

Change and Continuity: The Need of Effective History in the IR Research

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Abstract

The United States as the world's sole remaining superpower acts in the same offensive ways as imperial superpowers have done before, for it is essential for an imperial superpower to organise the world by economic and military means. Thus the presentation of economic and military power of the U.S. these days is, too, a sign of empire building. The American empire, however, is radically different from previous empires because of its partial aspatiality. Although the Roman Empire's foreign policy had nothing compared to this new world order, it can be hypothesised that the Roman discourse of empire building is relevant in explaining the establishment of the first truly global empire. Genealogical perspective on empire building discourse allows effective historical analysis of modes of exercising power at different times by forming a new mode of conceptualising the interplay between the temporality of discourse, the power and the odd spatiality of the empire. The author argues that there is a need for abandonment of narrow IR paradigm, and a need for further development of methodological diversity in IR research. The redefinition of the concept of modern state pervading IR literature and thinking on the subject seems to be the first task. The increased focus should be on the changing nature of war and continuing of its practices carried over within global processes.

Keywords: American empire, global empire, empire building, imperial discourse, imperial war, genealogy, modern state, IR paradigm, methodological diversity

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1. INTRODUCTION

Studying through hundreds of pages of texts concerning the American security discourse and American scholarly thinking on security, which are my primary research interests, would inevitably lead to the discovering of manuscripts presenting the idea of the American empire for the two themes are closely connected. One of such expansionist texts is *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, which was two years after the publication accompanied by the presidential National Security Strategy of 2002. While I was at the same time reading texts from the ancient past, especially from the times of the Romans, and had just completed the *Deeds of the Divine Augustus*, the hidden similarity between the *Rebuilding America's Defenses* and *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* captured my interest. Both the *Rebuilding-* and *Strategy-*texts sounded familiar although I read them for the first time, and it seemed that these two texts contain something similar with the ancient text. The similarity between texts was the presentation of thoughts about how to achieve imperial power or to build a world empire.

Ancient text is about imperial propaganda, one of modern texts is mostly about military technology and full of strategically coloured terminology, the second one is about justification of these means, though they all present thoughts about the hegemony and the power, about maintaining of it, and about building of an empire. The Romans built their empire on bloodshed and slaves long ago, Americans are building their empire on the democracy and freedom currently. Empires are not similar, they are not even comparable – one being just distant memory and other the reality we are living now – which seems to make such analysis overwhelmingly difficult. Nevertheless, despite such discontinuities there is continuity, a thread connecting those two empires together offering thus the historical perspective on the imperial discourse. Through this perspective, we have, hopefully, clearer and more logical insight into current events in the international relations, the war on terrorism and the emergence of planetary aspatial empire. The ability to see and understand the truth about people or situations will take, perhaps, as its objectives also the IR scholars' understanding of our discipline and the power that our beloved IR exercises obscurely over us.

It is my aim, therefore, to try to conceptualise this particular play of change and continuity in our understanding of international relations by combining historical-genealogical perspective with discourse analysis. It is this interplay of imperial ambitions, security rhetoric, established

knowledge, new technologies and war, which is forming the field of change and continuity for the IR discipline and research. The IR discipline and IR research, in turn, form the field for investigations of mine. I will start by introducing of imperial texts, which present the ambitions behind imperial rhetoric, and pose some questions and hypotheses, indicating thus the narrowness of IR paradigm and the concept of modern state, and the need of better conceptualisations and methodologies. The presentation of genealogical approach follows, being accompanied with the analysis of continuities and discontinuities of the imperial discourse. Finally, I will present results, and some conclusions I draw from the analysis.

1.1. IMPERIAL AMBITIONS THEN AND NOW

Although the *Res Gestae* was written thousands of years ago, it offers excellent starting point for the analysis of particular imperial discourse. Moreover, although historians do not consider the *Res Gestae* as an objective piece of evidence from the antique Rome, it is witness from the point of view of my research. By its very nature the *Res Gestae* may be less objective history and more propaganda for the principate that Augustus instituted, but as such it is a perfect example of Public Relations skills and political statesmanship of the Roman emperor. The first two parts of the *Res Gestae* are concerned with Augustus' political career, recording the offices and political honours that he held. Third and fourth parts record his gifts of money, games, and buildings to the Roman people. In the fifth and sixth parts, Augustus describes his military deeds, and tells how he established alliances with other nations during his reign. The last part summarizes Augustus' exceptional position in the government. This laconic text of the stewardship of the Emperor Augustus was left among the documents deposited with the Vestal Virgins before his death and preserved to us in a copy chiselled upon the walls of the Temple of Rome and Augustus at Ancyra in Asia Minor (Lacus Curtius 2003, p332, [www-document](#)).

Augustus emerged as the sole master of the Roman world. He ruled by personal prestige: he was the first citizen among equals and father of the country. He was the supreme ruler, the king, the emperor and his authority was absolute. His ruling of the Roman Empire lasted until his death in A.D.14. Succeeding in overhauling and reforming almost every Roman institution, he helped to establish the Roman Empire on a much more rational basis. Mixing effectively the old and the new by compromising between inherited traditions and changes in the economic, political, social and cultural life, Augustus created the mighty Empire. He tried

to turn Rome into a world capital, teaching at the same time the Romans to identify their destiny with the destiny of all humankind, and to know that they were the chosen people, who would bring peace and stability to a violent and changing world. Successful reforms along with his long life contributed to the idea that Augustus was something more than a human was – he was a hero, perhaps even a god. As such, the *Res Gestae* of Augustus' is a perfect piece of ancient imperial rhetoric, and presents well imperial discourse of its time.

In September 2000, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) issued a 78-page report entitled *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces, And Resources For A New Century*, proceeding "from the belief that America should seek to preserve and extend its position of global leadership by maintaining the pre-eminence of U.S. military forces" (RAD 2000, iv). This report states openly the role of the United States as imperial power. In the report the participants of PNAC (RAD 2000, 90) express in very clear manner the four main aims and concerns of theirs. These are maintaining the *Pax Americana*, securing global hegemony of the United States, rebuilding the military of the United States and finally, visioning future wars that might emerge due to the plans of complete control of land, sea, air, space and cyberspace. In the report, members of PNAC explain in detail that America should use its position to advance its power and interests into all areas of the globe and advise the use of military means to achieve those ends. To cope with emerging problems in particular areas, listed in the report as well, they suggest regime change of unfavourable governments so that eventually the whole world will be unified under the banner of American democracy, freedom and human rights. In the end of the introduction, the authors of the report state their hope, that the Project's report will be useful as a road map for the immediate and future defence plans of the nation (RAD 2000, iii).

Two years later, on 17 September 2002, the White House released a 31-page document entitled *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* stating the intention of the United States to become the police officer of the world. The ideas presented in NSS are adopted from PNAC group: e.g. the concept of Homeland Defense (RAD 2000, 6; NSS 2002, 6, 14). Nations that George W. Bush calls in the NSS as the Axis of Evil – Iran, Iraq and North Korea – are listed together also in RAD as possible military threats to the U.S. (RAD 2000, 4, 8, 17–19; NSS 2002, 14). There is a suggestion in RAD that military spending ought to be increased to 3.8 percent of the GDP (RAD 2000, 75), which is the amount George W. Bush has proposed for budget of year 2003: \$379.3 billion for the Defense Department (CDI

2002, www-document). An interesting interplay between RAD and NSS emerges – whereas the former is declaring truths concerning American security, its economic wellbeing and hegemonic position in the world bluntly, the latter is softening these truths by offering multiple justifications for why America should and has to take the lead.

However, the main purpose remains clear – only an open world to the American ideas and democracy could permit the American political economy to work effectively and thus assure the U.S. national security, too. It is achieved only through the exercise of dominant power – the logic of empire – to satisfy the needs of capitalist democracy. Interestingly, the National Security Strategy, which is more eloquent in appealing to public's feelings – I would say, propaganda equal to Augustus' plead for principate – than *Rebuilding Americas Defenses*, presents the idea of strong American military in reversed way. While the RAD stresses openly and shamelessly the importance of strong U.S. army in order to be able to defeat any opponent, the NSS stresses the importance of the strong military power by “glorifying” the power of America's opponents/enemies, terrorist organisations, in order to justify its own ability to defeat.

Because of the claims – of the U.S. being only one to maintain Pax Americana and to ensure the security for the international community – which consist into the official National Security Strategy and thus indicate the strong influence of PNAC to the administration, it can be considered that the group of authors of RAD speaks for and represents the society. The social conditions, under which PNAC can claim to speak for the society, are based on the American electoral system, on the culture of market economy and on the military culture of the United States. Moreover, members of PNAC did hold leading positions in the government and in the military organisation at that time, and as such, they represent society because of being members of democratically elected government.

Although one may argue that the neoconservative moment in American policy is over, and thus the RAD is not relevant from the point of view of world politics, it is relevant for the analysis of imperial discourse. The labelling of different standpoints producing imperial rhetoric has little importance for the genealogical analysis of the discourse of building a “world” empire. The concepts and meanings, concerning the building of an empire, that these standpoints have produced because of the powerful position they have, remain, instead, most relevant.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT: THE IR PARADIGM AND THE NEED OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE METHODOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The interplay of imperial ambitions, security rhetoric, established knowledge, new technologies and war, which is forming the field of change and continuity, poses a big challenge to a researcher. If I would follow the narrow IR paradigm and would take for granted the preposition that states are only players in international system – and that international system is the system of nation-states only – then it is impossible to explain the building of aspatial geo-economic American empire and its current war on terrorism. How the move towards Western-way globalisation with all its transnational institutions and global markets, and with all conflicts that such transition causes, can be conceptualised or explained from the narrow nation-state viewpoint? How the actions of overwhelmingly powerful transnational corporations – the so-called China-phenomenon, the companies moving their production from country to country in the search of cheaper workforce, and sovereign governments being unable of limiting this in any way – fit to this IR theory of “system of sovereign nation-states over which there are no power”?

If I am, nevertheless, determined to explain the aspatial American empire and the war on terrorism, isn't then there only one way for such research – the abandonment of narrow IR paradigm, further elaboration and development of methodological diversity, the redefinition of the concept of modern state and, perhaps, of state sovereignty, too? Isn't then there a need for new conceptualisations of historical practices e.g. war, too? The particular play of change and continuity in our understanding of international relations seems to pose the need of re-conceptualisation of international relations as well, with the need to focus on the changing nature of war and continuation of the practices of war by other means.

It is acceptable, I was told, to shift the focus of research on the changing nature of war. The combination of the analysis of war and of imperial discourse with the paralleling of Roman and American empires, instead, raised doubts. Was it because of the perspective of narrow IR paradigm and restrictive concept of “modern state” when I was told that the idea of genealogical analysis of imperial discourse is not going to work? I was told also that juxtaposing of the American empire with the Roman Empire is impossible because of the time difference and general difference. “They are too different, there is no relationship between

them” I was told. Although different, I considered these texts as particular messages of their time presenting the very special discourse of building a world empire, and thus compatible.

In order to follow the shape of imperial discourse I analysed texts from the perspective of discontinuities and continuities. The perspective of discontinuities is the one of how human practices and interpretations change when the changes in context and living conditions emerge. Discontinuities refer to the changes in the discourse and are thus analytically conceptualised as discursive discontinuities. The perspective of continuities illuminates what cultural lines continue to live and thus influence our thinking, causing the illusion of linear human history moving towards the determined or divine end. Being based on the cultural base, continuity exceeds beyond the discursive domain, and is thus analytically conceptualised as non-discursive.

In the Roman Empire, as well as in the American empire, the hegemony is understood in terms of hierarchy, the one of dominance and obeisance. With the help of the perspectives on how human practices and interpretations change or remain continuous, it is reasonable to figure out how the present “global American empire” can be possible, and be logically conceptualised. The discourse of building “global American empire” seems to be conceptually very close to the Roman discourse of empire building for it is based on old ideas and means of power. This refers to the line of non-discursive cultural continuity, according to which the dominance is the matter of the military and economy. As means to achieve and maintain one’s hegemony the particular military and economic arrangements belong to the imperial complex of their time, forming an independent unit of analysis, but being at the same time continuous cultural creations crossing the borders of both particular discourses. Military and economy both indicate this particular thread, which connects the discourses of the Roman Empire and the one of the American empire together. At Roman time, military and economy were different from nowadays, but the principle and the function of military and economy are similar.

The discourse of “global American empire” is rich of discontinuities, too. The line of discontinuity refers to the changes in the action and in the context of action. Changes in the power relations in international system, the emergence of new fields of knowledge, the development of technology and communication are considered as changes in the context of action having different impact on global ambition of building a “world” empire, and thus on

the rhetoric. The discontinuities, like the scope of empire – previous empires were national and international, never very global in scope, but the American empire strives to be planetary (Smith 2003, xiii) – or the contradictory spatiality of the American empire, at the same time spatially national and aspatially global, indicate context changes as well. According to Smith, another vital discontinuity in connection with the American empire has emerged, referring to the change in the action. While the United States participated in the world wars of the twentieth century, it initiated neither. This time, by contrast, the U.S. stands as the original belligerent state, which wages the war against terrorism to challenge and eliminate the threat of the alternative globalism that Islamic alternatives to the vision of Western globalization are posing (Smith 2003, xv).

Combination of old means of empire building with the ability to maintain one's power with the help of high technology – as improvement to the ability to act, to spread one's influence, to expand to areas unimaginable, and to cross any borders – proves that though the world has changed crucially, the need for effective historical analysis remains. The genealogy in itself is the effective historical analysis, or the “effective history” according to Michel Foucault. Genealogy would be the one that takes into consideration the influence of historical ideas and ideals, the continuity, as well as sudden accidents and unexpected events that cause rapid changes in the world. Nevertheless, it seems that in IR research – though the IR perspective is historical – the thinking is not historical but somehow stagnant, old-fashioned, it is not developing, growing or changing. It is overwhelmingly influenced with a powerful shibboleth – Westphalian concepts and definitions, from which the concept of “modern state” has achieved the status of the “king of the kings”.

The “modern state”, it seems, is in IR paradigm the precondition, the only accepted and possible mode, of conceptualising or think about the units operating in the world of international relations. It is the state, and not the human being, which is the only player in the international arena, though the state is not possible without human beings running it. Thus, if we continue to think, that well-bordered sovereign states are the only players in international arena, how it is possible to explain the economic expansionism, and building of an aspatial geo-economic empire of the United States? How is it possible to explain, based on the “old” IR paradigm, the war on terrorism? How it is possible to conceptualise the non-state terrorist units – that are fighting against the state and not against the people – from the established IR standpoint? One may argue that terrorists are attacking against the human beings, because

terrorists are killing people. I would argue that it is not the people but the state – the population as the workforce of the state, the resource of the state – against of which terrorists are attacking. Thus, the set-up of this battle is very strange from the point of view of IR paradigm: international non-state actor, which cannot be an international actor because it is not state, against the state actor.

2.1. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT OF THE EMPIRE

The *Pax Romana* was a period of peace in the antique world lasting from 27 B.C. till 180 A.D. Based on the superiority of the Rome and Roman legions, the life of Roman style was accepted by many. The Rome led all the lands around the Mediterranean Sea and most of the Northwest Europe in the areas of government, law, engineering, art and literature. By conquests, the Roman Empire created the Roman peace, *Pax Romana*. For that reason, the concepts of “empire” and “Pax” are considered as inseparable and both meaning the same – domination of the Rome, the idea of spatial and aspatial governance in particular temporality – the invisible influence of ideology of belonging.

The empire, *imperium* - traditionally viewed as political entity, “an empire is a territory ruled by an emperor” (see Finley 1978, 1) – or simply as a matter of territorial conquest and rule (Eland 2004, 21–22), was conceived by the Romans in terms of people. Viewed in its widest sense, the Roman Empire, *imperium populi Romani*¹, was the hegemonic power Romans exercised over other peoples – the *populus Romanus*² and its *socii et amici*³ (Lintott 1981, 53). Rather than to annex a territory directly, Rome desired that its will should be obeyed by other nations – that is the fundamental concept behind the word *imperium* (Lintott 1981, 53–54; see also Eland 2004, 22). Logically for such empire, understood as obeisance or dominance, is impossible to draw clear and non-debatable borders. The title of Augustus’ official autobiography – *Res gestae divi Augusti quibus orbem terrarum imperio populi Romani subiecit*⁴ – shows that for Augustus, too, the Roman empire was not only the territory controlled by Rome (in the narrow territorial meaning of IR), but it was equivalent to the world itself (Lintott 1981, 53). Logically, there is no need to draw borders for the world.

¹ Authority, rule or supreme power of the Roman people.

² The Romans or the Roman people.

³ Allies and friends.

⁴ The achievements of his by which he brought the world under the empire of the Roman people.

Driven from the Roman equivalent, I consider the concepts of *Pax Americana* and “American empire”, too, as two metaphors meaning the same – the global dominance of the United States based on the desire to bring western democracy, free market principle, freedom and peace to every corner of the world, and on the global ambition of American internationalism and unilateralism. I do not use the term *Pax Americana* traditionally to describe an era or condition of life, but as a metaphor to describe the scope, limits and the power of the American empire. The term “empire” either does not carry the traditional territorial meaning here, but is understood as a hierarchical system of economic, cultural, political and social relationships in which the most powerful state exercises decisive influence (see also Eland 2004, 22; Lake 1997, 32–34; Lichtheim 1971, 5; Ikenberry 2004, 3).

The concept of the “empire” here is not a synonym for the modern state used by the traditional way – to describe a limited political entity with some borders and ruled by an emperor according to the classic Westphalian world order – but by the Roman way. Considered as the system of obeisance and dominance it describes the imaginative scope of spatiality and temporality of dominance – an imagined and abstract rather than an actual and territorial empire. The core idea of my use of the concept of the “empire” is thus the exercise of authority by Rome (or by U.S.) over other states and peoples. According to this, the “empire” is regarded in the sense of hegemony and empire building, and of a desire and a need to exercise hegemony – to take advantage of events for the advancement of an empire and of one’s interests.

3. APPROACH: GENEALOGY AS THE EFFECTIVE HISTORY

Despite of being limited by the paradigm of IR, I have recourse to analyse in terms of genealogy of relations of power, force, strategic developments, and tactics with the point of reference to the model of war and battle, the Foucauldian approach. “The history, which bears and determines us, has the form of a war rather than that of language: relations of power, not relations of meaning” (Foucault 1984, 56). As a form of history, able to account for the constitution of knowledge, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to refer to a subject, who either is transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history, the genealogical analysis offers the way to historicise grand abstractions (Rabinow 1984, 4).

In Foucault's interpretation, our Western political philosophy is hallmarked with the devotion to abstractions, first principles, and utopias – i.e. the theory – of an ideal social model for the functioning of our scientific or technological society (Rabinow 1984, 5). It is this consistent mode of action in the West to approach the problem of political order by building models of the just social order or searching general principles by which to evaluate existing conditions (ibid). However, this emphasis on grand theoretisations has left us in the dark about the concrete functioning of the power in our societies. "It seems to me," Foucault argues, "that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticise the workings of institutions, which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticise and attack them in such a manner that the political violence, which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them." (Foucault 1971, www-document.)

3.1. METHODOLOGY OF GENEALOGICAL ANALYTICS

Genealogy of the discourse of empire building allows the historical analysis of special modes of exercising power at different times by isolation of particular power techniques. It provides productive analysis of accepted conclusions, assumptions, methods and objectives, and thus also of any established system of truth and knowledge. Genealogical analysis is useful in order to understand, how the elements of such truth systems – like the notions of state and system of states, or the notions about the need of the American leadership in globalising world, or about the security and new threats – developed and came to constitute truth and knowledge. In the global framework, the military and economic institutions with their social and power relations are not only modes of exercising power, but also conditions for empire building. In genealogy, these conditions replace the state as the only unit of classification and analysis, and build an independent level for the analysis and explaining (Kusch 1991, 97), free of restrictions of the concept of "modern state" and forming a new mode of conceptualising distant historical relationships that are still related yet not closely.

Referring to the Foucault's work, I would call this method a genealogical analytics of the empire building, which is aimed at revealing the mechanisms and institutions of creating an empire. Genealogy of empire building is thus the recording of the singularity of the events to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles, and defining those instances where they are absent or remain unrealised (Foucault 1977, 140). Genealogy is an historical method, but it is not a history of the past:

Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form to all its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that give birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us [...]. (Foucault 1977, 146.)

Therefore, genealogy is a history of the present in terms of its past (Bartelson 1993, 6). In order to be effective, a genealogy must start from the analysis of the present – its task is not to tell what happened in the past, but to describe how the present became logically possible (Bartelson 1993, 6). It is not the search for the origins, or identifying the exclusive generic characteristics of an institution or mechanism, which permits us to qualify them as being of “Roman origin” or of “American origin”. Rather, it seeks the subtle and singular marks that might possibly intersect in them to form a network allowing sorting out different traits. Genealogy of empire building is thus the study of the beginnings – numberless lowly beginnings and the myriad of events, which may or may not, gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for the hegemonic power (Foucault 1977, 145–146). Considering of building an empire, such beginnings or events are an idea of army in the background of military power, an idea of working economy in the background of successful army, the idea of annexing of territories in the background of wealthy economy, etc. Such lowly beginning, considered as heritage of the element of the building of an empire, is not an acquisition or a possession that grows and solidifies. Rather, it is an unstable assemblage of faults, fissures, and heterogenous layers threatening the fragile inheritor – army, economy, territorial conquest, or even an empire – from within or underneath of it: injustice, instability, disorder, lack of decorum, hasty conclusions, superficiality (Foucault 1977, 146–147).

Genealogy, of being the effective history of the present in terms of the past, is not useful without the analysis of emergence. The emergence is not the final term of an historical development, but the hazardous play of dominations – being always produced through a particular stage of forces (Foucault 1977, 148). Emergence is thus the result of interaction – the struggle forces wage against each other or against circumstances. It is not about the energy of the strong or the reaction of the weak, but the scene where they are displayed face-to-face and nothing but the space dividing them. Whereas descent qualifies the strength or weakness of an institution or idea, emergence designates a place of confrontation, not as a closed field

but rather as a “non-place” – a pure distance, indicating that the adversaries do not belong to a common space any more (Foucault 1977, 150). Considering them in terms of the building of empire again, army and economy are both qualified by their descent – all those events, or beginnings that may have given birth to them. The emergence of them, i.e. the scene where the power of the army or economy are displayed, depends upon the struggle of forces of these events against each other or against circumstances they are situated (availability of men and money, fertility of the land and crop, climate conditions etc.). In the case of global empire, the emergence of institutions and documents (PNAC, RAD and NSS) can be considered as scenes of consecutive and somehow successive struggles. The struggle imperial forces wage against each other or against circumstances at that scene is caused by previous struggles.

3.2. GENEALOGY OF IMPERIAL DISCOURSE

What are these social conditions, which allow the exercise of hegemony and are at the same time symptoms of dedication of society to fight wars and to invest in military, and of the desire both for immediate victory and long-term conquest? What are the continuities that refer to global or world ambitions of empire builders and what are these changes that force imperial discourses to make sudden turns? Referring to the hypotheses I made earlier, the military and economic institutions with their social and power relations are not only modes of exercising power, but also conditions for empire building. They represent the continuity in the discourse. They also replace the state as the only unit of analysis, and therefore build an independent level for the analysis and explaining.

For creating and maintaining an empire there are one kind of imperial means available. Both imperial powers know about the importance of military power and careful advanced military planning in order to maintain its superiority. In order to be victorious, the importance of investing in superior military technologies must be noticed. One must prepare to war, because the superior position is always questioned on behalf of adversaries. One can push its borders further by deploying the military to the “provinces” or just by exercising its influence, but how far is far enough? When does the end reach the end? Strong allies and diplomacy, through which one can influence the way other peoples think and behave, or the way that things work and develop, is one kind of tool in the toolbox of empire building and maintaining. Creating global markets and expanding one’s power in the economic dimension, are other kind of tools. We can call these means ironically as the instructions of successful

empire building, the plate of Five Commandments that express the continuity of the imperial thought. Firstly, do not worship anything but power, therefore **be strong**. Secondly, maintain your strength, therefore **invest to the military**. Thirdly, ensure that your position is noticed and obeyed - therefore **be present** with the help of military bases and through the economic arrangements. Fourthly, take as many members you can into your circle of freedom - therefore **expand**. Finally, lead others to your freedom for they do not know what they want, therefore **make allies and friends**. These five cultural non-discursive continuities form the basis for the grid of interpretation, where the discursive discontinuities draw a pattern of change.

Power

Understanding of and considering the military as the practice and operation of power represents the long line of cultural non-discursive continuity in the imperial discourse because despite two different armies, the principle of function is the same. The Roman army was the biggest and the most effectively organized power in Roman politics. It combined hierarchy, training, a clear command structure, discipline, regular pay, flexibility in unit-size (from small maniple to army-size groups of several legions), and aggressive persistence in the pursuit of fixed objectives. It had no similarly effective rival or imitator in civilian politics. The American manuscripts contain similar thoughts about military, which is considered as a decisive factor to maintain the global leadership of the United States. Starting from the first pages of the RAD, members of the PNAC emphasise continuously the importance of a strong military in order to keep the hegemonic position and to be ready for the future.

The sharp lines of discursive discontinuities are the one's indicating how human practices and interpretations change when the changes in the context emerge. The future missions and requirements of the individual military services, the role of reserves, nuclear strategic doctrine and missile defenses, the defense budget and prospects for military modernization, the state (training and readiness) of today's forces, the revolution in military affairs, defense-planning for theater wars, small wars and constabulary operations (RAD 2000, ii) are some of these discontinuities indicating that the context is not the same. Concerning the composition of army and military forces some other remarkable discontinuities emerge being conditioned mostly by the spatiality – the size and scope of the known world and the emergence of “modern state” with the practice of “tight citizenship”, which restricts American empire from

obtaining full power and greatness of an empire. At the Roman time, conquered territories were automatically considered as belonging to the Empire, and the people living on that territory were considered as Roman citizens – in terms of the modern state system they had “loose citizenship”. However, Roman legions considered those “loose citizens” as citizens anyway and recruited legionnaires outside of the original territory of Rome. The military forces of the American empire recruit people of foreign origin only when these move permanently to United States and obtain “tight citizenship”, which indicates how the power of the practices of the Westphalian state system works.

Army

The practices of military investments and improvements in the battle power are second group of the long cultural non-discursive lines. Military costs remained by far the largest element in the Roman state budget, for the Romans knew about the importance of careful advanced military planning, and also about the importance of investing in superior military technologies in order to begin and continue a war and to be victorious. In extending the Roman Empire, and bringing other nations under the sovereignty of Roman people, war and battle were tools (Lacus Curtius 2003b, part 1, 349; Lacus Curtius 2003b, part 2, p365.). Augustus stated in his Deeds also about his investments in military power, which show the importance of military in the Roman Empire. Augustus tells us about awards, payments and a pension system of soldiers in which he had invested. (Lacus Curtius 2003b, part 3, p371–373.) In maintaining and enlarging the Roman Empire, the Roman legions had a decisive role. For that reason, the Roman emperor had to support his army to keep soldiers in his command. Military spending is understood similarly also by the United States. The idea that “without a well-conceived defense policy and an appropriate increase in defense spending, the United States has been letting its ability to take full advantage of the remarkable strategic opportunity at hand slip away” (RAD 2000, ii) colours all thinking about investing in military. The importance of military spending, in order to have strong army, is emphasised throughout the RAD report.

As discursive discontinuities, the linings in the American imperial discourse, concerning amounts of money or practices, do well. Members of the PNAC working group state that addressing the Army’s many challenges will require significantly increased funding – in RAD terms, “budgets must return to the level of approximately \$90 to \$95 billion in constant 2000 dollars” (RAD 2000, 29). They state also that renewed investments in Army infrastructure

would improve the quality of soldier life as well. The NSS only mentions shortly this aspect of empire building, outlining the need of military spending. Differently from the Roman Empire, which extracted the price for military and men from their subjects, the United States does not share that burden entirely with allies or with the subjects of global empire, but pays the biggest part of military expenses by itself. How much the United States is benefiting in the international economic organisations, from international agreements and co-operation and the like, which are other tools of its hegemonic power, is impossible to count. Therefore, it seems that the spatiality and practices of the “modern state”, I referred on in the analysis of power, are limiting the actions of the American Empire also in this case. Though the RAD has remarks about sharing costs of military bases with the host country, the articulation of them is very cautious. It is staying at the level of careful wishing: “costs can be shared with the host” and “some of the cost might be paid for by host” and in the case of Europe “costs can be considered as common NATO assets and charged to the NATO common fund” (RAD 2000, 20).

Military bases and global market

In Augustus’ time Roman colonies were planted in kingdoms and provinces as these were considered as parts of Augustus’ provinces and thus subjects for Roman concern. Colonies were planted in order to secure new conquests. At the same time, it was a way of granting land to veteran soldiers. (Lacus Curtius 2003b, part 5, p393; Lacus Curtius 2003b, part 3, p370.) By establishing colonies, Rome extended its dominion and its name. Colonies were intended to keep in check a conquered people, and to repress hostile incursions. The colonies were more military in character, being composed of soldiers, than just settling new inhabitants. Considering the “colony” as military in its nature, i.e. in the way it was considered at Augustus’ time, allows the close examination of American military bases, which are intended to fulfil similar tasks. Defined that way, the practice of colony represents third line of cultural continuity that crosses beyond particular discourses. From the viewpoint of the American empire, the presence of American military abroad is necessary in order to maintain authority of the U.S. abroad. The military bases are considered as units stationed on the American security frontier, they are guarding spots identifying possible adversaries and securing American interests in the region. The American empire has a network of military bases around the world in order to guarantee stability and peace. The global scale of the presence, in turn, represents the discursive discontinuity of the imperial discourse. This global

presence of American military forces can be described as a hub-and-spoke structure in which America is the hub and its spokes are reaching out to the rest of the world. Whether established in permanent bases or on rotational deployments, they provide the first line of defence described as the “American security perimeter”. While the perimeter of U.S. security interests has expanded, the worldwide archipelago of U.S. military installations has contracted. There can be identified in the case of American empire clear shift from complex alliance system of cold war to the “provincial system” of the war on terror, where other states and peoples are more and more treated as possessions. At the time of the Roman Empire the neighbouring peoples had to accept Roman officials or (if maritime) at least one naval base. In the case of American empire other countries and peoples have not exactly accept U.S. officials, but accept of being controlled and monitored by U.S. officials. In some cases, they had to accept the building of American naval/military bases. As the security interests of the American empire have expanded, so would grow the number of peoples having accepted American military bases/installations in the war on terrorism.

Geopolitics and geo-economy

The Roman Empire was considered as a connection of the Rome and Roman people to its allies, friends, clients and vassals through the obeisance of them to Rome, rather than clearly marked territorial unit. Augustus itself talks about *finēs* or “ends” (e.g. *finēs Illyrici*, which are though translated as “boundaries”) (Lacus Curtius 2003b, part 5, p388–389; Lacus Curtius 2003, part 5, p395–p396). Augustus pushed forward the “ends” of the Roman Empire and wanted other peoples to accept the authority, control and greater strength of the Rome. This system of belonging and obeisance represents the fourth line of the cultural continuity that connects the Roman Empire to the American empire for the American empire, too, is trying to push its “ends” forward.

This cultural continuity is, however, cut through and discontinuities emerge for the American empire is pushing its ends up to the space and cyberspace. The reason for such plans is the security perimeter. It is considered in RAD that space dominance may become so essential to the preservation of American military pre-eminence that it requires a separate service (RAD 2000, 39). According to RAD, Space Command as “the ability to assure access to space, freedom of operations within the space medium, and an ability to deny others the use of space” defines the control of space (RAD 2000, 55). This action of “pushing ends forward” is

closely tied with military power and investing in military. The control of “new commons” is considered as essential for maintaining the hegemonic position because they represented new media of warfare. Expanding of an empire is commonly understood in terms of geopolitical action. However, how are we supposed to call that kind of aspatial expanding the RAD is suggesting:

Although it may take several decades for the process of transformation to unfold, in time, the art of warfare on air, land, and sea will be vastly different than it is today, and ‘combat’ likely will take place in new dimensions: in space, ‘cyber-space’, and perhaps the world of microbes (RAD 2000, 60).

Wars fought in air by long-range, stealthy unmanned crafts, on land by fleets of robots some small enough to fit in soldier’s pockets, and on the sea by navies able to manoeuvre and fight underwater as forced by land- and space-based systems represent discursive discontinuities emerging in the future. Space as the theatre of war, considering advanced forms of biological warfare that can “target” specific genotypes and may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool belong to this type of discontinuities, too.

Diplomatic ties and relationships

Fifth line of cultural continuity forms from the relationships. Relationship between the Roman Empire and its allies and friends was one of patron and client, *reges socii et amici populi Romani*⁷, as the Senate named them as kings and friends of the Roman people (Lintott 1981, 61). They were allies and friends, no more and no less. Their existence was precarious and depended on a decision by Rome not to annex their territory. Augustus used to place most conquered kingdoms either under their old rulers or under new appointees, considering them and taking care of them as parts of the Roman Empire (Lintott 1981, 62). Once a king or people had been defeated by Rome or become its ally, they were considered as parts of the empire. The *socii et amici* was differentiated into various categories according to their form of government and the terms of their association with Rome. They were regarded as contributors to Roman power and thus as proper subjects for Roman concern. Yet, what else but the “relationship of patron and client” describes better the relationship between American military power and the rest of the world today, or describes the intentions the United States is having for the rest of the world?

Again, the discontinuities in this particular practice of power emerge from the global scope, contradictory scale (national and international), and the changed attitude towards belligerence of the American empire. Considering the presence of American forces in Europe, the members of PNAC emphasise the importance of NATO not being replaced by the European Union for it leaves the United States without a voice in European security affairs, which is against of the national interest of the United States. Therefore, the airbases in England and Germany, headquarters and Army units in Belgium and Germany, and much of the current network of U.S. bases retain its relevance today as in the Cold War. (RAD 2000, 16.) In the Gulf region, although Saudi domestic sensibilities demand that the forces based in the Kingdom nominally remain rotational forces, the members of the PNAC are convinced that this mission has turned to be semi-permanent (RAD 2000, 17). By the same way one can consider that, while the American empire has security interests in East Asia as well, this part of the planet belongs to the empire, too. The mission of the United States is to tighten its ties with the Republic of Korea and Japan, as well as reach out to regional powers like Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia. To show others that you are interested in them and you want to help them will be difficult for the American empire due to diverse national sentiments. All the way, RAD is optimistic about this task for there are emerged new democratic governments in the region that make it more compelling: “By guaranteeing the security of our current allies and newly democratic nations in East Asia, the United States can help ensure that the rise of China is a peaceful one” (RAD 2000, 19).

4. RESULTS: THE CHANGING NATURE OF WAR AND CONTINUITY OF ITS PRACTICES IN IR

It was my aim to conceptualise the particular play of change and continuity in our understanding of international relations by combining historical-genealogical perspective with the discourse analysis. It was my objective to investigate the ancient and current principles of “empire building” genealogically to show how the current established knowledge, the truth regimes of the state and IR discipline, are limiting the research by posing conceptual limits for it. Moreover, assuming that words have kept their meaning, and that ideas retained their logic, is the ignorance of the fact that the world of speech has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises and ploys (Foucault 1977, 139). It is the interplay of imperial ambitions, security rhetoric, established knowledge, new technologies and war, which is forming the

field of change and continuity, indicating the endlessly repeated play of dominations and power relations.

How the power actually operates in our discipline? As Foucault would probably do, I too draw a distinction between the actual operational categories (“international system” or “state”) within a specific discipline at a particular historical moment and those broad conceptual markers (“international relations” or “politics”), which have had very little importance in the internal changes of scientific disciplines. In the history of IR knowledge, the notion of international relations seems to have mainly played the role of designating certain types of discourse in relation to or in opposition to political science or history. (Foucault 1971, www-document.)

The description and analysis of international relations shows that by the use of more highly perfected instruments and the latest techniques an entire domain of objects, an entire field of relations and processes, which have enabled us to define the specificity of IR in the knowledge of politics, have emerged. Can one say that research of relations between nations has finally constituted itself in the system of states of IR? Have the concepts of “state” and “international system of states” been responsible for the organisation of International Relations knowledge in a particular way? Juxtaposing the actual situation in the international relations with the scientific theory we have about the international relations, I would say that the notion of state is not a scientific concept. It has been, and still is, an epistemological indicator of the certain power, which has – through the classifying, delimiting and other functions – an effect on scientific discussions, and not on what they are talking about. The IR scientific concept of state has no affect whatsoever on the imperial ambitions and action of American empire in the world of international relations.

Foucault, saying that the history, which bears and determines us, has the form of a war rather than that of language, meant that relations of power, not relations of meaning are responsible of our understanding of international relations. The scientific discussions, one kind of war we are waging among IR scholars, are not about truth or real picture of the world, but about power positions one can achieve in the discipline of IR. It seems that the compatibility of one’s arguments of “state” and “international system of states” with the actual political life is not important, as long as the arguments are made in proper scientific way and according to the

established theories of IR. It seems that it does not matter what changes appear “outside” of our “ivory tower of IR”, as long as one can keep its powerful position and its theories.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The concept of the “American/global empire” is thus the description of hegemonic authority with the scope impossible to imagine, and having no borders and no limits. The “global empire” is not only about hegemonic authority, but also about its relationships, action and impacts of it and its actions on others. It is more than the description of the spatial entity in narrow (“modern state”) sense. In this widened and unlimited meaning, my use of these concepts can be considered as a protest against predominate and restrictive role of the concept of the “modern state” in IR – the one having a narrow meaning of “a city surrounded by a thick wall (borders)” and regarded traditionally as only actor in world politics. The concept of “modern state” is restricting, shaping and limiting all IR research, because our basic concepts of political order are still conditioned by our experience of statehood based on the Westphalian world order.

The concept of modern state, and with it the concept of state sovereignty, do not correlate any more with what is actually happening in the world or how the world order is formed or forming now. Globalisation, illegal and legal migration, transnational business and money flows, the concrete predominance of the United States (globally) or the European Union (regionally) are most visible signs of the fading concepts of modern state and state sovereignty, which are now less about “sovereign” and more about “governance”. It might be more understandable to talk about governmentality than about sovereignty in the context of European Union or global empire. Thus, as a shibboleth, the concept of “modern state” limits and forces the understanding and use of the wider concept of “empire”. The unquestioned power position of the “modern state” limits the concept of “empire” to mean narrowly only territorial unit with political nature, and not the wider whole of *populus et suus socii et amici*⁵, which might be better description of what is going on in the world now.

If we would not be in such a stuck with the Westphalian state system, and the anarchical international system, and the narrow concept of modern state, and have been more opened to

⁵ People and its allies and friends.

interdisciplinary research and creative definitions, would we then have noticed the emergence of two imperial ambitions of global scale? Could we then perhaps have been better equipped in order to explain the emergence of cold war, the sudden end of the cold war, or the collapse of one imperial colossus? If we would have tried to make our theories of IR fit with the world (and not otherwise), would we have now a mature discipline of IR instead of continuously disagreeing schools of IR, which have serious problems with explaining the world?

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