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Postsocialism in International Relations: Method and critique

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Abstract

While postcolonial approaches to International Relations have offered new concepts, methods, and political imaginaries of global politics, postsocialism has been absent as an analytical and political approach. Postsocialism has been mainly a descriptive term naming the temporal transition of the Second World to liberal democracy and market economy or the geopolitical space of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Building on literature that has connected postsocialism and postcolonialism analytically and politically, particularly feminist work that has reclaimed postsocialism to understand the global legacies of socialism in the present, this article proposes to unpack dimensions of postsocialism as method and critique. Postsocialism as method attends to how socialist legacies endure and are transformed in the present while holding together contradictions and ambivalences. Postsocialism as critique is oriented to transversal solidarities and the epistemic vocabularies that can undergird these struggles. To trace these dimensions of method and critique, the article is situated empirically within debates about borders and migration. Postsocialism is not intended to replace or displace other critical approaches but to pluralise our vocabularies and multiply political interventions.

Keywords: borders; feminism; method; migration; postcolonialism; postsocialism

Introduction

At the beginning of her collection of essays, *Sister Outsider*, Black American poet, activist, and feminist theorist Audre Lorde recounts her trip to the USSR in 1976 following an invitation by the Union of Soviet Writers. 'For a while, in my dream', Lorde recalls, 'Russia became a mythic representation of that socialism which does not exist anywhere I have been. The possibilities of living in Russia seem very different in some respect, yet the people feel so Western European (so American really) outside of Tashkent.'[1] Lorde's brief description and her essay-travelogue are indicative of tensions that have emerged in the literature revisiting relations between postsocialism and postcolonialism. An imaginary of living differently appears possible – or it can be dreamt of – while difference is constrained under the dominance of Western European/American whiteness. Yet a few lines further down, Lorde contrasts the relation between Black and white Americans, where 'a certain tension … is taken for granted', with her encounter with a Soviet, 'marvellously craggy-faced old-blue eyed woman on the plane' with whom 'there was a kind of simple human response to who I was'.[2] The narrative of the trip has drawn little attention in International Relations (IR) and other disciplines, whereas Lorde's work has inspired research on hierarchies of power and especially political activism

[1] Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 2007 [1984]), pp. 13–14.
[2] Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, p. 14.

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and epistemic change. 'The master's tools will not dismantle the master's house' is probably one of the most cited cautionary notes about epistemic contestation.[3]

Decades later, in 2022, I was speaking with a young Syrian woman in northern Germany. At one point in our conversation, she said unexpectedly: 'Romanians and Syrians are friends.' As I was born in Romania, I nodded my acknowledgement with surprise but did not ask any questions. Romania and Syria had a long history of friendship and cooperation during the Cold War. Only after this conversation did I find out that, during the Syrian Civil War, Romania kept its embassy in Damascus open. While Romania continued to provide support for other European Union (EU) citizens in Syria, this has remained invisible in the international media and public sphere.[4] It has also been invisible to me as I followed public debates about the war in Syria and the so-called refugee crisis in Europe. Romania had not been on one of the routes that refugees followed towards Germany, France, Sweden, or the United Kingdom. A few Syrian refugees made their way via or to Romania; some did because they had family there. A few others were resettled in Romania through the EU relocation programme.[5] Yet this did not hinder anti-refugee discourse and repressive practices in the country.

Set almost half a century apart, Lorde's visit to the former USSR and my encounter in northern Germany are indicative of the presence of socialist traces and socialist legacies in international practices, experiences, and political imaginaries. Drawing on scholarship that has reclaimed postsocialism as an analytics that can open a 'space to work through the ongoing legacies of socialism in the present',[6] this article explores what postsocialism can bring to analyses of international politics. It builds on literature that has brought postsocialism and postcolonialism into dialogue across the humanities and social sciences. At the same time, postsocialism as an analytical approach needs to grapple with the tensions that are articulated in the two moments at the start of the paper. On the one hand, Lorde's oscillation between the experience of human connection beyond racism and that of Western domination through whiteness and, on the other, the tension between the history of international friendship as anti-colonial solidarity and the anti-refugee discourse in Romania as elsewhere.

These tensions and oscillations have given rise to two different modes of analytical rearticulation of postsocialism. The first one inscribes postsocialism within the continuity of socialism as expressive of modernity's 'coloniality of power',[7] while the second one attends to the anti-racist, anti-colonial, and internationalist traces of socialism in the present. For example, IR scholar Piro Rexhepi has highlighted racial and colonial continuities, from the early project of 'colour-blind socialism' to the postsocialist project of 'white enclosures'.[8] Rexhepi has trenchantly contended that

[3] Lorde, *Sister Outsider*.

[4] Dragoș Sasu, 'România, singura țară din UE cu ambasadă funcțională în Siria. Diplomații români protejează cetățenii din mai multe state' [Romania, the only EU country with a functioning embassy in Syria. Romanian diplomats protect citizens of several countries], *Libertatea* (21 March 2018), available at: {https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/romania-singura-tara-din-ue-cu-ambasada-siria-tara-aflata-razboi-civil-de-opt-ani-2187734}. The Czech Republic also kept its embassy open. Different media sources speak of either Romania or the Czech Republic as the only EU countries with an open embassy in Syria. David Hutt, 'Prague is the only EU capital to keep an embassy open during Syria's war: Why?' *Euronews* (9 June 2021), available at: {https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2021/06/09/will-the-czech-embassy-remain-an-eu-outlier-in-syria}.

[5] Inspectoratul General pentru Imigrări [General Immigration Directorate], 'Refugiați sirieni transferați în cadrul programului de relocare extra–UE' [Syrian refugees transferred through the extra-EU relocation programme], 2 November 2022, available at: {https://igi.mai.gov.ro/refugiati-sirieni-transferati-in-cadrul-programului-de-relocare-extra-ue%EF%BF%BC/}.

[6] Neda Atanasoski and Kalindi Vora, 'A conversation on imperial legacies and postsocialist contexts: Notes from a US-based feminist collaboration', in Redi Koobak, Madina Tlostanova, and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert (eds), *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues. Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 29–39 (p. 30).

[7] Aníbal Quijano, 'Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America', *International Sociology*, 15:2 (2000), pp. 215–32.

[8] Piro Rexhepi, *White Enclosures: Racial Capitalism and Coloniality along the Balkan Route* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022). Any decolonial possibility cannot be found in postsocialism or socialism, but in 'thinking about the region from its margins' (p. 155).

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'Eastern Europe is not an exception but a peripheral extension of European coloniality'.[9] This diagnosis echoes Madina Tlostanova's seminal intervention, which advanced 'the decolonial option' as a 'common ground for postcolonial and postcommunist experiences' and as a challenge to 'Soviet pseudo-internationalism with its underside of transmuted racism', followed by post-Soviet 'bio-racism'.[10] By contrast, Neda Atanasoski and Kalindi Vora have recently proposed approaching postsocialism as method by pluralising legacies of multiple socialisms and attending to 'socialist projects rooted in decolonial and antiracist politics'.[11] Between these different articulations of postsocialism, how can postsocialism have any political purchase and analytical force for IR? I argue that postsocialism as method needs to 'stay with the trouble', as Donna Haraway has formulated it. Staying with the trouble implies being attuned to the present, 'learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings'.[12] 'Staying with the trouble' means attending to the messiness of the present and avoiding pronouncements of either rupture or continuity. In so doing, postsocialism as method mobilises the insights of feminism as method. As Angela Davis has put it, feminism is in that sense not just about gender, sexuality, and race, but also about how to 'inhabit contradictions and discover what is productive in these contradictions'.[13] To put it differently, by going back to Lorde's reminiscences, postsocialism as method needs to stay with the trouble of 'Tashkent', to inhabit its contradictions in the present. 'The longer I stayed', Lorde recollects, 'the more I realized some of the personal tensions between North Russian and Uzbek are national and some racial.'[14]

Recent critical scholarship in IR has reclaimed Central and Eastern Europe as a site of knowledge production, experience, and subjectivity, which can help further 'provincialise' the discipline.[15] In that sense, IR's 'postcolonial moment' needs to be extended from analyses of the entanglements of European and non-European worlds to hierarchies of intra-European worlds within a framework that attends to the constitution of lesser others both within and outside whiteness.[16] Geographer Martin Müller has proposed speaking of a 'Global East' as an 'interstitial position' between the 'Global North' and 'Global South'.[17] Müller had previously argued that postsocialism was obsolete.[18] After being present as a description of a region (usually Central and Eastern Europe or the former Soviet bloc) and an epoch (post–Cold War/post-1989), postsocialism has indeed largely vanished from IR. A search in the pages of this journal has yielded zero results for 'postsocialism' and five

[9] Rexhepi, *White Enclosures*, p. 12. The debate about racialisation within or outside whiteness has been particularly prominent in the literature on the racialisation of Eastern European migrants and the epistemic politics of how this racialisation is conceived. Alyosxa Tudor, 'Queering migration discourse: Differentiating racism and migratism in postcolonial Europe', *Lambda Nordica*, 22:2–3 (2018), pp. 21–40; Aleksandra Lewicki, 'East–West inequalities and the ambiguous racialisation of "Eastern Europeans"', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49:6 (2023), pp. 1481–99; Ivan Kalmar, 'Race, racialisation, and the East of the European Union: An introduction', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49:6 (2023), pp. 1465–80. I return to this discussion in the third section.

[10] Madina Tlostanova, 'Postsocialist ≠ postcolonial? On post-Soviet imaginary and global coloniality', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 48:2 (2012), pp. 130–42.

[11] Neda Atanasoski and Kalindi Vora, 'Postsocialist politics and the ends of revolution', *Social Identities*, 24:2 (2018), pp. 138–54; Atanasoski and Vora, 'A Conversation on imperial legacies'.

[12] Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 1.

[13] Angela Y. Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016), p. 104.

[14] Lorde, *Sister Outsider*.

[15] Maria Mälksoo, 'Uses of "the East" in International Studies: Provincialising IR from Central and Eastern Europe', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 24:4 (2021), pp. 811–19.

[16] The 'postcolonial moment' was formulated by Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey in the context of security studies and expanded by Maria Mälksoo to analyse Russia's war in Ukraine. Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, 'The postcolonial moment in security studies', *Review of International Relations*, 32:2 (2006), pp. 329–52; Maria Mälksoo, 'The postcolonial moment in Russia's War against Ukraine', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 24:3-4 (2022), pp. 471–81.

[17] Martin Müller, 'In search of the Global East: Thinking between North and South', *Geopolitics*, 25:3 (2020), pp. 734–55.

[18] Martin Müller, 'Goodbye, postsocialism!', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71:4 (2019), pp. 533–50.

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results for the adjectival form 'postsocialist'. With the exception of a reference to Nancy Fraser's *Justice interruptus*, postsocialism is only an attribute of a region or an epoch (after 1989). This is the case for other IR journals, where postsocialism is absent, while postcommunist or post-communism cover the same spatio-temporal description.[19]

As IR scholars have mobilised the analytical vocabularies and frameworks of postcolonialism, decoloniality, race, and racism to address the silences of the discipline, they have fostered new analyses and understandings of the post-Soviet and Central and Eastern European regions and governmentality. From the war in former Yugoslavia and the neoliberalisation of Eastern Europe to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and from EU border assistance missions to violence against migrants, the enduring legacies of colonialism and racial capitalism shape our present. Postsocialism, however, has been absent from these critical engagements, which have privileged the tools of postcolonial and decolonial analysis. This is partly due to the fact that postsocialism has been a spatio-temporal description rather than an analytical approach. Moreover, as Maria Mälksoo has pointedly remarked, the 'inbetweeness' of Central and Eastern Europe has made it an unlikely candidate for advancing debates in post-Western and postcolonial IR.[20]

This article shares a political impetus to problematise and pluralise International Relations.[21] To do so, it engages with interdisciplinary scholarship that has revisited and reclaimed an analytics of postsocialism in connection to postcolonialism, imperialism, coloniality, and racial difference.[22] In approaching postsocialism as method, I take methods to be 'performative practices experimentally connecting and assembling fragments of ontology, epistemology, theories, techniques and data through which substantive effects are obtained'.[23] I argue that postsocialism as method can be a device for critique in IR. Empirically, I explore postsocialism in relation to questions of difference. I focus on several moments in which migration and racialised difference have been problematised at Europe's violent borders. I do so because borders are constitutive of how IR thinks of itself as a discipline – in some sense, more than war, security, or peace, as borders constitute the ontological and epistemological distinction between inside and outside. I also focus on borders and migration, given my positionality as an insider and outsider to the discipline and to postsocialism. The engagement with postsocialism as method and critique is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive, but exploratory and problematising.

To trace several dimensions of postsocialism as method, the article proceeds in four steps. First, it maps how postsocialism has been used across literatures in IR and social sciences more broadly. Secondly, drawing on recent feminist engagements with postsocialism and abolition feminism, I propose specifying postsocialism as a prefixal and conjunctional method for analyses of global politics. Thirdly, I turn to analyses that focus on borders and migration through the continuities of colonialism and racism in order to ask what postsocialism as a method can bring to these debates.

[19]See, for instance, *European Journal of International Relations, Journal of Common Market Studies*, or *International Organization*. The *International Studies Enclopedia* features the terminology of post-communist politics, post-communist international relations, and post-communist foreign policies. postsocialism only appears in feminist contributions referencing Nancy Fraser and Jacqui True.

[20]Mälksoo, 'Uses of "the East" in International Studies'. Maria Todorova argues that, unlike Orientalism, which a discourse of 'imputed opposition', Balkanism is a discourse of 'imputed ambiguity'. The diagnosis of the Balkans as the 'other' within has been generalised to Eastern Europe. Maria N. Todorova, *Scaling the Balkans: Essays on Eastern European Entanglements* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), p. 204.

[21]Mälksoo speaks of 'problematising, pluralising and de-centring *the international* in IR from CEE'. Mälksoo, 'Uses of "the East" in International Studies', p. 812.

[22]See Madina Tlostanova, Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, and Redi Koobak, 'The postsocialist "missing other" of transnational feminism?', *Feminist Review*, 121:1 (2019), pp. 81–7; Redi Koobak, Madina Tlostanova, and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert (eds), *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues: Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2021); Jennifer Suchland, 'Is postsocialism transnational?', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 36:4 (2011), pp. 837–62; Miglena S. Todorova, 'Race and women of color in socialist/postsocialist transnational feminisms in Central and Southeastern Europe', *Meridians*, 16:1 (2018), pp. 114–41.

[23]Claudia Aradau and Jef Huysmans, 'Critical methods in International Relations: The politics of techniques, devices and acts', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20:3 (2014), pp. 596–619 (p. 598).

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In the final section, I explore two moments in which the confinement and displacement of the Roma are disputed to show how postsocialism can inform a different reading. I conclude with a few reflections on postsocialism and/in IR.

Postsocialism: Descriptor, absence, analytics

Postsocialism has been mainly a spatio-temporal term. In the 1990s, postsocialism was used to refer to the spatio-temporal condition of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It marked a rupture from state socialism and named a supposed period of transition towards liberal democracy and neoliberal capitalism. Postsocialism indicated a time after the end of socialism, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the Cold War and referred to a spatial delimitation of the so-called former Soviet bloc. In this sense, it was often used interchangeably with postcommunism, which became a favourite term of liberal and anti-communist critics.[24] In IR, postcommunist transition, postcommunist countries, postcommunist regimes, and postcommunist period all delineate a region and an epoch.[25]

These terminologies had their heyday in the literature on transitology, which encompassed works analysing transitions of planned economies to market economies and from socialism to liberal democracy.[26] This literature had a particularly prominent home in European studies in the 1990s, as many of the former socialist countries applied to join and subsequently joined the EU. In so doing, Eastern European countries continued to be seen as in some way backward, non-Western, and therefore in transition towards liberal democracy (presumed to be Western). Political scientists brandished many dichotomies between Eastern and Western Europe, where Europe was the 'unmarked' term of democracy, liberalism, market economies. Eastern Europe (and the Balkans) were 'marked' by corruption, illiberalism, totalitarianism, lack of competition, and so on. In her distinction between marked and unmarked categories, historian Maria Todorova explains that 'the marked categories become marked as different while the unmarked categories retain their power as the standard against which the rest have to position themselves'.[27]

Critical scholarship in IR and the social sciences more broadly has deconstructed these assumptions of 'transition', showing for instance how postsocialist countries were subjected to the 'shock therapy' of disaster capitalism.[28] Liberal and neoliberal norms and practices were both exported and imposed on the region.[29] Scholars also unpacked the different dynamics of exporting, for example, 'new norms of gender relations', which 'empower women as citizens and consumers'.[30] The transition to democracy was underpinned by a 'repressive infantilisation of the societies that have recently liberated themselves from communism'.[31] They were reduced to the time of the 'not-yet', a suspended present only tenuously connected to a past it tried to disavow and to a future it

[24]See Vladimir Tismaneanu, 'Postcommunism between hope and disenchantment', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 12:4 (2009), pp. 354–64. Vladimir Tismăneanu had been appointed by the former Romanian president Traian Băsescu to lead the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Romanian Communist Dictatorship and the drafting of its report on the communist dictatorship in the country.

[25]These examples were gleaned from *International Organization*.

[26]For example, e.g. Philippe Schmitter, 'Reflections on "transitology"', in Daniel Brinks, Marcello Leiras, and Scott Mainwaring (eds), *Reflections on Uneven Democracies. The Legacy of Guillermo O'Donnell* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), pp. 71–86.

[27]Todorova, *Scaling the Balkans*, p. 215.

[28]Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

[29]The *Journal of Democracy*, produced by the National Endowment for Democracy, has been home to these approaches. Jacques Rupnik, for instance, offers a concise summary symptomatic of these approaches when he states: 'In 1989, democracy returned to East-Central Europe together with national sovereignty, thus reinforcing the strong historical connection between democracy and the nation-state.' Jacques Rupnik, 'Eastern Europe: The international context', *Journal of Democracy*, 11:2 (2000), pp. 115–29 (p. 119).

[30]Jacqui True, 'Expanding markets and marketing gender: The integration of the postsocialist Czech Republic', *Review of International Political Economy*, 6:3 (1999), pp. 360–89.

[31]Boris Buden, *Transition to Nowhere: Art in History after 1989* (Berlin: Archive Books, 2020), p. 78.

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could only precariously lay claim to. Postsocialism or postcommunism as transition produced not-quite-liberal, not-quite-European subjects in the region. In an engagement with Eastern European studies more broadly, Aida Hozić highlights the region's ambivalent peripheral status:

> Squeezed between the European and Eurasian great powers and always a periphery to someone, these borderlands and bloodlands seem to invite continuous meddling by outsiders, which reflects both on the level of high-power politics (currently over resources) and in everyday lives of individuals (as, for instance, in conflicting imaginaries of belonging).[32]

This literature has mounted critiques of neoliberalism and has mobilised poststructuralist, feminist, and postcolonial approaches as a lens onto postsocialist experiences. Therefore, postsocialism has come to be gradually replaced with other spatial concepts such as the East, Eastern Europe, the Eastern/Soviet bloc, the Balkans. Each of these acquired different connotations. IR scholars showed in particular how these categories reference an 'other' who was constitutive of European identity.[33] Beyond IR, others concurred that Eastern Europe was the West's 'other', but 'an intermediary one, neither fully civilized nor fully savage'.[34]

As postsocialism and postcommunism were used interchangeably to refer to the region, this literature also traced forms of agency that had been erased and showed that Eastern European countries were not simply victims of European integration and neoliberalisation. In her extensive analysis of the commercialisation of security provision across Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia Herzegovina, Alexandra Gheciu argued that, 'far from being the passive recipients of Western-prescribed norms and institutions, national and local actors have exercised significant forms of power in shaping the logics of security provision in the post-communist era'.[35] Most often, however, critical scholarship has unpacked constraints and forms of 'othering' rather than forms of agency. Based on searches across key security studies and IR journals, Mälksoo pointed out that 'EE [Eastern Europe] has generally served as either an unquestioned symbolic space for exercising the civilising mission of the West and testing the related theories in practice or a source of tensions and problems requiring Western strategising to save Europe from the unwanted spill-over effects'.[36]

More recently, IR scholars have supplemented these analyses with a call for ontological and epistemological plurality in the discipline informed by a perspective of coevalness, to use anthropologist Johannes Fabian's terminology.[37] For instance, mobility has enabled such a coeval perspective to counter the securitisation of migration, as 'acts of citizenship' reconfigured the 'other' as a political subject making claims and enacting rights.[38] Both beyond and within IR, scholars have addressed different dynamics of racialisation within and outside whiteness.[39] The distinction between racialisation within and outside whiteness has served to reinforce this representation of Eastern Europe as not wholly other, but more of an ambiguous other. Eastern Europe

[32] Aida A. Hozić, 'East European Studies: A question and some ambivalence', *East European Politics and Societies*, 29:02 (2015), pp. 433–39 (p. 437).

[33] Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Maria Mälksoo, 'The memory politics of becoming European: The East European subalterns and the collective memory of Europe', *European Journal of International Relations*, 15:4 (2009), pp. 653–80; Thomas Diez, 'Europe's others and the return of geopolitics', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17:2 (2004), pp. 319–35; Sergei Prozorov, 'The other as past and present: Beyond the logic of 'temporal othering' in IR theory', *Review of International Studies*, 37:3 (2011), pp. 1273–93.

[34] Jill Owczarzak, 'Introduction: Postcolonial studies and postsocialism in Eastern Europe', *Focaal*, 2009:53 (2009), pp. 3–19 (p. 6).

[35] Alexandra Gheciu, *Security Entrepreneurs: Performing Protection in Post-Cold War Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 13.

[36] Maria Mälksoo, 'Captive minds: The function and agency of Eastern Europe in International Security Studies', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 24 (2021), pp. 866–89.

[37] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

[38] Engin F Isin and Michael Saward (eds), *Enacting European Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[39] Lewicki, 'East–West inequalities'.

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appears therefore as a (quasi-)subaltern.[40] Nevertheless, this analytical schema eschews differences between Eastern European countries and intra-European hierarchies. After 1989, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia were allocated to an imaginary of Central Europe, closer to Austria and Germany than Romania and Bulgaria, whose poverty and corruption appeared to push them both further East and further down the scale of barbarism. Different categories of distinction also emerged around the Baltics and the Balkans.

In engaging with the spatio-temporal conditions of othering, IR scholarship has paid less attention to postsocialism as an analytical dimension and situated experience. This could be partly due to the political absence of postsocialism from the wide range of critical approaches in IR. The focus on practices might have also led scholars to a re-spatialisation of IR through regions.[41] The analytical and political utility of postsocialism has also been disputed across the social sciences and humanities. Geographer Martin Müller has argued that we should dispense with the concept of 'postsocialism' altogether.[42] As he summarises it, 'postsocialism emphasises rupture over continuity, privileges a territorial geographical imagination and reflects uneven power relationships in knowledge production'.[43] Hence, his injunction to say 'goodbye' to postsocialism.

However, Müller's objections can be countered or at least nuanced. First, his criticism of how postsocialism privileges rupture, as it emerges after the collapse of socialism, can be met with a different reading of the 'post', as postcolonial scholars have done. Postsocialism can be read to alert us to temporal entanglements, where socialism is not of the past but is a temporal relation fraught with uncertainty. Second, for Müller, postsocialism falls into a territorial trap as it is associated with particular countries and regions of the world. Yet the alleged boundedness of postsocialism is only possible if socialist legacies are analysed in a national or regional framework.[44] Third, Müller castigates postsocialism for its 'orientalising tendency' as a Western imposition upon Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. This does not account for the increasing body of literature that reclaims and employs postsocialism as a critical intervention across disciplines.

In reclaiming postsocialism as a political concept and practice, scholars across the humanities and social sciences have tried to unsettle and displace East/West binaries and Cold War divisions of the world. They have done so by attending to the prefix 'post' as not indicating endings but afterlives, not failure but traces, and not loss but multiplicity. In a recent article on energy infrastructures in Tanzania, anthropologist Michael Degani pays close attention to how the legacies of socialism have framed the stakes of the present.[45] Anthropologists Robert Deakin and Gabriela Nicolescu have referred to 'socialist fragments' to render the legacies, border crossings, and reactivations of socialism across Europe.[46] Feminist scholar Kristen Ghodsee has analysed transnational feminism across the Second and the Third Worlds. While entanglements between the Second and the Third World have received less attention than imperial and colonial encounters, Ghodsee has

[40]See Mälksoo, 'The memory politics of becoming European'.

[41]Audrey Alejandro challenges the move that has relegated Central and Eastern Europe to area studies rather than IR theory by pointing out that 'one can consider Area Studies to be superior to "IR Theory", with a closer engagement with fieldwork, interdisciplinarity, and contextualisation – dimensions that "IR Theory" literature often lack'. Chari and Verdery attempted to make the reverse move – from postsocialism as relegated to 'Soviet Area Studies' and postcolonialism to 'Third World and Colonial Studies' to 'Post–Cold War Ethnography'. Audrey Alejandro, 'Do International Relations scholars not care about Central and Eastern Europe or do they just take the region for granted? A conclusion to the special issue', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 24 (2021), pp. 1001–13 (p. 1009).

[42]Müller, 'Goodbye, postsocialism!'.

[43]Müller, 'Goodbye, postsocialism!', p. 534.

[44]The concept of Global East seems to fall into the spatial trap as it projects a 'flat geopolitical space'. For a discussion, see Liviu Chelcea, 'Goodbye, postsocialism? Stranger things beyond the Global East', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Online first, doi: 10.1080/15387216.2023.2236126 (p. 8).

[45]Michael Degani, 'The flickering torch: Power and loss after socialism', *Critical Times*, 5:2 (2022), pp. 370–98.

[46]Robert Deakin and Gabriela Nicolescu, 'Socialist fragments East and West: Towards a comparative anthropology of global (post-)socialism', *Critique of Anthropology*, 42:2 (2022), pp. 114–36.

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traced exchanges and solidarities between feminists in the Second and Third Worlds.[47] It is also in this tradition of contesting the Cold War spatialisation of the world that scholars have drawn attention to transversal anti-colonial and socialist solidarities. These literatures have, however, not had their homes in IR, but mostly in anthropology, geography, and interdisciplinary feminist scholarship.

Although in the late 1990s Nancy Fraser connected postsocialism to a 'grammar of political claims-making' globally, it is the politics of redistribution versus the politics of recognition that has been translated in academic vocabularies.[48] Postsocialism was therefore a time of loss, but one which could be surmounted by reconnecting redistribution and recognition. Whilst the distinction between recognition and redistribution was subsequently disputed, their political geographies in North America and Western Europe have continued.[49] Drawing on her research in Hungary, sociologist Zsuzsa Gille challenged Fraser's narrative and argued that 'class and identity politics have been strategically fused in the region during and after state socialism'.[50] Gille traced the various forms in which class and identity had been articulated and merged. Her analysis addressed criticisms of 'colour-blind socialism' at the same time as destabilising the diagnosis of socialist racism (whether class racism and/or an 'epidermal schema').[51]

Critical scholarship in anthropology, sociology, geography, or literary and cultural studies has increasingly interrogated relations between postcolonialism and postsocialism, postsocialism and decoloniality, postsocialism and feminism. In a seminal article, geographer Sharad Chari and anthropologist Katherine Verdery proposed connecting the study of postsocialism with that of postcolonialism. They framed it as 'thinking between the posts'.[52] While they acknowledged that postsocialism started as 'simply a temporal designation', it gradually became a signifier of criticality: 'critical of the socialist past and of possible socialist futures; critical of the present as neoliberal verities about transition, markets, and democracy were being imposed upon former socialist spaces; and critical of the possibilities for knowledge as shaped by Cold War institutions'.[53] Much has happened since the publication of their article. Nonetheless, thinking 'between the posts' has remained marginal in IR.

Postsocialism has also been largely absent from discussions of postcolonialism in IR. For instance, the *Handbook on Postcolonial Politics* does not mention postsocialism or the challenges of 'thinking between the posts'.[54] If postsocialism is absent, 'socialism' appears both in relation to struggle and resistance – 'Third World socialism' or 'African socialism' – and as a logic of modernity. For Ajay Parasram and Lisa Tilley, socialism and capitalism 'share universalistic aspirations predicated on a developmental and colonial logic of gradual linear development'.[55] They make the decolonial move to 'elevate other-than European knowledge systems which are arguably more qualified to diversify and decolonise approaches to addressing the afflictions of the modern world'.[56] In that sense, the critical move is akin to the decolonial option that Tlostanova had proposed as a way

[47] Kristen Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

[48] Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 2.

[49] E.g. Judith Butler, 'Merely cultural', *Social Text*, 52/53 (1997), pp. 265–77.

[50] Zsuzsa Gille, 'Is there a global postsocialist condition?', *Global Society*, 24:1 (2010), pp. 9–30 (p. 10).

[51] Verdery diagnoses 'class racism' in socialism, while Rexhepi focuses on socialist racism as integral to European modernity and coloniality.

[52] Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts: Postcolonialism, postsocialism, and ethnography after the Cold War', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51:1 (2009), pp. 6–34.

[53] Chari and Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts', p. 11.

[54] Interestingly, Chari and Verdery's article is not cited in any of the contributions to the Handbook.

[55] Ajay Parasram and Lisa Tilley, 'Global environmental harm, internal frontiers and indigenous protective ontologies', in Olivia U. Rutazibwa and Robbie Shilliam (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Politics* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 302–17 (p. 307).

[56] Parasram and Tilley, 'Global environmental harm', p. 306.

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of 'thinking beyond the posts' rather than between them.[57] This resonates with the experience of feminist scholars who have noted that it has often been scholars of postsocialism who have worked with postcolonial concepts and approaches rather than the other way round.[58]

A notable exception is Catherine Baker's work on racial formations in the Yugoslav region, which starts from the challenge and invitation of 'thinking between the posts'.[59] Baker's intervention addresses South-East European studies, where 'race as distinct from ethnicity' has been rarely used as an analytical and critical lens. In tracing formations of race historically, from before, during, and after Yugoslav state socialism, racism appears in contingent and continuous constellations: 'While post-Yugoslav identifications with cultural racism went back too simply to "consequences" of postsocialism, the region's violently inverted geopolitical position after 1990 still shaped what form they took.'[60] The book's analysis of forms and formations of racism works through the tensions, contradictions and occlusions of debates about race. While Baker pays careful attention to how racialising vocabularies could coexist with anti-colonial practices and Yugoslavia's leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement, postsocialism seems to have less analytical traction than postcolonialism. In that sense, *Race and the Yugoslav Region* advances the interdisciplinary scholarship that has mobilised postcolonial approaches to understand relations of power and resistance in Eastern Europe. In the introduction to a special issue on 'Postcolonial studies and postsocialism in Eastern Europe', anthropologists deploy postcolonial concepts such as orientalism, hybridity, identity, and voice to understand postsocialist Eastern Europe.[61] Most recently, the 'postcolonial moment' in the Russia–Ukraine war has interpellated IR theory and 'the discipline's relative ignorance of Eastern European insights and the validity of their experiences'.[62] As Mälksoo argues, this is due to how '[m]ainstream postcolonial studies have focused on the political construction of racial hierarchies along the colour lines, not among the white-skinned people themselves'.[63]

The question that remains is what forms of political presence 'postsocialism' has – or should have – in our analyses of international politics. For instance, Chari and Verdery proposed to relinquish the language of postsocialism in favour of post–Cold War studies to avoid the limits and limitations of area studies. Anthropologist Jill Owczarzak observed, more than a decade ago, that postsocialism had not been deployed as an analytical category in contrast to postcolonialism, 'which has a rich history as a theoretical paradigm'.[64] Building on scholarship that has reclaimed postsocialism for critical analyses of the present, the next section unpacks several dimensions of what work postsocialism as a method and critique could do in IR.

Postsocialism as method and critique

If Chari and Verdery's call for 'thinking between the posts' has been met largely with silence in IR, a recent edited volume on *Postcolonial/Postsocialist Dialogues* tackles this invitation, its tensions

[57]Tlostanova, 'Postsocialist ≠ postcolonial?'; Madina Tlostanova, 'The postcolonial condition, the decolonial option, and the post-socialist intervention', in Monica Albrecht (ed.), *Postcolonialism Cross-Examined* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 165–78.

[58]Redi Koobak, Madina Tlostanova, and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, 'Introduction: Uneasy affinities between the postcolonial and the postsocialist', in Redi Koobak, Madina Tlostanova, and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert (eds), *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues* (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 1–10. See also Chari and Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts'.

[59]Catherine Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region: Postsocialist, Post-Conflict, Postcolonial?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018). In Critical Security Studies, a recent special issue also invites us to analyse security across postcolonial and postsocialist scenes and particularly to conceptualise these together. See Andrew C. Dwyer, Andreas Langenohl, and Philipp Lottholz, 'Topologies of security: Inquiring in/security across postcolonial and postsocialist scenes', *Critical Studies on Security*, 11:1 (2023), pp. 1–13.

[60]Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region*, pp. 122–3.

[61]Owczarzak, 'Introduction', p. 3.

[62]Mälksoo, 'The postcolonial moment in Russia's war against Ukraine', p. 471.

[63]Mälksoo, 'The postcolonial moment in Russia's war against Ukraine', p. 473.

[64]Owczarzak, 'Introduction', p. 4.

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and political challenges head on.[65] The volume features interventions by scholars across sociology, anthropology, area studies, and IR. Postsocialism is rendered both as method and analytics, even though not all the contributors agree on the value of postsocialist analytics. As the editors put it in the introduction, the book explores 'uneasy affinities between postsocialism and postcolonialism'. They also explain the academic silence around postsocialism, given its association with an endorsement of modernity and European values:

> While the early postcolonial discourses were leftist, anti-capitalist, and progressivist, the postsocialist discourses were marked by a visceral rejection of everything socialist and a fascination with Western knowledge. By the early 2000s, however, a more critical stance began to gradually emerge among postsocialist activists and scholars.[66]

This critical stance has taken largely two forms, which are relevant to the discussion of postsocialism as method in IR. The first form concerns rethinking the legacies of socialism, particularly genealogies of feminist and anti-colonial solidarities.[67] The second one revisits critiques of capitalism and the neoliberal present. For literary theorists Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Ioana Luca, postsocialism as an 'analytical concept and critical standpoint' helps hold together a critical analysis of the effects of neoliberalism with socialist legacies that shape the present, and 'the potential contributions of socialist experiences and ideals to the construction of imaginaries of more equitable futures'.[68] What they call 'socialist globalization' was an alternative modernisation project which 'encompassed humanitarian and development aid; the training of students, cadres, and workers; and extensive cultural connections and exchanges'.[69] Urban studies scholar Tauri Tuvikene proposes postsocialism as a 'de-territorialized concept', which is not associated with societies or cities as a whole, but which characterises processes of continuity and anti-continuity.[70]

Atanasoski and Vora have offered one of the most elaborate articulations of postsocialism as method, which 'enables an exploration of socialist legacies on multiple scales, expanding beyond state socialism and the Communist International, and how these have (or have not) remained constitutive of contemporary radical and decolonial imaginaries of collectivity and political action'. [71] While they do not specify the meaning of method, methods are not opposed to concepts, but work with and through concepts such as legacies, scales, plurality. As Jacqui M. Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have explained about 'colonial legacies', the formulation is used to 'evoke the imagery of an inheritance and to map continuities and discontinuities between contemporary and inherited practices within state and capital formations'.[72]

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[65]Koobak, Tlostanova, and Thapar-Björkert, *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues*. The volume also includes an interview with Catherine Baker: Catherine Baker and Redi Koobak, 'Bridging postcoloniality, postsocialism and "race" in the age of Brexit', pp. 40–52. Manuela Boatcă is one of the contributors who expresses her scepticism towards both postcolonialism and postsocialism as 'adequate analytical lenses'. Manuela Boatcă and Madina Tlostanova, 'Uneasy "posts" and unmarked categories" politics of positionality between and beyond the Global South and the European East. An interview with Manuela Boatcă', pp. 185–92.

[66]Koobak, Tlostanova, and Thapar-Björkert, 'Introduction', p. 2.

[67]For example, Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*.

[68]Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Ioana Luca, 'Introduction: The cultures of global post/socialisms', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 59:3 (2022), pp. 425–46 (p. 428).

[69]Sadowski-Smith and Luca, 'Introduction', p. 430.

[70]Tauri Tuvikene, 'Strategies for comparative urbanism: Post-socialism as a de-territorialized concept', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40:1 (2016), pp. 132–46.

[71]Neda Atanasoski and Erin McElroy, 'Postsocialism and the afterlives of revolution: Impossible spaces of dissent', in Nicoletta Pireddu (ed.), *Reframing Critical, Literary, and Cultural Theories: Thought on the Edge* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2018), pp. 273–97 (p. 227).

[72]Jacqui M. Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Introduction: Genealogies, legacies, movement', in Jacqui M. Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds), *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. xiii–xlii (p. xxi).

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I suggest specifying socialist legacies and the movement of continuity/discontinuity/anti-continuity through Raymond Williams's triad of the dominant, residual, and emergent.[73] The residual and emergent both accompany and exceed what is dominant. For Williams, the residual refers to what has been formed in the past but is still active in the present, while the emergent is about what is not just novel but alternative and oppositional. If 'actually existing socialism' was/is dominant in certain countries, fields, or struggles, some residues are reactivated in the present, others are disavowed, while other elements might be emergent. Sadowski-Smith and Luca have traced these residual lines, as 'socialist legacies persist in post-Soviet/CEE nations and in global South countries, in histories of Left Internationalism and Non-Alignment, and in U.S. narratives that approach the crisis of neoliberalism through neo-Cold War lenses centered on post/socialist opponents'.[74] This persistence is not sameness, it is a residual whose relation to the dominant and emergent needs to be problematised. Postsocialism as method can help account for 'more complex circulations, and understudied vectors of transnational movement that are not bound by the world regions bequeathed to us by Cold War configurations of knowledge and power'.[75]

Postsocialism as method recasts spatial boundaries, temporal ruptures, and exclusive categorisations by finding residues, reactivations, and emergences of different socialisms in the present – be it in anti-racist practices, in migrant struggles, or in transnational solidarities. Chiara Bonfiglioli and Kristen Ghodsee welcome the focus on postsocialism as a contribution to transnational feminist debates but argue that it should not be conceived simply as an exclusion resulting from Western-centric epistemology.[76] Rather, for them, this exclusion 'is also the result of the deliberate erasure of the history of an earlier internationalist form of women's activism that once linked the subaltern subjects of the Global South with their comrades in the former state socialist countries of Eastern Europe'.[77] They object to the assumption of a 'missed encounter between (post)socialist and (post)colonial subjects' as well as to the 'continued equation between Western and socialist colonialities'.[78]

In the sense in which postsocialism as method problematises what is dominant, residual, and emergent, it can be understood as prefixal. The prefix 'post' has been constitutive of how postcolonialism and other 'posts' have envisaged their relation to the past and the future. Postcolonialism enables 'a double re-engagement with global politics as both historically constituted through colonialism and presently delineated by struggle over colonial legacies even in an era where, formally speaking, colonialism has mostly ended'.[79] Rethinking the relation between past and present through the dominant, residual, and emergent allows us to understand how elements of the past can continue in a reconfigured mode, how both the residual and the emergent are different from how the dominant was constituted, and how they can be appropriated in the reconstitution of the dominant.

Postsocialism as method expands on the prefix 'post' to ask questions and problematise the multiplicity of resonances, legacies, and transgressions that socialism might hold and endure in the present. In his article on Tanzania and socialism, Degani reminds us of a tenet of the work

[73] Williams cautions about the difficulty of distinguishing what is alternative and oppositional to dominant culture. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 121–4.

[74] Sadowski-Smith and Luca, 'Introduction'.

[75] Douglas Rogers, 'Postsocialisms unbound: Connections, critiques, comparisons', *Slavic Review*, 69:1 (2010), pp. 1–15 (p. 3).

[76] Chiara Bonfiglioli and Kristen Ghodsee, 'Vanishing act: Global socialist feminism as the "missing other" of transnational feminism – a response to Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert and Koobak (2019)', *Feminist Review*, 126:1 (2020), pp. 168–72.

[77] Bonfiglioli and Ghodsee, 'Vanishing act'.

[78] Bonfiglioli and Ghodsee, 'Vanishing act', p. 168.

[79] Olivia U. Rutazibwa and Robbie Shilliam, 'Postcolonial politics: An introduction', in Olivia U. Rutazibwa and Robbie Shilliam (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Politics* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 1–15 (p. 1).

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on postsocialism, namely 'that beneath the formal ideological ruptures and embrace of liberalization, socialist dispositions endure'.[80] This endurance and affective life is not understood the same way as the transitology literature has done – as affects that impede the transformation of these societies and their transition to liberal democracy and neoliberal governance. Enduring socialist dispositions resonate with Ann Laura Stoler's analysis of how colonialism endures, which requires attention to reactivations, reconfigurations, displacements as well as dispersions and fragmenting processes. She emphasises 'recursive analysis' as attention to 'processes of partial reinscriptions, modified displacements, and amplified recuperations'.[81] The prefix 're' has been important to how the past and present are connected and resonate through reproduction, reiteration, recomposition, or rearticulation. It alerts us to recompositions and reconfigurations that produce insecurity and generate racialising effects, to the modes of generative difference that emerge through reconfigurations that are neither new nor old, neither the same nor entirely different. Alongside 'post' and 're', the prefix 'de/dis' also complicates relations between past and future, attending to ways of decomposing, disjoining, or undoing. To undo is not to negate, exclude, destroy, eliminate, or neutralise, but it is a mode of emergence, potentially oppositional but also potentially a 'new phase' of the dominant.[82]

This prefixal method of attending to residual and emergent practices, to reactivated and deactivated or vanishing legacies needs to be supplemented by a conjunctional one. In theorising 'abolition feminism as method', Angela Davis and colleagues highlight 'the necessity to always replace the either/or with the both/and'. As they explain, 'this both/and practice requires a willingness to inhabit contradictions, to eschew purity, and embrace the tensions and contradictions inherent in political and social movements that seek radical, systemic change'.[83] I read replacing either/or with both/and as working through the ambivalences of socialist legacies, not just through how socialist legacies are reconfigured and disfigured, reactivated, deactivated, and emergent, but also through how they are both racist and anti-racist, both internationalist and nationalist, both patriarchal and emancipatory. In that sense, postsocialism as conjunctional method is about interrogating and intervening within these contradictions rather than negating, inverting, or transcending them.

While socialism is seen not to carry the same negative valences as colonialism, it remains at best ambiguous, with both oppressive and liberatory legacies. As we have seen, critical scholars have made visible the constitutive dimensions of race for socialism and argued that it is inextricable from the 'dark side' of the modernity/coloniality equation. As Tlostanova has incisively put it:

> The main tools of modernity/coloniality in both Western liberal and Socialist versions are vectorial time and progressivist teleology; the absurdly rationalized management of knowledge and subjectivity; the sanctification of technological development; the cult of the future and the dismissal of the negatively marked tradition, particularly if this is a spatially alien past, with regular lapses into exoticism and antiquarianism.[84]

Postsocialism as method holds together these contradictions and ambivalences through the conjunctional both/and. Both/and does not dissolve contradictions and it does not surpass them in a dialectical move. It also does not simply invert the subordinate terms of a hierarchy. For Atanasoski and Vora, the key question is how to analyse 'ongoing socialist legacies in new ethical collectivities and networks of dissent opposing state and corporate-based military, economic, and

[80] Degani, 'The flickering torch', p. 374.

[81] Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 27.

[82] There are further intersections here to be explored with the literature on time and temporality in IR. See, for instance, Andrew R. Hom, *International Relations and the Problem of Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[83] Angela Y. Davis, Gina Dent, Erica R. Meiners, and Beth E. Richie, *Abolition. Feminism. Now* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2022), p. 155.

[84] Tlostanova, 'The postcolonial condition', pp. 166-7.

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cultural expansionism since the end of the Cold War.'[85] Furthermore, we need to ask how socialist legacies are activated and deactivated in contemporary governmentalities.

Therefore, postsocialism can orient us to different modes of critique. For instance, the legacies of socialism can underpin a critique of neoliberalism that does not prioritise freedom at the expense of equality or individuality at the expense of collectivity. Anthropologist Čarna Brković defines a postsocialist political imagination as different from a decolonial political imagination, as it 'is about figuring out what else there is to do after the utopian political project you pursued has failed, besides replicating patterns of (ethno-)racial capitalism.'[86] I suggest that a postsocialist critique can orient analysis by problematising binaries, refusing borders and boundaries that reinforce unequal freedoms, and reactivating socialist legacies that can foster emergent collectivities and political action. The next section turns to how postsocialism as method and critique can be mobilised in debates about borders and migration.

Coloniality of migration and socialist legacies

In the wake of the Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, it quickly emerged that foreign students and other third-country nationals from Morocco, Egypt, Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, and other African countries were not allowed to cross EU borders or faced highly discriminatory treatment. A double racism was represented in this media coverage – Ukrainian racism towards third-country nationals was supposed to not let them leave or to make them wait, while Polish and Hungarian racism did not let people enter the EU. For instance, the *Financial Times* reported that 'Ukrainian border guards separated foreigners from locals.'[87] These reports were followed by accounts of violence against third-country nationals in the region: 'People of colour fleeing Ukraine attacked by Polish nationalists' was such a headline in *The Guardian*.[88] Ukrainian 'white' refugees were opposed to refugees 'of colour' who were subject to discrimination. This also activated the trope of racist Eastern European countries versus more liberal Western European EU member states, even as some reporting and academic interventions highlighted racialisation as an EU-wide dynamic.

Most often, however, Ukrainian refugees were rendered as 'white' and therefore as an extension of European whiteness in contrast to third-country nationals, largely represented as foreign students studying at Ukrainian universities. Major English-language newspapers reported on how these distinctions and racialisations played out in Poland and Hungary in particular.[89] The triggering of the EU's Temporary Protection Directive to apply to Ukrainian refugees was met with similar criticisms, as the EU did not request its application to third-country nationals fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, who did not have permanent residence or could not prove it. Rather, the implementing Council Decision left their treatment to the latitude of EU member states.[90] Among these, only Portugal extended temporary protection to non-Ukrainian citizens, third-country nationals, stateless persons, and their families fleeing the war.[91] These distinctions passed largely unnoticed,

[85] Atanasoski and Vora, 'Postsocialist politics and the ends of revolution', p. 141.

[86] Čarna Brkovic, 'Between decolonial and postsocialist political imagination: Redescribing present failures in Mostar', *Berliner Blätter*, 85 (2022), pp. 33–47 (p. 35).

[87] Andres Schipani, James Shotter, Neil Munshi, and Joseph Cotterill, 'Foreign students report discrimination at Ukraine's borders', *Financial Times* (3 March 2022).

[88] Lorenzo Tondo and Emmanuel Akinwotu, 'People of colour fleeing Ukraine attacked by Polish nationalists', *The Guardian* (2 March 2022).

[89] Newspaper articles were retrieved based on searches in 'major world newspapers' in the Nexis database. The searches included 'Ukrainian refugees' and 'foreign students', and 'Ukrainian refugees' and 'Roma' (as of 6 May 2023).

[90] Council of the European Union, 'Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection' (4 March 2022).

[91] 'Temporary protection regime will also cover non-Ukrainian citizens' (2022), available at: {https://eportugal.gov.pt/en/noticias/regime-de-protecao-temporaria-tambem-vai-abranger-cidadaos-nao-ucranianos}.

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as EU discrimination between Ukrainian and other refugees, and the racism that foreign students had to face, appeared to be continuous.

What went unremarked in these debates was the history of the presence of African students in Ukrainian universities and the treatment that Ukrainian refugees faced in different countries, as well as that of the Ukrainian Roma. Raluca Bejan and René Bogovic have highlighted that what is absent from the story is how 'Ukraine has continued the former Soviet tradition of regularly recruiting Global South students within the medical field'.[92] In *Sister Outsider*, Audre Lorde recalls the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow:

> This is a university located in Moscow for students from African countries. There were many Africans in and around the hotel when I got back from the Metro station and I think many of them were here for the Conference. Interestingly enough, most of them speak Russian and I don't.[93]

In Romania, the strategy of 'educational internationalism', through which scholarships were offered to students from African states, was supplemented by the country's self-redefinition 'as a "developing socialist country" in order to appear closer to African nations'.[94] Yet the presence of African, Asian, and Latin American students also brought up a reckoning with the tensions between anti-racist, anti-colonial solidarity and racism. Historian Bogdan Iacob has shown that students from Africa, Asia, and Latin America contested the representation of their countries in the Romanian media and the regime's policies given the racism they experienced.[95] In Yugoslavia, similarly, educational internationalism and the presence of foreign students led to problematisations of racism.[96]

The presence of African students in Ukraine needs to be understood at the intersection of these and other postsocialist legacies as well as neoliberal capitalism and European bordering. Bejan and Bogovic ask us to pay attention to geopolitics and citizenship regimes. Indeed, in the EU, refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine had to cross Schengen (Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary) and non-Schengen EU borders (Romania). These are part of the EU border regime, and Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, was deployed at Romania's borders even before the Temporary Protection Directive was activated.[97] Frontex deployed additional officers, patrol cars, and aerial surveillance at the Romania–Ukraine borders. As the agency notes on its website, alongside helping Romanian authorities process people crossing borders, 'Frontex is also looking at ways how the agency can support non-Ukrainian nationals who have fled the country and would like to go back to their countries of origin with return flights'.[98] The shift to more humanitarian language towards third-country nationals does not suspend filtering practices that target some people on the

[92] Raluca Bejan and Rene Bogovic, 'Ukraine: How citizenship and race play out in refugees' movements in Europe', *The Conversation* (11 March 2022).

[93] Lorde, *Sister Outsider*.

[94] Monica Popescu, 'Cold War solidarities and twenty-first-century frayed alliances: Romanian–Ghanaian vantage points', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 59:3 (2022), pp. 487–505.

[95] Iacob also traces the transformation of the internationalist ethos into a commercial one, as Romania's need for hard currency grew in the 1980s. Bogdan C. Iacob, 'A Babel in Bucharest: Third World students in Romania, 1960s–1980s', *Cahiers du monde russe*, 3:4 (2022), pp. 669–90.

[96] Peter Wright, '"Are there racists in Yugoslavia?" Debating Racism and anti-Blackness in socialist Yugoslavia', *Slavic Review*, 81:2 (2022), pp. 418–41.

[97] Mariana Gkliati, 'Frontex assisting in the Ukrainian displacement: A welcoming committee at racialised passage?', in Sergio Carrera and Meltem Ineli-Ciger (eds), *EU Responses to the Large-Scale Refugee Displacement* (European University Institute, 2023), pp. 282–302.

[98] 'Frontex to send additional officers to Romania' (2022), available at: {https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-to-send-additional-officers-to-romania-B4Nl2h}.

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move. The borders with Moldova and Ukraine had also been integrated within EU governmentality through neighbourhood policies and border assistance programmes.[99]

This differentiation and racialisation around the restricted application of the Temporary Protection Directive resonate with critical analyses of the so-called 2015 refugee crisis. Building on Aníbal Quijano's 'coloniality of power', sociologist Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez has developed the analytical framework of the 'coloniality of migration'. As she points out, refugees appear as 'outsiders' who 'seem to have no historical connection with Europe'.[100] The coloniality of migration is understood as the racial classification of migration statuses and associated restrictions or filters reminiscent of the categorisation of colonised populations as 'fundamentally different and inherently inferior to the colonizer'.[101] More recently, scholars have situated Britain's response to refugee arrivals across the English Channel – what became known through the metonymic 'small boat arrivals' – within colonial histories. Thom Davies and colleagues have argued that the Channel needs to be understood as 'another site for the symbolic and material manifestations of the deadly afterlife of colonialism'.[102] These colonial continuities have not only shaped academic engagements with migration discourses and bordering practices, but they have also informed activist mobilisation.

While these interventions focus on Europe's colonial legacies, Rexhepi has nuanced these continuities by situating them in relation to the 'socialist geopolitics of race and religion'.[103] He has argued that the violence against refugees on the so-called Balkan route needs to be understood in relation to discourses 'propagated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, projecting Bosnia as a safe zone for militant Islamists on their way to Europe'.[104] Rexhepi explores this transformation at the intersection of 'second- and third-world Muslim resistance and solidarity'.[105] As this resistance is both invisibilised and rendered as antagonistic to dominant socialism, Rexhepi does not aim to recover the tensions between multiple socialisms, as Atanasoski and Vora have proposed. For him, socialism is inadequate to sustain anti-racist politics. Instead, it is a decolonial critique that enables 'delinking', not just from Eurocentrism, coloniality, and racism, but also from socialism, which informs some of the continuities that undergird the violence of our present.

These tensions are also at work in border and migration control at the EU borders. What does postsocialism as method mean for how violent racist borders have been conceptualised and criticised in IR? As we have seen, racism is constitutive of claims by Eastern European countries to uphold European values and return to their place in Europe – which is imagined and enacted as a place of whiteness, liberalism and homogeneity. Scholars working on migration have pointed out how these claims to whiteness inflect and deflect Eastern European migrants' experiences of precarious labour and discrimination in the West. What is at stake here is the 'Eastern European subjects' racial distance from both West European hegemonic whiteness and Blackness'.[106] This dual distance is translated into an ambiguity of racialisation, which can support claims to whiteness and simultaneously racialisation as 'lesser others', while effacing racialisation as socialist legacy and postsocialist emergence.

[99] Julien Jeandesboz, 'Intervention and subversion: The EU border assistance mission to Moldova and Ukraine', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 9:4 (2015), pp. 442–70.

[100] Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 'The coloniality of migration and the "refugee crisis": On the asylum–migration nexus, the transatlantic white European settler colonialism-migration and racial capitalism', *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 34:1 (2018), pp. 16–28 (p. 18).

[101] Rodríguez, 'The coloniality of migration', p. 24.

[102] Thom Davies, Arshad Isakjee, Lucy Mayblin, and Joe Turner, 'Channel crossings: Offshoring asylum and the afterlife of empire in the Dover Strait', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44:13 (2021), pp. 2307–27 (p. 2322).

[103] Rexhepi, *White Enclosures*, p. 46.

[104] Rexhepi, *White Enclosures*, p. 62.

[105] Rexhepi, *White Enclosures*, p. 67.

[106] Daria Krivonos, 'Racial capitalism and the production of difference in Helsinki and Warsaw', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49:6 (2023), pp. 1500–16 (p. 1504).

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Alyosxa Tudor in particular has questioned the 'oversimplified connections between migration and racism', arguing for an analytical and political distinction between 'migratism' and 'racism'. According to Tudor, an overgeneralised use of racism, particularly as applied to migrant Eastern Europeans risks reproducing 'conceptual whiteness'.[107] The main critique is targeted at 'migration-based racism', or racialisation understood solely as migration. While Tudor's point that Europeans of colour are rendered unthinkable in some discourses of migration is well taken,[108] I am less convinced by the critique of the epistemic collapse of migration and racism. Racialisation appears in many guises, as it makes possible the production of varied categories of infrahumanity and subhumanity, and it is imbricated with other practices, such as securitisation. Tudor argues that white people are migratised '*only* if they are or are *perceived* as coming from Eastern Europe or Latin America, which means from outside what is constructed as the Western world'.[109] Yet these migrants are also rendered as lesser humans or not quite white. In this latter vein, sociologist Aleksandra Lewicki has argued that Eastern Europeans are 'distinctively, yet ambiguously racialised'. They are rendered as inferior but also as privileged in Europe.[110]

Postsocialism as a critical intervention invites us to ask questions about the solidarities and struggles that can be sustained through our conceptual and empirical analyses. In the final section, I turn to two moments, two decades apart, to show how postsocialism as method can offer different readings of their political stakes. The first one concerns a case brought by the European Roman Rights Centre against the UK government for stationing immigration officials at Prague Airport in 2001. The second one concerns the treatment of the Roma fleeing the war in Ukraine in 2022.

Drawing connections: Differences that do (not) matter

In 2001, the UK government stationed immigration officers at Prague Airport, following authorisation by Parliament that immigration rules could operate extra-territorially and an agreement with the Czech Republic. The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) brought a case before the UK courts on the basis of racial discrimination towards Roma who were claiming asylum and were therefore prohibited from reaching the UK. The case was found unjustified by the Court of Appeal and was ultimately overturned by the House of Lords, which found that racial discrimination was at stake in these filtering practices.

What interests me, in this case, are not the court judgements per se, but how postsocialism as method can help us reread the stakes of the case. In light of the prefixal and conjunctional approach to postsocialism as method I have proposed, this section illustrates how connections are drawn or rendered unthinkable. The case also alerts us to the ways in which struggles take place 'in between' the posts, between postcolonialism and postsocialism as connected.

As the appellants draw connections across struggles and entangle anti-racist struggles, the courts repeatedly undo these either by introducing new distinctions or by erasing differences. Firstly, the appellants refer to another case in the USA, *Sale, Acting Commission, Immigration and Naturalisation Service v Haitian Centers Council Inc*. This case concerned a complaint against the American Immigration Service, which intercepted Haitian refugees in international waters and returned them to Haiti. The question is whether the 'interception' of the Roma at Prague Airport is similar to that of the Haitian refugees. The appellants' lawyer argued that:

> If it impermissible to return refugees from the high seas to their country of origin, why should it be permissible to prevent their leaving in the first place? How can the legality of

[107] Alyosxa Tudor, 'Ascriptions of migration: Racism, migratism and Brexit', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 26:2 (2023), pp. 230–48 (p. 238).
[108] Tudor, 'Queering migration discourse', p. 25.
[109] Tudor, 'Ascriptions of migration', p. 240.
[110] Lewicki, 'East–West inequalities', p. 1483.

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> the putative receiving state's action be determined simply by reference to which side of the frontier (perhaps a land frontier) the prospective asylum seeker is standing?[111]

While the US Supreme Court found the actions of the American Immigration Service lawful, the appellants and subsequently Judge Brown from the Court of Appeal follow the report of the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights, which was 'fiercely critical of the majority decision of the Supreme Court'.[112] Nevertheless, Judge Brown introduces a further distinction that then separates the treatment of Haitian refugees from that of the Roma asylum seekers, namely that the Refugee Convention specifies as refugees 'solely those who have left their own state'. 'The Convention could have', continues Judge Brown, 'but chose not to, concern itself also with enabling people to escape from their own country by providing for a right of admission to another country to allow them to do so'.[113] Therefore, the distinction between those who are already on another state's territory versus those who remain in their country as 'aspiring refugees' means that the connections between the Roma and the Haitian refugees are undone.

Second, the appellants argue that the measures are akin to racial discrimination, as the Czech Roma are singled out by the checks. The Court of Appeal, rather perversely, renders these checks as less serious than visa control because they are not as systematically applied:

> The fact that it operates only sporadically means that sometimes the intending asylum seeker will be free to travel. In any event it applies only to travel to the UK: the intending asylum seeker can travel anywhere else he [*sic*] pleases and, indeed, if he does so, there is nothing in the scheme which precludes his then travelling on to the UK. There is no stamping of his travel document or any permanent record of his having been refused leave.[114]

If the Roma are not universally prohibited from accessing the UK or not universally persecuted, then this amounts to non-persecution and non-discrimination. As differences proliferate in a world of endless possibilities, the claim of discrimination becomes deactivated. Yet the history of the Roma is not one of endless possibilities, but one of precarity differentially shaped by socialism and capitalism.[115]

Third, the appellants draw another connection between 'police officers stopping and searching black youths more frequently than white youths on the assumption that they are more likely to have been engaged in criminal activity; or tax inspectors more frequently or more rigorously investigating Jews than non-Jews on the assumption that Jews are more prone to financial crime'.[116] These connections between racist practices in the West are rejected by the Court of Appeal, as the Roma are categorised as asylum seekers to be subjected to security controls. On the one hand, the policy at Prague Airport targets 'prospective asylum seekers' rather than the Roma *qua* Roma. On the other, the intense questioning of the Roma is likened to the questioning of suspects in the aftermath of a terrorist attack: 'If a terrorist outrage were committed on our streets today, would the police not be entitled to question more suspiciously those in the vicinity appearing to come from an Islamic background?'[117]

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[111] Regina v. Immigration Officer at Prague Airport and another (Respondents) ex parte European Roma Rights Centre and others (Appellants), [2003] EWCA Civ 666, §35.

[112] [2003] EWCA Civ 666, §33.

[113] [2003] EWCA Civ 666, §37.

[114] [2003] EWCA Civ 666, §49.

[115] See Manuel Mireanu, 'Security at the nexus of space and class: Roma and gentrification in Cluj, Romania', in Huub van Baar, Ana Ivasiuc, and Regina Kreide (eds), *The Securitization of the Roma in Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 115–36, and Norbert Petrovici, Cristina Raţ, Anca Simionca, and Enikő Vincze, 'Introduction: Racialized Labour of the dispossessed as an endemic feature of capitalism', in Enikő Vincze et al. (eds), *Racialized Labour in Romania: Spaces of Marginality at the Periphery of Global Capitalism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 1–28.

[116] [2003] EWCA Civ 666, §80.

[117] [2003] EWCA Civ 666, §86.

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The House of Lords judgement was acclaimed for striking down these checks as racially discriminatory.[118] The Lords found racial discrimination against the Roma through the specific policy of checks at Prague Airport, but not through any other practices that impede their movement and possibilities of claiming asylum. While acknowledging the discrimination against the Roma in the Czech Republic, the judgement sees it as falling beneath the threshold of persecution, therefore not triggering Convention duties. The Czech Republic is deemed to promote the integration of the Roma and implement anti-discrimination policies. After all, the Czech Republic was a country in transition from socialism to liberal democracy and market capitalism. Discrimination was relegated to the socialist past and on the wane in the transition to liberal democracy. Sociologists Norbert Petrovici and colleagues remind us that:

> The proletarianization of the Roma eventually occurred under the communist regime, which incorporated them mostly in low-skilled, labour-intensive positions in agriculture and heavy industry, and provided means for upward social mobility through ethnocultural assimilation. The collapse of the agricultural and industrial state sectors during the 1990s left the Roma, who lacked any nationalized property to claim back, in a position of a seemingly 'surplus population'.[119]

As the appellants draw connections between the Roma and the Haitian refugees targeted by border practices, between anti-black racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Roma racism, the struggle for Roma rights becomes connected to anti-racist and anti-discrimination struggles across the world, from UK policing and anti-terrorism to education in Hong Kong and US anti-immigration practices. Even if the terms of postsocialism and postcolonialism are of course not used before the courts, we need to take seriously how connections are drawn across struggles. We also need to problematise the courts' representation of discrimination as relegated to the socialist past and only limited to non-state actors in the transition to liberal democracy. Postsocialism as method enables critical interventions that contest the rendition of the socialist past as a pathology to be overcome through future integration and non-discrimination policies in the region.

Closer to the present, a rare report in *The Independent* discussing the plight of the Roma points out how some of the Roma fleeing Ukraine were caught between these differences that matter and do not matter.[120] As many Roma from Western Ukraine held dual Ukrainian-Hungarian nationality, their movement across borders triggered EU citizenship rights, which also disqualified them from the Temporary Protection Directive. EU citizenship also implies a hierarchy of citizenship, as 'the mobility of the poor, and especially the racially stigmatized poor – even despite ostensible EU citizenship – is scarcely tolerated'.[121] As the Roma's EU citizenship superseded their Ukrainian citizenship, they were paradoxically made more precarious, by being denied access to employment, social welfare, or medical care as guaranteed by temporary protection.

We can read the precarisation of the Roma through the broader dynamics of precarity exacerbated through processes of privatisation and marketisation. As critical security studies scholar Manuel Mireanu has shown, the Roma are no longer perceived as a 'problem to be solved through welfare'. Rather, 'the precarity of the Roma becomes another layer in their exclusion'.[122] Ryan Powell and Huub van Baar have similarly noted the transformation of '*complex and long-term issues*

[118] House of Lords, Opinion of the Lords of Appeal for Judgement in the Cause Regina v. Immigration Officer at Prague Airport and another (Respondents) *ex parte* European Roma Rights Centre and others (Appellants), [2004] UKHL 55, 9 December 2004.

[119] Petrovici et al., 'Introduction: Racialized labour of the dispossessed as an endemic feature of capitalism', p. 7.

[120] Borzou Daragahi, 'In a twist, "Fortress" Hungary opens doors to refugees from Ukraine after years of keeping migrants out', *The Independent* (4 March 2022).

[121] Lisa Riedner, Soledad Álvarez-Velasco, Nicholas De Genova, et al., 'Mobility', in Nicholas De Genova and Martina Tazzioli (eds), *Europe/Crisis: New Keywords of 'the Crisis' in and of 'Europe'* (Zone Books, 2016), p. 33.

[122] Mireanu, 'Security at the nexus of space and class', p. 125.

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of Roma deprivation, marginalization and exclusion into cultural and group problems requiring penalization and corrective treatment'.[123]

Postsocialism as method problematises how connections are drawn between past and present, between the continuities of Roma discrimination which are relegated to the 'pathological' histories of socialism in a region or to a country's unfinished or partial transition to liberal democracy or market economies. It also orients us to how other connections can be drawn, and differences held together. Postsocialism as method problematises what happens when Roma are EU citizens and Ukrainian citizens and refugees, when they are deemed to be not-yet-refugees and not-quite-persecuted. These two moments that highlight how the Roma continue to be (differentially) racialised in and across Europe can be recast through a postsocialist analytics to challenge the relegation of discrimination to the socialist past or to not-quite/not-yet liberal subjects.

While it is important to analyse the specificities and intensities of racism towards different subjects and avoid a generalised diagnosis of racism, it is equally important to understand how socialist legacies can be reactivated to energise emergent anti-racist struggles. Polina Manolova has shown how precarious Bulgarian migrants in the UK do not necessarily instrumentalise their 'whiteness' in their critique of Western labour regimes and their subjugation but refer to 'a shared belonging to the progressive political project of state socialism'.[124] Moreover, these invocations of socialism cannot be reduced to a depoliticised 'nostalgia' but can be understood as forms of critique that mobilise social justice, solidarity, and freedom in the critique of neoliberal capitalism and precarious living.

Conclusion: Postsocialist moments in IR

This article has suggested postsocialism as method and critique for International Relations. Unlike other 'posts', postsocialism was present in the 1990s as a descriptor of a region and an epoch after the collapse of state socialism. At times used interchangeably with postcommunism, postsocialism has lost any political valence except as a marker of unending, incomplete transition. Temporal backwardness continued to characterise Eastern Europe – both in relation to Central Europe and the unmarked (Western) Europe. While critical scholars have called for pluralising the discipline from different locations, including Central and Eastern Europe, I have argued that postsocialism as method and critique produces an alternative modality of pluralising and problematising IR.

First, postsocialism as method attends to the multiple and contradictory legacies of socialism in the present, its interconnections with colonialism and with anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles. Postsocialism as method works in the dual modality of the prefixal (post/re/dis) and conjunctional (both/and). It orients us to the ambivalences of socialism and its multiple and contradictory actualisations in the present. It attends to the imbrications of the residual and emergent, without assuming continuity as sameness or disruption as difference. Postsocialism as method also holds together legacies of colonialism and socialism by problematising, for instance, how these intersect in the EU member states' responses to Ukrainian refugees. It holds together the continuities and iterations that are not the same through the prefix 're' – reproducing, reconfiguring, rearticulating – with the prefixal mode of undoing 'dis/de' – disjoining, disconnecting, disarticulating. Second, a postsocialist critique or, rather, moments of postsocialist critique reclaim vocabularies of critique around equal freedoms, collectivity, and global processes of labour. Moments of postsocialist critique can become moments of solidarity through anti-racist, feminist, and internationalist solidarity movements, which have been immanent rather than external to socialist projects. Indeed, if IR is to attend more to alternative internationals, as Burak Tansel and Lisa Tilley invite us

[123] Ryan Powell and Huub Van Baar, 'The invisibilization of anti-Roma racisms', in Huub van Baar, Ana Ivasiuc, and Regina Kreide (eds), *The Securitization of the Roma in Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 91–113 (p. 110).

[124] Polina Manolova, 'Seeing the future through the socialist past: The works of the radical imaginary through migration', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* (2023), Online First (p. 19). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-023-09452-3.

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to do,[125] this analytical attention needs to encompass postsocialist practices, contradictions, and critiques.

The dimensions of postsocialism as method and critique, which I have outlined in this article, are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. They are not intended to replace other vocabularies of method and critique and other approaches that have shaped critical work in IR as well as in the social sciences and humanities. Postsocialism as method and critique is intended to pluralise and problematise our analyses, to ask what the afterlives and alterlives of socialism might mean for how we differentially know and experience global politics today. It recasts what appears as dominant, residual, and emergent. While I have focused here on border and migration governmentality, scholars have shown that issues as diverse as as the 'tech boom' or the digital economy can be approached through a postsocialist analytics.[126]

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[125] Burak Tansel and Lisa Tilley, 'Reproducing socio-ecological life from below: Towards a planetary political economy of the global majority' (this issue).

[126] See the contributions to the special issue 'Postsocialist politics and the ends of revolution', *Social Identities*, 24:2 (2018).

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