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MAKING SENSE OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY: WHAT CAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY OFFER?

Umut UZER¹

Abstract: State identity not only defines how elite decision-makers, as well as the informed public, identify their governmental affiliation but also informs the actions of the policymakers in the conduct of their foreign policy. There are numerous studies dealing with the role of ideas, identity and norms in international relations by scholars belonging to the constructivist school of thought in International Relations Theory. This study purports to offer such a constructivist analysis of Turkish foreign policy behaviour based on the gradual change of Kemalist state identity from a secular Western-oriented identity to that of a religious-based affiliation under the current Justice and Development Party (2002-2020). While realist variables are significant for explicating major events of Republican Turkey, such as its alignment with the United States after World War II, Turkey's policy decisions towards Cyprus and the Turkic republics of the former Soviet Union cannot be explained by purely materialist factors. For an adequate understanding of these policies, we need to resort to analytical eclecticism employing both realist and constructivist variables for a more sophisticated analysis of Turkey's foreign relations. When it comes to the JDP government, however, constructivist variables trump realist explanations as Turkish foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, has been clouded and shaped by an Islamically-framed Weltanschauung.

Key words: Constructivism, state identity, Turkish foreign policy, Kemalism, Neo-Ottomanism.

INTRODUCTION

Turkish foreign policy is in dire need of theoretical explications as most of the work on that topic involves empirical studies, which are valuable in mastering the details that would be relevant for our understanding of Turkish foreign policy behaviour while they lack the theoretical depth, which international theories can

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offer. In other words, studies that employ International Relations Theory are few, which makes such an approach significant for both academic and policy considerations.² This article argues that IR theory offers multiple venues for a better understanding of Turkish foreign policy behaviour. Focusing on Kemalist foreign policy, particularly the 1923-1938 era and the post-Kemalist foreign policy of the Justice and Development Party, especially from 2006 until 2020, this study argues that a constructivist approach to foreign policy behaviour is particularly significant in understanding the policies of the current Turkish government.

The main puzzle is whether changes in the ideas of the decision-makers of a particular country result in diverging foreign policy outcomes when compared with previous eras. Therefore, some of the research questions include: What were the characteristics of the foreign policy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (i.e., Kemalist foreign policy); what ideas and identities informed Kemalist foreign policy; was it really as peaceful as has been argued by the advocates of Atatürk; what has changed under the Justice and Development Party; what are the ideas and identities of the new ruling party of Turkey from 2002 onward? Can realist or constructivist variables offer a better understanding of Turkish foreign policy behaviour as far as the two cases are concerned?

In order to tackle and unpack these questions and concerns, this article starts with a literature review of IR theory to employ it as an intellectual tool for answering them. Then the methodology and case studies will be laid out. An analysis of Turkish foreign policy of Atatürk, and the ideational components of Kemalism, which guide foreign policy behaviour, as well as realist elements such as survival and power, are essential to clarify the significance of constructivism and realism for the Atatürk era. On the other hand, ideational components of the Justice and Development party's ruling cadres, especially that of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, are paramount to comprehend the change in foreign policy behaviour of his government. It is the contention of this study that ideological elements trump *realpolitik* calculations of state behaviour under this government, especially when it comes to the Middle East. Moreover, such considerations are not confined to the JDP's approach to the region and are applicable to other areas of the world as well, but that would be beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that, a similar study can be undertaken vis-à-vis Turkey's relations with the European Union as a discourse analysis of President Erdoğan's speeches would reveal that he perceives European and Turkish/ Islamic civilizations to be distinct and separate. (*Sabah* 2020, for a contradictory statement see: NTV 2021).³ Additionally, he perceives the Islamic

² Of course, it could be argued that policymakers do not take theoretical considerations into account. See: Avey and Desch 2014.

³ Though we can also find a few positive characterizations by Erdoğan as he uttered the words "We see Turkey's future in Europe", which was quite surprising after many years of hostile haranguing

and Ottoman heritage to be superior to the Western world, as he presents the former as more humane and egalitarian as opposed to the European worldview, which is more rigid and discriminatory towards non-European peoples.

In other words, there is an East-West dichotomy among the conservative rulers of Turkey, a state of affairs, which can be characterized as Occidentalism that essentializes the West and, in fact, contains elements of hostility towards the Western World. Occidentalism is, in fact, the mirror image of Orientalism by which the Western powers aimed to dominate the Orient using academic knowledge (Metin 2020) and containing a simplistic depiction of the East. Therefore, there are plenty of approaches in different parts of the world that easily generalize without fully grasping other peoples. Having said all that, regardless of their claims of authenticity as far as culture is concerned, the JDP government is quite comfortable with capitalist economics, including international trade. Discussing that would of course constitute a whole different article.

In sum, this framework offers a theoretical understanding of foreign policy and how IR theory can explain changing foreign policy behaviour, particularly regarding Turkey's approach to Palestine and Israel. The above discussion about the differentiation between the Islamic world and the West, of which Palestine occupies a central place, is closely connected with issues of identity, about which constructivism has a lot to offer.

IS IR THEORY RELEVANT FOR EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS?

Constructivism, according to Nicholas Onuf, starts with deeds, then involves actions followed by the words uttered. Accordingly, “people and societies construct and constitute each other” and hence the “world is a social construction” consisting of both material and social realities (Onuf 1989, 36, 39, 40). As opposed to realism, which has a materialist ontology, constructivism has an ideational ontology (Wendt 1999, 372) with a focus on shared ideas, identity, and norms. While not denying the existence of the material world, constructivists such as Alexander Wendt, give significance to the meanings we attribute to the material world as regards weapons, our own selves or threat perception. In other words, it is very much the ideas that constitute power and the material world out there (Wendt 1999, 90, 96). Consequently, a country's self-definition would have drastic foreign policy repercussions if that country is ready to consistently follow up its declared principles.

Identity is defined by Samuel Huntington as “a sense of self” or “self-consciousness that I or we possess distinct qualities as an entity that differentiates”

against the EU. He made these remarks during his meeting with the president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen. See: NTV 2021.

us from others and conferring “distinctiveness” to the nation or any other collective (Huntington 2004, 21). It should also be pointed out that the construction of national identities is a social process as state as well as national identities always entail an outside or inside enemy or simply an Other (Barnett 1999, 9). If we need an *Other* to be able to define ourselves, our own definition is usually self-serving as noble, heroic and peace-loving, whereas others are usually hostile, cruel and aggressive. Of course, that perception would most likely not be shared by our adversaries or rivals.

The most consequential variables for this study are state and national identity which might or might not overlap. The identity of a state refers to “who or what actors are”, while at the same time state interests are related to the desires of the state actors (Wendt 1999, 231). Changing state identities or accepting new norms of peaceful coexistence or re-definition of state identities as “trading states” undoubtedly had a massive influence on the foreign policy behaviours of Germany and Japan after WWII (Katzenstein 1996, 55-60). Needless to say, realist factors such as warfare led to this result, but a change in the material situation of Japan and Germany also caused the revision of the mental map of the German and Japanese decision-makers, making war unthinkable in the conduct of their international relations.

By discussing and interpreting the role of ideas and identities in world politics in general and specific regions or countries in particular, it is possible to offer fresh analyses of foreign policy behaviour. For instance, focusing on the relations between Arab countries, purely strategic explanations are inadequate since they did not simply balance against each other, but rather resorted to the protection of the “norms of Arabism”, which defined acceptable behaviour for all Arab states. The Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser’s main source of strength came from his ideational framework of Arabism influencing the Arab masses well beyond Egypt’s boundaries (Barnett 1998, 2, 7). In other words, competition for the soul of the Arab world was not only based on material resources, but also on the ideational mindset of the Arab masses and the literati.

While there are numerous empirical studies of Turkish foreign policy (Hale 2002; Robins 2003), there is a gap in the literature when it comes to theoretically grounded research⁴ analysing Turkish foreign policy behaviour. Therefore, this article offers a framework of analysis to use IR theory in explicating Kemalist and post-Kemalist Turkey as far as its foreign policy behaviour is concerned. For the former case, a combination of realist and constructivist variables are offered for comprehending Turkish foreign policy. The latter case, on the other hand, is

⁴ The few exceptions include: Uzer 2011 and Bozdağlıoğlu 2003.

adequately analysed with ideational factors such as religion and identity and their impact on policy implementation.

The main hypotheses of this study entail whether ideologically motivated political parties moderate their discourse when they come to power, when does ideology trump practical *realpolitik* considerations, and whether the rational calculation of state interests and objectives of regional hegemony are behind what appears as ideologically-driven policies? The case of Turkey between 1920-1938 and 2002-2020 periods, which I label as Kemalist and post-Kemalist eras respectively, are put under scrutiny employing the tools of International Relations Theory. Discourse, as well as specific policy decisions, are presented to decipher Turkish foreign policy behaviour during these two different periods.

“PEACE AT HOME, PEACE IN THE WORLD?” WAS KEMALIST TURKEY ALL THAT PEACEFUL?

The major transformation of the Ottoman Empire from a multinational empire into a republican pro-Western Turkish nation-state was one of the monumental events in the Balkans-Caucasus-Middle East strategic triangle. This was no less than a civilizational change of the state and national identity of the Turkish polity from that of an Islamic-dynastic structure to a modern-secular Turkish state. In many ways, a new Turk was to emerge from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, which was imbued with the instruments of science having reached the level of contemporary civilization, meaning that of Europe. Nonetheless, the new Turk was to become Western not only in his/her thought, but also in manners, outfit, and taste. At the same time, pre-Ottoman Turkish culture was researched to supersede the now-defunct Ottoman traditions. While many elements of the new national culture were based on the negation of the old Ottoman culture, a complete rupture would not be possible as almost all the founders of modern Turkey were, until recently, Ottoman officers, bureaucrats and intelligentsia.

Throughout centuries, Turkish national consciousness was at best tenuous as the majority of the people of Turkey did not have a clear Turkish identity but preferred local or religious identities. Consequently, Turkish nationalism emerged at the end of the nineteenth century but was confined, predominantly to a limited number of intellectuals and parts of the reading public (Uzer 2016, 22-23). With the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, Turkish nationalism became part of the official ideology, namely Kemalism, of which nationalism was one of its six arrows,⁵ that is the main principles of the state ideology. While there was a

⁵ The Six Arrows did not immediately appear in 1923 but rather evolved throughout the Kemalist era, finally entering the constitution in 1937. Nationalism, however, was clearly the main catalyst of Atatürk's thought.

passionate and exuberant propagation of Turkish nationalism, there were limitations to its content as Atatürk and others did not want to antagonize the Soviet Union in which numerous Turkic peoples resided.

Therefore, the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), was quite clear on his rejection of pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism in his long six-day speech during the Second Republican People's Party (CHP-Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) convention in 1927, known in Turkish historiography as *the Speech* (Nutuk). Atatürk pointed out that "a national policy within the borders of the Republic of Turkey" would be the policy preference for Republican Turkey (Atatürk 1963, 436). In other words, as the new Turkey was established on the negation of the Ottoman Empire, a new outlook based on Atatürk's statement "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" would guide its foreign policy together with a Western vocation (Oran 2002, 20-21) and an emphasis on international law (Bozer 1990, 20). According to one constructivist analysis of Turkish foreign policy, this pro-Western stance emanates from the Western identity intrinsic to Kemalism (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003, 7-9) by making the country part of the Western civilization, which was one of the paramount goals of Atatürk. While this framework offers a significant contribution to a theoretical analysis of Turkish foreign policy, which is rare as mentioned in the introduction of this article, it only presents one side of the coin. In other words, nationalism which is one of the six arrows of Kemalism also offers a guideline for policymakers as far as interest in the affairs of External Turks is concerned. The concept "External Turks" refers to people of Turkish ethnicity living in the vicinity of modern Turkey in places such as Western Thrace or Syria and Iraq. Moreover, the varying degrees of involvement in Hatay, Cyprus and Nagorno-Karabagh can be better understood by utilizing the Turkish element in Turkey's state identity (Uzer 2011). To clarify, Turkey's involvement in the above-mentioned regions cannot be explained by purely strategic motivations since, without the existence of Turks in distress, cross-border involvement would not have been justified in the eyes of the Turkish public. Moreover, it should be pointed out that there were varying degrees of involvement in these three cases, from outright annexation of Hatay in 1939, military operations in Cyprus in 1974 to public statements of support by politicians in Turkey in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh throughout the 1990s, which incidentally has continued up until now, particularly visible in the liberation of significant parts of occupied Karabakh by Azerbaijani forces in September-November 2020.

Going back to discussing Kemalist foreign policy, it would be in order to point out that the multidimensional character of Atatürk's foreign policy resulted in the establishment of a number of regional cooperation schemes, such as the Balkan Pact and the Sadabad Pact signed in the 1930s with its neighbours.

In 1930, the leaders of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia met at a summit in Athens, where they discussed multiple levels of cooperation between their respective countries. Four years later, the Balkan Pact

was signed in the Greek capital by Greece, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia, assuring each other that the territorial integrity of all the signatories would be protected and that endeavors of Bulgaria to expand its territories would be checked. It should be noted that close relations between Greece and Turkey (Akşin 1991, 261-266, 270-271) were particularly significant as the two countries were involved in warfare in the early 1920s.

However, the Balkan Pact did not meet the security needs of Greece and Yugoslavia when the former was attacked by Italy in 1940 and the latter occupied by Germany in 1941 as both countries demanded help from Turkey within the parameters of the Balkan Pact. Turkey had a different understanding of the Pact as it argued that it was predominantly concerned with Bulgaria and not Italy (Barlas and Vlasic 2016, 1011). Needless to say, it was well beyond Turkey's power to resist the German or Italian occupation of Greece and Yugoslavia and hence it was more concerned with protecting its own territorial integrity against those expansionist states. In other words, state survival, protection of the territorial integrity of the country, and eschewing adventurist foreign policy behaviours were the basic characteristics of Kemalist foreign policy.

The Sadabad Pact, on the other hand, signed in 1937 between Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey in Sadabad Palace in Tehran, was a treaty of non-aggression guaranteeing all signatories to refrain from interfering in the domestic affairs of each other. Supported by the USSR and the UK, the ultimate objective of the pact, according to the Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüşdü Aras, was peace (Akşin 1991, 198-200) in the region. He also characterized Kemalist foreign policy in general and these pacts in particular as part of Turkey's belief in collective security through regional cooperation (Aras 2003, 202). Furthermore, in 1932, Turkey acceded to the League of Nations, whose paramount concern was collective security against aggression, and became one of the adamant supporters of sanctions against Italy due to the latter's occupation of Ethiopia (Aykan 1994, 20) in 1935.

The fact of the matter was that recognition and affirmation of the new regime in Turkey was one of the major considerations of its leaders. Therefore, a number of bilateral treaties were signed with its neighbours in addition to those regional multilateral pacts. Earlier, in 1921, even before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, Turkey and Afghanistan had signed a security agreement in Moscow. Turkey agreed to dispatch security personnel as well as teachers to Afghanistan and eventually established a medical school in Kabul. As a result of these friendly relations, Amanullah Khan, the ruler of Afghanistan visited Turkey in 1928 (Akşin 1991, 191-194; Akbaş 2008, 314). The leaders of both countries were interested in modernizing their societies, but the Afghan experience was short-lived as the king could not stay in power for long, whereas Turkish modernization was more resilient, lasting until the early twenty-first century.

Turkey also signed a peace and friendship treaty with its eastern neighbour Iran in 1926 resulting in that country providing aid to Turkey's counterinsurgency measures in its territories, in proximity to the Iranian border. Furthermore, the Iranian ruler Reza Shah visited Turkey in 1934, culminating in Atatürk characterizing bilateral relations as of utmost importance for both countries (Akşin 1991, 194-196).

It should be mentioned that the Sadabad Pact, as well as the Balkan Pact, were part of Turkey's opening up to its neighbours, conducting a multilateralist foreign policy and creation of a zone of peace among all the respective countries. While this is an indisputable fact, it should also be noted that there were cases when Turkey tried to recapture former territories belonging to the Ottoman Empire, especially those considered to be part of the National Pact (Misak-ı Milli) delineating its borders. The territories in question were the former province of Mosul in Iraq under the British mandate and the Sanjak of Alexandretta in Syria under the French mandate. While Turkey's efforts to regain Mosul were futile in the 1920s, Atatürk laid the groundwork for the annexation of Alexandretta and Antioch, known as Hatay in Turkish, which occurred in 1939, one year after the death of Atatürk.

Turkey has used all elements of diplomacy short of war, namely public statements, public relations, inducements to foreign powers and the like to recover Hatay from Syria under the French mandate and reunite it with the mainland. There was a strong national consensus of the masses in Turkey as the government was propagating the significance and "Turkishness" of Hatay to the people. President Atatürk was personally involved in these endeavours and successfully conducted the whole Hatay operation (Uzer 2011, 89) until his death prior to the legal unification of the area with Turkey. It would be in order to say that Turkey's push for a referendum in Hatay and then the declaration of independence of Hatay, culminating in its decision to join Turkey, would have been perceived as a policy of expansionism by a significant part of the Syrian elite and the masses. Though all measures were taken in conformity with international law, such as demands of self-determination, a plebiscite and the resolution of the parliament of Hatay to become part of Turkey, these decisions would not be seen as legitimate by significant portions of Syrian society.

The truth of the matter was that Atatürk got personally interested in Hatay during World War I, as he was one of the commanders of the Ottoman army in Syria, during which time he tried to resist any British encroachment on Alexandretta. Afterwards, France has recognized nationalist Turkey with the 1921 Ankara agreement, which stipulated that Turkish would be accepted in the special administrative unit of Alexandretta within the French mandate of Syria. Turkey's position on Hatay was expressed in Atatürk's statement "a land which belonged to the Turks for forty centuries cannot remain under enemy control" (Sanjian 1956, 379).⁶ Therefore,

⁶ For Atatürk's statement, see: Tekin 1993, 118-119, 124, and Ada 2006, 51.

Atatürk's determination to eventually get Hatay back was evident from the 1920s till the end of the 1930s.

Numerous public relations campaigns were instigated in the Hatay region by supporting newspapers in Latin script, adopted earlier in Turkey in 1928, opening football clubs and visits by dignitaries from Turkey to the region to keep the interrelationship between the two entities as close as possible. Furthermore, People's Houses were opened in the area to inculcate the new Kemalist creed into the inhabitants of Hatay. In 1937, Turkish soldiers moved towards the Syrian border, and Atatürk planned to visit the border areas with full fanfare but was dissuaded by his ever-cautious Prime Minister İsmet İnönü (Tekin 1993, 134-136, 147-150). The Republic of Hatay, which existed from September 1938 until July 1939, had already accepted Kemalism as its state ideology and a flag very similar to that of Turkey. In late June, the parliament of Hatay decided to become part of Turkey, which came into effect in July when Hatay was incorporated into Turkey (Uzer, 2011, 100-101) as one of its provinces. The Hatay affair demonstrates that Turkey's state identity had a strong Turkish component not only at the domestic level but also in its foreign policy. It would take strong action provided it did not jeopardize its national survival. In fact, "adventurism" was something that Turkish leaders eschewed as they perceived some of the actions of Enver Pasha, the leader of the late Ottoman Empire during World War I, as reckless, resulting in utter failure. Therefore, for Kemalist leaders, state and national survival were paramount. Yet if certain conditions were satisfied, there would be actions to rectify past injustices.

The condition of Turkish involvement in Hatay and Cyprus are discussed in detail in the book *Identity and Turkish Foreign Policy*, which argued that there were a number of preconditions that should be satisfied for Turkey to take a more active role in the affairs of "External Turks". The internal factors included: the perception of the dispute as a paramount national interest, "ethnic kin under oppression", "national consensus" for the necessity of involvement, whereas external factors should include a "conducive international environment" and no veto of Turkey's activism by any of the major countries in the region or the world (Uzer 2011, 86). In other words, the portrayal of the Atatürk era as peaceful is only one part of the story, as the Hatay case demonstrates that Turkey did not rule out foreign policy activism to correct, what it perceived to be, historical wrongs.

In sum, both state interests and state identities are significant in analysing Turkey's foreign policy during the rule of Atatürk. A number of pacts in its region can be understood by national security considerations while at the same time perceiving the Turkish state as peaceful, which was demonstrated in Atatürk's famous motto, can be explicated by constructivist variables such as a peaceful state identity. Similarly, the policies towards Hatay can be best unpacked by both constructivist factors, such as the Turkish characteristic of the region according to Turkish decision-makers, as well as the strategic location of Hatay, although the

latter has not been as much emphasized by Turkish politicians. Having said all that, however, this balance of the materialist and ideational variables has radically changed in Turkey during the twenty-first century, especially regarding its policy in the Middle East.

A POST-KEMALIST TURKEY⁷

After almost 80 years of Kemalism as the dominant state ideology of Turkey, the advent of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) to power in 2002 meant a gradual change of the state identity of the country from that of Kemalism into a more eclectic mindset without however explicitly rejecting Atatürk. Hailing from the Islamist National Outlook Movement (Millî Görüş), the cadres of JDP in its initial years refrained from using extremist discourse and presented itself as a conservative political party, similar to Christian Democrats (Duran 2008, 98) in Europe.

Admittedly, there were cracks in the Kemalist shell as a number of rival identities have emerged in the 1980s. Kurdish, Alevi and Islamic affiliations became more visible in the 1980s as the country has opened up to the West and a consumerist economy was supported by the Motherland Party under the leadership of Turgut Özal who became Prime Minister in 1983. This was also the period of the rise of “Anatolian tigers” – provincial Anatolian cities that had economically developed as a result of the export-led growth supported by the government and became bastions of conservatism both at the centre and the periphery. The pro-Western orientation was still solid under Özal whereas, under the JDP government, pro-EU policies were used more as tactical tools to tame the military and break the hegemony of the foreign policy establishment which was quite hawkish on a number of issues, most important of which was Cyprus.

It is always appealing to find historical turning points, and one such episode was the unofficial visit by Khaled Mashal, one of the leaders of Hamas to Ankara in 2006, which was labelled as “a policy shift” by Soner Çağaptay (Çağaptay 2006) of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think tank located in Washington D.C. This visit was spearheaded by Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was the foreign policy advisor at the time and had orchestrated the visit, despite strong objections from the Foreign Ministry (*Hürriyet* 2006). It cannot be stressed enough that Turkey’s turn towards the Middle East, and more importantly to the Islamic world, was initiated and intellectualized by Ahmet Davutoğlu (Janković, 2016), who was one of the few members of JDP who had any understanding of foreign policy. Having said that, however, Davutoğlu had a romantic attachment to the former Ottoman Empire and lacked in-depth analysis and knowledge of the region about which he

⁷ For post-Kemalism, see Aytürk 2015.

pontificated. Of course, such slogans also reverberated with the Islamically oriented leaders of the JDP, most notably with prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (2003–2014), who was elected as president in 2014, whereas Davutoğlu became prime minister in 2014 and served until 2016. The two figures later had a falling out as a result of which Davutoğlu established the Future Party (Gelecek Partisi) in 2019.

Coupled with Turkey's domestic policy of Islamization, which included a campaign to build mosques in central places such as Taksim Square (Hansen and Behrendt 2017) in Istanbul or on hilltops overlooking the city such as Çamlıca Hill (*Daily Sabah* 2019a), as well as an unofficial declaration of warfare against alcohol by raising taxes on liquor and turning a significant number of regular elementary and secondary schools into religious İmam-Hatip Schools (Arslan 2019), and opening new schools, the policy ramifications of all these developments were quite drastic. In fact, the government was praised by the Islamist newspaper *Akit* for having opened 4,000 such schools (*Akit* 2019), and this domestic Islamization also spilled over to its foreign relations as policy change was also quite radical, especially regarding the Middle East.

As discussed in the previous section, multilateralism has been one of the key tenets of Turkish foreign policy. Under the JDP leadership, however, Turkey has undertaken a more unilateral foreign policy and has presented the Palestine question in general and the Jerusalem dispute, in particular, as a matter of national concern. This can be explained by the change of the state identity from that of a Turkish secular character into a Muslim and pro-Ottoman affiliation. Officially, however, Kemalism remains the state ideology, and the secular nature of the Turkish legal system remains intact.

Having said that, however, the statements of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, “glorifying” the Ottoman Empire and attacking the early republican regime, while usually refraining from directly criticizing Atatürk by name, makes it evident that there are a counter-narrative and an attempt to create a new Turkey (Uzer 2018, 346). Indicative of feeling alienated from national holidays initiated by Atatürk and a desire to express sympathies towards the Ottoman Empire, the president on 10 November 2019, on the very day of commemoration of Atatürk's death, defended the literacy rate and arms industry under the Ottoman Empire rejecting those claiming that the Ottoman state was deficient in those areas. “Literacy rate vanished” with the change of the alphabet from Arabic to Latin (*Yeniçağ* 2019) in 1928, according to the president. Regardless of the veracity of these points, what is crucial is his desire to defend the Ottomans even on a day commemorating the death of Atatürk.

Moreover, his statements on the same day to the effect that Atatürk opened the parliament as an Ottoman officer and in the name of the Ottoman state (Erdoğan 2019) seems like an effort to appropriate both the Ottoman Empire and Atatürk, as well as the Turkish state tradition at the same time. His feelings of

revulsion against those who criticize the Ottoman Empire led him to defend it and set the record straight, demonstrating where his loyalties lie.

Moving on from a discursive perspective to the policies of the JDP government, the most evident policy emanating from a Muslim and Ottoman identity is conducted towards Palestine. In the first years of the government, the JDP continued the balanced approach towards Israel and Palestine of the previous governments, being an honest broker which has been continuing over the last past decades. While the pendulum usually swung towards Palestinians most of the time, especially during the 1990s, Turkey and Israel established amicable and strategic relations.

The Justice and Development Party leadership tried to keep this balance by visiting Israel, as prime minister Erdoğan did in 2005 (TMFA 2020), as well as by undertaking an active role in peacemaking between Syria and Israel. However, as Israel's clashes with the Palestinians in Gaza in 2008-2009, 2012 and 2014 (Marks 2018) erupted from time to time, Turkey's relations were indexed to the situation in Palestine as it has become a national issue for the JDP government and particularly Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. While previous secular governments have also expressed sympathies towards the Palestinians, pro-Palestine policies and statements have reached much higher level, to such an extent that the balance has been upset, now tilting totally towards the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip.

In 2012, an honorary doctorate was bestowed upon Erdoğan by the Palestinian al-Quds (Jerusalem) University, which is located in Abu Dis, just 4 kilometres outside the city of Jerusalem and separated from the city by the wall Israel had built.⁸ At the ceremony, he clearly demonstrated his criticisms of Israel and even downplayed the importance of Israel by pointing out that Turkey would continue the policies of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), which were based on the protection of the Islamic character of the city as well as the region. He also accused the Israeli government of violating the tenets of the Torah as they paid no attention to human life (*IHLA* 2012). This was not an isolated incident since Turkey pulled its ambassador from Israel due to the conflict following the American recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel in 2017 (Landler 2017) and the eventual move of its embassy from Tel Aviv in 2018 (*BBC News* 2019) to Jerusalem. As a reaction to clashes on the Gaza border between the Palestinians and Israelis emanating from these decisions, Turkey asked the Israeli ambassador Eitan Naeh to return to Israel, without having declared him a persona non grata and had recalled its ambassador to Tel Aviv Kemal Ökem back to Turkey (*CNN Türkiye* 2018). This is indicative of the fact that Turkey's position is not only based on posturing or mere talk, but genuine support for the Palestinian issue making it a national matter.

⁸ The ceremony was held in Turkey, see: Quillen 2018.

Turkey was adamant that America's decision was a provocation but interestingly seemed to be more furious towards Israel than the United States (*Anatolian Agency* 2018). Erdoğan called Jerusalem "our redline" on numerous occasions throughout 2018, emphasizing the centrality of the city for the Islamic world but also adding that it was a humanitarian issue concerning the entire world (*Gazete Vatan* 2018).

At the United Nations General Assembly plenary session on 24 September 2019, President Erdoğan called for global justice for refugees all around the world and demanded upholding international law, especially pertaining to Palestine (*Daily Sabah* 2019b). He showed a map popular on internet sites demonstrating the shrinkage of "Palestine" and expansion of "Israel" throughout the twentieth century to the present day. Of course, he was referring to the UN Partition Plan of 1947 and the territory the current Palestinian Authority controls. He asked where the precise boundaries of Israel were located and presented himself once again as the defender of the underdog and the oppressed. He repeated his slogan "World is greater than Five" (*Haber Türk* 2019) as a criticism of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

In sum, Turkey has become more royalist than the king as far as the Palestinian issue is concerned, being more supportive of the Palestinians than most Arab countries at a time when a number of Gulf countries, including the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain under the Abraham Accords (2020), have decided to normalize their relations with the Jewish state, most likely to be followed by other Arab states. Given that Turkey has not broken off diplomatic relations with Israel, since 2018 the respective ambassadors of Turkey and Israel in Tel Aviv and Ankara are back in their home countries, amounting to a de facto downgrading of their liaisons. Making Palestine a Turkish issue cannot but be explained by affinities of religion and history hence they are part and parcel of constructivism in international relations theory.

CONCLUSION: RIVAL IDENTITIES OF TURKEY

With the rise of an ideologically motivated political party to power in Turkey and its consolidation of power domestically, it resorted back to identity politics and devised a foreign policy based on the Muslim and Ottoman identity of Turkey. Turkey's fixation on Palestine cannot be explained by realist variables as it was not a matter of state interests or power maximization, unless there is a plan for leadership of the Muslim world by using the Palestinian card as a tool for such an objective. Nonetheless, there is no evidence of such a well-thought rational plan, but rather sentiments and ideological concerns seem to have trumped over realpolitik considerations.

Consequently, the Muslim identity of Turkey has consolidated itself at the governmental level after 19 years of JDP rule as they have created a new hegemony and a new elite. Therefore, the Islamic state identity, despite the continued official secularism of the legal and constitutional system, allows for a politics of Islam aiming to protect the world-wide Islamic community- umma in Arabic and ümmet in Turkish. Going hand in hand with the Islamic identity, there is also the Ottoman identity reincarnated as neo-Ottomanism with particular concern towards the Islamic world, including Bosnia, Kosovo, and other Muslims on the former territory of the Ottoman Empire. In many ways, the Islamic and Ottoman identities overlap. While there is no overt rejection of the Turkish identity, there has been a de-emphasis of the Turkish world, and the Western identity of Kemalism with its attachment to Europe has also weakened partially due to the European Union's and the United States' diverging policies vis-a-vis Turkey. At the end of the day, there is a new Turkey at the governmental level with a new state identity, which has wide-ranging repercussions for its foreign policy resulting in more unilateralist and activist behaviour in its region. Whether such a policy is commensurate with the material capabilities of Turkey is a whole different matter.

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RAZUMEVANJE TURSKE SPOLJNE POLITIKE: ŠTA TEORIJA MEĐUNARODNIH ODNOSA MOŽE DA PONUDI?

Apstrakt: Državni identitet ne samo da definiše kako elitni donosioci odluka, kao i informisana javnost identifikuju ideološko usmerenje njihove vlade, već i usmerava delovanje donosilaca odluka u vođenju spoljne politike. Postoje brojne studije koje se bave ulogom ideja, identiteta i normi u međunarodnim odnosima od strane istraživača koji pripadaju konstruktivističkoj školi mišljenja u okviru teorije međunarodnih odnosa. Ova studija ima za cilj da ponudi takvu konstruktivističku analizu turskog spoljnopolitičkog ponašanja zasnovanu na postepenoj promeni kemalističkog državnog identiteta iz sekularno-zapadno orijentisanog identiteta, u identitet verske pripadnosti tokom vlasti vladajuće Stranke pravde i razvoja (2002-2020). Iako realističke promenljive imaju značajan udeo u objašnjavanju glavnih događaja Republike Turske, poput savezništva sa Sjedinjenim Državama nakon Drugog svetskog rata, političke odluke Turske prema Kipru i turskim republikama bivšeg Sovjetskog Saveza, one se ne mogu objasniti

isključivo materijalističkim faktorima. Da bismo adekvatno razumeli ove politike, moramo da pribegnemo analitičkom eklekticismu koji koristi realističke i konstruktivističke promenljive, za sofisticiraniju analizu turskih spoljnih odnosa. Kada je pak reč o vladi SPD-a, konstruktivističke promenljive nameću realističnija objašnjenja, jer je turska spoljna politika, posebno na Bliskom istoku, bila obojena i oblikovana islamskim pogledom na svet.

Ključne reči: konstruktivizam, državni identitet, turska spoljna politika, kemalizam, neootomanizam.

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FRANCE'S GEOPOLITICAL VISION FOR EUROPE AND THE WESTERN BALKANS: THE CASE OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract: The main aim of the paper is to analyse France's position in a global and regional geopolitical context. That also means in EU affairs related to enlargement policy and views about the Western Balkans and North Macedonia. The European Union is modelled on the spread of democratic values and economic benefits for the members. Also, the EU has recently developed sustainable neighbourly policies. Nevertheless, recent events like Brexit, misunderstandings within the Union, and the enlargement process blockade led to deconstructive processes and opened up new dilemmas that require comprehensive scientific analysis. The paper aims to analyse France geopolitically and its influence on the Western Balkans and the EU enlargement policy. The changing methodology of the EU approaching stopped North Macedonia and Albania in 2019. We will try to research and provide a solution for North Macedonia, considering the new aspect of its foreign policy and France's possible role in that process. From a theoretical point of view, this paper is based on critical geopolitics, i.e., a practical geopolitical approach. Primarily, the authors used articles and online data as a source of analysis.

Keywords: France, Geopolitics, North Macedonia, Western Balkans, Macron.

INTRODUCTION

The history of intensive French involvement in the Balkan questions could be dated to 1854 when the Great Powers fought in a war for the first time since

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Napoleon. Ironically, this war, the Crimean War, which was condemned by historians as a meaningless problem that could have been entirely avoided, was not started by Russia, Britain or Austria – countries with interest in the Eastern Question, but from France.

In 1852, the French emperor Napoleon III, who had just come to power through a coup, persuaded the Turkish sultan to give him the nickname Protector of Christians in the Ottoman Empire, a role that the Russian tsar had traditionally kept to himself. Nicholas the First was angry that Napoleon, whom he considered an illegitimate ruler and novice, continued to interfere in Russia's role as protector of the Balkan Slavs and demanded equal status with France. When the sultan ousted the Russian envoy, Russia severed diplomatic relations (Kissinger 1994).

Historically analysed, the Balkans has never been France's primary foreign policy interests. However, Paris's diplomacy, especially since the 19th century, was forced to pay some attention to the region, especially Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Turkey. Paris has established privileged relations with Serbia, which were specially strengthened during the First World War, for example, with the appearance of the French Army of the Orient (*Armée d'Orient*) in this part of Europe. After 1918, the French leadership believed that a centralised and united federal state had a stabilising effect in the Western Balkans, which was ethnically and religiously mixed. After the Second World War, the country's eccentric third-party policy led by Tito was rather positively appreciated by French governments, but with some reservations.

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the process of the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s brought back to Paris, for a brief period, a distinctly pro-Serbian political orientation. In that period, French lawyer Robert Badinter led the so-called "Badinter Commission" to resolve Yugoslavia's dissolution. From North Macedonia perspectives, it was interesting that the "Badinter commission" ruled that two Republics, Macedonia and Slovenia, fulfilled all the conditions for recognitions based on previously formally requested recognition by the European Community and its Member States. In the case of Croatia, a reservation was expressed concerning the rights of minorities. The request for recognition made by Bosnia-Herzegovina was refused (Pellet 1992).

In the next period, Croatia's recognition and Slovenia's independence triggered a heated debate between Germany and France. Mitterrand demanded guarantees for Belgrade, while Chancellor Helmut Kohl required rapid recognition. Finally, Yugoslavia's dissolution gained international recognition, while the internal latent ethnic conflict escalated into a Yugoslav war. In 1995, France's military presence in the Balkans was increased and gave impetus to the Dayton Agreement on the Bosnia-Herzegovina issue. It is no coincidence that the peace treaty concluding the first phase of the Yugoslav Wars was signed on 14 December 1995, in Paris's

Elysée Palace. However, after 1989, Paris had no particular long-term strategy for the region. The main objectives were general: eliminating the hostilities, promoting the democratic system of the states created by the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the long-term European integration of the countries.

Continuously, France believed the region would automatically catch up with Europe without playing a significant role, and these countries were not a priority for French politics. Paris, referring to its past friendship, only displayed some prejudice towards Serbia (IFAT 2020). However, in the so-called effective bilateral relations, it was only modest, even if excellent relations were demonstrated in 2001 during Jacques Chirac's official visit to Belgrade. One year after the summit held in Zagreb between the European Union and the Balkans, an event took place where the French President expressed faith in support of the European integration of the former Yugoslav Member States. At the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, France argued that the Western Balkan small states were due to join the European Union. Paris repeatedly expressed its support for Serbia's efforts to join the European Union after 2008 and did not prevent Croatia from joining in 2011. However, in reality, the friendly, encouraging statements were followed by only a few concrete actions. The French President attended the Balkans Summit in Ljubljana in 2013, supported the launch of the Berlin Process in 2014, and hosted the event in Paris in 2016. However, any significant turnarounds in France's politics for the Western Balkan countries did not follow these spectacular meetings. With respect to European enlargement in the Balkans, French diplomacy has always been constrained and reluctant. France did not openly obstruct the accession process, but it insisted on adherence to accession conditions (Fejérdy 2020).

Searching and interpreting actual political moments after the new approaching methodology in the EU in 2019 may sound very confusing. The authors of this article think that it is a prominent and temporarily determined path for starting the accessing process. North Macedonia and Albania are affected by the new methodology. Montenegro and Serbia, which have already started the process with an old methodology, can choose how they will continue. Using the appropriate methodology, we will try to determine France's role in the new geopolitics of the EU after Brexit. Does North Macedonia have a chance for prompt integration in the EU? We will try to establish France's position in the new EU and decide whether it is a beginning of new great France (as in Napoleon time) or Macron's doctrine is oriented into strengthening the whole EU.

Regarding the methodology, this article uses a holistic approach and dominantly uses the methodology of critical geopolitics. That means the composition of mainly practical geopolitical analysis and comparative, legal, and analytic methods. The main emphasis in terms of the data analysis method is set on discourse analysis. This method is appropriate because critical geopolitics sees

geopolitics as discourse (O'Tuathail and Agnew 1992). We will draw upon both speeches of President Macron and French foreign policy practices during his presidency. Evermore, if we use Fairclough's approach, we will find that it is appropriate for our research. According to Fairclough, discourse analysis is a form of argumentation that involves more practical argumentation. Argumentation for or against specific modes of action and argumentation that can ground decisions (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). With the help of discourse analysis, we will try to analyse Macron's rhetorical and symbolic forms by explaining his politics and justify the exercise of France's power in the public eye. In this case, towards Europe and the Western Balkans, and especially North Macedonia's negotiation path to the EU. We are analysing Macron's language and the context of the language used in his speeches.

Relying on the extensive literature on critical geopolitics, the authors predominantly consulted the following literature: O'Tuathail 1996; O'Tuathail and Dalby 1998; O'Tuathail et al. 1998; Mamadouh 1998; O'Tuathail 1999; Kelly 2006; Agnew 2013; and Haverluk et al. 2014.

It is clear that in the last 100 years, geopolitical critiques have also developed in parallel with geopolitics. What can be noticed is the fact that the critique of geopolitics was very little represented in public by the geopolitical ideas themselves. This may partly explain the consistency and rigidity of particular geopolitical views that have survived to the present day. However, certain things have changed considerably in both the political and historical spheres. The existence of criticism is significant for several reasons. One of the reasons is that the justification for international conflicts, as a rule, was found in the geopolitical and geostrategic constellations of relations. There has been criticism of such approaches, of those who have taken and justified such actions, but its arguments have not convinced states of the need for a different, nonviolent action. The second reason is that it is necessary to develop different modern geopolitics approaches to overcome the dangerous tendencies to simplify geopolitics (O'Tuathail, 1999, 107-124).

The authors of the article choose the practical geopolitical analysis because foreign relations decision-makers who rely on practical geopolitics generally use practical and pragmatic inference. This is an appropriate methodological approach for research in this paper because practical geopolitical thinking relies more on the everyday context than on the geopolitical tradition. To provide a working conceptualisation of geopolitical vision as a central analytical tool in the paper, we will focus on the possibilities of creating a strong Europe as a geopolitical player through which France would differentiate itself as a leader.

FRANCE IN THE ERA OF MACRON PRESIDENCY AND GLOBAL GEOPOLITICS

Emmanuel Macron is the eighth president of the Fifth Republic of France. He launched the movement «En Marche!», founded on 6 April 2016, and was its leader until his victory in the presidential election on 7 May 2017, beating the opposite candidate Marine Le Pen. What has President Macron done for the fifth Republic of France?

In a short time, France's international position has strengthened. Following the practical geopolitical approach, we found that France's geopolitical perspectives and vision were explained in Macron's speech delivered at the Sorbonne in 2017 and at the Ambassadors Conference held in Paris in August 2019, and much better explained in the new Macron's doctrine from 2020.

In 2017, Macron spoke at the Sorbonne about achieving unity within the European Union and the importance of its reorganisation. His speech focused, among other things, on explaining the idea of more European Union rings with different degrees of integration. This idea was coldly received in European circles, especially in the eastern part of the European Union. However, the aspiration for a different European Union architecture has strengthened after Brexit and Great Britain's exit from the Union. In short, Macron's plan was a sovereign, united and democratic Europe. Macron stressed in his speech that the time has come when France makes proposals to drive Europe forward, and for every European who wishes to do so – the time has returned. He referred to Robert Schuman, who was, according to his words, brave enough to suggest founding the European Union in Paris on 9 May 1950. “A unified Europe was not accomplished, and we had war”, he said emphatically (IE 2017).

At the Ambassadors Conference held in Paris in August 2019, according to Macron, the international order was undermined in an unprecedented way, with massive disruption happening in almost every region and on a monumental scale, likely for the first time in our history. Above all, there was a transition, a change in geopolitics and strategy. He went on to state, “We are most certainly witnessing the end of Western hegemony over the world”. He argued that since the 18th century, we had become used to an international order focused on Western hegemony. The Enlightenment most likely influenced French hegemony in the eighteenth century, British hegemony in the nineteenth century, thanks to the Industrial Revolution, and American hegemony in the twentieth century, thanks to two major conflicts and that power's economic and political dominance. Macron noted that things were changing and that they have been deeply affected by the mistakes made by Westerners in specific crises. He emphasised American decisions over the last several years, which did not start with the Trump administration. But these decisions “have led us to re-examine certain

involvements in conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, and to rethink fundamental diplomatic and military strategy and on occasion elements of solidarity which we thought were forever inalienable even though we had developed them together during periods of geopolitical significance, which have however now changed. Moreover, it is also the emergence of new powers whose impact we have probably underestimated for far too long” (AC 2019).

Macron continued with the constatation that major upheaval risk was increased twofold thanks to geopolitical and military turmoil. “We live in a world where the number of conflicts is rising, and I see two key risks,” he said (AC 2019). “The first is that these wars are becoming more aggressive and causing a rise in civilian casualties. Take a look at the different theatres of operations around the world. And the second thing is that the world has started to become more savage, and here again the order on which our convictions and our systems were sometimes based is disappearing. In innocence and silence, we are abandoning the arms control treaties that emerged at the end of the Cold War. All that should raise far-reaching questions. First, it should make us see that our habits and information are no longer valid. And then that should prompt us to examine our strategy because the two nations that now hold the real cards in this affair are the Americans and the Chinese” (AC 2019).

Macron described the strategy of boldness and vision. It is about trying to rediscover something that profoundly characterises the French spirit and restore European civilisation. Macron believes that this should be their goal at home, in European strategy and internationally. The French spirit is a spirit of resistance with a universal calling. “Having a spirit of resistance means one does not give in to fate or adapt to things and habits. It means believing that we can prevail when things are unjust by giving ourselves the resources to succeed and the reforms to make us stronger, we can rebuild our economic muscle and productivity. We can make things happen. We do not accept the prevailing order for good reasons, and we succeed in rediscovering our deep-seated values” (AC 2019). He believes that the thing that has always characterised Europe, the unifying thread in our mission, is true humanism. He says this because it is no longer apparent. Moreover, if we take the easy road and continue to see the world in the way it is shaping up to be, and as he described, this European humanism will disappear.

France’s diplomacy is also intense because it has a strong army, a strong state, and Macron thinks it is essential that they should continue to reflect on themselves. Macron wants France intense diplomacy to work towards the strategic goal: regain control over France destiny in a rapidly changing world and to give its people back some of the control they are owed and breathe new life into the European civilisation project to which France has contributed politically, strategically, culturally, and in terms of imagination (AC 2019).

If we approach analysing the Macron doctrine (*Le Grand Continent* 2020), we could conclude that his view on the future is going towards “more Europe” and “much stronger Europe”. Here we point to his idea for the “Paris consensus”, which will be built on ideological and practical work (sides), both on making political Europe and its geopolitical character. Europe as a critical geopolitical player on the chessboard, on one side, and also the transformation of our contemporary economics where we face “uncontrolled increase of inequality”, on the other side. The touch of the French geopolitical school (human geopolitics) we also see in his key priority in this consensus, which would be a “rephrasing” at the global level around the environmental priority - “a realistic ecology”. In his doctrine, among the words, ideas and goals he wants to achieve, we hear the very sophisticated “voice” of French geopoliticians from the past. We refer here to Elisée Reclus’s: *L’homme est la nature prenant conscience d’elle-même*” (Reclus 1908). This doctrine could be seen as a defender of European values. These shared values make this diversity of countries with their different cultures and histories possible to succeed in a shared home called Europe. Macron is mentioning the “European sovereignty”, but very shy. So, at this moment, he talks about “European strategic autonomy”, which should be built in terms of defence (military), technology, and law. When it comes to Europe’s borders, Macron is reaching way beyond the current EU borders, so he talks about the Balkans in his vision, but only as reformed states with European values. At the Sofia Summit in 2018, he said: “I am in favour of anchoring the Balkans in Europe and moving towards Europe. But I think we need to look at any new enlargement with a lot of prudence and rigour”. Again, here, he reaffirmed what we could read in his vision for Europe - France will only support expansion with new countries members when there is first “a deepening and a reform of our Europe”, but also when reforms are taken in the Balkan countries (concerns about crime, corruption and governance in the region) (*Financial Times* 2018), which will be evaluated without hypocrisy or lax. At some moments, in putting out the structure of his doctrine where he defined Europe in these broad terms, a parallel could be made with a few French politicians: De Gaulle, who viewed historical and geographical Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals” “Oui, c’est l’Europe, depuis l’Atlantique à l’Oural, c’est l’Europe, c’est toute l’Europe, qui décidera du destin du monde!” (de Gaulle 1959) as a way of increasing the power of the countries of the continent, and Europe as a key geopolitical player; Jean Monnet, for whom the European community was a market that would one day be a source of political power; it was therefore open to the whole continent; and on the other hand, Robert Schuman who stood on that it should only bring together countries that resembled each other (Foucher 2016). We can conclude that Macron’s doctrine is made as a collage of French academics and politicians’

influence from the past, incorporated with Macron's original intellectual capacity in an original plan for Europe.

FRANCE AND EU ENLARGEMENT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Researching many scientific articles (Smith 2017; Ker-Lindsay et al. 2017; Economides 2020), we can conclude that enlargement is in the EU's "DNA". Indeed, accession of new member states was on the European agenda since the European Economic Community's creation in the 1950s. The accession of the UK and the countries that eventually formed with it the European Free Trade Association had already been under discussion. So was Greece and Turkey's association – with a perspective of accession. Since then, consecutive enlargements have brought EU membership from 6 to 28 (27 after Brexit in 2020) and have almost incessantly been on the EU agenda. Axel Sotiris Walldén argues that enlargement is enshrined in the Union's charters since the Rome Treaty. The enlargement clause establishes accession to the EU as a quasi-"right" of democratic European states, not as a mere option for the incumbent member states. True, there is no legal right of accession: a state can apply to become a member, but the Union is not obliged to accept the application. Besides, the requirement for democracy incorporates the well-known "criteria" for membership. Based on these criteria, the member states assess each candidacy – albeit with considerable margins of interpretation (Walldén 2017).

Enlargement policy rapidly degenerated during the last decade. Today, it is practically at a standstill in all three dimensions, the Western Balkans, Turkey and European neighbouring countries. We can assume this as a negative development, both for the EU and its neighbours. The revival of the policy is conditional upon a necessary, but an improbable, significant shift in the EU's strengthening solidarity. The aim of our paper is the Western Balkans and France's politics about EU enlargement.

We will start with the constataion that the Western Balkans is a part of Europe, geographically surrounded by the EU Member States. As part of one continent, the citizens of Western Balkans and the citizens of EU member states share the history and cultural heritage, which has established links that hold them in common until today. The President of the European Commission, Jean Claude Juncker, in 2017, reaffirmed the European future of the Western Balkan countries. He noted, "If we want more stability in our neighbourhood, then we must also maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans" (EC COM[2018] 65 final). The EU enlargement strategy for the Western Balkan countries foresees technical and financial support measures to ensure and safeguard the region's stability, foster economic development, and support the

region's countries' smooth accession process. Core issues such as the rule of law, fundamental rights, strengthening democratic institutions, public administration reform, and economic development and competitiveness remain key priorities in the enlargement process. Besides, regional co-operation and good neighbourly relations are essential for progress on the countries' respective European paths. After the Berlin Summit organised by France and Germany, held in 2019, the Office of President of France Emmanuel Macron published the "French Strategy for the Western Balkans" (France Diplomacy 2019). At its core, again, we find the same postulates on which Macron is building his political strategy, so he stipulates few main goals towards the Balkans: economic and social, security, justice and defence. Although this is a bilateral approach of France towards the Balkan countries, he again stays faithful to his European dream. In this strategy, he added that "France's strategy aims to support and complement the European Union's work to support the region's convergence with Europe". The strategy is in line with the new methodology for enlargement, seeking tangible results, especially in the mentioned fields. With this, the Balkans in Macron's Europe's vision could not be denied, but with significant preconditions and explicitly fulfilled preconditions.

Suppose we are framing power politics and traditional forms of geopolitics, alluding to concepts such as spheres of influence as negative aspects of European history, leading to world wars. It is then evident that the EU needs to claim a higher moral ground in promoting soft forms of geopolitics as normativity in international relations. In the last five years, in the EU policy makers' vocabulary, we have seen the rise of the traditional aspects of geopolitics. However, to promote its principles and standards, the EU strives to advance its interests abroad. It can be understood as a softer version of geopolitics, where space is important. However, the fundamental goal of the EU is to extend its spatial principles and values as a way of advancing its foreign policy (Nitoiu and Sus 2019). That kind of reasoning is mainly understood through critical geopolitical thinking.

What kind of interest does France, however, have in the process of EU enlargement? In this regard, Natasha Wunsch argued that France's reluctant stance on EU enlargement towards the Balkans represents a wider ambivalence between the French establishment and the citizenry towards the European project. Wunsch (2017, 11) in her analysis states: "Despite its moral support for EU membership of the Balkans, France is no major player in the EU when it comes to defining the Union's long-term approach towards the region. Instead, the country tends to align itself with Germany's positions on the dossier, stepping forward only in rare cases of divergences, such as on the question of opening accession talks with Serbia. Expertise and human resources dealing with the Balkans are limited both within and outside the French institutions, reflecting a

lack of national strategic interest in the region. The awareness that no enlargement will occur in the coming years confirms France in its perception that there is no need to increase its investment levels, be it material or in terms of human resources, in the Balkans. Over the next years, France is likely to keep its spot on the backbench, neither supporting enlargement too vocally nor actively hindering the Balkan countries' progress towards eventual membership".

Recently, the situation has changed. A new Methodology is arising, and the role of France is smoothly changing. After the non-decision on EU enlargement at a European Council meeting in October 2019, France faced a fierce attack by many EU politicians, academics, think tanks, and external actors. However, the question remains whether the attack was justified, or France played a crucial role in guaranteeing the EU's stability. It is known that even during the recent EU enlargement with the country members as Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, the general conclusion is that the methodology under which EU enlargement is implemented does not provide satisfactory results, and a new approach must be established. In particular, in this regard, issues concerning the rule of law, the judiciary, corruption and administration are critical and add disappointment in the older EU members. Serbia and Montenegro are the countries that have already started EU accession negotiations. Serbia in 2013 and Montenegro in 2012. Unfortunately, no particular improvement in these two countries' everyday lives could be identified since the start of negotiations with the EU up to date.

Concretely, the EU faces a rift over enlargement policy after French "non" during the October 2019 summit. Due to that reason, the EU polity is currently going through an intense period of contestation and challenge. To distance itself from the French "non", the EU Parliament adopted a resolution on 24 October 2019. It expressed regret and deep disappointment over the EU's failure to agree on opening negotiation talks with North Macedonia and Albania. This issue clearly demonstrates that enlargement was shifted in its political dimension from the geopolitical arena to the domestic one.

Nevertheless, what the Non-Paper means and how it is positioning France in the EU enlargement policy? Lalatović describes this question in a transparent way. She notes that the Non-paper is described as an attempt by Paris to justify its prior position. According to some authors, it has delivered "a heavy if not mortal blow to the EU's credibility in its nearest neighbourhood". This view suggests that the mentioned French position has increased doubt among the Western Balkan countries on their future EU prospects and, in a way, pulled the drag on EU enlargement policy. Also, it is stated that it seriously undermined some of the core EU principles and values. Such as the principle of legal certainty - that in a way predetermines a moment when a country "deserves a certain dose of appreciation" of its efforts invested in the EU accession negotiation process. All of this proves that the current accession methodology is not an autonomous

process, but rather a technocratic procedure in single-member states' hands, given the right to veto. Some more optimistic views suggest that outlined changes in the negotiation procedure with the Western Balkan countries could allow aspiring countries to efficiently adapt to the EU rules before entering the bloc's institutions. In the same tone, these interpretations support the thesis that Macron's Non-paper reflects "unequivocal support" for the EU membership drives of the countries from the Western Balkans under the condition they are able to overcome some significant challenges facing nowadays that require "the profound political, economic and social transformations [...] that continue to be too slow and the concrete benefits for citizens in candidate countries remain insufficient" (Lalatović 2020).

The postponing of the decision about the start of EU accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania was a surprise, but for some was expected. Namely, the group consisting of France, the Netherlands and Denmark can be described as a group of EU members in favour of the controlled enlargement. It is of great importance for them, especially for France, that the candidate countries start the negotiations fully prepared in order not to cause further problematisation of the EU institutions' functioning and the EU project. However, the assumption is that these EU countries were not alone in this approach at the Summit in 2019, so the uncertainty about decision-making may have also been a question to some other EU members. Nevertheless, what is important to note and has been abused at the time? No one at the Summit has used the rhetoric of "No to enlargement" or stated that the enlargement is "dead". France was determined that the enlargement methodology first has to be changed to make a decision. Consistent with his position, French President Macron, on the meeting with Plenković, the Croatian Prime Minister, at the beginning of 2020, reiterated the same - continuing the enlargement with a changed methodology. France has put forward its proposal as a possible solution.

In November 2019, the French Non-Paper to reform the European Union accession process was presented. The French non-paper begins with the words: "we reaffirm our unequivocal support to the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries". It is further pointed out that the Balkan countries historically, culturally and geographically belong to Europe. This dismisses the attacks, pointing France opposition to enlargement as groundless. According to France, the new approach to enlargement should be based on four principles: gradual association, stringent conditions, tangible benefits and reversibility (*Politico* 2019). When considering each of the steps proposed in the French proposal, it can be concluded that it is all in the function of producing real benefits of the enlargement process for the citizens of the candidate countries and ensuring a real implementation of the reforms to be taken until the final accession in the EU. This way, both sides benefit: candidates, especially the citizens, get reformed

systems alike European one, with improved quality of life; while the EU is assured that having a fully-fledged new member state in the future could not cause significant new turbulence in the EU structure. How EU enlargement has unfolded, so far, can be described as bureaucratic without a more significant impact and a substantial influence on the processes taking place in the EU candidate countries, and thus without particular impact on ensuring a real reform of the candidate country's system. Another aspect in favour of the new methodology and the French position is one which offers a comparison of the old process of enlargement by which North Macedonia was getting ten positive annual reports from the EU Commission and on the other hand, no remarkable improvements in the range of real-life in terms of the rule of law and democracy: in Democracy Index 2019 Macedonia is defined as a hybrid regime (*Economist* 2020), by Freedom House is recognised as “partly free” (*Freedom House* 2020). That is why the French proposal for more robust political governance is more than welcome. This way, the EU Commission and the EU members would review the evaluations, and the role of the Council would be strengthened. Contrary to what one would like to point out, the French proposal is not for halting enlargement or drastically altering the current enlargement process, but for improving it and benefiting the EU and the EU candidate countries.

Europe faces numerous challenges. From Brexit (for the first time an EU founder leaves the EU), the rise and impact of populist parties in the EU, the problems of climate change, the fight against terrorism, the protection from external influences in undermining the EU project, the influence of the United States of America, China, Russia. We live in the time of the 4th Industrial Revolution. Europe has a problem with the rule of law in some of its members and faces social riots from its Demos that demand more and better from the EU politicians. Therefore, the European Union cannot afford the comfort of recklessness in geopolitical steps in any sphere of its activity, even in the field of enlargement. The issue of EU borders is not closed since not all countries that are part of geographical Europe are formally part of the European family. Of course, the completion of this issue is of great geopolitical importance for the structure of Europe, for protection of external influence and their possible impact on the EU project, as well for the safety of its borders. However, that must be done with extreme caution. If we view through the eye of the German geopolitical school, we say that the goal of taking up more space through EU enlargement is justified.

Nevertheless, if we look from the French geopolitical school point about space and expansion, it is essential to focus on the human aspect. Planning strategies only from a purely geopolitical point of view have proved inadequate for both the reality of the 21st century and the EU project's nature. Therefore, towards a geopolitical approach, we must also use a critical geopolitical

approach. That is to say, we must have in mind that the EU project is one of its kind, and there is a danger if the wrong philosophy leads it. The EU is a family of states with their history, culture, and customs, united under the crown of agreed common values based on unity: the rule of law, democracy, human rights and good governance. Lack of respect for the shared values on which the EU family is based, whether it is a Member State or a candidate country, is always a sign of a potential problem in the EU in the future. So, it is not a question of excluding certain countries, but of being able to deliver effective policy which will promote common values, principals and interests. Additionally, the current situation in the EU with no clearly defined borders and difficulty in agreeing on EU's limits contributes to the slow and challenging enlargement process.

In his Non-paper, Macron remained faithful to his Initiative for Europe about a sovereign, united, democratic Europe. In his Sorbonne speech, he noted they fully respected the *acquis* and democratic requirements. This EU “will have to open itself up to the Balkan countries because our EU is still attractive, and its aura is a crucial factor of peace and stability on our continent”. In Macrons words, “They will have to respect the conditions stipulated, but securing them to a European Union reinvented in this way is a precondition for their not turning their backs on Europe and moving towards either Russia or Turkey or towards authoritarian powers” (FRSch 2017). That does not currently uphold European values, after what Macron added: “If we can accept this demanding enlargement, it is also because the European Union’s stronger foundation will allow more effective differentiation forms”. So, in his ambitious plan for Europe, even in 2017, Macron was very clear about where and how he sees Europe based on shared values, respected by all member countries, and refers to candidate countries. He sees Balkan countries as part of Europe, “our Continent” as he says, but with fulfilled preconditions. In his video message addressed to Macedonia’s citizens before the referendum, back in 2018, he says that he firmly believes that this agreement is fair, quote: “for you, the whole region and Europe”. A significant segment of this video addressing Macedonians is that he does not mention the enlargement process or connecting Prespa with Macedonian negotiations for the EU. He expresses his position but underlying that the decision to change the name and constitution is up to Macedonia citizens. Here again, we see his credibility regarding his strategic plan for Europe, as our continent has common values.

After the Bulgarian veto, French Minister for Europe Clement Beaune was interviewed by *Le Grand Continent* in 2020. He concluded that North Macedonia and Bulgaria could not agree on the origin of the Macedonian community. He said, “We are obsessed with history, yet this should not be synonymous with refusing the future” (*Le Grand Continent* 2020). Again, France is putting aside the matter with questions that are not part of the Copenhagen

criteria, and their primary stress is about the fulfilment of basic European principles and values. In Macron last interview for the same geopolitical group from Paris, speaking about Macron's doctrine (*Le Grand Continent* 2020), he mentioned "strengthening and structuring political Europe", "strong and political Europe", "reinvent the useful form of co-operation", "modernise our structure", "build a much stronger Europe, the voice, strength and principles of which can carry weight in this reformed framework". So, we can say that Macron's objection and demanding new methodology before the enlargement process is carried on are part of his bigger idea for Europe, reformed stronger and united.

THE MACEDONIAN CASE

Although there is still debate over the boundaries of Europe, there is not a question of whether but when and how countries that are part of geographical Europe will also be part of the European Union. North Macedonia is situated in Southeast Europe, on the Balkan Peninsula, surrounded by the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Albania, Kosovo³, the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Greece. It is a small country, but the importance of its geopolitical position is high. This country's importance lays in its central position on the road to Europe. However, we can call it The Gate to and off Europe, on the way out of Europe. The Republic of North Macedonia got its first positive EU Report and recommendation from the EU Commission to start the negotiation on 14 October 2009. For 11 years, North Macedonia is receiving positive Reports and recommendations from the Commission to start the negotiation. The reason, as many say, was the name dispute with Greece. In September 2018, a Referendum was held in the Republic of Macedonia about the so-called Prespa Agreement. The referendum was not successful. However, the Prespa Agreement was passed through State institutions, implemented in the Constitution, and the name dispute was closed. However, it was not just Greece; Bulgaria came up with its demands; an Agreement with Bulgaria was made. Today, the country is facing a veto from Bulgaria. The Republic of North Macedonia was an excellent example of the Balkan for many years. Macedonia deserved opening the negotiations with the EU ten years ago, even more than today.

Nevertheless, politics always came over the law somehow in this case. Let us say that EU enlargement is based on accession criteria or the Copenhagen criteria in Western Balkan plus a unique process with three aims, "Regional co-operation". It is not evident on which criteria are based these disputes over the name, history, culture and one country as in the Macedonian case. So, we cannot

³ Not recognized by Serbia.

see the usual European principals in this matter. The EU stepped out from its framework in the Macedonian path to the EU, which brought uncertainty and new problems to the enlargement process and ruined the EU's geopolitical plans.

In which geopolitical circumstances Macedonia tries to open the negotiation process? There are identified several geopolitical obstacles determining the gloomy period of the EU enlargement process. The recently finished Brexit and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic era are also negative geopolitical factors that followed up the monetary crisis that began in 2008. Therefore, the EU enlargement process's general context is not very easy. Namely, the internal crisis within the Union regarding the Belarus embargo, new Union budget or a resolution on human rights in China should be considered when analysing each candidate country's accession from the Western Balkans region. Another relevant context is the regional framework for the Balkan countries' accession (Gasmi and Prlja 2020). The region needs more vital co-operation for the joint development of the regional infrastructure, trade, cohesion policy, and bilateral relations between individual countries of the Western Balkans, which have recently deteriorated significantly. Doing so would highlight the Western Balkans shared common values, such as multiculturalism, natural resources, tourism capacities, and cohesion. One valuable attempt to enhance regional co-operation was when Serbian President Vučić established the so-called Mini – Schengen area in the region. However, only North Macedonia and Albania joined this Serbian initiative through the agreement. Such failure had a negative impression on the rest of the region, i.e., that Mini - Schengen was meant to be a substitute for an EU membership (Gasmi and Prlja 2020, 70).

Regarding the above, Professor Michal Vit for “Euractive” did an interview where the assumption for future enlargement is not seen by 2030. He noticed, “The whole Western Balkans region will be de facto integrated into that economic part, as this will be in the interests of the EU's key economic actors”. However, politically, in his opinion, “it is impassable for someone to come up with an initiative at the moment that values, culture, identity will frame, it will not work” (Plevák 2021).

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that Europe is at the core of the French strategy. Europe accompanies Macron in his language, whether used in his speeches or written down. Thinking of France, he is also reflecting on Europe. Europe as a common home, but a strong Europe as a precondition for the stronger France. This is the approach for the Balkan, too. He is taking France back to the Balkan, but step by step, with the demands of tangible and relevant results and all in the name of stronger Europe. Never before, since Napoleon and De Gaulle, has France been

at the centre of policy and strategy building in Europe and widely in the world (the relevance of this paper is Europe). Since 2017, Macron has brought back the spirit of what it means to be European. However, no one can deny that he did that with language messages delivered. And without any doubt, he is dedicated to spreading this idea on the Balkan. In the future, we should expect the German practical geopolitical approach to be switched with the French political, human geopolitical approach, seeking more Europe.

Although the borders of Europe are not defined yet, France has not put a line with which they wrote off the Balkans. Since De Gaulle's time and his view on geographical Europe, or Jean Monnet's Europe's openness to the whole continent, today's Macron's effort for more involvement at the Balkan is written down in his Initiative for Europe. The New approach in the enlargement process is needed to assure the process's credibility and transform candidate countries into European ones. At the moment, we see the lack of that. With this, the new methodology proposed by France is justified. France is pro enlargement, but a controlled one with fulfilled preconditions.

Summing it up, we could say that Macron's strategy follows the thread of the French geopolitical school, i.e., care for nature, climate, human rights and values at the centre of his geopolitical planning. It is quite logical that such an approach is used towards enlargement. We can also assume that in the next period, the question would be whether the emergence of Macron suppresses the German classical geopolitical approach. At the expense of human and critical geopolitics, Europe will begin to build its profile as a geopolitical player on the chessboard under French impact.

From North Macedonia's perspective, one gets the impression that we have been turned into a geopolitical laboratory. On the way to the EU, we have to accept everything, mostly to our detriment. Something that is not provided in the basic directions and preconditions for EU membership. We will point out several possible scenarios to bring sound conclusions and forecasts for what awaits North Macedonia on the enlargement process's path.

Scenario 1. The European Union is moving from the principle of unanimity towards a qualified majority in decision-making in enlargement. This way, if North Macedonia starts to reform itself with significant results, it will be a good argument for the EU member states about the country's capacity to fulfil the requirements stipulated in the new methodology for enlargement. The process towards the EU for North Macedonia will be opened, with a qualified majority. Here we expect France to be pro-vocal on the issue only if the Country candidate delivers any significant results and the EU project's reform has started.

Scenario 2. Membership in the European Economic Area (EEA), for economic benefit, but without political unity. A long pause in the enlargement

process at least up to 2030, meanwhile strengthening the European neighbourhood policy that does not involve accession, offered privileged partnerships. In this scenario, France would be pro. Engagement with its Francophonie and Agency for development and other state and non-state actors are expected from France.

Scenario 3. Without serious EU efforts to integrate the Western Balkans, the region is moving towards Chinese hegemony. Pandemic and crisis of US democracy have shown us that the West does not democratically renew itself. A various analysis shows the possible transition to at least a binary US-China hegemony, and China hegemony in the long run.

Scenario 4. Stagnation of the enlargement process and putting the Balkan countries in limbo, with an option for a “mini-Schengen” area. Here is expected France to engage itself with its Francophonie and Agency for development as a support of the countries and building the French influence.

Scenario 5. The comeback of US diplomacy at the Balkan, helped by the German diplomacy, brought back the so-called “bulldozer diplomacy” and closed the open disputes on the Balkan, but with possible adverse effects, in the long run, the EU project. The German geopolitical philosophy of “more land” and US Kissinger’s approach vis-a-vis French geopolitical philosophy “human in the centre”. In this scenario is not expected significant involvement of France.

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GEOPOLITIČKA VIZIJA FRANCUSKE ZA EVROPU I ZAPADNI BALKAN: SLUČAJ SEVERNE MAKEDONIJE

Apstrakt: Cilj ovog rada je da analizira položaj Francuske u globalnom i regionalnom geopolitičkom kontekstu. To takođe podrazumeva i njen odnos u vezi sa politikom proširenja EU i njenog pogleda na Zapadni Balkan i Severnu Makedoniju. Sama Evropska unija je zasnovana na širenju demokratskih vrednosti i ekonomskih koristi za članice. Takođe, EU je nedavno razvila i održive politike susjedstva. No, nedavni događaji poput Bregzita, nesporazumi u Uniji i blokada procesa proširenja doveli su do dekonstruktivnih procesa i otvorili nova pitanja koja zahtevaju sveobuhvatnu naučnu analizu. Cilj rada je geopolitička analiza Francuske i njenog uticaja na Zapadni Balkan i politiku proširenja EU. Promena metodologije približavanja EU zaustavila je istoimeni proces za Severnu Makedoniju i Albaniju u 2019. godini. Pokušaćemo da istražimo i pružimo rešenje za Severnu Makedoniju, uzimajući u obzir novi aspekt njene spoljne politike i moguću ulogu Francuske u tom procesu. Sa teorijskog stanovišta, ovaj rad se zasniva na kritičkoj geopolitici, tj. na praktičnom geopolitičkom pristupu.

Ključne reči: Francuska, geopolitika, Severna Makedonija, Zapadni Balkan.

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Review article

HISTORY AND PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA AND COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Abstract: The cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries aims to promote both the development of China-EU relations and the construction of the “Belt and Road”, and has gone through various development periods such as the initiation period, the golden period and the deep-water period. During different historical periods, China and Central and Eastern European countries have made positive progress in cooperation, but as the internal and external pressure increases, there is the need to further tap into the potential of bilateral cooperation. By releasing comprehensive reforms China has to free itself for more development benefits, while maintaining good China-EU relations and deepening practical cooperation in various fields, addressing in a timely manner the challenges and problems cooperation faces and promoting cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries in order to achieve long-term, stable and sustainable development.

Keywords: China-CEEC cooperation, “17+1 cooperation”, China-EU relations, “Belt and Road” Initiative

INTRODUCTION

The China-CEEC cooperation mechanism (“17+1 cooperation”) was developed from scratch, and then deepened. It has promoted practical cooperation between China and CEECs in many aspects, and also demonstrated strong development resilience. Compared with other bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, China-CEEC cooperation mechanism has its particularities. From the perspective of the development process, China-CEEC cooperation has roughly gone through three development stages: the initiation period (2011-2012), the golden period (2012-2017), and the deep-water period

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(2017-present). Whereas both 2012 and 2017 were turning points, the former marked the official launch of the mechanism, while the latter witnessed its ups and downs due to internal and external environmental influences. At present, the cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries has entered a deep-water zone. How long this period will last and whether the “17+1 cooperation” will enter a new stage of development is of particular concern.

THE INITIATION PERIOD OF CHINA-CEEC COOPERATION (2011-2012)

China and CEE countries launched a formal dialogue in the field of economics and trade in 2011. After a year of preparation, the China-CEEC cooperation mechanism was officially launched in 2012. The start of China-CEEC cooperation cannot be separated from the background of China's rapid economic development. During the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period (2006-2010), China's rapid economic development provided an important impetus for China to develop economic and trade cooperation with CEE countries. China's gross domestic product (GDP) has achieved double-digit growth for many years, China's share of the global economy has soared from 4.9% to 9.3%, and its foreign exchange reserves have reached nearly US\$3 trillion. In 2010, China's GDP surpassed Japan to become the world's second largest economy (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). As far as Chinese enterprises are concerned, enterprises in the fields of infrastructure construction and equipment manufacturing have achieved greater development and have already attained strong international competitiveness. Therefore, when the Chinese government formulated the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, it decided to speed up the pace of Chinese companies' *Going Global*, strengthen their international business capabilities, and cultivate a group of world-class multinational companies; coordinate bilateral, multilateral, regional and sub-regional open cooperation, speed up the implementation of the free trade zone strategy, and promote interconnection with neighboring countries (*China Peoples Daily*, 2012).

2011 is the first year of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan and an important point in the development of China-EU relations. China-EU economic and trade cooperation has been continuously developing since the EU's eastward expansion in 2004. The EU has long maintained its status as China's largest trading partner, and China has also maintained its status as the EU's second largest trading partner. However, in October 2006, the European Union issued the sixth document on its policy to China, “EU – China: Closer partners, growing responsibilities”, which caused some important changes in the policy leading to increase in disagreements and frictions in the fields of economy and trade and politics (Commission of the European communities[2006] 631 final). The EU kept stepping out of red

line of China's core interests, harming bilateral relations. Since 2008, several factors such as the outbreak of global financial crisis and the European debt crisis, the Ukraine crisis, the refugee crisis, made impact on EU resulting in internal contradictions and hindering economic development. So, EU was forced to focus on internal affairs and surrounding issues. Due to the impact of the debt crisis, the CEE countries within the EU have begun to search for new development opportunities, and China's remarkable economic achievements have attracted their strong interest and great attention.

The “step up step down” power changes between China and EU, the trend of the EU's China policy development, and many problems that appeared in the relationship between the parties have caused China to re-examine its relations with Europe. While maintaining the normal development of China-EU economic and trade relations, China also needed to explore new fields and growth points of bilateral cooperation. It also needed to fully consider the EU internal differences and different demands, in order to build a more comprehensive, balanced and sustainable relationship with EU. As a result, promoting cooperation with regions within EU has become China's new perspective for development of relations with Europe. Presented with favorable chances such as the lack of time for the core European countries to take care of the CEE region, and the CEE countries wishing to develop more extensive foreign cooperation in order to overcome economic difficulties, China seized the opportunity of this time frame to develop cooperation with CEE countries and successfully initiated the China-CEEC cooperation. The China-CEEC Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum held in 2011 can be seen as part of the initiation of China-CEEC cooperation. It was also an important test before formal institutionalization. In June 2011, Wen Jiabao, then Premier of the State Council of China, visited Hungary, marking the first step in the formal economic and trade cooperation between China and CEE countries. China pointed out that CEE countries located in the heart of Europe, with extensive transportation are a bridge connecting the markets of the East and West. Chinese enterprises developing re-export trade and investment cooperation in CEE countries can save a lot on business costs, integrate into the EU's internal industrial division system, and use the EU's preferential policies to jointly extend to Western European market. By achieving mutual benefit and win-win results, CEE countries can become the bridgehead of China-EU cooperation. At the same time, China emphasizes that CEE countries are regarded as reliable friends and important partners. Whether it is implementing the strategy of diversifying the foreign trade market or implementing the enterprise *Going Global* strategy, China has always regarded the CEE region as a strategic priority (*Xinhua News Agency*, 2011). The above statement set a good tone for the formal cooperation between the parties and raised many specific suggestions for cooperation. For example,

China will increase its investment in infrastructure in the CEE region and establish a special investment fund. These measures laid an important foundation for the 2012 China-CEEC Leaders' Meeting.

In April 2012, China-CEEC cooperation ("16+1 cooperation") was officially launched with great enthusiasm of CEE countries. Poland took the lead in hosting the first summit. It can be said that the Warsaw Summit between the leaders of China and CEE countries in 2012 was a very pragmatic and efficient meeting. The proposals of this meeting included the establishment of the China-CEEC Cooperation Secretariat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and the establishment of a special preferential loan of US\$10 billion. The twelve actions, including the establishment of the China-CEEC Investment Fund, will profoundly affect the development process of China-CEEC cooperation in the next few years (*Xinhua News Agency*, 2012).

THE GOLDEN PERIOD OF CHINA-CEEC COOPERATION (2012-2017)

Different from other regional cooperation frameworks, China-CEEC cooperation entered a golden development period as soon as it was established, and the depth, breadth and influence of the cooperation between the two sides have reached a relatively high level. Although there are still some problems in cooperation, the achievements of China-CEEC cooperation are very impressive, and are embodied in the following aspects.

One is the promotion of a series of important achievements. During this period, the cooperation mechanism between China and CEE countries has been continuously improved. Various professional cooperation platforms in tourism, infrastructure, finance, agriculture, think tanks and other fields have been established with the increasing number of participants. In the context of promotion of cooperation mechanism between China and CEE countries, Chinese companies are actively investing in development of these countries. Promotion of the special preferential loans of US\$10 billion, caused continuous upscale of economic and trade cooperation between China and CEE countries. This includes a series of large-scale infrastructure and energy investment projects such as the Montenegro North-South Expressway and the Stanari Thermal Power Station in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two promotional periods of China-CEE Investment Funds, also brought some small and medium-sized investment cooperation projects to CEE countries.

At the same time, with the encouragement of the governments of both parties, cultural exchange between China and CEE countries has developed rapidly. The number of Chinese tourists traveling to CEE countries has grown

rapidly. Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and other countries have adopted visa-free or seasonal visa-free policies for China. In order to further promote cultural exchanges between the two parties, China has opened a number of direct flights to CEE countries, and major Chinese financial institutions have also set up branches in these countries to serve the increasing number of corporate investments and personnel exchange. At the same time, education cooperation between China and CEE countries has also entered an active period. One by one, Chinese universities began to establish language education institutions, cooperative exchange projects, and to include Central and Eastern Europe regional and national research institutes (graduate schools). Chinese think tank institutions have begun to set up research centers and research networks in Central and Eastern Europe, which achieved great development in a short period of time. In addition, Chinese traditional medicine has also begun to enter CEE countries, which has promoted *Going Global* of Chinese culture. The positive momentum of cultural exchange between the parties has also aroused the enthusiasm for cooperation in CEE countries. One by one, CEE countries took turn in hosting summits. While expanding their influence, they have helped China-CEEC cooperation reach new level.

The second is embarkation on “Belt and Road” construction express train to intensify cooperation and connectivity. In September 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed the “Belt and Road” initiative, which aims to actively develop economic partnerships with countries along the route jointly building mutual trust in politics, economic integration, benefits of cultural inclusiveness, and a community of shared responsibility and destiny. The “Belt and Road” initiative has included 16 CEE countries along the “Belt and Road”. These countries can fully unleash their geographical advantages and become an important hub for promoting interconnectedness. The various measures proposed by the “Belt and Road” initiative continue to empower China-CEEC cooperation and stimulate the cooperation potential of both parties. The Hungary-Serbia Railway and the China-Europe land-sea Express Line have been launched one after another, and so section by section China-Europe railway has led to the higher level of cooperation between the parties. In particular, the implementation of China’s multiple infrastructure projects in the Balkans has promoted the rapid development of local infrastructure and has attracted widespread attention in terms of international public opinion. Following the “pragmatic cooperation”, “interconnectedness” has become another important label of China-CEEC cooperation.

Third, frequent high-level visits have warmed up the cooperation between China and CEE countries. During this period, President Xi Jinping and leaders of CEE countries conducted series of frequent visits, which greatly raised the level of bilateral strategic cooperation. In 2016, President Xi Jinping visited the Czech Republic, Serbia, and Poland, and concluded or deepened strategic

partnerships. High-ranking officials or politicians from CEE countries also took the opportunity of China-CEEC Leaders' Meeting and the first "Belt and Road" International Cooperation Summit Forum to visit China. Under the political leadership of their leaders, China and CEE countries have reached important consensus in many areas, and their cooperation has continuously produced high-quality results. In 2015, at the Suzhou Summit between China and CEE countries the "Medium-term Plan for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries" was issued. It comprehensively summarized the results of cooperation and made arrangement for future cooperation directions, pointing out that "16+1 cooperation" does not replace existing bilateral cooperation mechanism or platform, and that the two complement and promote each other to accelerate the improvement of the level and scale of China's relations with 16 countries. "16+1 cooperation" links up with major EU initiatives and plans to effectively promote peace, growth, reform, and civilization in China and Europe, the four major partnerships. It welcomes and supports the establishment of a China-Europe interconnectedness platform. "16+1 cooperation" fully grasps the important opportunities brought by the "Belt and Road" construction, continuously expands the space for cooperation, and at the same time keeps contributing to the "Belt and Road" construction.

The reasons that China-CEEC cooperation was able to make such a great progress in this period were both active participation and joint efforts of all partners and favorable external environment. First of all, China's economy performed brilliantly during the period from 2012 to 2017, and policies supporting foreign investment were introduced one after another. The "Belt and Road" initiative was introduced in such a way which promoted the rapid progress of China-CEEC cooperation. Secondly, in spite of EU increasing concern regarding the potential risks that China-CEEC cooperation will bring, such as whether it violates EU rules and whether it will cause the EU to "divide", it has not made any public interventions in terms of actual legal actions. Apart from expressing concerns on different occasions, the EU also hopes that China-CEEC cooperation can achieve practical results and promote the overall recovery of the EU economy, which, objectively, creates terms for China-CEEC cooperation. Further, although the United States pays great attention to China-CEEC cooperation, substantial intervention measures have not been made publicly. During this period, the United States was undergoing in-depth reflection and debate on domestic and foreign policies. The Obama administration began implementing the "Asia-Pacific Rebalancing Strategy" in 2012, shifting its strategic focus to Asia and decreasing its deployment in Europe. In this context, China and the United States "one in one out" attitude towards Central and Eastern Europe has to some extent prevented the two sides from having more conflicts of interest in the region.

It is worth noting that as China-CEEC cooperation has entered the “golden period”, some potential problems have gradually surfaced. For example, the results of cooperation among CEE countries are uneven, some countries have fewer achievements and unresolved financing obstacles. The implementation of related flagship projects is progressing slowly, and the trade deficit gap between some CEE countries and China continues to widen. But on the whole, during this period China-CEEC cooperation faced a better external environment and achieved unprecedented results.

CHINA-CEEC COOPERATION ENTERS A DEEP-WATER PERIOD (2017 TO PRESENT)

Since 2017, China-CEEC cooperation has still made positive progress. The actual cooperation between the parties in the fields of economy, trade and investment has yielded fruitful results. Chinese companies have continued to increase their investment in the Western Balkans, especially in investment cooperation projects in Serbia. There are also cooperation spot lights in the field of large-scale projects. The Croatian Pelješac Bridge project undertaken by a Chinese company has become China’s first successful bidding project in a Central and Eastern European country that received funding from the European Union. Chinese companies continued to invest in Piraeus Port project in Greece and obtained positive returns. The Hungary-Serbia railway project was progressing in an orderly manner despite difficulties. Cooperation between China and CEE countries in terms of cultural exchange also remained at high levels. CEE countries have successively hosted the 2017 Budapest Summit of China and CEEC leaders, the 2018 China and CEEC Sofia Summit, and the 2019 China and CEEC Leaders’ Dubrovnik Summit. The particularity of this summit was that Greece in 2019 joined the China-CEEC cooperation as a full member, upgrading “16+1 cooperation” to “17+1 cooperation”. In addition, in 2019 China and Bulgaria upgraded their bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership, and the partnership network between China and CEE countries has become increasingly dense.

However, at the same time, the internal and external environment of China’s cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries has undergone profound changes. Uncertainties in the cooperation have increased, and external factors and domestic problems overlaid, leading to increased difficulties in cooperation which gradually entered a deep-water period.

Firstly, the change in China-EU relations. In March 2019, the European Union released the “EU-China Strategic Outlook” report defining four points for China-EU relations. Namely, partners in different policy fields, negotiating partners to balance the interests of all parties, and economic competitors pursuing

technological leadership and systemic opponents promoting different governance models. In addition, the EU has repeatedly questioned the motives for cooperation between China and CEE countries and has increased its intervention intensity, such as introducing an investment security review mechanism, and strengthening environmental reviews of China's thermal power and other energy investment projects in CEE countries. Also new restricting conditions have been added for Western Balkan countries that have not joined EU in order to guard against third-party security threats (EC COM[2020] 57 final). Especially in the areas of market access, intellectual property protection, government procurement, etc., the EU has unilaterally emphasized the reciprocity and equivalence in cooperation with China as being an interference.

Secondly, the formation of all-aspects competition between China and the United States had quite an impact on China-CEEC cooperation. Although the "Asia-Pacific Rebalancing Strategy" adopted during Obama's period was intended to contain China's overall development, but when it came to its specific implementation it adopted more gradual and flexible methods to avoid direct conflict with China. However, after Trump took office, in March 2017, he announced the formal end of the "Asia-Pacific Rebalancing Strategy" and launched a large-scale trade war against China. The US policy toward China has entered a new stage of comprehensive and direct containment of China. In this context, the United States has stepped up its intervention in the Central and Eastern European region and directly imposed pressure on the cooperation between China and CEE countries. High-ranking officials of the US government frequently visited CEE countries, spreading information security, "China threat theory" (sharp power) and other arguments, propagating that China is creating "debt trap" in Central and Eastern Europe, causing geopolitical tensions, etc. In particular, they attempted to kidnap Central and Eastern European countries' China policies on the grounds of information security. Under pressure from the United States, the duality of some Central and Eastern European countries' policies towards China has surfaced, which has worsened the external environment for China-CEEC cooperation.

Thirdly, the "murmur" regarding cooperation increased within CEE countries. Some Central and Eastern European countries have been affected by anti-China propaganda expressed by public opinion in Europe and the United States, and doubts about cooperation between China and CEE countries have risen. Some European think tanks have played a vanguard role in this. For example, the "China Influence" project and the "China Observer" project undertaken by the think tanks of Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia (ChinfluenCE, 2020; Choice, 2021), and a series of reports issued by the German Mercator Institute, continue to discredit China-CEEC cooperation. This caused

public opinion to increase unceasing pressure on China-CEEC cooperation (Benner et al., 2018).

Fourthly, China's economy has entered a new normal in all aspects, which will affect China-CEEC cooperation. Due to the profound changes in the domestic and international situation, China's economy is shifting from a stage of rapid growth to a stage of high-quality development. Long-term accumulated contradictions intertwined with new problems and challenges, causing increasing pressure on Chinese economy. In the larger context of domestic structural adjustments and changes in the growth mode, China placed more emphasis on high-quality development of cooperation in the field of foreign investment, economy and trade, simultaneously bringing benefits to long-term economic development. However, such adjustments will inevitably cause some short-term pains, which will certainly impose pressure on China-CEEC cooperation. In particular, the outbreak of the new coronavirus epidemic at the end of 2019 has further increased the resistance towards economic development and investment cooperation between China and CEE countries, making China-CEEC cooperation linger in the deep-water period.

PROSPECTS AND COUNTERMEASURES OF CHINA-CEEC COOPERATION

The China-CEEC cooperation, being an important undertaking of foreign exchange, will inevitably encounter some twists and turns, but its prospects are undoubtedly bright. To solve the current difficulties of cooperation with CEE countries, China needs to take care of both its domestic and foreign affairs. It must not only address its own affairs well, but also further good resolutions of issues with CEE countries such as trade deficits and access to agricultural products. At the same time, China has to comprehensively and effectively deal with problems and challenges that changes in relations with EU and US have brought about for bilateral cooperation.

Firstly, China has to further benefits of freer cooperation with foreign countries by comprehensively deepening reforms. Facing the complex situation at home and abroad, China should continue to make efforts in market access, intellectual property protection, and domestic structural reforms, so that CEE countries can see that they can gain more opportunities from China's increasingly open market. In addition, Chinese overseas companies, especially companies that have previously invested in CEE countries, should make full use of the benefits offered by the policy of comprehensive deepening of domestic reforms. These companies need to continuously promote their own optimization and upgrade, and increase investment in CEE region in order to boost local economic and social development.

Secondly, there is the need to further tap into the development potential of cooperation between China and CEE countries and solve the existing cooperation problems. On the one hand, China and CEE countries should maintain good cooperation in the field of economy, trade and investment, further increasing the investment of private enterprises. China should deepen the cooperation potential of CEE countries in high-precision digitalization, intelligent machinery manufacturing and other industries, especially to promote connecting of related industries “Invisible champions” in order to fully tap into complementary potential of the parties in market, knowledge and resources. It should strengthen mutual cooperation in cultural exchange, and jointly create cooperation results in the fields of animation games, film and television dramas, variety shows, tourism and education, thus achieving “win-win” effects in cultural industry and society. On the other hand, China and CEE countries should promptly and favorably resolve problems in cooperation. China needs to address the concerns of CEE countries in a timely manner, and actively resolve various problems accumulated or emerging in bilateral cooperation, especially those involving trade deficits, imbalanced investment projects, and difficulties in accessing agricultural products. At the same time, both sides need to work hard to strengthen mutual political trust, deepen economic and trade cooperation, and improve the level of cultural exchange, so as to set China-CEEC cooperation on a path of high-quality development.

Thirdly, there is maintenance of the overall situation of China-EU relations and aiding China-CEEC cooperation. Economic and trade relations are not only the top priority of China-EU relations, but also the foundation of relations between China and CEE countries. China and the EU should further consolidate the achievements of the negotiations regarding China-EU Geographical Indications Agreement, accelerate the progress of the China-EU investment agreement negotiations and strive for its early completion and signing of the treaty. Various parties created conditions to initiate the feasibility study of the China-EU Free Trade, also improving conditions for China and CEE cooperation in economy, trade and investment. At the same time, since the industries of CEE countries are deeply integrated into Europe, China should promote more achievements in the field of industrial chain development and industrial cooperation with important European countries, assisting China and CEE countries cooperation in industrial chain and other fields. In addition, China and the EU should continue to use the potential for cooperation around important initiatives such as the “Belt and Road”, create multi-dimensional connectivity, and enhance the level of practical cooperation. In this process, Central and Eastern European countries can make full use of the advantages of geographic and logistics hubs to promote China-EU connectivity and cooperation.

Fourthly, seizing the new chances to find opportunities for China-CEEC cooperation. Since the Trump administration came to power, it has pursued the “America first” policy, regardless of the opposition of the international community and even EU allies, and held high protectionism and unilateralism, which caused dissatisfaction of EU and many CEE countries. At the same time, China’s policy concept of “seeking common ground while preserving differences” and “mutual benefit and win-win” has been more attractive to Europe, including CEE countries. As a response to US pressure China should seize this opportunity, and act on its advantages, actively developing close partnerships with the European Union and its member states, developing cooperation in the fields of 5G, investment and business, and cultural exchange, and use higher levels of practical cooperation with both Europe and CEE. Under the impact of the new coronavirus epidemic, European countries got into great trouble, and China actively aided, within its capacity, European and CEE countries by dispatching medical assistance teams to Italy, the United Kingdom, Serbia. Thus, strengthened international cooperation in the field of public health with the European side and further stabilized confidence of CEE in cooperation with China.

On the whole, the current CEE countries’ demand for cooperation with China are still flourishing. China should focus on the two basic directions of promoting the development of China-EU relations and advancing the construction of the “Belt and Road”: opening up to high-quality practical cooperation and brining more benefits through deep reforms and broader opening to foreign countries , while actively maintaining the general situation of China-EU relations, deepening China-EU cooperation in various fields, and promoting China-CEEC cooperation to achieve long-term, stable and sustainable development.

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ISTORIJA I PERSPEKTIVE SARADNJE IZMEĐU KINE I ZEMALJA CENTRALNE I ISTOČNE EVROPE

Apstrakt: Saradnja između Kine i zemalja Centralne i Istočne Evrope koja ima za cilj da ujedno promoviše razvoj odnosa između Kine i Evropske unije i razvoj Inicijative Pojas i put, je prošla kroz različite razvojne periode kao što su inicijalni period, zlatni i period “duboke vode”. Tokom različitih istorijskih perioda Kina i zemlje Centralne i Istočne Evrope su napravile pozitivan napredak u saradnji, ali kako se unutrašnji i spoljašnji pritisci uvećavaju, postoji potreba da se bolje sagleda potencijal bilateralne saradnje. Stvaranjem sveobuhvatnih reformi, Kina se mora otvoriti za veće razvojne koristi, uz održavanje dobrih odnosa između Kine i EU i produbljivanje praktične saradnje u različitim oblastima, te blagovremeno rešavanje izazova i problema sa kojima se saradnja suočava, i promovisanje saradnje između Kine i zemalja Centralne i Istočne Evrope u cilju postizanja dugoročnog, stabilnog i održivog razvoja.

Ključne reči: saradnja između Kine i zemalja Centralne i Istočne Evrope, saradnja 17+1, kinesko-evropski odnosi, Inicijativa “Pojas i put”

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IS SPAIN THREATENED BY A PERMANENT POLITICAL CRISIS?

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Abstract: The political situation in Spain, after the failed attempt of a unilateral declaration of the independence of Catalonia, has become the subject of study by the scientific and professional public throughout Europe and the world. The strained political relations between official Madrid and Catalonia have reached their peak in the last few years, which leads us to the conclusion that the Spanish state is in a political crisis. In this paper, we will examine the potential sources of this crisis, which may include the crisis of the regional model of the state, the future of the monarchy, the crisis of Spanish identity, separatism in Catalonia and the Basque Country, the rise of the far-left and far-right, and other factors that may further induce political crisis (such as the economic and demographic situation). In conclusion, we will propose the improvement of the regional state as a solution (as opposed to the proposals on the federalization of Spain), as well as the abandonment of radical strategies wherever they come from.

Keywords: Spain; political crisis; the regional model of the state; Catalonia; the Basque Country; federalization.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the Spanish state is facing the biggest political challenges since the death of dictator Francisco Franco in 1975. Numerous problems burden the political life in Spain, which can result in a multidimensional political crisis. Accordingly, it is essential to identify and analyse these problems, so that an adequate solution can be proposed. If these problems were ignored (which has been a fairly common occurrence so far), Spain could face a crisis of unprecedented proportions, perhaps even a conflict outcome. The failed attempt to declare Catalonia's independence by separatist political forces in that Spanish region resonated most with the Spanish and European public, but it represents only part of the general political and economic discontent that has prevailed in

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Spain in recent years. The political polarisation between the left and the right seems to have never been stronger since the crisis of the Second Republic, just like the general dissatisfaction of both sides. The terrorist separatist organisation ETA², which has been fighting for decades to blackmail the independence of the Basque Country, has ceased to exist, but the Basque political forces have not given up on the project of an independent Basque state. Given the growing antagonism between the Castilian part of Spain, on the one hand, and a significant part of Catalonia, the Basque Country (and even Galicia), on the other, we believe that the Spanish national identity, which since its inception has served to create a sense of unity of all peoples in this part of the Iberian Peninsula, is seriously tested. The centuries-old polarisation between the supporters of monarchism and republicanism is very present today and additionally contributes to the general political division. On the other hand, Spain has been in an economic crisis for years, which adversely affects its political and demographic trends. The key to the functioning of Spain after the adoption of the Constitution of 1978 and the entry into the process of democratisation is its vertical organisation of government. The Constitution provides for the possibility of forming autonomous communities (or regions), which represent forms of political, economic, but also cultural and linguistic autonomy. Opinions on the Spanish Constitution are divided. Some consider it the guardian of the unity and indivisibility of the Spanish state and nation, some part of the problem, while some see in its reconstruction a solution to most of the political problems that burden the Spanish present. It is up to us to investigate structural problems of Spain such as the crisis of the regional model of the state in Spain, the crisis of the monarchy, the crisis of Spanish identity, the rise of the far-left and the far-right, separatism in Catalonia and the Basque Country and others.

THE CRISIS OF THE REGIONAL MODEL OF THE STATE

The death of General Francisco Franco in 1975 also marked the end of an era in Spanish history. During his decades-long dictatorship, Spain was an undemocratic and one-minded society, which suppressed any form of pluralism and diversity with institutionalised coercion. From 1975 to 1986, Spain was in the process of democratic transition and consolidation. During that period, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Spain (1978) was adopted, which aimed to carry out the political and administrative decentralisation of the state, which was previously strictly centralised. At the very beginning of the fragile Spanish

² A Basque terrorist organisation that operated in the period between 1959 and 2018, advocating the secession of the Basque Country by force. It carried out dozens of attacks in which it killed over 820 people.

democracy, the institutions of the army and the monarchy played a significant role in democratisation, and later the political parties gradually took over the primacy (Conversi 2002, 223). The 1978 Constitution established the Kingdom of Spain as a parliamentary monarchy. On the other hand, it also introduced a completely new form of vertical organisation of government. Although we will join the assessment that with this Constitution Spain has become a regional state, there are significant disputes in the theory of constitutional law on this issue. The question is whether Spain has become a decentralized unitary state or is it a *de facto* federation. However, the prevailing opinion is that Spain is a regional state, and the Spaniards themselves usually say that Spain is the so-called state of autonomy (Станковић 2012, 234-235). The Constitution, therefore, provides for the possibility of forming autonomous communities but does not provide for the exact number and scope of their competencies. That is why the Spanish model of regionalisation is rather asymmetric. A year after the adoption of the new Constitution, three regions with distinct historical, cultural and ethnolinguistic features were formed: Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country. Later, a total of seventeen regions was formed (Станковић 2012, 236).

There are many reasons why Spain is today organised as a regional state. Since its inception, Spain has been composed of different ethnic communities that have nurtured their language, tradition and culture, and have become attached to the areas they inhabit as one of the parts of their identities. Historically, there have often been misunderstandings between Castile (which aspired to centralism) and areas that wanted a greater degree of autonomy, and even independence (Perović 2010, 491). Precisely, because of that, Spain started the so-called “middle way” which meant giving a high degree of political, economic, cultural and linguistic autonomy to their regions, while those same regions were prevented from separating themselves from the Spanish state on their own initiative. This was to achieve the stability of the political system, as well as the unity and indivisibility of the state (Perović 2010, 498). Without going into too much detailed analysis of all the features of the regional model in Spain, we will pay attention to the building blocks of that model, which, after forty years of application, have become problematic. The Spanish model of regionalisation is asymmetric, which means that the regions do not enjoy the same degree of autonomy or competence. For example, the Basque Country and Navarre are regions that have a greater degree of autonomy than other Spanish regions (Станковић 2012, 237). This is certainly a problem for preserving the unity and indivisibility of Spain as a state of all Spaniards who, according to the Constitution, are equal (Constitucion Española 1978). When it comes to financing the system on which Spanish regionalisation is based, there is a problem related to the principle of solidarity between regions. Namely, it is a principle that implies achieving a financial balance between the regions so that richer regions will give

more to the common state budget in order to help the development of poorer regions. This issue is particularly sensitive for Catalonia as the richest Spanish region (Станковић 2012, 246–247). The issue of tax collection is also a debatable part of this model of regionalisation. The Spanish Constitution provides for the exclusive competence of the state in the primary regulation of tax matters (Станковић 2012, 247). Given that taxes are the main source of income for each state (but also any unit of local self-government within it), tax autonomy is a key to economic and any other development. Part of the professional public in Spain considers the existing progressive system of taxation more than justified, believing that richer Spanish regions, just like other rich regions across the European Union, want more money for themselves without taking into account two facts. First, that their wealth is largely induced by the fact that they are part of the state of Spain, which, given its territory and population, is a significant market but also a partner for the European Union. Second, the rich Spanish regions themselves do not allow their rich provinces or municipalities to be exempted from financial equalisation within the region (Maqueda 2017). This, however, does not diminish the fact that rich Spanish regions are dissatisfied with the existing tax arrangement.

THE CRISIS OF THE MONARCHY

According to the Constitution, the king is the head of the State of Spain, a symbol of its unity and longevity, represents the state in international relations, and has an arbitrary role when it comes to the functioning of government institutions. He is obliged to perform all his functions in accordance with the Constitution and the laws (Constitucion Española 1978, 29321). Some of the most important functions of the Spanish king are sanctioning and promulgating laws, convening and dissolving the Assembly (Cortes Generales), calling elections in constitutional situations, calling referendums in constitutional situations, proposing and appointing candidates for Prime Minister, the supreme command of the armed forces, etc. (Constitucion Española 1978, 29322). Its role is much more symbolic and historical (traditional) in nature. As we can see, a good part of his functions is procedural, and it cannot be said that the real levers of political power are in his hands because the Government of Spain is, after all, the most important in the country. Despite the fact that today's monarch of Spain, Philip VI (Felipe VI), is only a pale shadow of the power of his ancestors, a significant part of society opposes not only the current monarch but also the monarchy as a whole. This is a significant factor that must be recognised and treated as one of the elements of a possible ongoing political crisis in Spain. Throughout history, there has been a strong polarisation in Spain between supporters of the monarchy and those who advocated a republican system. Republicans were nationally

oriented, but they nurtured strong anti-monarchist and anti-clerical sentiments, considering them the obstacles to the development of democracy and society (Sanabria 2009). On the other hand, republicans still have tragic memories of the collapse of the Second Spanish Republic during the 1930s, as well as the decades-long Franco's dictatorship. Given that Franco appointed King Juan Carlos as his successor before his death, it is not surprising that many Spaniards see today's monarchy as a recurrence of a dark past. After King Juan Carlos voluntarily abdicated in favour of his son Philip in 2014, a huge anti-monarchist mood in Spain came to the surface. Many republicans saw it as an opportunity to protest in the streets against the monarchy and the royal family. Almost two-thirds (62%) of Spaniards believe that a referendum should be held on whether Spain should remain a monarchy or not. Research shows that, if such a referendum were held, 49% of Spanish citizens would support the monarchy headed by Philip, while 36% of citizens are ready to support the republican option. The then Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy rejected the possibility of holding such a referendum, believing that the citizens in a referendum on the new Constitution in 1978, among other things, confirmed that they wanted the monarch as the ceremonial head of state (*The Guardian* 2014).

Opinions about Spain as a monarchy are still deeply divided, and such a situation has and may have significant political consequences in the future. Spanish monarchists believe that the king is a symbol of Spanish unity, that he is an important representative of the state in the world, and that he is outside daily politics and in the service of exclusively national and state interests. According to them, the monarchy and the monarch are permanent categories, which do not change every couple of years, as is the case with the political parties in power, and form an important part of Spanish history, tradition and values. Republicans, on the other hand, see the monarchy only as a brake on the further political and economic development of Spain. Of course, they see the monarchy as one of the main culprits for the downfall of the First Spanish Republic³ and the Second Spanish Republic⁴, which further distances them from it. As convinced democrats, the proponents of the republic consider it trivial to talk about democracy and equality of all citizens when you have a royal family that lives privileged. At a time of economic crisis that is hitting Spain hard, the lavish behaviour of the Spanish royal family also raises the question of the economic justification for the existence of the monarchy (Govan 2014). Recent years of research show that as many as 7 out of 10 Spaniards under the age of 40 do not

³ A short-lived republic that lasted from 1873 to 1874, when the Bourbon dynasty was restored (King Alfonso XII came to the throne).

⁴ The government in Spain in the period between 1931 and 1939, which consisted of a broad left-wing coalition. It was bloodily extinguished after the end of the Spanish Civil War.

see a reason for the existence of the institution of the monarchy nor they understand the way it functions in today's society (Ramos Fernandez 2013, 209). Thus, former King Juan Carlos left Spain in August 2020 when he faced accusations of corruption and depositing money of suspicious origin in secret accounts in Switzerland in order to protect the reputation of the monarchy institution and make it easier for his successor (González 2020). All the previously presented data indicate that growing dissatisfaction with the institution of the monarch in Spain can be expected in the future, which may further contribute to the fragmentation of political life in this country.

THE CRISIS OF SPANISH IDENTITY

It is very important for the survival of a state that its citizens share a common identity, whether it is an old form of identity (religious, ethnic, linguistic) or a relatively modern civic identity. The Spanish identity⁵, that is, what should be the common identity of all those living in Spain, is quite endangered today, which can have far-reaching consequences. The Spanish Constitution of 1978 defined the recognition of linguistic, cultural and to some extent national pluralism in the country. This was a kind of compromise in order for the insufficiently integrated communities to accept, in addition to their authenticity, also the Spanish identity. It was up to the social and political elites to articulate that identity during the decades that followed. So, an identity that would be common for Castilians, Catalans, Basques, Gallegos, etc. The general assessment is that the support of citizens for the basic parameters of the 1978 constitutional compromise in this domain is still quite high (Martínez-Herrera and Jeffrey Miley 2010, 6). We are of the opinion, however, that the real situation on the ground is quite different. There is not even a single model of Spanish identity nurtured by all those who primarily feel like Spaniards, let alone those who feel exclusively like Catalans or Basques. The division over the notion of Spanish identity has

⁵ National identity is a complex phenomenon that varies from identity belonging to a certain nation to belonging to a certain state. In the first case, it is about the ethno-national community, and in the second about the political one. The issue of Spanish identity is, given the ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences on Spanish soil, very complex. In this respect, Spain resembles other multinational and multicultural countries, such as the United Kingdom, Ukraine or Belgium. In these countries, the issue of identity is often blurred or divided between several different levels of identity (provincial, regional, state) and significantly affects the internal political dynamics of the country. The biggest problem such countries face is ethnically motivated separatism. Just as a significant part of Catalans or Basques want to separate from Spain, so do Scots in Great Britain, Flemings in Belgium and Russians in Ukraine. What is specific for the citizens of Spain is that they dominantly nurture the so-called dual identity, that is, they feel at the same time Spaniards and Andalusians or Spaniards and Valencians (Coller and Castelló 1999).

lasted for decades. In the last two centuries, traditionalists and republicans have formed two mutually exclusive visions of Spanish identity, based on different symbols, myths and heroes. The traditional model of Spanish identity was formed in the Middle Ages. It is based on the myth of the Reconquista⁶ and the need to preserve the homogeneity of Spain as a country of the Christian religion and Latin culture. On the other hand, the republican (liberal) notion of Spanish identity developed at the beginning of the 19th century, at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Spain. The Spanish liberals realised that they had to develop their own democratic and progressive ideas in order to distance themselves from French influence. According to them, the authentic Spanish identity is not the one related to the Reconquista and the powerful Spanish Empire, but to the diversity in Spanish tradition and culture. Judging by that, tolerant Muslims from Andalusia, fighters for freedom and democracy from the Middle Ages onwards, etc., are also part of the Spanish identity (Torrecilla 2009).

Disagreements over the essential elements of Spanish identity are still present today. There is not even an essential agreement on what Spain is. Is it a state, a “nation of nations” or an ethno-patriotic entity? Also, there is no agreement on when the Spanish identity originated. Liberals believe that the modern Spanish nation was born out of resistance to the French occupiers in the 19th century. On the other hand, traditionalists view the Reconquista period as the birth of the Spanish nation as we know it today and see in its imperial expansion that followed the power of a united Spain (Torrecilla 2009, 206–211). On the other hand, Martín Ortega Carcelén has a far more flexible and inclusive view of Spanish identity today. According to him, it has three main dimensions: sharing global culture, sharing common principles and values of a modern democratic state, and participating in joint sharing at the global level. He perceives Spain as a specific political project, and the Spaniards as those who voluntarily agree to be a part of it (Ortega Carcelén 2016, 7). An example of disagreement over basic state symbols such as the flag and anthem are also symptomatic. According to the 1978 Constitution, the flag and anthem represent all Spaniards. The situation in practice, however, is a bit different. Today we have not only a multitude of Catalans or Basques who use their national flags, but also a part of the citizens from the rest of Spain who use the flags of the Second Republic (Díaz 2019). The anthem of Spain, as many people know, has no words, which speaks enough about the fact that there is no clear consensus between the two parts of Spain on Spanish history and Spanish identity (Pardo Torregrosa 2018). Despite the efforts of the constitution-makers to create a balance in the sense of identity that will be in the function of democratisation and stabilisation of Spain, the Spanish

⁶ The name for the overall effort of Christians on the Iberian Peninsula to expel Muslim invaders, which lasted between 722 and 1492.

identity is not strong enough today in all parts of Spain. The vaguely defined identity of members of a community is a symptomatically favourable ground for the outbreak of political (or other) conflicts. Even decades after the collapse of Franco's dictatorship, there is no clear consensus on what Spain really is and what it means to be Spanish. It should be emphasised that the majority of citizens perceive themselves as Spaniards in the national sense and respect the existing state symbols and the anthem, so the views of authors like Torrecilla should be taken with a grain of salt. A survey conducted on this topic in 2017 showed that 42% of respondents are very proud of the fact that they are Spanish, but also that only 14% of respondents feel only Spanish, without a dual identity (Llaneras 2017). A survey on the same topic conducted two years earlier showed that 54.3% of citizens consider themselves Spaniards and members of a certain region, of which only 15.7% are considered exclusively Spaniards (*Statista* 2015).

THE RISE OF THE FAR-LEFT AND THE FAR-RIGHT

The conflict between the left-wing and the right-wing in Spain was one of the most radical in Europe.⁷ Their uncompromising relationship reached its peak in the Spanish Civil War when the ruling left collapsed (Cvetićanin 2015). The left-wing, however, has managed to survive in Spain to this day with its specific vision of this country. The Spanish left-wing has had its strong foothold in the Spanish people since the time of the Second Republic. Already the first free and democratic elections after the fall of the Francoist regime⁸ in 1977 showed that leftist potential had not disappeared in decades of right-wing dictatorship. Out of almost 19 million voters in those elections, almost half gave their vote to political parties that advocated socialism. In these elections, the right-wing received a total of only 8.5% of the vote (which is not every tenth Spaniard)

⁷ The conflict between the Spanish left and right has its roots in the 19th century. The political right in Spain dates back to the Carlist wars in the 19th century and conservative parties and movements that resisted the modernisation and liberalisation of the country. It made a strong influence during the reign of Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923–1930), culminating in the Franco era (1939–1975). All the time it was in direct political conflict with the Spanish left, regardless of whether it was the Socialist Workers' Party of Spain (founded in 1879), the Communist Party of Spain (founded in 1921) or anarchists and syndicalists of various kinds. The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) was the culmination of political polarisation in Spain, where the conflict between the left and right coalitions resulted in several hundred thousand deaths and the establishment of a decades-long right-wing dictatorship that brutally persecuted leftists and their organisations.

⁸ The dictatorship established after the end of the Spanish Civil War by General Francisco Franco, which was based on militarism, Spanish nationalism and ultra-Catholicism. The death of General Franco in 1975 is taken as the end of the dictatorship, that is, as the beginning of the Spanish "smooth" transition.

(Indić 1977, 373). Today, left-wing parties in Spain are a strong political force with huge potential. Since 2018, they have even become the ruling force in the country (Stanković 2018). The analysis of the trend of strengthening the political left is extremely important for the future of Spain, considering that, if certain ideas of the left are applied in practice, Spain, as we know it today, will not survive. From 2011 to 2018, Spain was ruled by a coalition gathered around the People's Party (*Partido Popular*, PP) led by the former Prime Minister of Spain Mariano Rajoy. This party is considered to belong to the right-centre of the political spectrum. The following data show how unstable the Spanish political scene is in the ideological sense. In the elections in 2015, the far-left party Podemos won as many as 69 seats (out of 350), while the People's Party experienced a significant drop-in support. The following year, Podemos, as the leader of other left-wing parties, experienced a significant decline, while the People's Party emerged from these elections as a convincing winner. Namely, the total percentage of votes won by left-wing parties dropped from 24% in the 2015 elections to 21% in the following year. It seemed to many at the time that the populist Podemos was only a short-lived political episode (Zarzalejos 2016, 184-185). However, it seems that such an assessment was premature, which is confirmed by Podemos participation in the current Spanish government. Namely, for the first time in modern history, Spain got a new prime minister by a vote of no confidence in Prime Minister Rajoy, and then elected the leader of the Party of Socialists (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* – PSOE) Pedro Sanchez (Pedro Sánchez) as the new prime minister. Although his party had less than a quarter of the seats in parliament, Sanchez managed to gain the support of other leftists, primarily Podemos, but also Catalan and Basque nationalists, which upset the Spanish right-wingers (*Нова српска политичка мисао* 2018). Podemos' support for the survival of the current government, formed after the November 2019 elections, is crucial because they represent a direct coalition partner of Sanchez's Socialists, where Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias became Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda. On the other hand, we believe that in the foreseeable future, this party could be the leader not only of the far-left part of Spain, but also of the Spanish state itself, thanks, among other things, to its charismatic and energetic leader Pablo Iglesias. Accordingly, it is important to analyse Podemos as an authentic Spanish left, which is *de facto* the fourth political force in the country, and which has quite radical ideas but also a position to put them into practice. Podemos is a far-left political party that was formed by gathering young university professors in early 2014. Already in May of the same year, the party won over 1.2 million votes (or 8%) in the elections for the European Parliament, which was a big surprise. The leader of the party, Pablo Iglesias, announced that this was only the beginning of the fight for a fairer and more solidary Spain, free from Germany and the European Union. Only a month later, opinion polls

showed that Podemos had the support of about 15% of voters. The growth of this party seriously threatened to shake up the traditional bipartisan in Spain, but also to introduce Spain into a time of general political and economic uncertainty (Torreblanca 2015, 10). As we previously pointed out, support for Podemos grew throughout 2015 until the 2016 elections, when it declined, though not drastically.

The ideas around which the people gathered in Podemos pose a threat to political stability in Spain. Given that we treat Podemos as a distinctly far-left party, in the analysis of the ideas of this party, we can find the causes of the sympathy of a large part of the voters towards it. First, since its founding, Podemos has strongly opposed the liberal model of democracy, considering it politically, economically, socially and environmentally unfair. Secondly, Podemos strongly opposes the European Union and its bureaucracy. They want the abolition of the Lisbon Treaty, as well as a change in the EU's economic relationship with Spain, which they consider to be exploitative. The supporters of the party are especially indignant at Germany and see it as the main culprit for the poverty of the southern EU states (we see left-wing internationalism through cooperation with, for example, Syriza from Greece). Third, the party initially advocated both Spain's exit from the NATO pact and the withdrawal of American troops from the country (Torreblanca 2015, 10-11). It is, therefore, a far-left political party that over a couple of years has become a threat not only to the dormant Spanish right, but also to the established Spanish left-wing parties (Ramiro and Gomez 2016, 109). This is a party that advocates the complete deconstruction of the model of the Spanish state as we know it today. The fact is that the leader of Podemos marked the Catalan independence referendum announced for 1 October 2017 as a legitimate act. Pablo Iglesias pointed out that, if his party wins power in the coming years, it will be ready for a significantly different arrangement between Spain and Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia (Garcia de Blas 2017). Such assessments often come from Podemos and can pose not only a threat to the existing model of a regional state but also to the territorial integrity of Spain.

It is no secret that Spain is still divided over the historical interpretation of the Spanish Civil War, as well as of Francoist Spain. Part of the Spanish conservative right-wing population still considers Franco one of the most important historical figures in Spain, while for leftists, he is a symbol of the suffering of the Spanish people (Minder 2015). As one of the first moves after coming to power, the new left-wing government ordered the removal of Franco's remains from the Valley of the Fallen mausoleum (which it did), believing that they reminded Spanish citizens of dictatorship and that the current purpose of the mausoleum did not honour and commemorate all Spaniards. This decision did not have as a reaction the stronger political mobilisation of the Spanish right, but it remains to be seen how the voters of the far-right Vox (who was in the

Spanish parliament for the first time after the 2019 elections) will react. During its rule, the conservative People's Party opposed attempts to exhume Franco's remains, fearing that it would only awaken painful memories forty years after his death (PTC 2018b). The rise of the far-right Vox is especially significant. It is a party that was formed at the end of 2013. The legacy of Vox is the idea of Spanish nationalism, anti-separatism and Eurosceptic views. Vox opposes the immigration of migrants to Spain and fights against the "Islamization of Spain", especially by celebrating two periods in the history of that country – the Reconquista and the Francoism. On the other hand, Vox strongly opposes the political left at both the Spanish and global levels (Rubio-Pueyo 2020). Until 2018, Vox did not record significant results, and it seemed that it would pass like many nationalist parties and movements in that country during the transition period. However, at the end of that year, Vox won 10.97% of the votes in Andalusia, where it later participated in the formation of the government. A significant rise of the party at the national level followed. In the first general elections in 2019, Vox won 10.26% (2.6 million votes), and a few months later in the new general elections, it won 15.09% (3.6 million votes). The political and economic crisis, especially in the conditions of the global coronavirus pandemic, will certainly affect the strengthening of such political parties.

SEPARATISM IN CATALONIA AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY

The biggest challenge the Spanish state faced in the last few decades was the strong separatist tendencies in its autonomous regions. In that sense, Catalonia and the Basque Country stand out as historical regions inhabited by people of special ethnic origin (in the case of the Basque Country), who speak languages other than Spanish (or Castilian), but also as regions that are one of the richest in Spain. In addition to the cultural-historical aspect, in these regions, there is an increasing emphasis on the economic aspect as one of the crucial drivers for gaining the independence of these regions (Payne 1971). Given that the history of political (and other) conflicts between Spain and these regions is too extensive, in this paper we will focus on the most current ones. As we know, Catalan nationalist political forces have been advocating for the secession of Catalonia from Spain for years. They justify it by the fact that throughout its history, Catalonia has always had its own political institutions of power, as well as cultural and linguistic specificity until Franco's dictatorship, when it was forcibly abolished. Today, more than forty years after the fall of the dictatorship, Catalonia is the richest Spanish region that enjoys a relatively high degree of autonomy within the Spanish state. After failed attempts to negotiate with the Spanish government to increase the scope of Catalonia's political, economic and cultural autonomy (the Spanish Constitutional Court in 2010 rejected most of the 2006 Catalan

Statute proposals), Catalan nationalists led by their political elite decided to take more drastic steps. First, a symbolic referendum on independence was organised in 2014, in which the majority of voters voted in favour of Catalonia's independence, and then in 2015, the separatist parties won power in the regional elections. Carles Puigdemont became the president of the regional government of Catalonia, who already announced the holding of a referendum by which Catalonia will finally become independent from Spain. Despite the Spanish government's ban and the announcement that a possible referendum and an attempt at secession would be prevented by the state apparatus of force, the referendum on Catalonia's independence was held on 1 October 2017. Of the 43% of voters who turned out, 90% voted for the independence of this region, and the day of the referendum itself passed in great tension and clashes between the demonstrators and the Spanish police. Any attempt at a political solution to this crisis through dialogue between the central government of Madrid and the Catalan government has failed. As early as 27 October, Catalan MPs declared the independent Republic of Catalonia, while the Spanish government issued an arrest warrant for the Catalan politicians who organised the referendum. The Spanish government also used Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution and took direct control of the Catalan region. Carles Puigdemont fled to Belgium with some of his associates, while some were arrested and are currently in Spanish prisons for organising a revolt against the state (*BBC News* 2018). These events represented the biggest political crisis in modern Spain, which is currently under control, but its causes are not even close to being suppressed. One of the most famous terrorist organisations in modern Europe was ETA. It was a left-wing armed formation of Basque nationalists and fighters for the independence of the Basque Country, which emerged in 1959 as a reaction to Franco's repression of the Basque language, culture and national identity. During its existence, ETA has carried out hundreds of terrorist attacks throughout Spain, where a large number of civilians were killed (although the targets were often politicians and the armed forces), which were carried out in order to intimidate and extort the independence of the Basque Country. Even after the fall of the Francoist dictatorship, ETA did not agree to a peaceful democratic transition of the entire Spanish society. With this approach, ETA deeply divided the Basque society, and even those Basques who were in favour of independence from Spain. After 11 September 2001, ETA was faced with serious efforts of Spanish and French counterterrorism formations to eliminate it completely. The decline in the popularity of this terrorist group, the loss of its membership and the efforts of political and civic groups in the Basque Country to fight peacefully to achieve their goals, influenced ETA to stop terrorist activities in 2011 (Whitfield 2015, 1). ETA definitely announced the termination of its existence in 2018. This gave Spanish citizens hope that tensions related to this Spanish region are a thing of

the past. However, there are clear indications that the Spanish government in this region will now face a new kind of challenge. Shortly after the end of the ETA, the leader of the Basque separatists, Arnaldo Otegi, stated that, with dedicated work and daily activities, the political struggle for the independence of the Basque Country would continue. The fact that the militant ETA has been disbanded does not mean that Basque separatism as a strong political factor has disappeared (*The Local* 2018). For example, on the eve of the Catalan referendum on independence on 1 October 2017, tens of thousands of Basques took to the streets in support of the right of Catalans to declare whether they want to separate from Spain or not. It is no secret that the Basques hope for a similar referendum in their region in the future, given that close to 1/3 of the Basque population wants the region to become an independent state. This was also stated by the spokesman of the Basque Nationalist Party, Joseba Egibar, during the recent Catalan crisis (Pereira 2017). The announcement of a new political crisis in the Basque Country could be the determination of Basque Prime Minister Iñigo Urkullu to put the Basque issue back on the agenda. Namely, in 2018, he met with about twenty ambassadors of European countries in Madrid and asked them for support in organising a referendum in the Basque Country regarding its future. He, like other members of the aforementioned Basque Nationalist Party, advocates an agreed referendum on the independence of the Basque Country from Spain (PTC 2018a).

THE ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN SPAIN AS AN AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCE

The political situation in Spain could be further complicated in the coming period due to the unfavourable economic and demographic situation in it. That is why it is important to examine certain parameters of the Spanish economy and the demographic picture. After years of economic expansion, the Spanish economy began to show the first signs of exhaustion in 2006. With the outbreak of the global economic crisis in 2007 and its deepening over the next year, the Spanish economy is entering a cycle of economic decline. The crisis has affected the decline of the general standard of living of citizens, and economic issues have become one of the most important in the Spanish political discourse. Unemployment in Spain rose dramatically in the first years of the crisis, from 8.3% in 2007 to 20.1% in 2010. The younger Spanish population (aged 16 to 25) was particularly affected by unemployment growth of as much as 41% (Carballo-Cruz 2011, 309–328). Only after a few years, the Spanish economy, through government austerity measures, began to record an average growth of 3.3% (period 2015–2017). The consequences of the initial impact of the crisis are very much being felt today, and the general impression is that the economy is slowly

recovering. This is already causing strong political consequences in Spain, which may become even more dramatic over time. Today, Spain is the third EU country in terms of the inequality index of its population. About 10.2 million Spaniards live below the poverty line. The number of citizens who had to use the services of homeless care centres increased by 20.5% between 2014 and 2016. In 2018, 37% of young Spaniards (under 25) were unemployed. The younger population employed in 2018 had 33% lower annual incomes compared to their 2008 peers. The number of fixed-term contracts among young employees is growing (Michaine 2018). The economic crisis, which mostly affects the young Spanish population, induces a political crisis because it is the young population that is prone to political mobilisation. Economic dissatisfaction in Spain is closely linked to the demographic challenges facing this country. Many Spaniards leave their country and go to other EU countries in search of better jobs and living conditions. Official data show that since the outbreak of the great economic crisis in 2008, Spain has been entering deeper and deeper demographic problems. On average, over 350,000 Spaniards left their country annually between 2009 and 2018. Today, Spain, just like throughout its history, has a high rate of immigration, but it not only cannot fully compensate for the losses due to emigration but also influences the change in the demographic structure of the country. The state has suffered for years from negative natural growth and the growing share of the old population in the total population. The population over 65 in 2014 was 18.2% of the total population. It is predicted that this percentage will increase to 24.9% in just fifteen years, and to an incredible 38.7% by 2064 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2014, 6-8). These are huge challenges for the Spanish economy, given that over the years, according to the given projections, it will lose more and more young and able-bodied population, and it will have to support more and more old population. This can lead to social unrest, which would only further complicate the general political situation in the country.

CONCLUSION

The Catalan crisis of October 2017 has been just one of the most visible and strongest manifestations of the political crisis that Spain as a country is facing. We believe that there are many factors that can lead the Spanish state into the years of permanent political crisis with an uncertain outcome. The regional model of the state, established after the collapse of the Francoist state, is today under attack by certain political factors. Not only do a significant part of the political representatives of the regions inhabited by special ethnic groups (Catalonia and the Basque Country) feel that the current model does not provide enough political, economic and cultural autonomy for their regions, but the rest of Spain often seeks federalization as a possible option. Such an option would meet

resistance from a significant part of the citizens, especially those who believe that Spain needs more centralisation and not the other way around. Spain is formally a parliamentary monarchy, but the very institution of the monarch as head of state is increasingly being challenged. Despite the fact that the monarchy is seen as politically and economically unprofitable in the modern democratic world, Spain is still traditionally torn between republicans and monarchists, and that division is still an important part of the political discourse. The unique Spanish identity is increasingly being questioned. A good part of the citizens of Spain do not feel like Spaniards (a large part of the Basques, Catalans), and there are those who nurture a dual identity. The constitutional concept of Spanish identity as common to all citizens is undergoing increasing temptations today. Certainly, the lack of a unified civic and political identity in one community is a reservoir for political conflicts. The rise of the Spanish left-wing, which is in power today, and especially the Podemos party, may in the coming years lead to significant changes in Spain as we know it today. The Spanish left-wing mainly cultivates strong anti-EU and anti-NATO sentiments, looking with suspicion at the liberal model of democracy that is still dominant in the world, and is traditionally republican and distinctly anti-monarchist. Of course, the most notorious political problems Spain is facing are Basque and Catalan separatism. Although the Basque terrorist and separatist organisation ETA has ceased to exist, the Basque political elite is increasingly committed to the peaceful and consensual separation of the Basque Country from Spain. Catalan political leaders in the regional parliament have intensified their efforts over the past few years to achieve the ultimate goal - the secession of Catalonia as an independent republic. The failed referendum from 2017 further deepened the Catalan crisis, and official Madrid and Barcelona are more distant than ever. Unfavourable economic and demographic trends in Spain can only contribute to the further polarisation of Spanish society and politics. In conclusion, Spain obviously needs a dialogue of all relevant political and social actors in search of a broad consensus on the future of this country. Without it, a lasting political crisis imposes itself as an inevitable state. We believe that neither side should insist on radical solutions because they can only be counterproductive. Giving a somewhat higher degree of autonomy to the Spanish regions than the existing one, without insisting on the federalization of Spain or unilateral secession of certain regions, seems to be the most optimal possible solution in the current circumstances. That would, at least in the foreseeable future, probably satisfy the appetites of the Catalan and Basque separatists. So, more than the existing regional state and less than the federal one.

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PRETI LI ŠPANIJI TRAJNA POLITIČKA KRIZA?

Apstrakt: Politička situacija u Španiji je, nakon neuspelog pokušaja jednostranog proglašenja nezavisnosti Katalonije, postala predmet proučavanja naučne i stručne javnosti širom Evrope i sveta. Zategnuti politički odnosi između zvaničnog Madrida i Katalonije su tokom poslednjih nekoliko godina dostigli svoj vrhunac, što nas navodi na zaključak da se španska država nalazi u političkoj krizi. U ovom radu ćemo ispitati potencijalne izvore te krize, u koje možemo uvrstiti krizu regionalnog modela države, pitanje budućnosti monarhije, krizu španskog identiteta, separatizam u Kataloniji i Baskiji, uspon krajnje levice i desnice, te druge činioce koji mogu dodatno indukovati političku krizu (poput ekonomske i demografske situacije). Zaključno s tim, predložićemo usavršavanje regionalne države kao rešenje (nasuprot predlozima o federalizaciji Španije), kao i odustajanje od radikalnih strategija ma odakle dolazile.

Ključne reči: Španija, politička kriza, regionalni model države, Katalonija, Baskija, federalizacija

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IIFE’S AMBASSADORS FORUM

CUBAN VACCINE CANDIDATES: NEW HOPE AGAINST COVID-19

Lecture by
H.E. Mr. Gustavo TRISTÁ DEL TODO
Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Serbia

at the
“Ambassadors’ Forum”
Institute of International Politics and Economics
Wednesday, March 10th, 2021, at 11 o’clock, via Zoom platform.

The high scientific level of Cuban medicine is known to all, and it represents the result of tradition and the most decisive political will to which considerable human and material resources have been dedicated.

In 2012, the Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Industries Group, known as BioCubaFarma, was created. It is a state business group founded by the Council of Ministers of Cuba with the goal of producing high-tech medicines, equipment and services aimed at improving the health of the Cuban people and generating exportable goods and services, as a result of the reached scientific-technical development. The Group holds more than 30 manufacturing companies and institutes that together produce more than half of the country’s essential medicines, and exports medicines to more than 50 countries. One of them is the Finlay Vaccine Institute (IFV), which is now working on at least two vaccine candidates known as Soberana01 and Soberana02.

In May 2020, Cuba began to define what the vaccine would be like. The first clinical trial with two formulations of Soberana01 began on the 24th of August. In October Soberana02 entered Phase I, in December Phase II, and on the 3rd of March, the authorisation for Phase III was obtained.

2020 was a complicated year, worsened by the aggressiveness of the United States sanctions and the pandemic, reasons why the suppliers of basic materials were affected. One of the companies, BioCubaFarma, had to fight hard to acquire

the necessary materials, as the suppliers demanded that no component from the US market be used. This forces them to seek solutions within the country in order to strengthen their position as producers.

The chosen antigen was the “receptor-binding domain” of the virus (RBD). Simply put, those are the molecules that constitute the external “spikes”, so eye-catching that they appear in the picture representation and the high-resolution microscopy of the viral molecular aggregate.

Cuba is currently developing five vaccine candidates.

Soberana02:

It is the most advanced candidate, the second period of clinical trials started on the 22nd of December. Phase III began on the 1st of March after receiving the approval from the Center for State Control of Medicines, Equipment and Medical Devices (Cecmed) and thus became the first in Latin America to reach this stage, where around 44,000 people from Havana, between the ages of 19-80, participated through more than 30 clinical centres and 48 vaccination hubs.

The trial is conceived in three groups: one is a placebo, another subjected to two doses of the vaccine candidate Soberana02, and the third one with a two-dose schedule of Soberana02, combined with one dose of Soberana01. The study will last approximately three months. Inner studies will be performed via partial trial tests and based on the efficiency of the vaccine. The partial results of these trials can be used to create progress in other categories, such as emergency use.

It is a conjugated vaccine where the virus antigen is chemically bound to tetanus toxoid, a substance associated with the bacteria that produce tetanus but chemically inactivated to make it harmless. It requires the administration of three doses in two-week intervals. The application of Soberana02 induces a powerful immune response in a significant number of individuals, and also a cellular response, not only antibodies but also cells that wake up and help protect the person.

Side effects reported by Phase III volunteers are mild pain at the place of injection in the first 24 hours after administration of the vaccine and some general malaise in some subjects, but nothing more. Also, systemic occurrences have not been reported, like high fever or malaise that limits a person’s activities, and especially hospitalisation due to vaccination. All participants undergo rigorous prior medical examinations, including PCR test, and, after the vaccination, they remain under the supervision of medical staff certified in medical urgencies for one hour.

Among the criteria for exclusion from the study is that the subject suffered an acute febrile or infectious disease in the previous seven days or at the time of

vaccine application; the previous or current history of SARS-CoV-2 infection or the administration of vaccines with tetanus toxoid in the last three months. Also, pregnant women, postpartum or breastfeeding are excluded, as well as people with decompensated diseases that limit vaccination according to clinical criteria.

The Soberana02 production system makes up three BioCubaFarma companies: Finlay Vaccine Institute, Center for Molecular Immunology and Center for Biopreparations (BIOCEN); the latter is already producing on a large scale and is expected to reach 100 million doses this year to vaccinate the entire 11 million population. Biocen, a company with experience in the production of parenterals and vaccines, is a high-tech company internationally certified by ISO standards and qualified by the WHO as having sufficient productive capacities to respond to the number of doses needed for the country, as well as to satisfy other commitments.

Cuba signed an agreement to carry out clinical trials in Iran, in collaboration with that country's Pasteur Institute, while Jamaica, Vietnam and Venezuela, among others, have expressed interest in obtaining the vaccine once it passes the necessary safety and efficacy tests. It is expected to be exported by the end of the year. Like the rest of the vaccine candidates, deep freezing is not necessary, which benefits poor countries with a deficit in freezing systems and facilitates the donation of the product.

Abdala:

It requires two separate doses separated in three-week intervals and is based on the recombinant RBD protein formulation. In the coming days, Phase III of the vaccine candidate will begin in the provinces of Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo after being approved by the Centre for State Control of Medicines, Equipment and Medical Devices of Cuba (Cecmed). These territories were chosen due to the high occurrence of the disease, besides the fact that the initial trials of the medicine were carried out in the east of the country.

The trial is planned to include 42,000 subjects, and the vaccine is administered intramuscularly. Two age groups are involved in the trial, 56% of them younger than or equal to 50 years of age and 44% older than 50 years, while the trial is estimated to last for 10 working days, with the vaccination of 1,200 patients each day.

Abdala's production system made up of the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology and (CIGB) and the company Laboratorios AICA, a company that produces injectable generic medicines, has guaranteed the necessary doses for this trial. The logistic operator, the Medicines Marketing and Distribution

Company (Encomed), has prepared its platforms to ensure the distribution of the vaccine candidates.

Soberana01:

The Finlay Institute is developing the vaccine against COVID-19 - Soberana01, which has already shown high security in Phase I and constitutes a possible ideal booster for immunity in convalescents. It is in Phase II of clinical trials, with no date yet for the start of Phase III.

Mambisa:

It is the nasal formulation combining a dose of the product Abdala, which takes advantage of the excellent permeability of the intranasal membranes. It is also selected to generate some highly neutralizing antibodies in the route of the entry of the virus. It is based on the formulation of the RBD (Receptor Binding Domain) protein and contains a portion of the coronavirus spike protein and a hepatitis B virus protein, which stimulates the immune system. It has been developed by the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CICGB).

Soberana Plus:

The Finlay Institute's new medicine is one of the evaluated formulations in the Soberana01 project, but it will be developed as a booster vaccine and will be used in convalescent patients or in combination with other vaccines. The application of a dose of Soberana Plus on subjects with two doses of Soberana02 is much better than the application of the third dose of Soberana02 on those subjects; it is not a dose of the same vaccine, but the combination of two doses of Soberana02 with one of Soberana Plus that increases the immune response even more.

It is aimed at boosting antibody titers in patients exposed to the virus or vaccinated with other vaccine candidates. The injectable was applied to patients recovering from COVID-19 at the Institute of Hematology and Immunology through an open and adaptive study. The trial aimed to stimulate protective levels of neutralising antibodies and protect patients from possible reinfection.

It is an extraordinary phenomenon and one of great relevance for people who had COVID-19 in mild and asymptomatic form since in these subjects the immunity afterwards is not usually strong, nor can their protection against reinfection or one of the new variants of the coronavirus be guaranteed. The

vaccine will serve in the mass vaccination stage to confront variants, mutations and strains of SARS-CoV-2.

As for the underage population, the products will first be evaluated in adolescent populations before children. To achieve high levels of vaccination in the country, clinical trials are required on children under 19 years of age, and the Finlay Institute will focus on paediatric groups in the short term.

The study will be carried out on children from 5 to 18 years of age, starting first with the children between 12 and 18 years; once the safety has been demonstrated in those age groups, the vaccine will be applied to those from 5 to 12 years. The documentation of this process is currently undergoing a review by a research ethics committee. Children between 0 and 5 years will not be included because their immune systems are exposed to other vaccines intended for immunisation in those stages of life.

Almost 6,000 children have suffered from COVID-19 in Cuba since the beginning of the pandemic on the national territory, the 11th of March 2020. 89.5% of all those under 19 years of age overcame this condition, although they report consequences such as inflammation of the heart muscle or myocarditis; and in the covering of the heart, known as pericarditis, in addition to arrhythmias, heart rhythm or heart rate disorders and high blood pressure.

I would like to point out that the success achieved in medicine, in particular the vaccine programs undertaken since the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution that have facilitated the current work, is above all due to the political will of the Cuban State and the guidance of Commander in Chief, Fidel Castro Ruz, who always prioritized the health of the people, and these are the results.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION AND ENGAGEMENT: EU MEMBER STATE RELATIONS WITH KOSOVO

Ioannis Armakolas, James Ker-Lindsay, *The Politics of Recognition and Engagement: EU Member State Relations with Kosovo*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, pp. 245.

Perception of countries towards Kosovo's unilateral independence, based on a binary distinction of recognizers and non-recognizers, is incomplete if not wholly wrong (Armakolas, Ker-Lindsay 2020, 2) claim editors of the volume devoted to analyzing the EU member state relations with Kosovo. *The Politics of Recognition and Engagement*, edited by Ioannis Armakolas and James Ker-Lindsay, explores the complex interactions of the European Union countries with Kosovo's unilaterally declared independence 2008 up to recent days. The book represents the product of a project entitled '*The Politics of (Non)Recognition-Lessons Learned and Knowledge Transfer*' carried out between 2016 and 2018 and made up of eleven chapters aimed at exploring the individual interactions of meaningfully chosen nine EU-member states with Kosovo's unilaterally declared independence. The first chapter provides a unique research framework with clearly elaborated criteria and thus categorization of the countries that will be separately analyzed in other chapters.

An act of recognition represents one of the most essential steps in establishing relations between countries. However, the significance of the recognition regarding both emerging new states and establishing relationships among them have been a highly debated topic within both international law and international relations disciplines. In this study, the phenomenon of recognition and its importance in establishing relations between countries has been thoroughly discussed by using a case of Kosovo's unilateral independence. A starting point in examining the topic is a claim that a 'simple binary explanation, based on a distinction between recognizers and non-recognizers is far from enough' (Armakolas, Ker-Lindsay 2020, 4) to understand the complexity of states' behaviours towards Kosovo's unilateral independence. Namely, as the authors assert, within these two categories of the countries can be identified as highly heterogeneous behaviours. This is because the simple act of recognition, although an initial one in establishing interaction within countries, is not the only one that determines them. It is an intensity and form of engagement of the

countries that make a difference in this regard. It is rightly pointed out that in the years after the unilateral declaration of independence has been shown that the ‘recognition does not necessarily mean an engagement’ (Armakolas, Ker-Lindsay 2020, 3). This is why the authors import in the equation another important criterion - engagement. By stating the importance of both recognition and engagement, as well as their indisputable interrelation, the authors construct four broad definitional categories, aimed at describing complexity of states’ interactions with Kosovo in the last decade: ‘*strong recognizers*’, ‘*weak recognizers*’, ‘*soft non-recognizers*’ and ‘*hard non-recognizers*’ (Armakolas, Ker-Lindsay 2020, 4). This thesis, the authors strive to prove, particularly in the case of the EU, in which the above mentioned has been particularly illustrated. Therefore, according to the presented criteria, they have chosen nine EU member states that clearly illustrate defined categories.

Namely, by categorizing Britain and Germany as *strong recognizers* and Poland and the Czech Republic as *weak recognizers*, together with Cyprus and Spain as *hard non-recognizers* and Greece and Slovakia, and to some extent Romania as *soft non-recognizers*, editors divided this study into additional nine chapters, each devoted to studying one state as a unique case study. The additional value of this research is that it strives to examine the overall connection between recognition, diplomatic relations and engagement in the sphere of international politics, with particular emphasis on the importance of internal political dynamics of each country in shaping these elements. Lastly, in the EU context, this study contributes to the understanding how the EU’s external policy is formulated and operationalized in cases where there are profound differences of opinion between the member states’. (Armakolas, Ker-Lindsay 2020, 16)

The book has ten main contributors, each exploring a position of the country previously classified in one of the four categories. However, the second chapter firstly analyzes the way in which Kosovo formulated its foreign policy from the proclamation of unilateral independence in 2008, with particular emphasis on the strategy of Kosovo’s diplomacy in the process of gaining recognition. As elaborated, this was a part of its effort to establish and strengthen both its international position, as well as internal sovereignty. The author claims that strengthening international support to recognise Kosovo’s sovereignty has been a top foreign policy strategic objective. Presented data, based on the interviews and analysis of important diplomatic documents (Foreign Policy Strategic Objectives, 2008) provide a unique insight into the strategic approach of the newly formed diplomatic service, as well as major achievements and obstacles in this regard. More importantly, in terms of previously defined distinctions, it shows that Kosovo has chosen ‘recognition’ strategy, rather than ‘engagement’ one, especially at the beginning of its efforts to gain international support. However, the decline in gaining new recognitions after the initial success has

shown that engagement is an important tool in filling out a recognition gap. As the author concludes, ‘the process of recognition lost its momentum’ (Demjaha, 2020, 23). Therefore one can expect that Kosovo will strive to improve overall interaction with other countries and organizations, instead of strictly focusing on gaining formal recognition.

Chapters 3 and 4 includes analysis of Britain and Germany, both considered as strong recognizers but with different roles in supporting Kosovo’s independence after 2008. The UK was at the forefront of supporting Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence and therefore played an important role in lobbying for Kosovo’s wider recognition and membership in various international organizations. Therefore, politically Britain has invested a great effort to support Kosovo on the international stage, particularly during the initial phases of an international campaign aimed at providing recognition. However, as it was presented, engagement of the UK in this regard has been reduced over the time, but it is rightly pointed out in the title of this chapter that Britain is the strongest supporter of Kosovo in Europe. Significantly, changed international environment and Brexit definitely shaped the UK’s foreign priorities, which have affected Kosovo’s engagement. Contrary to this trend, Germany, the second strong recognizer, thoroughly analyzed in chapter 4, has gone through the engagement process from ‘a cautious recognizer’ at the beginning towards ‘Kosovo’s key ally’ in the European Union. Despite this difference within the category of strong recognizers, it is interesting to underline the different framework of the engagement. Namely, unlike Britain, which assisted Kosovo in its wider international campaign, aimed at ensuring its international sovereignty, Germany was engaged mainly within the EU framework, especially throughout the EU’s enlargement policy opted for Kosovo’s European integration. Consequently, Germany has a major role in the process of the EU led negotiations and in pressuring Serbia combining instruments of the EU’ soft power’ in the region. However, the major contribution of this chapter consists in following Germany’s path in becoming Kosovo’s ally that was not straightforward, especially during the initial stage that was largely affected by internal political process and divisions. Referring to the role of premature recognition of secession in escalating the Yugoslav civil war, the author explains background of German initial hesitance and reasons that changed this position in favour of Kosovo. Claiming that ‘the Kosovo conflict has been defining foreign policy issue for Germany over two decades’ and ‘the case in which Germany foreign policy change after the Cold War has been most evident’ the author provides a broader picture on the way Germany formulated its approach towards Kosovo’s independence which is of great importance for understanding the future of the EU led to dialogue and Germany’s role within it.

Chapters 5 and 6 examine two lesser-known but quite interesting recognizers, perceived by the authors as ‘weak recognizers’ – the Czech Republic and Poland. As it has been presented, both countries’ behaviour towards Kosovo’s independence was largely influenced by internal political divisions between what was described as ‘pro-Western forces’ and ‘pro-Serbian sentiments’. In both countries, this division created a unique situation in which government decided to recognize unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo, while presidents of both countries denied appointing ambassadors and therefore to establish high-level diplomatic relations. Therefore, both countries remained minimal interactions regarding Kosovo, with poor chances for any significant change.

Starting from the group of the countries that willingly or reluctantly recognize Kosovo’s independence, the second part of the book is focused on the EU’s five member states that do not accept independence of Kosovo, with a profound analysis of the differences among them based on the previously elaborated ‘engagement criterion’. Namely, based on the degree of engagement, the countries are divided into the group of ‘soft non-recognizers’, including Greece, Slovakia and Romania and ‘hard non-recognizers’ consisting of Spain and Cyprus. In chapter 7, it has been elaborated a complex position of Greece, as a non-recognizer but highly interactive country in terms of its presence in Kosovo, as well as its role in the Balkans’ affairs as an important regional actor. Additionally, traditional ties with Serbia and special relations with Cyprus were highlighted as the major starting points in explaining the reasons behind the reluctance of Greece to recognize Kosovo, while at the same time being present in Kosovo in various forms. (Armakolas, 2020, 128) On the other hand, in the case of Slovakia, as chapter 8 assert, the decision was mainly influenced by several internal factors. Although Slovakia has been engaged in some of the regional initiatives regarding Kosovo, the overall cooperation has remained limited over time. In the case of Romania, both internal political perspective towards secession together with traditionally close relations with Serbia resulted in non-recognizing position. (Ivan, 2020, 175) However, in chapter 9, it is asserted that in terms of its interaction with Kosovo. Although started with a somewhat pragmatic position towards overall interactions in Kosovo, throughout the time, it has hardened its approach, which made the authors to qualify it ‘somewhere between’ soft and hard non-recognizers.

Lastly, in chapters 10 and 11 is presented the group of ‘hard non-recognizers’, including Spain and Cyprus. Described as the hard-line countries, each of them has been thoroughly elaborated in the two chapters. What has been identified as a common ground for understanding the countries’ positions is the problem of secessionist movements that each of them deals within their own borders. However, in terms of engagement, both countries remain reluctant to any interactions, whereas Spain seems to be at the forefront of the hard-line position

within the European Union, highlighting the division that will remain as the significant obstacle for any further common position of the EU, despite its proven pragmatism in dealing with the issue of Kosovo. Having in mind unresolved issues in Kosovo and the prospect role of diplomacy in gaining further recognition or withdrawal from Kosovo's recognition, this study is significant for both academics and practitioners. Although focused on the EU member states, it illustrates a wider perspective in the way countries formulate decision towards the highly sensitive issue in international politics and strive for compromises in this regard.

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Sandra DAVIDOVIĆ

EU AND NATO: WHOSE IS THE VICTORY OVER MANAGING CRISES?

Claudia Fahron-Hussey, *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU: The Decision-Making Process*, Springer VS, 2019, pp. 337.

In her pioneering monograph, Claudia Fahron-Hussey provides a conceptual framework with predictive value for scholars and policy-makers interested in the military responses of NATO and the EU. In the affluence of existing literature, we can reveal the “body of knowledge” largely founded on the insights referred to the EU-NATO relationship and their military operations separately (Biermann and Koops 2017; Smith and Gebhard 2017). Emphasising criteria for their effectiveness, theoretical and empirical foundation of knowledge tends to neglect the importance of the decision-making process in these two organisations (Rodt 2011; Rodt 2014). Consequently, many scholars and students get the impression of a blurred image about the division of labour between the EU and NATO. Since the security realm is an open question, Fahron-Hussey with her book fills the research gap about the very important empirical phenomenon. Accordingly, she raises two main points in her introductory observations. First, the EU and NATO represent two international organisations, which are struggling for the new strategic positioning after the end of the Cold War. Second, there is a significant operational overlap between these two organisations in the field of military crisis management. Bearing in mind these two constellations, the author poses a research puzzle asking a key question: why is an authorisation given to either NATO, the EU, or both NATO and the EU to intervene militarily in a conflict?

It is worth mentioning that the book represents an updated version of Claudia Fahron-Hussey’s dissertation, so it can serve as an exemplary guide for PhD students who are in the process of writing their doctoral thesis. The structure of the book follows a logical sequence of research divarication, contained in seven chapters: 1) the first one that follows research design (research question, political and academic relevance, state of research, methods); 2) the second chapter reflects the empirical puzzle of the book, through which are selected pivotal players of the EU and NATO; 3) the third chapter depicts the theoretical framework with a refinement of the principal-agent approach; 4) the fourth part of the book is dedicated to the first case study, the NATO operation in Libya in early 2011; 5) the fifth chapter explains the decision for EU operation

Chad/CAR in 2007; 6) the sixth chapter and the last case study analyse the decision for NATO operations and an EU operation in the Horn of Africa in late 2008; 7) and lastly, the seventh chapter is based on the achievements and limitations of the research.

The theoretical framework of the research goes beyond mainstream theories of international relations, often used to explain the deployment of military operations. Primarily aimed to resolve the empirical riddle, this study also emphasises the theoretical aim embodied in the refinement of the principal-agent approach. Originated from political economy, the principal-agent theory was limited to narrow institutional and economic clarifications, without further examination of delegation in security affairs. Revealing the possibility of multiple agents in the principal-agent hierarchy, Fahren-Hussey notices that organisations can be divided into two roles. The first role of agents belongs to NATO or the EU, as collectivities, and the second role of principals is attributed to their Member States. Through the decision-making process in the EU and NATO, Claudia Fahren-Hussey explores the conditions under which they receive authorisation to launch a military crisis management operation. A succinctly posed research problem has been elaborated by focusing on pivotal states: the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany. Further operationalisation develops two distinct indicators for the concept of agent characteristics. The first indicator is the “capabilities” or characteristics of international organisations, based on insights combined from the principal-agent approach and organisational sociology. Hence, the positivist interpretation of military apparatus has been overcome by the other, soft side of the coin, composed of non-material features. An indispensable part of further examination is the experiences and preferences used as the second indicator of agency characteristics.

Claudia Fahren-Hussey tests principal-agent explication in three detailed case studies by applying the method of process tracing. Since the tracing process is based on the establishment of a dependent and independent variable, she had to suggest certain correlations in each case study and offer alternative explanations of the state-centric institutional perspective and neorealist explanation. The first case study is the NATO operation in Libya in 2011. By analysing official speeches, interviews, press conferences and messages of representatives, Fahren-Hussey tries to determine the attitude of a particular country towards a particular crisis, which thus guides the entire crisis management of an organisation. Almost every pivotal player voted for military engagement except Germany, which was against it. Diffusion in the process making was prevailed by UK preferences and bureaucratic actors within both NATO and the EU. Their lobbying efforts included agent characteristics of their organisation when they pointed out NATO’s structures, assets, and experience as well as its preferences, which were in line with the preferences of the pivotal players within the principal. In contrast,

the EU's representatives made it clear that their organisation should not carry out the military intervention in Libya (p. 151). None of the alternative explanations of the NATO operation in Libya has explained this case. First of all, the state-centric institutional hypothesis was not relevant since the Europeans were not dependent on US military support and the US was interested in the military operation, which would lead to both NATO and EU operations (p. 151). The neorealist hypothesis did not have any explanatory power in the Libya case either, since the US had, compared with France, a lower interest in the crisis region, which would lead to an EU operation (p. 151). Although the neorealist perspective was not obvious by the lack of consensus among the pivotal players, the fact that only NATO conducted the military intervention in Libya means that we should look for a third alternative explanation. In fact, this case demonstrates that the role of bureaucratic actors has become more and more significant.

The second case study was Operation EUFOR Chad/RCA. Even though it was a direct result of the European Union's response to the Darfur crisis, the area of military engagement was in Chad and the Central African Republic, instead of in Sudan. The principal-agent relationship showed that the agency characteristics of the European Union were more suitable than NATO's with regard to a military reaction to the humanitarian disaster in Chad and the CAR. This was confirmed by more suitable material and non-material capabilities of the EU, namely important military resources and significant experience of carrying out military operations in Africa and cooperating with the UN. Strong evidence existed for all parts of the causal mechanism of the principal-agent hypothesis (p. 193). The US saw the EU as the right agent for conducting a military operation in Chad/CAR. The UK and Germany were sceptical about intervening in the two countries, but France argued strongly for an EU operation in Chad/CAR. While NATO's representatives did not lobby for a military operation in Chad and the CAR by their organisation, the EU's representatives like Bernard Kuschner were engaged in intensive lobbying efforts and obtained the consent of other countries to respond to the regional crisis with an EU military operation. Relevant material and immaterial predispositions of the organisation protecting Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad and the northeastern CAR coincided with the preferences of the pivotal player - France in the role of the principal. In this case study, both alternative explanations proved to be affirmative. The state-centric institutional hypothesis was also confirmed because the Europeans did not need US military support for the operation, and the US was not interested in the military operation. The neorealist hypothesis also had explanatory power in the Chad/CAR case, since France compared with the US, had a higher interest in the crisis region.

The third case study was represented through the Operation Allied Provider, the Operation Allied Protector, the Operation Ocean Shield, and the

EUNAVFOR Atalanta off the Horn of Africa. NATO's agent characteristics and the EU's agent characteristics were equally suitable with regard to a military reaction to piracy off the Horn of Africa, in 2008. Both NATO and the EU had highly suitable material and non-material capabilities. Also, they had highly suitable preferences, since both organisations wanted to join the fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia. Preferences of the pivotal players, such as the US, the UK, Germany, and France were compatible, with Germany being the only one that did not have a problem with NATO having a share in the fight against piracy. Unlike the previous mission, the lobbying efforts came more from NATO's representatives. The state-centric institutional hypothesis had explanatory power in the case of the Horn of Africa because the Europeans did not need US military support and the US was interested enough in the military operation (p. 238). On the other side, the neorealist hypothesis has not been confirmed, since the US compared with France, had a lower interest in the Horn of Africa. On the contrary, their highly ambitious interests would lead to an EU operation only (p. 238).

Claudia Fahrion-Hussey's monograph provides a systematic analysis of the decision-making process in NATO and the EU, in order to explain different military outcomes. Speaking the language of academic prudence, the author succeeds to resolve the empirical riddle and make a twofold contribution embodied in theoretical knowledge and policy recommendations. Completing the rationalist approach with constructivist elements from a sociological perspective, the book represents innovative utilisation of the principal-agent conception in terms of international relations and international security. When it comes to the political relevance of research, revelation lies in an empirical pattern with a predictive value for policy-makers. Composing a mosaic of different preferences among pivotal players in NATO and the EU, Fahrion-Hussey identifies strategies to gain organisational support in a military response to the crisis. Uncovering the race to take authority over military crisis management operations, this remarkable study sheds more light on the challenging nature of EU-NATO relations.

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Jovanka KUVKALOVIĆ-STAMATOVIĆ

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Original research article presents the results of research with clear contribution with a view of expanding and/or deepening of existing knowledge. It should be structured to include the following elements: general context and aim of research; theoretical background (review literature) clearly stated in the introduction; departing hypothesis or research question; applied methods; presentation and explanation of the results; conclusion discussing the main research findings, departing hypothesis or research question.

Review article provides a comprehensive summary of research on a certain topic or a perspective on the state of the field by describing current areas of agreement as well as controversies and debates. Review article identifies gaps in knowledge and the most important but still unanswered research questions and suggest directions for future research.

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All types of manuscripts should be submitted in Word and saved in .doc or .docx format.

Use Times New Roman font in size 12, with single-lined spacing, and with an empty line between paragraphs.

Use continuous line numbers starting on the first page, with page numbers on the right side of the bottom of the page.

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Use bold for the article title (size 14).

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Below the title is given the author's full name, with a footnote that refers to her/his institutional affiliation (the name of the institution and its seat), and her e-mail address. Author's affiliation is the affiliation where the research was conducted.

In the footnote, the author also provides all details regarding the project under which the research presented in her article is conducted and/or sources of financial and other support. The author also may point to readers that some of the views presented in the article express her own opinion and not the one of the institution she works for.

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Johnson and Axinn (2013, 136) argue that killing with emotions is morally superior to killing without emotions, because military honour demands a clear will to assume a risk of sacrifice of health and life.

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(Oxford Library 2012)

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Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. *Power, realism, and constructivism*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

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