perception of democracy towards
minorities: “The vulnerability of our society is connected with its openness; therefore we need to redefine the relationship between freedom and security. The dilemma of the West is in essence the fact that it is forced to defend freedom at the expense of other freedoms.” Revolting French students in 1968, blinded by the irrational philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and Michelle Foucault, used the motto “it is forbidden to forbid.” If Western civilization wishes to keep its freedom, it should adopt the motto “we do not tolerate intolerance.”

Really, democracy can be a double-edged sword - a boomerang that we released when we agreed on European/Western values. Western civilization spent hundreds of years struggling for freedom, struggling to secularize the state from the church, and created the infrastructure that allow citizens to choose what to believe in. The Peace of Augsburg saying cuius regio, eius religio (translated as “Whose realm, his religion”) is no longer applicable; we are faced with the choice of the individual.

As stated, Western civilization fought for hundreds of years and lost thousands of lives for this principle. Therefore, it is obvious that the leaders of our civilization are very cautious when asked to limit the rights of individually selected religious beliefs. It is almost impossible in the current European ideologically paradigm to force immigrant minorities (especially Muslims) to integrate and forcefully assimilate. Ghettos and closed communities are paths to fundamentalism, terrorism and a struggle for the emancipation of Muslims in Europe. Limited social welfare for inadaptable ghetto citizens will result in a struggle of the lower immigrant class with the host state. We have seen this happen already.

Our aim should be to build a middle class of assimilated Muslims (who understand that religion is a private matter, not res publica). The middle class is a consistent social guarantee, the majority tax payer, the essence of a democratic state as we know it.
Development Options

In conclusion, I would like to add the Muslim integration counterargument: Some Muslim communities speak of the fate of the Bosnian Serbs. “Bosnian Muslims were the most integrated minority, some even had blond hair and blue eyes and just look how they ended up. The same thing will happen to us sooner or later. We are the victims of xenophobia. It is pointless to believe in integration, we will end up just like the Bosnians anyway.” How can we react to this?

I believe that we need to emphasize secularization of the majority of Europe (aside from Muslim Albania and strongly Catholic Poland). Let us speak about the laïcité of everyday life from a religious perspective; let us speak about religion being everyone’s private business.

Another point that needs to be addressed is the theory that Islam cannot adapt. We know that this is the case with the Orthodox form of Islam. The events of the last years evoke the questions whether liberal Islam is capable of adaptation, especially since the events in London, where British citizens born and raised in the heart of the nation killed in the name of Allah. If we were to allow only liberal and adaptable Muslims to our countries would we create tension between ‘real’ Orthodox Muslims and ‘westernized’ democratic Muslims? What would that mean for our civilization?

This article has tried to voice a prognosis for the next decade. I expect that there will be a wider debate on Islam and related policies within European society. Today Europe is lying to itself, believing that the Muslims “are like us.” I do not claim that this is not true. However, it is necessary to have an open factual debate. The entire Union must realize where the border between tolerance and foreign occupation by another culture lies.

I would like to conclude by stating that the multiculturalism of the Dutch in the 1960s, the ‘we take everyone’ style is dead. We have killed it. It did not have a chance for a long and prosperous life because the classic understanding of Islam does not allow for it. Let us admit this and look for paths to take in the future.
The Future of Islam

Petr Pelikán*

If we are to consider the near future of Islam, we must dissect and reformulate the issue. If we analyze the future of Islam from a purely religious perspective, the answer would be clear and straightforward: one of the basic characteristics of Islam as a religion is its rigorous adherence to tradition and the rejection of development.

Islam was not defined as a new religion when it was founded; instead it was viewed as the climax of a continual process of holy apparitions existing since the beginning of mankind. The Prophet Mohamed succinctly describes the Muslim perception of human development: Everything has already been achieved; development has ended. The only other event still awaiting human kind is the end of the world. Judgment Day is the only future event a man is permitted to know about. However, he must not know the day or the hour it will occur. Islam strictly rejects any sort of forecasting, whether it is referred to as prophecy or prognosis. The right to know what will happen in the future, and therefore the possibility to influence the future, belongs only to God.

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Just consider how many complex religious loops had to be applied for the legal systems of the more puritanical Islamic states to come to terms with the introduction of insurance.

The dogmatic Islamic system cannot accept something similar to the modern Catholic “signs of our times” - a principle that allows for the application of fundamental changes in teaching according to societal conditions and presenting them as the new God’s will. This would negate everything on which the Islamic religion is based. As much as Islam modifies its manifestation and adapts to real circumstances in confrontation with Western ideological and political currents, its essence does not change and most certainly will not change in the future. One of the most frequently cited statements by the Prophet Mohamed (as I have noted in the last two decades during Friday sermons on three continents) is this warning: “the worst thing is to introduce something new, for every novelty is an act of heresy and each heresy is a deception.” In light of this, it is safe to say that any reform movement in the next decades will not openly change the fundamentals of Islam or lead to the creation of a new religion. Such a movement would simply not be generally accepted. It is also highly unlikely that the creation of relatively successful sects from the second half of the 19th century, such as the Aga Khanis, Bahaism and Ahmadiyya, will experience a reprise. The development of these sects was related to the expansion of colonial Europe, which today is not a concern for the Muslim community.

The current interaction of Islam with the West creates two opposing philosophies within Muslim communities. Western analysts characterize them as “moderate” Islam, meaning Islam not directly opposed to the interests of the West and “radical”, “jihadist” or “fundamentalist” Islam, in other words Islam hostile to Western civilization. Despite the given connotations, there are a few major differences in regard to thoughts about adaptation. No current type of Islam inclines to liberalize
transformation into a new religion entirely outside the realms of Islam despite the pressure it is under to do so. The most significant source of that pressure appears to be globalization. Interconnectedness, access to information and greater travel opportunities do not allow for large groups of Muslims to find themselves isolated, a situation that could be a factor in leading to the creation of a new religion. The unity of Muslims is strengthened by fast distribution of information about current events that can be perceived as attacks on Islam as a whole (although in reality the events in question tend to be entirely insignificant or even untrue). Salman Rushdie’s novel *Satanic Verses*, Danish caricatures or the alleged case where Christians were forbidden to convert to Islam (this was not even reported in Western media) all contribute subconsciously to Muslim unity. It seems that the image of a common enemy can even surmount the otherwise enormous animosity between the various Muslim sects. Clearly the types of Islam the West describes as radical are prominent in this unification process.

The rivalry between the Western and Islamic way of thinking is not geographically limited to Muslim countries, but has been transferred with immigrants to other parts of the world. This also leads to greater unity. The need to react to mutual antagonism is thereby transferred to everyday life. The hotbeds of conflicts moved from the elitist philosophical discussions such as “was Jesus the son of God or a mere human?” to more sensitive disputes about the admissibility of covering women, the power of men within the family or animal protection with respect to ritual sacrifice.

When European intellectuals ponder the future of Islam, they typically narrow the topic down to the demographic development of the Muslim community on the European continent. They discuss the quantitative side of the issue, meaning the demographic increase due to continued immigration and high birth rates. They also discuss the qualitative side – whether the Muslim community will radicalize or not
and whether development will lead to integration. The rising number of Muslim immigrants is indisputable, even though the official statistics do not reliably document it (as it is unacceptable for contemporary Europe to take into account the religious convictions of immigrants when they apply for citizenship; it is altogether impossible in the case of those who have received citizenship or the generations who were born in Europe). The dynamics of the growing Muslim communities in European states are therefore based on inaccurate estimations relying mainly on secondary or tertiary estimates. The data is based on information such as the frequency of the name Mohamed given to first-born children, information about construction and capacity of new mosques, or in countries such as Austria, the number of religion taxpayers.

Modern European society meticulously adheres to two incompatible principles: the idea that civic identity is more important than religious affiliation, and that everyone should have the freedom of religion. These two ideas can coincide only provided that each existing religion only limits itself to faith and does not demand concrete actions, or that all religions will continuously adapt their teachings according to state legislative developments. In the case of Islam both of these conditions are far from reality.

Europe still adamantly declares that this concept is achievable. Top state representatives – a prime example was Tony Blair – declare in seemingly
welcoming and conciliatory statements, that they respect Islam. However, they will not accept imams preaching a twisted and violent version of Islam in their countries. In many countries integration courses are organized for imams that aim to educate them in local languages, history and civic/legal practices. Enormous sums of money are spent on activities related to the convergence of Abraham’s religions. All of these steps appear to be appeasing; however in reality many Muslims perceive them as highly offensive and aggressive. This is because they understand these acts as a way for non-Muslims to judge the Islamic religion and support more “moderate” versions of Islam. It would be naive to assume that more or less involuntary education courses can significantly influence the worldview of Muslim clerics.

So what development can we expect for the second most widely spread global religion in the next few decades?

As stated, the creation of a new form of Islam seems unrealistic. Instead, Europe may be greatly influenced by its Muslim population and take on Islamic beliefs in part. Alternatively, Europe could stage a strong resistance to its Islamic inhabitants. The social and political currents characterized today as xenophobia, nationalism and populism could become dominant. If this happens, a future Europe could reach for fascist solutions: instead of a referendum about the mere construction of minarets, which is purely symbolic, we could expect the demolition of mosques. Steps to curb migration could be taken in extremes and Europe could force Muslim immigrants to flee for a more welcoming refuge elsewhere. While this seems extreme and improbable today, such mass removals of Muslims from Europe occurred during the Spanish Inquisition. Additionally, it was only in the 1980s that Bulgarian Muslims (Pomacs) were faced with political and social pressure to change their Turkish surnames to Bulgarian ones. If European Muslims were forced to exodus, it could stir up a wave of Islamic radicalization. In contrast, this return of “Europeanized”
Muslims to the Middle East could introduce more Western elements into the local society. Either situation is a probability; both are problematic in some way.

Another possibility is the foretelling of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi: that Muslims will conquer Europe with the wombs of their women. Indeed, the current population development is heading in this direction. But we do not need to worry that our descendants will suffer under an Islamic whip. Change occurs slowly and only a small part of the majority notices it with indignation. For future generations it will be entirely natural. Some time ago, I heard an older lady from a small English town complaining that the local Muslim community demanded there be one day at the public pool that allowed men and women to swim separately. She thought that this was unacceptable. However, the weakening non-Muslim majority seems unable to coordinate its interests and enforce them as effectively as their fellow Muslim citizens. Today this public pool offers only one day of coed swimming per week, illustrating the concessions made for the Muslim minority.

Despite this, children of this indignant lady will think this is entirely normal. To be politically correct, they will be willing to limit the Christmas decoration in the office so as not to offend their Muslim colleagues. They tolerate that their colleague covers herself and that she does not shake their hands in greeting. Over the years, they will perhaps accept Friday as a day of rest instead of Sunday and eventually accept other values and regulations of Islamic society as it develops.

However, when predicting the future of Islam we cannot deny that the Prophet realistically described the methodology and reliability of prognostics’ work years ago. When people asked the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, about fortune-tellers, he said: “There is nothing about them.” The people replied: Messenger of God, they tell us things and they are true. Messenger of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, answered: “The true word is possessed by an evil spirit, which whispers it into his protégés ear who adds a hundred lies to it.”
Belgrade Pride

Robert Rigney*

Since the fall of Communism gays and lesbians in the former East Block have struggled with varying levels of success to realize gay pride demonstrations, such as are common in Berlin, Paris or London. In Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria Pride demonstrations have been met with intolerance and often, outright violence. However, nowhere – perhaps with the exception of Russia – has this been more extreme than in Serbia and in the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

In 2001 Serbian police stood by and watched as hooligans brutally attacked Pride demonstrators in Belgrade in what has since become known among people in the scene as “Massacre Pride.” Ultimately the gay and lesbian demonstration had to be called off because police could not ensure the marchers’ safety.

Last autumn, gays and lesbians in Belgrade tried it again, this time with immense support from the European Union (EU) and the West. Serb politicians, eager to show the West that Serbia was taking strides to comply with EU norms mobilized 5,000 police to protect the marchers, who were estimated to be between 500 and 1,000 in number. Behind the banners which bore slogans like “Peace”, “Together united” and “Solidarity against fascism” were local Serbian gays and lesbians,

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prominent Serb politicians, representatives from international NGOs and foreign ambassadors; the US ambassador was also among those who attended the march.

Thomas Schulte, a gay Bosnian-German activist living in Berlin who was among the demonstrators, described the manifestation as a “marching ghetto.” Buffered by heavily armed lines of police, demonstrators had little knowledge of what was going on in the rest of the city; that Belgrade was erupting in violence as hooligans tried to penetrate police cordons, set fire to containers and cars, smashed shop windows, robbed trams, threw Molotov cocktails, and attacked Democratic Party and Liberal Party headquarters, causing by the end of the day one million euro in damages and wounding 78 police and 17 bystanders.

Who was behind the unrest in Belgrade? Some weeks later many in the Belgrade hooligan scene traveled to Genoa to watch a football match between Serbia and Italy, where they again attracted Western media attention by rioting in stadium terraces. Serb media determined that many of these hooligans, who had participated in the violence against Belgrade Pride were incited and supported by right-wing groups, local tycoons and mafia barons who stood to gain from Serbian isolation from the West, and sought to sabotage Serbia’s EU bid in the eyes of the West. Anti-Pride demonstrators also had the support of the Serbian Orthodox church, a fact belied by press photos showing black gowned Serbian popes hoisting crucifixes aloft alongside hooded hooligans hurling rocks. “We don’t hate these people,” said Bishop Artemije about gays and lesbians in Serbia on the occasion of the Pride demo. “We hate the sin.”

Homosexuality, in contrast to England, France and Germany, has very little tradition in Serbia and other countries of the former Yugoslavia. Writing in the thirties, English travel writer Rebecca West commented that in contrast to many Western

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1 Rebecca West is the author of the widely read book on Yugoslavia called Black Lamb Grey Falcon.
countries, homosexuality played little if any role in Serb culture, and the culture of
the Balkans in general. To this day gay bars do not exist in Belgrade, and just about

every expression of homosexuality in Serbia is met with intolerance and hostility.

Nevertheless, gay activist Thomas Shulte points out that there have been some
expressions of homosexual culture in Serbia’s recent history, both during
Communism and in the nineties, drawing attention to a Serbian cult film from the
70s called *Mramor Dupa*, or *Marble Ass*, which recounted the story of a Serbian
transsexual.

Kristina Mignon, a Croatian gay rights activist living in Berlin also draws attention
to the personality of flamboyant Serb singer Oliver Mandic, who Mignon calls,
“something like the Boy George of Yugoslavia.”
Mandic raised public furor in the eighties in Serbia due to the singer’s cross-dressing and makeup. Mandic, however, made an about-face a decade later, became involved with Serbian paramilitary leader Željko “Arkan” Ražnatović, who Mandic knew from childhood, and was often seen wearing the Serbian Voluntary Guard uniform. It is said that he even made a couple of trips to the front lines in Slavonia, where according to most accounts his role was distributing food and cigarettes in the Guard’s Erdut headquarters.

Despite the fact that few Serbian pop and folk stars – with the exception of Mandic – have challenged gender roles in Serbia, recently controversial scandal-mongering pop-folk star Jelena Karleusa came out with several pronouncements in the Serb tabloid press, defending gays in Serbia, while turbo-folk star Seka Aleksic has said that many of her biggest fans were gays.

Politically gays have achieved some moderate success in Serbia. Laws that criminalized homosexuality during Communism have been repealed. There was an attempt to include sexual orientation as a basis for anti-discrimination as part of a new law in 2008. However, it was prevented in a rather subtle way with the assertion that family should be protected and that marriage under Serbian law should consist exclusively of man and woman.

In comparison to Serbia, the situation in Bosnia with regards to gay rights and social acceptance of gays and lesbians is bleaker, says former Sarajevo resident Schulte, a fact which is compounded by the fact that Bosnia is in many ways a very Muslim rooted country and that in recent years the Saudi-financed extremist Muslim Wahibi sect has been making inroads in Bosnia.

“The situation in Bosnia is really catastrophic,” says Schulte. “In 2008 we organized a culture festival in Sarajevo. The stupid thing was only that it was during Ramadan, and on an extremist webpage, named Saff, an Islamic Wahibi publication, there
were murder threats and everything imaginable. And that’s where it started. At the opening there were three hundred guests, which is pretty big for Sarajevo. We got more interest than any other culture festival and it got a very positive response, but there were a lot of hate tirades. And then we had a lot of right-wing extremists at the opening, football fans, Islamists and also women with headscarves, allegedly religious people. They waited for us and then attacked the guests, who were forced to flee in taxis.”

In Croatia the situation appears to be a little better. “Because there is more political will,” says Schulte. “And everything is happening under the paradigm of European integration.”

Pride demonstrations have taken place in Zagreb, but in contrast to Serbia, from the very beginning there were leading politicians present and the police protected marchers.

“Which doesn’t mean that no one was injured,” says Schulte. “Every time when it takes place people are injured and chased through the city by hooligans.”

The one country of the former Yugoslavia that appears to have a tradition of tolerance towards homosexuals is Slovenia, where Slovene pop star Magnifico – called in the Slovene press “the Slovene Madonna” – has come out in support of public acceptance of homosexuals.

“There’s a joke,” says gay Serb DJ and music shop owner in Berlin, Zoran Markovic. “Even in Yugoslavia people said that all Slovene men were gay.”

Linda Freimane, from the Latvian LGBT organization and a veteran of a number of marches against discrimination in Baltic countries, was also present at Belgrade Pride. She finds similarities in the challenges that LGBT activists have to overcome in their fight against prejudice and intolerance in the former Yugoslavia. “In the
beginning it was the same in the Baltic countries, too much violence and too many police to protect us,” she says. “Gradually both police and society in general started to accept us and our demands as well. I am sure the same will happen in Serbia.”

Still the cities of the former Yugoslavia have a long way to go before they can resemble anything like the cities of Berlin, Paris or Vienna.

“It will never in my lifetime be the case that one is as free as in Germany,” says Markovic. “Where you can kiss on the street. Where you can go to a gay disco and all the gay bars are full. It will never be like that in Serbia.”

Slovene pop star Magnifico. Promotional photo.
Two Steps Forward or One Step Back?
The Future of Art

Karolína Fabelová*

Art in the future will be categorized in different ways. Some will be seen and lauded as luxury goods; others will develop into art-anthropological projects and become accessible to the masses, outside of museums.

In recent decades, visual arts have experienced a boom in popularity. Along with this growing esteem, art has become commoditized, like any other goods. In many ways, the boundary between art and non-art is overlapping. In the future, museums will have an even harder time keeping the line between the two clear – museums will become more and more like amusement parks and commercial centers. They will be driven by consumerism and filled with art-consumer goods. As Massimo Melotti describes in his book, *L'età della finzione (The Age of Fiction)* it is not relevant whether consumption is of items, paintings, atmosphere or communication. In response to this movement, art can choose to embrace this new identity, or rebel and find another way forward.

The First Path: Art as a Luxury Relic

Some artists – such as Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons and Andreas Gursky – will receive star-like status, similar to that of movie stars. Their names and images will be a part

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of their art, which will be worshiped and admired by the public, whether for its popularity, financial value, use exceptional materials or the situations the art depicts. These artists will retain the appearance of originality, despite the fact that their art will be mass produced in workshops. Still, by purchasing these pieces, one will acquire a certain social status – like owning a Louis Vuitton handbag. People who can afford these luxury items will establish home ‘cathedrals’ to show off their trophy pieces.

The Magic of Death: For the Love of God

To understand this path a little better, let us investigate the work of Damien Hirst in more detail. He is often considered the biggest star of contemporary art today. Charles Saatchi established his gallery in 1985, and in 1991 he commissioned Damien Hirst to create The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living – a dead shark preserved in formaldehyde. From that moment on, death became the main subject matter of Hirst’s work. He embraced this and enveloped it in glamour – Hirst shows us a glittering death – a beautiful, shimmering end.

After many showcases of various animals in formaldehyde, Hirst decided to create a work of art that would last for centuries, or even millennia. For the love of God, created in 2007, represents the utmost extravagance and the magic of death. Its base is a human skull of an approximately 35-year old male living at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, purchased by Hirst in a shop in Islington in North London. Hirst covered it in platinum and set it with 8,601 diamonds. He placed a pearl-shaped pink diamond on the forehead. The teeth are original. The cost of production reached 14 million GBP. The piece was exhibited for the first time in the White Cube Gallery in London in 2007, where it was also available for sale for an
incredible 50 million pounds – the highest price for a piece of art by a living artist. The exceptionality and exclusivity of For the love of God was not only emphasized by the high asking price, but also by its presentation. It was placed in a specially lit room and closely guarded visitors were brought to the skull in a special security coded lift.
For the love of God – A Modern Relic

Beyond the presentation, Hirst wanted another way to make the piece viewed as more than a skull studded with diamonds – he wanted it to be an icon of contemporary art, a relic of the modern era. For that it was necessary to introduce it in the correct context – one that would sanctify its value. It was necessary to place it in new age cathedrals – famous museums. In 2008 Jeff Koons used the royal chambers at Versailles to exhibit his seventeen kitsch-inspired sculptures and thereby elevate them to a royal level. Hirst chose a similar tactic. At the end of 2008 he exhibited *For the love of God* in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, where his skull suddenly shared a space with Rembrandt’s *Night Watch*. Hirst was not satisfied only with the role of an artist; as a curator of the exhibition (the theme was the search for immortality and inevitability of death) he chose sixteen 17th century works from the museum to accompany his skull and added his personal commentaries.

Hirst’s skull can be seen at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence from November 2010 to May 2011. The Palazzo is the former Medici residence, a masterpiece of Florentine Mannerism from 1570 and 1575 as well as the symbol of the city. In this way, one could argue that Hirst has reached the status of Michelangelo and Donatello: “Just like pilgrims waiting to worship a relic, the visitors stand in a queue in the study of Francesco I. de' Medici. They keenly observe the classic paintings and await the moment when they can approach the ‘treasure’. A black curtain, a chamber entirely drowned in darkness. Everybody’s gaze is fixated to the center of the room, to the brilliant and glittering – *For the love of God*."

The question remains whether a high price, luxurious materials, a complex topic and presentation in prestigious palaces are enough to really turn a skull into a modern relic, an icon and a symbol, and Damien Hirst into a saint, a preacher, a divine

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Michelangelo. Is it perhaps more about the image than the artwork? Is it not, despite all the efforts to elevate it, just a diamond skull, just like that Louis Vuitton handbag is still just a handbag, albeit luxurious? Jack Malver from *The Times* wrote of Damien’s work: “At the first sight it resembles something between a handbag carried by wives of famous footballers and a disco ball.”

*For the love of God* is a great example of art branding. Damien Hirst is not only the artist and curator, but also a successful businessman, manager and publishing house owner. He owns the Other Criteria shop as well which sells, in cooperation with other artists, various items such as t-shirts, jeans, plastic skulls, painted plates and postcards. Forty-six pounds will buy you a t-shirt with Hirst’s skull. The real creation here is not the skull itself, but its image, which we can see it in many forms online, on items, in magazines – an image which can be sold endlessly and eternally. Perhaps in this respect Hirst’s ambition has been fulfilled. He has successfully turned his art into an everlasting luxury item to be desired, worshiped and, of course, sold.

**The Second Path – Art as Anthropology**

In stark contrast to art becoming a luxury item, art will become more democratic and will take on anthropological uses. Artists such as the Frenchman known as JR, Banksy and Jorge Rodriguez de Gerada will take this path in their future work. They will turn to the wider public and focus on philanthropic projects. If people recognize their art outside of museums and accept it, these artists may become powerful enough to incite real change. Their art could transform the faces of cities not only aesthetically, but socially and politically as well. Massive investments swallowed up by museums and funds produced by the art market could be used for the

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2 Ibid.
improvement of our everyday environment. Art would leave the museum and return to the people.

**JR**

JR, a Parisian artist appearing in photographs and films in a hat and black glasses, whose main aim is to create outside of museums and galleries, is representative of this second path. JR began his career in 2004. In 2006 he rose to fame with his *Portraits d’une generation (Portraits of a Generation)* when he covered Parisian suburbs with photographs of local young people often suspected of causing violence due to prevalent stereotyping. In 2007 he left France and realized *Face 2 Face* (an installation of large-scale portraits of Israelis and Palestinians on both sides of the security line) in eight Palestinian and Israeli cities. After he returned to Paris, he posted the portraits in his hometown as well. He said: “The real heroes of this project are all those people on both sides of the wall who let me stick the photographs on their houses.”

In 2008 JR visited four continents and ten countries, taking pictures of women in places often mentioned in the media but whose inhabitants are not represented. The result was the film, *Women are Heroes*, as well as a collection of 62 photographs of women which JR chose to display on the embankment of the Seine in Paris. The photos were accompanied by stories about the women, which anyone could listen to by calling a free telephone line. In 2009, JR, together with ten unpaid assistants, transformed Kibera – a slum in Nairobi and one of the biggest in Africa – into an exhibition space. He placed portraits of the locals on the roofs of their shacks. The photographs did not only have an artistic purpose, but also a practical one – they

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were waterproof, which was important for the local inhabitants. He refers to his work as ‘guerrilla photography’ – he is not only interested in the artistic quality, but also in its potential for social and political change. And it seems that his work is getting many people’s attention: in 2010 the TED American Foundation awarded him a prize of $100,000 USD for anthropological projects.

Art, and its role in society, is constantly changing. In the future, we will come to a crossroads – one where art can become solely a market product for the elite, or something that the everyday person can access, a way to activate people and incite change. Perhaps both of these movements forward are not ideal, nor mutually exclusive, but at a time when people are questioning what the future may bring, we cannot forget to assess the future (and power) of the visual arts.

Rooftop view of the Kibera slum. JR covered the roofs with waterproof photos of the inhabitants. Photo courtesy of Blazej Mikula. Creative Commons 3.0.
Language Engineers

Jan Horálek*

Every once in a while Czech language experts have a go at the female surname ending –ová. “Into Europe without the –ovás,” said a scriptwriter from Lidové Noviny in the mid 1990s. The main argument was that the languages of nations within the European structures the Czechs want be a part of do not have this linguistic feature.

Recently this very feature literally sent publicist Ondřej Neff into rage - coincidently also a member of the Lidové Noviny editorial team - in his article Jmenný obojek (Name Collar), 10.1.2011. The Author referred to the suffix –ová as a ‘proprietary suffix’; an apparently “disgusting Slavic masculine superiority manifestation, similar to a collar around the neck or a burka.” Further in the article, he calls it a ‘chauvinistic suffix’. His granddaughter was mistakenly thought to be Russian in Germany, because of the –ová. He concludes his article with a victorious exclamation that “during the First Republic names weren’t vitiated this way.”

Let us note that his disgust with this regular language feature is not based on any factual or systemic argument; often emotional attitudes can make one prejudice against characteristics of a language. The ‘proprietary’ argument is laughable. The proprietary suffix in Czech is short (as in –ova), however –ová relates to words related to something – for instance dubová is related to dub (oak). Similarly, the argument that some young Germans perceive our female surnames as Russian is also

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unfair. We might as well forbid the Czech word *fakulta* (faculty) because it might sound like something else in English. And that’s just the beginning. It is interesting that this emotional approach to the –*ová* ending is often rather slovenly about the correct terminology. It is certainly not only Neff who suffers from this. A suffix is not a word-formative, but a grammatical feature, a bending tool – with female surnames ending in –*ová* it is only the final -á.

Using the suffix in foreign surnames is indeed more complicated. Some foreign surnames cannot be changed because they end in vowels and some are changed wrongly. Moreover, it is problematic to use the suffix with surnames that already have a female form in their original language. It is also rather embarrassing that the registry offices automatically add the –*ová* suffix to female foreigners who marry a Czech man and take his surname. The law fortunately now allows for exceptions. We should not forget that Czech is a highly flectional language and female surnames that do not have a female ending cannot be inflected. This leads to a linguistic asymmetry. Additionally, the surname ending enables us to immediately identify the gender of its carrier. Some might find this chauvinistic, but others might think it chauvinistic to hide the femininity of the carrier behind a male surname form.

Lastly I would like to come back to the claim that “during the First Republic names weren’t vitiated this way.” That is only a half-truth: it was simply more common to add or remove the suffix of *any* given surname. The usage of both forms was much more common in spoken Czech and it did not arouse any passionate outbursts. It was undoubtedly related to the fact that one third of all the inhabitants of the Czech lands spoke German, which does not differentiate between female and male surnames. There were many bilingual people and many more that used both languages fluently, therefore switching between the two formats was common. It should be noted that this linguistic reality broadened the awareness of linguistic
differences and at the same time strengthened the respect for the peculiarities of
ones’ mother tongue.

As the Czech Republic is further integrated in multicultural, transnational bodies
such as the EU, this is of particular importance.