*Nationalities Papers (2023), 51: 1, 3–13*
doi:10.1017/nps.2022.75

STATE OF THE FIELD

# Revisiting Pan-Slavism in the Contemporary Perspective

Vladimir Đorđević,[1]* Mikhail Suslov,[2] Marek Čejka,[1] Ondřej Mocek[1] and Martin Hrabálek[1]

[1]Department of Territorial Studies, Faculty of Regional Development and Intl. Studies, Mendel University, Brno, Czech Republic and [2]Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
*__Corresponding author__: Vladimir Đorđević, email: vladadjo@yahoo.com, vladimir.dordevic@mendelu.cz

**Abstract**
In this article, we examine the literature on the topic of Pan-Slavism that has been published in the last 20 years. We do so by paying particular attention to discussions on contemporary perspectives and manifestations of Pan-Slavism that in our view have been largely missing from academic research. We begin the article by introducing a theoretical conceptualization of Pan-Slavism in general, preparing the ground for our inspection of the academic output in the said period. We then continue by presenting our own contribution to the conceptualization and the current state of the field on Pan-Slavism, suggesting venues that future research may take towards broadening the field that has been and remains narrow. We conclude the article by summarizing the key points made therein.

**Keywords:** Pan-Slavism; Slavic world; Slavophilia; Contemporary perspective

## Introduction

How can Pan-Slavism be defined in a contemporary perspective? Are Pan-Slavic notions relevant in the politics of the Slavic states today, and are there any contemporary political implications in this regard? What sort of narratives in domestic politics of (not only) Slavic states are based on a Pan-Slavic ideological agenda? Are today's Pan-Slavic ideas abused in domestic and foreign policy discourse, and, if so, in what manner? Are Pan-Slavic ideas at times associated with anti-Western political agendas and Russophilia in domestic politics and instrumentalized as such? Finally, are there any cultural implications of Pan-Slavism in the contemporary perspective? It is these and other related questions that in our view have remained largely unanswered in the contemporary scholarship on Pan-Slavism. The recent resurgence of Pan-Slavic discourses and agenda in the contemporary politics and culture in several Slavic states appears to be, to a large degree, inconsistent with their respective treatment in academic literature, which was the main impetus behind the writing of this article. Therefore, our aims are twofold. Firstly, we address academic contributions on Pan-Slavism in the last 20 years, whereby we pay attention to the academic input produced in this period in international, largely Western, academia. We introduce a systematic overview of academic debates on the topic in the period of 2000-2020. Secondly, with this article we would like to invite researchers to study and broaden the field, considering its growing importance in recent years. Hence, the article strives to present a basis for additional research to be done. Our methodological approach to Pan-Slavism in this article is explained in the section subtitled "Pan-Slavism in the Contemporary Literature" that follows. In it, we

highlight that, in our opinion, Pan-Slavism has not simply faded away, and therefore it still deserves rigorous academic attention.

Our initial inspection of the field suggested that in many ways the field may be improved. These deficiencies, as shall be argued later, stem from the fact that the field remains narrow in terms of the topics addressed, and is inadequate with the analyses it offers, indicating a significant paucity of academic studies on contemporary Pan-Slavism in the past 20 years. What remains probably the single largest issue in this regard is that the majority of research has paid attention to historical perspectives of Pan-Slavism, with but only a few attempts to establish "communication" between Pan-Slavism in both the historical perspective and its contemporary manifestations. By "communication" in this regard, we mean that too few authors in their work are paying sufficient attention to the works of other researchers' scholarship. This lack of "communication" leaves unanswered the questions previously mentioned in our introduction. As shall be shown, academic production has been mostly limited to Pan-Slavism in terms of treatment from a historical perspective, whereby the space for addressing contemporary (and resurgent) political, social, economic, and cultural aspects within Pan-Slavism remains marginal in size. Hence, the international academic field hosts relatively few, if any, contributions with developed ties to each other, remaining deficient as such (Đorđević et al. 2021). Furthermore, despite the continuing interest paid to the region inhabited by the Slavic peoples and cultures in the post-communist period, political reflection on the present degree of Slavic unity has generally escaped scholarly attention. There are, however, numerous almost exclusively non-academic deliberations on Pan-Slavism, steeped in using the notion in a slack way and to designate an array of supposed connections and/or sympathies largely with Russia specifically.

English is the language of our academic production within a research project on Pan-Slavism we are currently working on concerning the domestic and foreign policies of the Slavic countries. This article is part of that project. We are, of course, aware of the fact that academic treatments of the said topic have been produced in recent decades in other languages, primarily in several Slavic languages and in German, leaving the English-based field limited in size (Đorđević et al. 2021). Last of all, our current research on Pan-Slavism, with respect to its contemporary perspectives and manifestations, has allowed us to gain valuable insights that we present herein. We are doing so in the belief that the research field may benefit from this, making this article both an instrument offering direction that future research may take and a repeated call to researchers to engage on the topic (Đorđević et al. 2021).

The article is organized in the following manner – we conceptualize Pan-Slavism as a notion, providing a theoretical background for a review of the academic scholarship in the past 20 years; we then present this review. The last two sections of the article introduce our contribution and input to the field, whereby we specifically point out and briefly discuss perspectives we deem are missing in the contemporary scholarship. We bring the article to a close in the conclusion by briefly summarizing the key points.

## Conceptualizing Pan-Slavism vis-à-vis its Contemporary Manifestations and Dimensions

Pan-Slavism can be classified primarily as a distinctive pan-nationalism, the origin of which is associated with the rise of the era of national awakening and nationalisms, and their parallel "pan-variants" in the 19$^{th}$ century. The main idea of Pan-Slavism can be identified as an attempt to transcend a more isolated national identity and create a greater, "pan-national," identity, including, in the spirit of the geopolitics of the time, a territory larger than the area of a nation state.

In contrast to one of the most substantial contributions to the field made by Louis L. Snyder (1984), we believe that it is analytically fruitful to identify the difference between pan-nationalism, standing for a supra-national identity among "kindred" nations, and the macro-nationalism of post-imperial countries, which emphatically denies differences inside the metropolitan cultural core. While the former is epitomized by classic Pan-Slavism, which was the future-oriented vision of a new political entity embracing already existing states and regions, the latter could be seen, for

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

example, in the geopolitical ideologies of the "Russian world" and "Holy Russia," in which the bottom-line is the revanchist and nostalgic recreation of the split imperial unity, such as the union of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarussians.

There are multiple interpretations of Pan-Slavism in the academic literature and in the political discourses. "I am a Pan-Slav" almost always means something quite different from the indictment "you are a Pan-Slav!" Self-professed Pan-Slavs are usually expressing feelings of solidarity, cultural unity, spiritual bonds, or linguistic kinship, while accusations of Pan-Slavism are typically connected with criticism of imperialist thinking, irredentism, sedition, treason, and so on.[1] Our contention is, however, that Pan-Slavism is a specific ideological phenomenon, with its internal morphology and historical genealogy, which is not the same as discourses about Pan-Slavism.[2] In other words, a person calling herself a "Pan-Slav" is not necessarily pan-Slavic in our ideological sense, and the same is true when somebody is accused of being a Pan-Slav. In our understanding, a self-declaration is an important qualifying moment, but the center of gravity should lie in the contextual and history-specific analysis of the internal structure of political ideas (Freeden 2013). For example, for Russian intellectuals of the late imperial period of the 19th century, German unification provided a valuable pattern for thinking about the future Slavic Union, in which the Russian Empire would play the role of Prussia in the united Germany (Sharapov 1905). Today's Russian Pan-Slavists are inspired by both the historical experience of the bloc of former socialist countries, glued together by ideological resistance to the West as well as by the ethno-cultural proximity of the various Slavic countries.

Another important conceptual caveat is the need to distinguish the ideational complex of pan-nationalism from positive valorization of a specific country in international politics. In this sense, Pan-Slavism points to the ethnic proximity of certain nations as the main reason why these countries should establish a more cohesive political community. Of course, there could be other reasons – economic, political, and cultural – for international friendship or "soft power" (Nye 1990) attraction among nations, such as the popularity of the US among some East European countries. This means that when we analyze Russophilic discourses among, for instance, the Serbian political elite, we need to understand if these discourses are motivated by metaphors of Orthodox Slavic brotherhood or by pragmatic calculations. To equate Russophilia with Pan-Slavism is to deflate the latter concept to a degree of irrelevance. Having said this, we need to highlight that in practice pan-nationalism often imbricates with other reasons for political friendship. For example, it is hard to separate Serbian Russophilia, motivated by anti-Westernism, and purely Pan-Slavic reasoning because the notion of "Russia" in this context becomes an "empty signifier" (Laclau 2007, 36), drawing in various meanings, including the concept of Slavic brotherhood.

In this article we propose a research focus that additionally zeroes in on a pan-nationalist component of the discourses about cultural attraction among nations. Hence, our position is that the rich history of Pan-Slavic solidarity as a movement and ideology did not disappear without a trace, but only shifted into the background, providing a canvas on which new political meanings can be painted in new styles and with new colors. For instance, a recent Russian initiative to establish an Institute for the Protection of Historical Memory in Belgrade (Zamakhina 2020) amalgamates old Pan-Slavic sentiments and reminiscences that Russia and Serbia were once brothers-in-arms in the war against Nazi Germany, with the new ideological agenda of sacralization of World War II and absolutization of Russia's eternal confrontation with the West. Likewise, when we focus on the motives of the Serbian paramilitary squad "Jovan Šević" fighting on the side of the pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas conflict in 2014, we can observe that the anti-Western agendum of Serbian nationalists was amplified by discourses on Slavic solidarity and the memories of Russia's volunteer movement in the Balkans in the 19$^{th}$ century (Bacchi 2014). In other words, it is our conviction that neglecting the pan-nationalistic element in the recent academic scholarship leaves out an important aspect of the contemporary politics and ideology in the formerly communist parts of Europe.

Pan-Slavism, which was constituted approximately in the period of 1830–1840, was one of the first politically conceptualized pan-nationalisms (Adams 2001, 73). It followed Pan-Germanism

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that occurred a bit earlier, where the role of Ernst Moritz Arndt, who "emphasised the need of new and stronger ties for the German Reich," needs to be mentioned (Kohn 1949, 788). Kohn discussed in length Arndt's claims regarding Germans needing "the bond of a common state and political strength" (Kohn 1949, 788), with Pan-Germanism eventually coming to partly influence Pan-Slavism political unity projects. Pan-Germanism was additionally formulated in cultural terms as well, with other pan-nationalisms, such as Pan-Arabism and Pan-Scandinavism, arriving at the international scene somewhat later. Although pan-nationalisms resonated with many supporters in the 19th century, ultimately they could not compete with nationalisms in terms of political mobilization and ideological conviction. One of the main problems of pan-nationalisms was their vagueness and low practical feasibility, which could not compete with clearly defined nationalist programs. In the case of Pan-Slavism, even at the time of its greatest popularity, the concept of unity of the various Slavic nations did not come to be clearly defined.

Although Russia historically was the champion of Pan-Slavic ideas, the first significant variant of Pan-Slavism did not count on Russian political influence. Both "Austro-Slavism" (from circa 1820s, with Herkel and Šafařík, to the 1830s, with Jan Kollár, and then roughly until the end of the First World War), and "Neo-Slavism" (1908–1918) had increasingly literary and emancipatory objectives, resonating with Central and South European Slavic nations that were part of the then gradually liberalizing Habsburg Empire and not under the whip of the Russian Tsarist autocracy (Nenasheva 1984). Gradually, however, Russia increasingly used Pan-Slavism in its imperialist policies, where aspects of Pan-Slavism were challenged by other concepts such as Eurasianism (Laruelle 2008). The "classical" era of Pan-Slavism subsequently came to an end with the disintegration of Tsarist Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the First World War that witnessed the birth of new Slavic states, among others. Soviet Russia (and later the USSR towards the middle of the 20th century) utilized different concepts in its foreign policy, although Moscow at times relapsed to the use of Pan-Slavic motifs, for instance during the Second World War (Kohn 1952).

Today, Pan-Slavism is mostly seen as a historical and extinct version of pan-nationalism. This perception, however, ignores the fact that at the present time we can witness the revitalization of this concept towards its updated and reinterpreted forms, with the occasional retreat to historical Pan-Slavism either in a comprehensive manner or by means of using only certain aspects of it. These new forms of Pan-Slavism are very vague, as much as the traditional ones were, and perhaps even more difficult to define and grasp. For some aspects of this Pan-Slavic revival, it would be more appropriate to use the term Slavophilia, which may also contain political aspects of Slavic unity while at the same time oscillating on the border of the romantic-cultural perception of today's Slavic identity. Very often, however, contemporary references to Pan-Slavism may also highlight a Russian influence in various political, largely nationalist, and cultural contexts and discourses. Sometimes, these references directly target and espouse the importance of pro-Russian politics, only to be shrouded in a particular Pan-Slavic garb.

New forms of Pan-Slavism/Slavophilia have been particularly visible in the last decade and notably used and abused in illiberal political agendas in Slavic societies where the Christian Orthodox milieu habitually plays a major role in identity politics. For example, consider contemporary Russia. Under Vladimir Putin's rule, Russia's foreign policy ambitions have grown significantly, and some aspects of Pan-Slavism in Russia's foreign policy have therefore re-emerged (Suslov 2012, 575, 585). Pan-Slavism is being engaged with domestically as an ideological ingredient of nationalist, religious-fundamentalist, radical-conservative, and anti-globalist left-wing theorizations. Importantly, the Russian regime's ideology in the past 10 years has incorporated a great deal of these theoretical perspectives and agenda into its mainstream (Chebankova 2020; Lewis 2020; Suslov and Uzlaner 2019). Similar tendencies, for that matter, may be found in other Slavic countries, for instance in the very secular Czech Republic that does not espouse predominant Orthodox milieu, or in Serbia that in its foreign policy constantly invokes its traditional and brotherly relations with Russia. These new forms of Pan-Slavism/Slavophilia can manifest themselves in both domestic and foreign policy, where they can disproportionately favor Russia's foreign

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

policy attitudes and ambitions, as well as deepen anti-democratic, anti-civic and populist tendencies. It is interesting to note that in recent years cultural, and sometimes quite apolitical, concepts, agenda, and narratives of Slavic unity have also begun to emerge, inspired by the rising trend of various neo-pagan movements (Golovneva 2018; Laruelle 2008). Lastly and importantly, these new forms of Pan-Slavism/Slavophilia can threaten EU integration.

This multifaceted nature and differences in the understanding of contemporary manifestations of Pan-Slavism are, therefore, important but unjustly neglected challenges to the current research of nationalisms and related issues in the context of politics and society in the contemporary Slavic world. Our brief survey of the ideological status of Pan-Slavism in today's world shows that it can no longer be considered a sort of "failed nationalism," striving to forge an unbreakable collective identity by connecting nation, state, and culture but having been derailed by historical contingencies. Pan-Slavism today should rightfully be called "Slavophilia" – a low-profile political sympathy for another Slavic country, motivated by the fact of its "Slavicness" in terms of ethnicity, culture, language, and history.

## Pan-Slavism in the Contemporary Literature

With respect to the theoretical debate above, the research on Pan-Slavism can be divided into two major categories: 1) a traditional/historical Pan-Slavism and 2) more contemporary perspectives/manifestations of Pan-Slavism (Đorđević et al. 2021). The authors treating historical perspectives of Pan-Slavism in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries are more numerous, while there are a relatively small number of authors focusing on the more contemporary perspectives, most of them treating the relationship between Pan-Slavism and politics in the present-day context.

As for the historical Pan-Slavism, to begin with there are authors focusing on the political context. For instance, Maxwell (2020) describes the Slovak national awakening in the 19th century, while his work in collaboration with Brown is focused on the Latinization campaign in Ruthenia in the beginning of the 20th century (Brown and Maxwell, 2016). Haraksim (2011) discusses the formation of the Slovak national identity and the national question of the Slovak people in the 19th century, while Cetnarowicz (2021) examines relations of Slovenes with other Central European Slavic nations, Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles, in the second half of the 19th century. Jaworska (2011) takes a different approach, examining non-Slavic countries and focusing on German propaganda and its anti-Slavic discourses in the interwar period. This topic was also dealt with by Adamantios Skordos (2014) in his scholarship.

In addition, there are authors addressing the issue of Pan-Slavism in other geographic contexts, such as the Balkans. Russia's historical influence and the need to be geopolitically present in this part of Europe is treated in several studies through the prism of Russian state aid and its relentless efforts to maximize its influence. Hence, the authors focusing on Pan-Slavism in the Balkans discuss these points in detail, with Parppei (2021) analyzing the Russian influence in the Balkans against the background of the Russo-Turkish War in the second half of the 19th century. Vovchenko (2010) and Gülseven (2017) deal with a similar topic, examining the form of the Russian influence, whereas Kasatkin (2020) focuses on Pan-Slavism in Bulgaria in the 19th century. Sotirović (2017) delves into the national identity of Croatians at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, examining it vis-à-vis ideas of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Croatianism (the notion of a Greater Croatia in the Balkans). Last of all, instrumentalization of Slavic solidarity by the Soviet Union has recently been spotlighted by Stefan Troebst (2014a) and Jan Claas Behrends (2014).

It is also important to note that there are researchers whose focus goes beyond the political and examines cultural aspects of Pan-Slavism from the historical perspective. To begin with, Burry and Orr (2015) focus on the Russian and Slavic cultural identities, examining the novel, Anna Karenina. Prieto (2009), for her part, continues in very much the same manner, treating the influence of Pan-Slavism on the literature of Slavic nations, while Boldin (2018) aims at the role of the Russian language for the integration of Slavs into one country or a kind of superstate of Slavic people, taking

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

into consideration two generations of Pan-Slavists – the "patriarch of Russian Slavic studies" and a convinced Slavophile, V. I. Lamansky; and a supporter of the 'new Slavic worldview' and a leader of the Serbian Radical Party, Ljubomir Stojanović. Dusza (2014) goes on to explore other arts, analyzing whether Pan-Slavic ideas did indeed find their way onto the canvas of the Czech painter Alfons Mucha, credited with the cycle of 20 large canvases called "The Slav Epic." Additionally, Gąsior (2014) addresses Slavic topics and motifs in the interwar Polish art landscape, again an attempt to discuss contexts other than literary contexts.

The second category of research on Pan-Slavism is composed of contributions aimed at more contemporary contexts. Suslov (2012) goes into an analysis of contemporary Russian politics, dealing with the overreaching meta-narrative of Pan-Slavism in the context of the Russian state and its foreign policy. Laruelle (2013) continues in the same manner, focusing on meta-narratives associated with Pan-Slavism in Russian politics and society. The research on Russian foreign policy vis-à-vis Pan-Slavic ideas and notions can also be attributed to Grigorova (2019), who discussed the ideological narrative behind the Russian foreign policy in the Balkans in the 1990s. Further, Kolossov, and O'Loughlin (2002) also treated the foreign policy perspective by focusing on the role of Pan-Slavic ideas in the foreign policy of Russia during the Kosovo crisis in the late 1990s.

In addition, Temper (2009) discusses the Pan-Slavic rhetoric of the Belarussian authoritarian regime, arguing that it should be read as a political gimmick legitimizing President Lukashenko's rule rather than a genuine belief in the solidarity among the Slavs. Troebst in his research highlights a very interesting point, problematizing the possibility of "Euroslavism" in the context of EU enlargement (Troebst 2009), claiming that when Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic (all in 2004), Bulgaria (2007), and Croatia (2013) acquired EU membership, the European Union was on the way to becoming a natural political habitat for most of the Slavic nations and hence a practical solution for Slavic unity. Additionally, Troebst goes on to underline the latent feature of Slavic reciprocity today, which is to say the relationship between Russia and other Slavic countries. He points out an inescapable imbalance between Russia and the rest of the Slavic world that is not conducive to the development of a Pan-Slavic sense of belonging to a single Slavic-only community (Troebst 2009, 19).

To continue, Troebst, in cooperation with Agnieszka Gąsior and Lars Karl, produced an edited volume entitled "Post-Panslavismus" (Gąsior, Karl, and Troebst 2014), incorporating chapters on identity, ideology, myths, and perceptions of "Slavicness" at different times and in different cultures. This volume has traded its coherence and focus for a richness and diversity of topics and approaches. It is, nevertheless, the most monumental contribution to our understanding of the "micro elements of 'Slavic reciprocity'" (Troebst 2014b, 21) in the 21st century. Konstantin Nikiforov, the head of the Slavic Studies Institute at the Russian Academy of Sciences, contributed a chapter to the volume. In his chapter, he argues that it would be a stretch to speak about a full-fledged resurgence of Pan-Slavism today, though it is far from forgotten either in Russia or in other Slavic countries. It resurfaces from time to time in the form of integrationist projects in the post-Soviet space, such as the ideas of Eurasianism and of a larger Russian nation/state. Nikiforov expresses apprehension that, within the EU, the Slavs are losing their identity, coming to recollect their "Slavicness" only in the times of hardship (Nikiforov 2014, 130, 134–135).

The last study of this group is produced by DeDominicis (2017). It deals with the period after the Cold War, analyzes the contemporary international political setting, and applies the framework of Pan-Slavic ideas to tackle soft power and hybrid warfare agenda in the Slavic world. The author claims that the manifestations of Pan-Slavism can today be used as an indicator of the Communist-era control systems of the 1950s and 1960s and their decaying legacy networks (DeDominicis 2017).

## Taking Stock of Pan-Slavism, or Towards Broadening the Field

As the literature review indicates, the current research on Pan-Slavism is severely limited, offering relatively few analyzes and covering an arguably small number of topics. What remains most

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

problematic in this respect is that the academic contributions do not seem to be in communication with each other (Đorđević et al. 2021), and as mentioned previously herein. We are, nevertheless, fully aware of the fact that works discussing Pan-Slavism scholarly literature and Pan-Slavism culture do not necessarily need to be communicating with those works discussing other perspectives within the same topic. This is the prime reason for this article and our call to authors to update the research in the field, and to provide more information on different aspects and issues within the field. This would result in the field of Pan-Slavism becoming more interconnected, with studies from different areas able to be associated, compared, and integrated in a more comprehensive manner. Therefore, with the aim of updating the field and with respect to our current research on Pan-Slavism addressing the politics and social aspects of the Slavic countries, we suggest that research should be done to make the field wider, more coherent, and more interconnected (Đorđević et al. 2021).

First, it is necessary to start addressing in more detail the foreign policy of Russia and other Slavic states, as the foreign policy field has in recent years witnessed the use and abuse of Pan-Slavic agenda and ideas. Besides only treating Russia that used these ideological grounds in its foreign policy even in the communist past when it was a part of the Soviet Union, it would also be valuable to explore if other Slavic states attempted and still attempt to use their "soft power" as well. For instance, the Serbian foreign policy of the 1990s has often been described as that of a European pariah state espousing anti-Western values (Pridham 2001), though there has been relatively little research on how much of that foreign policy was indeed influenced by the Pan-Slavic ideas as largely channeled by Moscow at that time. Milošević's regime was severely anti-Western, even up to the point of the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) trying to join a union of Russia and Belarus. This sort of political project may have indeed been far-fetched (and largely influenced by pragmatism), but they nevertheless exemplify how supposed Slavic "otherness" may be used for political purposes.

Furthermore, it is important to explore whether the Pan-Slavic agenda has had any impact on the domestic politics of the Slavic states, as we suspect they indeed have. For instance, Montenegrin and Serbian domestic politics alike host political entities that advocate and champion notions that are based on Pan-Slavic narratives. Montenegro is, in this regard, probably the most interesting case, as the country is split along identity lines that are heavily reflected in both domestic politics and culture, where independent Montenegrin identity has been disputed for years (Džankić 2013). Moreover, internal issues that Ukraine has been facing for quite some time also indicate how Pan-Slavic discourses can be used as a powerful tool in information wars towards gaining advantage over one's adversary. Pro-Russian propaganda in eastern parts of Ukraine that are not under Kyiv's control exemplifies such a case, being based on a portrayal of Ukrainians as (Western) fascists and forwarding an image of the need to defend the supposed Slavicness (in political, cultural, and other terms) of eastern Russia (*Foreign Policy* 2019; *RFE/RL* 2021).

It also seems logical to pay attention to various anti-Western, and at the same time deeply uncivic, illiberal, and undemocratic political and cultural concepts that have in the past decade often been aimed at the EU while bearing a Pan-Slavic ideational mark. Many of these have been quite significant, at times heavily intruding into the domestic politics of the Slavic states, not only those that are part of the EU but those that are waiting and hoping and negotiating to join the Union someday. Several anti-Western and anti-EU ideas may still be witnessed in, for instance, Central Europe, some of which are based on Pan-Slavic notions. Take an example from the Czech Republic: as has been noted, the country's president, alongside a few other notable politicians, publicly praised "Slavic otherness" on more than several occasions, speaking of this otherness in political and cultural terms when compared to the non-Slavic West (Šlechta 2016). This sort of pronouncement at public appearances is often tied to anti-EU rhetoric, questioning the need for the existence of the European Union, and allowing Russian foreign policy propaganda to gain more influence. Much of what is said at these public appearances is then replicated online, complemented by disinformation often found in conspiracy theories and shared in

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

cyberspace by various social media groups, many of which share pro-Russian, anti-Western attitudes (*iRozhlas* 2020).

In addition, Christian Orthodoxy, and particularly its Messianism, are also points to be addressed in academic literature, chiefly with respect to the foreign policy agenda of states that often see and present themselves as (unofficial) leaders of the Slavic world, most notably Russia (Curanović 2021). As recently noted by Lewis (2020), Putin's rule has not only been characterized by a specific ideological turn and inclination to an increasingly authoritarian rule in domestic politics, but also by a specific return to what politicians like to tag as "traditional values," many of which in the Russian case are rooted in the civilizational (read Slavic) otherness of the Russian (and hence Slavic) world standing firmly opposed to Western values and institutions. This Russian notion of Moscow ideationally leading the Slavic world is certainly a point to be focused on, particularly in the current period when Russian relations with the West have come to a low point, pitting the two against each other and reopening the West-East divide that was supposed to have been resolved decades ago. It is in this divide that the political narratives based on Pan-Slavism have become influential (Suslov 2012). Similar notions of the supposed defense of Slavicness, coupled with ideas of being at the "gates" defending the Slavic (predominantly Orthodox) world against all sorts of "invaders" existed in the politics (and partly also foreign policy) of Milošević's Serbia. A few Serbian medieval myths of being the guardians of Orthodoxy at the time blended with the nationalist political agenda and became a perfect excuse for the supposed Serbian need to defend its national and cultural (read Slavic) identity in the Yugoslav wars (The Independent 1994; on Serbian Orthodoxy see, for instance, Flere and Rudi 2008). Therefore, taking stock of the Orthodox milieux in the Slavic states today and trying to delve into their influence in political and cultural terms remains a future task.

In drawing to a close, it should be stated that to better understand the contemporary situation in the Slavic societies one also needs to investigate gradual changes in the Slavic cultural identity vis-à-vis Pan-Slavism. There has been very limited research on this subject. Our initial insights have led us to believe that the number of cultural associations and groups throughout the Slavic world has increased in recent years. Some of these are even calling for a return to pagan Slavic roots. Most, however, remain apolitical, arguing for supposed Slavic unity in cultural terms, rather than any other (Golovneva 2018; Laruelle 2008); and, though there have been several studies in this respect, more research focusing on the contemporary Slavic culture would certainly be welcomed.

## Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to provide a theoretical overview of Pan-Slavism and to address the current scholarship in this regard, as well as to identify a space for furthering the current research agenda. While doing the review, we found that a large part of the puzzle of Pan-Slavism is missing from the academic research agenda. This is particularly true for the contemporary manifestations of Pan-Slavism that remain essentially unaddressed by the academic literature. More than this, our intention has been to show that the debate remains overall splintered, missing a unifying overarch. The field is, therefore, small, and underdeveloped, which is a matter that should be addressed in the future.

The gaps in the current literature are surprising, as Pan-Slavism remains vivid both in the political and cultural perspectives of the Slavic states, playing a role, particularly in recent times, in the political and social realities of the Slavic states that remains far from marginal. Most of the Pan-Slavic agenda is naturally attributed to Russia and its growing influence and soft power, often manifested in the form of various Pan-Slavic narratives in its foreign policy and aimed at other Slavic countries, particularly in the past decade. More than that, we have highlighted the recommendation to researchers to address Christian Orthodoxy, particularly the perspective of Messianism, that has in recent years been witnessed in the politics and societies of several Slavic countries, largely in the form of a call to "go back to the basics" and thus reintroduce the so-called "traditional"

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

values. These narratives emphasize social values that are based on the idea of the civilizational (Slavic) otherness of the Russian (and therefore Slavic) world that is supposedly threatened by an assumed onslaught of the institutions and values of the West. It is these sorts of civilizational narratives that have unfortunately helped create and deepen the West-East divide that may in the future become more significant, possibly coming to endanger the unity of Western institutions, such as the European Union and NATO, that have for years included several Slavic states of Central and East Europe and have offered membership to the remaining Western Balkans states as well.

**Financial Support.** This article is part of the research grant provided by the Czech Science Agency (GAČR), number *GA20-07592S- Hey, Slavs! Visual culture of propaganda inspired by Slavic nationalisms in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and its anti-European character.*

**Disclosures.** None.

## Notes

1 The authors express gratitude to the anonymous reviewer, who helped formulate this thought.
2 Our understanding of ideology is influenced primarily by Freeden 2006 and Freeden 2013.

## References

Adams, Ian. 2001. *Political Ideology Today*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bacchi, Umberto. 2014. "Ukraine Crimea Crisis: Serb Chetnik Militia Joins Pro-Russian Patrols," *International Business Times*, March 10. https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/ukraine-crimea-crisis-serb-chetnik-militia-joins-pro-russian-patrols-1439654. (Accessed December 19, 2021.)

Behrends, Jan Claas. 2014. "Stalins slavischer Volkskrieg. Mobilisierung und Propaganda zwischen Weltkrieg und Kaltem Krieg (1941-1949)." In *Post-Panslavismus. Slavizität, Slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, edited by Agnieszka Gąsior, Lars Karl, and Stefan Troebst (Hsg.), 79–108. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag.

Boldin, Vladimir A. 2018. "'Languages Are Not Studied by Sympathies or Antipathies, but Only by Requirements of Practical Suitability': The Dispute Between Academists Lamansky and Stoyanovich About the Role of the Russian Language for Integration of the Slavs in the Early 20th Century." *Rusin* 54 (4): 318–334.

Brown, Geoffrey, and Maxwell, Alexander. 2016. "Czechoslova'k Ruthenia's 1925 Latinization Campaign as the Heritage of Nineteenth-Century Slavism." *Nationalities Papers* 44 (6): 950–966.

Burry, Alexander, and Orr, S. Ceilidh. 2015. "The Railway and the Elemental Force: Slavophilism, Pan-Slavism, and Apocalyptic Anxieties in Anna Karenina." In *Russian Writers and the Fin de Siècle: The Twilight of Realism*, edited by Katherine Bowers and Ani Kokobobo, 69–86. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cetnarowicz, Antoni. 2021. "Slovenian Historiography of the Last Thirty Years: Slovenian Political and Cultural Relations of Slovenes with Poles, Czechs and Slovaks, and the Slavic Idea in the Second Half of the 19th Century." *Slovanský přehled* 107 (1): 43–86.

Chebankova, Elena. 2020. *Political Ideologies in Contemporary Russia*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press.

Curanović, Alicja. 2021. *The Sense of Mission in Russian Foreign Policy: Destined for Greatness!* London: Routledge.

DeDominicis, Benedict Edward. 2017. "Pan-Slavism and Soft Power in Post-Cold War Southeast European International Relations: Competitive Interference and Smart Power in the European Theatre of the Clash of Civilizations." *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Civic and Political Studies* 12 (3): 1–17.

Đorđević, Vladimir, Marek Čejka, Ondřej Mocek, and Martin Hrabálek. 2021. "Beyond Contemporary Scholarship and toward Exploring Current Manifestations of Pan-Slavism." *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 55 (2): 147–159.

Dusza, Erin. 2014. "Pan-Slavism in Alphonse Mucha's Slav Epic." *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 13 (1): 113–134.

Džankić, Jelena. 2013. "Cutting the Mists of the Black Mountain: Cleavages in Montenegro's Divide over Statehood and Identity." *Nationalities Papers* 41 (3): 412–430.

Flere, Sergej, and Rudi Klanjšek. 2008. "Serbian Orthodox Religiousness: An Empirical and Comparative Portrait." *Review of Religious Research* 50 (1): 35–48.

*Foreign Policy*. 2019. "Russian Disinformation Distorted Reality in Ukraine. Americans Should Take Note." August 2. https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/08/02/russian-disinformation-distorted-reality-in-ukraine-americans-should-take-note-putin-mueller-elections-antisemitism/ (Accessed August 18, 2021.)

Freeden, Michael. 2006. "Ideology and Political Theory." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11 (1): 3–22.

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Freeden, Michael. 2013. "The Morphological Analysis of Ideology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, edited by Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent, and Marc Stears, 115–138. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gąsior, Agnieszka, Karl, Lars und Stefan Troebst, ed. 2014. *Post-Panslavismus: Slavizität, slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*. Göttingen: Wallstein, Moderne europäische Geschichte.

Gąsior, Agnieszka. 2014. "Slaventum und Staatspropaganda. Zofia Stryjeńskas Kunst in der Repräsentation der Zweiten Polnischen Republik." In *Post-Panslavismus. Slavizität, Slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. Und 21. Jahrhundert*, edited by Agnieszka Gąsior, Lars Karl, and Stefan Troebst (Hsg.), 139–159. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag.

Golovneva, Elena. 2018. *The Native Faith: Religious Nationalism in Slavic Neo-Paganism.* Brewminate, September 5. https://brewminate.com/the-native-faith-religious-nationalism-in-slavic-neo-paganism/. (Accessed August 3, 2021.)

Grigorova, Darina. 2019. "The Post-Yugoslav Balkans in the Ideological War between Russia and NATO." In *David vs. Goliath: NATO War against Yugoslavia and its Implications*, edited by Nebojša Vuković, 292–303. Belgrade: Institute of International Politics and Economics.

Gülseven, Aslı Yiğit. 2017. "Rethinking Russian pan-Slavism in the Ottoman Balkans: N.P. Ignatiev and the Slavic Benevolent Committee (1856–77)." *Middle Eastern Studies* 53 (3): 332–348.

Haraksim, Ľudovít. 2011. "Slovak Slavism and Panslavism." In *Slovakia in History*, edited by Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč, and Martin D. Brown, 101–119. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*iRozhlas*. 2020. "Více než 90 procent dezinformačních webů v Česku jedná ve prospěch Ruska, říká analytik Vrabel." December 1. https://www.irozhlas.cz/zivotni-styl/spolecnost/frantisek-vrabel-dezinformace-web-koronavirus-rusko_2012010712_tzr. (Accessed August 19, 2021.)

Jaworska, Sylvia. 2011. "Anti-Slavic Imagery in German Radical Nationalist Discourse at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: A Prelude to Nazi Ideology?" *Patterns of Prejudice* 45 (5): 435–452.

Kasatkin, Konstatntin Aleksandrovich. 2020. "'You do not hear the cry of the people to whom you owe so much…': The Image of the Bulgarians in Russian Pan-Slavism of the 19th Century." *Balkanistic Forum* 29 (3): 250–267.

Kohn, Hans. 1949. "Arndt and the Character of German Nationalism." *The American Historical Review* 54 (4): 787–803.

Kohn, Hans. 1952. "Pan-Slavism and World War II." *American Political Science Review*, 46 (3): 699–722.

Kolossov, Vladimir, and John O'Loughlin. 2002. "Still Not Worth the Bones of a Single Pomeranian Grenadier: The Geopolitics of the Kosovo War 1999." *Political Geography* 21 (5): 573–599.

Laclau, Ernesto. 2007. *Emancipations*. London/New York: Verso.

Laruelle, Marlene. 2008. "Alternative Identity, Alternative Religion? Neo-paganism and the Aryan Myth in Contemporary Russia." In *Nations and Nationalism* 14 (2): 283–301.

Laruelle, Marlene. 2008. *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Laruelle, Marlene. 2013. "Larger, Higher, Farther North … Geographical Metanarratives of the Nation in Russia." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53 (5): 557–574.

Lewis, Charlie. 2020. "Contemporary Russian Messianism under Putin and Russian Foreign Policy in Ukraine and Syria." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 98 (3): 531–559.

Lewis, David G. 2020. *Russia's New Authoritarianism: Putin and the Politics of Order*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Maxwell, Alexander. 2020. "Contingency and "National Awakening." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 20 (2): 183–201.

Nenasheva, Zoya Sergeyevna [Ненашева, Зоя Сергеевна]. 1984. "*Идейно-политическая борьба в Чехии и Словакии в начале XX в: чехи, словаки и неославизм, 1898-1914.*" Moscow: Nauka.

Nikiforov, Konstantin. 2014. "Russland und die Slavische Idee heute. Moskauer Perspektiven." In *Post-Panslavismus. Slavizität, Slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, edited by Agnieszka Gąsior, Lars Karl, and Stefan Troebst (Hsg.), 127–138. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag.

Nye, Joseph. 1909. "Soft Power." *Foreign Policy* 80 (3): 153–171.

Parppei, Kati. 2021. "This Battle Started Long Before our Days." *Nationalities Papers* 49 (1): 162–179.

Pridham, Geoffrey. 2001. "Uneasy Democratizations: Pariah Regimes, Political Conditionality and Reborn Transitions in Central and Eastern Europe." *Democratization* 8 (4): 65–94.

Prieto, Susana Torres. 2009. "Slavic Epic: Past Tales and Present Myths." In *Epic and History*, edited by David Konstan and Kurt A. Raaflaub, 223–242. West Sussex, England: Blackwell.

*RFE/RL*. 2021. "Prigozhin Propaganda? Another Movie Bathes Russian Mercenaries in a Positive Light, This Time in Eastern Ukraine." August 15. https://www.rferl.org/a/31411794.html. (Accessed August 18, 2021.)

Sharapov, Sergei. 1905. "Lead Article." *Russkoe delo* 36: 3–4.

Skordos, Adamantios. 2014. "Vom 'großrussischen Panslavismus' zum 'sowjetischen Slavokommunismus.' Das Slaventum als Feindbild bei Deutschen, Österrechern, Italienern und Griechen," In *Post-Panslavismus. Slavizität, Slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, edited by Agnieszka Gąsior, Lars Karl, and Stefan Troebst (Hsg.), 388–426. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag.

Snyder, Louis L. 1984. *Macro-Nationalisms: A History of the Pan-Movements*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Sotirović, Vladislav B. 2017. "The Idea of a Greater (United) Croatia by Pavao Ritter Vitezović: An Early-Modern Model of the National Identity and Creation of the National State of the Croato-Slavs." *LOGOS - A Journal of Religion, Philosophy, Comparative Cultural Studies and Art* 93: 98–108.

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Suslov, Mikhail. 2012. "Geographical Metanarratives in Russia and the European East: Contemporary Pan-Slavism." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53 (5): 575–595.

Suslov, Mikhail, and Dmitry Uzlaner (eds.) 2019. *Contemporary Russian Conservatism: Problems, Paradoxes and Dangers*. Leiden: Brill.

Šlechta, Ondřej. 2016. "Miloš Zeman a Rusko." *Cdk.cz*. https://www.cdk.cz/milos-zeman-rusko. (Accessed August 5, 2021.)

*The Independent*. 1994. "Embattled Serbs of Krajina 'have God on their side': Robert Fisk, in the last of a series of articles on former Yugoslavia, is lectured on the perfidy of Croats and Muslims by a minister in the Serbian Orthodox Church." June 26. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/embattled-serbs-of-krajina-have-god-on-their-side-robert-fisk-in-the-last-of-a-series-of-articles-on-former-yugoslavia-is-lectured-on-the-perfidy-of-croats-and-muslims-by-a-minister-in-the-serbian-orthodox-1425358.html. (Accessed August 18, 2021.)

Temper, Elena. 2009. "'Der reinste slawische Stamm': Identitätsbildung à la bielarusse," *Osteuropa* 59 (12): 293–307.

Troebst, Stefan, 2014a. "Schwanengesang gesamtslavischer 'Einheit und Brüderlichkeit'. Der Slavenkongress in Belgrad 1946." In *Post-Panslavismus. Slavizität, Slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, edited by Agnieszka Gąsior, Lars Karl, and Stefan Troebst (Hsg.), 43–68. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag.

Troebst, Stefan, 2014b. "Post-Panslavism? Political Connotations of Slavicness in 21st Century Europe." In *Post-Panslavismus. Slavizität, Slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, Agnieszka Gąsior, Lars Karl, and Stefan Troebst (Hsg.), 17–21. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag.

Troebst, Stefan. 2009. "Slavizität: Identitätsmuster, Analyserahmen, Mythos." *Osteuropa* 59 (12): 7–19.

Vovchenko, Denis. 2010. "Gendering Irredentism? Self and Other in Russian Pan-Orthodoxy and Pan-Slavism (1856-85)." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34 (2): 248–274.

Zamakhina, Tatiana. 2020. "Volodin predlozhil sozdat' institute zashchity istoricheskoi pamiati," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, February 12. https://rg.ru/2020/02/12/volodin-predlozhil-sozdat-institut-zashchity-istoricheskoj-pamiati.html. (Accessed December 21, 2021).

**Cite this article:** Đorđević, V. Suslov, M. Čejka, M. Mocek, O. and Hrabálek, M. 2023. Revisiting Pan-Slavism in the Contemporary Perspective. *Nationalities Papers* 51: 3–13, doi:10.1017/nps.2022.75