

Croatian International Relations Review

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Congressional Views on NATO Enlargement: Limited Domestic Interest with Few Votes to Gain

Ryan C. Hendrickson

Introduction

At NATO's 2014 Wales Summit, the alliance, across a number of issue-areas, reaffirmed its interest in expanding its outreach activities and partnerships. Whether it is the possibility of new partnerships on missile defense, the improvement of NATO's Naval and cyber-defense capabilities to work more effectively with other international organizations, partners, or non-partner states, or in general the backing for new partnerships, the Wales Summit Declaration expressed broad sentiment for an increasingly global military organization (Edström, Haaland and Petersson 2011). On future enlargement plans, most significantly the document states:

NATO's door will remain open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, which are in a position to further the principles of the Treaty, and whose inclusion will contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area. We reaffirm our strong commitment to the Euro-Atlantic integration of the partners that aspire to join the Alliance, judging each on its own merits (Wales Summit Declaration 2014).

The Summit declaration was followed by expressing their ongoing support for the NATO membership aspirations of Georgia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as by calling for a resolution to the ongoing debate between Greece and Macedonia over its name so that Macedonia can eventually join the alliance. In addition, President Obama continues to support the idea of enlargement, as do senior American officials (Obama 2014; Nuland 2014). Thus, though reservations remain for any immediate membership expansion, by a number of measures it is clear that NATO intends to increasingly expand its partnerships, and will continue to assert an interest in having new members.

When evaluating how NATO has expanded in previous enlargement rounds, the United States has often played the determinative role in shaping when and how many new members will be invited to join the alliance. At NATO's Madrid Summit in 1997, it was U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who announced that only three aspiring NATO allies would be invited to join NATO. After difficult and somewhat contentious diplomatic negotiations among the allies, she got what she initially promulgated (Asmus 2002). Similarly, when President George W. Bush first traveled to Europe in June 2001 and shocked the allies by announcing his desire to "erase the Yalta line" and advance a broad agenda for membership expansion, he got what he sought at NATO's Prague Summit in 2002, when seven new allies were invited to join (Hendrickson and Spohr-Readman 2004).

Given the United States' influential role in previous rounds, coupled with NATO's ongoing interest in NATO expansion, this paper turns to the potential role that the United States Congress may play in shaping this political process. As is evident below, some members of Congress have demonstrated strong and meaningful interest in NATO enlargement and in NATO policies more generally (Pettersson forthcoming). At times, especially in the lead up to NATO's Madrid Summit in 1997, members of Congress played an important role in shaping American foreign policy and the larger strategic dialogue on NATO expansion. The evidence presented here, however, maintains that while some members of Congress have recently expressed interest in NATO expansion, few constituency political incentives exist for members to actively support enlargement. Thus, due to rather minimal issue saliency for most members of Congress, most

legislators remain disengaged from the issue, which will likely dampen efforts to expand NATO, and keep NATO membership at its current size. Moreover, since the crisis in the Ukraine, the enlargement issue has taken on a new partisan identity that may also limit the extent to which greater support for membership expansion develops in a substantive and more comprehensive way.

Literature Review

In discussing Congress's foreign policy activities, and in particular with regard to congressional attention to NATO, at least four bodies of scholarship have been recognized as research that provides insight on what may inspire or generate legislative activism (Hendrickson 2015).¹ One body of literature focuses on members of Congress interest in keeping their elected seat. Among the most notable scholars who made this claim, David Mayhew maintained that everything members of Congress do is generally motivated by their interest in getting reelected (Mayhew 1974). Mayhew's views have found some support among foreign policy analysts, who argue that members of Congress will work to keep their constituencies pleased. Such activity may mean that members of Congress will extend their support to active and vocal interest groups in their districts (Rubenzer 2011; Cutrone and Fordham 2010; Souva and Rohde 2007). Indeed, when members of Congress chose to support NATO's first round of expansion in 1998, they were targeted and aggressively lobbied by the Polish American Congress, the Hungarian-American Coalition, and other ethnic-American interest groups to support their desire to join NATO (Sloan 2003: 147).

Another body of scholars who address congressional foreign policy activism is those who identify partisanship as a key variable in explaining such behavior. A number of studies have found that members of Congress are indeed quite partisan on foreign policy issues (Carter and Scott 2009; Johnson 2006; Auerswald and Matzman 2003). Over the course of Congress's historical relationship with NATO, however, few scholars point

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1 See especially chapter 5 for a similar analytical approach.

to the presence of strong partisan legislative activism. Certainly, many more republican members of Congress, rather than democrats, raised concern with President Clinton's deployment of U.S. peacekeepers to NATO's 1995 peacekeeping mission in Bosnia (Hendrickson 2002). Some republicans similarly opposed President Obama's military strikes and coordination with the alliance during the NATO military operation in Libya in 2011, though opposition was not exclusively partisan either (Hendrickson 2013). Yet in terms of Congress's views on NATO's strategic decisions in the past, partisan activities are difficult to identify.

A third body of scholarship that may help explain Congress's activities on NATO is a general deference to presidential decisions related to the alliance. Much scholarship on Congress, especially research that examines congressional views on American military policies and military actions abroad, argues that Congress often simply follows the president's lead (Hendrickson 2015; Fisher 2013; Griffin 2013; Moss 2008; Ely 1990; Glennon 1990; Weisman 1995; for an exception see Howell and Pevehouse 2007). This literature squares with findings that Congress was largely disengaged from NATO's actions during much of the Bush presidency, as few members of Congress provided oversight of NATO's activities in Afghanistan, or NATO's operations in Darfur and Iraq (Hendrickson 2007).

Congress's oversight of the 2002 Prague Summit expansion round could also be categorized as deference to President George W. Bush as all senators, in unanimous fashion, went along with Bush's expansion request (Nowlton 2003). In evaluating the possible new applicants to NATO, most senators focused on whether the applicant states had backed the United States and its war in Iraq, which appeared as the key assessment measure when senators rose to express their support for the expansion plan. Unlike the Senate's discussions of the Madrid enlargement round, there was very little substantive debate over the strategic merits of adding the "Prague invitees" to the alliance (Hendrickson and Spohr-Readman 2003). In a similar degree of deference, the Senate approved of Albania's and Croatia's membership invitations in 2008 through a unanimous consent procedure, and thus entailed no debate or floor discussion of these applicant states (*Congressional Record* September 25, 2008).

However, there have been cases in NATO's history when individual

members of Congress have expressed strong interest in matters related to NATO, which squares with a fourth body of research that argues for simply the presence of some members' personal policy interests as motivation for their activity on a particular foreign policy issue (Carter and Scott 2009; McCormick and Mitchell 2007; Burden 2007; Carter 2004; Hammond 1998). This body of scholarship could also be captured by noting that certain members of Congress may simply be motivated by their own unique personal beliefs on a certain set of issues that helps generate activism. For example, Senator Richard Lugar (R-In.) has been credited with leading the cause in Congress for NATO to reform itself upon the Soviet Union's collapse, and as an early and strong advocate for NATO's initial post Cold War enlargement (Sloan 2003: 147; Goldgeier 1999: 35). Indeed, in the Senate's lead-up vote for the Madrid membership enlargement proposal in 1998, many members followed Lugar's initial lead and engaged deeply in a deliberative and nonpartisan evaluation of the applicant states in question (Sloan 2003: 148-153; Goldgeier 1999: 145-151).

Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) was another important independent legislative voice in often pushing NATO's European allies to accept a greater share of defense spending burdens. Similarly, Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Mt.), in the 1960s, also often placed pressures on the allies by threatening the removal of American troops from European deployments (Kaplan 1984: 27). Thus, across NATO's lifespan, individual members of Congress have on occasion risen to express their concerns over NATO's directions, and at times, have injected important and meaningful suggestions and pressures on their sitting presidents or the allies. Individual members of Congress can help drive and shape a foreign policy issue.

In sum, four broad expectations of behavior can be extrapolated from this previous scholarship. First, if there is congressional activity, one may expect that such behavior may be inspired by constituency pressures and the desire to get reelected, all of which would suggest that this issue has higher electoral saliency. Second, if there is legislative activity on NATO enlargement, partisanship may be a factor that provides insight. Similarly, Congress may also engage in partisan challenges to the president. Third, if there is very little congressional activism, one may anticipate some degree of deference or silence on this issue, which often seems the case in national security affairs. Fourth, and finally, there may also be

individual members of Congress who have developed a strong interest in foreign policy issues, and thus perhaps have a long-standing interest in NATO enlargement, which would help advance or perhaps limit NATO enlargement, which was especially evident prior to the Madrid Summit enlargement.

At the same time, one must recognize that these categories of activities could easily overlap and are not mutually exclusive; a very partisan member of Congress may also have strong incentives to act in such a manner due to constituency pressures, especially if one is from a politically homogenous district. A personal policy interest could also very legitimately appear as a strongly partisan view of an issue, which makes it very difficult to determine why a member of Congress is taking a stand on an issue. Thus, determining the motives for these actions is very difficult, if not impossible, and thus some congressional foreign policy activity may overlap among these categories in the analysis that follows (McCormick and Mitchell 2007).

The rest of the paper examines congressional views on a potential next round of NATO enlargement, focusing mostly on activities in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Searches were conducted of the *Congressional Record*, as well as Lexis-Nexis to identify members of Congress who advanced proposals regarding NATO enlargement. For this project, no committee hearings were examined, which potentially presents a limitation to this research, though perhaps not a significant limitation given how few congressional committees carried out oversight of NATO issues during the Bush presidency (Hendrickson 2007).

Constituency pressures

Unlike the political processes that occurred surrounding the Senate's debates over NATO Madrid Summit enlargement, among the aspiring and potential new members, there are few ethnic-American interest groups that yield significant influence in American domestic politics to

lobby on behalf of their home states. Among the possible candidates who were mentioned in the Wales Summit declaration, including Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia, these states have weak domestic lobbies in the United States and thus few votes are to be gained by actively advancing enlargement on behalf of these states. This is a markedly different environment when compared to the number of Polish-Americans in the United States, who were well-organized and active across the United States during discussions of the Madrid expansion round (Goldgeier 1999: 52, 99).

One member of Congress, Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.), however, has views that appear to square closely with her district's constituency related to NATO enlargement. Maloney, who serves as the founder and co-chair of the congressional caucus on Hellenic Issues notes: "I am privileged to represent a large population of Greeks in my New York City district, the city that is home to the largest Hellenic population outside of Greece and Cyprus" (Greek Reporter 2014). Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that she has sided with Greece in the ongoing debate over the possible admission of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia into NATO, which was conditionally invited to join the alliance in 2008 at NATO's Bucharest Summit upon some revision of its name, "Macedonia," which the Greeks oppose (*Congressional Record* 2014).

In contrast, Congressman Mike Turner (R-Oh.), who has a long and sustained interest in NATO and NATO enlargement issues, was commended by the United Macedonia Diaspora (UMD) for his support of Macedonia's potential membership in NATO. A UMD representative noted:

Ohio is home to some of the oldest Macedonian communities in the United States, where immigrants started arriving in the early 1900s to help build this great country...It's encouraging to see Congressman Turner, a member of the Congressional Caucus on Macedonia, getting engaged in this way on behalf of his constituents (United Macedonia Diaspora 2012).

Apart from these examples, it is difficult to identify the presence of any meaningful political pressure on members of Congress to support membership expansion due to strong constituency pressures. Certainly, there may be small pockets of strong ethnic-American interest group

pressures placed upon some members of Congress to act on this issue, which another more comprehensive research approach may discover, but in this case, no members appear to reflect the “constituency pressure” position better than Congresswoman Maloney or Congressman Turner—though Turner’s actions can also fall very legitimately into the following category of “personal policy interests.” In sum, due to the limited political and electoral incentives for engagement in this issue, NATO enlargement has rather low issue saliency, and thus few members of Congress who appear interested in NATO’s future expansion.

Personal policy interests

To identify members of Congress who have a personal policy interest or a strong personal belief on NATO enlargement in the time period under analysis, one can assess if this person has expressed a sustained interest in the issue, and also may have exhibited some degree of bipartisan cooperation to help advance the cause. Two members of Congress who appear to fit this standard are Congressmen Michael Turner (R-Oh.), noted above, and Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.). Turner has served as a delegate to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly since 2011, and currently serves as its President. Engel is the ranking minority member on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and has a long-standing interest in American foreign policy issues.

Prior to the crisis in Crimea, Turner and Engel introduced a bipartisan proposal, signed by additional 38 members of Congress, which advanced a number of policies related to NATO enlargement. The proposal included the call for Montenegro to be invited to join the alliance; a resolution to the “Macedonia” name dispute in order to result in their membership in NATO; a compliment to Bosnia and Herzegovina for its activities in the Membership Action Program (MAP); for Georgia to be invited to join the MAP; and for Kosovo to become an active member of NATO’s Partnership for Peace. This proposal came in a letter sent to Secretary of State John Kerry, prior to the NATO’s Wales Summit, and included signatures from 21 Republicans and 19 Democrats (Engel 2014). Congressman Turner, on

many occasions, has since reiterated these positions, both in the United States and abroad (*Congressional Record* 2014; Civil.ge 2012; German Marshall Fund 2014). Engel, too, has previously been engaged on NATO enlargement issues (Engel 2009). Thus, given the bipartisan nature of the proposal and these members' sustained interest on this issue, a case can be made for their personal policy interests here.

In addition, Congressmen John Shimkus (R-IL) and Adam Schiff (D-CA), co-chairs of Congress's Baltic Caucus, have also advanced various proposals for NATO expansion (Shimkus 2014; Shelbyville Daily News 2014; Embassy of the United States, Lithuania 2014). Shimkus's views are especially interesting given that he has noted that there are few political incentives for him to serve on this caucus, given the limited number of people in his district of Baltic descent. In fact, Shimkus noted that he was recruited by caucus supporters to join the organization, and thus implicitly noted that membership and support for the caucus was not something he had considered prior to joining (Shimkus 2014a). Like Congressman Turner, Shimkus also served as an American delegate to the NATO parliamentary Assembly, but has since resigned from this position. Nonetheless, while neither Shimkus nor Schiff appear to have as extensive records on this issue when compared to Turner and Engel, both have advanced policy positions that do not easily seem to correlate with district preferences or the presence of diaspora populations living in their districts, which suggests a personal policy interest in the issue.

One additional member of Congress who has demonstrated a sustained interest in NATO enlargement is Senator John McCain (R-AZ). Among members of the United States Senate, no other senator has generated as much media coverage on NATO enlargement. McCain's views have been clear since prior to NATO's Chicago Summit in 2012 and in the lead up to the Wales Summit in 2014. McCain has consistently advocated for NATO's membership expansion. In 2012, prior to Chicago, McCain noted:

We hear it said that this will not be an expansion summit. That is regrettable. We must make it clear to all of these countries, and any other country in Europe that wants to be a part of NATO and can meet the criteria, that the path to membership is open to them (quoted in Brannen 2012).

McCain, along with Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) have also lobbied President Obama directly to expedite Georgia's call for membership in NATO (Bennett 2013). McCain has also expressed backing for Montenegro's request for membership as well (News Europe 2014). Thus, McCain is not new to this issue and has demonstrated a sustained interest in the cause. His positions, in the wake of the crisis in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, however, appear to have taken on a more partisan quality, or at minimum, are more anti-Obama in their presentation.

Partisanship

As noted above, it is very difficult to distinguish between a member's personal policy interest in an issue, and a member's ideological preferences that may appear to be quite partisan in nature. Thus, analytically this is very difficult to distinguish and categorize. There are at least three recent actions, however, in the wake of Russia's military interventions in Ukraine, that certainly have a more partisan complexion than the bipartisan proposals advanced earlier in 2014 from Congressmen Engel and Turner.

First, John McCain's criticism of President Obama's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been quite forceful. McCain has noted that "Obama Has Made America Look Weak" and that in this new security environment, it has been a mistake not to continue with NATO enlargement (McCain 2014).

McCain, along with GOP Senators John Barrasso (R-Wy) John Hoeven (R-N.D.) and Ron Johnson (R-Wi) also published an opinion editorial in the *Washington Post*, in which they noted:

The west must provide far greater diplomatic, economic and military support to Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and other European countries that aspire to be part of our transatlantic community. We must show all of these countries that, as long as they meet the rightfully high standards for membership, the doors to NATO and the European Union remain open (McCain, Barrasso and Johnson 2014).

While these positions may indeed have policy legitimacy, the fact that no democrats joined as co-authors, and only Republican Senators penned the editorial, suggests some measure of partisanship.

Congressman Mike Turner (R-Oh) also became increasingly active on NATO enlargement issues in the wake of Russia's new militarism. On 27 March, 2014, Turner introduced the "NATO Alliance Recognition and Promotion Act" introduced by Congressman Mike Turner (R-Oh.), which simply called upon the House to appreciate the significant political gains produced through past enlargement rounds, and to continue with "enlargement activities." His proposal was co-sponsored by nine republicans and only one democrat.² Turner also introduced the "Forging Peace Through Strength in Ukraine and Transatlantic Alliance Act" on 9 April, 2014, which like his previous proposals, included calls for "NATO membership for Montenegro, a NATO Membership Action Plan for Georgia, a diplomatic solution to disputes between Macedonia and Greece, and [to] seek resolution to the constitutional issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (House Resolution 4433, 9 April 2014). It is notable that only two co-sponsors signed with Turner: Mike Rogers (R-Al) and Howard McKeon (R-Tx). Why no democrats co-sponsored the legislation is not apparent, though it is clear that only three republicans advanced the bill.

In the Senate, apart from the media outreach efforts made by McCain and his fellow republicans, one response to the Ukraine crisis was led by Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), the then ranking minority member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He, along with 22 GOP senators, called for a more aggressive and active policy toward Russia, which included the proposal to grant Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) status to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. While the distinction of being a MNNA is not the same as becoming a NATO ally, this proposal is nonetheless another means of moving the United States closer to these states (S. 2277, 1 May 2014). Again, a notable feature of the proposal is that only republicans signed on as co-sponsors.

In sum, some indications exist that suggest a heightened degree of partisanship present in both the House and Senate in the aftermath

² The one democrat was Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.). See House Resolution 4346 (27 March, 2014) at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr4346/text> (Accessed 5 January, 2015).

of Russia's action. The absence of bipartisanship is evident across these recent proposals, which introduces a new political dynamic into Congress's domestic consideration of NATO's future enlargement.

Deference

As is clear from the data above, a number of members of Congress have expressed interest, and in some cases, sustained attention to the issue of NATO enlargement. In this sense, congressional activity is alive and well. At the same time, the congressional activity identified is from a rather small pool, which at its peak included 40 members of the House of Representatives, or less than ten percent of the chamber. Moreover, President Obama has not chosen to actively advance an enlargement agenda, which for most members of Congress, at least thus far, appears to be politically acceptable. Widespread opposition to Obama's views does not exist, and those who are advocating for a different political direction do not appear to be gaining political traction. In this respect, most members of Congress, at least tacitly, appear to agree with President Obama, or are not engaged on the issue. Thus, as President Obama seems relatively unengaged on this issue, so too are most of the members of Congress. As noted above, this absence of interest may also be explained by the generally low issue saliency of NATO's future enlargement.

Perhaps the diplomatic complexity of the Russian-Ukraine issue has pushed the NATO enlargement question to the wayside for now, and given the more partisan complexion of how NATO enlargement is now being presented by some members of Congress, many members--especially democrats--are choosing to simply follow President Obama's lead and not inject new positions into the wider debate over how to manage this crisis. Thus, deference, especially from the House and Senate Democrats, appears to be the chosen strategy on the specific issue of NATO enlargement at this time.

Conclusion

Congress's attention to NATO's possible membership expansion can, in part, be explained by four bodies of scholarship on congressional foreign policy activism. First, the evidence presented here suggests that the vast majority of members of Congress is either content with the current status of NATO enlargement or is simply not engaged in this issue. These findings lend support to the literature that views Congress as largely deferential to the president in foreign policy. In the last three years, both houses of Congress have generated no major legislative initiatives to help shape the debate over NATO's future enlargement. It is clear that as an institution, Congress is not pushing a new enlargement agenda.

Second, some of this deference may be shaped by the few electoral incentives and low issue saliency in place that may be necessary to generate enthusiasm for this issue, which also lends credence to those scholars, like David Mayhew (1974), who argue that members of Congress remain focused most importantly on reelection. Given the small ethnic American diaspora(s) that exists in the United States, working to advance their home-states' cause for membership in NATO, the political incentives are simply not there to inspire major and sustained efforts to encourage another round of NATO enlargement.

At the same time, there indeed are pockets of congressional activity related to NATO enlargement, which help lend support to the idea that indeed there are members of Congress who have a personal policy interest in NATO's enlargement. The 2014 proposal advanced by Congressmen Engel and Turner offers the most substantive and bipartisan example of Congress's interest in future expansion. These efforts, however, have become subsumed by a more polarized debate and presentation of NATO enlargement, as Republicans have become somewhat more active in advancing NATO enlargement proposals, while Democrats have distanced themselves from such initiatives. This heightened partisanship will likely make it more difficult to advance this issue and generate wider support for the cause in the United States Senate, especially as Senator John McCain (R-Az.), rightly or wrongly, becomes increasingly more outspoken on President Obama's diplomatic initiatives on Ukraine. Thus,

partisanship has now arguably crept into the question of NATO expansion, which scholars have identified as another variable in congressional activism. In sum, all four bodies of previous scholarship on congressional foreign policy activism (or deference) help provide some insight on how Congress may shape the next possible round of NATO's expansion.

All of these findings suggest that NATO is unlikely to enlarge in the near future. As most members of Congress appear to be deferring to President Obama on this issue, and as Obama appears relatively unengaged, NATO is unlikely to expand its membership. Indeed, as demonstrated above, some members of Congress are engaged on this issue, but given how few political incentives exist, the status quo seems like a probable scenario in the near future. Among the candidates who seek admission, Montenegro seems the most likely, given that in the past, both democrats and republicans have expressed support for this country. In the event the President Obama and the NATO allies proposed Montenegro as a new member, as long as partisanship does not overwhelm congressional dialogue and debate of this issue, Congress would likely defer to Obama's wishes. Otherwise, it is difficult to foresee a serious policy effort from Obama or the Congress to enlarge NATO, especially given the few domestic political and electoral incentives for doing so.

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Obama's Dual Discourse on American Exceptionalism

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Abstract

This paper analyses the highly contested concept of American exceptionalism, as described in the speeches of Barak Obama. The authors of the paper use discourse analysis to show that Obama is using the idea of American exceptionalism on two levels: US foreign policy and the US stance towards international law. Our conclusion is that Obama uses an implicit dual discourse in both these fields. Obama favours active US foreign policy, based on soft power instruments and multilateralism. He insists that American exceptionalism does not mean that the US can exempt itself from the norms of international law, however, he does not think the US should always have a very active foreign policy. He makes room for unilateral acting and the use of hard power instruments in foreign policy. He allows for the use of force even if is not in accordance with the norms of international law, when US national interests are threatened.

KEY WORDS:

US foreign policy, Obama, American exceptionalism, international law

Introduction

On the 10th of September 2013, Barak Obama gave a speech regarding the situation in Syria. At the end of the speech he said that “America is not the world’s policeman... But when... we can stop children from being gassed to death... I believe we should act. *That’s what makes us exceptional*” (Obama 2013a). The following day, the New York Times published Vladimir Putin’s text in which he made a comment about American exceptionalism: “[M]y working and personal relationship with President Obama is marked by growing trust. I appreciate this. I carefully studied his address to the nation on Tuesday. And I would rather disagree with a case he made on American Exceptionalism... It is extremely dangerous to encourage people to see themselves as exceptional, whatever the motivation” (Putin 2013). He also said that “the law is still the law, and we must follow it whether we like it or not” (Ibid.).

Putin’s criticism gained a great deal of attention in the US media, and although Obama did not stop using the term ‘American exceptionalism’ he was criticised for not believing in it enough (File 2015). The crisis in Ukraine opened the debate over Vladimir Putin’s hypocrisy and the genealogy of the Russian exceptionalism. Arguments between Moscow and Washington about the potential influence of the idea of American exceptionalism on American foreign policy and its stance towards international law are still being exchanged today (Security Council of Russian Federation on US National Security Strategy 2015).

These examples illustrate the importance of the use of the idea of American exceptionalism. American exceptionalism represents one of the most important aspects of American identity. The best indicator for this claim is the fact that exceptionalism is widely accepted in public opinion as something that characterises the USA (Jones 2010).¹ There is no single fixed meaning of American exceptionalism, however, and the description of this concept is variable. On the one hand, different perceptions of the American role in the world, coming from the different variants of American exceptionalism, might lead to completely different practices. On the

¹ Although the Pew Research Center poll from 2014 shows that belief in American exceptionalism: “has declined 10 points since 2011” it is still very high (Source: Tyson, A., 2014. Most Americans think the USA is great but few say it’s the greatest. Pew Research Center. Available at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/02/most-americans-think-the-u-s-is-great-but-fewer-say-its-the-greatest/> [accessed May 29 2015].

other hand, different practices in American foreign policy might lead to a change in the discursive articulation of the concept in the purpose of adjustment of the identity with the current practice and consequential legitimisation of the practice.

In this paper we analyse the way Barak Obama uses the idea of American exceptionalism on two levels: US foreign policy and the US stance towards international law. Our main conclusion is that Obama uses implicit dual discourse in both these fields. In US foreign policy Obama predominantly uses the term 'American exceptionalism' as consists of an *active* foreign policy, favours a *multilateral* to a unilateral approach, and insists on the importance and efficiency of the *soft power* instruments of foreign policy instead of *hard power*. There is dualism present in Obama's discourse however, because his perception of activism in foreign policy is not without boundaries, unilateralism is not inconsistent with exceptionalism, and "smart" use and the development of hard power are also acknowledged as important.

Similarly, in the context of the US stance towards international law, Obama regularly states that America should not be exempt from international legal order, and that what makes the US exceptional is not an ability to flout international norms and the rule of law, but the willingness to confirm them through US actions. Obama's discourse in the field of the prohibition of the threat or use of force in international relations, however, reveals that he is trying to "maintain the right" of the US to use force whenever it is in accordance with their own national interest.

This research paper consists of six chapters. After the introduction, we explain in Chapter II the analytical framework of our research. In Chapter III we briefly explain the genealogy of 'American exceptionalism'. In Chapter IV we analyse Obama's discourse on American exceptionalism towards US foreign policy. In the fifth chapter we apply the same analysis to Obama's discourse on American exceptionalism in international law. Finally, in Chapter VI we make concluding remarks.

Analytical Framework

Theorists of international relations (IR) have recently paid more attention to the concept of American exceptionalism, as an important part of US identity. American exceptionalism is probably one of the most important elements of US identity. As Restad (2012: 53) notes, many see American identity and American exceptionalism as equivalent. Most US foreign policy writers treat identity and 'domestic ideas about what kind of country the United States is', as important in the explanation of its foreign policy (ibid). The role of identity in foreign policy is acknowledged in some of the most important theoretical approaches, such as neoclassical realism, liberalism, social constructivism, as well as by critical IR approaches.

Social constructivism places special emphasis on identity. For constructivists, identity is a key issue in the construction of reality, since "the more we act toward an entity as if it has a particular representation or meaning, the more that entity can take on that representation" (Najak and Malone 2015: 256). The poststructuralist approach also places special emphasis on identity. It considers identity and (foreign) policy as mutually constitutive and discursively linked (Hansen 2006: 25). Adjustments to both practice (policy) and identity are possible through discourse. The goal of foreign policy actors "is to present foreign policy that appears legitimate and enforceable to its relevant audience" (Hansen 2006: 26).

For the purpose of this paper, it is sufficient to conclude that the concept of American exceptionalism is generally considered relevant in the analysis of American foreign policy, and especially in the US attitude towards international law. In this paper, we accept this widespread attitude. We additionally underline the thesis of Hughes (2015: 528), explaining that the relevance of this concept for IR scholars is "that it provides a cultural mechanism for legitimating foreign policy decisions and practices". Since there is no single and fixed meaning of this concept, we find it theoretically and practically relevant to explain how Barak Obama, as a key US foreign policy decision-maker, understands and uses this concept. It is a first and necessary step for any further theorisation of the influence of this aspect of US identity in its foreign policy.

In order to conduct our research, we focus on the way President Obama uses the concept of American exceptionalism in his speeches related to foreign policy and international law issues. We therefore use a method of discourse analysis. The objects of our analysis are Obama's public speeches. We do not specifically analyse Obama's foreign policy practice outside the discourse.

Despite the fact that there is no single and fixed meaning of American exceptionalism, there were some patterns (or "genres") of its use in history. Prescriptions of different patterns for US foreign policy and stance towards international law are especially important for our analysis. In order to clarify Obama's understanding of the concept in foreign policy and international law issues, we will, therefore, adopt a two-level research framework:

1. *Secondary source literature review* – which will make it possible for us to locate different "genres" in the meaning of American exceptionalism in the context of foreign policy and international law;
2. *Analysis of the primary sources (Obama's speeches)* – which will enable us to classify Obama's American exceptionalism discourse in these genres of meaning.

The notion of American exceptionalism

American exceptionalism is an essentially contested concept. Various US statesmen, politicians and intellectuals have associated it with different meanings, and therefore, certain social scientists made efforts to define the most proper and precise meaning of this concept. One group of social scientists conducted an in-depth historical, sociological and political analysis in order to question the old Tocqueville (2004) thesis that America is qualitatively different (or an exception, as it was later framed) to the rest of the world. The American political scientist Lipset (1997) is a typical representative of this group.

In the field of International Relations, however, the majority of scholars have focused on clarifying and analysing the influence of the phenomenon of American exceptionalism on US foreign policy (Deudny and Meiser 2012; Hodgson 2009; Bachevic 2008; McCrisken 2003; McEvoy-Levy 2001). This means that these scholars were not questioning whether America is exceptional according to particular criteria, but whether Americans believe that America is exceptional, and how this important belief (ideational variable) influences US foreign policy.

A typical representative of realist theory, Steven Walt (2011), understood this concept as something similar to American primacy in power and the tendency to perceive others in the international arena as unequal. Liberal approaches associated American exceptionalism with the unique character of American democracy and with that what Tony Smith (1994) calls 'the American Mission' - the possibility of spreading democracy around the globe, and "make of world a better place".

The poststructuralist approach adopted by Pease (2009: 9) considered American exceptionalism as a national "fantasy", composed of "incompatible elements", which actually made it possible to survive and adapt to different circumstances. He considered the evolution of this concept as a way of "othering" primarily of the Soviet Union, but also of Europe and the so-called 'third world' (Pease 2009: 10-11). Najak and Malone (2012), put additional emphasis on the role of American exceptionalism discourse as an addition to American Orientalism discourse, and treated it as a way US distinguishes itself from "others" in the Western world, especially Europe.

Most relevant for our analysis are authors who undertook comprehensive research into the way in which the concept was used and the meaning it had in public debates about foreign policy. One of the most important contributions regarding the patterns of use of this concept in foreign policy is work of McCrisken (2003). He claims that there were two different strands of American exceptionalism which had two different foreign policy prescriptions: 1) exemplary – prescribing isolationism; and 2) missionary-prescribing an active international role. Deudny and Meiser (2012) confirm that American exceptionalism has been taken as fundamental to both activism and isolationism at different periods.

More recently, Leah Achor (2012) conducted a detailed analysis of the patterns in which “American exceptionalism” was used over the last few centuries and concluded that there were seven different patterns (genres). Based on the criteria of prescriptions for foreign policy present in American exceptionalism discourse, Achor (2012) defines three different groups: 1) isolationism, protectionism, unilateralism; 2) active foreign policy; and 3) strong multilateralism.

Several works have criticised Achor's thesis, based on the distinction between isolationism and internationalism. Hughes (2015: 541) argues that the work of the majority of IR scholars who accept the distinction between isolationism and internationalism is based on the findings of “lazy historiography”. He points out the findings of revisionist historians, such as William Appleman Williams, which have challenged the thesis that the US was ever really isolationist (ibid). Previously, Restad (2012) also criticised research based on the dichotomy explored by McCriksen, and the many other political scientists that have followed his ideas, suggesting that the thesis of American isolationism is outdated.

We respect the findings of these critics, however, we consider that a negation of the existence of pure isolationism in US foreign policy history does not mean that different conceptions of American exceptionalism do not contain different prescriptions regarding the scope and level of activity of US foreign policy. In addition, the period in which America was focused only on the western hemisphere, even if we do not call it “isolationism”, was definitely more passive towards the world as a whole than the period that came after. As Mearsheimer (2011: 18) points out, there are still libertarians today advocating US foreign policy similar to isolationism. These libertarians actually believe that the US is different and better than other countries in the world.

We thus expand our model in comparison with McCriksen's conventional dichotomous model and adjust the content of his main dichotomy to the findings of the critics. The model that will be used in this work to analyse foreign policy oriented aspects of American exceptionalism discourse is based on three different dichotomies.

The first is the dichotomy between: a) active foreign policy, and b) passive foreign policy. For the reasons explained above, we find this a more appropriate dichotomy than isolationism/internationalism. The second dichotomy is the dichotomy between: a) unilateralism, and b) multilateralism. This distinction helps us to clarify whether the prescriptions derived from discourse are tied to the unilateral US role in the international politics, or to a multilateral approach which seeks to find more partners for the US. Finally, as Stretch and Mara (2014: 5) argue in their article, the roots of American exceptionalism could be traced back both to hawkish (Jackson's expansionism) and dovish policies (Wilson's idealism). The main difference between hawks and doves today lies in different perceptions of the usefulness of foreign policy instruments. Our third dichotomy therefore takes into account two basic means of power (Nye 2004: 25) as a basis for different foreign policy instruments: a) hard power, and b) soft power.

We believe that these three dichotomies present, historically, the most important variations in the discursive framing of this concept. In the following chapter, we will try to locate Obama's use of this discourse in one of the three categories (genres) on both scales.

American exceptionalism is not an essentially contested concept only in the field of foreign policy. Its connection or even tension with the norms of international law is well established (Ignatieff 2009; Koh 2003; Posner and Bradford 2011, etc.). Unfortunately, the dichotomies that we suggested in the analysis of the relationship between the concept of American exceptionalism and foreign policy were not very useful in this sense. Neither active nor passive foreign policy explains the relationship between the concept of American exceptionalism and international law. The same is true for unilateralism and multilateralism: unilateral self-defence, for example, could be in accordance with international law, but multilateral actions, such as that in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 or Iraq in 2003, were violations of international law norms. This is why we need to make a different analysis of the relationship between the concept of American exceptionalism and international law.

The doctrine of international law reveals different interpretations of the influence of the use of the concept of American exceptionalism in international law norms. Koh (2003: 1482), for example, states that "the

term “American exceptionalism” has been used far too loosely and without meaningful nuance”. This is why he suggests four possible meanings of American exceptionalism: distinctive rights, different labels, the “flying buttress” mentality, and double standards (Koh 2003: 1483). At the same time he finds that the most dangerous meaning of American exceptionalism is the last one – double standards. By double standards Koh means a situation in which “the United States proposes that a different rule should apply to itself than applies to the rest of the world” (Koh 2003: 1486).

Another relevant example is Ignatieff’s three different interpretations of the concept of American exceptionalism: the first is connected with the USA reservations, non-ratification or non-compliance of human rights and humanitarian law conventions (Ignatieff 2009: 3). The second is encompassed by the term ‘double standards’ – “judging itself and its friends by more permissive criteria than it does its enemies” (ibid). The third is connected with USA denial of the jurisdiction of human rights law within its own domestic law.

Bredford and Posner strongly criticise the aforementioned and similar classifications of the concept of American exceptionalism. They offer a different explanation for United States foreign policy and its stance towards international law by claiming that there is nothing exceptional in American exceptionalism and that every powerful country is exceptional in its own way. It is obvious that the term *exceptional* is differently understood in the work of Bredford and Posner. They claim that all powerful nations “advance interpretations of international law that reflect their values and advance their interests” (Ignatieff 2009: 5). Bredford and Posner see a strong difference between this version of exceptionalism and the concept of *exemptionalism* which suggests “that the rules of international law... apply to all states except for one particular state” (Ignatieff 2009: 7). To conclude, they believe that there is an American exceptionalism which is not so very different from that of the Chinese one or that of the European Union, but that there is no such thing as *American Exemptionalism*.

For the purpose of this analysis, we are not going to use this distinction between the terms *exceptionalism* and *exemptionalism*. The main reason for this is that we are going to analyse Obama’s discourse about the American stance towards international law. Obama does not use the

term *exemptionalism*, although he sometimes criticises a practice that could be very similar to this concept. We are thus going to treat the term *exemptionalism* as part of the term *exceptionalism*.

Ultimately, we would like to emphasise that the sovereign equality of states as a general principle of international law does not mean an absolute legal equality of all states in international community (Simpson 2004). In other words, in some specific areas of international law, some states could be an *exception*, such as when great powers, including the United States, have a special legal status in certain situations (the most obvious example is the status of permanent membership in Security Council). It is, however, important to bear in mind that this special legal status is accepted by other subjects in the international community. Otherwise, we are dealing with the unilateral promotion of so-called exceptionalism, which is used only to legitimize violations of the international law norms.

Obama's discourse on American exceptionalism and US foreign policy

Foreign policy connotations and prescriptions are an integral part of the American exceptionalism discourse. President Obama often used this concept in his speeches, even more so than George W. Bush (Gilmore 2013: 77-78). Despite this, President Obama was widely criticised for his "lack of belief" in American exceptionalism by conservative politicians such as Mitt Romney (Rucker 2012) and Rudi Giuliani (File 2015). This concept is very important for Barack Obama, and it was the topic of his first political speech at national level (Obama 2012a). Its content for Obama was not the same as that understood by Bush, Romney or Giuliani. The claims of his critics are actually based on this different understanding and definition of the concept, in comparison with those of Obama's predecessor and the current conservative political elite.

Barack Obama belongs to the group of believers and proponents of American exceptionalism that prescribes *active* foreign policy, favours

multilateral to unilateral approach and insists on the importance and efficiency the *soft power* instruments of foreign policy as something that makes America exceptional. Obama's perception of activism in foreign policy is not without any boundaries, however: unilateralism is not inconsistent with exceptionalism, while "smart" use and the development of hard power are also acknowledged as important. Therefore, while emphasising one particular combination of these factors (active-multilateral-soft), Obama more or less directly legitimises their contrasts as well, as something that is at least not contradictory to American exceptionalism, if not an integral part of it. We claim that Obama uses an implicit dual discourse regarding American exceptionalism, which is unbalanced in favour of the combination of factors. In this chapter we will further develop and try to explain our thesis about Obama's unbalanced dual discourse, analysing in detail Obama's American exceptionalism discourse position in the three dichotomies described above.

a. Active vs. passive foreign policy

President Obama is a strong and decisive proponent of active American foreign policy, and considers US activity and decisiveness to confront the threats on international level to be the essence of American exceptionalism (Obama 2015a). This was often associated in Obama's speeches with historical examples of what Obama considered the brightest side of American activism and international leadership. In his famous interview during the G20 summit in 2009, he underlined the role of the USA in European liberation, reconstruction and unification, pointing out the expenditure of American resources, sacrifices of the troops and leadership of the new alliances after the Second World War as something exceptional in history (Obama 2009a).

In another speech, Obama analysed various historical challenges for American leadership in the twentieth century history of the USA (the Great Depression, Pearl Harbour, Vietnam, the economic rise of Japan and the Asian tigers) concluding that the US always managed to overcome these potential problems and to remain a leader (Obama 2012b). As Obama points out, the USA is therefore an "indispensable nation in world affairs" and "one of the many examples of why America is exceptional" (*ibid*). This attitude implicitly contains a message that a passive policy which would lead toward an abandoning of American leadership would not be

considered as part of genuine American exceptionalism in the historical continuum.

Regarding contemporary issues, Obama stated that US engagement and decisiveness to “stop children being gassed to death”, such as in Syria, is something that makes the US exceptional (Obama 2013a). Obama even explicitly emphasised the risk to the whole world of American passivity and isolationism in the case of disengagement from regions such as the Middle East:

“Now, I believe such disengagement would be a mistake. I believe America must remain engaged for our own security. But I also believe the world is better for it. Some may disagree, but I believe America is exceptional, in part because we have shown a willingness through the sacrifice of blood and treasure to stand up not only for our own narrow self-interests, but for the interests of all” (Obama 2013b).

It is important to note that Obama's perception of activism and leadership is not entirely without boundaries. He warned against “reacting to the headlines instead of using our heads” (Obama 2015b) and explicitly stated that “America is not a world policeman” (Obama 2013a). In practice, however, it is often hard to distinguish positive active foreign policy from negative “world policeman” foreign policy. Boundaries between these two concepts are usually found in international law, as well as the legitimate interests of other states. It is thus very important to analyse the way Obama perceives these concepts in the context of American exceptionalism. As it can be argued, Obama's perception of the importance of International Law and multilateralism for American exceptionalism is somewhat ambiguous and without clear shape. Consequently, it is hard to define where precisely the border should be for American activism, if the US wants to stay positively exceptional, instead of becoming a negative interference in international affairs.

b. Unilateralism vs. multilateralism

American exceptionalism has often been associated in Obama's speeches with multilateralism in foreign policy. This association shows us

that Obama's perception of active foreign policy does not include the aforementioned "world policeman" model, based on unilateralism. His attitude is that American exceptionalism and global leadership must, in the most important global processes, involve other relevant international actors as well. This approach was called "leading from behind" (Halper 2012). Obama noted US coalition-building skills as one of the things that makes the US exceptional:

"Looking to the future instead of the past, making sure we match our power with diplomacy and use force wisely, building coalitions to meet new challenges and opportunities, leading always with the example of our values—that's what makes us exceptional. That's what keeps us strong. That's why we have to keep striving to hold ourselves to the highest of standards: our own" (Obama 2015b).

In the interview noted above on American exceptionalism during a G20 summit, Obama stated that America's "extraordinary role in leading the world" is not in contradiction to creating partnerships, since the US "can't solve these problems alone" (Obama 2009a). Obama thinks that US values orienting the country's strategic thinking towards multilateralism. He pointed out that the American tendency to "think what's good for the world", and not only to think about its own interest, is one of the things that make America exceptional (Obama 2011a).

This does not mean that unilateralism is completely erased from Obama's American exceptionalism discourse. On the one hand, in his statement on the 2015 National Security Strategy which glorifies the "exceptional role" of the US, President Obama stated that there is a possibility of unilateral reaction when "core interests" are endangered, although he added that even then it is better to tackle issues multilaterally (Obama 2015c). In his 2014 West Point address, Obama announced the possibility of the unilateral use of military force, if "core interests demand it" (Obama 2014a). On the other hand, in the same address (which contains many explicit references to American exceptionalism), President Obama stated that an important element of American leadership was international institutions since "they reduce the need for unilateral American action" (ibid).

It is obvious that multilateralism is something Obama considers essential for American leadership and exceptionalism, but unilateralism is perceived as something that is not necessarily in contradiction with these concepts, if it is used only when “core interests” are in question. This concept of “core interests” is somewhat ambiguous, however, and open to different interpretations. It is therefore necessary to conclude that, while favouring and emphasising multilateralism as an essential part of American exceptionalism, Obama also legitimises the possibility of unilateral action which would not hinder this exceptionalism.

c. hard power vs. soft power

“The question is not whether America leads in the world, but how”, said President Obama in January 2015 (Obama 2015b). The issue of the nature and form of American power is obviously very important to the president. If we had to describe Obama’s approach to the most desirable form of power in two words, the most precise concept would be smart power. This term was coined by Joseph Nye (2009) to describe the successful combination of hard and soft power instruments. In his speeches President Obama underlined explicitly and implicitly the need to rely on instruments of both hard and soft power. He claimed that the skill of matching “power with diplomacy” and the wise use of force is something that makes the US exceptional (Obama 2015b).

Obama put much more emphasis in his speeches on the effectiveness of soft power than on hard power instruments as the core content of American exceptionalism. Earlier diplomatic successes, such as McCain’s effort to restore diplomatic ties with Vietnam, were characterised as exceptional (Obama 2012c), and the restoration of diplomatic ties with Cuba and success of the diplomatic negotiations with Iran were also glorified (Obama 2015b). Obama also claimed that American leadership in science and research (Obama 2014b), as well as the attractiveness of American universities (Obama 2014c) is something that makes the US exceptional. He even underlined the importance of the entertainment industry in American superpower status and exceptionalism (Obama 2013c). American ideals and its internal inclusiveness are, according to Obama’s speeches, the essence of the American power to attract people from around the world and of its exceptionalism (Obama 2014d, 2014e, 2012d). In one of his speeches, Obama emphasised:

"...I travel around the world a lot, and I'm not somebody who expects that other people love their country any less than we love ours, but I will tell you there is something exceptional and special about this country. And there are very few people around the world who wouldn't do everything they could to be citizens of the United States or have the same opportunities that we have" (Obama 2012e).

In his speeches involving American exceptionalism, Obama also stated his opinion of the lack of hard power in tackling some of the most problematic global issues. The President said that military power is not enough to solve issues such as world terrorism, but that other means are necessary to fight its causes (Obama 2015c). Ending the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq was also treated as something good for America (Obama 2012b). Already noted examples of Obama's rhetorical tendency to avoid war solutions can be summarized in his following words – "the American people expect us only to go to war as a last resort" (Obama 2015b).

Obama definitely favours soft to hard power and emphasises it as more important for the content of American exceptionalism. It does not, however, mean that President Obama leaves no room for hard power. On the contrary, although it does not seem so at first sight, he actually leaves a great deal of room for the use of such power as an instrument of foreign policy and also connects it with American exceptionalism. The "sacrifice of blood and treasure" for global interest is believed by Obama to be part of those things that make America exceptional (Obama 2013b). He also classified the patriotism of US military servants in this category of exceptionality (Obama 2014f). It is important to note that while often placing emphasis on ideas and creed as the essence of American exceptionalism, Obama does not negate the importance of the military and economy as aspects of hard power for American exceptionalism, but usually suggests that they are not enough (Obama 2013b). This does not mean that they are not also important. Obama's message is that they are not enough for exceptionalism on their own, but that they are important, and probably necessary for it.

It is also important to note that Obama avoided using the term "war" in the context of American exceptionalism, but he did not resort to connecting

various other instruments based on hard power with this concept. First of all, he congratulated economic coercive instruments, such as economic sanctions, for the pain they impose on the Russian economy (Obama 2015c). Secondly, Obama openly applauded the use of hard (military) power in a non-coercive way for fighting global problems, such as Ebola, and marked these achievements of American military as exceptional (Obama 2015a). Finally, as we have already noted, he left space for the direct use of coercive military measures when “core interests and values” are threatened, in a “smart” manner.

It is obvious that, despite the constant highlighting of soft power instruments and insisting on the “smart” and bounded use of hard power, Obama’s exceptionalism discourse leaves a great deal of space for the legitimate unbounded use of force. Phrases such as “core interests”, “national interests”, “global interests” or “national security” are essentially contested and there is no consensus regarding the precise content of these categories, which should if necessary be protected even by force. The meaning of these concepts is shaped by various public actors in the security sector, and the US President is probably the figure with the greatest degree of social capital possession. The President therefore leaves enough space to frame a single issue as a “national security threat” (*securitize*) in the future, and consequently legitimise the use of force as a necessary special measure for dealing with that threat.²

Obama’s speeches on American exceptionalism and international law

In his very first interview after inauguration in 2009, Barak Obama noted “... that the language we use matters” (Obama 2009b). Although the notion of international law is not so frequently noted in his speeches, there are some important exceptions. We believe this is why it is more illustrative to focus specifically on one of these exceptions in order to show how Obama understands notions of international law, and American exceptionalism,

2 More details about securitization theory in security studies: Buzan, B., Waver, O., De Wilde, J., 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. London: Lynne Ryner.

and their relationship. We are going to focus on the speech Obama gave at West Point on the 28th of May 2014.

In this part of our paper we claim that Obama uses implicit dual discourse about the relationship between the concept of American exceptionalism and international law. Although on a general level Obama declares that the US should not be exempt from international law norms, he “reserves the right” of the US to use force in international relations in a way which could be hostile to international law norms.

It is interesting to note that in his West Point speech Obama mentioned *international law* or *norms of international law* six times (as far as we know, more than in any other of his speeches during his two mandates). This is intriguing considering the place he made the speech (a military academy).

We would like to underline and subsequently analyse two aspects of Obama’s speech at West Point:

1. The part of the speech in which we can identify his understanding of the right of the US to use force in international relations;
2. The part of his speech in which he talks about the general importance of international law and the US stance toward it.

It may be fair to note at the beginning that the principle of the prohibition of threat and use of force in international relations is probably the greatest challenge of all in the context of compliance with norms of international law. This is particularly the case taking into account the position of the US as the only military super-power in the world. We believe that this is the reason special attention should be paid to US self-perception in this field of international relations and international law.

At the beginning of his speech Obama stated that America is an *indispensable nation* which *must always lead on the word stage* (Obama 2014a). At least two interpretations of this statement are possible:

1. America should defend this status by using all necessary means

(including its military power) against any state who dares to (even peacefully) challenge this status;

2. The status of a leader on the world stage should be preserved by peaceful and legal instruments.

It seems obvious that the first interpretation is contrary to the international legal order and that the second is complementary: states have a right to compete and enlarge their power, but they have to do that in accordance with the rules of international law.

Obama also noted that:

“[t]he United States will use military force, unilaterally if necessary, when our core interests demand it – when our people are threatened; when our livelihood is at stake; or when the security of our allies is in danger... America should never ask permission to protect our people, our homeland, or our way of life”.

This is not the terminology of international law and Obama is not obliged to use it in this kind of speech. It is, however, interesting to see how it fits into the international legal framework. There is a consensus (Bredford and Posner would say it was the core of international law) in the international legal doctrine that the use of force is prohibited by Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter³ and customary international law, although there are (at least) two exceptions to this prohibition: the authorisation of the use of force by the UN Security Council by Article 42 of the UN Charter⁴ and self-defence in accordance with Article 51⁵ of the same legal instrument (Gray 2008; Dinstein 2011, Corten 2011). Nevertheless, there are fierce debates not only about the interpretation of these articles, but also about other possible

3 Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations".

4 Article 42 of the UN Charter: "Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations".

5 Article 51 of the UN Charter: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security".

exceptions. The International Court of Justice adopted a restricted understanding of the scope of these exceptions in its jurisprudence (*Military and Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua*, Merits, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1986, p. 14), but there was serious opposition, especially in American legal doctrine, to this viewpoint.

It is also good to note that in the same speech Obama claimed that the US could use military force *unilaterally, if necessary*. International law does not prohibit the unilateral use of force in a situation of self-defence, however, even then, self-defence could be used only until the UN Security Council (UNSC) take *measures necessary to maintain international peace and security* (art. 51 of the UN Charter). Additionally, self-defence must be proportional and necessary (Obama also noted that the use of force needed to be *proportional, effective and just*). That was also confirmed in jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice (*Oil Platforms (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America)*, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2003, p. 161). Ultimately, even if the UN SC authorizes a state to use force, as in the case of its Resolutions 1368, 1373, 1377 and 1378, the use of force must be in accordance with the mandate defined by these Resolutions.⁶

Be that as it may, Obama also suggested that *in taking direct action we must uphold standards that reflect our values*, but immediately explained what he meant by our values: *taking strikes only when we face a continuing, imminent threat, and only where... there is near certainty of no civilian casualties*. This raises the difficult issue of the scope of the self-defence rule in the context of the concept of so-called preventive self-defence. There is a fierce doctrinal debate about the existence of this concept in international law. There are authors such as Corten, who claim that the concept of preventive self-defence is illegal because it is not in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and the customary law in this field (Corten 2010: 406). It seems that most states in the international community share this view (Corten 2010: 425), however, there are also a variety of views suggesting that preventive and/or pre-emptive self-defence is allowed in international law (Higgins 1963; Wedgwood 2000). Until now, the ICJ has noted the concept of preventive self-defence in several cases (e.g. *Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo*

6 It is interesting to note that Obama promised in his speech at West Point that *at the end of this year (2014), a new Afghan President will be in office and America's combat mission will be over*.

(Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2005, par. 143) but has never made a judgment that was based on it.

Before 11th September 2001, the US took a cautious stance towards the concept of preventive self-defence in international law (Corten 2010). Even after this date, Marry O'Connell (2002: 50) noted that the US did not recognise the existence of a general rule of international law that would establish the right to pre-emptive self-defence. Accordingly, claiming the right of pre-emptive self-defence on the part of the United States would suggest *exemptionalism* in the US standpoint toward this international law rule.

Obama probably mentioned the question of *civilian casualties* in the context of the general principles of International Humanitarian Law (distinction and proportionality). The American use of drones in several countries also raised the question of the legal concept of armed conflict (drones were not only used in countries in which there was an armed conflict in the legal sense, but also in countries such as Yemen where the use of drones was part of the CIA agenda) and targeted killings (Melzer 2008).⁷

As already noted, in his West Point speech Obama also talked about the "right" of the USA to use force without asking permission when its core interests were jeopardised. It is not however clear what Obama perceives as the *core interests of the USA* – what does he mean when he is talking about situations in which *people are threatened* or where the *American way of life needs protection*. After all, the International Court of Justice found that self-defence was legal only in the case of an armed attack against the state (*Nicaragua*). By *unilateral use of force to protect our people* Obama probably means that the USA will unilaterally use force to protect its nationals outside US borders. The legality of this use of force is controversial in the doctrine of international law, although there have been several situations in which the USA claimed that these kinds of operations were legal (Arend & Beck 1993).

7 It is interesting to note that the already mentioned Harold Koh, former Legal Adviser of the Department of State (2009 – 2013) is the subject of a controversial petition that circulated at NYU where he teaches International Human Rights Law. People who signed the petition (more than 200 hundred students, organisations and "concerned members of NYU and the global community" - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/14hNTa9_-WqCgJv3DFu_XVK2zQsfHKwIne5PEu9Ld-2M/viewform) declared that by publicly defending the policy of the US drone programme and the policy of targeted killing Koh had behaved in a "unacceptable" way and so should not teach a subject such as International Human Rights Law.

Even more controversial is to claim that the states have a right to unilaterally use force *without permission* in order to protect their own way of life. It is very hard to determine the specific meaning of this claim (even in the US there is strong disagreement regarding the interpretation of their famous expression *life, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness*) and it is probably even harder to defend the position that every state in the world has a unilateral right to use force in order to defend *its own way of life*.

To conclude this part of our analysis, it is hard to believe that the US would agree that all nations in the world can use *military force, unilaterally if necessary, when their core interests demand it – when their people are threatened; when their livelihood is at stake*. It is equally hard to imagine that the US would permit all nations in the world to use force without permission in order to *protect their people, their homeland, or their way of life*. The US could not be an exception to the complete system of international law regarding the use of force in international relations. That would be an example of the negative exceptionalism noted by Koh, or *exemptionalism* in the words of Bredford and Posner. Of course, Obama's statement is a political one and could be interpreted differently in order to fit the international legal framework (for example the interpretation that 'protection of the American people' only means self-defence in the case of armed attack against the USA), but our intention was only to stress an interpretation of American exceptionalism that is almost certainly hostile to the order of international law.

We have already noted that in this speech at West Point Obama also made some general remarks about the US stance towards international law. One should bear in mind that almost every political leader in the world would always claim that their country is obeying the norms of international law, however, it is important to see how Obama understands the relationship between American foreign policy and international law.

Obama declares that those who claim respecting international law is a sign of the weakness are wrong. More importantly, he criticised the USA's attitude towards important international legal instruments and offered a (new?) landscape of American leadership that would not be based on the notion of exceptionalism and that would not be hostile to the international legal framework:

"American influence is always stronger when we lead by example. We can't exempt ourselves from the rules that apply to everybody else. We can't call on others to make commitments to combat climate change if a whole lot of our political leaders deny that it's taking place. We can't try to resolve problems in the South China Sea when we have refused to make sure that the Law of the Sea Convention is ratified by our United States Senate, despite the fact that our top military leaders say the treaty advances our national security. That's not leadership; that's retreat. That's not strength; that's weakness. I believe in American exceptionalism with every fiber of my being. But what makes us exceptional is not our ability to flout international norms and the rule of law; it is our willingness to affirm them through our actions".

Although Obama declared that he believed in *American exceptionalism with every fibre of his being*, his interpretation of that exceptionalism in this part of his speech is not hostile to the international legal framework (at least declaratory) because he also stated that the USA can't exempt themselves from the rules that apply to everybody else, and that USA is exceptional in its willingness to affirm international norms through its actions. Obama noted two areas of international law and politics in which the USA was severely criticised for double standards: environmental law and the law of the sea (although there are other examples, such as the American position towards the International Criminal Court). Obama's comment on double standards may be understood as his critique of the Senate's practice in the field of ratification of important international agreements. In our opinion this was a message to the US public and senators rather than to people outside the US.

It therefore seems that Obama's discourse about American exceptionalism and international law rests on two basic, but probably opposite foundations. The first is that, at least generally speaking, the US can't exempt itself from the rules of international law that apply to everybody else. The discourse on the rules of the prohibition on the use of force in international relations reveals that, at least in the most sensitive fields of international relations, the US wants to have almost full freedom to protect their own national interests. The question remains whether it is possible to make peace between these two foundations in order to

create a coherent foreign policy which would be in accordance with norms of international law.

Conclusion

Due to its popularity and importance for the American public, American exceptionalism has been widely used in recent decades by presidents to justify their actions on the international stage, however, American exceptionalism remains an essentially contested concept. The articulation of its content is one of the most important aspects of the identity of the USA in the international arena. The findings of our analysis of secondary sources showed that in US public discourse there are important differences (even contradictions) in the articulation of this concept in terms of US foreign policy and its relationship with international law. The fact that a particular president uses or does not use the American exceptionalism concept in their public speeches cannot tell us about their foreign policy or stance towards international law. It is necessary to analyse the way a particular president uses this concept and the meanings they associate with it.

Based on the analysis of primary sources (public speeches) we have concluded that Barack Obama has unbalanced the dual American exceptionalism discourse concerning foreign policy and relations with international law. Obama favours *active* US foreign policy, based on *soft power* instruments and *multilateralism*, as something that makes America exceptional. He also insists that American exceptionalism does not mean that the US can exempt itself from the norms of international law, however, Obama's speeches also contain a second aspect in his articulation of American exceptionalism. Obama does not think that the US should always have a very active foreign policy and, more importantly, he makes room for unilateral action and the use of hard power instruments in foreign policy. Regarding international law, he allows for the use of force even if is not in accordance with the norms of international law, whenever US national interests are threatened. The parallel existence of these two approaches is the reason we describe Obama's American exceptionalism discourse as "dual". Clearer articulation and much more

insistence on the first combination is the reason we added the attribute “unbalanced”.

The focus of our research was Obama's discursive articulation of American exceptionalism concerning US foreign policy and its stance towards international law. In other words, we have focused on identity, and not on practice. As we have explained, however, American exceptionalism is considered one of the most important mechanisms for the justification of foreign policy. It is obvious that the dual articulation of this concept allows Obama to justify a wide range of foreign policy practices and practical stances towards international law. The findings of this article should help further research about the way Obama's articulation of this concept influences his foreign policy practice and stance towards international law.

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Demographic Security Trends in Southeastern Europe

Dario Malnar, Ana Malnar

Abstract

Over the past three decades we have witnessed an evolution of the concept of security in general and of demographic security as a specific field of security studies. The approach to security has been changing both in regards to a widening of subjects and referent objects of security, and a widening of the security domain. Consideration of the demographic component in the security sphere has evolved in accordance with this development; the scope of perspectives through which demographic security is viewed and defined has expanded – the population composition, population dynamics and human capital paradigm. Aspects of demographics and security are in continuous interaction and interdependence which significantly determines demographic security and national security.

The aim of this paper is to establish a specific link between demographic security and security in ten post-socialist countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE). In accordance with this aim, an analysis has been made of the compositional elements and population dynamics in order to determine demographic security of the observed states. The analysis indicates unfavourable demographic security, and negative demographic composition and dynamics in most of observed states, which suggests that demographic security will have a continuing negative impact on the security of the countries analysed and the region as a whole.

KEY WORDS:

demography, security, South Eastern Europe

Introduction

Population is, along with territory and sovereign authority, the constituent element of the state as a permanent and organised community.¹ Population is the foundation of all territorial, regional, economic, social and other sorts of planning, a fundamental territorial resource and potential and is – in every country – of national strategic interest (Šterc and Komušanac 2011: 693).

The study of population – demos² – and changes related to the population is therefore a permanent activity of the institutions that shape social, cultural, political, economic, as well as security, segments of the social and state system.

In public, the problem of the population was for a long time confined to real and potential numbers of the population, its implications on comparative development and the power of certain countries and, at the global level to the implications on general conditions of development and survival of people on our planet. In contrast, in the last fifty years, attention has been drawn to the problems of dynamic and structural interdependence and patterns of demographic development, whereby demographic factors are not autonomous, but they, along with economic, technological, social, political and environmental factors, make up a set of conditions, causes and consequences of a unique social development process (Wertheimer-Baletić 1999: xiii).

The development of security studies is also characterised by the widening of the context in which security is observed, starting with the expansion of the thematic area to areas through which security is defined. Of particular importance is the contribution from members of the Copenhagen School whose work has established a foothold for the consideration of security in a widened and deepened context as compared to the previous period

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1 More on the issue of the constituent elements of the state in the Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (Montevideo Convention)

2 The population of a state is a community of people which consists of the citizens of the state and of foreigners who have continuously inhabited the territory of that state (Degan 2000: 228).

focusing on state security through military power and demographic trends.

“Demographic phenomena per se are seldom the cause of conflict ... demographic factors are therefore to be viewed as one set of many factors potentially contributing to armed conflict, interacting with others in complex series of linkages” (Nichiporuk 2000: xi). Demographic changes more often incite internal crises, and even conflicts that subsequently have the potential for wider destabilisation – refugee waves, using opposing sides to conduct a proxy war, and similar. At the same time, demographic features and trends have without a doubt had an impact on the geopolitical picture and relationships in a certain area.

The end of the Cold War prompted a consideration of security which changed the prevailing concept of focusing on the state and military power. As the work of the Copenhagen School broadened the definition of security, security studies began to deal with the factors that also emerged in the demographic studies discussed by Wertheimer-Baletić, and the notion of security was widened to include political, economic, military, societal and environmental security. It was clear that “the nature of the future international security environment will be determined by complex interactions between geopolitical alignments, technological advances, economic developments, demographic factors, and environmental trends” (Nichiporuk 2000: 1).

It is without doubt that modern security studies view demographic development as a determinant security factors and that demographic factors may represent an indication of the security situation and possible changes.

The aim of this paper is to determine the correlation between demographic security and aspects of security as defined by the Copenhagen School, and subsequently to define the demographic security of ten SEE states. These are countries that in the late 1980s and early 1990s of the 20th century entered the transition process from single-party and directed economy socialist/communist regimes to a democratic and free market system.³

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3 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.

Security and population

The traditional concept of security, based on a realistic approach as defined by Morghentau (1967) and his followers, was focused on protection of the territorial integrity of the state and its defence against the attack of another state.⁴ The object of security is the state itself and the concept is primarily based on the security of the state.⁵ The security effect of the population was seen principally as a function of how an aggregate population size affected the power potential of a given nation state. Nichiporuk calls this intellectual approach "static" and emphasises that it "saw population size and density as being one independent variable in an aggregate "bucket of capabilities" that determined a country's level of power and influence in international system" (Nichiporuk 2000: 5).

The traditional concept of security prevailed during the Cold War both in democratic and totalitarian states, however, even though totalitarian states at the time, with regard to the concept of international security, based their approach to security on a realistic concept and their approach to population on a static concept, they also saw the population in another, intrastate context.

In totalitarian states there is no clear definition of national security. Those matters are mistaken for the security of the ruling elite or ideal state as the organisation superior to the nation (Podolski 1999: 46). It is in this context, in the intrastate sphere, that the population is also viewed, and is segmented along ideological, ethnic, and social lines. The homogeneity and potential of a group, separately or in correlation with other groups, for provoking intrastate ethnic or ideologically motivated conflicts, as a threat to the regime's security, is assessed. The demographic structure and processes influencing the creation of hyper nations and ideological patterns are also analysed. This approach widened the context in which impact of demographic factors on state power and security was observed, and therefore the components and content of demographic security as well. The approach was dynamic in character.

4 This approach reflects the definition of national security as was given by Luciani that "National security can be defined as the ability to resist external aggression" (Luciani 1989: 151).

5 See (Vilijams 2012: 46).

In the wider international context the dynamic approach was developed and strengthened during the 1980s and 1990s. Nichiporuk states that “this dynamic paradigm emphasizes not population size as a component of national power calculations but rather the interactions between population pressures and environmental degradation, mass migrations, resource depletion, forced refugee flows, ethnic conflict, hypernationalism, and urbanization [...]” (Nichiporuk 2000: 6).

The development of elements of the dynamic paradigm, as it is called by Nichiporuk, coincides with tendencies in the development of a modern concept of security developed after the concept of security had been affected by the fundamental changes in the security environment after the Cold War. One could even say that there has been a shift from the state as a central subject of security to people as groups and individuals. This shift in security studies was initiated by Barry Buzan and then further developed in his work and the work of theorists associated with the Copenhagen School.⁶ Buzan expanded the understanding of the concept of security by widening it into five fields: military, economic, environmental, political and societal security. “Referent objects can be the state (military security); national sovereignty, or an ideology (political security); national economies (economic security); collective identities (societal security); species or habitats (environmental security)” (Buzan et al. 1998). The perception of security has become more subjective and individualised. The modern concept of security views population trends through their impact on a country’s potential to meet the needs of the population and ensure the protection of common and individual rights. As Grizold (1998: 32) states, it is about “...activities which ensure fulfilment of societies basic functions (socio-economic, socio-political, psycho-social, cultural, ecological and other)”.

In the modern concept of security the psychological dimension-what make us feel secure or insecure - has gained priority over the physical, and stems directly from the population and its structure, particularly from personal values. A strengthening of the psychological dimensions of security is compatible with demographic development, which marks the second demographic transition (SDT). According to the original SDT

6 It is primarily about the Barry Buzan’s book “*People, states and fear*” 1983, following the research and studies of Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde..

concept, large scale changes in family and reproductive behaviour are the consequence of cultural and ideational changes (e.g. a shift towards secular individualism and an orientation towards personal self-fulfilment) driven primarily by economic affluence (Van de Kaa 1987).

So demographic security "...is not only to assess the direct impact of demographic trends on population numbers, economic size, and defense capabilities, but also to consider how these trends may indirectly affect capabilities by altering economic performance, social temperament, and national goals." (Jackson and Howe 2008: 1)

Herd and Sargsyan, in their study of Russian demographic security noticed that aging, shifts in ethnic distribution and migrations from rural to urban areas influence political security. Voter turnout and orientation is partially influenced by the age composition of the population (Herd and Sergsyan 2007: 55). Shifts in the ethnic structure, prompted either by natural movement or migration, also influence the political preferences of the population in a particular area, and in the case of inter-ethnic security dilemmas or conflicts may lead to radicalisation of political views and the articulation of such views through election results.

The economic component of security is also dependent on the structure of the population. The level of socio-economic development of a particular region is a true reflection and direct indicator of the demographic processes that are the demographic status of that particular region (Lajjić 2010: 17).

The composition of the population is a determining development factor. In all types of society the population enters the economic process in a double role, as a producer – determining the overall labour potential of a country and at the same time as a consumer – determining the demographic dimensions of the domestic market and important characteristics of overall, and especially personal consumption (Wertheimer-Baletić 1999: 4).

Leahy and Peoples (2008), have underlined the implications of population aging on the economic potential of society by stating that:

“As populations progress through the demographic transition, an opportunity for economic growth, known as the ‘demographic dividend’ arises. And, once death rates and birth rates decline due to investment in health, working-age adults make up the greatest share of population for a few decades and there are relatively small groups of dependent children and other adults. The lower dependency ratio can lead to higher savings and wages, greater per-capita spending on health and education at both household and governmental level, and increased participation of women in the labour force. These factors help boost national economies... The timeframe for countries to take advantage of this demographic window of opportunity is relatively narrow, often 40 to 60 years, lasting only until the median age of the population increases and dependency ratios rise again with the higher proportion of older adults (Leahy and Peoples 2008: 43-44).

Another consequence of population aging is the additional burden for pension, health and social funds. This situation, especially in the case of a society underdeveloped in human capital and technology, reduces society's productivity and prompts negative impacts on the economy.

In demographic-economic relations, there is distinct negative correlation at the global level. Developing countries with the strongest population pressures and the highest rates of population growth, yet economically challenged, are characterised by low domestic product, both aggregate and per capita (Wertheimer-Baletić 1999: 103). In contrast there are developed countries with very low rates of population growth, but high domestic aggregate and per capita product.

Finally there is a third paradigm defined by Nichiporuk taking into account the human capital of population and national power. This view holds that “the quality and skill level of a labour force is the most important demographic variable to overall national power...” (Nichiporuk 2000: 8).

This is particularly reflected in the economic component of security in states whose economies are based on the technological potential of skills existing in the workforce which is in clear correlation with productivity and therefore with economic growth.

A distinct demographic factor with an impact on all aspects of security are migrations. What appears to matter in the case of potential conflicts are those cases wherein migration leads to clashes of national identity (Teitelbaum and Winters 1998: 197). This is when one distinct ethnic group migrates into an area that is considered the homeland of another ethnic group and challenges the dominance of the latter, here conflict is likely to arise (Goldstone 2002: 14).

Graham (2000) concludes that large immigration waves can harm the political, cultural, societal, economic, environmental and security homogeneity of states that are flooded with such migrants. Graham adds that, viewed from a conventional security viewpoint, population movements would only be perceived as a threat if the influx was an invading army or secondarily, a large number of refugees.⁷ This is thus not only about the physical security of people, but the so-called "ontological security".⁸

According to Leuprecht (2010), migratory influx in the case of poor management by government institutions, leads to the so-called security dilemma⁹ in a domicile population, or in the case of demographic trends, a demographic security dilemma. This is a situation of mutual fear which encourages a chain of self-protective aimed actions and reactions between the domicile population and the newcomers, which may ultimately lead to a threat to national security, and even conflict.¹⁰

A percentage of foreigners amounting to 10% are enough to create tension among various ethnic groups (Soffer 2008: 16). Finally, a rise in legal or illegal immigration may eventually lead to xenophobic extremism.

7 Cited by Soffer, A., 2008. *The Connection between Demography and National and International Security – The Case of the E.U.* National Security and the Future, 1-2 (9) 2008, p. 10.

8 Leuprecht (2010) states that security is ontological security writ large, that is, the security of self, of individual and group identity and the environment (s) necessary to sustain that identity. The presumption is that ontological security is no less important to states, groups and individuals than physical security (Leuprecht 2010: 61).

9 The concept of security dilemma is primarily employed in the neorealist branch of international relations theory and emphasises the anarchic environment in which states exist. The concept of the security dilemma is based on the presumption that upgrading of a country's defense capabilities fosters a sense of threat in other countries and stimulates them to strengthen their own defence potential. In this way, the countries involved enter a continuous chain of actions and reactions that can lead to conflict. For more on the security dilemma, see Snow (2007: 166).

10 See (Leuprecht 2010: 62-63).

Bearing in mind the power transition theory,¹¹ such changes may on a regional or even municipal level lead to situations where a minority becomes the threat to the majority. In such situations, the struggle for the preservation of power by the majority and the demand for a redistribution of power from the growing minority may cause crises, and threats to national security. These are exactly the situations the SEE region faced in the outbreak of crises and armed conflicts during the last decade of the 20th century.

Threats arising from the changed relationships between minority and majority communities are particularly evident in sparsely populated areas.

Defined aspects of demographic security are broad, and connected to a population's composition, dynamics and human capital potential. In this paper we address demographic security through the elements of composition and dynamics according to Cincotta who addresses demographic security through elements of:

- A population's size, age structure, geographic distribution, or ethnic composition
- Changes in these demographic conditions and interactions between them, including migration, population growth, shifts in the age structure, and changing location and proportion of ethnic and religious groups (Cincota 2004: 24).

The ethnic structure of the population, as a particularly important component of demographic security and security in the SEE region and the issues of human capital paradigm due to their complexity, requires a separate analysis and is not the subject of interest in this paper.

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11 Power transition theory was developed by Organski. With this theory he provided the basis for understanding causes of conflict between states in situations where the parties find themselves in conditions of power parity. These are situations in which the growing power seeks for change in power relations, and the existing power tends to preserve its position (Organski 1968) and (Organski Abramo and Kugler 1981).

Demographic characteristics of South Eastern Europe

Through analysis of the population development, age structure and the total fertility rates in ten selected SEE countries we will identify specific demographic developments in the region and their impact on the definition of demographic security. Taking into account different methodological approaches and the inconsistent temporal dynamics of the censuses in the selected countries, as well as the reconfiguration of states at a given time period, the data from the World Bank will be used. The World Bank's data on particular important demographic parameters allows the necessary level of methodological coherence and comparability.

The total population (Table 1) in the countries of this region declined in the period from 1980 to 2010, in all countries except Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia, which demonstrated continuous, yet modest growth in population. In Bulgaria, the total population has declined in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Between 1980 and 1990 the population was reduced by 143,246 inhabitants, and in the period between 2000 and 2010 the population was further reduced by as many as 635,883 inhabitants, which is a total of 7.534,289 inhabitants.

In Albania, the last increase in population was recorded between 1980 and 1990, from 2,734,776 to 3,446,882 inhabitants. This was followed by a period of population decline to 1,419,934 inhabitants by the year 2000 and by another 154,805 by the year 2010, with 3,150,143 inhabitants living there.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, between 1980 and 1990 the population increased from 4,099,903 to as many as 4,526,511 inhabitants. This period was followed by a significant drop of 692,147 people. By the year 2010 the trend was continuing and that very year only 3,845,929 inhabitants were recorded. In Bosnia and Herzegovina this trend was reinforced by significant losses during the war that was waged in the first half of the 1990s. A comparable demographic trend has also been noted in Croatia, which was also faced with the war in the first half of the 1990s. During the pre-war period between 1980 and 1990 the number of Croatian inhabitants had

increased, from 4,580,000 to 4,780,000 inhabitants. In the year 2000, there was a population decline of 354,000, this negative trend continuing until 2010 when Croatia recorded a population of only 4,417,800.

On the other hand, Kosovo recorded a significant growth of population in the period 1980-1990, from 1,521,000 to 1,862,000 inhabitants. This was followed by a slight decrease of the population to 1,700,000 in 2000 and then a further increase until 2010, when 1,775,680 inhabitants lived in Kosovo.

In the year 1980 there were 579,880 inhabitants in Montenegro. By 1990 the population had increased by 35,513 to 614,601. By 2000 Montenegro had lost 3,405 inhabitants. This decline was followed by a period of slight increase after which, according to data for 2010, Montenegro has 620,078 inhabitants.

Romania, as the most populous country of the region, recorded 22,242,653 inhabitants in the year 1980. By 1990 the population of Romania had increased to 23,201,835 inhabitants. Then the number of inhabitants started to decrease to 22,442,971 in 2000, and finally to 21,438,001 inhabitants in 2010. During the observed period Romania has lost nearly 10% of its population.

Serbia has had continuous decline of population from 1990 onwards. Between 1990 and 2000 Serbia lost about 70,000 residents. In 1990 the population was 7,586,000 and in 2000 it was 7,516,346. Such a negative trend continued, and in the year 2010 a total of 7,291,436 inhabitants lived in Serbia.

During the period analysed Slovenia recorded a slight increase in population. In 1980 there were 1,901,315 and in 1990 1,998,161 inhabitants. This was followed by a slight decline in the population until 2000 to 1,988,925 inhabitants. Since then the demographic trend changed in Slovenia from negative to positive and as a result in 2010 there were 2,048,583 inhabitants.

Throughout the analysed period 1990-2010, excluding 1980 due to a lack of data for Serbia, the overall population of the region was decreasing. In

the year 1990 these countries had a combined population of 58,743,989, and then until 2000 the population fell to 56,047,051. Between 1990 and 2010 the number of inhabitants decreased by 4,519,834, so the overall population of the analysed SEE countries was then 54,224,155.

Table 1. Total population of SEE countries 1980 - 2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Albania	2,734,776	3,446,882	3,304,948	3,150,143
Bos & Herz	4,099,903	4,526,511	3,834,364	3,845,929
Bulgaria	8,861,535	8,718,289	8,170,172	7,534,289
Croatia	4,588,000	4,780,000	4,426,000	4,417,800
Kosovo	1,521,000	1,862,000	1,700,000	1,775,680
Macedonia	1,895,727	2,009,710	2,052,129	2,102,216
Montenegro	579,088	614,601	611,196	620,078
Romania	22,242,653	23,201,835	22,442,971	21,438,001
Serbia	-	7,586,000	7,516,346	7,291,436
Slovenia	1,901,315	1,998,161	1,988,925	2,048,583

Source: World Bank Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.IN/countries> (accessed 12 October 2013)

The negative demographic trend shown through the changes in total population of the SEE region is additionally burdened by indicators of the age structure (Table 2). The population's age structure is directly associated with natural demographic development, migrations and other events important for population development, thus pointing to the past as well as the future. The demographic literature provides different methodologies for population classification by age and sex structure. In this paper we opted for the classification developed by experts of the United Nations according to the proportion of the population aged "65 and over". This definition implies the dynamics and transformation of different types of population age structure related to the overall demographic development, by distinguishing three types of populations: a) the young population - with a proportion of elderly "65 and over" -4% or less, b) the adult population - with a proportion of elderly from 4% to 7%, c) the old population - with a proportion of persons aged 65 years and over, more than 7% (UN, The Aging of Populations and its Economic and Social Implications, United Nations 1956). In the modern concepts of security, the age structure of the population, in correlation with the general potential of society in economic, political, social and military terms, determines the security status.

Table 2. Population of SEE countries – Composition by age 1980- 2010

	Population											
	Composition by age%											
	0 – 14				15 – 64				65 <			
	1980	1990	2000	2010	1980	1990	2000	2010	1980	1990	2000	2010
Albania	38	34	30	23	57	61	63	67	5	5	7	10
Bos & Herz	28	24	20	17	66	70	69	68	6	6	11	15
Bulgaria	22	20	16	13	66	67	68	68	12	13	17	18
Croatia	22	20	17	15	68	69	67	67	11	12	16	18
Kosovo	-	-	-	27	-	-	-	66	-	-	-	7
Macedonia	29	26	22	17	64	66	68	71	7	7	10	12
Montenegro	28	26	21	19	64	66	67	68	8	8	11	12
Romania	28	24	19	15	62	66	68	70	10	11	13	15
Serbia	-	24	20	17	-	66	67	69	-	9	13	14
Slovenia	23	21	16	14	65	68	70	69	11	11	14	17

Source: World Bank Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.IN/countries> (accessed 12 October 2013).

The age structure of the countries analysed (Table 2) clearly indicates that the population in as many as six countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia, during the entire period from 1980 to the year 2010, had the characteristics of an old population. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia showed the characteristics of a mature population in 1980 and in 1990. During the period between 2000 and 2010, as in other countries in the region, they developed characteristics that indicated an old population. In the case of Albania, it was only in the year 2010 that the population age structure change from mature to old became visible, which means a ten year delay in comparison with the trends in other countries of the region. It is interesting to note the same trend in Kosovo, but with a ten year delay compared to Albania. Kosovo's age structure thus had the characteristics of a mature population, with people over 65 years accounting for between 4 and 7 percent of the population. It should be noted that in 1980 and 1990 Kosovo was part of Serbia and for that period there is no valid demographic data.

Table 3. Population of SEE countries - Total fertility rate 1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Albania	3.7	3.0	2.4	1.7
Bos & Herz	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.2
Bulgaria	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.5
Croatia	2.0	1.6	1.4	1.5
Kosovo	4.6*	3.9	3.0	2.3
Macedonia	2.6	2.2	1.7	1.5
Montenegro	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.7
Romania	2.4	1.8	1.3	1.3
Serbia	2.1*	1.8**	1.5	1.4
Slovenia	2.0	1.5	1.3	1.5

* 1981, **1991

Source: World Bank Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN/countries> (accessed 12 October 2013).

Total fertility rate represents the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with current age-specific fertility rates. Total fertility rate is the most dynamic and complex component in the natural change of population, which ultimately determines the future of a society and the range of structures and substructures of the population.

Among the many factors determining the level of fertility in a population, there are three interrelated groups: 1. biological factors, 2. economic and social factors and 3. psychological factors (Wertheimer-Baletić 1999). There is a consensus among scholars today, that the birth rate in modern societies is a component of the natural change of population, which is primarily affected by economic, social, cultural, and psychological factors. Demographers distinguish it as the most important determinant of the second demographic transition, pointing out that in most developed countries, fertility rates are not high enough to ensure a simple reproduction of the population. This trend is obvious in most SEE countries (Table 3) where the fertility rate in the period from 1980 to 2010 was continually declining. The fertility rates of all observed countries, with the exception of Kosovo, were below the replacement rate. The fertility rate in Kosovo decreased from 4.6 years in 1980 to 2.3 in 2010, but is still the highest in the region, and shows the characteristics of a country with expanding reproduction. Albania demonstrated features of expanding reproduction from 1980 to 2000, but

in 2010 the fertility rate dropped to just 1.7, which means that there is not even simple reproduction. As with the age structure of the population of Kosovo there is a ten year delay in fertility rate trends compared to Albania, so we can expect that within the next decade the fertility rate of Kosovo will converge with the demographic characteristics of neighbouring countries.

Macedonia last recorded a replacement fertility rate of 2.2 in the year 1990; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia even earlier, in 1980. In the same year Croatia and Slovenia had a fertility rate of 2.0 which until 2010 dropped to only 1.5, way below the level of simple reproduction.

Based on that analysis of demographic parameters, we can conclude that in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia demographic development demonstrates negative characteristics or characteristics of stagnation. These countries are thus approaching demographic trends that characterise the developed countries of Europe. It is interesting to emphasise the ten-year lag of Albania compared to most countries in the region, and then the same lag from Kosovo to Albania. This indicates that in these countries the effect of the second demographic transition process, in which the natural components are primarily affected by socio-cultural and psychological factors, started somewhat later than in other SEE countries.

The delayed or negative demographic development of the SEE countries is reflected in all three analysed components: reduction or stagnation of the total population, the process of population aging and negative indicators of population reproduction. According to data from 2010, only Kosovo, with a total fertility rate of 2.3 percent, has fertility rate over the replacement rate, while the other nine countries are below the 2.1 percent which allows natural replacement of the population. We must point out that although all these changes are gradual, their effects are long-term, and reflected in all areas of the population as well as the overall forthcoming life of the population and society. We also agree with Nejašmić (2002) when he states that "after the tumultuous changes in the 1990s, there was a strong natural depopulation, that is of? decreasing reproduction of the population; there was a demographic collapse!" (Nejašmić 2002: 720).

Migrations – impact on the demography of SEE countries

In addition to the described natural population movement in the SEE region, the mechanical movement of population – migration – also has a significant impact.

Migration is the most dynamic component of population movement and represents the most complex research subject in terms of content and methodology.

The mobile part of the population (migration contingent) mechanically changes its geographical location and in proportion to its demographic volume “moves” all its human potential (biological, structural, cultural, etc.) to the region of immigration (Lajić 2010: 15). Once arrived in a new locality migrants may retain their attitudes, religion, language, culture and genetic identity for a longer or shorter period (Roberts 1988: 46).

International migration has more than doubled in the past 50 years. There are some 232 million international migrants today. In 2000-2009, the EU population gained almost 15 million people through net migration. This number is higher than the total for the previous four decades, making the European Union a more important migration destination than the United States during this period (Sobotka 2009: 217). The EU also became an important immigrant continent.

In SEE countries migration is perceived as an important factor of demographic change and key driver of population development. Some authors characterise this field as a “new regional migration pole” (Garson et al. 1997), and it is generally understood that population shaped by migration trends is quantitatively and qualitatively highly heterogeneous.

A particular challenge to migration research, as well as the complexity of the issue, is the lack of good quality data and terminology, as well as the differences in definitions and sources used in various countries and in the coverage of the statistics. All this makes comparative research on migration

in Europe more difficult (Kupiszewska et al. 2010), especially in countries whose migration trends are of interest for the purpose of this paper.

Several political factors have significantly determined the migration flows in SEE countries in the late 20th and the first decade of the 21st century: the end of the socialist system in Europe, the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a socialist federation, and the creation of new states. While in Bulgaria, Romania and Albania, this occurred without changes to the integrity of the state, the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was followed by wars that brought dramatic changes. Wars, as stated by Šterc and Komušanac, are "the greatest social and demographic destruction and direct post-war demographic movement to a significant degree" (Šterc and Komušanac 2011: 696).

Studies have shown that the total demographic losses, (direct demographic losses, losses in the birth rate and migration losses) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period from 1992 to 1995 amounted to approximately 1,135,966 residents, which is 25.95% of the population in 1991, or around a quarter of the pre-war population (Tanović et al. 2014, 245). According to the results of research conducted by Živić and Pokos (2004, 727), during the Homeland War in Croatia the total demographic war losses in the period 1991-2001 amounted to 450,276 inhabitants. In the structure of these losses, migration losses comprised 92.94%, war mortality 4.93%, and natality losses 2.13%. If the mentioned demographic war losses are reduced by the contingent of immigrants into Croatia between 1991 and 2001 (232,966 persons), we have a net balance of demographic losses comprising 217,310 persons. The war in Kosovo 1998/99 also triggered waves of internal and external migration; the overall number of persons who migrated was 1,480,000 or 71% of the total population. According to surveys, approximately 1,150,000 persons or 55% of the population temporarily left Kosovo during the conflict, and some 555,000 persons or 27% of the Kosovo population stayed in refugee centres on at least one occasion (Bergouignan and Blayo 2011).

Migration from the Western Balkans to the EU is not new, but the volume of migration from Kosovo in early February 2015 surprised many. There is no precise information on the number of Albanians who have left Kosovo, but estimates indicate that around 100,000 have left since August 2014.

Another consequence of these wars are the great humanitarian crises, followed by movements of refugees and displaced persons from Croatia and Bosnia to FR Yugoslavia and from Bosnia to Croatia. In the early 1990s the number of immigrants from the Balkans residing in a Western Europe country was especially high in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (Bonifazi and Mamolo 2004: 524).

The change of the political system and disappearance of restrictive state control over migration triggered the departure of many people, especially inhabitants of Albania and Romania. Different sources suggest that around one million Albanians have moved temporarily or permanently across its borders since the beginning of the transition period (INSTAT, 2004; Labour Market Review of Albania, 2006). In the decade from 1990 to 2000, Albania lost more than 21% of its population. Albania is still the country with the strongest negative migratory growth (Avdeev 2011). Migrations are the phenomenon at the heart of economic, social, and cultural change in Albania over recent decades (King, 2005: 133). Romania has been the largest country of departure with an average of more than 200,000 people per year. In Bulgaria, the liberalisation of passport restrictions in 1990 created a framework for emigration. The decisive factors for asylum migration, however, mostly to Germany, were political instability and a desperate economic situation at the beginning of the 1990s (Bobeva 1996: 37).

During the 1990s and 2000s Montenegrins emigrated to Western Europe as well as to some overseas countries, however, during this period, immigration to Montenegro was also recorded, albeit lower than the emigration.

Due to the problems with the availability and quality of data, it is not easy to give even a rough estimate of the overall scale of immigration to, and emigration from Serbia, but, traditionally the Republic of Serbia has been a country of economic emigration which has nevertheless experienced several inflows of immigrants consisting mainly of ethnic Serbs from the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Nikitović 2014).

External migration in the Republic of Macedonia has over a long period of time shown a dominant tendency for emigration to Western European

and overseas countries. Emigration stands out as one of the societal and economic processes which have marked the 20th and has continued at an unabated pace well into the first decade of the 21st century. Recent migration flows from the Republic of Macedonia abroad have over the past four decades exhibited a tendency of continuous increase (Bonifazi and Mamolo 2004: 523).

Migration trends in Slovenia reflect an entirely different situation. Slovenia expects to remain in a pattern of growth, entirely based on immigration. Slovenia is the only country where natural and migratory dynamics are both positive and mutually reinforcing. Most immigrants are from ex-Yugoslavia, but Slovenia is also now beginning to attract immigration from countries to the east (Sobotka 2009: 231).

An important stimulus to migration is the accession of selected SEE countries into the European Union in 2004 (Slovenia), 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) and 2013 (Croatia) which, in addition to the great economic crisis and recession that began in 2008, prompted the free movement of persons within EU member-states. There is a gradient of material welfare in Europe from the southeast and east, to northwest and west, and people migrate from the marginal states to the comparatively wealthier ones (Reiterer 2010: 124) creating a new migration landscape in the EU. This changes the size, composition and destination of migration. Whereas Germany and Austria were the main destinations of east – west migration in the early 1990s, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Britain and Ireland, all traditional emigration countries, became major destinations at the beginning of the 21st century.

The birth rates of the SEE countries are low and migration brings new political, cultural challenges and addressing new questions for scientists, policymakers and public opinion.

The data in Table 4 (showing migration flows in the period 2010-2015) shows that the defined trends are continuous, and that all observed states except Slovenia, (there is no data available for Kosovo), register a negative migration balance.

Table 4. SEE Migrations, Flows 2010-2015, Net migration

	Number (thousands)	Rate per 1.000
Albania	-7.3	-2.3
Bos & Herz	-0.2	-0.0
Bulgaria	-9.8	-1.3
Croatia	-5.1	-1.2
Kosovo*		
Macedonia	-0.8	-0.4
Montenegro	-0.5	-0.8
Romania	-9.1	-0.4
Serbia	-16.6	-1.8
Slovenia	3.4	1.7

* Data not available

Source: INED Available at: http://www.ined.fr/en/everything_about_population/graphs-maps/international-migration/ (accessed 17 May 2015).

Impact of demographic trends on demographic security

The analysis of data on the defined demographic features of SEE countries indicates that overall population development in the observed SEE countries is shaped under the influence of natural and mechanical (migration) factors.

The demographic legacy from the pre-transition, socialist period in most of these countries was unfavourable.¹² The transition period that followed was marked by a complex and difficult social and economic transformation and accompanied by high unemployment rates.

Transition processes in the 1990s, which in some of the observed countries (Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania) were followed by the opening of the borders which made it possible for the population to go abroad, coupled

12 In the analysis of demographic development of the European post-communist countries, which also includes the ten countries subject to this analysis, Nejašmić (2002) concludes that "the demographic legacy from the socialist period in most of the analyzed countries had been unfavourable. Thus, most countries entered a dramatic period of political change and overall social and economic transition with weakened population potential and unfavourable tendencies of demographic development" (Nejašmić 2002: 720).

with the economic crisis and high unemployment rate in all analysed countries, prompted negative demographic trends, in regard to both natural and mechanical factors.

In addition to the transition processes, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia were caught up in armed conflict and wars that further incited significant migration flows which had exceptionally negative consequences on population development.

The economic crisis and high unemployment rates, particularly among young adults, continue to encourage emigration and a negative migration balance. This also discourages natural reproduction of the population – whether through the emigration of youth or a reluctance to have children in the given circumstances.

The consequence is visible through the basic demographic indicators analysed. The region as a whole, as well as most of the analysed states are characterised by a continuous decrease or stagnation of the total population for natural and mechanical reasons. The age structure of the population, with the exception of Kosovo, is unfavourable and characterised by an old or mature population, with an aging tendency.

The analysis of the combined population shows that only Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia record a slight increase. The other countries are characterised by a decline, and it is noticeable that in all countries, with the exception of Bulgaria, the population peak was reached in 1990, right before the democratic and market transition began. This is also the time when the fertility rate fell significantly, under the replacement level in all observed countries, with the exception of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. This was therefore the demographic turning point, and there was a subsequent strong effect from the negative natural and mechanical factors on the population movement. The consequence was inevitable and has led to the accelerated population aging; Kosovo is the only country that deviates from the trend to a significant degree.

Total fertility rate data shows that a naturally driven change to the trends and demographic characteristics of the SEE countries cannot be expected. Countries in the region, again with the exception of Kosovo, are

characterised by extremely low fertility rates which are significantly below the replacement rate. Kosovo is ten years behind Albania with regard to fertility rate decline; but it can be expected that the fertility rate will decline until it is under the replacement level in Kosovo as well. Given Kosovo's very young age structure, however, this will not automatically result in population decline. Kosovo is a generation from achieving population stabilisation due to the phenomenon of population momentum.

The slow or negative demographic development of the SEE is therefore evident in all three analysed components; population trends, age structure and the reproductive potential of the population - fertility rate.

Migration, with its influence on standard demographic development, also impacts demographic trends in SEE; and all analysed countries, with the exception of Slovenia and Macedonia, have a negative impact on the demographic balance. A particularly strong negative impact on the population growth rate was recorded in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Romania.

The negative demographic development of the population can only be replaced with an influx of people through migration. SEE countries, so far, haven't been an attractive target destination of international migrants.

Such a demographic situation, independently or in correlation with other security components may have negative consequences on economic, political and security-related aspects of the SEE countries analysed.

In the post-war era, employment growth has been a major, and sometimes the dominant, contributor to economic growth in developed countries (Jackson and Howe 2008: 58).

Most SEE countries, as shown by analysis of demographic trends, have passed the period of "demographic dividend", and in some the consequences of wars and emigration have had further impact on the sudden negative changes in the population, preventing the "demographic dividend" from being economically expressed and capitalised. Albania and Kosovo haven't passed the period of "demographic dividend" but as a result of the significant emigration of young people in particular, they don't benefit from it.

Due to the economic crisis and significantly high unemployment rate, the negative consequences of this situation have not become entirely visible. The relationship between the dependent and working population will determine both the outcome of the crisis and economic development in the long term.

In addition to the aging process in most SEE countries, there is also population stagnation and decline which has a negative impact on demographic dimensions of the internal market. Only in the case of Kosovo might more significant growth be expected, should the outflow of youth be stopped.

In addition to the increase in the negative correlation between the dependent and working population, "... aging is likely to place substantial demands on governmental spending for retirement and health care and their related costs" (Haas 2007: 116-7). Such budget-related effects of society aging leave fewer funds available for other social groups and development.

As societies age, they must transfer a rising share of income from working adults to non-working elders, whether through families, financial markets, or government budgets (Jackson and Howe 2008: 50-52).

The elderly will not be a dominant economic force - due in large part to the huge share of national resources that will be steered toward them through public budgets (Jackson and Howe 2008: 104).

The transfer of funds from one age group to another raises the issue of intergenerational solidarity. Possible reactions of the employed, especially the younger employed, to additional financial and tax burdens is to have fewer children, to emigrate and seek more favourable work conditions¹³; to develop a more negative attitude towards the elderly; or to strengthen political competition with the elderly (Jackson, Howe 2008). These are all elements that could negatively affect a country's demographic security.

13 It should be noted that unemployment is the main trigger of migration in SEE, but it is precisely under such conditions that a financial burden could be an additional reason for emigration. In the case of Croatia, even though it is not possible to accurately estimate potential migration contingents, concern about the opening of labour markets of EU member countries to Croatian citizens is indicative in this context. It is estimated that over 100,000 individuals, primarily young adults, might leave Croatia.

In societies marked by population aging the elderly are becoming a dominant political subject. In accordance with an increasing share of the elderly in the total population, their share in the electorate of a country is increasing too, thus increasing the possibility of their influencing the election of political representatives. "Since the elderly vote with greater frequency than younger adults, their electoral clout will be further magnified" (Jackson and Howe 2008: 50-52).

The retired segment of the population tends to formalise its political participation. In SEE countries, we see a number of pensioner political parties and their participation in government. Their growing political influence means a growing influence on budget appropriation. In such a situation, decision makers face a dilemma in acting under the circumstances of the growing influence of the elderly on the one hand, and dominant dependence on the work potential of the young on the other.

"With aging populations, governments will be under pressure to pay for massive new expenditures for the elderly (and most likely in the context of slowing economic growth) that all other discretionary spending will likely be affected" (Haas 2007: 127). This means that defence and security expenditure within the framework of discretionary spending will be under more intense reduction pressure. Given the new security paradigm which sets new challenges for security systems in facing threats in terms of necessary human, technical and financial resources, this may lead to a weakening of defence potential and security in general.

A positive consequence of the aging population is a stronger desire to avoid conflict in international relations, which consequently reduces the possibility of international conflict. Readiness for international engagement in general is being reduced in parallel with the aging population¹⁴, however, which reduces the potential for a cooperative approach in international crises management. Given the demographic trends, this "conflict provoking fatigue" can be expected in SEE as well.

Still, one has to bear in mind that demographic changes affect not only the possibility of interstate conflicts but "...by altering the domestic politics of a given state it becomes a security problem for its neighbours"

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14 For further information see Haas (2007: 144).

(Nichiporuk 2000: 29). This threat is a possibility in SEE, chiefly because of the weak institutional structure and non-consolidated interethnic relationships in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Consolidation of interethnic relationships is determined, among other things, by the different demographic dynamics of ethnic groups of Albanians and Macedonians in Macedonia, and Bosnians, Croats and Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We will not go any further because, as stated in the introduction, the ethnic issues in the region, as a particularly demanding component of SEE demographic security, are not the subject of this paper and require a separate and deeper analysis.

SEE is a region located between demographically propulsive MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and Central Asia regions and Western Europe as desired destination for most migrants. Even though the region is a transit area, given the distinct demographic imbalance and the increasing phenomenon of migrant transit, most often illegal, the potential for retaining a certain number of migrants will grow, as will creation of new ethnic communities with associated security challenges¹⁵.

The sparse and uneven population of the region, even in the case of limited migration, can lead to significant consequences for security. A migration influx, into some of those sparsely populated areas with its request for redefinition of the relationships of different communities as described in power transition theory, could pose security threats through the demographic security dilemma.

Conclusion

SEE has entered a complex demographic period that has not been observed in previous periods in terms of its features and negative trends

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15 The processes could be prompted in the countries of the region that are members of the EU if the European Commission persists in proposals to disperse illegal migrants and refugees across member states. European Commission – Fact Sheet, *First measures under the European Agenda on Migration: Questions and Answers*. Brussels, 27 May 2015. Available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-5038_en.htm site consulted on 18.6.2015. It is precisely such a dictated transfer of refugees that could lead to the creation of the so-called host communities that subsequently serve as a factor of attraction and reception of other migrants from the same area or belong to the same ethnic group.

– the overall population decline, population aging, low fertility rate and significant migration outflow. The analysed demographic data for ten SEE states indicates the unfavourable trends for their economic, political and security contexts.

A large and growing share of the economically dependent population, in comparison to the active, working population, hinders the dynamic economic development of society. This period is particularly important in the context of SEE countries regarding the significant economic lag of those states behind the levels of economic development recorded in the EU.

The countries of the region could face, or are already facing, a particularly challenging situation, which Haas describes as "...disadvantage of growing old before growing rich...", which will "...greatly handicap these states' ability to pay for elderly care costs" (Haas 2007: 146).

The development of society, as is shown in the analysis, depends on the demographic structure of the population and the demographic trends that characterise a society. Demographic development with negative characteristics and the characteristics of stagnation determines the overall potential of society not only for economic development but also for social development.

Future demographic processes, which have arisen from the current situation, and which are in the long-term formed on the basis of demographic inertia, will effect the social structure and social relationships in a more powerful way (Nejašmić 2002: 720). "An exceptionally high natural rate of decline, significant population aging and the appearance of a negative external migration balance confirms the conditions for a new period of very slow population substitution. This is further fuelled by the economic recession, high unemployment rate, unstable society and all systems within the society [...]" (Šterc and Komušanac 2011: 703).

The dominant trends of stagnation or decline of population are the processes with a long-term negative impact on a number of other demographic structures, as well as the general demographic development of society. Fast changing trends are not possible. Since the negative trends have been developing over a long period of time, a reverse process – even in

favourable social, economic and political conditions – would take a long time. Significant changes in the determined trend cannot be expected in the foreseeable future.

Following the analysis of the components of demographic security it can be concluded that the countries analysed in the region of SEE demographic security have the potential to adversely affect security and the adverse effect will continue. In this respect, the question of demographic security is a strategic question of future national power and security in the SEE countries.

Jackson and Howe warn that "...demographic aging will affect more than the size and structure of the population and economy. The burgeoning proportion of elderly in the population, the smaller size of families, and growing ethnic diversity promise to recast every facet of society from the popular culture to politics. More fundamentally, they could shift society's overall direction and political agenda" (Jackson and Howe 2008: 95).

In the given circumstances, strategic planning for population development is particularly important, due to the needs of economic development but also the development of society in general.

Special attention should be paid to demographic policies that will slow population decline and aging, ensure migration flow management and encourage investments in human capital; economic policies that respond to the changes in the labour contingent and internal market and possible negative effects conditioned by demographic changes; and security policies that will harmonise the structure and goals of the security system with new demographic realities.

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China's Global Order: a New Paradigm in South to South Relations

Ernani Contipelli, Simona Picciau

"To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill" (Sun Tsu, The Art of War)

Abstract

This article analyses the evolution of Chinese political foreign policy and its strategy in approaching developing and less developed nations. In this context, the relationship between China and Latin America appears to reveal the practice of the Beijing Consensus when considering their interests: China needs natural resources and new markets for its products, and Latin America needs financial aid and loans to develop its infrastructure and provide social programmes. The absence of the US in the region and the rise of political movements denouncing the American imperialism of the Washington Consensus are all factors that contribute to the expansion of Chinese influence. All these considerations allow a discussion concerning the new role of China in developing countries as an expression of a new emerging order in which China is assuming an important role.

KEY WORDS:

China, Beijing Consensus, United States, Latin America, New Global Order

Introduction

China has confirmed itself as one of the most powerful countries in the world, creating its own model of development and promoting a new form of South to South relations. China has passed a period of self-isolation and ideological foreign policy to enter a period where it becomes a central player in the current global system, through a strategy based on pragmatism and economic interests.

China has created its own form of governance based on the idea of the “*Chinese socialism market*” and seeks new partners to sustain its wide economic growth. Through the concept of the Beijing Consensus, founded on innovation, diversification and self-determination, Chinese foreign policy has been able to turn itself into an alternative and essential partner for developing and less developed countries.

This article analyses the evolution of Chinese political foreign policy and its strategy in approaching developing and less developed nations. In this context, the relations between China and Latin America are considered, to reveal the practice of the Beijing Consensus when considering their interests: China needs natural resources and new markets for its products, while Latin America needs financial aid and loans to develop its infrastructure and provide social programmes. The absence of the influence of the US in the region and the rise of political movements denouncing the American imperialism of the Washington Consensus are factors that contribute to the expansion of Chinese influence in Latin America. The role of China in developing countries as a new South to South relationship is thus to be discussed.

Rise of the Asiatic Dragon

The role of China on the global scene is becoming increasingly important in each corner of the world. In less than three decades, China has been

transformed from an agrarian country into the world's second largest economy, becoming one of the most relevant players in the world economic system. China has been able to create a powerful network of South to South cooperation based on trade investments, manufacturing and commodity markets.

China has emerged since the 1980s as a key partner for developed countries and emerging powers due to the economic reforms promoted by Deng Xiaoping, the leader of the country after Mao Zedong's death. Partnerships situated not only in Asia but also in Africa and Latin America have brought China a host of new opportunities.

Chinese economic reforms have followed a different path from those of other countries that liberalized their markets in the 1980s and 1990s in accordance with the IMF and World Bank. These organisations suggested reform policies based on privatisation, deregulation, unilateral trade and conditional investments. China promoted its process of economic reforms differently: lowering barriers, opening its markets and giving business opportunities to private agents, under state control and with the direct involvement of the Communist Chinese Party (CCP) in the economy.

Notoriously, the Chinese government controls the economy by planning and identifying priorities in the selection of sectors for investment and infrastructure, the creation of human capital, research and strategic fields. This reflects the strong influence of the CCP in the development of the country. The government wanted to create a free area for foreign investment by establishing special economic zones. This has become the engine of the Chinese economy as an important place for technology and import practices on the mainland. In order to restore Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China (PRC) and benefit from its already developed economy, China established a constitutional principle that was also valid for Macau: *One Country, Two Systems*. According to this principle these two territories could maintain their political system and capitalist economy while China maintained its own "socialist market system".

According to Chinese values the notion of the state is completely different from that of Western values. The state is considered the representative of Chinese civilization, playing partly a spiritual role for society that gives it

authority and legitimacy without challenging power (Jacques 2009). The relationship between society and the CCP, for example, has a specific dynamic with an implicit agreement wherein people renounce political liberties in exchange for the right to enrich themselves, "*To get rich is glorious!*" said Deng Xiaoping.

The Chinese consider the state an intimate community, as the patriarch of the family. In Western countries, state power is repeatedly challenged, and society almost always perceives this figure as an intruder. This sort of view explains the participation of the Chinese state in the economy, controlling and intervening in the private sector to confirm its legitimacy and authority, as well as the particular path of its political system.

To reach its actual level of economic development, China passed through a stage of isolation following the Maoist project of development, with a foreign policy based exclusively on ideological motivation in order to spread its political model to the revolutionary movements of the "*Third World countries*". The foreign policy principles formulated in that time, around the 1950s continue to influence China's behaviour towards less-developed-countries today. This foreign policy includes: 1) mutual respect for territorial integrity, 2) non-aggression, 3) mutual non-interference in the internal affairs of states, 4) equality and mutual benefit, and 5) peaceful coexistence.

During the 1980s and 1990s, China experimented with the beginning of its political and economic transformation, starting with the policy of four modernizations: agriculture, science and technology, industry and defence. These policies were idealised by Zhou Enlai and launched after his death by Deng Xiaoping who introduced policies oriented to attracting foreign direct investments and stimulating the economic development of the country. This would also lead to a new phase of relations between China and southern nations in economic and pragmatic interests, especially in the supply of natural energy resources to support its growth.

International admiration for the spectacular Chinese development was interrupted by the Tiananmen Square protest at the end of the 1980s. The government repressed students who were asking for a fifth modernization, democracy and greater political liberty, taking advantage of the

visit of the Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the presence of the international media. When Western countries opted for international isolation and embargo, China began intensifying its relationships with developing countries.

The economic and financial crisis that took place in 2008 deeply affected the USA and Europe and allowed China to enhance its relationship with developing countries, especially Africa and Latin America, in order to stimulate the domestic market and diversify exports. These countries represent an alternative to the traditional powers (United States, Europe and Japan), and a model of economic development. In other words, China wanted to establish a new path for relationships with these countries, based on economic and pragmatic interests rather than ideological or geopolitical factors.

Currently, one of the channels that China is using to act globally and also regionally is through a group of countries formed by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), which are considered the future dominant nations of the world economy¹. BRICS were initially created as a forum to discuss common interests and homogeneous political strategies in traditional international organisations through annual summits between its leaders. BRICS has been converted to an “institutional agency” with the launch of the New Development Bank and the Contingency Reserve Agreement to provide financial aid to developing countries. Through this channel, China wants to demonstrate its engagement and support for multilateral cooperation on one hand, and on the other hand to move away its image as an imperialist and a dominant country, especially in East Asia.

Dragon’s Profile: Beijing’s Consensus

As opposed to Latin America and Africa, which followed the recommendations of financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, China chose its own path to increasing its social and economic development, centring its efforts on the “*open door policy*”, creating innovation and increasing state control with a set of principles which

1 According to the report of investment bank Goldman Sachs “*Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050*” of 2003, the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China could together become larger than those of the G6 (Britain, the United States, Germany, Japan, Italy and France) in less than 40 years.

founded the “*Chinese socialist market economy*”. In Western perceptions, this political formula seems contradictory in itself, but for the Chinese it is not, as Deng Xiaoping stated in 1981: “*I think there are more than 100 kinds of socialism in the world, there is no restriction. China will build socialism with Chinese characteristics*”.

The 16th Congress Party, which took place in 2002, ratified the social political theory of the three representatives as created by former leader Jiang Zemin. According to this theory the CCP should represent advanced forces of social production, advanced culture and the interests of the overwhelming majority. With this political arrangement, the CCP wanted to open itself to the productive forces of the country, managers and businessmen, in order to consolidate its hegemony in society, revealing the pragmatic approach of Chinese socialism and the will to establish its own path of thinking even if it didn't match Western conceptions.

Even today the current leader, Xi Jinping, explains the Chinese way of government using traditional metaphor: “*You know if the shoe fits only after you put it on yourself*” (Lee 2015) meaning that each nation must look for the political model that best fits its social and cultural expectations of development.

This specific form of governance has shaped the political and economic “*Dragon's Profile*” creating a new form of “*socialism*” or “*capitalism*”, depending on the perspective taken. According to its leaders, Chinese society is based on certain principles such as reciprocity and harmony, repurposed in foreign policy strategy towards less developed countries. In particular, as stated by Hu Jintao, China foreign policy aims to “*1) strengthen strategic common ground and enhance mutual political trust; 2) take practical and creative steps to tap potential economic cooperation, and 3) attach importance to cultural exchanges to deepen mutual understanding*” (Shixue 2006). This demonstrates that the country wants to enhance its image on the global stage and present itself as a good partner.

In 2004 Joshua Ramo introduced the concept of the *Beijing Consensus* in opposition to the *Washington Consensus*, to express China's own model of development based on three main characteristics: a) innovation:

"constant tinkering and constant change, and a recognition that different strategies are appropriate for different situations" (Leonard 2006); b) pursuit of dynamic goals: "rejection of per capita GDP as the be-all and end all" balancing with other focuses such as quality of life and individual equity; and c) self-determination: "valuing independence and self-determination and refusing to let other powers impose their will (...) Countries can plan their own development without having to accept the unfavourable terms of the Washington Consensus" (Gresh 2008).

The "recommendations" of the Western capitalist system were followed by governments in Latin America, Asia and Africa, especially during the 1990s. These recommendations were based on the neoliberal ideology expressed in the concept of the *Washington Consensus*. The package of policies of the *Washington Consensus* includes free trade agreements, fiscal disciplines and the privatisation of state-owned companies, and clearly demonstrates a unilateral agenda oriented only by the economic and political interests of the North imposed on the South².

Developing nations pursued features of the Beijing Consensus to create their own path and space in the world economic system, resisting the dominant economic policy dictated by the Western international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. In other words, Beijing's Consensus was to be a lesson to enable developing nations to establish their own path of development according to their challenges: "*China is writing its own book now. The book represents a fusion of Chinese thinking with lessons learned from the failure of globalization culture in other places. The rest of the world has begun to study this book*" (Ramo 2004).

In this context, the success of the Beijing Consensus in its rhetoric of reciprocity and harmony, as supporting the growth of the Chinese economy, convinced Latin American and African governments to follow China's approach. The financial crisis that affected the USA and Europe from 2008 was the decisive factor that allowed a new peripheral network of economic relations from South to South, establishing China as the centre.

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2 According to Willianson (2004), the Washington Consensus recommendations are based on: fiscal discipline, restructuring public/social expenditure priorities, tax reform, liberalising interest rates, competitive exchange rates, trade liberalisation, liberalisation of inward foreign investments, privatisation, deregulation and property rights. These policies show the neoliberal orientation of the *Washington Consensus* and its main preoccupation for the growth of the GDP and openness of national markets. It has been interpreted as a new form of imperialism founded on the unilateral interests of Western hegemonic nations taking advantage of the south (A *Short History of the Washington Consensus*).

China presented itself as a new pole of opportunities and advantages for developing and less developed nations in South America and Africa. Both continents can offer their commodities to sustain the increasing economy of the Asiatic Dragon and gain unconditional financial aid in exchange. The aid and loans support their social policies and infrastructure programmes. The dynamics of these relationships reveals the real content of the Beijing Consensus and the pragmatic interest that China has in these countries. One example of this formula of cooperation is given by Niall Ferguson who reported the confirmation of a Chinese leader concerning China's foreign policy strategy in Africa: *"we will build up roads, and certain facilities for you, but you make sure that we will have access to the commodities and primary resources. As to your domestic politics and human rights you do whatever that you like"* (Ferguson 2010).

International Cooperation under the Wings of China

China is very quickly imposing itself as a source of finance for southern nations building critical infrastructure which will reduce obstacles to development. These infrastructure projects in Latin America and Africa are closely related to China's economic interests and focus on strategic sectors such as energy, mining, transport and telecommunications. This infrastructure is considered necessary to increase China's trade relationships and influence in these regions.

Possible evidence can be seen in the recent Chinese investment strategy in Africa: *"...roads and bridges in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), railways in Angola and power stations in Zambia which are often planned around oil and mineral resources. China is constructing high-voltage power transmission lines to interconnect countries in Southern Africa. In the rail sector China's largest deals include the construction of mass transit systems as in Nigeria, and the construction of new lines linked to mining developments in Gabon and Mauritania"* (Schiere, Rugamba 2011). When building these infrastructure projects China uses its own labour force which interrupts the generation of local employment. China also tries to obtain privileges in licenses and regulations to exploit the natural resources of these countries.

This particular Chinese approach demonstrates the real content of the Beijing's Consensus. The pragmatism represents the backbone of the Chinese foreign policy model. As the former president Deng Xiaoping said: *"It doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice"*.

From the perspective of its rhetoric, China continues to diffuse values of reciprocity and harmony. During the 6th BRICS Summit, held in Fortaleza (Brazil) on 16th July 2014, Xi Jinping claimed that everyone should push together for a new world order that is more fair and rational. This new order should be able to guarantee the rights of the peoples to determine their own social system and their way to development. The need to strengthen global governance and demand greater attention to alternative international communities such as BRICS and the balance between the existing International Organisations and new communities was also noted.

To empirically analyse these considerations, we will take an example of the relationship between China and the Latin American countries. This example allows us to understand the pragmatic form of governance, especially with respect to its bilateral relationship with the USA.

China plays in the "backyard" of the US

The Chinese presence in South America was almost absent until the 1980s, but since the Second World War and during the period of the Cold War the relationship between China and Latin America was characterized by a strong pragmatism. One example is the strengthening of the relationship between China and the dictatorship of Pinochet despite the international isolation of Chile in these years. It is important to note that the socialist Chilean government of Salvador Allende had been the first Latin American country to recognise the PRC, in 1970. China was also able to sign trade agreements with Argentina during the period of the dictatorship between 1976 and 1983. In the 1990s its presence on the continent slowly increased until it reached a high level of influence under the leadership of Hu Jintao.

In 2014 the current Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, was in South America twice for official visits, demonstrating the importance of this region for Chinese diplomacy not only through the multilateral channel of BRICS but also through bilateral ties such as the launch of the China-CELAC forum (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) in Beijing in January 2015. "*China will make efforts so that both sides can reap early harvests from the forum and build a new model of South-South cooperation*"; the speech of the Chinese foreign Minister Wang Yi during the forum highlights Beijing's growing interest in the "*backyard*" of the United States.

It is important to note that the relationship between the United States and Latin America has become "*colder*" in recent years and China seems to be an alternative partner for the countries of the region. Very recently there have been signs of a possible new US approach to the region, as suggested by the participation of Barack Obama in the Summit of the Americas held in Panama (April 2015), which was the occasion of Obama's historical meeting with Raul Castro, President of Cuba, after the bilateral relationship has been at odds for more than 50 years.

Between 1945 and 1990, the Cold War transformed Latin America to a space of political interest for Washington, a silent field of battle in which to contain possible incursions of the Soviet Union and the spread of socialism in the region. Political movements oriented by social ideas were reasons given for US intervention in Latin America.

The 1990s was the end of political conflict led by leftists and Washington's approach towards Latin America changed from a political and military focus to an economic strategy with a pragmatic agenda of trade and investment based on the *Washington Consensus*. This political behaviour can be seen in some of the US's strategic projects, such as the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) that aimed to establish a free trade area over Latin America or the programme of debt relief and loans (1990). The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed between the USA, Canada and Mexico was to be an incentive for other Latin American countries like Mexico to join the trade initiative, however, the new political movement in Latin America, led by a leftist ideology representing nationalism, populism and criticism of US policy, started to develop in 2000 and contributed to temporally stopping the "*American Free Trade Zone*

Dream". The ideological and political Yankee influence continued to exist strongly in Latin America, especially in the *Pacific Alliance* countries (Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Peru).

Taking advantage of the distance between Latin America and the US, and the absence of strong external trade partners for the region, China started to increase its presence, generating diversity in terms of foreign relations for Latin America.

As a result of the beginning of the terrorism war launched by George Bush after the 9/11 attacks, the disastrous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the "*Pivot to Asia*" strategy of Obama's Administration, Washington has appeared further and further from Latin America. In this context, the "*Pivot to Asia*" strategy is an important element in the bilateral relationship of China and the US, because the new American policy in Asia has been idealised in order to contain the military and economic spread of China's influence in Southeast Asia. The statement of the former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, is crucial to understanding the relevance of Asia for the US: "*The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan and Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action*" (Clinton 2011).

Chinese expansion in Latin America was not considered a challenge to US in its *backyard*. The interdependence of the two first world economic powers was a reason for China to sustain its pragmatic foreign policy of "*no intervention*" and "*only doing business*" without affronting the political influence of US in the region.

The neoliberal agenda promoted by the Washington Consensus hasn't been able to attract the entire Latin America region. For the moment, China's approach is attracting most Latin America countries, especially those in which the populist governments have had remarkable success. Countries such as Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador are all strengthening their cooperation with China and frequently accuse the USA of imposing an imperialist policy in the region. As stated by the Vice President of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza: "*China has great potential, and it is not imperialist. It is a great potential that wants for all of us respectable and dignify living standards*" (Fisher Hoffman 2015).

Dragon catches the Latin American Mice

Chinese interests in Latin America are based on a clear strategy. These countries supply China with natural resources such as oil (Venezuela), meat (Argentina), soybeans (Brazil and Argentina), and copper (Chile and Peru) in exchange for loans with low interest rates which could be considered an instrument of diplomacy and a source of profit³. This model of cooperation with developing countries and the internationalization of Chinese investments and lending were first put in place by the former Chinese President Jiang Zemin (1989-2002). South American leaders, conscious of this reality, are developing a foreign policy characterised by strategically flirting with China in order to attract more investment. The Vice President of Argentina, Amado Boudou, clearly confirmed: "*Relations between China and Argentina will continue to grow for the benefit for our people (...) it is not a simple buyer or trade partner but a strategic partner to work together and have an egalitarian world*" (Latin Post 2014), revealing the tendency of South American governments to use populist statements to sustain the new South to South development cooperation, and their necessity to be financially supported by China.

The increase in trade relations between China and Latin America originated with the "commodity boom" between 2003 and 2008, when the internal Chinese capacity to produce raw materials (oil, minerals, foods) began to be insufficient to satisfy its wide economic development. This generated the development of exports from Latin American countries in order to supply Chinese demand.

China has recently signed a trade agreement, for example, with Argentina, called "*Convenio Marco de Cooperación en Materia Económica y de Inversiones*" which will help to build infrastructure projects in the country. In particular the construction of two hydroelectric dams is planned in Patagonia with loans of US\$ 4.7 billion and US\$ 2.1 billion, which will be used to make a railroad connecting Argentina's agricultural plants to its ports, for more efficient transport of grains, as China is the largest buyer of Argentinean soybeans.

3 In some cases, these loans are paid directly with commodities. China has already granted US\$ 50 billion of credits to Venezuela since 2007, and a big part of this loan is paid through barrels of crude oil and derivatives which Venezuela sends daily to China.

The most recent visit to Latin America of Xi Jinping (in particular, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and Cuba) was the biggest visit of a top Chinese leader in the region since the tour of Hu Jintao in 2004, accompanied by the Vice President Zeng Qinhong, and represented an important stage in the relationship between China and Latin America because it focused mainly on the signature of trade agreements and the investment cooperation in different sectors. During these ten years, China has been able to enhance its position as a strong partner for Latin American countries and Xi Jinping's trip has been considered a milestone in the development of the relationship between the Asiatic Dragon and the region. Xi Jinping visited Brazil, its first trading partner of the region, to discuss their cooperation and the construction of a high-speed railroad connecting Brazil to Peru, and the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts.

Another emblematic and ambitious engineering project is the construction of the Nicaragua Canal, which will also link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, promoted by a private company in Hong Kong (HKND). The group received the concession to build and explore the channel from the Nicaraguan government, headed by Sandinista Daniel Ortega, but it has been criticized by civil society and countries like Costa Rica for its environmental impact. This project would be the greatest engineering construction in history, and it appears to be competition for the US dominance of the shipping route since the building of the Panama Canal. Even if Beijing declares itself not involved in the project, it is obvious that the realisation of this infrastructure work means the reinforcement of China's growing influence in the region and control of the trade route that could weaken the US's historical hegemony.

These examples demonstrate how China is engaged in the development of Latin American infrastructure in order to benefit its economic and political interests, using its pragmatic approach.

China also launched the China-CELAC forum (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) in Beijing on January 2015. "*China will make efforts so that both sides can reap early harvests from the forum and build a new model of South-South cooperation*", read the speech of the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, during the forum, which highlights Beijing's growing interest in the backyards of the United States. Xi Jinping

opened the forum by announcing an amount of investment worth US\$ 250 billion in Latin America over the next decade. China also promised an increase of US\$ 500 billion in bilateral trade, nearly double the total amount of 2013 (US\$ 261 billion) which would consolidate the position of China as the second-largest trading partner of Latin America (Tiezzi 2015).

Each year the importance of the Chinese economic presence grows considerably in Latin America countries. Since 2005, China has provided US\$119 billion in loan commitments to the region, that in 2010 represented more than those of the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and US Export-Import combined. In 2014, for instance, Chinese banks loaned more than US\$22 billion to Latin America. Usually, Chinese banks (mainly the China Development Bank and China Ex-Im Bank which were both created in order to support the government's policy) have a distinct target of countries to which to provide economic support such as Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela which have difficulties obtaining loans from international financial institutions.

The following table presents a general view of Chinese loans in Latin America, as updated in 2014 (The Dialogue):

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF LOANS	AMOUNT
VENEZUELA	16	\$ 56.3 B
BRAZIL	10	\$ 22 B
ARGENTINA	10	\$ 19 B
ECUADOR	12	\$ 10.8 B
BAHAMAS	03	\$ 2.9 B
MEXICO	03	\$ 2.4 B
PERU	04	\$ 2.3 B
JAMAICA	08	\$ 1.4 B
BOLIVIA	03	\$ 611 M
COSTA RICA	02	\$ 401 M
HONDURAS	01	\$ 298 M
CHILE	01	\$ 150 M
GUYANA	01	\$ 130 M
COLOMBIA	01	\$ 75 M
URUGUAY	01	\$ 10 M

This form of cooperation is seen by some experts as a danger for Latin American economies because of their increasing dependence on the exportation of natural resources to China and the privilege of short-term gains over of long-term uncertainty. In other words, this model of economic relations with China does not encourage the development of the industry of the region, increasing, on the contrary, its dependence on the exportation of its natural resources.

China represents a competitor for Latin American countries - for example, the competition in manufactured goods between China and Mexico for the US market. The manufacturing industry represents three quarters of its exports and since the global expansion of Chinese manufactured products has increased constantly, Mexico has lost competitiveness, particularly in the United States market, vital for the Mexican economy. Another interesting example are the consequences of the already noted agreement between China and Argentina, regarding Brazil, according to which, China will be allowed to produce manufactured goods in Argentina that will reduce the competitive force of the Brazilian industry in the same sectors (Passos 2015). In 2011, nine of the twelve members of the Latin America Integration Association (ALADI)⁴ registered a trade deficit with China (Manriquez, Alvarez 2014). The trade relationship between China and the region suffers from a lack of reciprocity. Latin America does not, in fact, figure as one of the main trade partners of China.

China is developing its influence in Latin America not only at a bilateral level but also through the multilateral channel of BRICS, confirming itself as the incontestable leader of the group. It has recently played a central role in the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB), created in order to mobilise resources to finance infrastructure projects in emerging and developing nations⁵. Based in Shanghai, the NDB will have an initial capital of U\$50 billion funded by the BRICS members. Another important financial initiative is the Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to provide liquidity to countries that have difficulties in their balance of

4 Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

5 The first article of the Agreement of the Development Bank asserts this concept: "The Bank shall mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, complementing the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development".

payment and head off future economic crises⁶. In the case of the CRA, China is expected to participate with the biggest contribution, US\$41 billion, followed by Brazil, India and Russia with US\$18 billion, and US\$5 billion from South Africa, demonstrating China's substantial economic power compared to the other BRICS members.

Actually, it is too early to predict the benefits of the actions of the NDP and the CRA for Latin America and how the relationship between the region, China and the other BRICS members will develop. For the moment, most of the Latin American leaders see these financial institutions as an opportunity for national development and the demand for modernisation by building a system of national infrastructure, making their ties with China stronger.

Despite its engagement at a multilateral level, and a sort of solidarity between BRICS members, the pragmatic Chinese approach and the prevalence of its national interest have been demonstrated on many occasions, such as the competition with Brazilian industry, confirming their approach in a globalized economy: *we are together but each one of us is free*.

China has a clear foreign policy strategy based on the diversification of its partners through multiple activities, according to what they can offer its development. Its current economic force gives China a predominant position among its partners, especially the peripheral regions with economies that depend on their natural resources.

Conclusion

The Chinese form of development is based on a strategy of diversification through the establishment of trade relations with multiple partners in different regions in order to expand economic influence.

6 The Contingence Reserve Agreement "is a framework for the provision of support through liquidity and precautionary instruments in response to actual or potential short-term balance of payments pressures" (Agreement of the Development Bank).

The trade relationship between China and Latin America has some particularities. Chinese expansion over a zone historically submissive to US influence has been facilitated at least by three factors: the interest of Washington's foreign policy in other regions such as the Middle East and Asia, its unsuccessful strategy to promote Free Trade Agreements and the insurgence of leftist governments which began to spread anti-American ideology.

Chinese foreign policy in Latin America follows a clear agenda: economic interests based on the trade of commodities, supply of raw materials and exploration of new markets for its manufactured products which is compatible with the ideas established in the Beijing Consensus of innovation, diversification and self-determination, which is generating a new model of cooperation from South to South.

Currently, Latin American governments find it convenient to join the Chinese model, because of their need to develop their infrastructure. The Chinese principle of "*no intervention*" in domestic affairs appears to be of more interest to these governments than the traditional model of political interference of Western powers. China is not concerned about the national issues of its trading partners, but "*only doing business*" which reflects the pragmatic Chinese way.

China has been able to create its own model of development according to its challenges and demands. It is not a question of evaluating whether this model is good or bad, fair or not, but only to demonstrate that it is important for Latin American countries to rethink their own social and economical development systems on the basis of their needs and society's expectations in order to find their role in the new global order.

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Am I an Active Citizen? Women's Narratives of Citizenship Practices in Albania

Eriada Çela

Abstract

This study explores the topic of citizenship as related to the practices of twelve Albanian women. This research utilizes literature on gender and citizenship as a framework for comparing and analysing the narratives of women who exert their political citizenship through civil society and governmental political bodies. First, this study explores the ways the interviewees perceive citizenship while analysing women's narratives to get at their spoken and unspoken specificities. Secondly, it discusses their conceptualisations of themselves as active citizens and analyses how their expressed perceptions relate to their identification as political actors with regards to their identities as women. Thirdly, it analyses issues of relevance to women's engagement as active citizens as they appear from women's individual experiences of citizenship in the narratives. This research focuses on the way interviewed Albanian women perceive themselves in relation to their citizenship and what their experiences as citizens say about their self-identification as agents with a say in the issues that affect their lives.

KEY WORDS:

citizenship practices, women, narratives, Albania, civil society

Introduction: Analysing women's practices of citizenship

The concept of citizenship in this paper is used in two forms. In the first part of the narratives, which refer to the beginning of the interviews, no emphasis is put on any particular aspect of citizenship, and respondents are allowed to make any possible correlations to the citizenship concept. The second way the concept of citizenship is used in this paper is through the aspect of political citizenship, of which the concept of active citizenship is part. The social and civil aspects of citizenship are not totally excluded from the analysis, but they are less present as a result of the emphasis placed on the political aspect of citizenship, especially where the paper focuses on women's active citizenship.

As broad a term as it is, the concept of citizenship is viewed and narrated in different ways by the respondents, whose perspectives vary according to their personal experiences and characteristics. Its complexity and wide degree of entailments are the focus of this research, where I analyse perceptions and experiences as narrated by my interviewees. The question of how women in Albania perceive themselves as citizens and how they experience active citizenship is a means by which to explore the notion of citizenship, comparing women's narratives to the literature on gender and citizenship. The interviews are analysed through the lens of feminist critiques of citizenship regarded as a traditionally male domain.

Theoretical background: What is citizenship?

According to Voet, citizenship can be seen as the relationship between a state and a citizen as well as the political relationship between citizens (Voet 1998: 9). The influential scholar of citizenship theory in Britain, T.H. Marshall, has defined citizenship as a "status bestowed on persons who are full members of a community" (Marshall 1950: 14). The key elements in Marshall's concept of citizenship are membership of a community,

equality of the members of that community, and rights and obligations that result from membership. The political aspect of citizenship as explained by Marshall might also be recognised as including duties apart from rights when referring to political participation as part of citizenship. In this respect, the "right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body" (Marshall 1950: 10), explicitly states the obligation of citizens to employ their political capacity.

As Lister justly argues, rights and responsibilities are closely linked in the "citizenship equation". In her view, "...the question is: what is the appropriate balance and relationship between the two and how does that balance reflect gender and other power relations?" (Lister 1997: 31). Other definitions of citizenship are expressed in terms of dichotomies such as active/passive and public/private (Turner 1990: 209). Since gender is not properly reflected in the traditional dimensions of citizenship, feminist theory requires the integration of gender into citizenship theory in order to properly understand the concept of citizenship within the dynamic of gender relations. Two models for including gender in political citizenship have been introduced: through the "politics of difference", which places difference before equality but risks freezing group identities as women, (Young, 1990, Mouffe 1992), and through the "politics of presence", such as gender quotas (Phillips, 1995).

Methodology

The semi-structured interviews aim to discover women's perceptions and practices of citizenship as well as their identification with political potential. Based on the limited selection of interviewees, the findings and realities as discovered from the respondents are not indicative of all Albanian women's experiences and perceptions, so far as issues such as education, class, religion, ethnic minorities and rural-urban distinctions remain unexplored. The interviews were conducted with women from Tirana and Elbasan who are part of civil society and women politicians, which are seen as two categories of women that, according to citizenship

and gender literature, fit the description of women as active citizens on the basis of their political citizenship exertion. The selection of interviewees as active citizens was only literature-based, however, because during the interviews women were questioned about their own perceptions of themselves as citizens and since the concepts of 'citizenship' and 'active citizenship' entail broad meanings, the informants' views of their being active citizens varied accordingly.

The first group of informants as part of civil society consisted of eight interviewees who belonged to three categories: women working in women's non-governmental organisations, women working in humanitarian NGOs, and women who undertook volunteer work in any of these two entities. The second group included four women who are involved in local and central governmental bodies, and thus women who are part of the decision-making process. The interviewees are aged from their twenties to fifties, but women aged from twenty to thirty comprised the greater number of informants, and there were only two women in their forties and one in her fifties. The presence of such a wide range of respondent ages is due to the perceptions and experiences of women who had experienced working and living during state-socialism compared to those who did not. It is important to point out that even though the differences between the interviewees are used as fields for comparisons, this study does not primarily aim to compare women's experiences. When using interview quotations, pseudonyms are used instead of the respondents' real names, even though some, especially women politicians, willingly offered use of their real names in this research. Since pseudonyms were used for most of the respondents, however, I decided to do the same for those women who offered to be recognisable, thus being consistent throughout the study.

In feminist research and knowledge production, the empowerment of women and the equality of the research relationship are two key concepts that cannot be ignored by the researcher (Millen, 1997). The empowerment of women in this study is realized by the fact that through the interviews a particular group of Albanian women are given voice to speak about their specific experiences as active agents in their society.

Citizenship as conceptualised by women

A complex and multi-layered concept, citizenship is a notion that is not part of daily debate, and therefore people are not often confronted with this topic unless their engagement in different citizenship activities makes them consider their work as part of their citizenship. Thus, when asked to think about the concept and to share their perceptions, some of the women also shared the fact that the interview served as a moment of reflection in their lives about the meaning they can give to citizenship and, particularly, their own citizenship as related to their identities as women.

All respondents consider citizenship to be closely connected to rights and duties. They all associate citizenship with life within a specific community where, in their opinion, citizens are expected to offer their contribution through their engagement in different issues for the benefit of community interests in interaction with other citizens. These two associations made by respondents are interrelated in their concerns about the rights and duties discourse as the basis of equality between men and women in the civil, political and social spheres, which is the primary basis for women's full citizenship. Community interests fall into the duties discourse so far as those interests are supposedly reached through women's involvement as citizens on the basis of their citizenship obligations. In these terms, the respondents made no particular reference to their gender as a distinguishing factor of specific rights or obligations as persons.

The next most frequently expressed association of citizenship perceptions (for 10 out of 12 interviewees) was related to the issue of representation as part of political engagement. The respondents connected this aspect of citizenship to the accountability of political representatives as well as their own obligation to make the representatives accountable for their expected duties. Most, both politicians and non-politicians, consider the small number of female political representatives in Albania to be a problem, making reference to women representatives as better leaders or as more willing to address women's issues than male representatives. As theoretically coined by feminist literature, this concern is closer to the concept of the "politics of difference" than the "politics of presence". However, both these concepts are present in the way women tackle

women's representation in politics as far as they require both women to be present in the political domain, as well as women to act as agents for women's issues.

Many (nine of the respondents) also referred to citizenship as a role and mission. Citizenship as a role, in their opinion, is equally attributed to all citizens, however, there is differentiation between citizens in terms of activities, thus clearly distinguishing between active and non-active citizens. Three of these nine respondents held citizens responsible for their reluctance to act as citizens and fulfill their citizenship role, while the other six were more comprehensive and willing to justify an inability to act as active citizens. Both women over and below the age of thirty brought up the totalitarian regime as one of the factors affecting citizen passivity.

Another common thread of citizenship perception among the interviewees was the positioning of citizenship as a contract between the state and individuals, where both parts have respective responsibilities. In this respect, all the respondents who expressed this link to citizenship referred to citizens in gender-neutral terms, claiming no gender-based difference. Some (five) even said they consider citizenship as consisting of standards that have to be reached, as a way of living with regard to certain cultural norms. A few connected citizenship with geographical belonging and, what is more, as identity or one of its components. Two of the respondents, one a politician and the other a humanitarian NGO worker, expanded the citizenship notion by making reference to European citizenship as part of Albania's process of accession to the European Union.

Surprisingly, the social aspect of the concept was missing in women's narratives of citizenship as a general concept. The fact that the interviewees did not mention any feature of social rights is an indicator of the Albanian state's currently insufficient provision of welfare regimes, particularly for women. Most of the above associations with the concept of citizenship were made while women were making reference to citizenship in general terms without personalizing or contextualizing it; no particular gender divisions were made and none of the interviewees referred to citizenship as a gendered concept. Given the literature on the gendering of citizenship, these narratives can be classified as being either gender-blind or gender-neutral. I view them as gender-neutral rather than gender-blind in so far

as their reference to citizenship was not in exclusionary terms but neutral to the gender of citizens. I interpret their gender neutrality in their general expressions of citizenship as the result of their recently gained or even previously existent awareness of women's acceptance as equal citizens without the need for differentiation. Obviously, as part of civil society or political bodies, the interviewees may have been in some way influenced by their contact with current feminist debates through different organised trainings or events, however, I do not deny the possibility of their genuine attitude towards a gender-neutral citizenship.

Citizenship as entitlement to rights and obligations

One of the most recurrent answers in the interviews, women's conceptualisations of rights and duties, is closer to two of the aspects of citizenship outlined by T. H. Marshall: civil and the political. As already mentioned, the respondents did not bring up the social aspect of citizenship rights. Their self-identification as citizens was not articulated in terms of second-class citizenship in spite of these women's experiences as such at some point in their lives. The close connection of citizenship to rights and duties can be linked to the definition of citizenship as a status and practice. In these terms, rights are obtained from the ownership of the citizenship status and duties or obligations stem from and are operationalized in the practice of citizenship. All the respondents made explicit reference to citizenship as a status that entitles citizens to rights as well as obliges them to abide by rules and obligations as unavoidable components of citizenship. The "rights and duties" term seemed to be used more during the first interviews as a cliché, but as the rest of the interviews were conducted, I understood the reason the respondents perceived the two as closely interrelated.

Especially in the cases where the interviewees referred to citizens as "people with a keen eye on what goes on around them", as Suzana, a local government official phrased it, rights and duties were expressed as being chronologically connected and no one mentioned rights without later relating them to duties. First respondents mentioned eligibility for

certain rights and later they introduced the obligations corresponding to the particular rights. For example, according to Marsida, a young teacher and volunteer in a social movement, “you have the right to live in a clean environment, but you can in no way escape the obligation of caring about it”. Rights and duties as part of citizenship were also described as creating a chain reaction in terms of the impact that one might have on the other, thus being very closely interrelated. To be more specific, as Anisa, a regular follower of local government events in Elbasan, explains, no duties can be performed unless the rights corresponding to that duty are respected:

As a citizen, I feel obliged to choose my representatives and to participate in monthly meetings where important matters are discussed and decided. If my right to be properly informed about my representatives or meeting dates of the municipality meetings is not respected because information is not properly disclosed, I cannot fulfill my citizenship duties.

In this case, placing the right to information as the condition upon which to base her own actions as a citizen, Anisa links the right to be informed to her duties as a voter and local participant.

The kind of rights expressed during the interviews consist predominantly of rights that are guaranteed by law on the basis of citizenship and, as already mentioned above, the respondents see themselves as being in an individual relationship with the state. Respondents considered themselves as eligible for all types of rights emerging from their equal citizenship status without feeling excluded from it, at least from the perspective of laws and regulations, even though during the interviews they all made reference to discrimination, mistrust or obstacles they had experienced at some point in their lives primarily because of their sex. These experiences had not affected the women’s perceptions of citizenship, however, and they do not describe viewing themselves as second-class citizens.

Voting was one of the citizenship rights to which almost every interviewee made reference. Many respondents, however, referred to the process of voting as a citizenship activity that is the exercise of duties and of rights at the same time. For Elona, a student volunteer in a social movement, the

right to vote is also a major obligation as an adult citizen: “Now that I am over 18, voting is my major requirement as a citizen, so I am obliged to use the power of suffrage. If I don’t vote, or other adult people don’t vote either, most probably offices will be run by the wrong people; this is why I feel obliged to utilize my right to vote”. Noticeably, even though expressed in terms of duties, voting is also recognised as the tool for exerting one’s political will as citizen, as Brunilda pointed out: “Voting is the primary means of expressing my citizenship first, and of having my voice heard second”. Along the same lines, the majority of the interviewees considered the voting process as very important and they identified power and agency in the exercise of their own will as citizens through voting. Being in the role both of electors and the elected, some of my interviewees immediately related the process of voting to their recognition of the need for more women representatives.

Working was also described simultaneously as both a right and duty. As Berta, a worker in an international NGO in Tirana, put it, she considers work as both her right as a woman and her duty as a citizen, in order to be economically independent. Vera, aged 55, also described the same perception of work as simultaneously a right and duty. Interestingly, she also perceived work as both a right and duty during the previous regime, since she had experienced being employed during the state-socialist regime as well. Currently a politician, Vera said that she perceives her current work as a personal obligation rather than as a requirement by state, as it used to be under the previous regime for women. She relates work as a citizenship right to her identity as a woman, stating that as a woman, she has the same right as men to be part of the labour force.

Women and active citizenship experiences

In this section issues that emerged from the women’s narratives of their experiences as active citizens are presented and analysed. Given the complexity of the term ‘citizenship’, even the concept of active citizenship itself is debatable so far as the nature of activities belonging to the category of “active citizenship” are concerned. As is by now evident,

however, of the three aspects of citizenship noted by T. H. Marshall, the concept of active citizenship is political. The importance of studying and analysing variations in the active citizenship experiences of women in Albania therefore lies in discovering women's specific experiences as active citizens first, and in their positioning as agents of change second, whether this is within the existing political system or in civil society. As Voet and Lister both point out, the field of carrying out citizenship activities is broad and women can promote themselves as agents of change through their involvement in different activities (Voet 1998, Lister 1997).

When asked to personalise the citizenship concept and think of themselves as citizens, the interviewees almost always related citizenship to their gender, profession, educational background, political context, family or society as crucial factors that are inseparable from their perception of citizenship. What was easily distinguishable in most of the interviews was the fact that most women positioned themselves as individuals who feel obliged to act and take responsibility, thus reinforcing the idea of perceiving citizenship as a role that involves action and framing themselves as potential actors of change, the degree of which varies according to their personal or institutional position. When contextualizing or personalizing their narratives, however, they became more specific, and questioned and explained citizenship rights and duties with reference to real situations of which they were either aware or, most often, had experienced in their own lives.

Citizenship as women's agency

While speaking about their personal experiences as active citizens with particular reference to citizenship as a practice, the respondents introduced the concept of agency in terms of their ability and opportunity to bring about change. Agency, as Birte Siim (2000) claims, lies at the heart of the theorization and politics of women's citizenship. The interviewees often made reference to agency as emerging in response to current conflicts or situations in need of immediate action. Even though at some other stage of the interviews some had considered active citizenship a

continuous lifestyle, they connected the issue of agency with specific difficulties they came across at some point in their lives or activities. Most interestingly, the problems mentioned by the interviewees when illustrating cases of their agency as active citizens, also prompted their initial interest or particular field of activities. This does not limit their activities to one single nature, however, it only indicates that the first recollections of their own agency were related to their typical activities as active citizens either at the individual or organisational level.

Berta, a woman working with a humanitarian NGO in Tirana, relates the degree of agency to personal involvement first and networking second.

In my opinion, there are two forms of being an active citizen: one can try to do something individually or can cooperate with other people. For example, if part of the street was damaged, I would call the municipality department in charge of repairing it. This action does not change the world, but at least it improves the situation. The second form of active engagement is when we look for networks and try to find solutions together. In my opinion, both cases are fine as long as we do not sit down and wait.

Brunilda, the manager of an international NGO local office in Elbasan, offered a very personalised narrative to her conceptualisation of citizenship as duties through which she exercises her agency as citizen. Being in a managerial position, she closely connected her overall performance within her work as part of her duties as a citizen:

Since many things I do cannot be separated from my job activities, I feel inclined to fulfill my obligations as a citizen even within my work. For example, I am attentive to bringing about positive changes and offering opportunities to gifted and hard-working people, particularly women, without becoming part of compromises that might corrupt my position as a leader, which I also connect to being a citizen. Meanwhile, being aware of the small number of female managers in Albania, I also feel morally obliged to portray my role as a good citizen and efficient manager to other people in order to show that women also have the ability to perform in such positions.

This quote opens two points for discussion. First, as personalised activities, it shows how one's duties as citizens are perceived as being broad enough to encapsulate other variations of duties at the same time. Here, Brunilda frames her concerns about being correct and offering space to those she sees as the right people as part of her citizenship duties. Other respondents who considered this as part of being good citizens, also made the same reference to citizenship as a rightful part of one's job. Secondly, Brunilda makes reference to the glass-ceiling phenomenon, in her concern about offering more space to other women through her position as well as by using her achievement and good job performance as an example of women as efficient managers.

The concept "good citizen" as employed by Brunilda above, however, points out her conceptualisation of a "good citizen" as involved with both political and non-political actions. One finding thus concerns some of the women's conceptualisations of citizenship and their views of active citizenship as consisting of different unwritten obligations that are not always closely related to political issues. They view citizenship as a concept that encapsulates a variety of actions. Other interviewees made the same link to citizenship obligations of this kind through examples such as offering a seat to an elderly person (Berta), crossing the road at the white stripes and following eating etiquette properly (Enkeleda), disposing of litter in the right place (Marsida) and other similar activities that attribute meaning in daily life events to the concept of citizenship.

At least in terms of perceptions, most of the interviewees associated their personal relationship with citizenship with their engagement in activities on either a personal or broader level. Most interestingly, some separated citizenship practices, framing them as belonging to two different categories: activities consisting of minimum and often essential obligations, and more demanding activities that require a certain level of awareness, intention and ability to undertake a particular action. This division between minimum activities and other more demanding actions corresponds to Marshall's distinction between "compulsory" duties and "vague" duties. The process of differentiation between citizenship activities is an indicator of the fact that the respondents' considerations of active citizenship exceed the above-mentioned conceptualisation of citizenship as simply a way of living with respect to certain rules and obligations.

This differentiation is significant in making a difference between simply the required actions as a citizen or standing out through extended interest and activity. As Anisa, quoted here, explained, she does not consider herself an active citizen just because she pays her taxes on time. "On the contrary, the moment I ask what happens to the taxes that I regularly pay, things are different because I do not stop at the level of doing the minimum required of me as a citizen." The same idea of differentiating between activities was described by Elona, who as a student felt that her involvement in extra-curricular activities, especially those related to her volunteer work with a social movement, were a way of separating being 'just a student' and a student that at the same time is an active citizen.

Am I an active citizen?

Rian Voet's argument about women and their identification as political agents is that women cannot be active citizens in their communities or beyond if they do not first of all identify themselves as political actors (Voet 1998: 142). Not all the interviewed women described such open personal identification with political potential, however, even though they described a need for this in broader terms when referring to other women and the importance of their engagement in political issues or volunteer work. When speaking about citizenship obligations as a component part of being a citizen, some of the interviewees started to speak about their own responsibility to contribute as citizens to improving various conflicting or problematic situations. Therefore, an important finding of my research is that through their own narrations, women associated citizenship with active citizenship. In order to differentiate between citizenship and active citizenship, Ruth Lister's distinction of terms is helpful, as she uses different verbs to describe the two: to be a citizen and to *act* as a citizen. So, according to Lister, "[t]o be a citizen, in the legal and sociological sense, means the enjoyment of the rights of citizenship necessary for agency and social and political participation. To *act* as a citizen involves fulfilling the full potential of the status. Those who do not fulfill that potential do not cease to be citizens" (Lister 2003, 5).

So, this theoretical framework distinguishes between citizens in terms of activities, and being called an active citizen based precisely on the performed activities. The fact that all my respondents related their own citizenship indicates that their perceptions of citizenship are linked to their active citizenship potential. The interview questions about women's active citizenship belonged to two levels: the conceptual level and the actual activity undertaken.

According to most of the narratives in the interviews, citizenship activities under the framework of good or active citizenship were all related to the undertaking of responsibility and acting in the best personal or collective interest. Many of the respondents willingly enumerated actions taken in their daily life as part of what they call active citizenship. During this part of their narrations, however, the interviewees seemed to feel much more unobstructed when listing the activities of an ideal citizen rather than their own activities. Apparently, it was easier for many of them to express this in impersonal terms when answers about the activity level were required.

In order to relate this research to Voet's argument about women as active citizens and their necessary identification as political actors I tried to discern hints from my interviewees' narratives. When speaking about citizenship in general, most described personalised action and articulated the need for agency. This is a clear sign of their concern with political engagement, either through civil society, communitarian action or participation in decision-making bodies.

Group identification as women

Women's general views on citizenship as entitled to rights and duties were described in two ways. This was first through the conceptualisations of rights and duties as applicable to them as citizens: thus making no particular reference to their gender. Secondly, the respondents openly pointed out that as women they have certain rights or duties. In this case, the relationship to gender in their narratives was described either as simply

a way of identifying with other women or as a means to point out the difference that in their opinion lay in the particular citizenship situation. The concept of women's equality as citizens with reference to male citizens was not always openly spelled out, however, the idea of equality often appeared as the basis for rights eligibility as well as the grounds upon which all respondents required themselves, as well as other citizens, to be responsive to their obligations as citizens.

Most respondents were demanding in their attitude toward other female citizens when addressing the topic of duties and obligations, especially when referring to women's interests. My argument is that group identification as women becomes more prominent when the common interests of women are at stake, in either the case of rights or duties, especially when action for change is required. As Tatjana, the head of a women's organisation in Tirana, put it: "I always try to write newspaper articles in reaction to events within the country or beyond that negatively affect women's lives and situations, but I cannot cover all possible topics. I think that all women who can write such articles should have the feeling of responsibility and should react as soon as possible whenever it is so needed". In this case, Tatjana refers to writing as an active citizenship activity, and through her demanding attitude that other women write more about their common issues she undertakes active citizenship action based on her identification with other women.

Another instance when the respondents related active citizenship to addressing group issues as women was when speaking about active citizenship as channelled into involvement with governmental decision-making bodies. Some described concern and discontent regarding the actual political situation in Albania and many of the interviewees openly stated the need for more women to be present as well as actively engaged in politics. Along these lines, the interviewees who brought up this issue always referred to political involvement as belonging to the public sphere, and to women as a homogenous group, disregarding probable differences.

The seven interviewees that mentioned women's need for engagement in decision-making processes also brought up the quota system as one of the components that have an impact on women's access to this aspect

of political citizenship. All referred to women's involvement in politics as one of women's citizenship rights, but only three considered the quota system as the best temporary solution to the problem of women's under-representation in the political domain. On the other hand, the other four respondents described concerns about women's quotas as "facilitators" of the process of women's political engagement. As Ledia put it, "I would want more and more women to be involved into politics, but if they get there through quotas, it would be like they make it into politics precisely because of quotas". In both cases, however, all seven women who made reference to the quota system emphasised the need for women's identification with politics as well as recognising the existence of difficulties women face when intending to be part of decision-making bodies.

In this respect, the respondents' identification with other women as part of their group identity was accompanied by their expression of the necessity for more women to be present as political leaders in order for women's issues to be more properly and seriously addressed. Interestingly, most of the seven respondents who made reference to this issue also seemed to believe in women's greater ability to lead and make politics, which apart from pointing out their existing identity as women, also shows that they believe in essential gender difference as now described in different styles of leadership.

Further aspects of relevance to women's active citizenship

Based on the interviewees' perceptions of citizenship as closely connected to engagement in either individual or communitarian issues through writing, networking, lobbying and other types of activities that aim to foster change, it is evident that the common denominator in these narratives is the connection of citizenship with the meaning of active citizenship. The personal degree of commitment to citizenship actions was variable, however, and it often depended on other decisive factors in the lives of the respondents. Issues of relevance to women's active

citizenship as discussed in this section can be regarded as applicable to the interviewees who articulated them, as well as beyond, so that these issues can be considered aspects of importance in the engagement of all women as actors in societies sharing similar features. It is noteworthy that the issues of relevance to women's active citizenship engagement are many, especially considering the political context in post state-socialist countries.

One issue that many of the respondents were concerned about is related to the lack of proper networking within their environs. As Ledia pointed out, networking is a very important factor that affects the organisation of a good level of citizenship activities: "There are certain citizenship activities that all citizens can perform with a bit of desire and effort. On the other hand, there are also other much broader issues that affect the interests of more than one single individual, but which can also be resolved much more easily if all citizens group together and find common solutions." In these terms, the lack of networking and cooperation between citizens is detrimental to the outcome of common citizenship activities. The lack of networking is related to different issues, some of which are specific to Albania as well as other post state-socialist countries.

Even within Albania itself there are differences in terms of networking, however, which are based on particular situations. For example, Anisa, a worker in a humanitarian organisation in Elbasan, complains about the lack of networking and feels that she is in a disadvantaged position even when wanting her neighbourhood litter to be collected more often by the municipality machines during summer time. Her disappointment in this context is related to the reluctance of other citizens in her neighbourhood to be more self-organised and arrange their problem in cooperation with one-another. The issue of networking in this case is related to other features that affect citizen activities, especially women's actions as such. One of the regional factors affecting women's engagement as active citizens is related to the passive mentality, inherited by the state-socialist regime that left no space for individual activities.

Another important element that needs to be mentioned regarding women's activities as actors in civil society is their field of engagement. As already mentioned, the first recollections women made when asked

to share their activities as active citizens were related to their immediate spheres of engagement. For example, a student, Elona recalled employing her agency within the social movement when one of her university professors was accused of being corrupt; a mother of two, Suzana mentioned the influence she and other parents had in the municipality meetings for the construction of a small park in their neighbourhood; the head of a women's organisation, Tatjana, brought up the lobbying she undertook in cooperation with other women working in women's NGOs for the inclusion of quotas for women's participation as candidates in the elections.

This does not mean that the activities of the women were limited to one activity. It has to be pointed out, however, that their agency is very closely connected to their field of engagement, which suggests two different interpretations. First, such framing as typically women's activities might reduce the importance of women's agency, which apart from denying the importance of women's activities, reduces women's capacities to their immediate actions only. Second, it might imply that these are not real citizenship activities insofar as they are being paid for them, and are thus taking the action in return for personal earnings. As Tatjana, who is the head of a women's organisation in Tirana, argues however, it is easier for her and her colleagues to obtain changes and exert their agency as citizens through organisations than on an individual basis.

Many women's issues in Albania today are in great need of intervention, so whoever can do something to improve the situation, be it through writing, signing petitions, showing up in the elections and so on, should just do it. In my own case, I think that in order for women's issues to be properly addressed, more organised action is needed. So, through this organisation that I have been leading for years now, I feel that I can undertake many more active citizenship activities than as a simple individual. However, the fact that I identify more with women's issues does not mean that I am limiting my activities only in this respect and that I am not an active citizen.

So, similarly to other women who are part of organisations or other civil society groupings, Tatjana associated agency with the organisation

rather than with her personal potential as a citizen, recognising, however, that the umbrella of an organisation facilitated her work and empowered women more easily than in activities on individual basis.

Conclusion

This study analysed the narratives of women who exert their political citizenship through their agency in civil society or governmental decision-making bodies. Their openly described perceptions and practices of citizenship are used to create links between their narratives and the literature on gender and citizenship. The analysis evolves according to the findings of the women's narratives. In the first part of this study, women's perceptions of citizenship were openly analysed, presenting their concept associations in the same order of appearance as the interviews. Here they mainly conceptualised citizenship as closely linked to rights and duties, but also in terms of relationships between citizens and the state, as grounds for political citizenship action and so on. Secondly, this study analysed women's political citizenship practices and their own ways of expressing agency. Most of the women identified themselves as actors of change, but their situations, activities and experiences as political citizens were diverse. Thirdly, this paper briefly tackled important issues in women's activities as political citizens in Albania.

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“Why do I have to trust you?” The perspective from civil society on active citizenship in post–communist Albania

Elona Dhembo, Veronika Duci, Juliana Ajdini

Abstract

Civil society (CS) is the main medium in which active citizenship can flourish and have an impact on good governance and democracy. The communist past has played a major role in CS underdevelopment across Eastern European countries but research primarily targeting the elites has explained little of how citizenry has developed and mapped little of the cross-country variation. This paper attempts to increase understanding, looking at the case of Albania, where low levels of active citizenships are documented¹, as the main indicator of this underdevelopment. Data from in-depth interviews with key informants explain that it results from a combination of historical factors with current determinants such as the low perceived level of impact, the transparency of CS actors and the political influence believed to often dictate their agendas. These and additional explorations of gender and age differences lead to suggested new strategies to boost active citizenship in the country.

KEY WORDS:

citizenship, activism, civil society, post-communist societies

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1 See Civil Society Index for Albania (IDM, 2010)

Introduction

Works exploring issues of civil society in Albania have not been many, although more than two decades have passed since the country (like other countries of Eastern Europe) left behind long decades of communism. The first light on the issue was shed by Sampson (1996) highlighting the role of western donors in shaping the reality of "civil society". In his opinion, the "interests" of various actors, "contexts" in which they operate and the "resources" they have at their disposal are important factors in the effort to engage civil society. He notes, however, that the western view of transition, in relation to the eastern countries, generally assumes a conversion to western models and ways of being; meaning, in the case of civil society, a "system export".

Even less attention has been paid to active citizenship, its dimensions and variations, while internationally, the interest in citizens activism and the role of civil society have been growing continuously, not least because of the importance they signal for a democratic society. Albania as a new democracy has to join other democratic societies with an emphasis on the importance of 'citizen participation' for good governance; citizens are expected to be more involved in the policy process and to more actively participate in governing their own communities and societies (Matsuda 2009).

The communist past is often claimed to have played a major role in the underdevelopment of civil society, and in an active citizenry in the ex-communist countries of the Eastern Europe. Research has often focused on the region, but although the countries share many similarities, there is continuous movement in each, and much diversity to be explored (Hann and Dann 1996; Vasiljevic 2014). Looking at them through western eyes, the focus has been primarily on the elite (such as writers, dissidents etc.) of these countries providing little information about the way citizenry developed and is challenged (Hann and Dann 1996; Lewis 2001).

Chiodi (2007) provides one of the few empirical analyses on the nature of post-communist civil society in Albania, focusing mainly on the problem of

control, that of technocracy and the heuristic value of western categories. She finds that, even though the Albanian elite appreciated the consistent foreign involvement in its social development, the political elite had a harder time in coming to terms with civil society organisations. Chiodi argues that one of the reasons Albanian citizens criticized local NGOs and civil society organisations in general was the overall perception that NGOs have an impact on, and benefit their own representatives rather than the society, and this was confirmed by her empirical study.

Chiodi's findings are also supported by the BTI transformation index (2012; 2014) according to which, before the subject of civil society became an issue of public debate, the idea was introduced to Albania through Western donor aid policies, the goal of which was to stimulate civic participation and introduce the populace to democratic values and behaviour. Foreign assistance has largely contributed to fostering local NGOs and enriching the public sphere, although local NGOs were not influential in the public sphere and were thus less important. Emphasising the evolution of the NGOs and their roles in civil society in Albania the report states that at some point NGO employees and organisations themselves stopped blindly imitating the western models and started acting as cultural mediators for foreign donors and organisations, trying to describe to them the features of the local context. Even nowadays Albanian civil society is viewed as a cluster of donor-driven NGOs, however, rather than a collection of genuinely local interest groups and grassroots movements in touch with local priorities. Many civil society leaders are somewhat connected to politics, adding to the lack of public's trust in them (BTI 2014). These are among the factors claimed to contribute to the low levels of activism and impact of both citizens and CS in Albania (IDM 2010).

This paper is an attempt to deepen the understanding of the particularities of active citizenship and citizen participation in Albania through civil society organisations, as an ex-communist country in transition. It explores the background to the low levels of citizen participation, looking at historical, cultural and social determinants. Based on information provided through in-depth interviews with key informants in the Albanian civil society sector, the paper looks at the current traits of active civic engagement through civil society organisations in the country, with particular focus on gender and age diversity. Exploring the determinants believed to be shaping

the current rates of citizen activism, the paper also outlines strategies proposed by participants in the research to overcome existing obstacles to a more active and participatory citizenship in Albania.

A theoretical framework

Citizens are expected to play an active role in the policy process and collaborate with other actors such as governments and the private sector, so that their preferences can be reflected in policy determination (Matsuda 2009). Traditionally, the concept of governance used to be associated with government, whereas today this is no longer the case. Current definitions of governance seem to at least agree on the idea that nowadays governance includes “reference to processes and actors outside the narrow realm of government” (Kjær 2004: 1). The emphasis on governance suggests that government should not be regarded as the only actor in charge of tackling social problems. On the contrary, a variety of actors should be considered when analysing who is to ‘govern’ society.

Achieving an active and meaningful citizenship can be a challenge for many democratic societies, including those with developed or long-established democratic traditions, and even more so for those with a fragile democracy. A number of Central and Eastern European countries currently have an arguably fragile participatory citizenship, which can hinder the overall process of democratization (Hirt 2012). It has been claimed that their dictatorial past has frozen the capacity for active citizenship and civil society for 40 years (Hann and Dann 1996) and this is having repercussions in the aftermath of the fall of communism. In Albania, for instance, the last two decades have witnessed a blossoming of civil society in comparison to the communist past; nonetheless CS in Albania still lags behind in comparison not only to that of developed democracies but also to that of other developing countries in the region, with a similar history. So, too, does the level of active citizenship, as documented in the Civil Society Index in Albania 2010 (IDM 2010).

Several theories have developed on the notion of citizenship, which differ primarily in the perspective they take on the relationship between rights and responsibilities of the citizen. They can be divided into two main groups: liberal individualistic and republican or communitarian approaches. Habermas (1994: 25-26) makes a clear distinction between liberal individualistic approaches and republican/communitarian approaches. The former stem from the liberal Lockean view of natural law, stress the rights of citizens and regard the protection of these rights as the primary function of the state. Republican/communitarian approaches have developed in line with the philosophical tradition of Aristotle; emphasising citizens' duties and their belonging to a community: the approaches call for an involved citizenry (Kivisto 2008).

The ongoing attempt to conceptualise citizenship has been recently challenged by contemporary social changes. Globalisation and the facilitated transnational movement of people have changed the relationship between the state and citizens. This has resulted, among other things, in an increase of the number of individuals with dual or multiple citizenships, which also signals the coming of "a new era in which the nation-state's monopoly on defining citizenship is being challenged" (Kivisto 2008: 543). Such changes have also been accelerated by recent technological innovations.

Globalisation, moreover, has changed the scope of social problems and the methods used to deal with them, stimulating the establishment of supra-national organisations such as the United Nations and the European Union. As a result the roles of the state in defining citizenship have changed, and as van Steenberg (1994) puts it an "earth citizen" is emerging. The concept of citizenship is being also challenged by the current emphasis on transnationalism and multiculturalism² where a dilemma is to what extent group differences should be acknowledged and how unity and diversity should be balanced in multicultural societies (see for example Kymlicka 1995; Kymlicka and Norman 1995).

In addition to these contemporary challenges to citizenship, the recent

.....
2 Although traditional approaches to defining citizenship have focused on the rights of an individual, the diversity of contemporary societies and group rights, especially those for minorities, are increasingly recognised as significant (Matsuda 2009). Rights often referred to as cultural rights have been newly added to Marshall's (1950) types of rights (Delanty 2005).

stress on governance and citizen participation has revitalised the traditional debate between liberal individualism and republicanism/communitarianism over the relationship between the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Citizens are expected to be active participants in the community as well as in the polity, contributing to the common welfare, to the economy's wealth production and, most significantly, sharing in the rights and responsibilities of the polity.

There have been, in fact, an increasing number of studies that refer, explicitly or implicitly, to the notion of active citizenship and insist on the promotion of citizen participation (Schachter 1995; Alford 2002). Turning to educational policy in affluent democracies, moreover, one finds active citizenship declared more often today than previously. The era of governance requires active citizenship; citizens are now expected to be active in governing globalised and multicultural society.

The notion of citizenship is often described as a legal status or relationship between the individual and the state (Lister 2003). According to Lawson (2001: 177), citizenship consists of "the notion of participation in public life, the idea that a citizen is one who both governs and is governed, a sense of identity, an acceptance of societal values, and rights and responsibilities". Feminist critiques of the concept of citizenship (as both a social and legal status) have argued that it is distinctly male and predicated on an idealist notion of the white, European, middle class, able bodied man (Sawer 2005).

Finally, but central to our approach, another view conceptualises citizenship as participation in civil society (Delanty 2005). This view underlines the relationship between citizenship and participation in the political community, which is argued starts early in life. As Delanty (2005) explains, citizenship is an "active agency and a social actor" shaped by relationships with others. Civil society thus occupies a particular space as the realm of opportunity for such a role to be played out, but also for citizenship to be learned. It is from this viewpoint that this paper looks at Albanian civil society and its importance for a society that fosters active citizenship and democracy.

Citizenship as participation – The role of civil society (CS) in Albania

The section on the theoretical framework explained the conceptual framework and the stand from which this paper and its findings can be read (without intending to be exhaustive of the theoretical debate in the realm of either citizenship issues or civil society) this section is a tailored background of Albania. It aims to set the context for civil society development and citizen engagement in the targeted country.

The history of civil society in Albania is brief. Albania was not a free country until 1944, after which the totalitarian rule which dominated the country for most of the second half of the 20th century acted not only as a huge obstacle to citizen empowerment and participation, but also as an inhibitor to the development of a culture of participatory citizenship in the country. As in many other communist countries, civil society organisations and action were repressed by the regime, with a low level of public awareness of citizen rights (Zaharchenko and Gilbreath Holdar 2010).

As argued by Wedel (1994), under communism the nations of Eastern Europe did not have a 'civil society'. Lack of freedom was considered the main obstacle to a civil society. In Albania, however, the communist regime was one of the longest and most severe; and particularly harsh in the sphere of social control. A few organisations which were active among Albanians in the diaspora had almost no impact on the life of those in the country. In such a context, there was little space for individual or non-governmental voluntary activities.

The phenomenon of voluntary association, free of control and direction from the government, was absent in Albania for many years, however, voluntarism was a well-known term and activity among Albanians, albeit with a completely different meaning and context. People were involved continually in the so-called 'volunteering initiatives' dedicated to building the country and the "new socialist man" but they were not a result of people's free will. On the contrary, people were very often forced into and burdened with the "volunteer work" which continues to echo negativity to the generations of the post-communist era.

The concept of civil society in western terms as *the arena – outside of the family, the state, and the market – which is created by individual and collective actions, organizations and institutions to advance shared interests*, has historically been absent in Albania. Terms such as ‘civil society’, ‘non-governmental organisations’, ‘not for profit organisations’ and other related concepts have been added to the Albanian discourse only recently, after the fall of communism. Before this, the dimensions that citizenship and activism could take were related to and defined only by the state party. Similarly, other terms such as ‘charity sector’, ‘voluntary sector’, ‘community sector’ or ‘third sector’, which in some countries (e.g. in the UK) gained more ideological and conceptual traction, remained virtually unknown to Albanians until the 1990s (Jochum, Pratten and Wilding 2005). In fact, defining civil society and other concepts related to it, including active and participatory citizenship, have proved to be difficult tasks, not only in countries like Albania where such concepts are new, but also, of course, in countries with a recognised tradition of the third sector.

In the years following the fall of communism, civil society organisations were seen as the route towards revitalising active citizenship in Albania, however, the developments that followed showed that this was not always the case. The work of Sampson on civil society in Albania sheds light on the role of western donors in shaping the reality of “civil society” in the first years of transition. In his review of the developments of the time, Sampson notes that the western view of transition, in relation to eastern countries, generally implied conversion to western models and ways of being, which in the case of civil society was a “system’s export”. This statement is supported by the BTI transformation index (2012; 2014) according to which before the subject of civil society became an issue of public debate, the idea was introduced to Albania through western donor aid policies, the goal of which was to stimulate civic participation and introduce the populace to democratic values and behaviour.

The emergence of hundreds of NGOs and civil society groups after the 1990s in Albania is considered a major achievement on the road to democracy (HDCP 2009). The role played by civil society in the country’s political, social and economic processes has been unique and of vital importance. Even the discrepancy found between the appreciation of

the Albanian elite for consistent foreign involvement in Albanian social development, and the harder times the political elite had in coming to terms with CS organisations could be seen as a sign of pluralisation (Chiodi 2007).

Decades after the systemic change, however, local NGOs have not become influential in the public sphere as the western hegemony in Albania was present through other routes. Even now Albanian civil society is viewed as a cluster of donor-driven NGOs, rather than a collection of genuinely local interest groups and grassroots movements in touch with local priorities. Many civil society leaders are connected somewhat to politics, adding to the lack of public trust in them (BTI 2014).

The NGO Sustainability Index (SI) published annually over the last decade by USAID, measuring the progress of the NGO sector, indicates that civil society in Albania is currently far from the advanced stage of civil society in developed democracies. The NGO sector is in fact a shrinking horizon (2010). The civil society sector in Albania has been diminishing in terms of size, type, and geographical coverage of activities. NGOs in all fields of activities, working at all levels, have experienced bad times due to a lack of funding. Many have become inactive, while the role of those that remain is very limited. To illustrate we refer to the most recent available data reported by Partners Albania for 2009, where of more than 800 NGOs registered in Albania only around 50% were active (HDPC 2009).

Think tanks are also experiencing difficult times. They operate in a policy environment that is perhaps more competitive than that in which many of them started. As in other Eastern European countries during the first decade of transition, think tanks played an advisory role to the reformer agencies, mostly in the framework of foreign assistance (Krastev 2001), however, in recent years, think tanks have reduced their role in offering their expertise on issues related to public institutions. The reasons for this may be complex and need to be explored specifically. The research undertaken by think tanks has also been reduced due to a lack of funding.

The Society Index indicates a clear NGO stagnation in each assessed dimension over the recent years. A lack of financial resources, high donor dependence, a substantial decrease in the quantity and impact

of advocacy activities towards governmental policies, a decrease in membership in associations and networks and a decline in NGO services to citizens explain this stagnation. The stagnation of the NGO sector identified in much of the existing literature on Albanian civil society, combined with the findings of the Civil Society Index in Albania (IDM 2010), which show a low level of citizen participation, are further explored in this paper.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed to explore from the CS actor perspective the barriers and opportunities for civic engagement through civil society organisations in Albania. In addition to a review of the most relevant reports, documents, and literature on civil society, civil sector and active citizenship, primary data was gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with key informants. Key informants were identified among representatives of CSOs that use citizen participation and which interact with active citizens, who would therefore be best informed about their profiles, interests and needs. Accordingly, the findings of the study are derived primarily from in-depth interviews with representatives of unions, membership-based NGOs, and other non-governmental organisations in the country. A total of 32 key informants were purposefully selected on the basis of their expertise and activism in the area of CS and voluntarism in Albania. Eighteen were women and fourteen were men, with an experience in this field ranging from 3 to 15 years.

The study is limited in terms of its scope and targets:

- *Limitations in scope.* The study doesn't cover religious groups, media, and political parties which, according to certain international definitions (e.g. CIVICUS definition³), are also part of civil society. The analysis in this study refers mainly to the civil society actors such as NGOs, political organisations (but not political parties) and unions.

3 CIVICUS defines Civil Society as "the arena – outside of the family, the state, and the market – which is created by individual and collective actions, organizations and institutions to advance shared interests".

- *The participants were only active civil society actors.* A different perception of 'active citizenship' might be expected from active and successful individuals compared to less active individuals. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study it was decided to focus on experienced civil society actors as the interviewees, given their longer and richer practice in working with active citizens.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data collected via in-depth interviews with key informants was transcribed, coded and then analysed according to these domains of interest: traits of active citizenship in Albania, influencing factors, and barriers and opportunities towards promoting active citizenship. The findings derived from the interviews were contextualised in the framework of the literature review and are presented in the following sections of the paper, organised under the topics the paper aims to address.

Understanding the traits of active citizenship in Albania

It was a common perception of the participants in this study that citizen participation and activism in Albania, regardless of the developments following the fall of communism, have persistently been very low. With very few exceptions, such as the citizen's engagement in pressuring the government in 2013 to say 'no' to chemical weapons demolition in the country⁴, few positive experiences were hardly and pointed out. This lack of memory of the successful episodes is the result not only of their rarity but also because many small scale protests go unreported, or are not linked to results (Chiodi 2007).

4 In November 2013, after long protests by civil society and citizens, the Albanian government, rejected a request by Washington for it to host the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpile. See: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/15/albania-rejects-request-disposal-syrian-chemical-weapons>

As well as being in line with the findings of the Civil Society Index in Albania, our data provides sound explanations for several of the trends established in quantitative terms. According to several of the participants sharing their views about the low levels of engagement of citizens in the activities of civil society organisations, low participation is primarily due to the immense distance of the CSOs from citizens and their groups of interest.

"It is very rarely that you'll find CSOs that have their roots among citizens, groups of interest and that enjoy their trust and support. Grassroots organisations are either inexistent or very weak" (Male, CSO representative).

This detachment from the communities and citizens overlaps with several other factors which are believed to keep citizens away from CSOs and activism in general. Our findings show that these underlining factors could be categorised under two main topics: awareness and efficiency. Apparently, Albanian citizens lack knowledge, information and awareness of the ways in which they may become engaged, actively participate in governance and decision-making, and have an important agency as stakeholders on different issues.

"Most citizens are not aware of the power they have. And even if they do, they have no information or access to the channels where such power could be directed to strengthen their voice. The not-so-distant past of looking upon the state and passively expecting it to resolve any issues, making it seem "mighty", is still common among Albanian citizens" (Female, CSO representative).

Their low interest and involvement in the civil society sector is believed to be partly because the sector is perceived as not very efficient or transparent. Such perceptions are based either on people's personal, unsuccessful experiences in the cases where they did get involved or due to a lack of information on the agenda, activities and successes of civil society in Albania at large.

"The extensive number of NGOs in these recent years and their vague success has resulted in an overall view of the CSO-s as ineffective, narrow-minded and untrustworthy. It is as simple as

this: why do I have to trust you? And evidence for that answer is missing" (Male, CSO representative).

A crucial factor is described as the way the relationship between civil society and the political arena is negatively perceived by citizens. Except for the cases in which direct interests are questioned or in which serious and direct threats are anticipated, Albanian citizens would not 'risk' affiliating themselves with any movement or organisation that would involve opposition towards governments. This is mainly due to fears inherited from the past, but according to one of the interviewees also from how things have developed in recent years.

"There is evidence to suggest that these fears are substantiated even nowadays. Citizens who have affiliated themselves with oppositional movements or organisations have risked their working place, or have suffered discrimination as a result of their political views and actions" (Female, CSO representative).

Nonetheless, the participants noted several specific traits of those who do engage actively. Exploring the motivation for active citizenship, it appeared easier for the participant to address it and form a comparative perspective between engagement through NGOs dealing with socio-economic development issues and other types of organisations. First, involving citizens can be an easily achieved goal for religious groups and large political parties. In the former, citizen activism, although limited in quantity, can be very strong, with belief often being the main driving reason. In political parties, activism was believed to be motivated primarily by benefits once the party gains power. Such benefits might include, for example, employment, and schooling or higher/continuous education for the activists or their children. This confirms a BTI (2014) report which claimed that in Albania civil society is still viewed as a cluster of donor-driven NGOs, rather than a collection of genuinely local interest groups and grassroots movements in touch with local priorities. Many civil society leaders are somewhat connected to politics, adding to the lack of public trust.

"You can easily see that, with the exception of the chemical weapons protests, none of the protests of civil society has ever

been comparable to political parties' rallies which fill main squares" (Male, CSO representative).

When it comes to NGOs, however, it is claimed that it can be more effective to organise and stimulate the activism of citizens on the basis of their feelings of belonging. Small groups based on common interest, such as professional groups for instance, have proven to be more active and more efficient in their initiatives. According to the participants, experience shows that when issues such as the environment, electricity, or clean water are targeted by a certain movement, they can be considered too broad or general to achieve any tangible results and therefore rarely act as a strong incentive for active citizens, in spite of the fact that they maybe massively important problems. For the several of the interviewees, one explanation for this variation was to be found within the second category of factors – efficiency. Lack of efficiency in the tradition of CSOs activism is a responsible factor.

"Citizen initiatives around such issues have often proven to be unsuccessful or to require a long time for the results to show. Citizens fail to see direct and immediate results for many years, and fewer and fewer people mobilise to join similar initiatives in the future when called upon" (Male, CSO representative).

Another important determinant is the "appeal" of the initiative to donors. The initiatives that manage to have an impact or last long enough to bring about change are expected to be supported by donors. The donor driven agendas of many NGOs do lead to weakened agency and links with ordinary citizens.

"I was very fond of a project on voluntarism among high school students on the issue of environment protection. It needed little seed money as it would continue on volunteer terms as peer-to-peer education on activism but it did not manage to get funds. It was not under the areas of priority for donors, although environment issues and youth activism are in fact high priority issues in the national context" (Female, CSO representative).

The “profile” of the Albanian active citizen

Although generally speaking active citizenship was considered very low, interviewees could see several variations based on gender, age, ethnicity and geography which moderate the enabling or disabling environmental factors for activism in Albania. According to their experiences, greater participation and activism is usually found at the local level, rather than at the central/national level. When issues concerned the immediate community, and therefore directly affected the quality of life of families and their children, women were perceived to have considerable agency compared to men, however, whenever such issues are taken further to the national or central level, women were perceived as being 'lost' along the way.

“Citizens need to see the direct impact of their actions and be able to identify and understand their risks and benefits. Thus it may happen more often that we see citizens getting together to fix an issue over an elevator rather than see them organised around issues of social insurance and pensions in the country”
(Male, CSO representative).

The reasons that interviewees gave for the reduction of women's participation from local to central levels related mainly to the division of labour and community duties along gender lines, as well as to the still strong prejudices that accompany women's activism in the community, especially in remote and rural areas. Absence from, or spending time away from, the family is also still a luxury for many women who continue to undertake the lion's share of the unpaid work and care in a family (INSTAT 2010)⁵.

“Women are still too overwhelmed by unpaid work at home. They may manage to attend an event or participate in an action that does not interfere too much with their routine. On top of that the patriarchal mentality which persists keeps them away from public engagement at large. They probably know best what is

5 Time use survey 2011 in Albania documents as much as 84% of the unpaid work being undertaken by women and girls, compared to only 14% by men and boys.

not working and how it can be addressed but it is expected that they will present issues and then leave what is a man's job be done by men" (Female, CSO representative).

Age is also considered an important factor in determining trends in citizen activism. Although the literature makes much of the activism of youth (Hirt 2012) - young people supposedly form a new generation, free from the past repercussions of communism on citizenship activism - there are other factors which seem to make this demographic factor less influential than others. As one of the interviewees put it, '**...being an active citizen is not considered 'cool' by the young Albanians**'. Interviewees also stressed that the lack of awareness raising and educational approaches, both informal and formal, was also an important factor in fostering activism among young, future citizens.

"At home, young Albanians are raised by those parents who lived much of their life under totalitarian rule, and who might as a result lack the necessary comprehension or culture of active citizenship and who can therefore fail to act as role models for their offspring to follow" (Male, CSO representative).

On the other hand, school curricula tend to pay little or no attention to transmitting the necessary information about active citizenship, or to building the necessary skills and capacities to become such a citizen.

It was also claimed that youth organisations are given the least support. Youth organisations are poor in resources and rarely supported or trusted by donors. This limits the opportunities not only for youth organisations but also for young citizens in general to become more active. It should be noted, however, that regardless of their limited actions and opportunities, young people are believed to have the necessary ideas and energy to bring about change. In this sense, there is a significant burden of hope placed on the shoulders of Albanian youth, that they will provide the country with active and participatory citizens in the future.

Inhibiting factors

The qualitative approach explores what the quantitative findings of the Civil Society Index in Albania (IDM 2010) identify as major inhibiting factors for active citizenship and a stronger role of CS, such as the low perceived level of impact that the civil society sector is believed to have, the low level of transparency of the civil society sector, and the political influence that is believed to often dictate the activities and agendas of civil society organisations.

Our respondents shared the common perception that the level of impact within the civil society sector in Albania is quite limited. In addition, even where successful stories do exist, they receive little or no publicity. Citizens in general can therefore find it hard to believe that the activities of the civil society sector have any substantial contribution to addressing the important issues and problems that face the country, let alone those of a smaller scale. A larger degree of transparency should be considered not only with respect to finances but also in terms of responsiveness and efficiency.

“We need to do much more in promoting our work and achievements. The lack of transparency is not primarily a problem in financial areas, but rather with respect to the agenda and activities being carried out by civil society actors. Information sharing and awareness raising activities should therefore occupy a more central part of the work of many CSOs, so that citizens can know more about, and develop a greater sense of ownership over, the many activities being undertaken by civil society”
(Female CSO representative).

In terms of the harm that political influence can do to a stronger active citizenship, the key informants relate it not only to the past history of the country, but also to the present. In their opinion, people suffered an aftermath of political revenge when they were actively involved in certain movements or actions that might have threatened the interests of political powers.

"People continue to be scared and it is not only those who grew up under dictatorship. For more than two decades citizens have witnessed and experienced citizens being hunted down in politics and power, losing jobs or suffering other consequences for speaking their minds. Any negative experiences would require long and sustainable efforts to establish new standards and practices" (Female, CSO representative).

Strategies to promote active citizenship through CS organisations

It is found that new strategies need to be employed to encourage active citizenship and they need to be all-encompassing and address information sharing, awareness raising, skills and capacity building. Information should be available and accessible to citizens as the main 'door' through which they can enter the civil society arena. Civil society actors should make information and transparency important components of their work; informing and being accountable to donors or partners is not by itself enough.

"It is unrealistic to expect citizens to trust you if you're never in touch with them or you work remains in closed boxes. CSOs do little not only to involve citizens but also to inform them. My impression is that, overall, their primary audience is the donor and sometimes the decision makers. Citizens and groups of interests are often times just a tool or a channel for this bipartisan relationship to look functional" (Male, CSO representative).

The continuation and clear profile of an organisation, union or other CSS actor are a guarantee of greater citizen support and activism. Follow up activities and involvement of citizens in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the actions/initiatives are essential. Citizens should not only be made part of the process but sometimes even made leaders of the civil sector activities, giving them a sense of ownership which would definitely

strengthen their profile as active citizens and lead to greater degrees of activism in the future.

“It is overwhelming to see all the time, the same faces appearing at events targeting issues ranging from rural development, to women, to the environment...but you know, specialisation is important and commitment, of course! Only when you demonstrate these will citizens trust and count on you, and you can be more effective” (Female, CSO representative).

At the same time, there is an urgent need for civil society actors to turn their attention to ways of engaging and working for and with the citizens. Such engagement, where relevant and possible, should become a priority goal.

“For most CSOs their group of interest is only in their mind...no real communication and monitoring takes place” (Male, CSO representative).

This calls for part of civil society (especially those that base their activity on citizen participation) to become more driven by the interests of citizens rather than those of donors. Civil society actors should aim to move towards a citizen-centred approach in which priorities are set and followed by considering the interests and needs of citizens. A civil society which is detached from its citizens is not an inspiration for active citizenship.

Conclusions

As a result of Albania's history and cultural factors, the civil society sector is still new, fragile and under continuous change. As a result, its profile and impact is still not very clear or well understood by many Albanian citizens. The low level of awareness about the importance and agenda of the civil society sector, combined with other factors such as the perceived political influence of this sector and its generally low impact, seem to have

discouraged a greater number of citizens from actively participating.

The common perception of citizen participation and activism in Albania as very low is thought to be the result of the interplay of several influencing factors, among the most important those related to the effectiveness of the civil society sector and awareness of the issue. Several variations in active citizenship could be identified based on gender, age, ethnicity and geography. In general, political and religious participation is stronger than social participation; women are more likely to act at local level while men dominate at any level; the older generation is more active in the political sphere, whereas the youth, although more difficult to organise, stand for their own group interests.

Citizen participation should become a major priority for civil society actors, who will need to apply different strategies if they are to set about changing the landscape of Albania's civic participation. These strategies will need to be informed by the various trends, profiles and demographics of active citizens identified by this and other studies, as well as by stories of success. In particular, new strategies need to be employed to encourage and shape new trends of active citizenship in post-communist Albania and in addressing inhibiting factors such as the low perceived level of the ACSS's impact and transparency and the political influence that is believed to often dictate the agenda of ACSS actors.

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Book Reviews

Yoji Koyama

The EU's Eastward Enlargement: Central and Eastern Europe's Strategies for Development

2015. World Scientific Publishing Company. Pages: 426. ISBN 978-9814602457.

When the European Economic Community was established I was 11 years old. When the disintegration of Yugoslavia started I was 46 years old. I have been living in Europe all my life but nevertheless, I learned a lot reading this book; new elements and views on the prevailing impressions and beliefs about the history of the EU and its enlargement.

The starting point of the book is that all of the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) are not newcomers to Europe, but are in fact returning to Europe. Secondly, a different path from the one they took could have led to different results, less sacrifice and pain related to shock therapy and neoliberal reforms (p. 6). What makes this book really interesting and different is the fact that the "story" of enlargement is examined from an Asian perspective. A new and interesting insight is the author's claim that the process of transition could have been different and less painful, if the countries in the region had learned from the experiences of Asian industrializing countries.

The first chapter dwells on the changes in CEECs and provides new insight into the history of the region and its relations with the EU. It offers a criticism of neoliberal recipes and the shock therapy prescribed by the IMF and G. Sachs. The latter was a "parachuting" adviser to the regions' governments regarding transition and privatisation backed by the US and IMF's Washington consensus approach in its original form. The author elaborates on the region's efforts to catch up with the West and the problems arising from putting the process on a fast track. It is followed by a chapter on Poland, which is for many reasons a specific and a very interesting story due to its internal economic reasons and its (historical) geographical position (vicinity to Germany and Russia).

The chapter which overviews South Eastern Europe is rich and based

on extensive reading of the empirical evidence of the happenings in the region. However, we all have different perspectives, so do not be surprised if an interpretation departs from what you think or believe. These differences add to the creativity of the author and the richness of the book. For instance, being Slovene, I have a somewhat different opinion on the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The author may have placed too much emphasis on external and economic reasons contributing to the disintegration. He claims, for instance, that the "premature recognition of Slovenia and Croatia by EC member states destabilized Bosnia and Herzegovina" (p. 8). He later even claims that this "caused the breakup of the Yugoslav Federation and triggered tragic ethnic conflicts" (p. 48). He goes on to say that "shock therapy spurred escalation of conflicts among the republics leading to the subsequent breakup of the Federation and fierce ethnic conflicts" (p. 6). From an insider's perspective, this seems as only a rather modest element of the mosaic. The major causes of disintegration are much more complex, deeply rooted in the history of the last 500 years, and even more so in the events of the Second World War. Both Slovenia and Croatia tried to keep Yugoslavia together by, for instance, proposing a confederate system and several other reforms, but they were rejected, mostly by the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milošević, which tried to keep Yugoslavia together by abolishing the high level of autonomy of its republics. It achieved part of this aspiration by abolishing the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo. This was a greater cause of problems in Kosovo than "shock therapy" was (p. 48), which is seen by Koyama as the element "spurring escalation of conflicts among the republics" (p.48).

In spite of the growing inequality between the more and the less developed republics during socialist Yugoslavia, economic reasons were not the major drivers of disintegration. They certainly played a role, but not a major one. The major reasons for disintegration were historical, ethnic, religious and the different opinions on the future of the Yugoslav federation (centralised as Milošević saw it, or more confederative as the Slovenes and Croatians saw it). There were also differences of opinion regarding European integration. For instance, the Slovenes were pushing for it, but Milošević was against it. The author is closer to the mark when claiming that the "Kosovo problem triggered the breakup of the former Yugoslavia" (p. 8, 201). In this chapter, Koyama rightly mentions the

experiences of Poland as a success story, partly because of a "shorter period of socialism" (p. 82) but, also, we can add, good policies during the transition period in contrast to bad policies in some other CEECs.

Chapter II, concentrating on the Western Balkans, starts with the complicated story of Kosovo. An in-depth historical overview is provided as the background for the problems of the present. This background is illuminating even for those who have lived in SFRY for many years. The chapter demonstrates a deep knowledge of the issue, although more from the Serbian than from the Albanian perspective. It was not only the "violence and harassment by Albanians" in the 1980s which stimulated Serbian nationalism, as the author claims, but also the deeply rooted historical disputes present among both groups for a long time. The author does not put enough emphasis on the abolishment of the autonomy of Kosovo or the harassment and violence against Albanians in the late 1980 and the beginning of 1990s performed by Serbs, which were the triggers of problems in this region. Certainly, as the author states, the "harassment by Albanians in the first half of the 1980s stimulated Serbian nationalism" (p.111). However, the reasons are much deeper. One has to look into the long-term policies of Milošević aimed at Serbian hegemony in the federation, the abolition of autonomy of the province of Kosovo and the Serbian harassment of Albanians in the distant and recent history. Furthermore, the claim that "the international community has accelerated the process" of ethnic conflict (p. 97) is not well founded, nor is the position that the bombardment by NATO "strengthened the position of Milošević in Serbia" (p. 105). It might have been true in the short-term, but later developments proved it stimulated his fall since internal opposition was strengthened.

The author is right in explaining the path of the latest EU member state, Croatia, alluding to the "danger of becoming the second Greece", referring to Greece's heavy dependence on tourism. He emphasizes the need to "develop manufacturing industries" (p. 171) in order to diversify its economic structure and reduce its dependence on tourism.

Serbia (ch. 6), which is only starting its path to EU membership, is a different story. The situation has changed, the initial enthusiasm has vanished as a result of the crisis of the EU and the Eurozone, and the demands on

potential new members have increased. Koyama demonstrates in-depth knowledge about the Serbian economy and political situation and its, as he puts it, "adverse international environment". It could be mentioned that such an environment is not generic but is in fact a reaction to Serbian policies and roles in the disintegration of Yugoslavia and its ethnic wars. Such internal factors contributed to its lagging behind in development and transition.

The chapters on individual countries explain well and in-depth their economic and political development based on rich data and documents. This also holds true for Macedonia with its everlasting name problem, and the veto of Greece, which is the main obstacle to EU membership. The author also justifiably emphasises the importance of regional cooperation, manifested also in CEFTA. Upon EU accession, trade within CEFTA becomes much more expensive, and the EU should address this issue with more care. Nevertheless, it is not the only problem. "Macedonia has always been facing the problem of structural weakness of its economy", (p. 222) which has recently been addressed with liberal and proactive policies to attract FDI. There are also ethnic problems, although these have been "settled for the time being by the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001, but the situation is still precarious" (p. 222).

The interesting parts in the contribution on Albania are the analogy with the Meiji restoration in 1868 and the one connecting its development to the experiences of Japan in the second part of the 19th century by referring to the role of talented persons. Koyama reflects on the pressing problem of the Albanian economy, the exodus of the (educated) work force, claiming that in the Japanese experience "only limited number of people were sent to Western countries and they absorbed the latest information and technology in the West and contributed to the economic development in Japan. In contrast, the contemporary Albanian society has suffered from serious brain drain" (p. 255-256). One can only agree with Koyama's statement that "it takes time, perhaps more than a generation, for democracy, rule of law, etc. to be rooted in the Albanian society" (p. 256).

The Baltic states (part III of the book), together with Slovenia, are a different story. The Baltic countries differ because of their geographical position and

historical relations with Russia/the Soviet Union and Slovenia by being by far the most developed part of Yugoslavia and the richest among all the new member states. Koyama is right in saying that after the initial success of Slovenia's first years of transition, it turned out to be a failure, as it was affected more deeply by the economic crisis than other new EU member states. But the economic crisis does not explain it completely. There are many internal reasons why Slovenia is still facing the crisis, although moderate growth resumed in 2014. Slower privatization and gradualism are emphasized as traits of the specific Slovenian transition path. The author is quite right in claiming that political interference in the economy was one of the reasons for mostly failed leveraged management by objectives (MBOs), which were regarded by managers to "escape from political intervention". The timing of such MBOs was bad, just before the economic crisis, leading to a collapse of many companies. There were bad management reasons behind it as well, such as restructuring, which came too late and were too slow (structural reforms) and adjustments to tectonic changes in the world as well as heavy investments in non-core business leading to huge non-performing loans.

The book concludes with the Eurozone crisis focusing on the Baltic states, Latvia in particular. The dependence of these countries on foreign capital is emphasized, particularly from Sweden and in the banking sector.

Koyama claims that "CEECs had almost no relation with subprime loans in the USA, but they were indirectly affected" (p. 344). He is also convinced that "relying solely on austerity has led to a vicious circle of deepening the recession" and, "dividing Europe." Koyama's plea for new wisdom replacing the austerity measures is well placed also because of the negative effects on cohesion and the catching up of the new and less developed members. One can add to this the need to recognize that "it takes two to tango"; it is not only the south and less developed countries who should adjust to resolve the crisis, but also the most developed countries, such as Germany.

In the concluding chapter Koyama again emphasises that the CEECs are not newcomers to Europe but are, rather, "returning to Europe". Strong emphasis is given to the role of the USA "as a shadow major actor" (p. 360) in the region. This is explained through the non-acceptance of Mitterrand's

frequently forgotten plan of a "pan European confederation" in 1989 and opting for the US solution of "accelerated transformation into capitalism" delinking the region from the influence of the Soviet Union. One cannot escape from the impression that perhaps too much emphasis is given to external factors, while internal ones are being neglected.

The book ends with a very contemporary reference to Ukraine claiming that it should "act as a bridge between the EU and Russia which would be beneficial both for Ukraine and for the EU and Russia" (p. 365). *Either-or policies*, such as making Ukraine decide between the EU and Russia, ignore the deeply rooted history of the region.

I can recommend the book to all those interested in the EU and its enlargement, to academics, businessmen, the general public in all the Western Balkan countries as well as to those from countries which joined the EU after the fall of the Berlin wall. The author has not only read extensively on the issues, but has also spent a lot of time in the region. His interpretations have a touch of 'hands on' experience which makes the book even more interesting and provocative.

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Radhika Desai

Geopolitical Economy: After US Hegemony, Globalization and Empire. The Future of World Capitalism

2013. London: Pluto Press, and Halifax: Fernwood Publishing. Pages: 313. ISBN 978-0745329925.

The book by Radhika Desai titled *Geopolitical Economy: After US Hegemony, Globalization and Empire* and part of *The Future of World Capitalism* book series, represents a profound introspection, as well as an overview of the most important politico-economic relations in the world, from the late-19th century until the current period. This book deconstructs common myths present in the mainstream literature devoted to international political and economic relations by using a scientific approach oriented towards processes and laws of political economy. Drawing mainly on the critique of the hegemony stability theory (HST), and using the theoretical perspective of scientific Marxism, the author overturns cosmopolitan visions of the world and describes the political and economic prerequisites crucial for the functioning of the capitalist economy. This is a book that rejects the possibility of a contemporary world hegemony, which according to the author could not be conducted by any state, not even the U.S.A. Maybe the most important contribution of this book, as this reviewer sees it, is the deconstruction of mainstream ideas about the functioning of the world economy, and of ideas that Desai calls cosmopolitan and that include hegemony, globalization and "global economy", which dominate the discipline of international relations (and to which Desai refers as "the bourgeois discipline").

Desai's main thesis, around which the whole book is organized and meticulously explained in the first, "theoretical" chapter, is that the processes of uneven and combined development (UCD) characterize international relations of the modern world. These processes evolve in a dialectic in which, on the one hand dominant states tend to preserve the existing uneven configurations of capitalist development which favours them, including through formal and informal imperialism. On the other hand, contender states accelerate the capitalist, and in some cases

such as the USSR, communist development contests imperial projects of dominant states.

The states dominate the political economy on the domestic level, and the geopolitical economy on the international level. The uneven and combined development thesis most appropriately describes the world of modern capitalist international relations (pp. 2-3, 10-11). Therefore, it represents a theoretical starting-point for geopolitical economy. Uneven development characterizes the global economy, which cannot function without it. Powerful and developed states tend to seek the status quo while contender, developing, states want to change that order. Combined development is what makes the acceleration of development, and through it change, possible. Desai rejects the thesis that the capitalist economy is global. According to him, it is not truly global because it functions through different states which are in mutual competition to protect their interests. Capitalism cannot function without the state, as the state is central for capitalism.

In the second chapter 'The Materiality of Nations' the author, besides providing an understanding of the ideas of A. Smith, Hamilton, List, Keynes and Polanyi, also provides a novel interpretation of Marx and Engels' ideas in order to make the case for the materiality of nations, and recover "their theories of crisis from the disdain of most Marxist economics". The thesis that Marx and Engels, as well as the other afore-mentioned thinkers, were advocates of free trade (actually one way 'free trade' of industrialized goods from the colonial powers to colonies) is deconstructed, showing that they understood the centrality of such 'free trade' for imperialism and for the rise of the first industrialized state (the United Kingdom) to the status of the world power, achieving hegemony that will never again be repeated in the history of modern civilization. In order to overcome the paucity of demand, capital needs markets outside the borders of its homeland state, consequently creating formal (territorial) and, after the Second World War, mostly informal colonies. Later non-Marxist critics of capitalism, like Keynes and Polanyi, also understood that the state has a central role in capitalist societies. "They also advocated the extension of that role to promote full employment and social protection" (p. 20). During the Bretton Woods negotiations, Keynes suggested the creation of a multilateral currency and a clearing system that would minimize

trade imbalances. Nevertheless, the U.S.A. wanted to use the weaknesses of other powers and emulate the nineteenth century role of the United Kingdom, as a state that would dominate the world not through a system of formal colonies, but through “free trade” and the instalment of the dollar as the world's currency. Keynes's proposals were therefore rejected.

Chapter three, titled ‘The US Imperial Career’, deals mostly with the U.S. imperial past prior to the Second World War, thereby providing a historical account of the U.S.A.'s ambitions in taking over the role of the U.K. as the world's dominant power. However, the U.S.A. was never a “typical” colonial power, although it had a couple of its own colonies. The First World War (which started only a year after the Federal Reserve Bank was created!) completely exhausted the finances of European colonial powers, making them debtors of the U.S.A. This was crucial for the U.S. intentions of becoming the world's dominating power and of course, the dollar becoming the world's currency (instead of the sterling). The Second World War was the best opportunity for the U.S.A. and the dollar to take over the role of the U.K., thereby becoming the true successors to British world dominance. The intentions of the U.S.A. in creating its own empire through free trade were also present in the works of President Wilson's and Roosevelt's Geographer, I. Bowman (the author of “The New World”). The importance and the temptation of the possibility of world domination for the U.S. establishment in the Interwar Era was probably most directly expressed through the notion of the “American Century”, by H. Luce in 1941. He saw the upcoming war (the U.S.A. was still out of the war at that time) as an opportunity for establishing world dominance. The strength of the economic dominance of the U.S.A. after the Second World War, the true intentions of its establishment and the means of achieving them were best expressed in 1948 by G. F. Kennan's remarks about the position of the U.S.A. in the Post-War world and how it should be maintained:

We have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population. (...) In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships, which will permit us to *maintain this position of disparity* without positive detriment to our national security (quoted in Desai, p. 96).

Since even in the 1950s the U.S.A. was not able to maintain competitiveness and create a demand that was sufficient to maintain steady growth, it turned to “military Keynesianism” and “military Schumpeterianism” to create a national security complex, waging wars in Korea and Vietnam and developing a robust and sophisticated military industry that subsidised the demand needed for a capitalist economy to grow continuously.

In the chapter on HST the author deconstructs this theory, developed mostly by C. Kindleberger, who claimed that the U.S.A. was hegemonic at the world level until the oil shocks of the 1970s. It is shown that even in this “hegemonic era” the attempts of the U.S.A. to preserve the dollar as the world’s currency were never completely successful. The world role of the U.S.A. was slowly, but continuously, diminishing since Western Europe and Japan re-emerged as the second and the third pole of world economic growth.

The chapter titled ‘Renewal?’ explains the situation during the Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan administrations. The attempts to preserve the dollar failed and the gold window was finally abolished unilaterally by President Nixon in 1971 (p. 156). Contrary to those who regard this as a masterstroke, the dollar declined and stabilised only two years later when Nixon and his national security advisor, H. Kissinger, managed to initiate a quadrupling of oil prices, creating the “oil shocks”. This was the first in a series of attempts to save the dollar’s position as the world’s currency (p. 158-159). This “rescue operation” by “opening black gold window” continued in the next decades through a series of financializations, increasing capital inflows that helped the U.S.A in dealing with its own deficit. In this chapter, a false opinion that the Reagan era brought a restoration of U.S. hegemony and that deregulation and another military build-up that created “the Second Cold War” were useful for the U.S. economy in the long-term, is deconstructed.

On ‘Globalization’ and ‘Empire’ (the titles of chapters 7 and 8 significantly marked with a question mark), perspectives that dominated the 1990s and the 2000s respectively, the author claims they were based on the assumption that nation-states are not relevant to explaining the world order (globalization) or that only one nation-state (the U.S.A.) is relevant (empire). The author rejects both perspectives, maintaining the thesis that nation-

states are the key for the functioning of capitalism, since they dominate the political economy on the domestic level and geopolitical economy on the international level. Globalization theorists usually describe it as an unstoppable process beyond the influence of individual states. However, Desai thinks globalization was primarily the politico-economic paradigm of the Clinton administration, succeeded by the empire paradigm of the G. W. Bush administration. While the Clinton administration presided over the so-called "New Economy", which proved to be short-lived and easily reversed and sought to open new markets to US capital flows, economic growth during the Bush administration was mainly based on housing loans (financed by sub-prime mortgages and financial derivatives) and real-estate prices, which were overinflated. After the real-estate bubble collapsed, another crisis in capitalism occurred, creating what is now commonly referred to as the Great Recession.

The last chapter, titled 'Conclusion: The multipolar moment', deals with the current period of Obama's administration in the U.S.A, marked by the financial and real economic crisis of the developed world, and the rising of the contender states, especially BRIC states. Since the book was finished in 2012, it clearly does not contain the effects of increasing oil production, falling oil prices and the recovery of the U.S. economy within geopolitical economy. Among other conclusions, the author states that we live in a multipolar world comprised of probably more dominant and contender states than ever before, and hegemony of any state is and will be less realistic than ever, since civilisation became industrial and technological advancement occurred, creating the modern capitalist economy.

After reading this book, the conclusion is that it represents a very valuable asset if it is read carefully, not only for scientists, but also for graduate and Ph. D. students, as well as policy-makers. It opens different perspectives, and explains processes in a scientific, yet understandable way. It also connects various prior knowledge and understandings about the topics explained in the book into clear, causal relations.

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Our Children and Other Animals

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At the very beginning of their book Cole and Stewart introduce us to a paradoxical concept of “the juxtaposition of death and delight”. They wish to further explore it as a commonly accepted occurrence in today’s marketing and media, most often seen in the linking of likeable, animated animal characters with promotional fast food meals which contain mutilated animal body parts (Cole, Stewart: 4). This paradoxical occurrence is often called out as such and those who do the calling are often marginalized and labeled as extremists. This has motivated the authors of “Our Children and Other Animals” to explore the social processes responsible for the construction of what is today’s mainstream concept of human – nonhuman animal relations. It is necessary to explore and expose the underlying processes of child socialization (in the family, school and through the media) in Western cultures, which serve to legitimize an instrumental appreciation of animals and obscure their violent exploitation. However, in order to do this we must start by reexamining the dominant discourse on the topic and choosing our words carefully. Vocabulary is one of the tools used to create space between the two inextricably linked concepts (human animal – nonhuman animal). It also perhaps diminishes identification and empathy. Cole and Stewart’s motives are moral but their appeals for a deeper look at these issues are based on the undisputable and dire consequences these practices have on us – human animals – our habitat and our physical health.

At the turn of the 19th century, mediated by intense industrialization and a diverse set of social changes it made possible, the trend of exploitation of animals for food, scientific and medical research, entertainment and education drastically intensified. These changes soon brought about the simplification and distortion of human – nonhuman animal relations. Before mass urbanization, most men and women lived in rural areas and shared quarters with a large number of different nonhuman animals. Children grew up surrounded by their scent, grew accustomed to their sounds, fed them, cared for them, and witnessed their births, moments

of procreation and deaths. Through this daily interaction, according to the authors, a specific type of relationship was formed. Mass migration to urban centers at the beginning of the 19th century included the livestock – live animal markets and slaughterhouses resided at the heart of every major city. However, with the development of education, the rise in health awareness, as well as the drastic change in the perception of childhood, most children were moved from factories into schools where the concept of children's innocence was further developed. The abusively treated and violently exploited animals thus had to go. Both the perceived health risks and the detrimental influence of slaughterhouses on children's morals were deemed too high. Consequently, the ever intensifying exploitation (labeled as a necessary condition of progress) was expelled from the cities, moved to the outskirts and hidden behind inconspicuous architecture. The spatial and social positioning of nonhuman animals into 'appropriate' spaces, out of sight, completed their naming as 'Others'.

While the true nature of nonhuman animal exploitation rose in quantity and cruelty, paralleled with efforts to conceal such practices, the concept of pets arrived in the home of the urban dweller and with it a possibility of a new kind of relationship. Pets opened the door for the capitalist proliferation of cultural representations of nonhuman animals aimed at children. Cole and Stewart find this fact worth investigating since it seems to point towards the secretive, underlying processes that reproduce human – nonhuman animal relations during human childhood. It is also their belief that the study of these issues will shed light on other kinds of 'othering' as a consequence of a patriarchal, colonialist and classist society since such processes, be they intra-human or inter-species, use the same methods. The objectification and containment of 'Others', their removal from the public sphere and their comparison with animals (vermin) all serve to dominate. The processes this book investigates are those that belong to a social system called anthroparchy – "a complex and relatively stable set of hierarchical relationships in which 'nature' is dominated through formations of social organization which privilege the human" and encompasses "the interplay of the material and discursive constitution of domination" (Cudworth qtd. in Cole, Stewart: 27).

Hence "Our Children and Other Animals" presents its argument by covering five subjects: 1) a critical examination of the human use of other

animals in UK society during early socialization, 2) the interconnection of dominant practices and representations in this socialization process, 3) the sociological importance of nonhuman animals in human children's lives, 4) the consequences of these early socialization practices for other animals' lives and deaths, and 5) the ways in which these dominant practices and representations are and can be challenged (Cole, Stewart: 6). Cole and Stewart recognize the existence of Foucault's discourse pertaining to nonhuman animals which legitimizes and reproduces their oppression. They work to create specific types of knowledge that serves to objectify the 'Other', to turn them from ends into means. The authors argue that the positioning of nonhuman animals depends on the dominant discourse backed by scientific knowledge which legitimizes their specific usage. Alongside the dichotomy of those who do the naming and those who are named due to their usefulness, another important moment ushers in Max Weber's understanding of the role of rationalization in modern Western society. Western rationalization, for Weber, demands a weakening of the effect of emotions and tradition on human action making it a product of calculus that is applied in all spheres of life. He distinguishes between four ideal types of meaningful social action: 1) instrumental-rational, 2) value-rational, 3) affective, and 4) traditional. Most human action towards nonhuman animals can be called as instrumental-rational. By placing nonhuman animals onto what Cole and Stewart call an instrumentalization continuum, some animals are most directly objectified as clothes and consumed as food, while others become companions and toys. On each side of the spectrum the animal has lost the ability to be the agent and is used, controlled or at best 'cared for'. It is the humans who name, supervise, control and inscribe purpose and fate onto their objects.

The importance and omnipresence of media in the socialization process of children did not escape the authors and exploring their role is crucial for the book. What is presented are the ways in which caricatured representations of nonhuman animals direct children into forming a specific kind of relationship with abstract, non-existent characters whilst the real experience of touch, smell and sound of living animals is eliminated and their oppression hidden. Animals are presented through the prism of cuteness that uses a specific style of photography, eliminating representation of true animal behavior and focusing on certain species mostly outside of their natural habitat. The consequence is an isolated

and controlled experience that teaches children to direct their affection and empathy towards representations and away from actual animals being exploited as a result of our everyday choices. The concept of an animal is fragmented into two parts from early childhood: an infantilized caricature to adore on the one hand, and a living animal to consume on the other. Animal representations are used in marketing of animal products aimed at children whilst the violent process of the production of those products is completely hidden from view. Cole and Stewart touch upon the socialization methods of children within the family as well as the educational system where discourse and an established set of norms (e.g. curriculum, school lunches etc.) normalize a sense of natural human domination over animals in the mind, as well as the habit of their consumption. Another issue is the state subsidizing of certain programs that further enforce and perpetuate the discourse and practices in question.

"Our Children and Other Animals" presents an interesting argument by investigating the nature and power of the discourse around human – nonhuman animal relations in present day Western society as well as Weber's instrumental-rational social action behind it. The narrative is backed by a historical inquiry into social change that occurred in the UK and might have had an effect on how that discourse and action became the norm. The book also contains a detailed analysis of marketing and media directed at children, as well as popular videogames, in order to support its claims. More work could have been done in respect to alternative representations of animals children come into contact with through documentaries and other educational programs dealing with wildlife. Such programs deviate from the processes Cole and Stewart believe legitimize objectification and oppression of nonhuman animals in the media and are not far from children's reach. Despite the fact that more realistic representations exist, it is true that they are less available and perhaps do not target children directly. Thus the authors suggest the broadening of discourse and the need to introduce new elements into the socialization process of children. One of the ways this can be done is through vegan literature that portrays many species of animals in their natural surroundings whilst interacting with their kind without the need to make them appear cute. Such books contain realistic illustrations and give agency to their nonhuman characters independently from their human ones. Nonhuman animals then finally cease to be "blank or near-

blank slates awaiting the inscription of human meanings and practices that will define their purpose and mortal fate" (Cole, Stewart: 19).

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Kathleen Thelen

Varieties of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity

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Are notions of solidarity obsolete in the face of the free market? Is there a single developed capitalism or are there many? Is there a best, most efficient way to delimit the state from the market and the public from the private or are there alternative, equally efficient solutions?

Comparative political economy is often based on the premise that the latter is true. In particular, the now classic *Varieties of Capitalism* (VofC) comparative approach postulates two types of institutional frameworks. The general idea was that each institutional solution generates positive externalities which may or may not be captured by specific solutions in other institutional domains. Therefore, the precondition for economic success of any given country is not any single institutional solution, but rather a consistent approach throughout the political economy cutting through finance, labor markets, education, inter-firm relations etc. The analysis of developed countries revealed two principal types of such institutional consistency – the coordinated market economy (CME) as a more restrictively regulated variety of capitalism and the liberal market economy (LME) as a more flexible variety oriented towards free markets.

The CME path to efficiency and growth is based on the formation of specific skills, protected and organized labor markets and long-term bank-centric corporate governance systems. This was considered as an approach of the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Japan. On the other hand, LME countries base their institutional comparative advantage on general skill formation, flexible labor markets with low unionization and short-term oriented corporate governance with predominant stock-market financing. These were said to be the USA, Canada, Ireland, the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

This VofC comparative system has been challenged numerous times since its very beginnings. Its critics often claim that the CME countries face direct and indirect pressures towards liberalization (globalization, recession, Europeanization...) and that these inevitably transform the coordinated systems based on labor and employer unions. Kathleen Thelen, one of the leading scholars in the VofC field since its beginnings, with her 2014 book *Varieties of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity*, joined this debate. Her book achieved two worthwhile accomplishments: firstly, the VofC approach is enriched with an attempt to attach developed trajectories of liberalizations to its logic, and secondly, the literature on institutional change takes a further step in explaining the intricate interplay between the agency incarnated in power resources/coalitions and structured path dependency.

The bulk of Thelen's book focuses on the comparison of the United States, Germany and Denmark across three comparative dimensions: Industrial relations, Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Labor market policy. All three institutions carry great importance for VofC analysis, even though a number of others could be added to this list. The choice of the surveyed institutions reflects numerous elements of Thelen's previous works in all three fields. To recount but a few, Thelen (2001) was a chapter in the original Hall and Soskice (2001) *Varieties of Capitalism* volume and dealt with varieties of labor policies, while Thelen (2004) was a volume dealing with the evolution of training systems. Also, the contribution to the better understanding of the problem of institutional change should be read in the rich context of her work with Wolfgang Streeck (Streeck and Thelen 2005), Peter Hall (Hall and Thelen 2009) and James Mahoney (Mahoney and Thelen 2009). In particular, Streeck and Thelen (2005) defined five modes of institutional change: *displacement*, *layering*, *drift*, *conversion*, and *exhaustion*. Several years later Thelen and Mahoney (2009) explored a more actor based approach building on these modes, but omitting *exhaustion*. Now, we are confronted with an analysis of only *displacement*, *drift* and *conversion* as relevant modes of institutional change through liberalization.

Specifically, *displacement* is a model of institutional change in which new institutions form and replace the old ones. In the context of liberalization trajectories, Thelen considers it a typical process conveying pure

deregulation - a direct attack on the existing institutional arrangements, largely characteristic of US liberalization. The US always lacked strong coordinating capacities in industrial relations, but the trajectory of liberalization in recent decades saw a collapse of existing unions and collective bargaining and an erosion of real values of statutory minimum wages and benefits. Other institutional domains seem to carry traits of risk individualization and recent developments in education are focused on increasing the college enrollment, but without care for their successful completion. The education system therefore goes a long way in preserving the socio-economic *status quo* and similarly, the diminutive active labor measures are limited to a short term perspective and aimed at securing any form of jobs.

Drift occurs when the existing institutions remain stable, but exogenous events change their context and outcomes. It is applied here as a description of dualization processes typical for Germany – a tendency to continue with the protection of insiders, coupled with a disregard for new social risks on the periphery. While German industrial relations appear to remain typical of a CME invested in high skills, a strong social partnership in the manufacturing core of the economy with high unionization rates conceals low union coverage for the emergent service sector. Changes in the education system complement these developments. The high quality apprenticeship model is today challenged by the growth of the service sector (not based on specific skills required in manufacturing) and a drop in the available apprenticeship slots. Regardless of the continued need for institutional reform to remedy this, traditional institutions were generally defended, resulting in poor distributive effects with the winners and losers distinguished early in their careers. Germany also witnessed a substantial growth of the low-wage sector (after Haartz reforms 2002-2005) with substantial deregulation of agency work, fixed-term and mini jobs even as the well protected blue collar core was preserved.

Finally, *conversion* describes institutional changes which redirect institutions toward new functions. The produced *conversion* embedded flexibilization typical of Denmark, with institutions reoriented in order to collectivize risks in accordance with shifting social coalitions. While the German pattern of liberalization involved the perennial defense of traditional institutions, Denmark experienced the opposite. In industrial relations the formal

institutions underwent a consistent decentralization but high levels of bargaining coverage/unionization were maintained across sectors and skill groups. The VET system now favors general skills more akin to the LME systems but the risk in education is nevertheless collectivized with the help of massive education subsidies and with unemployment training integrated in a comprehensive education/training system. While the dualization of labor presents a problem, generous social support, and training spending helped to preserve low rates of unemployment and a low share of low-wage jobs.

This analysis leads Thelen to conclude that the survival of egalitarian capitalism is entirely possible with the prerequisites of coordinated employers, coordinated labor and state support. These three points are far from obvious in social sciences today, even though they would have passed for common sense not long ago. Most importantly, the preservation of institutionalized solidarity depends on the ability of power alliances and institutional solutions to shift in order to accommodate new groups and exogenous events. Such an approach to liberalization is both desirable and plausible.

It is important to bear in mind what this book is not. It is not a primer on *Varieties of Capitalism* and students seeking an introduction should still reach for the original volume (Hall and Soskice 2001). It is also not a complete VofC study of the political economies of the analyzed countries. In the very least, a look into the corporate finance systems would be necessary to round the institutional picture. Therefore, it should primarily be read either by those already familiar with VofC or those interested in institutional change. They should find it a rewarding contribution to either field. While it does rush through the basics, and clearly limits the scope of analysis, Thelen's book more than compensates by completely rephrasing some of the most important questions social sciences face today. Thelen successfully applies the theory of institutional dynamics to an approach to comparative political economy which has up to now lent itself mostly to comparative statics.

In short, this is an important contribution to the institutional change literature and one of the most important *Varieties of Capitalism* related books since 2001. The work is timely, as it provides a useful reminder that

uniform pressures do not necessitate uniform solutions. This lesson should be appreciated in particular on the periphery of the European Union, where perpetual reforms increasingly become an integral part of the political culture.

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Torild Skard

Women of Power- Half a century of female presidents and prime ministers worldwide

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Women of Power starts with a story about Torild Skard, the book's author. What made Skard embark on such an ambitious project as to collect case studies on 73 female presidents and prime ministers from 53 different countries, is the fact that she is a *woman of power* herself. With her grandmother and mother as role models, Skard is a third-generation feminist in her family. Moreover, Skard was an MP, the first female president of the Norwegian Upper House, the director for the Status of Women in UNESCO, the regional director of UNICEF West and Central Africa and the general director in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This impressive international and political career gives Skard the legitimacy to write about her female colleagues who often struggled to reach top leadership positions.

Skard uses a unique pattern to describe in detail the development of the feminist breakthrough and show that female subordination is not a necessary condition of human societies, but rather a cultural product that can be subject to change with a certain amount of political will. Each story starts with the family and educational background on an emerging female leader. After that, the historico-political context and the party structure of a specific country are provided. Skard is particularly interested in the introduction of quotas, if and what position women held in government cabinets as well as to what extent the countries carried out the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The focus is placed on the rise and the fall of women who became presidents and prime ministers from 1960-2010. Each story is finalized by listing the achievements of the leaders in improving the status of women, describing how much they were *feminists* and if so, how they made a difference.

The first chapter starts with a description of first female leaders who came to

power in various parts of the world between 1960-75. The most interesting stories are those of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the first female prime minister (PM) in the world from Ceylon (later Sri Lanka) who ruled for more than 17 years and Indira Gandhi, the PM of India who was in power for 15 years. What these two women had in common was that neither of them, initially, wanted to rise to the top of society. Bandaranaike was requested to take over after her husband, and Gandhi after her father. On the contrary, Golda Meir, the PM of Israel for more than 5 years, reached the top on her own merits. However, Skard points out that all three of them were criticized because they did not do more for women and did not declare themselves as feminists.

While the second chapter deals with the analysis of trends which affect the under-representation of women, the third chapter brings interesting stories of several Western rulers, *inter alia*, those of Margaret Thatcher and Gro Harlem Brundtland. When Thatcher became PM, it was because of her hard work, not because of her gender. Skard and other feminists resent her for surrounding herself with male politicians only and wanted to prove she can do as well, or better than men. Thatcher underlined several times that she sees no difference between male and female styles of governance. However, there was definitely a difference in governing between Thatcher and Gro. Gro was the youngest prime minister in Norwegian history and became an active advocate for gender equality. In total, she appointed 20 women to her cabinet, which was therefore called „the female cabinet“.

The fourth and fifth chapters cover the female leaders from South and East Asia. Particularly impressive is the story about Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's second democratically elected civilian leader. She was not only elected as PM twice, but was also an undisputed leader of one of Pakistan's two largest parties. Despite numerous threats from fundamentalists who claimed she could not serve as PM according to Muslim law, Bhutto did a lot for Muslim women. Among other things, she established a Ministry of Women's Development and created a female police force. Cory Aquino, on the other hand, was not well prepared for her role as the president of the Philippines. She was invited by party members to continue the work of her deceased husband. When she accepted to run for president, Aquino was quickly given the name „Mother of Democracy“ and stayed

in power for six years. Skard's conclusion referring to Asian female leaders is that they were often only men's substitutes.

Violeta Chamorro, Nicaragua's and Latin America's first elected female president, Michelle Bachelet, current president of Chile and Christina Fernandez de Kirchner, current president of Argentina are in the focus of Skard's sixth chapter. Among them, Bachelet stands out. Not only was she the first female president in Latin America elected on her own merits, without influential family ties, but she was also actively improving the status of women in many areas. The case of Eugenia Charles is similar as the first elected head of government in Dominica who ruled for 15 years and has left a lasting impact among the countries in the Caribbean. Both Bachelet and Charles embody women friendly policy, which Skard voices through her entire book. The seventh chapter, devoted to Caribbean female leaders, is remarkable because it shows that all female leaders managed on their own. None of them rose to the top as widows, daughters or substitute leaders. The case with the leaders of Sub-Saharan Africa, covered in the eighth chapter, was similar. One of the very few who succeeded in doing so was Ellen Sirleaf, the president of Liberia, elected late in 2005.

In the ninth and tenth chapters the stories about Eastern and Western female leaders are presented. Their number in the Eastern bloc was smaller than in Western countries. This can be explained by the fact that while Communist Parties were in power, no women gained top political leadership, apart from Milka Planinc, who came into power at the end of the communist rule in Yugoslavia under special circumstances. However, women started to succeed after 1982, during democratisation processes or the transition between regimes. One of them was Vaira Vike-Freiberg. With her election as the president of Latvia, the post-Soviet period was over. Even though she lacked political experience, the fact that she had nothing to do with the Communist Party was enough. It was praiseworthy that during her rule the number of women in parliament and cabinet increased. It was undoubtedly easier for women to become presidents or PMs in Western countries. From 1960-2010, there were 23 women at the top in 15 countries. On the one hand, they were often discriminated against and harassed. For instance, Edith Cresson, the former minister of agriculture in France, was at the time not allowed to participate in breakfast meetings

with the PM. On the other hand, some of them became national leaders of great importance and respect, such as Angela Merkel. Additionally, thanks to her, Germany became an international defender of women's rights.

The eleventh and twelfth chapters present the conclusion of Skard's book. While the eleventh chapter is the summary of all regional chapters, the twelfth consists of trend analysis and recommendations on how to introduce women-friendly policies to improve the status of women. If trends continue at this rate, it will take 200 years to get to a 50/50 representation ratio. Therefore, introducing quotas is of great importance, and Nordic countries are the absolute pioneers with seven female national leaders. To successfully implement quotas, institutional changes are crucial and have to be based on changes in political culture and political parties. In her final statement Skard points out again how fundamental female contribution is for the further development of democracy and the preservation of peace.

The book "Women of Power: Half a century of female presidents and prime ministers" represents an excellent academic source for both students of gender studies and international relations. It is also an interesting read for those either considering or analyzing careers of female politicians. Skard provides a lot of information on each of the 73 female leaders, bringing a reader closer to these complex personalities. One possible obstacle to an eager reader may be the book's length of 500 pages which could prove exhausting for some. However, it is worth noting that each chapter can be read separately. Skard made a genuine effort in writing this book – gathering information so consistently, without missing a single detail, is truly impressive and admirable.

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