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Marshall Plan to the British refusal

MIHAI ALEXANDRESCU

Feminism in International
Relations. Case study: Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher

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Jean Monnet – From the Marshall Plan to the British refusal*

Mihai ALEXANDRESCU**

Abstract

During the last interwar years and the first three years of the Second World War, relations between states considerably deteriorated. In 1943, David Mitrany published at Chatham House, his well-known work “A Working Peace System”, in which he expressed his own arguments against the territorial order of future world peace. A new process was needed with three stages: appeasement, reconstruction and reorganization. Furthermore, Monnet found the construction of a supranational entity necessary, which would integrate the common interests of the states, in order to satisfy the needs of the citizens. Monnet’s idea transformed into what we now call the Schuman Declaration. The existence of a ‘high authority’, which would absorb the sovereignty of participant states, determined a blockage in negotiations with Great Britain.

Keywords: David Mitrany, Jean Monnet, Schuman’s Declaration, Winston Churchill, Clement Attlee

THE DECADE THAT preceded the Treaty of Rome (1957) and which began with the Marshall Plan can be named the “American monnetism”, after the expression used by John Gillingham. (Gillingham 1995: 21-36) These two pillars in European history reveal a roadmap of ideas launched by leaders and politicians influenced by a war which proved the helplessness of states.

In 1947, a year after Winston Churchill had delivered his famous speech at Fulton, George Marshall proposed an economic recovery plan for the European continent. The former British prime minister’s approach was the expression of politico-diplomatic wear and tear, which portrayed resignation, looking from the perspective of the facts that were known at that time. Marshall’s idea was meant to offer a pragmatic solution, which attempted to harness the lessons of the war in favour of future peace.

On the 18th of April 1948, Jean Monnet sent a letter from the United States to Robert Schuman. Caught in the emotion and ambience, Monnet tried to show that the American government was fully willing to help Europe, but was waiting for the European states to manifest the desire to help themselves. In the aforementioned letter, Monnet reached the following conclusion: “the effort of the Western European countries to be consistent with the circumstances, with the imminent danger and with the American effort must become a genuine European effort that will be possible only under the auspices of a federation” (Monnet, Schuman 1986: 188).

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Over the following years, there were many debates regarding sovereignty, integration, and federalization. Speeches were held, that utilized the same concepts, only with different meaning and in different perspectives. However, the ideas expressed by Monnet, in 1948, were not entirely new. Some notes of Monnet remained, dating back from the summer of 1943, in which he referred to post-war peace. In these notes, he expressed his belief that two major goals were to be reached: (a) re-establishing or establishing the democratic regime in Europe and (b) the economic and political organization of a “European entity” (Monnet 1943).

For the second goal, Monnet argued that:

“There will be no peace in Europe if the States are reconstituted on the basis of national sovereignty, with all that is entailed in terms of prestige politics and economic protectionism. If the nations of Europe once again adopt defensive positions, huge armies will once again be necessary. Under the future peace treaty, some nations will be allowed to re-arm; others will not. That was tried in 1919; we all know the result. Alliances will be sealed between European nations; we all know what they are worth. The weight of military spending will prevent or delay social reform. Fear will once more be the dominant factor in European reconstruction.” (Monnet 1943).

During the last interwar years and the first three years of the Second World War, relations between states considerably deteriorated. Any scheme meant to reconstruct international order could not have been realized, without taking into consideration the nation-states as main players. During this period, federalist projects were in trend, especially those which promoted the idea of a universal federation (Alexandrescu 2010).

Reading the mind of who was later called “Monsieur l’Europe”, I found many clues of functionalist influence on his arguments. The same year, in 1943, David Mitrany published at Chatham House, his well-known work “A Working Peace System”, in which he expressed his own arguments against the territorial order of future world peace, suggesting instead an interconnected system of international agencies which would have regulated the different areas of international social, economic or political life. Mitrany’s work was in fact the result of an ampler analysis which he had done up until 1941 for the British Foreign Office. As he was a part of the institution’s Foreign Research and Press Service, he presented to the work group (1941) and to his superiors (1942) a project he had titled “Territorial, Ideological, or Functional International Organization?” Mitrany also affirmed that, from a political standpoint, the Allied powers had to pursue two major goals: (a) resolving the war and (b) organizing peace. If the first goal was realizable through the signing of peace treaties, through which particular issues, such as borders, repairs, and policy measures could be solved, to realize the second goal, the initiative

to organize a new peace system, special administrative accords were necessary, through formal treaties or through any other means considered to be opportune. (Mitrany 1975a: 173-177)

The process had three stages: appeasement, reconstruction and reorganization. The calming action was an urgent issue, albeit spatially and temporally limited, while the reconstruction could be guaranteed through converging the immediate needs with a continuity policy, outlining a long-term plan for development, without considering the material state of the moment. Mitrany argued in favour of a reconstruction and development plan. In the said case, the mission of the planning authority was counselling, coordinating and conducting different reconstruction and international organizing actions. Because of this, his recommendation was to take into account the accumulated experience in different sectors by the international agencies, as it was the case of the International Work Organization or other organizations under the coordination of the Secretariat of the League of Nations (Mitrany 1975a: 179).

Based on the above-mentioned considerations, the following question arises, a question that had been asked by Mitrany, in the context in which the majority of the pacifying plans of the era were considering constituting a federation:

„Federation seemed indeed the only alternative to a League tried so far for linking together a number of political units by democratic methods. It would mean an association much closer than was the League, and its advocacy therefore takes it for granted that the League failed because it did not go far enough. In what way would federation go further?“ (Mitrany 1975b: 105).

So as not to leave the question unanswered, Mitrany specified that a federal union represents the widening of territorial and administrative base, but will not solve however the potential for offense of the actors of the international system. “We must put our faith not in a protected peace but in a working peace”, Mitrany wrote to the UK officials (Mitrany 1975b: 121).

At this time, we find the influence Mitrany had on Monnet’s ideas evident. Both authors thought about a durable and functional peace. Monnet’s optimism regarding the Marshall plan was obvious, as he had considered it an instrument or opportunity to realize at least a harmonization of European interests.

The most unmanageable feeling is that of fear of an enemy/external danger, especially after a half of a decade long, generalized war. In preventing these old realities, Monnet agreed that two steps had to be taken. The first one was the timeframe between liberating the occupied territories and the peace treaty. The provisional governments had to establish new constitutional order. The transfer of power between former combatants

was affected by the possible dangers which could have derailed the course of post-war reconstruction towards despotism or anthropolatry. In this sense, a permanently informed public opinion was necessary, as was avoiding economic nationalism. The second step took into account the peace conference itself. To this end, Monnet brought to light eight ideas that had to be taken into consideration:

- (1) A plan with regard to the political and economic reconstruction of Europe;
- (2) Europe's status in relation to the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union;
- (3) The regulatory program of the German problem and the movements of the population;
- (4) Creating a European inventory of heavy metallurgy;
- (5) Monitoring of the aeronautical industry and of the airlines by a European authority;
- (6) Associating the United States, Great Britain and the USSR in these systems and controls;
- (7) The political and financial organizing of Europe;
- (8) Organizing a World Council with European participation. (Monnet 1943).

Concretely, in 1948, at the time when Robert Schuman received the letter from Jean Monnet, in which he referred to the necessity of a European effort, we can grasp a number of major projections referring to the stability of peace. On one hand, the project of George Marshall, whose speech on the 5th of June 1947 focused on the economic wellbeing of Europe, as a source of continental peace, which was only possible through a general support for reconstruction. On the other hand, David Mitrany's functionalist vision is to be kept in mind, in that he recommended organizing the future peace system on the basis of international sectoral arrangements. Simultaneously, Jean Monnet relies on the Marshall project in order to sketch the future organizing of Europe, also utilizing numerous elements found in Mitrany's functionalist approach.

What separates Monnet from Mitrany was the interpretation of functionalism. The first regarded it in the form of integration, while the other considered it a form of cooperation. The state itself was not a goal for Mitrany. For Monnet, however, the effort of a single state was not enough to satisfy the needs of the citizens. More precisely, Mitrany considered the nation-state incapable of solving issues relating to public management, distribution, wellbeing, communication. In order for these to be solved, a transnational sectoral cooperation was necessary. Furthermore, Monnet found the construction of a supranational entity necessary, which would integrate the common interests of the states, in order to satisfy the needs of the citizens.

Monnet's initial project transformed, slowly but surely, into what we now call the Schuman Declaration of the 9th of May 1950. From this moment on, months of negotiations followed, in order to institute the first European community, during which time the European press and the western states' political leaders presented their own arguments for or against the Schuman Plan, with more or less conviction.

The German communists, opponents of the Plan, saw in it the hand of America, which operated through Konrad Adenauer and maybe even through Jean Monnet. According to William Diebold Jr., there was no doubt regarding the fact that a pooling of coal and steel in Western Europe had been discussed in private between American and European officials (Diebold Jr. 1959: 45).

The British press, alike its German counterpart, reported on the lack of clarity of the Schuman Plan: new concepts, new institutions, unclear goals. In the Manchester Guardian's Monday issue of the 19th of February 1951, the analysis provided revealed ambiguities which persisted upon four new institutions which would be created by the new organization: the High Authority, the Council of Ministers, the Court of Justice and the Assembly. What remained unclear was the role of these institutions in relation to the member states (Manchester Guardian 1951).

In 1959, Diebold Jr. expressed his thoughts on the speed in which the Schuman Plan had transformed, in merely a year, into a Treaty, which was merely awaiting parliamentary ratification from the six signing states. He attributed this dynamic to the ambiguities in finding the language which will cover a variety of circumstances (Diebold Jr. 1959: 47). Nevertheless, the author remained surprised with regard to the reduced number of principles accompanying the implementing norms. Moreover, the norms themselves were labelled to be "questionable". What is certain, is the fact that in nine years from the debut of negotiations these were not published in 'Les Travaux Préparatoires', and in their absence, I find the commentaries and suspicions created around the subject to be justified.

Viewed through the lens of the era, the French initiative surprised not only the British, but also a few French diplomats on mission, where they had to argue and advocate for the new Plan. This was the situation of René Massigli, the French ambassador in London. A scene which is reminiscent of Ch. Dickens novels, presents the French high diplomat in search of a chair when reading Schuman's project. Reserved by nature, the British Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ervin Bevin, supposedly told Massigli: "when we will see the proposal in detail, we shall of course examine it attentively, but in the mean time I cannot comment on the subject" (Foreign Office 1950).

Jean Monnet travelled to London in order to discuss the Schuman Plan with British officials. Taking into consideration the British reaction, two reasons can be detected concerning the reserved attitude of Her Majesty's government. On the one hand, it regards the specific ambiguity employed by Jean Monnet in presenting the Plan, some even accusing that Monnet and his counsellors each described different and contradicting plans. On the other hand, the British government had been presented with a communiqué which had already been approved by the West-German government. (Diebold Jr. 1959: 49)

Beyond these initial explanations, those which followed in the form of memorandum

exchanges highlighted the other arguments which consolidated the British position. The island press allowed these opinions to be seen ever more clearly. The existence of a 'high authority', which would absorb the sovereignty of participant states, determined a blockage in negotiations with Great Britain. The dispute between Labourists and Conservatives in the House of Commons focused on the opportunity to participate in negotiations.

In any case, the diplomatic language did not seem to abandon the British Labourist Prime Minister Clement Attlee, who, on the 11th of May 1950 declared his admiration for the striving of the French initiative to offer a solution to "a severe European issue". Beyond this eulogy, the head of the British Cabinet underlined that the proposition from Paris was to have "long term implications on the future economic structure of the participant countries", because of which a thorough study was in order ([Foreign Office 1950](#)).

Following the debates in the British Parliament in the months of May and June of 1950, a heated debate ignited between the Labourist Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, and the leader of the opposition, Winston Churchill. In his intervention on the 13th of June 1950, in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister mentioned that following his discussions with Jean Monnet, it was evident that the plan proposed by the French government lacked a methodology, and the opinions which he himself presented at negotiations frequently differed, leaving room for interpretation ([Hansard 1950a](#)). A few weeks later, Churchill claimed, that if he had been asked: "Would you agree to a supra-national authority which has the power to tell Great Britain not to cut any more coal or make any more steel, but to grow tomatoes instead?" his answer would have been, without hesitation, a negative one, „[b]ut why not be there to give the answer?" ([Hansard 1950b](#)). It seems that Churchill had not yet lost his sense of orientation amidst the dynamics of European politics. However, his interventions can be understood in view of the ambitions of the opposition in the parliamentary battle.

What remains is the fact that in the long duration of the history of post-war European construction, functionalist thinking has known readjustment and remodelling, depending on the pressures of the moment in which it was affirmed. The middle of last century was truly the time of functionalist thinking, competing with the harsh realism upheld by the lessons of war. Furthermore, without Jean Monnet's initiative and his vast network of personal relations with political and financial European leaders, Western Europe would have remained in the strict logic of territorialism and sovereignty both in political and economic perspectives. Monnet's approach was unusual for the European cabinets. His negotiation always lingering on the boundary of ambiguity and rejection has managed to offer the continent a Treaty which had been signed by six states. It remained to be seen whether it would be sufficient for initiating the construction of the new European community, which had been much complained about between 1950 and 1951.

Coming back to the phrase utilized by John Gillingham, we can refer to an “American monnetism” between 1947 and 1957, for without the Marshall Plan and without Jean Monnet’s initiative, the Schuman Plan would not have existed, alike the entire integrative process caused by it. After all, Charles de Gaulle again, after becoming the head of the French government, in 1958, offered an argument to support the aforementioned interpretation in saying that “we are no longer in the era in which Mr. Monnet gave the orders”. (Duchêne 1994: 315)

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Feminism in International Relations. Case study: Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher

Pallukacs HAJNAL *

Abstract

The present article takes on the subject of feminism in international relations. The objective of this article is to nuance, if not to combat the harsh feminist point of view by focusing on two key figures in the history of global politics, two female politicians who shaped the world they lived in. Through the case study, the aim is to prove that, although falling under the category of the female gender, a politician's primary focus should be the people they are leading.

Keywords: feminism, Gandhi, Thatcher, international relations, gender

THE FEMINIST POINT of view has been voiced only recently with regard to international relations. The first article which subscribed to such an opinion was published in 1987, bearing the title "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals". (Cohn 1987: 687-718). The said article discusses the problem of nuclear weaponry, also bringing into focus the author's conviction, which can be summarized as: the strongly masculinized culture of the institution of the defense has brought about a situation in which the state and acts of war have become aspects that are fundamentally separated from human emotions. (Cohn 1987: *passim*) The book that had the most influence on the emergence of feminism, as a theory of the international relations field, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, written by Cynthia Enloe, was published in 1990. The main idea of the book, as pointed out by its subtitle („Making feminist sense of International Politics"), revolves around the fact that a reconsideration of the field is necessary, paying special attention to the women's perspective, seen as shadow actors in international politics.

During the following years, more and more voices have supported the necessity of a feminine perspective with regard to the issues of international politics. Controversy and debates – although few – did appear. The majority of researchers and international relations analysts had no interest in joining the debate, remaining neutral or detached.

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Robert O. Keohane's article (Keohane 1989: 245-253), which reutilizes a typology of feminism in international relations formulated originally by Christine Sylvester (Sylvester 1989: *passim*), and which attempts to provide constructive criticism of what could potentially become a feminist theory of international relations, is received as an attack by some researchers in the feminist community. The first response came from Cynthia Webber (1994: 337-349), who wrote an article, the title of which proved the acidity of the intervention: "Good Girls, Little Girls and Bad Girls: Male Paranoia in Robert Keohane's Critique of Feminist International Relations". The said article proves the radicalism of some feminists in the sense that Keohane's idea, stating that research should make use of gender but not necessarily subscribing to the feminist point of view, was poorly received by the feminist school of thought. Likewise, more voices appeared that supported the fact that a gender theory would be more recommended in the study of international relations, compared to a feminist theory. The idea that there was a real danger in bringing women onto center-stage, concretely the undermining of men, was brought into focus, the so-called "masculinities" having been conceptualized as representing social issues. (Carpenter 2002: 157) Epistemological and normative differences prevent the integration of gender issues, which as such cannot be taken seriously, and feminists contribute to this marginalization through the fact that they are resistant to co-opting gender as an explanatory framework, separate from feminists norms. (Carpenter 2002: 153-154) On the other hand, Terrell Carver considered that to study using gender theory, without approaching the subject from a feminist point of view, would constitute an oxymoron. (Sjoberg 2009: 191)

Taking into consideration the works of the mentioned authors, as well as others, the common conception on feminism in international relations is the following: feminism implies an analysis of the way in which the stage of international politics affects and is affected by both sexes. At the same time, it includes an analysis of concepts used in the field of international relations and the way in which these are attributed to a gender or the other, with the purpose of deepening the understanding of international relations.

This theory divides into several categories, but as to which exactly, there is no unanimous consensus. As such, the categories presented in the present article are the ones considered to be the most relevant for the field at hand. The feminist standpoint theories claim that the experiences that women had lived through, on the outskirts of politics, have granted them some perspectives regarding social issues, which can prove useful to the political world. From the outskirts, the theoreticians of feminism offer criticism to the theories constructed by the men who assume the role of policy-makers. (Keohane 1989: 245)

Realist feminism is interested in gender roles strategic and power-policies between states. The liberal viewpoint analyses the undermined position of women in global politics and advocates for the inclusion of women into the existing structures of world pol-

itics. (Sjoberg 2009: 188) At the same time, it represents an individualist form of feminism, in which the ability of women to showcase and maintain their equality through their own actions and decisions. (Goldstein 2013: v. „Liberal feminism”)

Critical feminism is interested in the idea and manifestation of gender identity and its power in world politics. Constructivist feminism gravitates around the study of ways in which preconceived views and opinions about gender form and are formed by global politics. The analysis of the linguistic manifestations of gender, of the way in which these contribute to the empowerment of the masculine and the marginalization of the feminine in constituting global policies, is the appanage of post-structuralist feminism. Thus, it focuses on the analysis of dichotomies, such as “rational-emotional”. (Sjoberg 2009: 188)

Because of the fact that, according to feminists in the field of international relations, one of the defining characteristics and one through which academic feminism can be told apart, is the research question (Ackerly, Stern, True 2006: 5), in the present study answers will be attempted to be given to the following questions, referring to the cases of Margaret Thatcher and Indira Gandhi:

Can a feminist key be applied to their actions in international politics?

In what way was their political life affected by their gender?

What were their thoughts on feminism?

Do their decisions in the realm of international politics prove feminist considerations? In this context, have they advocated for the fulfillment of an ideal that can be considered feminist?

The objective of the present article is to disprove, through the aforementioned examples, a part of the feminist theory, according to which women, because of their gender, have a different style of ruling, utilizing and implying concepts which have feminist connotations, such as emotions and sensitivity.

Indira Gandhi

The rise to power of Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi happened at a political turning point. Up until that moment, the fact that a woman could ascend to a leading position had never been considered. Her ascent had been of course facilitated (if not altogether made possible) by the fact that Indira Gandhi was the daughter of India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.

After her father’s death, in 1964, she was named Minister of Information and Broadcast by her father’s successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri. Gandhi chose to have an active role in

politics. In 1965, having arrived in Kashmir at the time of the discovery of the Pakistani infiltrates, the first act of Gandhi was to notify the prime minister, and the results of her actions were to have benefic effects on her image in the eyes of the public. This was the moment in which she stopped being regarded only as the daughter of Nehru. (Wagner-Wright 2012: 6) She had earned the reputation of being “the only man in a Cabinet of old ladies”. (Everett 1993: 112)

After the death of Shastri new elections were announced and Gandhi was a candidate for the position of prime minister of India. Her candidature was orchestrated by Kumarasami Kamaraj. Because of the fact that she was a woman, she was considered to be malleable and easily manipulated, thus being perfect for the role of puppet in the hands of the Syndicate, but also strong enough so as to assure victory. (Katz 2012: 34; Frank 2002: 184)

From an international relations viewpoint, Ms. Gandhi’s actions were controversial. At first, she held to the idea of non-alignment, regarding the non-involvement in Cold War matters. (Wagner-Wright 2012: 7) However, she was reticent and there were problems regarding India’s relations with the United States of America. These originated from the aid (weapons) offered by the USA to Pakistan during the war in 1965, and had only gotten worse with the US involvement in Vietnam. (Frank 2002: 187-188) Forced by the troubled internal situation, in 1966 Gandhi made an official visit to the USA, in order to obtain financial and material aid (food), but without having to ask for it explicitly. Because of this, she made use of her femininity and charm, in order to eventually receive a promise of aid from the US president Lyndon Johnson. (Frank 2002: 187-188)

The aid however was running late and the food shipments were not organized, arriving in a chaotic manner, which led to the fall of Gandhi’s popularity. She then turned to the Soviet Union. The USSR became India’s most important weapons provider. In order to counter the bond between the USA, Pakistan and China, Indira Gandhi signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in 1971. (Wagner-Wright 2012: 7) In December of the same year, there was another Pakistani attack on India. Indira Gandhi had taken a big risk by offering support to the liberalization of Eastern Pakistan, especially because of the danger of involving India in a conflict not only with Pakistan, but also with its supporters, China and the USA. She held her ground under pressure from the USA and China, proving to the entire world that she was a capable leader. (Mukherjee 2015: 30-31)

She proved her worth again, when she regained her position of power after two years, in 1980. Her assassination was a direct result of her ironclad political convictions.

With regard to the personal convictions of Indira Gandhi, she always denied vehemently the claim that she was a feminist. Implicitly, she was bothered by the questions

of reporters who wanted to find out more about her role as a female politician. (Frank 2002: 187)

Looking at things from the viewpoint of feminism in international relations, the first thing that is to be observed is the perception of the public regarding Gandhi, at the beginning of her political carrier, the aforementioned episode that took place in Kashmir, in 1965. The most important thing to notice is the citation, “the only man in a Cabinet full of old ladies” (Everett 1993: 112). Thus, a core idea of feminist theory is proved, the case of the concepts and genders associated to them, the case of post-structuralist feminism. In the present case, what is invoked is courage. This is a strongly masculinized concept. Besides this theoretical idea, we obtain proof through the fact that Indira Gandhi is labeled as a “man” because of her courage and her sense of duty. At the opposite pole of the comparison is the label given to the other members of the Cabinet. The rest of the members (all men) are viewed as “old ladies” (women) because of the fact that they were cowards and preferred not to get involved. The main issue with this comparison is the positive connotation given to the masculinized concept, although the reference is clearly to a woman, and at the same time, the negative connotation given to the feminized concept, although those involved were all men. This is proof that what feminists in international relations want to change is actually a deeply rooted concept in world culture, because of the customs of the experiences in patriarchal states.

The second point of interest from a feminist point of view is the opinion of the Syndicate regarding Indira Gandhi. As she was a woman, the role of a puppet seemed to be fitting for her. Herein lies the issue brought up by constructivist feminism. The opinion regarding Indira Gandhi’s gender was that it was malleable. This opinion formed was helped by global politics, as well as Hindu culture. Although, through her ulterior actions, Gandhi contributed to the development of a different opinion regarding her gender, even if this was not a policy supported by her.

A third issue that should not be neglected, given the subject of the present paper, is Gandhi’s behavior during her official visit to the USA, her use of her gender in order to achieve her goal. Interestingly enough, the feminist theory on international relations does not mention such a possibility. It could however be tied in with the perspective of realist feminism. The fact that a woman will utilize her gender’s attributes in order to gain something must be regarded as a given, sure fact. In no way should sexuality be the only thing thought of in such a case, a woman’s attributes transcend the said aspect. Of course, the fact that she can use this will confer a different role to a woman in inter-states strategic and power policies. The example of women spies comes to mind, such as Mata Hari or Madhuri Gupta, but the issue is raised at another level when the subject of a research is a woman of the state, a prime minister. In this case however, the role of only one woman,

or that of a select group of women changes – those who will play a role in world politics –, but not that of all women.

Regarding her way of ruling, Indira Gandhi does not enter into any category with regard to the theme of this paper. Her actions did not offer proof of any typically feminine conceptions. Thus, there is nothing to prevent her from being considered a “woman” of the state solely because of her gender, but who also acted and ruled in a way that a man would have probably ruled as well. This was also what determined the author Sylvia Wagner-Wright to consider her to be a cyborg, a political robot. (Wagner-Wright 2012: 9)

Margaret Thatcher

Unlike Indira Gandhi, Margaret Hilda Roberts Thatcher was not born into a politically prominent family. Her rise to power did not have anything to do with her family or her name; she could not be considered a political asset due to these, as Gandhi had been.

Thatcher began her political career in 1950, receiving a seat in the British Parliament in 1959 as a member of the Conservative Party. In 1970 she was appointed in the Cabinet as State Secretary for Education and Science (Wagner-Wright 2012: 10). In October of 1974 she announced her candidature for the presidency of the Conservative Party, title which she had received officially on the 11th February 1975 when, for the first time in British history, a woman gained control of the helm of one of the great political parties (Blake 1990: 319). Approximately four years later, in May 1979, Margaret Thatcher was elected as the first female prime minister in British history.

She had been named the Iron Lady before getting elected as Prime Minister. The title had been given to her by a Soviet newspaper, Red Star, and was not meant to be a compliment, but Thatcher decided to wear it with pride (Wagner-Wright 2012: 10).

In external affairs, the issues were always placed under the motto “Britain first” (Blake 1990: 341). Thatcher strove to reconfirm Great Britain’s status as a world power through a seat on the UN’s Security Council and through nuclear power, and to reestablish the special relationship between Great Britain and the USA. At the same time, Thatcher refused to obey the pretense of a united Europe (Wagner-Wright 2012: 11-12).

The Falkland war was, in the eyes of most political analysts, her moment of glory. Great Britain, as well as Argentina had ties to the islands. The islands were British territory, but were dependent on Argentina as far as services go. Maintaining British jurisdiction of the islands was not a vital issue for Great Britain, the islanders however

thought of it as essential (Wagner-Wright 2012: 12). Thus, negotiations regarding this issue were held with Argentina, but to no avail. Tensions rose, and Thatcher decided to send nuclear submarines into the Southern Atlantic as a threat and a demonstration of power (Wagner-Wright 2012: 12).

The tactic was unsuccessful. The Argentinean forces launched an attack on the islands on the 2nd of April 1982, and with regard to war, Thatcher found herself agreeing with her nation's state of mind (Blake 1990: 350). The campaign in order to reclaim the islands was launched on the 21st of May. The Cabinet was prepared to lose 1000 soldiers. The final tally showed that 260 people lost their lives, and the Argentinean forces were forced to surrender on the 14th June (Blake 1990: 352).

With regard to bilateral relations with the USA, the fact is they were good and stable. The same, however, cannot be said about Great Britain's relations with the European Community. Great Britain had joined the Common European Market in 1973, the practical reason being that this was the only way in which British products could remain on the European market. In 1975, Britain was contributing approximately 20% of the total budget of the Community, but the return rate was only 5% (Wagner-Wright 2012: 14). Thatcher was not content with the situation and after five years of debate, in 1984, at the Fontainebleau Summit, Great Britain was granted an annual rebate of 66% of the difference between British contributions and revenues (Wagner-Wright 2012: 14).

As did Indira Gandhi, Thatcher also repudiated feminism. Any idea or belief she might have had, that might be categorized as "feminist" (such as "equal pay and equal opportunities" of 1969), actually stemmed from her individualist convictions (Katz 2012: 14).

The most striking problem, with regard to the feminist viewpoint on external affairs, is the nuclear issue. Feminist international relations theory, regarding security, is strongly against weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weaponry, strongly opposing militarism. Even if Thatcher considered these weapons to be a last resort, she seemed ready and willing to use them as a threat in the Falkland Islands conflict.

At the same time, with regard to war, retreating for reasons, such as safeguarding life, never came up and was never thought of as an option. Emotions played no role in this case. Throughout the entire period when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister, the only emotion that can be deduced from her actions and her style of rule is passion and patriotism, two key characteristics of a statesperson.

The only acknowledgeable feminine side, as far as Thatcher's rule, was the way she presented herself, the fact that she did not abandon skirts for trousers, and that she always had her hair and make-up done. She kept these attributes for a simple reason: she

was surrounded by men. She counted on and used high-class men's discomfort to her advantage, a discomfort that they had near all women, but mostly near women in power (Wagner-Wright 2012: 14).

In feminist historiography and in non-feminist historiography as well it is considered that Thatcher was not a woman, when referring to her public life. Thus, the Iron Lady, in the same way as Indira Gandhi, can be considered a cyborg.

Conclusions

Having the benefit of an overall view on the issue at hand, the answers to the posed research questions become clear. Gandhi, as well as Thatcher, repudiated feminism, a fact that does not however mean that they did not have opinions, views or did not manifest themselves in ways which can be considered feminist in nature.

Indira Gandhi's political life was affected at the beginning of her career, having been viewed by the members of the Syndicate as easily manipulated, because of her gender. On the other hand, she managed to get into the graces of President Lyndon B. Johnson, during her first visit to the USA, precisely because of the trumps provided by her gender.

Unlike Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher's political life did not seem to have been affected by the fact that she was a woman, at least not after she had ascended to a position of power. Most likely, she enjoyed the aforementioned discomfort, felt by those who surrounded her, but which she also exploited.

The decisions made in external affairs do not reveal a feminist viewpoint. To the contrary, the fact that they were women had nothing to do with the manner in which both of them chose to behave and act. Their behavior begs the conclusion that a statesperson has to be a *state's person*, the behavior scheme being androgynous in nature. They have to consider each aspect of the issue at hand, however, the most efficient actions are the ones in which they are not preoccupied with their personal identity, as far as gender. Based on these two distinct cases, it can be stated that including more women into the existing structure of global politics will not lead to a dramatic reconfiguration of the said structure.

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Democratic awakening in Macedonia: Expecting the unexpected

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Abstract

On the weekend of 9-10 of May 2015, a firefight with grenades and snipers took place in Kumanovo, the third biggest city in Macedonia. However, it was just the tip of the iceberg – for seven months Macedonia witnessed the most massive popular movement in its history. People of all ethnicities protested the oppressing tax law, the stagnating educational law, the outrageous conduct of the Ministry of Health, the unbelievable recordings revealing government schemes of corruption, election fraud, political murder and nepotism. Claiming that the conflict in Kumanovo was staged by the authorities to distract public attention from the above-mentioned problems, people organized into a movement and established a camp in front of the government, determined to leave only when the government resigns. While voices echo the resemblance with the 2001 conflict, a thorough analysis of internal factors indicates that the commotion is revolving around mass dissatisfaction with the government in power.

Keywords: Macedonia, protest, corruption, conflict, political crisis

Civil unrest: seven months of murky waters

It is not uncommon to hear about civil unrest or armed confrontation in the Balkans, due to its historical heritage. In its twenty three years of independence, Macedonia witnessed several conflicting situations including clashes between its two main ethnicities – Macedonian and Albanian, but it also developed mechanisms for better integration and preservation of diversity.

One often hears Europeans associate the term “Macedonia” with a fruit salad. While it brings a smile on Macedonians’ faces, it suits the country quite well – Macedonia is a small (25,000 sq. km.) territory that hosts Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Romani, Serbs, Bosniaks and other ethnic denominations.

Although a multiethnic country, its general goal of European integration is shared by all political factions. Macedonia signed an Association Agreement with the EU in 2001 and was granted the status of candidate in 2005 ([European Commission 2005](#)), but fur-

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ther negotiations were stalled because of the ongoing dispute over the official name of the country with Greece¹, which also vetoed Macedonia's entry into NATO.

For the purpose of better understanding the current power-sharing schemes in the political sphere, the three main political parties will be presented below.

VMRO-DPMNE² is a centre-right ruling party with a Christian Democrat-style orientation; its leader, the current Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, took office in 2006. The party won the majority of seats in parliament four times since 2006.

SDSM³ is the main opposition party and second in Parliament; it is led by Zoran Zaev, who became the main face of the anti-government protests after releasing the infamous wiretapped recordings. His party stands for liberal economic policies, co-operation with the international community, and flexibility in the row with Greece over the country's name in order to enable the country to join NATO.

DUI⁴, the third and "junior" ruling party in the government; it was formed by former guerrilla fighters in the 2001 conflict and advocates the full implementation of the Ohrid Agreement which granted equal political rights to the Albanian population. ([Balkan Insight 2010](#)).

The recent firefight in Kumanovo made the headlines of the main European and international newspapers, yet most of the reports fail to encompass the complex power-relations between governments and their citizens. Our goal is to get an overview of the latest events in Macedonia and analyze the systemic components of the current political crisis. From massive student protests in late 2014 to recorded proof of high level corruption and a threat of an armed conflict, we will follow the chain of events that culminated in early May with a shooting incident that took the lives of eight policemen and injured over 30 people.

Stage I: The students' movement

The unrest among the civil society was best visible when students started organizing protests against the new law of education that introduced an additional external examination. For the first time since its independence, Macedonia saw tens of thousands of students marching the streets of Skopje, in what would become a genuine movement.

Studentski Plenum is the name taken by students to identify their movement: protests that started in November 2014 gradually transformed into a fully-fledged occupation of the University space. While classes were boycotted, students together with their profes-

1 Greece claims that Macedonia is the historical name of a Greek region and represents the Greek heritage.

2 Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity.

3 Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

4 Democratic Union for Integration

sors (who created their own Professor's Plenum) could be found on the premises of the University, giving alternative lectures, organizing debates on relevant topics and informing students about possible actions undertaken by the Plenum.

Below are the pleas made by the students of the State University *Ss. Cyril and Methodius*:

- cancelling the newly-adopted law on education that introduces an external examination. Students claim that the law goes against the Bologna system, which specifies that universities and other educational bodies can reserve the right to decide upon the preferred method of grading.
- denouncing the deplorable condition of dormitories, the lack of funding for the state university, the lack of adequate representative student bodies that are not infected by corruption and often sudden changes in the educational law.
- introducing a more democratic process of decision-making that would involve the student body in a transparent process with suggestions based on a needs-assessment.

The government's decision to open talks with representatives of the students' body took everybody by surprise. On February 24, the occupation of the university ended, with the Plenum taking the decision not to disband and continue representing students' interests.

What happened next was even more surprising. High-school students followed the example of their older counterparts and started their own movement – the *Srednoskolski Plenum* (High-school Students' Plenum). This time, protests covered the whole territory of Macedonia, with students protesting several times a week, while boycotting classes and even organizing alternative activities in some high-schools. Under the slogan “Stop the bad reforms”, students requested the cancellation of the external examination, returning to the old pattern for the graduation exam and respecting the EU educational standards. Teachers joined the movement, supporting their pupils in their quest for modifying the educational law. ([Radio MOF 2015](#)).

But what made students turn their protests into a movement was the government's decision to prohibit any type of student association, which came at the beginning of April. Since then, regular camps in front of the Ministry of Education and Science were held in order to express disagreement with the breach of the right to civic association.

Stage II: Protests related to the wiretap scandal

For the past couple of months, the main opposition party in Macedonia, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, has been publishing recordings of illegally wire-tapped

conversations of prominent political figures, journalists and activists, called “bombs”.⁵ The opposition claims that the conversations had been recorded by the Secret Police headed by Saso Mijalkov and that Gruevski orchestrated the illegal surveillance of some 20,000 people.

The tapes have lifted the lid on a range of suspected wrongdoings by senior officials, including election fraud, intimidation, the politically motivated jailing of opponents, surveillance of journalists and interference with the media, the judiciary and the prosecution. At the time being, around 30 such bombs have been made public, conversations being grouped according to the main legal breach.

In the most shocking revelation, senior government officials are allegedly heard scheming to cover up a dubious car accident that took the life of a noted government critic. Another recording seems to implicate the government in sweeping under the rug a case in which police had beaten a young reveler to death (Joseph 2015). One of the latest bombs exposes PM Gruevski’s hypocrisy over the dispute with Greece regarding Macedonia’s name. The tape includes conversations between Nikola Gruevski, the PM, Antonio Milososki, the former Foreign Minister and Saso Mijalkov, the former Director of the Administration for Security and Counterintelligence:

“Milososki appears to explain to Gruevski and Mijalkov that they should seek a complex compound country name that would include a prefix with a “political connotation” like Independent, Sovereign or Democratic before the name Republic of Macedonia, with a suffix in brackets like (Upper), (Northern) or (Vardar). Milososki also says that the Greeks will be able to sell this to their own public by insisting that the current Macedonian name has been changed significantly.” (Marusic 2015a).

An extended space was given to the topic of election fraud. Several bombs reveal dialogues that refer to different techniques used by the ruling party members to cancel the first round of elections because of apparent loss on their side (threatening employees with dismissal and business owners with closure, staging incidents at the polling stations in order to invalidate the ballots, making ballots “disappear”, etc.). Interlocutors also refer to “crushing the opposition” during the second round of elections (Al Jazeera 2015).

Gruevski insisted that the tapes were created by unnamed “foreign secret services”, in collaboration with the opposition, in order to destabilize the country. Refusing to acknowledge the authenticity of the revealed tapes, the PM mentioned in a press-conference that he would not step down and dissolve the current government, a declaration that triggered further protests backed by the opposition. The dismissal of two ministers

5 Al Jazeera created an interactive map of the transcripts, together with profiles participants, at <http://interactive.aljazeera.com/ajb/2015/makedonija-bombe/eng/index.html>

involved in the scandal – Gordana Jankulovska, Minister of Internal Affairs, and Saso Mijalkov, the Intelligence chief – did not manage to feed the people hungry for a consistent change of the governing elite.

Amid refusal from the government to take any action regarding the claims of corruption, protests became a regular sight in Skopje, the capital. Under the slogan *Protestiram* (I protest), which became extremely popular on Facebook, tens of thousands of people marched the streets of Skopje every week establishing a protest camp in front of the Vlada (the building of government). Estimates go between 20.000 and 100.000 people, the exact number being unavailable. Numerous Facebook users supported an online campaign that urged people not to resort to violence, not to bring sharp or dangerous objects to the protest and not to respond to provocations.

Daily activities included speeches held by professors, businessmen, politicians, journalists; debates; musical events, etc. People insisted that PM Gruevski and his cabinet had to resign.

As a response to this act of popular rebellion, supporters of the VMRO-DPMNE ruling party organized a counter-camp to show support for the government. People maintained that they were there on their own will, that they lived well and that the government was doing all it could to serve their citizens (Jordanovska 2015). Despite the evident disagreement between both camps, distance was kept, and no violent outburst was registered.

Stage III: The armed clash in Kumanovo

On the 8th of May 2015, an armed conflict between a so-called terrorist group and the police took place in the town of Kumanovo near the border of Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo. Several streets on the Albanian side of the city were blocked, and shootings were heard for two days around the city. A general feeling of uneasiness overtook the city, but there was no actual reason to believe that an escalation was expected. During the two days of shootings, eight policemen were killed and another 37 people were wounded (Marusic 2015b). Official media reported that the situation in the city remained calm despite the blockade and that citizens had nothing to fear.

Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov on the 10th of May 2015 chaired a session of the National Security Council, which opposition party leaders also attended. The session noted that prompt police action neutralized a group of several dozen people that had planned terror attacks across the country, intending serious destabilization (Marusic 2015b). Ivanov also used the incident to urge Western powers to unblock Macedonia's

entry into NATO and the EU in order to avoid the rise of such terrorist groups.

While the government insists to hold extremist Albanians responsible for the attack on the police, voices from the opposition suspect the government's involvement in staging the conflict in order to distract people's attention from the ever-growing scandals around the corruption allegations. Considerable effort was put into keeping track of hate speech and avoiding the escalation of the conflict through the spread of misinformation. Facebook and Twitter were used as main tools to spread the message that there was no ethnic clash in the city of Kumanovo, whose population is 35% Albanian.

Remembering the 2001 conflict: what is different now

The armed clash with the police in early May inevitably triggered associations with the 2001 ethnic conflict and raised fears of escalation in the region. However, the sense of déjà-vu these events provide misleads the general opinion. The forces that triggered the armed conflict in 2001 differ considerably from the ones that are driving the popular movement into the streets today. Understanding this difference is crucial for imagining a future action plan, both for the civil society and for political actors involved.

Historically speaking, the geographic territory of Macedonia is scattered across three modern nation-states: Bulgaria, Greece and FYROM. The end of the Ottoman rule over the Balkans (in 1912), the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the First World War (1914-1918) reshaped the entire Balkan region, Macedonia included: thus, Vardar Macedonia became a part of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, while the Aegean Macedonia with Thessaloniki passed to Greece and the Pirin Macedonia to Bulgaria (Sotirovic 2015).

After the declaration of Macedonian independence in 1991, Bulgaria recognized the new state, but not the nation to which its majority belongs, nor the language that they speak. Albania faced its own crises of transition, but Macedonian citizens self-identified as Albanian were allegedly involved in various armed confrontations with Macedonian police over the rights of the Albanian minority in Western Macedonia. And in the best-known neighborly stand-off, Greece – the northern region of which is also called Macedonia – challenged the republic's status by interpreting its constitution, new flag and very name as expressions of extraterritorial ambitions (Cowan, 2005:2).

The ethnic component fluctuated in time, as a response to the major imbalance in the whole region. Thus, after the Treaty of Lausanne was adopted in 1922, the Muslim population was considerably reduced when a population exchange happened: some 350.000 Muslims from Macedonia were displaced to Turkey, while around 1.200.000 ethnic Greeks from Anatolia came into Greece and its adjacent regions (Sotirovic 2015). Eighty

years after, as a result of the war in Kosovo, over a quarter of a million refugees from Kosovo arrived in Macedonia – one refugee for every eight citizens (Cowan, 2005:5). It is hard to estimate today's ratio of Albanian-speaking citizens, due to the fact that the last population census happened in 2002. Nevertheless, around a fourth of the population is Albanian-speaking, leaving around 65% Macedonians and roughly 10% other ethnicities.

The commotion created by two world wars and ethnic displacement left space for the emergence of nationalist politics. Under Tito's rule, in Yugoslavia, Macedonians were recognized as a constituent 'people'. Tito's new structure recognized separate 'peoples' and 'nationalities' residing throughout the various republics, and gave them certain rights on that basis (Cowan, 2005:12). The Socialist Macedonia gained recognition of its nationhood, language and alphabet.

Naturally, the establishment of a "majority" automatically triggered the shaping of "minorities". The Albanian-speaking minority was not granted autonomy in the same way that Kosovo obtained it, together with the right to have their own president, government, assembly, police, university and academy of sciences. Enforced by the impressive number of Kosovar refugees who settled in different Macedonian regions across the North and North-West and radicalized by a wish to gain political power and privileges, the Albanian community got involved in an armed conflict at the beginning of a new century.

The armed conflict in Macedonia started in February 2001, when the guerrillas of the so called National Liberation Army (NLA) seized control over the village of Tanusevci near the border with Kosovo. Over the next few months, fighting spread to areas near the northern towns of Kumanovo and Tetovo and close to the capital Skopje. The conflict ended with several thousands of internally displaced persons and claimed the lives of over 60 Macedonian soldiers and policemen. The number of casualties among NLA remains unknown (Balkan Insight 2007).

The outcomes of the conflict were materialized by the Ohrid Framework Agreement – a document backed by the United States and the EU that became the main guarantee for Macedonia's accession to NATO and the EU. The Agreement bids for keeping Macedonia's sovereignty by making concessions to the Albanian population. Thus, every ethnicity that represents over 20% of the population of Macedonia got the right to receive education in their native language, which becomes an official language of the state (Framework Agreement 2001). Besides recognition of cultural rights, it created space for Albanian representation in Parliament and gave more autonomy to Albanian-populated municipalities. Thus, leaders of the Albanian guerrilla turned politicians, founded the Democratic Union for Integration, DUI, which entered coalition government after the September 2002 elections.

But the Ohrid Agreement had a limited impact. While focusing on immediate results

which included halting military actions, it deepened the division between the two ethnic communities. The envisioned political solution of double representation in government created deadlocks, with Albanian junior ruling party often blocking legislative initiatives, due to the institutionalized procedure of “double majority”. Political interests aside, the community is culturally divided. Albanian children go to Albanian schools, their parents shop in Albanian shops and markets, on weekends they go to Albanian cafes and attend Albanian events.

But the fact that there is a division in the municipalities where both ethnicities reside doesn't mean that conflict is imminent. Although there is limited interaction between them, interethnic friendships are not uncommon and even joint events happen. Kumanovo is known on a national level for its efforts to blur the physical boundaries between Albanians and Macedonians by organizing events held in both languages and by encouraging the young generation not to foster the division.

As seen in the previous section of this paper, the recent clash between the police and a terrorist faction in the Albanian side of Kumanovo is an attempt of the government to hold on to power by switching public attention from the massive wiretapped scandals and allegations of corruption to a presumable ethnic clash and escalation. Having this as a starting point, we can safely assume that at stake is not Macedonia's integrity, but rather the government's survival.

In 2001, the Albanians were genuinely disenchanted with the governing party. Although Albanians were handed important ministries and their participation in the public administration increased by 25%, Albanians intermittently accused the Macedonians of discrimination in the labor market, in secondary, and higher education, in outlays on infrastructure (Vaknin, 2009: 591). Today, all the population is dissatisfied with the current economic situation. High rates of unemployment, increased taxes, limited freedom of expression, scandals of high corruption and halted negotiations with the EU because of the name dispute with Greece are just some reasons that pushed people into the streets to claim a change of government.

Another argument in favor of this theory descends from an established practice of cooperation in mixed municipalities, fostered by the emergence of an open civic society. Since the proclamation of independence 23 years ago, various international organizations supported the development of civil society by funding and encouraging cultural projects. The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Skopje is an active organization that monitors political hate speech, works to prevent violence during protests and offers counseling and support to the LGBT community. After signing the Association Agreement with the EU and becoming a candidate country in 2005, Macedonia got access to European funds for both political and the civil sectors. Other funding opportunities

came from the Council of Europe and from the Soros Foundation.

The results of this continuous process of fostering dialogue between communities could be perceived during the anti-governmental protests. Both Macedonians and Albanians gathered in Skopje to request Prime Minister Gruevski to resign, in an unprecedented mass movement that preceded the conflict in Kumanovo in early May. And it was Alsat, an Albanian-owned TV station that was airing the wiretaps and offering extensive airtime to opposition voices, a remarkable gesture of solidarity. Albanian web-sites have published sharp anti-government commentary by ethnic Macedonians, something that was largely unheard of in the traditionally ethnically segregated media sector (Joseph 2015).

To sum up, comparing this year's events with 2001 and claiming that there is a risk of renewed ethnic conflict draws the attention away from the real problem: the retention in power of a profoundly corrupt government which ignores popular dissatisfaction with its ruling.

Media coverage

Media plays a crucial role in creating the link between what is happening in the streets and what is delivered to the rest of the population. Without any doubt, there is a considerable part of the population that was unaware of the frequent protests happening in Skopje due to the fact that national TV channels and press were not covering them. The government acted extremely careful in order not to let the fever of unrest raise in other parts of Macedonia.

In 2007, Macedonia ranked number 36, ahead of the United States, in Freedom House's Press Freedom Index. Last year, Macedonia sunk to 123, languishing with the likes of Venezuela (Joseph 2015). Research conducted by the Macedonian Centre for European Training in 2014 indicated that the majority of Macedonia's citizens, 53%, fear to openly express their opinions, and another 64% think they are exposed to state surveillance (Georgievski 2015).

Condemning the corruption in the media circles, young people resorted to online social media to mobilize forces and build up a structured movement. Both the Students' Plenum and the High-School Students' Plenum had an official position statement and an agenda for daily events. The Protestiram movement has a daily agenda as well. Facebook and Twitter are the main "meeting points" for people to connect and plan their activity.

For instance, after the PM Gruevski's speech in which he mentioned that nobody would thank him for spending his best years between the walls of the Vlada, a twitter

campaign under the hashtag *thankyouNikola* (*falaNikola*) unleashed a wave of “gratitude”. With messages full of irony and sarcasm, Macedonia’s twitter community pointed out to the poor state of economy, the high level of corruption, the selective application of the rule of law, the government’s tightening control of the media and other issues that have become synonymous with the regime that has been in power for nearly ten years (Georgievski 2015).

Boris Georgievski from BIRN believes that the role of the social media was much bigger than simply disseminating information about the situation in Kumanovo (Georgievski 2015):

“It showed its importance as a tool for calming tensions between the different ethnic communities and acted as a direct opposite to the numerous Macedonian pro-government and regional (especially Serbian) media that published a lot of disinformation, essentially calling for blood.”

Concluding remarks

It is inevitable for the European community to feel uneasiness every time one of the Balkan countries comes up in the news and the tags read “conflict”, “protest”, “casualties”. Its tumultuous history keeps haunting the still-young democratic republics that were established after the collapse of the Yugoslav Republic and went through an unfortunate belligerent episode at the end of the twentieth century.

When it comes to Macedonia, concerns over the possibility of a disintegration of the country due to its Albanian population are still echoing both in the country and abroad. Yet, rather than immediately jumping to the conclusion that it’s another ethnic conflict, a more careful consideration needs to be made. Being constantly constrained by the ruling party, the opposition decided to act boldly, and apparently they enjoyed the support of the masses.

This time, the wind that blows from Macedonia promises a change. At least the people who organized a camp in front of the Government with the intention to watch its constituents walking out with their resignation in hand seemed to be confident about it.

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Norway's Public and Cultural Diplomacy

Stefana Teodora POPA *

Abstract

The Scandinavian strategy is to focus on a limited number of international relationships. This doesn't mean that Norway is an isolated country. Norway is one of the strongest international actors when it comes to the promoting peace. The 74 agreements with the EU, led to a third modification in Norwegian law. A Nordic Council was created in order to solve questions related to cooperation among the Nordic countries in all fields. Furthermore, the Scandinavian country is seen as a country without a particular profile, strengths or weaknesses and that few people think about or are linked to. Norway can be seen as a model in matters of public and cultural diplomacy.

Key words: Norway, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, NORAD, peacekeeping

A NATION'S CULTURE SHOULD aid in achieving international recognition. Norway however, is rarely associated with the concept of „culture”. In a report realised by the Norwegian Ministry of International Affairs, culture represents one of the main fields in which major improvements are required. The research shows that very few things are known about Norwegian culture on an international level. (Kavli; Thorkildsen 2009).

According to Ljuben Tevdovski, Norway is a major cultural actor and a role model in peace and dialogue work, being one of the countries that has the most projects and initiatives in this sense (Tevdovski 2009: 68). Norway is a militant for peace, but when it comes to culture, it is legitimate to ask whether it really is as important an actor, as Ljuben Tevdovski thinks?

In the past, the Norwegians were happy and satisfied to live in „beautiful isolation”, in a particular geographical area, where they could organize and live their lives as they wished. In the current context of globalization, it has become impossible to live in isolation, without integrating or belonging to a particular group. Thus, after the Second World War and especially in the past few years, Norway has begun to work harder in matters of collaboration and international cooperation.

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Mainly, the Scandinavian strategy is to focus on a limited number of international relationships, which they want to develop. However, in the past few years, Norway has sought to expand its partnerships with countries that had not previously represented a major interest in international relations.

Norway's international relations

Norway is often called a “different country”. This is largely due to the fact that it is not an EU member, or because it is one of the few countries that has not been affected by the financial crisis of recent years like other western countries. Of course, its geographical position, history, culture are special features and thus, Norway doesn't follow the same patterns as other nations.

This doesn't mean that Norway is an isolated country, especially if we take into consideration its connections with other countries and organizations. Europe, USA, Asia and even Africa are continents that have great influence on the Norwegians, politically, economically and culturally. Even if Norway is a small state, this influence goes both ways.

Norway is one of the strongest international actors when it comes to the promoting peace, one of the countries that offer strong financial support to impoverished countries (the most recent example is Ukraine), one of the most important actors in the fight against pollution and the destruction of natural resources. Considering political power, it has to be mentioned that Norway is a NATO member and as such, being part of an international decisional system implies assuming some obligations. As a UN member, Norway supports the objectives of this organization regarding peace strategy, human rights and fighting poverty, as much as possible. When the UN requested the help of NATO for establishing peace in Afghanistan, Norway assumed the responsibility to send troops, even if such action implied the possibility of death for Norwegian soldiers in a war that had nothing to do with their country.

A 2012 report on Norway's relations with Europe showed that Norway has a total of 74 agreements with the EU. This led to a third modification in Norwegian law. The decisive influence of the EU on Norwegian policy is obvious. The report also concludes that Norway is associated with three-quarters of the work of EU countries, more than Finland or Germany, for example. Compared to other countries that present exceptions to EU rules (single currency, security policy, etc.) such as Britain, Sweden or Denmark, the figure is clearly larger for Norway. The Scandinavian country is nearly as integrated as them, but it stands outside the decision-making bodies of the EU ([Norway's agreements with the European Union 2012](#)).

Since the 1960s, there have been ongoing debates in Norway regarding the country's relations with the European community. Opinions are divided almost equally, both among experts and citizens. It still cannot be said for sure whether or not Norway will one day become an EU member.

In the Norwegian political environment, the European integration process didn't arouse much interest at first. The Norwegians praised the initiatives to reduce animosities between old rivals, but they also believed that the process of bringing the countries together interested the northern country only to a small extent. The lack of interest may also be seen from the following perspective: after the Second World War, Norway turned its attention to the West. The orientation towards security policy, foreign economy and political ideology led to this. Internal affairs were guided in the same direction. Because the main goal regarding the country's foreign affairs was NATO accession, Norway wanted to maintain its political neutrality and was careful not to violate the principles of NATO ([Norway's agreements with the European Union 2012](#)).

Through the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, Norway is guaranteed and guarantees "the four freedoms": free movement of people, goods, services and capital. At the same time, it benefits from the same rules and conditions regarding market competition. The agreement also includes collaboration in other areas of social life, such as environmental protection, insurance, education, culture etc.

On the other hand, Norway is not obliged to introduce the EU currency (the Euro), it doesn't share the same politics when it comes to justice, security, natural resources (petroleum and fishing industry), relations with countries outside the ERA, and it doesn't have the chance to be represented in the decision-making bodies of the EU, such as the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Commission ([Tøtlandsmo; Rudi; Tønnessen 2009](#)).

Norwegian Culture

The Norwegian culture is a very particular subject, and we would not be wrong if we say that it is an ideology, a guiding principle in the Norwegian life. The following is the title of an article in a successful Norwegian newspaper: „The Norwegians have an almost erotic patriotic connection with their country” ([Skjeggstad 2013](#)). This title suggests the strength and depth of the bond between the Norwegian people and their country, as well as the importance of their national identity.

The concept of 'culture' is slightly different in Norway, from what it means for other nations. In the context of establishing Norway's international relations with other sta-

tes and especially from a cultural point of view, it is important to understand what this concept means to them. As a country that has always been under the domination of one of the other Scandinavian countries (Denmark and Sweden), Norway has always had a strong desire to assert the Norwegian spirit, to get out of the suppression imposed by unfavourable contexts. After 1905, when they gained their definitive independence, the Norwegians were finally free to come forward. After so many centuries of domination it was hard to rediscover the Norwegian essence and it became one of the main national ideals. On the other hand, in the recent years, in the context of globalization, Norway was forced to confront another issue that seems to threaten its barely regained national identity. The issue of immigration caught them off guard and therefore generated much debate and disagreement. In a way, Norway did not (and it still doesn't yet) know how to react in such a situation. On the one hand, Norway is a strong supporter of human rights and peace and therefore feels that it is a moral duty to accept and help immigrants. On the other hand, the fear that immigration will once again lead to the loss of national identity, Norwegian culture and traditions is omnipresent and puts Norway in difficulty.

In January 2013, there was a strong debate concerning the values that are important to Norwegian culture and the ways in which they must be preserved. Kindness is the axis around which all the other values revolve. Social-democratic values, such as equality or human rights and Christian values are deeply embedded in the Nordic citizens' sense of identity. In the eyes of Norwegians, nature is a symbol of strength and continuity, patience and simplicity. Civilizations can break down, and man, as a social being can be malevolent, complicated and can follow the wrong path, but nature always prevails, pure and firm.

The debate began at the end of 2012, when a representative of the Progress Party officially asked Hadia Tajik, the Minister of culture at that time, how she saw Norwegian culture and if it was important for the state to defend its culture and traditions. The answer Tajik gave caused a disturbance because they were not traditionalist and nationalist enough (*Stortinget* 2012).

The simple fact that an evasive answer regarding the Norwegian culture created such an issue among Norwegians (even disputes on social networking sites) clearly shows the attitude they have towards the importance and significance of their culture. It is obviously a sensitive matter, and it must be studied carefully if we want to understand the Norwegian way of promoting themselves abroad.

Joseph S. Nye claims that "some countries accomplish almost all of their public diplomacy through actions rather than broadcasting. Norway is a good example. It has only 5 million people, lacks an international language or transnational culture, is not a central location or hub of organizations or multinational corporate brands, and is not a

member of the European Union. Nonetheless, it has developed a voice and a presence out of proportions to its modest size and resources through a ruthless prioritisation of its target audiences and its concentration on a single message – Norway as a force for peace in the world. The relevant activities include conflict mediation in the Middle East, Sri Lanka, and Colombia, as well as its large aid budget, and its frequent participation in peacekeeping forces. Of course, not all Norwegians actions are on message. The domestic politics of whaling sometimes strike a discordant note among environmentalists, but overall, Norway shows how a small country can exploit a diplomatic niche that enhances its image and role.” (Nye 2002: 141-142).

Norwegian Cultural Diplomacy

In the past few years, the technological development and democratization of the media have made Norway’s external politics much more focused on the image that Norwegians have abroad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs defines public diplomacy as one that „improves mutual understanding, establishes long-term contacts, and strengthens the connections in various areas” (Støre 2009).

The state engaged itself in promoting the Norwegian culture especially after the Second World War. Concurrently, the Norwegian cultural diplomacy was formalized for the first time. Around 1950 bilateral agreements were signed both with allied states and states that were formerly part of the enemy camp.

In the last few years, Norway has invested very much in international promotion. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the main player in coordinating the activities of cultural diplomacy. At the same time, other organizations, such as *Visit Norway*, *Innovation Norway* or *NORAD (development agency)* play a crucial role in promoting the country by the means of culture. Such as in any other field, Norway carries itself in a serious, strategic and efficient manner. Considering the website www.norway.org.uk, for instance, we can see that it is built in a professional manner. We are introduced to the most beautiful Norwegian characteristics, wilderness, clean environment, brave explorers, and so forth (Holden 2007: 89).

One of the problems Norway has to deal with regarding international cultural recognition is that it is often seen as part of a whole, alongside the other Scandinavian countries. One of the conclusions of the report mentioned above is exactly this. Most of the interviewees associate Norway with the North, the cold, handball, or blonde hair. However, it is only normal that Norway belongs to a group different from the other European countries. Moreover, by analysing this, we get a better understanding of the way

Norwegian cultural diplomacy has evolved.

After the Second World War, the three Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden), together with Finland and Iceland form The North (the Scandinavian word is *Noreen*) signed the European Cultural Convention, and played an important role in the collective cooperation between the 21 member states in the Cultural Cooperation Council of the European Council.

The Nordic countries represent a special group, homogeneous, but at the same time different. They are all welfare states, with highly developed social services, a high level of education, similar political constitutions and a common adherence to Lutheran Protestantism. However, the five governments pursue incompatible policies in matters of foreign relations, defence and economics. We also cannot forget that the Second World War led the five Nordic countries into three different camps, two of which were on opposite sides of the war.

The Nordic cultural heritage has been regarded as common property. This was both because it belonged to a time before national boundaries had been fixed and because it had served as a common basis for all the national culture.

Shortly before the start of the Second World War, representatives of the Nordic countries met in Copenhagen in order to establish some agreements regarding exchanges between students, teachers as well as the teaching of Nordic languages in all of the Nordic countries. Unfortunately, because of the war, the meetings did not continue.

However, in 1946, a second meeting between the ministers of education took place, in Sweden. They concluded, among other things, that each country should appoint 2 members to a Nordic Cultural Commission. One year later, the first meeting of this commission was held in Oslo. Thus, without any written agreement, the cultural collaboration among the Nordic countries came into being. In its initial form, the Commission did not have any direct contact with the governments or parliaments of the involved countries. University professors were dominants in the meetings (Haigh 1974: 149).

The Nordic Council was formed in 1952 to add vigour to the Nordic Cultural Commission. The Nordic Council was created in order to solve questions related to cooperation among the Nordic countries in all fields. By 1954, the Nordic Cultural Commission had been reorganised: each national delegation included one senior official, besides the two parliament members. Also, the commission divided its work into three sections: one for higher education, one for general education and one for adult education and arts. The national delegations and the three sectors now had a permanent secretariat each.

In 1962, the Helsinki Agreement was signed. The Helsinki Agreement was a Nordic cooperation treaty and it wasn't meant to change the status of the Nordic Council as an inter-parliamentary organ of consultation. The treaty dealt with collaboration in judicial,

cultural, social, economic matters, communications and other fields. Regarding cultural collaboration, the clauses read as follows:

„Article 8. In every Nordic country, education and training given at school shall include, in a suitable degree, instruction in the language, culture and general social conditions of the other Nordic countries.

Article 9. Each Contracting Party should maintain and extend the opportunities for a student from another Nordic country to pursue studies and graduate in its educational establishments. It should also be possible, to the greatest possible extent, to count a part examination passed in any Nordic country towards a final examination taken in another Nordic country. It should be possible to receive economic assistance from the country of domicile, irrespective of the country where the studies are pursued.

Article 10. The Contracting Parties should co-ordinate public education qualifying for a given profession or trade. Such education should, as far as possible, have the same qualifying value in all the Nordic countries. Additional studies necessary for reasons connected with national conditions can, however, be required.

Article 11. In the fields where co-operation is expedient, the development of educational establishments should be made uniform through continuous co-operation over development plans and their implementation.

Article 12. Co-operation in the field of research should be so organised that research funds and other resources available will be co-ordinated and exploited in the best possible way, among other things by establishing joint institutions.

Article 13. In order to support and strengthen cultural development the Contracting Parties shall promote free Nordic popular education in the fields of literature, art, music, theatre, film and other fields of culture; among other things, the possibilities provided by radio and television should be borne in mind.” (Haigh 1974: 140-141).

These articles were important mostly because they conventionalised the already existent practices. The treaty did not represent a strict regulation, it rather had a more general character.

In its first years of existence, the Nordic Cultural Commission did not significantly influence the Nordic cultural relations, which continued to be carried out by NGOs.

Most of the Nordic non-governmental organizations have branches in all of the important cities and even in small ones. Plus, the local branches have close contacts with the local authorities and other voluntary organisations. This led to the concept of „sister-towns”.

After the Second World War, the Swedish and Danish associations organized visits for thousands of Norwegian and Finnish children to Swedish or Danish families, as the latter had better food supplies. To support these exchanges, along with activities in other fields

connected to culture, the decision to create a Nordic Cultural Fund was made. Instituted through a small grant, it had risen to 5 million Danish crowns by 1972 (Haigh 1974: 149).

The Nordic Council, through the Cultural Committee, initiated certain actions meant to strengthen the cooperation in the cultural field. Since 1962, the Council has awarded a writer from the Nordic countries every year. Besides literature, they also offer a similar award every two years in the musical field. This pattern of cultural diplomacy in the Nordic countries continued to operate until 1971, when it was replaced by a new structure, created by the Nordic Cultural Agreement, signed in the same year (Haigh 1974: 149).

Basically, this new structure was a revised version of the Nordic Cooperation Treaty and strengthened the position of the Nordic Council. Moreover, it became the parliamentary equivalent of a Nordic Council of Ministers. This aided in formalizing the contacts between governments, represented by the Council of Ministers, and between the members of the Committee. The new Nordic Cultural Agreement succeeded to create a more powerful instrument of cultural collaboration than any that had existed before. One of the new features of it was the disappearance of the Nordic Cultural Commission, which had itself played an important part in working out the plans for the said new instrument which was expressed in the new agreement.

The revisions basically had the same goals as before. The treaty was aiming at strengthening and intensifying cultural cooperation in a wide sense between the Contracting Parties in order to further develop the Nordic cultural community and to increase the combined effect of the countries' investments in education, research and other cultural activities. At the same time, the treaty had the aim of creating a basis for a coordinated contribution in international cultural cooperation.

The period which followed the Second World War represented a collective experience which was of significant importance for the Nordic countries and by default, for Norway. By creating all those treaties and agreements, a powerful collaboration was developed between the countries belonging to a special group. Moreover, this led to the integration of isolated countries in an international system meant to develop the cultural diplomatic relations between states.

Actors and actions

While, during the Cold War, Norway was a strategic priority for USA and other NATO members because of its geographical position (border with Russia in the north), after the end of the said war, the Nordic country was somewhat overshadowed. This invisibility is one of the issues that challenge the Norwegian public diplomacy. Leonard and Small

showed that „there are a number of factors that perpetuate Norway's invisibility: it is small – in population, economy and culturally; it lacks linguistic attraction – many Norwegians speak English but not vice versa; it lacks brands or icons - there are no emissaries for the Norwegian identity; it is similar to Scandinavia – its shared culture does not help to distinguish it from the rest” (Leonard and Small 2003: 2).

In order to change this view, Norway has to present itself to the world as a country which is: a superpower in the humanitarian field/peace maker, a society which lives together with the nature, an egalitarian and an international society with a spirit of adventure. Establishing objectives like these may seem more formal nowadays, but the Norwegian government has been involved for a long time in helping impoverished countries, fighting for human rights and peace keeping (since 1950).

Dobinson and Dale used a metaphor, the *Norwegian backpack*, to describe how the Norwegian actors (both governmental and non-governmental) conduct in the above mentioned processes. This method is used when conflicting parties in a war are invited in Norway to negotiate a solution. The ritual is that the participants are invited to walk in the woods north of Oslo (Israeli and Palestinian negotiations that led to the Oslo peace agreement in 1993) or to spend time in the private cottage of a Norwegian NGO-representative (Guatemalan guerrilla-representatives in mid-1990s) (Dobinson and Dale 2000: 51-53).

The Norwegian Foreign Ministry establishes various collaboration forms, information exchange and it coordinates itself with a select number of civil society actors, but at the same time it is reluctant to engage in public debates regarding the priorities and values of its foreign policy. Other ministries rely on a broad array of mechanisms to engage the public in discussions about political initiatives and priorities. Rather, the only mechanism the Foreign Ministry has relied upon is consulting the public through conferences and lectures where only select groups of societal actors have been invited to participate. Because of the problematic relationship with the domestic society, the Ministry has always had to share information with the public in order to get support and approval of foreign policy activities (Batora 2005: 16-21).

The internet has become a very effective tool for public outreach activities. Ever since the Norwegian government has established their official websites, the Foreign Ministry has been the most active one in terms of the amount of documents uploaded and the most visited as well. All the embassies' websites have a standardized design and they are connected to the Norway Portal, introduced at the end of 2003 (www.norway.info). This portal is now the official face that Norway shows to the world and in 2004 it received the Norwegian Design Council award.

Norway relies on the coordination of public diplomacy in a centralized and corporat-

ist manner. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the actor which coordinates the way Norway is presented abroad. Therefore, a set of images and values that capture the essence of Norway have been decided upon, in order to represent the Nordic country abroad. These images and values (peace, nature, equality) represent values which any society in the world would find attractive. Norwegian actors (both state and non-state) involve themselves in international activities to promote one or several of these values, especially in the virtual space. The Norwegian state has managed to position itself on a multi-directional platform, which the majority of the Norwegian society can identify with, and which at the same time is attractive to the outside world (most political regimes, religions and cultures around the world) (www.norway.info). This is a great ability that the Norwegian Foreign Ministry can capitalize on, so as to attract societal actors into identifying themselves with their state. Furthermore, the special focus on peace enables Norway to attract worldwide attention.

„Oppbrudd og fornyelse“

In order to talk about how foreign policy uses the concept of culture, it's important to take a look at the support it has received from the Norwegian state throughout the years. The cultural policy led by Norway is based on the grounds that “culture has value, culture brings development and culture must be protected from commercialization” (Schackt 2009: 40).

In 1985, the relation between culture and foreign policy was clarified by the Norwegian parliament. New visions were replacing the traditionalist policy with a new one. In this case, it was clearly underlined that the Norwegian goals regarding foreign policy were focused on human rights and security policy. This new vision was perfectly aligned with the new capitalist way of looking at cultural cooperation (Matlary 2002).

During the 1990s, the discussions and attempts to establish ways to promote a united image of Norway continued, especially in the context of the Winter Olympic Games, hosted in Lillehammer, in 1994. The project *Oppbrudd og fornyelse* (Beginning and renewal) took place between 1980 and 1990 as an activity of the Foreign Ministry and paid more attention to culture and its promotion. The media, culture and information sector was now divided into two separate sections of the Ministry, the Department for Culture and Norway presentation, and the Department for Information and Press (Lending 2000).

In this project, the main idea was to portray the role of culture in foreign policy and to emphasise the development and importance of international collaboration in the cultural field and public diplomacy. This indicates the major role that communication has begun to have in the state's foreign policy matters. Moreover, in *Oppbrudd og fornyelse*, it was

proposed for the third time that the administration of international cooperation in the cultural field should not belong to ministerial structures. It should be an independent structure evolving around the NORAD program for cultural development.

NORAD

NORAD or The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation is an agency under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that deals with the development of international collaboration. In matters regarding Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, NORAD reports to the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment.

NORAD came into being in 1968 as the Directorate for Development Aid. The reason why it was necessary to create such an instrument was the public commitment that Norway took in matters of cooperation for the development of life standards, institutions, infrastructure, agriculture and other economic aspects. This commitment started with a subvention Norway offered to the Fund for Underdeveloped Countries and with an agreement between Norway and India regarding fishing (Norad 2015).

In the 1970s and 1980s, NORAD played a central role both in planning and implementation of bilateral agreements for development aid. Also, this mechanism had a big role in helping people better understand the development of aid-projects. When the projects began to be regularly implemented, NORAD focused more on the planning and management of bilateral assistance. In its first years of activity, NORAD had worked intensively in Asia and Africa. After 1990, the agency's offices were integrated in the Norwegians embassies, initially through a trial project that took place in Namibia in 1990. NORAD had stand-alone branches in several countries: India, Ethiopia, Portugal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and so on. Nowadays, NORAD is still one of the main mechanisms that make Norway one of the most important actors on the international scene of supporting underdeveloped countries, human rights and environment protection (Johannessen and Leraand 2015).

Peace keeping

The work Norway does in peace keeping is an impressive one and impossible to ignore. Many of its present practices in peace keeping have deep roots in history, since the Lutheran missionaries' expeditions around the world. The Norwegian missionaries were returning back home with new visions and social, global knowledge. This mentality

served as the background for the Nobel Prize for Peace project, which takes part in Oslo since 1901.

The mediation of the conflict between Israel and Palestine (1993, resolved in the same year) is an example of the efforts Norway makes in peace keeping. Partially, the solution to this conflict was developed outside the official sphere. Norwegian politicians, members of the Labour Party and religious circles, have always maintained close relations with their Israeli counterparts. Moreover, academic research led to new Norwegian-Israeli connections. Altogether, they led to the opening of a secret channel, called „the Oslo Back Channel”. The confidentiality was somehow naturally assured by the geographical position of Norway, up in the north of Europe. The Oslo Accord went public in August 1993 and it contained ideas for a step-by-step reconciliation between Realisations and Palestinians.

In 2002, Frank Bruni argued that „over the last decade, Norwegians have had a hand in peace talks between Communist rebels and the Philippine government; Croatia and Yugoslavia, and Colombia’s government and the FARC rebel movement. Norwegians have ventured into Cyprus and Somalia and Sudan” (Bruni 2002). This continuous work in peace keeping has become the most important element of national pride. The midnight sun, the fjords, the amazing nature or the oil discovery are overshadowed by the Norwegians altruistic spirit, by the desire to solve conflicts around the world. Basically, Norway has become “the international capital of peace” (Bruni 2002).

Considering the fact that it is a small country, with no major role on the international scene, Norway should promote itself as a humanitarian superpower. In order to gain influence, the Norwegians have to be visible, to be noticed. The best way to do that is through partnerships. Partnerships are based on dialogue, which is a more effective method compared to branding and manipulation. The partnerships do not necessarily have to be established just with governments, but also with organizations, associations, companies or civil society. Norway is a country that has a lot to offer, and it has the capacity of acting quickly and in significant quantity. Also, it is capable of easily coordinating with other countries. “Utstein Group” partnership, for example, is a project developed by Norway in cooperation with Great Britain, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. Together, these countries fight against poverty, corruption, and for peace-building and peacekeeping (Henrikson 2005: 80-83).

Through these various partnerships, Norway gains access. Whether considering its role as a mediator, peace militant, support for Third World countries or as a fish and seafood exporter, Norway is seen as a stable, reliable partner.

We can say that Norway is a role model for both small and medium-sized countries, but also for the superpowers. The effectiveness of its public diplomacy makes Norway a global player in the field of soft power.

Omdømmeutvalg

In 2004, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a commission in order to build a profile of Norway and improve its reputation abroad, called Omdømmeutvalg. This committee was composed of representatives of authority, industry and cultural life. The committee's job was to analyse the country's situation and develop good, effective proposals in order to extend Norway's importance (Vea 2006).

The establishment of this body is the result of a long process based on the fact that Norway is little known abroad and what is known about it, is not the result of a certain strategy. Until then, the Scandinavian country had been rarely canalized, with few resources and with no work in advance (Vea 2006).

In a world of globalization, more and more countries develop their importance by presenting an attractive profile; clear, accessible and desirable for those abroad. Many states have sufficient resources to create an effective collaboration between different actors that can assure the development of that attractive profile (authorities, representatives of cultural life, organizations, associations, etc.).

The events of recent years, such as fish export boycott or conflicts with certain groups of Muslims after Muhammad cartoons episode, show that Norway is still a vulnerable country in some respects. Therefore, the profile of Norway has to be extremely well thought out and it has to have a clear and positive position.

The primary purpose of this committee is to build a strong plan in order to promote a clear, attractive image of Norway in the international arena and to strengthen the cultural life, industry, tourism and influence that Norway may have internationally.

Since the mid-1980s various surveys and research were carried out to see how Norway is seen abroad. The majority of these studies have concluded that people don't know very much about the Scandinavian country, but the overall picture they have is positive. Furthermore, the Scandinavian country is seen as a country without a particular profile, strengths or weaknesses and that few people think about or are linked to (Vea 2006).

Nowadays, a nation can gain a lot by having a suitable strategy for increasing its prestige. As long as the states are central units in the international system, national identity is of great importance. An appropriate strategy for building a successful image of this country is not only about the desire to be perceived in a certain way by others. It is also about identifying core values underpinning the Norwegian society and the way Norwegians see themselves. *Omdømmeutvalg* is a complex project that wants to develop this idea and put it into practice. The Commission's main objectives are to increase the attractiveness of Norway as a tourist destination, as a country in which to invest, to

strengthen the capacities of labour in strategic areas, to promote technological innovation and research, to promote art and culture (Vea 2006).

Ibsen year

„Ibsen Year” represented a unique opportunity for Norway to show the world the best of Norwegian culture and to engage in direct dialogue with foreign audiences. „Ibsen Year” wanted to show the world the greatness of Ibsen works and to portray him as an inspiration for contemporary art, while simultaneously increasing international interest in Norway.

Henri Ibsen is a famous Norwegian writer, considered the „father of modern drama”. In 2006 was the 100th anniversary of Ibsen’s death and the Norwegian government took advantage of the moment. Several highly publicized cultural activities were organized and spread around the world.

„Ibsen Year” involved 8059 different events around the world, in 83 countries, on all continents. These events ranged from theatre to concerts, TV programs, conferences and seminars about the life and works of the famous writer, held in national libraries or cultural spaces. Ibsen Year also included a superb gala opening in Oslo, attended by the royal family and guests from abroad, and an international gala held in the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt, chaired by the first lady. The committee in charge of „Ibsen Year” had a budget of about 70 million NOK, and the preparations for these events began in 1997 (Henrikson 2005: 80-83).

A conclusion

Norway can be seen as a model in matters of public and cultural diplomacy. Even if it is a small country, somewhat isolated and with a different history, the Scandinavian country has managed throughout the years to become a strong, reliable partner for countries that have a much bigger role on the international scene. However, there is still a struggle for Norway to become more visible, better known by people around the world. In this respect, the state has developed several programs and projects, especially in the field of cultural and public diplomacy. The Norwegians have realised the importance of soft power and they continuously try to develop and use it as a powerful political instrument.

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