BOOK REVIEWS

Memory and Securitization in Contemporary Europe, edited by Vlad Strukov and Victor Apryshchenko (eds.). London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 284.

Priya Sara Mathews
Independent Researcher

In the past decade, Europe has been suffering multiple and intersecting crises such as the economic downturn, the influx of refugees and immigrants and the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union (EU) following the Brexit referendum. These crises have shed a light on some of the limitations of a purely economic union with little political and socio-cultural unity and have brought to the fore the question of who exactly is European?. However, it is not only the European Identity that is facing an upheaval but also the very notion of Europe. What is Europe? Is it a merely a geographical entity? Does it allude only to those that are within the economic union or is it a representation of certain values and cultures that have been birthed through a joint history of war and peace? *Memory and Securitization in Contemporary Europe*, puts these nuanced questions in stark relief.

The use of discourse as an instrument of securitization has become a topic of increasing research interest, particularly in the area of Critical Security Studies. Discourse helps create the identity of those who are the consumers of this securitization. This book expands that notion and explores the relationship between

memory and security by highlighting how memory is used to shape the discourse on security. To this end, Strukov and Apryshchenko's edited volume analyzes the dominant discourse in a diverse range of cases from Scottish referendum of independence to the Ukraine crisis looking mainly at speech acts.

Several authors draw out how historical memory is invoked to securitize certain aspects of politics. In Chapter 2, for example, Victor Apryshchenko considers the three referenda that took place in 2014 - Crimean, Scottish and Catalan - to indicate and examine how history is instrumentalized to create identities. Ewen A. Cameron further explores this idea, in Chapter 3, demonstrating how collective memory of important historic events are alternately used in the Scottish referendum by both those who were pro-Scottish independence as well as those against.

However, the book does not consider only the impact of historic memory on contemporary securitization but also analyses the creation of "new" memories as a part of the contemporary strategy of securitization that is visible in different parts of Europe. By examining the movies in the *Best Foreign Language Film* category of the 2015 Oscars Vlad Strukov, in Chapter 6, illustrates the dual function of the films chosen: on the one hand, they help an American audience imagine a Europe that is a single albeit erratic cultural space, on the other hand, it demonstrates to the European audience the European Identity is divided and connected to a complex network of individual and collective memories. Furthermore, he shows that both the selection of the movies and the choices made by the filmmakers reflect the concerns of the time.

Chapter 7, by Stephen Hutchings and Kenzie Burchell, considers the parallels in the remembering/forgetting dichotomy that is a fundamental part of the workings of media and the contemporary security culture which instills fear of the unknown while striving to convey a "sense of control based on past threats". Ex-

ploring the reporting of Lee Rigby's murder by the BBC and the French news program *Journal de 20 heures* the authors demonstrate how varying definitions of 'terrorist' created by the media through the years, result in an inability to rely on the memory of who a 'terrorist' is. Moreover, the interconnected nature of our world means that security and securitization span multiple countries thus, different approaches to securitization are filtered through the media while dealing with a Europe that has conflicting views on its history and values.

While the first part of this book mainly looks at the United Kingdom, the last few chapters consider Eastern Europe, with Chapter 8 acting almost as a bridge, with the exploration of memory and discourse in the securitization of climate change in both Russian and British media. The author argues that climate change being a relatively newly discussed issue with the first instances of this discourse formed only in 1988, thus discursive memory surrounding it is pretty short and it is precisely this lack of collective memory that has had an impact on its process of securitization. Mykola Makhortykh, in Chapter 9, on the other hand examines the use of social media during the Ukrainian crisis noting that "historical memory featured as a factor in securitization and de-securitization on Twitter" (p.232). Finally, in the last chapter, the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union and its basis on memory and securitization is considered. The author notes that the choice of Russian as the official language of the union belies that the project is not simply an economic one but rather a political one with roots in its historical past.

The book is cohesive and the chapters are structured in a way that in most cases one chapter almost leads into the other. There are however, a couple of missteps. For instance in Chapter 4, commemorations are used as 'speech acts' that according to the author, demonstrates a threat that needs to appear to be resolved in the collective memory so that in the present it is neutralised. This argumentation

seems to be a little weak as while commemorations can be considered to inform or reflect the wider discourse the monuments and art pieces discussed appear to be a product of rather than to shape the political, social and cultural situation of the time. And in Chapter 5, the researcher looks at memory and securitization in Belfast by using a semi-fictional essay to demonstrate the discourse surrounding the Troubles. Although effective in illustrating the author's point, considering that all the other chapters followed similar methodological approaches, this chapter hits a slightly jarring note.

Securitization theory forms an important part of Critical Security Studies and this book looks at the interesting aspect of memory as an instrument of securitization. Furthermore, it gives a broad overview of some of the pressing security issues in contemporary Europe such as climate change or the problems facing East Europe. Thus, it provides a useful framework for understanding some of the security mechanisms for those students who are interested in broadening their understanding on the subject.

Priya Sara Mathews