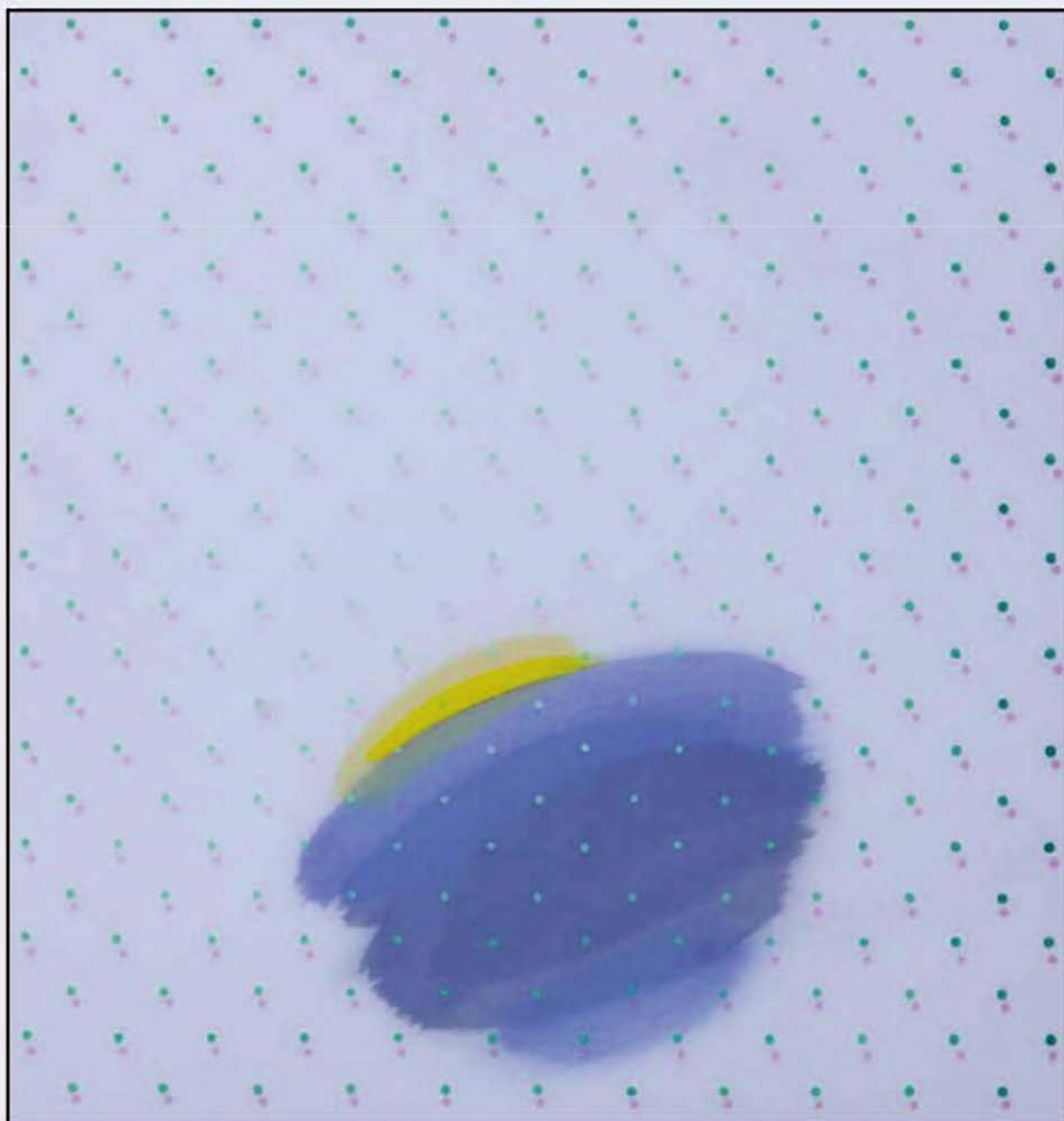


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Editorial

These past few weeks, the Editorial Board at the South East European Journal of Sustainable Development has been a hive of activity as we have doubled our capacity in order to meet the increasing supply of academic articles to review for publication. This – already third annual - issue of SEEJSD is the direct result of scholars' increased research activity across the scientific spectrum. A glance at the broader landscape of research and writing at present sees this as scarcely a surprise. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a rapid shift in priorities in the world of science which has also inevitably affected the world of academic publishing. While the sudden unified focus on the coronavirus transformed what and how scientists study, the unprecedented circumstances that it imposed on the habitual and the everyday affected the volume of studies, as reports suggest that 2020 witnessed a sharp increase in articles across all subjects being submitted for publication in scientific journals.

Under this strain of a swelling pool of research and shorter time between submission and publication, the scientific community, and particularly any journals that aim to maintain their reputation and influence, are poised before the challenge of balancing the benefits of the rapid emergence of new research insights against the potential damage from diminished publication standards. As we at the Editorial Board of SEEJSD understand the Journal's accountability in contributing to the issuance of authentic new research, we have enhanced our review infrastructure in order to be better able to accommodate and honour valuable new submissions without compromising the rigorous editorial standards that we have nurtured for years in our effort to establish a journal that publishes relevant and cutting-edge research in sustainable development and upholds the values of transparency, reproducibility and consistent quality.

It is thus a source of immense pride for us to share the news that SEEJSD has been successfully evaluated for inclusion in EBSCO's full-text subject-specific database. Indexing is vital to the reputation, reach, and consequently impacts of journal articles. As researchers and scholars, we understand too well that academic indexes are typically our chief starting points when we embark on new scientific explorations. At the same time, as indexing has come to represent a hallmark of journal quality, having a submission referenced in a journal that is included in a leading index is a priority for many scholars. Hence, SEEJSD's indexing nomination is at once an effect, i.e. a crowning achievement of years of dedication to developing a reputable platform for the promotion of groundbreaking academic research and a cause, i.e. a driving force spurring us on to even more committed work in the future as we aim to achieve a reliable impact factor.

As we prepare to undertake the challenge of meeting both the real and the scientometric standards of quality academic publishing, we invite our researchers and readership to join us and contribute to building SEEJSD's story of success.

Cordially,

Dr. Azis Pollozhani, PhD
Editor-in-Chief



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The integration process of the country visa vi migration of Albanian youth

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Abstract

One of the most contemporaneous topics of discussion in the Republic of North Macedonia is youth migration, with a special emphasis on the Albanian youth. This concern has increased exponentially since most of the ones leaving are the ones with university education; even the most elite part of them, causing an effect of brain drain. The aim of this paper was to estimate and detect the determinants of this phenomenon. For this purpose, we conduct a survey of Albanian students studying in the three biggest universities where teaching is conducted in albanian language in the Republic of North Macedonia. For the obtained data to be relevant, the selection of the faculties, study programs, as well as the number of students for each year were taken into account in the conception of the sample, with the purpose of reflecting the composition of Albanian student population. Our findings suggest that Albanian students have high expectations for the improvement of the situation in the Republic of North Macedonia, after the NATO membership, but they do not expect the country to become an EU member in the near future. The results from the survey suggest that the main reason for youth emigration is the lack of perspective and bad government policies. Importantly, our findings suggest that material status is closely related to the determination of students to remain or flee the country. More specifically, students from lower income households are more inclined to leave the country at the first given chance. Furthermore, we detect a difference in the push factors between the students from technical sciences and philology students. Lastly, the findings of the survey suggests that patriotism for the country is declining, or that the connection to the homeland is fading. The findings suggest that policy makers should undertake urgent measures to combat corruption and nepotism which we identify as the main reason for the emigration of Albanian youth and accelerate the steps towards the integration processes because it is the only factor that may retain them home, if accompanied by positive economic effects.

Keywords: *student, emigration, survey, Albanian, North Macedonia*

1 Introduction, Need for study, purpose, and method of study

In the public discourse of the Republic of North Macedonia, the topic of population emigration from the country towards European Union countries is being raised every day more frequently. This is a worrying phenomenon for anyone who thinks soberly on the consequences of the phenomenon. Most disturbing is that migration in the present day is not spread only to those who could not guarantee family survival, but more on the vital and educated population, who should be the bearer of economic development but also of the transformation processes of society at the time of integration and globalization.

Mother Teresa University in Skopje, since its establishment in its strategy, has established migration as one of the focal points to study both by the academic staff and by the study programs that are accredited in this university. For this purpose, since the first year of operation, it was decided an international conferences to be organized every year, where the issue of migration will be addressed through theoretical studies, but also scientific research conducted on the field, through public opinion surveys-as a quantitative analysis tool and the most contemporaneous qualitative analysis used by domestic and foreign researchers.

On the occasion of the conference " Migration, Mobility and Social Welfare in the context of Euro-Atlantic integration - Demography, economic development and security " organized by University Mother Teresa in Skopje, the Faculty of Sciences Social organized a project for measuring the public opinion on migration among students at the three universities where it is taught in albanian in the Republic of Northern Macedonia. In the context of the conference topic; the main research topic of the project was measuring the public opinion of the students, across all study years, studying at the University of Tetovo, University of Southeast Europe as well as in Mother Teresa University in Skopje. The study aimed to identify students' opinion on some current topics such as: the European perspectives of the state; How do Euro-Atlantic integration affect migration, and migration prevention. As a second aim of the survey, but not less important, was to identify the determinants of youth emigration from the country but more importantly offer an approximative estimation of the proportion that intends to leave the country. Through additional questions, we were able to extract relevant data on how much Albanian youth is bonded to the country, or how strong the feeling of patriotism was as a precondition for stopping or reducing migration among Albanian educated youth, as we claim to see students. An additional question was conceived, to estimate their concern over national identity, as the assumption was that they would be aware that leaving the country would inevitably affect the creation of a new identity, other than the national one, which if not diminished, at least it will be lightened-faded away.

If the above mentioned points were the major highways that the survey would follow, on its way it was supposed to shed light on the effect of the social status of students (revenue per capita of household), urban-rural residence, the educational background of parents in determining their decision whether to leave the country or to stay and seek perspective in it. Lastly, through the survey we intended to reveal, students from which faculties or future professions have a higher tendency to leave the country.

For the collected information to be as comprehensive as possible, the compilation of the questions and the people who had to conduct the survey with the students (face-to-face) had to meet the main criteria so that the collected data would be relevant. For this purpose, the questions are formulated in a form that is clear, without ambiguity and does not tend to suggest answers, while the interviewers are qualified, neutral towards possible answers, with education other than a degree in political science, while for the processing of results people who have sufficient knowledge in data processing were engaged.

2 Some general data for the surveyed students

In determining the number of students to be surveyed several parameters were held into account, so that the results reflect the Albanian students population that study today. In this regard, the parameters that were considered were: gender ratio, year of study, the number of students from each university and most importantly the faculty from which the respondents are. Following we provide some data of the surveyed students. In total 304 students were surveyed, of which 48.7% of all respondents studied in the University of Tetovo, 28.3% from the University of Southeast Europe, while 23% of the total students are from the University Mother Teresa. In terms of gender, 47.2% are male and 52.8% female. The survey included 10 faculties and a total of 16 study programs. Observed by year of study, first year students comprise 17.2% of the sample, second year 35%, the third year 42.9% , while fourth year students represent 10% of the sample. In terms of their social status, 17.3% of the students in the sample had an income per family member of 50-100€, with a revenue per family member of 100-200 € were 17.3% of the participants, with revenues between 200-350€ were 45.1% of the participants, while those with income per family member of above € 350 represented 20.4% of the total sample. In terms of the place of living, 46.8% declared that they live in the countryside, while 40.5% live in urban areas. Of those who stated that they live in the urban areas, 8.6% said that they live in the suburb areas while only 5% in the city. In order to grasp the social status of the participants the question on the parents' level of education was asked. In this regard, 19.9% of the participants stated that their parents are with primary education, 50.2%, have high school diploma, while 29,9% of the participants parents had higher education (graduate degree). In the process of determining the sample and the questions we saw it necessary to assess the students religious beliefs, in terms of their intensity. The results from the survey showed that a very high percentage of 57.9% see themselves as devout believers, while 15.4% see themselves as traditional believers. A serious percentage of 23.7% declared that they regularly practice religious rites and only 3.4 % have not responded or have been declared as something else, which was not included as a possible answer in the questionnaire.

2.1 Analysis of the results obtained from the survey

Since the country has recently joined the NATO, we considered it necessary assess the expectations of students in terms of the country's membership in this organization and the integration process in the EU. As shown in the graph, almost half of them, more precisely, 49% think that there will be improvements, and 22% of the participants are optimistic that the country has a good future. On the other side 18% of them think that it will not change anything, while 11% who do not know or have no answer.

1. Question: What do you think about the future of RNM after joining NATO?

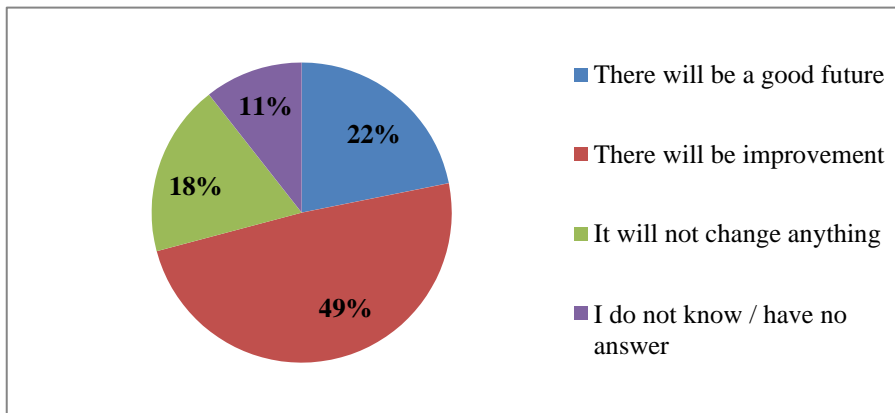


Figure 1: Estimation of the results of the question: What do you think about the future of RNM after joining NATO?

In term of the Eu integration, the data shown in Figure 2 indicate that a high percentage of the students (49.2%) think that the Republic of North Macedonia will join but it will take a lot of time, while 24.8% of them think that membership can happen within 5 to 7 years. On the other hand, 9.6% of them are pessimistic and do not believe that the Republic of North Macedonia will ever join the EU, while 16.5% of the participants have no answer or do not know.

2. Question: What do you think, can RNM join the EU ?

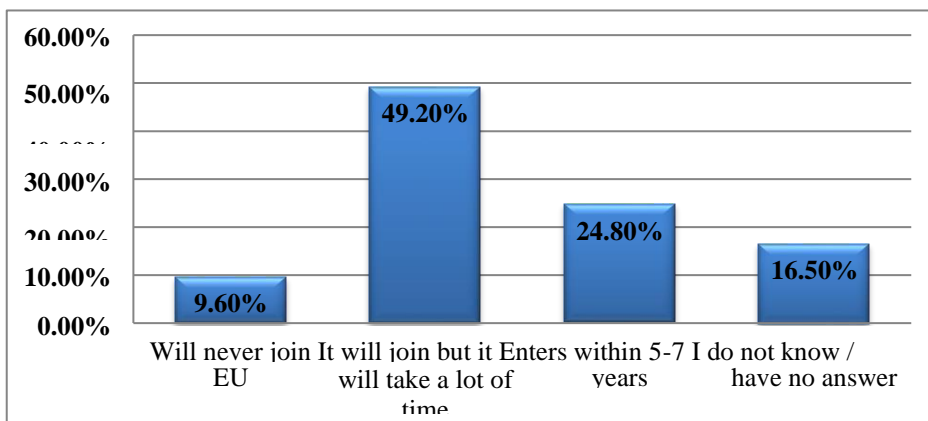


Figure 2: Estimation of the results of the question: What do you think, can RNM join the EU?

Next, our interest was to identify the reasons why students think that Albanian youth are leaving the country. As it can be seen from Chart 3, the vast majority of them (52%), see the lack of perspective in this country as the main reason. Only 16.3% think that the cause of the departures is social problems, while 30% of the respondents think that the wrong policies of the country are the reason for the emigration of Albanian youth. The given answers are very indicative and enlightening, considering the fact that in the day-to-day conversations one gets the impression that social problems are the main factor that pushes young people to leave, but seems that at least for students this is not seen as a reason.

3. Question: What do you think why Albanian youth leave RNM?

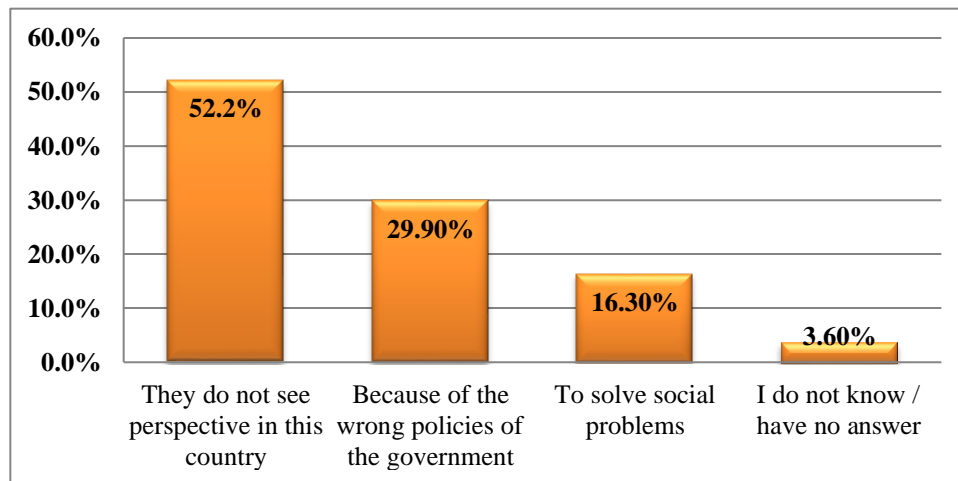


Figure 3: Estimation of the results of the question: What do you think why Albanian youth leave RNM?

While in the previous question we intended to reveal their thoughts on the reasons for youth emigration in general as a social phenomenon, the following questions were supposed to reveal their personal thoughts on the matter, by addressing each one personally, the question: You personally, do you plan to release RMV? The answers given for this question, shown in graph 4 seem extremely disturbing. This is because 35% of the students stated that they will do it at the first opportunity that will be given to them. For jointly more than half of them their decision depends on the economic situation (33%) and the political situation (18%). On the other hand, only 14% of the respondents are adamant in their decision not to leave the country no matter what happens.

4. Question: You personally, do you think to leave RNM?

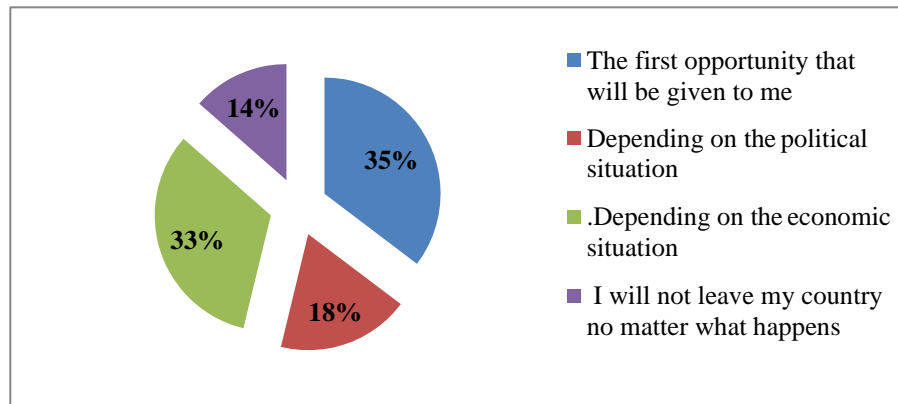


Figure 4: Estimation of the results of the question: You personally, do you think to leave RNM?

A focal point of this paper was to analyse the social dimension of students as a factor of youth emigration. More precisely, we wanted to assess whether students from poorer households were more inclined to leave the country or vice-versa. For this purpose, we analyse the answers of the questions previously mentioned, through the social dimension (income per family member). More precisely, we will concentrate on the two clusters of students (shown in figure 5) with household per member income between 50 and 100 € and those who have income over 350 € per family members, since there is an evident difference between the two extreme possibilities. More precisely, in terms of the answer “I will leave the country at the first opportunity that will be given to me”, where we notice a significant difference of 8 percentage points, between the students with the lowest income (39%) and those with the highest income (31%). The discrepancy noticed above, is in accordance with the social and economic logic, by suggesting a higher tendency of students from lower income households to emigrate to other countries. An interesting perspective of the two groups of students is seen also on the factors of emigration. More precisely, the biggest discrepancy is seen in the political situation aspect, which for students from wealthier households is a significant factor and a precondition for staying in the country. Mathematically speaking, for 29% of the students from households with higher income, the improvement of the political situation is a determinant for their decision to stay, in contrast to only 12% of the students from lower income households that think alike. While for both groups, the improvement of the economic situation seems like an important determinant on the decision for staying in the country, the factor is more pronounced in the students from lower income households (31%).

4. Question: You personally, do you think to leave RNM? (depending on the social situation)

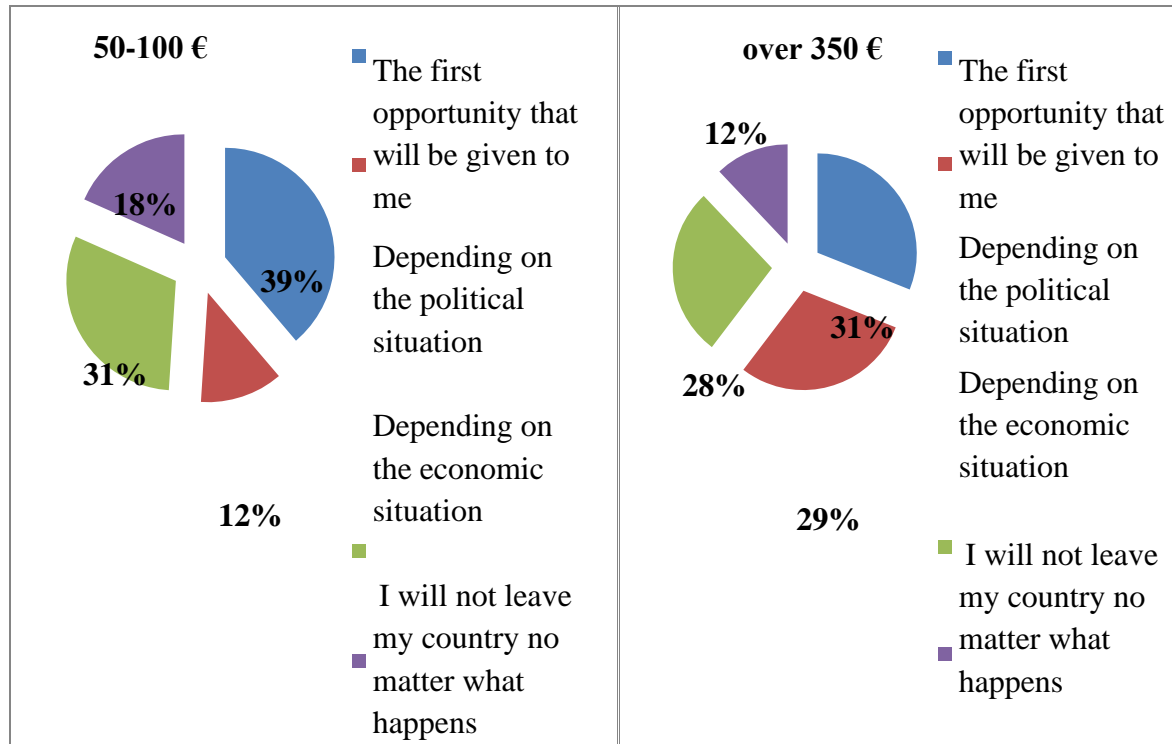


Figure 5: Estimation of the results of the question: You personally, do you think to leave RNM?

To grasp the aspect of the influence of the integration processes for the decision of youth to leave the country, we asked the question: Will NATO and EU membership influence the decision to leave the country?

The results, shown in the graph below suggest that while the process of integration has a significant impact on the decision of the decision of youth to stay in the Republic of North Macedonia, their opinions are quite diverse. Hence, while 27.4% declare that there will be a lot of influence, there are 27.4% of them state that it will not influence their decision at all. For 23.4% of them, the influence of integration will be small, while a majority (34.4%) of the student's state that the integration processes will have an influence on their decision if it will have a positive impact on the economic situation.

5. Question: Membership in NATO and EU will affect the decision to leave the country?

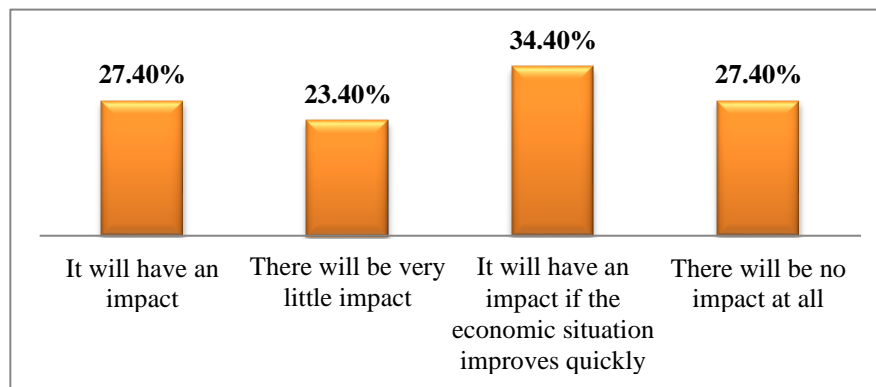


Figure 6: Estimation of the results of the question: Membership in NATO and EU will affect the decision to leave the country?

In order to further assess the factors that push the Albanian students to leave the country, we personified the question by asking them to state the main reason (out of four possible answers) that pushes them to leave the country. Accordingly, as shown in the graph below, a vast majority of the students (40%) stated that the corruption and nepotism that reigns among the political elites is the reason why they want to leave the country. A high proportion, 32% of the students, stated that they want to leave the country because their profession is more highly valued (paid) abroad. For 26% of them, jointly, the lack of career and perspectives and the improvement of the economic situation are factors for emigrating abroad.

6. Question: What is the main reason that pushes you to leave the country? (total respondents)

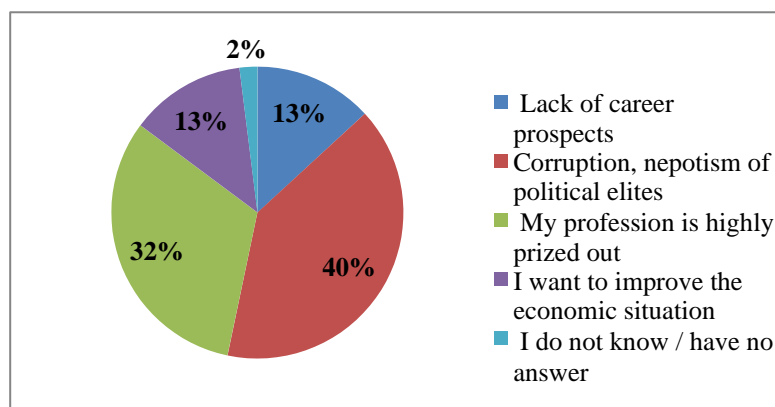


Figure 6: Estimation of the results of the question: What is the main reason that pushes you to leave the country? (total respondents)

In order to highlight how the future profession that they expect to practice after graduation affects their reasoning for emigration, we analyse the answers (shown in figure 7) of students from the two study programs which have the biggest differences on this issue. In the preliminary question, “What is the main reason that pushes you to leave the country?”, the answers of the students from the Faculty of Philology show almost a symmetrical proportion on the reasons for emigration, with a prevalence as a main factor of the higher prize (payment)

abroad, 35% of respondents. The corruption and nepotism of the political elites (23%) and the need to improve the economic situation (23%) is the main cause for emigration for 46% of them. A smaller portion, 19% of them, stated that the main reason for emigration is their need to improve their economic situation.

Contrarily, for a vast majority of students of the Faculty of Informatics (58% of them), the main reason for emigration is corruption and nepotism that dominates among the political elites. More illustratively, more than twice the students from the branch of informatics would leave the country due to corruption and nepotism, compared to the philology students. Moreover, only 24% of the informatics students chose the higher payment abroad as the main factor for emigration, a difference of 9 percentage points compared to the philology students. A divergence on the answers is seen also in terms of the factors: lack of career prospects and improvement of the economic situation, where only 9% of the students for each factor alone, respectively chose it as a main determinant for emigration. The results, are in accordance with the economic logic and the current situation in the Republic of North Macedonia, where IT engineers are the most highly paid professionals (on average engineers earn more than twice the average salary in the RNM), suggesting that once the existential needs are satisfied the need for a better quality of life (social factors) prevails..

6-a. Question: What is the main reason that pushes you to leave the country?
(depending on the profession)

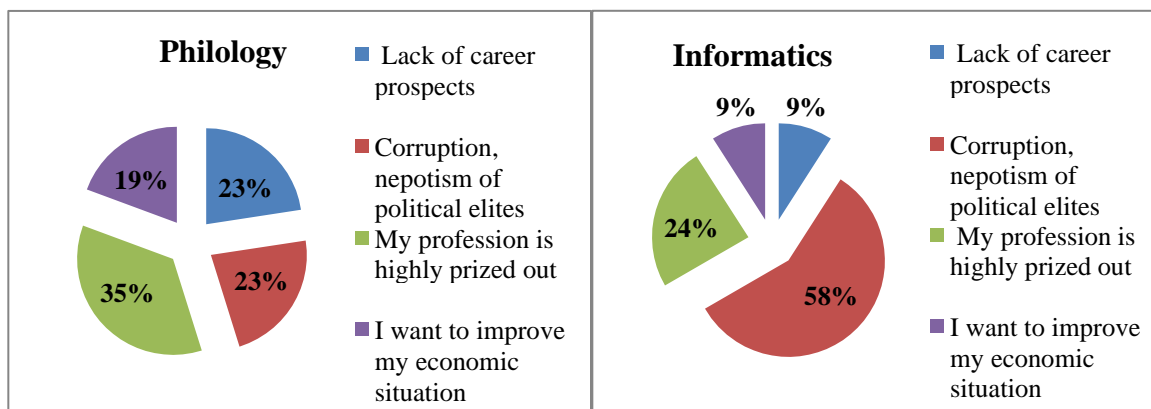
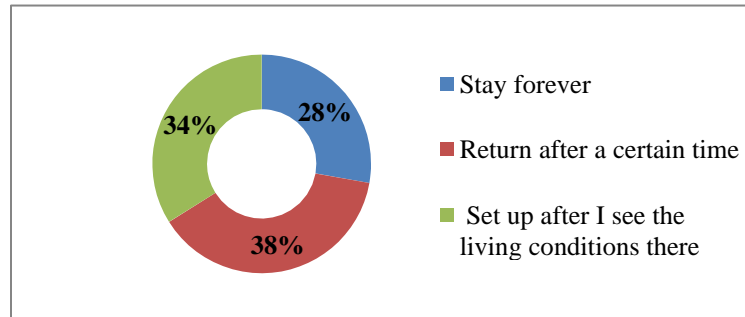


Figure 7: Estimation of the results of the question: What is the main reason that pushes you to leave the country?

In order to grasp the time frame (permanent/short term) of youth emigration we asked a question with three possible answer options (stay permanently, return after a certain time, depending on the living conditions abroad). The results of the respondents, as seen in graph. 9, in a way confirm the before given reasons given for emigration, since only 28% of them stated that they would remain permanently, while a total of 72% jointly relate it to the conditions they would find abroad (34%) and that they will return after a certain time abroad (38%). The high percentage of respondents that would return after a certain time, in a way confirms the before mentioned reasons for emigration, such as corruption and nepotism and the lack of perspective. This is since the two factors mentioned before, have to do with a current situation, which does

not mean that one day they can't improve and implicitly suggests that in the case of better circumstances (the two factors) they would not have left the country.

7. If you had decided to leave your country, do you think to:



Graph 8. Estimation of the results of the question: If you had decided to leave your country, do you think to:

Lastly, we wanted to understand how connected are the young intellectuals (students are considered for the homeland) and how much they are worried about the future of their homeland, after the best intellectual elites will leave the country. For this purpose, the question: “If the best intellectual elites leave the country, who will replace them?” was posed. The received answers are worrying for all those who claim that we have a youth educated in a patriotic spirit, since 17 % of respondents said they do not care, 42 % of them think that they will be replaced by people coming from the East. Hence, a vast majority of the students either do not care at all, or even by being aware that the demographic structure will change, still will choose to leave.

8. Question: If the best intellectual elites leave the country, who will replace them?

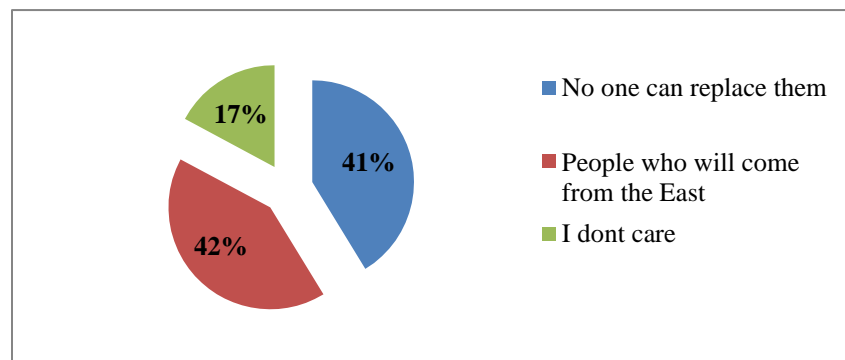


Figure 9: Estimation of the results of the question: If the best intellectual elites leave the country, who will replace them?

In the end, we wanted to hear their opinion on how they see the future of the nation if young people leave the country. To grasp this aspect we asked them the question: How do you think the departure of young people from the country will affect the future of the nation? the answers of which are shown in figure 11. The answers to the last question are even more worrying for those who claim that the Albanian youth has strong national feelings, since 26% of them do not care and 24% think that they will be assimilated, or a joint total of 50%. If to

this percentage is added 30% of those who think that that Albanians will be Islamized, meaning religious identity will prevail over the national one, the picture of the national feelings of the student youth becomes even clearer. What is more interesting is that only 15% think that they will be Europeanized, which means that a small proportion of them have a hope that the country and the nation have a European perspective. The biggest pessimists are those who think that they will be ghettoized, which means that they do not see any movement towards the East or the West of the country and a change of the identity of Albanians.

9. Question: How do you think the departure of young people from the country will affect the future of the nation?

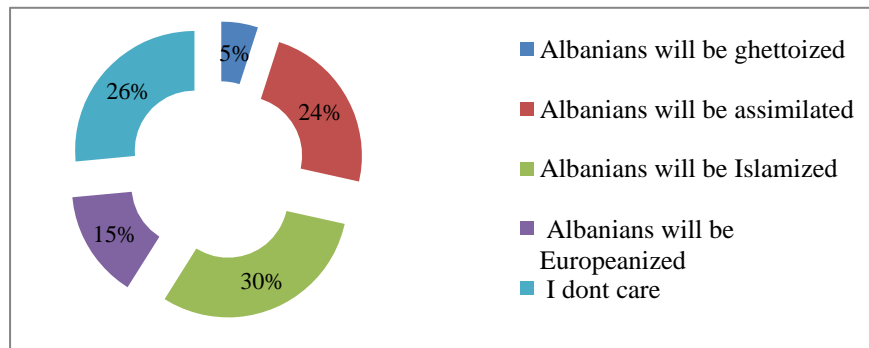


Figure 10: Estimation of the results of the question: How do you think the departure of young people from the country will affect the future of the nation?

After analyzing thoroughly the questions and results of the survey, we believe that they reveal an important insight of the views of Albanian students regarding integration, their connection with emigration, as well as the determinants of youth emigration. Hence, we consider that we have enough material to give an overview of the determinants for the phenomenon. Moreover, the data relieve important information, enabling us to give guidelines on the direction the country's policies for preventing the migration of Albanian youth.

3 Conclusion

From the results of the surveyed students, the first conclusion that we can draw is that Albanian students have high expectations for the improvement of the situation in the Republic of North Macedonia, after the country's membership in NATO. However, they do not expect the country to become EU member in the near future.

In terms of youth emigration, the vast majority (over 52%) think that the main reason why young people leave the country is the lack of perspective but also due to the bad government policies (close to 30%). Moreover, 35% of the respondents think that they will leave the country at the first opportunity that will be given to them, around 51% are waiting for the economic and political situation to improve soon, while only 14% state that they will not leave the country. Among those that stated that they will leave the country at the first given chance prevail students from the low-income households.;

expressed in percentage, their proportion is 8 percentage points higher compared to the highest income students. Namely, material status is closely related to their determination to remain or flee, if necessary, we can also say "patriotism".

Integrations give a glimmer of hope as respondents think that NATO membership will have an impact on their decision but only if the economic situation improves very quickly.

On the concrete question on the reason that pushes them to leave the country according to the respondents the main factors are: corruption and nepotism of the political elites (40%) and the better payment of their profession abroad (32%); while the need for improving their economic situation (13%) and the lack of career perspective (13%) is the main factor for jointly 26% of them. Analyzing the determinants of emigration, we detect that it depends on the students future profession; for example for the student from technical sciences (computing) the main cause is corruption (58%), while this is a determinant for only 23% of the students studying philology.

It should be noted that out of the total number of respondents, about 28% state that they intend to leave permanently, 34% will decide on their decision after seeing the conditions, while 38% plan to return after a certain time abroad.

The survey can conclude that patriotism for the country is declining, or that the connection to the homeland is fading, since 17% of the respondents do not care who can replace them, while 42% think that people from the East will come. Patriotism and national feeling seem to have a correlation with this, since from results it can also be concluded that the sense of national belonging has decreased significantly, with 24% of them thinking that the Albanians that will remain here will be assimilated, 30% think they will be Islamized, 15% think they will be Europeanized, while 26% think that the remaining Albanians will be ghettoized.

From the results obtained, our suggestion are as follows:

The phenomenon of migration is highly complex, thus it requires additional theoretical studying as well as thorough research to identify the exact reasons for Albanian youth emigration and how can this phenomenon be prevented, reduced and provide thorough estimations of its consequences.

Policy decision makers should undertake urgent measures to combat corruption and nepotism that prevails in the country, which the Albanian youth identified as the main reason for leaving the country.

Acceleration of the steps towards the integration processes because it's the only one that gives a glimpse of hope that can change the mind of students if accompanied by positive economic effects.

The proposed instruments and actions should be put in the function of creating perspectives for a better future which a high proportion of respondents see as reasons for emigration abroad.

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Developing diaspora through regional initiatives. Albanian and Western Balkan countries through a political and legal perspective approach

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Abstract

Diaspora is a nowadays issue that needs to be treated into the terms of development. Sometimes, it is hard to keep the connection among this network alive worldwide. Regional initiatives can be an useful instrument that can empower diaspora development specifically in the Western Balkan arena. This paper aims to analyze the political context of diaspora development, mostly into the Western Balkan countries and also proposing some alternatives on how regional initiatives can be a solution to keep the diaspora linked and also a successful network.

Regional initiatives are perceived as a new and an unknown issue, especially when it comes to refer this instrument to diaspora development. There is a whole network of Albanian people all over in the world, mostly based in Western Balkans, Europe, USA etc. The long historical migration of Albanians has presented often the need for development. Beyond many other instruments used so far, this paper aims to understand the importance on how local and regional initiatives can be a useful instrument that can empower the role of diaspora into another level of approach.

Going through this point of view, this paper presents when necessary the legal analysis of European legislation for local and regional initiatives that can be properly used into our diaspora context of living everywhere in the world.

Keywords: *diaspora development, local and regional initiatives, EU legislation, Western Balkans*

Introduction

Due to a historical migration of Albanians in different countries of the world, the need to take care of this community worldwide is a ‘must’. In the recent years, we have the presence of some regional initiatives, mostly in the Western Balkan countries and what is more important we have specific public institutions created to ‘manage’ the diaspora development. Among national, international and European provisions to keep the connection of this community worldwide, regional initiatives seems to be a very useful instrument, too.

This paper has explored the information from the websites and documents of those institutions created specifically for diaspora development such as: different agencies in EU, different non governmental organizations, and respective ministries of Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia etc. Through this exploration, the objective of this paper addresses the general and specific panorama on how diaspora has began to be empowered through regional initiatives by giving also some reflections and recommendations on how can a better policy and legislation facilitate regional development of diaspora. Regional initiatives are not only a matter of procedure, but these instruments are helpful and in the function of an important cause such as diaspora development. So far, regional initiatives have been consolidated casually, without following a specific procedure even in a national or regional approach.

1. Regional initiatives for diaspora: Western Balkan case

When it comes to diaspora development, a lot is said and asked, but less is officially done to realize concrete initiatives, specifically in the regional level. In the recent 10 years, there are a lot of activities that aim to keep alive diaspora network. For example: we have a lot of summits, cultural events, but not even a tentative or a functional local initiatives such as: diaspora community initiative, local and regional referendums, regional agreements etc. In this way, there is not any official legal regional initiative for diaspora in any of Western Balkan countries, where is mostly based diaspora community. Western Balkans can be the best appropriate arena of developing regional initiatives in order to strengthen the diaspora network. It is worthy to mention that some initiatives could easily be transformed into successful official regional initiatives for diaspora. It must not be neglected the fact that diaspora is now a term and issue for EU Commission, too. In the last progress report for Albania in the framework of integration process, it is appreciated the national strategy for the diaspora 2021-2025 as an important event that can manage migration issues in the country and into the regional level also.¹ Even though, diaspora is presented from EU not as a specific policy approach for Western Balkan countries, but it is treated under the migration policy dimension. Despite this official dimension of operating through national strategies for

¹ Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, pg. 40, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-albania-report.pdf>, last seen in September 2020

diaspora, there are many non official initiatives and attempts to develop diaspora community, basically through cultural events such as:

1. A specific conference dedicated to diaspora, organized from the University 'Mother Teresa Skopje'. For almost than 3 years, this very young university gathers many researchers for migration and diaspora, by creating a diverse network among different Albanians that work around the world.² We can consider this conference as a formal and visible activity that offers a specific focus to diaspora issues and also serving as an non formal regional initiative in this framework.

2. Creation of specific websites for diaspora information in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia etc.³

The information presented at these three websites most of the time does not follow the '*same rhythm*'. We see mostly a vague national level approach rather than a regional one, posing in this way a higher need of coordination among the responsible structures of these countries for the activities related to diaspora. Another thing from the exploration of these websites is that most of the activities stay mostly in a cultural dimension. Even though the cultural dimension is very important, there are still many issues where the diaspora development must be focused on such as: legislative initiatives, policy making, project development etc. Although, the initiatives or the activities presented in these websites seems to be sporadic, not with a continuous line of objective achievement.

The strategy and the national plan for diaspora remains also two very important legislative initiatives that can help diaspora development. In the next strategy-project 2021 - 2025 for diaspora a new initiative '*Albania makes advocacy*' is presented. The strategy provides that through this initiative, Albania and its respective institutions must raise the capacity of diaspora stakeholders and to collaborate in order to realize common initiatives between the countries that are going to be part of this initiative. It is also provided a '*business approach of diaspora communities*'. The participation of diaspora communities to collective businesses must be established through institutional support.⁴

Even though, the new initiatives provided in this strategy, the concrete rights and activities of diaspora community are still missing. The strategy is mainly focused to the role of the institutions that need to manage diaspora. We recommend and find it necessary that the strategies must provide even some basic principles and rules for citizens in the diaspora community. Empowering these communities with rights that really do play a significant role helps a lot not only the institutions, but also make possible that this network keeps connected by truly exercising these rights.

² <https://www.migration.unt.edu.mk> , last seen in September 2020

³ Respectively as: www.diaspora.al for Albania, www.mdis.rks-gov.net for Kosovo, www.diaspora.gov.mk for North Macedonia

⁴ Project Strategy 2021-2025 for Diaspora, Albanian Ministry of Diaspora, [https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_224_Projekt-Strategjia-Kombetare-e-Diaspores-2021-2025%20\(1\).pdf](https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_224_Projekt-Strategjia-Kombetare-e-Diaspores-2021-2025%20(1).pdf), last seen in October 2020. The strategy was approved with the Council of Minister's Decision no.585, date 22.07.2020, <http://diaspora.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/STRATEGJIA-KOMBETARE-E-DIASPORES-2021-2025-2.pdf>

II. Institutional mechanisms for Albanian diaspora development

It is a step ahead the fact that an institutional mechanism is being established to manage and be responsible for diaspora development. In Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro, a specific ministry for diaspora is in function. This step means and promises for having a specific focus and decision making towards initiatives for developing diaspora. These institutions have already begin to work on some concrete initiatives that can help the diaspora community to be developed. If we analyse the website of Albanian Ministry of Diaspora, we can see that for up to three years the consultation process for legal issues for diaspora not only for the regional activities, but also for the legal development has been established. This can be red as an opportunity of diaspora citizens to express their opinions and also to be part of the decision making. In order that this opportunity be properly working out, a high level of lobbying and information must be realized, too.

In order to manage the work up to specific sectors and issues, it was seen appropriate that the Ministry would not be enough. So, in Albania, for example there are also some other institutions in the framework of Ministry of Diaspora such as: National Committee for Diaspora, Coordination Council, Commission for Diaspora and Migration and diplomatic officers. *What can these structures offers to the diaspora community?* A direct contact mechanism functioning close to their needs.

The law for diaspora in Albania speaks more into the institutional dimension rather into the rights of the citizens of diaspora. It is highly recommended that the law will have to provide also this part of the medal. The establishment and functioning of institutional mechanisms that manage diaspora issues is not enough to promote and facilitate diaspora initiatives. Also the right that these initiatives do exist as a matter of human rights and basic principles, the specific law for diaspora is not friendly when promoting local or regional initiatives of this community.

Another example that can serve as a very good road path is the Kosovo case. The Ministry of Diaspora and Strategical Investments, promises through its vision to facilitate the regional initiatives of diaspora community.⁵ Sometimes, the division of powers inside an institution, facilitates (or not) the regional initiatives. The strategic investments are concrete results that help a lot this community to keep the network alive participating in this way in different investments that the ministry is being established. The departments that this ministry is divided produces a helpful model to be followed, because it opens road path with a specific focus to diaspora community development.

One alternative and issue that it is appropriate to be addressed into the institutional framework is ‘ *Must the local authorities establish and provide specific structures for diaspora community development* ’? I strongly stand with the opinion the establishment and strengthening of diaspora sectors in local authorities will be more than useful, because they can be closer to community rather than national governance identifying in this way their needs. One of the strategical perspective can be the collaboration between municipalities that are in the cross borders regions. They can easily establish bridges of regional initiatives and

⁵ <https://mdis.rks-gov.net>, last seen in October 2020

other necessary elements. The existence of diaspora structures in local authorities creates warmer realities and possibilities for the realization of regional initiatives, bringing in this way models of European values and integration.

Actually, in Albania there is a collaboration memorandum for establishing and functioning of diaspora and migration structures in local governance.⁶ This structure will function near municipalities, but it will be managed from the central governance, specifically the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Diaspora, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. In this memorandum of collaboration, this structure has the duty to keep alive the network of diaspora, keep them informed and function as a key role researcher into different regional projects that can be a good support for different aspects of development.

Another thing that can help the institutions to be more connected with the diaspora community will be a detailed database with the respective contact of structures where they can ‘knock on their doors’. This database must also be shared into the Albanian embassies in countries that do have diaspora community. Now that most of the legislation for diaspora is being established, the way how the institutions will connect with this community is a significant panorama to be implemented in practice.

III. Legislation improvement to facilitate regional development of diaspora

Despite all the efforts towards the citizenship education for regional and local initiatives and for governmental education for regional development, the basic cornerstone that creates these opportunities still remain the legislation. The process of regional development begins from the legislation followed next from community behavior. Into this framework, the national legislation of Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia are a main focus of our analysis. For the purpose of this paper analysis, the law for diaspora and migration of each of these countries has been studied in order to find and compare the opportunities, facilities and what is missing out for regional initiatives in diaspora community:

	Albania	Kosovo	North Macedonia
The law for migration/diaspora	A specific law for diaspora 16/2018	Law 04/L – 095 ‘For diaspora and migration’	North Macedonia is still working on the law for diaspora and migration. Despite this fact, there is a specific provision at the Constitution for this issue: ‘The Republic shall provide for the diaspora of the Macedonian people

⁶ <http://diaspora.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Memorandum-për-strukturat-e-diaspores-dhe-migracionit-në-pushtetin-lokal-2.pdf>, last seen in November 2020

			and of part of the Albanian people, Turkish people, Vlach people, Serbian people, Roma people, Bosniak people and others and shall foster and promote the ties with the fatherland (Article 36)
Secondary legislation	There is a Strategy and Integration Plan for Diaspora Also other decisions of Council of Ministers are being approved related to specific issues	There is a Strategy and Integration Plan for Diaspora Also other decisions of Council of Ministers are being approved related to specific issues	Being conditioned from the approval of the basic law for diaspora....
The power of citizen initiative in diaspora community	No specific provisions on different legal tools that diaspora citizens can have to concretely realize a regional initiative. The Strategy and the Plan provides some initiatives where citizens can participate, but not specific tools on what they can use for .	The law speaks more for the institutional operation rather than for concrete rights that diaspora citizens have towards regional initiatives.	The law tries to connect this right with referendums. Very important to be developed as a model and also to be a new approach for other diaspora communities.
Institutional facilities to empower and support initiatives	The law speaks more for institutional organization and less about capacity building to manage diaspora regional aspect. Concrete rights for initiatives are missing.	The politics tend to realize the participation of diaspora communities at the decision making structures, especially at the Parliament.	There is an urgent need to intervene at the local governance into establishment of diaspora initiatives.

In a parallel analysis of national legislation between these countries, the EU approach and policy towards diaspora and migration is also important. One of the basis documents of the analysis have been the latest progress reports for Albania and Kosovo related diaspora community. For Albania the establishment of a platform for brain circulation has started with the gathering of data on the Albanian specialists/researchers/experts working abroad. ⁷

If we see the progress report for Kosovo, a lot more is said and analyzed from EU perspective for diaspora development. The report pays attention to the donations and financial support for diaspora, considering EU as the main donor for diaspora issues. ⁸

As explored above, some of the most important and urgent issues that need to be improved from legislative coordinates are:

- the facilities that institutions must create to let regional initiatives happen,
- the connection with the local and regional referendums, as a tool that will empower their role in decision making,
- a coordination scheme between legislation and initiatives between countries that need to take care about diaspora community. Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia must connect their laws in order to create cross borders facilities for regional development into the framework of diaspora context.

Conclusions and recommendations

Some of the reflections found in this research paper are as following:

1. Regional initiatives should be seen as a main tool that can help diaspora development.
2. Diaspora development and regional initiatives should be perceived and conducted following this rhythm : International laws - EU laws - National approach - local level.
3. Diaspora regional initiatives must be treated into legislation terms connected with referendums dimension.
4. The actual legislation for diaspora in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia must provide specific rights of diaspora citizens when developing initiatives.
5. The institutions established for diaspora development must organize a special structure that can help diaspora community be connected realizing also regional initiatives among this network.
6. Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia must connect their laws in order to create cross borders facilities for regional development into the framework of diaspora context.

⁷ See the 2020 Progress Report from European Commission for Albania

⁸ See the 2020 Progress Report from European Commission for Kosovo

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International community must fulfil uncompleted work in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

There is an overall agreement that security and stability are the key prerequisites for sustainable development of the region and beyond. Shareholders hesitate to invest in areas where minimum security and stability standards are not guaranteed. Western Balkans countries still suffer to fully integrate into Euro-Atlantic associations, primarily NATO and the EU, what places them at the bottom of the wellbeing bar. This article concentrates on the obstacles for the progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina and impacts on the entire region. Analysing the role of international community, alongside with internal players, there is a large evidence of efforts, however there is a dilemma whether all these attempts are synchronized with the integration's objectives. The analysis includes player's interests and complementarity of endeavours, their competence and efficiency, as well as outcomes, in order to show an impact on the integration processes but also on the overall security and stability. There are tangible indications of a deliberate slowing down of the process, been enabled by insufficient legal and political circumstances, including the deficient Constitution, which are created and cultivated by international community. There is an empirical evidence of numerous failed activities and projects that directly influence overall progress and future of the country, which is substantial for the entire region and beyond. Conclusion derived from this study suggests that country is facing decisive point in its integration process, which is also threaten by disintegration that could pose a huge risk for the entire region. Suggestions include an immediate and comprehensive engagement of international community with concrete agenda, including the political and legal components.

Keywords: *Western Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina, international community, Constitution, integration, obstacles, progress.*

1 Introduction

There is a high degree of compliance that security and stability are the crucial requirements for sustainable peace and development of a region and beyond. This is relevant to the Western Balkans countries, some of them still striving to recover after the recent war and the post-war ambiguities. The countries share number of similar issues, which are directly related to the regional security and stability, including the integration processes. The experience so far suggests that major events in one country often spill over into the entire region. As far as Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is considered, a long-lasting status quo in the country directly affects the entire region. After twenty-five years of political obstructions and lack of progress, Dayton Peace agreement has proven itself as limited, therefore, it is obvious that international community is failing to provide an adequate constitutional framework for BiH. The Constitution that has been imposed by international community indicates extensive limitations for further progress, which prompted widespread incompetence of the country, internally and externally. Political leaders are not integrating factor, but rather an obstacle, undermining the overall improvement of the country, endangering stability of the entire region. As a direct consequence, serious difficulties have been witnessed and breakdowns of the several activities, initiatives, and projects failed, which leads to disintegration and uncertainty. It could be perhaps explained by the government inability as well as by the neglecting of international community. Consequently, there are number of indicators that illustrate failure of the state functionality: justice incompetence, corruption, human rights, ethnical division, neglect of domestic and international institutions, which results with inability to fulfil integration preconditions and to provide stability and progress. All mentioned could critically endanger the peace in the country, as well as outside. Although this problem has been analysed previously by official progress reports and individual researchers (EC Report, 2020; Rochford, 2019), a multidirectional assessment that includes interdependence of behaviour of internal and external actors has not perfectly investigated. The purpose of the study is to discover whether the further delay of international community to act promptly and engage comprehensively in Bosnia and Herzegovina will encourage destructive forces to slow down processes and undermine any progressive future of the country. The study includes an elaboration of the reform efforts and initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, then analysis of the mayor obstacles for progress, sustainable peace and stability, closing with Conclusion and recommendations of possible solutions.

2 Reform efforts and initiatives

If we take in consideration that Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was internationally recognised in 1992, with the democratically adopted Constitution, and functional country's institutions, then we should acknowledge that the first reform has been made in 1995 by The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, branded as the Dayton Peace Agreement. This accord embodied the Annex 5, which is the country's Constitution, imposing the new organisational, administrative, and political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to the establishing enduring peace, the aim was also to enable democratic development, efficient governing and suitable progress of the country, which

involves the Euro-Atlantic integration. Important to highlight, the Constitution has been imposed by international community, with signed guaranties for its implementation. Unfortunately, twenty-five years later we are not in the position to witness any significant progress. It is difficult to shake off the impression that fifteen years ago the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina for cooperation and reforms was more optimistic than today, when we are witnessing growing ethnic tensions and inflammatory rhetoric, including the open advocacy for the secession of Republika Srpska. As the European Parliamentarian Hannes Swoboda recently stated, „25 years after Dayton, I would say that the glass is both half full and half empty. We have peace, we have some progress, people can live in peace, respecting each other, but on vital issues, such as reform, progress, building the future, not enough has been done.” (Avaz, Dec 15, 2020)

2.1 Initial reform attempts

There were number of reform attempts to improve the governing of the country and to accelerate overall improvement. Initial success was indicated by the transfer of significant authorities to the state level, including the Constitutional Court of BiH, Indirect Taxation of BiH, High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH. The greatest post/Dayton triumph was made by defence reforms and creation of the state ministry of defence and single armed forces that has been completed in 2005. Something that is in common for all of these accomplishments is the fact that international community was determinedly involved in the processes, together with internal actors. Or, success has been made by imposing the solution and forcing local actors to implement it. It worked. Limited success of the police reforms in 2005 marked the beginning of the deadlock course in the country. Commenting on the achievement of the police restructuring on of the insiders commented, “Bosnia found itself at the end of 2005 with a very weak political agreement that sketched out in broad terms a process over the coming five years with the most disputed issues still not resolved.” (Muehlmann, 2008) Due to the deficient conducts of internal actors, enabled by the ethnically based political system, and encouraged by inadequate international reactions, consensus for reforms was rarely attained. This confronted behaviour has been often supported or instructed from the neighbouring countries, which additionally complicates the situation. Stalemate in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued next fifteen years. There is an empirical proof of numerous failed projects that supposed to influence progressive future of the country, which is considerable for the entire region and beyond. (Kozljak 2018) One of the first initiatives that aimed the constitutional reforms was pursued by the US in 2005 but failed in April 2006. What is important to mention is that the collapse of the so-called April package was substantially inspired by international community. Actually, in the critical moment, the EU announced that the constitutional changes are not a prerequisite for the EU integrations. Such an ambivalent and confusing position of the EU will continue following years. Therefore, no surprise that two more initiatives to amend the Constitution and close the OHR office, the Butmir process in 2008 and the Prud agreement in 2009, failed similarly. However, the optimistic fact was that all relevant parties were willing to work on the solution.

2.2 NATO integration

One of the crucial areas to determine the accomplishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the NATO integration process. After preliminary success, demonstrated by the defence reforms, Bosnia and Herzegovina join the NATO PfP program in 2007, and started with the first Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) in 2008. Defence sector seems to be a leverage for the further progress, so NATO foreign ministers met in Tallinn in 2010 and offered the conditional activation of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Tallinn precondition appeared to be a concrete testing of the efficiency of the state government to make decisions effectively. Unfortunately, yet fifteen years later, the Government has not succeeded to fulfil this precondition. However, in December 2018 NATO proposed to Bosnia and Herzegovina to submit its first Annual National Program (ANP). Even this generous NATO offer did not encourage Bosnian politicians to use it as an opportunity to speed up E-A integration processes. In contrary, they spent an additional year in discussing, better to say arguing whether to respond to the NATO call. Finally, in December 2019, the Presidency submitted a reduced document, with the same structure as an ANP, but under different name – Bosnia and Herzegovina Reform Programme. A year after, due to the direct obstruction from Republika Srpska, backed from Serbia and Russian Federation, Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to submit the second ANP, seriously undermining its NATO integration process. Important to highlight that these obstructions were explicitly advocated by Serbian as well as Russian leadership.

2.3 EU integration attempts

The similar struggle is concerned to the EU integration efforts. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only ex-Yugoslav Republic failed to obtain the EU candidacy status. Not even the British-German initiative that was launched in 2014, calling for reforms in the framework of the EU accession process, produced tangible progress regarding the EU accession route. (Kozljak, 2018) Bosnia and Herzegovina only succeeded to unblock the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). Although submitted the answers to the EC questionnaire, appropriate response to the fourteen EU priorities is far away from being accomplished, prolonging the EU candidacy status of the country. The crucial requirements that Bosnia and Herzegovina should fulfil are related to the democracy, functionality of the government, rule of law, basic rights, and public administration restructuring. Something that highlights the approach of the EU is the condition to adjust the Constitution to the EU standards, something that BiH will be hardly able to do on its own. All previously elaborated failures clearly demonstrate a long-lasting lack of the efficiency of the government, which could lead to the further instability of the country, influencing stability and security of the region.

3 Mayor obstacles for progress, sustainable peace and stability

Despite the persisting claims that destructive performance of political leaders is the major problem for the overall progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are also other obstacles that seriously contribute to the gridlock of the country. It could be explained by the limited Dayton

constitution, interference from the neighbouring countries - Serbia and Croatia, and inconsistent actions of international community.

3.1 Politicians as the major obstacle

No doubt that the domestic politicians that pursue ethnically based politics represent the main impediments for the prosperous future. In the existing political settings, they are perceived as relevant only if they advocate to act exclusively for their own ethnic group, regardless the fact if such behaviour is not beneficial for the overall prosperity. Thus, if the member of the BiH Presidency calls for the Entity secession and unification with Serbia, he is glorified among Serbs, although it is an unlawful act. Milorad Dodik acted in this way in many instances, although that exemplify a direct breach of the Dayton Constitution. Or, if he disrespects decisions issued by the Constitutional court, without being prosecuted, that clearly suggests that he inspires violations of the law. Recent addressing of Milorad Dodik to the UN General Assembly, using very offensive vocabulary against HR Valentin Incko, visibly demonstrates character of the statesmen expected to lead the process and represent the entire country. Constant neglect of the genocide from Republika Srpska leadership is another obvious indicator of the disregard of international community. Politicians inappropriate behaviour is not the only problematic issue. Their involvement in crime and corruption seriously undermines the country functioning as well as damages society, directly preventing reform processes. That is precisely observed by the last European Commission report, stating that "Corruption remained widespread and is a serious concern, with all levels of government showing signs of political capture directly affecting the daily life of citizens." (European Commission, 2020) Obviously, political leaders enjoy status quo, without showing interest for changes, which is an excellent framework to control their ethnic groups, and safe haven for criminal and corruptive activities. This suggests that political leaders are not sufficient partner to the international community in its efforts to pursue changes in the country.

3.2 Dayton insufficiency

Regrettably, the lack of political accountability has been predominantly enabled by the Dayton Peace agreement and its deficient Constitution. During the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs' hearing in December 2020, the Chairman of the Committee stated that "The Dayton Peace Agreement ended the war in Bosnia, but it made the country stuck within its dysfunctional system, and its RS entity is blocking the decisions that are in the state interest, which must stop." Political analyst Janusz Bugajski, who also testified before the Committee, warned very seriously that "sooner or later the situation will explode in Bosnia", highlighting the secessionist ambitions from Republika Srpska, backed by Russia. This could lead to a bloody scenario that "must be avoided at all costs." (US Committee, 2020) The CNN reporter Amanpour argued, "Dayton saved lives and brought peace, but rewarded Bosnian Serbs with their own parastate, constantly threatening to secede." (Amanpour, 2020) A big flaw of the Constitution is that the system is conceived to dissuade politicians to do anything for the country, because if they put an emphasis on the state, members of their people will complain about their actions. As Kurt Bassuener stated, "the Dayton constitution makes leveraging fear

politically profitable and politicians unaccountable. Bosnian politicians pursue their self-aggrandizing, maximalist goals at the expense of the general welfare". (Bassuener, 2009) Another blemish of Dayton is that the Constitution set out extremely complicated political and administrative structure, with the state level government, two entity governments, a district government, ten cantons governments, plus municipalities. This has been proven as very complicated and inefficient. For example, if the EU Commission ask for an action to be taken about the EU integration, instead of one single point of contact, fourteen different government should adopt the response to be submitted back to Brussels. This suggest that every of the fourteen levels could veto any decision. That is just one of numerous examples that demonstrates inefficiency of the government, established by the Dayton Constitution. Thus, although ministries and other bodies are created at the state level, due to constitutional competencies, they are disabled to complete their duties. The Constitution has also imposed very limited Electoral law, which is again ethnically based, very discriminatory and undemocratic. Also, this law enables major political parties to apply electoral engineering methods, fabricating election results and thus damaging the will of citizens. As an outcome, there are repeated complications to implement election results, which very often ends with an inability to form a government, enduring the ethnical tensions. That also suggests that progress in Bosnia in such circumstances cannot be made democratically, by electing appropriate leaders. It does not work in that way so far.

3.3 Influence from neighbouring countries

Continual interference from Serbia and Croatia in internal affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina additionally complicates the situation. This has been also empowered by the Dayton peace agreement misinterpretation. Hiding behind special relations or Dayton signatory status, they encourage disintegrating behaviour of the respective ethnic groups. Bosnia and Herzegovina is very often a subject of internal discussions of neighbouring countries in the way that directly undermine sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. This is also highlighted by deliberate equalization of the nationality and ethnicity. Therefore, Serbs and Croats, living in Bosnia and Herzegovina have granted the backup state. These countries are also proxies for wider geo-political competition. For instance, Russian influence in the region has been openly welcomed by the Serbian leadership, involving Republika Srpska in this rivalry. Bugajski argued that "the fundamental problem for Bosnia and Herzegovina is that successive Serbian and Croatian governments have not fully accepted the country as a legitimate and sovereign multi-ethnic state". He also stated that "Serbia hid behind Russia to challenge Bosnia's integrity, while Croatia concealed itself behind its membership in the EU." Thus, nationalistic ambitions of Serbs to secede and Croats to argue to a third entity are directly supported from neighbouring countries, which severely disrupt functioning of the country. This suggest that both, Serbia and Croatia, are destructive factors in the region. They prevent E-A integration process of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus directly advancing the position of Russia in the region. Also, some Bosniak leaders proudly relay on Turkish assistance for pursuing their ethnic interests. All these activities badly destabilize situation in the Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3.4 Role of international community

International community is fully aware of all previously stated anomalies, however, no concrete action occurred that resulted in fixing the issues. In contrary, there are continues signals of disunity. In a view of some analysts, “very often the EU leaders seem very divided and deliver oppressing messages when the European integration reforms in Bosnia are concerned”. (Brljevac, 2009) It has been proven as a big mistake that EU has not made the EU membership achievable for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although almost eighty percent of population support the EU membership, it has not been seen by the EU officials as a potential leverage for further progress. (EUBusiness, 2011) As an outcome, there is a dysfunctional state in the heart of the Europe, with a potential risk of spreading over instability beyond its borders. Despite the twenty-five years of experience that domestic authorities are unable or unwilling to make improvement, the EU is very rigid about the methodology used. As it has been presented, success was only possible when international community was decisively involved in reform process and committed to decided objectives. However, the fact that the EU is undecided on the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans as a whole, is confirmed by the recent pronouncements to delay the start of negotiations with Northern Macedonia and Albania. Obviously, with this approach, the path of the Western Balkan countries to the EU will continue to be thorny and uncertain. Therefore, multiplying assessments of the EU mistreatment suggest that lasting stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina largely depends on the United States. As Bugajski stressed out, “Washington and those NATO Allies that are determined to resist Russia’s destabilizing inroads need to take the leading role in integrating Bosnia internally and internationally”. (Bugajski, 2020) A comprehensive and decisive action, with clear objective to make a tangible change is essential for the future of the country and stability of the entire region. Thus, there are still opportunities and the one that is still without perceptible alternative has been granted by the E-A integrations. As professor Daniel Serwer argue “Biden’s victory is good for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s NATO path. He will resist Russian influence in the world more strongly than Trump.” (Server, 2020)

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Stability, integrations, and overall progress are common imperatives of the region. However, the region is still in danger to become instable. There is an obvious deadlock in integration process, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Number of signs suggests that the country is facing decisive point in its integration process. The significance of the situation is particularly highlighted by the disintegration attempts, allowed by the Dayton Peace Agreement inadequacy. Crime and corruption are encouraged by insufficiency of the judiciary. All this could pose a huge risk to the country as well as to the entire region. Evidence shows that European Union failed to apply adequate strategy, push reforms, and integrate the country, internally and externally. The existing EU approach of only putting pre-conditions and leaving it to the domestic authorities to decide whether to implement them or not has proved as deficient. Instead of that, clear goals should be set out, with the EU and BiH politicians taking joint responsibility for meeting them. Experience suggests that further delay of international community to act promptly in Bosnia and Herzegovina will encourage destructive forces to stop

the processes and undermine any progressive future of the country, thus endangering stability of the entire region.

4.1 Recommendations

4.1.1 Feasible solution undoubtable includes an immediate and comprehensive engagement of international community with concrete agenda and objectives, including the political and legal component. It must comprise a synchronised set of decisive actions of external and internal actors, with accountability mechanisms established. Taking into consideration the lack of accountability of politicians to their people, the responsibility should be observed from the outside too. This could be explained by the fact that international community has imposed the limited Constitution, that enabled these anomalies, which has been widely acknowledged. Therefore, international community must also take obligation and decisively participate in fixing the problems.

4.1.2 It is of the crucial importance to have the US and the EU working together on the new amended Constitution that must be adopted. The recently elected president of the US might be an additional leverage that will strengthen these efforts. Multilateralism has been given a new prospect, and President Biden knows the situation in the Balkans very well, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He already expressed his willingness by the addressing the anniversary of Dayton: "As president, I look forward to working with the international community and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to finally achieve the promise contained in the Dayton Accords — a prosperous, just, and democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina in the heart of a Europe whole, free, and at peace." (Biden, 2020) The momentum ought to be used.

4.1.3 An appropriate Constitution should de-blockade functioning of the state government, provide democracy, and enable efficient decision making, respect human rights, ethnic belongings, religious differences, and the all citizens. The provisions should incorporate: **(1) The abolition of entities and cantons and creation of few economically based regions**, as legitimate societies. **(2) Also, there is an urgent need to determine an independent judicial system**, which would reinforce efficiency of the government. **(3) Then, the new modern Electoral law, in line with EU norms, should be adopted.** It should prioritize democracy, civil rights, and civic citizenship, instead of the ethnic distinctiveness, but still respecting ethnical identity of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4.1.4 The US and EU should assist in halting the destructive influence from Serbia and Croatia, forcing their political leaderships to cooperate. There are workable tools in hands of the US and the EU to attain this, which could include political pressure, diplomatic activities, sanctions, financial measures, etc.

4.1.5 Finally, instead of taking the political leaders and government as only relevant partners, this time it should be improved by actively involving academy, experts, civil society and young educated people in finding and adopting the appropriate solution. This opportunity should not be missed.

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In search of sustainable peace: Peace proposals prior to the Dayton Agreement

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Abstract

During the 1990s, United Nations promoted the idea for peaceful settlement of conflicts. That approach was endorsed regarding the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, too. Mediation process begun primary within the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia, representing the joint efforts of UN and EC. Firstly the Vance – Owen Peace Plan and later the Owen – Stoltenberg Peace Plan had been rejected by the adversaries. Nevertheless, under mediation of USA, the Washington Agreement was concluded and it was one of the fundamentals for the upcoming peace talks, including the Dayton Agreement. Considering that several peace initiatives took place along all those years and proposals on peace agreements many times were refused by the adversaries, this paper aims to understand in what way timing of the efforts for resolution determined success of the mediation process. Contextualizing the mediation process through the concepts on “*positive peace*” and on “*ripeness*”, it is concluded that without reaching mutually hurting stalemate signing of the peace agreements had been very demanding process.

Keywords: *positive peace, ripeness, mediation, Bosnian war*

Introduction

Keeping international peace became a great challenge during the 1990s. United Nations promoted the idea for peaceful settlement of conflicts but in the international scene the phenomenon of intra state conflicts became more present compared with the period of the Cold War. UN needed to find long term solutions for ending the wars that happened with the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, too. Unsuccessful efforts of European Community to manage alone the Yugoslav crisis united UN and EC in the idea for establishing the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia (ICFY), in 1992. In the beginning, mediators Vance and Owen were in charge for conducting the peace talks between the adversaries in the Bosnian war. After several months of intensive negotiations their proposal it was rejected. Later, Owen together with Stoltenberg continued with the mediation process drafting a new proposal. The outcome was the same.

For more than three years international community couldn't reach an enduring solution, acceptable for all parties in the Bosnia war. Very soon after the outbreak of the fighting, in the reports delivered to the Security Council, situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been characterized like ethnic cleansing. Furthermore, within ICFY and Security Council strongly it was believed that negotiations lead by UN and EC will give positive results. All those decisions were not only based on the priorities of UN but also on the interests of the permanent members of Security Council. Founding principles of the organization, especially the idea for peacekeeping forces and economic sanctions didn't prove to be very successful. The decisions for declaring certain war zones like "*safe area*" turned out to be the biggest mistake of the Security Council, too. On the other side, very important element it was willingness of the adversaries' for ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. More concretely, neither of them was fully prepared for compromises. For the Bosnian Presidency and Government it was very important to be preserved territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state. The force for staying in those positions they found more in the capacity of being UN member state. Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats stayed firm on their requests referring to the principle on the right of self-determination. They relied on the political and military assistance from the neighboring countries, particularly Bosnian Serbs from the support of Belgrade. Finding the right moment and the most appropriate peace proposal it was very challenging for the mediators. At the same time they had to follow the Basic Principles for the peace talks defined by the ICFY and to put together the demands of the belligerents in the Bosnian war. Conclusion of the Washington Agreement showed that not only the content of the peace proposal but also timing when it is delivered the agreement plays a crucial role in stopping of the war. In the period of the negotiations for the Vance – Owen Peace Plan and later for the Owen – Stoltenberg Peace Plan, particularly Bosnian Serbs were convinced that with continuation of the military operations will be reinforced their dominant position not only in the battlefield but also during restoration of the initiatives for peace talks.

In understanding in what way timing of the efforts for resolution determined success of the mediation process, in this paper the context of the mediation process will be analyzed through the concepts on “*positive peace*” and on “*ripeness*”. Galtung states that transformation of the conflict and not only stopping of the violence can give long-term results in preventing recurrence of the war (Galtung, 1964, 2013). Considering that the core of sustainable peace relies in changing the conditions that lead to war in this paper will be analyzed the content of the peace proposals offered by the mediators for the period 1992-1994. Perception of the adversaries about the deadlock it is also a determinant element if the peace agreement will be accepted. As Zartman notes Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS) it is closely related with the readiness of the adversaries to sign the peace agreement. On this view, ripeness it is linked with the pain and casualties caused from the war (Zartman, 2000). The first one it is known like subjective component and the second like the objective component(ibid).

Sustainable peace: definition and institutionalization of the idea

The efforts for sustainable peace have had been present since 1899. The First and the Second Hague Peace Conference represents the initial attempts in an institutional form to be introduced mechanisms that would limit use of force in resolution of conflicts and would be created conditions for maintenance of international peace. Analyzing the principles, goals, and expectations written in the Conventions for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes of 1899 and 1907 it is evident that the main idea had been replacing war with peaceful settlement by creating the foundation for permanent institutions and institutionalization of the instruments for peaceful resolution. The documents comprise the principles of equity, right and solidarity.

After the First World War necessity for an international organization responsible to maintain peace and security, in global level, became essential. Peace couldn't endure if the most powerful states continued to see war like solution in the settlement of disputes. For that purpose, in the Preamble of the Covenant of League of Nations it was underlined that signing the document would mean “*acceptance of obligations not to resort to war*”. Therefore, members of League of Nations formally have had agreed to reduce national reserves of military weapons, too. Articles 12, 13, 15 and 16 regulated the procedure that member states had to follow in case of conflict. Role of League of Nations regarding on sustaining international peace and security it was defined in article 11, paragraph1 of the Covenant, in which it is emphasized that Secretary General, member states and Council have an important role in convening an urgent meeting in circumstances of war or threat of war. Readiness of the signatory states to behave according to the provisions of the treaty weakened. Aggression one more time became threat for international peace and security and as such League of Nations failed to prevent the Second World War.

Charter of United Nation symbolizes merging of the previous ideas and instruments for collective security and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Strengthening the role of UN in maintaining international peace and security became the most important priority after WWII. Security Council became the main institution responsible in managing armed conflicts not to be

transformed into threat for the international peace. Determination for lasting peace again was pointed out in the preamble of the UN Charter. Nevertheless, concrete definition on sustainable peace within institutional framework of UN it was adapted in 2016. In the resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 sustainable peace it is defined as:

“A goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development”

In this paper sustainable peace it is seen in two ways: like an objective and series of activities undertaken by UN and EC, focusing on the period of outbreak and escalation of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Vance – Owen Peace Plan

Positive peace

Preparations for the peace agreement regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina begun in September 1992 and after two months the first draft it was ready. Priority had been given to the basic principles on the constitutional framework. Principles were in the same line with the Basic Principles of the ICFY, defined earlier in the conference in London. Mediators Vance and Owen believed that it was a solution that can bring enduring peace in the country whose recognition provoked intra state conflict. Therefore, the main challenge about the content of the proposal continued to be the issue on defining the borders of the provinces.

The question whether Vance – Owen Peace Plan promoted functional cooperation between Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats will be analyzed based on ideas about the structure of the state and the structure and distribution of the governmental functions. In the first draft, it was proposed Bosnia and Herzegovina to be decentralized. Transfer of the authority from the central government to the provinces it was substantial, especially on the political sphere. Competences of the central government were concentrated on the representation and membership of the country in international organizations, defense and citizenship (S/24795). Therefore, foreign policy, including bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, remained responsibility of the state and not being shared with provinces. Considering that parties in the Bosnian war had very divergent demands about the constitutional framework of the country both proposals were suitable in preserving territorial integrity of the country.

In the proposed peace agreement it is characteristic the equal constitutional status of Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. All of them were defined like “*constituent people*”

(S/24795). For the stability of the country that foundation it was very important. It gave the feeling of belonging and not of exclusion which was very important for heterogeneous society that has been in war. Sustainable peace couldn't be built if ideas about other groups didn't change. Improved communication and understanding had to lead to creating an environment that it wouldn't be reflection of stopping the violence but replacing the mentality that brought the war.

The meeting in Geneva, on January 1993, it was the moment when the peace proposal officially was delivered to the parties in the Bosnian war. The final version didn't have great differences from the first draft except that in it was specified that "*The provinces shall not have any international legal personality and may not enter into agreements with foreign States or with international organizations*" (S/25050). As well, that in the national constitution it has to be added the formulation on "*constituent people*" (ibid).

Ripeness: subjective and objective components

Analyzing the reports on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, since the end of August 1992, have had called for urgent measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina, underlining that the situation it is beyond the violation of human rights. In those lines, he had stated that ethnic cleansing happening in the territory of the newly independent state it was not a consequence of the war but the main source that caused the war (E/CN.4/1992/S-1/9). Defining it as a policy his conclusions were based primary on the testimonies of the witnesses and victims, particularly in the besieged areas, interviews with prisoners in the detention camps, interviews with civilians being in the shelter centers, and observations in the field, too.

Focusing on the reports E/CN.4/1992/S-1/9, E/CN.4/1992/S-1/10, A/47/666-S/24809, E/CN.4/1993/50 there are found several subjective elements. In those conditions, in the most disadvantaged position during the negotiations for the Vance Owen Peace Plan it had been the Bosnian Presidency and the Government. In the battlefield, the Muslim population it was the one who suffered the most. They were the main target of the policy of ethnic cleansing. There were used different mechanisms by political and military leadership of Bosnian Serbs aiming to cause constant fear and pain, and in that way to force Bosnian Muslims to leave their homes, particularly in the regions that were considered part of the Republika Srpska.

For the period from August to October 1992, instruments like systematic executions, disappearances of people, detention, intimidation, and rape of women were the most present. Attacks on the homes of Muslims, cultural centers and mosques happened almost every day. Very often people have had decided to leave their homes because of pressure and fear. They were obliged not only to sign documents that will not return but to declare that they donate the properties to the local government (E/CN.4/1992/S-1/9). In most of the cases, all members of the family were forced to leave with the idea they cannot come back in the village or the city they

used to live. The detention it was one of the techniques used for the same purpose. A huge number of people began to disappear, too. Living conditions for the Muslims in the territories under the control of the Bosnian Serbs were very difficult also due to closing of the roads for delivery of the humanitarian aids, sniper fires, and cut off phone lines, electricity, gas and water (ibid). Shelling centers were not safe and civilians were under continues attack. Mazowiecki have had pointed out that during the winter the risk will be high and a lot of people will lose their lives also because of hunger and illnesses.

In the second report, it is repeated that “*ethnic cleansing remains a matter of particular and most urgent concern*”, underlining that the primary purpose it is “*the establishment of ethnically – homogeneous regions*” (E/CN.4/1992/S-1/10). In one occasion Special Rapporteur in negotiations with Karadzic had succeed to prevent massacre of Bosnian Muslims but that it was not sufficient because a lot of families faced with same fear and threat. Unable to protect themselves a lot of them decided to leave or to surround. Therefore, it was a period when intensification of violence weakened the resistance of the Muslim families (ibid). That was the moment of success for the leadership of Republica Srpska where use of the mechanisms of brutality showed to be effective solution for ethnic cleansing. In that direction, Special Rapporteur had called Croatia and European countries not to return back in Bosnia and Herzegovina people that asked the status of refugees, emphasizing that for the Bosnia Muslims, particularly for the young men, the sole solution to escape death it was finding shelter abroad(ibid).

Bosnia and Herzegovina it was not capable neither to preserve its territorial integrity nor the lives of its people. In November 1992 situation deteriorated seriously. The evidences from terrain became more substantial. The period when the conflict had been started began to be covered, too. Information constantly were more voluminous making possible to be documented and to have complete view on what was happening in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina since April 1992. In the report A/47/666 –S/24809 it is underlined that based on the previous information there existed evidences of war crimes and recommending further investigations. As well, it was pointed out that there it was present not only the hate of speech and revenge like it was underlined in the earliest reports but that media plays an negative role in disseminating fake news. It was emphasized that the nature of the conflict it was not religious but nationalistic(ibid).

In the report E/CN.4/1993/50 the scope of information about violence and forms of violence was wider. In the focus were executions, rape, children, forced transfer of people, and military attacks on non-military objects. As consequence of ethnic cleansing in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina became evident demographic changes. Each day repercussions from the policy on ethnic cleansing were more present. By February 1993, more than a million people were internally displaced or having the status of refugee in the neighboring countries and number of the detention camps exceeded 50 (ibid). Release of prisoners it was going very slowly and in most cased it was delayed purposefully.

Among the victims were also the Bosnian Serbs that didn't accept to cooperate with the political and military leadership of Republika Srpska. Any resistance to put in practice the idea for ethnic cleansing meant almost the same fate for the Bosnian Serbs like that of the Bosnian Muslims. Here should be underlined that during the period of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina were several citizens and politicians that strongly believed on the idea for multicultural state like used to be earlier in the country. From the beginning of the negotiations for peace within Bosnian delegation, in each phase, there had been also Bosnian Serbs, supporting the idea for unitary state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Changes in the demographic map continued. Target of arbitrary executions became leading figures in the Bosnian society, too (E/CN.4/1993/50). Eliminating influential people became one of the main mechanisms of ethnic cleansing. The Special Rapporteur had been informed by witnesses and victims that during the period of April 1992, in the area of Srebrenica, there had been *“organized killing of the Muslim population with the emphasis on younger people and distinguished persons”* (ibid). Whether brutal execution of younger men it was one of the mechanisms of ethnic cleansing, rape of women served for the same purpose. After the investigation of the international team of medical experts it was reconfirmed that in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina *“rape of women, including minors, has occurred on large scale”* (ibid). In the report of the Special Rapporteur, it was emphasized that *“rape has been used not only as an attack on the individual victim, but is intended to humiliate, shame, degrade, and terrify the entire ethnic group”* (ibid). Targets of military operations were also attacks on non-military objects, including hospitals.

Owen – Stoltenberg Peace Plan

Positive peace

The main principles on which it was founded the Owen – Stoltenberg Peace Plan were the principles of UN Charter, principles of ICFY, Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The first two documents were closely related to the earlier ideas on peaceful resolution of the conflicts in former Yugoslavia. The universal declarations were used like instruments to be supported the necessity for guaranteeing the rights of the minorities. Referring to international documents the proposals of the mediators were more justifiable and also that states in ethnic conflicts must act according to the international norms and practice. The negotiations had reached a point where the neutrality of the mediators had been questioned by the political leadership of the parties in the Bosnian war.

The structure of the Bosnian state it was defined like *“The Union of Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina”* where the previous proposal about ten provinces it was replaced with the *“three Constituent Republics”* (S/26337/Add.1). The element of three constituent people it was

preserved. Considering that very soon after its independence Bosnia and Herzegovina became member of the UN, in the draft of the constitutional agreement, it was emphasized that the status of UN member state will not be lost. This was essential because it was confirmed that with the new formulation it was not put in risk neither territorial integrity nor recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The state continued to have the legal personality. Therefore, it was the right of the Union except in cases that membership of the Constituent Republics in international organizations would be in conflict with the foreign policy of the Union or of the other Constituent Republics (ibid). With the proposal for Collective Presidency and rotation it was preserved the right of representation and governing for the three constituent people. Considering that rotation it was proposed to be in every four months it was an indication that in practice it will be difficult to implement, especially because of the continuity needed in function of the state.

Comparing with the Vance – Owen Peace Plan in the peace proposal of Owen and Stoltenberg were defined more in details the responsibilities. Constituent Republics gained more competences and it was a step beyond a decentralized state. Despite the initial idea for enhancing the cooperation between Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats it gave impression that functioning of the state will be problematic. The rights and instruments enjoyed by the Constituent Republics could block working of almost every national institution. Again the proposal of the mediators it was built over the model of power sharing whether the nature of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina it was completely different. As well, it was perceived like division of the country in ethnic lines.

Ripeness: subjective and objective components

Special Rapporteur in many times called international community for urgent measures for ending the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina and protection of civilian population, in 1993. Spread of violence it was all over the country. Delivery of the humanitarian assistance it was in very difficult conditions or in some areas completely blocked. Number of displaced people within certain of enclaves increased significantly, including Srebrenica, Zepa, Gorazde and Tuzla. Requests for international forensic experts were present, too (EC/CN.4/1994/3).

Hostilities between the Croat Defense Council (HVO) and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina forces caused pain and casualties in the battlefield to be enormous. Conditions of peace collapsed. Mostar became one of the cities where massive arrests of men and rape of women were main mechanisms of ethnic cleansing (EC/CN.4/1994/3). This time HVO forces were responsible for the acts of barbarity against Bosnian Muslims. There were cases when Bosnian Croat women were victims of inhumane behaviors, too. Methods of forced displacement similar to those of the paramilitary forces of Republika Srpska were used also by HVO. Bosnian Croats that had tried to help their Bosnian Muslim neighbors faced with death threats.

First hand evidences delivered to the Special Rapporteur made clear that suffering of the civilians, especially of Bosnian Muslims, belonged in the category of crimes against humanity. From May to August there had been no signs of improvement. On contrary, devastations including attacks over hospitals and killing of doctors, nurses and patients happened every day. Considering the period when the peace proposals it was delivered and the subjective and objective elements it was very difficult that the Owen – Stoltenberg Peace Plan will be accepted by Bosnian Muslims. It represented the moment when pain it was perceived like a driving force to continue with the war. HVO it was controlling the city of Mostar and it was in a very advantage position in the battlefield, too. Therefore, in those conditions without Mutually Hurting Stalemate it was very difficult to be signed the peace agreement.

Washington Agreement

Positive peace

Under mediation of USA political leadership of Sarajevo and Zagreb concluded that in Bosnia and Herzegovina territories with majority of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats can be integrated in one entity. Therefore, Washington Agreement became the foundation for creating the Federation. Later with the Dayton Agreement it was reconfirmed the status of the Federation and being one on the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the Agreement were specified responsibilities of the Federation and of the cantons. Central government had exclusive competences on foreign policy, defense, economic and fiscal policy, and citizenship. Cantons had the right to manage the issues related to local public policies, including police, education, culture, housing, local finances and social welfare services (S/1994/255). As well, central government and cantons shared competences related to human rights, health, environment, infrastructure for communication and transport, tourism and use of natural resources (ibid).

In the structure of government theoretically there were elements of positive peace, particularly the right in each institution equally to be represented both communities. Nevertheless, again the model it was very complex and difficult to function in reality. For example, there it was central government, cantonal governments and municipality governments. All of them had separate executive, legislative and judiciary bodies. Importance of the Washington Agreement lays in the compromises about the military, too. It was agreed Federation to have “*a unified military command*” (S/1994/255). It was more cooperation for military purposes rather reconciliation.

Ripeness: subjective and objective components

The main source of pain continued to be the policy on ethnic cleansing. Instruments of causing suffering, humiliation, threat, torturer and death were the same and in the sharp rise. Main target remained young men and women. Practices of massive execution and rape persisted. Number of civilians victims of savagery it was very high. They didn't feel safe neither in the zones that were

under protection of the UN peacekeeping forces. Tensions between civilians from different ethnic groups begun to be more present (E/CN.4/1994/47). The antagonisms mainly caused by the condition of war were serious threat for the future of the Bosnian state. Forced displacement of people not only changed demographic map of the country but it enforced the sentiment of interethnic hate and intolerance.

The quest for victory in the battlefield intensified. Human rights violations were committed by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, military forces of Republika Srpska and HVO. In the investigations of the Special Rapporteur regarding the Bosnian government the criticism it was addressed more on the violation of the rights of detainees, restrictions on freedom of movement for Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs, and attacks over civilians in the region of Mostar (E/CN.4/1994/47). Related to the military operations of HVO, in the report, were condemned the mass deportation of Bosnian Muslim population from Mostar, arbitrary arrests and violation of the rights of detainees, rape of women, forced labour, especially military attacks over civilians. The most inhumane acts of violence were identified to be committed by the military forces of Republika Srpska, including executions and disappearing of individuals. Comparing presence of objective components it is found that the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina faced with more material costs. Not being able to protect civilian population, particularly in the areas controlled by Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, demonstrated that it was very challenging for them to fight with two paramilitary forces, at the same time. As well, number of detainees and of prisoners of war it was higher at the detention centers held by paramilitary forces of Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats.

In the report of the Special Rapporteur, prior to the conclusion of the Washington Agreement, it was underlined that “*war continues unabated in Bosnia and Herzegovina*” and the bombardment of the Sarajevo marketplace it was defined like the most serious attack over civilians from the beginning of the war (E/CN.4/1994 /110). Form and scale of violence became unbearable, in the period from December 1993 to February 1994. Mechanisms of ethnic cleansing continued to be used also for the purpose of revenge. Victims of harassment, humiliation and/or rape became also Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat women.

From the Washington perspective, directly engaged in the mediation, the parties showed readiness to accept the peace proposal for different reasons. For the Bosnian Government the Agreement on Federation it was an instrument that would enforce their military capacities against Republika Srpska and would prevent division of Bosnia and Herzegovina like it was proposed previously with the Vance-Owen Plan (DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force,1994). Sarajevo would achieve to counterbalance the army of Pale and to maintain a larger portion of the territory under the joint control with the Bosnian Croats. Tudjman had played an important role over the Bosnian Croats to respond positively on the proposal of the US mediators due to preserve his country’s interests (ibid). At that moment, had existed possibility Croatia to be sanctioned by UN because of the military support for the Bosnian Croats. Under the pressure of Tudjman and wanting to avoid fighting with Bosnian Army, Bosnian Croats decided to sign the

agreement. They didn't perceive the draft as favorable for them and still believed on the idea for union with Croatia(ibid).

Conclusion

From September 1992 to March 1994 there had been intensive negotiations about ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina under third party mediation. The peace proposals of ICFY delivered to the adversaries were rejected with objections on the content of the drafts. With the Vance Owen Peace Plan it was proposed Bosnian state to be decentralized and provinces to have broad competences. Owen Stoltenberg Peace Plan it was built on the idea for the Union of Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina composed from three Republics. In both proposals for the Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats it was guaranteed equal constitutional status. All of them were defined like constituent people. The disapproval of the drafts it was linked with question of the internal borders, too. The proposed maps remained main challenge. Very often the issue it was determined by the objective competent of ripeness. Bosnian Government tried to preserve more of the territory of the Bosnian state. Leadership of Republika Srpska and HVO looked for more territory under their control in the areas that were considered as belonging to Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, too. Therefore, casualties and material costs from the battlefield were closely related with the willingness of adversaries at those moments of victory or defeat to accept or reject the peace proposals. Washington Agreement it was signed in the moment when military alliance between Sarajevo and Zagreb it was reciprocally essential. They were in stalemate positions.

Subjective components of ripeness related to the Bosnian war are found in the practice of ethnic cleansing. Referring to the periodic reports of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, ethnic cleansing had been well defined policy for causing pain at the civil population and not a consequence of the war. There were different mechanisms, including pressure to donate the properties to the local government, fear, killings, disappearance of people, detention, attacks on cultural centers, religious objects and hospitals. Systematic executions of men and rape of women were more present and in large scale victims were Bosnian Muslims. Presence of pain made the leadership of Sarajevo to sign the Washington Agreement whether in September 1993, during the negotiations for the Owen – Stoltenberg Peace Plan, pain it was perceived like a driving force to continue with the war. The force for staying in those positions they found more in the capacity of being UN member state whose territorial integrity and sovereignty it was under a threat.

Finding the right moment and the most appropriate peace proposal it was very challenging in the mediation process, for the period from 1992 to 1994. As a result, without reaching Mutually Hurting Stalemate signing of the peace agreements had been very demanding process.

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The Relationship Between Migration and Life Satisfaction Among Young People in RNM

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Abstract

The general social position of the young population has changed significantly, compared to previous decades, resulting in deterioration in the most important segments, such as rising unemployment and declining quality of daily life. Migration comes up as an answer to this social change. Migration as a social phenomenon is part of the development of human history and is essentially identified as a desire and determination of the individual to overcome difficulties, with the projected view towards a better life. This phenomenon has affected almost the entire young population in the territory of the Republic of Northern Macedonia. Statistics show that a large proportion of young people want to leave in order to create a better life outside their homeland. Potential migrants are motivated by a variety of factors, ranging from the opportunity for a higher quality education to the opportunity for a higher-income employment.

Based on this fact, this paper aims to investigate the relationship between migration and life satisfaction of young people in RNM. The study involved 42 subjects aged 18 to 26 years, grouped according to demographic data such as age, gender and place of residence. Two questionnaires were applied to the above sample: the migration questionnaire (consisting of 16 statements, rated on a scale of 1 to 5) and the life satisfaction scale (consisting of 5 statements, rated on a rating scale from 1 to 5).

According to the obtained results it is founded that there is a statistically significant correlation ($r = -0.488$; $p < 0.01$) between the tendency of young people to migrate and their satisfaction with life offered to them in RNM, where the correlation is in the opposite direction.

This shows that with the increase of life satisfaction in their homeland, the level of tendency of young people to express the desire to migrate decreases.

Keywords: migration, life satisfaction, young population

Introduction

1. Theoretical approach to the research problem

The general social position of the young population has changed significantly, compared to previous decades, resulting in deterioration in the most important segments, such as rising unemployment and declining quality of daily life. Migration comes up as an answer to this social change. Migration as a social phenomenon is part of the development of human history and is essentially identified with the desire and determination of the individual to overcome difficulties, which is mainly led by the projected view towards a better life. This phenomenon has affected almost the entire young population in the territory of the Republic of Northern Macedonia. Statistics show that a large proportion of young people want to leave in order to create a better life outside the homeland. Potential migrants are motivated by a variety of factors, from the opportunity for a better education to the opportunity for higher-income employment.

By definition, *migration* is similar to the notion of geographical mobility and indicates a person's ability to move from one region to another, including changing residence due to work or study. In the political context, migration is defined as the territorial displacement of people from one state to another, changing social relations (UNESCO, 2011). Živković, Soporer and Sekulić (1995, p. 11) define *migration* as "the movement of an individual or group from their place of birth to another geographical or social space, and always arises as a reaction to a range of economic, social or political stimuli. "Migrations can be seen in a broader sense as any form of relocation, temporary permanent residence. A person who changes his permanent residence, participating in the migration process, is called a *migrant*.

Migrations can vary according to several criteria. According to the state border criterion, we distinguish internal and external migration. Internal migration is most commonly taking place within the borders of a state, in a rural-urban ratio (from village to city). External migrations, on the other hand, are migrations in which the country of departure and the destination are not in the same country. Given the time dimension, migrations can be permanent and temporary. According to this categorization, migration refers to the realization of the permanent goal to stay in the migration area, while temporary migrations are realized until the fulfillment of any economic or educational goal. Furthermore, we also distinguish migrations according to the conditions under which migration takes place, on a voluntary or compulsory basis. Voluntary migration refers to the migration of individuals of their own free will and under existing laws, while forced migrations are related when an individual flees war or occupation, natural disasters and conflicts. Also, migrations may be illegal, which refers to illegal crossings of state borders as well as illegal residence in another state (Mesic, 2002). Petersen (1970, according to Mesić, 2002) points out that many authors and researchers who deal with the issue of migration start from the assumption that people move only if they are forced to move. She also says that some people migrate to achieve something new and others migrate in response to changes in living conditions or out of dissatisfaction with life in the homeland.

Researchers agree that the main drivers of migration are the economic factors, respectively the desire to improve the living conditions of the migrants and their families (Haug, 2008; Stahl, 1982). In general, there can be identified six main or motivating factors for migration (kiaki., 2015). The

first are the economic factors, mainly the need for a better living standard and employment opportunities. Other motives are related to dissatisfaction with state governance, giving an emphasis on corruption, and a weak educational and health system. The third factor is demographic and has to do with the replacement of the labor force in developed countries with that of underdeveloped ones. The fourth factor is caused by conflicts and violations of fundamental human rights. The fifth factor consists of environmental factors, such as earthquakes, floods, industrial disasters. The last factors, respectively the sixth ones, are related to the creation of transnational networks in developed countries, based on family or kinship associations.

Although the migration is considered as a good or, in most cases even a single, opportunity to improve the living and the economic standard of the individual, this social phenomenon reflects positive but at the same time also negative consequences on society in general. Migration can be beneficial regarding the economic status of a migrant family, but in most cases moving to another country and being separated from the family can result in the breakdown of family relationships as well as to increase the psychosocial stress. (Kahn, 2003). This consequence is relatively evident in poorer families, who are unable to migrate together (D'Emilio, 2007). However, the development of technology enables the preservation and maintenance of family and social relationships in general, even when individuals are physically away from each other (UNDP, 2009). One of the negative social consequences of migration is the decline of the domestic economy, caused by a special form of migration called "Brain Drain", which is manifested by the emigration of professionals, scientists and intellectuals from the country. (Shverko, 1996).

As mentioned above, one of the main reasons for migration is the desire to increase the quality of life. Subjective experience of quality of life from a psychological point of view represents life satisfaction, which is defined as the cognitive component of well-being. Personal well-being values an individual's satisfaction between his material condition, health, achievements in life, relationships with family and friends, a sense of security, as well as the acceptance by the society.

In terms of collective well-being, it values the satisfaction of an individual in the wider environment he lives in. So, it examines satisfaction with the economic situation, environment, social conditions, state governance, national security, etc. Whether for personal or collective reasons, the goal of a better life in our society resulted with the emigration of a large number of young people to more economically advanced countries. Unfortunately, this emigration is permanent in most cases, where individuals who once migrate do not even plan to ever return to their homeland. William L. Swing says migration cannot and should not be stopped. People should be offered a better and more quality life in their own country. Migration is a process, not a problem.

2. Research methodology

2.1 *Research problem*

Migrations are typical for all zones and time periods, so there is always a need to explore this social phenomenon. The issue of migration is one of the most important issues of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century due to the growing number of individuals who want to "flee" their country (Masey et al., 1993). Therefore, the purpose and the main problem of this paper is to investigate whether there is a relationship or correlation between migration, as a social phenomenon, and satisfaction with the living conditions among the young people.

2.2 *Sample*

In this research are included (N = 42) subjects aged 18 to 26 years. The largest number of participants are aged 18 to 20 years at 52.4% (Table 1). According to the gender of the sample, 73.8% are female, while 26.2% are male (Table 2). Regarding the residence of the subjects, 59.5% live in urban areas, while 45.5% in rural areas of the country (table 3).

Table 1. Participation of subjects by age

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 18-20	22	52.4
21-23	13	31.0
24-26	7	16.7
Total	42	100.0

Table 2. Participation of subjects by gender

	Frequency	Percent
Valid male	11	26.2
female	31	73.8
Total	42	100.0

Table 3. Participation of the subjects by place of residence

	Frequency	Percent
Valid city	25	59.5
village	17	40.5
Total	42	100.0

2.3 *Research instruments*

To obtain the data to achieve the main purpose of this research, dz instruments were used:

1. ***Migration Questionnaire*** - designed by researchers, created on the basis of preliminary assessments, interviews and focus groups. The instrument includes 15 items rated on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). The instrument is reliable reporting the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.622.
2. ***Life Satisfaction Instrument*** (SWL, Pivot and Diener 2008) - a short instrument designed to measure cognitive judgments about an individual's life satisfaction. The instrument consists of 5 questions which are considered to be good measures of suicidal ideation and mental health concerns. The response format in this instrument is the Likert scale from 1 to 7, where 5 is the minimum amount of points and 35 is the maximum. The neutral level of points is 20, while below 9 points indicates extreme life dissatisfaction and above 31 points indicates very great life satisfaction. This instrument is reliable and has a high internal consistency reporting Cronbach Alpha of 0.867.

2.4 *Data analysis methods*

For the analysis of the data obtained from the applied instruments are used statistical methods such as:

Descriptive method, including frequencies and centering tendencies (arithmetic mean, standard deviation);

Testing the reliability of the applied instruments;

Pearson correlation for ascertaining the correlation between migration tendency and life satisfaction.

3. **Results**

3.1 *Test reliability statistics*

The Alpha Cronbach coefficient was used to test the reliability between the items that measure the tendency for migration and the degree of satisfaction of young people with the living conditions offered by their country.

Table 4. Reliability statistics of the migration questionnaire

Crombach's Alpha	N of Items
,532	15

Table 4 shows the reliability of the 15 items of the measurement instrument regarding the migration tendency. According to the achieved coefficient ($\alpha = 0,532$) we notice that the reliability measure characteristic of this questionnaire is average.

Table 5. Life satisfaction rate reliability statistics

Crombach's Alpha	N of Items
,656	5

In table 5 are presented the reliability statistics of the test for measuring life satisfaction; the coefficient ($\alpha = 0.656$) from the 5 items of the respective instrument again shows the average reliability.

3.2 *Statistics for key variables*

Before starting with the comparative analysis to confirm the purpose of this research, we will present the statistical data that the subjects achieve in the evaluation of the main research variables, the tendency for migration and life satisfaction.

The evaluation of the subjects in the migration questionnaire reaches the overall average ($M = 39.64$, $SD = 9.01$) within the minimum value of 25 and the maximum of 62. The theoretical arithmetic mean of the test is ($M = 37.5$) from the maximum 75 points and minimum 15 points. Based on the achieved average we notice that it is higher than the theoretical one (table 6).

Table 6. Migration assessment statistics by subjects

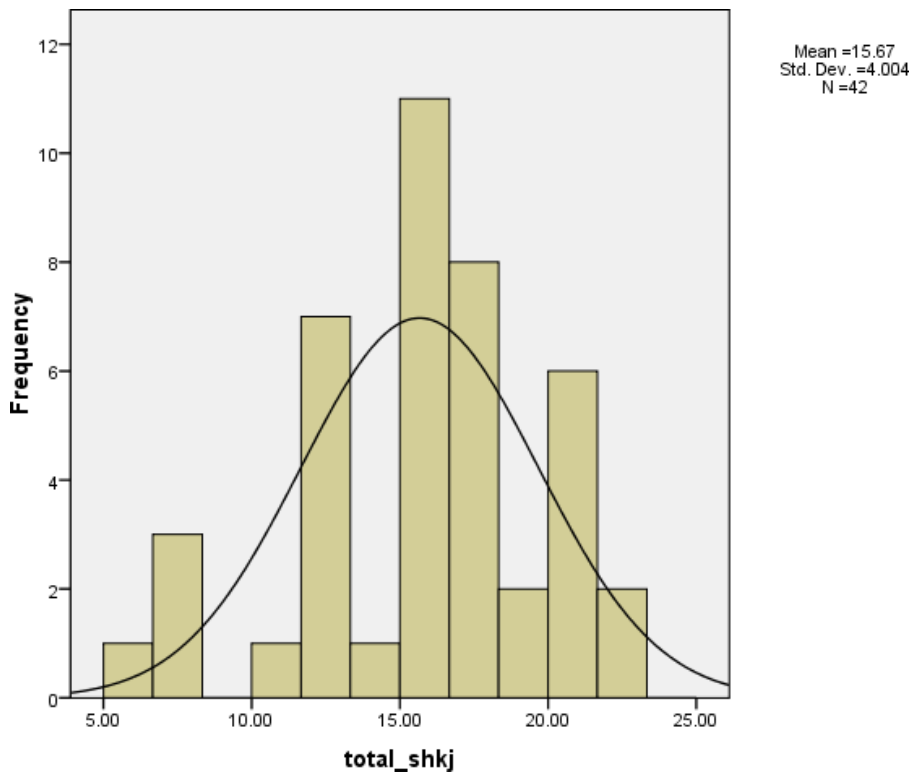
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
total_shm	42	25.00	62.00	39.6429	9.01982
Valid	42				
N					
(listwise)					

In order to show more accurately the focus of the subjects, in Diagram 1 is presented the deviation of the subjects from the normality of the variable.

Diagram 1: Average of migration tendency values

Regarding the level of life satisfaction in table 7 is presented the average of this variable ($M = 15.67$), from the minimum value 6 and maximum 23, with standard deviation $SD = 4$. The theoretical arithmetic mean is ($M = 15$), from maximum points 25 and minimum 5. According to the average achieved, it is noticed that it is higher than the theoretical average and that the points deviate from the existence of satisfaction with the living conditions offered to young people in our country.

In Diagram 2 is showed the deviation of the subjects from the normality of the variables, where we notice that the largest number of subjects is part of the highest points achieved.



3.3. Hypothesis statistics

Considering the relevant research related to the social phenomenon of migration, the basic hypothesis of this paper is:

There is a negative correlation between the tendency to migrate and living conditions satisfaction among young people in RNM.

According to the value of the correlation coefficient presented in table 8 we see that the result obtained goes in favor of the hypothesis put forward. According to the statistical data processing there is a negative correlation ($r = -0,488$; $p < 0.01$) between the tendency for migration and life satisfaction of young people in RNM.

Table 8. Correlation between tendency to migrate and life satisfaction

	total_shkj	total_she
total_shkj Pearson Correlation	1	-.488**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
total_shm Pearson Correlation	-.488**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

- There are differences based on the place of residence of young people in the tendency to migrate and life satisfaction.

- Young people living in rural areas show a higher tendency to migrate, as opposed to young people living in urban areas.

- Young people living in the city show higher satisfaction with the living conditions offered by their country, unlike the young people living in the village.

Based on the results presented in Table 9 regarding the level of tendency for migration and life satisfaction according to the place of residence of young people, it is observed that subjects living in rural areas show a high tendency to migrate from the country with average ($M = 40.88$), in contrast to the subjects living in the city ($M = 38.80$). In terms of life satisfaction, subjects living in cities show higher life satisfaction ($M = 16.12$), in contrast to subjects living in the village (15.00).

Table 9. Assessment of the tendency for migration and life satisfaction according to the place of residence of the subjects

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
total_shmCity	25	38.8000	7.90042	1.58008
Village	17	40.8824	10.58821	2.56802
Total	42	39.6429	9.01382	1.39173
total_shkjCity	25	16.1200	3.45591	.69118
Village	17	15.0000	4.73022	1.14725
Total	42	15.6667	4.00406	.61784

Table 10. ANOVA for differences by place of residence in assessing the tendency for migration and life satisfaction

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
total_sh Between Groups	43.878	1	43.878	.533	.470
Within Groups	3291.765	40	82.294		
Total	3335.643	41			
total_shk Between Groups	12.693	1	12.693	.788	.380
Within Groups	644.640	40	16.116		
Total	657.333	41			

According to the value of the analysis of variance for differences by place of residence in Table 10, it is observed that there are no differences between the subjects in assessing the tendency for migration ($F = 0.53$; $p > 0.05$) and life satisfaction ($F = 0.788$; $p > 0.05$), respectively the hypothesis put forward is rejected.

4. Discussion

Individual as well as group migrations represent a historical constant and human need, which have been deserving of great achievements, whether positive or negative ones. Migration is a daily event and process that has an impact on the global labor market and the workforce in general. Today they are caused by a large number of factors with a dual character, motivating and attractive, starting from war, ethnic intolerance, lack of security in the homeland, poverty, etc. As a result of these factors, the overall social position of the young population has changed significantly compared to the '80s, where there is an increase in unemployment and a decrease in the quality of daily life.

The main purpose of this paper was to study the relationship between the tendency for migration and life satisfaction offered to the youth in our country. According to the obtained results, it was proved that there is a connection between these two social phenomena, but this

connection occurred in the opposite direction ($r = -0,488$; $p < 0.01$). This means that by increasing the life satisfaction, it is noticed a decrease in the level of tendency to migrate among the young people, but unfortunately, the opposite effect occurred.

Regarding the differences in the assessment of the tendency for migration and life satisfaction according to the place of residence of the subjects, ie young people, in general there are no statistically significant differences. According to the averages obtained in the two applied scales, there is a slightly higher level of the tendency for migration of the subjects living in the village, also it is noticed the lowest level of satisfaction with living conditions, in contrast to those living in the city, although this difference is relatively low. The result is attributed to the fact that cities as settlements offer better living conditions, ranging from schooling to employment opportunities.

So in order to reduce the level of migration of the young population, which is the future of our country, there must be provided opportunity, space and resources to the young population in order to fulfill actively their role in the society. This is a long-term action, but also very profitable for our society.

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Diaspora and public donations during COVID-19

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Abstract

The economic and financial crisis caused by COVID-19 has affected almost every country in the world. In Debar, the first cases of those infected with the virus began to appear in early March 2020. After the first victims' registration, the city entered in total isolation and lockdown, including establishing an artificial border with other North Macedonia cities. The negative consequences of isolation began to be felt even more with migrants' absence due to restrictive measures imposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the technical government's virus prevention policies. Through this research paper, we want to emphasize the role and contribution of the Diaspora of Debar during the period of isolation and after it, which were in the form of public donations, initially distributed by the Emergency Office at the Municipality of Debar, in cooperation with non-governmental associations and religious communities. Public donations are in a database, where the exact amount of money donated and their distribution are known. To accomplish this study, we interviewed competent persons, especially the mayor of Debar, who was also the head of the Emergency Office and the Dibra Community Organization president in the USA, as one of the most active diaspora associations of Debar. There will also be a focus group with people who have been involved throughout this period, where we will know their attitude about the management of public donations and their destination; and the impact of these donations on the overall social welfare and standard of living.

Keywords: *Diaspora; COVID-19, Public donations, Social welfare; Standard of living.*

1 Introduction

In late 2019, the coronavirus, already known as COVID-19, began to spread in China, and from 2020 until today, it has spread to almost every country in the world and has been declared a pandemic by the WHO. The number of victims who have lost their lives due to this virus is increasing every day, and the consequences it has left are not only on human health. As a result of states' measures and restrictions, the pandemic of the century has influenced this virus's negative consequences to be felt in economic, financial, social, and psychological terms. In general, this pandemic has led to an increase in the global poverty rate resulting from the economic shock. This virus has also affected gender inequality as women make up around 70% of health and social services care. This inequality has also been intensified because pupils have been ordered not to go to school, which has increased women's obligations at home. According to (UNDP, 2020: 4), 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy have lost around 60% of their incomes, which has resulted in less savings in their bank accounts and less access to social protection. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the reduction of remittances; meanwhile, the decline is expected to be up to 20%. This pandemic has also affected the decline in international trade in goods and services, lowering petroleum products' prices, increasing food insecurity, and a dramatic decline in tourism and airline services.

In March 2020, in North Macedonia began to appear the first cases of those infected with COVID-19 and all this started in the city of Debar, wherein many media you can read that "Debar is the Wuhan of Macedonia." Although the exact link to the virus is unknown, the consequences began to be felt in March's first days. With the holidays of March 7 and 8, where it is a tradition to have gatherings and events, the number of infected increased tenfold within a few days. Panic had already begun to spread among the population, and with the registration of the first deaths, the government of North Macedonia decided to place the city of Debar and the Centar Zupa under curfew on March 13, 2020. At the two crossings, at the Boshku bridge entrance and the beginning of the bridge near the Spilje hydropower plant, police barriers were set up that did not allow entry and exit from the city of Debar. With the declaration of the state of emergency and the closure of the border with Albania, the city of Debar was in complete isolation for a whole month, and only the movement of cars and trucks that brought food supplies and pharmaceuticals were allowed.

After establishing the Emergency Office in the Municipality of Debar, it was decided to close all bars and restaurants in the city, close barbers and other artisans, and close all shops, except supermarkets, grocery stores, and pharmacies. All other organizations, including religious rites in mosques and churches, were also banned. In this way, the city functioned for a whole month, where was reduced the number of infected people, even there were no infected people for a few more days, but started to be felt the other consequences that this situation had left. During the month of total isolation, the citizens began to feel insecure about food and what they would not be able to meet their family needs if it continued in this way, so initially, humanitarian aid was needed for families in need. Many workers employed in the informal economy were faced with the fact that they may lose their jobs and will not realize income, although according to all information, the

owners of bars and restaurants have paid their workers even during the month of isolation. The boutiques, artisans, and other shops did not work for a whole month, so the negative consequences in economic and financial terms began to appear. As uncertainty continued, due to restrictive measures taken by the government and WHO recommendations and measures, migrants could not come to Debar, which would further deepen the economic, financial, and social crisis.

2. Key research terms

We will first define the term diaspora and adapt this concept to our research. This term's historical meaning refers to the group of immigrants included and transformed by the younger generations in the host country. According to Collins Electronic Dictionary (2021), "people who come from a particular nation, or whose ancestors came from it, but who now live in many different parts of the world are sometimes referred to **as the diaspora.**" In most cases, the term diaspora is synonymous with Greek and Jewish groups scattered worldwide. Incorporating the diaspora concept into the social sciences in the 1960s, the term has a more extensive meaning. According to Swiss researcher Janine Dahinden (2010: 53), several crucial factors influence the creation of transnational social formations and are local. From this position of the Swiss researcher, the Polish researcher Karolina Bielenin-Lencowska (2015: 158), in her research on the protests of the Reka diaspora against the diversion of the river Radika, uses the term diaspora in terms of local conceptualization of the concept of the Diaspora. Therefore, for practical issues, in this paper, the Debar emigrants in the USA and Europe, we will refer to the Diaspora of the city of Debar, which in the USA is organized in the Dibra Community Organization based in New York and Dibra Community Center based in New Jersey. Also, the citizens of Debar in Switzerland have founded the association Dibra Community Switzerland, which was very active through public donations during the pandemic and total isolation of Debar.

Donations are usually related to financial aid given to a person or organization to help others. Donations can be of various natures, but we will mention only a few of them: generous donations, a large donation, a small donation, political donations, charitable donations, **private donations, public donations, and anonymous donations.** According to the Longman Electronic Dictionary (2021), private donations are given only by a single person, whereas public donations are donations from a group of people or organizations that will serve specific purposes. In this research paper, we will have almost all types of donations, except political ones, because during the management of the situation with COVID-19, most of the public and private donations were intended for charity, in order to the standard of living is maintained, and there is at least social welfare during this period as well. During the confrontation with the pandemic and total isolation, there have been numerous donations in Debar, which have come in the form of private, public, and anonymous donations, but for practical purposes, we will continue to use the term public donations.

Standard of living and overall social welfare are two issues that had to be maintained and managed during this period. According to the Cambridge Electronic Dictionary (2021), referring to

the economic and social aspect, "standard of living refers to the degree of comfort that people in a particular social have, including the number and type of products and services that they can buy." Although many people could have saved and could afford to buy products and use services during this period, the chaos caused by the situation led to food insecurity and reduced family income. Social welfare has to do with all the good things and services that can be used privately and publicly by the people of a place (Muça, 2019). Social welfare implies the well-being of society. Social welfare is not the same as the standard of living, and according to Electronic Dictionary Business Dictionary (2018), instead refers to the quality of life that includes several factors: the quality of the environment (air, soil, water), the level of criminality, the extent of drug abuse, the availability of essential social services as well as other aspects of spiritual and religious life.

In the absence of a survey regarding remittances, taking into account many conversations with citizens, we have estimated that the citizens of Debar receive a considerable amount of remittances from their relatives located in the US and Europe. The pandemic and total isolation led to a momentary reduction in remittances, further aggravating citizens' situation. Therefore, during this period, the Diaspora's role, the Office of Emergencies, and public donations were crucial in overcoming this crisis in all aspects.

3. Public donations and the diaspora of the city of debar during COVID-19

From the first days of the isolation of Debar and the declaration of the state of emergency in the municipalities of Debar and Centar Zupa, the Diaspora of Debar in the US and Europe has started organizing to help the citizens of Debar. The Diaspora's contribution to the city of Debar has a historical and continuous flow that has been realized on two levels: private or remittances, as well as in public terms, such as public donations and direct investments. The Diaspora of Debar has had an impact on:

- Improving the overall social welfare;
- Rising the standard of living;
- In the democratization of the city;
- Economic growth through direct investments and remittances;
- Supporting activities and projects of public character such as sports, gatherings, and national events, assistance to primary and secondary schools, assistance to cults and religious facilities, support for civic initiatives.

Regarding the areas in which the Diaspora has contributed, we can list them as follows:

- **Infrastructure** – in cooperation with the local government;
- **Financial and economic assistance** – humanitarian aid;
- **Construction and reconstruction** – helping people in need to build their own houses;
- **Education and culture** – helping the students with scholarships and sending teaching aids for schools;
- **Religion objects and infrastructure** – building mosques and reconstruction of other religious objects;
- **Hospitals and healing** – sending hospital supplies and financial aid for people who need healing;
- **Direct investment** - Opening of companies by emigrants in Debar, where many people are employed.

According to the Mayor of Debar, Hekuran Duka (2020), "with the discovery of the first case of COVID-19 in the city of Debar in March 2020, an initiative was taken by the Center for Crisis Management in cooperation with the Municipality to form operational headquarters or Crisis Staff to deal with the COVID-19 situation. The citizens of Debar living in the USA, Europe, and those living in Skopje, started to help Debar and the citizens of Debar, initially with food products, clothing, and hygiene items. The Diaspora of Debar was present in this action through aid, especially from the USA, wherefrom The Dibra Community Organization we had various aid, but also from other persons and businessmen living and operating in the USA". Even though there have been individuals who have given their contribution in terms of humanitarian aid and financial support, we will first address Diaspora organizations' role that through public donations have helped the citizens of Debar.

One of the earliest and largest associations in the US is The Dibra Community Organization (SHAD), founded in 1996 in New York to preserve Debar's values and culture. According to Strikçani (2019), "since its establishment, this association has had a variety of organizations for the benefit of the citizens of Debar living in the US, but also of the citizens of Debar who are in their homeland." Among the many activities, this organization's objective has been the "establishing a connection bridge" with Debar, where various donations have been present in almost every activity. According to the president of SHAD, Dashnor Miftari (2020), "the actions or commitments undertaken by SHAD have continued very well, thanks to the donors who support these activities in the US, but also the volunteers who cooperate in Debar and who are a significant factor in the realization of these projects."

According to the report of SHAD (2020), public donations are carried out in four phases, as follows:

1. **The first phase:** Garbage bags, disinfectant detergent for street washing, gloves for workers;
2. **The second phase:** Distribution of food aid to families in need: 140 food packages;
3. **The third phase:** Teaching materials for elementary schools' pupils in "Said Najdeni" (485 pupils) and "Penestia"(600pupil);
4. **The fourth phase:** During the month of Ramadan, the fourth phase was realized since the beginning of COVID 19 in Debar. Fifty families were assisted with a \$ 100 food package each;

According to the report, the total amount of the public donations during the COVID-19 period and total isolation of Debar was about **US \$ 25,000**. According to Miftari (2020), SHAD has plans to continue to be close to the homeland in the future, having close contacts with the competent bodies in Debar, such as the Municipality of Debar, and volunteers who are willing to contribute. In addition to the report's activities, SHAD also completed the action to distribute firewood for families in need. The request was also made for the pupils of Said Najdeni Primary School to be provided with tablets to attend online classes. In addition to the report's activities, SHAD has continued the activity through various humanitarian aid to people in need. According to the SHAD report (2020), a total of **US \$ 50,000** was collected from public donations during the COVID-19 period.

Another Debar Diaspora organization that has been active through public donations during COVID-19 is The Dibra Community Center, based in New Jersey. Among many other humanitarian aids, this organization has donated to the school Penestia 65 tablets dedicated to the pupils with social needs who do not have the opportunity to attend distance learning. Public donations, which have been from individuals and social initiatives, can be listed as follows:

- To the Penestia Elementary School were donated 50 tablets by a businessman living and working in the USA.
- With a family and social initiative, in the elementary school's pupils in Debar were provided 151 tablets to cover distance learning.
- Businessmen living and working in the US donated 75 tablets to high school students;
- Individuals and families living in the US donated 30,000 US dollars in humanitarian aid during the COVID-19 period.

These donations have been managed by volunteers in Debar, by non-governmental organizations in cooperation with the Emergency Office, emphasizing the Drita Humanitarian Association, which has been active in distributing humanitarian aid since 1999.

Another diaspora organization that has been active and contributed through public donations is the Dibra Community Switzerland, where emigrants living in Switzerland have destined their aid through the Islamic Religious Community - Mufti Debar. On their Facebook page, they wrote: "The Debar community in Switzerland, in these days of pandemics, extends its hand of generosity to the homeland, hoping to fulfill the good deeds during the month of Ramadan." ¹ According to Muça (2021), the aid that has been destined to the Islamic Religious Community - Mufti Debar during the COVID-19 period has been numerous, starting from businessmen's financial aid. This financial support reaches the value of tens of thousands of dollars. There has been an aid in the renovation and maintenance of mosques, and it should be noted the initiative of a citizen from Debar, a refrigerator-storage room has been built for the storage of meat products collected during Eid ul Adha.

According to Duka (2020), all diaspora donations were brought in at certain times and places. Public donations, which are also recorded in an electronic database, have gone to the right destination, and that the Diaspora's willingness to help has continued even after the pandemic crisis. The Mayor of Debar and representatives of Diaspora organizations also discussed opening a joint office, where there will be representatives from the Municipality, representatives from the Diaspora, and representatives from non-governmental organizations. If this is realized, then many other projects will be feasible, which will benefit Debar and the citizens.

4 Conclusions

At the end of this research paper, we can say that the Debar Diaspora's contribution during COVID-19, during the days of total isolation, but also after, has been considerable and in favor of maintaining the standard of living and social welfare. The Diaspora has played an essential role in the period of political pluralism in North Macedonia, where the activity of Debar migrants living and operating in the US and Europe has been continuous and has involved many areas of society.

Although SHAD is a prominent organization of the Diaspora, we think that there are other groups of Debar and other businessmen who are ready to cooperate with the Municipality of Dibra, so all these should be coordinated. Therefore, our recommendation is to establish a diaspora entity in Debar, with all its bodies, where there will be Debar representatives.

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/myftiniadiber.bfi.mk/photos/a.107886173958280/257967015616861/>

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Geopolitical disputes in the Black Sea Region

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Abstract

Global Geopolitics of the 21st century has a changing geopolitical contest. From monopolarity it slips towards multipolarity and to interolarity from economic well-being in recession. Within global framework, at the end of the first decade of this century, the outgoing administration of former US President Bush, tired of the war on terrorism and the financial crisis, seemed to leave behind a weakened US. The Obama's administration was expected to revel in the tired world superpower, against Russia's rebound from energy gain under Putin's presidency.

Since 2008 Russia began to impose itself globally, after the invasion of Georgia to the presidency of Medvedev. China and India appeared as a rising powers not only in the economy. Brussels affected by the internal institutional crisis, economic, energy and ecological crisis, hardly came to impose any new international relations report. It seemed that the geopolitical weight of the Western Balkans was losing the strength of the importance towards the South Caucasus and the Mediterranean. The eastern and southern borders were challenging European security, not just political but above all in the energy security.

Such a leading EU compass left little room for its expansion towards the Western Balkans, while Brussels's attention was directed towards Euro-Asia and the Middle East.

The Euro-Atlantic Factor, (US and EU) remains inevitable in Euro-Asian geopolitics of the 21st century. Two others also remain the key (Russia and China), while Turkey remains a regional, and a group of geopolitically-defined states that emerged from the former Soviet Union (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kirgizstan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia), for these states clashes will go on to put them into the influence zone of the abovementioned global factors. Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran cannot be avoided as borderline factors. The latter, together with Saudi Arabia, will be two key factors of the other geopolitical axis of the Middle East. The harshening of Iran-Saudi Arabian bilateral relations in January 2016 only stressed out the rivalries of these two major Middle East regional powers.

Keywords: *Geopolitics, Geostrategy, EU, Russia, Euro- Asia, NATO.*

Introduction

Global Geopolitics of the 21st century has a changing geopolitical contest, which bipolarity was slipping towards multipolarity under the economic well-being in recession. Within this global framework, at the end of the first decade of this century, the outgoing administration of former US President Bush tired of the war on terrorism and the financial crisis, seemed to leave behind a weakened US. The Obama's administration was expected to revel in the tired world superpower, against Russia's rebound from energy gain under Putin's presidency.

Since 2008 Russia began to impose itself globally, after the invasion of Georgia to the presidency of Medvedev. China and India appeared as a rising powers, and not only in the economy. Brussels affected by the internal institutional crisis, economic, energy and ecological crisis, hardly came to impose on this new international relations. The global financial crisis, the Euro-zone endangered by the Greek budget crisis, the new geopolitical challenges in Europe, Asia and the Mediterranean, especially in Syria; as well as energy security, impacted on changing the EU's strategic priorities. It seemed that the geopolitical weight of the Western Balkans was losing the strength of the importance towards the South Caucasus and the Mediterranean. The eastern and southern borders were challenging European security, not just political but above all energy security.

Such a leading EU compass left little room for its expansion towards the Western Balkans, while Brussels's attention was directed towards Euro-Asia and the Middle East.

This is the mid-decade geopolitics of the second decade of 21st century. In the next few decades, it is expected that the Euro-Asian axis will be strengthened as a key geopolitical point of international developments, along with the friction of this geopolitical axis with the other axis of the Middle East. More factors will be faced in the Euro-Asian axis: The Euro-Atlantic Factor, (US and EU) remains inevitable in Euro-Asian geopolitics of the 21st century. Two others also remain the key (Russia and China), while Turkey remain a regional, and a group of geopolitically-defined states that emerged from the former Soviet Union (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia), though for these states clashes will go on to put them into the influence zone of the abovementioned global factors. Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran cannot be avoided as borderline factors. The latter, together with Saudi Arabia, will be two key factors of the other geopolitical axis of the Middle East. The harshening of Iran-Saudi Arabian bilateral relations in January 2016 only stressed out the rivalries of these two major Middle East regional powers.

European Geopolitics

The new geopolitical priorities focused on Brussels's interest in facing new challenges. The message from the informal EU summit in late March 2009 only confirmed the Western Balkans' concern that the enlargement process could be prolonged. Brussels has been repeating for ten years the 'European perspective' of the region, promising that candidate countries remain on the path to the membership, but at the same time warning that the process is long-lasting.¹ The successful transition from military totalitarianism to liberal democracy with the expansion of the EEC of 1980s and those of the 1990s with the post-communist transition to EU

membership in Eastern Europe seems difficult to be achieved in the Balkans, which passed from feudalism to communism and from war to the first squabbles of liberal democracy in the last century

Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, the world is challenged by the '3E' priority agenda, - Economy, Ecology and Energy. The EU is orienting towards 'East Partnership'², thus by shifting the geopolitical compass from the Western Balkans towards the Caucasus.³ This was the overall geopolitical context that changed the policy of enlargement toward the Western Balkans. The EU's second plan for the Western Balkans was clearly seen by the EU's annual strategies, which defined political priorities as: economic and social recovery, climate change, European citizens, Europe as a world partner, better regulation and transparency".⁴ Although at the beginning of 2009, NATO expanded to the Western Balkans with the accession of Albania and Croatia,⁵ it seemed that the region was not in the EU's focus. Unlike Americans repeating to Europeans 'unfinished work in the Balkans,'⁶ while the EU enlargement was not a priority because of financial, energy and institutional crisis.

In 2014, when German Chancellor Merkel inaugurated the annual EU summit for the Western Balkans (first in Berlin, 2014, then Vienna in 2015), the European Council on Foreign Relations has proposed the so-called 'out-of-institutional' membership in the EU, which would take place after the geopolitical decomposition of the Western Balkans, respectively its differentiation into two regional groups regarding the timeline that the countries of the region could be joined to: 1. the Adriatic Peninsula, with brighter prospects and faster EU membership under the current enlargement policy (Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro), and the Central Balkans, or the regional group which is slower in the accession process (BH, Serbia, Kosovo) because, according to the authors of this study, they "have no institutional capacity and human capital to implement half of the SAA".⁷

The key parameter in further planning of the enlargement process remains the EU's geopolitical orientation about the extension of the boundaries and how far they can go. Depending on this geopolitics, the EU will also implement the relevant enlargement policy. The war in Georgia (2008) concerned even more Brussels's fear of security challenges threatening its eastern borders. By 2009, is it likely that the dilemma is clarified whether Brussels will continue to pursue the traditional policy of enlargement, whether it will continue to pursue more restrictive enlargement policy or be more flexible it? Perhaps the EU was entering the stage of reflection on what should be done further with the enlargement process? These dilemmas occurred in Brussels, especially after the Russian annexation of Crimea (2014), the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine (2014- ...) and the Russian military invasion in Syria (from the bombing of 30 September 2015). Expansion needed a geopolitical compass.

There is a dilemma about whether the enlargement process will continue (with the Western Balkans and eventually Turkey); or whether this policy will be revised restrictively, in accordance with the EU's geopolitical priorities. Therefore not only European security threats from the Caucasus, and Russia's energy sector but also military-political strengthening, are the geopolitical parameters that play a role in creating enlargement policy. Not without reason,

Barroso II (2010-2014) fused the policy of enlargement with the policy of the neighbourhood Europe, to have a policy of coordination both towards the East and the Mediterranean. Lipert even proposed 'closer links' to the EU, the Western Balkan states and those that are part of the EFTA; while for Turkey, and Russia also 'dialogue-based relations.'⁸

Through the enlargement policy, the EU had concluded the achievement of its geostrategic target: integration of the post-communist eastern and central European countries, plus two Mediterranean countries, and is moving towards closing the integration circle with the Western Balkan countries and Turkey. With this enlargement the EU is going to address the two geopolitical challenges and two Cold War strategies: the former communist Eastern Europe (pro-Soviet) and post-conflict Balkan countries.

The Syria refugee crisis of 2015 turned Europe's attention to the importance of Turkey's geopolitics as it was the next door refugee wave for Europe.⁹

This EU geostrategic itinerary was realized in accordance with the new post Cold War geopolitical reality, which Fukuyama had called "the end of history." But for less than two decades from this "end of history," the world faced the "return of history," following the threat of world order from global terrorism, the energy and financial crisis, and the rise of authoritarian regimes and their new trans-continental alliances. After the "end of history" (at the beginning of the 1990s of the last century), the first decade of the new century restored history again. Though it was not just due to the war in Georgia¹⁰ but also in Ukraine and Syria. Russia, either by recovering as the world power, or as so-called 'corrupt oligopoly'¹¹ is returning to the twilight of the world's (new) order.

However, Russian return with the Cold War¹² spirit reinstated the threat of using the Russian veto in the UN Security Council. Initially, with Russia opposing the recognition of Kosovo's independence (2007-2008) and subsequent US-Russian battles at the UN Security Council (2012-2015), followed by the conflict in Ukraine (2014-ongoing). This Cold War spirit was also noted in the indecision of some NATO members, and prevented two former Warsaw Treaty members, Georgia and Ukraine,¹³ from joining the Alliance. despite the American insistence that the two states of the Caucasus join NATO in an expedited procedure.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the Russian invasion in Georgia¹⁵, the recognition by Moscow of the two separatist provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia¹⁶, the Russian annexation of Crimea (2014) and the ongoing war in the eastern part of Ukraine, along with the Russian support of the Sadat regime in Syria, (2012-2015), returned the time of the two decades ago. Independent strategic analysis guessed that the cause of such a Russian behaviour in the Cold War spirit could prevent the agreement with Gorbachev in the 1990s for not extending NATO¹⁷ to the east. But it is unclear whether such agreement had really existed between America and the Soviet Union. By the end of 2009, Gorbachev himself declared that the West 'had promised us not to extend NATO to the east'; but this statement was denied by other key political actors of that time, such as former Soviet Foreign Minister Shevrnadze, former US Secretary of State Baker, and German Foreign Minister Gensher.¹⁸

During 2008-2015, Putin materialized these guidelines as a pretext for his military invasion in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria.¹⁹

Finally, reviving the spirit of the Warsaw Pact through CSTO (the Collective Security Organization Agreement) with Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan²⁰ reminded the already-forgotten East-West ex-rivalry. As a result of Russia's growing economic, political and military influence in the Caucasus, in early February 2009, the Kyrgyz government had demanded the withdrawal of US troops and the closure of US military bases in its territory.²¹

Meanwhile, in April 2010 bloody riots had led to the collapse of the government of this country. In Moldova, in that period, the pro-communist and pro-Russian regime of General Voronjin was in power, while in Ukraine, political power was centred around the pro-Russian president Yanukovich until February 2014 when he fled to Russia. By January 2016 in mass demonstrations in the Moldovan capital, hundreds of protesters called for resignation of the pro-European coalition government. This event warned an upcoming hot spot between Russia and the West. The Russia-Georgia War (in early August 2008) returned the Caucasus to a new international crisis with threats to the eastern borders of the EU, while the annexation of Crimea and eastern Ukraine during 2014, and the Russian bombing in Syria (2015) demanded the need for a new geostrategic against the permanent threat of Russian Caucasus and the Mediterranean. Georgia itself had faced two existential issues: the annexation of its state territory by Russia and the ethnic cleansing of these annexed territories, which the Georgian government called the 'territories occupied by Russia', while referring to the Russian government as 'the controlling power'.²²

By not accepting this re-integration strategy of the annexed Georgian territories, the EU welcomed the approach of solving this problem by peaceful means and reconfirmed that it respects the principle of independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity recognized by international law.²³ However, at first, the EU did not give much importance to Georgia, driven by its strategic orientation in relation to Russia and its economic interests with Moscow.²⁴ As Mr. Zourabichvili said, "Since 2002, the EU had led an ambivalent policy towards Georgia, considering this country as a Russian zone of influence."²⁵ Only after the Georgian crisis erupted in early August 2008²⁶, the EU changed its approach by setting its own monitoring mission²⁷, opening up the process of international negotiations for its resolution (Geneva Process)²⁸, while strengthening the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership with about 5.7 billion euros for the next three years.²⁹ However, this EU policy did not help much, because these two Georgian provinces still, remained under Russian occupation.

Over time, the great words spoken in Brussels, would be complemented only by minor acts. . From threats, EU softens its own rhetoric.. Following the EU's threats to suspend negotiations with Russia on the Partnership Agreement (PCA) until withdrawal of all Russian troops from Georgia, made on threats of September 1, 2008, , just two months later at the Nice Summit on 2 December 2008,³⁰ the EU decided to continue these negotiations even without the withdrawal of the Russian army from Georgia. Though with the divisions within the Union itself, following

the official reaction of Poland and the Czech Republic to the statement by the French President Sarkozy, the chairman of the EU presidency, said that, in his opinion, the deployment of US anti-missile systems in Poland and the Czech Republic "did not contribute to security".³¹

Russia acted similarly in Ukraine (2014- ... and in Syria (2015- ...). The EU did not have a clear geopolitical orientation any effective strategy to address these Russian threats. EU did not have the power to impose solutions to the problems of international relations. At the end of the first decade of this century, Euro-Asia was imposed as a geo-strategic region³² because of its past history as the "silk road", and subsequently became the energy route, at the beginning of this century.. This new geopolitical context overlooked the importance of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and also Turkmenistan.³³ EU towards Euro-Asia, developed associative policies in the framework of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (CPAs) that expected to conclude on free trade agreements with the EU.³⁴

However, the EU remained cautious about the political breadth of these policies, especially to their reflection in the face of Russia. Brussels, though after the war in Georgia, verbally "condemned the violence and recognized Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity."³⁵ The EU also remained careful, so these reactions did not affect the EU-Russia relations, given the European energy dependency on Moscow,³⁶ while the neighbours of the former Soviet Union were recognized as those having 'European aspirations'.³⁷ At the end of 2008, the European Commission came up with a document that disclosed the new EU policy towards this region by accepting the European aspirations of Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also denying their membership in the EU none of the less. Unlike the 'European perspective' policy for the Western Balkans, which implied the possibility of their eventual membership in the EU, regarding the European Asia, Brussels inaugurated the policy of 'European aspirations', which in fact was only formalizing Brock's vision for the model of concentric relations circles with the EU.

Following the annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine, the EU condemned Russia's expansionist policy by applying economic sanctions against Moscow, though this did not return Crimea to Ukraine nor did it stop the war in the eastern part of the state. As time went by, Russia strengthened its positions in Ukraine and Ukraine lost control of its eastern part.³⁸

It has been proved many times that in international relations, the power of the state predetermines the international position because international relations are guided mostly by interests and less so than by the principles. As it has been could rightly pointed out in a study on eastern Ukraine at the beginning of 2016: "Security is before politics in eastern Ukraine."³⁹

Perhaps these developments could not be qualified as a return of Cold War, but the reminiscences of this war could not be ignored nevertheless. The exchange of Washington-

Moscow messages (2007 and 2008) and Syria (2014-2015) recalled the Cold War rhetoric, and the anchoring of their navy fleets in the Black Sea and aviation in Syria and the Mediterranean signified that the aggravation of their relations will not remain in verbal terms.

Such a development in the West's relationship with the East,⁴⁰ has been called the 'cold comfort' by some international analysis, if not the Cold War, a synonymous term describing the new situation created after the Russian invasion of Georgia.⁴¹

If Gorbachev's period marked the end of the Cold War and the bipolar partition of the world, Yeltsin's term marked the monopoly period, while Putin with his doctrine of the "near abroad" restored Russia's geopolitical power to Euro-Asia. Not without reason, in his 1997 book 'Great Chess Field,' *Brzezinski* predicted that the one who would control Euro-Asia would control the world. Russia's power, however, should not be overestimated, because, as far as Europe is dependent on Russian gas, Moscow also depends on the European market, while demographically its population is declining, and its infrastructure remains underdeveloped. Nor should Moscow be underestimated. At least, it should not be ignored in its real energy capacity, and its economic and military power.

Since 2008, after the Western Balkans (which was, and still potentially is a threatening challenge to European stability), and Turkey (which remain the geostrategic importance) Brussels faced some new geopolitical challenges. For Brussels, Central Asia (Afghanistan and Iraq) continuously was considered 'an American problem'. After the war in Georgia, the Caucasus challenged the eastern borders of the EU. The EU approach to the crisis in Georgia seemed more unique than, for example, Brussels' approach to the war in former Yugoslavia or to that in Iraq, but it is still far from complete unity.

Despite the threats and demands of some member states (Great Britain, Poland, Estonia) for a tougher and more firm response to Russia, until the application of economic sanctions, some other member states (primarily Germany) were kin to keep good relations and in favour of avoidance of damaging measures. EU should not remain a passive bystander of the energy and geostrategic clashes in the region between the US and Russia, but have its own policy developed regarding this important geopolitical region. This is best proved after the Russia-Georgia war (August 7, 2008) and especially after the 'gas' war between Russia and Ukraine (January 2009).

Conclusion

There have been some important developments in the EU-Russia in recent years, following the emergency energy crisis,⁴² and finally after the wastage of all reserves by some EU member states (Poland and Lithuania), which over the past two years blocked the approval of the mandate for EU negotiations with Russia on the new Memorandum. After two summits of the EU-Russia (2004 and 2005) and a three-year break (due to cold relations between Moscow and Brussels, especially after the war in Georgia), this high political profile was gathered for the third time in Moscow on February 6, 2009 to review once again whether it was likely to move

from the possibility of finalizing the new EU-RUS⁴³ Partnership Agreement and finally the EU-Russia Summit (Stockholm, 18 November 2009).

Not only the EU's energy policy towards Russia, but generally the political and security approach of Brussels to Moscow, was concerned, especially after the war in Georgia⁴⁴ and the recognition of the independence of the two separatist regions of the Georgian state, southern Ossetia and Abkhazia by the Russian side. It seems that the Caucasus and energy routes will remain at the centre of the EU's foreign policy in the years to come, as it was the case with the short war in Georgia. While in antiquity wars were developed for the territories through which the trade routes were established or as it was said "where gold was passing", at the beginning of the 21st century, geopolitical and geostrategic significance took the passageways through which black gold passes. Thus, not only the territories rich in gas and oil, but also transitory ones (such as Georgia), who do not have these reserves, but provide the pipeline trajectories, such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan. Therefore, even though the EU wanted to publicly reveal the unity achieved among the 27 member states against Russia on the occasion of the Georgia crisis, it remained more in the verbal declaration of 'disproportionate Russian reaction'. It was clear that this time as well as in similar cases, individual interests of member states dominated the EU's overall interests. The EU's vague reaction to Russia testified several times that the EU does not adhere to the principles proclaimed, but above to the interests of its member states, in line with its formula of 'unity in diversity'.⁴⁵

References

- [1] The informal Assembly of the Foreign Ministers of the EU Member States was held on 26-27 March 2009 in Hluboka nad Vltava (Czech Republic), and attended by the foreign ministers of potential candidate states, also by potential candidates of the Western Balkans and Turkey. During the first day of the summit was discussed the situation in the Near East and Belarus, while on the second day the expansion towards the Western Balkans. After the summit, it was announced that the candidate state Turkey, Croatia and Macedonia remain on the road to EU membership, although the process may last, especially for other Western Balkan states.
- [2] Green and Social Europe" Conference on the same topic (organized by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) was held in Brussels on 24.02.2009; Therefore, the Czech Republic, although verbally promising to dedicate itself to enlargement policy, formally inaugurated the new East Partnership policy, promoted at the EU Summit, Prague, May 7, 2009.
- [3] Finally, the reformulation of the EU official vocabulary in the communiqué issued in Hlobuka na Vltavou (2009), compared to that of the Thessaloniki Agenda (2003) or the Salzburg Communiqué (2006), clearly demonstrates this. While in previous summits, the European Union reconfirmed the European perspective of the Western Balkans and reiterated its commitment that EU enlargement also included the region; the message from the informal summit of EU foreign ministers from the Czech castle was "not closing the doors for Western Balkan states" "Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.9871, 28 March 2009, p. 4); "Keine Erweiterung ohne Reformvertrag" (Die Welt, March 30, 2009).
- [4] European Commission: "Annual Policy Strategy: 2010"; Part I-Policy Priorities for 2010, para.1-2.5, Brussels, 18.02.2009.
- [5] Albania and Croatia officially joined NATO on 1 April 2009, becoming the 27th state, respectively 28th of the North Atlantic Alliance.
- [6] Balkan Watch (PILPG, Vol.11.6, Monday March 16, 2009, 1).
- [7] Daniel Korski Goodbye Balkans, Hello Adriatic Peninsula (ECFR, 08.04.2008, 1-2)
- [8] B. Lipert's discussion by SWP at the conference of the German Institute for International Affairs and Security, Brussels, 03.03.2010.
- [9] 37 ESI, "Turkey as a "safe third country" for Greece", (17.10.2013, 1).
- [10] At: "Georgia: The Risk of Winter" (ICG, Europe Briefing No.51, 26 November 2008)ë "Security Architecture, Security Community" (CEPS, Issue 43, November 2008).
- [11] 39 "Russia: a recovered world power, or a corrupt oligopoly?" (The Economist, November, 22nd, 2008, 6.)
- [12] Although Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov himself would drop charges against Moscow as a culprit in returning the Cold War in his speech at the International Conference: "Common World: Progress Through Diversity", held in Astana, Kazakhstan, October 16, 2008; See for more on "New Europe", October 19-25, 2008, 46).
- [13] At the NATO Summit, Bucharest, April 2, 2008.
- [14] At the end of 2008, efforts were intensified to engage Georgia and Ukraine in NATO as soon as possible, precisely because of the fear of Russian geopolitical domination in the Caucasus. On the eve of the summit of NATO foreign ministers (Brussels 2-3 December 2008), US Secretary of State Rice had urged European allies, first and foremost from France and Germany, to override the standard procedures for admission of new members and to join in an accelerated procedure for Georgia and Ukraine in NATO. (According to The New York Times, November 26, 2008); See for this presentation of Georgia's Prime Minister Grigol Mgaloblishvili at the conference "Georgia's Future with EU and NATO?" (The German Marshall Fund of US and Institute for Strategic Studies, Brussels, 1 December, 2008).
- [15] On August 7, 2008.
- [16] On August 26, 2008, which was later recognized by Nicaragua (2008) and Venezuelan (2009). On the other hand, the leader of the Georgian opposition-left-wing working party Jospheh Shatberashvili, during his visit to Washington, demanded that the US recognize Abkhazia and southern Osetia- annexed from Georgia as if they had recognized Kosovo; See: "Georgian Opposition Wants U.S. to Renounce Recognition of Kosovo, RFE / RL, November 09, 2009.
- [17] 45 Uwe Klussman, Matthias Schepp and Klaus Wiegeler: "NATO's Eastward Expansion: Did the West Breal its Promise to Moscow?", (Speigel online, 11/26/2009).

- [18] Ibid. The German Foreign Ministry's recent declarations of 10 February 1990 (16: 00-18: 30) for the Gensher-Shevnadze meeting, then Genesher's speech in Tutzing, Bavaria on January 31, 1990, Gensher- Beker, in Washington, February 2, 1990, then Gensher's conversation with British Foreign Minister Hurd, Bonn on February 6, 1990, and others.
- [19] The foreign ministers of these countries at their summit in Moscow on September 5, 2008, had supported Russia in its military invasion in Georgia. The next CSTO summit will be held in Moscow in the second half of 2009. (New Europe, 07-13.09.2008, p.30, 48).
- [20] The foreign ministers of these countries at their summit in Moscow on September 5, 2008, had supported Russia in its military invasion in Georgia. The next CSTO summit will be held in Moscow in the second half of 2009. (New Europe, 07-13.09.2008, p.30, 48).
- [21] Kyrgyz Government's decision of 4 February 2009 and the request that the country's parliament formalize this decision within 180 days. REUTERS, 04.02.2009.
- [22] 50 Ibid.
- [23] EU Council Statement on Georgia Strategy for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Brussels 11.03.2010.
- [24] The EU with Russia, since 1994, when they signed the Agreement for Cooperation and Partnership, had held 24 summits, (of the case in Stockholm in November 2009). In 2008, negotiations for a new partnership agreement between Russia and the EU began, but the events in Georgia had made it impossible for it to come to an end. Politically, the European Union does not consider Russia today, as if it was the former USSR at the time of the Cold War. Economically, Russia remained the third trading partner for the EU. The EU was dependent on Russian gas, but just as Russia depended on European goods. The case of the Russian purchase of French military vessels proves this best; See more about these: "EU-Russia: Baltic questions need for sale of French warships to Russia", New Europe, February 28- March 6, 2010, 14; "EU / Southern Caucasus: Stronger EU Ties with the Caucasus Region", (Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.10090, 4 March 2010, 6-7); "EU / Neighborhood: 5.7 Billion Euros to Fund Eastern and Southern Neighborhood Policy over the next three years: 2011-2013, (Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.10089, 3 March 2010, 4).
- [25] Salome Zourabichvili, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2004-2005) and former Ambassador Georgia to France (2003-2004), his speech at the EPC Conference: "Georgia in the EU's eyes" (Brussels , 14.10.2008).
- [26] With the Russian invasion in Georgia on August 7, 2008.
- [27] EUMVM, started work on 1 October 2008.
- [28] The first round (with the participation of EU, US, Russia and Georgia) was held in Geneva on October 15, 2008, but without any success.
- [29] "EU / Neighborhood: 5.7 Billion Euros to Fund Eastern and Southern Neighborhood Policy over the next three years: 2011-2013, (Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.10089, 3 March 2010, 4); "EU/Neighborhood: 5,7 Billion Euro to Fund Eastern and Southern Neighborhood Policy over next three years: 2011-2013, (Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.10089, 3 March 2010, 4).
- [30] The EU-Russia summit, Nice, November 14, 2008; See: "Russian Lessons" (The Economist, November 8th, 2008, 38); Ferdinando Riccardi: "Politico-Strategic Plan of the EU-Russia Summit" (Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.9785 , 19 November, 2008, 3.); "EU / Russia: Relaunch of Partnership Agreement Talks" (Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.9784, 18 November, 2008, 3); "(Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.9783, November 15, 2008, 4).
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- [35] As for the EU Declaration (13.11.2009) on the arrest of four juveniles at the border of Georgia with South Ossetia on 4 November 2009.

- [36] Especially on the eve of the EU-Russia Summit, Stockholm 18.11.2009. Even the main objective of the 27 EU member states from this summit was the Russian guarantee that there would be no more gas crisis (as of January 2009). In the shadow of the European energy security from Russian gas, other issues such as trade, human rights and rule of law, visa policy, where Moscow demanded speeding up the dialogue on visa facilitation, were discussed; See more for this: "EU / Russia: EU 27 Hope to Ensure There Will be No More Gas Crises-Several Tricky Issues at the Stockholm Summit", Bulletin Quotidien Europe, No.10016, 11.11.2009, 5..
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Diaspora Mobilization During Peace Conferences: Political Protests and Kosova's Statehood Question

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Abstract

Albanian Diaspora had played proactive role in the process of internationalization of the issue of Kosova. Peaceful political protests during the Dayton Peace Conference and the Rambouillet Peace Conference were a mechanism to make pressure over the Contact Group and expecting Kosova to be recognized like independent and sovereign state. The protests didn't go unseen but the course of the peace talks didn't change. Mediators referring to the complexity from the phase of the prenegotiations stayed in the positions that any additional correction in formula and agenda would cause failure of the "Around-the-table" negotiations. Despite an increased interest in diaspora studies focusing on the question on Kosova, particularly for the period from 1989 to 1999, few studies have treated the role of the Albanian Diaspora from the perspective of conflict resolution. The paper examines how the processes of negotiation have had a direct impact on the outcome of the political protests of the Albanian Diaspora during the Dayton Peace Conference and the Rambouillet Peace Conference. Therefore, the purpose is to analyze diaspora activism in terms of political support during the peace conferences, particularly focusing on the context of the prenegotiations and the around-the-table negotiations. The term Albanian Diaspora is used in the sense of ethnicity and not exclusively to the country of origin. The process of negotiation is constructed based on the Berridge's model. Analyzing Contact Group's Conclusions and published memories of the appointed delegates it is concluded that context under which happened the negotiations and the Contact Group's position for substantial autonomy for Kosova determined the success of the Albanian Diasporas' protests in Dayton and Rambouillet.

Keywords: *Kosova, diaspora mobilization, political protests, prenegotiations, peace conference*

Introduction

Recognition of Kosovo like independent and sovereign state became one of the priorities in the political activism of the Albanian Diaspora, in 1990s. Abrogation of the autonomy of Kosovo by Serbia and dissolution of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia enforced the sentiment for defending the right of self-determination. It was widely embraced among the Albanians that Kosovo Albanians have the right to have their own state and international community must treat the request equally like in the case of the republics that earlier withdraw from the SFRY. As well, they saw independence as a sole solution for ending repression and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Engagement of Albanian Diaspora in pursuit of the idea for independence of Kosovo included wide range of activities, among which the most present were lobbying, marches and protests in the host countries and financial support for the homeland. Political activism of Albanian Diaspora it was present in all phases of the conflict. Peaceful political protests during the Dayton Peace Conference and the Rambouillet Peace Conference were a mechanism to make pressure over the Contact Group expecting Kosovo to be recognized like independent and sovereign state.

Studies on the diasporas' role in conflict resolution tend to approach the way in which diaspora groups affect the process of peacemaking and peace building, focusing on the activities undertaken in the host country and the country of origin. Bercovitch identifies diasporas like "*communities of individuals who may possess resources and have access to international organizations, international media and powerful host governments*"¹. According to him, diasporas are "*important political forces*" that can have influence in every phase of the conflict but their political activism and forms of mobilization depends whether the conflict it is in the initial phase or the conflict it is in the escalation phase². Koinova's study on Albanian Diaspora mobilization in USA and UK it is focused in four periods of the conflict in Kosovo and it is conclude that the level of violence in the homeland it was determinant factor for radical or moderate diaspora mobilization³. As well, she argues that relevant element in diaspora mobilization it was the connection of the political leadership of Prishtina with the Albanian

Diaspora in USA and UK⁴. These studies give a significant understanding on the behavior of diaspora communities in conflict resolution. Furthermore, how the processes of negotiation have had a direct impact on the outcome of the political protests of the Albanian Diaspora during the Dayton Peace Conference and the Rambouillet Peace Conference remains to be examined. The purpose of this paper is to analyze diaspora mobilization in terms of political support during the peace conferences, particularly focusing on the context of the prenegotiations and the around- the-table negotiations.

¹ Bercovitch, Jacob: A Neglected Relationship- Diasporas and Conflict Resolution, 2007, pg.17-27

² Ibid

³ Koinova, Maria: Four Types of Diaspora Mobilization –Albanian Diaspora Activism for Kosovo Independence in the USA and UK, Foreign Policy Analysis, 2013, pg.437-447

Political Protests and Kosova's Statehood Question

Protests of Albanian Diaspora in Dayton

For Albanian Diaspora it was important to raise awareness about the violence happening in Kosovo by Serbia and injustice made to the Kosovo Albanians by international community regarding the right of self-determination. They were disappointed that it was not invited in Dayton neither the leader of the Kosovo Albanians, Rugova, nor the question on Kosovo it was included in the agenda of the peace conference. After the London Conference, in 1992, the Dayton Peace Conference it was the moment when Albanians have hoped that after a long period the question on Kosovo will be internationalized. For most of them final settlement of the status of Kosova couldn't be neglected. They wanted to see in deeds that their commitment and solidarity for peaceful resistance it was worthwhile and not a mechanism of international community to prevent them to gain independence by force. Living conditions in Kosovo continued to be unbearable and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, in several occasions have had reported about the ethnic cleansing that was happening there.

Dayton peace conference began with the protests of the Albanian Diaspora, too. People from several states from United States and Canada protested in front of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. During the opening ceremony of the conference they were holding posters with slogans "*Mr. Clinton, no double standards against Albanians*"⁵. The national coordinator of the Albanian American Community of the USA, Gjok Martini, for the journalists had declared that "*we [Albanians] are humiliated at this conference for ignoring us and believing there will be peace without Albanians*"⁶. In pursuit of justice they wanted to make visible that Milosevic cannot be promoted like an influential figure for the peace and stability in Balkans when his regime it was responsible for the brutality against civilians in Kosovo. In addition, Rugova the person that was supporter of the idea for peaceful resistance to be excluded from the peace conference.

On 9 November, for the second time Albanian Diaspora gathered together, in front of the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Compared with the previous protest this time participated also the Prime Minister in exile Bukoshi but the number of demonstrators that responded positively to the calls for protests it was less. The posters with slogans "*We Want Kosova Free*" continued to be what Albanian diaspora was asking from the Contact Group, particularly from USA⁷. They tried to be also the voice of the people living in Kosovo. Among the demonstrators were people that had been forced to leave Kosovo because of the pressure, brutality and violence. Nevertheless, Milosevic remained strongly in his positions that the issue of Kosova it was an internal problem of Serbia. That attitude it was seen also during the protests when Holbrooke asked Milosevic together with him to approach to the demonstrators⁸.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Dayton Daily News, 2 November 1995

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Dayton Daily News, 10 November 1995

⁸ Holbrooke, Richard: To End a War, New York, 1999, pg. 237

Drawing a parallel on the protests and on the issues that were discussing inside the Air Force Base it is clear that it was the moment when Holbrooke tried to reach the Agreement on Federation. As well, it was considered to be the most difficult period of the peace conference, because the negotiations about the internal borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina were approaching to the deadlock.

Protests of Albanian Diaspora in Rambouillet

Mobilization of Albanian Diaspora it was evident especially with the protests of 13th February, in Rambouillet. It was one of the most significant protests regarding the final status of Kosova. Lot of people joined calling for independence for Kosova. Factors that made the number of the demonstrators to be bigger than in Dayton were that the conference it was in the European continent and for the Albanians that have had emigrated particularly in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria and France organization and participation it was easier. Secondly, massacre in Raçak it was another moment when Albanians felt pain and this component it is determinant factor not solely for the conflict resolution but also for the political activism of diaspora related to the questions that are considered as crucial for preserving the nation and/or the state.

Therefore, it was the emotional attachment transformed into a concrete action of solidarity between the diaspora with the homeland. Thirdly, the slogans “UÇK” and “*Kosova independence -Unique solution*” were a sign that the demonstrators whose relatives were in Kosovo and part of them victims of the war couldn’t accept another peace conference to end without recognition of the idea for independent republic⁹. For them the decision for an interim agreement it was not welcomed. Since 1991 it was seen that the idea Kosovo to be part of Serbia it was not an enduring solution. Nevertheless, Contact Group have had determined its position for substantial autonomy for Kosovo.

In Rambouillet, protests of Albanians and Serbs happened in one day difference¹⁰. Both were organized in a critical phase for the peace conference. The main objective it had been to transmit the message that the Contact Group must undertake into consideration the will of the people. In other words, protests had been also an instrument of pressure over the pace of the peace talks. It was the second week and the Agreement on political issues had to be signed. Mediators remained in their position that without it cannot be proceeded with the annex on security issues. In those circumstances, it was of great importance to be prevented escalation of the situation outside the castle, too. France, being the host country of the conference, had have requested from the organizers to guarantee that the protests of the Albanian Diaspora will be peaceful and without incidents¹¹.

⁹ Associate Press, 13 February 1999

¹⁰ Associate Press, 12 February 1999

¹¹ Kiqmari, Sabri: Fitorja Diplomatie, Epoka e Re, Prishtinë, 2017, pg. 134

The Dayton Peace Conference: the context of the prenegotiations and the around-the-table negotiations

Agreeing on the need to negotiate

Fall of Srebrenica marked the turning point that changed seriously the course of the negotiation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It represents not only the genocide that happened in a zone that was declared by Security Council, in 1993, like “safe area” with the resolution S/RES/819 and resolution S/RES/824 but also the moment when all parties were eager to participate in an international peace conference. In conditions of pain and failure were created the conditions for restoration of the peace talks. Among the adversaries the reasons for such movement differed

significantly and were closely related with the fact that the war had reached stalemate. Holbrooke had believed that the position in which were leadership of Pale, Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo was a decisive opportunity that will lead to a successful mediation. International community, particularly UN and Contact Group, had to respond decisively and fast. Their approach for peaceful resolution of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina despite the information for ethnic cleansing since 1992 had resulted in crimes against humanity.

International community trying to keep the momentum intensified the diplomatic activities and it was more decisive about military intervention. Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were invited for the procedural agreement regarding the upcoming international peace conference. The meeting in Geneva had a dual purpose: to be defined the basic principles for the upcoming negotiations and to be seen reaction and communication among the foreign ministers sitting around the same table. Those segments were very important because the peace conference couldn't be convened without the framework of the negotiations and without having an indication about the composition and the platforms of the negotiation teams.

Prior to the opening of the meeting in Geneva it became uncertain if the invited ministers would participate. Belgrade very successfully had achieved to provoke hesitation in Sarajevo. Bosnian Minister for Foreign Affairs received a call from his home country to boycott the meeting, few minutes before the beginning of conference, as sign of protest and insistence the term “*republic*” to remain before Bosnia and Herzegovina. In those circumstances the responsibility for failure of the negotiations would be addressed to the Bosnian representative and to his country. He considering the repercussions from such movement decided not to withdraw¹². Losing the support of the Contact Group would have damaged the negotiation position of his country and at a very delicate period for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The second challenge occurred during the opening speech when a representative of the Bosnian Serbs insisted to sit in the table of negotiations which was reserved only for the mediators and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs¹³. That intervention it was with the intention for the second time to be ruined the step towards dialogue. In August between Milosevic and Pale it had been signed the Patriarch Document under which Milosevic was authorized to lead the negotiations in the name of the Bosnian Serbs

¹² Holbrooke, Richard: *To End a War*, New York, 1999, pg. 243

¹³ Ibid

and that had been the reason for asking Belgrade to send their Minister of Foreign Affairs in Geneva.

The Geneva Agreement known also like the Agreement on Basic Principles it was signed. Components of the main principles of the framework of negotiations were set. Republika Srpska gained its recognition like Bosnian Serb entity and 49% of the Bosnian territory¹⁴. Bosnia and Herzegovina preserved its existence by keeping existing international borders and international recognition¹⁵. Creating two divided entities that will function through central joint institutions from the beginning it was discouraging and confusing. Reactions on what had been achieved were different, too. Belgrade considered it as a great accomplishment and their merit that Republika Srpska became one of the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the interview for the journalists the Foreign Minister Milutinovic declared that readiness of his government to contribute for the peace and compromises that they accepted should not be seen as weakness, underlining that this was the easiest phase of the negotiations compared with the final phase when the issue about the internal borders will be discussed in details¹⁶. That question had to be solved at higher level. For the President Izetbegovic recognition of Republika Srpska was a “*bitter pill*” and they had to accept it only for two reasons: keeping the relationship with USA and NATO¹⁷. Part of the soldiers in the Bosnian army were irritated with the decision and put in question the meaning of the war where thousands of civilians lost their lives¹⁸. Pale continued with attacks over civilians in the area of Sarajevo.

New York was the place where for the second time Contact Group gathered the Foreign Ministers of Yugoslavia, Bosnia, and Croatia. The meeting it was convened approximately three weeks after the meeting in Geneva and in a period when the negotiations for the ceasefire agreement were in a critical phase. The main objective it was reaching a consensus regarding central institutions of the Bosnian state. That it is the reason why it is also known like Agreement on Constitutional issues. The discussion was about presidency, parliament and constitutional court. In some form it was continuity of the work concerning the Agreement on Basic principles. This time negotiations for sending the ministers of foreign affairs were in a more tensed atmosphere, especially with Izetbegovic who had threatened to boycott the meeting. He was making pressure the agreement on ceasefire to be signed. Holbrooke had proposed the meeting for two reasons. Firstly, the logistical preparations for the peace conference still were ongoing and it was not favorable during that period to be created the vacuum which could be interpreted like postponing of the idea for a peace conference. Secondly, there it was a risk to lose the momentum and adversaries to pull back from the negotiation process. In those circumstances timing it was a decisive factor.

¹⁴ Agreed Basic Principles - Geneva Agreement, Office of High Representatives, Geneva, 8 September 1995

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Tanjug, 08 September 1995

¹⁷ BosNet, 12 September 1995

¹⁸ Associated Press, 10 September 1995

Agreeing the agenda

“Around-the-table” negotiations from the beginning where specific for three issues: the level at which were held the negotiations it was higher, expectations for rapid progress and final solution, and nervousness and uncertainty. Sitting around the negotiation table pointed out equality within adversaries and within members of the Contact Group. Nevertheless, the discomfort present between the Presidents Milosevic, Izetbegovic and Tudjman made the Co-Chairman Christopher and mediator Holbrooke to ask the three presidents firstly to greet each other. The handshake before the opening speech and in presence of international media it was on purpose the presidents to understand that they were not in the battlefield but in the peace conference where they have to communicate and reach compromises.

Mediator Holbrooke and his team estimated that it would be more productive if they would start with slow rhythms in the beginning and later to speed up with the most challenging issues for negotiation. In that manner they could go with the inductive approach. That would give its results gradually and would increase the level of trust between the adversaries and mediators. As well, it was expected among adversaries to be improved the level of communication and their readiness for compromises. It was a priority during the first week of the conference to be avoided any nervousness and to dominate flexibility.

The antagonisms from the battlefield had been transferred also at the peace conference. In order to be prevented a collapse of the peace talks it was necessary to be avoided unpleasant situations. For that purpose, it was the most ideal the negotiation to begun firstly by opening the problem on Eastern Slavonia and the question on Federation, and after it the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As well, the Croatian President has had to leave the conference and return later due to the parliamentary elections in his country. In Dayton the dynamic of the peace conference it was dependent on agenda. There was an agreement what problems will be discussed and in which order. For example, Bosnian President Izetbegovic was very determined that without finalizing the Agreement on Federation, the implementation part, he will not continue with the negotiations for the other issues. His insistence it was logical because without making the Federation functional, as one of the constituent entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country couldn't began the process of peacebuilding. The head of the German delegation in Dayton underlines that he have had instructions from the Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel the question of Kosova to be added in the agenda but as he claims *“that was a good idea but impossible to implement. I would have been thrown out of the room if I had mentioned Kosovo”*¹⁹. Holbrooke and his team had the main word on the content of the Agreements and about the arrangement of the activities. They had been focused on building all necessary conditions that would persuade antagonists of the Bosnian war to agree on the need to negotiate. For them it was a success what they had have achieved in the prenegotiation period but they also feared that something could get out of the control.

¹⁹ Perrit, H. Henry: *The Road to Independence for Kosovo, A Chronicle of the Ahtissari Plan*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pg.33,

Ending the peace conference without the conclusion of the peace agreement it was considered to be complete failure for Washington. It would be sign of incapability to bring peace in the Balkans, especially when they had the main role in the prenegotiations, around the- table negotiations and were the host country of the conference.

The Rambouillet peace conference: the context of the prenegotiations and the around-the-table negotiations

Agreeing the formula

After the Raçak massacre members of the Contact Group convened two meetings in London. They condemned the killings of the civilians, concluding that situation in Kosovo it was critical and that they needed to act urgently. They announced that peace agreement will be achieved under mediation of international community. As well, that Prishtina and Belgrade have no other solution rather than to agree on the idea for peace conference and constructively to participate in the negotiations. They hold responsible Serbian forces and KLA forces. It was concluded that restoration of peace cannot happen without direct involvement of the Contact Group in the negotiations between Belgrade and Prishtina²⁰. They emphasized that if would be necessary they will put pressure on both sides, aiming to end the war in Kosovo. On the meeting that followed, Ministers of the member states of the Contact Group defined the Basic Principles on the settlement of the war in Kosova. Therefore, Contact Group in a period of two weeks have had harmonized the positions and had been agreed the framework on negotiations. Knowing what to do and how to do have had permitted process to be managed effectively and on time.

Regarding the Basic Principles, Contact Group found reasonable the solution to be in-between the principle of territorial integrity and the principle of self-determination, both principles proclaimed in the United Nations Charter. They concluded that Kosovo must have substantial autonomy within Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Thus, the idea on recognition of the independence of Republic of Kosova had been rejected. Ministers of the Contact Group strongly believed that the non-negotiable principles fulfilled the objectives of the Kosova Albanians. In those lines, Contact Group demanded the Serbian Forces to “*stop all offensive actions in Kosovo*” and KLA to release hostages, prior to the peace conference in Rambouillet²¹. Formula maintained inclusiveness and balance, but not flexibility. From the London Conclusions’ it had been clear that during the prenegotiations Contact Group will not make any compromises with the parties in war about the agenda and the formula of the conference in Rambouillet.

Agreeing on the need to negotiate

Announcing active participation in the peace process and that there will be no longer persuasion but coercion gave the signal that international community finally had reached a common agreement on the solution about the question on Kosovo. The meeting on 22 January ended with concrete requests delivered to Belgrade.

²⁰ Chairman’s Conclusions, Contact Group, 22 January , 1999

²¹ Chairman’s Conclusions, Contact Group, 29 January , 1999

From the Contact Group it had been demanded Serbia to end all military operations in Kosovo and to permit all displaced persons from the village of Raçak to return safely in their homes, not to block Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) to fulfill its mission and responsibilities, complete cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) regarding the investigations in Raçak, and respecting all relevant agreements signed by Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with OSCE and NATO. Security Council found unacceptable that Belgrade didn't permit the prosecutor of the ICTY to enter in Kosovo to investigate the killings of the civilians. It was disapproved the decision of Serbia to declare the Head of the KVM Mission *persona non grata*. For them it had been an attempt Serbia to cover up what had been the real purpose of the military operation undertaken on 15 January. They one more time called Belgrade and Prishtina to restore the dialogue, announcing that it was the last attempt of UN the issue on Kosovo to be solved by peaceful means²². In the UN statement on the massacre in Raçak it had been clear that the position of the Security Council didn't change. Referring to the resolutions from 1998 and the phrase "*the village of Raçak in the Southern Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*" gave the Basic Principles upon which rested the strategy of the Security Council²³. Thus, for UN Kosovo continued to be considered part of Serbia and Belgrade had to stop all the violence in Kosovo.

Robin Cook, British Foreign Secretary and Co-Chairman of the Rambouillet Conference, arrived in Balkans, on 30th January. He was the person who carried the message not only in the name of the Contact Group but of UN and NATO, too. He's main responsibility it was to meet with the representatives of Belgrade and Prishtina. His presence demonstrated that international community was united over the position on the political settlement and the repercussions that would follow if the peace talks would fail. NATO's statement, on the same day, served to that purpose. Cook had been accompanied by Ambassador Chris Hill, U.S Envoy for Kosovo, and Ambassador Wolfgang Petrisch, EU envoy for Kosovo. That it was an indication that despite the fact that USA had agreed that the peace conference to be held in the European continent, American diplomats remained important figures in the prenegotiation process. From the other point of view, it had been important Cook to be together with the ambassadors that had close contacts with Prishtina and Belgrade. As well, Ambassadors Hill and Petrisch were the persons that months in advance had have worked on the draft of the peace agreement.

Cook informed Rugova about Contact Group's decisions and provided him with the document that contained the basic elements of the interim settlement for the status of Kosovo²⁴. From the Albanian side, was expressed gratitude for the commitment of the international factor to solve the question on Kosova. Rugova emphasized his willingness to participate in the peace talks in

²² Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2, 19 January 1999

²³ Ibid,

²⁴ Radio Free Europe, 31 January 1999

Rambouillet²⁵. Cook travelled in Belgrade, too. He met with the President of Yugoslavia Slobodan Milosevic, President of Serbia Milan Milutinovic, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jovanovic where he had pointed out that based on the basic principles Kosovo will remain part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia²⁶. During the meeting, Milosevic had stated that he continues to support peaceful resolution but he cannot give immediate respond²⁷. From the visit in Belgrade Cook got the impression that the Serbian side also will sent its delegation in Rambouillet but Milosevic himself will not attend the conference and probably will send Milutinovic as the Chief of the Serbian delegation²⁸. Belgrade's officials were not that much enthusiastic to join the conference because they continued to considered the question of Kosovo as an internal problem of Serbia. They preferred direct talks instead of international mediation.

Conclusion

After the London Conference, in 1992, the Dayton Peace Conference it was the moment when Albanians have hoped that the question on Kosovo will be internationalized. Protests of the Albanian Diaspora, in front of the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, were expression of disappointment and raising awareness about the violence in Kosovo. Freedom for Kosovo it was the main request addressed towards international community, particularly USA. Demonstrators strongly believed that Kosovo Albanians were victims of the brutality and ethnic cleansing of Serbia and of the injustice of international community. Among the demonstrators were also people that had been forced to leave Kosovo. The framework of the negotiations for the conference in Dayton has had been defined two months in advance. During the period of the prenegotiations, firstly in Geneva and later in New York, mediators almost lost the momentum for peaceful resolution of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The same threat continued also during the around-the-table negotiations. Readiness of the adversaries in the Bosnian war for conclusion of the peace agreement tended to fluctuate from one phase of the peace talks to the other. In those conditions accepting the requests coming from the protests of the Albanian Diaspora it was impossible for the mediators. Nevertheless, international community became more alert that a proactive approach must be taken about the situation in Kosovo. The beginning of 1999 brought the idea for the peace conference dedicated to the question on Kosovo but it happened after the massacre in Raçak. Contact Group convened the conference with the solution for substantial autonomy and not independence for Kosovo which was unacceptable for the Albanians. Therefore, the protest of Albanian Diaspora in Rambouillet it was one of the most significant regarding the final status of Kosovo. It was not only an act of solidarity of diaspora with homeland but it had the feelings of anger and pain. The protest it was an instrument of pressure over the pace of the peace talks, particularly when it is taken into consideration that the annex on political issues it was on the agenda of the around-the-table negotiations. It was a signal that frustration of the Albanians will be bigger and there it is necessary appropriately to be conveyed the message that peace agreement will be an interim solution.

²⁵ Kosovo Information Center, 31 January 1999

²⁶ Reuters, 30 January 1999

²⁷ Ibid

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The beginning of the 2001 war in North Macedonia until the Prizren agreement - May 2021 according to the British press

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Abstract

The outbreak of the 2001 war in northern Macedonia came as a surprise to both the state apparatus and the international community. Even though the status of Albanians was not yet legally defined in the country, it was considered that the state was stable and there was apparently no room for any eventual conflict. From mid-February 2001, when the conflict erupted and until the so-called Prizren Agreement between representatives of Albanian political parties in northern Macedonia and the political leader of the National Liberation Army, mediated by the OSCE Ambassador, political developments were blurred and unknown. The British press regularly followed military and political developments on a daily basis during this period of time. Of course, such a report would also reflect the creation of the political opinion of the population on the events in Northern Macedonia though the same would reflect that of British and world policymakers. The analysis is done in this paper exclusively on the basis of the British press.

Keywords: *North Macedonia, 2001 war, British press, international mediators, political opinion.*

I. Introduction

Political and military developments in Kosovo during 1998-99 enabled Macedonia to establish and strengthen ties with the international Western European factor. NATO's great need to use Macedonian territory or airspace to attack Serbia created a historic opportunity for close ties with Brussels and Washington. The influx of Albanian refugees from Kosovo to Macedonia, although with obstacles of various natures, also influenced the current government to gain European and American sympathy. These were some elements that influenced the relaxation of interethnic relations in Macedonia and the international factor. Though there was preliminary information that the state did not move at all or did very small step towards advancing the rights of Albanians, mistakenly made international community think that the situation in the country is normal and certainly they gave priority to Kosovo in all aspects.

However, taking into account that the liberation movements in Kosovo and Macedonia had many connections and as such it was organized in parallel in both countries, although in Kosovo due to the circumstances it was more dynamic, but also in the same period of time military activities will take place in Macedonia which will also concern the international factor. Thus, the first armed action in Macedonia will take place against the Gostivar Court on December 17, 1997, then immediately on January 4, 1998 in Kumanovo and Prilep police stations. On July 22, 1998, three explosions rocked Macedonia, one blast in the center of the capital, Skopje, caused only a small amount of damage. They precede a visit to Macedonia by Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General. The cause of the blasts was investigated by Macedonian police, who said they had nothing to do with the Kosovo Liberation Army.

These actions will continue with deadly effects for the police forces of Northern Macedonia, in January 1999 in Aracinovo, 3 policemen were killed and on January 22, 2001, in Tearce, a Macedonian policeman was killed.

These guerrilla actions were as disturbing to the international community though these incidents were also signals that not everything in Macedonia was as presented by the current government. None of these actions were categorized by the international community as terrorist, but as extremist or radical actions. During this time the situation was simmering while the final explosion was not known, the Macedonian government instead of taking concrete actions towards the advancement of the Albanian status rather authorities thought that like in the past would extinguish by force any Albanian political activity. In the mean time the international community following the developments in Kosovo and Macedonia with great interest tensions in Macedonia did not take at the beginning very seriously.

II. The beginning of armed conflict on 16 February 2001

Decisive moment would be February 16, 2001, when in Tanusha, Skopje, National Liberation Army (NLA) units were positioned and the frontal war with the Macedonian security forces finally began. The beginning of the fighting, uniformed soldiers under the emblem of the NLA in

the public appearance of its representatives led by the main leader Ali Ameti, the presentation of demands in public and the rapid sympathy they won among the Albanian population marked a new moment that also raised the alarm among the international community that another hotbed of war would be opened in the areas of the former Yugoslavia.

The interest of the western media would be very fast, where on February 19, 2001, the Scotsman newspaper will report on the fighting in Tanusha, Skopje, then in the following days the Observer, The Times, International Herald Tribune, etc. will constantly report on the events in Macedonia. As a result, European and American diplomats reacted the country very fast. They will emphasize Kosovars not to be involved in the armed conflict in the Presevo Valley and in Macedonia, by putting pressure on the former structures of the Kosovo Liberation Army, respectively now incorporated in the Kosovo Protection Corps,.

On February 24, 2001, at a regular Balkan Summit in Skopje aimed at promoting economic co-operation and closer ties with the EU, Chris Patten, EU Commissioner for External Relations, warned that international assistance to Kosovo would shrink if ethnic Albanian separatists continue to launch cross-border attacks against security forces in southern Serbia. (Financial Times). On the other hand, on February 25, 2001, Macedonian military officials stated that they were making efforts to prevent Albanian fighters from entering their territory. Slavic and Russian propaganda, on the one hand, sought to divert political developments in the Balkans, trying to convince Western international actors that the Albanians were once again destabilizing the region and struggling to form a Greater Kosovo. At the moment the situation was quite complicated and despite the sympathy that Albanians had from Euro-Americans as well as other geopolitical and geostrategic interests, they were again put in diplomatic challenge in what way they would justify these hostilities in the Presevo Valley and in Macedonia. (The Observer).

III. The international community is beginning to take a serious interest in the conflict in northern Macedonia

At a meeting of NATO foreign ministers on 28 February 2001, US Secretary of State Colin Powell reaffirmed US commitment to the Balkans. Hombach, special co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, urged NATO to increase security along the border with Macedonia. (Financial Times). These immediate actions of the North Atlantic Alliance showed its commitment but it also speaks for the very seriousness of the situation and the risk of its escalation.

In this murky situation when the armed frontal war had already erupted in Macedonia between the NLA on the one hand and the Macedonian Army, Police, and other armed structures on the other, the Macedonian government instead of looking for quick ways to calm down Albanians, it continued with extremely reckless actions at a completely inappropriate time. On March 2, 2001, the Macedonian Parliament ratified a long-awaited border treaty with Serbia, which specified the demarcation line in the Kosovo-Macedonia part. This means that Macedonia still recognized

Serbia as sovereign in the territory of Kosovo despite the fact that now it was a completely different reality on the ground. This reckless and unnecessarily diplomatic action cost Macedonia a lot. Now the NLA would have an even greater motive to continue and spread the war to other settlements, as well as a strong justification before the international factor arguing that it had a right to its own war.

This would certainly change the international diplomatic approach to the war in Macedonia. Thus, on March 2, 2001, NATO will urge Macedonia not to launch an offensive against the NLA. On the other hand, the Macedonian government will be justified in losing patience as about 200 NLA soldiers were already present in Tanusha. (The Daily Telegraph). Thus, on March 5, 2001, the Macedonian Army announced the mobilization.

As the conflict now escalated the Balkan powers would not be left out. On March 6, Macedonian Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski met with his Greek, Albanian and Bulgarian counterparts. Bulgarian President Petar Stoyanov stressed that he would consider sending Bulgarian troops to Macedonia. Although the Bulgarian defense minister later stated that only military equipment would be sent, the international community was still concerned about the risk of escalating the conflict. While the Greek Foreign Ministry spokesman stressed that this is the result of selective implementation of UN policies in Kosovo.

At the same time from Washington, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said: "We strongly condemn acts of violence by extremists seeking to undermine the stability of Macedonia, Kosovo and the region." While Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that the potential for extremism that is spreading outside Kosovo was growing. Mr. Putin during the telephone conversation with Mr. Trajkovski, blamed the West for the latest developments in Macedonia. EU countries said they had sent harsh warnings to Albanian leaders in Kosovo. Meanwhile, KFOR and Macedonian military officials met in Skopje to discuss Macedonia's military plans to clear the guerrillas. (Los Angeles Times). Now the KLA was pointed at Kosovo as the main culprit for inciting and helping Albanians in Macedonia to start a new conflict, just as Serbia had begun cooperating with the West to extradite former Serbian leader Milosevic to The Hague tribunal. Kosovo and NATO did not admit that they were on the side of the NLA in Macedonia, they even strengthened the border line with Macedonia and there were cases when armed clashes were recorded between KFOR and NLA soldiers. In this action to secure the border between Kosovo and Macedonia, about 250 American soldiers were engaged who kept under surveillance the border line towards the village of Tanusha in Skopje. The fact that soldiers from the 325th US Air Battalion in the first week of March 2001 used weapons to prevent NLA soldiers from crossing the border refuted Macedonia's allegations that NATO was assisting the NLA. In this largest NATO operation to isolate NLA soldiers, they even entered several hundred meters inside the Macedonian border, which action was assessed with various contradictions by official Skopje.

IV. Bulgarian assistance to the country's government and expansion of the conflict to new areas

The warning that Bulgaria would come to the aid of North Macedonia will now come true. Bulgarian Prime Minister Ivan Kostov will arrive in North Macedonia on March 8, 2001 to provide diplomatic and military assistance. Bulgaria to send hundreds of tons of weapons and ammunition after ratification of military-technical agreement with North Macedonia.

However, US Secretary of State Collin Powel had stated that the US and Europe had entered the Balkans together and would leave together, while Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and that the Balkans are a difficult part of the world to maintain peace. Now the stance will be a little different, perhaps due to public reactions to excessive military engagement in the Balkans. Collin Powel would state that NATO has a hard time in the Balkans and was not cut out for further engagement in the region. The US Congress was also interested in reducing the US military presence in the Balkans. Despite the risk of an outbreak of a new conflict in the Balkans, the US Administration will withdraw from Bosnia about 1,000 troops, helicopters, tanks and other weapons, etc. Although the US says it does so in cooperation with other NATO allies, reducing the number in Bosnia to 20,000 troops after 6 years of engagement.

The Independent, on March 12, 2001, reports that one of the leaders of the NLA in North Macedonia is Ali Ameti, trying to link the conflict with the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Although the international community reacted quickly in Macedonia, in order not to repeat the case of major bloodshed as in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, but again their rapid diplomatic offensive did not prevent the escalation of the conflict. In March 2001, the KLA will extend to the settlements of Kumanovo. Also while the international community was trying to isolate the conflict and bring peace back to the country, on March 14, 2001, while a protest was taking place in the center of Tetovo by several thousand young people, shots were suddenly heard from villages near the city. This extension of the NLA for only a few weeks created the impression on diplomacy and Western journalists on the ground that these hostilities may not be short-lived. Journalist Patrick Bishop underlines that: "The continuation of violence has dampened hopes that the NLA's actions would be short-lived," quoting Prime Minister Georgievski, who said: "At first we thought they were just criminals, but based on our information now it seems they have strong political and logistical support from the structures in Kosovo".

On March 15, 2001, Macedonian President Trajkovski convened the National Security Council for consultations on the crisis in the country. The head of state and the Macedonian political bloc as a whole tried to convince the international community that the crisis was imported from Kosovo and eventually from Albania. In addition to the war on the ground, there was now a fierce diplomatic war over who would win the sympathy of the international factor, namely the Euro-American one, which would be decisive for the course of the prospects. Part of the international opinion so far influenced by the calls of the Macedonian authorities that the Albanians are fighting to secede a part of Macedonia to join Kosovo and Albania, as they believed. Researcher and professor Mark Mazower at Birckbeck College University in London,

will consider that the Albanians in Macedonia, act the same as those in Kosovo who by provoking the Serbs involved the international factor on their side. According to him, the Macedonian government is democratic, has an Albanian party in the coalition, has opened a University in the Albanian language and many other advancements towards Albanians.. The position of some internationals was that KFOR, with 37,000 troops, should block the border with Macedonia to prevent the passage of NLA soldiers. Although KFOR announced that it had isolated the border with Macedonia to prevent NLA soldiers from crossing it but the Macedonian government still said that two-thirds of NLA fighters entered from Kosovo.

US Special Envoy James Pardew will meet with Emrush Xhemajli, leader of the Kosovo People's Movement, on March 14, 2001, following rumors that he was one of the KLA organizers in Macedonia, urging him to focus on Kosovo and do not put his hand in Macedonia. The Balkan states had also openly declared their involvement in the conflict, Bulgaria would engage on the Macedonian side if it escalated into a civil war, as had Serbia and Greece, and Russia had also expressed interest. Government officials say about 20,000 government troops have been mobilized so far, but the total mobilization could reach 120,000. As the Macedonian government struggled to defend itself against the NLA, the international community continued to put pressure on the NLA, with neighboring countries besides Albania openly lobbying in favor of Macedonia, while the NLA continued to advance on the ground and increase troop numbers and sympathy. Despite government propaganda that the NLA wants to divide the state, the latter deny the same and say that we fight only for the equal rights of Albanians. But at the same time there were rumors that Macedonia should not use excessive force against the NLA as Milosevic did in Kosovo on the contrary the government should sit down and give concessions to the NLA, as The Guardian journalist Jonathan Steele writes. The same attitude is shared by the editorial of The Daily Telegraph of London, appealing to intervene as soon as possible, by learning from the omissions of the 90s.

The National Liberation Army, in order to enable peace, on March 18, 2001, began to appoint its representatives for talks with the Macedonian authorities. A day later, on March 19, 2001, the Macedonian government put curfew in Tetovo from 7 pm to 6 am. The situation was getting worse so fear and panic was spread among citizens, though this moment forced the international community to take faster steps to calm the parties. On March 19, 2001, EU Foreign Ministers and NATO Secretary General Javier Solana met in Brussels with Macedonian Foreign Minister Kerim in a bid to elaborate a coordinated strategy for the crisis in Macedonia. In a meeting with Macedonian Foreign Minister NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson said NATO would send troops to support KFOR and encourage KFOR activities aimed at cutting off cross-border channels used by the KLA in their offensive against Macedonia.

V. Western pressure on Kosovo politicians

To put pressure on the parties involved in the conflict, on March 22, 2001, EU envoys Chris Patten and Javier Solana visited Pristina, where they held extensive talks with the head of the UN

Administration in Kosovo and Kosovo Albanian leaders, Ibrahim Rugova, Hacim Thaçi and Ramush Haradinaj, who a day later issued a joint statement calling on Albanian insurgents in North Macedonia to stop fighting. The statement also called on North Macedonian authorities to find solutions to the problems of ethnic Albanians in the country. Mr. Solana also visited Skopje, this is the second visit within the last three days, where under international pressure a ceasefire was reached which was greeted by Mr. Solana, but in particular he said I am happy that the people in the mountains (i.e. KLA, F.I.) in response to the government ceasefire will stop fighting. Ms. Ana Lindh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, as chair of the EU in this six-month period, will be next to Mr. Solana in Skopje, who will also put pressure on Albanians to lay down their arms and that they strongly support a democratic and independent Macedonia.

As the conflict escalated, senior British military officials estimated that Macedonian government forces did not have the capacity to defeat the NLA. That is why senior EU officials will put pressure on the Macedonian government to withdraw from the attacks and intensify talks with legitimate representatives of Albanian political parties.

Only a few weeks after the outbreak of the armed conflict in Macedonia, the international community began to show solidarity with the demands of the Albanians in Macedonia. Thus, on March 24, 2001, US Secretary of State Colin Powell recommended to the Macedonian government to consider constitutional changes that would allow ethnic Albanians to receive higher education in the Albanian language. At the same time, Powell warned that excessive measures taken on behalf of the Macedonian authorities could further alienate ethnic Albanians in the country.

VI. International community began to demand that the state make concessions to Albanians

Under international pressure, the Macedonian authorities hoped that with quick military action they would clear the ground of the KLA, so on March 24, 2001, the government launched a strong offensive with all means of war, both ground and air. This led Lord Robertson a day after visiting Skopje to ask the government to withdraw from the attacks and at the same time make concessions to the Albanian population. The NATO secretary-general conveyed the position of all alliance governments, including the United Kingdom, urging President Trajkovski to be more restrained in the expression of violence. As a result of this offensive by the Macedonian government, thousands of Albanians fled their homes and the humanitarian situation worsened. This worried the international factor who were looking for a solution as soon as possible. Thus, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, will declare before the British Parliament that Macedonia has begun to build a multiethnic society and we must not allow the polarization of Slavic and Albanian societies. Mr Blair justified the intervention in Kosovo by saying that racial genocide would not work and that the future of the Balkans was eliminating this kind of ethnic conflict.

Two days later, the KLA Chief of Staff stated that the KLA was ready to retaliate against the Macedonian Army. The crisis was constantly deepening. Macedonian opposition dissatisfied

with developments in the country and on March 31, 2001, the leader of the Social Democratic opposition party, Branko Crvenkovski, threatened the government with street demonstrations if Prime Minister Georgievski did not accept the idea of forming a grand governing coalition.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana arrived in Skopje on April 2nd, 2001, in a bid to help Macedonia and its ethnic communities find a way out of the crisis. Brussels offered the "Stabilization and Association Agreement" as a first step towards EU membership. Inter-ethnic dialogue was seen as an integral part of the road to EU membership.

The only other Balkan country that had been promised such an agreement in the past was Croatia. In response to EU activities, Macedonia was expected to launch a broad political dialogue with the leaders of its Albanian community. President Trajkovski expressed readiness to hold a dialogue with all Albanian parties and to revise some parts of the Macedonian constitution. A key requirement of the European Union was the amendment of the Constitution to advance the status of Albanians.

VII. President Trajkovski's peace plan

Due to international pressure, the President of Macedonia, Mr. Trajkovski on April 2, 2001, submitted a document for talks with parliamentary parties. However, since the document in essence did not contain elements for the advancement of the Albanian issue, as requested by the American Secretary, Mr. Powel and EU representatives, Albanian parties expressed dissatisfaction and Arben Xhaferi as part of the government stated that he would withdraw from the government if the Albanian demands are not met within a month, while Imer Imeri from the Albanian opposition in protest stated that he would not take part in the meeting. In this situation, the moderate politician of Kosovo reacted for the first time since the beginning of the crisis, Mr. Ibrahim Rugova who recommended that the Macedonian government talk to representatives of the National Liberation Army.

NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson on April 4, 2001, warned that parties supporting armed extremists would be isolated. Robertson stated that KFOR took responsibility for establishing strong control over the Kosovo-Macedonian border. Robertson said that already 150 extremists have been arrested and handed over to the UN administration in Kosovo.

VIII. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook calling the KLA "terrorist"

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook will visit Skopje on 5 April 2001. In addition to the protocol meetings he had with the head of state, Mr Cook also made a presentation to the media. Journalist Steve Crawshaw from The Independent of London, on April 6, 2001, presents a special emphasis when the chairman of DPA Arben Xhaferi reacts to Robin Kuk since he uses the term <terrorist> refering to NLA, as he writes "Mr. Xhaferri, although a declared opponent of

the NLA, strongly opposed the word <terrorist>. He said: "They cannot be terrorists, as they have a uniform and a front line, they have not attacked civilians. "We have an uprising."

In order to create a climate of optimism towards creating better living conditions and hope for a better perspective in Macedonia, the EU expeditiously offered to sign on 9 April 2001 in Luxembourg by a strong multiethnic delegation from Macedonia, an agreement to forge new political and economic relations with 15 EU countries, known as the Stabilization and Association Agreement, which unveiled Macedonia's promise of eventual EU membership if it were to present a package of reforms. After weeks of intense diplomacy between Brussels and Skopje, the Macedonian government agreed with the "European Community" for a roundtable to cover much of the political spectrum to create a debate on institutional reform.

IX. US Secretary of State Colin Powell visited the Balkans

US Secretary of State Colin Powell began his tour to the Balkans with a visit to Skopje, Macedonia on 13 April 2001. Powell held talks with President Trajkovski and later with the Foreign Ministers of Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia and Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Officials said Powell's visit gave support to President Trajkovski's government, but also aimed to speed up dialogue between the five Albanian and Macedonian political parties on Macedonia's constitutional reform. Due to the fighting in Macedonia, the US had pledged \$ 5.5m, in addition to almost \$ 50m, for civilian programs to facilitate reforms. Mr Powell also met with Kosovo Albanian leaders, warning them that they were facing the erosion of international support if they did not denounce the violence and isolate the extremists' intention to destabilize Macedonia.

On a two-day visit to facilitate multiethnic dialogue in Skopje on 19 April 2001, Solana will meet with President Trajkovski, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski and leaders of other political blocs. After Macedonia's political leaders signed an agreement in Luxembourg on Macedonia's association with the EU, local politicians began discussing in practical terms the formation of a grand coalition government. According to preliminary talks, the ruling VMRO should give 4 ministries to the opposition Social Democratic League, while the ruling Albanian party, the Democratic Party of Albanians, should provide 2 ministries to the opposition, the Party for Democratic Prosperity.

X. Attempting to declare a state of emergency

Despite international pressure on the warring parties, the crisis deepened due to the lack of seriousness of the Macedonian political bloc, as their approach was wrong as they felt that the state had the capacity to confront the KLA, but in fact the ground war was expanding every day and the KLA was expanding the territory under its control. Closely related, the prime minister and the president of the state constantly aimed to declare a "state of war" to concentrate power on the president who was of Macedonian origin and this was not allowed by the internationals. An

attempt to declare a state of war the government would make on May 8, 2001. Although the president somehow did not want this action. But at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Nyköping, Sweden in early May, they will oppose the dangerous move. EU Foreign Policy Chief, Mr. Javier Solana will state; "Instead of talking about a state of war, it is better to talk about a state of peace.". Also Mr. Solana urged the Macedonian government to exercise maximum restraint.

Mr. Solana, from Sweden will go straight to Skopje to meet the head of state, while Mr. Robertson, NATO Secretary General, is expected to arrive on May 7, 2001. They insisted that no state of war be declared as the situation could be further complicated.

XI. Formation of the enlarged government

On 13 May 2001, an enlarged government was formed in which all internationally mediated parliamentary parties joined. During the last three weeks of NLA fighting, it had captured about 320 km of territory. Western defense sources suspect that the Macedonian Army of 12,000 inexperienced and untrained soldiers could drive out the KLA, despite the obtaining of Ukrainian helicopters, Bulgarian tanks and Yugoslav armaments.

The European Union is determined to find a solution to the conflict in Macedonia as soon as possible, so on 16 May 2001 an EU delegation led by Anna Lindh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, arrived in Skopje and Foreign Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten. Their mission was to encourage interethnic dialogue, and Macedonian authorities had to set a deadline for progress at inter-ethnic talks to be seen at the EU summit in Gothenburg in early June..

The commitment of the international community was extremely great and quick to end the war, in order to save the fragile multiethnic state of Macedonia, but also to put pressure on Macedonian Slavic politicians to make concessions to political reforms in favor of the Albanians. Javier Solana, EU foreign policy chief, has made seven visits so far in the last six weeks. NATO Secretary General, Mr. George Robertson has visited Skopje 4 times, together with other officials, including the US Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell. Western diplomats think that now the broad governing coalition that has an absolute majority in parliament has the opportunity to pass controversial legislation that has been dragging on for 10 years.

Mr. Solana will visit Skopje on 28 May 2001, and was concerned about the escalation of the situation, though he will state that both sides are deepening the division.

XII. Prizren Agreement

In order to reduce the tension between the Albanian political parties and the KLA, the OSCE Special Representative, Mr. Richard Frowick mediated an agreement which was signed in Prizren, Kosovo, on 24 May 2001. The reaction was immediate from the Macedonian authorities and the international community. All demanded that the deal be scrapped, fearing it could lead to the overthrow of the extended government formed a few days earlier. Mr. Frowick was an

experienced American diplomat since the 1960s and a good connoisseur of the Balkans. For six weeks he tried to persuade both sides to reduce tensions and persuaded the NLA to withdraw from the border with Kosovo. . The Macedonian government now did not hesitate to say that the US has always been closer to the Albanian fighters.

As the fighting continued on the ground, the international community increased its presence and interest in finding a way out so that the war in Macedonia would not escalate further. Significantly, the Macedonian political bloc has tried since the beginning of the war in February 2001 to convince the international community that the country has been attacked by terrorist groups, hoping for their benefit, but the US, and the entire international community from the beginning neither did they trust the information released by the head of state, nor did they allow them to use excessive force against Albanian settlements, despite the fact that they too were convinced that the state was powerless to stop the NLA's advance. While the attitude of the international community was mild towards the NLA from the beginning, over time they even began to meet with representatives of the NLA, while the qualifications as terrorist, separatist, fundamentalist, etc., will not be mentioned by the international community but political terms such as: riots, uprisings, rebellions, wars, conflicts, etc. will be used.

XIII. CONCLUSION

The manner of conducting the fighting, the use of excessive force against civilians by the army of Northern Macedonia, the way of conducting of negotiations, the manner of proposing the Draft Agreement by the international community, the proposal of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences for the division of the state related to the demographic aspect, etc. Were closely followed by EU and USA.

The political developments in Northern Macedonia in terms of the involvement of the Balkan states in the daily politics in the country, the intervention of the international factor, respectively the Washington and Brussels as world political centers, prove the thesis that Macedonia is and will remain the hottest spot in the region for decades.

The British press has reported with great precision and accuracy every day on all military developments on the ground, has reported on all political developments in the country, has also reported on all diplomatic developments in the EU and the US on the issue of the conflict in Northern Macedonia. .

The British press was undoubtedly decisive in the implementation of EU and US policies in relation to developments on the ground.

Crucial would be the British press throughout the sensibilisation of the British and world public for the risk of escalating the conflict to other parts of the region as presented in most of the analyzes and reports carried out in the British daily press, though this strongly reflected to decision-making chancelleries in London, Washington and Brussels.

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Application of new Mathematical Models in the Higher Education Evaluation Process

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Abstract

The current situation with the reforms conducted in the last several years in Republic of North Macedonia, in terms of higher education do not give the expected results regarding the positions Universities have at the international rankings. Based on the Ministry of Education and Science, there are currently 17 accredited higher education institutions in the state and still there is not relevant, deep and comprehensive analysis conducted about their work. Working in the field of higher education showed that there is a possibility (still not automated and integrated) to examine the quantitative outputs in terms of educated staff, as well as scientific work and visibility in the Internet (Scopus, Webometrics, other sources), but the quantitative aspect is missing, as well as the comparison in between with locating the best of the best, thus knowing what are the best practices and who is conducting them. Also, there is lack in the approach of comparison the outputs with the inputs (what has been invested to produce those outputs) and answer the question of what is the price paid (not only in terms of finances, but broader). Bearing this in mind, the efficiency of our Universities is still a black box and for sure we claim that not being aware about it, we cannot hold any successful reform in the educational system and achieve higher goals and international rankings. The purpose of this work is to propose a new ways of evaluation the higher education system which could be applied not only for the domestic Universities. Mathematical modeling is used with elaboration of several specific methods, such as DEA, AHP, SFA etc. Some of them already applied in qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation of some parts of our educational system.

Keywords: *DEA – Data Envelopment Analysis, AHP – Analytic Hierarchy Process, SFA – Stochastic Frontier Analysis.*

Current situation and analysis

There are a lot of publications that can be found in academic circles, concerning efficiency of educational institutions. Maybe one of the most important question to be answered is what is the most appropriate method to be used in the process of evaluation of the efficiency of higher education systems. For sure, the best approach would involve deep research and consideration of the recent publications from the reputable publishers, institutions and authors.

Data envelopment analysis (DEA) is used to make an evaluation of the relative efficiency of around 500 higher education institutions (HEIs) from Europe and USA, between 2000 and 2010. Different input-output sets were applied with specific parameters as inputs and outputs in the DEA model (inputs: total revenue, academic staff, administration staff, total number of students; outputs: total number of publications, number of scientific articles, graduates). Different frontiers were developed, in terms of global and local regions. Also, the external factors affecting the degree of HEI inefficiency, e.g. institutional settings (size and department composition), location, funding structure were taken into consideration. It was found that the role of the university funding structure in HEI technical efficiency is different in Europe and in the U.S., thus making completely different influence in the end results. It is very interesting to note that regarding European units, more government funding is associated with greater inefficiency, while the share of funds from tuition fees decreases the efficiency of American public institutions, but relates to the efficiency improvements in European universities. Wolszczak-Derlacz, J. (2014)

One important step is overcoming the possible lack of comparable data when comparing the performance of higher education institutions. In some situations, it is impossible to be solved, regarding the current positions of the Universities and their development. Veiderpass and McKelvey are evaluating the performance of higher education institutions in a production theory context, applying the well-known data envelopment analysis (DEA) method to cross-section of 944 HEIs in 17 different European countries. It is pretty suitable to apply DEA in this context, where little is known about production technologies and economic behaviour of the HEIs. On average, provision of education is found to be most efficient in the Slovak Republic followed by Belgium and Latvia, while Denmark and Norway display the lowest efficiency. This study also indicated a positive relation between efficiency and HEI size and efficiency and research intensity. Furthermore, the study pointed to the importance of continued data collection. Veiderpass and McKelvey (2016).

Johnes and Johnes (2013) applied various stochastic frontier models and analysis in order to find and evaluate relative efficiency in English higher education institutions over the period 2003/04 to 2010/11. The stochastic frontier approach involves fitting a curve through data on costs and a variety of explanatory variables. In this way, they produced an envelope that defined an efficiency frontier – the best we can get with the resources available – a curve that shows the lowest possible costs at which a given set of outputs can be produced. The frontier is the benchmark against which the efficiency with which each

institution produces its output can be determined. Once differences between institutions are accounted for 1, the variation in efficiency scores across institutions is greatly reduced, with a concentration of scores above 0.9 (where a score of one represents efficiency). Indeed, the relatively small number of institutions with low scores is exclusively made up of small and specialist institutions. The results do not, therefore, support the notion that substantial sector- wide gains could be made by using efficiency scores as a criterion for resource allocation.

Kulshreshtha and Nayak (2015) examined the technical efficiency (TE) of eight famous higher technical educational institutions (HTEIs) in India (more precisely, seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc)), with appliance of SFA method (Stochastic Frontier Analysis) and DEA method (Data Envelopment Analysis). The study uses the input-oriented and output oriented stochastic distance function models, as well as constant returns to scale DEA approach to measure the TE of the above institutions. This paper demonstrates that technical efficiency definitely can varies between the examined institutions and points directly the need for strengthening the know-how (concerning higher technical education) of the Indian HTEIs, so that they can exploit the full potential of the existing educational inputs.

For sure, this is only a short list of the available papers and works regarding the issue. A great number of them show that DEA and SFA are probably the most widespread methods to evaluate relative efficiency of the higher education institutions, no matter whether it is in developed or in countries in developing. Normally, there are pros and cons regarding the methods also, but the results are pretty acceptable regarding the policy makers.

Evaluation methods

Creating the production frontier points the benchmark institutions in the sector. All the others institutions can follow the benchmarks in order to improve their relative efficiency. In this context, SFA and DEA are frontier analysis and can be applied for good enough results. So, the question is what method of constructing the production frontier and calculating the efficiency scores to be used

Using SFA in higher education needs a cross-section or a panel sample of HEIs. For the panel sample it does not require the condition of balance. For the production function it requires the quantitative data about inputs and output, for the cost function – a quantitative data about inputs and output, and the data about prices of products. For sure, we can examine both advantages and disadvantages of SFA:

Advantages:

- (a) It enables to take into account a certain kind of random error and,

simultaneously, to estimate the element of inefficiency.

- (b) The influence of other factors can be modeled (quality, environment, etc.).
- (c) Significance tests are in the base (sensitivity, resampling, bootstrapping, asymptotic theory).
- (d) Change in efficiency can be decomposed into components: the change of technical efficiency, technological change, scale change.

Disadvantages:

- (a) It requires an assumption about the functional form of the model and determination of the production technology.
- (b) It requires assumption about the functional form of placement of the error term and inefficiency.
- (c) In the analysis of the production function it can consider only one output indicator.
- (d) In the analysis of the distance function it is difficult to explain obtained coefficients.
- (e) In the analysis of the cost function it may be difficult to get exact prices for inputs.
- (f) It is difficult to calculate.

As we can see, there are multiple disadvantages in terms of appliance SFA in the process of measuring the technical efficiency of HEIs.

DEA as well as the SFA is a frontier method. DEA uses linear programming methods to construct non-parametric piecewise surface (frontier) for a sample of HEIs, and the calculation of the efficiency with respect to this surface. DEA methodology is based on the approach of piecewise-linear convex envelope to calculate the frontier. Maybe one of the most important moments in DEA development and appliances through years was the publication of an article by A. Charnes et al. (1978). DEA term was used for the first time, using model of linear programming to solve the problem of frontier constructing and efficiency estimation. From that moment on, this method has received recognition and development.

DEA has the following advantages:

- (a) it gives an opportunity to include in a model few inputs and outputs that allows estimating efficiency without calculation of a sole parameter of input or output;
- (b) absence of necessity to choose the functional form of production function;
- (c) it allows to analyse the efficiency in cases when it is difficult enough formally to explain relation between numerous resources and outputs of industrial system;
- (d) it enables to estimate the contribution of each of inputs to overall efficiency (or inefficiency) of the companies and to estimate a level of inefficiency of each input;
- (e) and besides an estimation of technical efficiency, it enables to estimate other kinds of efficiency, for example, economic efficiency.

Disadvantages:

- (a) It does not provide a test for errors, i.e. DEA assumes that the errors in the

original data are not available.

(b) The sensitivity of results to the number of variables in the model and number of observations, i.e. when the number of factors in the model increases and the number of observations decreases, then the number of HEIs that lie at the efficiency frontier increases.

Bearing the previous sections, we can determine that SFA can perform better if we deal only with one input, if there is a need to decompose efficiency into main components and it is important to measure various factors influence on HEIs' efficiency. In other cases, the DEA is better for evaluating efficiency. However, in order to use DEA for HEIs efficiency analysis we must be sure that our sample has enough data and this data doesn't have errors. So, the data and its grouping is very important.

MATHEMATICS OF THE PROPOSED TECHNIQUES

DEA technique

Modeling of the real word in DEA terms means having: Set of production units – input/output systems – known as DMUs (Decision Making Units), in this examination – university study program courses;

- Input parameters (same for all DMUs), in this examination investments for each course;
- Output parameters (same for all DMUs), in this examination the results of study program conduction in terms of knowledge and skills gathered from the students;
- Technical efficiency (the goal of the examination) of a single DMU is defined as:

$$\theta = \frac{Output}{Input}$$

It is called **Pareto** efficiency in case of best resources allocation (usually inputs) in the examined set of DMUs. The DMU with Pareto efficiency is called **efficient** DMU (in this paper – efficient course). The other DMUs are relatively inefficient (only in the observed set of DMUs). It is not possible for the efficient DMUs to change something in order to achieve better performances to the efficient DMUs (it is impossible to improve the output without worsening the input).

Having n DMUs with m inputs and s outputs each, the efficiency of k-th DMU is:

$$\theta_k = \frac{u_1 y_{1k} + u_2 y_{2k} + \dots + u_s y_{sk}}{v_1 x_{1k} + v_2 x_{2k} + \dots + v_m x_{mk}}$$

where $x_{1k}, x_{2k}, \dots, x_{mk}$ are the inputs of the k-th DMU, $y_{1k}, y_{2k}, \dots, y_{sk}$ are the outputs of the k-th DMU, v_1, v_2, \dots, v_m are inputs' weight coefficients and u_1, u_2, \dots, u_s are outputs' weight coefficients, with mathematical limitation (in connotation of the reality):

$$v_1, \dots, v_m \geq 0, u_1, \dots, u_s \geq 0,$$

In this paper, we use DEA CCR CRS input oriented model:

- Goal:

$$\max \theta_k = \frac{u_1 y_{1k} + u_2 y_{2k} + \dots + u_s y_{sk}}{v_1 x_{1k} + v_2 x_{2k} + \dots + v_m x_{mk}},$$

- Limitations:

$$\frac{u_1 y_{11} + u_2 y_{21} + \dots + u_s y_{s1}}{v_1 x_{11} + v_2 x_{21} + \dots + v_m x_{m1}} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^s u_i y_{i1}}{\sum_{j=1}^m v_j x_{j1}} \leq 1$$

$$\dots$$

$$\frac{u_1 y_{1k} + u_2 y_{2k} + \dots + u_s y_{sk}}{v_1 x_{1k} + v_2 x_{2k} + \dots + v_m x_{mk}} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^s u_i y_{ik}}{\sum_{j=1}^m v_j x_{jk}} \leq 1$$

$$\dots$$

$$\frac{u_1 y_{1n} + u_2 y_{2n} + \dots + u_s y_{sn}}{v_1 x_{1n} + v_2 x_{2n} + \dots + v_m x_{mn}} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^s u_i y_{in}}{\sum_{j=1}^m v_j x_{jn}} \leq 1$$

$$v_1, \dots, v_m \geq 0, u_1, \dots, u_s \geq 0;$$

$$x_{ij} \geq 0, y_{rj} \geq 0; i = 1, \dots, m; r = 1, \dots, s; j = 1, \dots, n.$$

The result are weights that maximizes each DMU's efficiency in respect of all the other DMUs, forming frontier line consisted of best DMUs with efficiency = 1 (**efficient DMUs**). All inefficient DMUs have efficiency below 1 and are called **inefficient**.

Often, as in this paper, the dual DEA CCR model is used:

- Find $\min \theta$
- Having limitations:

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j x_{ij} \leq \theta x_{i0}, \quad i = 1, \dots, m$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j y_{rj} \geq y_{r0}, \quad r = 1, \dots, s$$

$$\lambda_j \geq 0, \quad j = 1, \dots, n$$

index 0 is for each DMU that equations are solved for separately (in order to maximize its efficiency), lambdas represent weighted coefficients that build the composite DMUs for each inefficient DMU (shows possible ways for improvement). The composite DMU for each inefficient real DMU is consisted as sum of the ERS (efficiency reference set – efficient DMUs) multiplied with its lambda coefficients. If A and B are efficient DMUs (m inputs, s outputs) and belong to the ERS set of observed inefficient C DMU, the composite DMU C' can be calculated as:

SFA technique

In general, the frontier specifications we consider are variants of the general panel-data regression model:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_t + x_{it}\beta + v_{it} - u_{it} = \alpha_{it} + x_{it}\beta + v_{it},$$

where y_{it} is output for firm i ($i = 1, \dots, N$) at time t ($t = 1, \dots, T$), x_{it} is a vector of inputs and v_{it} is a random error. In contrast to v_{it} , u_{it} is a one-sided error ($u_{it} \geq 0$), capturing the shortfall of y_{it} from the frontier, $(\alpha_t + x_{it}\beta + v_{it})$. The term “stochastic frontier” follows from the fact that the frontier specification includes v_{it} . Defining $\alpha_{it} = \alpha_t - u_{it}$, we have a model in which inefficiency is reflected in differences between firms in the intercepts. Various special cases arise depending on the restrictions placed on the α_{it} . The early literature on SFA developed in a pure cross-section ($T = 1$) context, where identification requires strong assumptions about the distributions of v_i and u_i .

The application and extension of panel data econometrics to SFA grew out dissatisfaction with these assumptions. The first panel frontiers treated inefficiency as a time-invariant firm effect, $\alpha_i = \alpha - u_i$. Estimates of the α_i can be obtained using standard panel techniques and converted into estimates of inefficiency. The time-invariance restriction can substitute for the distributional assumptions necessary for cross-section SFA. Later work on panel frontiers introduced specifications for the α_{it} that relax the time-invariance assumption, while retaining the advantages of panel data.

In general, when we say that a firm produces efficiently, we mean this in both a technical and allocative sense. Here our emphasis will be on technical efficiency, but we will pay some attention to allocative efficiency as well, in both cases following the canonical approach to the measurement problem developed by Farrell (1957). A firm is technically efficient if it uses the minimal level of inputs given output and the input mix or produces the maximal level of output given inputs.

The first definition is formalized in Farrell’s input-based measure, $I(y, x) = \min[b : f(bx) \geq y]$, (21.2) where I indicates the proportion of x necessary to produce y , holding the input ratios constant, and f is a standard, neoclassical (frontier) production function. This measure is illustrated in Fig. 21.1, which depicts an inefficient firm producing output y_A with input vector x_A . Technically efficient production occurs along the isoquant, $\text{Isoq}[L(y_A)] = [x : I(y_A, x) = 1]$, where $L(y) = [x : (y, x) \text{ is feasible}]$ is the input requirements set. Because only bx_A is required to produce y_A , both inputs must be scaled back by the factor $(1-b)$ to achieve technical efficiency. While this measure is used widely, its appeal diminishes when the input set is not strictly convex (the isoquant is not everywhere downward sloping).

For example, the input vector x_B is technically efficient according to the Farrell input measure, although the same level of output could be produced with less of x_1 . In this case, a distinction exists between the isoquant and the efficient subset, $\text{ES}[L(y_A)] = [x : x \in L(y_A), \text{ and } \tilde{x} \leq x \text{ implies } \tilde{x} \notin L(y_A)]$, with $\text{ES}[L(y_A)] \subseteq \text{Isoq}[L(y_A)]$. In most econometric specifications this distinction has no practical significance, because the

$$\mathcal{O}(y, \mathbf{x}) = \min \left[a : f(\mathbf{x}) \geq \frac{y}{a} \right]$$

functional forms used in empirical work impose equivalence between the efficient subset and the isoquant. Corresponding to the output-oriented definition of efficiency is Farrell’s outputbased measure:

Holding inputs constant, $1/\theta$ gives the amount by which output could be expanded. From the perspective of the output-based measure, the firm producing y^A with x^A in the first equation will also be technically efficient if it operates on Isoq $[L(y^A/a)]$. Farrell and Lovell (1978) showed that if f is homogeneous of degree r (r = returns to scale), then $y = f(bx) = b^r f(x) = a f(x)$ and $a = b^r$. Thus, $I = \theta$ only under constant returns. When technology is not homogeneous, there is no straightforward interpretation of θ in terms of I , a result that has some implications for how technical efficiency is estimated. A firm is allocatively inefficient when the marginal rate of substitution between any two of its inputs is not equal to the corresponding input price ratio. This is true of the firm using x^A in the first equation, instead of the cost-minimizing input vector x^* . Let p be the input price vector corresponding to the isocost line through x^* . Then the (input-based) technical efficiency of the firm producing with x^A is $b = p' (bx^A)/p' x^A$, and since $p' x^* = p' x^C$, its allocative efficiency is the ratio $p' x^C/p'$

(bx) . It follows that total or cost efficiency of the firm is given by $p' x^C/p' x^A$, or the product of technical and allocative efficiency.

The basic SFA empirical framework begins with the Farrell output-based technical efficiency measure, which relates observed output, y_i , to the production frontier, $f(x_i; \beta)$, as follows:

$$y_i = a_i f(x_i; \beta), 0 < a_i \leq 1$$

The basic empirical framework for SFA is a regression specification involving a logarithmic transformation of this equation that adds a random error term (v_i), as in:

$$\ln y_i = \ln f(x_i; \beta) + v_i - u_i$$

where $u_i = -\ln a_i \geq 0$ represents technical inefficiency and output is bounded from above by the stochastic frontier $f(x_i; \beta)\exp(v_i)$. The output-based measure of technical efficiency is obviously recovered as $\exp(-u_i)$. The v_i serve the same purpose as any conventional regression disturbance—to account for random unobserved factors. The central econometric issue in models like this is how to treat the u_i . With cross-section data they are usually assumed to follow some non-negative distribution, conditional on x_i . Panel data afford the opportunity to view this model as a standard unobserved-effects model and avoid the distributional assumption. Other issues, such as choosing a functional form and the specification for $f(x_i; \beta)$, are also important insofar as they affect the estimation of firm efficiency.

Evaluation data

If the idea is to apply DEA technique, a large and a valid database (accurate and without errors) like EUMIDA European University Data Collection is necessary to be available, with as much as it is possible indicators about HEIs' indicators can be found in. Globalization and the knowledge-based society have driven universities to an intense competition for the best professors, researchers and students. Rankings and reports measuring how universities perform are available in abundance are also broadly available. Nevertheless Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) have risen considerably since 1980s, there is a lack of consensus when selecting the indicators that represent the inputs and outputs of such institutions in a best way. In the following, we show an exhaustive review of the indicators used in DEA empirical studies in the last decade, classifying them according to

their nature and use. We tried to systematize the main approaches to the data selection for DEA separately for inputs and outputs.

Inputs - It appears that practically all sets of inputs are mixed and have quantitative and cost nature. Such mixes are possible in DEA, and researchers actively used this advantage. We found very poor usage of quality indicators in inputs sets. It can be explained by quantitative and cost nature of the HEIs' resources – table 1.

Outputs - Outputs should reflect the results of the HEIs. We systematized output variables and approaches in the Table 2. Unlike inputs sets, we found many outputs sets with mixed as well as quantitative nature. Overall, in all outputs sets, the quantitative variables dominate.

Table 1

Inputs (Variables)	Approach
Number of academic staff Number of non-academic staff Non-labour expenditures Number of students	Mixed (quantitative and cost)
Total Funding per student Total Expenditure per student Academic Staff per Student	Mixed (cost and qualitative)
Number of full-time academic staff Operating Expenditures	Mixed (quantitative and cost)
Total number of students Number of academic staff Expenditure	Mixed (quantitative and cost)
Number of non-academic staff Number of academic staff Personnel expenditure Non-personnel expenditure	Mixed (quantitative and cost)
Academic staff Total revenue Number of students	Mixed (quantitative and cost)
Central government budget appropriations Own revenue Number of scientific research projects Number of academic staff	Mixed (cost and quantitative)
Number of students enrolled in Letter Number of students enrolled in Computer Sciences Media and Telecom	Quantitative

Table 2

Outputs (Variables)	Approach
Number of graduates Total amount of research grant Rate of success (Ratio of number of students who passed the exam to number of students who sat for the exam)	Mixed (quantitative, cost and qualitative)
Total graduate students Total PhD degrees awarded Total number of courses	Quantitative
Number of students Number of ISI publications Operating income	Mixed (quantitative and cost)
Number of graduates Total amount of external grants and contracts for research	Mixed (quantitative and cost)
Total degrees ISCED 5 Total degrees ISCED 6 PUB Number of published papers International collaboration Normalized impact High quality publications Excellence rate	Mixed (quantitative and qualitative)
Number of graduates Number of publications indexed in Web of Science	Quantitative
Number of graduates per academic Number of post-graduates per academic Number of doctorates per academic Number of publications Number of students graduating who are employed	Quantitative
Number of research units and laboratories Number of graduates from fundamental and applied license	Quantitative

Conclusion and discussion

This study is about the future in terms of what needs to be improved and changed for having better educational systems. For sure there is a need of common approach and unification of the data sets in terms of inputs and outputs, if we want to understand the higher education systems efficiency in different countries around the world. The variables in different researches sometimes coincide, but not always. Creation of a unified performance evaluation system for higher education is very hard, especially due to the dual nature of some total indicators of HEIs' work, where the same indicator can be considered as an input and as an output. Therefore, this dualism explains the lack of a unified approach to the selection of indicators to evaluate the efficiency of HEIs. Moreover, each country has adopted its own database of higher education indicators, so it is not possible at this moment to find the exact type and proportions of data in our country as it is in EU. Hence, evaluation of efficiency in our HEI depends on the reliable data, which can have both quantitative and qualitative nature. We found the most appropriate methods for performance evaluation of higher education – SFA and DEA. Moreover, SFA is more appropriate if we have only one output, need to decompose efficiency into main components and need to model the influence of various factors on HEIs' efficiency. In other cases the DEA is better for evaluating efficiency. However, in order to use DEA for HEIs efficiency analysis we must be sure that our sample has enough data and this data doesn't have errors.

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A Meta-Regression analysis on the size of fiscal multipliers

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Abstract

We conduct a meta-regression analysis (MRA) analysis on a set of 51 empirical VAR and single equation estimation (SEE) studies, in order (i) to review the literature according to statistical criteria, (ii) to provide explanations of the heterogeneity of the empirical results, and (iii) to investigate possible publication selection bias in the literature. We classify studies with respect to the model class, type of fiscal impulses, method of calculation of multipliers, and time-series properties of the data. A novel approach of this study is to augment MRA with primary data on labour market variables. The results suggest there is no publication bias in the fiscal policy literature. Our findings suggest that the heterogeneity of the reported multipliers mostly arises from the study characteristics, in particular, data settings and methods of estimation, while the effect of structural characteristics is mixed. Our main finding is that there is no 'true' multiplier. The multiplier, as shown in this study, is time and state dependent.

Keywords: *fiscal policy, fiscal multipliers, meta-regression analysis, publication bias*

Introduction

The prevalent view on the stabilization role of fiscal policy has evolved over time. The recent crisis, the zero bound for interest rates as well as the policy of negative interest rates renewed interest in the importance of fiscal policy in fighting the recession and resulted in a rapid growth of the empirical literature on the size of fiscal multipliers. However, the results are far from enabling a consensus to be reached. Estimates of multipliers are all over the map, with the range of empirical findings varying from negative to higher than one (Gechert, 2015). The inconclusive theory and the variety of empirically estimated fiscal multipliers make the application of meta-regression analysis (MRA hereinafter) *‘a suitable tool in order to provide a systematic overview of the different approaches, to derive stylized facts and to separate structural from method-specific effects’* (Gechert and Will, 2012, p.2).

We apply MRA analysis to a set of 51 empirical studies on fiscal policy estimated by a single equation approach (SEE hereinafter) and Vector autoregression (VAR) models. In order to identify the systematic influence of certain country/structural characteristic and study characteristics on estimates of the multiplier, we classify studies with respect to the model used in estimation, the chosen type of fiscal impulse, the method of calculation of multipliers, time-series properties of the data, and various other control variables. In addition, we augment the MRA model with primary data accounting for structural characteristics of the countries. A novel approach of this study will be to augment MRA with primary data on labour market variables to see if there is any systematic variation to be attributed to labour market institutions.

The results are consistent with theoretical predictions. Fiscal multipliers differ in terms of model classes. VAR models yield significantly higher multipliers than do SEE approaches. In line with Keynesian theory, expenditure multipliers are higher than tax shocks multipliers, with public employment being the most effective shock across several specifications of our model.

Our findings suggest that the heterogeneity of the reported multipliers mostly arises from the study characteristics –data settings and methods of estimation –while – the effect of structural characteristics is mixed. However, the degree of openness, interest rate reaction, and labour market characteristics appear to be important factors that should be considered while estimating fiscal multipliers.

Investigating publication selection bias, the funnel plot analysis as well as the formal FAT-PET testing procedure, which is applied by using sample size as a proxy for precision, suggests that the literature on fiscal multipliers is not infected by publication bias.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In the first section a literature review is provided. The next section describes the preparation for MRA, the data collection process and some descriptive statistics of the variables. The third section provides an introduction to MRA methods and the results of the analysis are provided in the fourth and sixth sections along with some robustness checks. The end of the paper provides conclusions from the MRA.

Literature review

Theoretical predictions about the transmission mechanism of fiscal policy in an economy are controversial and differ not only about the **size** of the effects of fiscal policy on macroeconomic variables but also about the **direction** of these effects. While most theoretical models agree on the positive effect of an expansionary fiscal shock on output, there is disagreement about crowding in vs. crowding out effects on private consumption, investment and net exports (Gechert and Will, 2012). The effectiveness of fiscal policy as a stabilization tool depends on the assumptions about the type of the economy, the labour market, type of agents, the degree of openness and indebtedness, the exchange rate regime, financial development and institutional quality of the economy.

The effectiveness of fiscal policy on stabilizing the economy has been investigated in the literature by using theoretical based models (Real Business Cycle (RBC), New Keynesian-Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (NK-DSGE) and Macroeconometric (MACRO)) as well as econometrically based models (Simple Equation Estimation (SEE) and Vector Autoregressive (VAR)).

Several survey studies provide a descriptive approach to reported multipliers and characteristics of the reporting studies in the literature (Spilimbergo et al., 2009; Ramey 2011; Parker 2011; Hebous 2011). The reviews of empirical literature suggest that there is to some extent an overlap of empirical findings with theoretical predictions: i.e. the heterogeneity of reported fiscal multipliers might be attributed to structural characteristics of different economies and to the settings and method of analysis.

Gechert (2015) applies MRA to a set of 104 simulation-based and empirical studies of fiscal policy, suggesting that the reported size of the fiscal multiplier crucially depends on the setting and method chosen and that government spending is the most effective policy for increasing output. The present study is different from Gechert (2015) because he mixes empirical and theoretical studies, while we apply MRA only to econometric studies – including both single-equation and VAR approaches – of fiscal policy. Gechert (2015) controls only for the degree of openness in terms of the effects of structural characteristics on fiscal policy, while we control for several other characteristics, beside openness of the country. A novel approach of this study will be to augment the MRA with primary data on the structural characteristics of the economies studies in the literature: level of openness; level of debt; interest rates; domestic credit in relation to GDP; and labour market variables to investigate whether there is any systematic variation to be attributed to labour market institutions.

Asatryan et al. (2020) use Gechert's (2015) metadata and add primary data on author's characteristics and the funding of the research in order to investigate the sources of publication bias in the fiscal multipliers literature. Hence, considering that the aim of the Asatryan et al. (2020) study is not explaining the heterogeneity of the size of fiscal multipliers *per se*, we argue that this study is not directly comparable to ours.

The dataset and MRA variables

The first step of conducting this MRA analysis on fiscal multipliers is identifying all set of published or unpublished studies that investigate the effect on fiscal policy on output and provide calculations of multiplier effects. Following the Stanley and Doucouliagos (2012) recommendation, the EconLit database and working paper series (NBER, IMF, ECB, CEPR) were searched using ‘fiscal multipliers’ and ‘fiscal policy’ as key words. Additionally, the references of already identified studies were investigated as well as studies citing the seminal paper of Blanchard and Perotti (2002). This procedure identified over 100 empirical and estimated/calibrated papers on short-term output effects of discretionary fiscal policy measures, for the period 1992-2013, and 1204 observations of output multipliers. We counted 50 observations from RBC models, 86 observations from NK-DSGE models, 313 observations from MACRO models, 711 observations from VAR models and 44 observations from SEE.

The MRA dataset includes only empirical studies (VAR and SEE) and consists of a total of 755 observations obtained from 51 studies. The reported multipliers from estimated/calibrated papers (RBC, NK-DSGE and MACRO) are not included in the main MRA analysis. The purpose of gathering these estimates is for comparison with the MRA. The rationale for excluding these studies is that these models are not estimated empirically and are not for a particular economy/country. RBC, NK-DSGE and MACRO do not provide any measure of precision and not provide information on sample size, which are necessary to test for and control for publication bias in the literature. Additionally, classifying the estimates into RBC or NK-DSGE models is not always straightforward and implies a considerable degree of subjectivity by the meta-analyst.

MRA methodology

Meta-regression analysis (MRA) uses regression tools to investigate empirical literatures in which the primary studies report estimates from regression analysis. Typically, the meta-analysis uses results from primary studies as the data for analysis. Other MRA use standardization tools in order to construct comparable effect size, however in our case standardization is not necessary, since the multiplier is already dimensionless.

In order to explain the heterogeneity in estimates in our sample of studies, we begin with the following meta-regression model adapted from Stanley and Jarrel (1989):

$$k_i = \beta_0 + \sum_{m=1}^m \alpha_m Z_{im} + e_i \quad i=1,2,\dots,N, \text{ where:} \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

- k_i is the multiplier value of observation i ;
- β_0 is the “underlying” or “reference” multiplier value;
- Z_{im} is the vector of the values of m “moderator variables” pertaining to observation i ;
- α_m is the vector of systematic effects of Z_{im} on k_i ;

- e_i is the meta-regression disturbance term;
- N is the number of observations in the MRA database.

Among the Z_{im} we include external data. By doing so, we explore dimensions that were not considered by the primary studies. To this end, we take advantage of between-study heterogeneity to provide further insights into the effects of fiscal policy and to explore additional dimensions. We collect data on structural characteristics of the countries that were included in the primary studies. Hence, we assess the evidence base by drawing upon data from within the studies themselves— reported multiplier estimates, sample and study characteristics, etc. —as well as information that was (partially) not considered by the authors, such as monetary policy reaction, openness of the economy, the indebtedness of the country, financial market development and labor market characteristics of the country, at the time of the analysis. This allows us to model the heterogeneity within the primary studies, through their study specific characteristics, as well as the heterogeneity in the samples used by different studies, which— in principle — could not be modelled by the primary studies themselves.

In a primary study one can find more than one estimate of fiscal multipliers. Multiple estimates reported within a single study might not be statistically independent of each other, violating one of the OLS assumptions. Additionally, multiple estimates used from a study may cause an undue weight of a single study. Stanley (2001) suggests to use only one observation per study or to take the average in order to tackle these problems. However, following this strategy has its own drawbacks: it imposes a trade-off with variability and degrees of freedom and entails subjectivity by the meta-analyst in selecting the values to take (Bijmolt and Pieters, 2001). Following other authors (De Grauwe and Costa Storti, 2004; Nijkamp and Poot, 2004; Card et al., 2010; Gechert, 2015) we have decided to use multiple estimates per study in this analysis. Therefore, we adjust the standard errors for data clustering, treating each study in our dataset as a distinct cluster. Considering that primary studies use different specifications, data sets, or sample sizes, the variances of the estimated regression coefficients will not be equal, leading to possible heteroscedasticity in MRA (Stanley and Jarrel, 1989). In order to tackle the problem of heteroscedasticity Stanley and Jarrel (1989) suggest dividing the Eq. (1) by the standard errors of k_j . However, due to lack of data for standard errors in our case, it is not possible to follow the mainstream approach in this analysis. Instead, as noted above, we report robust standard errors.

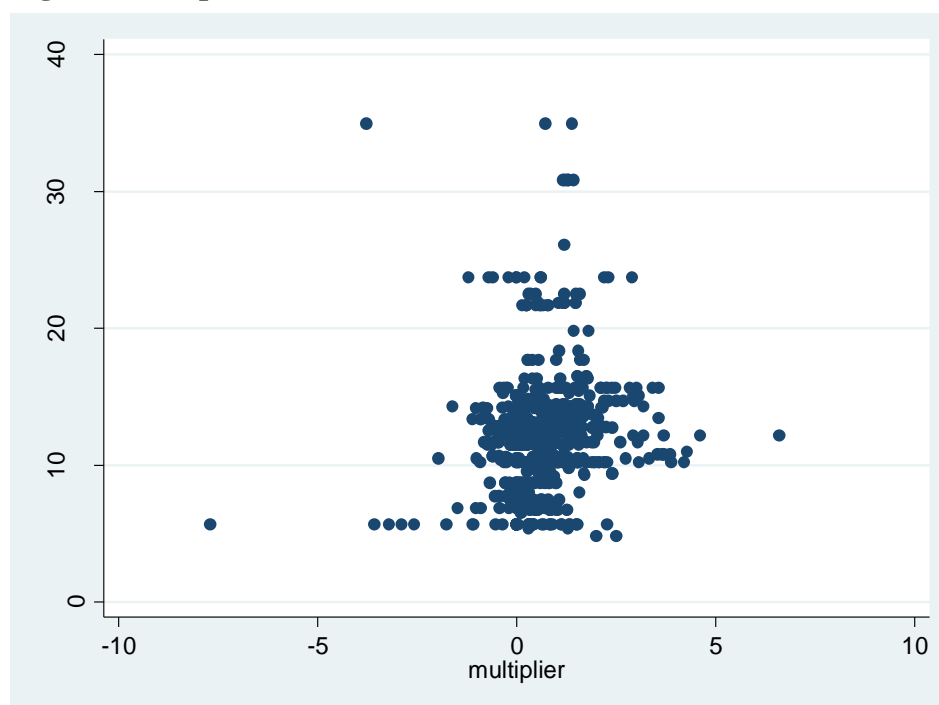
Publication selection bias

In this section we investigate the presence of publication selection bias by the following procedures:

- Visual analysis of the funnel plot;
- Formal OLS bivariate FAT-PET test;
- a WLS version of the bivariate publication bias test;
- estimating a fully specified multivariate MRA.

Publication selection bias occurs when authors do not report all of the results they uncover; rather, they selectively report statistically significant results or results consistent with a certain theory, which they believe have a stronger chance of being published. Consequently, the inference arising from the reported empirical evidence may be biased.

Fig. 1 Funnel plot



In order to investigate for publication selection bias in the fiscal multiplier literature, as suggested by Stanley and Doucouliagos (2012), we start by analysing the funnel plot in Fig. 1. In general, funnel plots graph effect sizes against some measure of the precision with which they are estimated. In our particular case, the estimated multiplier values from the literature (our effect sizes) are placed on the horizontal axis while on the vertical axis is placed the square root of the sample size which, as sampling theory suggests, is a proxy for the precision of the estimates. In an empirical literature free of publication bias the plot will resemble an inverted funnel; namely, symmetric, widely spread at the base (reflecting a lack of precision in small sample studies) but converging to a narrow range of estimates around the mean of the sample (reflecting more precise results from larger sample studies). In Fig.1, the distribution looks more or less symmetric, slightly skewed to the left (the distribution weights/more concentrated to the left), around a mean that is positive but small, hence, suggesting that there is at worst a mild case of publication bias – i.e. over-reporting of small positive or negative multipliers – but possibly no publication bias in this literature. However, as well as the visual – and subjective – impression of the funnel plot, a formal test of publication selection bias is needed. Stanley (2005, 2008)

suggests a simple and powerful test for publication bias – the funnel asymmetry test (FAT), which is implemented together with the precision effect test (PET). This “FAT-PET” procedure involves regressing the effect size against a constant and the effect size’s standard error (SE_{ij}). In the case of no publication selection bias in the literature, the size of estimates should not be correlated with their standard errors. But, if researchers want to get statistically significant estimates, they will eventually re-estimate their models until the relationship between the estimates and SE achieves some acceptable standard of statistical significance. This process will generate a correlation between the effect size and their standard errors (Stanley, 2008). Unfortunately, as reported above, most studies of fiscal multipliers do not report either the standard errors or t -values on the estimated effects. Consequently, it is not possible to investigate publication bias in the fiscal multiplier literature with these standard methods. Following Velickovski and Pugh (2011) and the suggestions of Stanley and Doucouliagos (2012), the square root of the sample size can serve as a rough proxy for precision in FAT-PET-MRA when the standard errors are unavailable. Accordingly, we explore the possibility of publication selection bias in this literature by estimating the following regression:

$$k_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}\right)_i + e_i \quad \text{Eq. (2)}$$

where k_i is the multiplier value of observation i , $\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}\right)_i$ is the inverse of the square root of the sample size (N) in regression i and e_i is the error term. In Eq. (2), β_0 estimates the true effect. In the above regression we test whether there is a relationship between the magnitude of the effect and the sample size. If the null hypothesis that $\beta_1=0$ is not rejected, then there is no evidence that larger sample estimates are systematically different in magnitude from smaller sample estimates. The results suggest that publication bias is absent in the literature. Sampling theory suggests that, as the sample size (N) increases, estimates of k_i approaches or converges to their true value β_0 , which is a feature mirrored by the reciprocal model specified in Eq. (2) (Gujarati, 2004). Larger-sample estimates should be more precise than smaller-sample estimates. Using the above principle that larger-sample estimates are more precise but not necessarily higher in magnitude than smaller-sample estimates, as well as the fact that publication bias arises if the researcher repeats imprecise estimation as long as it takes to obtain effects sufficiently high in magnitude to yield “significant” estimates, *‘we expect to find the trace of such selection procedures in systematic variation of effect size with sample size’* (Velickovski and Pugh, 2011, p.285). The RAMSEY test for non-linearity ($F(3, 750) = 3.95$; $\text{Prob} > F = 0.0082$) suggest that the model in Eq. (2) is misspecified and other diagnostic tests of the model suggest heteroscedasticity and non-normality problems. Following Stanley and Doucouliagos (2012) recommendations, we also estimate a WLS version of the bivariate publication bias test by dividing the model in Eq. (2.6) by the inverse of the square root of the sample size, $\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}\right)_i$. However, the diagnostics do not improve with respect to misspecification (RAMSEY test: $F(3, 750) = 13.5$; $\text{Prob} > F = 0.0000$).

The results of the OLS bivariate model in Eq. (2), estimated with cluster robust standard errors, suggest that the null hypothesis that $\beta_1=0$ is rejected. In our model $\beta_1=-7.16$, (p-value=0.00) is significantly different from zero, suggesting that there is a systematic variation of effect size with sample size. In contrast, the bivariate publication bias test estimated using the WLS approach suggests no systematic variation of effect size with sample size ($\beta_1=-3.14$, p-value=0.39). Conversely, the PET test, $\beta_0=0$, is rejected in both models suggesting a genuine positive effect around one ($\beta_0=1.32$), after controlling for publication bias.

However, in order to avoid the potential problem of endogeneity bias that may arise if $(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}})_i$ is correlated with the moderator variables Z_{im} , we include $(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}})_i$ in Eq. (1) and estimate:

$$k_i = \beta_0 + \sum_{m=1}^m \alpha_m Z_{im} + \beta_1 (\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}})_i + e_i \quad \text{Eq. (3)}$$

The results presented in column (1), Table 1 of the OLS model estimated by Eq. (3), with satisfactory diagnostics, suggest that $\beta_1=1.86$ (p=0.29) is not significantly different from zero. Hence, considering (1) the fact that there is no classical reason for publication bias in this literature, since there are competing theories with different predicted multipliers, (2) the mixed impressions and results from the funnel plot and the bivariate FAT-PET tests and (3) in particular, the result of the FAT when embedded in a fully-specified multivariate MRA (i.e. the absence of systematic variation of effect size with sample size), we conclude that the literature is not infected by publication bias. However, it should be noted that in the absence of standard errors from the original studies, we use a second-best approach in testing for publication bias. Hence, while we have no basis for concluding the presence of publication bias, the “charge” may be considered as “not proven” rather than definitively rejected. These results are in line with the Asatryan et al. (2020) findings that there is no publication bias in the fiscal multipliers literature, but contrary to Gechert’s (2015) findings which suggest that there is a negative publication bias in the fiscal policy literature.

MRA results

The results from the baseline model using Eq. (3) are presented in Table 1. The constant, β_0^1 , of the baseline model in column (1) is the average multiplier value of α as an unspecified public spending shock, calculated by SEE, not augmented with control variables for the characteristics of the economy, and estimated with annual data. The estimated value is lower than one and appears to be insignificant.

The results of the baseline model presented in column (1) suggest that model classes and fiscal impulses differ significantly concerning their influence on the multiplier (Of course, all estimates

¹ β_0 presents an average multiplier for a study with all the omitted categories characteristics.

are to be interpreted “*ceteris paribus*”). Estimated multipliers arising from the VAR model are significantly higher than estimates from SEE. Regarding the type of the impulse, public employment yields higher multiplier values in our data set², while tax shocks have a significantly lower impact compared to unspecific/general public spending. These findings are contrary to Gechert’s (2015) findings which suggest that public investment is the most effective shock on stimulating output. For public consumption, investment and military spending, the difference to unspecified public spending is insignificant. As expected, due to implementation lags in fiscal policy, a longer horizon of measurement comes with significantly higher multipliers. These results are consistent with the Gechert (2015) findings. Studies using quarterly data report significantly lower multipliers compared to studies using annual data. The duration of the shock is statistically significant, suggesting that multipliers from a temporary shock are lower than multipliers from a permanent shock. Peak multipliers are substantially higher compared to cumulative multipliers. The reported multipliers for transition countries do not differ significantly from multipliers for advanced economies.

The results suggest that multipliers arising from studies assuming expansion are significantly different compared with estimates from studies not controlling for the state of the economy. Generally, in line with theoretical predictions, the multipliers estimated in expansion are smaller and the results are robust for different specifications. The moderator variable for recession suggests that the context of normal business cycle downturns does not significantly affect multiplier estimates. Conversely, the less usual but more severe circumstances of financial crisis, although of borderline significance ($p=0.12$), appear to be associated with large multiplier values. The results on Japan dummies accounting for periods of deep recessions suggest that Japan90 is insignificant, while the first Japan dummy is significant ($\beta=-0.74$; $p\text{-value}=0.01$). The negative coefficient on the Japan dummy, suggesting a crowding out effect of fiscal policy, is most likely reflecting the pre-financial crisis period of very high growth.

The results on structural characteristics are mixed. The degree of openness channel is highly significant, suggesting that, due to the leakage effect of imports, more open countries have relatively lower multipliers than do relatively closed economies. This result is in line with Gechert’s (2015) findings. In particular, a difference between economies of one standard deviation in openness implies a difference in the estimated multiplier of -0.23. The results suggest a significant crowding out effect of interest rate increase on fiscal multipliers, in line with theoretical predictions. Specifically, a difference between economies of one standard deviation in interest rates implies a difference in multiplier of -0.11. The effect of financial development appears to be insignificant, in contrast with a priori expectations. The debt/GDP variable appears significant. However, although the magnitude of the effect is close to zero its sign is positive. Although this estimate is contrary to theoretical expectations, this effect is not robust across different model specifications. Accordingly, we do not attempt further interpretation.

² However, it should be considered that the number of observations arising from studies of a public employment shock in the data set is fairly small (1.3 %)

The results suggest that studies controlling for labour market characteristics yield significantly different estimates compared to conventional studies (i.e. those with no control variables for labour market institution and characteristics). Both the trade union density and the level of coordination of wage-setting have significant effects: in countries with higher levels of coordination of wage-setting, the multiplier effect is higher; while in countries with higher trade union density the fiscal multiplier is lower. In this model, a difference between economies of one standard deviation in trade union density implies a difference in multiplier of -0.04, while a difference between countries of one standard deviation in the level of coordination of wage-setting process, results in a difference in multiplier of 0.16. The other labour market variables have an insignificant effect on estimated multipliers.

Robustness analysis

In this section some robustness checks follow, by estimating the regression in Table 1, column (1) in several variants:

- The baseline model is estimated without the Japan dummies;
- In order to avoid a “double counting” effect, we estimate our MRA model using the primary data only for those primary studies that do not take account of these influences;
- estimating a WLS version of the multivariate publication bias test as suggested by Stanley and Doucouliagos (2012);
- estimating a FE MRA model in order to account for potential within-study dependence as well as to compensate for the imperfect control variables regarding the position in the business cycle of countries studied

Table 1 Total sample results- (OLS and cluster-robust SEs)					
Group	Variables	Description	Baseline model (1) ^a	Baseline model without Japan dummies (2) ^b	Baseline model estimated only for conventional studies (3) ^c
	β_0	Constant	0.767 (0.534)	1.078** (0.551)	1.151* (0.619)
Model class	var	VAR models	0.473* (0.288)	0.569** (0.283)	0.280 (0.341)
	see	SEE models			
Fiscal impulse	cons	Consumption	0.14 (0.143)	0.130 (0.148)	0.085 (0.220)
	invest	Investments	0.211 (0.225)	0.197 (0.224)	0.261 (0.297)
	milita	Military expenditure	-0.513 (0.331)	-0.415 (0.313)	- 0.864** (0.411)
	tax	Tax shocks	-0.413*** (0.163)	-0.417*** (0.163)	- 0.465** (0.212)
	pubemp	Public employment expenditure	2.108***	2.072***	2.158** *

	notspec	General government expenditure	(0.14)	(0.128)	(0.145)
Duration of impulse	tempor	Temporary shock	-0.699* (0.425)	-0.689* (0.398)	- 0.948** (0.410)
Type of economy	transit	Transition countries	0.097 (0.236)	-0.324 (0.241)	0.072 (0.330)
Method of calculation of multiplier	peak	Peak multiplier	0.780*** (0.252)	0.800*** (0.260)	0.860** * (0.288)
	cum	Cumulative multiplier			
Data characteristics	quart	Quarterly data	-0.415** (0.215)	-0.405* (0.213)	- 0.480** (0.186)
	horiz	Horizon after shock	0.020* (0.010)	0.022** (0.010)	0.019 (0.128)
MV for augmented models	indebt	Indebtedness of the country	-0.016 (0.222)	0.036 (0.211)	
	open	Openness	0.011 (0.106)	0.022 (0.114)	
	er	Exchange rate	-0.035 (0.152)	-0.013 (0.162)	
	employ	Employment	-0.164	-0.186	

			(0.164)	(0.157)	
	lmi	Labour market institutions	0.517***	0.581***	
			(0.197)	(0.181)	
	recc	Multipliers estimated assuming recession	0.075	0.104	
			(0.209)	(0.222)	
	exp	Multipliers estimated assuming expansion	-0.352**	-0.321**	
			(0.150)	(0.149)	
	fincrisis	Multipliers estimated assuming financial crisis	0.420	0.487	
			(0.266)	(0.268)	
Primary data	epl	Employment protection rate	0.044	0.097	-0.009
			(0.067)	(0.076)	(0.082)
	tud	Trade union density	-0.009***	-0.012***	-
			(0.002)	(0.003)	0.009**
					(0.004)
	brr	Benefit replacement rate	-0.152	0.200	-0.377
			(0.444)	(0.469)	(0.794)
	coor	Wage coordination	0.146*	0.009	0.168*
			(0.079)	(0.075)	(0.098)
	ir	Interest rate	-0.045***	-0.039***	-
			(0.014)	(0.014)	0.047**
					*
					(0.015)
	impgdp	Import/GDP	-0.012***	-0.007**	-0.011
			(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.008)

	credgdp	Domestic credit/GDP	0.002 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)
	debtgdp	Debt/GDP	0.007** (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.006 (0.004)
Proxy for precision	$\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}$	The inverse of \sqrt{N}	1.869 (1.758)	2.097 (1.750)	3.625 (2.285)
Proxy for the state of the economy	Japan	Dummy for all estimates from Japan	-0.741** (0.289)		- 0.864** (0.356)
	Japan90	Dummy for estimates from Japan for the period after 1989	-0.565 (0.498)		-0.702 (0.457)
Diagnostic s	Ramsey Reset Test	H0: correct functional form	0.59	0.74	0.60
	p-value				
	R ²		0.30	0.29	0.30
	N		755	755	526

a- Reference category: SEE, NOTSPEC, ANNUA, CONVEN, CUM

b- Reference category: SEE, NOTSPEC, ANNUA, CONVEN, CUM

c- Reference category: SEE, NOTSPEC, ANNUA, CUM

*, ** and *** indicate significance at 10, 5 and 1 percent level respectively.

The results in Table 2, column (2) and (3) are qualitatively the same compared to the baseline model. Following Stanley and Doucouliagos (2012), we estimate a WLS version of the multivariate publication bias test by weighting the model in Eq. (3) by the inverse of the square root of the sample size, $(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}})_i$. WLS MRA results are presented in column (1), Table 4. The results are quite similar to the OLS MRA (presented in Table 1). However, the diagnostics suggest that the model is misspecified.

As a further robustness check, considering the fact that we use multiple estimates from the same

study, we estimate a FE MRA model in order to account for potential within-study dependence (estimated in Stata, using *xtreg*). The following model is estimated:

$$k_{is} = \beta_0 + \sum_{m=1}^m \alpha_m Z_{ism} + \beta_1 \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}\right)_{is} + v_s + e_{is} \quad \text{Eq. (4)}$$

for estimate i in study s , where v_s represents an unobserved study effect. The results of the model estimated by Eq. (4) are presented in Table 2, column (2). Compared to the first specification presented in Table 1, column (1), the results are consistent with respect to publication bias and similar in terms of the heterogeneity explained by the moderator variables. The main difference in results is that structural characteristics, apart from the crowding out effect of the interest rate, appear to be insignificant, while moderator variables accounting for whether the original study has augmented the model with structural characteristics prove significant. However, FE estimation uses only within-group variation and is thus not appropriate for estimating effects that vary mainly between groups (studies in our case) and relatively little within groups. The study-specific fixed effects in effect absorb the effects of other variables that vary either little or not at all between studies. Lower-level fixed effects, e.g. study level, absorb or capture the effects of higher-level fixed effects such as country-specific institutional effects. Hence, the country-specific effects cannot be estimated with any acceptable degree of precision. Therefore, considering the diagnostic results, our preferred model, on the basis of which we continue our analysis, is the OLS MRA model estimated with cluster robust SE presented in Table 1, column (1).

Table 2 Total sample results- (WLS and FE)				
Group	Variables	Description	Baseline model WLS (1)a	Baseline model FE OLS (2)a
	β_0	Constant	0.949 (0.780)	-0.679 (0.545)
Model class	var	VAR models	0.532 (0.307)	-0.147 (0.146)
	see	SEE models		
Fiscal impulse	cons	Consumption	0.083 (0.166)	0.083 (0.135)
	invest	Investments	0.241 (0.235)	0.201 (0.257)
	milita	Military expenditure	-0.422 (0.315)	-0.382** (0.166)
	tax	Tax shocks	-0.267 (0.173)	-0.480*** (0.168)
	pubemp	Public employment expenditure	2.194*** (0.138)	2.577*** (0.174)
	notspec	General government expenditure		

Duration of impulse	tempor	Temporary shock	-0.646* (0.394)	0.052 (0.068)
Type of economy	transit	Transition countries	0.166 (0.307)	
Method of calculation of multiplier	peak	Peak multiplier	0.736*** (0.216)	0.511*** (0.179)
	cum	Cumulative multiplier		
Data characteristics	quart	Quarterly data	-0.123 (0.239)	1.223*** (0.270)
	horiz	Horizon after shock	0.023* (0.011)	0.012 (0.010)
MV for augmented models	indebt	Indebtedness of the country	0.013 (0.256)	0.445** (0.219)
	open	Openness	-0.088 (0.162)	-0.197*** (0.156)
	er	Exchange rate	0.134 (0.215)	0.186*** (0.025)
	employ	Employment	-0.499** (0.233)	0.128*** (0.020)
	lmi	Labour market institutions	0.884*** (0.271)	
	recc	Multipliers estimated assuming recession	0.130 (0.281)	0.439* (0.233)
	exp	Multipliers estimated	-0.339* (0.281)	-0.034 (0.233)

		assuming expansion	(0.168)	(0.203)
	fincrisis	Multipliers estimated assuming financial crisis	0.918 (0.637)	0.664* (0.373)
Primary data	epl	Employment protection rate	0.070 (0.099)	0.071 (0.118)
	tud	Trade union density	-0.012*** (0.003)	-0.003 (0.002)
	brr	Benefit replacement rate	-0.497 (0.675)	-0.359 (0.720)
	coor	Wage coordination	0.161 (0.120)	0.103 (0.081)
	ir	Interest rate	-0.097** (0.037)	-0.027** (0.011)
	impgdp	Import/GDP	-0.015* (0.007)	-0.006 (0.005)
	credgdp	Domestic credit/GDP	-0.001 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)
	debtgdp	Debt/GDP	0.011** (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
Proxy for precision	$\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}$	The inverse of \sqrt{N}	1.236 (2.267)	-1.387 (6.155)
Proxy for the state of the economy	Japan	Dummy for all estimates from Japan	-0.897*** (0.327)	-0.414* (0.229)
	Japan90	Dummy for estimates	-0.051	

	from Japan for the period after 1989 (0.538)			
Diagnostics	Ramsey Reset Test	H0: correct functional form	0.00	na
	p-value			
	R2		0.34	0.15
	N		755	755

Conclusion

In this paper, a MRA analysis is employed on a set of 51 empirical VAR and SEE studies, in order to review the literature with statistical criteria and to provide explanations of the heterogeneity of the empirical results as well as to investigate possible publication selection bias in the literature.

The results of our analysis suggest that the type of model class is important in explaining the heterogeneity of reported multipliers. VAR models estimates differ significantly from SEE estimates. Regarding the type of fiscal shock, public employment appears to be the most effective impulse, while tax shocks provide the least effective impulse. In line with a priori expectations, permanent shocks yield higher multipliers and multipliers estimated for a longer horizon are higher than impact multipliers. Quarterly data yield lower multipliers compared to annual data. Fiscal policy in transition countries does not differ significantly in terms of effectiveness compared to advanced economies. In line with theoretical predictions, the reported multipliers are smaller if estimated for open economies and economies in expansion and bigger for relatively more closed economies and economies experiencing a financial crisis.

Investigating publication selection bias, the funnel plot analysis as well as the formal FAT-PET test applied by using sample size as a proxy for precision, suggests that the literature on fiscal multipliers is not infected by publication bias. However, the results should be considered carefully, since sample size is not the most powerful approach for investigating publication bias. Conclusively, our findings suggest that the heterogeneity of the reported multipliers mostly arises from the study characteristics, in particular, data settings and methods of estimation, while the effect of structural characteristics is mixed. The degree of openness, the interest rate channel and labour market characteristics appear to significantly affect the size fiscal multipliers. Most importantly, these findings support the idea that there is no "the multiplier", but just only different multipliers for different shocks in different circumstances.

A contribution of this study relies on its novelty i.e. the augmentation of MRA with primary data on labour market variables besides other structural characteristics. However, this study has its limitations arising from data availability and method of investigation. Due to missing data on

standard errors we are constrained to use a second-best approach while investigating for publication bias in the literature. We include in our MRA only empirical studies and therefore we do not pretend that our MRA dataset is the “true representation of multiplier effects”.

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The determinants of fiscal multipliers in transition countries: a Panel VAR model

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the short-run effect of fiscal shocks on output, employment and other macroeconomic variables in transition countries. We apply a Panel VAR model using panel data from 10 New EU countries for the period 1999q1-2019q3 and a recursive approach in order to identify exogenous fiscal shocks. The main findings of our baseline model suggest that the effectiveness of fiscal policy on stimulating output in transition countries is limited. Our findings suggest that there are considerable differences in the transmission mechanisms of fiscal policy in transition countries compared to advanced economies. The results for the advanced countries are in line with theoretical predictions of modified RBC models adopting a non-separable utility function in consumption and leisure or deep habits in consumption, as well as with modified NK-DSGE models assuming liquidity constrained consumers, which predict a crowding in effect of fiscal shocks on private consumption, investment, employment and real wages. Conversely, the results for transition countries suggest a crowding out effect of fiscal policy on private employment. In terms of structural characteristics, our findings suggest that the effectiveness of fiscal policy is strongly dependent on (i) the level of the development of the country, (ii) the level of openness, (iii) debt dynamics and (iv) the degree of labour market flexibility.

Keywords: *fiscal policy, fiscal multipliers, panel VAR, transition countries*

Introduction

Transition countries, despite their differences, share many similarities in terms of their economic development, and fiscal policy in particular. Almost all these countries went through the turbulent early phase of transition and, in terms of fiscal policy, this period was characterized by unsustainable fiscal deficits. The assessment of fiscal policy effectiveness in transition countries is a complex and challenging task, due to the specific features of these economies. Firstly, in transition countries it is not clearly determined whether the origin of output fluctuations arise from demand deficiency (considering the high level of unemployment) or from supply side problems (considering the depreciated and largely obsolete inherited capital stock and relatively low investments). Secondly, the use of fiscal policy as a stabilization tool in transition countries was initially severely limited – mainly due to the IMF arrangements in the early phase of transition, financial constraints, and an exchange rate peg in some countries – and continues to be limited by the process of EU accession, which entails the Stability and Growth Pact for countries adhering European Monetary Union.

The literature on fiscal policy has been mostly focused on the effects of fiscal policy on output while less attention has been devoted to the macroeconomic labour market effects of fiscal policy. The theoretical predictions are that the effects of fiscal policy shocks on the labour market depend on labour market competitiveness and the type of fiscal shock. In particular, if the fiscal impulse is an increase in public employment, wages, or unemployment benefits, it has a crowding out effect on private employment, through the ‘wage pressure’ channel. The main hypothesis that follows from theoretical predictions is that the negative crowding out effect on private employment, which arises due to an increase of public employment, will be smaller in countries with more flexible labour markets.

We employ a Panel VAR model to investigate the short-run effect of fiscal shocks on output, employment and other macroeconomic variables in 10 small open economies in transition. We address the main criticisms in the literature by augmenting the baseline model with structural characteristics variables and controlling for labour market institutional characteristics in particular.

This research contributes to the existing literature of fiscal policy in several aspects. Firstly, considering the lack of thorough studies on transition countries, this empirical evidence will fill a gap in the empirical literature on transition countries regarding fiscal policy effects on output and employment. A novelty of this investigation is considering the influence of different labour market characteristics on the short-run effects of fiscal shocks on employment and other labour market variables in transition countries, which have so far been ignored, even in empirical studies for developed countries.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: In the first section a literature overview is provided. The second and third section describes the data and the methodology of investigation. In the fourth section the results of the baseline model are provided. The fifth and sixth sections provide describes the transmission mechanism of fiscal policy and the effects of structural characteristic for different subsamples and alternative specifications. The final section provides the findings of this research.

Literature review

The effects of fiscal policy in transition economies have been investigated by very few studies. Several studies using a panel VAR approach include some emerging economies in their sample and generally report lower multipliers compared to advanced economies. Contrary to the advanced economies, in transition countries tax cut appear to be more effective at boosting output compared to expenditure shocks (IMF, 2008; Ghosh et al., 2011; and Ilzetzi et al., 2013). The number of studies investigating the effect of fiscal policy specifically for transition countries is limited. Generally, all of the studies are based on relatively short time series, ignore the fact that transition countries are small open economies (most studies use a closed economy model) and few studies account for the fiscal foresight problem (Cuaresma et al., 2011 and Haug. et al., 2013), debt dynamics (except Haug. et al, 2013) or other structural characteristics of the country investigated.

Hory (2016) investigates the effects of a government spending shock on output in a panel of 48 emerging economies and advanced countries using quarterly data for the period 1990-2013. Hory (2016) employs a Panel Conditionally Homogenous VAR and computes IRFs conditional on two variables: the level of development of a country; and one of the determinants of fiscal multipliers (openness, public debt, savings, unemployment, financial development). The main finding of the study is that emerging economies have smaller multipliers compared to advanced countries. Regarding structural characteristics, their findings suggest that higher imports, public debts or savings reduce the spending multiplier, while higher unemployment or financial development increase the size of multipliers in emerging economies. The drawbacks of this study are not controlling for the fiscal foresight problem and not including tax revenues in the model.

Combes et al. (2016) investigate the effectiveness of fiscal policy in a panel of 11 Central and Eastern European economies using quarterly data for the period 1999:Q1-2013Q3 employing a Panel Vector Error Correction Model with the following variables: government spending; GDP; and taxes. Their findings suggest that (i) fiscal policy is limited with respect to boosting output in CEE, (ii) fiscal multipliers are in the range of 0.21-0.31, and (iii) fiscal multipliers are significant and higher in less open economies, in countries with relatively low public debt/GDP ratios and in relatively low-income CEE countries. The drawback of this study is that it uses a parsimonious closed economy model, which does not include in the panel VECM either interest rates or a measure for the openness of these economies.

Deskari-Skrbic et al. (2017) investigate the effectiveness of using government consumption to boost output in 11 Central and South East European economies using annual data for the period 2006-2015 and a Panel VAR model. They divide the variables included in the model into endogenous (government consumption, GDP) and exogenous (taxes, openness, labour market rigidity, public debt, size of the economy, output gap and exchange rate regime). They find that the fiscal multiplier of a government consumption shock is around 0.8 and that multipliers are higher in countries with a fixed exchange rate regime, a lower debt burden and that are less open to trade. The main drawback of this study is treating the aforementioned variables as exogenous, which is an unrealistic and inappropriate assumption contrary to theoretical predictions.

Ojeda-Joya and Guzman (2018) investigate the effects of a government consumption shock on GDP in a panel of 44 advanced and emerging economies using quarterly data for the period

2000Q1-2017Q2 and a Panel VAR model with the following variables: government consumption; interest rate; GDP; real money balances (M2); inflation; and the real effective exchange rate. Their main finding is that fiscal multipliers in developing countries are in the range of 0.16-0.35 and significantly smaller compared to developed countries. The drawbacks of this study are not controlling for the fiscal foresight problem and not including in the model either taxes or debt dynamics.

Data description

The relatively little research so far on the transmission mechanism of fiscal policy in transition countries is mainly due to data limitations. Until recent years, the national sources of transition countries collected (cash based) government expenditure data at annual frequency. As Ilzetski et al. (2013) acknowledge, the reported quarterly series were actually interpolated from annual data, using as a proxy the seasonal patterns of revenue collections, since data on tax collection were available on a quarterly basis, even though using this interpolated data for empirical analysis may lead to spurious regression results. Tax revenues are highly procyclical, therefore using their pattern for interpolating quarterly series will create a strong correlation between government expenditure and output by construction. Additionally, considering delays in fiscal policy implementation, using accrual data instead of cash-based data is suggested in order to better capture the effective economic responses to a fiscal shock (Cuaresma et al., 2011; Baum and Koester, 2011; Muir and Weber, 2013). Hence, in order to avoid the endogeneity bias that may arise if quarterly data are interpolated from annual fiscal data and to make sure that the data used are accrual figures, we refrain from using data on fiscal variables from national sources of transition countries. The data source used for fiscal variables in this study is the Quarterly Non-Financial Accounts for General Government (QN FAGG) of Eurostat's Government Finance Statistics and the choice of transition countries included is constrained by data availability in this database. Another advantage of using this database is that fiscal data are comparable across countries, since Eurostat transforms basic data in order to comply with ESA95. Quarterly budgetary data for the period 1999:q1-2019:q3 are collected for Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In order to compare our findings with existing literature on fiscal policy we define fiscal variables following Blanchard and Perroti (2002), a common approach used in most of previous studies. Government expenditures are narrowly defined as the sum of government consumption plus government investment. Government revenues are defined as non-interest general government revenues net of transfers. Original data in nominal terms are deflated. Most of the series are seasonally adjusted by the original source. Fiscal variables are seasonally adjusted by the TRAMO-SEATS method in EViews. Fiscal variables, output, exchange rate, employment and wage series are log transformed.

Unit root and cointegration testing

This section presents the results of several tests for unit roots and cointegration in a panel data context. The results presented in Table 1 suggest that all series, except interest rates, are non-stationary and I(1).

Table 1 Unit root testing

Test\Series	lg (pval)	lnt (pval)	lgdp (pval)	interest (pval)	ltreer (pval)	impgdp (pval)
. LLC H ₀ :unit root	0.00 x	0.08 x	0.00 x	na	0.01 X	na
BT H ₀ :unit root	0.87 √	0.18 √	0.38 √	na	0.84 √	na
IPS H ₀ :unit root	0.11 √	0.07 x	0.03 x	0.00 x	0.07 √	0.78 √
Fisher ADF/PP H ₀ :unit root	0.4/0.3 √	0.14/0.6 √	0.12/0.4 √	0.00/0.00 x	0.3/0.1 √	0.98/0.87 √
Hadri H ₀ :stationary	0.00 x	0.00 x	0.00 x	na	0.00 x	na
Conclusion	I(1)	I(1)	I(1)	I(0)	I(1)	I(1)

pval- p values

x- H₀:unit root is rejected

√- H₀:unit root is not rejected

lg- log of government spending

lnt-log of government revenue

lgdp- log of GDP

interest-interest rate

ltreer-log of real effective exchange rate

impgdp-import to GDP ratio

The results in Table 2 suggest the existence of cointegration relationships among the series in our model.

Table 2 Cointegration testing

Cointegration test	Ho	Statistics	P value
Pedroni	No cointegration	Panel v-Statistic Panel rho-Statistic Panel PP-Statistic Panel ADF-Statistic Group rho-Statistic Group PP-Statistic Group ADF-Statistic	0.07 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00
Kao	No cointegration	ADF	0.02
Johansen Fisher panel test	At most 3 cointegration vectors	trace test max-eigen test	0.09 0.04
Westerlund	No cointegration	Gt Ga Pt Pa	0.00 0.26 0.00 0.00

Methodology

In this empirical investigation a Panel VAR model will be used. In a Panel VAR all variables are treated as endogenous as in conventional VAR and it allows exploring unobserved country heterogeneity as in conventional panel models. The Panel VAR model is advantageous, since it allows the analysis of a variety of shocks, both endogenous and exogenous with few or no theoretical restrictions imposed (Canova and Ciccarelli, 2013). Additionally, the added cross-dimensional dimension in Panel VAR enables exploitation of the heterogeneous information in cross-section data, increases the sample size, hence degrees of freedom, and thereby enhancing the efficiency of estimates and reducing the problem of over-fitting (Rebucci, 2003).

In general, the panel VAR specification in its structural form can be written as:

$$A_0X_{i,t}=A(L)X_{i,t-1}+BD_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

where t indexes years and i represents the cross-section units. X is a vector of k endogenous variables in the model, A_0 is the matrix of coefficients capturing the contemporaneous relationships, $A(L)$ captures the dynamic relationships between endogenous variables and ε_{it} is a vector of orthogonal structural shocks and D is a vector of possible deterministic terms. The structural disturbances ε_{it} are not correlated with each other i.e. the variance-covariance matrix of

structural disturbances $\sum \varepsilon_{it}$ is diagonal. The structural shocks of government expenditure, ε_{it}^g and net taxes, ε_{it}^r are shocks of interest to be identified. Similarly as in standard VARs, the reduced form panel VAR is obtained by pre-multiplying Eq. (1) with the A_0^{-1} matrix:

$$X_{i,t} = C(L)X_{i,t-1} + E D_{i,t} + u_{i,t} \quad \text{Eq. (2)}$$

where, $C(L) = A_0^{-1}A(L)$, $E = A_0^{-1}B$ and $u_{it} = A_0^{-1}\varepsilon_{i,t}$ is a vector of reduced form-residuals. The reduced-form residuals u_{it} are independent and identically distributed in each equation, however potentially correlated across equations. The relationship between the structural and reduced form residuals is given by:

$$A_0 u_{it} = \varepsilon_{it} \quad \text{Eq. (3)}$$

To identify the structural model we need to impose restriction on the parameters in A_0 .

The narrative approach, despite being the most advantageous strategy, which avoids the fiscal foresight problem, is not applicable in our case, since it requires long data series of well-documented exogenous spending and tax shocks, which are not available for transition countries. The sign restriction approach is also limited since, by imposing theoretical restrictions a priori to the impulse response function, it excludes the possibility that the model yields part of the possible results. The Blanchard-Perroti (2002) approach used in most of the time-series empirical estimations requires institutional information regarding the elasticity of government spending and revenues to output and other variables in the model and, since this information is not available for our sample of countries, can't be used in our empirical investigation. Therefore, as a choice of identification strategy, we are left with the recursive approach. We follow Fatás and Mihov (2001) and identify structural shocks using the Cholesky decomposition of the variance-covariance matrix of the reduced form disturbances and by imposing zero restrictions to implement a causal order of the VAR variables and to rule out contemporaneous reactions of the fiscal variable to business cycle variations. In particular, our panel VAR with quarterly data and recursive identification of shocks has the variables in the following order: the log of real government spending ($g_{i,t}$); the log of cyclically adjusted real government revenues ($nt_{i,t}$); the log of real GDP ($y_{i,t}$); the short-term interest rate ($r_{i,t}$); the import/GDP ratio ($im_{i,t}$); and the log of the real effective exchange rate ($e_{i,t}$). The chosen order of the variables has the following implications for the period in which the shock occurs: government spending can contemporaneously affect other variables in the system, but rules out any contemporaneously reaction of government spending to shocks to other variables. The rationale of the above ordering is actually based on the decision lags of fiscal policy and is plausible using quarterly data.

Consistent with the main approach in the literature we use cyclically adjusted government revenues, following Alesina et al. (2002). Fiscal variables are cyclically adjusted in order to correct for business cycle effects to arrive at a measure that better reflects the underlying, or structural, budgetary position. The first step of cyclical adjustment is to estimate the cyclical component of the budget, which entails two estimates: 1) where the economy stands in relation to its potential or trend level ($\frac{Y^T}{Y}$); and 2) the elasticity of different components of the budget to

economic activity (ε_i) (EC, Monthly bulletin, p. 102). The second step is correcting the non-cyclically adjusted measures as in Eq. (4):

$$R_{it}^{CA} = R_{it}^{NCA} \left(\frac{Y^T}{Y} \right)^{\varepsilon_i} \quad \text{Eq. (4)}$$

where R_{it}^{CA} is cyclically adjusted government revenues, R_{it}^{NCA} is non-cyclically adjusted government revenues. We remove the cyclical component of net-taxes by using the trend GDP (Y^T) based on Hodrick-Prescott filtering and, as exponents, country elasticities (ε_i) of various components of net-taxes to output (these are taken from EC, 2005). Government spending is not unadjusted since unemployment benefits, the component sensitive to the business cycle, are not included in our measure of government spending.

The structural form of our baseline Panel VAR model in a matrix notation is presented as follows:

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{ntg} & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{yg} & -\alpha_{ynt} & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{rg} & -\alpha_{rnt} & -\alpha_{ry} & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{img} & -\alpha_{imnt} & -\alpha_{imy} & -\alpha_{imr} & 1 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{eg} & -\alpha_{ent} & -\alpha_{ey} & -\alpha_{er} & -\alpha_{eim} & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} g_{i,t} \\ nt_{i,t} \\ y_{i,t} \\ r_{i,t} \\ im_{i,t} \\ e_{i,t} \end{bmatrix} = A \begin{bmatrix} g_{i,t-1} \\ nt_{i,t-1} \\ y_{i,t-1} \\ r_{i,t-1} \\ im_{i,t-1} \\ e_{i,t-1} \end{bmatrix} + Ba_i + Cfc + Dld + \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_{it}^g \\ \varepsilon_{it}^{nt} \\ \varepsilon_{it}^y \\ \varepsilon_{it}^r \\ \varepsilon_{it}^{im} \\ \varepsilon_{it}^e \end{bmatrix}$$

where A_0 is restricted to a lower triangular matrix with unit diagonal; $\alpha_{j,k}$ denote the contemporaneous reaction of variable j to shocks in variable k ; B, C, D denote the corresponding coefficients to country-specific fixed effects, pulse dummy and shift dummy for the financial crisis, respectively and ε_{it}^g is the structural shock of interest to be identified.

Results

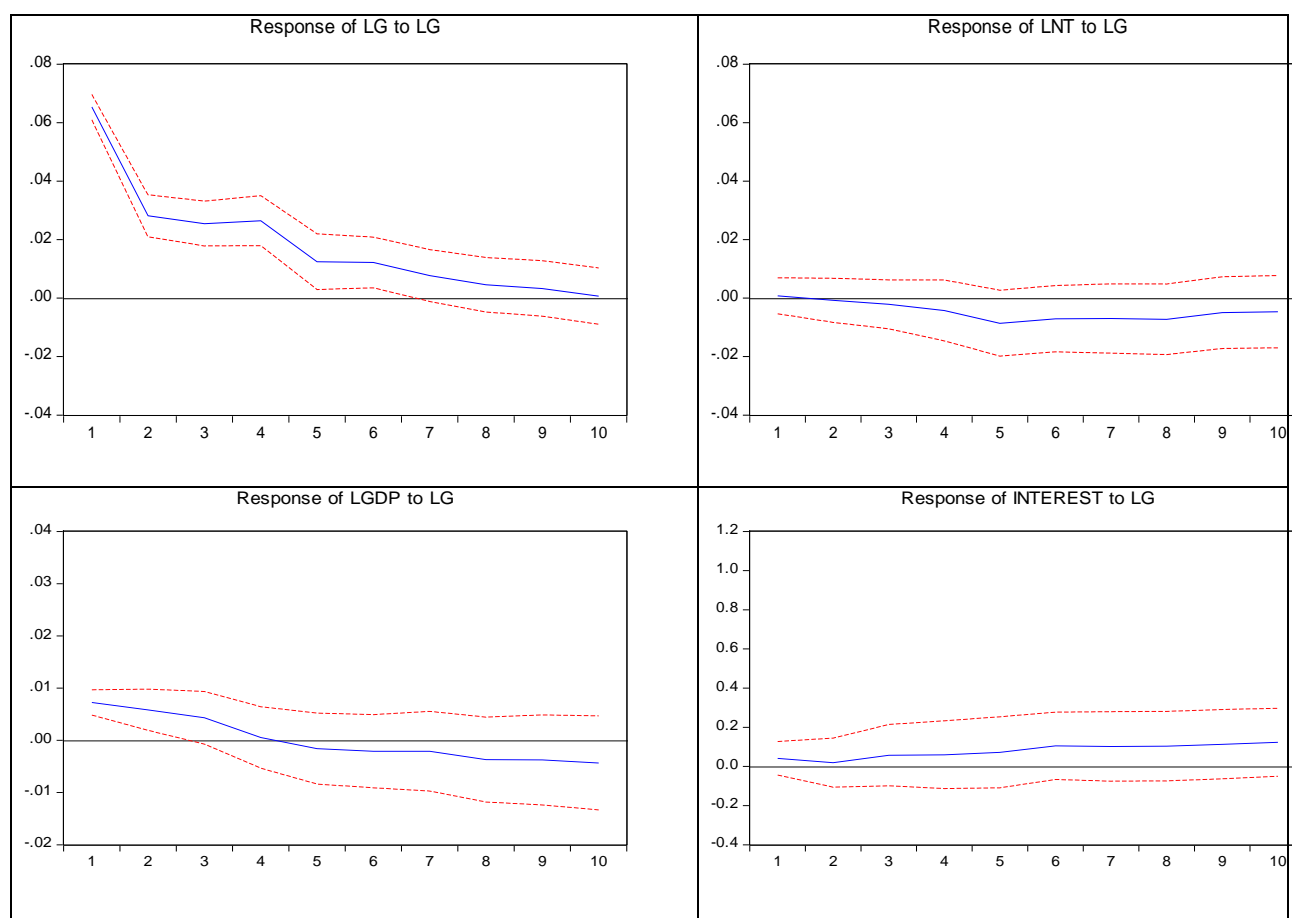
The Impulse Response Functions (IRF) presented in Fig.1 can't be directly interpreted as a fiscal multiplier, since fiscal shocks are defined as a standard deviation shock. In order to obtain fiscal multipliers we transform the original IRF of output by first dividing it by the standard deviation of the fiscal shocks to normalize the initial impulse to a 1% shock in the fiscal variable. Afterwards we divide the IRF by the average share of spending in GDP in the corresponding sample in order to get to the size of the shock equal to 1% of GDP. The government spending multipliers are presented in Table 3.

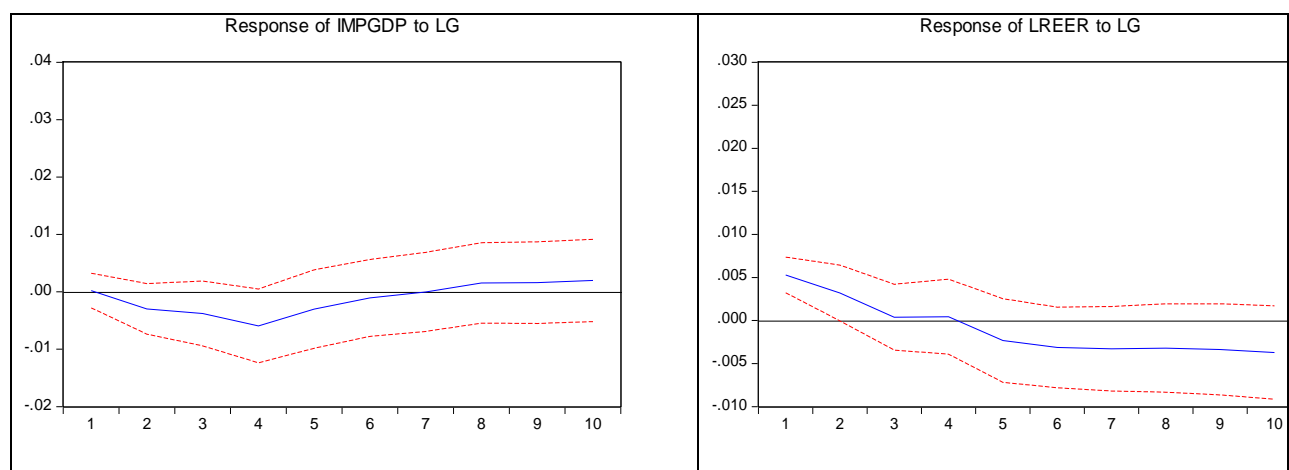
Table 3 Output multipliers-baseline model for 10 New EU countries

Sample period	Type of multiplier\Horizon	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter
1999q1-2013q2	Impact multiplier	0.45**	0.36**	0.26**	0.03
	Cumulative multiplier	0.45**	0.81**	1.08**	1.16**
1999q1-2018q2	Impact multiplier	0.70**	0.69**	0.68**	0.50
	Cumulative multiplier	0.70**	1.40**	2.08**	2.58**

**denotes significant multiplier at 5% critical value.

Fig. 1 IRF to a positive government spending shock-baseline model for 10 New EU countries





Horizontal (X)- period (quarters)

Vertical (Y)- unit response (% change) of the corresponding variable to a one standard deviation government spending shock

red lines- 95 % confidence intervals derived by Monte Carlo simulation

lg- log of government spending

lnt- log of government revenue

lgdp- log of GDP

interest- interest rate

lreer- log of real effective exchange rate

impgdp- import to GDP ratio

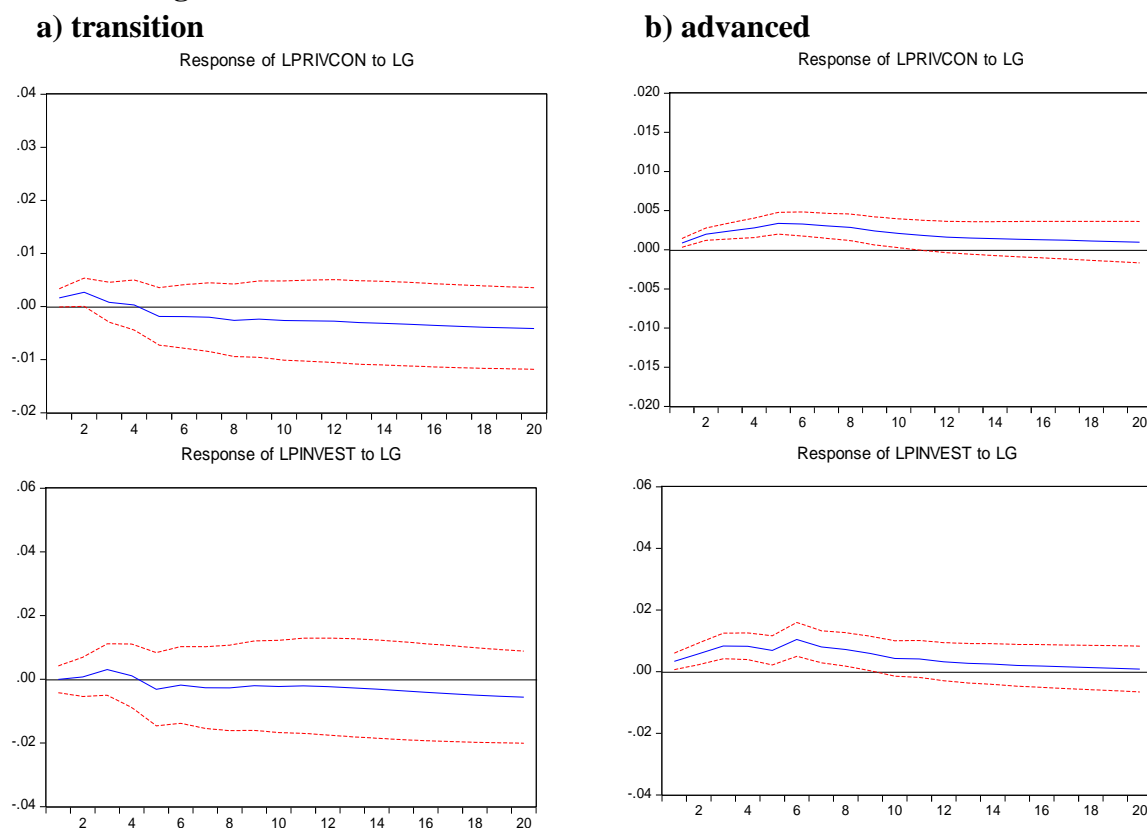
The first IRF presented in Fig.1 suggests that the government spending shock is relatively persistent, but it initially falls rapidly and dies out after 2 years. The second IRF suggests that taxes do not significantly change as a result of an increase in government expenditure. The third IRF is of main interest, reflecting the response of output due to an increase of government expenditure. The response of real GDP to the spending shock is positive on impact and significant, although small and not very persistent as the effect dies out after 3 quarters. The impact multiplier is smaller than one, 0.45, and becomes zero and insignificant after a year. The cumulative multipliers as expected are higher, considering the implementation lags of fiscal policy and the persistence of the government expenditure shock. The peak multiplier of 1.16 arises 4 quarters after the shock; after that point the response of output to the government expenditure shock gradually dies out and becomes insignificant. While, at this point, we cannot distinguish/compare between Real Business Cycle or New Keynesian theoretical predictions, since a positive response of GDP is in line with the predictions of both theories, considering that there are no stronger multiplicative effects beyond the approximately one-for-one response of GDP, this finding implies that fiscal policy effectiveness is relatively limited in small open economies. The results are in line with Spilimbergo et al. (2009) and similar to studies for transition countries, most of which do not report a multiplier higher than one. Interest rates increase as a response to an increase in government spending, however, the response is insignificant. Imports also do not significantly increase as a result of the fiscal shock, which can be explained by a not sufficient increase in output to trigger a significant increase in imports. The

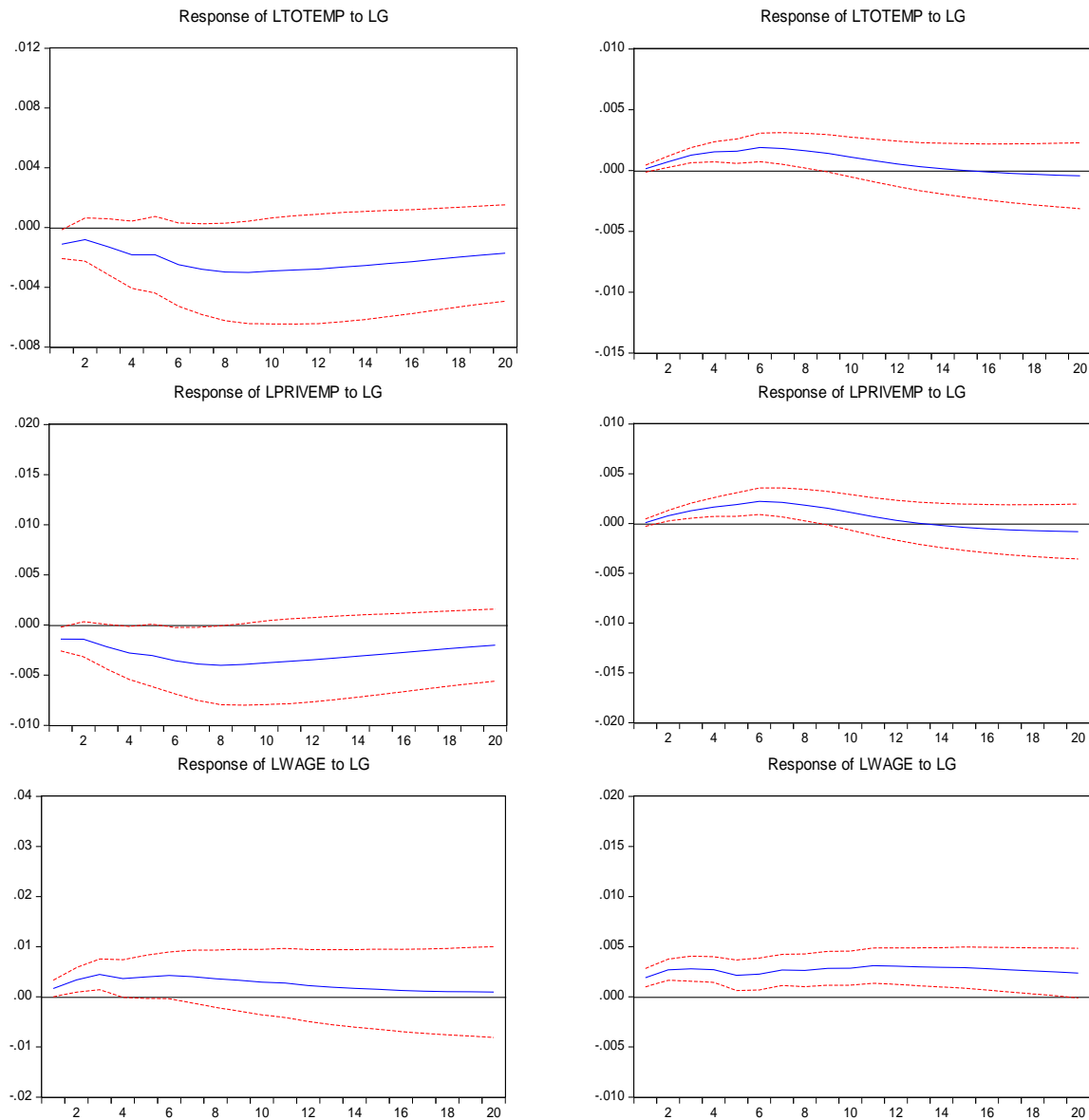
final IRF suggest that the real effective exchange rate appreciates on impact and the effect is significant up to 6 months which means that as a result of an increase in government spending, prices increase and countries lose price competitiveness. The increase in the real exchange rate is in line with the New Keynesian theoretical predictions.

The transmission mechanism of fiscal policy

In this section, we develop our analysis by further investigating the transmission mechanism of fiscal policy in transition and advanced countries and compare the findings with competing theoretical predictions on fiscal policy effectiveness. In order to analyse the channel(s) through which fiscal policy affects the economy we extend the baseline model with one additional variable at a time, considering the “curse of dimensionality” problem of VARs. Consequently, we run five additional specifications of the baseline model and one of the following variables: private consumption, private investment, total employment, private employment and wages. The IRFs of additional variables are presented in Fig.2.

Fig.2 IRF to a positive government spending shock-baseline model augmented by one of the following variables





Horizontal (X)- period (quarters)

Vertical (Y)- unit response (% change) of the corresponding variable to a one standard deviation government spending shock

red lines- 95 % confidence intervals derived by Monte Carlo simulation

lg- log of government spending

lnt- log of government revenue

lgdp- log of GDP

interest- interest rate

lreer- log of real effective exchange rate

impgdp- import to GDP ratio

The results presented in Fig.2 suggest that there are considerable differences in the transmission mechanism of fiscal policy in transition countries compared to advanced economies. In the latter group, the results are in line with most empirical findings in the literature reporting an increase in

private consumption and investment, while in contrast to theoretical predictions of RBC and simple NK-DSGE models, which suggest a crowding out on private consumption and investment as a result of a fiscal shock. The IRFs indicate that the response of private consumption and investment is positive and persistent, although in both cases the effect dies out 2 years after the shock. However, the magnitude of the effect is higher in the case of private investment. These effects are accompanied by an increase in employment and real wages. The results for the advanced countries are in line with theoretical predictions of modified RBC models adopting a non-separable utility function in consumption and leisure (Linnemann, 2006) or deep habits in consumption (Ravn et al., 2007) as well as with modified NK-DSGE models assuming liquidity constrained consumers (Gali et al., 2007) which predict a crowding in effect of fiscal shocks on private consumption, investment, employment and real wages. On the other hand, for transition countries, the results suggest mostly an insignificant change of the aforementioned variables. In particular, the IRFs indicate that the response in private consumption is positive on impact, although small and short-lived as the effect dies out after only 2 quarters. Private investment also does not significantly change as a result of a fiscal shock. Total employment appears to decrease on impact, and this is attributed to the decrease of private employment. The increase in government spending will lead to an increase in real wages. The results for transition countries suggest a crowding out effect of fiscal policy on private employment, in line with the theoretical predictions of Finn (1998) among others. This suggests that the transmission mechanism of fiscal policy depends on the type of fiscal shock and on labour market characteristics.

The effects of structural characteristics of fiscal multipliers

In this section we address the main critics of the fiscal policy literature by investigating the effects of structural characteristics of an economy on the transmission channels of fiscal policy. In order to have a sufficient number of observations in alternative subsamples we extend our dataset with additional data on 18 advanced economies (17 ‘old’ EU member countries and Norway). Following Ilzetzi et al. (2012) we split our sample across various structural country characteristics: open vs. closed economies; high indebted vs. low indebted countries; less flexible vs. more flexible labour market. We use the threshold level of 50% openness to trade of GDP; the threshold value of 60% of debt/GDP ratio; and the mean value (threshold) of labour market institution of the entire sample of transition countries.

Table 4 Output multipliers for different subsamples

Structural characteristic	Horizon	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter	5 th quarter	6 th quarter	7 th quarter	8 th quarter	9 th quarter	10 th quarter
Open	Impact multiplier	0.26 **	0.26 **	0.26 **	0.23 **	0.20 **	0.21 **	0.21 **	0.20 **	0.21 **	0.21 **
Closed	Impact multiplier	0.61 **	0.59 **	0.59 **	0.52 **	0.47 **	0.44 **	0.40 **	0.38 **	0.35 **	0.32 **

High debt	Impact multiplier	0.29 **	0.42 **	0.33 **	0.31 **	0.55 **	0.49 **	0.44 **	0.28	0.20	0.10
Low debt	Impact multiplier	0.76 *	0.67 **	0.68 **	0.59 **	0.32	0.22	0.00	-0.12	-0.29	-0.36
Less flexible labour market	Impact multiplier	0.24 **	0.21 **	0.36 **	0.28 **	0.25	0.21	0.13	0.20	0.17	0.28
More flexible labour market	Impact multiplier	0.55 **	0.59 **	0.67 **	0.63 **	0.54 **	0.37 **	0.29	0.18	0.11	0.07

The results confirm the theoretical predictions that fiscal multipliers are higher in more closed economies and are consistent with the Combes et al. (2016) and the Deskar-Skrbic et al. (2017) findings. However, a somewhat surprisingly and counterintuitive result is the response of the import/GDP ratio, which appears almost insignificant, albeit displaying a short-lived significant decrease in the fourth quarter, in the open economies subsample, while in closed economies there appears to be a significant increase of the import/GDP ratio from the 3rd quarter until the 7th quarter. This controversial result may indicate that the differences on fiscal multipliers are not really attributed to ‘import’ leakages and signal the importance of further exploring the transmission mechanism of fiscal policy in small open economies in transition.

The results confirm the a priori expectations that fiscal policy is much more effective in low indebted countries compared to high indebted countries. The fiscal multipliers presented in Table 4 are slightly higher in the low debt episode sample, albeit the response of GDP to a fiscal shock is more persistent in the high debt sample. The results suggests that fiscal sustainability is not a problem in transition countries, since debt dynamics do not respond significantly to an increase in government expenditure, whereas advanced economies follow a less disciplined fiscal policy. Regarding labour market flexibility the results presented in Table 4 are slightly higher for countries with more flexible labour market – i.e. the crowding out effect of public employment on private employment is less emphasized– in countries with lower benefit replacement ratios, lower trade union density and higher coordination of wage-setting process.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to investigate the effectiveness of fiscal policy in small open economies in transition. We employ a Panel VAR model and use recursive identification of fiscal shocks as do most studies in the literature.

The results of the baseline model suggest that the effectiveness of fiscal policy on stimulating the output in transition countries is limited i.e. there are no stronger multiplicative effects of GDP.

The response of real GDP to spending shocks is positive on impact and significant, although smaller than one and not very persistent. The results are similar to other studies of transition countries in the literature and robust to different specifications and sample periods. The results of the baseline model for advanced economies are in line with other studies in the literature, suggesting that fiscal multipliers are higher and the response of output more persistent, thus confirming that fiscal policy is much more effective in advanced economies compared to transition countries.

The results of the baseline model suggest that there are considerable differences in the transmission mechanism of fiscal policy in transition countries compared to advanced economies. The results predict a crowding in effect of fiscal shocks on investment, private consumption, real wages and employment in advanced countries, compatible with theoretical predictions of modified RBC models adopting a non-separable utility function in consumption and leisure or deep habits in consumption, as well as with modified NK-DSGE models assuming liquidity constrained consumers. The results for transition countries suggest a crowding out effect of fiscal policy on private employment, in line with the theoretical predictions of Finn (1998) among others, while the other aforementioned variables do not change significantly.

The results confirm the theoretical predictions that fiscal multipliers are higher in more closed economies, and are thus consistent with the findings in literature. However, the differences in fiscal multipliers are not really attributable to “import leakages”.

The results suggest minor/insignificant changes of the response of output to spending shocks after the inclusion of debt dynamics in the baseline model. In terms of subsample analysis the results are in line with the theoretical predictions that fiscal multipliers are higher in less indebted countries.

The results of the baseline model investigation into the effect of labour market institutions support the main hypothesis that fiscal policy is more effective – i.e. the crowding out effect of public employment on private employment is less pronounced – in countries with more flexible labour markets.

Considering the lack of thorough studies on transition countries, this chapter contributes to the existing literature of fiscal policy by filling a gap in the empirical literature on transition countries regarding fiscal policy effectiveness in stabilizing the economy. These empirical findings might be useful to policymakers in transition countries. A novelty of this investigation is considering the influence of different labour market characteristics on the short-run effects of fiscal shocks on employment and other labour market variables in transition countries, which have so far been ignored, even in empirical studies for advanced economies.

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