Research Issues in International Relations and Regional Politics

Laura Herta, Ana Pantea
(eds.)

Presa Universitară Clujeană

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INTRODUCTION: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AREA STUDIES, AND REGIONAL POLITICS

Laura Herța* and Ana Pantea**

The present volume intends to bring together several research endeavors undertaken by students of the Faculty of European Studies, under the coordination of professors Ana Pantea and Laura Herța. Topically and methodologically, the chapters included here are meant to reveal the interplay of sub- fields such as International Relations, Comparative Politics, Area Studies, and Regional Politics.

The evolution of all the aforementioned sub-fields entails opposing views within the academia (with respect to clear-cut disciplines or new disciplinary boundaries) and cross-cutting approaches or theoretical claims. Also, the historical trajectory is indicative for transformations reflected by the ways in which the study of international politics changed from the inter-war period to the Cold War period and the post-Cold War one.

The academic discipline of *International Relations* was formed in 1919 when the Department of International Politics was created in Aberystwyth; the initial scientific goal was to design means in order to prevent war and this is precisely why David Davis (Welsh industrialist) set it up. The inter-war period reflected the theoretical "confrontation" between idealism (as precursor to liberal international relations theory) and realism and the main focus was on states, international institutions and attempts to create peace and collective security. The study of international relations was endorsed in most textbooks because the field of IR "seeks to understand the way in which peoples' fundamental values (relating to security, freedom, order, justice and well-being) are respected or not"[1] or because "none of us is isolated from the impact of world politics."[2] However, the post-Cold War period witnessed new approaches tackling the

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[1] Robert Jackson, Georg Sorenson, *Introduction to International Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[2] John T. Rourke, *International Politics on the World Stage*, Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1986.

"globalization of world politics"[3] and concepts such as global threats, non-traditional conceptions of security; methodologically and theoretically, post-structuralist and social-constructivist theorizations revisited the so-called core (military and state-centering) issues in global politics.

The trajectory of area studies in relation to the discipline of political science has been explored by scholars, based on the starting point that "within the framework of the humanities, the significance of 'area studies' is largely unproblematic" but "the status of area studies within the social sciences, by contrast, has grown more tenuous over the past quarter century."[4] Globalization spurred ideas regarding new conceptualizations of uniformity and diminished differences between various regions in world politics. However, as noted by Basedau and Köllner, "in order to understand the mutually constitutive relationship between the global and the local, their interaction has to be studied"; consequently, far from dissipating the role of regional politics, after the Cold War period, "the need for area-based knowledge" is in fact increased.[5]

To assess the world today as is inter- and even over-connected at every level might seem like a cliché. The definition Marshall McLuhan gives to current society and implicitly to the phenomenon of globalization, namely that of the 'global village', helps us better to understand the possible implications of connectedness at the global level. Just as in a literal village, everything that happens there sooner or later affects all the citizens of the community, so also even the things that happen far away from us from the point of view of geography nevertheless affect us more than we might initially believe.

In the present volume are assembled a number of very interesting and relevant texts dealing with 'area-specific' or 'regional' studies, as these are variously called. The themes are diverse, the approaches differing from the particular to the general, this in turn challenging us, and especially but not only those readers of us who are immediately concerned with the topics at hand, to familiarize ourselves with serious studies which might not have had to do with the immediate interests of a research limited from the point of view of space and time.

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[3] John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, 7th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

[4] Rudra Sil, "The Survival and Adaptation of Area Studies", forthcoming in D. Berg-Schlosser, B. Badie and L. Morlino (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Political Science*, 2019.

[5] Matthias Basedau; Patrick Köllner, "Area Studies, Comparative Area Studies, and the Study of Politics: Context, Substance, and Methodological Challenges", *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, March 2007, pp. 105-124.

One of the most relevant subjects touched upon in the present volume is that of the problem of the environment in Romania. When it comes to the matter of environment and pollution in Romania, one realizes that there exist certain urgent problems: from the erosion and degradation of the soil, or the polluting of the water and air, to the contamination of protected zones such as the Danube delta. The work also addresses the problem of the generation of waste in Romania, which includes the impact of pollution upon the environment as also upon human health, as well as a reflection on the inefficiency of the recycling system.

Another relevant and interesting topic we address is connected to the refugee crisis and of the responses which have been given to it. It is already known that the European Union has for some time been confronted with a refugee crisis and that the borders of the EU have, in recent years, even undergone assault. Protests, exclusivist approaches, walls built, and other attitudes have necessitated that positions be taken on the part of significant political actors. Some attempts to resolve the situation with the refugees are analyzed in the present work, although the emphasis of this study falls principally on the analysis of the official response of the representatives of the European Union in the face of the refugee crisis. This response is compared with the response given by the representatives of the Visegrád group. Such analyses are welcome and desirable. They make it possible to understand the issue from multiple points of view and only then to adopt a certain position vis-à-vis the phenomenon in question.

The study on the opening up of Romania to the Western world from the time of communism is an interesting study from the point of view of the understanding and evolution of a region at a point in time as a function of its openness towards certain spheres of influence belonging to a state. Proceeding on the basis of the postulates of social constructivism, this study constructs an identity based on three of the four methodological landmarks developed by Ringmar, its purpose being that of explaining this behavior on the basis of the Romanian politics of that time, in the midst of a soviet empire.

The fourth chapter in this volume answers an important question pertaining to the new EU perspectives for an integrated response to the energy security problem in the wider Black Sea region. The author presents the recent EU perspectives regarding the improvement of energy infrastructure security in the wider Black Sea region, following European strategic initiatives such as the Eastern Partnership or the energy union.

Our volume continues with a new analysis of educational tourism. Through this study, the author proposes an understanding of this phenomenon through the lens of development brought about by migration. The Erasmus Mobility program represents a principal student movement which contributes greatly to the development of the economy of Europe. This study presents a demographic profile of Erasmus+ students from Cluj-Napoca, as well as a quantification of the impact had by these Erasmus students upon the economy and upon tourism. As a result, this study presents a model for the analyzing of the direct economic impact of educational tourism on the city of Cluj-Napoca. Educational tourism represents a sector capable of promoting economic acceleration and development at the social, cultural, and educational levels.

The difference in the way we perceive reality — so say many social analysts — is accounted for by the extent to which we are involved in it. *Pata Rât* Cluj is the principal landfill in Cluj-Napoca — the so-called "garbage hole" of the city. The people who live there live in very difficult conditions, having the possibility, as a result of living in an area of waste, of making a small income through sorting work. There are also multiple organizations and volunteer groups which go to Pata Rât in order to assist the people who live there, attempting to contribute to the improvement of their situation by offering programs and educational activities for their children (the majority of the inhabitants being Roma). The author of this work tries to describe the perception of some of the volunteers who work at Pata Rât, which seems to be entirely other.

In recent times, on the international level, there has been an increasing number of policies which concern the handling and managing of the phenomenon of migration, but there is far too little information available about the way in which the intended targets of these policies react to their endeavors. The persons at whom these policies are aimed are to a great extent ignored in the discussions and public debates which take place about the approach to be taken toward handling migration and especially illegal migration. In this sense, the study about participatory action is especially appropriate for the inclusion of such individuals in the practice of research, as well as for offering alternative modalities of knowledge and approaches to the inequalities of power which might emerge from this.

The problem of Islamic fundamentalism continues to be a constant challenge at the global level. The present study proposes an analysis of the power of discourse in the recruiting work of terrorist organizations. More specifically, the principal goal of the work is that of analyzing the original texts and teachings of the Quran and of contrasting them with the contemporary actions of the terrorist organization named the Islamic State. Proceeding on the basis of the original texts and of the recorded political and religious discourses of Muslim leaders, one can see to what extent it is a matter of Jihad, or of a lack of adaptation, or even of political discourse.

Another study which naturally belonged in a volume like this one has to do with the foreign policy of China — in the present case, panda diplomacy. The purpose of this study is to analyze in depth the practice of panda diplomacy. Panda Diplomacy has recently seen an unprecedented dynamism, transforming itself into a magnet attracting millions of people throughout the globe, at the same time receiving favorable treatment on the part of the decisive factors in Chinese politics. The subject matter discussed in this article is particularly important for the reason that it can be integrated in a greater perspective on public diplomacy. This has proved to be an "impulse" that has led to the peaceful ascension of China as a major emerging power in the network of international powers. The question raised by the author remains: Why has Romania not received a panda from China?

The subsequent chapter examines the three different U.S. Presidential administrations of the current century on their policy and actions on the extremely complicated Iran file. Going in chronological order, from George W. Bush and his tumultuous presidency, to Obama and his more diplomacy-oriented approach and finally arriving in the present at Donald Trump and his unique and personal way of conducting foreign policy. The theme of missed opportunities – opportunities for a better relation, for peace and stability in the region – appears on and on as the two countries, irrelevant of the administration sitting in Tehran or Washington, seem to be unable to meet in the middle and solve their problems at the negotiations table.

Finding ourselves at the threshold of the American presidential elections, we also present two texts having do with the external actions of the US. In the first of these texts (titled *Democracy, Conflict and Peace: from theory to action. Case study: the Iraq War*), the authors put forth a laborious analysis of the premises on which the 2003 Iraq War were based. In the second part of the study, they present the attitudes and actions of the agents involved in it, as well as other matters which relate to these. The problem of the legitimacy of the American attack on Iraq on the basis of accusations and terrorist actions remain disputable to the present day because of the presence of oil resources in that area.

The other of the two studies mentioned here (titled *Counterterrorism in the Age of Obama and Trump: a comparative analysis of the main strategies employed*) analyses counterterrorism strategies of Obama and Trump administration. The paper captures the sequences of establishing the parameters of the war on terror and pursuing the counterterrorism strategies, starting with the Bush administration, followed by the two administrations. This article entails a comparative analysis between the approaches to WOT of the administration of Barack Obama, followed by that of President Donald Trump during his first two years of presidency and will include an outline of consequential military operations and discuss elements of change and emerging patterns.

One very dense study included in the present volume presents an increasingly relevant and challenging subject for the domain of international relations and regional studies, namely research originating from and dealing with the African continent — in the present case, Zimbabwe. After a unilateral declaration of Independence, Zimbabwe isolated itself economically and politically, finding itself necessitated to diversify its network of commercial partners, in an attempt to compensate in this way for sanctions imposed from without as well as for a shortage of internal investments. Thus there was developed a commercial partnership with South Africa, one with real implications for the political and economic future of the state of Zimbabwe. The present article analyzes the way in which South Africa influenced, over the course of more than a decade, beginning with the Nelson Mandela era, the economic trajectory of Zimbabwe, as well as (implicitly) the processes having to do with democracy and democratic consolidation.

Another chapter, dealing with a very salient topic, focuses on the South China Sea, which had become the stage for a number of worrying developments. Specifically, it has seen an increased military presence from China and the USA and has been the location of a number of standoffs between military and civilian vessels. With the help of the realist school of thought, this paper analyzes the interests of the involved actors, in order to understand why these events occurred in the first place, and will then attempt to predict what the future of the region holds.

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ROMANIA´S INCONSPICUOUS 'WASTE CRISIS' AND THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

Marcus Wiesen

Aims and Background: A short drawing Overview

For a considerable time the "Refugee Crisis", trending right-minded population or "Syrian War" adorn the headlines of the news. So environmental topics dropped out of focus after the COP 21 (Climate Change Conference of the United Nations). This includes the waste management which highly correlates with ecological and social questions in globalized times. No nation has the opportunity to escape from waste disposal. Modern industry generates tons of hazardous waste from chemical, heavy metal and nuclear industry on a daily basis. The costs for the disposal are extensive. In the case of Romania mining and heavy metal industries are a central polluter (e.g. Iaz decantare valea șesii) but made a decrease after the transformation.[6] However the focus of this present work lies on municipal waste because it brings many problems along in rural areas (waste collection; waste burning; discard in nature).[7] Environmental impacts and human health are significant connected to that. Especially following generations have to handle with the bigger overall damage and increasing costs referring to incorrect waste disposal.

The following paper has the aim to present the connection between economical, ecological and social fields and reflecting the inefficient way of the removal of waste on the basis of environmental justice. Central questions are: How much waste is generated? Which risks occur from (incorrect) waste disposal? Is the physical area more polluted if the circumstances of life are precarious? The existence of local infrastructure and enforcement mechanisms should be evaluated in regards to the proper management practices facing involved emissions and effluents. It is demonstrated that there are opportunities for the sector which would be beneficial for the local population. In addition to that the European Union (EU) will have a positive influence in decision-making. At the end solutions will be illustrated.

[6] See Nordbeck 2013.

[7] See European Environment Agency 2013, p. 4.

Inequality – a connection between Ecology, Economy and Sociology

First of all the theoretical background should give an overview about the problematic case. A significant impact of waste manifests in the change of the landscape, air pollution caused by wind blown suspensions, surface water becomes rich in nitrates and other dangerous substances and at least soil which infertile and lead to inability of supporting life.[8] These reasons can lead to social inequality. But what does it mean? The science of social inequality describes the social structure in a given society that affects a group's social status, social class, and social circle. The physical chance of survival is given up to more than a half by geographical nursery because the circumstance for the birth is a coincidence and not made by performance. The social inequality mirrors itself in a 'world society', which is divided in national borders. [9] Inside those bounded places there are different laws, governments and values valid. Therefore ecological questions should be discussed across borders. Consider to the future perspective of coming generations it is important not to deteriorate their chances of survival. In times of globalization sustainable thinking and negotiation need a high priority regarding to economical, ecological and social decision-making criteria.[10] The research approach of *environmental justice* focuses on core ideas within different population structures. The variation of residential areas tries to make a connection to environmental pollution as well as resource access. The interface of environmental, social and health policy is related to the limited access of persons with disadvantaged positions.[11] The movement was formed in the US during the 1980s due to the construction of waste dumps, incinerators and similar kinds of industrial factories that were built next to the neighborhood of ethnic minorities. The main focus of the demonstration was the fear of negative effects on the residents. In Europe the issue of environmental justice became more attention to the new millennium. Scientific studies have thereby provided the impulse to show the interaction of residential areas of underprivileged population and the increased concentration of pollution.[12] It is obvious that less ecological friendly companies are located in poorer regions because of less expected political resistance. Another assumption can be made by cheap property prices. Selective migration of socially weak groups in polluted areas makes sense regarding to the lower level of rental rates. The approach can be

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[8] See Rizea 2012.

[9] See Kreckel 2008, p. 26.

[10] See Zabel 2001, p. 95.

[11] See Preisendörfer 2014.

[12] See ibid, p. 27.

extended to pollution and its consequences including social problems. This manifests itself in deprivation, poverty, discrimination and health problems. Prosperity interests and sustainability goals are in direct conflict with economic interests. In this context questions arise as: "Does socially disadvantaged cause more pollution in deprived areas? What are the consequences of economical, political, social, psychological and health point of view? Are there any solutions?" Further chapters will bring light into the darkness.

Environmental Background since Romania´s Transformation Process

Considering to the transformation of crisis shaped Romanian politics, environmental issues get somehow neglected. The changing is achieved in small increments and not in abrupt strokes as you can see missed recycling rates. The approaches of European Union and Romanian government differ. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 were the economy and infrastructure in a bad condition without intensive protection of the environment and 14 primary areas of massive pollution (Baia Mare, Copșa Mică, Zlatna, Ploiești, Petești).[13] Weak and changing government coalitions in the following years led to inconsistent political and economic reforms.[14] Raw industrial sewage was dumped in rivers, which were strongly burdened with polluted materials.[15] The rivers transported this water to the Danube and at least into the Black Sea. Standards for dumping were low and the waste management of hazardous waste totally inefficient. More than 10 percent of the landscape was highly polluted and at least 4 million citizens were directly affected.[16] That implies a higher risk for the health.

In times of changing and participation in the European Union, the situation changed. Air pollution decreased by 20-40 percent in the time from 1989 to 1997.[17] But still the energy sector caused a high emission due to the energy intensive industry of Romania, which had a lack of investments.[18] Another reason of highly polluted air is the traffic. The increase from 1990 to 1998 by the double amount to at leas 2,8 million cars and in addition to that the age of those vehicles led to a combined emission of 13 percent of the whole amount.[19] Also the burning of garbage for the reduction of the mass of waste was a big polluter.

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[13] See World Bank 1992, p. 1.
[14] See Freedom House 2001, p. 299.
[15] See Nordbeck 2013.
[16] See Nordbeck 2013, p. 328.
[17] See UNECE 2001, p. 71.
[18] See Krüger; Carius 2001, p. 11.
[19] See Nordbeck 2013, p. 329.

Much carbon monoxide and toxic organic material have been set free. Beside air pollution, the groundwater was loaded with heavy metals, nitrates, ammoniac and other toxic substances.[20] Until 1999 only 18 % of the commercial and industrial sewage was cleaned and over 50 % without any cleaning practice. Nevertheless the situation changed in a positive direction, but mainly caused by the shutdown of factories. Deficits in Romanian waste management can be resumed by low dumping prices, a lack of private investments, missing awareness plus insufficient definitions in the waste law.[21]

Municipal Waste Management in Romania

Besides the historical changing of industrial infrastructure in Romania, the municipal waste stayed on a continuous amount. Uncontrolled accumulated waste tends to create major problems.[22] Hence the municipal waste management has to solve it. The first National Waste Management Strategy was developed in 2003 after efforts of the European legislation.[23] Still there are communities in the country which are without access to waste collection. Differences in the regional recycling levels pose a wide-ranged problem. Especially in rural areas the collection in 2009 only adds up to 38 %.[24] According to EU Landfill Directive Romania has to reduce the municipal waste disposal on dumping sides until 2020.[25] Yet, the insufficient transport capacities and technological level bring Romania still to a low 3 % recycling rate in 2013.[26] According to Eurostat Romania use 97 % for landfilling that includes the „depositing of waste into or onto land, including specially engineered landfill and temporary storage of over one year". [27] Keeping in mind that Romania does not have a landfill tax[28], practicing landfilling seems to be cheaper than recycling methods.

Case of the waste dump in Cluj-Napoca

As mentioned, landfilling may have negative impacts on the surrounding environment. Therefore the municipal landfill of Cluj-Napoca

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[20] See Krüger; Carius 2001, p. 15.
[21] See ibid, p. 19.
[22] See Scortar; Lazar; Zagan Zelter 2009, p. 29.
[23] See European Environment Agency 2013, p. 4.
[24] See ibid, p. 4.
[25] See ibid, p. 7.
[26] See Scortar; Lazar; Zagan Zelter 2009, p. 34; Eurostat 2015.
[27] See Eurostat 2015.
[28] See European Environment Agency 2013, p. 10.

represents itself as a good example because one third of the annual collected waste belongs to household and street waste.[29] 1.5 km away from the city of Cluj, right next to Pata Rât commune and Zăpodie stream, the dump is located. The stream is a tributary of the Someșul Mic River. Here the toxicity effects are represented in form of water and soil pollution caused by poor landfill operation and poor geo-physical stability.[30] Most measures (water conductivity, Ca, Mg, Na, sulfates) rank above the official law limitation. High Mg value is responsible for the black-brown color of the stream water.[31] The pollution influences mainly plants and the society too. In Pata Rât lives a poor community, mostly Roma, outside from society.[32] But the paradox clue is that they make efforts in recycling because of the appeal of getting small money from reycling (plastics,metal). The integration of those people is very difficult. They are running out of healthcare because you need an insurance.[33] The area was used in Soviet times for toxic waste disposal. Air is still polluted by gas.[34] Living conditions are bad in the life of exclusion. That´s why Romania is also citicised for the treatment of human rights.[35] Here the circumstances of environmental injustice are present (poor region; higher pollution; lower healthcare).

Foreign Affairs Connection

Romania started the first governmental environment protection with a *National Environment Action Program (NEAP)* and an *Environment Protection Strategy (EPS)* in the 1990s. Both documents contain the protection of environment and an improvement of the quality of the surrounding area. To make the linkage to foreign affairs and international relations, the Danish Environment Protection Agency give a helping hand in making progress of those plans. But this paper keeps more importance on the international interactions. That´s why these two strategy paper fade from the spotlight. This chapter has more the aim to be based on the ground of the legislation of the European Union in order to the topic of waste stream.

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[29] See Lengyel; Reti; Roșu; Mancuila 2013, p. 338.
[30] See ibid.
[31] See ibid, p. 343.
[32] See Rizea 2012.
[33] See Ramsay 2016.
[34] See ibid.
[35] See Ramsay 2016.

European Union Linkage

The downside of the consumption intensive industrialized wealth holds many dangers which are associated with the production of waste. The EU realized the problem and set next to economic interests the ideas of environmental protection. Looking forward to save a significant amount of potential secondary raw materials from waste streams, national policy contributes together with EU legislative in form of adopting proposals on waste management. This encourages Europe's transition towards a circular economy for reaching a higher global competitiveness.[36] So the EU provides frameworks like the Directive 2008/98/EC that include following long-term sustainable idea of waste hierarchy: (a) prevention; (b) preparing for re-use; (c) recycling; (d) other recovery and (e) disposal.[37] The aim of this strategy is the decoupling of material flows and waste generation from economic growth (`Circular economy') and reuse waste as an input for other production processes. Additional the EU could improve her independence on resources from foreign countries. In order to limit the burden on the environment in terms of waste to a minimum, controlled regulatory mechanisms have been installed, for example annual reports about the progress of Agenda 2020 implementation or data harmonization in Eurostat, the statistical headquarter of the EU.

Impact of European Union on Romanian Waste Management

The EU has put Romanian waste management under regulative influence of European Directives since 2007.[38] In order to comply the requirements of the EU, Romania has to reach certain achievements where serious efforts have to be made. As mentioned in the previous chapters, Romania needs to make more progress in recycling and lowering the landfill rates. In comparison with other EU states, the quantity of generated waste per person in Romania (272 kg) is situated under the EU average (481 kg).[39] Ironically Romania takes the last spot in doing recycling. Developing investment projects access European funds for improving environment quality in Romania.[40] The European Bank for Reconstructing and Development in the Green Group gives an example for the

[36] See European Commission 2015.
[37] See Karagiannidis 2012, p. 50; Scortar; Lazar; Zagan Zelter 2009.
[38] See European Environment Agency 2013, p. 12.
[39] See Eurostat 2015.
[40] See Scortar; Lazar; Zagan Zelter 2009, p. 32.

support with a total of EUR 6.8 million as well as the Global Finance´s South East Europe Fund.[41]

Premise of solution building

Waste generation can be seen as an illustration for society correlations. A higher income level directs to more consumption of resources.[42] Although more waste will be generated. These patterns and schemata of consuming are of particular importance in such areas of life that are, like International Relations, not immediately subject to our everyday practical knowledge. Thus, to create a preunderstanding for this problem, the key to understand is at first to awaken responsibility and build awareness concerning adequate waste management.[43] Building awareness begins in the childhood with environmental activities. Beside school you can attend to programs like an afforestation participation which is practiced by the Romanian-German NGO "Tăşuleasa Social". It may persuade people to think about their daily practice and behavior. Beside this, following concepts should be fulfilled for doing more progress. Follow the EU roadmaps in order to build up a functional and efficient network for waste management. Higher technical standards for landfilling are recommended as drainage layer, drainage collector network, buffer tank and leachate treatment plant.[44] In order to such implementations financial support is needed which may be found in EU funding programs. For preparing more projects, it is necessary to promote them and implement a better coordination.

But there are still weaknesses to overcome. The quality of data is influenced by the lack of technical conditions for recording waste, registering existing enterprises in the field of waste treatment, limited possibilities for sorting and collection of waste. Citizen´s understanding and willing to recycle is settled on a low level.[45] On a financial level, high costs illustrate a problem in implementation of "clean technologies" as well as the inappropriate use of EU funds.[46] For example incineration is considered to cause overpriced costs for the waste management market in Romania.[47] That´s why this opportunity is less discussed whereas it is a daily practice in other member states of the EU.

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[41] See European Environment Agency 2013, p. 13.
[42] See Scortar; Lazar; Zagan Zelter 2009, p. 31.
[43] See ibid 2009, p. 32.
[44] See Lengyel; Reti; Roșu; Mancuila 2013, p. 344.
[45] See Scortar; Lazar; Zagan Zelter 2009, p. 30.
[46] See ibid 2009, p. 32.
[47] See European Environment Agency 2013, p. 13.

Conclusion

Waste generation is a result of human activities, causing serious problems like environmental pollution and social inequality. A long-term investment is needed to obtain a more favorable result. Partnerships with local authorities, transportation companies and specialized recycling firms can raise the economy. With the influence of the European Commission, in the whole EU could be created more than 170,000 direct jobs in the waste-working field by 2035.[48] Converting EU directions will for example increase the recycling rates but Romania will not fulfill this target if they don´t force a progress. It´s highly required because existing storing places are often placed in sensitive areas.[49] To reach the goals the EU has a complex monitoring system where every member state delivers annual development reports. On the one hand corresponding ecological effects will gain in a positive direction. For a flawless performance, an active involvement of citizens is required. But ongoing problems can be seen in the impressive increase of one-use packaging for daily consumption products.[50]The lack of interest has to be reduced by promoting responsibility in usage of daily products and waste generation. If you look at least to historically polluted sites as a consequence of former industrial activities, there is a need of decades for the process of renaturation. To prevent those consequences in the field of waste, an ambitious transformation in an ecological and social friendly direction is needed.

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[48] See European Commission 2015.

[49] See Scortar; Lazar; Zagan Zelter 2009, p. 34.

[50] See ibid, p. 34.

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THE VISEGRAD GROUP'S RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Delia Ioana Chilom

Introduction

The European Union has seen several challenges arise in the past years, one of the most important being the refugee crisis which has divided the opinions of European citizens and decision makers, giving way to feelings of fear and uncertainty of Europeans as well as of refugees.

The European Union has seen more than a million refugees cross its borders, with 1,321,560 claiming asylum[1] in 2015, and this has made the issue an important one, a main focus for the leaders of the Union. There was no miracle solution, no universal remedy to solve all the problems raised by the crisis, but instead, there have been a plurality of answers. The situation, however, deteriorated as the months passed, as the refugees' living conditions harshened with the coming of winter,[2] and as European citizens' fear of the refugees continued to grow, especially in the light of the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, and in Brussels in March 2016.

This chapter focuses on one aspect of the refugee crisis, namely how the Visegrad group reacted to it. The research question that will structure the chapter is "Is the V4 response to the refugee crisis in line with the EU response?" and the answer will be found by first looking at the background of the crisis, then at the official EU response to it, followed by a look at the Visegrad group's reaction, at the evolution of the EU response and, finally, a personal analysis will be made.

The methods used in this research are qualitative ones, mainly document and observation data, and text and data analysis. The sources are articles on news websites such as BBC, Reuters and Foreign Affairs, information and statements found on the official website of the Visegrad group, visegradgroup.eu, press releases of the European Union, briefing notes by the United Nations Refugee Agency, information from Amnesty International and World Vision.

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[1] BBC staff, *Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts*, 2016 [http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911], 30 March 2016.

[2] World Vision staff, *What you need to know: Crisis in Syria, refugees, and the impact on children*, 2016 [http://www.worldvision.org/news-stories-videos/syria-war-refugee-crisis], 30 March 2016.

Background of the crisis

The European Union saw more than a million refugees cross its shores in 2015, most of them fleeing from the Syrian civil war, but some of them coming from Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Kososvo, Albania, Pakistan, Nigeria, Iran and Ukraine.[3] In 2014, there were 280,000 arrivals both by land and sea, but the number almost tripled in 2015: more than 1,011,700 people arrived by sea and 34,900 by land in Europe.[4] They traveled in "flimsy rubber dinghies or small wooden boats"[5] from Turkey to Greece, almost 4,000 of them perishing in the attempt. The ones that survived claimed asylum, Germany being the country with the most requests, almost 500,000 in 2015, and Hungary being the second on the list with close to 180,000 claims.[6]

Thus the European Union found itself facing a crisis, with many refugees dying in the perilous journey, and with the ones arriving staying in camps throughout their road in Europe, in need of food, shelter, clothing,[7] and wanting to move, to get to their desired destinations of Germany, France, Great Britain, etc.

Official EU response

The EU response, according to the European Commission's website, has been to use the European Agenda for Migration to deal with the crisis, "drawing on the various tools and instruments available at the EU level and in the Member States."[8] ECHO's (European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department) contribution to providing aid, moreover, has been done through helping refugees in transit countries outside of the EU, putting the "EU Civil Protection Mechanism at the disposal of EU Member States and other countries requiring immediate material support to cope with the refugee influx," and finally, being a "leading global donor of humanitarian aid in all the main countries the refugees arrive from."[9]

The previously mentioned European Agenda for Migration deals with sharing the responsibility of migration management between Member States, as well as non-EU countries, providing a "comprehensive approach grounded in

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[3] BBC staff, *loc. cit.*

[4] *Ibidem.*

[5] *Ibidem.*

[6] *Ibidem.*

[7] World Vision staff, *loc. cit.*

[8] europa.eu staff, *Refugee Crisis*, 2016 [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis_en], 1 April 2016.

[9] *Ibidem.*

mutual trust and solidarity among EU Member States and institutions."[10] Its short term priorities are to fund search and rescue operations so as to stop the loss of lives at sea; to safely and legally resettle people to Europe; to strengthen Europol's role in dismantling criminal networks; to capture and dismantle boats; to establish a multi-purpose center in Niger; and to ease the identification, registering and fingerprinting arriving refugees.[11] The medium and long term goals are to look beyond the crisis and help Member States "better manage all aspects of migration," by reducing the incentives for irregular migration, saving lives and securing the external borders, strengthening the common asylum policy, and developing a new policy on legal migration.[12]

Additionally, the European Union announced in September 2015 its plan to resettle 160,000 refugees, distributed among the Member States based on a formula consisting of the country's population, GDP, unemployment rate and average number of asylum applications. Denmark, Ireland and the UK had the right to opt-out, Greece, Hungary and Italy were exempt, and if any of the rest of the Member States refused to participate, they would each pay 0.002% of their GDP to finance the coping of the crisis situation.[13] An agreement, however, was not reached in the relocation plan, the European Council of Ministers managing to adopt a previous proposal involving only 40,000 people. According to the UN Refugee Agency, this was "a single welcome step towards addressing the current refugee situation in Europe, but it is clear that much more is still needed."[14]

What is clear is that the Union wanted to find a solution based on the cooperation of the Member States, on their will to help, and on the choice to aid those in need, instead of shutting the door in their faces. The problem was that not all the countries agreed with the approach and so, the measures taken were not implemented, or challenged. Tensions in the EU kept on rising as many voiced their disapproval of its response to the crisis.

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[10] europa.eu staff, *European Agenda on Migration*, 2015 [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/index_en.htm], 1 April 2016.

[11] *Ibidem*.

[12] *Ibidem*.

[13] Aamna Mohdin, *The EU wants to set "mandatory" quotas to resettle 160,000 refugees, with penalties if countries refuse*, 2015 [http://qz.com/498174/the-eu-wants-to-set-mandatory-quotas-to-resettle-160000-refugees-with-penalties-if-countries-refuse/], 1 April 2016.

[14] Melissa Fleming, *Robust, coherent Europe response to Refugee crisis still urgently needed*, 2015 [http://www.unhcr.org/55f817399.html], 1 April 2015.

The Visegrad group's response

The Visegrad group, consisting of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, was created in 1991 with the purpose of fostering political, economic and cultural cooperation between the participating countries, in the aftermath of the fall of communism. The cooperation persisted even after the countries joined the European Union and the group has continued to rely on their identity as the V4 within the context of the Union.

An extraordinary summit of the group was held in Prague in February 2016 in order to deal with the issue of migration. The summit's conclusions were that the V4 fully supported the measured taken at the EU level, but disagreed with the automatic permanent relocation mechanism. The next possible steps to deal with the crisis were talked about, and seen as being stabilizing the Western Balkans migration route, intensifying communication between the concerned countries, the strengthening of security and the prevention of tensions in the region.[15] Thus, officially, the response of the V4 seemed to be in accordance with the EU's decisions, at least according to the statement put on the group's official website, even if they talked about points of disagreement between their views and the Union's decisions.

A look at Hungary's reaction, however, tells another story. Hungary received the most number of migrants from the four countries in the group. In analyzing its actions in regard to this crisis, one can observe that they fall short of the EU's desired behavior. Its response to the flow of migrants was done "through a series of widely derided political and policy responses."[16] There was a poll on immigration, the "National Consultation," which used "highly manipulative questions that likened job-seeking migrants and asylum seekers to terrorists."[17] According to Foreign Affairs, the state had decided its course of action before the results of the poll were processed and, before the poll even took place, the government had held a billboard campaign with such messages as "If you come to Hungary, you should respect our laws!" "If you come to Hungary, you should respect our culture!" and "If you come to Hungary, you cannot take away our jobs!"[18] The billboards were all in Hungarian, however and, according

[15] Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group, *Joint Statement on Migration*, 2016 [http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2016/joint-statement-on], 1 April 2016.

[16] Peter Kreko; Attila Juhasz, *Scaling the Wall – Hungary's Migration Debate*, 2015 [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/hungary/2015-07-30/scaling-wall], 1 April 2016.

[17] *Ibidem*.

[18] *Ibidem*.

to the same source, "it is hard to imagine that they really aim to target migrants and human smugglers, as the government claims."[19]

Moreover, in an action which brought along criticism from Serbia, Austria, Angela Merkel, Martin Schulz and others, the Hungarian government announced its plans to build a fence along its border with Serbia in order to stop immigrants. The Prime Minister continued by stating that the permanent refugee camps would be closed and replaced with temporary ones, meaning tents outside urban areas. He furthered the idea that inhabitants of the camps were abusing the generosity of the Hungarian state, calling them immigrants, not refugees, and stated that "We don't want more immigrants to come, the ones who are here should go home."[20]

All these acts contradict the EU's response, or its desired course of action, and they point to Hungary's informed choice to step away from the Union's guidelines.

That was not Hungary's only response to the refugee crisis, however, as it used the context of its membership in the V4 group to further its ideas along. The leaders of the other states in the Visegrad group were "also happy to exploit Hungary's immigration debate for their own gain… Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico praised Orban for his courage in building the wall. Poland's Civic Platform, the nation's major ruling party, has campaigned strongly against the quota for redistribution of asylum seekers ahead of this year's elections. The Czech government, too, has rejected mandatory redistribution quotas."[21]

The Visegrad group, moreover, has been unified by anti-migrant sentiments, according to the Economist. The countries, which are "normally a disparate bunch who agree on some subjects but are divided on others" are making the most of the anti-migrant views of their citizens to "implement an illiberal agenda on other fronts too."[22] The government of Poland is very much against any further European allocation deals, Czech politicians reject the quotas and the Prime Minister of Slovakia legally challenged the EU's migration policy, which he called "ritual suicide."[23]

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[19] *Ibidem*.

[20] *Ibidem*.

[21] *Ibidem*.

[22] Editors of the Economist, *Big, bad Visegrad*, 2016 [http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21689629-migration-crisis-has-given-unsettling-new-direction-old-alliance-big-bad-visegrad], 1 April 2016.

[23] *Ibidem*.

Tensions grew with the approach of the March EU summit on the migration crisis. Germany was committed to finding a European approach while the Visegrad group was described as being "on the opposite side of the EU spectrum…refusing to participate in an EU-wide relocation mechanism and proposing to close off the Greek-Macedonian-Bulgarian border."[24]

The Czech Prime Minister's statement in March 2016 further proves this view that the Visegrad group's response is not in line with the EU one: "Austria and Germany are at full capacity (for accepting migrants) and I believe Germany sooner or later will support measures in the western Balkans."[25]

They thus saw their behavior not only as justified, but as a future guide that other EU states should follow if they wanted to ensure the Union's safety. They were convinced they were right and that their opposition to the EU's views was admirable.

Change in the EU response

The EU's response to the crisis has shifted, however, as tensions kept on growing and solutions still needed to be found quickly.

During the EU summit on the migration crisis of March 7, 2016, the Union's heads of state and government talked about their progress in the Joint Action Plan with Turkey, about the need to close the smuggling routes, the importance of NATO activity, and about the irregular flows of migrants along the Western Balkans route having come to an end. They emphasized the need to stand by Greece and aid it in managing the external borders, to provide emergency support to the humanitarian situation developing on the ground, to accelerate relocation, to cooperate with non-EU countries, and, among others, to "assist Greece in ensuring comprehensive, large scale and fast-track returns to Turkey of all irregular migrants not in need of international protection."[26] The summit did not establish new commitments in concern to relocation and resettlement.[27]In other words, the summit was more in line with the V4 reaction through the emphasis on the stem of migrants having been stopped along the

[24] Krzysztof Blusz; Pawel Zerka; Pavol Demes; Michal Vit, *A view from Central Europe*, 2016 [http://visegradinsight.eu/a-view-from-central-europe/], 1 April 2016.

[25] Jan Lopatka; Robert Muller, *Europe must support western Balkans in halting migration: Czech PM*, 2016 [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-czech-pm-idUSKCN0W526M], 1 April 2016.

[26] Press release, *Statement of the EU Heads of State or Government, 07/03/2016*, 2016 [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/07-eu-turkey-meeting-statement/], 1 April 2016.

[27] *Ibidem*.

Western Balkans, and through the focus on helping Greece push out those who did not need to remain. While concerned with the humanitarian aspect of the crisis, the EU delineated the previously discussed points which stepped away from its initial response. Criticisms followed these decisions, especially as the EU-Turkey deal came into effect.

On the 18th of March 2016 there was a meeting between the European Council and Turkey at the end of which there was a reconfirmation of the Joint Action Plan, and the decision that "all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey," and, among others, that "for every Syrian being returned to Turkey from Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU taking into account the UN Vulnerability Criteria."[28]

According to the UNHCR, they are provisions to "stem the large-scale arrival of refugees and migrants to Greece and beyond into Europe"[29] and the Agency stated that the 'hotspots' on the Greek islands where refugees were assisted had become, under these new provisions, detention facilities and as such, the UNHCR would suspend some of their activities at the centers. The measures were further criticized because they were implemented before the safeguards were in place in Greece, and the UN Refugee Agency has stated that "it is not a party to the EU-Turkey deal, nor will we be involved in returns or detention. We will continue to assist Greece authorities to develop an adequate reception capacity."[30] The refugees themselves were made increasingly nervous and uncertain, waiting and hoping for the borders to open.[31]

Amnesty International criticizes the deal further, by saying that "in their desperation to seal their borders, EU leaders have willfully ignored the simplest of facts: Turkey is not a safe country for Syrian refugees…it is a deal that can only be implemented with the hardest of hearts and a blithe disregard for international law."[32] Turkey had returned several thousand refugees to Syria

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[28] Press release of the General Secretariat of the Council, *EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016*, 2016 [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/], 1 April 2016.

[29] Fleming, Melissa, *UNHCR redefines role in Greece as EU-Turkey deal comes into effect*, 2016 [http://www.unhcr.org/56f10d049.html], 1 April 2016.

[30] *Ibidem*.

[31] *Ibidem*.

[32] Press release, *Turkey: illegal mass returns of Syrian refugees expose fatal flaws in EU-Turkey deal*, 2016 [https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2016/04/turkey-illegal-mass-returns-of-syrian-refugees-expose-fatal-flaws-in-eu-turkey-deal/], 1 April 2016.

and, Amnesty International warns that if the deal proceeds, it is a real risk that the people the EU sends back to Turkey will suffer the same fate.[33]

From the criticisms brought to this EU-Turkey deal, one can gather the fact that the deal was made to stop the tide of refugees coming in the EU, while disregarding potential risks for the refugees. The response, therefore, has shifted from the EU's original stance, and is more in line with what the Visegrad group's members have asked for, and that is stopping the tide of people coming in, even if there is a cost.

Answering the question

What can be gathered from all of this? How can the initial question be answered?

The EU's response, at the beginning, was to help all those it could – Member States and refugees alike. The Visegrad group's reaction, in theory, was to praise EU's efforts and to agree with them, but in practice to disregard the Union's decisions and take measures to not only stop the migrants from entering their countries, but to further add flame to the anti-migrant feelings of their citizens. Thus the reaction was dissimilar to that of the official EU one.

On the other hand, the deal with Turkey and the emphasis on aiding Greece in its efforts to send back refugees signal that the EU has distanced itself from its official, initial reaction. This may be due to pressure from Member States not willing to stand by the quota system, or may be because of a resource issue, or might be because of many potential factors. The truth remains, however, that the deal was made with disregard to the potential risks the refugees might be subjected to, and criticisms soon followed.

This latter response of the Union was more in line with the V4 wishes – thus the Visegrad countries' reactions became similar to that of the EU. What can one understand from this, and what are its future implications?

The fact that the EU has changed its answer and has made the deal with Turkey and has put effort into ending the stem of migrants flowing through its borders legitimizes the behavior of the Visegrad group. They were criticized in the beginning but since the shift has taken place, people talk about their actions being right and being justified.

The EU must pay attention to this aspect because, in legitimizing the V4's response, it has shown them that future actions which are against the EU's guidelines may have little repercussions. This might prove to be an incentive for

[33] *Ibidem*.

the group in the coming decades to act in opposition to the EU, to behave as a voting bloc and decide for the region of East-Central Europe, giving the tone for other countries to act accordingly.

The EU reaches its decisions based on cooperation and consultation of all Member States and the danger might be that if the V4 do not agree with what is decided, they might simply disregard it. This is a dangerous line of thinking which will not benefit the Union in the future.

Conclusions

By and large, the refugee crisis the EU is facing is a serious one, with no clear solution as of yet. The Union's initial response was to provide assistance, while the Visegrad group's was to inflame anti-migrant feeling and to close themselves from the people coming in. The EU has now shifted because of its deal with Tukey, one that is highly criticized, and owing to this, has legitimated the response of the V4 group. This might be dangerous in the future, as the group might potentially imitate their behavior in other situations where they do not agree.

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ROMANIA'S OPENNESS TO THE WEST: DECADE 1962-1972

Ioana-Nelia Bercean

Introduction

At the end of the Second World War, Romania was in a tough situation, on its knees, caught in Soviet girths. Romania's status has been the same since 1944 and continuing until 1989, that of a country belonging to an area of soviet influence (occupation, followed by permanent control and undisguised interference). This situation was imposed against the will of Romanian, and was the equivalent of a straightjacket that could not be removed.[1]

Because in 1945 Romania entered into the Soviet sphere of influence, it could not develop any longer the formal foreign policy towards West, considered traditional in interwar period, the Soviet Union imposing in Romania the orientation of its foreign policy, especially towards the East, and strained relations with the Western world at minimum.

In 1947 Romania denounced the Marshall Plan, and in 1949, the Romanian state became a founding member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance – economic organization of communist countries MEAC (CAER) – based in Moscow, and of the Organization of the Warsaw Treaty, created in 1955, the communist military alliance of the satellite states of the Soviet Union, opposed to NATO.

During the Stalinist regime of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Romania has supported Moscow's position in the Yugoslav and Hungarian crisis (1956). Under the leadership of Communist reformer Imre Nagy, the Hungarians tried to end the communist party system and to obtain the withdrawal of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact, which is why Dej unequivocally supported the invasion of Hungary by Nikita Khrushchev. Given the increase of confidence that Moscow manifested towards the leaders of the Romanian Communist Party, in 1958 Dej did obtain the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country.

The Cuban Missile Crisis and the China-Soviet conflict of the 60's, have allowed Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej to take the first steps towards de-Stalinization of the country and to adopt a communist-nationalist line. With the Declaration of April (1964), thru which Romania rejects Valev Plan launched by the USSR, in

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[1] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Zid de pace, turnuri de frăție. Deceniul Deschiderii: 1962-1972*, București: Compania, 2011, p. 11.

which our country's role was to be a supplier of agricultural products, the distance from the Soviet power will increase.

The early years of the Ceausescu regime brought a period of relative relaxation and an increase in distancing policy towards Moscow. It's time for major decisions, such as recognition of the Federal Republic of Germany, Romania becoming the first socialist state with which Germany establishes diplomatic relations (1967). Diplomatic relationships are established with Israel, our country joins the IMF and World Bank, too, also making declarations, repeatedly and consistently, against the arms race, especially nuclear ones.

Romania's refusal to participate in military intervention of Warsaw Pact troops, in Czechoslovakia in (1968), was a significant moment in the country's politics, posting an attitude against Moscow, this statement being appreciated by that epoch politicians.

But independence from the Soviet Union represented in the same time, the strengthening of national-communism, which will evolve gradually and causing the return to Stalinist practices and Romania's diplomatic isolation. In the early 70's, after visits to China and North Korea, the Chinese Cultural Revolution practices and North Korean model of development, will be reflected more strongly in the economic, social and cultural development promoted by the Ceausescu regime. But this is a topic for another discussion, the goal of our work is to present the 1962-1972 period, as one of the opening, seeking the necessary arguments to support this theory by presenting the actors involved in this phenomenon, and the consequences of their actions on external plan.

Our work is mainly based on the writings of Romanian diplomat Mircea Malita – holder of few prestigious positions during communism, to its persecution after 1984 – the last important function being the ambassador to the United States. Malita believes that the most important role in this opening process is not for Dej or Ceausescu to be credited with, but to Ion Gheorghe Maurer, a man from the shadow, which took the initiative of opening to the West, with an aggregate active defense against Soviet interference in the internal affairs of Romania.

As reported by Mircea Malita, "that there was this special stage of Romania's foreign policy, which meant a relief of pressure from the Soviet Union in the camp, if there was any such question the Romanian politics has acquired a physiognomy own and began to be understood as a product of our own reflections is based on a random, like so many things to chance"[2].

[2] Mircea Malița, Dan Dungaciu, *Istoria prin ochii diplomatului. Supraviețuirea prin diplomație, "Deceniul*

This paper work will present Romania's position, facing two of the major international crises of the 60's and 70's, the Cuban missile crisis (1963) and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the desire of openness to the West, by recognizing Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), or joining the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), along with some sequences of Romania's foreign policy during the mentioned decade.

Identity and Nationalism

From the outset, a paper dealing with identity and nationalism used by a communist system, needs to provide at least a minimal explanation with regard to the way in which the idea of identity manifests itself within a country led by an autocratic leadership. Generally, it is a common practice to conceive identity at the individual level (as advocated by sociologists), where it may be characterized as "an individual's theory of oneself"[3]. To have an identity is simply to hold "certain ideas about who one is in a given situation"[4], to have an image of one's individuality and distinctiveness[5].

However, this self-image is not all bound to the individual level. Groups of people or even larger entities can develop a common self-image and thus an identity of their own[6]. Regarding this matter, Kratochwill explains that "identity is obtain with reference to the structure of relations the individual desires, with respect to cherished person and institutions (love objects). In other words, one identifies with those which one loves and cherishes, which are familiar and comfortable"[7], be it a group, a community or even a state. On this context, national identity is already a term taken for granted which includes "all of the spaces and spans, the specific cultural, ethnic, territorial contexts within which collective identities arise"[8]. In this sense, a state may be considered just the

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Deschiderii" (1962-1972) și Crizele lumii globale, București: RAO, 2014, p. 209.

[3] Anu Puusa, Ulla Tolvanen, *Organizational Identity and Trust*, in "Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organizational Studies", Vol. 11, No. 2, 2006, p. 30.

[4] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 170.

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[6] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Burgeois Society*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991, p. 160.

[7] Thomas Kratochwill, 1989, quoted in Rodney Bruce Hall, *National Collective Identity: social constructs and international systems*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 35.

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 24.

"rational bureaucratic, institutional manifestation of societal collective identities"[9].

However, a balance of analysis and narrative is necessary, in order to mitigate the social scientific impulse to generalize, and close attention needs to be paid to few specificities and idiosyncrasies of the Romanian communist leadership from the timeframe of this research.

Theoretical framework

Why the national idea played such a powerful role, both positive and negative (protochronic nationalism), inside the communist regime? The political empowerment of the national idea was unusually well situated to privileged nationalism in the struggle over the new strategies adopted in the 60's, by the communist regime.

The importance of nationalism in shaping political dynamics is apparent because when the communists were able to dominate, authoritarian politics was the result. However, this research will present few variations during the communist rule of the 60's in Romania, variations determined perhaps by a combination between the reaction against the Soviet model and the national identity. A clear pattern was drawn by the Romanian leadership, when criticizing the invasion of Czechoslovakia, pattern that was nothing more than a natural continuation of the foreign policy line drawn by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in the beginning of the sixth decade of the 20th century.

The narrative built around Romanian decision makers behavior, is using the Social Constructivist approach. In its original form, Social Constructivism emphasizes the idea that reality is not only conditional, but also constructed and constituted through social phenomena.[10]

Based on this arguments, Social Constructivism entered into the field of International Relations with the idea that the most important aspects of world politics is social, not material, and that the arena of international affairs is a world of our making.[11] Moreover, as a reaction to the over-determination of structure in rationalist theories, constructivists emphasized the process of interaction. It is not that actors are free to chose their circumstances, but rather that they make

[9] *Ibidem*.

[10] Dale C. Copeland, *The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism*, in "International Security", Vol. 25, No. 2, Fall, pp. 187-212, 2001, p. 197.

[11] Nicholas Onuf, *Constructivism: A User's Manual*, in Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf, Paul Kowert (Eds.), "International Relations in a Constructed World", M.E. Sharpe, New York: Armonk, 1988, pp. 58-63.

choices, not prior to the interaction as rational choice advocates would have it, but upon it or even in the process of interacting with others.[12] For constructivists, agents do not act in respect to the rationalistic logic of consequence, but according to the so called logic of appropriateness: how should I act in this situation?[13] As Wendt points out, "people act toward objects, including actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them. States act differently towards enemies than they do toward friends because enemies are threatening and friends are not".[14]

Therefore identities not only matter, but they are essential is grasping the interests and behaviors of actors on the international stage. For constructivists, identity is an inter-subjective notion. Its formation entails developing a collective sense of not only who one is, but also of how it differs from others.[15] To emphasize this theory of identity, is worth to mention what Ted Hopf underlines: "in telling you who you are, identities strongly imply a particular set of interests of preferences with respect to choices of action in particular domains and with respect to particular actors".[16]

The other paradigm used in this construction is Neorealism or Structural Realism, a theory first outlined by Kenneth Waltz in 1979. Neorealism is one of the most influential contemporary approaches to International Relations. The importance of Neorealism has been widely recognized and is essential "to understand the context of states' action before accounting for the actions themselves".[17]

Considering the relations between Romania and Soviet Union as a pair, throughout the structural-functional logic that the actions of one part are affected by the other part, and vice-versa, this research will explain how the actions coming from the both sides influenced each other, on the reciprocity base, so each "is not influencing the other: both are being influenced by the situation their interaction creates".[18]

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[12] *Ibidem*.

[13] Jon C. Pevenhouse, Joshua S. Goldtein, *International Relations*, 8th Edition, New York: Longman Publisher, 2008, p. 94.

[14] Alexander Wendt, *Anarchy is what states make of it: The social constructivism of power politics*, in "International Organization", Vol. 46, No. 2, Spring, pp. 391-425, 1992, p. 396.

[15] Amitov Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in South Eastern Asia: ASEAN and the problem of regional order*, 2nd Edition, New York: Routledge, p. 28.

[16] Alexander Wendt, 1999, *Op. cit*., p. 234.

[17] Robert O. Keohane (Editor), *Neorealism and its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 18.

[18] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Reductionist and Systemic Theories*, in Robert O. Keohane, *Op. cit*., 1986, p. 63.

Regarding the distribution of capabilities, there is an undisputed advantage held by the Soviet Union, but "the units of an anarchic system are functionally undifferentiated. The units of such an order are not distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks"[19], which in this case is the foreign policy of both states.

Structures encourage certain behaviors and penalize those who do not respond. The international imperative is "take care of yourself!"[20], and, as this paper will demonstrate, Romania took care of its image on the international stage throughout the foreign policy lines, between 1962-1972.

Methodology

The aim of this research is to analyze a succession of events – those which led Romania to adopt a few decisions in contradiction with the other countries from the Soviet block – and the extent to which identity was the driving force behind them. The explanatory endeavor should revolve around an evolutionary approach, in which the author present a historical reconstruction of political facts[21], through the use of narratives[22].

In order to trace the political realities of the time frame from this research, "the analyst needs to build a narrative -a dynamic account that tells the story of a variety of historical processes as they unfold over the time"[23]. On this context, the narrative is used as a retrospective device, so the order is imposed, because otherwise, it would be confusing[24], therefore, the best way to make sense of something, is to insert that something into a context of narrative[25].

One particularly interesting study with regard to this paper is Ringmar's (1996) historical account of Sweden's changing identities and interests in the 17th century. In this study, the Swedish scholar proposes a framework based on few essential benchmarks, which have to be met, so that a country could be considered to act in order to defend its identity. A defining moment that can be

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[19] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Political Structures*, in Robert O. Keohane, *Op. cit*., 1986, p. 103.

[20] *Ibidem*, p. 103.

[21] Emanuel Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics*, in "European Journal of International Relations", no. 3, September, 1997, p. 109.

[22] *Ibidem*.

[23] Vincent Pouliot, *"Sobjectivism": Toward a Constructivist Methodology*, in "International Studies Quarterly", Vol. 51, No. 2, June, pp. 356-384, 2007, p. 367.

[24] Cristopher S. Browning, *Constructivism, Narrative and Foreign Policy Analysis: A Case Study of Finland*, Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften; 1 edition (July 24, 2008), p. 67.

[25] Erik Ringmar, *Identity, Interest and Action: A Cultural Explanation of Sweden's Intervention in the Thirty Years War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 27.

explained using this method, is the Romanian position toward URSS's decision to send nuclear missile in Cuba, when Ion Gheorghe Maurer (the Romanian president personal adviser), stated that "we are not like this. This is not who we are!"[26]

Returning to the methodology used for this research, here are bellow, presented in a nutshell, the three (out of four) essential instances proposed by Erik Ringmar:

(1) "Traditional explanations phrased in terms of interests should produce ambiguous, highly contested or perverse results. If there was no obvious interest to be defended, or if the scholars who have studied the case are deeply divided regarding which interest the action was designed to further, then we have an a priori reason to be suspicious of these explanations".[27]

(2) The period in which the action took place should correspond to what Ringmar has called a formative moment. According to him, a formative moment is a time "when meaning is up for grabs; a time when old metaphors are replaced by new ones; when new identities established and new social practices initiated"[28]. In other words, such formative moments can be summarized as "world historical events"[29].

(3) "The particular person or group whose actions we want to explain must be engaged in a process of identity creation. It must be someone who tells constitutive stories and tries to establish a presence in both time and space; someone who constructs an affective geography of friends and enemies; someone who pays careful attention to the rules of the social system to which he or she seeks to belong"[30].

According to Ringmar, "if we can fulfill these requirements, we are justified in explaining the subsequent action undertaken by a person or by a group as a defense of identity"[31].As it was mentioned above, this paper work is mainly based on several books written by and with Mircea Malita, but alongside with this secondary sources, this research benefits of my personal conversations with the Romanian diplomat, so it will be used few primary sources as well.

Why did Romania choose a dissident position within the Soviet block, and how did

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[26] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Zid de pace, turnuri de frăție. Deceniul Deschiderii: 1962-1972*, București: Compania, 2011, pp. 18-19.

[27] Erik Ringmar, *Op. cit*., p. 90.

[28] Erik Ringmar, *Op. cit*., p. 85.

[29] Cristopher S. Browning, *Op. cit*., p. 59.

[30] *Ibidem*, p. 91.

[31] *Ibidem*.

manage the country leaders to contain the Soviet influences and threats? – this is the main question that I will try to offer an answer throughout this research.

From Conformism to Dissidence: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's Foreign Policy

In the early years of communist power, the government in Bucharest was one of the most docile satellites of the USSR, the Soviet factor being decisive in drawing the lines of Romania's foreign policy. Thru the Treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance, signed with the Soviet Union on February 4, 1948, with a validity of 20 years, the Soviet government had provided mandatory consultations on all matters of Romanian foreign policy. Via this act, Romania waived its promotion of external relations, except the ones with brotherly states, the diplomatic relations with Occident being completely frozen. In this context, ties with Western countries have almost ceased, and diplomatic representations in Bucharest, especially American, British and French, began to be subjected to constant pressure from the Soviet apparatus of repression.

Between 1948 and 1954 Romania's diplomatic isolation has become almost complete and any decision coming from Kremlin, was taken out unreservedly. A first alignment to decisions from Moscow, was during the Soviet-Yugoslav schism of 1948, when Romania became one of the most important centers of the anti-Titoist campaign[32].

On May 23, 1948 the USSR took over Snake Island, in breach of the Treaty of Peace of Paris in 1947 annexation being made through a simple report signed by Nikolai Pavlovich Sutov, first secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Bucharest, Eduard Mezincesu, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Romania's People Republic (RPP). This complete subordination to the USSR and the accelerated pace of sovietization, led to the emergence of rumors about the imminent transformation of Romania into a union republic, facts which led George Kennan, freshly appointed US ambassador to Moscow in 1952, to assert that the transformations from the last four years of the communist regime in Romania, made it an ideal candidate to merge with the Soviet Union.

According to the American ambassador, an additional argument in favor of the union, was Romania's strategic position, which consolidated Soviet defense system on the Danube and Black Sea. Rumors persisted until the early 50's, when Stalin's death led to a reformulation of Soviet strategies, and as a result, USSR launched a real pacifist offensive, starting a reconciliation with

[32] *** *150 de ani de diplomatie romaneasca moderna (1862-2012)* [http://www.mae.ro], January 30, 2016.

Yugoslavia, continuing with the promise of a peaceful co-operation between East and West, culminating in the withdrawal of troops from Austria.[33]

In this context, Romania has resumed its cooperation with Yugoslavia and began timidly to restore at least some ties with the US, French and British allies. The reopening of relations towards the West, even those of cultural type, did not remain unnoticed in Moscow, which considered this a real threat to the primacy of the Russian culture, USSR trying by various means to keep control of the Romanian diplomatic actions. But slowly, after 1956, Romanian Worker's Party's leadership started to undermine all the Soviet leverages from the Romanian diplomatic core.

The first step was taken in the context of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, against the Bolshevik dictatorship and Soviet occupation. The events in Hungary, but especially the forceful intervention of Soviet Army, persuaded Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej to require a change of attitude and policy towards Moscow, the leader demanding even an economic and cultural plan, which could help Romania to escape from the "Soviet bear hug"[34].

Early 60's showed a new phase of Soviet-Romanian relations. The policy of distancing from Moscow was developed based on three parameters: the economic development of the country (especially heavy industry), strengthening internal regime by making the pact with society and openness to the West together with the affirmation of Romanian state in international relations.

The individualization of the Romanian leaders within the communist bloc, was manifested during two major events: the missile crisis and Soviet-Chinese schism. In the first case, the decision to place Soviet missiles in Cuba compromised Romania's plans to normalize relations with Western countries, especially with the United States. In this context, Romania's representative to the United Nations, Corneliu Manescu, assured Dean Rusk, US Secretary of State, that the government in Bucharest, as a member of the Warsaw Pact, had not been consulted on the decision to deploy missile in Cuba, and in Romania are not placed nuclear weapons. The meeting between Manescu and Dean Rusk was recognized as the first great opportunity used by the government in Bucharest to resume official relations with the US[35].

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[33] *Ibidem.*

[34] Larry L. Watts, *Ferește-mă Doamne, de prieteni... Războiul clandestin al Blocului Sovietic cu România*, București: RAO, 2012, pp. 200-204.

[35] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Zid de pace, turnuri de frăție. Deceniul Deschiderii: 1962-1972*, București: Compania, 2011, pp. 42-50.

Regarding the second major event, the Chinese Soviet schism, it offered a chance to the Romanian Workers' Party's leaders to intervene in this ideological dispute and to assert their own position. Opening toward West was gradual, and was designed as a cultural and scientific change (cultural diplomacy), with three of the former Romanian traditional partners: France, UK and USA.

William Crawford, the American ambassador in Bucharest at that time, became very active in supporting the Romanian actions. He repeatedly informed the State Department that was needed to boost bilateral relations and economic trades, even President J.F. Kennedy himself, finding in Romania "an example of political dissidence and economic equality in the Soviet bloc"[36] and at July 15, 1963, a CIA report emphasized the economic trend, more obvious orientated toward Western Europe (35% of total), Romania being able to face a possible Soviet embargo.

In 1964, the Romanian opposition against the Soviet Union reaches its peak by two spectacular gestures: public rejection of the Valev Plan and thru the Public Statement of 1964, which provided for equal rights, noninterference in internal affairs, exclusive rights of the domestic party to solve internal problems and to choose their own leadership, and to establish own political lines of domestic and foreign policy[37].

Through these actions, the government in Bucharest has followed to distance itself from Moscow and not to break the relations. Romania continued to remain a member of CAER and of the Warsaw Pact, only that the decision makers wanted to draw single lines of foreign policy, trying to release Romania from the anonymity and to increase the Western interest to its actions.

Romania's Position towards Missile Crisis

For decades, the Cuban Missile Crisis was presented as an episode managed with a strong hand by President Kennedy, but with the opening of the Soviet and American archives, it surfaced a reality much tougher: the 13 days of October 1962 revealed the difficulty with which US president and his counterpart in the Kremlin, have mastered this chain of events. "The dominant feeling was shock and incredible"[38], confessed later Robert Kennedy, brother of the American president, who at the time was US General Attorney.

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[36] *** *150 de ani de diplomație românească modernă, (1862-2012)* [http://www.mae.ro/node/15028?page=4], February 1st, 2016.

[37] *Ibidem.*

[38] *** *THE WORLD ON THE BRINK: JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS* [http://microsites.jfklibrary.org/cmc/oct23], at February 4, 2016.

Regarding Romania's position, unwillingly involved in this crisis, it must be emphasized that the Bucharest authorities were not aware of the actions taken by the USSR, in terms of placement the Soviet missiles in Cuba. When events began to precipitate, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej with Corneliu Manescu and Ion Gheorghe Maurer were on a diplomatic mission in Asia. On the way back home, the Romanian president was informed by Maurer about the Cuban crisis, and the first reaction of the Romanian leader is epic described by Mircea Malita: "He told me that Maurer told Dej: «Ghiță, you can wake up in the morning and read in the newspapers that you are at war with the United States. I've seen them, heard them, they are not sane.»"[39].

The Romanian delegation expressed its "dismay against the dangerous turn of the situation. He (Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, A/N) refrained from any precipitate approval for Khrushchev's attitude, asking for some time to think over it and urging restraint and moderation. Later, in 1963, Dej told Bureau members that Khrushchev went to adventure in the Cuban crisis, creating the danger of a world war, *and we are not adventurers*"[40].

1962 changed everything: first Romanians understood that there is no escape from the USSR or from a war that the Soviet Union could cause itself alone. As a member of the Warsaw Pact, automatically Romania was going to be involved in an undeclared war, contrary to the objectives and national interests. This "finding made Dej to adopt the decision that Romania will not be caught in actions that would jeopardize its main task – the survival – idea which hunted Dej until the end of his days, three years later. It is a thread uninterrupted hanging tablets of tens and hundreds of meetings, negotiations, collisions, attended, an accurate direction, the military and, on another, more comprehensive diplomats. As long as Maurer had the competence to foreign policy issues – to 1974 – the thread was not interrupted"[41]. In the same vein, Malița reinforces the above by saying that "what happened in the crisis in the Caribbean at the end of 1962, triggered in Romania the entry into force of a massive program of bold foreign policy. It smoldered for a long time – more precisely, in 1960 – but now came to light".[42]

Going back to 1962 and to the topic of Cuban Crisis, it has to be mentioned that the Romania's official position toward Moscow it was one of support, at

[39] Mircea Malița, Dan Dungaciu, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

[73] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *op. cit.* pp. 18-19.

[41] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[42] *Ibidem*, p. 39.

least declaratively, maintaining "the monolithic unity of the socialist states"[43]. On the other hand, in Mircea Malita's memoirs – that in the absence of the Minister became Romania's representative to the UN Security Council – it is described the thread of events that were behind the position adopted by Romania in this situation: I was in charge of Romanian delegation, in the absence of the Minister. (...) I was asking instructions on how to proceed, formulate proposals calling for approval, I ask for some guidelines. The Ministry was dumb. The coming of Manescu as Minister in 1961 changed many routines – but the old habit was: *see your friends*, which meant, in fact, *see what's the Soviet position and do the same*.[44]"

Thus, the diplomat Malița propose a compromise solution, proposed by Professor Glaser: "To criticize the US in a weak point. For example, installing blockade at sea. It was enough this and the lawyers in the delegation, headed by Professor Glaser, developed an impeccable legal argument: the blockade is prohibited under international law. Incidentally, Glaser, who represented us in the judiciary committee, was seeing the law in an elastic manner: *do not ask me to say what position you must have, tell me what do you want me to pretend and I'll give you the arguments*"[45].

Romania's position during the missile crisis is very accurately described by historian Dinu Giurescu: "The opening was carefully skimp so it will not cause any over-reaction from the dominant power (USSR), but still permits starting a own way[46]". This new approach of foreign policy has determined leaders in Bucharest to restore immediate and exclusive control of national armed forces, which had passed through a tentative of general mobilization during the missile crisis.

When we look back at this moment of Romanian diplomacy, it should be considered the situation in which Romania was 1962, when Romanian diplomats were caught between the two superpowers that dominated the Cold War, and perhaps if they had chosen the fully support of one camp over the other, the consequences would have been devastating, regardless of the position taken. But even so, with the sword of Damocles over their heads, Romanian diplomats and their team, have realized that Romania finally counts, and can use this trump card whenever the wind is blowing in their canvases. Since then, the politicians who were aware of the international political events, registered the smallest gestures of Romania. From the desire for dialogue and to the idea of

[43] "Scânteia", Anul XXXII, nr. 5758/30 decembrie 1962.

[44] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[45] *Ibidem*, p. 20.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 64.

collaboration or partnership, the distance was not long. And gradually, on the virtual picture of countries' positions in the world, Romania accumulated points of interest and trust.

Romania's position towards the Soviet-Chinese conflict

Soviet-Chinese conflict is among the crises that have had a major impact on international relations in the second half of the twentieth century. With a humble beginning, the conflict has evolved steadily, becoming a problem of the entire communist world.

The starting point in Soviet-Chinese dispute it was the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in February 1956, and the secret report presented by Nikita Khrushchev, which denounced the cult of personality and I. V. Stalin's crimes. The impact of public condemnation of Stalin was perceived differently from country to country, depending on national circumstances and political or economic situation. De-Stalinization had immediate effects in Poland, Hungary and in Romania, leaders lining up in a formal position towards Moscow. Albanian leaders have taken the opposite position, expressing some doubts about appropriateness Khrushchev's policy, which they called a revisionist one.

In respect of Chinese leaders, despite reservations over the decisions taken at the Twentieth Congress of CPSU, they wanted to keep a close relationship with the Soviet Union, but at the same time, they decided to follow its own way of building socialism, depending on the specific national, characterized by defying the Soviet leadership and its challenge to compete, both politically and ideologically[47].

1960 will mark the debut of open confrontation between the Soviet Union and China, the outbreak being the third Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, held from 20 to 25 May 1960, an event attended by many key figures of the communist world. In the fall of 1960, the deterioration of the relationship was stressed because the Soviet government announced that it wishes to withdraw all specialists in China (including military experts), in parallel with unilateral cancellation of economic contracts and ceasing the provision of equipment and materials to China.

In October 1961, during the XXIInd Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchev embarked on a new campaign against Stalin – the second de-Stalinization – and attacked public Albanians, this stirring discontent of the Chinese delegation's

[47] Dan Catanus, *Tot mai departe de Moscova: politica externa a Romaniei in contextul conflictului sovieto-chinez (1956-1965)*, București, Institutul National pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2011, p. 89.

head, which stressed the idea that the Soviet attitude "does not contribute to unity and is not helping to solve problems"[48]. Soviet-Chinese conflict continued in the coming years, remaining irreconcilable even after the ousting of Nikita Khrushchev.

Throughout the debate between the Soviet Union and China, Romania's position towards the conflict has evolved, from unconditional support of Soviet points of view, in the period 1960-1962, which obviously led to a cooling of the Romanian-Chinese relations, to a tacit withdrawal of this dispute, during 1962, this fact leading to an outdistance from Moscow, on one hand, and on the other, starting a new policy towards Beijing, Romania approaching nearer to China, this positioning being a guarantee and support against the Soviet authoritarian policy.

Declaration of April 1964

American researcher Larry Watts called this period in Romanian history the *Spring from Bucharest*, and describes it as a limited attempt[49] to move away from Soviet influence, but "viewed from another perspective, Romanian movement had a character more radical in terms of its strategic goal, than the Hungarian uprising or the Prague Spring, in the sense that, instead of trying to withdraw from the Soviet domination – military, political, economic and social control – it tried to reduces the soviet influence throughout the region, as a prerequisite for independent development. Manifestations of independence not only that defied USSR, hindering Moscow's plans to integrate the Soviet economies and those of the satellite countries, but were also refusing to follow the soviet line of foreign policy and security, being completely and overtly anti-Soviet doctrine[50].

According to Mircea Malita, the Declaration of April was made in the context of an evident openness towards US, "embassies were opened and transport license of American equipment and plant were accepted; US officials spoke about the fact that Romanians want substantial relations with the US, including to go on an independent line policy against Moscow"[51], and also

[48] *Ibidem*, pp. 257-258.

[49] Larry L. Watts, *Ferește-mă Doamne de prieteni... Războiul clandestin al Blocului Sovietic cu România*, București: RAO, 2012, p. 247.

[50] Larry L. Watts, *op. cit*., pp. 247-248.

[51] Mircea Malița, Dan Dungaciu, *op. cit*., p. 207.

considering that things had become sensitive inside MEAC (CAER), this Declaration came very naturally[52].

The Declaration was written almost entirely by Costin Murgescu, obviously with the approval of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, because "anyway everything what was done, was done with the consent of Dej, nobody opposed the Russians on his own"[53].

The Declaration was divided into seven chapters, as follows:

I. The action of our party to end public policy;

II. Our epoch, the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism;

III. The defense of peace, vital cause of all mankind;

IV. The world socialist system is determinant for historical development;

V. The national liberation movement is part of the world revolutionary process;

VI. The international communist movement, the most influential contemporary political force;

VII. To safeguard the unity and cohesion of the international communist movement[54].

The adoption of the Declaration of April 1964 was a milestone in affirming Romania on the international stage, legitimizing the new course of Romanian foreign policy. Also, 1964 was a turning point for the further development of Romania within the MEAC and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, Romanian actions questioning the hegemony of the Soviet sphere of influence. Thus, the Bucharest leadership exploited the Soviet-Chinese differences in their own interest, to assert national sovereignty and the acquisition of own international identity.

Prague, August 1968

Prague Spring represents a crucial moment in international history and a focal point for relations between the countries of the Warsaw Pact. The massive demonstrations of force in Prague and throughout Czechoslovakia were an opportunity to create a rift that will lead to the collapse, two decades later, of the Soviet colossus and of the communists regimes from the satellite countries. On August 20, 1968, troops belonging to Members of the Organization of the Warsaw Pact – except Romania – entered the capital of Czechoslovakia to

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[52] *Ibidem.*

[53] *Ibidem.*

[54] *** Arhivele Nationale ale Romaniei [http://arhivelenationale.ro/CCPCR-1965.pdf], February 6, 2016.

overthrow the government led by Communist reformer Alexander Dubček. The action force, coordinated by Moscow, ended the Prague Spring, the political movement which proposed revision of Marxism and the reforming of the communist regime.

The ten days of the crisis in 1968 have helped to overcome any hope of giving communism a human face, as aims, at least declaratively, leaders of this malignant ideologies. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was a breach of international law, a brutal intervention in the internal politics of a sovereign state and has generated a new Soviet concept, that of limited sovereignty.

The Soviet Union its acolytes invasion – German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland – has deepened the chasm that already existed between East and West, but also created divisions within the Socialist block, where Yugoslavia and Romania, not only that did not joined the invasion, but more, they condemned the intervention ordered by the Kremlin leader.

Inside the mosaic of views and positions taken against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, a special case it was Romania, who objected with an extremely brutal voice against this brutal intervention. We appreciate that this attitude has been very well studied and developed, and aimed to serve the protection of the national identity.

Undoubtedly, the highest form of expression of independence from Moscow, was the manifestation from Palace Square, on August 21, 1968, where Nicolae Ceausescu claimed probably the best speech of his entire life: "The invasion of the five socialist countries in Czechoslovakia, is a big mistake, and a threat for peace in Europe, for the fate of socialism in the world, and is unacceptable for a socialist state to violate the freedom and the independence of another state. (...) there is no justification. It can not be accepted any reason to admit, for a moment only, that the idea of military intervention in the affairs of a fraternal socialist state. (...) only elected bodies of the party and of the state can decide over the destiny of a nation, and to discredit these socialist organs is an act in spite of the popular will, based on unilateral data, or tendentious intentions, made by certain groups or individuals, and it means to trample on the sacred principle of sovereignty of a socialist nation"[55].

"Native intelligence, political skills and a notable sense of the situation" turned Nicolae Ceausescu into a star of international politics, a man about everyone was discussing. Romania's position towards the Czechoslovak crisis, the aversion expressed strongly against military intervention and its position

[55] *** *Ceausescu's speech of 21 August 1968* [http://youtube.com/watch], February 6, 2016.

towards the reformist Prague, showed Romanian leader's ability to fold and quickly adapt to the interests of the country, but more to his personal interests.

Why not Romania?

Ambassador Mircea Malita finally asks "why Moscow intervened with troops in Czechoslovakia and not in Romania (...).How and what attracted the Czechs this hegemonic wrath?"[56], because even before this invasion, Romania had befallen several times the conduct drawn by Moscow.

There are two elements that could answer this question: one comes from inside Czechoslovakia, and the second it can be found inside the attitude adopted by the leaders in Bucharest, initiated by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and continued, for a time, by Nicolae Ceausescu.

In the first case we must take into consideration the direction adopted by the Czechoslovak communist regime and the party led by Aleksander Dubček and his team. "In the socialist regime, the Soviet control of the media, is a sine qua non condition. At the base of the regime were monopoly power (single party) and control the media (press, radio, television). Between February and July 1968, media from Czechoslovakia had regained its freedom of expression; some voices put indirectly into question the regime of the single party and the internal policies"[57]. This debate in Czechoslovakia against the Soviet system, represented a dangerous potential enlargement of this attitude towards the other satellite states, a potential risk, especially in the context of the 60's international detente.

On the other hand, in Romania, the openness strategy "consisted in the fact that the press, in official and public statements did not show off anything negative about the USSR, and this is like trying to fall asleep vigilance, but at the diplomatic level and the political game strategy, everything was set in motion: to try to make Romanian's lives not good or very good, but the least bad"[58]. An argument in this regard is the fact that during the Cuban crisis, although behind closed doors the Romanian delegation sought the best alternative to not close the doors to the West, the Romanian press articles were describing Romania's solidarity towards Cuba against US aggressor, etc. "That was something else to see, but what was seen it was not what it was prepared"[59].

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[56] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

[57] Mircea Malița, Dan Dungaciu, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

[58] *Ibidem*, pp. 196-197.

[59] *Ibidem*, p. 195.

Inside Socialist Republic of Romania, the situation was kept firmly in hand, and with all the openness attempts, at cultural or economic levels, it could not be foreseen any danger of undermining the Soviet regime. "Moscow did not think to interfere in Romania, because there was never doubted the stability of the communist regime"[60].

But with all the confidence invested towards the power from Bucharest, at the time of the invasion from Czechoslovakia, Romania's response was very strong, as shown above. This strategy was devised "in a very restricted circle, but the steps were developed with great care by Maurer and, partly, by Bodnaras. They were Ceausescu's almost exclusively counselors, himself being more emotive and younger than the two politicians, his reasoning being less nuanced and cautious than theirs"[61].

Ambassador Malița agrees that the Soviet action was a threat against Romania, but also required a firm response from the authorities in Bucharest. Thus Romania showed that "is not frightened of any Soviet action (...) and convince the Soviets that it is a difficult prey to be subdued"[62].

Conclusions

The primary task of this research was that of presenting the extent to which Romania's behavior in the middle of the 20th century, was driven by its identity. The overall idea was subsequently base on the social constructivist belief that Romania was at that time, more than just a simple subordinate of Kremlin, but a country with shared values and beliefs, a community brought together by a mutual sense of belonging, by a common identity.

Thus, by building a narrative based on three benchmarks of Ringmar's model, the paper set out to show that even one communist state, part of one of the toughest ideological system, think about who it is, before it acts according to what it wants[63].

Therefore, when it comes to the first benchmark – *interest based accounts of the action to be explained should be proven inappropriate or contradictory* – it was shown that Romania was more than a simple obedient, and when it was the right time, brought together a set of values and beliefs, stood up and made its voice heard.

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[60] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

[61] Mircea Malița, Dinu C. Giurescu, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[62] *Ibidem.*

[63] Alexander Wendt, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

When it comes to instance number two – *the action should be preceded by a formative moment in which the actor has to engaged* – the paper portrayed how the events from Cuba and Czechoslovakia have changed the Romanian's politics, by introducing the Western on the agenda, thus modifying the traditional way of foreign policy orientation.

The third benchmark – *the actor should be involved in a process of identity formation, coming up with new ways of identifying and portraying itself* – is illustrated by the positions adopted during the crisis described above: taking over the own foreign policy, Romania presented itself as a state with strong identity, initiating and strengthening its relations with United States, France or Britain.

The aim of this work was to present in a positive light certain events from 1962-1972, but this does not mean that we turn a blind eye to criticism of that period, or that some correction needed to be done. The analysis concluded that most of the decision taken at that time were driven by national identity, Romania's case being one in strong contradiction with Samuel Huntington's theory. But this discussion it would fall beyond the purpose of this research, namely to demonstrate that the change of optics in Romanian's foreign policy was not just a self-interest, but an extension of the society's will, based on a very strong sense of identity.

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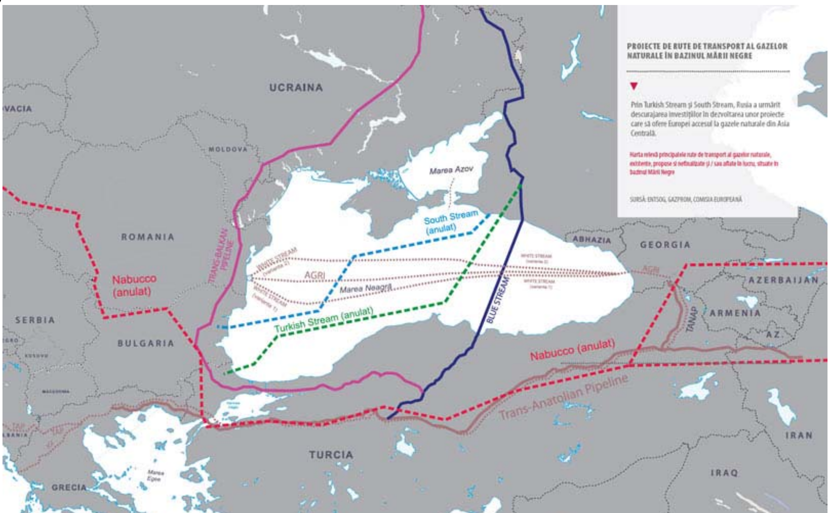
What are the New EU Perspectives for an Integrated Response to the Energy Security Problem in the Wider Black Sea Region?

Iulia Ghidiu

Introduction

In this paper I intend to present the recent EU perspectives regarding the improvement of energy infrastructure security in the wider Black Sea region, following European strategic initiatives such as the Eastern Partnership or the energy union and ambitious proposals of pipeline projects in this part of Europe (also Eurasia, as we will see further on). I tried to see if these revised and innovative projects could be feasible in the foreseeable future, meaning they could meet the objectives of reducing EU member states gas dependency from Russia, integrating energy markets and enhancing competitiveness, along with the questioning open door possibility for Turkey to accede the EU, strictly speaking from an energy potential perspective. To this end, I relied basically on a qualitative research methodology upon recent literature in the gas resources field, encompassing official EU documents and relevant media coverage on energy issues.



Projects of natural gas transport routes in the Black Sea Basin. Source: ENTSOG, GAZPROM, EUROPEAN COMMISSION [http://www.petroleumreview.ro/ro/68-aprilie-2016/963-marea-neagra-si-romania-puncte-de-referinta-pentru-securitatea-energetica-a-ue]

The Eastern Partnership-a revival?

With the occasion of the Eastern Partnership Summit, held in Riga between 21-22 May, 2015, the Heads of State or Government from the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and the representatives of the European Union met to reconfirm how important is this European initiative within the wider European Neighbourhood Policy.

The participants evoked the progress made by cooperating under the Eastern Partnership Flagship Initiatives, on Integrated Border Management, Small and Medium Enterprises, energy issues, environment and climate change and natural and manmade disasters. Also did they emphasize the important role of the E5P (Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership) and the successful extension of the E5P to Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, in addition to Ukraine.[1]

Energy interconnections in the Eastern Partnership region have been enhanced since the Vilnius summit, held between November 28-29, 2013:

● Natural gas reverse flow capacities to Ukraine from Hungary, Poland and Slovakia have been enabled.

● Work has advanced considerably on the Southern Gas Corridor, on the expansion of the South Caucasus Pipeline, the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline.

● Iași-Ungheni gas interconnector has been inaugurated last year and preliminary work started on electricity interconnector Issacea-Vulcănești.

● A Cooperation Arrangement between the European Commission and Belarus on an Early Warning Mechanism in the area of energy has been finalised.[2]

EU has made a step farther in consolidating its Strategic Energy Partnership with Azerbaijan that aims to improve European energy security and the diversification of energy supplies. There is a commitment to implement the Southern Gas Corridor that is still highly important for the two parts. Azerbaijan participates in the INOGATE regional energy programme, and it also hosts the Baku initiative, a policy dialogue on energy and transport between the EU and the littoral states of the Black Sea, Caspian and their neighbours.

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[1] European External Action Service, *Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit (*Riga, 21-22 May 2015), May 22, 2015 [http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/riga-declaration-220515-final_en.pdf], May 5, 2016.

[2] European External Action Service, *Eastern Partnership. A policy that delivers (fact sheet),* May 21, 2015 [http://eeas.europa.eu/factsheets/docs/factsheet_eastern_partnership_en.pdf], May 5, 2016.

In terms of cooperation on energy efficiency and renewable energy, opportunities were enhanced by the restructuring of the Azeri Ministry of Energy in May 2014 and the establishment of a new Energy Efficiency and Alternative Energy Sources Department.[3]

EU and Belarus use to cooperate in the energy sector both bilaterally and regionally. A good example of a project upholding the implementation of reforms and of improving managerial efficiency by the Ministry of Energy and Department of Energy Efficiency of the State Committee on Standardisation bears the name of "Support to the Implementation of a Comprehensive Energy Strategy of the Republic of Belarus".

What can we learn from the NABUCCO experience?

Nabucco transit route. Source: Deustche Welle [http://www.dw.com/en/nabucco-pipeline-future-uncertain-as-hungary-backs-russian-rival/a-15910599]

A 2002 OMV design, inspired by the Italian opera of Giuseppe Verdi, the Nabucco project was initially on the EU priority agenda, following the first gas crisis in 2006. This year version had as its scope to connect the resources from the Caspian Basin, Irak and Egypt with Baumgarten an der March from Austria, transiting Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, on a total distance of 3300 km. It has been estimated a maximum level of 31 bcm/year, at a cost between 7.9 and 10 bn euros. In the event of its realisation, Nabucco would have offered European states alternative sources and transit routes as well as a means to reduce the systemic risk in case of external shocks. In addition, the project

[3] European External Action Service, *EU-Azerbaijan. Eastern Partnership: Supporting Reforms, Promoting Change* [http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/eu-azerbaijan_en.pdf], May 5, 2016.

involved the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Romania was an important actor in the Nabucco project, politically and economically speaking. It was the only state supporting the project, even when it was being attacked from all parts, underlining the benefits that it could offer to the EU as a whole. Our country was scheduled to have its gas infrastructure modernised, with Nabucco pipeline transiting from south to west on a distance of 460 km, importing Caspian gas through Turkey and being able to manage the problems in the Russian gas transmission network.[4]

Fig. 1.: Companies making up the Nabucco consortium and their participation to NIC social capital (%)

Associate	**Participation to NIC social capital (%)**
OMV GAS & POWER GMBH Austria	35.8635%
FGSZ FÖLDGÁZSZÁLLÍTÓ ZÁRTKÖRÜEN MÜKÖDÖ RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG Hungary	10.3411%
S.N.T.G.N. TRANSGAZ S.A. Romania	17.9318%
BULGARIAN ENERGY HOLDING EAD Bulgaria	17.9318%
BORU HATLARI ILE PETROL TAŞIMA AŞ Turkey	17.9318%
Total:	**100.0000%**

On June 25, 2013, in Vienna, in the presence of NIC (Nabucco International Company), the Shah Deniz consortium has communicated its decision regarding the selection of the gas transport route to Europe, having to choose between TAP and Nabucco. The decision didn't favour the latter, with the motivation of commercial and geopolitical aspects. TAP was seen as a better business because of the smaller number of transit countries, reducing costs and political risks. It is true that the route for TANAP and TAP pipelines would be placed under the control of Turkey and Azerbaijan rather than the EU but they would also increase the geopolitical importance of these two countries as EU energy partners.

The failure of the Nabucco project was also caused by the fact that it has not appeared economically viable for some time. Gas expert Rudolf Huber described Nabucco in the Austrian daily *Standard* as "a relic from the past," when

[4] Crişan, Adina, *Securitatea energetică a UE în regiunea Mării Negre. Ce perspective pentru România?*, in "Raport Europuls", June 2010, p. 6-7.

the expanding market for gas made investment in long-range pipelines more or less secure.[5]

Some say that the failure of Nabucco was a failure to diversify gas supplies to Central and Eastern Europe, a failure of the European diplomacy to convince Azerbaijan and other potential exporters to sell gas to European clients. Difficulties in implementing the complex project trace back to a European Union lacking strong competence in the area of energy policy and foreign policy.[6] The EU has not speak with one single voice, but rather we could identify states with divergent interests, such as the case of Hungary which turned its attention to the Russian South Stream for further support in times of their economic crisis. Also the dialogue between the NIC delegates was somehow disturbed by the frequent change of representatives. The internal negotiations within the company were sensitive enough to the cultural background of the different countries involved. In terms of financing, the grant given by the EU to the Nabucco pipeline project was not very significant.

Azerbaijan's energy minister, Natig Aliev, in an interview to *NGE,* told Ilham Shaban, *NGE's* expert on Caspian region energy issues that "difficulties with the Nabucco pipeline project to bring gas out of the Caspian into the European Union contributed to a delay upstream. The consortium for Shah Deniz gas field's second phase (SD2) started developing the project in 2007 and, based on the approved agreement between Azerbaijani government and the operator of Shah Deniz (SD), the gas production at SD2 and exports towards EU should have started in 2011 and 2012 respectively, but it was postponed to 2020 owing to EU policies. It means capital lost for both consortium and Azerbaijan. Imagine if we had started exporting gas to EU with high prices (since 2011)." [7]

About Nabucco and the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) he discussed the fundamentally wrong structure of the Nabucco consortium, with each company having equal shares and not being willing to cooperate with governments (as a commercially-driven entity).

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[5] Weiss, Clara, *European Union's Nabucco pipeline project aborted*, July 13, 2013, in World Socialist Web Site [https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2013/07/13/nabu-j13.html], May 8, 2016.

[6] Thomas, Aleksander, *Nabucco – A study in failed EU energy policy,* April 6 2015 [https://europeanstudentthinktank.com/2015/04/06/nabucco-a-study-in-failed-eu-energy-policy/], May 8, 2016.

[7] Shaban, Ilham, *Nabucco 'Delayed Shah Deniz Gas Flow': Aliev*, in *Natural Gas Europe*, March 10, 2016 [http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/nabucco-delayed-shah-deniz-gas-flow-28578], May 10, 2016.

The Azeri energy minister Natig Aliev also brought forth the spending of the SD consortium-$1bn in SD2 by 2011, and the fact that French Total oil and gas corporation estimate of the offshore reserves of Absheron gas field was around 350bn m^{3}.

"By that point there was no way back. Therefore, the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) emerged in 2011. The South Caucasus Pipeline Expansion Project (SCPX) – including two gas compressor stations – was part of SD2. The only unresolved issue was the route of delivering gas from Turkey's western borders to EU: Nabucco West [which was Nabucco minus the Turkish section]; or Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). Finally, TAP was chosen and a 3500-km SGC emerged."[8]

Towards an energy union-to what extent is that possible?

The energy union package, published by the Commission on 25 February 2015, aims to ensure affordable, secure and sustainable energy for European citizens. It consists of three communications, as follows:

- a framework strategy for the energy union – detailing the goals and the concrete steps that will be taken;
- a communication setting out the EU's vision for the new global climate agreement and which was agreed in Paris in December 2015;
- a communication describing the measures needed to achieve the target of 10% electricity interconnection by 2020.[9]

A European energy union is needed since there are many EU member states heavily depending on a limited number of gas suppliers and which leaves the unfortunate possibility of disruption in the energy supply. In fact, their range of choice is being limited because of Europe's aging energy infrastructure, poorly integrated energy markets and uncoordinated national energy policies. The ex-president of the European Council, Donald Tusk, stated that most of the bilateral contracts with the main supplier, Russia, are being signed on a long term, which is not a healthy option for European security and the internal market and that

[8] *Ibidem.*

[9] European Council, Council of the European Union, *Energy union: secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy for Europe* [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/energy-union/], May 10, 2016.

this kind of agreements should be about economics and business, and not used as political weaponry.[10]

A modern infrastructure and improved energy interconnections and will potentially minimise these kind of risks. Equally important is the completion of the internal energy market in order for member states to access the energy markets across national borders more easily. In this way, the affordability of energy and the competitiveness of prices for both citizens and businesses could be also reconsidered in a positive sense.[11]

The European Commission has proposed a strategy having three long-term objectives: security of supply, sustainability and competitiveness.

The EU priority regarding energy security, solidarity and trust aims to make the EU less vulnerable to external energy shocks and reduce dependency on specific fuels, energy suppliers and routes. Therefore, it proposes the diversification of energy sources, suppliers and routes, the collaborative effort of member states and the energy industry to provide security as well as being more transparent about agreements on buying energy from non-EU countries.

According to the Vice President of the European Commission, in charge of the Energy Union, Maroš Šefčovič, there are no prospects for mega infrastructure projects in the European energy sector. Lessons have been drawn from South Stream and Nabucco pipeline projects and now the proper focus should definitely be on "a series of projects that we can manage, which will be in our hands."[12]

Mr. Šefčovič consciously underlined that the project of an energy union is not to be built from Brussels but at the level of European cities, towns, and communities for which it is obviously needed a strong public support. He intends to pay visits to member states in order to discuss with representatives of the government, NGOs, civic society about their opinion on this project and some priorities they identify in this regard.

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[10] InCont.ro, *Liderii europeni au convenit sa creeze Uniunea Energetica. Schultz: Europa este cel mai mare importator de energie din lume. Asta ne costa 400 mld. euro pe an*, March 20, 2015 [http://incont.stirileprotv.ro/international/donald-tusk-liderii-europeni-au-convenit-sa-creeze-uniunea-energetica.html], May 10, 2016.

[11] *Ibidem.*

[12] Leifheit, Drew, *Energy Union Head: No More Nabucco's*, in *Natural Gas Europe*, June 16, 2015 [http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/sefovic-eu-energy-union-no-more-nabuccos-24213], May 10, 2016.

Besides emphasizing the role of interconnectors in linking and diversifying the supply chain- in the sense that we could gain access to at least three different sources of gas-he also argued that it is crucial to have free-flowing energy among the EU member states.

An explicit intention of the Energy Union is to decrease EU gas dependency from Russia. Azerbaijan, who is the only gas supplier from Caspian Sea to Europe, has allocated most of its exportable gas resources to the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) project (operational by 2018-2020). The Energy Union identifies Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Iraq as potential sources for EU future gas demands. But here the problem is that Iran is still under tough sanctions also having its gas infrastructure undeveloped, Iraq struggles in his fight over ISIS, and Turkmenistan has at the moment no capability to deliver gas to the EU. Hence, since the first (10 bcm/year by 2020) and second stages (20 bcm/year) of transportation of Azerbaijani gas to the EU have already been fully guaranteed from Baku, there may be no necessity for Turkmeni gas unless the capacity of the pipeline is enhanced up to the level of 31 bcm/year (approximately by 2025). It is too early to make any anticipation for the next decade, but it is clear that both the EU and Turkey are working hard to make a breakthrough in the agreement over the realization of Trans-Caspian Pipeline (TCP), which in turn will make gas deliveries from Turkmenistan to the EU in future possible.[13]

The European Union has also increased official visits to Turkmenistan in recent years. The EU stated that the TCP pipeline could be built by 2019. However, this project has received a disagreement from the Caspian countries Russia and Iran because of the undecided legal status of the Caspian Sea. Apart from the legal issue, TCP requires Turkmenistan and Brussels to undertake commercial arrangements. Even though it is uncertain, whether the construction of the TCP pipeline will start any time soon, Turkmenistan is building its East-West pipeline. [14]

We mentioned the large dependency of the states on the Russian gas resources but also the recent geopolitical evolutions in the Black Sea Region (the status of Crimea and the Russian-Turkish relationships) show the urgency to

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[13] Baghirov, Elmar, *The Revival of Nabucco West: Myth or Reality*, in *Natural Gas Europe*, May 6, 2015 [http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/the-revival-of-nabucco-west-myth-or-reality-23537], May 11, 2016.

[14] Tabatska, Daryna, *Turkmenistan: The Diversification of Gas Export Market*, in *Natural Gas Europe*, December 16, 2015 [http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/turkmenistan-the-diversification-of-gas-export-market-27160], May 11, 2016.

broaden the range of supply sources and of the transmission routes for the natural gas in this part of Europe and largely in the energy system of the European Union.

Following the conflict in Ukraine and the sanctions imposed from the West, the South Stream project has become unfeasible from a political perspective. Also did Russia came back with the proposal to replace it by Turkish Stream, with 4 pipelines through which the Russian gas could transit the Black Sea from Russia to the eastern part of Turkey. It was designed for a capacity of around 63 bcm/year and then to replace the 14 bcm that Russia delivers to Turkey trough the trans-balkanic route that transits Ukraine. The rest of the amount would have been delivered at the Turkish border with Greece where Gazprom would have establish a hub for the South and Central Europe states. The latest discussions on this topic between Russia and Turkey took place at the beginning of 2015 but they haven't reach an end. Because of the military and diplomatic disputes, there are few chances of implementing this project in the near future.

Even if Moscow is trying to undermine the competing projects in the Black Sea area, the Trans Anatolian Pipeline project (TANAP) might be quite successful. To a large extent, it overlaps with the old Nabucco route, transiting Georgia and Turkey, to Europe. It has been announced in November 2011, during the 3rd edition of the "Black Sea Energy and Economic Forum" in Istanbul, even as an alternative to Nabucco initiative.

TANAP and TAP pipeline projects. Source: Focus Energetic [http://www.focus-energetic.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TAP-si-TANAP.jpg]

With a capacity of around 30 bcm/year, TANAP would transport natural gas from Azerdbaidjan, Shah Deniz II, from eastern to western Turkey. The whole consortium encompasses SOCAR, Azerbaidjan (58%), BOTAS, Turkey, (30%) and British Petroleum (12%). On March, 3, the European Commission gave a favourable opinion saying that TAP complies with the European legal framework provisions regarding state aid. This one accounts for the European part of the southern corridor for gas supply through which it is intended to connect the EU market with the reserves from Central Asia. With an estimated capacity of 10 bcm/year, TAP will take over TANAP flows and will bring to Europe the gas from Shah Deniz II. The gas pipeline starts at the Greek eastern border-where it connects with TANAP-transiting Albania to Italy under the Adriatic Sea.[15]

Mr. Vasile Iuga, SEE Cluster Leader PwC, argued at *Interconnecting Europe: Natural Gas in Romania* roundtable in Bucharest that the Energy Union could offer new hope and vision to Europe, but the question is how much it can be implemented, because over time there have been brought forth numerous EU strategic projects, but, unfortunately, only partially implemented.

He truly believes the emphasis of the Energy Union should be placed on implementation in South-eastern Europe and the Black Sea region and he made reference to the necessity of improving cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, given the vulnerabilities of the area in terms of gas supply. The 2009 cut-off had generated the fear of the precedent.

Mr. Iuga sees gas-connected interactions as individual rivalries. And the tactics of seeking individual "escape plans" by the countries in the region, each one intending to become a potential hub, was a trigger for their division.

South-eastern Europe countries fear the possibility of funds being distributed by the EU to countries such as Spain or Italy, on competitive grounds, and that they will end up bypassed by future gas pipeline projects. Mr. Iuga gives the example of Romania, which-even if it has the ability to produce gas, both for domestic and European needs, and could also be a transit country-has been counted out from large infrastructure pipelines projects and its interconnectors are low capacity compared with the European standards to which operators from other European countries have aligned themselves. One example that can be picked up is Poland's interconnector and LNG terminal. In

[15] Roşoiu, Laurenţiu, *Marea Neagră și România – puncte de referință pentru secutitatea energetică a UE*, in "Petroleum Industry Review", April 13, 2016 [http://www.petroleumreview.ro/ro/68-aprilie-2016/963-marea-neagra-si-romania-puncte-de-referinta-pentru-securitatea-energetica-a-ue], May 11, 2016.

order to attract long-term investments in the discussed region the required infrastructure has to be built and made operational.[16]

Turkey's accession to the EU-an energy perspective

Turkey took several steps to adapt its energy policy parameters to the EU regulations and rules for increasing bilateral cooperation. It joined the EU Energy Community, signed the Athens Memorandum for developing an oil and natural gas market in South East Europe (December 2003) and took part in the EU's energy cooperation efforts in the Black Sea, becoming one of the founders of the Black Sea Regional Energy Centre (BSREC), along with Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine in a joint initiative with the European Commission, under its SYNERGY Programme.[17]

Its strategic position enables Turkey to be the major energy transporter of the EU and to make use of this role within its energy diplomacy. Speaking about shared visions, it is also true enough that, along with the EU, Ankara recently displayed a willingness to detach itself from Russia.

Turkey could bring a number of new energy suppliers to the EU energy market via its proximity to the Caspian basin. Energy pipelines cutting through Turkey could be an alternative energy stream for the EU and gives the Caspian basin a stable market for their energy reserves. The stable flow of gas from the Baku-Tbilisi and Ceyhan pipeline is already a good reference for the future pipeline projects.[18]

In the article "Europe's External Energy Policy and Turkey's Accession Process", in *Center for European Studies Working Paper Series #170* (2009), professors Ali Tekin and Paul A. Williams discuss the role of Turkey in the European Union's energy security and its implications for the Turkish accession process.

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[16] Leifheit, Drew, *Energy Union in Romania: Optimism and Realism*, in *Natural Gas Europe*, October 26, 2015 [http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/energy-union-in-romania-optimism-and-realism], May 11, 2016.

[17] Black Sea Regional Energy Centre [http://www.bsrec.bg/], May 12, 2016.

[18] Uludağ, Mehmet Bülent, Karagül, Soner; Baba, Gürol, *Turkey's Role in Energy Diplomacy from Competition to Cooperation: Theoretical and Factual Projections*, in *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy, Vol. 3, Special Issue*, 2013, pp. 102-114 [http://www.econjournals.com/index.php/ijeep/article/viewFile/585/335], May 12, 2016.

In emphasizing the crucial pivot that Turkey represents to the attainment of the EU external energy policy objectives, they say Turkey may not be open to further cooperation on energy security unless the European Union displays incentives for more decisive mutuality of the Turkish membership efforts. They argue that the perspective should be in the long run, with the EU giving more serious consideration to Turkey's accession as European energy needs are getting more pressing day by day.

A Turkish energy corridor seems to offer one of the only feasible modes of connecting a greater diversity of suppliers to Europe along a larger number of secure and independent routes.[19]

The COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT TURKEY 2015 REPORT says that the country is moderately prepared in the field of energy, with good progress regarding security of supply. Turkey continues to comply with the oil stocks *acquis*. A gas transportation agreement between Turkey and Turkmenistan was ratified in May 2015. Operations related to the trans-Anatolian natural gas pipeline project moved forward decisively. Nevertheless, a fair and transparent gas transit regime in line with the EU energy *acquis* is still required for Turkey to play a major role as a gas transit country to the community area.[20]

Conclusions

Taking into consideration the facts and figures presented in this paper, we can see that the European Union has made some steps in the direction of inspecting and implementing new projects that could possibly reduce and, in time, replace its gas dependency on Russia and facilitate the completion of an integrated energy market with a competitive potential at international level. Recent investment in the Eastern Partnership, as the successful extension of the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership to Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, in addition to Ukraine, and the consolidated cooperation with Azerbaijan, also the potential promised by the TANAP project as an agent of change give some hope for advancement in attaining the strategic goal of improving energy security in the wider Black Sea

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[19] Tekin, Ali, Williams, Paul A., *Europe's External Energy Policy and Turkey's Accession Process*, in *Center for European Studies Working Paper Series #170* (2009) [http://aei.pitt.edu/11786/1/CES_170.pdf], May 12, 2016

[20] European Commission, *COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT TURKEY 2015 REPORT*, Bruxelles, Novemeber 10, 2015 [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2015/20151110_report_turkey.pdf], May 12 2016.

Region. Moreover, Turkey could account for another important pillar in this equation of key natural resources in its hypothetic quality of an EU member state. However, we must restate that there are still remaining steps to be taken so that they fully comply with the acquis in the energy field and we must acknowledge that the accession negotiations are also a sensitive topic in the union arena because of problems of other nature such as the rule of law or unsolved conflicts with Turkish neighbours, namely Cyprus and Greece. Equally true is that the actual President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Junker, made it clear that there will be no extension during his mandate.

I would like to attach a sense of personal optimism to these European perspectives in the meandering road to energy independence and security but I also underline the need for the common interest to be followed in practice and all throughout the process of change (some would contradict, saying that there is no common interest at all). Speaking with many voices in this ever-changing network of geopolitics will not ensure that integrated response to the gas problem in the Black Sea/Eurasian region of strategic interest.

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THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EDUCATIONAL TOURISTS IN THE CITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA AND ITS IMPACTS ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Alex Donega[1]

Introduction

Created in 1987, the Erasmus has become the best known European Union (EU) program and most successful student exchange scheme in the world (MARINA, 2014). Its objective is to promote and facilitate mobility in higher education as well as to prepare European students to work in an increasingly transnational economy. The idea is that intermixing students of different nationalities enhances a sense of European identity among participants and serves as a path to creating truly European citizens (MITCHELL, 2012).

The program is named after the Dutch philosopher, theologian and humanist Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1465-1536), who himself spent long periods of his life working and living abroad. The name is also an acronym: European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (EUROPEAN COMISSION, 2014).

Starting in the years 1987-1988 with 3,244 participating students from 11 different member states (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Netherlands and the United Kingdom), which later increased in the years 2012-2013 to 270,000 students benefitting from EU grants to study abroad for a total of 26 member states and three million students participating in total (EUROPEAN COMISSION, 2015). In January 2014 the Erasmus program was incorporated into the Erasmus+ and it has a budget of 14.7 billion Euros that will cover the period from 2014 to 2020 (EUROPEAN COMISSION, 2015).

In Romania, the Erasmus program follows the European trends, at least as far as what concerns the demand of the students (EUROPEAN COMISSION, 2014). Currently, Cluj-Napoca is one of the most important academic, cultural, industrial and business centers in Romania. Among other institutions, it hosts the country’s largest university, Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU).

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In Erasmus program, the period of mobility is between 3 to 12 months and the students do not pay university fees to study at the BBU. Students also receive a scholarship to partly cover the costs to live in Cluj-Napoca.

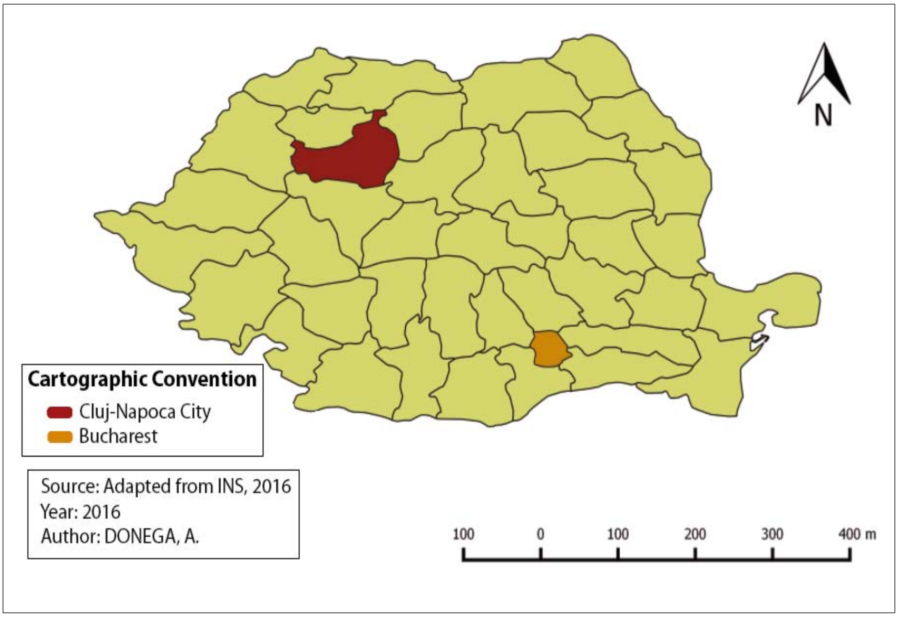
In contrast to the wealth of studies on the academics, demographics and economics of the Erasmus program, there have been relatively few studies investigating the impact of the Erasmus scholarship students regarding local development and reflecting where the students live.

Accordingly, this study presents a model of analysis of the economic impacts of the Erasmus+ students of BBU in Cluj-Napoca, which analyzes the main economic indicators. The proposed model is an extension of the model developed by Stynes (1999), widely applied in international studies to measure the economic impact of the tourism sector. Hence, this model can provide public managers an economic vision of tourism aimed at formulating public policies for the development of economic activity.

Cluj-Napoca and the Babeș-Bolyai University

Cluj-Napoca is located in the heart of Transylvania, one of the most important cultural and economic regions of Romania. It can be regarded as an access gate toward both the Eastern and Western side of Europe's educational market (HINTEA, 2012).

Image 1 – Cluj-Napoca City, Romania, 2016.



Source: Own elaboration.

According to the Institutul Naţional de Statistică (INS, 2011), the Cluj-Napoca population at the 2011 census was 324.576 inhabitants, which makes Cluj-Napoca the second most populous city in Romania. The boundaries of the municipality contain an area of 179.52 square kilometers, resulting in a population density of 18.08 inhabitants / km². Geographically Cluj-Napoca is roughly equidistant from Bucharest, Romania (324 kilometers), Budapest, Hungary (351 km) and Belgrade, Serbia (322 km).

Higher education has a long tradition in Cluj-Napoca. It is the second largest university center in Romania in terms of student population after Bucharest, the capital city. Initially founded in 1581, BBU is currently among the top research universities in Romania with approximately 50,000 students (HINTEA, 2012).

The outstanding tradition and the rich education prospects place Cluj-Napoca in a national competition with Bucharest and Iasi. With a tradition going back to 1581, when the Jesuits set the basis of education in Treasure City and the inauguration of the University in 1872, Cluj-Napoca is the most prestigious higher education center in Transylvania, where many world-renowned scientists began their career.

From the East, there is tremendous interest expressed by students coming from the former Soviet Union and its satellite countries to study in Eastern European universities, like BBU, which offer degree programs comparable in content and quality to those offered by universities in the countries of Western Europe, but at a significantly lower cost. From the West students are expressing interest in getting acquainted with the culture, traditions, as well as the educational system from the former communist countries; this is evident from the increasing number of Erasmus students who apply for short term exchange studies.

The multiplier effect of the Educational tourists

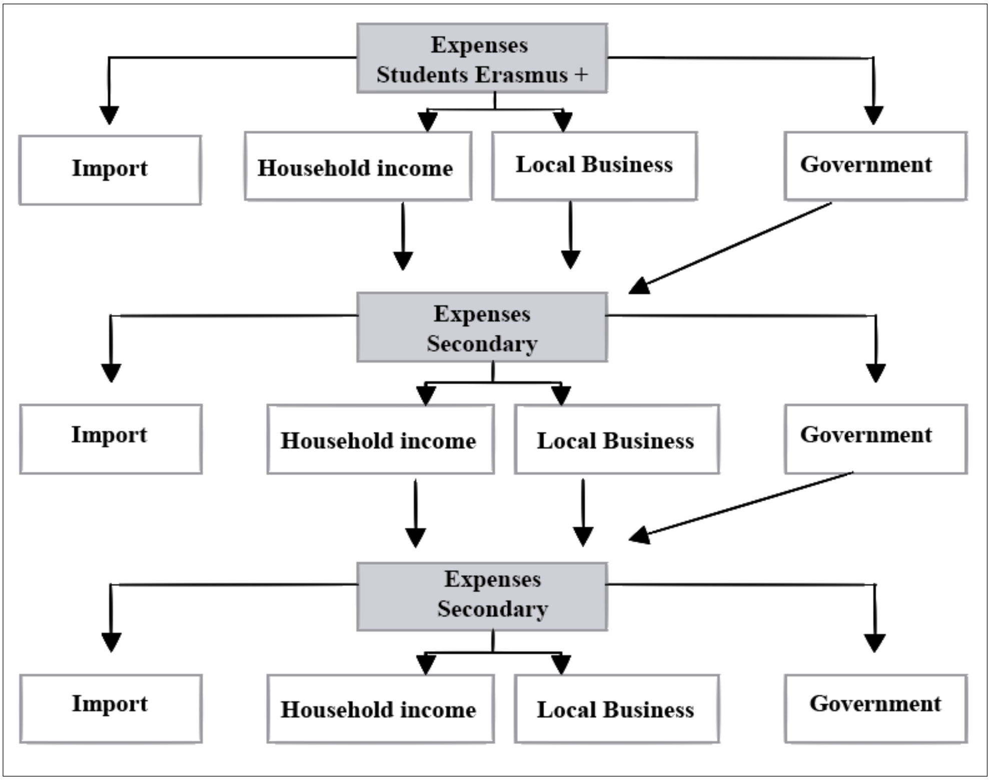
The educational tourists, characterized by a high educational level, could contribute, especially in economic terms, to increasing the local demand that constitutes, according to Ritchie et al. (2003), a base on which tourism can be planned and developed.

Despite the fact that exchange students do not contribute to the host university by paying fees, they still have the potential to make a significant contribution to the local economy by way of spending on accommodation, food, travel and leisure (LLEWELLYN SMITH & MCCABE, 2008).

The expenses of Erasmus+ students in Cluj-Napoca have a spillover effect on the local economy, which begins with students spending money on so-called *front line* services, such as transportation, lodging and restaurants. The result is a drain on the rest of the economy.

According to Cooper (2001), the direct effects of the activity are the expenditures made by students in establishments that provide products and tourist services. But part of that value immediately leaves the economy to cover the costs of the imports needed to cover expenses of these products and front line services. Thus, the direct impacts of the expenses tend to be lower than the actual expense, unless the local economy can produce and meet all the needs of tourists, which is a rare case.

Image 2 – Multiplier effect of educational tourism



Source: Adaptad BARBOSA, MARTELOTTE, ZOUAIN (2006).

Image 2 shows commercial establishments that receive direct earnings from Erasmus + students, who need suppliers to buy products and/or services from and other sectors of the local economy, like hotels that will hire construction services, banks, accountants, food and beverage services. Part of these expenses will come out of circulation because suppliers will need to purchase imported products to meet their needs or need to buy goods and services from other suppliers, and so on. The economic activity generated as a result of cycles of shopping and spending is known as an *indirect effect*.

The sales of a firm lead in the buying of products and services from others within the local economy. In other words, economic sectors are interdependent. Thus, a change in the end of a given sector demand will not only affect the sector in question, but also the sectors of the suppliers of products and services (FLETCHER, 1991). In the case of tourism, any change in spending will affect the level of production of the economy, the unemployment rate, the average family income, government revenue and the balance of trade. However, the magnitude of such a change in suppliers may be greater than, equal to or less than the tour expenses.

The model developed in this study to estimate the economic movement of Erasmus+ students in the Cluj-Napoca economy is an extension of the model proposed by Stynes (1999). However, it is important to mention that this model will only capture the direct effects of the expenses of these students. It is not possible to calculate the indirect effects and induced effects by the absence of database necessary for determining the model.

Therefore, according to Oliveira (2001), understanding the impacts of the activity of tourism and tourism related to other economic activities is fundamental to the search for solutions. This study will assess the contribution of the expenses of the Erasmus+ students spending for the Cluj-Napoca economy. The development of national, state and local plans for the development of educational tourism needs studies of economic impact, as this can serve as a tool for decision-making, contributing to maximizing of the positive impacts and minimize the negative impacts.

Methodology

The main tool used was a questionnaire divided in 3 sections where each section seeks different aspects of the study. The questionnaire was sent by email and through the social networking site Facebook to the students. The first section focused on creating a profile demographic of the Eramus+ students in Cluj-Napoca and concerned the general data collecting answers in terms of: age, nationality, gender, length of the stay and the institution they had studied in Babeș-Bolyai. The second section intended to quantify expenditures of the students in 5 categories: accommodation, food, leisure, transport and phone and internet (BAUWENS et al., 2008; PAWLOWSKA & ROGET, 2009; SOUTO OTERO, 2008). The last section reflects the mobility of the students in terms of trips inside and outside the destination. To the extent applicable, they were also asked about the number of cities and countries they had visited during their stay. This could give an idea of the potential of the international students not only in Cluj-Napoca, but also for the closer countries and cities inside Romania.

The survey was conducted during the month of May 2016 among 332 Erasmus+ students. The survey was send to the 332 students by email and through the social network Facebook, which was provided by the Academic Mobility sector in the Babeș-Bolyai University. These students had studied in Babeș-Bolyai University, in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, from February through June 2016. We obtained 75 responses to the survey.

We chose to use the online questionnaire Google Docs for data collection as a free tool with a nice design that is also practical and accessible to everyone. The choice for an online search was in part due to the flexibility of the data collection and not to generate costs to the students or researchers. The possibility of reaching a very large number of people and also to offer a standardized survey would facilitate data analysis. Couper (2000) explains some of the online search advantages:

Web surveys offer the research community enormous opportunities for low-cost self-administered surveys using a wide variety of stimulus material (sound, images, video, etc.) that has heretofore simply not been available or has been too costly to implement widely in interviewer-administered surveys.

In similar research, Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005) emphasized the importance of online research:

Its most important benefits, thought, were the convenience for both the respondents and the researchers and the fact that it was felt that respondents in this particular age group would be more likely to respond to an electronic format than to any more traditional survey tools.

An important concern regarding Web surveys is their low response rate, especially when sent out to the general population (SCHAEFER & DILLMAN, 1998). However, it was expected that these students would be interested in sharing their opinions about their lives in Cluj-Napoca, which was supported by the relatively high response rate obtained.

The main limitation of this study is the fact that it was based on a database on only Eramus + students. All the students studied at one of the 21 facilities at Babeș-Bolyai University.

The selected variable for determining the minimum required size of the sample was the amount of Erasmus + students in Cluj-Napoca from February until June 2016, since the objective of the research is to estimate the direct economic impact of educational tourism in Cluj -Napoca.

The calculation for sample size was conducted with a 95% confidence interval and maximum margin of sampling error of 10 points. It presents the following formula used in the calculation.

$$n = \frac{\mathrm{N}\left(Z_{\alpha/2} + CV\right)^2}{\left(Z_{\alpha/2} + CV\right) + (N\,\varepsilon^2)}$$

n = sample size; N = population size; CV = Coefficient of variation of the Variable in the sample – 'average daily expenditure; $Z\alpha/2$ = random variable with standard normal distribution; ε = maximum relative error allowed the estimation of the average dimensionante sample variable. The result was a sample size of n= 75.

Results

In sum, we received 81 valid questionnaires for analysis. This paper will discuss the demographic data and the descriptive results of the analyses then intend to quantify expenditures of the students and finally, evaluate the mobility of the students in terms of trips inside and outside the destination and at that extend they were asked about the number of cities and countries they had visited during their stay.

Profile Demographic of the Erasmus + by Babeș-Bolyai

The respondents were more often female (53,5%). The group of 22-26 year old respondents represents 56,3% and the 17-21 year old respondents represents 35,2%. Most students were from Member States of the European Union (40,85%), partner countries neighboring the EU (29,58%), countries of Latin America and the other 29,58% of students came from other regions. With respect to the academic status of the respondents 66,2% are working on their bachelor's degree, 32,4% are working on their master's degree and only 1,4% are PhD students. They study European Studies (19,72%), Business (18,31%), Economics and Business Administration (16,9%) and 47,7% study various other fields. All students spent an average of 5 months in Cluj-Napoca, mostly (89%) from February to June 2016.

Economic impact of the students

The economic impact seems to align with the work of García Rodríguez et. al. (2013), because the main expenditure is dedicated to rent and food, but leisure activities account for almost 1/3 of the total amount of money spend by the students monthly as can be seen in the Table 1.

Table 1: Monthly expenditure by category of accommodation in the city of Cluj-Napoca for person.

Expenses Students Erasmus +	**Monthly expenditure in Cluj-Napoca.**					
	Rent of the flat	**Food**	**Leisure**	**Transport**	**Phone/ Internet**	**Total € 271,68**
	€ 41,64	€ 103,62	€ 103,93	€ 12,69	€ 9,80	

Source: Own elaboration.

Considering the number of 332 Erasmus+ students and the average stay of 5 months, the total received on scholarship is estimated at € 208,262.20. And, the contribution only considering those expenditures in Cluj-Napoca will be around € 90.198,12.

Importantly, 62% of students were able to save money received from scholarships and intended to use this money in their countries of origin. Therefore, those students managed to save approximately € 9.576,50. Of the 38% of students who did not save money, 72% had additional personal monies to cover their expenses of approximately € 4,569.84.

Conclusions

The importance of educational tourism in an economy depends primarily on the quality of the University and the natural economic preconditions, as the existence of tourist attractions, urban infrastructure, tourism facilities and accessibility to the consumer market to attract new students from the Erasmus+ program.

The economic result provides that a noticeable contribution is done by the Erasmus students' expenditures to local economies. With this in mind, the results would pave the way to understand the importance of collaboration between the academic and business circles to improve the students' experience in the country and open up further opportunities for the host country.

The tourism earnings multiplier tends to be higher in larger regions and countries with self-sufficient economies, and lower in smaller regions and countries where earnings trickle out of the economy through importing goods and services to satisfy tourism demand (HORVÁTH & FRECHTLING, 1999).

Then, it can be concluded that the educational tourism sector is presented as an alternative to the present and future development of the city of Cluj-Napoca. However, this development is not simple because it takes planning and work aimed at maximizing the positive impacts that tourism can generate and minimizing the negative impacts. It is important to note that the proposed economic model could provide public managers an economic vision of educational tourism, allowing the formulation of public policies for the development of this activity.

Based on the results of this study, some recommendations are suggested for the development of tourism in the municipality in Cluj-Napoca as follows:

1) Creation of new tourism products that can extend the stay of students in the city;

2) Defining educational tourism (foreign exchange generator) as a local priority;

3) And, finally, the integrated development of all tourism in Cluj-Napoca creates a unique tourist destination able to compete with large national and international destinations.;

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PATA RÂT THROUGH THE EYES OF VOLUNTEERS

Ester Pacltová

Introduction

Sometimes our perception of things that are different to us, tell us the most about ourselves. How we perceive a certain environment, people or community, is being formed by many factors – some of these aspects are coming from our past experience; other opinions depend on how we are informed about a certain phenomena, on how we are influenced by our friends, on the ways in which we are driven by our personality. Alone our visual perception as defined is having the goal of taking in "information about the world" to: make sense of it".[1]

For a small ethnographical research I have chosen people involved in volunteer activities in Pata Rât and I was interested in how they see the environment and those people they interact with and got connected with through volunteering.

On the following pages I will firstly describe the theorethical background of what I mean with perception. Then I will introduce backgrounds of the research, describe what is meant with volunteering and add some facts about Pata Rât and lives of people there. The part of the research itself will afterwards deal with small analyze of volunteers´ perception on Pata Rât and on their volunteer activities there. This is going to be supported by some explanations of the elements of perceptions.

Perception of people, people as volunteers, authenticity

Our desires can produce a distorted perception of the reality, starting with the visual stimuli that we perceive. *Jerome Bruner* is mentioning a very simple example, showing that even our short-term motives may influence our perception: "*An office that i pass each day is numbered 400 D; inevitably, when the hour is near mealtime, I perceive this as FOOD. The car I used to drive had the euphemistic label SILVER STREAK on its dashboard; inevitably, when the hour was near mealtime, I would read this as SILVER STEAK." (C. E. Osgood).*[2] Likewise, as *J. Bruner* notices, our preferences, values and desires can "influence the judgements we make and the impressions we form about what is "out there" in the world".

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[1] Standford University, *Cognnition textbook http://www-psych.stanford.edu/~ashas/Cognition%20 Textbook/chapter2.pdf*, p. 53.

[2] Bruner, Jerome, *Motivation and Perception*, p. 293.

The perception of people about a certain place / community / phenomena can hardly be analyzed with simple categorizations and judgements. How we perceive things is connected to many layers and it is also something very subjective. Analyzing one person´s perception, we would get either way an insight that can appear as reasonably subjective. However, because perception in this case means how we see the world, it is something crucially important as it forms us. On the other side, our experiences are forming our consequent perception. According to how we think about a phenomena, we take actions (or not), we form our opinions and we behave in respect to one another. That is why an investigation into people´s perception can be an adventurous alternative insight on certain phenomena.

This paper will try to illustrate a perception of a specific group of people, the volunteers involved in activities in the settlement of Pata Rât. The attempt is to show a mind picture – the perceptions that volunteer themselves have about in Pata Rât.

Background and methodology of the research

The first thing to mention is the personal motivation for making this project and the methodology that has been used. I came to Romania in September 2016 as an Erasmus student. Without any previous knowledge that Cluj-Napoca is the city with the biggest number of NGO´s in Transylvania, I have met several students that were involved in a variety of voluntary activities in diverse fields.

A friend of mine, Laura Bastian, was the one who told me first about Pata Rât and about her volunteer work there. In Pata Rât there are various groups of volunteers involved in different activities. There are volunteers who spend time with children, teach them to write and read, some others work in the kindergarten in Pata Rât, and again others are engaged in planning sessions with people that search for jobs – in order to help them to find possible solutions.

After a few months I joined a group of volunteers involved in activities with children and I become a volunteer too. We realized that there are many volunteers in Pata Rât, either working for organizations (NGO´s) or in informal volunteer groups. Having met them up at that time, I found out that some of them are foreigners, some of them are students, some of them are working, and generally, that the volunteers only in Pata Rât have very different backgrounds. In February 2016 we decided to make a small ethnographical research for one of our classes, attempting thus to find out more about what pushes people to volunteer, about their life-stories and their perception of Pata Rât.

The first part of our research consisted of participant observation among the volunteers. Part of observations we made in Pata Rât, besides we went to several events that were organized by different NGO´s and Pata Rât volunteers, concerning Pata Rât.

Secondly, we made interviews with the volunteers on a qualitative base. An important aim for us was an attempt of showing the "verbally inexpressible" and maybe sometimes subconscious part of people´s perception. We asked each interviewer for a drawing of Pata Rât as they see it. Through this nonverbal visual illustration that became one of the tools for further discussion with the volunteers, we were trying to uncover their personal view on Pata Rât. All in all, we interviewed and got a Pata Rât „visual mental map" from – including the two of us – eleven volunteers of different age, country of origin, occupation and diverse degrees of involvement in volunteering.

Known or unknown?

Before addressing to the research itself, even if some of the things may be known, I feel the need of mentioning the two sides of our research. To understand better the illustrations and further comments, the question appears: who are actually volunteers in general and what is Pata Rât?

Pata Rât is a settlement area by the Cluj-Napoca´s main landfill. According to a research report carried out in October 2012, there were 1.156 persons in Pata Rât and in the area named Cantonului.[3] Pata Rât consists of 4 segregated settlements, most of them belonging to the Roma ethnic minority. A part of them are people belonging to the Romanian and Hungarian ethnic communities. There is also a small percentage of other ethnicities.

Cristina Raţ, professor of the Sociology Department of the *Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj Napoca*, who is also involved in volunteering in Pat Rât and among others is one of the authors of the above mentioned report, is explaining more about the history of Pata Rât. According to her words, the oldest community of Pata Rat, known as „Dallas", "*had been formed already under the communist regime; it grew significantly in the 1980s and 1990s. The first international faith-based NGO has started to work there in the early 1990s and it is*

[3] Report Research, *Participatory Assessent of the Social Situation of the Pata-Rât and Cantonului Area*, Cluj-Napoca, 2012.

still active today, known as ProRoma". Roma people settling Dallas started with collecting waste items from the landfill. This provided them with a small income and it was sometimes the only way to face unemployment. As Cristina Raţ is adding, "*Ten years later, by the early 2000s, the amount of waste produced by the city increased so that other families, mostly Roma, came to work in selective waste collection on the landfill. They settled not in Dallas, but on the hill right next to the waste dump. At the same time, the municipality had started to evict impoverished, mostly Roma families from the city, and "allowed" them to settle on a street along the railways, close to Pata-Rat, called Cantonului street. By 2012, the number of families living in the shanty-town of Cantonului exceeded one hundred, and they were involved mostly in informal work in the city. Moreover, in 2010 the municipality forcibly evicted 76 families from the city (Coastei street) to some substandard "social" housing located in Pata-Rat, on the hill right above the Dallas settlement.* "

As mentioned further in the *UNDP-UBB research repor*t, the inhabitants of Pata Rat and Cantonului lack proper health care and are confronted with unemployment. Most of the communities have an income of less than 100 lei per a household (in Colina, the majority of the households dispose of either less than 100 or less than 300 lei per household. The households have different numbers of persons, as referred, from 1 up to 10 or more. As an example of live conditions in the Pata Rât area, according to the report, just one of the community (Coastei – Colina) have piper water in the dwelling, the others use mostly either the public tap (Dallas and Cantonului) or use the surface water from a spring on the landfill (Rampa).

The second dimension of this research is circumscribed by the question: Who are actually the volunteers? Volunteerism – if we want to define it – can involve a planned, prosocial behavior that benefit strangers, and occurs in organized or not organized setting. However, volunteering can be also short or long term, individualist or not and can involve a whole range of very various activities. Considering this, volunteerism is in itself a vague term, also because of new meanings that it is constantly acquiring. It can be viewed from the perspective of where and how the volunteer is engaged; the volunteer can be defined according to his/her motivation etc. We should consider the volunteer as a diverse group of individuals engaged in a wide range of activities within formal and informal structures.

The study "*Volunteering in the European Union*"[4], referring to the report "*Volunteering in European Union*" is showing that the number of volunteers,

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[4] Annette Angermann/ Birgit Sittermann, *Source Volunteering in the European Union – An Overview.*

has increased over the past 10 years. In countries like Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, United Kingdom, or Germany, a percentage of 30% or more of the adult population of volunteers is engaged in volunteering. [5]Putting aside the question of formal and informal volunteering that is or isn´t counted into these surveys, we can say that in spite of the different levels of development of the volunteering sector in each EU country, there are certain volunteering traditions in Europe. Volunteers can be involved either in their countries of origin or abroad for long-term or short-term period, paid or unpaid, organized or not. A volunteer is in general willingly spending time to perform an activity that is meant to serve or to contribute to a certain development, improvement or to support a certain event, to carry out activities or to help people.

The Research part

The facts about the interviewers:

Number of interviewed volunteers including the authors of the research: 11

For this paper I will discuss about interviews and visual illustrations of 9 of them (describing 10 visual images).

Age: Volunteers of our research are 19 years old or older

Country of origin: 4 of them come from Romania, 4 of them from Germany; the remaining 3 volunteers are from Switzerland, Italy and Czech Republic.

Duration of their volunteering work: from being once in Pata Rat to 5, 5 years of volunteering; two former volunteers.

Scope of respondent´s volunteering activity in Pata Rât:

working in a kindergarten (for the organization *ProRoma*) – 2 volunteers,
working with children in an informal volunteer group – 7 volunteers
being involved in a musical workshop for children – 1 volunteer
working for another organization – 1 volunteer

The picture of Pata Rât

The images and sketches are an anthropological tool used mostly by the researchers themselves. In our case however it is used as a part of interview that has been carried out with the volunteers. Drawings in anthropology are "a precise method or skill" that "provides an interesting counter-narrative for

[5] Annette Angermann/ Birgit Sittermann, *Source Volunteering in the European Union – An Overview.*

fieldwork and dominant paradigms of visual representation".[6] A closer insight on the images can show what the interviewed volunteers have in mind when they think about Pata Rât. It is the subconscious part of our perceptions. The aim is to analyze the pictures on the basis of elements in the drawings that can be defined as patterns. While connecting these elements together or, on the contrary, when articulating their differences, we are likely to already see something about Pata Rât – what most of the volunteers view as significant to illustrate on the map. The differences can be a clue towards specific points of view / perception of each one of them.

As next we will connect these findings to what we know about the volunteers – factually, or from the interview – in this way there will be the subconscious, the facts and the verbal expression of the people put together as one image. "The drawings became the projective technique which anthropologists have been applying in order to study native's personality, mentality or their world view"[7], drawings were originally used to "record ethnographic reality" even before anthropology happened to be an independent science: "Sailors, travelers, merchants and missionaries – they all recorded the appearance of "the others"" through drawings, too.[8]

People that we interviewed are not part of one organized group, seven of them are part of one informal group; the others, as mentioned before, have found different ways to be involved in Pata Rât. Nevertheless, volunteers are also in a way a community. Somehow they belong together with their focus, given their way of spending of their free time. We can thus talk about the perception of volunteers as an abstract group of people that I have grouped together according to „the role of being a volunteer". This „community" (of volunteers) is showing us the image of another „community" (people from Pata Rat), and the same time it reveals something about their own values, opinions and beliefs.

The two first images are drawn by the two authors of this project. Before asking the others, we started with ourselves in order to define, how we actually see Pata Rât and in order to identify our motivation in joining the volunteer activities there. The third map is made by the one of the first volunteers for the purpose of drawing a first comparison.

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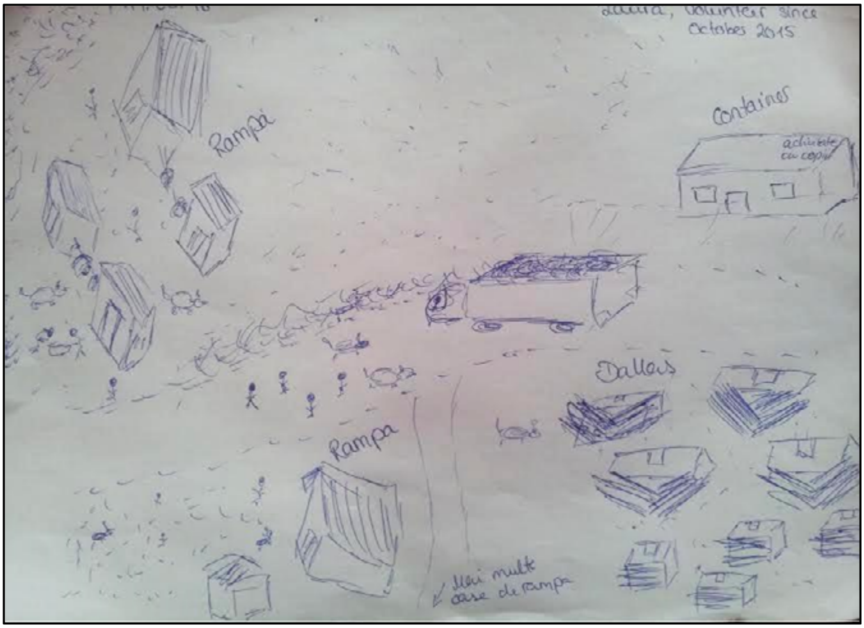
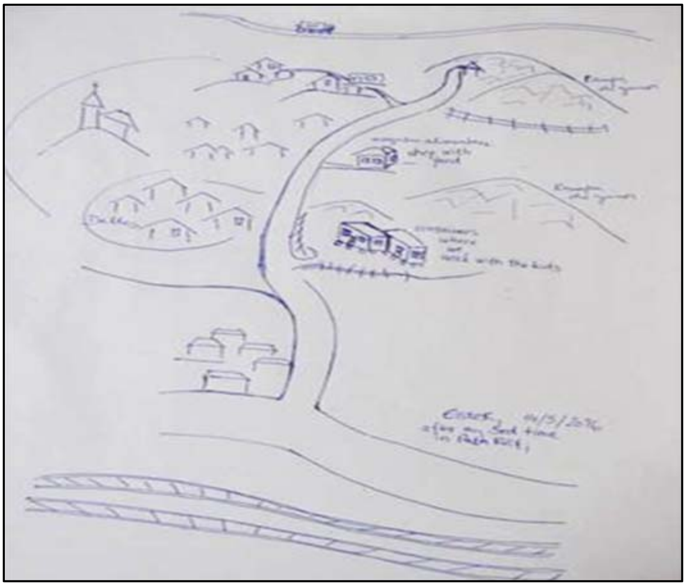
[6] Geismar, Heidy, *Visual Anthropology Review*, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/var.12041/full.

[7] see Cox, 2005; Johnson, Phister, Vindrola-Padros, 2012

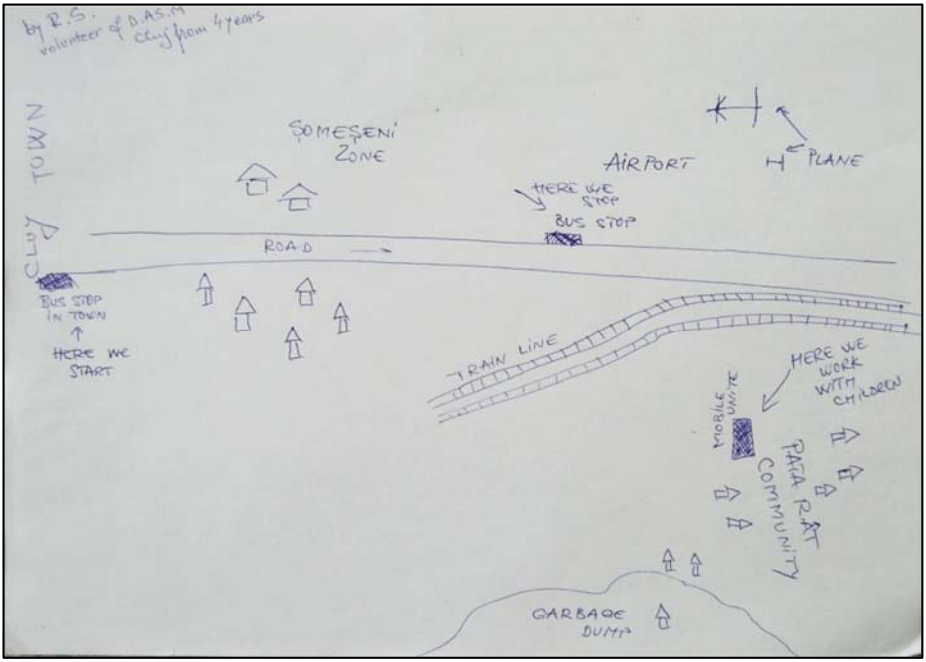
[8] http://www.academia.edu/9976898/Photography_and_Drawing_in_Anthropology p. 535



Map 1: Laura, volunteer in Pata Rât since October 2015. Laura is underlining not having drawn communities that she didn't know well at that time. I guess the more familiar she is with something, the more personal and detailed she perceives it.



Map 2: Ester, volunteer in Pata Rât since February 2016. On this map there is a certain isolation displayed, illustrated by the contour lines which are as if separating Pata Rât from the outside. It depends on the observer what they find in the image. According to a friend, this illustration looks like a beating heart with its coronary arteries.



Map 3: Volunteer R.S., in Pata Rât since autumn 2012; as an author of several researches in the field of Sociology, and being aware of the aim of this research, he focuses in his illustration on depicting directly the view of a volunteer while going to Pata Rât. R.S. is engaged in several volunteering activities. He is very concerned about the circumstances of people in Pata Rât and wants to keep in relationship with them and carry on in volunteering.

Conclusions of the first maps

Without knowing anything closer about Pata Rât and just by seeing by the drawings, we can already get a certain idea about what is Pata Rât like. Laura´s illustration in the map 1 seems to me like an impressionist drawing. She is focusing on one moment in the people´s lives. She is depicting details of significance and she is displaying the atmosphere of a place that she defines as chaotic. She is not interested in the borders of the place but in what lies inside, drawing people and situations that look like a situational photography. The perspective taken in the following two drawings (maps 2 and 3) is very different. From the picture, for me and for the volunteer R.S., Pata Rât is seen from above and from behind the trail lines, right after the bus road coming from the neighborhood of Someşeni, in a way that shows separation (either from something undefined or from the city of Cluj); only the community and the dwellings close to the landfill. The images are to a certain extent showing a flattened perspective, with or without its surroundings.

What does it show? In images 2 and 3, the contextual circumstances and the surroundings of the community are important in our perspective (more then what is going on inside the community). The example given in the first image is the opposite: it is an insight view. It nevertheless does not mean not being conscious in respect to the contexts.

Even though the images 2 and 3 seem to be pretty similar, not to connect them with our backgrounds and life stories would be showing just one side of a coin. In order to obtain a deeper view we must connect the subconscious with facts – even with facts about us – and mention how we express our perception and motivation verbally.

Possible meanings

Me, R.S. and Laura, we all work within the same group of volunteers. Me and Laura we are of a similar age and we are both foreigners, whereas R.S. is older than us and Romanian. Laura studies International Social work, R.S. is a PhD. student of Sociology and I am a student in the department of European Studies.

Why would it be necessary to mention these aspects? There are more similarities between the map drawn by me and the one made by R.S. that between mine and Laura's. This shows that the perception is at least in this case not necessarily determined by the age, the country of origin or the occupation of the individuals – and not even by the individuals' field of study. The time spent while being involved in the volunteer work also did not show its influence in this case. What is then informing / determining what we see and what we do not see?

R.S. is stating that he experienced a strong reaction when he got to Pata Rât for the first time. He was shocked by the living conditions of the people and by the lack of involvement the authorities in changing the people's situation. He liked working with children, and also with the group of volunteers with which he got connected. He got used to their way of working and reflecting on their work and with the way they spend their free time teaching children to read and write… He decided to stay involved. He is saying that doing this volunteer work is making him more empathetic and less individualistic. I can pretty much identify myself with all of these reflections and motives. R.S. also perceives volunteering as a way of changing things. As such, he has in view the circumstances existing in Pata Rât and the contribution made by volunteering. With this perspective in mind, I also see Pata Rât as it is, and hope the effects we, the volunteers, bring in, are beneficial. Maybe our images are colored by these motives and perceptions – which, in turn, affect the way we display Pata Rât in our images. It can be an example of the way in which motives and opinions influence our perception. With the distance offered by time, I realize that now, a few months on from the first drawing; I would illustrate Pata Rât differently. This shows me that perception is not stable and invariable: it can transform in the time, due to experience and too many other factors.

1) Three types of visual illustrations

After analyzing the images, I realized there are different patterns that keep on repeating in the "maps of Pata Rât". Some of them get repeated in almost each drawing; some of them are very specific to only two or three of them. There are also certain aspects that are specifically seen just by one person.

I tried to summarize this analysis and guess on some explanations of the patterns, according to the discussion I have carried out with the volunteers regarding their pictures. The results are the following:

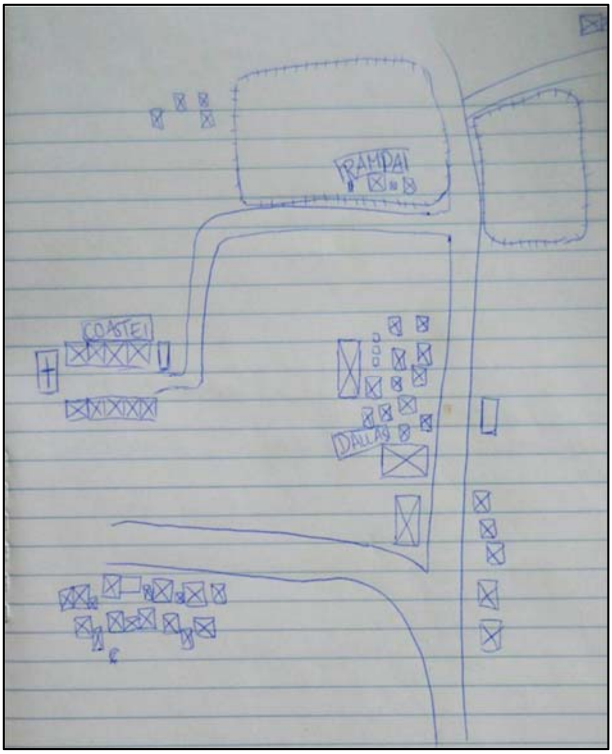
The visual images that have been collected are very different. From their nature, I can distinguish between: a) illustrations and sketches (most of the drawings cf. Map 1); b) maps from above (cf. Map 3) and c) "mind maps"- written ideas. Illustrations are more akin to artistic images whereas the "maps from above" take a rather descriptive approach of something that I call "google-map-alike". The third type of "mind maps" consists of written ideas resulting from a certain brainstorming on the topic. Sometimes the volunteers drew something in between (cf. Map 2).

What did the drawings show us about Pata Rât? There is a great deal of visual stimuli in what the volunteers decided to depict. In that perspective, Pata Rât is seen as a very diverse place.

What did we realize about the volunteers? Some of them seem to be very personal in their approach of illustrating Pata Rât – they display certain scenes taken from the routine life of the community, draw a person or a family. Some others, seeing Pata Rât more from above, reflect a certain interest on a perspective showing whole communities, conditions or situations.

For the sake of comparison, one can consider the two maps below:

Map 4: The volunteer is displaying a small perspective of a family from Dallas. She is used to volunteering and working with children and enjoyes it, that is what she wanted to volunteer in Cluj too. She comes from Germany and is a volunteer in Pata Rât since few months. She said she has seen already such life conditions of people in Middle America.. However, even despite difficult life conditions, she finds a certain esthetics in it.



Map 5: Volunteer since February 2016. In the interview she is talking about the approach needed in Pata Rât – to base any volunteering interventions on asking directly by people for their real. She thinks that her organization is following this approach which she finds good. Generally, she feels she is more learning herself while volunteering in Pata Rât. She sees the potencial in the children and thinks that education is important for them „so that they can be kids and don´t have to work“.

The different play of perspectives does not necessarily need to show that one is more detached and the other one less. I assume that it rather shows the focus of one's perception according to the aim of volunteering for the volunteers themselves. It can mean that the volunteer perceives the area of Pata Rât in its complexity, just like author of the Map 5 (or Map 3) who is explaining all the connections, history and conditions of the different communities in which she works. However, it can also show an attempt towards having an objective, contextual perspective. Map 5 shows us a volunteer that emphasized her look from above as a racial one – she says that a racial perspective is how she always sees things. She probably needed to make an overview of whole Pata Rât in order to better orientate herself in the phenomena as such. She is also talking a lot about the living conditions of people and her motivation is to learn from volunteering there – because, as a short-term volunteer, she does not think she can contribute in a visible way to changes to these conditions. This, conjoined with the fact that she is working with many different people in Pata Rât, makes perhaps possible an explanation for her view from above.

The Map 4 (and cf. Map 1), on the contrary, is empathizing a lot, showing an interest in a deep view of the intimacy of people´s lives in Pata Rât. This volunteer has had many previous experiences in working with children; she has established deeper ties with one family in Pata Rât, getting into closer contact with them. This can explain her drawing of just one concrete life story. She is concerned about the living conditions of people but she has found a certain "esthetic" in Pata Rât – something which is also visible in her drawing. Generally speaking, many of the collected drawings include references to certain personal elements of life in Pata Rât. The volunteers showed also a marked interest in talking about the personal stories and experiences that they went through while volunteering. Volunteers providing more personal images have a perspective that is more focused on peoples' stories and way of life. During the interviews, these volunteers were referring more frequently to concrete memories, whereas volunteers with objective maps seem more interested by the general living conditions in Pata Rât. Some of the more personal details will be mentioned in the next paragraph.

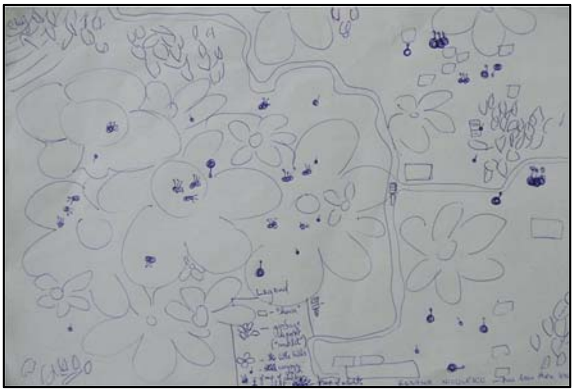
2) Symbolic representations

A closer look at the maps is rising the question of repeating patterns and symbols depicted in the images. After collecting these elements I defined a few of them.

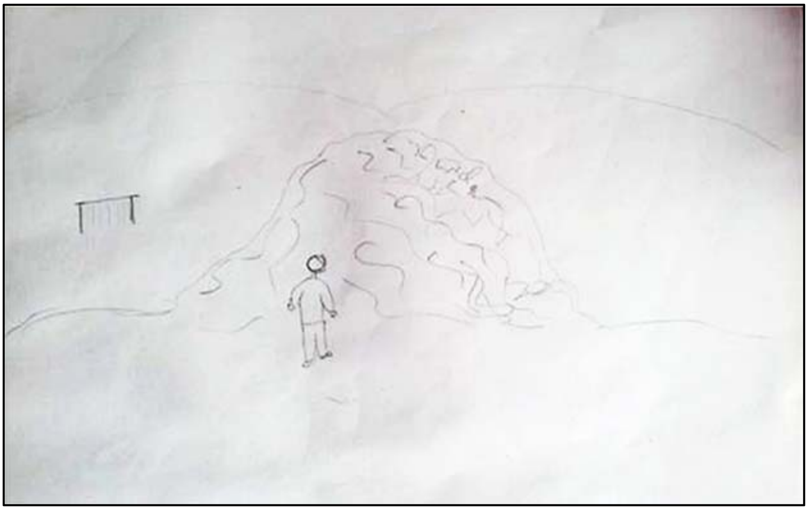
There are "geographical representations" that most of the volunteers described or illustrated: on most images we can see references to houses or at least to one of the four communities living in Pata Rât (cf. all the illustrations above). Sometimes the houses represent people; sometimes there are just people that are shown up. Each volunteer was referring in one way or the other to the people that live there – it is reasonable to remark that, as all the volunteers work either with children or with adults in Pata Rât, they considered it important to illustrate this somehow.

There is one topographical pattern that may be noticed on each image – bar one exception. That is the depiction of the garbage landfill. This is something that the volunteers felt the need to represent – even though they did it in different ways and to different extents. The garbage is displayed either as a part of the surroundings of the people's dwellings – built near the landfill – or simply just close to them.

Compared to the previous images, the following three images will illustrate this further:



Map 6 and 7:
Volunteer Roxana decided to draw two images; the first one illustrates how they arrived to Pata Rât with the volunteers and what is around – see the small legend. The second image shows happy and wild children that were around when she arrived.
She has been once in Pata Rât for a musical workshop with children. "I didn´t know anything about Pata Rât before. I mean we don´t know anything about them and they are so close... It's an interesting culture."



Map 8: Volunteer that has been twice in Pata Rât. This volunteer illustrated in a minimalistic way his strong impressions from when he firstly went to Pata Rât. He illustrated a kid by a landfill and a shelter which he was impressed by how small it is. He has seen such life conditions as people have only once- in Nepal after an earthquake.

The above mentioned are the most common patterns in the visual illustrations collected. However, there are several other elements to be described. Many volunteers drew or mentioned references to the place where they work as volunteers On some images we can therefore see a note referring to a „mobile unit" (see Map 3) or to „containers where we work with the kids" (see Map 1 and 2); for others it is the kindergarten that is of marked importance – or some of the communities (Map 5, 10 and 11). All these represent significant reference points for the volunteers, underpinning their connection to the people that they work with.

There are some other interesting patterns that can be noticed on several of the images that show us how life in Pata Rât is and also what volunteers perceive as being significant. From amongst these, I will briefly describe a few.

- Clothes on the drying line, depicted in 3 images (see Map 1, 4 and 9) – volunteers see it as something significant, as people spend a lot of time outside in Pata Rât. You can also often see clothes hanging on a line in front of the house. This argues about the perspective that is usually shown us in media where the living of Pata Rât people is often depicted as dirty. As Cristina Raţ is notes, "*The clothes on the drying line indicate the effort of the people to keep themselves clean and tidy despite their miserable living conditions.*" In this way the volunteers are seeing a different perspective then shown generally about Pata Rât. It could be a sign of trying to argue the stereotypes against people in Pata Rât.

- Animals – shown on 4 images (see Map 1, 4, 6 and 7) – dogs, pigs and horses that are in the area; the volunteer that authored the first map even depicted a dead dog that she had seen overrun by car. The animals are among houses and children, sometimes on streets. From the perspective of volunteers, animals belong to the live in Pata Rât.

- Children – they are depicted on 6 of the images (see Map 1, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10). Most of the volunteers work with the kids and they remember them being around, on the road where the big cars drive so dangerously quickly, crossing the unprotected train railway, or playing with a soap bubble blower. Volunteers talk about children also in their interviews; many of them seem to have close relationship to the children.

- Atmosphere – one volunteer explained that she depicted a sunny day with happy children around (Map 6 and 7), another one with the chaos that you can see there (cf. Map 1). On some more images we can see a very calm atmosphere (cf. Map 10) or worries about the circumstances of people's lives (cf. Map 10)

The last patterns describe possible symbolic elements present in the images:

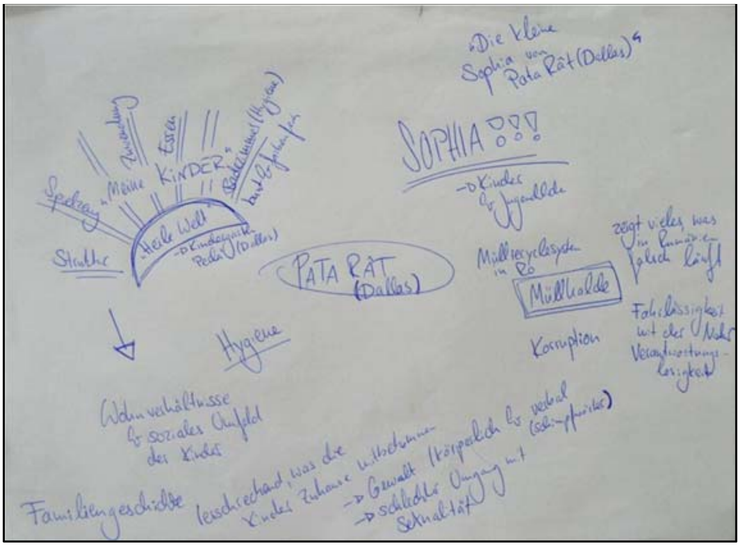
- Railroad tracks on two images (Map 2 and 3)– these are the tracks that you have to cross every time on the way from Pata Rât to the bus stop. The bus is taking you to the city center or the other way round – from the center to Pata Rât.

- References to the world outside of Pata Rât, displaying limits or borders of Pata Rât – on several images there are lines showing us the limited area of Pata Rât on my map (train rails, fences –Map 2, 5, roads all the maps apart from 8, separating lines –Map 2, 9, 10). Pata Rât may feel as an isolated place, maybe from the other settlements in that area, maybe from the city of Cluj

- Geographically, or symbolically.

To display this better, we can consider the last images below:

Map 9: Volunteer for 5,5 years. Her journey to volunteer and also to live in Pata Rât came through the faith in God. She does not know if she stayes in Pata Rât for the lifetime, but she does not plan anything else now. On her image she refers to the hard work on the landfill and on how much we should appreciate people from Pata Rât. As she has been working on the landfill for one year, collecting waste items as people from Pata Rât, she knows how unsatisfactory and physically demanding work it is.



Map 10: The last map displayed is created by a volunteer that has been working in Pata Rât since the autumn 2015. She is drawing Dallas and Kindergarten and talking about „her kids" from there that likes. She is talking about what their needs are and what conditions that they live in. „Even if it may sound like a cliche, volunteering is a learning program of self- or character development. It is a lot about learning and also it is changing people´s perception of world. This can afterwards already change something in the world."

Conclusions:

In this paper I tried to introduce the dimension of perceptions that volunteers have about Pata Rât. A main tool for the research consisted of visual illustrations made by volunteers themselves. Through this tool and by means of interviews carried out with the volunteers, we tried to uncover their perspective and to connect it with what was told.

As a result, I defined three main types of visual illustrations as following: a) art work-like images, b) what I call „plane perspective maps" and, as last, c) „mind maps".

Mostly, but not only, the art work-like images are full of personal touches and elements. During the interviews, the authors of these illustrations were talking more about their concrete memories and stories, and sometimes about concrete people or animals. They also usually mention minute details – for instance, they mentioned clothes hanging on the lines outside of houses, things found in/by in the garbage landfill, or the way in which the dwellings of Pata Rât are built.

On the other hand, the plane perspective maps are displaying Pata Rât from up above, giving the onlooker a wider range of context. Volunteers that created a „map from above" focus, in general, more on the objective elements and contexts present in the Pata Rât area. Sometimes they talk about the different Pata Rât communities or about the case of Pata Rât in general. In this way these illustrations are similar to what we called mental maps. Those, however, focus even more on general conditions of life in Pata Rât as a part of Cluj-Napoca or of Romania. The main focus was for instance on the need for a change of the circumstances existing in Pata Rât, on the role of volunteering or on life conditions in Pata Rât. Alongside this, we discussed the perspectives the drawings give when considered as closer personal insights or as a further contextual view.

Summing up, the visual representations of the volunteers turned out to be connected to the personal characteristics of the volunteers and their own beliefs and focuses. From a small-scale research as this I do not aim to draw generalizations but rather to explore and depict the nuances available in the various perspectives offered by a specific group of people. These aspects can help us towards a better understanding of a certain social phenomena and of our perception of it. The perception of our volunteers was mostly connected to the experiences of the individuals, as for instance previous volunteering activities. The first reactions triggered by seeing the life conditions in Pata Rât were also noticeable points in the case of some of the volunteers, as they influenced their latter perception of Pata Rât.

Further on, as already mentioned, the perception, may be influenced by interests of the volunteers. The perception of Pata Rât is more connected with the volunteers' interests – for instance in the arts, or in working with children etc. The aims and plans of the volunteers may also be found displayed in their illustrations – like, for instance, the attempt to improve the life conditions of the inhabitants of Pata Rât, or the experience of learning for self- or a character developement. Lastly, the perception can be affected by the values of the volunteers – as may be faith in God or hope and effort for a change of the life conditions in Pata Rât.

At the end I would like to say that even if visual illustrations are still very subjective – and so is my analysis of the interviews and the connection between the two – we nevertheless gained a certain insight into the meaning of what people see around themselves and perceive as significant. Sometimes it consists of details, sometimes of concrete life stories and sometimes of complex views on certain phenomena. Our perception of the same reality is not definite, it can also change with time. It is also not the same for everyone but it can be supported by facts that we know and, as described earlier, it may be influenced by many factors and by life experiences as such. However, we can learn how to affect our perceptions too, by being conscious about them. Through a reflexive view on our own motives, beliefs and perceptions, we can learn about own own perceptions and patterns in relation to the others.

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SENEGALESE IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND FAILING EU POLICIES: NEW INSIGHTS FROM A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PARADIGM

Magdalena Plasser

Introduction

The present research article was produced in the framework of a Master's Degree in Intercultural Mediation: Identities, Mobilities, Conflicts, and is the result of a four-month period of field work in Dakar, Senegal. The findings discussed in this article will also be presented in the full masters' thesis[1] which is to be published shortly after this article.

In recent years, there has been a steady increase in attempts by governments or supranational bodies such as the European Union to 'manage' migration flows. There is a general EU-wide consensus that migration needs to be managed and irregular migration needs to be impeded. However, the actual impact of policies targeting irregular migration, or migration in general, are difficult to measure and states' practical means are limited, especially with regards to human rights and the need for protection of asylum seekers and vulnerable groups[2]. Moreover, scholars such as Castles[3] have observed that migration policies, although indeed influencing migration patterns, often have unintended outcomes.

Besides the policy focus, my research interests concerned Senegalese irregular migration towards Europe, and their different pathways, decision-making processes, as well as their representations of and strategies for migration. At the same time, my goal was to provide a critical analysis of EU migration policies, aiming to present insights into the influence of EU migration policies on potential or unsuccessful Senegalese irregular migration attempts and strategies.

Thus, the following research question was developed:

"How do EU migration policies aiming to reduce irregular migration influence potential Senegalese migrants' plans for and thoughts on migration?"

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[1] Magdalena Plasser, *EU migration policies and Senegalese irregular migration: Migrants' perceptions*, Universitatea Babes-Bolyai, Forthcoming, 2016.

[2] Mathias Czaika and Hein de Haas, *The Effectiveness of Immigration Policies*, in "Population and Development Review", no. 39 (3), 2013, p. 487.

[3] Stephen Castles, *Why migration policies fail*, in "Ethnic and Racial Studies", Vol. 27, no. 2, 2004, pp. 205-206.

Starting from this general research question, the present article tries to answer the following more specific questions:

- What are the main reasons for potential Senegalese migrants to consider irregular migration to Europe?
- How does their decision-making process work? Who takes the decision to migrate and who influences the decision-making process?
- To what extent are individuals aware of current migration policies and do these play a role in their decision-making process?

In order to find out about individual people's opinions with regards to these questions, a participatory action research framework[45] seemed best suited to the idea that individual viewpoints are central to an understanding of these questions, and that they, as such, need to be taken into consideration and discussed openly and holistically. This is important most notably with regards to potential policy questions, as there has been an unfortunate lack of such discussions.

A need for new concepts and methodological approaches

Generally speaking, the field of migration research is oftentimes heavily influenced by policy makers and institutional funding, as well as media coverage depicting 'mass migration' movements from Africans in the direction of Europe. This coexists with a lack of funding for independent academic research. As a matter of fact, most migration on the African continent is not directed towards the global North but in fact towards other countries on the continent[6].

However, media coverage and the growing amount of EU policies targeting African migration seem to depict or respond to a different reality. The often referred to "myth of invasion"[78] is further fed by electoral campaigns and journalistic coverage and has even influenced the approaches of many

[4] Stephen Kemmis and Robert McTaggart, *Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere*, in Norman, Denzin (ed.), "The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research" (3.rd ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005.

[5] John, Heron and Peter Reason, *A Participatory Inquiry Paradigm*, in "Qualitative Inquiry", no. 3(3), 1997, pp. 274-294.

[6] Mohamed Berriane and Hein de Haas, *New Questions for Innovation Migration Research*, in Mohamed Berriane and Hein de Haas, Hein (eds.), "African Migration Research: Innovative methods and methodologies", Trenton: Africa World Press, 2012, pp. 1-2.

[7] Hein de Haas, *The myth of invasion: Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union*, in "International Migration Institute", 2007, University of Oxford.

[8] Hein de Haas, *The Myth of Invasion: The inconvenient realities of African migration to Europe*, in "Third World Quarterly", *29*(7), 2008, pp. 1305-1322.

researchers towards African migration research. For example, researchers may "generally refrain from rigorously applying methods and methodologies which would allow for an improved understanding of the nature, volume and trends of African migration"[9], and instead orient their research framework towards media and political discourses surrounding migration.

Thus, there is a strong need for empirical data and unbiased research which seeks to understand and conceptualise migration behaviour and which can contribute to an advancement of the field, without simply adopting and reinforcing undertheorised positions created through media or public policy discourse. Lack of funding for independent research means that a significant part of migration research on Africa is defined and driven by the interests of wealthy 'Northern' governments and international organisations, and as Berriane and de Haas[10] further emphasize, "the high dependency on commissioned research is a more general problem of migration research, which is often guided by the short-term policy interests to 'solve' what are perceived as 'migration problems' or 'migration challenges', rather than trying to achieve a more profound understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of migration".

Therefore, it is crucial to approach migration research from a different stance and to advance independent reflections on migration research, directed by worthwhile theoretical and methodological questions in lieu of policy influenced research focusing on migration control and EU security agendas[11].

With regards to data collection, Castles[12] argues that the fundamental distinction between methods and methodology need to be discussed openly and further emphasizes that a combination of methods can be worthwhile for improving and potentially diversifying our understanding of migration.

With regards to methods, Brachet[13] points out that the empirical approach chosen for the subject of migration has a fundamental influence on the results to be found, while the methods a researcher chooses also mirror how he or she

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[9] *Idem* 6, p. 2.

[10] *Idem* 6, p. 2.

[11] *Idem* 6, p. 2-3.

[12] Stephen Castles, *Methodology and methods: Conceptual issues*, in Mohamed Berriane, Hein de Haas (eds.), "African Migration Research: Innovative methods and methodologies", Trenton: Africa World Press, 2012, pp. 15-36.

[13] Julien Brachet, *From one stage to the next: Transit and Transport in (Trans) Saharan Migrations*, in Mohamed Berriane, Hein de Haas, (eds.), "African Migration Research: Innovative methods and methodologies", Trenton: Africa World Press, 2012, pp. 91-113.

conceptualises migration. Moreover, when discussing methodological choices, the political dimension of migration research needs to be acknowledged[14].

Hence, research needs to go beyond state interests and perspectives in order to develop new research questions which account for the diversity of African migration. This may involve conceptualising African migrations in their actual occurrence; as a social fact in constant flux with migrants circulating and adapting their plans depending on changing circumstances[15].

Accounts of migrants' constant adaptation to changing realities point to the fact that most migrants, although confronted with numerous obstacles and living in disadvantaged circumstances, they do show agency and actively try to shape their future and their living conditions. This opposes more traditional accounts of African migrants as passive victims, trying to escape poverty and warfare and emphasizes their agency within their means of manoeuvre[16].

At the same time, when conducting research with vulnerable persons, it is especially important to acknowledge the political economy of knowledge production with regards to African migration, which will be addressed in the following section. For instance, there is a danger in suggesting that African migration is different in nature than migration in the rest of the world. However, although there are high levels of irregularity and fluidity of migration, research on African migration can at the same time enhance general knowledge on human migration in the widest sense and may help to challenge the basis and potential biases of prior migration research[17].

In light of the need for unbiased research approaches and methods, and in order to provide an alternative to state-commissioned research regarding migration management, this article aims to contribute to a diversification of methodological approaches and is situated within a participatory action research paradigm. In the framework of this project, a combination of methods was employed in order to represent the perspectives of undocumented migrants regarding their experiences interacting with and navigating these policies, as well as their reflections on such policies and migration pathways more generally.

Methodological framework – A participatory action research paradigm

Much research has been conducted with regards to irregular migration behaviour, but a significant share of it was informed and funded, and thus to a

[14] *Idem* 6, p. 7.
[15] *Idem* 6, p. 11.
[16] *Idem* 6, p. 11.
[17] *Idem* 6, p. 11-13.

certain extent directed and influenced, by Western states and the European Union, pre-imposing their stances and interests on research. Therefore, I argue for a new, less hierarchical and more adaptive research practice in order to be able to account for the diverse realities, viewpoints and contexts of life of individuals. There is a need to shirk traditional Western academic standards which aim to understand irregular migration movements merely from a Western point of view, and to instead shift to an orientation towards people, thus moving from a solely top-down perspective to including a bottom-up perspective. Intrinsically related to this are issues of power inequality, which need to be addressed explicitly throughout the research process. Thus, if the real desire is to understand the underlying motives and reasons for irregular migration attempts, and not only to shield the European Union from irregular migrants, I argue that we need to give a voice to *the individuals* whom such migration policies are targeting[18].

Hence, for this particular research project, a participatory action research (PAR) approach was adopted. Participatory action research is especially well-suited for the given context, because it "works to embrace diverse knowledges and destabilize hierarchical relationships between researchers and participants"[19]. It is only when we are able to deconstruct power relationships and move to include the people concerned in the research process that we can hope to gain a better understanding of the different factors and circumstances influencing their choices. This involves attributing all those involved an equally important place in the construction of knowledge. As Reason and Bradbury[20] put it, participatory action research "seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people (...)". This refers to the general PAR position that worthwhile academic research should be directed towards producing knowledge aimed at an improvement of human beings' realities. Therefore, when researching irregular migration, this means that we should direct our efforts towards an understanding of the context and the factors that are at the origin of such migration attempts[21]. As is illustrated through one

[18] *Ibidem* 1.

[19] S., Kindon, R. Pain, and M. Kesby, *Participatory Action Research*, in "Elsevier Ltd.", 2009, p. 90.

[20] Peter Reason, Hilary Bradbury, *Introduction: Inquiry and Participation in Search of a World Worthy of Human Aspiration*, in Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (eds.), "Handbook of Action Research", London: Sage Publications, 2006, p. 1.

[21] *Ibidem* 1.

interview quotation, looking at migration behaviour is not enough, if we want to understand the underlying reasons for it:

> "words alone cannot make people stay / you know / there has to be projects/ or work / something determined / the Senegalese government needs to search for work / or for projects to help the young / so that they can work here (...)"[22]

Thus, there is a need to focus on people's perceptions of their own reality, and to consider them as experts of their own context and lived experiences. As Reason and Bradbury[23] acknowledge,

> "a participatory worldview places human persons and communities as part of their world – both human and more-than-human – embodied in their world, co-creating their world. A participatory perspective asks us to be both situated and reflexive, to be explicit about the perspective from which knowledge is created, to see inquiry as a process of coming to know, serving the democratic, practical ethos of action research."

This is to say that humans, including their realities and subjective experiences, reflections, representations of the world, and in this specific context, their individual migration experience, are at the center-stage of this research. Knowledge produced is necessarily embedded in people's realities and in the local context. Thus, knowledge gained explicitly depicts their own realities and should serve for a better understanding of struggles within these communities. Although the research is limited to two specific, traditional fishing communities in the suburbs of Senegal's capital city Dakar, these experience may well be potentially representative or indicative of other communities in Senegal and sub-Saharan Western Africa, where people to the present day live in disadvantaged conditions, poor education and employment opportunities, embedded in structural injustice and consequences of colonialism[24].

Therefore, the political aspects of knowledge production need to be emphasized when researching irregular migration behaviour. In this sense, Kindon et al. demand a "less hierarchical research practice which challenges and acts upon inequality" and advocate for PAR because "it is context specific, forefronts local conditions and knowledge, and produces situated, rich and

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[22] Interview 1, p. 16. All quoted passages have been translated from French to English by the author; [slashes are indicative of breaks].

[23] *Idem* 20, p. 7.

[24] *Ibidem* 1.

layered accounts"[25]. With regards to migration research, I support the call for alternative, less hierarchical ways of investigating in order to be able to create more diverse, rich and true accounts of people's realities and of how individuals relate to their own lives, experiences and contexts in order to understand their actions. It is also necessary to understand people as individuals who take decisions embedded in their circumstances, which means acknowledging that actions cannot only be explained merely through rational thinking. This is even truer, if we try to impose Western ways of thinking and acting on individuals in different cultures who live in completely different contexts and circumstances. Hence, it is not possible to explain irregular migration patterns and behaviour of individuals if we look at their behaviour through a Western lens and mindset[26].

With reference to this, it is especially important for a researcher to acknowledge his or her own position in the given research context and to actively acknowledge and question pre-existing power hierarchies. Being a Western, white, woman with university education in a research context where most individuals have little formal education and significantly less economic, employment and educational opportunities, concerns for issues of power hierarchy were omnipresent throughout the research process. As a matter of fact, I was at many occasions met with an advance in respect, most likely merely because of being Western and white. Therefore, such issues needed to be addressed openly throughout the research process in order to aim for a non-hierarchical research process where participants actively shape and critically assess the research process[27].

Methods – the problem-centered interview

Given the main research objective, which is to understand the extent to which EU migration policies influence the decision-making processes of Senegalese 'boat migrants', one of the biggest challenges was thus to get in touch with individuals concerned who were eager to participate in such a research project. In order to learn about what the people interviewed consider most important themselves, the most appropriate research tool within a participatory action research framework, turned out to be the problem-centered interview, a

[25] *Idem* 19, p. 92.
[26] *Ibidem* 1.
[27] *Ibidem* 1.

combination of methods developed by the German psychologist Andreas Witzel.

The problem-centered interview was designed in order to understand, while remaining as unbiased as possible, individual actions, perceptions and ways of dealing with social realities[28]. This in turn corresponds with the objective of participatory action research to depict unbiased versions of the lived realities of individuals and of their ways of interpreting and dealing with given circumstances. In the problem-centered interview, the process of knowledge production functions as a constant inductive-deductive interplay. The interview should focus on a problem that is relevant for a given society, which joins the PAR position for research that is meaningful for human beings. What is more, there is a focus on a given subject, which means flexibility of methods towards the different requirements of the research context[29].

The problem-centered interview consists of four main instruments: a short questionnaire completed prior to the interview; an interview guide; the audio recording; and a post-script produced immediately after the interview. The short questionnaire gives basic information on the participant's name, age and profession and serves mainly as an introduction. Then, researcher and participants proceed to the interview. The interview guide consists of one pre-formulated question focusing on the 'problem' that the research is centered on and is aimed at initiating narration. This question was formulated as follows: "Can you tell me about your life and your experience with migration?" The participants are thus encouraged to proceed to a narration of their migration experience and of anything related to this in their lifestory that they judge relevant. In addition, the researcher has pre-established a list of topics of interest to be asked if the interviewee does not talk about them in the first narration. Cross-checking with these topics enables the researcher to ask ad-hoc questions if necessary in order to ensure comparability between the different interviews. The audio-recording is necessary so that the researcher can fully focus on observing situational conditions and non-verbal communication aspects. Immediately after the interview, the interviewer proceeds to producing a postscript, in which he outlines the main topics of conversation, comments about non-verbal aspects, striking thematical features and first spontaneous ideas for interpretation[30].

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[28] Andreas Witzel, *Das problemzentrierte Interview*, Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, 1(1), 2000, Art. 22 [http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0001228], May 27, 2016, paragraph 1.

[29] *Idem* 28, paragraphs 2-4.

[30] *Idem* 28, paragraphs 5-9.

The basis for analysis of the problem-centered interview are the full transcription of the interviews. Following this transcription, the text is marked with keywords according to the interview-guide and is then combined with new concepts evolving from the descriptions and statements of the interview partners, which will form the basis for the development of a coding scheme. Thereafter, the researcher draws a case summary of each individual case, and subsequently proceeds to a systematic contrasting comparison of the different cases. From this process of comparing and contrasting, interesting areas of concern are established and then, core categories are defined. These will subsequently serve for the next stage of selective coding, which is then theory-based and deductive[31].

The problem-centered interview therefore was the most appropriate research strategy in order to find answers to the presented research questions, while attributing agency and power to the individual interviewees by letting them decide what they consider important regarding their own experience and thus placing the individual at the center of the process of knowledge construction. The problem-centered interview is thus especially useful for inquiry within the participatory worldview, because it understands the participants as experts of their own orientations and actions[32].

Fieldwork – Encounters, challenges and lessons learned

Because researching irregular migration is a highly sensitive topic, it can prove difficult at first to get in touch with persons wanting to become a part of the research process. Especially in the beginning of such a research process, the researcher has nothing to offer to the participants[33]. Therefore, it is natural that people might be suspicious of a researcher who decides to conduct such a study in their home communities. This is especially the case when researching a sensitive topic, where experiences are generally associated with negative, painful and oftentimes highly traumatising experiences. The researcher thus depends on the willingness of people to contribute to the research; they may be reluctant to do so, especially if they fear disclosure of their identities or other information to the government. Even if it is possible to reassure the participants with regards to

[31] *Idem* 28, paragraphs 19-25.

[32] *Idem* 28, paragraph 12.

[33] Stephan Wolff, *Wege ins Feld und ihre Varianten*, in Uwe, Flick, (ed.), "Qualitative Forschung: ein Handbuch", Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2005, p. 348.

their identities and information given, there is still a possibility for negative consequences, if example policy makers gain information with regards to specific migration routes and thus change policies, which might lead migrants into ever changing, even more dangerous routes.

After all, it was through getting to know several people in the communities, most of the time by chance, that things eventually moved forward. Most important when wanting to perform research is trust. And so it took weeks and months, simply spending time with people, families, engaging in every-day activities and taking regular part in these persons' life, that with time, trust seemed to grow. Individuals started to trust me, and to tell me about their lives and different aspects that I may not have known of previously. It was also through these accounts and revelations that I was able to gain a deeper understanding of community life, society and as a whole a better understanding of people's realities.

In the course of these weeks, after a while people started to show an interest in my research, introducing me to their friends and relatives. So it was that I was able to conduct several informal, unrecorded pilot talks. These preliminary talks were of invaluable help for gaining an impression of people's thoughts on my research interests and perceptions of the issues at stake. Thanks to this first set of conversations, it was possible to revise certain pre-existent concepts and ideas and develop a more open interview guide in order to account for the diverse nature of migration experiences and in order to leave it open for the participants to choose to elaborate on what they considered most relevant[34].

Subsequently, recorded interviews were conducted following the established interview guide. Most of the interviews took place in the participants' homes in a separate room. This is important to understand that whenever someone entered the room, bringing food or tea, which is very common in Senegal, most of the participants immediately lowered their voice or stopped and paused, sometimes seemingly embarrassed or uncomfortable.

In total, ten interviews were carried out between December 2015 and January 2016, with quite important differences in length. The shortest interview lasted for only about twenty minutes, because of time constraints of the person, whereas the longest lasted for a full three hours. However, most interviews took between 45 and 90 minutes. The interviews were generally well received by the participants who were eager to know what would happen thereafter. They were interested in receiving the full transcriptions of the interviews, and helped to

[34] *Ibidem* 1.

cross-check some information in order to avoid misinterpretations. After the interviews, a community workshop was organised at the end of January 2016. For this occasion, individual maps of the participants' migration routes were presented, in order to be able to visualise their different pathways. The community workshop provided an opportunity for the participants to express themselves and to encourage a discussion between the participants, former irregular migrants, and other community members. The public, which consisted of about 80 people from two different communities, seemed to respond well to the workshop, engaged with the personal accounts of the participants and provided critical reflections, questions and their respective thoughts on the issue, as well as on the research process.

Presentation of results

The interviews provided rich and in-depth accounts of people's migration pathways, but also of the circumstances in which they took their migration decision, influences on the decision-making process, and personal accounts of their lives, plans and wishes. An analysis would be possible on many different levels with regards to these topics and the insights gained are valuable for further research in this context.

However, for the framework of this project, the chosen focus was on the influence of EU migration policies on people's perceptions, plans and strategies for migration. What is important to note is that, if addressed as migration policies, people rarely seem to be able to make sense out of this notion or to relate to it. Thus, as a first observation, it is interesting to note that people do not have a "consciousness" of European migration policies comparable to a European understanding. While this might not seem surprising at the first glance, it is important to point it out nonetheless, because this in itself is indicative of the difference in living contexts and perceptions of reality between Europe on the one hand and sub-Saharan Africa on the other hand.

Moreover, the interviews showed that some of the participants did not relate to concepts of legality or illegality either, not entering their actions in either definition. Rather, one of the participants explained:

> "I did not know it was not good / I thought I can go to Europe and work / like they did / they went to Europe and they found work / but they stopped us / they told us we are not allowed / they explained to

> us / and I understand / we cannot all go / but I did not know it was not good what we did"[35]

Here we can see that the person does indeed not refer to issues of legal or illegal action, but to whether something is 'good' or not', subsequently even stating understanding of why he was being stopped and returned. This indicates a fundamentally different orientation, not differentiating as Europeans and thus European policymakers do, between legal and illegal, but between good and bad, providing rather a moral interpretation of actions.

Beyond a differentiation of concepts and terms, this is interesting on another level. For instance, policies, rather than meaning for people that they necessarily have to conform to them, can also be seen as opportunity structures. As Castles[36] further observes, the majority of the world population live in states that are "inefficient, corrupt and sometimes violent". Therefore, they are used to coping not thanks to or because of the state, but despite the state. In this sense, people are used to constantly adapting themselves to changing living circumstances, and to finding creative ways of dealing with problems within their means of manoeuvre[37].

To put it another way,

> "migration rules become just another barrier to overcome in order to survive. Potential migrants do not decide to stay put just because the receiving state says they are not welcome – especially if the labour market tells a different story. Policies become opportunity structures to be compared and negotiated"[38].

We can thus observe once more that, in a context characterised by everyday insecurity and risk, people are used to constant adaptation, to finding their own ways of action in order to find solutions to their problems. As another interviewee affirmed,

> "if there is a little bit / you give it / if you / you wake up one morning and your mother knocks on your door / yes mother / she asks / she tells you / but here there is nothing / but you are five or six / but there is nothing / nothing to eat / what are you gonna say? / you see / things like this / if they don't mark you on the inside / then you're not human

[35] Interview 4, p. 14.
[36] *Idem* 3, p. 209.
[37] *Idem* 3, p. 209.
[38] *Idem* 3, p. 209.

> anyway / you're not dignified / it is things like these that make a man // you know// "[39]

Regarding knowledge on migration policies, most interviewees declared that these did not play a role in their decision-making process. While they heard of controls prior to departure, they felt encouraged by hearing of others succeeding and did not consider potential controls or the idea to be repatriated as deterring. Here is what one migrant who attempted a pirogue crossing from Senegal to the Canary Islands explains:

> "you hide / they tell you exactly what to do and you don't ask / you go at night, so that they cannot see you / they know that the marine is there / but here you can go / there are waves / it's dangerous but they cannot see / at night you put a cover and turn off the lights / and they don't see"[40]

Another one describes his perceptions as follows:

> "me, I did not know anything / the captain told us / leave your papers / do not give your name / or country / you say nothing / and after 40 days they let you go / if you are lucky / us we were not lucky / a minister came / and he asked us to say our country / he told us then we go to Spain / so we did we believed / they gave us food / a place to sleep / how could we lie to them// but they sent us back / it was because of Wade, the president / he signed something with Spain / and they took us all back / it was so humiliating / they lied to us"[41]

Here we can see that, in addition to migration policies not playing a role in migrants' decision-making processes, they mainly represent obstacles to adopt to. Furthermore we can observe notions of morality through the quotation, indicating that, because of the perceived good treatment received, they needed to be honest in return and could not lie. However, this concept of trust was in the end why these people were returned.

For most migrants, even severe physical risks and knowledge of people dying on their way did not stop any of the interviewees from setting out onto highly hazardous migration attempts.

> "I was scared / me / I did not want to go // my uncle told me to / he said you are a fisherman you know the sea // I went to ask my parents

[39] Interview 4, p. 21

[40] Interview 5, p. 14.

[41] Interview 5, p. 6.

> / me I said nothing / I just asked the question // but I wanted them to say no // but my father said why not / there is many people who have succeeded / tailors / salesmen / you are a fisherman / why should you not succeed // it was these words then that gave me confidence/ and I thought I can go"[42]

Here we observe that, even though a person at first seemed reluctant to go, he would not have interfered with his parents regarding the decision. He simply asked the question and knew he would have to follow the decision. However, it was also the encouraging words from his father that gave him the confidence to go. Moreover, most participants mentioned trust in God as an important factor and many of them prepared with mystical objects and rituals so that the journey would have a positive outcome. Trust in these things is great in Senegalese society, and nearly all of the interviewees indicated having made use of them

> "I was prepared / with mystical things you know / gris gris / I had done everything / so I was going to be safe / we took our precautions"[43]

This is another factor indicating behaviour relative to risk, showing that individuals in this context most likely do not share the same representations of and regards towards risks as Europeans in their place would. One might argue that this could be because of risk being present every day in different ways in these people's lives, for instance regarding medical issues, work opportunities, the possibility to nourish the family, all of which were mentioned throughout the interviews. This is another indicator that irregular (high risk) migration attempts from Senegalese migrants cannot be understood through a Western lens and Western ways of rationalising. As the everyday realities of people in these circumstances are fundamentally different from lived realities of most regular citizens of European countries, it would be vain to believe to understand their decision-making processes and to pretend to be able or willing to provide solutions to these people's lives, by conducting research and implementing policies without including in either the realities and opinions of the people who are not only concerned by, but who are the direct targets of such policies.

Conclusion

As a result, some lessons can be drawn from these research outcomes regarding the importance of holistically taking into account the perceptions and accounts of individuals and to directly include them in the research process.

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[42] Interview 4, p. 5.

[43] Interview 2, p. 7.

Although this piece of research does not claim to account for the full diversity of Senegalese society and all of its different migration patterns, it is important to state the significance and diversity of results obtained. In-depth accounts of individuals' migration experiences may provide a better insight to the complexity and diversity of migration decisions, pathways and experiences. From a new regard towards personal, individual perspectives, there are important truths conveyed, which in themselves show the importance of involving the concerned individuals in research and potentially in decision-making processes. Indeed, one might ask why these individuals have never been asked about their perceptions at all. This might suggest that EU policy orientation, oftentimes promoting the migration-development link, might focus not as much on alleviating poverty as oftentimes claimed and might indeed rather be catering to perceptions of threats to EU security and to protectionist economic concerns.

Therefore, one could state that governments and international institutions should not expect to develop functioning policies on irregular migration, if they do for the biggest part not take into account peoples' realities and struggles underlying such attempts. However, if policy makers were willing to do so, they might potentially face more fundamental struggles with regards to global power relations and the European dominance on policy questions. As Castles[44] asserts,

> "migration control is really about regulating North-South relationships and maintaining inequality. Only when the central objective shifts to one of reducing inequality will migration control become both successful and – eventually – superfluous."

Thus, we can reach the conclusion that, in order for EU migration policies to become efficient and at the same time respectable, changes are necessary with regards to three aspects: first, there is a need to account for the very different living conditions and contexts that irregular migrants come from and live in, and thus base their decisions in. Politicians and international organisations need to take these realities into account if they truly want to understand migration behaviour. Secondly, in order to achieve such an understanding, and in order to adopt more just policies, there is a strong need to include individuals' concerns in the research process, and to account for their agency by assigning them an important place in the research and policy-making process, as they are the true experts of their situations. Additionally, there is a strong need for more

[44] *Idem* 3, p. 223-224

independent, unbiased and inclusive research practice able to question Western research traditions, practices and concepts. Thirdly, if migration policy makers truly want to aim for worthwhile migration policies taking into account the human beings concerned, it is indispensable to fundamentally question global power hierarchies and the influence that European countries still exert on countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and thus to shift their attention towards achieving global equality. These are the three main preconditions that can be established from the presented research process, so as to develop towards more efficient, just and worthwhile ways of perceiving migration.

With regards to methodological aspects, the participatory action research paradigm has proven useful to explore such questions, as it enables both researcher and participants to engage with each other in constant exchange and reflections. Furthermore, by aiming to assign equal importance to researcher and participants in the research design and the construction of knowledge, a significant attempt to deconstruct power hierarchies within the research process is taken. Thus, a participatory action research approach, engaging with bottom-up perspectives on top-down policy constructs, can provide valuable new insights and alternative stances for a more profound understanding of migration movements and factors related therewith.

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THE USE AND MISUSE OF JIHAD BY THE CONTEMPORARY EXTREMIST RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Orsolya Bartha

The question on Islamic fundamentalism is long debated both by scholars of Islamic studies and civil society. When it comes to the current global problem of terrorism upheavals, Islam is often of primal accusation.

The Islamist countries are characteristic for that their specific revivalist movements are not concerned with constitutional arrangements of state. Rather, they claim for the achievement of individual ethics and morals. As Maroth Miklos claims, as opposed to other religions, in Islam, there is not a clear distinction between religious activities of man, and political or societal ones.[1] Religion means also the general behavior related to fellows and relatives as every activity has to be in accordance with religion. The translated text of the original text from the Quran also envisages such freedom, 'There is no compulsion in religion' (…) 'so whosoever disbelieves in idols and believes in God, has laid hold of the most firm handle, unbreaking'.[2] Other religious text from the Quran also arrive at such a conclusion, indifferent of interpretation, such as 'So remind [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.'[3]

Fundamentalism, word derived from 'found', 'foundation', has a more complex rationale, where duality is regarded of major importance. Simon Robert who explains the Islamic fundamentalism by repristination, a term pinpointed by the author in order to offer a better understanding of this unique kind of Muslim orthodoxy. In his observation, every innovative feature apparent in the Muslim community had to be accepted by the model sacred by tradition.[4]The result thus was a present situation masked in the disguise of the past.[5] In the view of the author, fundamentalism is a mean to achieve the end of repristination, and it appears when there is the current crisis of such incompatibility. The most important warning in the time of such crisis envisages

[1] Maroth, Maroth Miklos, *Islam and Political Theory*, First Edition, Budapest: Akademia Kiado, 2013, p. 21.

[2] Quran, 2:256.

[3] Quran 88:21-22.

[4] Simon Robert, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, Budapest: Corvina Press, 2014, p. 9.

[5] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

the 'structural identity'[6] of the Islamic community, as observed by the author. These factors endanger the original pure status sacred by the Quran.

One can observe the importance of the original texts of the Quran which need to be observed in any particular time of history. The principle of repristination plays a major role in the fundamentalist character of the Islamic religious and political behavior. Still, the author argues that it is not a traditionalist feature which is overwhelmingly represented in the Islamic communities, because, as opposed to the repristination, traditionalism would seek to restitute any new situation to the old realistic standard. In this regard, fundamentalism is unalike traditionalism. While, on one hand, traditionalism means strict return to the initial standards which served as genuine value-set coaching the activities of the society, fundamentalism interprets the present context and makes adaptations if necessary, but only after elaboration and contrasts were drawn by the lenses of traditional values. Fundamentalism is regarded rather modernist than traditionalist, as it preferably 'evaluates' tradition and then 'selectively retrieve salient elements'.[7]

Another argument also stresses the view that fundamentalist activities are rather for the construction of a new order than a simple throwback to the past. In this regard, these activities revolve around the replacement of the existing structures with a more extensive order, having at its heart the large-scale area of religious principles.[8] As Akbarzadeh argues, this ability of re-interpreting the present for the imagination of the future provides for fundamentalists a great flexibility when there is need to respond to the existing changes or crises. [9] We can argue in this regard, that crises are pre-requisite elements for fundamentalist actions.

In the lights of the basic teachings of the Quran, fundamentalism can be interpreted as a projection of the individual need for worship to the level of the state. In this way, as on the part of individual actions, the presence of the ability to perform is considered to be of utmost importance, on the level of the religious state it can be interpreted that such presence of the ability can be regarded to be possibility to act in conformity with the religion during the periods of crises. As

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[6] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[7] Bassam Tibi, *The challenge of fundamentalism. Political Islam and the New World Disorder*, Berkley, California, London: University of California Press, 1998, p. 14.

[8] Bassam, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[9] Shahram Akbarzadeh, *The Paradox of Political Islam*, in "Routledge Handbook of Political Islam", ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh, New York: Routledge Publishing, 2012.

follows, the sin also can be extended to umma, if not acting in conformity with the given abilities.

As Montgomery Watt emphasizes, one major element providing 'legality' for some otherwise seemingly brutal actions, is the fact that the Quran provides excuses for the actions of men, these being primarily guided by Allah.[10] Thus, Muslims can justify their actions given this pre-given path of Allah, where the free-will of men is secondary. There are many examples in the Quran confirming this allegation, for example 'You killed them not, but Allah killed them. And you (Muhammad) threw not when you did throw but Allah threw, that He might test the believers by a fair trial from Him. Verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.'[11] In this respect, deeds of men are actually pre-given errands from God. The text 'And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors'[12] leads us to two main preliminary conclusions. First, it urges the believers to fight in the way of Allah, and secondly it warns not to infringe the limits of such conduct. Given the first element, we can assume that the term 'fight' cannot be directly associated to a struggle involving necessarily a physical damage. However, those considering and interpreting/ misinterpreting such religious texts separately and do not read them as linked to one another, may translate the text following the previous one mentioned as clear excuse for killing. The following sequence in question 'And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out (…) Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.'[13], this may implicitly refer to the murder of disbelievers, if one wishes to evaluate the writing without further analytical or contextual overview.

However, if one links the two separate texts as continuing line of thought, one arrives to a different conclusion. In this respect, the quality of the disbeliever will mean an attribution of one who infringes the limits in the process of fighting in the will of Allah, as it is mentioned only at the end of the sequence, preceded by the pronoun 'them', which refers to the previously mentioned transgressors. Accordingly, the translation of the merger of the two texts would mean rather to live accordingly to the path of Islam (the fight), but do not intend to attribute such conduct of extreme nature (not to transgress), and kill the ones who abuse the way of Allah (stop the transgressors), because such people are not following

[10] William Montgomery Watt, *A short history of Islam,* England: Oneword Publications, 1996; Hungarian Translation Filipcsei Mirandella, Akkord Konyvkiado, 2000, p. 68.

[11] Quran 8:17.

[12] Quran 2:190.

[13] Quran 2:191.

the true path of Islam (disbelievers). In such lights, the pacific nature of Islam is rather obvious than an appellation as religion of terror.

Continuing this line of argument, one can assert that Jihad in terms of physical battle is rather reactive than proactive.[14] Reasons for this statement may be the observed in the contextual conditions present in the Quranic texts when referring to this process. For example, one should consider the text 'Fight against them so that Allah will punish them by your hands and disgrace them'[15] without further emphasis put on the contextual situation of such, and thus could easily associate Jihad as a coercive process which allows for grievances. However, if we take a look at the text presented just before the mentioned part, we arrive at another conclusion. The previous text 'Will you not fight a people who have violated their oaths (pagans of Makkah) and intended to expel the Messenger, while they did attack you first?' prove the reactionary nature of such conduct, being rather a response than initiation. By this, the only conclusion to which one can arrive is the accentuation of the tit for that principle.

Maroth also underlines the *ius talionis*[16] principle mentioned before (eye to eye principle) also present in the Bible and the Laws of Hammurabbi, as being characteristic to Muslim societies. This reactive nature of the Quranic texts calling for Jihad is present also in the text 'They (the disbelievers, the Jews and the Christians) want to extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths, but Allah will not allow except that His Light should be perfected even though the *Kafirun* (disbelievers) hate (it).[17] Subsequently, even though the *prima facie* impression would be a clear pronouncement of war on the disbelievers, the used verb 'not allow' regards primarily the resistance and not as much the onslaught nature of such course of action. Another way of reaction near Jihad is Hijra, translated as migration, which may be used in times there are no means to fight back.

Another example for the most representative texts when proving excuses for killing as an authorized deed can be found in Surah Muhammad. However, when considering a deeper understanding on the elements found in such texts, one can easily counter-argue such legitimacy conferred upon murder for the sake of Allah. The text which can be recalled as providing rightfulness of assassination namely 'So, when you meet (in fight Jihad in Allah's Cause), those who disbelieve smite at their necks till when you have killed and wounded many

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[14] L. Ali Khan, *Theory of International Terrorism. Understanding Islamic Militancy*, Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1st Edition, 2006, p. 6.

[15] Quran 9:14.

[16] Maroth, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

[17] Quran 9:32.

of them' mentions such atrocities in the case of Jihad only, which is as demonstrated a reactive process. In this respect, according to the sources in the Quran it is not legitimate to initiate such harms without previous initiation coming from the part of the opposite side. More than this, the condition to fulfill the condition of a disbeliever claimed in this text is mentioned in the previous text in the same Surah, 'Those who disbelieve in the oneness of Allah' and implies monotheism again, as pre-condition to be a believer. Of course, as presented in the previous chapters, a true adherence to the Islamic religion (thus title of believer) would imply more than monotheism, in terms of the importance and quality of worship. Still, having in mind the linkage of such texts, one should not ignore the particularities and conditions invoked for legitimizing particular conducts.

The validation of terror as alternative means to uphold the Jihadist legacy can have as main source those texts in the Quran, by which one can draw immediate conclusions as extreme application of use of force being the most representative configuration. Such texts can be found in the Surah on the Spoils of War, for example 'I will cast terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved, so strike them over the necks, and smite over all their fingers and toes'[18] or 'This is the torment, so taste it, and surely for the disbelievers is the torment of the Fire'[19]. However, the identification of means to combat the disbelievers as 'cast terror' does not represent the contemporary misuse of the term. What changes the whole logic of the previous misleading texts is the continuation of the Surah as 'O you who believe! When you meet those who disbelieve, in a battle-field, never turn your backs to them'[20]. In this respect, terror as definition of invisible psychological tactics in order to spread fear stands in total opposition with the need for clear-cut visible performances of battle (indication of the battlefield), representative in the periods of conventional wars.

There are also considerations on another element of terrorist performances, the question on the problem of pain. As the text 'And don't be weak in the pursuit of the enemy; if you are suffering (hardships) then surely, they (too) are suffering (hardships) as you are suffering, but you have a hope from Allah'[21] provides, without further analysis, one should stand up to weakness and show worship during difficult times when in pursuit of the

[18] Quran 8:12.

[19] Quran 8:14.

[20] Quran 8:15.

[21] Quran 4:104.

enemy. However, the fact that the Surah in which this reference text is present is entitled 'The Women', we may wish to further investigate the particularities and arguments written before and following the text in question. The previous texts regard the role of women, the apology of one's women if she is not capable of performing the religious rituals, and the very text before the respective text discussed lays as follows: When you have finished *As-Salat* (the prayer – congregational), remember Allah standing, sitting down, and lying down on your sides, but when you are free from danger, perform *As-Salat* (*Iqamat-as-Salat*). Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours'[22]. In this regard the fear-from-pain factor does not regard the process by which one performs a terrorist undertaking, as invoked by the martyrdom value, on which further discussion will follow. Rather, this refers to a presentation of the contrast between the pain of non-believers who might suffer and fear because of not practicing those prescribed religious activities, in contrast to believers who should not fear as they will be rewarded when it comes to the final Doomsday.

One can argue that texts such as 'That you believe in Allah and His Messenger and that you strive hard and fight in the Cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives, that will be better for you, if you do!' [23] would implicitly claim for legitimizing murder. Moreover, when subjoining the tool to the fight as 'wealth', we can understood the term 'fight with life' in the same way we do regarding the former, as in terms of giving away in order to achieve a great impact. However, if we regard this from another perspective, fighting with lives can describe a proactive process, where one actively and vividly struggles in order to demonstrate the oneness of Allah. In the lights of the relevance of worship, such 'fight with life' can exactly be associated to the same phenomenon. Moreover, such text can be associated with a clear warning, as the words present in the end 'if you do!'. Nevertheless, the first text of the Surah in question where the discussed text is present goes like follows: 'O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?'[24]. In this respect, the previously misinterpreted warning takes the shape of condition and can be directly related to one's duty to worship once had the knowledge about the oneness of God.

Continuing and ending this line of argumentation on the possibility for diverging interpretations on the Quranic texts, another religious text on the subject of killing should be examined. The text 'They fight in Allah's Cause, so they kill and are killed. It is a promise in truth which is binding on Him in the

[22] Quran 4:103.
[23] Quran 61:11.
[24] Quran 61:2.

Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and the Qur'an'[25] clearly underlines the equal position of that of Muslims, Jews and Christians. In this respect, the legality of killing other religious groups united under the seal of monotheism is definitely out of question. In this respect, when invoking such legal ground for the sake of killing other religious groups, we can immediately recognize the abusive use of the original text. However, considerations should be made on the conditions of following Allah's path as defined in terms of 'killed and be killed'. The previous texts from the same Surah, are clearly defining the context and subjects of such deeds. As follows, the acclaimed texts such as 'And as for those who put up a mosque by way of harming and disbelief, and to disunite the believers (…)'[26], followed by 'Never stand you therein. Verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety is more worthy'[27] and 'The building which they built will never cease to be a cause of hypocrisy and doubt in their hearts, unless their hearts are cut to pieces'[28] once again underline the reactive nature of murder, in case a polytheist group organizes institutionalized and structured offences which seek to destroy the Muslim belief.

It is a general observation that in the Quranic texts, the definition of the conduct or action is usually included in conjunction with the object of the action, but the specificities and circumstances mentioned in order to fall in the category of that 'target group' are usually mentioned in separate texts before or after the ones one consider of distinct rationale. Such separations may be a reason why some terrorist groups can validate their course of action, without further implementation of the so-called 'clauses'. Without further interpretation on conditions and circumstances, extremist views have the potential to proclaim for their self-legitimized no-substance dual standards excluding any other explanation for possible permits.

Even when considering Jihad in terms of physical combat for the purification of the non-believers, there is little reason for the association of such process with the one of terrorism. While Jihad would imply direct and perceptible reactions in terms of holy war, terrorism is rather a mystical violence. In this respect, it is completely different with evident harms such as occupying territories or other seeable injuries, as the main tactics of such strategies imply the imposition of constant psychological fear, which is everything but tactile.

[25] Quran 9:111.

[26] Quran 9:107.

[27] Quran 9:108.

[28] Quran 9:110.

Also, while Jihad would imply reactive demonstrations in the case of direct attack, terrorism abuses such principle by using means of lurking without the possibility to pinpoint them, even if considering such deeds reactions for some direct assaults. The only possibility when Jihad manifests itself in rather offensive terms is by 'frighten' the infidels of their territory by sending troops on these.[29] Nevertheless, one should take into account the contextual aspect when the verses on offensive Jihad were revealed, when the representative form of combat was the traditional battlefield dimension. As follows, the fundamentalist nature of the religion proves of great importance when assessing the lack of adaptation to the today known form of collisions them in terms of 'New Wars'[30].

Moreover, when further analyzing the meaning of the word *Jihad,* we arrive to the conclusion that the 'fight' motive attached to it can also be misleading. In the explanation of Montgomery, the process of Jihad should rather be representative for the course of the pursuit of purification in terms of 'aspiration'.[31] In this respect, Jihad can also mean removing corruption and implementing Sharia, as elements of the process of establishment of the true Islam. One reason which may be invoked for the understanding of abuses and misuses of the reactive- and, especially spiritual Jihad, can be the previously analyzed special relationship between ability and action. In this regard, by emphasizing the need for action, one can easily fall in the mistake of considering the 'act' in terms of offensive deeds where the reference point envisages primarily the others.

Such embezzlement can have at its source the consideration of a clear rupture present on the right and wrong scale of standards. In this way, one identifies only the action and inaction aspects thinking merely in terms of visibility and physical effect. As concerns, the nature of Jihad can also be regarded also a spiritual struggle, without direct association to violence. The tools of such inner "fight" such as the worshipping activities (the rituals, invocations or mediations) are the values connected to the imperative of Jihad.[32] All in all, we can identify three forms of Jihad, which are the spiritual, offensive and defensive. Taking them separately, the principle of misuse can be applied to

[29] Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Inside Jihadism.Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide*, 2nd Edition, London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2009, p. 35.

[30] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars. Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 5.

[31] Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

[32] John Kiser, *A Story of True Jihad*, Monkfish Book Publishing Company [http://www.truejihad.com/pages/about-the-book.php], 15 March 2016.

all of them piece by piece, where the main aim of such abuse is generally that of achievement of political aspirations. As genuinely concluded by Brachman, it is hard to comprehend and identify one single understanding of Jihad, as it is generally 'what Muslims make of it'.[33] Having the fundamentalist consideration in mind, we can understand the constantly changing motion of the Jihadist ideology, as always regarded in terms of the diverging exterior circumstances.

Jihadist upholders are motivated in the frames of emotional, religious and cultural aspects, which claim leads us to contradictory comprehension of such pre-determinants when considering the outcome performed. In this way, as Hafez argues, Jihadists are considered representatives of moral values while acting in immoral ways.[34] In contrast to this, we can claim that terrorist do not fall in the former pre-conditions, as the motivational frames are not in accordance with morality and religion, but rather the misinterpretation of such is the dominant allusion. Ways to perform such actions, as Hafez continues, are by means of 'ethical justification' of the moral side in order to reach at a resolution.[35] This process of ethical justification then is a process of series of interpretations on the Quranic texts, as by which –as previously demonstrated- one can find ways to demonstrate the calling for coercive pro-actions. In cases when the rationales of one's logic cannot be deceived of such misinterpretations, other means will be used in order to assign righteousness to such performances. As claimed by Bandura, terrorists have the capability to think selectively, in terms of disengagement from the individual or societal moral code, in order to achieve a greater end for a greater cause.[36]

In respect of the attitude concerning the non-believers, the Quran calls for both coercive and more inducing power in order to lead them to the 'right path' in different sections of it. For example, on the one hand, it calls for forgiveness and overlooking their misconceptions and deeds, as provided by the following: 'So because of their breach of their covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard. (…) But forgive them, and overlook (their misdeeds)'.[37]. On

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[33] Jarret M. Brachman, *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice*, 1st Edition, Oxford: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2009, p. 9.

[34] Mohammed M. Hafez, *The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*, in "Suicide Bombers in Iraq", Mohammed M. Hafez, 1st Edition, Washington DC: Institute for Peace Press, 2007, p. 118.

[35] *Ibidem*, p. 119.

[36] Albert Bandura, *Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement in the Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind,* ed. Walter Reich, Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson University Press, 1990, pp. 161-191.

[37] Quran 2:112.

the other hand, especially when underlining the need for action for the sake of identity preservation, coercive means are also mentioned, as previously demonstrated. The undertaking of such actions should always be performed by the whole community, fact which emphasizes the tenacious nature of the umma. In the Quran, one can find orations about the role of 'You' and 'Us', without any kind of provisions and immunities. In this respect, when one refuses the duty of engagement, it is equal to the sin factor discussed in terms of action-ability duality, as touched upon earlier.

However, given the model of contemporary terrorist attacks, we can argue that the presence of the umma is fading, as those undertaking such attempts are in principle alone. In this regard, the common obligation of the Muslim community to convert to and invocate the teachings of Islam is absent. Nevertheless, in terms of significance of worship, it should be noted that the action can only be undertaken only individually.

There is another specific Shiite teaching which is typical technique undertaken by contemporary terrorist organizations, namely the taqiyya.[38] This principle allows the 'delegates' of suicide attacks to hide their religious affiliation in a hostile environment. With regard the specificities the Assassin Shiite have embraced by such pursuits, B. Lewis claims that this was a messianic movement which tried to make great use of the existing dissatisfactions, in an endeavor to bring these together under a single ideological umbrella.[39] Accordingly, the 11th Century Nizarite Shiite activities can be regarded as first manifestation of the today acclaimed model of terrorist attempts. The means used in order to gain legitimacy are, as Jarret asserts, first by proving that Jihad inherently means fight, and second that it is the only form of response by which effect can be achieved.[40]

A comprehensive conclusion should be the fact that contemporary terrorist organizations are to a greater extent applying the principles of the respective subdivision inside Islam, than the original declarations regarding the Jihad, under whose disguise they legitimize their actions. These justifications for conduct are always regarded in the terms of the fundamentalist character of Islam, by taking into consideration the external factors and developments.

Contemporary Jihadists perceive themselves to be performing the word-by-word, correct understanding of Quran that has been preached and practiced

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[38] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[39] Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins. A Radical Sect in Islam*, 1st Edition, London: Weidenfield &Nicolson, 1967, p. 139.

[40] Brachman, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

by Prophet Muhammad.[41] By doing so, they invoke the original Quranic texts as excuses for legitimizing their actions, without further examining or considering the broader contextual environment. As Sayyid claims, such activities are not in alignment with the mission Prophet Muhammad took up[42], since they wage a Jihad which is right only in the sense of word-by-word consideration. The word-by-word, selective understanding of some Quranic texts has long been debated by analysts and critics. The need for such strict understanding is emphasized in one of the publications of Dabiq, issue 12. Here, the main reason for such conventionality is the fact that today's ummah has been "afflicted" by leaders who have "violated the rights of Allah" [43], thus the need of the right and true understanding of the texts.

In this respect, some texts need no further interpretation and analysis from the part of the organization these just serve as primordial impetus for action. For example, Issue 7 of the Dabiq uses a Quranic text as model for contemporary jihadist activities, quoting a particular text from a Surah 47 regarding the disbelievers, that is to "smite at their necks will when you killed many of them, then bind a bond firmly."[44] In their usage of such texts, the extremist adherents claim for principles and methods functioning exactly the same way as in the 6th Century, when the most common form of punishment was murder, as the level of judicial institutionalization was rudimentary. Even so, if one applies the repristination principle on such argument, one can claim that it is not at all the case. A fundamentalist action (ultimate feature attached to the extremist group) would mean the application of innovative means under the disguise of the past. However, in this case, the means and the principles have both remained the same as how they were originally specified.

All in all, when analyzing the relationship between Jihad and Terrorism, it is important to mention that neither fundamentalism, nor Islamism is serving as prerequisite of such ends. The main cause, however for drawing such conclusions is the room left for misinterpretation when reading the Quranic texts. For the occurrence of such misunderstanding texts –see the question on murder as main example-, terrorists justify their deeds in such terms. Jihad is waged against the transgressors, as a way of defending and upholding the Islamic identity. Still, by not reading the texts taking also account of the context,

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[41] Jarret, *op. cit.*, p 5.

[42] Sayyid Qutb, *Islam and Universal Peace,* American Trust Publications, 2015, pp. 30-31.

[43] Dabiq, *Issue 12,* p. 10.

[44] Quran, 47:4.

the definition of transgressors is an ever-changing one, based on the current context. The misunderstandings that rise out of such particularistic uses and misuses contribute enormously to the long-debated true face of Islam. Without proper analysis and interpretation that takes into consideration the contemporary meaning of the historical ideas, the question on the appropriate response to the claims and actions of contemporary extremist organizations will not seize to exist.

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CHINA AND ITS PANDA DIPLOMACY: WHY NOT ROMANIA?

Ionuț-Eugen-Radu Sava

Introduction

Panda diplomacy seems to be **one of the most successful** tools in China's path to promoting its interests, as **part of a greater public diplomacy diagram**, in various parts of the world. It represents an enhancement of tradition, "an emblem of the Chinese nation"[1], a ritual of perseverance and a dose of inspiration. Having "a long history dating at least as far back as the seventh century Tang Dynasty"[2], panda diplomacy has seen more recently a spectacular evolution and stunning results[3][4], especially in popular culture and the media. Whatsoever, this "practice of panda diplomacy is **only barely discussed in diplomatic or international relations studies [and also], only seldom discussed in the academic realm**"[5]. Yet despite these assertions, this article could easily identify similar practices that include: Mongolian horses,

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[1] Kathleen Carmel Buckingham, Jonathan Neil William David and Paul Jepson, *Environmental reviews and case studies: Diplomats and Refugees: Panda Diplomacy, Soft "Cuddly" Power, and the New Trajectory in Panda Conservation,* in "Enivornmental Practice", vol. 15, no. 3, 2013, p. 268.

[2] Richard Alleyne, *A history of Panda Diplomacy*, in "The Telegraph", 10 January 2011 [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/wildlife/8251089/A-history-of-PandaDiplomacy.html], 20 February 2018.

[3] "The San Diego Zoo, considered one of the best in the nation, increased its attendance by 35 percent and its revenues by more than $5 million during a recent half-year visit by two Chinese pandas…" For further details, see Phillip M. Boffey, *Traditional Allies Battle over Pandas,* in "The New York Times", 31 May 1988 [http://www.nytimes.com/1988/05/31/science/traditional-allies-battle-over-pandas. html?pagewanted=all&src=pm], 8 March 2018.

[4] "It has also become the pre-eminent anthropomorphic star of advertising campaigns the world over, selling everything from radios and fizzy drinks to cigarettes, not to mention global conservation". For further details, see Henry Nicholls, *Pandas are Political Animals,* in "The Guardian", 13 January 2011 [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jan/13/pandas-political-animals-chinadiplomatic?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487], 8 March 2018.

[5] Falk Hartig, *Panda Diplomacy: The Cutest Part of China's Public Diplomacy,* in "The Hague Journal of Diplomacy", vol. 8, no. 1, 2013, pp. 49-50.

Australian koalas, Seychellois Aldabra giant tortoises, Japanese Akitas or Bulgarian shepherds[67].

Historically speaking, as **Falk Hartig** argues, animal diplomacy (of which panda diplomacy is part of) finds its initial roots in Ancient Egypt. More narrowly, in 802, when the Caliph of Baghdad has given to Charles the Great an elephant[8]. Later on, "in 1514, People Leo X received a white elephant, Hanno, from Portuguese King Manuel I…", which had been very "much admired" by the Pope[9]. Among one of the most renowned examples of animal diplomacy in history is the Medici Giraffe, "presented to Lorenzo de Medici in 1486 by the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt", or the giraffe given to Charles X of France in 1826[10].

Soft power, one of the omnipresent ambiences of this article, is a centrality when speaking about panda diplomacy. **Joseph S. Nye,** one of the most renowned IR theoreticians, describes soft power as the ability of "getting others to want the outcomes that you want"[11], although a universal definition regarding soft power has not yet been settled. And Nye rightly continues to asses that "soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument […] It is also the ability to entice and attract"[12]. *Ergo*, it is important to correlate, from the very beginning, soft power and panda diplomacy with one another.

While the effects of panda diplomacy, in practice, turn out to be more than visible in bilateral relations as it could be considered "China's best form of public diplomacy"[13], it is ideal to assess this dimension by comparing its outcomes to other scenarios. "Beijing's publicity [soft power] blitz began in 2007 under

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[6] Ernesto Londoño, *Hagel gets a horse from Mongolian hosts as he wraps up Asia trip*, in "The Washington Post", April 10 2014 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/hagel-wraps-up-asia-trip-with-stop-in-mongolia/2014/04/10/d2d03492-c095-11e3-bcec-b71ee10e9bc3_story.html?utm_term=.e4bf5c52c3aa], 9 March 2018.

[7] Lydia Lam, *Putin turns down Japan's dog gift: 5 types of animal diplomacy*, in "The Straits Times", 12 December 2016 [http://www.straitstimes.com/world/putin-turns-down-japans-dog-gift-5-types-of-animal-diplomacy], 23 March 2018.

[8] Falk Hartig, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[9] *Ibidem.*

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[11] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004, p. 5.

[12] Joseph S. Nye, *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power*, in "The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science", vol. 55, no. 616, 2008, p. 95.

[13] Richard G. Lugar, *Another US Deficit: China and America — Public Diplomacy in the Age of the Internet*, Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate: Washington DC, fn 47, 2011, p. 21.

President Hu Jintao [and] it has intensified under President Xi Jinping"[14]. By inference, this article assumes assume that China's public diplomacy instruments exploded, but why not in Romania's direction? Or, are other elements of this greater Chinese public diplomacy diagram grasping results when it comes to Sino-Romanian relations?

This article has the purpose not to expose in a linear style what panda diplomacy channels in other countries, but what it could have channeled for Romania. In the first part of the article, a generic capstone of the Chinese panda diplomacy will be laid out, **analyzing the theoretical spectrum of this practice**. It is important to observe the evolution of this phenomena and the terminus point of what it implies to receive a pair of pandas. The second part of this work represents **the zenith**. Thus, it will debate [the most] plausible assumptions towards figuring out why Romania was not included, in a broader sense, in the practice of panda diplomacy, and what Romania could have gained from such a conjuncture.

The capstone of Chinese Panda Diplomacy: How did this practice emerge in the contemporary era and when did it reach its crest?

In order to gain an omnidirectional mindset in respect to panda diplomacy, it is suited to determine the value of the existing literature. In an attempt to position panda diplomacy within the scale of public diplomacy, this narrative investigates the relevant theoretical elements that contributed to the creation and to the development of panda diplomacy. That is why **this article seeks to describe** the phases of panda diplomacy, as well as **determining the position** of this diplomatic practice within the soft power component of international relations. What are the defining elements of panda diplomacy? What narrative does China approach through panda diplomacy? Is diplomacy panda a flexible diplomatic practice or not?

In order to find the most plausible answers, the article pursues to investigate the evolution stages of the Chinese political agenda, and the occasions of the diplomatic agent of panda diplomacy[15]. An extremely interesting note, brought into question by **Brynn Holland**, outlines that the actual return to panda diplomacy was, first of all, done very shortly before the

[14] David Shambaugh, *China's Soft-Power Push. The Search for Respect*, in "Foreign Affairs", vol. 94, no. 4, 2015 [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push], 1 April 2018.

[15] Andreas Pacher, *China's Panda Diplomacy*, in "The Diplomat", 2 November 2017 [https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/chinas-panda-diplomacy/], 21 March 2018.

United States entered the Second World War[16]. For that reason, the precise evolution of this practice, combined with diplomatic experiences, suggest that in key moments of communication – *i.e.* when Beijing wants to communicate sensitive messages or to react to Western moves not exactly agreed –, Chinese leaders prefer to use *inter alia* these animals to avoid direct confrontations. Undoubtedly, this constant tendency of approaching foreign policy has its origins in Confucian philosophy, and has been heavily promoted by Deng Xiaoping.

An additional explanation that could support this assumption, through a correlation, is advanced by **Professor Kejin Zhao**, according to which "China's soft power [still] lags behind… It lacks experience in international governance and familiarity with the established rules of the international institutional framework, and has yet to effectively transform its abundance of soft resources – such as historical heritage, cultural norms, and social values – into national power…"[17] This assent is also shared by Ingrid d'Hooghe, arguing that China's public diplomacy issues pertain mainly to the "organizational dimension", "insufficient coordination", and a "shortage of professionals"[18].

Furthermore, **Andreas Pacher** argues through a "theoretical axiom" of the diplomatic theory, yet a very "powerful weapon in external affairs" due to its potential of strong appeal to "people's emotions", panda diplomacy represents "an anomaly"[19]. He concludes that, especially in the light of his analogy with China's Confucius Institutes, "[…] the popularity of panda bears… is an anomaly – and anomalies require great caution"[20]. In spite of this, not as assertive and firm as Pacher, the same Ingrid d'Hooghe debates regularly China's public diplomacy, yet does not count so much on China's panda diplomacy, but advances a balanced and much more objective analysis than other scholars[21].

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[16] Brynn Holland, *Panda Diplomacy: The World's Cutest Ambassadors,* in "History/A+E Networks", 16 March 2017 [https://www.history.com/news/panda-diplomacy-the-worlds-cutest-ambassadors], 12 May 2018.

[17] Kejin Zhao, *The Motivation Behind China's Public Diplomacy,* in "The Chinese Journal of International Politics", vol. 8, issue 2, 2015, pp. 167-168.

[18] Ingrid d'Hooghe, *China's Public Diplomacy*, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2015, pp. 125-126.

[19] Andreas Pacher, *op. cit.*

[20] *Ibidem.*

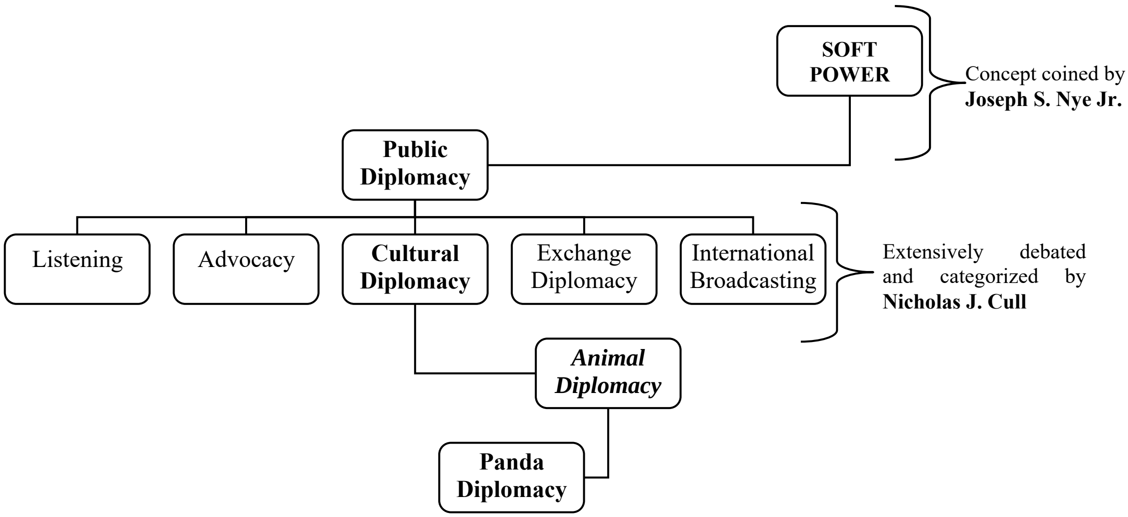
[21] Ingrid d'Hooghe, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-13.

A theoretical approach: Panda Diplomacy – between soft power, public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy

It is crucial to understand the correlation between soft power, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and panda diplomacy. As explained in figure 2.1, each of these concepts intertwines with one another. Scholars such as **Nye, Hartig, Cull** and others discuss extensively their characteristics, but the specialized literature has a separate approach, a distinct perspective and it does not offer the vital inclination towards fully explaining how these elements are altogether interlocked.

The foundation of a country's soft power instruments, as Nye argues, "rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)"[22].

Figure 2.1. Categorizing the existing literature into analogies comprised of PD, cultural diplomacy, and panda diplomacy.



Sources: Nicholas J. Cull, "Public diplomacy: Taxonomies and histories" in *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 55, no. 616, 2008, p. 32; Falk Hartig, *op. cit.*, p. 54; Joseph S. Nye, Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power" in *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[22] Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power" in *op. cit.*, p. 96.

Accordingly, China has started using pandas "in the late 1950s as part of a foreign-policy strategy of Chairman Mao Zedong" for the sake of initiating the input towards building strategic alliances and partnerships with the great powers of the 20th Century[23].

Pandas represent a "cultural animal icon in the West"[24], and trigger the *guanxi* effect. From a boarder perspective, *guanxi* refers to bilateral "relationships characterized by trust, reciprocity, loyalty, and longevity".[25] Given the rarity of these unique animals, pandas have an unequaled value. It is so determined by the challenges, for instance, faced when breeding this species or maintaining their demanding habitat[26]. If China, at the beginning, had offered pandas as gifts, nowadays this practice implies only loaning the animals to other countries amid a clear set of requirements.

Panda diplomacy **does not have** a particular academic definition, since it has quite been in the shadow, but it is pegged, *firstly*, to the concept of soft power. *Thereupon*, panda diplomacy is linked to public diplomacy due to the fact that "public diplomacy is a kind of diplomatic strategy"[27] which encompasses "the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies"[28]. In this case, it shall be "seen as a means for telling China's story to the world"[29]. This type of diplomatic practice has been widely debated by scholars, such as Nicholas J. Cull, professor at the University of Southern California. In 2008, Cull publishes a paper which proposes a separation of public diplomacy into five distinct items: "listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy and international broadcasting (IB)"[30].

Consecutively, scholars place panda diplomacy under the generic umbrella of culture. Nye debates that "culture is the set of practices that create meaning for a society, and it has many manifestations. It is common to

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[23] Kathleen Carmel Buckingham, Jonathan Neil William David and Paul Jepson, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

[24] *Ibidem.*

[25] See Thomas Gold, Doug Guthrie and David Wank (eds.), *Social Connections in China: Institutions, Culture, and the Changing Nature of Guanxi*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[26] *Ibidem.*

[27] Wei Cao, *The Efficiency of China's Public Diplomacy*, in "The Chinese Journal of International Politics", vol. 9, issue 4, 2016, p. 399.

[28] Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy" before Guillion: The evolution of a phrase*, 2006 [http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/public-diplomacy-gullion-evolution-phrase], accessed 28 March 2018.

[29] Falk Hartig, *Chinese Public Diplomacy. The rise of the Confucius Institute*, London and New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 1.

[30] Nicholas J. Cull, *Public diplomacy: Taxonomies and histories*, in "The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science", vol. 55, no. 616, 2008, p. 32.

distinguish between high culture such as literature, art, and education, which appeals to elites; and popular culture, which focuses on mass entertainment"[31]. Hence, it becomes only natural to adhere to the idea that pandas are part of the Chinese culture. Similar beliefs are shared by "most Chinese scholars and officials…"[32], yet further debates will need to polish both the domestic and international discourse in this regard. d'Hooghe points out three aspects that, at least for the moment, fundamentally shape the cultural soft power debates in China, mainly those are: "the idea that China's culture needs to be protected against the invasion of foreign, in particular Western, culture; the country's inability to capitalize on culture; and the question of which cultural aspects to promote"[33].

China's panda diplomacy has known, throughout time, three different phases of evolution[34][35]. The first concretized around 1941, but effectively took place between 1957 and 1982[36]. **The first two pandas** were sent to the Soviet Union, therefore it is particularly interesting to note that, in the initial component of this phase, pandas were sent to socialist states in order to establish stronger ties with countries that share similar ideology with China[37]. After the United Nations events in the early 1970's, China started delivering pandas as gifts to Western countries[38]. As **Falk Hartig** argues, "the most prominent case [...] was the offering of two giant pandas to the United States"[39] during Nixon's visit to China. In the upcoming period of this first phase, countries such as Japan, the United Kingdom, Spain, France and West Germany themselves received giant pandas from China[40].

The second phase gravitates around the mid-1980's[41], when pandas were "no longer given away as a pure goodwill gesture"[42], but rather as "loans involving a capitalist lease model based on financial transactions"[43]. This occurs

[31] Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power" in *op. cit.*, p. 96.
[32] Ingrid d'Hooghe, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
[33] *Ibidem.*
[34] Falk Hartig, *Panda Diplomacy: The Cutest Part of China's Public Diplomacy*, in *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[35] Kathleen Carmel Buckingham, Jonathan Neil William David and Paul Jepson, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[36] Falk Hartig, *Panda Diplomacy: The Cutest Part of China's Public Diplomacy*, in *op. cit.*, p. 60.
[37] *Ibidem.*
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] *Ibid.*
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] Kathleen Carmel Buckingham, Jonathan Neil William David and Paul Jepson, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

simultaneously with Deng Xiaoping's reforms, and targeted zoos in countries which were considered important for economic purposes[44]. However, due to the controversies of loaning and the fact that, in 1984, giant pandas were listed as an endangered, China had loosen this practice by the 1990's in favor of a more protectionist and conservationist policy towards pandas[45].

The third and current phase of panda diplomacy was triggered by pressure of the 1990's[46], and it culminates with the 2008 Sichuan earthquake[47]. In the light of these disclosures, panda diplomacy has entered a new phase. **Buckingham, David and Jepson** stress out that "given the soft-power value of pandas, the number of *guanxi* and other forms of panda-loans will increase"[48], while **Hartig points out** that "although China officially very much emphasizes the scientific dimension of panda diplomacy, its public diplomacy dimension should be beyond any dispute"[49].

Does *exporting cuteness* have a climax in the 21st Century?

Pandas have been used as a diplomatic tool in parts of the world where China has had various interests. Same **Buckingham, David and Jepson** observe that "two patterns are discernible in these [recent] panda transactions: first, they involve close Asian neighbor nations that have signed free-trade agreements with China since 2009, and second they involve nations supplying China with natural resources and advanced technologies"[50]. Hitherto, there is a tendency to believe that panda diplomacy does not have a particular capstone, but rather it experiences different impulses, as it happened more recently, in the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. The earthquake affected, according to environmentalists, up to 67% the habitat of these animals[51].

China carefully selects the receiving countries, and clearly defines the moment when to deliver (or withhold) the pandas. For instance, in May 2014, China sent two pandas (Fu Wa and Feng Yi) in Kuala Lumpur to mark the 40th anniversary of the Chinese-Malaysian diplomatic ties. Initially, Chinese authorities set to make the delivery in April 2014, but due to the MH370 tragedy,

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[44] *Ibidem*, p. 263.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 264.
[46] Falk Hartig, *Panda Diplomacy: The Cutest Part of China's Public Diplomacy*, in *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[47] Kathleen Carmel Buckingham, Jonathan Neil William David and Paul Jepson, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[48] *Ibidem*, p. 266.
[49] Falk Hartig, *Panda Diplomacy: The Cutest Part of China's Public Diplomacy*, in *op. cit.*, p. 64.
[50] Kathleen Carmel Buckingham, Jonathan Neil William David and Paul Jepson, *op. cit.*, p. 266.
[51] *Ibidem*, p. 264.

the shipment was delayed[52]. On the other hand, in 2010, China brought back Tai Shan and Mei Lan just two days after it had warned the United States that bilateral ties would be flawed if President Obama meets the Dalai Lama[53][54].

In addition to this example, Brynn Holland inserts a puzzling equation: while assessing the fact that panda loans coincide "with trade deals for valuable resources and technology"[55], he points out the fact that, once again, pandas are used as tools to communicate sensitive messages or to react indirectly to various events. Thus, Holland provides an incentive in the case of the Edinburg Zoo which, in 2011, receives two pandas, "the first to arrive in the United Kingdom for 17 years"[56]. For this reason, "trade deals were signed between the two nations for salmon, renewable energy technology and Lan Rover behicles"[57]. In a contrasting instance, Norway, who had just "recently given the Noble Peace Prize to jailed Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo lost their long-standing salmon deal with China…"[58]

For a country to receive pandas, it is indispensable to be, *firstly*, in China's commercial and economic sights. One of the pre-concluding assumptions of this article is that panda diplomacy is often used *extra* – additional to other public diplomacy mechanisms –, or either as a *replacement* – in case other soft power mechanisms do not function or posses limited resources. Furthermore, panda diplomacy is used as a way to communicate certain sensitive messages to governments and to the world itself, preserving extremely fine and delicate tactical maneuvers (the case of Tai Shan and Mei Lan *vs.* Obama and the Dalai Lama). There is a tendency to believe that this sensitivity could be directly rooted in the in-depth of the Confucian philosophy.

Thus, **panda diplomacy sought to establish stronger ties** with the superpowers of the time. Being preoccupied to obtain recognition of China's

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[52] --, *Pandas arrive at Zoo Negara*, in "The Star Online", 21 May 2014 [https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2014/05/21/pandas-arrive-in-zoo-negara/], accessed 5 June 2017].

[53] --, *Giant pandas Tai Shan, Mei Lan head for China from the American zoos where they were born*, in "Los Angeles Times", 4 February 2010 [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/unleashed/2010/02/giant-pandas-tai-shan-mei-lan-headed-for-china-from-the-american-zoos-where-they-were-born.html], accessed 1 April 2018.

[54] BBC News, *China warns Obama not to meet Dalai Lama*, in "The British Broadcasting Chanel", 2 February 2010 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8492608.stm], accessed 1 April 2018.

[55] Brynn Holland, *op. cit.*

[56] *Ibidem.*

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] *Ibid.*

"opening up"[59], Mao Zedong focused on a predetermined objective: to pursue both USSR ("its militant revolutionary rival"[60]) and the US ("its major ideological adversary"[61]) to "recognize China's emerging position and create a triangular power balance"[62] for the sake of avoiding violence and a direct confrontation[63].

Afterwards, during Deng's era, the projection of China's panda diplomacy gained yet another magnitude: "The purpose of panda diplomacy moved from an emphasis on geopolitics to a focus on markets: prestigious zoos in nations seen as important markets for Chinese products were offered the opportunity to lease pandas for six-figure sums plus a percentage of merchandising sales"[64]. Obviously, the sum of all these sales is dazzling, but they do not define the subject of this paper, since none of them are linked to Romania. Notwithstanding, the accent on species survival contoured during this period and the fact that "Chinese authorities abandoned short-term loans in 1991 in favor of a system, proposed by both Chinese and Western conservationists, of long-term loans (to allow breeding)" [65] are subsequent reasons to argue that Romania has never *qualified* for a panda, at least in a broader sense.

The dual demeanors of foreign politics or why this practice did not comprise Romania

Having explored in the previous section the main existing literature that assesses the dimension of panda diplomacy, the article proceeds to the zenith. In spite of the fact that several questions, – *Where does this form of diplomacy find its roots? How did panda diplomacy emerged in the contemporary practice of IR? What are the significant changes from theory to practice?* – have already been answered, it is needles to state that furthermore the article intends to elaborate on a few stances in regard to Sino-Romanian relations during the three phases of panda diplomacy. Ultimately, this section of the narrative is correlating the major bilateral events with this diplomatic practice as well as addressing the research question that had been raised at the beginning. The main outline of the proceeding is not to list facts, but rather to synthesize and to filter the empirical evident in such a manner that enables this anecdotal to become constructively

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59 Kathleen Carmel Buckingham, Jonathan Neil William David and Paul Jepson, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
60 *Ibidem.*
61 *Ibid.*
62 *Ibid.*
63 *Ibid.*
64 *Ibid.*
65 *Ibid.*, pp. 263-264.

and critically evaluated; a better comprehension of the application of the principles connected to the practice of panda diplomacy in the case of Romania.

As a preliminary assumption, this article argues that, although empiricism demonstrate that middle powers, smaller size countries (based on the fact that, for example, Belgium received a panda) could have the possibility the possibility to receive a pair of pandas from China. Yet, why countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), generally speaking, including here Romania, were not in China's right? This rhetoric has the potential *inter alia* to open, as a result, channels for debates in connection to the inclusive vectors of Chinese public diplomacy in the region, aspects of contemporary relations between China and Central and Eastern Europe, or even an estimation of China's Sixteen Plus One mechanism.

Sino-Romanian relations during the first and second phases of Panda Diplomacy

Romania is the third country in the world to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC), and thus bilateral relations have been established on 5 October 1949[66]. Throughout the first two phases of panda diplomacy, Romania and China had developed a strong bilateral relationship:

"The two countries and two peoples have always sympathized with and supported each other. In 1970 when Romania suffered serious floods, the Chinese Government provided Romania with free material aid. At the 26th session of the UN General Assembly in October 1971, Romania as a co-sponsor country voted for the resolution calling for restoration of all the lawful rights of China in the United Nations and the immediate expulsion of the representatives of the Kuomintang clique from the UN and all its agencies. In the early 1970s, Romania did a great deal of work for the improvement of Sino-US relations". [67]

In this connection, this article tends to claim that Sino-Romanian relations have been extremely cordial, and able to establishing successively high-level dialogues which could be regarded as sufficient for the state of the bilateral contacts. Farsighted, ideological closeness played the most important role, especially in their joint distancing from Moscow. This dual motivation should be perceived as a stimulus which created a *fundamentum inconcussum* among the two countries. Accordingly, this article articulates that panda diplomacy was not

[66] Government of Romania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Relații bilaterale – Scurt istoric," *Embassy of Romania to the People's Republic of China*, 2015 [http://beijing.mae.ro/node/221], accessed 8 April 2018.
[67] Government of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "China and Romania," *Embassy of the People's Republic of China to Romania*, 2004 [http://www.chinaembassy.org.ro/rom/zlgx/t66052.htm], accessed 8 April 2018.

further needed as the outcomes desired were achieved through other [diplomatic] techniques and more simple approaches.

In short, Romania not even nearly represented a combatant for China in international relations during this time as a result of its political and economic preoccupations, while both sides having the power to extract the mere interests and cultivate trustworthy. As a result, Ceaușescu himself visited China five times (in 1971, 1978, 1982, 1985 and 1988)[68], while similar high-level visits were also paid by Chinese officials, such as Zhou Enlai (in 1965, when he attended the funeral of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej[69] "and headed a Party and Government delegation to visit Romania in 1966"[70]), Li Xinnian (1964, 1974, 1984)[71] or Deng Xiaoping (1965, 1984 and 1989)[72].

Romania and China during the current panda phase: could there be a panda for Romania?

Sino-Romanian relations, in the aftermath of the political changes established in 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe, are actually in decline. Trade reached the lowest point in 1999[73], for instance, and what used to represent strategic, major interests for Romania is now insignificant. One of the reason for these changes, among other things, has been the agenda of political elites. Since the change of the regime in Bucharest, Romania's political establishment grew terrifically pro-Euro-Atlantic and, until roughly a decade ago, their major political goal was to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Union (EU). These objectives turned into some sort of an obsession for the Romanian public and their leadership, and Bucharest's foreign policy orientation is leaning in this direction.[74] In addition to this, critics have widely targeted China in the Romanian public space, while the general public have very little or none information regarding China.

However, the modest steps that have been made more recently cannot be ignored, namely when Romania announced the hosting of the Center for

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[68] *Ibidem.*
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] *Ibid.*
[74] Mihai Titienar, *Why is Romania's relation with China underdeveloped?*, in "Romania Insider", 2016 [http://www.romania-insider.com/comment-romanias-relation-china-underdeveloped/], accessed 21 April 2018.

Dialogue and Cooperation on Energy Projects under the 16+1 formula[75], and when Romania had announced its desire to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank early in 2017.

These disclosures indeed remain at a modest state of the art, and the reasons behind could be closely related to the state socialization theory which is extensively debated by Kai Anderson[76], Trine Flockhart[77] or Ewan Harrison[78]. Thus, its nature is relevant only to IR norms and practices for the sake of avoiding isolation and preserving control over the bilateral relations of Romania, those who fall under the competence of the national realm. Further divisions could also be identified by means of a domestic political gap, within the establishment among the Cotroceni[79] and Victory Palaces[80].

This article clearly does not argue that Romania did not received a panda due to the foregoing, but rather due to the following assumptions. *Firstly*, hosting a pair of pandas in a Romanian zoo would imply great costs for the government in two directions: to pay the loan, and to invest in the required infrastructure (including here accelerating the commitments assumed while on loan, such as nutrition, breeding etc.). As an analogy, "In Adelaide, for example, the pandas were a major reason why the zoo there had a debt of 24 million Australian dollars"[81].

Secondly, Romanian authorities have a volatile public diplomacy scheme (including here cultural diplomacy or animal diplomacy) which lacks interests from this perspective (this is especially noticeable in the funding scheme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs); "Romania's diplomatic efforts became muddled

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[75] Mihaela Cerban, *Cioloș: Centrul pentru Dialog și Cooperare în domeniul proiectelor energetice, înființat la București,* in "Agerpres", 5 November 2016 [https://www.agerpres.ro/politica/2016/11/05/ciolos-centrul-pentru-dialog-si-cooperare-in-domeniul-proiectelor-energetice-infiintat-la-bucuresti-19-50-13], accessed April 10 April 2018.

[76] See Kai Anderson, *Making sense of state socialization*, in "Review of International Studies", vol. 27, issue 3, 2001, pp. 416-417.

[77] See Trine Flockhart, *«Complex Socialization»: A Framework for the Study of State Socialization* in "European Journal of International Relations", vol. 12, issue 1, 2006, pp. 90-92.

[78] See Ewan Harrison, *State Socialization, International Norm Dynamics and the Liberal Peace,* in "International Politics", vol. 41, issue 4, 2004, pp. 525-530.

[79] Cotroceni Palace refers to the Romanian Presidential Administration.

[80] Victory Palace is housing the Prime Minister of Romania and his/her cabinet. It refers to the Government of Romania.

[81] Falk Hartig, *The Latest Round of China's Panda Diplomacy: Winning Hearts in Belgium*, in "Center on Public Diplomacy – University of South California", 2014 [http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/latest-round-china%E2%80%99s-panda-diplomacy-winning-hearts-belgium], accessed 19 April 2018.

and erratic"[82]. It has pursued an "obsession with its reputation issues [which] led to a pattern of tardy, on-the defensive communications which overshadowed and all but replaced well-structured and proactive attempts at building dialogue, understanding and trust…"[83]Potential solutions would be an all-inclusive facilitation of "exchanges on Romanian territory", involving more actively "the academia… in policy-making and governmental strategies…", as well as the "diasporas… in preserving the culture and in presenting a decent, hard-working, and civilized image"[84]. Withal, this is slightly improving from a generic angle, but as long as there is no demand, nor interests from decision-making actors and the public, panda diplomacy will not come into being.

Thirdly, there is no genuine interests, neither a real enthusiasm in regard to pandas in Romania, including scientific research (animal conservation), the public and media or governmental agents. In a narrow sense, pandas **do not represent:** 1.) an interest for Romanian biologists, especially since considerable progress has been achieved by China in order to save the species; 2.) a legitimate perception of China for the public and media; and 3.) strategic economic interests considering the fact that major export partners are European countries.

Diving into the perception of the Romanian general public regarding China, government agents etc., it is easily to identify considerable gaps in public awareness regarding the Chinese culture, lack of reliable information, lack of viable studies concerning the academia, and implicitly experts. Existing studies or reports, for instance, are remain predominantly biased and subjective.

Reflections and ordinary indictment of panda diplomacy

The question is "Why engage in panda diplomacy at all?" [85] that arises in one of the studies authored by Falk Hartig. In a 2014, Hartig brings into light arguments that explain the latest disclosures in terms of panda diplomacy. Hence, although considerable efforts need to be made, the positive effects persist for both sides involved in a panda transaction. China is visibly delighted to share

[82] Andreea Sepi, *Nation Branding: The Case of Romania. Brief history and possible reasons for failure*, in "Institute for Cultural Diplomacy E/IR&CD", 2013 [http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/pdf/case-studies/Andreea_Sepi_-_Nation_Branding_-_The_Case_of_Romania.pdf], accessed 20 April 2018, p. 3.

[83] *Ibidem*, p. 4.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[85] Falk Hartig, *The Latest Round of China's Panda Diplomacy: Winning Hearts in Belgium*, in *op. cit.*

some of the closest mementos to its culture, environment and identity in order to shape bits of perceptions in the receiving country[86].

On one hand, pandas reach "a much wider audience"[87] than "the Confucius Institutes, China Daily, CCTV, or any touring arts group"[88], representing thus the most efficient tool in China's public diplomacy, and it helps to black out, at least temporarily, criticism. Accordingly, panda diplomacy is indeed revived and "ideal for the media age"[89].

On the other hand, panda diplomacy brings prestige to the receiving zoos and countries, especially if the pandas breed[90]. But, as Hartig points out,

> "this is not an easy undertaking […] these animals are expensive, but the receiving country has to offer China something in return. This, of course, is not noted officially, as pandas are supposed to be sent abroad for breeding and conservation purposes only. But China is not just renting the pandas out to anyone: in the case of Canada, for example, various commentators were of the opinion that the pandas were a gesture of gratitude that was described in the context of a «raw materials for panda» deal... "[91].

In a hypothetically contrasting comparison, applying the principles of panda diplomacy in Romania's direction would imply advancing perhaps a rhetoric: what would Romania have to offer in exchange?

Conclusion

The implications of China's panda diplomacy are much broader than they seem to be at a first glance. Emerging from a historical context, animal diplomacy, in the case of China known as panda diplomacy, is deeply rooted in the practice of international relations. Upon reviving panda diplomacy throughout the 1950's, China's welter of public diplomacy instruments has been enriched, thus granting China more options and flexibility, while combining, at least to some extent, creativity – *i.e.* using an agent that is uniquely representative for a given space.

Despite the fact that China has had some struggles in identifying the true tenure of pandas in the world of foreign affairs, it has been proven that panda

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[86] *Ibidem.*

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] *Ibid.*

diplomacy possesses versatility, having the potential to shape and to adapt, therefore becoming one of the most successful instrument of Beijing's soft power mechanisms. From creators of strategic alliances to gift loans and *guanxi* builders, pandas represent, as a result of its evolution inspiration and tradition. However, it may not be the best form of public diplomacy that China own for the moment as Richard G. Lugar debates. Reasons to argue against Lugar's assumption includes the fact that pandas have a limited effect (blitz effect) on the public; it is an inclusive practice, yet the positive image of China created by panda diplomacy does not persist due to the abundance, for example, for negative news in media outlets.

Additionally, panda diplomacy, as most forms of generic public diplomacy, is not measurable, but it could help China achieve short-term results. It is a mean to escalade toward more complex issues and goals, a ladder to maximize some benefits ultimately. Beijing is aware that short-term impressions create impact on people, psychologically, especially in Western countries where the people can hold their governments accountable for their actions. Nevertheless, it is a persuasive form of enthusiasm on both sides: the sender and the receiver.

Romania could have the potential to grant China access to more complex regional prospects through the nature of Romania's European Union membership or, for example, if maximized, as an initiator of The Bucharest Nine Forum and as a participant both in the Three Seas Initiative or The (Chinese) Sixteen Plus One. Yet, Romania has a perpetual lack of interests, including at the political elite level, toward China. An apprehension of such a disclosure could be that Romania is afraid to stain its reputation within the Euro-Atlantic structuralism, when in fact this could bring even more substantial damage on the long run.

In the end, it is clear that, in the upcoming period, China has no intentions at all to initiate the dialogue for sending out a pair of pandas to Romania. The post-2000 high-level dialogue displays the interests China does have in Central and Eastern Europe, but as long as Romania keeps ignoring the *Chinese calls*, other countries in the proximity will become more favored. In spite of the humble steps towards enhancing several vectors in the direction of *re-heating* the Sino-Romanian relations, this article predicts that the rapprochement will not come as fast as the Romanian governmental agents would like to believe. This assumption is also supported by the wide spread public disagreement in connections to topics that address China, on top of a current geopolitical diagram, which has littered over Romania in terms of international relations, combined with an acute inability of the Romanian leadership to elaborate a long-term strategy of foreign affairs.

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U.S. – IRAN RELATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A CASE STUDY ON BUSH, OBAMA AND TRUMP AND THEIR APPROACH TOWARDS IRAN

Cătălin Badea[1]

The Bush Administration – From Working Together to Confrontation

By 2000, when George W. Bush, the son of former President George H.W. Bush, was elected President of the United States by a very small margin, the relation between Tehran and Washington was deeply rooted in mistrust between the two parties, if we can even speak about any type of relationship, as no official contacts have been made since 1979. Two decades of animosity have led both Washington and Tehran to internalize and institutionalise the mutual lack of any trust. The image of Iran in Washington and in reverse, the image of the United States in Tehran, were constructed over the two decades until 2000 (and with minor exceptions until today) so antagonistically that rapprochement was almost impossible. For the US, Iran was ruled by a backwards, theocratic regime that belonged in the Middle Ages, and on top of that, the regime was stubbornly opposing U.S. influence in the strategic area of the Middle East. For Iran, the United States was the epitome of a very peculiar blend of evil that the regime blamed for all its shortcomings. For the mullahs, the "Great Satan" was an imperialistic power hell-bent on destroying Iran or at the very least making Iran another one of its puppets, just like the Arab nations of the region. On this background came the administration of George W. Bush. At first, the Bush administration wanted to focus more on internal matters, trying to have a more "relaxed" foreign policy, after the less-than-fortunate decade of the 90's during which the U.S. did not improve its image by any means.

The tragedy of 9/11 quickly changed any plans the Bush Administration had, as Washington needed to answer an attack on its soil quickly and with devastating force. It was a time for the more hawkish elements in Washington to impose their will, as panic engulfed the U.S., and President Bush was not cut-out to be a strong voice that would calm a disturbed nation.

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In the aftermath of 9/11, Iran, thanks to the dialogue-oriented Khatami Presidency, was quick to offer its support, sympathy and help the U.S. in apprehending those responsible for the attacks.[2] Khatami was hoping that the tragedy of 9/11 could be used as the perfect moment to try and find some common ground with Washington and begin a new relation based on common interest and respect. Initially, there were some positive signs to this end, as some cooperation was achieved, as Tehran offered to help the U.S. in its invasion of Afghanistan and the broader fight against Al-Qaeda[3].

In what is perhaps one of the most hard to explain diplomatic blunders of the 21st century, at the beginning of 2002, Bush included Iran, who had just offered to help the U.S., in his famous "Axis of Evil" speech. The blow came out of nowhere for Khatami, and was devastating, as all of his efforts to establish friendlier relations with Washington since 1997 were erased in the instant that Bush lumped Iran alongside Iraq and North Korea as the threats to the "peace of the world"[4]. Not everyone was surprised or devastated by this move, however. Conservatives, led by the Supreme Leader Khamenei himself, were quick to jump on the opportunity the failure of the moderate and reformist Khatami presented for them in the minefield that is Iranian internal politics. Despite growing internal pressure to abandon any attempts at dialogue with the United States, the Khatami Presidency carried on with their goal and in 2003 attempted the impossible: to start official negotiations with the United States, in an attempt to restart the two countries dysfunctional or perhaps better said inexistent relationship.

In May 2003, the Swiss Ambassador to Tehran, who acted as a semi-official link between the United States and Iran in the lack of direct channels between the two, Tim Guldimann arrived in Washington in what should have been a routine visit that took place every few months to brief the U.S. on any developments in Iran. But this was not a regular, normal visit, as Guldimann carried with him a document that contained not only an official invitation from Iran towards the U.S. to start direct negotiations, but also Iran's proposals for all major points of grievance between Tehran and Washington, such as Iran's

[2] BBC News, Iranian president condemns September 11 attacks (2001) [http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/meast/11/12/khatami.interview.cnna/], 20 September 2020.

[3] Ali Parchami, *American culpability: the Bush Administration and the Iranian nuclear Impasse,* in "Contemporary Politics", Vol. 20, No. 3, 2014, 315–330, p. 316.

[4] Quote from the 2002 State of the Union Address in which the "Axis of Evil" concept was introduced by President Bush. Full transcript available at: https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html.

nuclear programme, the sanctions regime, Israel, Iran's support for Hezbollah and many others.

The proposal did not come out of the blue. By May 2003, the United States was in an excellent position, looking as powerful as ever. With the recent apparent victory in Iraq as the Saddam regime was toppled and the initial success of the Afghanistan Invasion, Washington was flexing its superpower muscles in all of their glory, and for many in the White House, Iran was looking like the perfect next target. In their proposal, Iran was willing to stop its military support of Hezbollah, stop all support for Hamas and the Islamic Jihad while also pressuring them to stop any attacks on Israel and co-operate fully with the U.S. on apprehending all terrorist organizations, chiefly Al-Qaeda. The most shocking proposal was however the fact that Iran was willing to accept the 2002 Beirut Declaration, under which Arab states pledge to recognize and normalize relations with Israel, on the condition of the two-state solution being implemented. In return for this, Iran asked for the U.S. to end the sanctions regime, accept Iran's right to a nuclear programme and Iran's role as a regional player[5]. Staying true to form and still riding the wave of initial successes in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush Administration, largely at this point under the influence of Vice-President Cheney and his hawkish neo-conservatives such as Donald Rumsfeld or John Bolton, dismissed the Iranian proposal without even blinking. During the first term in office of George W. Bush, the U.S. policy towards Iran, just like the rest of the foreign policy, was in the hands of Vice-President Cheney, who had little opposition, only Secretary of State Colin Powell tried, with limited success, to moderate the hugely influential Cheney. [6]The best summary of the United States policy on Iran in the first term of George Bush was made by exactly the man that, to a large degree, shaped it: "We do not negotiate with evil, we defeat evil."[7] Though at the time he was referring to North Korea, the same thinking was applied to all matters of foreign policy, and as we have seen from the 2002 concept of "Axis of Evil", Iran was placed, in this dark and

[5] Trita Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice, Obama's Diplomacy with Iran*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, pp. 13-15

[6] Glenn Kessler, *Colin Powell versus Dick Cheney* (2011) [https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ fact-checker/post/colin-powell-versus-dick-cheney/2011/08/30/gIQAwYydqJ_blog.html?utm_term=. bf358c8fbcff], 20 September 2020.

[7] The Sydney Morning Herald, *Cheney's tough talking derails negotiations with North Korea* (2003), [https://www.smh.com.au/world/cheneys-tough-talking-derails-negotiations-with-north-korea-20031222-gdi10g.html], 22 September 2020.

white depiction of the world of the Bush Administration, in the evil part. As such, negotiations were off the table, especially as the perception in Washington was at the time that it was much simpler for the U.S. to change the regime in Tehran than it was to negotiate with a hostile one[8].

Yet another opportunity to decrease tensions and start the negotiations that could bring the conflict to an end was missed. But the repercussions were not just that an opportunity was missed to break the deadlock that the two countries were in, as Khatami, and with him the reformist movement, lost a huge amount of political capital. The reformist movement argument was that a dialogue and a more moderate and open Tehran would bring the West and Iran to an understanding, and would subsequently allow Iran not only to flourish economically as the lifting of the sanctions regime and the end of the isolation on the global market would bring prosperity, but it would also grant Iran the long-desired acceptance by the West of Iran's role as a regional power. And to his credit, Khatami really did try to achieve this, even after being ruthlessly turned down. But the West, mainly the United States, rejected from the start any such move. Internally, the reformist movement lost credibility, and in the 2005 elections, Ahmadinejad, a relatively newcomer on the political stage, was elected President after running on a platform of fiery rhetoric against the West and especially the U.S. and Israel.

After 2004, the victory in Iraq and Afghanistan was more and more looking as anything but what anyone could consider a win and the mood for any more foreign interventions and regime changes was souring. The influence of Cheney and the neo-conservatives after the re-election in 2004 was considerably smaller, though they were still influential. However, the most important change had occurred not in Washington, where the shift can be described as a move from a largely unchecked hawkish wing controlling the majority of the administration's foreign policy (with the minor exception of Colin Powell – who despite his efforts could not push the administration in a different direction) to a more diluted or institutional control on the foreign policy, especially after Condoleezza Rice was installed as Secretary of State, but in Tehran. The election of Ahmadinejad changed the political landscape in Iran completely. The days of a dialogue, western-aspiring Iran under a reformist leadership were over. Instead, a familiar blend of nationalism, Islamism and populism with a side of fiery rhetoric was again the norm. The New-Right of Iran[9] was in many ways

[8] Trita Parsi, *op. cit.* p. 15

[9] Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution, Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 223-237

similar to the Bush Administration, especially in terms of foreign policy, as both were fundamentally guided on classic, realist principals that put concepts such as national security, national interest at the forefront of their agenda. For Ahmadinejad, survival was the name of the game, and in true realist manner, this meant strengthening Iran's military capabilities and refusing "humiliating concessions" that the diplomatic approach of Khatami would bring[10]. During Ahmadinejad's tenure, the IRGC (Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps) started to arm and fund the rebel movement in Iraq and Afghanistan, as a direct move against the United States[11]. The move also had a deeper, strategic goal, as Iran was looking to fill in the vacuum left in its two neighbours with favourable, Shi'a regimes. But the most important move that Ahmadinejad made was to push on, perhaps even harder than before, with the nuclear programme, despite growing international pressure.

At this point it is important to note that the 2003 proposal from Iran, despite the cold rejection it received in Washington, it was not entirely abandoned in the international arena. European powers, mainly the UK, France and Germany (known as the EU3) received the offer much more openly, and negotiations between EU3 and Iran, based on that proposal commenced in 2003. The negotiations however were not as successful as hoped in the beginning, mainly due to the fact that the United States, the most important actor in the international stage, constantly tried to interfere with the process and put a halt to it[12], and the Iranians knew too that any negotiations, especially a deal, that did not include the United States, would not carry as much weight as they wanted to portray.

After 2005, as the hawks started to lose influence in Washington and with the appointment of Rice as Secretary of State, the U.S. shifted its position to a more balanced one, and negotiations were back on the table. It was at this time that the famous "Dual-Track" approach was adopted, wherein the West would negotiate with Iran – track one- but at the same time hang over the heads of the Iranians the threat of sanctions – track two-, the logic being that the sanctions threat would keep the Iranians at the negotiations table.[13]

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[10] Bernd Kaussler and Anthony B. Newkirk, *Diplomacy in Bad Faith: American-Iranian Relations Today*, in "Diplomacy & Statecraft", Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 347-380, pp. 348-350.

[11] For more on the IRGC and its ties to Ahmadinejad see a short background by the Council of Foreign Relations, available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/irans-revolutionary-guards.

[12] Parchami, *op. cit., pp.* 320-322.

[13] *Ibidem, pp.* 322-325.

In what is maybe an ironic twist, it was precisely at the same time that the U.S. would moderate its approach that Iran would change its own moderate approach into a radical one. Despite officially continuing, negotiations, now in a P5+1 format[14], negotiations were less and less fruitful, as Washington and its European allies became more and more rigid in their willingness to compromise, a rigidness fuelled both by pre-existing mistrust between the parties and Iran's new administration.

Despite the significant change in tone from Washington, going from "we do not negotiate with evil" to sitting at the negotiating table with what it declared loud and clear only a few years ago as "evil", the relationship between Iran and the United States was not improved by any means during the second term of George W. Bush. In fact, tensions remained high and perhaps even intensified, as the United States move to join the negotiations greatly harmed Iran's international image, as Iran could no longer portray the United States as hell-bent on war, and it was Iran that was becoming associated more and more with aggressiveness, especially as the international sanctions regime was imposed as Iran was defiant towards the multiple UN resolutions calling on Tehran to halt its nuclear programme. Though no angels, the United States between 2005 and 2009 did try, or at least put on a show of trying, to reach a consensus at the negotiating table, but it's constant taunting of the 'second track' of sanctions did not help undo the quagmire of negotiations. During this period, only the fact that the U.S. domestic support for foreign adventures quickly diminished as both the Iraq and the Afghanistan missions bogged down, and subsequently the more hawkish wing in Washington lost a great deal of influence, stopped a direct confrontation between Iran and the United States from ever taking place.

The Obama Administration – The Dual Track approach

In the early days of 2009, a wave of hope mixed with uncertainty was making its way across the United States, but also much of the entire world, as Barack Obama was about to be sworn in as the 44th President of the United States. Uncertainty was high, as much of the world was mired in the devastating financial crisis that started with the almost complete collapse of the financial markets in the United States that triggered a domino-like effect that hit many other countries around the globe. The geopolitical standing of the United States was also subject to much questioning, both internally and externally, as by this time it was becoming clearer and clearer that the campaigns in Iraq and

[14] Member of the P5+1 being the 5 Permanent Security Council members + Germany.

Afghanistan were not the resounding successes that they seemed to be early on, and the narrative behind the intervention was failing to substantially legitimize the interventions. There was also hope, as there usually is when a new administration is sworn-in. In his inaugural speech, Obama tried to capture the essence of his movement, and in terms of foreign policy promises were very high, as Obama wanted to portray himself as the complete opposite of the previous, aggressive, administration. His famous phrase "…we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist" [15] was meant to portray exactly this new, more peaceful attitude of Washington. But it was another phrase in the same speech that was targeted directly at Iran: "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect"[16]. In line with his overall approach to foreign policy, it might seem only a small reference to the entire Muslim world, but the key phrase here is *mutual respect*. This specific term is the central point of Iranian claims ever since 1979, as they often stated that what is needed for an improvement in relations between Tehran and Washington is "mutual respect"[17].

Reality, however, seldom bends to the will of the hopeful and peace-loving, especially in times of crisis, just as the late 2000's were in the United States. Mired with the internal economic chaos and with what so many politicians use as the scape-goat for all of their shortcomings – the bad inheritance from previous administrations – in external matters, the Obama administration could hardly get the chance to really focus on the Iranian file and bring about major change. It is important to mention also that no particular help came from Iran, as Ahmadinejad and his administration were deeply skeptical of Obama's promise for a new approach to Iran, or at the very best that he was perhaps genuinely looking to improving relations, but that the whole state apparatus was controlled by other groups that wanted to destroy Iran and that he would not be able to really inflict a deep, fundamental change in Washington.[18] As such, much of the first term in office of Barack Obama was spent using the approach of the "two-tracks". The second track, that of sanctions, was by now fully enforced, but the administration hoped that diplomacy would still work and did not pull out of negotiations. The situation however did not

[15] Excerpt taken from Barack Obama's inaugural speech. Full text of the speech is available online at: https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/20/us/politics/20text-obama.html, accessed 24 September 2020.
[16] *Ibidem.*
[17] Trita Parsi, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[18] *Ibidem.*, pp. 36-42.

improve, as Iran under Ahmadinejad stubbornly refused to give in to international pressure, which, it is important to underline, after 2009 included even Russia and China, countries that traditionally refrained from such actions.

The nuclear issue was always, even before the 1979 Revolution, a major point of contention between Washington and Tehran, perhaps the single biggest impediment to a functional relation, as despite rhetoric from both sides about human rights abuses or imperialism, both countries maintain relations, in some cases even very friendly ones, with states that have a much worse record on such matters.

For the remainder of Obama's first term in office, U.S. policy towards Iran stayed in essence on the same second track of sanctions, while at the same time keeping open the possibility of negotiations, though it was getting clear that, at least under Ahmadinejad, diplomacy did not have any chances of success. Comparisons can be drawn up between the U.S. approaches to Iran during this time and, perhaps not surprisingly, the famous policy of "containment" that the United States employed throughout the Cold War period against the Soviet Union, based on the findings of the U.S. diplomat in Moscow, George Kennan.[19] The goals of the United States were, despite the obvious difference in the two scenarios, strikingly similar: isolate the enemy, deprive it of any economic connections and ostracise it on the international scene. And to give credit where it's due, the policy did work, as Iran, despite mustering all its energy and spirit under Ahmadinejad to fight against the enormous pressure put on by the international community, only managed to partially delay a complete defeat, as by 2012 Iran's economy was in shambles.[20]

By the beginning of Obama's second term in the first months of 2013 tensions around Iran were reaching a boiling point. Iran was, despite a ravaged economy, resisting international pressure to stop its nuclear programme and nations in the region, particularly Israel but to a certain degree also Saudi Arabia, were increasingly nervous about the situation. Israel was at the forefront of international pressure on Iran ever since 1979, and by 2013 its threats about pre-emptively striking Iran before Tehran got a nuclear weapon, which in Israel's view was an event very close to materialising, were more and more alarming, and sounded more real than ever. Israel also, quite uniquely in the world, has the ability to put a lot of pressure on the U.S. internal mechanism of governance thanks to its large and powerful lobby in Washington. These facts, coupled with

[19] Bernd Kaussler and Anthony B. Newkirk, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

[20] Masoud Movahed, *Rebooting Iran's Economy*, in "Foreign Affairs", 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/2015-11-22/rebooting-irans-economy, accessed 25 September 2020.

the fact that Obama was now in his second term, and thus there wasn't the huge pressure of facing a re-election that traditionally prevents U.S. Presidents from acting overtly aggressive or breaking too much with tradition during their first term, meant that a change was bound to happen in the U.S.-Iran relationship. And a change did happen, perhaps one of the biggest and most relevant ones since 1979. Despite several years of official negotiations, and decades of unofficial communications through intermediaries, the one problem that the U.S. and Iran could not seem to agree on was whether Iran should be allowed to enrich uranium fuel for its civil nuclear programme domestically. Almost all countries with a nuclear programme have the right and do enrich uranium domestically. But enriching uranium for civil uses is not a lot different than enriching it to create a nuclear weapon, and given the situation of Iran and it's international lack of credibility, allowing Iran to enrich domestically was, and still is, a very controversial point for the United States to accept. However, going through with his promise from early on in his first term, Obama did just that, and accepted that Iran could enrich domestically in early 2013. Negotiations did not start immediately however, as elections were looming close in Iran and Ahmadinejad built his entire profile as a strong President that would not accept any compromises and "tricks" of the West.

2013 was to be however, the year in which the stars aligned for the first time since 1979 for Tehran and Washington. In the presidential elections of 2013 in Iran, Rouhani, a moderate that built his political career as the chief nuclear negotiator of Iran, was elected president, and for the first time in four decades, a moderate sat both in the White House and in Tehran. Negotiations were very quickly re-ignited to a meaningful level, and the situation was starting to relax, as talks between Iran and the P5+1 were looking more and more fruitful.

In 2015, the famous JCPOA, or Iran Deal, was signed between the P5+1 and Iran and was triumphantly presented as the hallmark of a new beginning for Iran, and for the relations between Iran and the United States. Indeed it was hard not to be optimistic about Iran in 2015 and the following years, as it seemed that Iran was finally starting to integrate in the global community, with a booming economy[21] and leaving behind the image of aggressiveness that almost brought about a war between the United States and Iran.

[21] Amir Paivar, *Nuclear deal: Is Iran's economy better off now?* (2018) [https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43975498], 25 September 2020.

Obama's approach was finally paying off, as his long dream of achieving peace with Iran looked complete. And it was not just a dream brought by love for peace and humanity. Strategically, ever since 1979 the United States has been grasping at thin air in the Middle East in the absence of its most important ally in the region, endlessly trying to create new partnerships and coalitions to maintain a feeble "balance of powers" that had very little chances to bring about true stability without the aid of Tehran. For many reasons explained in Chapter 2 and 3 of this paper, Iran has a crucial role in the Middle East, strategically, as well as religiously, culturally and economically. Iran is the largest country in the region, the "home" of one of the most important branches of Islam, and perhaps the most important aspect, it is the only country that can truly bring historic and cultural arguments for its important role in the region, thus granting it a huge advantage over some of the newer players, such as Saudi Arabia. The U.S. close relationship with Iran before 1979 was no accident or based solely on some "friendship". It was a relationship built on common ground and common strategic goals for the Middle East and beyond, and the U.S. knew that a stable, friendly Iran is the key to long-term stability in this crucial part of the world, and it is telling that despite enormous efforts, and with its main opponent in the USSR gone, the U.S., being the sole-superpower in the world, did not manage to keep the Middle East stable without Iran.

For almost 4 decades before the JCPOA, the United States tried endlessly a combination of aggressiveness, sanctions and coalitions to counter the strategic importance of Iran in the Middle East. Throughout these 4 decades the objective of the U.S. was mainly ranging from regime change to a Cold War style of containment applied to Iran. Barack Obama was the first U.S. President since 1979 to actively try to find a diplomatic solution to the problem. And despite achieving it only one year before his second term in office ended, and with many concessions that critics quickly jump to point out that are much too generous for a deceiving, backwards regime like the one in Tehran, it is still a great achievement for Obama and for diplomacy as a strategical tool. Perhaps the most important successful aspect of the JCPOA is, aside from the obvious benefits of reducing tensions, avoiding a possible globally devastating war and bringing a major country back in the global system, the fact that diplomacy, flawed as it is and without perfect results (the JCPOA is by far not a perfect "deal"), was shown to be viable solution to resolve conflicts, even decades-old conflicts that were institutionalised so much that it was getting almost impossible to even think about a peaceful solution.

Trump and Iran – Back to the Old Ways

We can conclude that, in almost any way possible, the JCPOA was a perfect alignment of stars, a miracle of diplomacy if you will. But as we all know, miracles do not last too long. And that was the case for the JCPOA as well. In a shocking result, Donald Trump won the U.S. Presidential race, and true to his electoral promise, he withdrew the United States from a series of international agreements, including the JCPOA in 2018.

Donald Trump's approach to Iran and the 'Iran Deal' was from the election campaign one of fiery rhetoric in classic Trump style. He constantly taunted the deal as a weak one that only favoured Iran, a point that is strikingly similar to the narrative pushed by Israeli Prime-Minister Benjamin Netanyahu[22]. Indeed, ever since Trump was installed as Commander-in-Chief, United States foreign policy was brought back to a position in which Israel is the most important ally of the U.S. and Israel's interest gained a bigger importance, even at the detriment of relations with the Arab world and Arab allies in the region – acts such as the famous moving of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem[23].

However, there is still today, almost 4 years since Donald Trump took office, much debate about what exactly is the foreign policy of his administration. While it is clear that Trump is much more of a realist and conservative, these simple categorizations do not fit the actions of Donald Trump all too well or satisfactory. Cases were made that he is a neo-conservative, a realist, a neo-realist, a populist, a nationalist, a radical right-winger, an anti-globalist, and many more tags have been thrown at Donald Trump, but none seem to stick for a long time, as it appear that he is a walking contradiction. And he might as well be a walking contradiction, as his moves can hardly be anticipated, his preferred way of communication being social media, especially Twitter, even in cases of major importance, the old and established channels of communication being replaced with a short, random Tweet directly from the President.

The foreign policy of Donald Trump's administration cannot be summarized in the traditional, academic-friendly tags of liberal, conservative or realist (even with the added neo- suffix). Instead, a unique, 'Trump Way', is the

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[22] Alexander Fulbright, *In recording, Netanyahu boasts Israel convinced Trump to quit Iran nuclear deal* (2018) [https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-recording-netanyahu-boasts-israel-convinced-trump-to-quit-iran-nuclear-deal/], 26 September 2020.

[23] Stephen Farrell, *Why is the U.S. moving its embassy to Jerusalem?* (2018) [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-israel-diplomacy-jerusalem-explai/why-is-the-u-s-moving-its-embassy-to-jerusalem-idUSKBN1I811N], 26 September 2020.

best way to describe the foreign policy of the United States under Donald Trump. The Trump Way is a combination of nationalism, embedded in the famous phrase "Make America Great Again", realism/neo-realism, seen in the "America First" slogan and in the various actions of the administration such as the indifference to, and a sort of personality cult that Donald Trump developed. If we analyse the actions of the Trump Administration, be them regarding North Korea, the JCPOA and Iran, the Paris Agreement withdrawal or the new NAFTA agreement, we may start to see a pattern. The 'Trump Way' can be seen as putting the 'national interest' of the United States first, giving much more importance to nations and to bi-lateral talks and diplomacy, a renewed aggressive rhetoric against perceived enemies of the United States and a friendly rhetoric to those that are more agreeable and follow the lead of the U.S. But what this analysis misses in order to be classified as a typical neo-realist/conservative foreign policy is the crucial role played by Donald Trump himself. Indeed, much of the policy in Washington, be it internal or external, is centred around the President and his public image. It is crucial that every step and agreement made by the U.S. must be portrayed as a 'huge achievement' that could not have been possible without the guidance of Trump himself. In the same time, all agreements or progress are promoted as the best outcome possible for the United States and as a reawakening of the U.S. after years of 'soft' policy. The cases of North Korea and Iran are particularly telling for this 'personal' approach. Trump tried to cultivate for a long time the image of a personal relationship between him and Kim Jong-un as a way to get the North Korean dictator to the negotiating table, so that Trump could come out to the media with a great diplomatic victory that he personally is responsible for and could take all the merits. In a similar matter, but in reverse this time, in the case of Iran and the JCPOA, Trump wanted to undo what his predecessor Obama did 'wrong' with the signing of the Iran Deal. He took it as a personal quest to withdraw the U.S. from the agreement, despite international outcry against it. In terms of concrete actions in regards to Iran, Donald Trump has virtually reversed the relationship between Washington and Tehran from the calm and hopeful attitudes in 2015 and 2016 to a situation of deep tensions similar to the ones of the early 2000's. Step by step Trump withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA, re-imposed crippling sanctions and has brought the U.S. and Iran on the verge of conflict yet again, as well as doing nothing to promote stability and peace in the Middle East, quite the opposite in fact.

The recent events in the Gulf of Oman, where 2 tanker ships, one belonging to a Japanese company and one to a Taiwanese one, both heading to

Japan, where hit by yet unknown attackers, came as another blow to the stability of the region[24]. The fact that this event happened at the same time as the Japanese Prime-Minister Abe was conducting a state-visit to Tehran only adds more questions. The US, through Secretary of State Mike Pompeo came, very quickly, to blame Iran for the attack[25], despite sufficient and clear evidence of Iran's involvement, which it denied shortly after[26]. This recent development brings the fear of an escalation, and even outright war, closer to reality. The fact that the United States came out so quickly to blame Iran for the attack is also a sign that Washington is tightening the pressure on Iran. The U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and the re-imposition of economic sanctions on Iran has greatly rocked the stability in the Islamic Republic, a stability that brought in 2015 and 2016 unprecedented economic growth. In 2017 and especially after the 2018 re-imposition of economic sanctions, Iran's economy has again come under severe stress, and 2019 does not look any better. Tensions in Iran are escalating too, as the most affected by the sanctions are the poor. As of June 2019, I maintain my position, one that looks more hopeful than realistic every day, that a war between Iran and the United States will not happen. I believe that even with a wild, unpredictable president such as Donald Trump, the checks and balances of a democracy will not allow such a devastating war from taking place. It is perhaps a wishful way of thinking, but even strategic reasoning contradicts in all manners such a war. The United States, for all its military might, must see the errors in the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq and understand that a similar approach to Iran will not only be a resounding defeat in the long run, but it might just as well spell the end of the U.S. hegemony of the global system, a hegemony that is already under significant pressure from an emerging China.

The JCPOA was designed to be the foundation on which a strong partnership can be built between the global system, but more specifically the EU and U.S., and the Islamic Republic of Iran. A successful JCPOA would have allowed Iran a legitimate place as a regional power, a key player, if not the most

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[24] Patrick Wintour and Julian Borger, *Two oil tankers attacked in Gulf of Oman* (2019) [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/13/oil-tankers-blasts-reports-gulf-of-oman-us-navy], 28 September 2020.

[25] Parisa Hafezi and Makini Brice, *Trump says 'Iran did do it', as U.S. seeks support on Gulf oil tanker attacks* (2019) [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-attacks/trump-says-iran-did-do-it-as-u-s-seeks-support-on-gulf-oil-tanker-attacks-idUSKCN1TF0CA], 28 September 2020.

[26] DW, *Iran rejects US blame for tanker attacks in Gulf of Oman* (2019) [https://www.dw.com/en/iran-rejects-us-blame-for-tanker-attacks-in-gulf-of-oman/a-49190489], 29 September 2020.

important one, in the Middle East area, among others (a legitimate nuclear programme, economic ties with the world, etc.). On this foundation a long-term plan for stability in the Middle East could have been built, with history and recent events showing clearly that any such plan that does not include Iran is flawed and incomplete from the beginning. The withdrawal of the United States under Donald Trump from the agreement meant that it virtually became irrelevant. The presence of the EU3, China and Russia does grant any agreement legitimacy and meaning, but the main source behind Iran's decades of ostracism and isolation from the global system was and still is the relationship, or lack thereof, between Iran and the United States. In the aftermath of the 2018 withdrawal of the US, the EU3, China, Russia and Iran were quick to declare that they would stick by the deal even if the United States will not, in an attempt to salvage the diplomatic victory of 2015. However, as time passed by, it became clear that the absence of the United States from the agreement, as well as the imposition of some of the harshest economic sanction from Washington on Tehran, as well as the mounting pressure put by the U.S. on its European allies to join ranks and abandon the deal, meant that there were little incentives left for Iran to stick to its promises under the agreement. Thus it came to no surprise that Iran has announced that it started to re-stock and enrich its nuclear fuel reserves, and that by July 2019 it will break the limits imposed by the JCPOA[27]. Calls by the United States and Donald Trump to start negotiations for a new deal have been largely ignored by Tehran, as leaders in Iran fear that the United States is, yet again, aiming for regime change in the Islamic Republic. Trump himself tried to re-assure the leadership of Iran that a new deal is possible with the current regime[28] but the credibility of Donald Trump and the United States in the eyes of Tehran has been largely destroyed by the actions of the current administration. In Chapter 3 I gave the prediction that Iran will wait at least until the 2020 presidential elections for a change in the White House, and in the meantime it will try to mitigate the effects of the economic sanctions as best as they can, ideally by pursuing closer connections with the rest of the P5+1. However, the pressure put by the U.S. is enormous and the current situation of the international system limits by a great deal the actions of the EU and China, as relations between Europe and the U.S. are souring and the trade war between

[27] BBC News, *Iran nuclear deal: Enriched uranium limit will be breached on 27 June* (2019) [https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48661843], 29 September 2020.

[28] Jeff Mason and Malcolm Foster, *Trump says Iran nuclear deal achievable as sanctions sting* (2019) [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-usa-iran/trump-says-iran-nuclear-deal-achievable-as-sanctions-sting-idUSKCN1SX0VF], 29 September 2020.

Beijing and Washington is deepening, it seems that there is little room anywhere to try and help Tehran. Under these circumstances my prediction might not come to fruition. Instead, as we have seen already, tensions are rising at an alarming pace in the Middle East.

Missed Opportunities

The overarching idea that arises from an analysis of the United States-Iran relationship in the 21st century and perhaps we might speculate that it is the same for the last part of the 20th century as well, is that of *missed opportunities*. From a purely strategical perspective, the break-up of the alliance along with any form of relationship between the two countries following the 1979 Revolution was a disaster for the United States, as well as for Iran. The alliance between the two countries before 1979 formed the backbone that provided stability to the region, and in the absence of this stability pillar, the next decades saw the region plunging into ethnic, civil and national conflicts and wars. Despite rhetoric and fiery public declarations on both sides, fundamentally both countries understood, and understand (for that is why many in the U.S. desire a regime change in Tehran – not to destroy Iran, but to create an Iran that can be easily controlled and through which U.S. hegemony in the region can be fully attained) that a good relationship between them is beneficial to everybody. And that is why there have been many attempts, from both sides, ever since the Revolution to restore the relationship to at least a more tolerable level. All these opportunities were however missed, and even those situations in which the stars looked like they finally aligned turned out to be only temporary.

The three administrations that took place in this century had quite different approaches towards Iran, though many parallels can be drawn between the Bush administration and the Trump presidency. During the tenure of George W. Bush, the United States had a foreign policy that was generally based of realist/neo-realist thinking and had in key position hawks such as John Bolton or Donald Rumsfeld, with the whole foreign policy being *de facto* in the hands of the Vice-President Dick Cheney. During this administration, especially its first term in office when it had more freedom in terms of foreign actions, the relationship with Iran was practically non-existent, with the United States actively pursuing a policy of regime change in Tehran, *missing the opportunity* of a rapprochement during the presidency of the moderate Khatami, in fact, as we have seen in Chapters 2 and 3, the U.S. under President Bush not only squandered a very fruitful opportunity but actively worked to undermine any such progress. After George W. Bush came Barrack Obama and his more moderate, "unclenched fist" approach to foreign policy. Many hopes were raised in the early days of Obama's presidency, as it looked like there might finally be a chance for a diplomatic solution to the conflict. But by the time Obama was elected into office, the moderate Khatami was long gone in Tehran, and replaced by a hugely confrontational Ahmadinejad. Indeed this long distance 'dance' between Tehran and Washington, in which there is a moderate president in one country and a confrontational president in the other, followed by a reversal of roles between them, can be seen throughout the tumultuous relationship of the two countries. For the entire duration of Obama's first term in office it looked like yet another opportunity was going to be squandered. However, Obama's diplomatic approach was finally rewarded when in 2013 the moderate Rouhani won the Iranian Presidency and for the first time two moderates were in both capitals and diplomatic work could start. And start it did, as by 2015 the fruits of diplomacy were picked and the JCPOA were signed, marking the end of the conflict. But of course, that did not last, and the 'dance' was very quickly resumed after 2016 with the election of Donald Trump. Shadows of the Bush administration are large, especially when it comes to the way in which the Trump administration is handling the Iran file, but there cannot be much surprise there, as many key figures from the Bush administration, such as John Bolton, were recruited by Trump to be part of his White House team.

Comparing the three administrations is not an easy task, as the geopolitical and economic landscapes in which they operated were strikingly different. The Bush administration came under the immense public pressure that was generated by 9/11 and needed to bring concrete results to the public. This pressure coupled with the realist/neo-realist ideological foundation of the administration along with the fact that many members of the administration were 'hawks' led to a very aggressive U.S. policy in general, and especially in the Middle East, Iran only managing to escape the crosshairs of Washington during this time because the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq proved to be much more complicated than originally imagined. Obama came in much part as a reaction to the Bush administration, with a much more liberal ideological foundation of foreign policy. Thus, diplomacy was the chosen 'weapon' by Obama, though for the first term and a big portion of the second one diplomacy was only taking place in the background, the main tool used being economic sanctions. If we are to compare the two administrations, it becomes clear that Obama's path of action yielded much more fruitful and tangible results. The quality of the JCPOA and the degree in which it managed to harmonize U.S. interest with Iranian interest can be debated, and arguments can be drawn on the fact that U.S. gave perhaps too many concessions to a theocratic regime that can hardly be trusted. But the fact remains that a diplomatic solution is always the preferable alternative in the face of war, anywhere on the planet, but perhaps especially in a region as unstable and crucial for the world economy as the Middle East is.

As far as the presidency of Donald Trump is concerned, it is yet too early to draw any significant conclusions of the impact it has on the relationship between the United States and Iran. However, it is clear that this presidency draws much inspiration, not surprising at all considering the people that make up this administration, from the Bush administration's approach to Iran. Of course, the difference is that the Trump administration is not a classical realist/neo-realist administration, but one that combines several realist and conservative principles with the crucial role that the president himself plays, as discussed above. What this administration does not have, compared to the Bush one, is the failure of 2 campaigns weighing it down and hampering its ability to maneuver and act. As such, it is possible to imagine a war between the U.S. and Iran in the near future, but I would still think that such an event is unlikely. In the wake of recent events however, a possible conflict between U.S. allies in the region, especially Saudi Arabia, and Iran might be possible, but only time will tell.

Conclusion

Going from George W. Bush and his "Axis of Evil" concept towards Obama and his "unclenched fist" and arriving in the present at the "Twitter" President and his personal approach with heavy doses of realism, the one and only Donald Trump, the main argument developed in this article is that, for all its flaws and the long amount of time that it required to finally achieve results, Obama's approach that relied on diplomacy and sanctions (the dual-track approach that was actually developed during the late stages of the Bush administration) was the most effective one. The main theme in this study is that of *missed opportunities*. Indeed, the relationship between Iran and the United States has been marked by the inability of Tehran and Washington to fully seize the opportunities that arose through time, especially in the 21st century. Both countries are to blame here, as the United States under President Bush dismissed without even bothering to analyze thoroughly the proposal set forth in 2003 by Iran. Equally, Iran under Ahmadinejad did not bother with Obama and his openness to diplomacy, instead choosing to continue onwards with their defiance of the international community's sanctions that made Iran a pariah state.

Today, with the most recent events in mind, the relation between Iran and the United States is perhaps at the lowest it has been in the 21st century, with many voices calling for a war, but without realizing how devastating such a war would be, not only for Iran and the United States, but for the whole world. There are however also voices that urge for clarity and restraint. Hopefully these voices will in the end be the ones that are stronger and that the leaders of the two countries listen to them. The future of Iran and the United States is intertwined, perhaps much more than it appears at the first glance, and actions in the coming months and years, be they actions of aggression that ultimately lead to war and suffering, or actions of rationality and restraint that lead to peace and stability, both in Tehran and Washington will shape this future, hopefully for the better.

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DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT AND PEACE: FROM THEORY TO ACTION. CASE STUDY: THE IRAQ WAR (2003)

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Introduction

In the last three decades since the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War, there has been a constant effort on the international political stage to maintain peace and diplomatic relations aimed at cooperation, communication and mutual support. The desire for global peace has remained a constant of the main foreign chancellors of the important powers and they no longer want in any way to repeat even on a smaller scale the global conflagrations that have taken place several times in the last century.

Although the balance of power has risen significantly in favor of the United States, other states have gradually emerged eager to assert themselves, both in the European and Asian geopolitical space. However, it was inevitable that this balance would be affected by regional conflicts, divergences of interest or misunderstandings on the common security front. The United States has always been involved in military conflicts, especially in regions where power or domination was not very clear. From long and very expensive military conflicts both financially and especially humanly – such as the Vietnam War – to shorter conflicts or with intermittent actions as intensity. There are security experts who claim that the USA has had more days being involved in military conflicts than days of full peace. Every US administration has had a different approach. The Clinton and Bush administrations in recent history have been the most offensive, but the Obama administration has had a more conciliatory attitude overall, while the Trump administration remains unknown, although during the Trump administration, the conflict with Iran seems to have peaked (killing General Soleimani).

But our study is not about a history of military conflict, as we aim to understand the logic of the US administration's action on war. To convince

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ourselves of this or to understand certain mechanisms, it is enough to focus on the invasion of Iraq by the coalition led by the United States of America in 2003, which lasted for a period of about 7 and a half years. The conflict has left behind a significant number of casualties and material damage and has shown once again that, no matter how much one wants to maintain global security and peace and cooperation through peaceful diplomatic means, the interests of major actors on the political scene at some point, they may become completely different, which generates tensions, misunderstandings, discrepancies in the interpretation and resolution of potential vulnerabilities that could jeopardize international peace and security. It is worth noting and pointing out that the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 also had numerous diplomatic reproaches and more. Such actions oblige partner states to associate or dissociate, and so we can say that in such cases we are also dealing with a geopolitical and geostrategic reconfiguration.

I. Presentation of the conflict

Before beginning to present the analysis of this study, we consider it necessary to explain how the notion of armed conflict is perceived by the actors involved in such an event: for developed countries with high economic, political and military potential, like the USA, war itself is not a threat or an impossible path to follow, but on the other hand, this category also includes countries that prefer the peaceful path, where diplomacy plays a key and defining role, perhaps more specific to the European continent. However, there are also states that are at a decent level of development, in order to express their need to assert themselves in a conflict, here being states such as Romania or other volunteers participating in the invasion of Iraq. Of course, Romania's volunteering in this case also took into account the NATO accession treaties (which materialized in March 2004 by depositing the instruments of ratification). Finally, at the opposite pole is Iraq for which the conflict is an undermining tool.

Causes

To understand the premises for the start and outbreak of the war in Iraq, it is important to understand the origins of this conflict, which dates back to the First Gulf War, more precisely in 1993, when the United Nations (UN) sanctioned Iraq with the duty to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, and, in addition, with the establishment of a trade embargo, obligations which, however, for the most part did not compel Iraq to allow the United Nations unconditional access and control and at any time on its territory.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, launched by the terrorist group Al-Qaeda against the United States of America also had an indirect connotation with the conflict in Iraq, as the war on terrorism launched by the Americans in Afghanistan in 2001 began to make its way to Iraq amid suspicions and accusations that the US administration has launched against Iraq. The hypothesis that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction quickly turned into an accusation, in the absence of concrete contradictory evidence brought by UN inspectors, which became a sufficient reason for the US to resort to pressure on the UN Security Council to authorize an armed intervention in Iraq. Another rather vague and irrelevant accusation was the suspicion of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's links to the al-Qaeda terrorist group, an additional reason given by US President George W. Bush to justify his intentions, although he had no clear evidence at the time.

Development of the conflict

The US has not secured the agreement of the UN Security Council to use force against Iraq, which has led the US administration to tend to manage this conflict on its own, by forming an alliance of states that support both American ideological and military interests. The military intervention began in March 2003, even though it was an unethical decision and was not in line with the principles of international law. The United Kingdom supported the American invasion, which was voluntarily and jointly joined by other states on the European continent, which contributed military bases, equipment and troops.

It was certain that only this multinational alliance would emerge victorious in this conflict: the armed conflict, in itself, was not a large-scale one. However, the American victory did not bring concrete answers to the accusations based on the conflict, but even created a certain destabilization[3] in the region, weakening Iraq's border security, which has created a worrying vulnerability to external threats. The destabilization also intervened politically: Saddam Hussein was overthrown, and a temporary administration was established in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq[4] consisting of representatives of coalition forces, which failed to manage ethnic misunderstandings among the Iraqi population. This led to acts of rebellion[5] against the newly established

[3] N. Filipescu, „Cinci ani de război în Irak", in *Revista 22* [https://revista22.ro/international/cinci-ani-de-razboi-in-irak], 2008.
[4] T. Meyssan, „Qui governe l'Irak?" [https://www.voltairenet.org/article13892.html], 2004.
[5] N. Filipescu, *op. cit.*

regime, from which the civilian population as well as the military of the coalition forces suffered. Iraq's reconstruction process has proved largely ineffective,[6] whereas much of the money earmarked for the rebuilding of Iraqi infrastructure has continued to be spent on security[7] given the chaos in the area.

The conflict ended in September 2010, an event that was expected to take place sooner or later, given the coming to power of US President Barack Obama in 2009. It is also interesting and absurd that while coalition states preferred to withdraw gradually, one by one, from this conflict, why did the US not consider the possibility of withdrawing American military troops from Iraq earlier? Probably, during the armed developments, the interests were confused with the initial pretexts.

II. The political actors involved

First, the main actor was the United States, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a member of NATO. Along with the Americans was a coalition of volunteer states, led by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and North, also a permanent member of the UN Security Council and NATO.

Secondly, another important player was the United Nations. Within the UN Security Council, two camps were formed, some countries supported the American decision and others opposed it, with important countries such as Germany, France, Belgium, Russia and China among the opponents.

Iraq, located in the Middle East, a member of the Arab League, was the direct enemy of this conflict, turning into a theater of operations for 7 and a half years. Therefore, the events took place in Asia, with the involvement of other international actors.

III. Policy makers and the motivations of their decisions

On the one hand, the United States of America was represented in this conflict by President George W. Bush, the 43rd American president[8] with 2 successive mandates for the period 2001-2008. His political decisions regarding Iraq find a minimum of morality and denote a strength of character that comes to support the interests of the American people and democratic principles. Interestingly, even if his initial assumptions turned out to be unfounded,

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[6] B. Ștefănescu, *SUA au cheltuit degeaba 60 de miliarde de dolari – reconstructia Irakului, un esec* [https://ziare.com/international/irak/sua-au-cheltuit-degeaba-60-de-miliarde-de-dolari-reconstructia-irakului-un-esec-1222829], 2013.

[7] *Ibidem.*

[8] „George W. Bush", în *The White House Washington*, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/

president Bush motivated subsequently the need for intervention in Iraq to overthrow the dictator from power and establish democracy. In order to demonstrate George W. Bush's foreign policy powers, it is worth noting that, from a political point of view, the President[9] performs the functions in the executive and military sectors and adopts decisions in foreign policy, as head of state, which shows that the president has great decision-making power. Being at the beginning of his first term and given the seriousness of the attacks in 2001, the decision to fight terrorism received support from American society, the desire for revenge and the need for security and safety being normal and anticipated reactions in such situations. The American president also had the support of the Republican Party, of which he was a part.

The prime minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 1997-2007, Tony Blair, leader of the Labor Party, constantly supported US decisions and actions also agreed with the US president[10]. The decision of the British Prime Minister does not find a true explanation in a moral sense and it cannot be stated whether it was a decision taken in the interest of the country, proof that the Prime Minister was subsequently challenged for a long time[11] and accused of supporting the Americans. As for his foreign policy powers, the British Prime Minister is the chief executive[12] of the army and has an important decision-making role in the domestic and foreign policy of the kingdom. As in the case of the American president, the British Prime Minister enjoyed the support of the Labor Party in addressing the issues in Iraq.

On the other hand, Saddam Hussein was president of Iraq from 1979 to 2003, a member and leader of the Ba'ath Party. At the time of the conflict, that is, until 2003, Saddam Hussein served as head of state, commander of the armed forces and head of government, which gave the Iraqi leader great decision-making power in foreign policy. In the West, he was seen as a dictator, albeit his main concerns internally were to reform the political system. His refusal to cooperate with the United Nations came in response to the adoption of the Iraq Liberation Act by the United States in 1998, under the mandate of the former

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[9] K. Gill, *The President of the United States-Briefly* [https://www.thoughtco.com/presidential-cabinet-definition-3368099], 2020.

[10] „Tony Blair (1953-)", *BBC*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_ figures/blair_tony.shtml.

[11] J. Robbins, *Assessing Blair's foreign policy*, in "BBC News" [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6601097.stm], 2007.

[12] „The Prime Minister and British Politics", http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/prime_minister_british_politics.htm.

president, Bill Clinton, a document that supported aggressive foreign policy against Iraq.

In turn, the United Nations was present in this conflict through the Security Council, in which a decisive role was played by the representatives of that period of the 5 permanent member states with the right to vote: USA (George W. Bush), Great Britain (Tony Blair), France (Jaques Chirac), Russia (Vladimir Putin) and China (Hu Jintao). Given the motivations of the US President and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the other three decision makers preferred the path of a peaceful diplomatic solution and not the use of armed force.

IV. The political influence of the three main actors involved

The United States is the promoter of democracy in the world, which indicates that the American presidential political system has facilitated decision-making in this conflict. It is worth mentioning that, in the national security policy, this country recognizes the United States Supreme Court as the sole jurisdiction over U.S. citizens and the military, which is another thing that has favored President George W. Bush's irrevocable decision. Also, the American president, in both domestic and foreign policy, cannot make decisions at random or at will, he must have the support of the Congress[13], which represents the legislative entity in the USA. Last but not least, the American public opinion has a major impact, being often encountered the term "power of the people", a synonym for democracy.

The United Nations is an international organization and not a state, here the existence of a specific political regime cannot be questioned, but rather of specialized bodies meant to mediate decision-making at the political level. In this regard, on the defense sector, the UN Security Council[14] makes its voice heard on issues related to peacekeeping missions, authorized military interventions[15] under its auspices and international sanctions, where necessary. In addition, security decisions are taken by unanimous agreement of the 5 permanent members with the right to vote in this Council, which leads us to understand that, in the context of this conflict, the use of armed force was not an objective

[13] R. McMahon, „Balance of War Powers: The U.S. President and Congress", in *Council on Foreign Relations*, 17.04.2007, https://www.thoughtco.com/presidential-cabinet-definition-3368099.
[14] Ministerul Afacerilor Externe – România, „ONU Instituții și structură", http://www.mae.ro/node/5610.
[15] *Ibidem.*

adopted by all 5 decision-making states. Therefore, UN action on the Iraq issue was limited to monitoring, verification and inspection activities.

Iraq was, at the time of the 2003 conflict, a country in the process of modernization, and the political system presented a special situation, because theoretically, according to its Constitution, normally Iraq should have been a democratic state, with parliamentary elections in which all citizens could vote, and then the president would be elected by parliament. In reality, the political regime leaned more towards an autocracy and dictatorship led by Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party, and opposition parties had limited rights and they needed the approval of the state in order to run in the parliamentary elections, from which we can deduce that it was not a question of free elections. It is clear that the political regime in Iraq was not a democratic one, but it nevertheless facilitated the decision-making of the Iraqi leader, who chose the path of dictatorship, a behavior that he applied in addressing the 2003 conflict with the United States.

V. Arguments and theories in the decisions of the main actors

United States: – In this case, the theoretical perspective is largely reflected in the real threats that forced the US administration to change its own national security strategy in 2002, document justifying the use of force against any state which poses an imminent danger for the integrity of American society. From the following two statements: "The United States has unprecedented and unparalleled power and influence in the world" and "the United States will not hesitate to act alone [...] and take the necessary steps [...] to ensure global security", we can deduce that the theory of neorealism best fits American behavior, a country that defends its interests, that is willing to cooperate, but that does not give way to the adversary. War is not a threat to the United States, it is just a tool to lose or gain ground on the international political scene. That is, here we see only the opportunity that arises from the possible conflict. Even if we were initially tempted to tip the balance of the American political mentality toward realistic theory, we would find that this theory does not go hand in hand with moralism which American society applies in politics.

United Nations – In managing the crisis in Iraq, the UN has followed the diplomatic path: in this case, for the theoretical approach, the text of UN Resolution 1441 adopted in 2002 is relevant, to which Iraq responded positively[16]. "Any false statements or omissions in the statements issued by Iraq [...] as well as Iraq's refusal at all times to comply with this resolution and to cooperate fully in its implementation constitute a further violation of Iraq's obligations and will be reported to the Council"[17]. The final paragraph of the resolution has generated controversy, as the US administration and the United Kingdom have interpreted it as a legal basis[18] for military intervention: "[...] in this context, the Council has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face serious consequences if it continues to breach its obligations"[19]. We notice here the differences of interpretation and approach between the UN and the USA, differences which, from the perspective of realism, are fully justified, but which, in practical terms, it is desirable not to find an end, because, most of the time, no one has anything to gain, and the consequences are quantified in loss of life and material damage. However, in this case, the theory of neorealism best fits the UN mission, because the member states of this organization seek to ensure their common security and maintain a balance of power.

Iraq – The theory of classical realism, in this case, demonstrates the harshness and longevity of a political regime that has constantly sought to defend its interests and try to dominate some neighboring countries, such as Iran and Kuwait, as evidenced by the older disputes with them.

This statement leads only to the realistic vision given by the image of a regime driven by political interests and authoritarian manipulation, in which, no matter how much a change is desired, the binding of an agreement cannot be questioned. It is easy to understand that in this state, steps towards democracy would never be taken from the position of a dictator. Therefore, the theory of realism applies to Iraq, even if the strongest argument for the decisions of this dictator was his very mentality: the refusal, the opposition to cooperate with Western states, with democracy.

Conclusions

Beyond diplomatic theories and paradigms, the Persian Gulf remains a region of great strategic importance to the world. The huge resources of crude

16 „Irakul acceptă rezoluția 1441 a Consiliului de Securitate", *Adevărul (*2002), https://adevarul.ro/news/societate/irakul-accepta-rezolutia-1441-consiliului-securitate-1_50ad31427c42d5a663907755/index.html#commentsPage-1.

17 „Ce prevede rezoluţia 1441 a Consiliului de Securitate",în *Adevărul* (2003), http://www.adevarul.ro/actualitate/prevede-rezolutia-Consiliului-Securitate_0_81592281.html#commentsPage-1.

18 *Ibidem.*

19 *Ibidem.*

oil on the one hand and being the heart or center of Islamic culture on the other hand, makes this region a magnet. International actors and diversity of all kinds in this part of the world, coupled with the lack of deep democratic exercises, make the area unstable and in constant turmoil.[20]

Tensions can be easily divided into internal and external, and internal ones determine the external ones, and external ones determine the internal ones. We would like to close this analysis not necessarily with some general considerations on the conflict, because the harm, if we can call it that, is largely done. Iraq is still a troubled area today, as the post-conflict military presence has only ensured security, but it seems that ethnic misunderstandings will continue and the slow process of reforming the political system will be able at any time. to lead to new civil conflicts. No matter how much we want a more secure international world and a more palpable world peace if we can personify it in this way, policy makers must think more responsibly and even preventively and know how to act collectively, unanimously and impeccably, for the good humanity. Otherwise the so-called wars of liberation and democratic aid tend to become wicks or sources of explosions for the international world.

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*** *Tony Blair (1953-)*, in "BBC" [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_ figures/blair_tony.shtml], 21.02.2020.

[20] V. Creț, *Mari conflicte Postbelice,* Oradea: Editura Universității Agora, 2020, p. 410.

*** *Ce prevede rezoluţia 1441 a Consiliului de Securitate*, in "Adevărul" (2003) [https://adevarul.ro/news/societate/ce-prevede-rezolutia-1441-consiliului-securitate-1_50ace19f7c42d5a6638b2442/index.html#commentsPage-1], 19.02.2020.
*** *George W. Bush*, in "The White House Washington" [https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov], 20.02.2020.
*** *Irakul acceptă rezoluţia 1441 a Consiliului de Securitate*, in "Adevărul" (2002) [https://adevarul.ro/news/societate/irakul-accepta-rezolutia-1441-consiliului-securitate-1_50ad31427c42d5a663907755/index.html#commentsPage-1], 19.02.2020.
*** *The Prime Minister and British Politics* [http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/prime_minister_british_politics.htm], 22.02.2020.

THE BUSINESS OF DEMOCRACY: A STORY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S IMPACT ON ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TRAJECTORY THROUGHOUT THE 1990'S AND 2000'S

Dan Petrica[1]

Without further ado:

Throughout the 1950's and '60's, regional trading arrangements were driven by import substitution across the entirety of Southern Africa. Policies gradually shifted, particularly in lesser developed countries, and administrations, under the impetus of businesses and citizens alike, started being increasingly export-oriented and, concomitantly began seeking foreign investments. Being a part of Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which lasted between 1953-1963, with today's Malawi and Zambia, allowed Zimbabwe to gain unobscured access to all the regional markets for light manufactures. Britain was, before 1966, Zimbabwe's main export market, accounting for 30% of goods, followed by South Africa, US, Japan, West Germany and Zambia. However, after it unilaterally declared independence in 1965, Zimbabwe found itself economically isolated. Whilst not being recognized as a country by most of the international community, the government in Harare needed to resort to trade arrangements with historically less poignant partners – such as Portugal, and strengthen the ties with others that had stood in Great Britain's shadow – namely South Africa[2]. In the same period, Zimbabwe ran very high tariffs, which had been put in place to prevent foreign exchange shortages and to protect against the possible hardships arising from the sanctions imposed by the international community and its formerly-prominent trading partners.

The realist scholars of international relations hold that a state will tend to maximize its core interests, by either protection or promotion, when dealing with other actors, regardless if the latter are states or IGOs. South Africa's economic relationship with Zimbabwe demonstrates both a short-term inclination towards securing gains and a long-term approach, taken on by both states. Following the

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[2] See Harold, D. Nelson (ed.), *Zimbabwe: A Country Study*, Second Edition, Washington DC: American University, 1983.

collapse of diplomatic relations with Britain, Zimbabwe did whatever it could to secure or maintain an inflow of capital from those willing to be its business partners. Whereby trying to do so, Zimbabwe lowered tariffs for imports, in an effort to determine trade partners, such as South Africa, to reciprocate. Successive calls for increased trade in the decades which followed, some met with refusals by the governments in Pretoria, were aimed at filling up the Zimbabwe's treasury. While some funds were used to reshape the Zimbabwean economy after the fall of minority rule – large amounts were dissipated as a result of corruption and poor management.

In the early 1990's, however, South Africa increased tariffs, in an attempt to protect its markets from the inflow of Zimbabwean goods; especially since the former sought to expand its trade portfolio and network of partners. Later on, when its neighbour was facing a grotesque economic climate, South Africa pushed its parastatals to pour money in the pockets of Zimbabwe's government, at the risk of inflicting harm on its own economy. The later stage, as we will argue, is best understood not as a type of neighbourly aid when in need, but as the pursuit of self-interest, that was to be fructified in the long-run.

In 1991, Zimbabwe started liberalizing trade, in a move that was contrary to South Africa's policies, under strict directives from Bretton Woods institutions – mainly the World Bank. Export subsidies were drastically reduced and a large number of import restrictions annulled. in an attempt to achieve export promotion and market deregulation. Except for a few commodities, controls were removed from domestic prices. Mugabe's government wanted to make smallholder farming sufficiently productive to meet household consumption needs, and, thereby, generate greater incomes. The reform which was in line with GATT, had one additional plus-side: it was to reduce Zimbabwe's economic dependency on white-owned, large-scale commercial farms. In 1995, the government decided to further these reforms, by adopting a comprehensive agricultural policy for the next 25 years. Mugabe actively pursued South Africa and other states in the region, asking for the removal of trade barriers[3]. But, while Zimbabwe was reducing export subsidies, the government in Pretoria came with an antithetical set of policies: the introduction of an incentive scheme for businesses operating regionally – especially in manufacturing. As a result, South Africa's businesses gained a competitive advantage that would enable them to

[3] Pan African News Agency, *Mugabe Calls on Southern Africa to Remove Trade Barriers,* Dakar, Senegal, May 5, 1997, cited in Levi Mayhlome, *Impact of Zimbabwe-South Africa trade relations: a bilateral, regional, or multilateral approach?,* Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, 1997, p. p. 78 footnotes [https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/8499], 22 July 2020.

secure some regional markets in Zimbabwe's detriment[4]. Nonetheless, Zimbabwe remained a very important regional player, being surpassed only by South Africa throughout the 1990's. In 1995, Zimbabwe was South Africa's main trading partner from the region, receiving from its southern neighbour about 8% of its total imports and offering 1% of total exports[5]. For Zimbabwe, the value of these transaction was more significant in percentage, granted that South Africa absorbed 29% of its exports to the region (20% of Zimbabwe's total world exports)[6].

Continued financial liberalization in Zimbabwe came, of course, with a set of problems, ranging from hyperinflation to extreme underemployment, due to the high interest rates applied. The dire economic imbroglio in Zimbabwe only ensured that an already-crumbling democracy stepped up the pace towards meltdown. The economic component of democracy is best summarized by Jon Elster, who argues that in the particular case of African countries "*democracy will be undermined if it cannot deliver the goods in the economic sphere*"[7]. Przeworski recreates a chain of causality – linking economic reforms to anti-democratic practices, by arguing that the pressure entailed by economic reforms overflows into society, making the government resort to undemocratic practices[8]. True as that may be, the case of Zimbabwe is distinctive, because the prolonged hardships faced by citizens were not the sole result of a government trying deliver orthodox economic reforms, but that of a 'kleptocracy' that used a flawed vision and corrupt methods of accumulating wealth for party patrons. While in the case of reform, people might back up the government, the policy makers in Harare never requested popular approval for the discretionary allocation of funds. The theft of resources took place in secrecy, and, while some suspected what was going on, virtually no one could grasp the full dimension of the phenomenon and the consequences to follow – aside maybe from the people in charge of directing the funding. Thus, a besieged government – as a result of its

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[4] See Ronald T. Libby, *The Politics of Economic Power in Southern Africa,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

[5] See International Monetary Fund. Statistics Dept., *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook,* International Monetary Fund, 1996.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] Jon Elster, *The Necessity and Impossibility of Simultaneous Economic and Political Reform*, in D. Greenberg (ed.*),* "Constitutional Democracy: Transitions in the Contemporary World", New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 268.

[8] Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 189.

own practices and the practices of its protégées – had two options at its avail: to abandon power whilst admitting guilt for past malpractices, or to hold on to power, by all means, even by suppressing or controlling popular will, endangering human rights, rule of law or overall democracy. A government that not only shrugs off dissent, but fights off an ever-increasing proportion of a population that is dissatisfied with its *modus operandi*, brings the entire idea of democratization to a halt, and creates a loop that cannot be easily disrupted. In the late 1990's and early 2000's, Mugabe's government was lacking internal legitimacy, granted that it had mismanaged endemic resources, and this created a further problem for internal democratizing forces: the middle class was becoming poorer –consequently smaller in size– and there was fewer energy to invest in broadening and developing civil society. Nelson Mandela once stated that "*Freedom is meaningless if people cannot put food in their stomachs, if they have no shelter, if illiteracy and disease continue to dog them*"[9],perfectly summarizing the situation in Zimbabwe, where the struggle for survival and individual economic security outweighed, at least for a time, the struggle to maintain a functioning democracy. One commentator argued succinctly, that Mugabe was "*so compromised by years of abuse of power, he can only continue to hang on at any cost, even if it means bringing down the country with him.*"[10]

Another commentator argued that Mugabe's social spending spree from the mid 1980's – to which one can trace the start of Zimbabwe's economic decline – was actually a two-year period in which expenditures were raised above the resistance line in the education and health sectors[11]. He adds that the said period was followed by loan cutbacks under the IMF and World Bank regimes, whilst the government systematically ignored the needs of trade unions and other vital parts of the broader economic sector[12]. While we concur that the previously mentioned two-year period and the two sectors had taken up much funding, we distance ourselves from the cited author, by arguing that the real dimension of Zimbabwe's spending remains elusive. We do not know how much of the money said to be invested in these vital domains had actually been used to

[9] Michael Bratton and Robert Mattes, *Support for Democracy in Africa: Intrinsic or Instrumental?*, in "British Journal of Political Science", 31 (3), 2000, p. 447.
[10] Denis Venter, *Democracy, Governance and Leadership, Towards an African Renewal*, Africa Consultancy & Research, Pretoria, South Africa, 30 October 2003 [foundation-development-africa.org/africa_development/africa_general/democracy_governance_leadership.htm], 23 May 2015.
[11] See Patrick Bond, *Zimbabwe, South Africa, and the Power Politics of Bourgeois Democracy*, in "Monthly Review", 54 (1), 2002.
[12] *Ibid*.

improve social conditions and how much of it was syphoned through ZANU-PF flues, because there are no transparent accounts at our avail. As such, the dimension of the crisis, its birth and developments will be traced in what follows and connected with South Africa's economic policies.

During Mandela's presidency, South Africa embarked on what has been described as "*a mercantilist*[13] *policy vis-à-vis the other countries in the region*"[14]. It can be argued that Zimbabwe was one of the most, if not the most affected countries by Pretoria's protectionist stance. The two states had signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) in 1963, which expired in the early 1990's – due to the unwillingness of South Africa to ratify a similar bilateral deal. The agreement, offering partners a 'most-favoured nation' status, gave South Africa access to Zimbabwe's exports – most notably agricultural produce, electronics and textiles. In return, Zimbabwe was on the receiving end of several South African consumer goods and industrial outputs. Furthermore, UN sanctions imposed in the 1960's –which continued to be applied until 1980 – secured South Africa's position of main trading partner to Zimbabwe – both imports and exports considered. As the Preferential Trade Agreement had not been renewed, trade tariffs started to fluctuate. Both countries used 'uncharted terrain' to secure economic gains, or to pressure the other actor into economic submission; nevertheless, the situation favoured South Africa by a large margin. Maasdorp provides one example of the fluctuating nature of tariffs, which was due to both internal and external factors: in the textiles sector, tariffs skyrocketed from 15% in 1992 to an average of 75% by 1996 (topping 90% in the cases of some fabrics and yarns)[15]. This inflammatory tendency of manipulating trade tariffs contributed to the economic crisis that was underway in Zimbabwe. One observer[16] estimates that 17,000 jobs had been lost in Zimbabwe in the clothing and textile sectors by 1996. The government in Harare did not follow the best course of action to remediate the situation, either. State authorities were

[13] Mercantilists considered the limitation of imports in the context of export expansion as a way of creating wealth, and advertised heavy government mediation of foreign trade.

[14] Heribert Dieter, *Regionalisation in the Age of Globalisation: What Limits are there to Economic Integration in Southern Africa?*, in Heribert Dieter (ed.), "The Regionalisation of the World Economy and its Consequences for Southern Africa", Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag, 1997, p. 221.

[15] Gavin Maasdorp, *Can Regional Integration Help Southern Africa?*, in Gavin Maasdorp (ed.), "*Can South* and Southern *Africa* Become Globally Competitive Economies?", New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, p. 94.

[16] Mayhlome, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

incapable of convincing South Africa to renegotiate an agreement, so they started removing subsidies for a number of local products, such as cotton lint. The result was a price growth that created trade deficits with other neighbours, whom had been exporters of Zimbabwean textiles. Only at the impetus of both the EU and the US, was South Africa willing to restart a series of substantive negotiations with Zimbabwe. Following these negotiations, that commenced in the summer of 1996, the tariffs were gradually lowered to 20% by 2000, for most clothing articles and textiles. In other key areas such as agriculture, the process of lowering tariffs was clearly more complicated and lengthier[17].

Since the 1970's, Zimbabwe's trade balance with South Africa has always been negative. If in 1990 the trade deficit had been of merely 580 Zimbabwean Dollars, by the mid 1990's it went up to 6.8 billion[18]. Zimbabwe was growing more dependent on imports from South Africa. South Africa was becoming a big player in the region, having a GDP almost 300% larger than that of the SADC region in its entirety, and only half of the former's population[19]. South Africa's public enterprises were sweeping across the region, gathering contracts and opening branches. In the energy sector, Eskom, managed to strike considerable infrastructure-related deals with Mozambique, Zambia and even Zimbabwe. Subsequently, South Africa was granted SADC membership in 1994, as its importance as a regional giant could no longer be denied even by the most sceptic.

While the circumstances presented above unfolded between South Africa and Zimbabwe, other Southern African states were pushing for the transformation of the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) into a trade agreement, thereby hoping to reduce the need for bilateral agreements, once the internal wirings of the newly developed SADC would allow trade to be conducted efficiently within its multilateral framework. Upon seeing this angular framework in place, and, by profiting from a series of competing bilateral agreements previously reached with its neighbours (some also neighbouring Zimbabwe), South Africa used its seat at the table to greatly

[17] In the mid 1990's the government in Harare proposed an urgent restoration of the pre- 1992 tariff levels, and the widening of the 1964 agreement to include tariff items initially excerpted. They also pushed for increasing quotas and converting quotas from value to volume terms. South Africa opposed the tariff reduction to the 1 964 levels.

[18] *Zimbabwe Balance of Trade,* Trading Economics [https://tradingeconomics.com/ zimbabwe/balance-of-trade], 21 June 2020.

[19] Kenneth W. Grundy, *South Africa in the Political Economy of Southern Africa*, in Gwendolen, M. Carter and Patrick O'Meara (eds.), "International Politics in Southern Africa", Library of Congress, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1982, pp. 148-178.

reduce Zimbabwe's ability to conduct free trade, while increasing the latter's dependency on the newly anointed regional hegemon. Zimbabwe pushed back by becoming a founding member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States[20] (COMESA), while ensuring that South Africa would be one of two SADC members that do not obtain membership therein. This move from Mugabe's administration was made with the aim of securing some leverage over South Africa, as expectations were the latter could be swayed by restricted access in one very important trade-related regional body. Luckily for Mugabe, South Africa had no serious intention to participate in yet another multilateral organization, the functions of which overlapped those of SADC.

1995 brought about the SADC Consultative Conference of Malawi, at which SADC protocols referring to several financial aspects were outlined[21]. One kay aspect of the conference is that it brought together national policy makers, labour organizations and representatives of the private sector in each stakeholder country. This aspect did not only increase the chances for agreement ratification, but marked the beginning of a new era in regional relations, one in which the major stakeholders are invited to discussions that concern them and encouraged to work alongside government officials; all for the bettering of multilateral relations in Southern Africa. Since South Africa was the rising star of the region and the major economic player; while having insufficient national resources and not being plagued by macroeconomic imbalances, neighbouring states rallied up to establish close economic relationships with officials in Pretoria. Of course, none of these actors were willing to surrender sovereignty, a condition which may have either implicitly or explicitly been attached to strengthening trade with South Africa. Zimbabwe is the perfect example for such grievances: while Mugabe recognized the value of bilateral trade with South Africa and was actively pursuing Mandela's approval to eradicate trade-related barriers, his government began using an anti-imperialist discourse as a way of gathering foreign support to ensure that South Africa cannot and does not act like a (neo)colonial power. Mugabe gradually started to create "*a barrier of anti-*

[20] COMESA was established under the Preferential Trade Agreement for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) in November 1993.

[21] The protocols covered key areas such as finance and investment, coordinating fiscal and monetary policies to harmonize interest rates, reducing inflation and government budget deficits, establishing a development bank, energy, transport and communications, mechanisms for compensation, property rights, trade, public sector enterprises, free movement of labour and capital, and strengthening institutions.

imperialist solidarity around his domestic project… skilfully set[ting] the parameters of the subsequent debate"[22]. Furthermore, South Africa's decision to start negotiations leading to a free trade area with the whole of the EU, whilst leaving all SADC and Southern Africa Customs Union members aside, was not taken lightly by regional leaders. The regime in Harare was furious, for things had not been definitively settled between the two neighbours from a trade perspective, while Mandela was already looking elsewhere for financial deals. Certainly, the fact that regional players push similar products on the market, making some produce scarce or unavailable for South Africa's market was not taken into account by Mugabe's cabinet. Another fact to be taken into consideration is that during the 1990's, economic growth was underperforming in both countries. In Zimbabwe, it had to do with poor agricultural outputs, but it is fair to say that some correlation might exist between the two trends: South Africa's lack of capacity to absorb Zimbabwe's products, especially in the context of unilaterally imposed trade barriers, slowed down Zimbabwe's economy even further. Meanwhile, numerous workers were migrating from Zimbabwe to South Africa, granted the higher wages offered by the latter's business sector: in 1996 alone, approximately 12,000 Zimbabweans working in South Africa on visa permits had not returned[23]. Throughout the 1990's, the inflow of migrants had not been an issue for neither of the states: South Africa gladly received workers in several sectors with labour-force shortages, such as mining, while the government in Harare was satisfied with the influx of foreign currency, which had either been sent by the workers to their families, or entered the country upon the said workers' visa expiration and subsequent return. In recent years, following the democratization-related wounds that Zimbabwe has inflicted upon itself, neither partner seems willing to accept, nor deal with the outburst of people crossing the Limpopo River into South Africa.

Zimbabwe ran on a budget deficit, mostly financed through the state's borrowing schemes. Given the situation, interest rates rose as investments originated from the private sector were pushed out, ultimately leading to higher production costs and a declining export competitiveness. Some of the lenders were South African companies.

Further trade liberalization came with the 2005 SADC Protocol on Trade which established the SADC Free Trade Area in August 2008 – resulting in a zero

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[22] Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopoulos, *Zimbabwe Now: The Political Economy of Crisis and Coercion*, in "Historical Materialism", 12 (4), 2004, p. 386.

[23] See PANA, *South Africa Tightens Visa Regulations*, Pan African News Agency, Dakar, 29 October 1996.

duty for 85% of goods traded between partner countries by 2012. Zimbabwe encountered a series of problems in the implementation of its commitments regarding 'sensitive' products, thus other member countries allowed the government in Harare to suspend undergoing the reduction of tariffs between 2010 and 2012[24]. The annual reductions shouldered by Zimbabwe were completed in 2014, with a two-year postponement. South Africa seemed willing to understand Zimbabwe's economic hardships, and accepted the postponement of tariff reductions as a gesture of goodwill – one of the many it has demonstrated both in bilateral and multilateral settings.

South Africa had not severed economic ties with Zimbabwe in the early 2000's, even at the cost of heavy losses for the former. The International Crisis Group estimated that, by 2003, Southern Africa had lost upwards to US$36 billion as a result of the crisis in Zimbabwe, while the American Chamber of Commerce reported a loss of US$3 billion by mid-2001[25]. More importantly, South Africa's parastatals and companies lost important sums due to defaulted debts. In 2002 alone, the Zimbabwe Energy Supply Authority failed to pay a debt to the South African utility company Eskom of US$5 billion. Sasol, another energy company, was not in a better position, granted it was unable to collect arrears from Zimbabwe. The government of South Africa instructed both Eskom and Sasol to continue their activities in Zimbabwe, and managed to make their losses disappear under domestic absorption[26]. As a result of decisions taken in Pretoria, Zimbabwe was economically carried, albeit in part, by South Africa, which provided extensive credit lines for fuel and electricity. While parastatals had figured out a way of absorbing losses, smaller businesses, which did not have government backing, were severely hit. As a result, numerous South African firms closed shop in Zimbabwe, due to the inability to collect on debts. The situation described above was conducive to a down-ranking of South Africa by international financial institutions and, subsequently a decline in investor's willingness to invest in its markets, owing to perceived risks.

The shortage of investment led to currency depreciations in 2002, after a sudden appreciation against the dollar – as a result of the 9/11 attacks; the trend

[24] SADC, *Free Trade Area,* in "South African Development Community" [www.sadc.int/ about-sadc/integration-milestones/free-trade-area/], 28 July 2020.

[25] Curiosity Tangireni, *Harare Crisis Affects SADC Economy,* in "BuaNews", Pretoria, 6 February 2002 [www.fin24.com/Economy/Zim-woes-cost-SA-billions-20020206], 06 June 2020.

[26] *Zimbabwe battles to renew contracts as it runs up power bills*, in "Business Day", 23 February 2003.

continuing to hold for the following years[27]. The said facts have made businesses claim that the Zimbabwe crisis accounts for upward to 50% of South Africa's GDP decline.

While members of the international community have threatened Harare both unilaterally and collectively – through the use of international organizations, to either impose sanctions or cut off the current financial support, South Africa repeatedly and constantly rejected the idea of publicly threatening Mugabe and his government. Tshediso Matona – Chief Director of Trade Negotiations within the Trade and Industry Department, once admitted, summarizing the attitude of the government in Pretoria, that he does "*not foresee a decision on trade sanctions in the short term as such, particularly because sanctions are an extreme measure and they would need to be part of a multilateral decision*."[28]

South Africa stood strong on the issue of sanctions, ever since it worked as a mediator, to fix the UK-Zimbabwe crisis of 1997-1998. In May 1997, Labour won the elections in the UK and quickly after, Clare Short – Secretary of State for International Development sent a letter to the Mugabe government entitled 'I am not a colonialist', in which she argued that Tony Blair's cabinet is "*without links to former colonial interests*"[29] and that Britain has no "*special responsibility to meet the cost of land purchases*"[30]. Subsequently, relations deteriorated between Zimbabwe and the UK, and South Africa stepped in, continuously urging the British government not to resort to economic sanctions.

In 2005, a serious shortage of foreign reserves hit Zimbabwe, after a decision had been taken by government to relax the country's monetary policy. As a result, hyperinflation peaked. Businesses were producing insignificant outputs, thereby quickly emptying the monetary reserves of the state – which was receiving unsustainably low levels of taxes. The government then gradually rose the level of taxation, hoping to draw more money from businesses, which were all but paralyzed. These *austerity-esque* measures did nothing to fill up the state's vaults; on the contrary: they only killed-off numerous remaining businesses and crippled future growth.

In these circumstances, Zimbabwe started printing money, to keep its debts covered and its services afloat. The spiral continued, as allowing the

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[27] Quinton Bronkhorst, *A history of South Africa's currency*, in "BusinessTech", 22 September 2012 [https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/21665/a-history-of-south-africas-currency/], 09 June 2020.

[28] Tshediso Matona quoted in *South Africa-Zimbabwe: Mugabe seeks support*, in "IRIN", 6 December 2001.

[29] Clare Short, *One Bad Letter* with Long-lasting Consequences, in "New African", 20 May 2007, p. 69.

[30] *Ibid*.

Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to create currency was by no means economically feasible. Hyperinflation peaked at about 500 billion percent in 2008, according to IMF data[31], becoming the second largest such phenomenon that had been documented in global history. The Reserve Bank was granted further powers: it was allowed to purchase farm implements, coordinate financial support programs, and coordinate farm input. The government tried a series of solutions, ranging from regular economic practices, such as cutting the zeroes off of banknotes –which may work in some circumstances- to economic and political nonsense: declaring inflation illegal[32]. From March to June 2007, it became a crime for companies to increase the prices of goods and services. Their failure to comply led to numerous arrests. As it could have been foreseen, forcing a virtual price freeze by law – which is a de facto nationalization of the market -did not halt the hyperinflation's upward spiral. For example, in the agriculture segment, seed and fertilizer producers decided to keep huge stocks of their end-products from hitting the market, thus greatly lowering agricultural production. South Africa and other trading partners were privileged, for Zimbabwe could not fix the prices for exports; accordingly, a lot of merchandise ended up on regional and international markets that had no liquidity problems. By selling to South Africa and other neighbours with stable currencies, producers offering discounts received funds which they could use to re-start production and stay afloat.

Given that the 'solutions' identified by Mugabe's government didn't solve the full-fledged economic crisis, a decision was reached to abandon the national currency and adopt the aforementioned stable foreign currencies. The US Dollar, the Euro and the South African Rand became the primary currencies used by businesses nationwide.

By 2009 Zimbabwe was free of hyperinflation, but its economic problems were far from over. The ruling party, amongst strong contestation by the Movement for Democratic change (MDC) – which was rising in citizens' preferences – decided that companies should be indigenized. A law was passed, forcing businesses to have Zimbabwean majority shareholders. These constraints, alongside several others such as price controls, kept the state's

[31] *Zimbabwe: 2009 Article IV Consultation- Staff Report; Public Information Notice on the Executive board Discussion; and Statement by the Executive Director for Zimbabwe. IMF Country Report No. 09/ 139*, in "International Monetary Fund", May 2009 [https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ ft/scr/2009/cr09139.pdf], 13 June 2020.

[32] Michael Wines, *As Inflation Soars, Zimbabwe Economy Plunges*, in "New York Times", 7 February 2007 [www.nytimes.com/2007/02/07/world/africa/07zimbabwe.html?mcubz=0], 15 June 2020.

economy from recovering at a higher pace[33]. The situation also hit the businesses of several South Africa nationals, whom had set up shop in Zimbabwe. Subsequently, the said business owners cried out to their own government, but to no (official) avail.

Throughout this time, South Africa was not watching the deterioration of its neighbour's economy silently. While South Africa is Zimbabwe's main trading partner, by a large margin, the government in Pretoria was aware that Zimbabwean products and services were also of high value for its own citizens. Nonetheless, there are numerous voices that accuse the successive South African administrations, from 1994 onwards, of failing to exert palpable economic influence on Harare, especially during the dire economic quandary of the Zimbabwe[34]. In the early 1990's, however, whilst aiming to secure economic gains for their own country, the government in Pretoria acted detrimentally towards Zimbabwe, as explained above. Nevertheless, South Africa's deterrence strategy could rarely be based on economic sanctions, without facing the risk of 'poverty spill-over' across its borders. Arguably, when dealing with an important trade partner plagued by tremendous economic problems, it is very difficult to apply the right amount of pressure as to stimulate notable governmental changes –be them economic, political, or a hybrid of the two, without hurting an already impoverished population even further. Thus, paradoxically, by keeping conditionality under lock and key, South Africa concomitantly acted both morally and immorally: economic pressures in the form of sticks affects the population directly, while the lack thereof allows the people in power to stay in power and perpetuate the same political and economic models that have ruined the country's economy and, implicitly, the livelihood of its citizens.

Mandela had been cautious vis-à-vis Mugabe, and this caution has not withered away. The situation in Zimbabwe was condemned by Mbeki and Zuma alike – albeit as quietly as possible, and the government in Harare has received its fair-share of scrutiny, but, at the same time, decisive action has never been taken by South Africa. Public condemnation has always been balanced by a warm welcome offered to Zimbabwean officials and their supporting elites at event taking place on South African soil. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (also called ONG Earth Summit) which took place in

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[33] See Jayson Coomer and Thomas Gstraunthaler, *The Hyperinflation in Zimbabwe*, in "The Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics", 14 (3), 2011, pp. 311-346.

[34] See Chris Alden and Maxi Schoeman, *The Hegemon that Wasn't: South Africa's Foreign Policy Towards Zimbabwe*, in "Strategic Review for Southern Africa", 25 (1), 2003, pp. 1-28.

Johannesburg in 2002, Mugabe quickly moved from the environmental themes set on the agenda, to confront the North for their policies. In his speech, he stated, amongst other things that: "*Indeed, we denounced the debt burden by which the rich North continued to take away the impoverished South even that little which they still had*"[35]. He continued, denouncing the "*half-baked unilateral agenda of globalisation in the service of big corporate interests of the North*[36]". Mugabe's speeches have tended to show a clear pattern, one in which a nationalist narrative is coupled with an anti-imperialist one. By deploying such narratives, Zimbabwe's president has tried to justify the invasion of white-owned farms taking place in his country, by arguing it is a historical retribution favouring "*rightful indigenous, black owners who lost it in circumstances of colonial pillage*"[37]. Words such as 'democracy' and 'rule of law' have also found a way of infiltrating his discourse. Thus, democracy is seen as perverted, enshrined in a 'dirty cover'[38]; for Mugabe argues that democracy allows the proponents of neo-liberalism to strip states of their sovereignty and make them align to the foreign interest of the rich North. During the debates conducted under the summit's framework, it became clear that the United Kingdom was the main target of Mugabe's words, as he emphatically told the British prime minister: "*Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe*"[39]. The applause that soon followed from high officials representing mostly African states, is a statement of the impact that Mugabe's words have on the entire region, and underlines that his rhetoric, at least in part, resonates to some peers. The above reply also shows a deeply rooted, albeit subtle sense of entitlement: Zimbabwe is Mugabe's property and he will rule it as he deems fit. In a clear dictatorial fashion, Mugabe was the embodiment of the state; he alone ran the country and foreign intervention could not and would not influence him, nor was it to have any impact on the rest of his state-apparatus. The North needed to pay reparations, without having any further demands regarding the way in which things were to be handled by the recipient

[35] Robert G. Mugabe, *Statement on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)*, Johannesburg, 2 September, 2002 [www.un.org/events/wssd/statements/zimbabweE.htm], 22 August 2020.

[36] *Ibid*.

[37] *Ibid*.

[38] *Ibid*.

[39] Robert G. Mugabe, *Speech at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg*, 2 September 2002, cited in John Battersby and Andrew Grice, "Anti-West anger at summit as Mugabe rounds on Blair", The Independent, 3 September 2002, p. 1.

government. Nevertheless, the 'North' was not always the British, the EU, the US and other perceived 'rich neo-liberal puppeteers'. The term is transmutable and, inside Mugabe's discourse, it can be filled with an entirely different set of meanings: depending on the target-audience, the North could have easily included South Africa – paradoxically Zimbabwe's southern neighbour. The use of doublespeak was a weapon which Mugabe manoeuvred cunningly. In external gatherings, he assured other officials that "*no farmer is being left without land*"[40], and that he and his party were "*threatening no one*"[41] – particularly referring to white farmers whom saw their property seized – while in internal settings and the gatherings of his trusted party members, his words conveyed entirely different messages: "*Our party must continue to strike fear in the heart of the white man, our real enemy!*"[42]. Amongst his trustees, he constantly reaffirmed the idea that Zimbabwe was their property and that they were the rulers – as representatives of all Zimbabweans, reasserting his anti-hegemonic and anti-British stance. In a speech at the ZANU-PF Congress in 2003, Mugabe said: "*Let Blair and the British government take note and listen. Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans. Our people are overjoyed. The land is ours. We are now the rulers and owners of Zimbabwe*"[43]. However, all evidence points out to the conclusion that his people were not overjoyed, because they were experiencing harsh economic conditions, with some of them barely being able to make ends meet, particularly because of these new rulers and owners. We are not implying that colonialism had not inflicted great financial wounds on Zimbabwean soil – which have created economic cleavages, that, in turn, pushed a large part of the population past the brink of extreme poverty, but we do argue that the main fault for the economic conditions of 2003 should not fall on the shoulders of Britain, nor on those of the North.

Again, South Africa's economic relations with Zimbabwe, and the inability to put palpable democratizing financial pressure, make one wonder if South Africa was not primarily driven by interests to maximize its political power and the financial power of its elites. If such a goal is pursued, South Africa's only apparent endgame since the early 2000's was the shaping of a new government with a new president for Zimbabwe, regardless if it encompasses

[40] *Ibid*.

[41] *Ibid*.

[42] Robert G. Mugabe quoted in *Whites are real enemy, warns Mugabe*, in "Irish Times", 15 December 2000, p. 11.

[43] Michael White and Andrew Meldrum, *Commonwealth leaders delay decision on defiant Mugabe*, in "The Guardian", 6 December 2003, p. 2.

ZANU-PF, the MDC, others, or any combination of the above. One could argue that Mugabe, despite not always 'seeing eye to eye' with Pretoria, was relatively more friendly towards the latter than some MDC leaders. Moreover, it was perceived that this highly unstable leader offered more stability than whomever would emerge to fill a power-void, either provoked or negligently allowed. The severe economic conditions in Zimbabwe, while creating negative reverberations in South Africa, are not necessarily detrimental to the latter, if it would envisage either a directed or a partly-controlled regime change. The hegemon's parastatals had managed to sweep across Africa and particularly across Zimbabwe, extending credit lifelines in the absence of IMF and World Bank missions. This puts South Africa in the unique position to have extended credits that are long overdue. In the context of new political power in Harare, be it new blood or a reshuffling of ZANU-PF elites, credits could easily be transformed into equity positions in several key fields. For example, ever since the early 2000's the Zimbabwe Energy Supply authority has been indebted to Eskom[44]. However, even if debts were to be cashed in, the question of opportunity must still be posed. Is it opportune to wait more than a decade, to watch your businesses suffer at home in the financial sector, in mining, trade and agriculture – to name but a few- for future leverage? To that we answer: surely not. Nonetheless, although it may seem contradictory at first glance, arguably, South Africa's non-intervention can be perceived as a form of intervention, for a large number of its businesses profited from marginal priced deals while Zimbabwe remained in trouble, despite the burden of parastatals.

Another important aspect we need to take into consideration is the way in which other economic stakeholders perceive Zimbabwe. For example, in August 2000, during a one-day visit to Zimbabwe by Thabo Mbeki, Mugabe had assured him that squatters would be removed from the occupied farms within one-month, only to proclaim the following day that squatters would not be removed at all, but allowed to keep the farms, until a proper resettling took place. This climate of uncertainty and day-to-day discourse reversal was, as one would expect, spiralling down investor confidence and their willingness to pump funds into Zimbabwe's economy. Furthermore, Mugabe's lack of action towards achieving declared objectives and his narrative reversals did nothing to improve relations with South Africa. The contradictions were not only aimed to confuse

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[44] See Dale T. McKinley, *Commodifying oppression: South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe under Mbeki*, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2003.

regional partners – they also targeted international agencies and donors. In July of 2000, the Zimbabwean Minister of Industry and International Trade had stated that there is a need to work with the IMF for an influx of resources, only to be countered by Mugabe, whom declared that Zimbabwe does not require money from donors, if the funds come with land-restitution conditions attached to them[45].

Nonetheless, South African officials further invited Mugabe to the AU meeting held in 2004 in Maputo and to Mbeki's second term inauguration ceremony, which took place in the same year. While South African leaders see the value of inviting the region's elder to political and celebratory events alike, the population of South Africa was clearly divided when it came to Mugabe. Upon entering the Union Buildings in Pretoria to assist the inauguration, Mugabe was met with both 'boos' and 'cheers' by the public[46]. The situation was similar inside the AU, where despite contestation from some dignitaries, others cheered for Mugabe, their manifestation of respect only being outweighed by Mandela's appearance[47]. Furthermore, even in the face of strong result contestation by international and national organizations, Mbeki publicly congratulated Mugabe each time the latter secured a new mandate – determining critics to wonder why an illegitimate and harmful mandate would be legitimized by South Africa and to what extent this could be referred to as irresponsible leadership[48].

Summary and conclusion

Mandela's shift towards a mercantilist policy coincided with Zimbabwe's push for trade liberalization, resulting in a deficit of competitiveness for the latter. Robert Mugabe's short spending spree throughout the 1980's, his government's inability to reach agreements on tariffs with South Africa in the mid 1990's, and the discretionary allocation of funds to the clientele of The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), gave birth to an economic collapse the modern world had not previously encountered. Faced

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[45] Linda van Buren, *Economy*, in Katherine Murison (ed.), "Africa South of the Sahara", London: Europa Publications 2004, p. 1232.

[46] Rory Carroll and Andrew Meldrum, *Mbeki sworn in as country hails decade of freedom*, in "The Guardian", 22 April, 2004 [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/apr/28/southafrica.andrewmeldrum], 24 August 2020.

[47] *Ibid*.

[48] Chris Alden and Mills Soko, *South Africa's economic relations with Africa: hegemony and its discontents*, in "The Journal of Modern African Studies", 43 (3), 2005, p. 389.

with the said crisis, the government in Harare acted detrimentally towards its own economy and its citizens, in a struggle to maintain its grip on power. However, South Africa adapted its policies yet again and started lending money to Zimbabwe, in an effort to prevent the spill-over of refugees and poverty both within and beyond its borders.

In 2005, Mugabe's government relaxed the monetary policy, increased taxation to quench hyperinflation, started printing money, expanded the powers of an underperforming Reserve Bank, froze prices, declared inflation illegal, to later force the indigenization of companies operating domestically. In these circumstances, South Africa was faced with two major options: on the one hand, it could support imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe, which could have resulted in a regime change and the democratization of a space that had become latched to authoritarian practices. This path would have implied further impoverishing Zimbabwean citizens and risking possibilities such as: an influx of immigrants, the pushback of the government in Harare, and a possible power void therein. The other option, implied lending money to Zimbabwe, in an attempt to stop the crisis from developing, and placing some trust in the possibility that Mugabe could settle things internally, and manage policies and the few resources left, in such a way that economic redressal – followed by a social indemnification would be possible. Furthermore, by going with the second option, the situation of Zimbabwe's population would not be aggravated, as it was reasonable to presume that Mugabe would revert to democratic practices once his party faced fewer contestation from the public and the political opposition. In addition, South Africa would gradually gain sufficient leverage on Harare, for future usage. This second option was found viable by Mbeki, for it didn't put pressure on his country's borders and it aligned with the policies and the position that the regional hegemon – South Africa -so arduously tried to consolidate.

While we are not convinced that South Africa has struck a productive balance between the pursuit of its own foreign policy goals and the quenching of the political and economic crises affecting Zimbabweans, we are of the opinion that the future will show if enough leverage has been gained by the former, as to further influence the return of Zimbabwe to its democratic trajectory, under the current and future leaderships therein.

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THE SOUTH CHINA SEA BETWEEN CHINESE ASSERTIVENESS AND AMERICAN INTERVENTION

Alexandru-Flaviu Paloșeanu

Introduction

While far from being a region with an open military conflict, the South China Sea (SCS) is arguably one of the world's most complex political battlegrounds, where various actors are locked in a continuous conflict of competing interests, with each of them trying to win the upper hand. The situation itself is complicated for a number of reasons: competition over access to resources, multiple conflicting sovereignty claims, and vast security concerns.

In the past, there have been developments that have maintained peace, such as the 1992 *Declaration on the South China Sea* and the 2002 *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea*,[1] but since 2009 the situation has become more unstable and has seen rising American involvement, prompted by the "pivot to Asia." Additionally, since 2009, the increased assertiveness of the Chinese claims over the region has meant increased tensions between China and ASEAN countries, on the one hand, and between China and the US, on the other hand. The Chinese continue taking actions that damage their relations with neighboring countries and have become much bolder in their endeavors, whilst the Americans increase their presence in the region and attempt to have China abide by the international order that has been created so painstakingly. All in all, the situation seems to be worsening, with the actors fully conscious of this, yet unable to change course. The question is: why?

Consequently, this paper shall aim to put into perspective exactly those events that help bring to light the interests that are at play in both Chinese and American policy in the South China Sea. With this in mind, in the following section, the paper will first explain the theoretical framework that will form the basis for future discussion. Afterwards, it will give an overview of the situation in the SCS up until late 2017 and then move on towards the interests of China

[1] Aaron W. Steffens, *Scramble in the South China Sea: Regional Conflict and U.S. Strategy,* Research Report, Air War College, Air University, 2013, p. 7.
Lidya C. Sinaga, *China's Assertive Foreign Policy in South China Sea under Xi Jinping: Its Impact on United States and Australian Foreign Policy*, in "Journal of ASEAN Studies", Vol. 3 (2): 133-149, 2015, p. 134; Sam Bateman, *The South China Sea: When the Elephants Dance*, in "RSIS Commentaries" (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies) (091/10), 2010, p. 1.

and the US, the way these interests influence policy, and, finally, their implications for the future of the region and the dispute.

Theoretical framework – Structural Realism

In order to better understand the developments that took place in the region and their causes, the paper shall rely on the theoretical lenses provided by structural realism. The author of this article chooses to rely on structural realism because some characteristics of the South China Sea dispute are believed to be structural in nature, as this article will attempt to prove.

There are four main characteristics to structural realism which must be kept in mind: 1) the structure of the international system is anarchic (i.e. the absence of a supranational entity capable of enforcing order), 2) the main actors in IR are states, 3) because actors (states) do not have access to the intentions of their peers, a sense of insecurity is generated, which prompts states to prioritize survival as the first and foremost interest, if other interests are to be pursued (internal stability here is taken for granted, although the link between internal stability, security and survival will be explored further in the coming sections), and, lastly, 4) due to the absence of a supranational entity capable of resolving conflicts at the international level and due to actors being unable to *fully* trust one another, actors are forced to rely on self-help to ensure their survival (and security) at the international level.[2]

Furthermore, for the remainder of this piece, the concept of *security* will be thought of as an indicator of the survivability of a state. Hence, the higher the security of a state is, the higher are its chances of ensuring its survival. Consequently, a state – in a situation where it is insecure – is a state that, at best, has *perceived* low chances of survival and, at worst, *truly* has little to no chances of survival in that circumstance. By understanding the relationship between security and survival in such a manner, one may be better able to utilize the tools that structural realism offers. This is because the concept of security expands the group of threats that might endanger the survival of a state. Security takes away the attention from armed military attacks from other states, without taking away from their importance however, and, in so doing, allows statesmen to be prepared against a whole host of threats that might otherwise be overlooked. Being able to see threats outside foreign militaries allows statesmen to better mobilize the instruments of statecraft against an existential threat.

[2] Tim Dunne & Brian C. Schmidt, *Realism*, in Smith Steve; Baylis John (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, pp. 91-92.

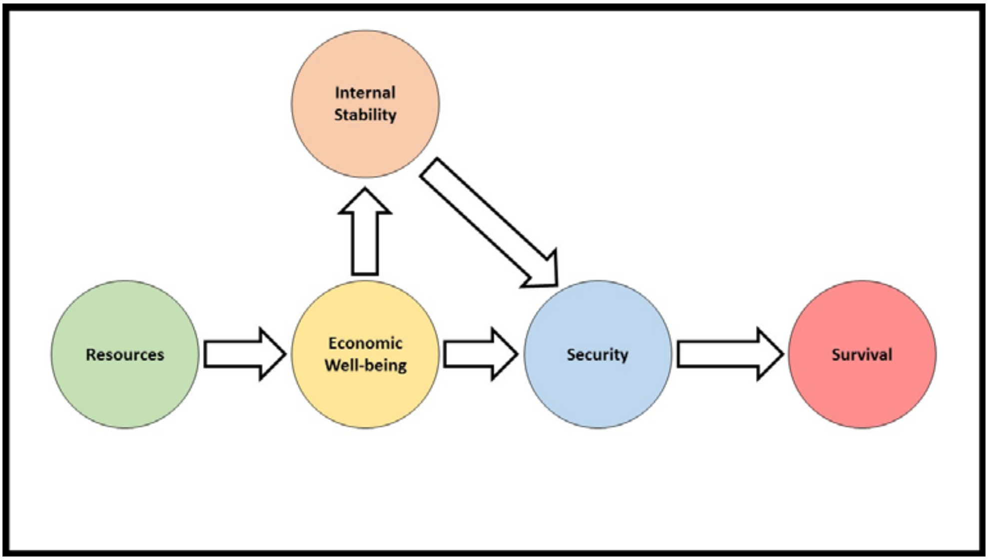

Figure 1: The link between Survival and domains of Security

For structural realism to give even more insight into the events taking place in the SCS region, another connection must first be made. Having linked security to survival, one can now look beyond the military to see the machinations of states in other areas and to see how these might affect security and survival. As can be seen in *Figure 1*, there are three other dimensions that will be relevant for understanding security and survival in the current article: resources, economic well-being and internal stability. As will be seen in subsequent sections, one of the main causes for quarrel in the SCS is represented by resources, whether it be the resources of the sea itself or those passing through it. Both of these types of resources are vital because they influence the economic well-being of the conflicting states, especially in China's case, which, due to its economic growth, has a ravenous hunger for a number of resources. In turn, economic well-being underpins, at the same time, security and internal stability, because economic stagnation or recession would weaken the state internally, which would allow other states to take advantage of the weakened state. Thus, both internal stability and economic well-being become domains of security and, hence, of survival. Nevertheless, the impacts of an economic crisis or of a political uprising at the domestic level are not as threatening to the survival of the state as an armed attack from the exterior, but both could, at least theoretically, degenerate further and endanger the state even more.

Overview of the situation

As previously stated, the states of the SCS region are fighting because of resources and over access to them. These are represented mainly by fish, oil and gas, which the South East Asian countries and China depend upon for their economies.[3] However, access to these resources can only be gained by first gaining sovereignty over the small islands that litter the South China Sea and their adjacent waters. Because of this, competition for sovereignty over different parts of the area arises. Moreover, due to the fact that the belligerent countries' economies are dependent on these resources, these are intrinsically related, in the long-term, to the survival of the states and their agents, since losing them would mean missed economic opportunities and growth, and since it would prompt national discontent, which could translate into action being taken against the state and its agents. At the moment, the survival of the Southeast Asian countries does not hinge on these resources. However, by obtaining them, these countries would be less dependent on foreign resources and would also attain a stronger sense of security.

For the past decade, the situation in the South China Sea region has been accumulating tension and has seen increased American involvement. The issue itself involves The People's Republic of China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan, who have conflicting sovereignty claims over land features in the area, namely, the Pratas Islands, the Paracel Islands, the Macclesfield Banks and, the biggest grouping, the Spratly Islands.

The international laws relevant to this situation are established by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Under UNCLOS, lands that belong to a country and are bordered by water grant full sovereignty over adjacent waters up to 12 nautical miles from the land mass. These waters are called territorial waters. Additionally, extending up to 200 nautical miles from the land mass is that country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which grants extensive economic rights over the area. This explains, at least in part, why the belligerents are so intent on gaining sovereignty over land features in the SCS, as these features grants access to the marine resources of the adjacent waters and subsoil, which include highly coveted fishing stocks and speculated hydrocarbon reserves.

While most of the belligerents only claim sovereignty over some of the islands, the PRC and Taiwan both claim sovereignty over almost all of the features of the SCS, based on the *9-dash line map* argument. This argument is

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[3] Aaron W. Steffens, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

based on a 1947 map released by nationalist China that had eleven hyphens around the SCS, which encircled the sea almost entirely within the country's borders. Additionally, the map is usually used as an argument in conjunction with China's proclaimed historical rights over the islands, as the first country that discovered and used them.[4] The map has suffered modifications over the years and is mostly referred to as *the nine-dash line*, but, nevertheless, the basic feature of it has prevailed: the inclusion of most of the SCS within China's borders. The map is often used as an argument for the historic rights that China has over the area, in order to support its sovereignty claims. In 2009, for instance, in response to a joint submission by Malaysia and Vietnam to the UN, the Chinese have used the map to claim sovereignty over the area's islands and waters as a way to oppose the claims of the two other governments.[5] An aspect of the item that has been maintained throughout history is its ambiguity. In this regard, the map itself does not establish any geographical coordinates and does not clarify the extent of the sovereignty claims themselves, meaning that it is not known whether or not the claims cover only the land masses or also the seas, and, if so, to what extent. Apart from this, the assertion that the islands themselves have been used by the Chinese has vague supporting evidence at best.

Apart from China and Taiwan, the two other participants that remark themselves as highly engaged in the dispute are Vietnam and the Philippines, with both of them having a rather difficult relationship with China when it comes to the SCS. Vietnam has in the past even taken up arms against China over the Paracel Islands in 1974 and 1988, from which the Chinese drove out the Vietnamese. Currently, the Chinese occupy the Paracels[6] and, ironically enough, China has in the meanwhile become Vietnam's biggest trading partner.[7] Moreover, one of the incidents that have led to increased tension in the area was the previously mentioned joint submission by Vietnam and Malaysia in 2009 to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

[4] Lidya C. Sinaga, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

[5] The 2009 Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of the People' Republic of China to the UN regarding the sovereignty dispute (last accessed on the 7th of January 2019 at https://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/mysvnm33_09/chn_2009re_mys_vnm_e.pdf).

[6] Michael McDevitt, *The South China Sea and U.S. Policy Options*, in "American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy" (Routledge) (35:4): 175-187, 2013, page 177.

[7] Aaron W. Steffens, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

(CLCS). With this, the two parties laid claim to the resources of the entire southern part of the sea, which subsequently prompted outrage from China, who saw it as a violation of the 2002 Declaration of the Code of Conduct (DoC).[8] China has also outraged Vietnam by placing the Haiyang Shiyou-981 oil rig within Vietnam's EEZ in 2014, triggering protests in Hanoi.[9] Additionally, stand-offs between Chinese and Vietnamese civilian and military ships are commonplace.

In the case of the Philippines, the situation is similar, being littered with stand-offs between vessels and diplomatic battles. One of the flare-ups between China and the Philippines was in the vicinity of the Scarborough Shoal, over which both parties claim sovereignty. The infamous incident of 2012 saw Chinese poachers being spotted by a Filipino surveillance plane, which prompted the Philippines to send its biggest warship to investigate. Eventually, this led to a stand-off between Chinese and Filipino ships.[10] Afterwards, in 2013 the Philippines brought the territorial conflict with China before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), after having exhausted political and diplomatic alternatives. After three years, in 2016, the tribunal's award was heavily in favor of the Philippines, declaring China's claims as invalid and the nine-dash line to have no legal basis.[11] Initially the Chinese have vehemently rejected the ruling as null and void, and despite Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's decision not to enforce the ruling,[12] it has been observed that China is acting more in line with international law.[13]

As for Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, the remaining two claimants, their situation is starkly different from that of the previous two. Firstly, Brunei, by nature of it being geographically smaller compared to the other belligerents, only has limited claims over the Spratlys and also has at its disposal far less resources to tackle the issue. Consequently, its actions are less significant to the big picture of the situation, especially when viewed in the context of the Sino-American relationship. In the case of Malaysia, it does not regard the SCS issue as a pressing matter, instead having its interests align with those of China, with

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[8] Lidya C. Sinaga, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 137.

[10] *Philippine warship in standoff with China vessels,* in "The Guardian" (last accessed on the 7th of January 2019 at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/11/philippines-china-stand-off-south-china-sea).

[11] Ronald O'Rourke, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress,* CRS Report, Congressional Research Service, December 12, 2017, p. 21.

[12] *Ibidem*, p. 21.

[13] *Ibidem*, p. 23.

which it has a dominant economic relationship.[14] Moreover, despite the 2009 joint submission, it has not been confrontational in its dealings related to the issue and has abstained from criticizing China's actions in this regard, due to the fact that it seeks to grow closer to it politically and economically.

ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, although not an actor per se, has had a hand in some of the developments that have influenced the region. Unlike the European Union, which has some supranational elements, ASEAN is an intergovernmental association and therefore relies more on consensus building and dialogue, being unable to take action in similar fashion to how a state would. In spite of this drawback, through it, the member states have managed, for example, to negotiate an important agreement for its time, namely, the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC), which marked the beginning of a seven year period of relative peace in the SCS, where no major incidents occurred between the claimants.[15] The DoC embodied ASEAN's model of conflict management and rejected the use of force as a legitimate means of interacting with the other claimants. Additionally, the signatory members stated that they would practice self-restraint and rely on consultation and dialogue.[16] However, as previously mentioned, this peace was short-lived and overturned by a series of events in 2009. One of the aims of the DoC was the creation of a binding Code of Conduct (CoC) to regulate the interactions between the members, yet discussion on this mechanism have yet to fully materialize, with only a preparatory framework for further discussion being in the works.[17] The delay can be explained in part by China's unwillingness, in typical great power fashion, to tackle this issue from a multilateral perspective, insisting instead on unproductive bilateral arrangements, due to it being larger than all the other countries in the region and, therefore, having more sway.[18]

One interesting aspect is the neutral stance that the association strives to maintain throughout, despite differing views among the members on how to deal with the issue and with a rising China. These views are greatly influenced

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[14] Aaron W. Steffens, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[15] Sam Bateman, *The South China Sea: When the Elephants Dance*, in "RSIS Commentaries" (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies) (091/10), 2010, p. 1.

[16] Ralf Emmers, *ASEAN's Search for Neutrality in the South China Sea*, in "Asian Journal of Peacebuilding", Vol. 2 (1): 61-77, 2014, p. 64.

[17] Ronald O'Rourke, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress*, CRS Report, Congressional Research Service, December 12, 2017, p. 18.

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 33.

by the member state's involvement in the dispute or lack thereof, on the one hand, and their relationship with China, essentially dividing the association along interest lines. One of the main reasons why the association is struggling to maintain neutrality is the fact that it cannot represent the interests of all of its member states, due to the vast variations in their wants, which is why its aim is to develop together with China a code of conduct that might regulate the situation. The limited success of ASEAN in the SCS only goes to show that the international system is still very much dominated by states and that international organizations are, up until now at least, only minor actors, subject to the whims of nation-states.

Lastly, the United States is the actor that does not have any claims and does not support any side in the sovereignty dispute, at least explicitly, but that has added new dimensions to the conflict and to regional stability. This section will only briefly sketch the activity of the US in the SCS, which will be further detailed and analyzed in the coming section. Ever since the "Pivot to Asia," the United States have become more active in the region, although not in the dispute itself. In 2011, American President Barack Obama said at the East Asia Summit that the US does not take sides in the sovereignty dispute, but that it is very much interested in maintaining freedom of navigation in the SCS.[19] On the sovereignty issue, as the builder of the international legal system and its patron, the US supports a peaceful settlement according to international law (UNCLOS), which would most likely translate into China losing the argument and having to give up on its claims. This in turn is one of the reasons why the Chinese have been reluctant to conform to either international law or the 2016 ITLOS ruling. Apart from this, the US has a defense partnership with the Philippines, while it has also provided military equipment and expertise to the Vietnamese.

It is apparent that the Chinese, who are backed by incredible might, are determined to maintain their claims as they are, which has brought them into conflict, most prominently, with the Philippines and Vietnam, both of whom have taken an active approach in the past to the issue which has often antagonized China. In essence, the two countries refuse to accept Chinese hegemony and, because of this, must find other ways or allies to counter Chinese assertiveness. Both are posed with a security dilemma to which they respond by gravitating towards the US. Malaysia and Brunei, on the other hand, appear much more content and are far less confrontational, the former

[19] Lidya C. Sinaga, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.

due to its relations with the growing regional power, while the latter due to its lack of power. Unlike Vietnam and the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei embrace Chinese hegemony. The actor that has been mostly left out is Taiwan, which lacks coercive measures and has been barred from most negotiations due to its relationship with China. Having established a view on the situation in the South China Sea, the scope of the Chinese and American interests will be approached in the next chapter, delving deeper into their motivations and the way these translate into concrete actions.

The Assertive China and the US Superpower

Further discussions will be viewed through a realist's lens, primarily focusing on state interests and security, how these relate to self-preservation and how decisions crystallize in order to pursue these goals. In order to understand China's foreign policy and actions in the SCS, one must first take a look at its domestic interests and security outlook, as these directly influence the priorities of the policy makers.

First and foremost, the Chinese state aims to maintain its domestic stability and economic well-being, in order to ensure its self-preservation. A stable China, with a healthy and growing economy, is a powerful and less vulnerable China and, by extension, a more secure China. Moreover, the Chinese state is bent on maintaining its economic growth, which would enable the Chinese to vindicate the *century of humiliation* and allow it to take its perceived rightful place as one of the main actors on the international arena. Additionally, safeguarding its continued growth ensures domestic stability, job security and job creation. Due to these concerns, the Chinese are highly dependent on the resources that could come from the SCS or that pass through the area, such as oil, natural gas or fish, as they not only underpin continued economic development, but also support domestic stability.

In this regard, hydrocarbons are one of the most important resources, if not the most, for they power the increasing energy demands of Chinese industries. China's need of hydrocarbons has increased to such an extent that it is now the largest importer of oil,[20] meaning that it is highly vulnerable to shifts in supply, shifts that could translate into massive losses for the Chinese. In this line of thinking, it is very likely that actions that could jeopardize its oil imports, which mainly come from Africa and the Persian Gulf, would be very

[20] "The global importance of China's oil imports", in *Financial Times* (last accessed on the 30th of January 2018 at https://www.ft.com/content/e7d52260-a1e4-11e7-b797-b61809486fe2).

poorly received by the Chinese and would prompt immediate action. Dependency on foreign oil endangers Chinese energy security, which is linked to self-preservation, and makes the speculated hydrocarbon reserves in the SCS that more attractive, thereby contributing to its growing assertiveness in the region. Access to the oil and gas of the sea would lower reliance on foreign oil and remove the Chinese state from a vulnerable and insecure position. It should be noted that estimates of the SCS reserves vary from 28 billion barrels of oil to 213, which, in the best case scenario, could compete with the 265 billion barrels of oil that Saudi Arabia held at the end of 2011.[21] If China were to become sovereign over the entirety of the SCS, as it intends, not only would it be able to better manage its energy demands, but it could even preserve some of the oil as a strategic resource, much like the USA does with its domestic oil.

On the topic of resources, one cannot avoid discussing about fishing stocks, due to the fact that China is both the world's largest consumer and exporter of fish.[22] Both the state's and the fishermen's reluctance to give up on the fishing stocks of the SCS can be explained by the fact that they view the SCS as their historical fishing grounds. Moreover, giving up on them would greatly reduce their potential yield, impacting both domestic consumption and exports, which explains the fishermen's continued intrusion into other countries' EEZs and the existence of so many incidents between fishing boats and other vessels, such as in the Scarborough Shoal incident.

In light of these domestic needs, the Chinese state would be gravely affected if either access to the SCS lanes of communication would be hindered or if it would have to limit its fishing and economic activities to areas closer to its territorial waters. Its insecurity is evident. As a result, a number of developments can be justified by these concerns. Firstly, its extensive sovereignty claims over the features of the SCS are one such development and are a product of necessity, upon which the long-term future of China's economy depends. At a diplomatic level, the Chinese use all relevant arguments to enforce their claims in order to ensure continued access to resources, but also in order to obtain sovereignty over features that are still disputed, as ownership of these features could grant access to the resources of the nearby waters, as established by UNCLOS.

Another development, in a ruthless display of self-help, is the building of artificial landmasses over submerged features in an attempt to forcefully

[21] Aaron W. Steffens, *op. cit*, p. 4.

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 3.

obtain ownership of adjacent waters. This strategy is particularly successful due to the fact that the other claimants are unable to discourage these activities when they take place, and due to the nature of international law and its lack of enforcement. From a legal standpoint however, land reclamation has little effect. Additionally, in tandem with island building, the construction of military bases is taking place, with the aim of establishing footholds through the military. In this way, the Chinese increase their capacity to respond to incidents in the area, to discourage fishing parties from other Southeast Asian countries and ensure continued access to the "occupied" regions. Moreover, should events that hinder access to the SCS, or outright prevent it, happen, the Chinese military and its navy would have a stronger position from which to react. In addition to this, increased military posturing, exercises and patrols in the area are all taking place in order to further solidify Chinese presence in the SCS waters and to limit access of would-be fishermen to the area. Lastly, related to this is the drawing out of diplomatic discussions, the so-called "talk and take" strategy. As can be seen with the delaying of the creation of a Code of Conduct or with the insistence on unproductive bilateral discussions, the Chinese are acting in a coordinated fashion in order to buy time for its military to continue island-building and to strengthen its position. Again, due to its bargaining power and a lack of a mechanism or entity to enforce a settlement, this strategy continues unhindered. China realized that its state of insecurity would not be altered if it failed to acquire sovereignty over the islands through legal and diplomatic means. Therefore, if the islands and their adjacent waters cannot become China's *legally,* then they will become China's *de facto*. The end result would be similar to the 2014 forceful annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation. In both cases, annexation is done by force, not legally, and in spite of the international community's outrage. For China, potentially damaging relations with its neighbors is acceptable, if, in the process, it can ensure its long-term security.

The second key aspect one must take into account when considering China's actions is military security, which is crucial and tied directly to a state's survival. In the case of the SCS dispute, military security plays a heavy hand when it comes to supporting and legitimizing certain actions and excesses. According to Michael McDevitt,[23] there are four main factors that contribute to China's elevated interest and involvement in its near seas: 1) its economy's vulnerability to attacks from the sea, 2) the need to be able to deter or defeat an approaching US Navy force, 3) the need to protect seaborne trade and the development it sustains, and, lastly, 4) its desire to reinforce its global political interests by means of a strong navy. While the two economic arguments have been tackled previously (1 and 3), the remaining two (2 and 4) are mostly concerned with the creation of a stronghold of sorts in the SCS, from which the People's Liberation Army Navy could operate on a global scale and deny access to hostile forces. Whilst the need to deter or defeat a potential adversary is rather self-explanatory, China's desire to project its power globally could mean that it aspires to become, ultimately, the hegemon or leader of the international system, which, according to offensive realism, is the position of ultimate security. To tackle these concerns, China aims, firstly, to establish a buffer zone and the means to provide adequate security in order to guarantee self-preservation, and, secondly, seeks to expand its capacity to interact and influence political developments on a global scale.

Objectives such as these have contributed over the years to island-building and the building of military facilities, an increased military presence and an increase in naval and air capacities and technology. In this regard, Chinese land reclamations in the SCS have set the ground for the creation of military facilities such as military bases and airstrips, which would contribute to the creation of a buffer zone, where aircraft or vessels would have difficulties traversing or entering at all. For instance, one of the contributing factors to the creation of the buffer zone is the development of anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, whose aim is to restrict or deny potential attackers freedom of maneuver or entry.[24] Another relevant event is the 2016 positioning of anti-ship cruise missiles on one of the disputed Paracel Islands.[25] Furthermore, a good example of military posturing is the sending in 2013 of its first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, to the SCS, which worried nearby actors.[26]

[23] Michael McDevitt, *The South China Sea and U.S. Policy Options*, in "American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy" (Routledge) (35:4): 175-187, 2013, page 180.

[24] Dynph ten Haaf, *Leading Smart: The Implementation of Smart Power in American Foreign Policy Regarding the Ukraine Crisis and South China Sea Conflict,* MA Thesis, Universiteit Leiden, 2016, p. 21.

[25] *Ibidem*, p. 25.

[26] Lidya C. Sinaga, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

Nevertheless, probably one of the more worrying events is the development of nuclear capabilities. In this case, one could mention the deployment of ballistic missile-carrying nuclear submarines and the construction of the naval base at Yalong on Hainan Island that is capable of nuclear powered attack.[27]

The growing militarization of the area is apparent and goes to show China's reluctance to comply with international law or to take non-forceful action, but its security needs could potentially justify its actions to a certain extent and also the tensions they create. The fact that these developments have not led to a more pronounced erosion of its diplomatic relations is due in part to the "salami-slicing" strategy that is being implemented. By only taking incremental actions that do not constitute a cause for war by themselves, the Chinese manage to maintain diplomatic relations with their neighbors afloat, whilst at the same time changing the status quo to its advantage.[28] If China's interests in the SCS were purely economic, a settlement over maritime borders and access to marine resources could have been easily achieved, as in the case with the Gulf of Tonkin settlement in 2000.[29] Another example is the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, which is a multilateral settlement that manages a fishing ground outside the EEZs of its members in the interest of all, showing that such disputes can be managed diplomatically.[30] However, due to the fact that China's security interests are particularly vital, it is very unlikely that it will renounce its claims in the region and instead continue strengthening its position.

Moving onward, the focus shall now shift onto the United States of America, the superpower from overseas that wishes to play a part in the fray of the South China Sea. From the Second World War until today, one might have accepted American meddling or intervention as almost another fact of life, something that should be expected of the US. This holds true also in the Western Pacific and in Southeast Asia. Similarly to China, US action is shaped by a mixture of economic and security interests. Its aims are various, but can be boiled down to the desire to enable sustained American access to the Western Pacific and the SCS, the protection of seaborne trade, especially from America or Japan to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, and the delaying

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[27] Leszek Buszynski, *The South China Sea Maritime Dispute: Legality, Power, and Conflict Prevention*, in "Asian Journal of Peacebuilding", Vol. 1 (1): 39-63, 2013, p. 41.

[28] Ronald O'Rourke, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress,* CRS Report, Congressional Research Service, December 12, 2017, p. 31.

[29] Leszek Buszynski, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

[30] Aaron W. Steffens, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

of the emergence of an Asian hegemon. Despite the scope of its aims, due to the fact that it favors preserving the status quo, American policy is mostly reactionary and attempts to halt those actions that could irreparably change the regional order.

Beginning with basic economic reasoning, the SCS is a mass of connective economic tissue where many trading routes coalesce and through which trillions of dollars pass each year. ChinaPower, for instance, has estimated that around $3.4 trillion in trade passed through the SCS in 2016.[31] In the past the $5.3 trillion figure has been frequently cited, with $1.2 trillion of the total belonging to US trade.[32] Nevertheless, based on these figures, it is easy to infer the fact that the amount of US trade that passes through the SCS is substantial and highly important for general American trade. Additionally, as in the case of China, disruptions of trade in the SCS or outright denial of access to the area would mean longer trading routes and soaring costs, something to be avoided. However, the biggest apparent threat is represented by China's increasingly aggressive and assertive behavior that leads to the militarization of the area, which in turn prompts an increase in American presence to balance this out. An antagonistic China with enough military might and regional control could deny access to the area, in order to inflict damage on the US and on its trading partners.

When it comes to security, American policy in the SCS is motivated by the desires to maintain the regional security architecture and to honor its security commitments, but, most importantly, by the need to delay the eventual "rise" of China, which could dominate both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. With enough military might, China could threaten all of the above and could even threaten in the long-term the USA's position as the leader of the international system. Such developments would be devastating for the American economy and for its ability to project power globally.

For instance, if China were to block American entry to the area, it would essentially render the Americans unable to intervene in a conflict between China and Taiwan.[33] In addition, a regional security structure that does not allow the American side to support its allies and fulfill its commitments could

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[31] *How much trade transits the South China Sea?* in "ChinaPower" (last accessed on the 7th of January 2019 at https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/).

[32] Aaron W. Steffens, *op. cit.*, p. 4; Ronald O'Rourke, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress,* CRS Report, Congressional Research Service, December 12, 2017, p. 2.

[33] Leszek Buszynski, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

lead to a reorientation towards China, thereby further isolating the US from the region and limiting its range of motion.

Therefore, in order to protect the trade that passes through the area, American or foreign, in order to maintain its capacity to act on a global scale with adequate force and in order to prevent any threats to its status as the only global superpower, the US' policy has involved Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS), reinforced defense partnerships and active diplomatic engagement in various regional initiatives.

First and foremost, in order to maintain an active presence and act as a deterrent to initiatives that might restrict freedom of movement in the sea's waters, the US military often organizes so-called Freedom of Navigation Operations, which involve the deployment of patrolling US Navy vessels. Ever since the beginning of the "Pivot to Asia," freedom of navigation has been heralded as a national interest of the Americans, starting in 2010 with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the 17th Asian Regional Forum in Hanoi,[34] who was shortly followed by American President Barack Obama in 2011 at the first East Asia Summit.[35] Just as the Chinese seek to limit American presence by increased militarization, the Americans attempt to ensure continued freedom of maneuver of both maritime vessels and aircraft in order to deter further militarization.

A point of conflict appears however in this clash, due to the stark contrast between their views. In line with UNCLOS, the American view on freedom of the seas (i.e. freedom of navigation) is much more encompassing than that of the Chinese. From the US' point of view, UNCLOS gives other states the freedom to conduct peaceful military activities in another country's EEZ. On the other hand, the Chinese hold a narrower definition of the "high seas freedoms" and believe that a country's EEZ allows them to regulate both economic and military activity, which makes them regard unauthorized foreign military actions in their EEZ as a violation of international law. This dichotomy has led in the past to several incidents such as the harassment of US naval ships Bowditch, Impeccable and Victorious, while they were operating in China's EEZ, or when a Chinese navy ship forced the US Navy cruiser Cowpens to change course in order to avoid a collision.[36]

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[34] Lidya C. Sinaga, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[35] Ronald O'Rourke, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress,* CRS Report, Congressional Research Service, December 12, 2017, p. 33.

[36] Ronald O'Rourke, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress,* CRS Report, Congressional Research Service, December 12, 2017, p. 10.

Secondly, in order to maintain a strong military presence in the region, the US has several strategic partnerships in the Western Pacific, ECS and SCS, extending towards the Indian Ocean. The purpose of this series of partnerships is the creation of the *First* and *Second Island Chains*, whose purpose is to create a sort of containment mechanism, but also to allow unimpeded military access. Establishing a foothold along the island chains is particularly important due to the fact that it counter-balances the actions of a rising China. The partnerships themselves, besides mutual assurance of intervention in case of one party being attacked, involve the providing of military technology and expertise, joint exercises and intelligence sharing.

Lastly, the US aspires to safeguard regional security and international trade by embarking on a diplomatic effort in Southeast Asia. In order to accomplish this, the US seeks a stronger relationship with ASEAN and supports its efforts to develop a Code of Conduct.[37] Additionally, the US wants to raise the issue at international venues, such as the ARF and the EAS, in order to internationalize the dispute and, by doing so, have China scrutinized according to its actions, which could potentially limit future Chinese excesses.

The US, being the only actor involved in the sovereignty dispute not to have any claims, does not take any sides officially, however it could be argued that it does so through the way it acts. This is due to its supporting of a settlement that is in accordance with international law and is based on non-forceful action and dialogue, both of which China has rejected through its actions. Such a settlement could spell the end for Chinese ambitions in the South China Sea and its growing military presence, thereby rendering it unable to take control of its near seas region. Should such a development come to pass, China's rise would be severely impeded and would certainly delay it from becoming a regional hegemon, thus, maintaining American supremacy.

The future of the South China Sea

Between Chinese assertiveness and American intervention, the South China Sea region appears to be moving towards an uncertain future. In an attempt to increase its security at multiple levels, China, supported by strong nationalist sentiments, has acted in defiance of international law time and again and has gone on to induce fear in its neighbors. The USA, eager to maintain its status as global superpower and its capacity to influence global politics, has mostly reacted to the Chinese, in order to safeguard regional stability and

[37] Aaron W. Steffens, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

trade, but also the legitimacy and influence of the international order built by it. In so doing, both actors contributed to a climate of uncertainty, characterized by increasing military presence and posturing in and around the area.

Our analysis must begin with China, for it is the actor that threatens to topple the established status quo. China's actions in the 21st century in the South China Sea are an indicator of its long-term goals. Its assertiveness in the region is motivated by a realist view on international politics. As such, the state identifies potential threats to its security, which it then tackles methodically and consistently over time. Firstly, if China is to maintain its economic growth it must have secure long-term access to oil and gas. At the moment, however, a well-organized adversary could cut off China's supply of foreign oil, which would shake the Chinese state to its core. The Chinese state is highly aware of its vulnerability, which is why it seeks to gain access to fuel sources closer to home. Because of the anarchical structure of the international system and because of China's perceived insecurity in a matter of vital concern, the only option that the Chinese state had was to act along the logic of self-help, which it has done consistently and assertively. So vital is gaining sovereignty *de jure* or *de facto* over the SCS hydrocarbon reserves, that is has soured its relations with its neighbors, especially Vietnam and the Philippines.

Despite the importance of ensuring energy security, there is another reason for China's bold actions in the SCS: military security. The SCS is a region through which an adversary's navy could come to attack, in the case of armed conflict, *unless* the SCS was controlled by the Chinese. The creation of a buffer zone with A2/AD capabilities in the SCS would prevent or strongly impede a would-be foe from reaching the mainland of China, and since the USA has the strongest navy and since China's economy is expected to overtake that of the US in the coming decades, it is a rational choice on the part of China to secure against an attack from the world's strongest navy. In order to do so, China has created artificial islands, constructed military bases and has increased its presence in the region, and realism predicts that this will continue until China has adequately ensured its defense and survival. It is important to note here the fact that these measures work synergistically with those implemented in order to achieve energy security. As long as China gains control over most or all of the SCS, as it intends, then it can, at the same time, ensure its energy security and its military security. As it stands, there are strong structural incentives for China to act in the way it has acted up until now. The possible gains are simply too high to pass.

Lastly, it must be noted that the Chinese state is displeased with the current distribution of capabilities and with its place in the international system. It believes that its rightful place is among the great powers, if not at the helm of the international system, in the US' stead. China is, thus, a revisionist state, for it wishes to topple the current status quo. Its desire to become leader of the international system, coupled with its growing military capacity – as can be seen in the SCS – suggests that China has embraced the ethos of offensive realism, which would further imply that it does not wish to stop until it is the leading power of the international system.

In light of China's consistent way of acting, the USA has been forced to respond. From a structural standpoint, the USA's reaction can be credited to its desire to prevent China from replacing its preeminence in the international system. Most other motivations are either subordinated to this one or less pressing. The other notable motivation for the US presence in the region is the desire to protect international trade. The US has only to lose if the trading routes that pass through the SCS become unviable as a result of Chinese action. Its trade and its partners' trade depend on its ability to keep the seas free and open. In order to address all of these issues, the USA has taken action on its own and has entered into alliances with Asian states.

The USA has implemented a mixture of soft power and hard power, in order to stall and prevent China from achieving its goals. Firstly, the USA has entered into strategic partnerships with, has sold weaponry to and has exchanged expertise with Asian states (e.g. The Philippines, Japan). Secondly, with the help of its navy, it has maintained a strong presence in the SCS and has organized numerous freedom of navigation operations. Thirdly, through diplomacy, at regional forums and elsewhere, it has promoted the resolution of sovereignty disputes in accordance with international law (UNCLOS). It is important to note that the US has been consistent in its approach to the SCS region and that it appears that it will continue to be an active player for years to come.

Due to the structural factors at play, it is my contention that the US and China are set on a collision course. China, who appears to have embraced the ethos of offensive realism, has both the capacity and the motivation to become the new hegemon of the international system. In contrast, the US will continue to act in order to prevent such a reality from coming to pass. If both continue to take small enough steps, that do not constitute a *casus belli* by themselves, then sooner or later the two will find themselves in a situation from which there will be no escape. After enough will have accumulated, only a spark – like a standoff between military vessels – will be needed to throw the international system into chaos. This type of situation is not new, however. Graham Allison's "Thucydides Trap" metaphor[38] can help one see the Sino-American relationship in a different light. The "Thucydides Trap" describes a situation in international relations, where war between a rising power and an already established one becomes seemingly imminent, due to the established power's fear of being overthrown by the ascending one. According to Allison, 12 out of 16 such studied cases ended in war, which, from on optimistic point of view, indicates that the Sino-American war of the future could be averted. Though structural factors and the previous metaphor suggest a conflict will occur in the future between China and the USA, it should be noted that such a future is not a given. The future is not yet written, which means that the statesmen of tomorrow will have the possibility to choose peace over war and cooperation over conflict. The only question that remains is whether peace will be a preferable alternative to war.

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[38] Allison Graham, "The Thucydides Trap" in *Foreign Policy*, June 9th 2017 (last accessed on the 7th of January 2019 at https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/09/the-thucydides-trap/);
Yoichi Funabashi, "Can we avoid the 'Thucydides Trap'?", in *The Japan Times*, October 10 2017 (last accessed on the 7th of January 2019 at https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2017/10/10/commentary/world-commentary/can-avoid-thucydides-trap/#.WpBP9-dG1PY).

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COUNTERTERRORISM IN THE AGE OF OBAMA AND TRUMP: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

Ionela Ruști[1]

The Obama Administration: Out with the Old, In with the New

The evening before he was sworn into office, Barack Obama received some alarming news that no president would wish to hear in the hours before being named the leader of the most powerful nation in the world: there was considerable evidence of a major terrorist plot to attack his inauguration. His new counterterrorism adviser, John Brennan, together with two foreign-policy advisers, Denis McDonough and Mark Lippert, were the ones to break down the bad news to the newly elected president. It would appear that after a weekend of round-the-clock analysis, the nation's intelligence agencies were concerned that the threat was real. A group of Somali extremists was reported to be coming across the border from Canada to detonate explosives as the new president took the oath of office. Obama had not yet taken office, and he was already being confronted with the threat that consumed his predecessor's presidency.

At the heart of the deliberations about what to do was John Brennan. This was a man who did not just work for the CIA in the past, but had also set up the National Counterterrorism Center for Bush and was a recognized Middle East specialist. He suspected that the threat was a classic "poison pen" when one group of radicals rats out another group to get Americans to take out its rivals. It would turn out that he was right: some Somali extremists knew that a rival group was traveling to the United States and planted false information about its intentions that got back to American intelligence. In the end, this proved to be nothing but a false alarm. But the lesson was clear: the incident showed just how unpredictable and murky terrorist threats are. The challenge against violent

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extremism, as Obama would learn, is more than just hunting down bad guys; it is distinguishing between which threats are real and which ones are not. Striking a balance between acknowledging danger and projecting confidence is what the Obama administration spent its first year in office trying to do.[2]

Barack Obama inherited a world in which the United States became used to playing on the defensive, their allies limited and with the public opinion mostly turned against the country's leadership. With the American forces engaged on two battlefields – Afghanistan and Iraq – and an economic crisis looming in the background, the world looked to Obama for renewed hope and a fresh breath of air. Obama vowed to get the country out of its defensive crouch and promised to restore traditional American "engagement" by talking and listening to America's most troubling adversaries and reluctant partners. His supporters saw a welcome turn away from the "with or against us" black-and-whites" of the George W. Bush years. His critics, says David Sanger, saw "naiveté and softness".[3] Both have been surprised.

What the world has seen instead is the slow emergence of an Obama Doctrine, "a redefinition of the circumstances under which the United States will use diplomacy, coercion, and force to shape the world around it."[4] Obama often talked about his approach to international relations, saying that he considers himself a realist, walking in the shoes of the first President Bush. Just like him, Obama has not been afraid to consider US national interests as the main priority in the administration's foreign policy decisions. When discussing this with the journalist Jeffrey Goldberg, Obama made a point out of reassuring his audience that although he was very much a realist, he would not be so ignorant as to refuse to pass judgment on immoral leaders. The difference between him and his predecessor's way of thinking is that Barack Obama did not believe that it is America's responsibility to remove these despots from power or, as President John Quincy Adams once said, go around the world "seeking monsters to destroy".[5] The president made it clear that the United States "does not have the means to police the world or to make right what is wrong everywhere".[6] This was

[2] Peter Baker, *Obama's War Over Terror,* in "The New York Times Magazine", January 4, 2010, [https://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/17/magazine/17Terror-t.html], September 15, 2020.
[3] David E. Sanger, *Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power*, New York: Crown Publishers, 2012, p. 11.
[4] *Ibidem.*
[5] Steven J. Rubenzer, *Personality, Character, and Leadership in the White House: Psychologists Assess the Presidents*, 2004, p. 300, apud Ronald E. Powaski, *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*, Ashland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, p. 161.
[6] *Ibidem.*

one of the first departures from the Bush way of dealing with issues: while the former president saw himself as a caped crusader who wore on his shoulders the burden of destroying al-Qaeda, without really caring who stood in his way, Obama was much more risk-averse, shockingly calm and pragmatic. Perhaps one of the reasons for his calculated attitude when compared to Bush was that he was not the one to lead the country in the aftermath of the devastating 9/11 attacks whereas Bush's entire presidency was concerned with fighting the war on terror.

Another aspect that made Obama different from his predecessor was, as mentioned before, his concealed concern in the face of a storm. When confronted with a direct threat to American security, Obama, says Sanger, has shown that he is willing "to act unilaterally – in a targeted, get-in-get-out fashion"[7] that does not lead to messy wars and lengthy occupations that have been the norm for America in the past decades. The examples here, which will be discussed in length later, are clear: the raid that killed America's most wanted, Osama bin Laden, and the increased use of drone strikes that slowly brought al-Qaeda to the brink of strategic defeat. If put together, they reveal a strategy of confrontation and concealment.

But there is another side to the Obama Doctrine. Slowly, the world acknowledged that there was a wind of change blowing from the direction of the Obama administration. No longer was America willing to take the lead in every crisis that the world faced. If a threat did not go to the heart of America's own security, Obama proved reluctant and even hesitant at times to get involved. His intentions were clear: if others were not willing to do their fair share, why should the US? As such, the former president declined to act unless partners with greater interests at stake take the greatest risks and contribute the greatest resources.[8] Obama also resented that other nations, particularly the richer members of the NATO alliance, relied excessively on the United States to solve the world's problems. He was prepared to act multilaterally, only if others were too. The decision to extract the American troops from Iraq and slowly from Afghanistan, where American interests were few and rapidly diminishing are only two examples of this kind of mentality. The way Sanger puts it, "in an age of reckonings, when so many bills have come due, Obama has made the case for an America that can no longer do it all. It must pick its fights."[9]

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[7] Sanger, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[8] *Ibidem.*
[9] *Ibidem.*

The New "Countering Violent Extremism" Strategy

During his first year of presidency, as Peter Baker writes, Barack Obama adopted the bulk of the counterterrorism strategy he found on his desk when he first arrived in the Oval Office, a strategy already laid out from the earliest days after Sept. 11, 2001.[10] However, the president departed from some of the more aggressive and contested policies of his predecessor. Where George W. Bush saw black and white, Obama sees gray. If Bush favored a straightforward approach that he judged with his guts, Obama showed that he prefers to combine both force and intellect in a more elegant approach. David Sanger writes that a senior official who worked first for Bush and then for Obama said that although the two presidents have different ways of analyzing a situation, they do have one thing in common: "Obama worries far more about collateral damage, about the precedent the United States sets when it acts. But when it is decision time about whether to order a strike, or use a certain kind of weapon, he often comes out pretty close to where Bush did."[11]

When writing about the counterterrorism strategy that the Obama administration developed, Leonard Cutler argues that the essential contradiction of their strategy was that it "lacked core principles to anchor it and as a result policies were tailored to address individual crises as they flared up."[12] The author believes that the decisions taken by Obama led to his country being involved in more regional conflicts and he characterizes his counterterrorism strategy as "flexible pragmatism".[13] Obama committed himself to ending America's long and costly war in Afghanistan while, at the same time, employing methods that would target terrorist insurgents more effectively, without inflicting too much damage on the American troops. This is another reason why the US relied, during Obama's presidency, on a light footprint approach. This meant that the US would send less troops on the ground and would, instead, rely upon trained local security forces to track, apprehend, arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate terrorists.[14] Furthermore, Obama combined this tactic with the use of innovative drone technology which made him both popular as well as resented by some because while he retained a lot of military power and authority at little cost and avoided

[10] Baker, *op. cit.*

[11] Sanger, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[12] Leonard Cutler, *President Obama's Counterterrorism Strategy in the War on Terror. An assessment*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, p. 3.

[13] *Ibidem*, p. 1.

[14] *Ibidem.*

military occupations, the drone strikes also caused the death of many innocent civilians.

However, one thing that clearly distinguishes Obama from his predecessor is the way each president employed the term WOT in his discourse: while the presidency of George W. Bush was defined entirely by the War on Terror, a narrative constructed by Bush himself so as to define the strategies and actions adopted by the US in order to combat terrorism, President Obama slowly distanced himself from this narrative. He did not want, under any circumstance, to allow his presidency to be focused entirely on the War on Terror. While he acknowledged that this threat was not one to be foolishly ignored, he rejected the phrase "war on terror", hoping to recast the struggle as only one of a number of vital challenges confronting America. In his view, the nation is at war with al-Qaeda, but not with terrorism, which, as Obama understands it, is a tactic, not an enemy.[15] This was evidenced by his order to replace the term "Global War on Terror" with "Countering Violent Extremism." Operationally, the change was less evident. Like Bush, Obama found that his intentions ran into inconvenient realities on the ground.

Perhaps the biggest change Obama has made, as Peter Baker writes, is what one of his former advisers calls the "mood music" – choice of language, outreach to Muslims, rhetorical fidelity to the rule of law and a shift in tone from the all-or-nothing days of the Bush administration.[16] Obama wanted to improve US relations with the Muslim world by undoing the perception held by many Muslims during Bush's presidency that the United States was at war with Islam.[17]

Barack Obama appeared to be drawing down a curtain on the War on Terror. In his first months as a president, he ordered the Guantánamo Bay prison to be closed within a year, officially ended the use of secret prisons by the CIA, and required all interrogations to follow the non-coercive methods of the Army field. He also ordered a six-month review of all the cases of the 245 prisoners then held at Guantánamo,[18] which effectively ended any of the trials going on at the base. But despite Obama's declarations that the "war on terror" was a construct of the past and the implications that his administration would dramatically move away from Bush's policies, the shift was more one of tone than of substance,

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[15] Baker, *op. cit.*

[16] *Ibidem.*

[17] Powaski, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

[18] Peter Bergen, *The longest war: the enduring conflict between America and al-Qaeda*, 1st ed., New York: Free Press, 2011, p. 316.

according to Bergen.[19] As much as he tried, Obama did not manage to shut down the prison, not even by the end of his second term. Indeed, in 2011 around 175 prisoners remained incarcerated there, with some who were likely to be held there indefinitely. Because of New York politicians who put a lot of pressure on him, Obama did not go through with the trial of Guantánamo's most infamous inmate: 9/11 operational commander Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was to be held in a federal court in Manhattan. Instead, Mohammed would be tried by a military commission at Guantánamo.

There were other continuities with the Bush administration as underlined by Peter Bergen: while Obama did ban the use of the euphemistically named "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques", the practice of waterboarding had already ended in 2003 and the other coercive interrogation techniques were suspended three years later because of a ruling by the Supreme Court.[20] What is more, Obama dramatically increased the use of targeted killing of militant leaders in Pakistan by drone strikes, which the Bush administration started, while greatly expanding the war against al-Qaeda and its allies in neighboring Afghanistan.

Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan

Under President Obama, Afghanistan had become the military's top priority in the war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. During his campaign, he promised to withdraw US troops from the country, a task that would prove to be much more difficult that initially thought. Obama put his best foreign policy advisers, his generals and his closest staff to analyze the situation in Afghanistan and develop a strategy for exit. The conclusions were not as expected but necessary nonetheless: the number of troops was increased reaching 100 000 by 2010, in a final effort to crush the Taliban before withdrawing from the country. Counterinsurgency and nation-building had become the early core strategies and Obama's principal goal had been to promote good governance and legitimacy in the eyes of the local population.[21]

The strategy that the Obama administration had devised relied heavily on the training of local security forces who would in turn be able to protect their territory from any insurgents who wanted to return to the country therefore denying them sanctuary. This meant that money also had to be invested in building infrastructure and help create a democratic environment which would not encourage political corruption. Local governments were expected to play a

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 317.
[20] *Ibidem*, p. 318.
[21] Cutler, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

bigger role in this long-term strategy since they could appeal to the locals much better. It was pivotal for Afghanistan and for the success of the US strategy to develop capable law enforcement and legal institutions that would track, apprehend, arrest, prosecute and incarcerate terrorists. Unfortunately, it was not to be for sooner than later the Obama administration would abandon its idealistic reforms and accept reality: the Afghan war was simply unwinnable. To justify its decision, the Obama administration narrowed its goals and claimed that America achieved limited objectives in an impossible situation. After redeploying 33 000 additional troops that Obama originally ordered to fight back the Taliban, the administration declared that the surge had accomplished its mission by increasing the size and capability of the indigenous Afghan National Security Force.[22]

After 13 years of war which claimed over 30 000 lives (more than two-thirds of them were civilians) and almost $1 trillion spent trying to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaeda, the American public's patience with the involvement of US troops in that region had run out. One of the reasons that the US failed in Afghanistan was the safe have that the Taliban found in neighboring Pakistan and the continuing support they received from the Pakistani military and its main spy agency, the Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence.

Because of that, by 2014, the US was ready to hand over the country back to the Afghans, committing itself to keep only 10 000 American troops and thousands of civilian contractors. This allowed the American-led coalition to maintain the two large bases in Kandahar and in Jalalabad, which was the principal hub for intelligence on al-Qaida and it served as the launching pad for the raid that killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

The Rise of ISIS and the Threat of Homegrown Terrorism

President Barack Obama may not have been the one to steer the country in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and into the direction of two new major conflicts like the one in Afghanistan and in Iraq, but he faced a rapidly growing threat that would take the WOT on a whole new level: the rise of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This group was a former al-Qaeda affiliate which upheld the fundamentalist doctrine of Sunni Islam called Wahhabism or Salafism.[23]

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[22] *Ibidem*, p. 15.

[23] The Salafis are Muslims who advocate literal and to some degree binary interpretation of Islamic teachings as enjoined by Prophet Muhammad and subsequently practiced by the early pious predecessors known as the salaf al-salih. Following the salaf is the reason for their self-designation as

In 2008, President George Bush signed the Status of Forces agreement with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki which stipulated that all American forces would leave Iraq by 2011. President Obama, in continuation of Bush's policies, implemented the Bush-Maliki agreement and all US troops left Iraq by December 18, 2011. In the absence of American troops, the Maliki government did not train the Iraqi troops as he should have nor did he involve in the decision-making process important Sunni leaders. When the Arab Spring began in Tunisia in December 2010, the region was engulfed by uprisings and protests.

Due to these developments, President Obama was not able to fulfill his goal of not involving US military forces in yet another war in Iraq and, in the summer of 2014, he was forced to react, once again, militarily to events unfolding in the country. The Shiite-dominated government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was threatened by the rapidly spreading Sunni uprising started by the terrorist group known as ISIS. This new enemy proved to be incredibly challenging not just for Obama, but for the leaders of many other nations of the world. The impact of the Islamic State insurgency movement in Iraq in 2014 and Syria was particularly complicated for the Obama administration in the context of WOT since there was so many other key players in close proximity to each other, including the Islamic State, the al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat Fateh al-Sham[24], Hezbollah[25], mainstream backed rebels and pro-Assad government forces. Because of that, there were many variables that had to be considered before deciding upon a course of action.

One of the first moves that the White House decided to take was a combined strategy of diplomacy and military force with Sunni-governed states in the region: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates. These states would use their individual and collective influence with Sunni tribal leaders in Iraq to get them to push the Islamic State out of the occupied areas they

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Salafis. Unlike "Salafi" which is both a label and self-designated term, the term "Wahhabi" is a label given to the followers of the teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, from whose name the term "Wahhabi" originates. Wahhabism simply means the way of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab which also denotes his ideology.

[24] The Nusra Front—also known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham ("the Levantine Conquest Front")—, is the second-strongest insurgent group in Syria after ISIS, and a formerly open al-Qaeda affiliate that seeks to replace the Assad regime with an Islamic state. In the years since its formation in 2011, the Nusra Front has gradually amassed and sustained territory throughout Syria. As of early 2019, the Nusra Front controls or administers all of the Syrian opposition-held parts of Idlib, north Hama, and west Aleppo.

[25] Hezbollah, Arabic Ḥizb Allāh ("Party of God"), is a militant group and political party that first emerged as a faction in Lebanon following the Israeli invasion of that country in 1982.

controlled.[26] The administration managed to compel its allies to assist in the conflict: Britain, France, Italy, Australia, Turkey and Canada provided airstrikes and military assistance for Kurdish forces in Iraq and moderate opposition forces in Syria in a joint military mission.

The counterterrorism strategy that Obama employed in Iraq involved arming and continuing to support the reliable Kurds, giving air support to Baghdad, determining how to degrade Islamic State training camps in Syria and organizing Iraq's Sunni allies into a solid anti-Islamic front.[27] But ISIS had a strategy of its own and by taking advantage of the hatred of Iraq's Sunnis for the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government, the group quickly conquered territory on both sides of the Iraq-Syria border, including Iraq's second largest city, Mosul. After Maliki was removed from power, at the insistence of the United States, US air power and ground forces engaged ISIS and the Iraqi army was able to recover and regain much of the territory it had lost to the insurgents. By the time Obama left office in January 2017, Mosul was on the verge of liberation by the Iraqi army, with support from Kurdish troops and US Special Forces, but the Syrian conflict continued to produce uncountable civil deaths, widespread destruction and a migration crisis that took a toll on countries far beyond the Middle East. Even more troubling were the major external attacks against cities from Paris to Brussels to Orlando in 2015-2016 that showed just how capable ISIS remains at directing or inspiring deadly terrorist assaults abroad.

Back home, in the United States, the rise of ISIS and the war fought in Afghanistan and Iraq also inspired a new wave of terrorism that analysts called "homegrown terrorists" because the perpetrators of such acts were American born citizens who became radicalized and decided to join the holy cause of jihad. Peter Bergen writes that ever since the attacks of September 11, 2001, "330 people in the United States have been charged with some kind of jihadist terrorist crime ranging in seriousness from murder to sending small sums of money to a terrorist group."[28] And the fact that a high number of them are Americans goes against the common belief that those involved in terrorist activity in the United States are foreigners. What is more, at the time Peter Bergen wrote his book, more than one hundred American citizens or residents have been charged after traveling overseas to join a terrorist group, and a further thirty-nine were arrested in the

[26] Cutler, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
[27] *Ibidem*, p. 84.
[28] Peter Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists*, New York: Crown Publishers, 2016, p. 17.

States while planning to do so.[29] These individuals operate without a group of conspirators or direction from any organization, they are "lone wolves". An example of such an act is the Fort Hood murder from 2009 in which the perpetrator, Nidal Hasan, killed thirteen fellow Americans. Another tragic incident are the Boston Marathon bombings from 2013, carried out by the Tsarnaev brothers and yet again, the terrorists had no connection or aid from a foreign terrorist group.

During the Obama administration, "lone wolves" attacks such as those previously mentioned, became the face of jihad in America. These self-radicalized terrorists proved far harder to detect than either al-Qaeda operatives or independent groups, as they did not generally communicate with other militants which meant there were no phone calls or e-mails to intercept and no meetings to monitor.[30] Since 9/11 every act of jihadist terrorism resulting in a fatality on American soil has been carried out by lone wolves and this has also been influenced by the Internet which provided online lectures, videos, and instructional resources on how to pursue jihad.

"There are going to be times where we can do something about innocent people being killed, but there are going to be times where we can't."[31] Indeed, as much as President Obama tried to fight back the threat of terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and even at home, some things simply cannot be prevented. Yet, no one would dare argue against the progress that the Obama administration achieved in the context of WOT or, as they came to define it, "Countering violent extremism".[32]

But while Barack Obama always kept a realist outlook on events and shaped his discourse in a moderate, pragmatic tone, his successor would prove to be the opposite of everything that the world learned to appreciate about Obama.

Donald Trump and "America First"

As Donald Trump was being sworn into office, the world stood by and watched how a billionaire businessman who never held a political office and had

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 18.
[30] *Ibidem*, p. 59.
[31] Powaski, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
[32] The term "countering violent extremism," or CVE, refers to proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence. Fundamentally, CVE actions intend to address the conditions and reduce the factors that most likely contribute to recruitment and radicalization by violent extremists. (Source: https://www.dhs.gov/cve/what-is-cve, accessed on September 17th, 2020)

virtually no experience with international relations (not related to his business activities) became the President of the most powerful nation on Earth. Tapping into the populist sentiment of his electorate, Trump set on to attack the liberal international order that was established by the USA at the end of the Second World War and to reassert American nationalism. He even declared: "We've made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has dissipated over the horizon…From this day forward, it's America first!"[33]

President Trump inherited a war in Afghanistan, an ongoing military campaign against ISIS, involvement in Yemen's civil war, and military engagements elsewhere in the world. One could argue that this situation was much more dangerous, definitely more complicated, than what Obama was left with when he came to office. During his first year as president, Trump attempted to implement the America First agenda. He called NATO obsolete, criticized the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, and rejected multilateral trade agreements, such as the TPP[34] and the Paris Climate Agreement.[35] What is even more concerning is the fact that the President praised authoritarians and ignored their violations of human rights and their attacks on democracy in the United States and in Europe, a prime example of such a figure being the Russian President Vladimir Putin. Two years into Trump's presidency and it became clear to everyone that his "America First" foreign policy is not idealistic, but neither is it realistic.[36] What the President has been doing goes against some of the United States' vital national interests: by creating and following a discourse that is meant to undermine the international order that, despite its flaws, has managed to defend and promote democracy while enhancing the security and prosperity of the American people and their allies, Trump placed his country in an ambiguous

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[33] Eliot A. Cohen, *Trump's Lucky Year: Why the Chaos Can't Endure*, in "Foreign Affairs", January 20, 2018.

[34] The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a defunct proposed trade agreement between 10 countries, including the United States, signed on 4 February 2016, which was not ratified as required and did not take effect. After the United States withdrew its signature, the agreement could not enter into force.

[35] The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance, signed in 2016. As of March 2019, 195 UNFCCC members have signed the agreement, and 186 have become party to it.

[36] Powaski, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

relationship with its traditional allies who have come to be susceptible of everything that the President says and does. And for good reason.

The Trump Administration, as we will analyze it through the actions undertaken by the members of the administration in their first two years of mandate, has been characterized so far by controversy and contradictions. What President Donald Trump says and does are two different things and that is because, in spite of the general impression shared by the public, a president in office cannot single-handedly revolutionize each and every aspect of that country's policies without having consistent support from other politicians. Surely, one's rhetoric can comprise copious statements that may spark controversy, but as history has shown, there is little chance of those statements actually transforming in anything else than mere promises. More often than not, some of those promises might turn out to be just some reinterpretations of previous policies but delivered under a different name (such as Donald Trump's "new" take on counterterrorism strategy which is in fact a reiteration of some of George W. Bush's views on how to tackle the terrorist threat). In consequence, President Trump's campaign promises, although ambitious and plentiful, did not succeed in becoming real policies, with a few notable exceptions which this paper will discuss in the following paragraphs.

Prior to his largely unexpected election win, Mr. Trump boasted to his followers that he would be "harsher and smarter"[37] than President Obama with regards to national security and the threats posed by terrorist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda. So far, his actions did prove to be tougher than Obama's: in April 2017, the USA dropped the largest non-nuclear bomb in its arsenal on Taliban and ISIS caves and tunnels in eastern Afghanistan. The "Mother of All Bombs", or massive ordnance air blast (MOAB), was developed during the second Bush administration to be used in the war with Iraq, although Mr. Trump was the first one who actually ordered it on the battleground. With regards to how much smarter the new President's actions are in comparison to his predecessor's is an aspect that is in continuous development. However, one thing is certain: the Trump Administration heavily relies on the national security advice and expertise of aides to Donald Trump due to his lack of foreign policy experience. And although during the campaign Mr. Trump formulated an "America First" foreign policy approach, the phrase became more of a slogan than a foreign relations agenda[38].

[37] Donna G. Starr-Deelen, *Counter-Terrorism from the Obama Administration to President Trump*, Kensington: Springer Nature, 2018, p. 34.
[38] Starr-Deelen, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

But in order to understand Trump's America First approach, we ought to first look at the people who are helping to implement it, that is, the key members of the President's Cabinet. What is interesting to note about the staff of the new administration is that it is continuously changing, with prominent figures coming and going.

When Donald Trump picked Mike Pence of Indiana to be his running mate many political figures were surprised because Pence did not have any impressive credentials except for his experience in government. But Pence does not seek the spotlight and he understands how the levers of power work in Washington, D.C., and because of that, Pence might just turn out to be a largely unseen but quite an influential member of the Trump administration.[39]

Another important staffing decision that influences the direction of the ongoing war on terror is the choice of Secretary of State. During the first two years of the Trump presidency, there have been two people who took this role in the Trump administration: Rex Tillerson, a businessman with no experience in government or the military, was offered the position first. On March 13, 2018, he was replaced by Mike Pompeo, former Director of the CIA, who did not approve of the harsh interrogation techniques of the Bush era, despite candidate Trump's promises at campaign rallies to waterboard terrorism suspects and kill their families. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, a retired four-star general, proved to be the most influential among Trump's advisors, until he resigned on December 20, 2018. Together with former National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, General John Kelly, the chief of staff, and Vice President Mike Pence, Mattis managed to persuade Trump to send an additional 3900 troops to Afghanistan and to keep a small contingent of US forces in Iraq, despite the president's intention to withdraw from those countries. However, McMaster did not succeed in to "discipline" Trump and to get him to abandon key features of his America First agenda. On March 22, 2018, Trump announced that McMaster would be replaced by John Bolton, an outspoken advocate of military action who served briefly as George Bush's UN ambassador.

The America First agenda does not give us many details on how Trump's foreign policy or counterterrorism approach might look like and so our analysis has to rely on preliminary observations, trends and patterns and even statements made during Trump's campaign which can prove to be instructive and pertinent to the topic at hand.

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[39] *Ibidem.*

Changing the Rules of Engagement

As with every new administration that comes at the White House, there are always attempts to try to change the way politics is made and to tailor it according to the new Commander-in-chief. The Trump administration is no exception. Even before he won the elections, Trump criticized Obama for the way he addressed the issue of counterterrorism policies, believing that he deliberately avoided taking a harsh stance on the matter of terrorism. Once he assumed office, Mr Trump named Michael Flynn, a former intelligence office in the US Army, as the new National Security Advisor due to the fact that his worldview and policies were shared by many in the Trump administration. Flynn was very vocal in stating that Obama made a mistake in omitting to use the term "radical Islam" in his speeches on counterterrorism, with which Trump agreed. But as the trend goes in the Trump administration, Flynn's influence came to an abrupt end and President Trump avoided using the term in his first 9/11 anniversary speech, proof that once more a president cannot, in reality, do whatever he likes as he is constrained by his more competent advisors. However, the Trump administration did choose to rename countering violent extremism programs (as Obama named them) to "countering Islamist extremism".

Unfortunately, although he omitted the term from one speech, Trump continued to internalize the belief that radical Islamic terrorism (both Sunni and Shiite) is a foreign threat against which America has no choice but to protect itself with stronger borders, travel restrictions and reductions in refugee flows and immigration. In Trump's view, Europe's greater number of terrorists and recurrent terrorist attacks are an example of what happens when "countries adhere to politically correct policies in dealing with terrorism and fail to control the influx of immigrants and refugees".[40] Such a scenario, Trump fears, could soon become a part of America's reality if it refuses to confront radical Islamic terrorism as the real enemy. This perspective is a clear departure from Obama's own attempt to no longer portray Islam as the threat and to try to approach the Muslim community and build a dialogue with them. And while it is closer to the Bush administration's counterterrorist policy in several aspects, the Trump's administration demonized view of Islam, hostility toward immigration and reluctance towards traditional allies differ significantly from it.

[40] Brian Jenkins, *Bush, Obama, And Trump: The Evolution Of U.S. Counterterrorist Policy Since 9/11*, in "International Institute for Counter-Terrorism", 2017 [https://www.ict.org.il/Article/2079/BUSH-OBAMA-AND-TRUMP#gsc.tab=0], September 1, 2020.

We have mentioned before that the Trump administration has yet to come up with a clear and structured foreign policy agenda that includes counterterrorism, but he nevertheless was quick to dismiss everything that his predecessor achieved while he was still on the campaign trail. When addressing his audiences, Mr Trump asked them whether they wanted four more years of President Obama's foreign policy, warning them that voting for his campaign opponent, Hillary Clinton, would simply prolong the "failed" policies of the Obama era.[41] Trump has also chosen not to emphasize as much as his predecessor did soft power issues and human rights. During his campaign, Trump said that, in contrast to Obama, he would fill the military prison in Guantanamo with "some bad dudes".[42] As a candidate, he also expressed his support for 'enhanced interrogation techniques' such as waterboarding, but as a president, Trump avoided making such statements.

Brian Jenkins writes in his article that a draft of Trump's new counterterrorist strategy that was prepared by the National Security Council says that the United States needs "to intensify operations against global jihadist groups"[43] while leaving out any mention of "radical Islamic terrorism". It also argues that the US must reduce the costs of American lives in pursuing its counterterrorism goals while choosing to rely more on allies and partners. It also has to avoid large-scale interventions and open-ended military commitments. Jenkins also underlines the fact that these principles derive from publicly reported excerpts from a draft document because there was no official policy document at that time.

In March 2017, NBC News also reported that the Pentagon prepared a counterterrorism plan targeting ISIS that was meant to change the rules of engagement from the Obama era but which, at the same time, NBC characterizes as little more than an "intensification" of Obama's slow and steady approach to degrade ISIS.[44] It would appear that the draft indicated that President Trump will be expecting US allies and partners to do more in the fight against ISIS, al Qaeda and other militants. What is more, just like his predecessor, Trump wants to avoid costly open-ended military commitments, but, unlike Obama, the new president is willing to grant the Pentagon greater authority to use force on the battlegrounds. Nine months into his presidency, and it became clear to everyone

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41 Starr-Deelen, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
42 Jenkins, *op. cit.*
43 *Ibidem.*
44 Starr-Deelen, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

that the president intends to stay true to his word: President Trump prioritized military action and downplayed diplomacy, soft power and political engagement. After all, the first Trump budget includes large cuts in the Department of State's budget, which plays an important role in using public diplomacy to promote human rights, democracy and religious freedoms abroad.

Trump also delegated authority to the military to set troop levels (the number of which are not to be made public) and undertake a much wider range of strikes. When it comes to the rules that govern the use of drones in noncombat theaters such as Somalia and Libya, Trump chose to abandon Obama-era rules. Whereas Obama operationally expanded but bureaucratically constrained drones' use, Trump's new rules instead vest military commanders with strike decisions, without requiring approval from the White House.[45] However, the use of drones is an element of continuity between all three presidential administrations that are being discussed in this paper, with the difference being that with each new president, the use of drones as a counterterrorism tool became more and more popular. The first two years of the Trump administration have reflected President Trump's preference for the use of force.

President Trump's Show of Power

We have seen that the Trump administration manages to somehow stand out when compared to its predecessors. From the very beginning, the new administration had a lot to face: from press scandals to controversies around the members of the staff, changes within the ranks and disapproval rates from the electorate. This reflects the disputed character of the president himself who shocked everyone with his discourse, behavior and personality ever since he began his election campaign. Unlike his predecessors, Trump lacks a coherent foreign policy agenda, a clear strategy for counterterrorism and a certain level of balance within his Cabinet members, but he is nonetheless quick to make powerful statements with regards to what America's priorities should look like. Our subject of interest, counterterrorism, is particularly important to analyze by looking at the actions taken by the new administration.

The Trump administration's early counterterrorism decisions indicate a strong preference for forceful military responses and a willingness to downgrade

[45] Daniel J. Rosenthal and Loren DeJonge Schulman, *Trump's Secret War on Terror*, in "The Atlantic", August 10, 2018 [https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/08/trump-war-terror-drones/567218/], June 1st, 2019.

civilian-protection concerns to enable speedier military action.[46] By taking a look at what has been done so far in major military activities that the US is currently involved it, a certain pattern begins to reveal itself. The decisions that President Trump made with regards to operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Yemen indicate that he is convinced that USA military power is the game changing factor that will finally bring America definite victory in the war on terror. And this is also shared among the president's advisors who proved that they are not hesitant to bring in the "big guns" on the battlefield. And why would they be when they have the necessary means to do it? President Trump himself gave former Secretary of Defense James Mattis the kind of authority that would allow him to take vital decisions regarding operations in the war on terror.

As mentioned before, despite his campaign discourse, President Trump has increased the number of troops in Afghanistan and has even put pressure on NATO allies to send more troops. But what has happened in Syria ever since Trump took office is indeed worthy of analysis. The US and Coalition forces have made considerable progress in the fight against the Islamic State: through joint efforts, they have managed to take back control of much of the territory that for four years has been known as ISIS's caliphate in Syria and Iraq. Key cities such as Mosul, Tikrit, Raqqah and Tal Afar were lost to the US led coalition forces and now ISIS controls only 1% of the territory that it used to have. And much of this has been achieved in the first few month of Trump's presidency. According to Brett McGurk, the Special Presidential Envoy for the Coalition against ISIS, the results of the Trump administration are the consequences of three key factors: the first is President Trump's choice to delegate much of the essential decision-making responsibilities to battlefield commanders. The second factor is a tactic termed "annihilation" whereby Coalition ground forces surround ISIS fighters and prevent the foreign fighters from escaping. And, lastly, the fact that the administration insisted that much of the burden of the war must be shared between Coalition members has also played a significant role.[47] But with all this progress, the increase in the human lives lost has been worrying, with no one willing to take the blame.

In Somalia, the Trump administration has also made a show of power by increasing the number of counterterrorism strikes against the al-Shabaab

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[46] Saskia Brechenmacher and Steven Feldstein, *Trump's War on Terror,* in "The National Interest", 2017 [https://nationalinterest.org/feature/trumps-war-terror-22783], June 1st, 2019.
[47] Starr-Deelen, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

organization[48]. However, the US also saw its first military death in Somalia since the infamous Blackhawk Down incident in 1993 – a Navy SEAL was killed during an operation 40 miles west of Mogadishu against al-Shabaab. What is interesting to note is how President Trump is changing the rules of the game from the way they used to be during the Obama administration. Particularly, he has loosened the rules and standards for the use of force by designating certain regions of Somalia as "areas of active hostilities" which authorizes the commanders in the field to make targeting decisions that are not subject to an interagency review process. More concerning perhaps is the fact that civilian protection rules are less strict.

Shortly after his inauguration, President Trump approved the first raid of his presidency, one that had been planned during the Obama administration. It took place in Yemen, on January 29, 2017, and it is known as the Yakla raid. The goal of the operation was to gather intelligence against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, but the raid resulted in the death of one Navy SEAL and several civilians including the eight year old daughter of Anwar al-Awlaki[49]. Nonetheless, President Trump declared the operation a success, but this raised a lot of controversy: can one really define an operation that led to the death of several civilians and one Navy Seal plus the destruction of expensive military equipment as a success? Once again, as with Somalia, president Trump designated three provinces of Yemen as "areas of active hostilities" which means more flexibility to use force in the region and less rules for civilian protection.

But is the increased use of force in military zones really the best possible strategy to reach a favorable outcome in the conflicts that the US is currently involved in? President Trump has repeatedly claimed that ISIS has been obliterated and reduced to ashes. As much as the world would like to believe that that is indeed the case, it is only partially true. Although they no longer possess the territory and resources that they did back in 2014, the organization still represents a real threat. Lone wolf attacks and small-scale, unsuspected, coordinated attacks will continue to occur, just as they did before. And these require a different kind of strategy to be dealt with since they do not happen on the battlefield, but far, far from it. Knowing that, it is rather premature to declare such victory and the Trump administration would do well in developing new,

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[48] Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (translated as "Mujahideen Youth Movement" or "Movement of Striving Youth") is a jihadist fundamentalist group based in East Africa which in 2012 pledged allegiance to the militant Islamist organization Al-Qaeda.

[49] Anwar al-Awlaki is an American of Yemeni parents who was an al-Qaeda propagandist killed by a drone in 2011 during the Obama administration.

more pertinent, counterterrorist strategies than just relying on brute force. Special ops, intelligence gathering and working closely with allies while upholding the rule of law and human rights are only some of the measures that America will have to consider in its future counterterrorism policies.

The muscular use of American military might in the war on terror undertaken by President Trump since his inauguration raises troubling questions for the American people"[50], says Donna Starr. The real fear is that ISIS, just like al-Qaeda before it, will metastasize and reappear in other places, more powerful and still able to inflict damage and spread terror.

Conclusion

This paper has examined American foreign policy in the context of WOT and the measures and strategies adopted throughout the administration of Barack Obama, followed by a brief analysis of the counterterrorism strategies outlined by the Trump administration during the first two years of presidency.

Barack Obama promised to bring back the focus of American policy makers on its national issues while at the same time balancing a foreign policy that unites allies in order to fight back the terrorist threat. The Obama administration's more liberal approach included harnessing every tool of American power: securing partnerships with valuable allies and embracing multilateralism. However, the Obama Doctrine entailed a few simple principles that meant to establish the 'guidelines' by which the US would be prepared to resort to the use of force: so long as an issue did not go to the heart of US interests or represented a direct threat to America's security, the conditions under which America would act would be set much higher. Furthermore, NATO allies (but not only) would have to do their own share because this was an America that was no longer willing to act alone. The highlight of Obama's fight against terrorism was, undoubtedly, the capture of Osama bin Laden, which many saw as marking the end of WOT.

However, as Donald Trump was sworn into office, America's foreign landscapes would change once more as a rise in populist views swept over a nation tired of wars. 'America First' became the doctrine of Trump but while the president said and promised a lot, his policies lacked substance. WOT continued with the Trump administration, which, although did not develop a concrete agenda to fight terrorism, achieved some progress in the conflicts inherited from Obama, particularly in hunting down ISIS in Syria.

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[50] Starr-Deelen, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

Today's world is witnessing a time of disruption, uncertainty and contention in American politics. The election of Donald Trump in 2016 raised profound questions about America's global role. And the worries are not simply related to the way the Trump administration manages its day-to-day agenda, but to what extent the chaos of the new administration will affect US relations with its foreign partners. Regardless of who triumphed in the 2016 presidential election, the United States have had to confront numerous fundamental questions about how it has addressed the challenge of WOT in the recent past – and how it will do so in the years to come. After all, as Ernest May said, 'History does not repeat itself, but it rhymes.'

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