

Cultures of Security in the Nineteenth Century. Transimperial Perspectives

Veranstalter: ERC-SECURE, Utrecht University

Datum, Ort: 09.05.2019–10.05.2019, Utrecht

Bericht von: Yannick Balk, Utrecht University; Paul Kardoulakis, University of Antwerp / Utrecht University

The conference marked the closing event of the ERC-funded research project „Securing Europe, fighting its enemies, 1815–1914“ (ERC-SECURE), hosted at Utrecht University, The Netherlands. Over the past five years, the research group has contributed to scholarship by singling out forgotten, overlooked instances of security cooperation on the European continent and beyond. The bicentenary of the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) provided the group with an analytic opportunity to reflect on the state of the historiography. There was scholarly need for knitting two isolated historiographical strands into one interpretative framework. On the one hand, diplomatic history detailing high-political topics following the defeat of Napoleon, and the historiography on the vivid social life of the Congress (which mentions the diplomatic intricacies only in passing) on the other. The ERC-SECURE-project aimed to bridge that gap.

Several features of the project's approach stand out. First, it combined different scholarly fields (such as history, cultural studies and International Relations). Second, it historicised concepts such as „security“ by placing them in their historical context and not treating them as static entities. In so doing, the project has opened up, conceptualised, and operationalised the notion of the „how“. *How* did people, actors, states, sub-state groups and institutions come together and engage in projects of cooperation that markedly differed from the era before? In addition, *how* did the great „transformation of European politics“ (P.W. Schroeder), culture and international relations come about?

The aim of the Cultures of Security conference was to take these considerations significant steps further. All contributors agreed that security was a crucial overarching mechanism and dynamic, which pushed states, em-

pires and political actors together towards increased cooperation. By agreeing to that statement, one has to acknowledge that security went hand in glove with the notion of imperialism and new forms of colonialism in the industrialising age. Placing the nexus between security and empire in its historical context allowed to overcome alleged distinctions between domestic and international politics that were not seen as sharp in the nineteenth century.

Chaired by LAURIEN CRUMP (Utrecht), the first panel took off with a presentation by MIROSLAV ŠEDIVÝ (Pilsen). From Šedivý's viewpoint, the Rhine Crisis, the Eastern Question and uprisings in Italy before 1848 were developments which suggested that the heritage of the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) was less stable than scholars have usually claimed. According to Šedivý, all three examples show the consequences of the abuse of power wielded by the great powers. Therefore, Šedivý suggested, Metternich's proposal for a collective European league in 1840 was an attempt to set up an inter-empire reaction to the turmoil.

BEATRICE DE GRAAF (Utrecht) centred her presentation on the Second Paris Treaty and the Quadruple Alliance Treaty (both 20 November 1815). Her paper stated that, to understand the transformations that took place in the post-Napoleonic era, we should close-read such treaties. De Graaf argued that the two treaties together unveil how we should understand the basic tenets of the new peace and security order after 1815: as one based explicitly on private ownership and, therefore, a transnational capitalist one. By demonstrating how the negotiations regarding arrear payments of private claimants from all over Europe dominated the Paris Treaty talks, de Graaf interlinked the technical treaty-making process with the day-to-day security practises on the ground for the „victims“ of the Long French Wars.

ERIK DE LANGE (Utrecht) spoke about the Paris Declaration of 1856 and its troubled precedents. De Lange unpacked the efforts of French Foreign Minister Alexandre Walewski to „memorialise“ the Paris conference. In so doing, De Lange interpreted the resulting declaration respecting maritime law as a memo-

rial of sorts to the international security culture that had emerged in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. De Lange suggested taking into account how the Paris Declaration symbolised and inhibited decades-old security practises in terms of treaty-making. Discussant DAVID TODD (London) concluded that the post-1815 order was indeed equally normative as asymmetrical, and very much fuelled by economic considerations as much as by politics.

The conference continued with a keynote lecture by MAARTJE ABBENHUIS (Auckland). She spoke about globalising the history of European peace and security after the Vienna Congress. Abbenhuis unfolded how we should examine the global history of security. She proposed to look at it as „helicopter historians“: sketching broad vistas, while intermittently also diving down to meticulously research case studies.

The second panel on the agency of „experts“ opened with CONSTANTIN ARDELEANU (Utrecht/ Galati) and JOEP SCHENK (Utrecht). They respectively provided their thoughts on trans-imperial perspectives within the installed river regimes for the Danube and the Rhine. Ardeleanu presented a testimony of a „river expert“, C. A. Hartley, who left a handprint on the functioning of the Danube Commission. Ardeleanu articulated that he approached the nineteenth-century cultures of security in a twofold fashion: on the one hand as abstract political spirits, and on the other hand as „concrete“ constructions – in the actual, physical sense of the word – that arose to overcome transnational threats. Schenk, in turn, pinpointed how the years 1840s were a period of consolidation of an international body of expertise in the European „revolutionary age“. He exemplified this with archival findings in the proceedings of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR).

As a follow-up to these case studies within Europe, JOANNE YAO (Durham) and ANGELA THOMPSELL (New York) gave their thoughts on river regimes in respectively the Congo and Niger rivers. Trained in IR-scholarship, Yao investigated the forgotten history of the failed Congo River Commission through the lens of the „institutional

model theory“. She did so by conceptualising „emptiness“ along the Congo River in terms of historical, cartographic and legal emptiness. In agreement with Yao, Thompsell spoke about trans-imperial cooperation and competition at the 1885 Berlin Conference. Furthermore, Thompsell used the micro-case of the „Melanine affair“ as a case in point to rethink the nature, result and consequences of the Berlin Conference. Discussant WIM VAN MEURS (Nijmegen) concluded the panel by posing the question how historians should evaluate the (security) role of experts and other „soft“ actors in nineteenth-century international politics.

Three panellist then took up the challenge to reflect on the ubiquitously present „Empire-Security-Nexus“ within extraterritorial regions. OZAN OZAVCI presented his findings on the Ottoman policy towards the Congress of Vienna. Drawing on untapped British, Russian and Ottoman archival material, Ozavci problematised and construed the historiographical narrative about the Ottoman involvement during the Congress. In so doing, Ozavci provided an inside-view in Ottoman decision-making processes.

SIMON YIN (Hefei) shed light on the underlying motives of the Anglo-French coalition in China. The Treaty of Nanjing (1842) stood central in Yin’s discussions. Further, he demonstrated how the long-time bitter enemies France and Britain formed a coalition against China to obtain diplomatic and juridical equality. The countries strove to do so in their treaty relations with the Chinese Emperor. This in turn sparked Chinese resistance. In contrast to Ozavci’s micro-historical discussion, Yin remained on the macro-level in his empire-security analysis.

ANDREA WIEGESHOFF (Marburg) spoke about American „medical“ intervention in (semi)-colonial spheres around the *fin de siècle*. Based on archival material of „quarantine officers“, Wiegeshoff offered a fresh perspective on health issues (such as cholera) threatening security in the American Empire (the Philippines and Hawaii). These sources unveiled how cultures of security emerged in transatlantic regions. Discussant DAVID SCHIMMELPENNINCK VAN DER OYE (St. Catharines) applauded the challenge that the

panellists took up to examine „western“ notions in the non-western world.

The last panel, chaired by LIESBETH VAN DE GRIFT (Utrecht) dived into the world of transnational police cooperation. KARL HÄRTER (Frankfurt am Mein and Darmstadt) presented an analytical paper which introduced the concept of „transnational criminal law regimes“ as a sub-category to security cultures. His conceptual framework helped understand transatlantic and transnational networks of police cooperation, all the while noticing that transnational criminal law regimes were not (and could not have been) as formally fleshed out as international law regimes were. One question constantly discussed by contemporary police officials throughout the century was what was (perceived as) a transnational crime or threat. Archives stacked with reports, treaties and legislature attest to this.

The two other panellists demonstrated how the emergence of security cultures by means of transnational police cooperation could be studied empirically. CHRISTOS ALIPRANTIS (Cambridge) discussed the emergence of transnational policing in Europe after the 1848–49 revolutions. He concluded that European states exhibited a remarkable adaptability to new international conditions after 1848. New policing techniques and modes of cooperation were invented to curb the alleged threat of a transnational criminal underworld. The wide variety of measures – from intelligence and personnel exchange to border control and passports – expanded in the second half of the century. In so doing, Aliprantis suggested that police collaboration in Europe was no novelty around 1900. Its origins traced back to at least 1848.

WOUTER KLEM (Utrecht) provided a case study of the concerted police campaign against anarchist terrorism during the *fin de siècle*. The harnessing of both interpersonal and formal police networks were precipitated by a collectively perceived fear of an anarchist destruction of Western civilisation. Combined, as discussant RICHARD BACH JENSEN (Louisiana) concluded, the empirical papers presented by Aliprantis and Klem helped answer the conceptual questions raised by Härter. They did so by deep-diving

below the level of government politics and diplomacy, into the level of the personal relations of individual police actors. That was the level where the *actual* cooperation took place.

In her concluding remarks, BEATRICE DE GRAAF (Utrecht) drew three main conclusions from the conference’s proceedings. First, to better understand how concepts such as „security“ and „threats“ left their marks on history, it is necessary for historians to work interdisciplinary. Not only need cultural and diplomatic history to be brought together, the history of law, the environment and technology (among other things) are essential for further inquiries as well. Second, rather than superimposing concepts such as „security“, „threats“, „interests“, all participants emphasised that bringing in these notion of security requires meticulous historicisation. Contemporaries used notions of „security“ and the likes for various reasons of legitimacy (e.g. attaining power, money, influence or leeway). When embarking on the practice of historicisation, one needs a keen eye towards historical changes. One has to ask how views of contemporaries changed over time. This in turn allows for a comparison of different repertoires of action, thereby pointing at historical (dis)continuities. Finally, De Graaf posed the question whose security cultures actually have been discussed? Did the cultures only serve imperial elites, the metropole; rather than indigenous citizens in far reaches of empires? She acknowledged it will be a daunting task to study security cultures globally without falling in the trap of „Orientalism“ or excessive discussions on „Modernity“.

As all conference participants in one way or another suggested: the consequences of security norms and practices were drastic and sometimes repressive. Security for the one almost inevitably meant insecurity for the other.

Conference Overview:

Welcome and Introduction:

Beatrice de Graaf (Utrecht University)

Panel 1: Treaties and the making of a security culture

Chair: Laurien Crump (Utrecht University)

Discussant: David Todd (King’s College, Lon-

don)

Miroslav Šedivý (University of West Bohemia): Metternich's project for a league to preserve peace in Europe. The last attempt to save the post-1815 normative approach to collective security?

Beatrice de Graaf (Utrecht University): Revisiting the Paris Treaty and the Quadruple Alliance Treaty of 20 November 1815. International revolution and transnational transformation: overcoming the restauration myth

Erik de Lange (Utrecht University): The recorded legacy. The Paris Declaration of 1856 and its troubled precedents

Keynote: Junction 1815. Globalising the history of European peace and security after the Congress of Vienna

Maartje Abbenhuis (Auckland University)

Moderator: Ozan Ozavci (Utrecht University)

Panel 2: Expert security and riparian cooperations

Chair: Rachell Gillett (Utrecht University)

Discussant: Wim van Meurs (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Constantin Ardeleanu (Utrecht University / University of Galati): Transnational technocrats and the correction of an international river

Joep Schenk (Utrecht University): The CCNR in the 1840s: consolidation of an international body of expertise in a revolutionary age

Joanne Yao (Durham University): Forgetting two histories: European institutional models, empty spaces, and the failure of the 1885 Congo River Commission

Angela Thompsell (College at Brockport, SUNY): The „Sergeant Melanie“ affair and the Congo and Niger river regimes. Rethinking the Berlin Conference and transimperial cooperation

Panel 3: Empire and extraterritoriality

Chair: Jolle Demmers (Utrecht University)

Discussant: David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye (Brock University)

Ozan Ozavci (Utrecht University): A priceless

grace? The Congress of Vienna, the Ottoman Empire and the politics of international law, 1814–1815

Simon Yin (Hefei University of Technology): Implementing treaty system in China. Focusing on the Anglo-French coalition in the nineteenth century

Andrea Wiegeshoff (University of Marburg): Protecting the health of the American Empire in the „Orient“. U.S. sanitary measures in and beyond its Pacific colonies (c. 1898–1910)

Panel 4: Police cooperation and security

Chair: Liesbeth van de Grift (Utrecht University)

Discussant: Richard Bach Jensen (Northwestern State University)

Christos Aliprantis (University of Cambridge): A conservative international? Transnational policing and the origins of a European security culture after the 1848–49 revolutions

Wouter Klem (Utrecht University): Founded on fear. The anti-anarchist campaign and the formation of interpersonal and formal police networks, 1890s–1914

Karl Härter (Max-Planck-Institut für europäische Rechtsgeschichte): Transnational criminal law regimes, police cooperation and security in transatlantic perspective

Concluding Remarks

Beatrice de Graaf (Utrecht University)

Tagungsbericht *Cultures of Security in the Nineteenth Century. Transimperial Perspectives*. 09.05.2019–10.05.2019, Utrecht, in: H-Soz-Kult 08.06.2019.