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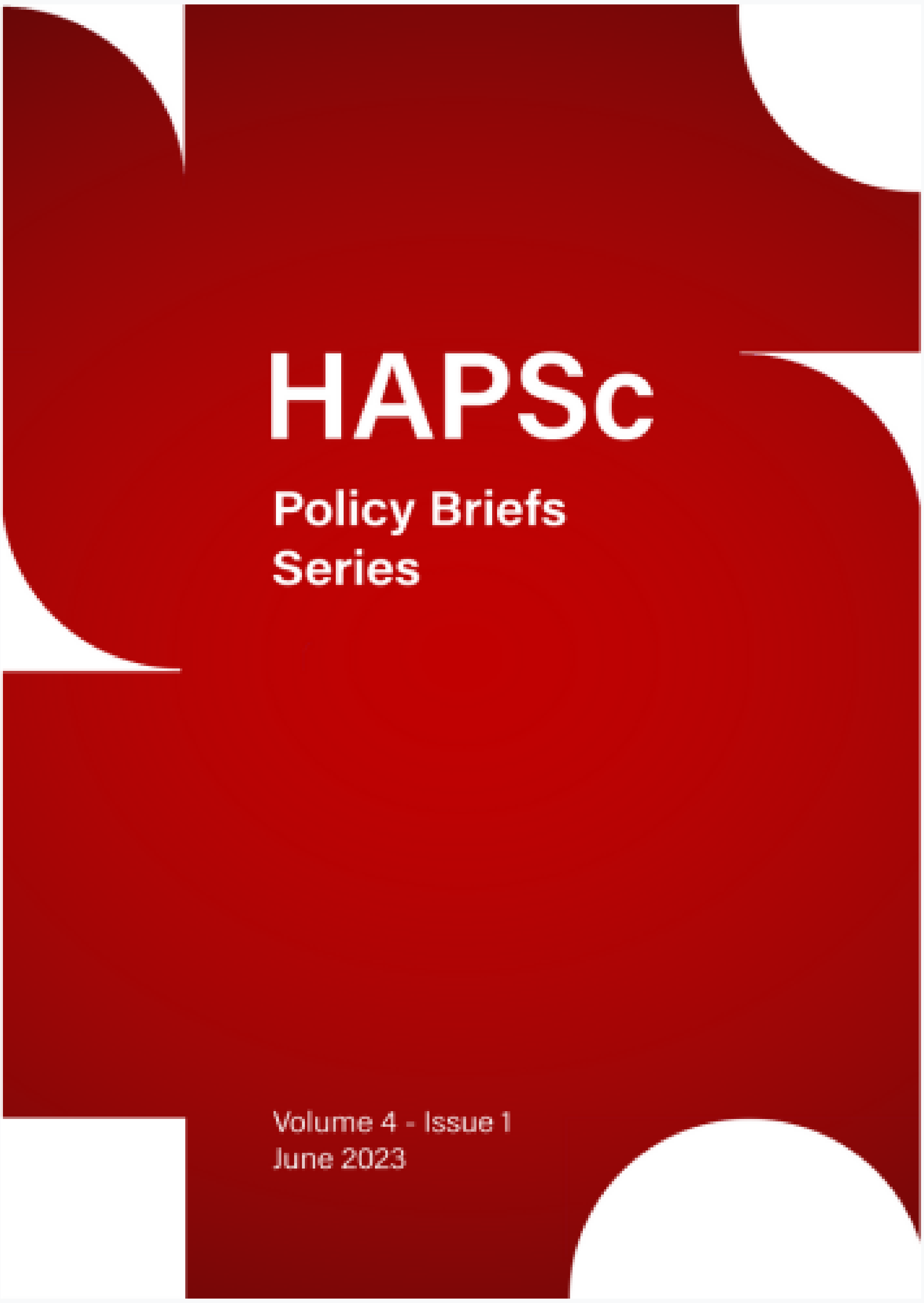

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Email: policybriefs@hapsc.org
Phone: +30 2103645390
Address: Voukourestiou 38, Kolonaki, Athens, Postcode: 10673
Secretariat: **Mr. Alkinoos Emmanouil-Kalos**, PhD cand.

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Topic 1

Democracy and Civil/Human/Social Right

Legal Aspects of Measures Implemented for the Management of SARS-Cov-2 Crisis in Greece[1]

Zisis S. Kyrgos[2], Aikaterini Karageorgou[3], Alexandros Tsadiras[4], Elpidoforos S. Soteriades[5]

Abstract

The management of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has seen extensive criticism on the subjects of legality, social liberties and general scientific morality. The method used by the Greek state to impose control measures was that of Acts of Legislative Content. The other available alternatives were that of a "state of siege" and the "emergency civil planning", which were both determined to be legislative disproportionate to the situation and could have, if chosen, a significant potential political cost for the government. The measures were imposed with the justification provided by art. 25 par. 1 of the Constitution which states that the state has the right to claim of all citizens to duty of social and national solidarity, implying that the state is able to request by its citizens to restrict their rights in favor of the above duties. However, the above justification can be considered relevant only in the case of these measures being proportionate to the threat posed by the pandemic. Further research on the subject of proportionality would be necessary to comment on the justification of the measures in regards to the threat posed by the pandemic.

Key Words: Covid-19, SARS-CoV-2, pandemic, control measures, emergency management, legal aspect, crisis management, civil rights.

Introduction

Since the first days of urbanization, humanity has struggled with infectious diseases and their implications on both human pathophysiology and societal structure. In the most recent years, Ebola in West Africa (Ohimain & Silas-Olu, 2021), Zika in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santos et al., 2023), Cholera in Yemen, Haiti and Zimbabwe (Federspiel & Ali, 2018; Piarroux et al., 2022; Cuneo et al., 2017), as well as the H1N1 global influenza pandemic of 2009 (Fineberg, 2014) are but a few examples of infectious diseases, which resulted in several disruptions of the normal societal operations on ethnic, regional and global levels. Often, the measures imposed by the governments or global organizations were seen as invasive and out of proportion compared to the threat posed (Alhaji, 2021). The most notable, and most recent, example is that of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The severity of the measures imposed by ruling authorities in order to limit the impact of the disease has

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[2] Faculty of Economics and Management, Healthcare Management Program, Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus.
[3] Department of Nursing, Philips University, Nicosia, Cyprus.
[4] Faculty of Economics and Management, European Union Law Program, Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus.
[5] Chan School of Public Health, Department of Environmental Health, Environmental and Occupational Medicine and Epidemiology, Harvard University T.H., Boston, MA, USA.

widely been criticized as to the actual threat the disease posed to both the individual (in regards to its physical implications) as well as the disruption of the normal societal operations (Tsiliotis, 2020). The aforementioned criticism proposes that these measures unjustly restricted a number of social liberties. The measures implemented have been criticized with regards to three major areas, namely their legality, their social acceptability and their scientific morality.

The importance of studying the above claims lies in the lessons-learned during the current post-crisis phase of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic (Goh, 2021). The post-crisis phase includes the conclusion of the crisis and the post-evaluation of the situation. Specifically, since the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic nears its end, it is important to reflect on the experience gained through the management of the crisis and identify the cases of mismanagement of the pandemic, so as to apply these lessons-learned to any future situation which might be similar to the one experienced.

From the above, three obvious research questions stem, namely how these measures were adopted, why was the specific method of their adoption chosen and whether there were actual violations of human rights during their implementation. Due to pragmatic reasons, the research will be limited to those measures imposed and enforced in the Greek state and society.

Literature Review

Regarding the case of the Greek population, most scientific studies conducted focus on the acceptance of vaccination (both for initial and booster shots). A study by Karavokyris (2021) argues that the measures imposed by the Greek authorities came under a state of *"emergency law"*, which is provided under art. 44 par. 1 of the Greek Constitution. Specifically, the Constitution states that *"Under extraordinary circumstances of an urgent and unforeseeable need, the President of the Republic may, upon the proposal of Cabinet, issue acts of legislative content. Such acts shall be submitted to Parliament for ratification, as specified in the provisions of art. 72 par. 1, within forty days of their issuance or within forty days from the convocation of a parliamentary session"*. The latter provision is provided under the scope of these extraordinary circumstances prohibiting a parliamentary summit. However, even during the height of the pandemic, the parliament saw no major disruptions in its daily operations. The mention of art. 72 states that these emergency legislative acts of the President of the Republic must be ratified in Plenum and no later than 40 days after their enforcement, otherwise they are voided.

In another relevant study performed by Papadakis and Dimari (2022), a number of legal documents and public announcements produced by the Greek legislative and executive authorities were examined in regard to the justification of the measures imposed suspending public liberties in order

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to provide for the physical survival and protection of public health. The article concludes that while the measures enforced were indeed extraordinary in regard to the situation, they were nonetheless proportionate to the threat presented by the pandemic (Dimari & Papadakis, 2022).

Methodology

In order to answer the research questions proposed in the introduction, it is necessary to examine the relevant legislative texts and determine their connection, as well as what their implementation entailed through a pragmatic perspective. In the context of the Greek legislative system, a seniority exists between the different legal texts. The most senior text that exist is the Constitution and its modifications, followed by the European and any international legislation that has been incorporated into the Greek legislation. Specifically, article 28 of the Constitution provides that any international law as of the time that they are ratified shall be considered an integral part of domestic Greek law and prevail any contrary provisions. The EU Regulations and Decisions are automatically binding for all member states, including Greece, while Directives need to be incorporated into the country's legislation by a set date (European Commission a, n.d.; European Commission b, n.d.). Following the constitution and any international legislation incorporated, formal laws are the next step in seniority, followed by Presidential and Royal Decrees. The hierarchy concludes with the decisions of the various agencies, which are analogous to the seniority of the issuing authority. Any legislative or administrative texts belonging to the same seniority level are determined by their chronological order of adoption.

Table 1: Hellenic Legislative Texts Hierarchy

Seniority Level	Legislative Text	
1	Constitution	
2	Formal Law	
3	Presidential Acts of Legislative Content	
4	Presidential Decree	Royal Decree*
5	Ministerial Decision	Joint Ministerial Decision
6	Agencies' Decisions and Directives, according to the authority's seniority level	

*Royal Decrees were instituted by the King until the abolition of monarchy in 1973. Some of them are still in effect today, as they were never revoked or voided by newer legislation. **Source: Own elaboration**

To answer the research questions, it is necessary to review the legislative acts instituted for the purpose of managing the pandemic emergency and compare them to the Constitution and any relevant previous Formal Laws. All Formal Laws, Presidential Acts of Legislative Content, Presidential Decrees and Ministerial and Joint Ministerial Decisions are being published in the Newspaper of the Government, issued by the National Printing House and are made publicly available at the NPH's website (National Printing House, n.d.). The majority of the Agencies' decisions are made publicly available through the “DIAVGEIA” Platform (Ministry of Digital Transformation, n.d.). The Constitution and its revisions can be accessed through the webpage of the Hellenic Parliament (Hellenic Parliament, 2019). The legal documents produced specifically for the management of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic have been conveniently gathered at the Covid-19 government platform (EODY, 2021).

Results and Discussion

The use of the legislative procedure discussed above is seen as optimal for the nature of the threat, as the other two possible alternatives would have been extremely disproportionate to the threat of the pandemic and would also have a notable political impact on the government. Specifically, the two other legislative alternatives which allowed for the implementation of emergency measures include the *“state of siege”* and the *“emergency civil planning”*.

The *“state of siege”* is an extraordinary measure, provided under article 48 of the Constitution. When this article is activated, it is possible for the Parliament to suspend a number of specific articles of the Constitution, including the article 5 par. 4 which permits the free travel of individuals and art. 11, which permits the free and peaceful gathering of individuals, provided that they do not carry arms, restrictions which were enforced during the pandemic. However, in order for the government to activate art. 48 and impose these restrictions, it is necessary for the country to be in a state of war, be under military mobilization or for an active movement to overthrow the democratic government be present.

The *“Emergency Civil Planning”* Legislative Decree No 17 of 1974 is implemented in cases of *“any sudden circumstance resulting from either natural or other events, war-related or not, or any other extraordinary events which have as a result the occurrence or threat of occurrence of damages, loss or destructions of materials and individuals of the Country or the obstruction or disruption of the economical and social procedures of the Country”*. The implementation of the above Decree requires the involvement of the armed forces and explicitly mentions that in order to utilize this state of emergency, it is necessary for the Minister of Defense and the Armed Forces General Staff to recommend its implementation to the Prime Minister. Its implementation involves the declaration of a partial or total civil mobilization, under which any civil entity is obliged to provide assistance and any resources necessary to the armed forces which are put in charge of managing the emergency situation.

From the above analysis of the other two possible legislative alternatives, it is made evident that these, while theoretically are provided for the management of emergency situations even in times of peace, are mostly oriented for the preparation of the state in case of an armed conflict and the management of an ongoing internal armed conflict. Therefore, they were not suitable to be implemented for the adoption of emergency measures proportional to the situation. Another important factor to be taken into consideration is that the open involvement of the armed forces in the managing of the emergency would come with a severe political cost, which would derive from the events of the 7-year military junta of 1967, which has left a severe impact on the Greek social conscience still visible today, especially if we take into consideration the progress and liberalization of the Greek society.

The Greek Constitution provides in art. 11 par. 1 the right of citizens to assemble peaceable and unarmed. Restrictions to the above can be enforced by decision of the police authority *"[...] if a serious threat to public security is imminent, and in a specific area, if a serious disturbance of social and economic life is threatened, as specified by law"*.

In art. 25 par. 1 it is provided that the rights of all human beings, individuals and as a member of society, and the principle of the welfare state rule of law are guaranteed by the state. However, in the same art. par. 4 it is stated that *"The State has the right to claim of all citizens to fulfill the duty of social and national solidarity"*, implying that the state might request by its citizens to restrict their rights in favor of the duty of social and national solidarity (Tsiliotis, 2020).

The prelude of every legislative text, apart from the Constitution, includes the senior or chronologically previous legal texts the new legislation is based upon. One of the first Acts of Legislative Content to be implemented for the management of the pandemic was the Legislative Act 68/20-03-2020 *"Emergency measures for the management of the consequences of the threat of Covid-19 proliferation, the support of the society and business and the smooth functioning of the public administration"*. The Acts of Legislative Content's prelude mentions the art. 5 par. 1, 4 and 5, art. 18 par. 3, art. 21 par. 3, art. 22 par. 1, art. 25 par. 4, art. 44 par. 1, and art. 106 par. 1 and 2.

The provisions of art. 11 were fulfilled, as the lockdowns were, especially in the later stages of the pandemic, enforced in a prefecture-basis and were imposed by Presidential Acts of Legislative Content (EODY, 2021), while the provisions of art. 5 par. 4 were used for the restriction of domestic and international travel. Art. 18 was used for the commandeering of resources of the private sector.

In general, the narrative of the prelude focuses mainly on the state's obligation to protect its subjects (as seen in art. 5 par. 1, 4 and 5, art. 21 par. 3, art. 22 par. 1 and art. 106 par. 1 and 2), rather than the need to restrict their freedoms in order to protect them.

Greece has also ratified by Formal Law (L. 2462/1997) the *"International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights"*. The most relevant provision of the Covenant is that of art. 7 which states that no individual can be subject to medical experimentation without their consent. Similarly, the Formal Law (L. 2071/1992) *"On the Rights of Hospitalized Patients"*, art. 47 provides that it is within the patient's rights to consent or deny any diagnostic or therapeutic procedure that they might be subjected into. The main criticism on the subject is that while the vaccination procedure was not made directly mandatory, it was made evident that there was social pressure for the individuals to be vaccinated. A notable example was the instigation of a fine for the unvaccinated population over the age of 60 (L. 4865/2021 art. 24).

Conclusions

In summary, and to answer the research questions set in the introduction, the emergency measures were implemented through the procedure of Acts of Legislative Content. This specific method could be argued that it was chosen due to its simplistic nature and due to the unsuitability of the other two possible alternatives (state of siege and emergency civil planning), as well as the possible political cost the other two would entail.

The potential violation of human rights requires further consideration in the context of the current research approach. Further study would be necessary to determine the basis and nature of expressed criticism. In addition, through a subsequent investigation, we will examine the proportionality of the measures adopted in regards to their scientific justification and effectiveness and in comparison to the actual threat presented by the pandemic. The examination of proportionality is necessary in order to assess the justification for their implementation.

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Podcast as a Tool to Popularize Political Science Knowledge into Non-Academic Audiences: The Case of Universities' Podcasts in Poland[1]

Oliwia Szeląg[2]

Abstract

Increasing digitization means that education is forced to adapt technological solutions to the learning process. Podcasts are one of the forms that accompany education. This article is an analysis of political science podcasts in Poland, which are produced by academic units. The purpose of the article is to verify the methods of popularization, promotion, and distribution of political science podcasts. Study draws on qualitative and quantitative analysis of sources. The first allowed to discover what topics are covered by political science podcasts in Poland and how they are distributed. The quantitative analysis of sources made it possible to gain knowledge of the number of episodes of these podcasts produced. The author also posed three research questions 1) What are the political science podcasts in Poland that are produced by university units? 2) What topics do they cover? 3) How do the creators try to reach non-academic audiences? The study draws attention to good practices in producing and distributing political science podcasts to reach beyond an academic audience.

Keywords: podcasts, civic education, political science podcasts, popularization of science, non-academic audiences.

Introduction

The ever-increasing digitization is making its way into various areas of social life. One such area is education, in the field of which audiovisual works are being created. These are projects aimed at transmitting knowledge to the audience but also popularizing learning. A special form in this regard is podcasts. This was pointed out, among others, by Thomas Moore, who divided educational podcasts according to the creator, the number of participants involved, and the format. The use of podcasts to transfer knowledge is an example of an epistemically diverse approach to education. In this article, Moore's approach is adopted, which considers the podcast as an additional or complementary teaching tool. It is essential to know the advantages and disadvantages of creating podcasts (Moore, 2022). As it was pointed out by Jham et al. (2008) that the benefits of podcast production are low production costs, widespread online access (anytime, anywhere) and a form that is user-friendly. An essential aspect in this regard is to distinguish areas that are relevant to the design of this form of broadcasting. Christopher Drew (2017) singled out such areas as content type, length,

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[2] Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland.

who the author is, style, purpose, voice or addressing, fit with other materials, series structure, pedagogical approach, and topic. A podcast is also a form of communication that connects academia and a wider audience interested in the topics covered. In this way, people who do not participate in academic discussions daily can learn about the opinions of experts. In considering the relevance of the adaptation of educational content, attention must be paid to the target audience. Marc Prensky characterized today's students as digital natives. They expect education to take new forms and knowledge to be transmitted through digital tools. This is because this is the environment in which they navigate daily (Ralph, Head, Lightfoot, 2010). The subject of research in this article is political science podcasts in Poland produced by academic units. This study aims to discover how podcasts' production and distribution methods support popularizing political science among non-academic audiences.

Podcasts in Poland

Research on the podcast market shows that it is the most rapidly growing media area, not only in Poland but also across Europe. The biggest breakthrough in this area was in 2019-2020. According to the survey "Czas na podcasty!" 27% of respondents listen to podcasts at least once a month. By 2021, this figure has risen to 31% (Interaktywnie.com, 2023). The results of the survey, conducted by the Ariadna panel for "Wprost" and Studio PLAC, showed that viewers pointed to the desire to learn something new as the main motivation for listening to podcasts, and one in three said they listen to podcasts for educational purposes. One of the most recent surveys, "Jakich podcastów słuchają Polacy?", which was released in 2022, showed that 57% of respondents indicated that the topics of the podcasts they listen to are combined with a popular science aspect. It is also noteworthy that within the same survey, 62% of respondents considered the great value of podcasts to be the expansion of knowledge gained at different stages of education (Fiedorek, 2023). This proves that audiences want to educate themselves on their own and are looking for this type of content themselves.

Study on the market for political science podcasts in Poland produced by university units

The subject of this study is the sphere of political science podcasts in Poland, which are produced within university units. It was aimed at verifying the manner of production and distribution of this type of content. The research questions are the following: 1) What political science podcasts in Poland are produced by university units? 2) What topics do they cover? 3) How do the creators try to reach non-academic audiences? Study draws on qualitative and quantitative source analysis. The first allows to discover what topics are covered by political science podcasts in Poland and how they are distributed. In turn, the latter allows to gain knowledge of the number of episodes of these podcasts produced. A podcast is defined as a regularly published online audio or visual-sound form (Ralph, Head, Lightfoot, 2010). A political science podcast means that covers topics related to current events in politics, history or civic education. The purposeful selection of the analyzed podcasts was the study of the market for political science podcasts in Poland produced by academic units and distinguished the following: Podcast Maturalny, Nie-koniec historii (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan), Migrostacja, WOS w pigułce (University of Warsaw), Świat od nowa (Mikołaj Kopernik University in Torun), Przystanek #misjaUJ, Sprawy Wschodu (Jagiellonian University in Krakow) and Podcast Wszechnica.org.pl – Nauka (cooperation of the Polish Academy of Sciences with the University of Warsaw). The author excluded political science podcasts of a journalistic nature from the field of research, due to the fact that the purpose of their presentations is to comment on current events, not to popularize science. The scientific and cognitive quality of such podcasts is questionable. In addition, they do not connect the academic world with an audience that is not exposed to this environment daily. The above podcasts were analyzed in terms of the number of their distribution channels, their promotion on social media, the topics they cover in the field of political science, their content production (whether they are spoken by experts), accessibility (existence of transcriptions) and technical implementation of distribution (dedicated graphics and jingles).

Table 1 Analysis of political science podcasts in Poland produced by academic units in terms of production and distribution

Title (Numer of episodes)	**Multi-channels broadcasting**	**Promotion in social media**	**Content**
Podcast Maturalny (33)	YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcast, Google podcast	Faculty website; Faculty social media (Facebook, Instagram); szkola.wnpid.amu.edu.pl, blogkandydata.amu.edu.pl	Politics, citizenship education , history
Nie-koniec historii (10)	Spotify, YouTube, Tunein	Faculty Facebook, kubajakubowski.pl	Political science, migration, commenting on current events
Migrostacja (14)	YouTube, Spotify, Google podcast, Breaker, Pockercast, RadioRepublic, Apple Podcast, Listennotes	University website	Political science, migration, commenting on current events
WOS w pigułce (30)	Spotify, YT, Audacy, Listennotes, Ivoox	University website, Facebook and Twwitter; Faculty website	Politics, citizenship education , history
Świat od nowa (7)	Spotify	University website; dedicated Facebook	political science, commenting on current events

Przystanek #misjaUJ (62)	Spotify, Apple Podcast, radio.pl, Podtail	University website; dedicated Instagram	General science podcast also covering political science topics
Sprawy Wschodu (119)	Spotify, YouTube, Apple podcast, Podkasty, Muckrack	Dedicated Facebook, Instagram and TikTok	political science, commenting on current events
Podcast Wszechnica.org.pl – Nauka (471)	Spotify, YouTube, Apple Podcast, listennotes.com, Podchaster.com, Podcastaddict.com, Podtail.com, ivoox.com, Google podcast, Antennapod, Anytime player, Bullhorn, Castamatic, Castbox, Gpodder, Podcast index, Podvine, Radio public, Podcast guru, Listennotes, Podcast republic, Sonnet, Momento, Moon fm, Podfrend, steno.fm, Castroo, Vercast, Podhero, Curiocaster, Player fm, Podknife, Fountain, Pocket cast, Podstation, Goodpods, Podbean, Podverse	Dedicated Facebook and Twitter	General science podcast also covering political science topics

Each of the podcasts tries to have a social media presence. Because they are university productions, the most common channel for announcing new episodes is the university or faculty websites or social media such as Facebook or Instagram. Only one podcast - Podcast Wszechnica.org.pl - Nauka has its dedicated website. This may be motivated by the wide audience base generated by the main university or faculty websites. Dedicated means of communication through social media such as Facebook or Instagram might not reach as large an audience as the university website, which has built an audience over the years. However, these types of profiles allow podcasts to reach a non-academic audience that is not familiar with university websites. Each of the podcasts is produced with the participation of experts, indicating a desire to provide quality, proven information and knowledge. The most common topics are those related to current events, which are commented on by experts, but also civic education or history. The largest number of episodes has been produced by the Wszechnica.org.pl - Nauka and Przystanek #misjaUJ, but it should be noted that these are podcasts that cover a much wider range of topics that go beyond political science. Through thematic diversity, these podcasts reach a much larger audience who are not only interested in political science but also in topics from other disciplines. The largest number of episodes in the field of political science has been released in the Sprawy Wschodu podcast. The platform on which all the analyzed podcasts are present is Spotify, followed by YouTube.com. The Wszechnica.org.pl - Nauka podcast has the widest distribution, being present on 38 streaming platforms. This indicates that the creators of the podcast are focused on reaching the widest possible audience. Widespread distribution on streaming platforms that are not necessarily the most popular indicates that the creators want to reach out to all potential audiences. Meanwhile, the second most widely distributed podcast is the Migrostacja, which is present on 8 streaming platforms. All analized podcast try to be as attractive to the listener as possible using visuals or sound (jingles). Despite the desire to reach as wide an audience as possible, none of the analyzed podcasts develops transcriptions for deaf people, making them not inclusive. This excludes a potential audience from experiencing the content.

Conclusion

The study showed that the market for political science podcasts in Poland produced by academic units is not well developed. And in addition, for the most part, those that are on the market do not make sufficient attempts to reach a wide audience. This is indicated primarily by the low number of streaming platforms on which they are present. And this is one of the two dominant factors that determine reaching a wide audience. The second is social media presence. The dominant channel of promotion is a university and faculty websites and Facebook profiles. Because such websites already have a certain audience this is a good direction in attracting podcast audiences. However, these types of channels that are associated with university units may reach mainly the academic community, rather than the non-academic community, which in this case is the target of the broadcast. Political science podcasts should take care to promote themselves in channels unrelated to the academic community, e.g. by working with elementary or secondary schools, which could share information about the podcast on their social media.

Expanding education channels into the digital space is particularly important in Poland because ruling elites seek to limit civic education. Since 2022, there has been a lively debate in Poland over the implementation of the subject Historia i Teraźniejszość (ang. History and the Present) instead previous civic education program. Representatives of political scientists expressed their concerns about marginalization of civic education at elementary level (Stanowisko KNP PAN ws. wprowadzenia do szkół przedmiotu HiT, 2023). Podcasts in the field of political science provide an opportunity to reach students who have not absorbed knowledge in this area at school. They are one of the non-institutional channels that can be used to transfer knowledge, especially since it does not limit the listener in time and space. This is an opportunity to make young people aware of current events and provide basic knowledge of their rights in connection with political participation. It would be worthwhile to conduct a similar study on the example of the political science podcast market in other countries to verify their level of involvement in this type of subject matter. The results could be compared to the state of democracy in a given country and verify whether there is a correlation between a given system and the state of civic education. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the popularity of remote learning to increase. Finally, it is worthwhile to obtain support from such entities as national (in Poland – Polish Political Science Association) or international political science associations such as IPSA or CEPSA.

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Topic 2

Public Policies, Social Policies and Welfare State

Sex Work, Sex Workers and Forms of Inequality: A Policy Brief[1]

Georgios Tsertekidis[2]

Abstract

Sex work has always been here. It has many types and expressions. According to existing scholarship, sex work is associated with a variety of inequalities. Evidence from academic literature shows that, worldwide, sex workers face serious inequalities with severe effects on their lives. Through this policy brief, inequalities are classified by context in some main categories. Social, economic, racial/ethnic, gender, age and "beauty" as well as health inequalities, as demonstrated by international literature, plague sex workers at a global scale. Taking all the above into account, conclusions are drawn and possible solutions are recommended for the mitigation and -if possible- elimination of these inequalities, utilizing means at a local, national and international scale.

Keywords: Age, Gender, Health, Human trafficking, Inequality, LGBTQ+, Sex work, Sex workers, Social inequalities, Women.

Introduction

Sex work refers to the exchange of sexual services for financial compensation. Commercial sex seems to have almost since the very dawns of humanity been a part of human activity, in various societies, epochs and periods of history, or maybe before it too. Only during some really extreme social situations, such as the Cultural Revolution in 1960s China (Cohen et al., 1996; Harcourt & Donovan, 2005) and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan has commercial sex probably been quantitatively suppressed (Larsen, 1996; Harcourt & Donovan, 2005). Sex work in general, is deeply ubiquitous. It has so many expressions and takes so many different forms of service and activity (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005; Bernstein, 2007; O'Connell Davidson, 2014). The topic of sex work is often shrouded in stigma and taboo, leading to a lack of understanding and misrepresentation of the experiences of sex workers. Sex workers face a range of forms of inequality, including discrimination, violence, and barriers to accessing health and social services. Social marginalization, human trafficking, poverty, and bad health are affecting sex workers' lives and experiences worldwide. Societies and states have to take more intensive action in order to confront these serious issues and combat inequity.

Defining Sex Work

Initially, sex work as a term, already makes a statement. It does so by recognizing and identifying sexual labor as work. Sex work is identified as the exchange or provision of sexual services,

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[2] Department of Social Work, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

performances, or products for compensation of money or other goods (Overs, 2002; Harcourt & Donovan, 2005; Lutnick & Cohan, 2009; O'Connell Davidson, 2014; Benoit et al., 2019). A sex worker is a cis woman, cis man or a transgendered person who offers sexual services for the receival of money or other goods, and consciously define that activity as income generating, even if she or he does not consider sex work as their occupation (Overs, 2002; Harcourt & Donovan, 2005).

Harcourt and Donovan (2005) identify at least 25 different types of sex work. Types of differentiated worksites, workplaces, ways of attracting and soliciting clients and of course different sexual practices implicated. Some include the so called third parties and others include only the sex worker-client's interaction and transaction. In those procedures clients play a significant role as it is rational to assume. "Clients are people (usually men) who pay with cash or other resources for sexual services either explicitly or within an agreed package that includes other services such as entertainment or domestic service" (Overs, 2002: 2). In many cases though, the transaction between the sex worker and the client does not come without any other participant in many different forms. "Third parties are people who play ancillary roles in commercial sex. These include arranging meetings between sex workers and clients and/or providing resources and services. These roles vary from place to place and in terms of influence and power over commercial sex and sex workers" (Overs, 2002: 2).

The dominant type of sex work in terms of numbers, significance and historicity worldwide, is what is widely known as prostitution. Prostitution can be defined as the sexual access to one's body in exchange of something of value (money, goods, drugs etc.) (Monto, 2004). It is necessary though to be mentioned that this term is considered to be extremely deep stigmatized and quite offensive in many cases (Pheterson, 1989; O'Connell Davidson, 2014; Benoit et al., 2019).

Another really useful term that plays a major role in the legal and the illegal sex industry is that of human trafficking. MacKinnon's (2011: 299) definition of trafficking is characterized by the following: "transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a human being for purposes of sexual exploitation: it is straight-up pimping". This phenomenon is likened by many scholars and academics as a modern form of slavery.

Sex Work and Forms of Inequality

Social inequalities

Sex work and inequalities share a long series of common ground and space within the social reality. Sometimes the one is the cause of the other and vice versa. Whatever inequalities mean for a society sex work can make it even deeper, even more serious for the commonly shared social life. The various social, economic and structural inequalities are being reinforced by sex work (Bernstein, 2007; Benoit et al., 2019).

It is proven through various studies and researches that sex work worldwide in the neo-liberal capitalist societies works both as a reason and as an outcome of social and structural inequalities. That is because the already existing social inequalities can act as push factors to women, men and transgendered people to sex work and vice versa; people within the sex industry worldwide are being affected by inequalities that exist in the sex labor, and their occupation in it reinforces and reproduces these inequalities at a large scale (Pruitt & Lafont, 1995; Monroe, 2005; Padilla et al., 2008; Benoit et al., 2019).

Studies around the world indicate that even though violations of sex workers' human rights, occur at a global context, the very heaviest violations and mistreatments occur in countries and states where sex work is criminalized by the legal framework and status quo. Taking that as a basis, increasing HIV vulnerability and weakening intervention programs, are very realistic as observations (Corrêa & Parker, 2004; Decker et al., 2015). Criminalization also makes it more difficult for sex workers to assert their rights, as they are often reluctant to report violence or exploitation for fear of arrest. For example, in a study of street-based sex workers in Canada, it was found that criminalization made it more difficult for sex workers to seek help when they were victims of violence, as they were afraid of being arrested or facing discrimination from the police (Outshoorn, 2005).

Economic inequalities

Economic inequalities are an absolute and indisputable reality of the world. Inequalities between populations, countries, citizens of the same state, and of course citizens of the same towns or cities. Poverty devastates huge numbers of the human population all around the planet. Poverty in particular, is in so many cases the main push factor for someone to work in the sex industry (Monroe, 2005; Della Giusta et al., 2009; O'Connell Davidson, 2014).

So many women in the developing as well as in the developed capitalist world are pushed to sex work as a result of extreme poverty conditions and lack of opportunities for any career in another field of work (Cusich & Berney, 2005). Those are the women (sometimes men and transgendered people as well) who do not choose willingly the way of sex work, but they follow it as a necessary means of survival for themselves or even at the same time for their families. There are so many cases all over the world in which the whole budget of families is supported not only partially but even exclusively by the occupation of one person as a sex worker. There are cases in which that is happening openly and even more where the social stigma along with the legal framework and status (criminalization), work conversely and do not allow these families to be honest about the real origins of their family income.

Income inequality is also a feature of sex work. This includes the cases of sex tourism and many more types of sex work (Pruitt & Lafont, 1995; Weitzer, 2009; O'Connell Davidson, 2014). This inequality in incomes, has a significant impact on the power relations of the two parties involved. It is profound that the financial ability of the client to afford a journey to an exotic famous for the sex tourism destination (for example The Netherlands, Thailand, The Caribbean, Brazil etc.) or just the ability to purchase one sex worker's services gives to the client an obvious upper hand, for the choice of use to be his or hers.

But to be crystal clear, extreme poverty is not the only economic push factor for sex workers. It has also been observed that middle classed people in the neo-liberal capitalist world, are pushed to get involved in the sex industry in its various aspects as sex workers (Bernstein, 2007). That is because of the economic inequalities of the post- industrialized capitalist societies.

Moreover, not only criminalized, but also legalized and decriminalized sex work, is not regulated efficiently in terms of employment regulation and labor protection (Cruz, 2013; O'Connell Davidson; Benoit et al., 2019). Thus, sex workers are being exploited in many different ways, and they are denied their own labor rights, even though they are not breaking any law, in many cases. Albeit the legitimacy of the sex workers' occupation, to avoid taxes and social stigma, many sex workers stay out of the official and registered sex industry by working without being registered, and by that they abolish any labor rights in a state which decriminalized sex work had granted them (Kavemann, 2007), and leave themselves totally unprotected against the human trafficking networks that operate all over the Globe (Benoit et al., 2019).

Racial/ethnic inequalities

Racism is a social phenomenon that exists in many places of the world. Not only it is not yet extinct but from times to times, there are major outbreaks of racism, that lead to shifts in social, political and even economic life in societies and states. Racism involves many and different expressions. Racial and ethnic inequalities are really important phenomena.

Of course, sex work is affected by these inequalities and at some points, it is sex work that generates and produce those inequalities (Bishop & Robinson, 1998; O'Connel Davidson, 2001; Koken et al., 2010). The race and the ethnic background of the sex worker plays a major role in the process of choosing whose services one client will purchase (Schols, 2018). Also, these features of the sex workers, affect the payment of them by the clients and the price of their services. All these in a deeply racist spirit and way of action. Many female, male and transgendered sex workers are being discriminated by many clients, because of their color or their ethnic origins (Koken et al., 2010) and by that, these types of inequalities are reproduced and escalated into even major social issues and problems.

Non-privileged parts of the sex industry laborers, people of color, differentiated ethnic minorities and other migrants are heavily affected by these inequalities. The phenomenon of refugees and migrants who work in the sex industry because of their disability to work elsewhere and earn in a different way their living is an important paradigm of what ethnic inequality really means for the sex workers. These refugees and migrants are often victims of human trafficking. The experiences of migrant sex workers are similarly shaped by intersecting forms of inequality. Migrant sex workers often face additional barriers to accessing health and social services, as they may fear deportation or be subjected to racist and xenophobic attitudes. For example, in a study of migrant sex workers in the Netherlands, it was found that they were more likely to face barriers to accessing health services, as they were afraid of being reported to immigration authorities (Schols et al., 2018). All the above of course export inequality to their communities and reproduces such pathogenic reflections and narratives, which marginalize in many ways these groups of sex workers.

Gender inequalities

Gender inequality is a worldwide social problem. The intense and depth of gender inequality differ from country to country, and from society to society. But it is undisputable, even though some more conservative commentators often struggle to argue for the opposite, that gender inequality is not absent from any society in the post-modern world of the 21st century. This inequality affects so many aspects of human social, economic and political activity. Naturally it heavily affects sex work and sex workers. Women are mostly presented as natural servants of men’s desires and wishes (Satz, 2010; Benoit et al., 2019). Women are objectified and become mere objects of trade (Koken et al., 2010). Pateman (1988) gets to the conclusion that female sex workers in particular are selling their own selves in a quite real sense. The sex worker’s relation with the client is an essential relation of domination and subordination of the first’s self, arising only under conditions of gender inequality (Anderson, 2002; Satz, 2010; Farley, 2018).

This type of gender inequalities is found to be just a mere possible aspect of sex work, but also an inherent characteristic of sex industry worldwide (Phillips, 2011). Gender, race, sexuality, and migration status intersect to shape the experiences of sex workers in complex and nuanced ways. Women, transgender people, and gender non-conforming individuals are disproportionately represented in the sex industry, and are more likely to experience violence, exploitation, and poverty in their work. For example, in a study of transgender sex workers in India, it was found that they were more likely to face violence and discrimination in their work compared to other sex workers (Rao et al., 2016).

Sex work may many times be a darkest expression, reinforcement and reproduction of patriarchal power relations, that deeply undermine women's and LGBTQ+ people's rights and dignity (Hughes, 2000; Raymond, 2004; Jeffreys, 2009;) as many sex workers are members of the LGBTQ+ community. It is them, who many times are being heavily exploited, abused and of course underpaid for their services. All these phenomena of mistreatment are heavily boosted by the extensive human trafficking that takes place in many regions of the world (Anderson & O'Connell Davidson, 2002; MacKinnon, 2011).

The experiences of LGBTQ+ sex workers are similarly shaped by multiple forms of discrimination, including homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia. This can result in higher levels of stigma, violence, and poverty for LGBTQ+ sex workers, who may face additional barriers to accessing support and services. For example, in a study of LGBTQ+ sex workers in the United States, it was found that they were more likely to experience homelessness, poverty, and violence compared to non-LGBTQ+ sex workers, and also faced discrimination in accessing healthcare and social services (Bickham et al., 2018).

Age and "beauty" inequalities

It has been found that age is a factor of great significance for clients' choice, when scouting for a sex worker to service them (Anderson & O'Connell Davidson, 2002). It is a feature that convinces to a large scale a client if the sex worker is attractive or not, if one deserves the cost and the trouble.

Many sex workers are being discriminated because of their age. They are being set aside mostly by male clients who choose younger sex workers, to purchase their services, and undermine the worth of older sex workers. They are being reviewed by the status of their body and their physical characteristics (O'Connell Davidson, 2014). Either they get the job or not.

Sex work then, reproduces a pathogenic which is related to human age, to woman's age, to man's age, to transgender's age. Beauty in general can be a cardinal factor as to how a person is going to be treated in many social engagements, for example even in social and health care (Polyzoidis, 2019). In that context, beauty, charming and worth, is being quantified in terms of years and features of body that are strongly connected with ageing. To be straight clear, they are being reviewed and assessed like meat, like objects (Monto, 2004; Satz, 2010; MacKinnon, 2011).That dehumanization is a great question for theorists, sociologists, and other social scientists in general.

Health inequalities

The legal framework around sex work affects many of its aspects; one of them is health. Not only health of the sex workers but of their clients too. In countries such as the United States of America, health inequalities are gigantic due to the structure and the form of the health system. In countries like this, due to the criminalization of the main forms of sex work (not in all States, but in their vast majority), in many cases there is no access to health and medical care by sex workers. This situation, along with other social inequalities and imbalances of power with clients, leave them vulnerable to many Sexually Transmitted Diseases, including a dangerously high risk of possible exposure to HIV (Overs, 2002; Corrêa & Parker, 2004; Decker et al., 2015; Schols et al., 2018).

Not only in that kind of countries but also in countries with different kinds of healthcare systems, sex workers are putting themselves and their clients into great risks because of the implicated criminalization against sex work. When criminalization is implicated by the state authorities, the state cannot have any effective monitoring or control over the health of the women, men and transgendered people who work illegally as sex workers (Cusick & Berney, 2005; Padilla et al., 2008; Rao et al., 2016). In a study of sex workers in South Africa, it was found that stigma and discrimination made it more difficult for sex workers to access health services, leading to increased risks of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Shisana et al., 2014). In their struggle to survive, they might become dangerous for their own health and lives as well as for their clients', and of course they find severe difficulties in seeking help from any official authority. In that way, health inequalities are dangerously deepened in a society.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Sex work and inequality are deeply correlated and interwoven. That is a reality in various ways and expressions. Inequality and its different forms can clearly be the root causes or origins of sex work. They can as well be the outcome of sex work, as it clearly produces and reinforces inequality in its various expressions. This reproduction either of patriarchal or other systematic hierarchies, social and structural inequalities of many forms through sex work is reasonably considered by many scholars to be deeply problematic.

Sex workers are not always vulnerable and weak, but when they are, their social, economic, health and physical conditions are exposed to many perils and dangers. Even their life is being risked during their struggle and effort to earn their living through the various sex work that they are occupied with. Many theorists, scientists, politicians and of course activists, have worked and are still working towards the degrading of inequalities that are reinforced or even produced by sex work. Many more are necessary to be made and accomplished it that direction though.

The problems

Scholarship on sex work strongly indicates that, worldwide, sex workers face various inequalities. These inequalities negatively affect people working in the sex industry in many ways. Their dignity, self-respect, self-esteem, health, welfare and even life are systematically endangered. Social scientists have extracted safe conclusions concerning the severe dangers sex workers face during their efforts to earn their living.

Criminalization of sex work, according to literature, is a core factor in marginalizing sex workers and placing them to obscurity as workers and citizens. Criminalization of sex work exacerbates inequalities faced by sex workers. Laws that criminalize sex work force it into the shadows, making it difficult for sex workers to seek protection, report violence, or access justice. Criminalization also hampers efforts to regulate and improve working conditions, leading to increased vulnerability to exploitation, violence, and health risks. As criminalization accounts for perpetuating many social, economic and health inequalities, decriminalization is something that legislators in even more countries should examine.

Not working legally block sex workers off from having regular access to regular medical examinations and testing for example for STDs and other infectious diseases. In tandem, deprives them from social security and insurance.

Economic disparities contribute to the inequalities experienced by sex workers. Many enter the sex industry due to limited economic opportunities, poverty, or lack of social support systems. Unequal power dynamics in the industry, such as exploitative practices by intermediaries or pimps, further compound economic inequalities. Limited alternative employment options and income-generating opportunities can trap sex workers in cycles of poverty and reliance on the sex industry.

Sex work inequalities are often gendered, with women, transgender individuals, and gender non-conforming people disproportionately represented in the industry. Patriarchal structures, misogyny, and gender-based violence contribute to the vulnerability of women in sex work. Intersectionality, which considers how multiple social identities (e.g., race, sexuality, disability) intersect, further shapes inequalities. For instance, women of color and LGBTQ+ sex workers may face compounded forms of discrimination and violence due to intersecting oppressions.

Migration plays a significant role in shaping sex work and inequalities experienced by migrant sex workers. Migrant sex workers may face additional vulnerabilities due to language barriers, limited social networks, precarious legal status, and exploitation by traffickers or employers. The conflation of sex work and human trafficking in public discourse and policies often fails to differentiate consensual sex work from instances of coercion, further exacerbating inequalities faced by sex workers.

Some possible solutions

Legally recognizing sex work as a form of work, grants rights to the workers and makes them visible for the welfare state and state in general. In that way they can have more security provided by law enforcement and social security. Social security, and access to health services not only can bate, but they also prevent many inequalities, by stopping social and economic marginalization.

Societies need to address all kinds of inequality that challenge and pose vital threats to sex workers. It is a matter of social equity and human rights. That said, all social institutions have a part to play towards weeding out inequalities that challenge the core of sex workers' rights as workers, citizens and humans.

Educating and informing communities at local, national, and international scale for the serious issues that rise due to inequalities sex workers face, could cultivate more inclusive attitudes towards them. School, Media and the Third Sector (non-governmental and non-profit organizations) can have major impact on peoples' awareness, by curing misinformation, prejudice and stereotypes.

Implementing social support programs that address the unique needs of sex workers, including safe housing, education, vocational training, and alternative employment opportunities, can help alleviate economic disparities and reduce reliance on sex work.

Emphasizing on making healthcare and social services more accessible to sex workers can enhance the chances of preventing inequalities to plague sex workers and reproduce inequity. Ensuring equitable access to comprehensive healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health, educating healthcare and social care workers even better for the needs and special challenges sex workers face, can be impactful in confronting health, age, beauty and social inequalities in general.

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COVID-19 and the Exacerbation of Existing Inequalities: Why the Lower Socioeconomic Stratums Were Influenced the Most[1]

Antonios Alevizos[2], Markella Michail[3], Magdalini Eleftheroglou[4], Symeon Sidiropoulos[5]

Abstract

Since the outburst of the COVID-19 virus many changes have taken place that concern most aspects of human life. A group that seemed to be affected most by the pandemic was that of the lower socio-economic stratums. This paper aims to demonstrate how individuals were most influenced. Firstly, their health was severely affected mainly due to the higher prevalence of social determinants that make them more vulnerable to COVID-19 and as they were more likely to delay seeking the necessary care for the virus. They also had to deal with a greater financial burden throughout the pandemic. Individuals of lower socio-economic stratums were much more likely to lose their jobs, to have their earnings reduce and to have to work while sick or in unsafe conditions. The last areas that have been negatively affected by the pandemic is digital, educational and health accessibility, as poorer individuals appear having reduce to technical means.

Keywords: COVID-19; Health Inequalities; Digital Inequalities; Educational Inequalities; Financial Inequalities; Lower Socioeconomic Stratums

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic deeply influenced the lives of individuals across the world. It didn't only cause millions of deaths but also led to the deterioration of already existing inequalities. The individuals that were affected the most are those of the lower socioeconomic stratums. This paper focuses on examining how health inequalities, financial inequalities, digital inequalities and educational inequalities were aggravated, bringing on life altering side-effects to the lives of poorer individuals. Specific data for Greece, concerning how its economy was affected and the exacerbation of its digital inequalities, will also be demonstrated.

The Exacerbation of Health Inequalities

In 1630 the plague in Northern Italy killed 35% of the population. An after-effect of this tremendous demographic change was the slowdown of the rising inequalities of the country. As many workers

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[2] Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Social Policy, Democritus University of Thrace; Researcher, Laboratory of Sociology of Culture and Civilization, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Greece.

[3] Research Associate, Laboratory of Sociology of Culture and Civilization, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences

[4] Researcher, Laboratory of Sociology of Culture and Civilization, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Greece.

[5] Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Piraeus; Researcher, Laboratory of Health Economics and Management, University of Piraeus, Greece.

and potential property-buyers had died, wages increased and houses became less expensive. Unfortunately, this glimpse of positivity can't be found in the COVID-19 world. A total of 6.86 million deaths didn't only cause worldwide panic and the grief of many, but it also led to the strengthening of inequalities throughout the sphere. (Marmot and Allen, 2020; Our World in Data, 2023)

A very typical example of an inequality that widened in the years of the pandemic is that of health inequalities, as that disadvantaged socioeconomic groups suffer from higher levels of mortality and morbidity, after being affected by COVID-19 (McGowan and Bambra, 2022). Health inequalities existed long before COVID-19; in England, three different worrying trends have been documented, ever since 2010. A slower increase of life-expectancy, a widening gap of life expectancy between richer and poorer areas of England and a deterioration of the life expectancy of the women living in the most deprived areas indicate steady steps towards a dystopia of inequality (Marmot and Allen, 2020).

Poorer individuals are more likely to suffer from a health condition that makes them more vulnerable to COVID-19. Someone who is in the bottom three deciles of the income distribution is about 50 per cent more likely than someone in the top two deciles to have such a condition (Blundell et al., 2020). For those with underlying chronic conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, lung diseases, diabetes and cancer, COVID-19 is way more dangerous. The frequency of these conditions is inversely associated with economic status (Bigdelou et al., 2022; Batra et al., 2022).

Societal factors that directly influence the volume of the effects of COVID-19 are also the higher prevalence of smoking and obesity observed in the poorer social stratums. These two constituents are known to further aggravate the disease (Casetta et al., 2017; Mayor, 2017; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2022). As the habits and behaviours of individuals influence the possible risk of COVID-19 on them, according to Van Dorn et al. (2020) poor white communities who were at the time suffering an opioid crisis and more frequent health conditions, were more likely to be hit hard by the pandemic.

Furthermore, after being affected by COVID-19, disadvantaged socioeconomic groups are more likely to delay seeking the necessary care, which could potentially result in their more severe disease and possibly their death. That is because health literacy isn't as prevalent in those groups and because it's not as easy for them to access healthcare, given that they can't afford their user fees and their medicine (Burström and Tao, 2020; Blundell et al., 2020).

Another reason why the lower socioeconomic stratums are more influenced by COVID-19 is because mental health illnesses are way more prevalent among them. About 13% of individuals in the bottom decile report suffering from a long-standing mental health illness, and just 3% in the top decile. This factor leads to two different pandemic-related side-effects. Firstly, the former were also more vulnerable to increased social isolation during the pandemic (Blundell et al., 2020). Also, COVID-19 was even riskier for them, as mentally ill people are proven to be less resilient to this disease. Sadly, in Greece not much has been done by the government to help poorer individuals deal with their bad mental health state and its side-effects (Theodoraki, 2020).

On a positive note, the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is poised to bring about a transformative impact on the field of medicine, fundamentally altering the manner in which healthcare services are provided. Artificial intelligence (AI) is expected to facilitate advancements in healthcare quality, patient engagement, and accessibility to healthcare services. The implementation of this initiative is expected to enhance the efficiency and efficacy of healthcare services, while also enabling healthcare facilities to expand their capacity for providing comprehensive treatment and management to a larger patient population. By leveraging real-time data collection, artificial intelligence has the potential to offer current information that aids in the prevention of diseases. In subsequent times, this will emerge as a significant instrument for combating additional epidemics and pandemics. This intervention will offer a preventive measure and address numerous other diseases. Artificial intelligence (AI) is poised to assume a crucial role in the future of healthcare by facilitating the provision of predictive and preventive measures (Efthymiou et al, 2020).

The Exacerbation of Financial Inequalities

The pandemic also brought on an overall downfall of the economic development that preceded it, which resulted in the tragic impoverishment of ten million people around the world. Just like a century ago, during the Spanish flu, the economic crisis resulting from the many economic upheavals of the pandemic lead to the deterioration of the already existing social and economic inequalities. Many studies on the subject report that the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 is identical to the Great Depression of the 20th century and worse than all the previous similar crises caused by viruses. Since the beginning of the pandemic in late 2019, the percentage of people living in extreme poverty has skyrocketed. Reduced wages, cutbacks, shortages of basic goods and the impoverishment of millions of people are some of the harshest side-effects of the virus (Theodoraki, 2020).

In 2020, a survey conducted by Adams-Prassl et al. found that individuals of lower socio-economic stratums were much more likely than the higher-income individuals to lose their jobs and to have their earnings redacted, due to the pandemic. The younger workers and those with lower levels of education were also more vulnerable to those side-effects of COVID-19, but not as vulnerable as the self-employed and those on zero-hours contracts, who had their hours of work redacted the most. To this day, thousands experienced cuts in their monthly income. Sadly, as mentioned before, the ones who were more in need of a salary were the ones that were affected the most (Blundell et al., 2020).

People with lower paying jobs didn’t only have to deal with their incomes being cut and the possibility of losing their jobs, but they were also much more likely to work in dangerous conditions. Exposure to COVID-19 increased for occupations that demand physical presence and proximity or direct contact with other people. Subsequently, people with low-income jobs in service-sectors such as health or social care, transportation, cleaning and hospitality dealt with much riskier conditions in their work-environment. The risk was even worse if they had to use public transport to get to work or if they lacked personal protective equipment and the appropriate knowledge on how to use it (Burström and Tao, 2020). As the lower a person's income, the less likely it was that they were in jobs were working from home is possible, poorer individuals often were obliged to leave their houses even during the lockdown. ONS reported that before lockdown only a 10% of employees in accommodation and food were able to “telework” and only a 53% of employees in communication and information (Marmot and Allen, 2020).

Precarious working environments and a lack of social insurance could be the reasons behind employees working while sick with COVID-19, during the pandemic. This situation put them in even more dangerous conditions not only as their illness would worsen if they weren’t provided with the necessary care, but as they would often have to work around other sick employees too (Tilchin et al., 2021).

A relevant trend of a significant increase in its unemployment and an equivalent drop of its GDP was observed in Greece. The country’s unemployment rate, after having reached very high levels (28% in the summer of 2013), had started to decrease. After the pandemic and the subsequent restrictions to the labour market in the first months of 2021, however, it began to rise. According to ELSTAT statistics the unemployment rate for the month of January 2020 reached the percentage of 16.4%, which means an increase of 2.1 points compared to January 2019. ELSTAT data (2021) also indicate a drop of the country’s GDP in the third quarter of 2020 compared to the third quarter of 2019 by 11.7%. The OECD (2020) records a large drop of its GDP in the second period of the pandemic to 3.8% and in 2021 a drop of 1.8%. ELSTAT reports that businesses in the accommodation and catering services sector in the 4th quarter of 2020 saw a reduction in job positions by approximately 43 thousand compared to the corresponding quarter of 2019 (Andreola, 2022). To counter these effects, social protection expenditure should increase, as it's positively correlated with employment rates and the GDP per capita in the European Union (Emmanouil-Kalos & Prokakis, 2021).

High rates of unemployment are known to lead to prevalence of psychological difficulties, depression and suicidal tendencies on populations under consideration (The Health Foundation, 2021). Unemployment doesn't only cause mental health problems but increased alcohol and substance abuse and family violence too (Llop-Gironés et al., 2021) Given that all these side-effects of economic crisis' further implicate peoples' health, it is to be addressed that poorer peoples' health is further burdened due to this factor too.

The Exacerbation of Digital Inequalities

Lower socio-economic stratums were also negatively affected by the pandemic because of the digital inequalities that prevailed because of it. Four proximal factors impacted whether individuals could use technologies efficiently and effectively, during COVID-19, all of which are affected by the socio-economic situation of those under consideration (Beaunoyer et al., 2020).

The first factor is the technical means individuals could access. Richer households had the ability to upgrade their equipment when it was necessary for telework, learning or entertainment. Households with lower incomes, on the other hand, couldn't always upgrade their technical means and they often were not able to afford the best connection both in terms of speed and data usage, without sacrificing essential spendings. As home confinement was obligatory many times throughout the pandemic an unprecedented internet traffic load was created, which affected poorer households with not as great internet packages more (Beaunoyer et al., 2020).

The second factor that impacted whether individuals could use technologies efficiently and effectively, during COVID-19, is the autonomy of use of their technological devices. The third factor is their ability to get assistance from other experienced users and the last factor is the experience they had of technology and their general abilities in utilising it. (Beaunoyer et al., 2020).

In Greece access to technology was a significant problem throughout the pandemic, especially in the context of distance education. According to a relevant study only 62.7% of parents stated that they had sufficient digital equipment in their home. A significant percentage of parents (37.3%) stated that the digital equipment they had at their disposal was not sufficient to achieve distance learning and they had to buy a new digital device (40.8%). An equally important issue that emerged throughout this period was that of bad internet access faced by families during distance education. According to the results of another relevant study a significantly large percentage of participants stated that they encountered problems with their internet connection often, at a rate of 44.4%, and they had to upgrade their internet connection (31%) during the pandemic. The last finding implies an increased financial burden on households, potentially significant for lower income families (Strofylla, 2022).

Regarding the second factor, the autonomy of use of technological devices, it is true that throughout the quarantines internet and digital equipment use at home became further restricted. The fact that family members had to share technological equipment raised many issues surrounding carrying out desired online activities. As public spaces such as schools, libraries and coffee shops were also not accessible to individuals throughout the pandemic a significant barrier of teleworking was created. Poorer individuals that had less ease of access to technologies, sadly became even more vulnerable to the economic impacts of the virus (Beaunoyer et al., 2020).

The ability to use technological equipment efficiently, however, doesn't only impact individuals' socio-economic status, but it impacts their health too. Being digitally excluded signifies a partial exclusion from health determinants such as education, work, social networks, resources and information. Especially during COVID, digital spaces have been a centre of spreading information for governments and official agencies. Subsequently, accessing and understanding information on health measures was a problem for those dealing with digital literacy inequalities. Overall, it is evident that during COVID, the poorer socio-economic stratums had to deal with the effects of the exasperation of both health and financial inequalities. As limited digital access can lead to health inequalities, which in return can broaden digital inequalities, a "digital vicious cycle" is created that tormented poorer individuals greatly throughout the pandemic (Beaunoyer et al., 2020).

The Exacerbation of Educational Inequalities

The lack of the necessary digital equipment, which was a characteristic of the lower socio-economic stratums that deeply influenced them throughout the pandemic, also had negative repercussions in regards to their education. As the less privileged students were less likely to have access to digital media, educational inequalities faced a rapid increase throughout COVID-19 (Bekova et al., 2021). Parents' lack of familiarity with digital educational media could also be thought of as one of the most significant factors of this observed inequality (Goudeau et al., 2021).

In other cases, educational inequalities widened as financial difficulties led to many students picking up jobs themselves to financially support their families, leaving their education behind as a result. It has been noticed that a higher pressure is put on the students of lower-income backgrounds to support their family. A typical example is that of the poor Argentinian young women that had to focus a lot on family health during COVID-19 and therefore didn't have the ability to prioritise their education (Global Development Commons, 2020).

Unfortunately, the factors that led to widening educational inequalities during the pandemic aren't limited to the aforementioned. As many students coming from poorer families had to pay tuition for their studies and they dealt with an increased financial pressure, due to the pandemic, their academic results were affected and they even had to drop out. Even if they didn't have to let go of their studies, however, it is likely that the education they were offered wasn't as good as that of the richer students. Wealthier schools had the ability to provide better technology and more resources to their students. According to UNICEF, in fact, there was a risk of "widening of performance gaps between low and high-income individuals" and this risk was "consistent on a local level, national level, and international level" (Global Development Commons, 2020).

Another issue that tormented lower-income families throughout the pandemic was the loss of school meals, but also of other services that help improve the quality of life of students. The suspension of school units created a lot of uncertainty and concern among families about the free school meals that were offered in schools. According to research, school meals are significantly related to improving the academic performance of students, while not providing school meals is associated with low school performance and increased risk for students' physical and mental well-being. 6.6% of families from the European Union, 5.5% from the United Kingdom and 14% from the USA cannot provide their children with meals that include all the nutritional elements necessary for their development. Subsequently, it is evident that the pandemic affected the educational system in ways that hurt the physical wellbeing of students as well (Strofylla, 2022).

Conclusion

The precedent pandemic didn't limit its repercussions at the health side-effects it caused and the millions of deaths it brought. It was also the reason behind the exacerbation of other great societal problems. In this paper it was proven that the lower socioeconomic stratums were the ones that had to deal with the bigger burden of the virus. Health, financial, digital and educational inequalities significantly worsened throughout these years, all at their expense. Health inequalities were exacerbated, as among poorer individuals there seemed to be a prevalence of smoking, obesity, of mental illnesses and of other health conditions, that made them more vulnerable to COVID-19 and as they delayed seeking the necessary care for the virus. Also, in a general state of a heightened extreme poverty, individuals of lower socio-economic status were also much more likely to lose their jobs, to have their earnings redacted and to have to work while sick or in dangerous conditions. Last, they didn't have the same access to technical means as the other classes. They weren't lucky enough to have autonomy of use of their technological devices, experience on utilising it or ability to get assistance from other experienced users. This information, however, should act as a disappointment determinant for our view of society, but rather as a source of motivation. As it has been highlighted, lower socio-economic stratums have been treated as the outcasts of society, left helpless when chaos arrived. However, this doesn't have to be our truth. A stronger social welfare state must and can be at their disposal, at any upcoming crisis.

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Brain Drain: Greece's Open Wound[6]

Georgios Tsertekidis[7]

Abstract

The phenomenon of brain drain, which refers to the emigration of highly skilled individuals from their home country, has been a long-standing challenge for Greece. After the global financial crisis of 2007 – 2009 struck the country, scholars have observed the escalation of brain drain, the loss of valuable human capital in terms of social and economic growth and development. The current phenomenon is linked throughout the relevant literature with other eras of the Greek past. Of course, beyond the historicity of the phenomenon, there are new factors that affect the current status. This policy brief attempts to work with the existing knowledge on the subject and recommend some policy directions.

Keywords: Austerity, Brain Drain, Crisis, Greece, Greeks, Migration, Unemployment, Work.

Introduction

The global financial crisis of 2007 - 2009 affected at a big scale the economies and the societies of the member-states of the European Union. Greece has been severely hit by the global financial crisis of 2007 - 2009 because of economic and political structural insufficiencies that characterized the state. The country, before 2009 had a period of almost four decades of unprecedented social, economic and political stability after the reestablishment of democracy in the country in the year 1974. That all came to an end with the 2009 crisis outbreak in the country. The new state of things in Greece would lead to, amongst many other things, some extremely high rates of unemployment. Those enormous, for the EU's standards, unemployment rates created a depressing and repellent environment for large numbers of well-educated women and men; people who could be the country's best by potentially offering many things in the country's political, social and economic progress and advance (Labrianidis, 2011; Kapur, 2014; Theodoropoulos et al., 2014) did not get any opportunity to work end evolve in their own home country (Pelliccia, 2013; Triandafyllidou & Gropas 2014; Labrianidis & Pratsinakis, 2016).

Low salaries that were a new reality for the country after the year 2009, in tandem with the high unemployment, can be identified the two major reasons of the 21st century's brain drain phenomenon in Greece. Being that way, unable to satisfy their expectations, they chose to leave their country, and migrate to countries within the EU but also to many other places worldwide (Damanakis, 2014; Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2016, 2017).

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[7] Department of Social Work, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

Greek Brain Drain: What we know now

Defining Brain Drain

'Brain drain' was introduced to the academic literature to an increasing pace, mostly after World War II. Despite the difficulty of defining brain drain, as an original social phenomenon of high complexity, by one single and universally accepted definition, (Theodoropoulos et al., 2014) there are some serious attempts, to define that complex social phenomenon that concerns and interests a vast variety of scientists and scholars.

It has been identified (Portes, 1976; Özden & Schiff, 2005; Beine et al., 2008; Chaichian, 2011; Labrianidis, 2011; Theodoropoulos et al., 2014) as an international movement of well and highly educated human resources, from less developed or countries that are currently developing, to more developed countries and economies. Docquier & Rapoport (2012) also recognize it as a contemporary dominating trend globally, by adding to the context of brain drain, the parameter of the deeply processed globalization (Castles, 2000) in almost every sector of the post-modern human activity, as well as in the contemporary world labor market.

It is considered as a fact that the majority of developing countries are affected by brain drain while the developed countries have profited from it (Stark, 1991; Theodoropoulos et al., 2014). The mobility of scientists and the migration from their own countries to others, are caused by the absence or lack of jobs that fit their skills and expectations. They are attracted by the better prospects for better careers in the destination countries. These people are usually the most educated and skilled, something that makes the loss of this human capital even more important for Greece (Katseli, Lukas & Xenogianni, 2006; Lowell and Findlay, 2002; Theodoropoulos et al., 2014).

The case of Greece

After WWII, another great in numbers and socio-economic significance wave of Greek emigration came to be (Mousourou, 1991). This emigration concerns the Greek people who left their totally war-devastated country, to migrate to the rapidly developing United States, to Canada, to Australia and a few years later to the reconstructed and reindustrialized western Germany, France and Belgium. During this post-war time period, Labrianidis (2011) identifies a phenomenon, similar to the current brain drain phenomenon, as scientists and intellectuals then, left the country in great numbers, in order to seek better potentials and chances in countries, other than their own homeland.

Some academics link those periods of loss of important human capital, observed during the 50s (Grubel & Scott, 1966), with another important continuance of the phenomenon between 1998 and

2005 (Robolis, 2005). Labrianidis (2014) also confirms that after the mid-90s the international migration of skilled professionals and scientists from Greece to other countries has increased. Thus, the origins of the current brain drain phenomenon can be located in these years, long before 2009.

Due to austerity, high unemployment rates and minimum need for high-skilled workforce, along with the nadir that wages fell to within the country’s labour market, the brain drain phenomenon became profoundly recognizable (Labrianidis, 2011; Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2016, 2017; Polyzoidis and Tsertekidis, 2019). Labrianidis and Pratsinakis (2017) found that the notable lack of demand for highly skilled labour force is one the greatest generating factor of this phenomenon in Greece, and in the meantime a major push factor for well-educated Greeks to move out of Greece and migrate.

The sequelae

Brain drain has a deep impact on the economy, the society, and the future perspectives of Greece. As Chaichian (2011) found, the loss of intellectually high human capital of Greece, was one of the largest in the Globe. The demographic problem of Greece is widely known and acknowledged. The Greek population is currently ageing really fast and decreasing in numbers (Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research, 2022). All those people who emigrate from Greece leave behind them a dangerous gap in the normal reproduction of the population.

If approached from an economical point of view, brain drain also costs a lot for the country’s economy in terms of society as well as in terms of state. Both Greek society (families etc.) along with the Greek state have invested so many financial resources and funds to train and qualify this human capital but the country fails to benefit from this promising (in many aspects) part of its population. All those social and economic growth and development potentials are being eradicated.

All the parameters of brain drain presented above, lead scholars and academics in search of ways and means to deal with that phenomenon that negatively affects Greece in many ways.

What relevant scholarship recommends

The context of this phenomenon is interpreted in a really negative way by the majority of the scholars that have studied it. And that is not without serious reasons as it was shown before. Scholars have made many efforts via policy recommendations to reverse brain drain. Many changes and many bold decisions should be taken to serve that purpose. A structural way to make the desirable steps is a desired bold swift of the Greek economy, supported by the state, with sufficient national and European funds, via implicating public policies, from an economy based on low-cost services, to a developed economy. An economy that would need high-skilled work force in order to produce, advance and flourish (Labrinidis & Pratsinakis, 2017). Another solution proposed at the same time by the same academics (Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2017), sets aside the efforts for repatriation of Greeks that left the country as parts of the brain drain phenomenon. It sets on the spotlight the possibilities of developing new kinds of partnerships with those Greeks that already residue elsewhere on the planet. People who have already started their new lives, created their own social connections and networks with other fellow Greeks or local people. If something like that would succeed, it would have major results of magnificent importance in transnational collaboration in sciences, businesses, and many other sectors.

In a long term, a new connection like this with the motherland, can lead to further deepening on the emigrants' bonds with it. That can possibly lead to opening of new perspectives for future even closer collaboration and possible repatriation. It is a way for the Greek state's credibility to be restored in the minds and consciousness of the Greeks who left the country out of disappointment and desperation (Theodoropoulos et al., 2014; Labrianidis & Pratsinakis, 2017). Thus, approaching these people should be really careful and tactful. Free of any patronization. Collaboration and equality of the parties should be of first priority.

Also, modernizing the infrastructures of Greece's public sector, lowering taxes for businesses and individuals, social policy measures for the unemployed and for new families, investing more public funds in the universities and in the various prestigious Greek scientific institutes for research, giving more opportunities to young scientists of many scientific fields and the simplification of state bureaucracy can also lead to positive results (Labrianidis & Pratsinakis, 2017; Polyzoidis and Tsertekidis, 2019).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The brain drain phenomenon in correlation with the Greek society and state as a subject of social research is very interesting for many Greek academics, scientists, researchers and university students for a series of quite profound reasons.

The common academic knowledge about the historicity, the origins, the reasons, and the effects of brain drain is currently deepening and expanding. In parallel, many options and possible solutions have been suggested from time to time throughout the literature by scholars who study this subject.

All the proposed options for action, the possible solutions and the strategies that can be offered by scholars can give useful tools for future implication and development. Any actions taken by the Greek authorities need to be holistic. Fortunately, there has been at least a basic consensus as a starting point for the recognition of the problem. It is an issue that draws many families' attention, people's whose children study and venture in the scientific field and see no perspectives in Greece for them to pursuit.

It is clear that answering to brain drain phenomenon will not be easy nor will be of low financial and political cost. There is much progress to be made towards:

- The digital transformation of the state to diminish bureaucracy to the minimum possible and thus meeting the current European standards
- The promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation
- The emphasis on development and multiplication of sustainable and high-skilled jobs
- The implementation of a more business-friendly tax system
- A shift to granting more financial resources to academic research
- The initiatives in direction of deeper and stronger synergies between Greek universities, research institutions and businesses and the Greek diaspora

The financial resources needed for the implementation of the recommendations mentioned in the paper could be provided by an alternative of priority-setting from funds of the state budget and of the European Regional Development Fund, which has offered valuable funding capabilities throughout the EU for the post-COVID-19 era.

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Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth and Development in Angola: A Policy Agenda for Diversification and Innovation[1]

Jabulani Garwi[2]

Abstract

This policy brief titled "Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth and Development in Angola: A Policy Agenda for Diversification and Innovation" provides a comprehensive analysis of the economic challenges faced by Angola and proposes a policy agenda to foster inclusive growth and development. The brief highlights the heavy reliance on oil exports and the need for diversification, identifies key challenges in sectors such as human capital development and infrastructure, and presents policy recommendations for economic diversification, enhancing human capital, improving infrastructure, and addressing governance and transparency issues. The proposed policy agenda aims to promote sustainable economic development, reduce poverty and inequality, and improve the well-being of the Angolan population. The brief offers valuable insights and practical solutions for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders interested in addressing the economic challenges and unlocking the potential of Angola's economy.

Keywords: Inclusive economic growth, Development, Angola, Policy agenda, Economic diversification, Human capital development, Infrastructure, Governance and transparency, Sustainable economic development, Poverty and inequality.

Introduction

Angola, a country located in southern Africa, is currently grappling with significant economic challenges due to its heavy reliance on oil exports. With oil accounting for over 95% of its export earnings, Angola's economy is highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices, as was evident during the 2014 oil price crash that resulted in a recession (World Bank, 2022). Although some efforts have been made in recent years to diversify the economy, progress in this regard has been slow. Consequently, the country faces persistent levels of poverty and inequality. However, Angola possesses several opportunities for economic growth and development. It boasts abundant natural resources, including mineral deposits, fertile land, and a lengthy coastline that could support a thriving fishing industry. Moreover, Angola's strategic location in southern Africa offers potential for regional trade and investment. To address the challenges and unlock its economic potential, Angola requires a comprehensive policy agenda for diversification and innovation. This policy paper aims to examine the Angolan economy and propose solutions that promote inclusive economic growth and development in the country. By leveraging its resources and adopting targeted policies, Angola can

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[2] Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development, University of the Free State, South Africa.

achieve sustainable economic diversification, reduce poverty and inequality, and improve the well-being of its population.

Overview of Angolan Economy: Economic Challenges

The Angolan economy has been facing significant challenges, and its heavy dependence on oil exports has made it vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. In 2014, the oil price crash and subsequent recession highlighted the risks associated with this dependence. Despite efforts to diversify the economy, progress has been slow, and the lack of diversification has resulted in limited job opportunities, particularly in the formal sector, with high levels of poverty and inequality.

According to the World Bank (2022), poverty rates in Angola remain high, with about 32.3% of the population living below the poverty line. Limited access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social protection further perpetuates poverty and stifles human capital development. Income inequality exacerbates social tensions and hinders social and economic cohesion, necessitating targeted policies and interventions to reduce poverty and promote inclusive growth (African Development Bank, 2021). In addition, Angola struggles to generate sufficient formal employment opportunities, particularly for urban areas and the youth population. Around 80% of jobs are informal, and half are in the primary sector, often subsistence work (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). Urban and youth unemployment rates remain high, limiting economic mobility and contributing to social challenges.

The country also faces significant challenges in human capital development. Inadequate provision of quality education and healthcare services hampers the potential productivity of the population, hindering innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic diversification. According to the World Economic Forum (2022), Angola ranks 135th out of 140 countries in the Health and Primary Education pillar of the Global Competitiveness Index (Global Competitive Report, 2022).

Infrastructure deficits pose significant constraints on economic activities in Angola. The country has a relatively underdeveloped infrastructure, with poor road networks, limited electricity access, and inadequate telecommunications infrastructure. The lack of infrastructure limits the country's ability to attract private sector investment and hampers its competitiveness in the global market (United Nations Industrial Development Organizations, 2022).

Governance and institutional challenges further hinder Angola's economic development. Corruption, bureaucracy, and limited transparency can hinder investment, impede business growth, and erode public trust. Angola ranks 147th out of 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, indicating high levels of corruption (Transparency International, 2021). The poor public sector governance has also contributed to a lack of trust in the government and institutions, leading to reduced private sector investment and economic growth.

Inflation has been high over the years, with rates reaching as high as 27% in December 2021, which has led to a reduction in the purchasing power of the local currency, making imports expensive and affecting the country's balance of payments (International Monetary Fund, 2022). The exchange rate has also been unstable, leading to significant fluctuations and uncertainty in the economy.

Reforms to Promote Inclusive Economic Growth and Development

To promote inclusive economic growth and development, the government has implemented several reforms in various areas. One such area is economic diversification, where Angola has initiated reforms to stimulate non-oil sectors and reduce its heavy dependence on oil exports. The government has implemented investment incentives, regulatory reforms, and infrastructure development projects in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and renewable energy. While there have been some positive outcomes, progress has been mixed. The agriculture sector has shown promise, with increased production and exports, but challenges such as limited access to finance and inadequate infrastructure hinder further growth (Republic of Angola, 2021). Similarly, the development of manufacturing and tourism sectors has been slow, requiring sustained efforts to attract investment and enhance competitiveness (African Trade Observatory, 2022).

Another important area of reform is support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The government has implemented reforms to improve access to finance, simplify business registration processes, and provide training and mentoring programs for entrepreneurs. These initiatives have led to increased formalization of SMEs and improved access to credit (Republic of Angola, 2021). However, challenges remain, including limited access to finance for smaller businesses, inadequate business development services, and an unfavorable business environment. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing efforts to enhance the capacity of SMEs and create an enabling environment for their growth (US Department of State, 2022).

Angola has also implemented reforms to improve the quality of education, enhance healthcare services, and promote vocational training programs as part of its human capital development efforts. Efforts have been made to increase access to education and healthcare, resulting in improved enrollment rates and expanded healthcare facilities (Republic of Angola, 2021). However, the quality of education and healthcare services remains a concern, with limited resources and infrastructure. Vocational training programs need to be better aligned with market needs to enhance employability.

Further investments in human capital development are necessary to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic diversification (World Investment Report, 2021).

Infrastructure development is another area of focus for the government, with reforms to improve road networks, expand electricity access, and enhance telecommunications infrastructure. While some progress has been made, particularly in the construction of new roads and power generation capacity, the pace of infrastructure development has been slow, and the quality of infrastructure remains inadequate in many areas (EIU ViewsWire, 2022). Continued investments, public-private partnerships, and effective project management are essential to address infrastructure gaps and improve Angola's competitiveness.

Angola has also taken steps to combat corruption, streamline bureaucracy, and improve transparency in public institutions as part of its governance and transparency reforms. However, corruption levels remain high, as indicated by Angola's low ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index. Addressing corruption requires comprehensive reforms, including strengthening anti-corruption institutions, promoting transparency in public procurement, and implementing effective oversight mechanisms (Transparency International, 2021). Additionally, efforts to improve the efficiency of public administration, reduce red tape, and enhance the rule of law are necessary to create an enabling environment for private sector investment.

Despite the reforms implemented, Angola continues to face various challenges to its economic development. Poverty rates remain high, and access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social protection is limited (World Health Organisation, 2021). The country struggles to generate sufficient formal employment opportunities, particularly for urban areas and the youth population. Infrastructure deficits and institutional weaknesses also hinder economic activities in Angola. To address these challenges, sustained efforts are needed to enhance economic diversification, support SMEs, improve human capital development, and address governance and transparency issues. The government should also focus on reducing poverty and inequality, promoting job creation, and enhancing infrastructure development to improve Angola's competitiveness and foster inclusive economic growth and development.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the challenges and opportunities identified in the previous sections, this policy paper proposes a comprehensive policy agenda for promoting inclusive economic growth and development in Angola. The policy recommendations can be grouped into four main areas: economic diversification, human capital development, infrastructure development, and governance and transparency.

Economic Diversification

To promote economic diversification, the Angolan government should:

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for economic diversification that identifies priority sectors and implements targeted policies and initiatives.
- Provide investment incentives and support for non-oil sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and renewable energy.
- Address challenges such as limited access to finance and inadequate infrastructure that hinder the growth of non-oil sectors.
- Encourage private sector investment in non-oil sectors through public-private partnerships, streamlined business registration processes, and a favorable regulatory environment.
- Promote regional trade and investment through regional integration initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Human Capital Development

To improve human capital development in Angola, the government should:

- Increase the budget allocation for education and healthcare and prioritize the provision of quality education and healthcare services.
- Develop vocational training programs that are aligned with market needs and provide opportunities for skills development and entrepreneurship.
- Improve access to education, particularly for girls, rural populations, and vulnerable groups.
- Develop social protection programs that target the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, including the elderly, disabled, and children.
- Address the mismatch between skills and labor market demands by developing a comprehensive job creation strategy that targets high-growth sectors and promotes youth employment.

Infrastructure Development

To address infrastructure deficits and enhance Angola's competitiveness, the government should:

- Develop a national infrastructure plan that prioritizes key infrastructure projects and identifies funding sources.
- Promote public-private partnerships in infrastructure development to leverage private sector expertise and resources.
- Improve the quality and coverage of road networks, particularly in rural areas, to facilitate the movement of goods and people.
- Expand access to electricity through investments in renewable energy and grid expansion.
- Enhance telecommunications infrastructure to improve connectivity and reduce the digital divide.

Governance and Transparency

To improve governance and transparency in Angola, the government should:

- Strengthen anti-corruption institutions and promote transparency in public procurement.
- Improve public sector governance by reducing bureaucracy and enhancing the efficiency of public administration.
- Enhance the rule of law and promote judicial independence.
- Promote citizen participation in decision-making processes and increase public accountability.
- Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to improve public awareness of government policies and initiatives.

Conclusion

Angola faces significant challenges to its economic development, including limited diversification, high poverty rates, inadequate human capital development, infrastructure deficits, and governance and transparency issues. To promote inclusive economic growth and development, the government must implement targeted policies and initiatives that address these challenges. The policy recommendations proposed in this paper aim to support economic diversification, enhance human capital development, address infrastructure deficits, and improve governance and transparency. These policies require sustained efforts and investments over the long term to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation, reduce poverty and inequality, and improve the quality of life for all Angolans.

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Topic 3

International Relations and International Security

Security Dilemma Between USA and China: A Strategic Perception Approach[1]

Anastasios-Nikolaos Kanellopoulos[2]

Abstract

This paper approaches the "Security Dilemma" as the cornerstone of Realist school of thought strategic Theory. According to that, states are regularly trapped into competition escalations, due to the lack of a clear "opponent" strategy and operational decisions' understanding. This situation, leads to political distrust, occurring economical rivalries and military conflicts. Subsequently, 21st century China's commercial and military power rising, creates fear for the states in the East Asia region and the global naval powers, a situation that promotes a new world competition between USA and China.

Keywords: Security dilemma, perceptional strategy, economic rivalry, strategic competition, USA, China, East Asia.

Introduction

Strategic perception refers to an organization's ability to collect, interpret and process information and intelligence about its strategic environment and utilize it to achieve strategic planning and make decisions. This framework involves the identification of patterns and trends, that highlight the changing operational and strategic circumstances, assessing simultaneously potential future developments. Thus, a strong strategic perception is essential for a competitive organization or a state, as it consists an intelligence-led function, determining the competition escalations decisions (Chorev and Shumacher, 2014).

In addition, the strategic perception constitutes the pillar of Security Dilemmas creation, leading the high-level decision makers to misunderstandings regarding states' pursuits. This paper examines, the Security Dilemma situation, between USA and China and tries to determine whether it relays on both states' strategic perception.

Security Dilemma Theory

"Security Dilemma" consists a chief academic approach of the Realist school of thought, on the field of International Relations. It is the situation when the efforts of a state to increase its security, increase or creates mistrust and fear to other states, leading them to take measures proactively, that may generate conflicts. The inventor of the term John Herz (1948), states that "the increase in the power of one state leads to the decrease in the power of another". Simultaneously, Herbert Butterfield

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[2] Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece.

following Herz, supports that "Security Dilemma" is generated by the lack of real knowledge of the adversary's intentions, meaning that it may rely on perception management issues (Butterfield, 1951). This academic view, highlighted the great subjectivity regarding the perception of the factors, that could lead to the "Thucydian trap", as it is possible for states to misunderstand their competitors' decisions and actions' aiming, escalating their reactions excessively, due to the distorted information or perception they have about another state (Tang, 2009).

Thucydides in "Peloponnesian War", without intending to shape the initial perception of "Thucydian trap", embraced the cornerstone Theory of Realism thinking. In a world that tents to resemble progressively to the Hellenic pollical structure of 5th century BC., the rise of Athens' power and the anxiety it caused in Sparta, in the period prior the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, is alike to present looming conflict between the USA and China. Approximating the period of the 5th century BC, the 21st century's international system is in a regime of structural anarchy, where states seek to ensure their security and increase their power.

Therefore, the constant rise of China in the international stage is corelated with the lack of a substantial strategic consideration of its intentions, leading to the formation of "strategic fears" in the West and especially in the USA.

Economic Rivalry

Since 1978, the year that China changed its economic policy, the country is showing growth per year, on an average of 10% of GDP. The great shift in Chinese policy took place following long-term diplomacy by the US, which led to China's decision to stop the economic policies of a closed, "Soviet Union-style" economy and to gradually join the open-type internationalized economies of the West. The change in policy allowed the involvement of Western international companies in Chinese territory, with a simultaneous increase in trends for trade and the creation of commercial infrastructure in the country. This policy resulted to rapid growth of trade between the US and China, since 1985 (Scobell, 2012).

Furthermore, China's economic policy conversion was completed in December 2001, the year of entrance to the World Trade Organization. By joining the organization, China accepted the rules of the global trading and financial system. Following the above developments, USA and the Liberal school of thought in "International Relations", considered that there was a possibility of developing economic relations with China, under a framework of international control, in a global system that would maintain economic primacy and develop cooperative trade games with Chinese companies in

East Asia (De Graaff and Van Apeldoorn, 2018). Nevertheless, the first negative sign was the permanent Chinese policy of exercising partial regulatory control over companies operating in China.

In 2010, China's GDP surpassed that of Japan, upgrading the country to the second largest economy in the world. This was the result of both external factors, such as the Chinese opening to international trade and economic system and a series of internal economic developments. China, since the beginning of 2000, promoted and increased its urbanization policy, giving the country many millions of new workers in the secondary and tertiary production sectors. Sequentially, spurred an increase in savings, through a network of government control (Heywood, 2011). Eventually, this savings policy combined with keeping the yuan's exchange rate low against the dollar, made it possible to provide external lending to third countries, increasing China's diplomatic power.

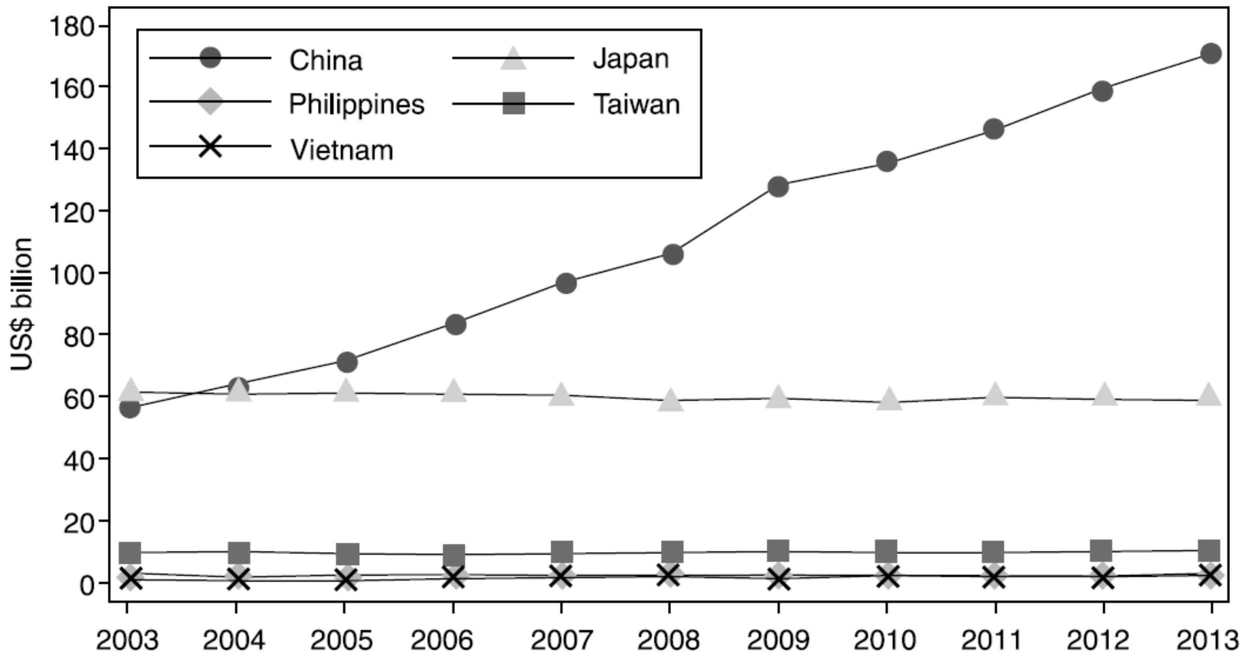
These developments particularly disturbed the Western political system, that was observing China becoming the center of the world's commercial and manufacturing industry, during the first decade of the 21st century. Nevertheless, China has laid a strong foundation for trade cooperation with the European Union, upgrading the Chinese merchant fleet and establishing strategic partnerships with maritime trade lobbies such as the Hellenic (Huang et al., 2020). In addition, it formed commercial agreements on port control at important points, of the China-EU maritime trade route (Van der Putten, 2014).

As a result, USA, for the first time after the end of the Second World War, feels that its economic primacy is threatened. Major financial houses predict that within the next decade, China's GDP will surpass that of USA (Fortune, 2021). Additionally, as of December 2020, Chinese SOEs held US debt equivalent to just over a trillion dollars.

Therefore, it is easy to understand that China's rapid economic expansion in the last twenty years creates a climate of fear for American economic interests. While USA foreign policy has attempted and succeeded in bringing the Chinese system into a regime of participation in the global market, as well as in the commercial and financial system, it is now understood that the intent of Chinese policy is more collusion than cooperation, with ultimate goal of global economic dominance.

Strategical Competition in the Eastern Asia

China's rapid economic growth during the first twenty years of the 21st century, has particularly concerned states in the Eastern Asia region. The fear lies in the looming transformation of economic power, into military power, through the new armament programs that China implements (Hundman et al., 2015).



(Fu, R., et al., 2015: 183)

Through increasing military power, China is likely to intensify its claim enforcement operation in the East Asian maritime region (Lanteigne, 2008). Specifically, in the public version of the Chinese national security strategy for 2019, the intention to upgrade the military is apparent, with the aim of responding to the Chinese interest on ensuring control of the China Sea (Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, 2019). Chinese claims in the region began in 1947, when the communist regime adopted the "eleven-dash line", placing outside the framework of international law and interstate understanding, under Chinese sovereignty, almost the entire East China Sea Asia, violating the sovereign rights of all states in the region (Papasotiriou, 2013). In the following years, Chinese policy adapting to the international economic and legal framework in other fields, did not retreat from its positions regarding the China Sea region, fearing that such a move would create problems of internal legitimacy. On the contrary, under the same framework of internal pressure, it escalated its political confrontation with Taiwan, during the decade 2010-2020.

Under these circumstances and with the real Chinese intentions unknown, USA fearing China's regional dominance with "hard power" in East Asia, has steadily increased its involvement in the region. In a context of solid military defense cooperation, maintain USs military units in Japan, South Korea, and Australia, as well as significantly enhance their defense efforts by providing weapons systems (Ekmektsioglou and Lee, 2020). As far as Taiwan is concerned, they maintain a defense agreement to ensure the essential independence of the island state, supplying it with anti-submarine warfare and "denial of access" weapon systems. In addition, the US continues to develop partnerships with other countries in the region such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines, providing steady diplomatic support against Chinese claims and maintaining naval bases on their territory.

Consequently, the effort to upgrade China's military capabilities, combined with its uncompromising and illegal claims, in the maritime areas of East Asia, causes “strategic fear” to East Asia states the countries. USA is missing a clear view of the Chinese real intentions, sees China's military build-up as a threat to the emergence of a new military regional power and escalates its presence in East Asia, both militarily and diplomatically.

Strategic situation after Covid-19 and Ukraine war Taiwan

Subsequent events, such as the covid-19 and the war in Ukraine in 2020-2022, created an environment of regional economic constraints and conflicts. USA increased its strategic and operational support to Taiwan, thus upleveled the intensity of its economic confrontation with China, attempting to limit its economic growth at the expense of the US economy. Moreover, China has further developed existing alliances, such as those with Iraq and Iran and attempts to play the role of international relations “coordinator” in the Middle East and Asia (MacGillivray, 2018; Sun, 2021).

In addition, it developed its economic and military relationship with Russia, keeping a neutral relationship in the Ukrainian war. This diplomatic attitude is connected with China’s strategy towards Taiwan. Beyond that, strengthening relations with Russia can support Chinese interests in Africa, Latin America and vis-a-vis Japan.

Furthermore, the Aukus agreement and the discussions between NATO and Southeast Asian countries, attempted to limit China's capabilities in the Intelligence operational field (O’Connor et al., 2023). On the contrary, China proceeded to new alliances development in the Pacific region, such as the security agreement with the Solomon Islands, endeavoring to increase its military operational capabilities in the region (Fraenkel and Smith, 2022).

Strategic Perception

The present study, assesses the extent of the economic competition and China's rise in East Asia, as factors that reinforce the existence of a "Security Dilemma" between the USA and China. Besides, observing macroscopically the political reality and examining these factors, it is understood that the Western intelligence gap of China’s real intentions in the global political arena and regionally in Asia, leads to tensions strengthening and military escalation.

It was mentioned in the chapter "USA-China Economic Rivalry" that the diplomatic relations between the two countries were excellent during the second half of the 20th century. The political climate seems to have changed with the rise of Xi Jinping to the political scene in 2012. The new Chinese political leadership pushed China to diplomatic exploitation of its monetary and commercial power. Thus, the country rapidly developed its strategic planning, for the sea and land trade connection between China and Europe. In addition, by forming new economic agreements in Africa and the Middle East, China attempted to ensure its energy autonomy. In this context, it developed close cooperation with countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, Pakistan and Iraq. The economic deals quickly evolved into lending financial support in countries, such as Pakistan and Iraq, as well as diplomatic support on critical issues, such as Iran’s nuclear program (Scita, 2021).

Beyond the above economic and diplomatic developments, the factor of Chinese internal political stability is of critical importance. China is governed under a framework of “Communist Capitalism”. This means that, political absolute control is maintained by the executives of the "Party", under the strict framework of state surveillance, overall economic and political movements. This significantly reduces the possibilities of foreign political intervention in China's internal issues, leading to inability of Chinese essential strategic goals understanding.

The above mentioned internal and external Chinese policies, create a climate of suspicion for other powers in the international environment. In this climate, a state such as USA is unable to ascertain the true intentions of China's economic and political rise. However, it should be pointed out that China's policy possibly aiming at securing its territory and internal stability. If we examine the political reality from the Chinese side, we find that the country is called upon to operate in a strategic environment surrounded by "personal enemies" or strategic allies of the USA (Balzacq et al., 2019). Especially, regarding its diplomatic relations in the region, while there is an attempt of partial normalization with countries such as India, it is evident at the same time an inability to develop strong alliances with countries whose interests could coincide with its own, such as Russia, despite the serious efforts that took place in 2022 and 2023 after the start of the Ukraine war (Holslag, 2009; Pardesi, 2010). This is mainly due to the "political autism" of Chinese perceptional politics, which often focuses on solving internal problems and loses the "big strategic picture", placing every neighboring power, in the status of the "enemy" (Luttwak and Carson, 2019).

Conclusions

Eventually, the international balance between the USA and China was examined, through the factors that influence and increase the "Security Dilemma". China's economic empowerment was approached as an event that causes fear of loss of economic primacy for USA, while increasing China's diplomatic power. In addition, China’s claims and conflicts of interest in East Asia, reinforce USA's perception of fear, for the emergence of China as a military regional power in the region. Finally, the most important influencing factor of the "Dilemma" between the two powers, is the lack of understanding of their real strategic intentions. This intelligence gap, may lead China's decisions that cause the extreme reaction of USA. Hence USA escalates its presence in East Asia.

It is certain that, during historical moments, when a new power attempts its global emergence, in the international primacy, the previous stronger power reacts and attempts to limit it. Especially, in cases where a land power builds up and tries to gain naval power, the existent global naval power reacts, usually not by peaceful means. However, in present international environment, where significant steps have been taken in interstate understanding and cooperation, USA and China could seek cooperative frameworks, to manage the fields of interests’ conflicts. Such a cooperative perceptional approach, may become possible through the strategic alignment of USA and Chinese interests in matters concerning the Arctic seas and Northeast Asia.

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The Greco-Albanian Relations During the Period 1974-1996: From Irredentism to Political Realism[1]

Manolis Peponas[2]

Abstract

Greece and Albania are two countries that confronted each other several times during the first decades of the 20th century. The fact that both Albanians and Greeks were living for centuries in the same geographical region (Epirus) caused several disputes and the intervention of the Great Powers. However, after several years of armed or political confrontation (1913-1945), Greece understood the necessity for peaceful coexistence. The effort to re-establishment their relations was not easy because of the power of the nationalistic organizations. This paper aims to describe how political realism prevailed against irredentism.

Keywords: Greece, Albania, Karamanlis, Papandreou, Hoxha, Greek Junta, international relations, history, 20th century, nationalism.

Introduction

The main issues that determined the Greco-Albanian relations during the 20th century were the Northern Epirus and Chams Questions. Both could be considered as implications of the nationalistic movements that rose in the Balkans during the previous period (19th century), as well as the collapse of Ottoman domination. Consequently, after the Balkan Wars and the establishment of the Albanian state (1912 - 1913), thousands of Greek-speaking Orthodox who lived in Northern Epirus were forced to be subjects of the Albanian Prince Wied, and a particularly significant number of Albanian-speaking Muslims who were living in Chameria had to be Greek citizens. In the following years, Athens and Tirana tried to protect those populations, using their compatriots frequently as political tools (Margaritis, 2005; Manta, 2004; Kontis, 1994). Especially the Northern Epirus Question dominated Greek politics, mainly because several Northern Epirots migrated to Greece after the Second World War and created powerful organizations (Skoulidas, 2021: 143-164).

The Greek government maintained the war status against Albania since 1940 to preserve its territorial demands for Northern Epirus. Despite political leaders like Konstantinos Karamanlis believing in the decades of 1950 and 1960 that the re-establishment of the Greco-Albanian relations was crucial for the restoration of the international order in the Balkan peninsula, no one was able to take the political risk to dissatisfy the Epirotic organizations (Skoulidas, ibid). Therefore, the tension between the two states remained until the coup that organized the Colonels Makarezos and Papadopoulos and the

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[2] National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece.

Brigadier Patakos on 21 April 1967 (Woodhouse, 1985).

The establishment of a far-right dictatorship in Greece influenced the Greco-Albanian relations. Paradoxically, despite the ideology of its leaders, the "Junta" decided to approach Enver Hoxha, a profound communist with chauvinistic ideas for the future of his country. The main reason was that, at that period, Albania was afraid of Tito's attack and continued its distancing from Moscow. Thus, the Greek dictators believed that they could contribute to Albania's rapprochement with the West - something very favorable for the U.S. government. In this way, in 1970, Greece and Albania signed a commercial agreement in Paris, while the following year Greek embassy in Tirana and the Albanian embassy in Athens began to work again after three decades (Valden, 2017: 124-128; Sfetas, 2021: 170-175).

The Junta's policy towards Albania did not concern the Northern Epirots, who continued to suffer the hostility of the Hoxha's regime. That caused the resignation of the leaders of the most significant Epirotic organization, the Central Committee of the Northern Epirus Struggle [Κεντρική Επιτροπή Βορειοηπειρωτικού Αγώνα] in 1972 (Makedonia, 25-1-1972: 1). However, no one in Greece could criticize the decisions of the dictators without facing the danger of prosecution at that period. After the fall of the dictatorship (1974), the new Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis had to find a way to improve the Greco-Albanian relations without sacrificing the Greek minority in Albania.

Karamanlis' realpolitik (1974 - 1980)

Konstantinos Karamanlis returned to Greece in 1974. Firstly, he had to handle a dangerous situation in Cyprus, where the Turkish army had invaded. At the same time, inside the country (especially in the Armed Forces) were remaining several supporters of the Junta. The Greek politician institutionalized the "Metapolitefsi" (the political transition of the state to a democracy) but failed to prevent the occupation of the northern part of Cyprus by the Turks. For the subsequent years, the fear of a Greco-Turkish war determined the foreign policy of Athens (Karamouzi, 2015: 11-24).

Considering Turkey as the most dangerous neighbor of Greece, Karamanlis planned a "realpolitik" in the Balkans. He aimed for the preservation of friendly international relations in the peninsula - something that would offer Athens the opportunity to concentrate on its disputes with Ankara. In this way, he approached Yugoslavia and Romania, two states governed by communist leaders, while also visiting Moscow in 1979 (Triantaphyllou, 1997: 176).

Albania was not a priority for Karamanlis. Despite that, three years before his trip to the USSR (May of 1976), the Greek Minister of Commerce Ioannis Varvitsiotis visited Tirana, signing a five year commercial agreement with the Albanian government. That move underlined the Greek Prime

Minister's intention for a peaceful coexistence of the two states, although Hoxha continued to believe that he desired the separation of Northern Epirus. Varvitsiotis' paradigm followed several politicians in the subsequent period (Ntagios, 2015: 320, 323).

The most notable decision of the Karamanlis government occurred in 1980 when the Greek leader forwarded to the parliament a bill for the end of the state of war with Albania. That was a bold move, considering the power of the Epirotic organizations. Indeed, the intense opposition of the latter caused the cancelation of the plan and contributed to the Karamanlis' loss in the elections of 1981 (Ntagios, 2015: 325).

Papandreou and the end of the state of war (1981 – 1989, 1993-1996)

In 1981, the socialist Andreas Papandreou was elected Prime Minister of Greece. Soon after, his Albanian counterpart, Mehmet Shehu, congratulated him with a warm telegram. Shehu knew not only about the ideological influences of the Greek leader but also his will for a Balkan agreement focusing on cooperation in economy, culture, and foreign policy. Indeed, Papandreou intended to improve his country's relations with its northern neighbors, mainly because -like his predecessor- he believed that Turkey was the real threat to the Greek territorial integrity. As a result, he advised his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karolos Papoulias, to approach Tirana (Ntagios, 2015: 349-350).

At the same time, in Albania, Hoxha and his collogues began to understand how isolated the regime was. The tension between Tirana and Belgrade for Kosovo, the continuous clamors of the Greek minority in Northern Epirus, and the distancing with the United States and the Soviet Union simultaneously resulted in constant anxiety for the Albanians. The latter were living in poverty and had no political freedom. Gradually, Hoxha understood his people's displeasure, and, fearing a possible social revolt, he began approaching the West.

In this context, a CIA memorandum created in 1983 mentioned that:

"In a marked departure from its usual xenophobia, Albania is beginning to expand its economic and political contacts abroad. In the past year, Tirana has made some solid gains, concluding a trade pact with China and making progress in its economic relations with Italy. The increase in Albania's international activity, in our opinion, is caused by:

1) An acute need for spare parts for Chinese-built machines and an interest in new technology to spur economic development.
2) An apparent desire to increase international understanding for its point of view in a deepening dispute with rival Yugoslavia" (CIA, 1983).

Albania's "departure from its usual xenophobia" was helped by the death of Hoxha on 11 April 1985. The Albanian politician had led his country for four decades, smashing the opposition and depressing the minorities. Despite the opinion expressed by authors like Miranda Vickers, his foreign policy caused international isolation and financial devastation for his country. His successor Ramiz Alia was a low-profile leader who understood that numerous reforms had to occur for the survival of the Albanian people. Especially in the Balkans, although he knew how crucial the Kosova and Northern Epirus Questions were for the involved governments, Alia desired to improve Tirana's relationship with Belgrade and Athens. It was the right time for the latter to reapproach Albania and end the state of the war declared in 1940 (Vickers, 2001: 210-211; Britannica, 2023).

In Athens, Papoulias was sure that the survival of the Greek minority was related to the improvement of Greco-Albanian relations. Also, he criticized the policy of the previous governments as stiff; for him, only a friendly Albania could guarantee the protection of the rights of the Northern Epirots. Thus, on 28 August 1987, Papandreou and his Ministerial Council declared the end of the state of war that occurred with Albania until 1940. That was a hard decision that attracted the hostility of the opposition (Ntagios, 2015: 358). The latter underlined that the government did not receive any Albanian promise about the improvement of the position of the Greek minority as a bargain for the resolution. In fact, apart from Papandreou and Papoulia's hopes, Tirana continued its hostile behavior, considering the Northern Epirots as separatists who could cause trouble to the communist regime (Kontis, 1994: 175).

The opposition parties were not the only groups that disagreed with the policy of the Greek government. The Epirotic organizations also declared their antithesis, referring in their protests to the hostility of the Albanian government against their compatriots. Those views were radicalized further during the decade of 1990 when the communist regime fell, and thousands of refugees from Albania (both Northern Epirots and Albanian) migrated to Greece. Papandreou's successor, Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis (1990 - 1993), visited Tirana in December of 1991 and tried to discourage a further exodus of the Greek minority. Obviously, advice like those was not enough to stop the devasted people from approaching the Greek frontiers for a better future. Hence, the migration continued till the first years of the 21st century (Vickers, 2001: 218-219).

In this context, the radicals believed it was the right time to act. In April of 1994, a group of the Greek terrorist organization Font for the Liberation of Northern Epirus (Μέτωπο Απελευθέρωσης Βορείου Ηπείρου) attacked against an Albanian barrack at the village Episkopi. The terrorists killed two soldiers and injured four others. A period of suspicion was followed in both countries. Some months after the attack, the CIA quoted:

“Relations between Albania and Greece have deteriorated sharply following a violent border attack in April, the latest incident in three years of strained bilateral ties. Greece has stepped up accusations of Albanian “repression” of its ethnic-Greek minority, while Tirana fears Athens has designs on the Greek minority region in southern Albania” (CIA, 1993).

The attack in Episkopi could be considered a violent reaction against the re-establishment of Greco-Albanian relations and the end of the state of war between the two parts. Despite very few things about the Font for the Liberation of Northern Epirus revealed, it was apparent that the Greek government did not encourage actions like that. Papandreou, just like Karamanlis, believed that the support of the Greek minority in Albania had to be peaceful and that both peoples needed to coexist harmonically. His successors followed his path.

Conclusions

The study of the history of contemporary Greco-Albanian relations offers some great lessons. The most significant is that the nationalistic cries always resulted in great disasters for the two countries. For example, the terrorist attack in Episkopi embarrassed Greece worldwide, and incidents like the murder of the Northern Epirot Aristotelis Goumas by Albanian nationalists in Himara in 2010 caused dangerous diplomatic implications. The same thing happened in 2018 when Albanian policemen killed Konstantinos Katsifas (a Greek local of Bularat) in an armed confrontation. Each of those episodes fed the Greek and Albanian extremists and caused several problems for the governments.

In fact, the struggle of political realism against irredentism stigmatized Greco-Albanian relations during the period 1974-1996. Political leaders such as Konstantinos Karamanlis and Andreas Papandreou understood how necessary it was to improve their country's relations with Albania because that could lead to political stability in the Balkan peninsula. In this context, they decided to confront the irredentistic Epirotic organizations, executing a "realpolitik" at any cost. That resulted in the security of the peaceful coexistence of the Greek and Albanian peoples.

On the other side, the critics against them had a correct point: the improvement of Greco-Albanian relations must not occur at the expense of the Northern Epirots. The survival of the latter remains significant for both moral and strategic reasons. Morally, those populations inhabit the same region for centuries; Northern Epirus was the homeland of their ancestors, the place where Greek culture was always present. Strategically, Athens could use its minority as a channel for communication and cooperation with Tirana. So, a requirement for the preservation of friendly relations with Albania is the execution of a more energetic policy by the Greek government: Athens must preserve with every means the legally recognized freedoms of the Northern Epirots and use them to approach its counterpart.

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Counterterrorism in Syria and Iraq: The Issue of ISIS Captives in Detention. Lessons from the Algerian Experience [1]

Nouha Khelfa[2]

Abstract

This policy brief aims to re-examine the situation of ISIS captives in detention in Iraq and Syria, and the serious security threat that it might pose on the long term, especially, after the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions on movement. This policy brief proposes to extract lessons from the Algerian experience during the 1990s of counterterrorism. The Algerian approach to counterterrorism relies on both the military and the soft method. The Global War on Terror against ISIS was successful militarily, but it lacks the soft method to deal with what comes next to prevent the recreation of new terrorist groups in ISIS concentrated camps. This brief focuses mainly on the *Algerian Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation*, rebuilding trust, state's regulations of religion and border protection as effective ways to counterterrorism that can be reproduced in Iraq and Syria.

Keywords: ISIS, Algeria, Iraq, Syria, Counterterrorism, Soft method, Camps, Global War on Terror.

Introduction

Thanks to the combined efforts of the U.S.-led international coalition that came together to destroy it alongside Iraqi and Syrian allies, ISIS is a diminished danger more than three years after its military defeat in Iraq and Syria. ISIS has been able to carry out assaults year after year even though it no longer controls any territory, despite the fact that the terrorist group's capacity has been significantly weakened and millions of people have returned home. The problems that the ISIS fight left behind are still with us, and there is no end in sight. This is one of the most painful human legacies. For many reasons, there is an urgent need to reevaluate the Global Coalition against Daesh's policies and strategies to counterterrorism.

The ways the Global Coalition views ISIS is problematic because it also influences its strategies to counterterrorism. They view ISIS soldiers, suspects and families as one. However, in fact, they are not. Kurilla classifies this view into three categories. First, "ISIS at large" which is a generation of ISIS leaders and fighters in Syria and Iraq, with their radical ideology. The U.S. Department of Defense estimated that 65,600 detainees are held as ISIS suspects and family members in Syria. 55, 600 are in camps and 10,000 are in prison (« Syria », 2022). Second, ISIS is in custody. An actual

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[2] Universitas Islam Internasional, Indonesia.

"ISIS army" is being held captive in Syria and Iraq. Third, the probable successors to ISIS are here. These are the more than 25,000 kids who are in danger in the al-Hol camp. The camp's children are ripe candidates for radicalization by ISIS (USCENTCOM, s. d.). Hence, this three dimensional classification of ISIS predict catastrophic results of the Global Coalition's strategy of ISIS camps in Syria.

In fact, after years of efforts of fight against terrorism, the Global Coalition could arrest not just the terrorists but also their families and children and any suspect of terrorist activity from around the world, especially Syrians and Iraqis and gathered them in concentrated camps. Al-Hawl refugee camp in northern Syria, nearby Syrian-Iraqi border, for instance, is formally controlled by the U.S. backed Syrian Democratic Forces, but in reality it is monitored by ISIS that uses it as a camp for indoctrination and recruitment (Pantagon, 2021). Therefore, it seems clear that these camps are centers for breading new generations of ISIS soldiers instead of serving their original objective which is counterterrorism.

To monitor this problem and the threat of ISIS in general, I suggest that the Global Coalition against Daesh should benefit from the Algerian approach, which fuse hard and soft strategies, in its decade of war on terror during the 1990s and the aftermath, for its effectiveness in annihilating terrorism from the country and protecting of borders from the expansion of global jihad from neighbors: Tunisia, Libya, Mali and Niger.

The Algerian Approach of Counterterrorism:

After the Islamic Salvation Front Party (FIS) declared jihad against the Algerian government and sparked a civil war, the fight against extremism in Algeria officially began in 1990 with two insurgencies in question GIA and AIS, both affiliated with Salafi-jihadim. While the administration initially concentrated on employing the Algerian military to repress extremist groups, it soon became clear that doing so only fueled more extremism and that effective counterterrorism needed addressing the groups' ideological appeal.

The Algerian approach hasn't only eradicated the country from terrorism; it also has developed immunity against future radicalization and recruitment. For instance, IS was unable to persuade Algerians to support their cause. Only 170 people joined the organisation, compared to around 3,000 Tunisians and 1,500 Moroccans who joined IS and many more who tried to. Even Jund Al-Khilafa (Soldiers of the Caliphate), the Algerian affiliate of IS, was unable to pose a serious danger to the nation. These data show a significant shift from former times, prior to Algeria's comprehensive war on terrorism: Algerians were among the first combatants to head to Afghanistan in order to join the worldwide jihad movement against the Soviet Union; many combatants then joined extremist groups during the 1990s civil conflict (Bendaoudi, 2018). Thus, given the long-term success of Algeria in its war against terror, it is promising to apply similar approach to countries that suffer from terrorism such as Syria and Iraq.

The Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation

The Algerian approach against terrorism metamorphosed from hard to soft strategies. At first, "in response to the increasing violence and in line with its 'eradicator'* strategy, the government decided in 1993 to task the Directorate-General for National Security with waging 'total war' against the armed groups," (Sour, 2015: 29). Parallel to this military war on terror, the regime encouraged "repentant" insurgents to speak out in public as part of the development of its "soft" strategy. In their testimony, which was aired on television during prime time, the former guerrillas referred to the guerilla fight as "hell" rather than as a source of honor and pride (Hasan et al., 2012: 81). The confession of repentant terrorists portrayed their recruitment as search for survival sources and social reasons rather than being convinced with the ideology itself.

As a result, the youth, who could serve as a source of guerrilla combatants, were put at the center of the regime's economic strategy. The government also provided them with contracts with the Ministry of Defense in addition to positions in the public sector, bonuses, and help with home construction. The state persuaded many young men to enlist by providing them with the security of home and a steady income as opposed to the chance of death in the maquis. By creating this "social net" or clientelistic network, the regime assisted common Algerians in avoiding financial incentives to join an armed Islamist group (Sour, 2015: 30).

With the election of President Boutaflika, the ultimate goal of state was to put an end to the civil war by implementing a policy of national reconciliation and establishing reasonable terms for the reintegration of Islamists who were ready to give up their weapons. Eventually, in July 1999, he introduced the Civil Harmony Law. According to this law, Radical Islamists who surrendered and renounced violence before January 13 were given conditional amnesty. Islamist insurgents who had not killed anyone, committed rape, or detonated explosives in public were eligible for amnesty. Reduced prison terms, but not complete amnesty, would be given to insurgents who had committed such crimes (Hasan et al., 2012: 84).

After the civil war's end in 2006, Boutaflika unconditionally granted fighters who turned up their weapons amnesty. The government also started an innovative rehabilitation program that allowed terrorist fighters and inmates to confess their guilt and give up their radical ideology (Bendaoudi, 2018).

Rebuilding Trust

The ability of a government to uphold and strengthen security in regions under insurgent control will help to increase its legitimacy among the populace and solidify its support base. The potential of the insurgent to use violence as well as his organizational and support systems must be identified and destroyed in order to maintain government control over areas where the insurgency had an impact (Santos, 2011: 6). Hence, if this support structure is left in place, the insurgency will only be able to regain the powers it lost and preserve its ability to carry out violent attacks in that region. The Algerian government hence adopted a number of economic measures to build this kind of trust.

In order to provide its inhabitants with new economic prospects, the Algerian government launched substantial economic reforms in 2000 that included infrastructure and large-scale projects. These economic initiatives attempted to improve the government's connection with the populace, which had deteriorated throughout the so-called "dark decade," and to bring in more direct foreign investment. In order to help the families of the missing and deceased heal from their losses, Algeria also addressed the problem of the victims of the country's tragedy (Bendaoudi, 2018).

State's Regulations of Religion and the Introduction of Salafiya Al-Elmia

The state has had absolute control over religion in attempt to restrict radicalism and to reintegrate moderate Islam. The state has direct control over mosques, imams, and other civil officials, as well as a number of other domains. The state provides guidance on family regulations, and personal status is governed by a variant of sharia.

To offer religious interpretations and thereby govern the religious domain, the state employs a range of methods. The High Islamic Council is one of these tools, as it is in charge of all matters relating to Islam, as well as correcting erroneous conceptions and interpreting Islamic principles (ijtihad). The President appoints and supervises the members of the council. If necessary, the council can also issue fatwas. The National Scientific Council of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Waqf, which is made up of imams, theologians, scholars, and scientists from Algeria's forty-eight districts, was established in May 2017 to be the official body that issues fatwas.

The Algerian government has also promoted Salafiya Al-Elmia, often known as quietist Salafism, as an alternative to this harmful doctrine. Those who were dissatisfied with the violence of terrorist groups have options in the form of moderate ideas provided by Salafiya Al-Elmia. Salafiya Al-Elmia academics emphasize how the importance of their goal of personal "purification and education" will eventually result in an Islamic state devoid of violence. They renounce political activism in favor of personal religious practice (Bendaoudi, 2018).

Protecting Borders

Algeria has implemented a strict security strategy based on two tactics: coercion and deterrence. The Algerian army proactively increased its military spending and capabilities during the height of the IS threat, with an increase of 176%, bringing total yearly spending to $10.4 billion. Algerian forces concentrated on border security to prevent entry of other regionally active terrorist organizations (Bendaoudi, 2018).

Reproducing Algerian Counterterrorism Measures to Solve the Issue Detention

Like GIA and AIS in Algeria, ISIS soldiers' main motive is money. "[m]oney, not ideology, was the primary motivation for joining AQI [Al-Qaeda in Iraq]" (Gerges, 2021: 84). This new model of caliphate's economy relies mainly on local recruitment. Jones and Solomon argue that," given the origins of much of its fighter population, ISIS's state-building project has unsurprisingly been heavily reliant on the economic networks that local Sunni tribes had constructed. A – Perhaps optimistic – estimate puts ISIS's 2015 revenues at $900 million (Solomon et al., 2016). Thus, the basic platform of both jihadi organizations is identical. Especially that both groups recruit members, exploiting the economic failures in the respective countries. As a result, the Algerian scenario can be applied to ISIS.

First, the Global Coalition should employ something similar the Algerian Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation by granting general amnesty for ISIS captives in detention who are willing to repent and who have not committed war crimes such as rape and murder. This applies, especially, to women and youth in camps. This step would guarantee that a new ISIS army is not recreating itself within these camps. It also would attract ISIS insurgents who are still affiliated with ISIS because they have no other choice to put down arms and repent.

More importantly, the Global Coalition should unify their efforts to return these captives to their homeland and ensure their reintegration in society by providing suitable jobs and sources of incomes. Children of ex terrorist should also be released and sent to rehabilitation to get better education and welfare instead of being left in camps, exposed to radicalization and future recruitment.

Second, to regain trust with the affected population, the Global Coalition should coordinate with the concerned governments to implement reforms, similar to Algerian reforms in terms of politics and economy. The Algerian state transformed its electoral system from majoritarian to proportional to host diversity and challenge fragmentation. Further, it also granted special state assistance to victims of terrorism to erase the dark memory between the state and the people. Similar measures can be introduced in Iraq and Syria.

Third, the Global Coalition in collaboration with the concerned states should have more control of religious institutions and education to spread a more tolerant version of Islam, in attempt to replicate the Algerian Salafiya Al-Elmia. After all, GIA, AIS and ISIS share one common ideology which is radical salafism, and hence replicating the same measure should be effective.

Finally, the Global Coalition should coordinate with the concerned governments to put more efforts to protect borders especially Syrian-Iraqi borders that ISIS uses to export soldiers, arms and resources. There should be more investment in border protection rather than expenditure on raids on ISIS leaders such as the last raid on Syrian village, Atmeh to kill al-Qurayshi because history has already proved that killing emirs and caliphs would not affect these terrorists' groups because they would reelect a new emir every time.

Conclusion

The issue of ISIS captives in camps in Syria and Iraq poses a huge threat regionally and globally as these camps are hosting and nurturing a literally ISIS army on one hand, and a potential whole generation of radicalized descendants of ISIS soldiers. The Global Coalition against Daesh that is responsible for these camps needs to act immediately.

Given the similarities between the nature of terrorist groups in Algeria during the Civil War and ISIS, and the social and especially the economic factors that motivate both groups, and given the outstanding success of the Algerian government to counterterrorism, lessons from the Algerian experience should be exploited.

Fighting terrorism is not a question of military war on terror alone, but it also requires soft approaches. The Algerian government focused on amnesty and the reintegration of the repentant insurgents, regaining trust with the affected population, controlling religious institutions and more focus on border protection in its war on terror. If the Global Coalition coordinates with the concerned governments to treat the issue of ISIS camps and the remaining affiliated ISIS soldiers, a major threat should be prevented.

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Resilience: Highlighting its Importance for Security and Development through References to (National) Security Strategic Documents of International Actors[1]

Georgios Koukakis[2]

Abstract

Resilience is a critical capacity for any international actor, allowing it to successfully address emerging challenges in the security environment and to seize opportunities to quickly recover from crises. This article attempts to highlight the importance of resilience for international actors - as far as security and development is concerned - by showing how they have integrated resilience into their targeting through official documents related to (national) security.

Keywords: Resilience, National Security, European Union, NATO, USA, France, Japan, United Kingdom.

Ανθεκτικότητα: Αναδεικνύοντας τη Σημασία της για την Ασφάλεια και την Ανάπτυξη μέσα από Αναφορές Στρατηγικών Εγγράφων (Εθνικής) Ασφάλειας Διεθνών Δρώντων

Γεώργιος Κουκάκης[3]

Περίληψη

Η ανθεκτικότητα αποτελεί μία κρίσιμη ικανότητα για κάθε διεθνή δρώντα, καθώς του επιτρέπει να αντιμετωπίζει με επιτυχία τις αναδυόμενες προκλήσεις του περιβάλλοντος ασφάλειας και να εκμεταλλεύεται τις ευκαιρίες που παρουσιάζονται ώστε να ανακάμπτει ταχέως μετά από την εκδήλωση κρίσεων. Το παρόν άρθρο επιχειρεί να αναδείξει τη σημασία που έχει η ανθεκτικότητα – όσον αφορά την ανάπτυξη και την ασφάλεια - για τους διεθνείς δρώντες, παρουσιάζοντας τον τρόπο με τον οποίο την έχουν ενσωματώσει στη στοχοθεσία τους μέσα από επίσημα έγγραφα που σχετίζονται με την (εθνική) ασφάλεια.

Keywords: Ανθεκτικότητα, Εθνική Ασφάλεια, Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, ΝΑΤΟ, ΗΠΑ, Γαλλία, Ιαπωνία, Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο.

Εισαγωγή

Η ανθεκτικότητα (resilience) αποτελεί μία σχετικά νέα έννοια στο χώρο της πολιτικής επιστήμης, η οποία αφορά τόσο τα κράτη όσο και τους διεθνείς οργανισμούς. Διαδραματίζει δε ιδιαίτερα

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[2] Master of Arts in «Governance, Development and Security in the Mediterranean» of the University of the Aegean, Analyst of Center for International Strategic Analyses (KEDISA), Member of the Hellenic Institute of Strategic Studies (HELISS) and Research Associate of "HERMES" Institute of International Affairs, Security & Geoeconomy (I.I.A.S.GE.), Greece.

[3] Μεταπτυχιακό Δίπλωμα Ειδίκευσης στη «Διακυβέρνηση, Ανάπτυξη και Ασφάλεια στη Μεσόγειο» του Πανεπιστημίου Αιγαίου, Αναλυτής του Κέντρου Διεθνών Στρατηγικών Αναλύσεων (ΚΕΔΙΣΑ), Μέλος του Ελληνικού Ινστιτούτου Στρατηγικών Μελετών (ΕΛ.Ι.Σ.ΜΕ.) και Ερευνητικός Συνεργάτης του "ΕΡΜΗΣ" Ινστιτούτο Διεθνών Υποθέσεων, Ασφάλειας & Γεωοικονομίας (Ι.Δ.Υ.Α.ΓΕ).

σημαντικό ρόλο κατά τη χάραξη της στρατηγικής (εθνικής) ασφάλειας των προαναφερθέντων δρώντων, καθώς είναι άμεσα συνδεδεμένη τόσο με την επιτυχή υπέρβαση των προκλήσεων όσο και με την εκμετάλλευση των ευκαιριών που παρουσιάζονται στο ταχέως μεταβαλλόμενο διεθνές περιβάλλον. Όσον αφορά τις προκλήσεις, αξίζει να τονιστεί ότι σχετίζονται με την αντιμετώπιση των απειλών (threats) και των κινδύνων (risks) οι οποίοι πολλαπλασιάζονται πλέον με εκθετικό ρυθμό λόγω της αλματώδους εξέλιξης της επιστήμης και της τεχνολογίας.

Ο όρος ανθεκτικότητα έχει διττή σημασία, καθώς περιλαμβάνει αφενός την ικανότητα ενός δρώντα να γίνεται ξανά δυνατός, υγιής, ή επιτυχημένος έπειτα από ένα δυσάρεστο γεγονός, και αφετέρου την ικανότητα ενός σώματος να επιστρέφει στην αρχική του κατάσταση αφότου έχει υποστεί κάποιου είδους παραμόρφωση (The Britannica Dictionary, n.d.). Όσον αφορά την πρώτη περίπτωση, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση την ορίζει ως την ικανότητα ενός δρώντα «*[…] όχι μόνο να αντέχει και να αντιμετωπίζει τις προκλήσεις, αλλά και να υφίσταται μεταβολές, με βιώσιμο, δίκαιο και δημοκρατικό τρόπο*» (European Commission, n.d.). Σύμφωνα δε με το λεξικό της νεοελληνικής γλώσσας, ανθεκτικός είναι ο δρώντας που «*[…] έχει αντοχή και στερεότητα, που δεν φθείρεται εύκολα […] αυτός που δεν καταβάλλεται από τις δυσκολίες, που αντέχει στις κακουχίες […]*» (Μπαμπινιώτης, 2002:186).

Σκοπός της παρούσας ανάλυσης είναι η ανάδειξη τόσο των τομέων με τους οποίους σχετίζεται η ανθεκτικότητα, όσο και της σημασίας της για την (εθνική) ασφάλεια και την ανάπτυξη. Στο σημείο αυτό αξίζει να τονιστεί ότι η ασφάλεια είναι αλληλένδετη με την ανάπτυξη, καθώς η πρώτη αποτελεί απαραίτητη προϋπόθεση της δεύτερης. Στο κείμενο που ακολουθεί παρουσιάζονται τα κυριότερα σημεία – όσον αφορά την ανθεκτικότητα - των επίσημων στρατηγικών εγγράφων έξι σημαντικών διεθνών δρώντων (Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, ΝΑΤΟ, ΗΠΑ, Γαλλία, Ιαπωνία και Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο), μέσα από την ανάλυση των οποίων εκπληρώνεται ο ερευνητικός σκοπός.

Η Στρατηγική Πυξίδα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

Το πρώτο επίσημο έγγραφο που θα αναλυθεί είναι η Στρατηγική Πυξίδα (Strategic Compass) της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης (ΕΕ), η οποία εγκρίθηκε από το Συμβούλιο αυτής στις 21 Μαρτίου 2022 (Κουκάκης, 2022α). Βασικός στόχος της ΕΕ είναι «*[…] να γίνει ένας πιο δυναμικός παράγοντας στον τομέα της ασφάλειας και της άμυνας, παρέχοντας τη δυνατότητα πιο ισχυρής, ταχείας και αποφασιστικής δράσης, μεταξύ άλλων για την ανθεκτικότητα της Ένωσης και την αμοιβαία βοήθεια και αλληλεγγύη*» (European Union External Action, 2022a). Όσον αφορά τον πρώτο στρατηγικό πυλώνα της Στρατηγικής Πυξίδας,[4] ως προς την στρατιωτική κινητικότητα (military mobility) καθορίζεται ότι επιδίωξη της ΕΕ είναι η αύξηση της *ψηφιακής ανθεκτικότητας* (cyber resilience) των υποδομών των μεταφορών και των συστημάτων υποστήριξης αυτών (European Union External Action, 2022a: 31). Για την υλοποίηση του εν λόγω στόχου, τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2022 προτάθηκε η θέσπιση του *Ευρωπαϊκού Νόμου Ψηφιακής Ανθεκτικότητας*[5] (European Commission, 2022), ενώ τον Μάρτιο του 2023 παρουσιάστηκε η *Διαστημική Στρατηγική της ΕΕ για την Ασφάλεια και την Άμυνα*[6] (European Defence Agency, 2023).

Όσον αφορά το δεύτερο στρατηγικό πυλώνα, επιδιώκεται η αύξηση της ανθεκτικότητας μέσω της βελτίωσης της πρόβλεψης, του εντοπισμού και της ανταπόκρισης στις απειλές του περιβάλλοντος ασφάλειας, η οποία επιτυγχάνεται με την τακτική αναθεώρηση της *Ανάλυσης Απειλών* (European Union External Action, 2022a:33). Επιπλέον, καθορίζεται η αξιοποίηση της *Μονάδας Ανάλυσης Υβριδικών Απειλών*[7] και της *Ενιαίας Ικανότητας Ανάλυσης Πληροφοριών*,[8] οι οποίες μέσω των εκτιμήσεων που παρέχουν συμβάλουν στην επίγνωση της κατάστασης για την επίτευξη κοινωνικής και οικονομικής ανθεκτικότητας, την προστασία των κρίσιμων υποδομών και των εκλογικών διαδικασιών (European Union External Action, 2022a:34).

Επιπλέον, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει θέσει επίσης ως στόχο την ενίσχυση της ανθεκτικότητας όσον αφορά την κλιματική αλλαγή, τις καταστροφές και τις έκτακτες ανάγκες (European Union External Action, 2022:38), έχοντας ως βασικούς άξονες τη μείωση της εκπομπής των ρύπων μέσω του *Οδικού Χάρτη για το Κλίμα και την Άμυνα*[9] (European Union External Action, 2022b) και την ενδυνάμωση των υποδομών του *Συστήματος Αντίδρασης σε Κρίσεις*[10] της Υπηρεσίας Εξωτερικής Δράσης της ΕΕ και ιδιαίτερα της *Αίθουσας Διαχείρισης Κρίσεων*[11] (European Union External Action, 2021:34).

[4] Στη Στρατηγική Πυξίδα καθορίζονται οι ακόλουθοι τέσσερις πυλώνες δράσης: Δρώ (Act), Ασφαλίζω (Secure), Επενδύω (Invest) και Συνεργάζομαι (Partner).

[5] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου Cyber Resilience Act. Οι δύο γενικοί αντικειμενικοί σκοποί του προτεινόμενου Νόμου είναι η δημιουργία συνθηκών «*[…] για την ανάπτυξη ασφαλών προϊόντων με ψηφιακά στοιχεία, και […] για τη διασφάλιση ότι οι χρήστες να λαμβάνουν υπόψη την ασφάλεια στον κυβερνοχώρο κατά την επιλογή και τη χρήση προϊόντων με ψηφιακά στοιχεία*». Επιπλέον, τέθηκαν ως ειδικοί αντικειμενικοί σκοποί «*[…] η εξασφάλιση ότι οι κατασκευαστές βελτιώνουν την ασφάλεια των προϊόντων με ψηφιακά στοιχεία από τη φάση του σχεδιασμού και της ανάπτυξης και καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια του κύκλου ζωής τους, η εξασφάλιση ενός συνεκτικού πλαισίου κυβερνοασφάλειας, διευκολύνοντας τη συμμόρφωση των παραγωγών υλικού και λογισμικού, η ενίσχυση της διαφάνειας των ιδιοτήτων ασφάλειας των προϊόντων με ψηφιακά στοιχεία, και η παροχή της δυνατότητας στις επιχειρήσεις και τους καταναλωτές να χρησιμοποιούν με ασφάλεια προϊόντα με ψηφιακά στοιχεία*» (European Commission, 2022).

[6] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence.

[7] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου Hybrid Fusion Cell.

[8] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC).

[9] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου EU' climate change and defence roadmap.

[10] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου Crisis Response System.

[11] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου Situation Room (SITROOM).

Μεγάλη σημασία δίδεται επίσης από την ΕΕ στην ανάπτυξη πολυμερών συνεργατικών σχημάτων με κράτη των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων, της Ανατολικής γειτονίας και της Αφρικής, αλλά και με διεθνείς οργανισμούς όπως το NATO, ο OSCE, η Αφρικανική Ένωση και η ASEAN, καθώς μέσω της αλληλεγγύης (solidarity) ενισχύεται η ανθεκτικότητα των κρατών-μελών (κ-μ) της (European Union External Action, 2022a:43). Ομοίως, επιδιώκεται η ανάπτυξη μίας *Ευρωπαϊκής Τεχνολογικής και Βιομηχανικής Αμυντικής Βάσης*,[12] για την ενίσχυση της ανθεκτικότητας της οικονομίας και της ανεφοδιαστικής αλυσίδας (European Union External Action, 2022a:47).

Το Στρατηγικό Δόγμα του NATO

Το Στρατηγικό Δόγμα (Strategic Concept) του NATO υιοθετήθηκε από τα κ-μ της Βορειοατλαντικής Συμμαχίας στις 29 Ιουνίου 2022 κατά τη διάρκεια της Συνόδου Κορυφής στη Μαδρίτη (Koukakis, 2022a). Όσον αφορά τη σημασία που αποδίδει ο εν λόγω οργανισμός στην ανθεκτικότητα, αξίζει να τονιστεί ότι στον πρόλογο του εγγράφου αναφέρεται ότι «*[…] η εξασφάλιση της εθνικής και συλλογικής μας ανθεκτικότητας είναι ζωτικής σημασίας για όλα τα βασικά μας έργα και στηρίζει τις προσπάθειές μας για τη διαφύλαξη των εθνών μας, των κοινωνιών και των κοινών αξιών*» (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022a:1), τονίζοντας λίγο παρακάτω ότι οι στρατηγικοί ανταγωνιστές του NATO δοκιμάζουν τα όρια της ανθεκτικότητας της Συμμαχίας (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022a:3).

Ακολούθως, αναφέρεται στην επιδίωξη ανάπτυξης ανθεκτικότητας στον κυβερνοχώρο και το διάστημα, τομείς που θεωρεί άρρηκτα συνδεδεμένους με τη συλλογική άμυνα και ασφάλεια (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022a:7) έναντι όλων των απειλών και προκλήσεων ασφάλειας. Θεωρεί δε την ανθεκτικότητα ως έναν από τους καλύτερους τρόπους αντιμετώπισης της τακτικής εξαναγκασμού (coercion) τόσο της Ρωσίας (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022a:4) όσο και της Κίνας (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022a:5). Επιπλέον, συνδέει την ανθεκτικότητα των κ-μ του NATO με αυτή των εταίρων της Συμμαχίας, επιδιώκοντας τη υποβοήθηση αυτών (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022:9) και δίνει έμφαση στην ανάπτυξη ανθεκτικότητας έναντι της ξένης επιρροής (malign interference) σημαντικών διεθνών δρώντων και τη συνεργασία με την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022:10).

Τέλος, αξίζει να επισημανθεί ότι το NATO αποδίδει μεγάλη σημασία στην ανθεκτικότητα των κ-μ του και την προετοιμασία του δημόσιου τομέα,[13] καθώς επηρεάζει – σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 3 της

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[12] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου European Defence Technological and Industrial Base.

[13] Όσον αφορά την αντιμετώπιση φυσικών καταστροφών, την κατάρρευση κρίσιμων υποδομών και την αντιμετώπιση υβριδικών ή ένοπλων επιθέσεων.

ιδρυτικής συνθήκης του ΝΑΤΟ - την ικανότητα συλλογικής άμυνας της Συμμαχίας (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022b). Για το λόγο αυτό, στις 11 Ιανουαρίου 2023 ο Γενικός Γραμματέας του ΝΑΤΟ και η Πρόεδρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής – στο πλαίσιο υπογραφής της τρίτης κοινής δήλωσης ΝΑΤΟ-ΕΕ - συμφώνησαν στη δημιουργία μίας ειδικής ομάδας εργασίας (taskforce) για την ανθεκτικότητα και τις κρίσιμες υποδομές (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2023).

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας των ΗΠΑ

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας (National Security Strategy) των ΗΠΑ δημοσιεύτηκε από τον Λευκό Οίκο στις 12 Οκτωβρίου 2022 (Koukakis, 2022b). Σε αυτήν – έχοντας ως σημείο αναφοράς την πρόσφατη υγειονομική κρίση του COVID-19 - τονίζεται η σημασία της ανθεκτικότητας του υγειονομικού συστήματος (The White House, 2022:10), επισημαίνοντας παράλληλα ότι η διαχωριστική γραμμή μεταξύ εξωτερικής και εσωτερικής πολιτικής είναι πλέον ανύπαρκτη και ότι για να είναι σε θέση οι ΗΠΑ να επιτύχουν τους εθνικούς τους στόχους θα πρέπει να επενδύσουν στην καινοτομία, τη βιομηχανία και να αναπτύξουν ανθεκτικότητα στο εσωτερικό της χώρας. Το εν λόγω έγγραφο αναφέρεται επίσης στην ανάπτυξη της οικονομικής ανθεκτικότητας των εταίρων των ΗΠΑ, η οποία επηρεάζει άμεσα την αντίστοιχη αμερικανική.

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας επικεντρώνεται – όσον αφορά την ανθεκτικότητα - στην αντιμετώπιση των ξένων ενεργειών στον κυβερνοχώρο, ενώ αναφέρεται και στην υποβοήθηση ασθενέστερων κρατών για την ανάπτυξη της ανθεκτικότητάς τους ως προς την κλιματική κρίση, μέσω του σχεδίου με την ονομασία *Προεδρικό Σχέδιο Έκτακτης Ανάγκης για την Προσαρμογή και την Ανθεκτικότητα*[14] (The White House, 2022:19-20). Επιπλέον, εστιάζει στην ανάπτυξη ενός ανθεκτικού αμυντικού οικοσυστήματος για την ανάπτυξη ενοποιημένης αποτροπής (The White House, 2022:20), αναγνωρίζοντας παράλληλα την ανάγκη ανάπτυξης συλλογικής ανθεκτικότητας στο πλαίσιο της Βορειοατλαντικής Συμμαχίας.

Τέλος, αναφέρεται στην ανάπτυξη ανθεκτικότητας έναντι των ακραίων καιρικών συνθηκών και της κλιματικής αλλαγής, τόσο σε ομοσπονδιακό όσο και σε πολιτειακό και τοπικό επίπεδο (The White House, 2022:27), της επισιτιστικής κρίσης, των κυβερνοεπιθέσεων και των ανταγωνιστικών εμπορικών πολιτικών άλλων κρατών (The White House, 2022:27-34). Αξίζει επίσης να τονιστεί ότι οι ΗΠΑ επιδιώκουν την ανάπτυξη ανθεκτικότητας των εταίρων τους στην Ευρώπη, το Δυτικό Ημισφαίριο, τη Μέση Ανατολή και τον Ινδο-Ειρηνικό, περιοχή που τροφοδοτεί σε μεγάλο βαθμό την

[14] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου President’s Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE).

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παγκόσμια οικονομική ανάπτυξη και η οποία – μαζί με το πεδίο του διαστήματος – αναμένεται να αποτελέσει το επίκεντρο του 21^{ου} αιώνα (The White House, 2022:37).

Η Εθνική Στρατηγική Αναθεώρηση της Γαλλίας

Ένα ακόμα επίσημο έγγραφο στρατηγικού χαρακτήρα το οποίο δίνει έμφαση στην ανθεκτικότητα είναι η *Εθνική Στρατηγική Αναθεώρηση*[15] η οποία εκπονήθηκε από το Συμβούλιο Άμυνας και Εθνικής Ασφάλειας της Γαλλικής Δημοκρατίας (Πικραμένος & Κουκάκης, 2023:89-92) και παρουσιάστηκε από τον Γάλλο Πρόεδρο στις 9 Νοεμβρίου 2022 (Κουκάκης, 2022β). Στο εν λόγω έγγραφο επισημαίνεται η ανάγκη προσαρμογής της στρατηγικής αντίδρασης της Γαλλίας μετά τη Ρωσική εισβολή στην Ουκρανία μέσω της ανάπτυξης της ανθεκτικότητας, η οποία σε συνδυασμό με την προστασία χαρακτηρίζεται ως μία από τις έξι στρατηγικές λειτουργίες.[16]

Η προαναφερθείσα γαλλική «προστασία-ανθεκτικότητα» σχετίζεται επίσης με την κλιματική αλλαγή και την υποβάθμιση της βιοποικιλότητας, την επισιτιστική κρίση, την ενεργειακή ασφάλεια, τις ανεφοδιαστικές αλυσίδες, τις κοινωνικές παροχές, την ασφάλεια των θαλάσσιων ζωνών, τις χημικές-βιολογικές-ραδιολογικές-πυρηνικές (ΧΒΡΠ) απειλές, τη χειραγώγηση των πληροφοριών, κ.ά. Ως εκ τούτου, η ανθεκτικότητα τίθεται ως μέρος του δεύτερου στρατηγικού στόχου[17] «Ενωμένη και Ανθεκτική Γαλλία», αλλά και ως τέταρτος στρατηγικός στόχος υπό τον τίτλο «Πρώτης κλάσης ψηφιακή ανθεκτικότητα». Αξιοσημείωτο είναι επίσης το γεγονός ότι η Γαλλική Δημοκρατία συνδέει την ανάπτυξη της ανθεκτικότητας με την ενδυνάμωση της αποτροπής (General Secretariat for Defence and National Security, 2022).

Όσον αφορά το δεύτερο στρατηγικό στόχο, η Γαλλία εφαρμόζει την *Εθνική Στρατηγική Ανθεκτικότητας*[18], της οποίας οι τρεις θεμελιώδεις στόχοι είναι η πλήρης προετοιμασία του κράτους για την αντιμετώπιση κρίσεων, η ανάπτυξη ανθρώπινων πόρων και υλικών δυνατοτήτων για την αντιμετώπιση αυτών, και η προσαρμογή της δημόσιας επικοινωνίας για την κάλυψη των προκλήσεων της ανθεκτικότητας. Έμφαση δίδεται επίσης στον παράγοντα του ηθικού και την ανάπτυξή του μέσα από την εκπαίδευση, η οποία συμβάλλει στη βελτίωση των ικανοτήτων του πληθυσμού και την ενδυνάμωση της κοινωνικής ανθεκτικότητας. Επιπρόσθετα, η συνεργασία λαού και κράτους κρίνεται

15 Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου National Strategic Review.
16 Οι έξι στρατηγικές λειτουργίες είναι: α) Γνώση-Εκτίμηση-Αναμονή, β) Αποτροπή, γ) Προστασία-Ανθεκτικότητα, δ) Πρόληψη, ε) Παρέμβαση, και στ) ΕΠιρροή. Το έγγραφο αναφέρει ότι «*Οι έννοιες της προστασίας και της ανθεκτικότητας αλληλοσυμπληρώνονται, με την ανθεκτικότητα να είναι μια απαραίτητη προϋπόθεση για να διασφαλιστεί η προστασία του γαλλικού λαού και της γαλλικής επικράτειας, και να εγγυηθεί τη συνέχεια των βασικών λειτουργιών του έθνους. Η λειτουργία αυτή απαιτεί ενισχυμένη συνεργασία με τους συμμάχους και τους εταίρους μας*» (General Secretariat for Defence and National Security, 2022:22).
17 Η Εθνική Στρατηγική Αναθεώρηση της Γαλλίας καθορίζει δέκα (10) επιμέρους στρατηγικούς στόχους.
18 Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου National Rsilience Strategy (NRS).

ζωτικής σημασίας στην ανάπτυξη ανθεκτικότητας, ειδικά στους τομείς της ασφάλειας, της οικονομίας, της εργασίας και της κοινωνικής συνοχής (General Secretariat for Defence and National Security, 2022:36).

Όσον αφορά τον τέταρτο στρατηγικό στόχο, η Γαλλία προσδιορίζει την ψηφιακή ανθεκτικότητα ως «*[…] την ύπαρξη προσαρμοσμένων και οργανωμένων δυνατοτήτων που μπορούν να αποτρέψουν ή, εάν συμβούν, να μειώσουν τον αντίκτυπο και τη διάρκεια των κυβερνοεπιθέσεων κατά της Γαλλίας, τουλάχιστον για τις πιο κρίσιμες λειτουργίες*» (General Secretariat for Defence and National Security, 2022:39) χαρακτηρίζοντάς την ως προαπαιτούμενο της εθνικής της κυριαρχίας. Επιπλέον, εστιάζει στην ανάγκη μακροπρόθεσμου σχεδιασμού και συνεργασίας μεταξύ ευρωπαϊκών και διεθνών δρώντων για την από κοινού εδραίωση της ασφάλειας και της σταθερότητας του κυβερνοχώρου (General Secretariat for Defence and National Security, 2022:40).

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας της Ιαπωνίας

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας της Ιαπωνίας δημοσιεύτηκε από το Συμβούλιο Εθνικής Ασφάλειας αυτής στις 16 Δεκεμβρίου 2022 (Κουκάκης, 2022γ). Σε αντίθεση ωστόσο με τα προαναφερθέντα κράτη τα οποία αναφέρονται εκτεταμένα στην ανάπτυξη της ανθεκτικότητας, το εν λόγω στρατηγικό έγγραφο περιορίζεται σε ελάχιστες αναφορές. Μία από αυτές σχετίζεται με την υποστήριξη άλλων κρατών όσον αφορά την αντιμετώπιση της κλιματικής αλλαγής για την ανάπτυξη ανθεκτικών οικονομιών και κοινωνιών (National Security Council of Japan, 2022:17), ενώ μία δεύτερη αφορά την ανάπτυξη υγειονομικής ανθεκτικότητας έχοντας ως σημείο αναφοράς την παγκόσμια υγειονομική κρίση του COVID-19 (National Security Council of Japan, 2022:33).

Όσον αφορά την οικονομία, αναφέρεται στην ανθεκτικότητα της ανεφοδιαστικής αλυσίδας επισημαίνοντας ότι «*[…] η Ιαπωνία θα περιορίσει την υπερβολική εξάρτηση από συγκεκριμένες χώρες, θα προωθήσει την ανάπτυξη ημιαγωγών επόμενης γενιάς και βάσεις παραγωγής, εξασφαλίζοντας σταθερό εφοδιασμό για κρίσιμα αγαθά, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των σπάνιων γαιών, θα προωθήσει την κεφαλαιακή ενίσχυση των ιδιωτικών επιχειρήσεων με κρίσιμα αγαθά και τεχνολογίες, και θα ενισχύσει τη λειτουργία της χρηματοδότησης με βάση την πολιτική, επιδιώκοντας την προστασία και την ανάπτυξη κρίσιμων αγαθών*» (National Security Council of Japan, 2022:30). Η οικονομική ανθεκτικότητα δηλαδή της Ιαπωνίας είναι στενά συνδεδεμένη με τις ιδιωτικές επιχειρήσεις, την ανεφοδιαστική αλυσίδα και ορισμένα κρίσιμα αγαθά όπως οι σπάνιες γαίες.

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας και Διεθνούς Πολιτικής του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου

Στις 13 Μαρτίου 2023 το Βρετανικό Γραφείο του Υπουργικού Συμβουλίου (Cabinet) δημοσίευσε την *Αναθεωρημένη Ολιστική Ανασκόπηση*[19] για το 2023, η οποία αποτελεί τη Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας και Διεθνούς Πολιτικής του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου (Κουκάκης, 2023). Σύμφωνα με αυτήν, η ανθεκτικότητα είναι μία από τις βασικές ικανότητες που θα πρέπει να διαθέτουν τόσο οι δημόσιοι όσο και οι ιδιωτικοί φορείς (Government of the UK, 2023). Για την ακρίβεια, το συγκεκριμένο στρατηγικό έγγραφο καθορίζει ως τρίτο πυλώνα[20] της βρετανικής στρατηγικής την «αντιμετώπιση των τρωτοτήτων μέσω της ανθεκτικότητας», επισημαίνοντας ότι «*[…] θα ενισχύσει την αποτροπή του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου μέσω της άρνησης και θα διασφαλίσει ότι η επιχειρησιακή δραστηριότητα στο πλαίσιο του δεύτερου πυλώνα μπορεί να επικεντρωθεί εκεί όπου έχει τον μεγαλύτερο αντίκτυπο*» (HM Government, 2023:16).

Οι τομείς στους οποίους εστιάζει όσον αφορά την ανάπτυξη ανθεκτικότητας περιλαμβάνουν την ενέργεια, το κλίμα, το περιβάλλον και την υγεία, την οικονομία, τη δημοκρατία και την κοινωνία, την κυβερνοασφάλεια και την ασφάλεια των συνόρων (HM Government, 2023:46). Αξίζει επίσης να σημειωθεί ότι το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο έχει αναπτύξει το πρόγραμμα *Κλιματική Δράση για μία Ανθεκτική Ασία*[21] (HM Government, 2023:25-35), καθώς δίνει έμφαση εκτός από την ανάπτυξη της ανθεκτικότητας στο εσωτερικό του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου και στην ανάπτυξή της στο εξωτερικό, δηλαδή τις υπερπόντιες κτήσεις, καθώς και τους συμμάχους-εταίρους του.

Τέλος, επισημαίνεται το γεγονός ότι η ανθεκτικότητα «*[…] αποτελεί προϋπόθεση για την ευδοκίμηση των εθνικών δυνάμεων, η οποία με τη σειρά της παρέχει τα μέσα για την περαιτέρω ενίσχυση της ανθεκτικότητας. Ειδικότερα, ένα ακμάζον οικοσύστημα επιστήμης και τεχνολογίας θα αναπτύξει καινοτόμες λύσεις σε θέματα ανθεκτικότητας στο εσωτερικό και στο εξωτερικό*» (HM Government, 2023:46). Επιπλέον, το Συμβούλιο Εθνικής Ασφάλειας διαθέτει ειδική Υπο-επιτροπή Ανθεκτικότητας (Resilience Sub-committee) για την εξέταση των αντίστοιχων ζητημάτων (Government of the UK, 2022), ενώ το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο έχει προχωρήσει στη σύσταση *Κέντρου Ετοιμότητας Πανδημίας*[22] για την ανάπτυξη της υγειονομικής ανθεκτικότητας, αλλά και την ψήφιση

[19] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου Integrated Review Refresh.
[20] Οι τέσσερις πυλώνες δράσης της Αναθεωρημένης Ολιστικής Ανασκόπησης είναι οι εξής: Διαμόρφωση του διεθνούς περιβάλλοντος (Shape the international environment), Αποτροπή, άμυνα και ανταγωνισμός σε όλα τα πεδία (Deter, defend and compete across all domains), Αντιμετώπιση των τρωτοτήτων μέσω της ανθεκτικότητας (Address vulnerabilities through resilience) και Δημιουργία στρατηγικού πλεονεκτήματος (Generate strategic advantage).
[21] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου Climate Action for a Resilient Asia.
[22] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου Centre for Pandemic Preparedness.

του *Νόμου Εθνικής Ασφάλειας και Επενδύσεων*[23] (Government of the UK, 2020).

Συμπεράσματα

Το πρώτο συμπέρασμα που εξάγεται από την ανάλυση των προαναφερθέντων στρατηγικών εγγράφων είναι ότι η ανθεκτικότητα αφορά τόσο το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό όσο και τα μέσα-υλικοτεχνικές υποδομές ενός κράτους ή οργανισμού, τα οποία πρέπει να είναι λειτουργικά ώστε κάθε δρώντας να είναι σε θέση εκπληρώσει τους στόχους του υπό αντίξοες συνθήκες. Σχετίζεται όμως και με τις εσωτερικές διαδικασίες[24] και τις πολιτικές που εφαρμόζουν πριν, κατά τη διάρκεια, και μετά την εμφάνιση μίας κρίσης, οι οποίες τους επιτρέπουν να υποστούν την ελάχιστη δυνατή ζημία και να διαμορφώσουν τις κατάλληλες συνθήκες για την ανάκαμψή τους. Η ανθεκτικότητα δηλαδή περιλαμβάνει την προετοιμασία/πρόβλεψη, τον εντοπισμό των κινδύνων/απειλών, την αντιμετώπιση/αντίδραση και τέλος την αποκατάσταση/ανάκαμψη ενός δρώντα.

Όσον αφορά τους τομείς που περιλαμβάνει η έννοια της ανθεκτικότητας, συμπεραίνεται ότι καλύπτουν ένα ιδιαίτερα ευρύ φάσμα δραστηριοτήτων για τη θωράκιση έναντι κοινών κινδύνων παγκόσμιας κλίμακας - όπως είναι οι φυσικές καταστροφές, η κλιματική, υγειονομική και επισιτιστική κρίση, κ.λπ. - αλλά και στοχευμένων απειλών όπως οι κυβερνοεπιθέσεις, η ξένη επιρροή, ο εξαναγκασμός, κ.ά. Όσον αφορά τη φύση των απειλών, επιδιώκεται η αντιμετώπιση τόσο των «παραδοσιακών» συμβατικών απειλών – ειδικά μετά την εισβολή της Ρωσίας στην Ουκρανία – όσο και των «νέων» υβριδικών απειλών, οι οποίες εκμεταλλεύονται νέα πεδία δράσης όπως ο κυβερνοχώρος, το διάστημα και το πεδίο της πληροφορίας, τα οποία αναμένεται να αποτελέσουν το κύριο πεδίο αντιπαράθεσης στο εγγύς μέλλον.

Το τρίτο συμπέρασμα που εξάγεται είναι ότι η ανθεκτικότητα σχετίζεται άμεσα με την ανάπτυξη της τεχνολογίας και την πρόοδο της επιστήμης, δύο τομείς που είναι άρρηκτα συνδεδεμένοι με την καινοτομία. Η ανάπτυξη των τομέων αυτών επιτρέπει σε ένα δρώντα αφενός να αντιμετωπίσει αποτελεσματικότερα κάθε κίνδυνο/απειλή και αφετέρου να εκμεταλλευτεί τις παρουσιαζόμενες ευκαιρίες δημιουργώντας τις συνθήκες εκείνες - μέσα από την ανάπτυξη της βιομηχανίας, των κρίσιμων υποδομών, της οικονομίας και του εμπορίου – οι οποίες θα του επιτρέψουν να ανακάμψει.

Τέλος, η ανθεκτικότητα – τουλάχιστον όσον αφορά την πλειοψηφία του δυτικού κόσμου – σχετίζεται με τους δημοκρατικούς θεσμούς, τις εκλογικές διαδικασίες και τη συνεργασία τόσο μεταξύ πολιτών και κράτους, όσο και μεταξύ διεθνών και περιφερειακών δρώντων, καθώς η αλληλεγγύη ενισχύει την

[23] Απόδοση του αγγλικού όρου National Security and Investment Act (NSIA). Ο συγκεκριμένος Νόμος παρέχει στην κυβέρνηση τη δυνατότητα ελέγχου και παρέμβασης σε επιχειρηματικές συναλλαγές, όπως εξαγορές κρίσιμων επιχειρήσεων, για την προστασία της εθνικής ασφάλειας.

[24] Λήψη απόφασης, οργανωτική δομή, ανάθεση αρμοδιοτήτων, κ.λπ.

ανθεκτικότητα. Θα πρέπει ωστόσο να λαμβάνονται κατάλληλα αντίμετρα ως προς τις ενέργειες (π.χ. ξένη επιρροή, χειραγώγηση πληροφοριών, κ.ά.) που υπονομεύουν την κοινωνική συνοχή. Για να είναι ωστόσο τα μέτρα αυτά αποτελεσματικά απαιτείται η επιμόρφωση του προσωπικού για την ανάπτυξη ανάλογης κουλτούρας και η εφαρμογή κατάλληλης στρατηγικής, η οποία - σε συνδυασμό με την παροχή έγκαιρων και έγκυρων πληροφοριών - θα συμβάλλει τόσο στην πρόληψη όσο και στη διαχείριση των κρίσεων.

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The New Space Race: Between the Great Powers of our Era[1]

Themistoklis Zanidis[2]

Abstract

This paper focuses on Space as the relatively new domain of the strategic rivalry between the two greatest powers of modern era, the United States and China. The rise of China during the last decades has had compelling consequences in the international system/order, which is led by the United States, especially since the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. China's ambitions know no limits, and the country competes with the US in every domain including trade, politics, economic, military, and especially technology. The paper highlights the fact that the New Space Race (NSR) is primarily a technological competition which eventually can and will affect everyone on this planet. In this regard, the NSR has two main facets: space exploration and the weaponization of Space. The former refers to deep space exploration mainly to a manned mission on Mars, as the red planet is the ultimate prize, and the return of humans to the Moon. The latter refers to the development of sophisticated weapon systems and respectively defensive systems which can either threat or protect the great powers from competitors. In this NSR, each side has its comparative advantages, China cooperates with Russia; however, the US is leading the way because it has the advanced private space industry and more years of experience in space exploration than China, which is struggling to catch up. Undoubtedly, the NSR has already begun but it will take more years to be fully develop, leading the great powers, and their allies, to the edge of technology as they try to dominate in the last frontier for mankind.

Keywords: US, China, Space, strategic competition, great powers, new space race, technology, global affairs, power politics.

Introduction

The Cold War era was characterized by the intense competition between the US and the Soviet Union, specifically in space exploration. The USSR launched in 1957 the first human made object in space, Sputnik satellite, which marked the start of this race, which shocked the Americans. Back then, a manned Moon landing was the ultimate prize of this technological competition. The story of this intense competition is well known. Eventually, the US won the first Space race by successfully completing the first manned mission (Apollo 11) on the Moon's surface in 1969.

The world has changed tremendously since then. The USSR collapsed and the US left as the sole superpower. However, the Pax Americana era has ended due to the rise of a new power in the East which openly challenges the US dominance: China. The United States has been the dominant power in space since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but Russia and China, with their own history and presence in space, are trying to surpass the US technologically. In this regard, the new Space Race is

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[2] United Nations Development Coordination Office, UN Headquarters, New York, USA.

first and foremost a technological competition between the most powerful nations of the international system. This strategic clash has already begun and will affect everyone on this planet in the long term.

The New Space Race

Today, the international system is characterized by the retreat of the US power and the Chinese expansion. As a result, the two greatest powers of our time compete in numerous domains of our globalized world, including of course Space. More detailed, the New Space Race can be divided into two main spheres, deep space exploration, and the militarization of it. As we mentioned earlier, the new space race, as primarily a technological competition, is of great concern to the world powers also because it can influence the lives of billions of people in the years to come. American dominance in Space is challenged directly when China recently launched a satellite (Singer & Lee, 2021), completing the Beidou tracking system (Goswami, 2021) which rivals the famous American GPS and the European Galileo. Additionally, the two powers had recently both launched exploratory vessels to Mars, as the red planet is the ultimate prize of the New Space Race (Griffiths, 2020), which had landed on the surface of Mars successfully. The Chinese success specifically had been a huge step forward for the Chinese technology while the CCP has set the goal of landing the first manned mission on Mars until 2030 transforming China in a space superpower (Time, 2019). It’s easy to understand how this potential success for the Chinese will boost their reputation across the globe as the new technological superpower. However, Beijing must catch the United States which has been more years in space exploration and thus hold the edge as the most advance nation in economic, military, and technological terms. The competition of the great powers in space is first and foremost a technological competition but we cannot exclude the parameter of soft power. Not to mention that the second aspect of the space race is the militarization of it. This development is a reality even though international treaties forbid the militarization of the Space[3]. The latter will pose a credible threat to the national security of the great powers.

In this regard, today several states, including Russia, India, the UK, the European Union, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Argentina, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, are involved in one way or another in Space business. This means that the new space race is significantly different from its predecessor because more powers, even with less capabilities, have established their presence in Space. Consequently, the US policy makers have to consider the fact that their main competitors are China

[3] Any militarization of Space is forbidden from the UN’s commitment for its peaceful uses for the shake of humankind (Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, UNOOSA). Additionally, the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is the secretariat of the UNOOSA and is responsible for implementing the responsibilities of the UN/SG under International Space Law (Stasko, 2021).

and in a less decree Russia but also medium seized powers like Iran. China on its behalf should consider the fact that America and its European allies are more advanced in space exploration and mainly have the private sector deep involved in Space (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). The latter poses a huge comparative advantage for the United States as the collaboration between the state (NASA) and the private sector (private space companies like SpaceX, Blue Origin, Virgin Galactic, etc) can redirect valuable resources for the American state's towards deep space exploration and the R&D of sophisticated anti-space weapons (in this regard the private sector has been involved in low-orbit operations (NASA, 2023), like the astronaut transportation to the ISS while they have been developing space tourism -commercial use of Space) (NASA, 2019).

It is true that the development of new weapon/missile systems in orbit could make it extremely complicated for every power in the world, including the US, to effectively intercept those weapons/missiles due to their trajectory. Thus, this development could pose a direct threat to the national security of the United States (US Department of Defense, 2021), China, and other powers. There are three possible future scenarios regarding the new space race: The first scenario, where the US wins the new Space Race and eliminates all the potential threats coming from space, securing its dominant position in the international system for the years to come. The second scenario is where China eventually dominates, and the US loses its technological advantage. In this scenario the US rivals manage to establish a credible threat to the American national security with their sophisticated weapons in orbit given the fact that the Americans will still have the upper hand in the military field on Earth (army, navy, air force, marines) against all their potential opponents. In this scenario, the US also loses the prestige of the world's most advanced nation, a huge blow to the American soft power. The third scenario is the most realistic because it focuses on the process of the space race and not on its potential outcomes. That said, we should expect a long-term competition between the US/allies, including their closest intelligence allies like the Five Eyes Australia, the UK, Canada, and New Zealand (Lawton, 2021) and China/allies in Space.

Analyzing further the realistic scenario, nowadays, many factors are in place for a long-time space race between the US and China. As we mentioned earlier, the pax americana, the unipolar moment of the US, has ended due to the rapid growth of the Chinese power. Beijing has been challenging the American dominance in every aspect as it transforms rapidly its economic power to military and political influence (Pacific Council on International Policy, 2021). The Chinese strategists have analyzed the US power and spotted a weak link of it which is the Space. Currently, I hard for the Chinese military to challenge the superior armed forces even in the Chinese Sea. Probably this is the reason why the Chinese are waiting to invade Taiwan while they are strengthening their military capabilities. To make matters worse for Beijing, the country still lacks in terms of soft power in comparison with the US because of its limited political/cultural influence. That's why the Chinese policy makers have focused on space where they have better odds to challenge the US power. A possible positive outcome in the new space race could be a significant achievement and thus boost the Chinese soft power (the Communist Party (CCP) and of course the People's Liberation Armed Forces), not to mention the positive impact of space dominance in terms of economic, trade, communications, intelligence, and military.

However, the rapid rise of China and its offensive rhetoric has alarmed the US strategists and policy makers and its allies. Additionally, the western public opinion in general is concerned regarding the Chinese ambitions. The West has already experienced several cyberspace attacks on critical infrastructure tracking back to China and Russia. However, the advantages from cyberattacks are relatively limited while both the Chinese and Russian government continuously deny their evolvement.

In contrast, space is a vital domain of the Great Power's competition, and a possible prevalence in the new Space Race could lead to global dominance at least in the long term. The Chinese interest in space and the US capabilities in it is not new. Recently, Xi Jinping, the Chinese President, has announced China's Space strategy to transform the country into the dominant power in space in the next decade. The country is developing/launching its Chinese-made space station Tiangong, which is expected to be fully functional until 2025, making breakthroughs in the long-term survival of humans in space, sending astronauts to Mars, as well as to the Moon. Furthermore, Beijing is rapidly extending its nuclear arsenal and conducting launching tests on new-generation supersonic missiles capable of bearing nuclear warheads.

On their behalf the US is aware of the challenges posed by China's rise in the new domain of space. The US is also investing heavily in space exploration, developing cutting-edge technologies to maintain their dominance and protect their national security from possible threats. In this regard, the US, as many other world powers, has established the US Space Force, an independent military branch, to protect the American interests in this domain. Additionally, the Americans have launched various initiatives to explore Mars and the Moon and enhance its space exploration capabilities.

Why the New Space Race is so significant to us

Consider the fact that technological competition is not something new in international relations. Even though only a bunch of countries have actually the capability to establish their presence in Space, space technology plays a critical role in the globalized world and affects many aspects of everyday life such as economy, trade, news, communications, weather forecasting, animal migration, and climate monitoring (Paikowsky & Baram, 2021). In addition, Space is of great importance to militaries around the world, especially the technologically advanced US Armed Forces which rely on it for their global operations, including tracking, monitoring, surveilling, striking, and intelligence gathering (Paikowsky & Baram, 2021). Nowadays, we have witnessed the extremely critical presence of satellite internet for the Ukrainian forces who are fighting the Russians who have destroyed the communication network of the country (Foreign Policy, 2022). More interesting is the fact the satellite internet has been developed from the American private sector.

Space competition (technological) probably gave the final blow to the Soviet Union to collapse as Moscow failed to keep up the military/technology competition with the US. (The U.S. President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), commonly known as "Star Wars," neutralized the Soviet Union's strategic advantage by making the US immune to any Soviet nuclear weapon). The collapse of the Soviet empire and the entire Communist block reshaped the international system in extended way.

Today, in a different geopolitical context, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), poses an extended investment program that unites Asia, Africa, South America and Europe for the benefit of China. Beijing now is a far more capable competitor than the USSR used to be and competes with the US in terms of technology, including military technology, as it has acquired the know-how to do so in a myriad of areas, such as advanced 5G networks. Also is worth mentioning that China is autonomous in terms of satellite positioning due to its global geospatial satellite system which offers significant military and political capabilities as it can be used in transport, agriculture, fisheries, and trade even in anticipation of impending natural disasters. The Chinese authorities offer the capabilities of this system free of charge to anyone who wishes, specifically addressed to the countries of Africa, Asia, and South America in the regions where the Chinese penetration is most intense. This initiative is placed within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as the Chinese Information Silk Road (which includes the 5G networks) (Goswami, 2021). Beijing is becoming independent at a critical military juncture as it will now have its own autonomous missile, aircraft, and submarine navigation system.

Undoubtedly, the Sino-American rivalry in domains like the economy-trade and technology has led the two powers inevitably to space, in which the possibilities for development and experimentation are unlimited. Many researchers and officials at the global level have recognized space as the new domain of power politics, the competition between the world's powers which is extremely dynamic and rapidly growing (Paulauskas, 2020). As space becomes increasingly important for global security, the US and China, along with other major powers, will continue to struggle for the upper hand in this critical domain which affects the lives of billions of people in the hyper globalized era.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the modern hyper-globalized world we are living in is heavily dependent on technology in various aspects such as transportation, trade, intelligence, and communications. As this paper indicated, the New Space race is primarily a technological competition among the most significant powers. While this new race shares similarities with the Cold War era, it is also different in several ways. Firstly, it involves multiple stakeholders, including private space companies and other nations with advanced space programs. Secondly, the global order is characterized by multilateralism rather than bipolarism, with the United States defending its dominance against revisionist China and Russia.

The competition in space is expected to take years to fully developed as China is becoming progressively more ambitious regarding space exploration and the development of state-of-the-art weapon systems capable of penetrating any American defenses. The United States, on the other hand, has recognized the emerging threat and, since the pivot to Asia, has been using all its competitive advantages to neutralize the Sino-Russian space threat to its security and global interests.

In addition, the commercial use of space by the private sector is a crucial aspect that sets the new space race as a unique chapter in global history, apart from the Cold War era. The United States leads space exploration and technology and has a leadership coalition with other important space powers. Moreover, the private space industry can provide innovative solutions to the US government, which may be necessary to outpace China and Russia.

Finally, this paper has outlined three possible scenarios for the future of space competition, with the third scenario being the most realistic as it focuses mostly on the procedure of the competition rather than the outcome. Space competition will take years to be fully developed, and the economic impact of space will continue to increase as human presence in space expands (along with the dangers of space debris). Given the crucial importance of space for US interests and national security, it is inevitable for strategists across the globe to prioritize space in the years to come. Space is the final frontier for humankind, with endless possibilities for development, and our lives in the globalized era heavily depend on it. Therefore, it is important for the great powers of the international system to seek the upper hand in space technology to ensure their interests and protect their national security.

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A Set of Dead-End and Development in the South China Sea: A 2-Level Game Analysis of the Philippines-China Arbitration Case[1]

Alvin Abdudaya Sudargo[2] & Abel Josafat Manullang[3]

Abstract

Being the heart of the Indo-Pacific, Southeast Asia has seen numerous regional disputes over the years. One of which has remained a vocal point of dispute between the states in and outside the region, that is the South China Sea dispute. An interesting point of development in the South China Sea dispute can be pointed to the China-Philippines arbitration case. Such is the case as China, despite having its action in the waterway deemed illegal, simply brushed it off and remains insistent on its claim. Through incorporating the qualitative research method and relevant concepts like the 2 level game theory, the article seeks to explain why China made that decision. Along with that, the article also seeks to posit some regional implications that states in the region should take note of. In understanding the first issue, the 2 level game theory fits the bill as it allows the writers to learn the forces behind China's eventual foreign policy decision. Here, China's national interest along with its realization over its power standing plays a big part in the eventual outcome. For the latter, should China's assertiveness be left with no proper response, it may endanger the region's growth and stability. Not only that, it would also bring into the stage another global power like the US that would again take the spotlight from ASEAN and its member states. Against such consequences, it is important for ASEAN member states, both claimant and non-claimant, to align their view and approach towards the region's perennial issue.

Keywords: Arbitration case, China, Foreign policy, South China Sea dispute, Two level game.

Introduction

The international system has long been regarded as an anarchic one in which its composing units, the states, all live with no overarching actor that has the role of a police or ruler. Under such circumstances, many if not all states in the system sought to be the international system's hegemon or the one to possess the biggest power so as to maintain its survival and perhaps doing so by threatening the survival of others. Given the vast conflicting dynamics, it is no surprise that numerous destructive conflicts have taken place as such is the worst end of an anarchic system.

However, while it is true that the system is conflict-ridden, it is also thanks to the states that conflicts can be solved, albeit not permanently, and peace, as brief as it is, can eventually take place. States have developed many mechanisms through which conflicts can be settled or eliminated before it escalates further, from building international organizations like the UN to the creation of laws or

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[2] Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia.
[3] Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia.

norms that govern state activities. International law is one of the things that governs state action in the system, from the conduct of war to how conflicts should be solved. They can take the form of treaties to even relevant cases rulings which would require a considerable degree of legitimacy or acceptance from the states.

However, despite the presence of international law and other sets of norms, international conflicts are still around in the system. The international community would find themselves being confronted from time to time by violations of international law. Some states have violated the law for numerous reasons. On some occasions, states would justify their violation as a means to attain a greater end, this was the case in some emergency humanitarian interventions in the past. One of such conflicts has been present in one of the world's growing regions, the Indo-Pacific.

The Indo-Pacific has been regarded as one of the world's thriving regions. Many have attributed it to the region's growing importance as the veins of global trade and flow of goods. Another trait to look at is how the region is home to many of the world's growing powers, from the giant of the east like China and numerous regional powers and blocs such as Australia, Japan, and ASEAN. The latter is a unique one as it comprises numerous states, some of which are also regarded as notable regional powers, like Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Given the huge potential the region has, it is important therefore for the region to remain stable and devoid of conflicts. However, that is not the case as the region has witnessed numerous conflicts of many scales. From the numerous proxy wars fought during the Cold War to numerous contemporary conflicts that at times have escalated to armed conflicts, the region has it all. One of the prominent and perennial conflicts the region has is the South China Sea dispute. The conflict also involves actors from the ASEAN bloc (Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines and Brunei Darussalam) and China.

Currently the South China Sea (SCS) has become a flashpoint in the Indo-Pacific. Disputes in the SCS not only involve some countries, i.e. China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, and Malaysia, but also involve the interests of other major powers such as the United States. Furthermore, the book "The Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific" affirms that the geographical importance of the region for sea-lane traffic, regional and international security, and international trade brings the problem to the forefront of international dispute. As a result, the conflict has become a critical global security problem since regarded by foreign parties (e.g., the European Union, the United States, Japan, and others), as it calls into question the state of world peace and security (Rossiana, 2022).

Against the backdrop of the issue's presence to this day, the article seeks to expand upon the knowledge surrounding the topic through utilizing the 2 level games theory. The 2 level games theory is chosen as the relevant concept due to its fitting nature to analyze international matters that involve both domestic and international matters. The aforementioned matters are essential in the Philippines and China arbitration case as the eventual China's treatment towards the result of the ruling is strongly determined by its domestic dynamics.

The 2-level game theory

To understand the existing issues, then "two level game theory" is very appropriate. The theory initiated by Robert Putnam describes international political relations as a "two-level game". The government plays an important role in taking policies that favor domestic interests but on the one hand also considers external factors (Putnam, 1988). Against the backdrop of driving forces, numerous outcomes may emerge from the domestic stage. For the two levels to come together, agreement in the domestic stage of the parties involved are needed. For agreement at the international level to be accomplished, a win-set needs to be obtained. A win-set can be understood as the converging point between the interests of the involved parties where once it is fulfilled, the agreement can emerge. While it has been commonly used to analyze how international cooperation or negotiation are successfully done, it can also be used on other subjects such as the stance towards international law matters (international court ruling) or even to understand why certain interactions break down (Lisowski, 2010).

In this sense, the concept is suitable to understand the conflicting nature that leads China's move that would render the eventual ruling somewhat irrelevant. The concept would give the leeway to analyze the respective national interests of each party involved as well as seeing how it is simply contradictory in nature which results in the breakdown of the issue. This fits in well with the arbitration case between China and the Philippines where the two states failed to come into agreement over the South China Sea dispute despite the issue being deliberated and settled with the involvement of the arbitral tribunal of Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA).

The elephant in the room: China-Philippines arbitration case

As humans in nature, a country led by humans also has its interests. The Philippines has its own interest in the South China Sea. With lucrative fishing, oil and gas resources, the Spratly Islands have become one of the most significant and strategically contested oceans in the 21st century. The former President, Benigno Aquino III, believed that the Spratly Islands and their surrounding areas were richly endowed with resources. In addition, as a country which relies too much on imports for energy, the Philippines is eager to protect supplies and reduce its electricity costs by expanding its own ownership of offshore oil and gas resources (Imanudin & Sugito, 2021).

China's interests in the South China Sea are limited by the interests of other countries (in this case the Philippines). China's interests are further restricted by the decision of the PCA arbitral court. In 2016 the International Court of Arbitration based in The Hague, Netherlands, ruled that China had violated Philippine sovereignty in the South China Sea. The United Nations Arbitration Court (UN) stated that the Chinese state has no legal basis for claiming territorial waters in the South China Sea. However, the Chinese government did not accept the ruling (Adi, 2021).

In essence, the judgment issued by the Court states:

- There is no legal basis for China to make historic claims rights to resources in the marine areas included in the 'nine dash line'.
- None of the Spratly Islands can afford resulting in an expanded maritime zone. The Spratly Islands cannot produce maritime areas collectively as one unit.
- China has violated the Philippines' sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone by (a) disrupting Philippine fishing and petroleum exploration, (b) building artificial islands and (c) failed to prevent Chinese fishermen from fishing in the zone
- Large-scale land reclamation and construction of artificial islands by China in seven features in the Spratly Islands cause irreversible damage to marine environment and ecosystems (Permanent Court of Arbitration, 2016).

However, the Chinese side said that they did not accept and would not recognize the decision of the PCA. The Chinese Foreign Ministry said that the ruling had no binding force so China would not accept or recognize the ruling. The statements issued by China regarding the PCA ruling are:

"The ruling is null and void with no binding force. It will in no way affect China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea. We oppose and refuse to accept any proposal or action based on the ruling. China will continue to safeguard territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea, and endeavor to peacefully resolve relevant disputes in the South China Sea with parties directly concerned through negotiation and consultation on the basis of respecting historical facts and in accordance with international law" (Rafi et al., 2017).

The rapid change of regional circumstances is cited by many observers as the reason for China's position in the South China Sea. A key driver of these developments is Beijing's concern over its territorial superiority and interests, particularly among Chinese analysts. Actions of the Chinese in disputed areas. The demand for energy sources, the need to safeguard fisheries resources, oil supplies and sea transport are some of the issues which concern economics. Nearly half of the South China

Sea is covered. In addition to half its fishing grounds and huge potential energy resources and mineral wealth, the area of 1 million square kilometers is vital for Beijing in terms of both. This is a vital waterway for trade in the sea. The bulk of China's crude oil imports transit South China Sea market from the Middle East and Africa (Kuik, 2017).

Behind the machinery of China's foreign policy

China's foreign policy has been driven by its fundamental national interests, and domestic political stability plays a role as well. The sovereignty, territorial integrity and sustainable social development of the country are these fundamental national interests. The importance of protecting China's interests and sovereign rights as well as its refusal to surrender to external pressures was underlined in the 18th Chinese Communist Party Congress 2012 report, which offers guidance for the next five years. The South China Sea has also been declared to be a "core National Interest" at the 18th CCP Congress. Nationalism, patriotism and pride are also in the forefront of Xi Jinping's leadership. Xi Jinping, Huang reminded him, recognized that nationalism was a strong concept in Chinese society (Sinaga, 2015).

While many outside observers regard China's physical challenges to U.S. or other foreign military surveillance operations in the EEZ of China, as a very important element From Beijing's perspective, these activities signal an increased degree of assertiveness. The reaction to what is considered unfriendly shall constitute a genuine and comprehensible response behavior (Swaine et al., 2011).

The basis of the Chinese government's claim to the South China Sea seems to be based on the assumption of historical rights. Beijing claims that China was the first country to locate these islands in the South China Sea, established a government and lived on those islands. Chinese people have been the first ones to engage in economic activity in this region. According to the Chinese ambassador Liu Xiaoming, as early as 200 BC, during China's Han Dynasty, the Chinese had large-scale seagoing and fishing activities in the South China Sea. As a result, the first islands to be discovered in the South China Sea were discovered by the Chinese. The assertion confirmed that China was the first to be discovered, named, searched and exploited in the South China Sea (Wood, 2021).

In the domestic stage, China's political characteristic paves the way for how it behaves in the international system. Given that China's domestic politics is dominated by the CCP, it doesn't face the need to convince or get the support of many stakeholders. With such conditions laid out, the CCP can freely pursue its international interest in the dispute with little to none domestic hindrance. The same thing also applies when it is facing an external hindrance as apparent in the arbitration court ruling where China's supportive domestic political landscape allowed it to simply brush it off. With such domestic arrangement, national power and ambitious national interest (procure territory and resources in the South China Sea), it was not surprising for China to not go for the win-set and instead remain with its interest.

Due to China's immense power and position in the international system, it doesn't come out as much of a surprise that China could at times adhere to and ignore international law. One of which that's been violated and adhered to, to some extent, by China is the UNCLOS. In a unique twist, China has referred to the UNCLOS in the handling of the ongoing dispute, claiming how the issue needs to be resolved through the mechanism and principles laid out in the UNCLOS. It is with such conditions that China decided how the arbitration result holds little to none impact to its claim and activity in the area. While it is true that the international community has once again been made aware of the regional conflict, none of them can do any major move that would reverse the present fait accompli there.

Therefore, given that China had no desire to cease its pursuit of its own national interest in the disputed area, China simply couldn't go forward with the court's ruling. This is in line with what the 2 level game theory has to offer as for any international cooperation or ruling to function, the involved parties must agree on a shared point, in this case it was the end of China's unjust claim and activities in the disputed area.

Rough waves ahead! Regional implications to consider

Being the heart of the Indo-Pacific, it would not be a surprise that many global powers have been eyeballing the regional dynamics in Southeast Asia. One of such dynamics include the many developments of the South China Sea dispute along with its far-reaching implications. The eventual result of the China-Philippines arbitration case puts forward some things to consider for the states along with the region as a whole.

The huge power gap between China and ASEAN, as the regional bloc that covers 4 of the claimant states in the dispute, is so apparent, let alone when it is juxtaposed with the 4 claimant states. Being a rational actor in the international system, China's disregard towards the court's ruling and how it did not bring any significant consequences give it a sense of impunity. In that, China learned how despite its action being deemed illegal by the international community, at the end of the day, it can simply brush it off and go about its previous business in the disputed area. With such violation of international law in the disputed area remains present, it would severely harm international laws supremacy in governing the behavior of states in the system. At its worst, China's assertive move and constant violation of international law as it does in the South China Sea may push other states, either in the region or outside of it, to follow the same path.

Another thing that the countries in the region should be aware of is how other countries seek to take matters into their own hands. A prominent actor with such interest is the US which has made its interest known through the creation of numerous multilateral cooperation in the region. In regard to other claimant states in the region, the US has made numerous overtures to bridge dialogue between them, even to go as far as strengthening military ties with Vietnam. While it is true that increasing US presence may hinder further assertive moves by China, it would also harm the region's growth. That is because the region would be the stage in which the two global powers, China and the US, bring about their own national interests which in turn may endanger the present regional architecture and rule-based order (international law constructed by ASEAN). Not only that, through taking the coachman seat, it would also hinder the regional powers of the region to grow, notably some ASEAN member states and ASEAN itself.

Against such a backdrop of ongoing implication, it is crucial for the states in the region to take the necessary measures. An important step to take is to formulate a better rapprochement towards China and the dispute. In this matter, ASEAN plays an important role as the bridge between claimant member states and non-claimant member states. Apart from being a regional actor or regional organization, ASEAN is first and foremost a forum for its member states to deliberate upon crucial issues, the South China Sea dispute is one of them. From there, member states can unite their vision to face the problem at hand given the far-reaching effect it has on the region's interconnectedness. While it is true that aligning the vision of all member states is not way more arduous, given what's at stake, it is indeed important to resort to.

Adherence to international law may have been a fruitless effort as apparent to the China-Philippines arbitration case, but it is important for ASEAN to remain committed to the available rule-based order. One of such laws relevant to the dispute is the UNCLOS, which set the basis of ASEAN member states' respective claims. As mentioned before, China has referred to the UNCLOS and many measures it has. Hence, in the future efforts, ASEAN should take note of this particular international law in carrying out its desire to solve or maintain the issue as apparent in its effort to develop a code of conduct there.

Conclusions

The PCA in The Hague, Netherlands on 12 July 2016 ruled in favor of the Philippines' petition against Beijing. In this case, on the one hand, China has a claim to the South China Sea area based on history and the nine-dash line. On the other hand, the Philippines feels that this claim contradicts the

UNCLOS 1982 and violates the sovereign rights of the Philippines in the exclusive economic zone. This shows that both the Philippines and China have their respective interests in the South China Sea.

The South China Sea is an important region because of the abundance of fishery resources and energy resources and mineral wealth, as well as sea transportation. This shows that it is natural that the South China Sea is an area contested by several countries in the region such as China and ASEAN countries (Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines and Brunei Darussalam). This factor also affects China's foreign policy in the South China Sea. This was especially evident when Xi Jinping took office as president of China.

As the concept of 2 level game theory, a country's policy in international matters is also influenced by its domestic interests. This is also what affects China in making foreign policy. China's foreign policy is driven by its fundamental national interests, and domestic politics. Given that China's domestic politics are dominated by the CCP, there is no need to convince or gain support from many stakeholders. Against such a backdrop its disadherence to another source of international law can be rationally understood. Its move to do so also comes with regional scale implication that other states in and around the region must take note of.

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Topic 4

Internal and External Affairs of the European Union

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Navigating the Complexities of the European Union - Russia Energy Relations[1]

Kaltra Asllani[2]

Abstract

The European Union and Russia are both important players on the global stage when it comes to energy. Russia is the second largest supplier of natural gas right after the USA, while the European Union is one of the world's largest consumers of energy. As expected, throughout the years cooperation has blossomed between them in the aforementioned area. Due to the fact that both parties have been working closely together, tensions have arisen regularly. The European Union's effort to lessen its dependency on Russian energy has been one of the main issues of dispute between the two partners. Concerns over Russia's use of its energy resources as a political weapon, particularly in light of the invasion of Ukraine and its repercussions, have been the primary motivators for this development. The European Union should aim to increase the use of renewable energy sources, implement new procedures and upgrade existing infrastructure in order to diversify its energy supply.

Key words: energy, security, European Union, Russia, unbundling, renewable energy, diversifying, gas pipelines.

Introduction

The European Union's reliance on Russian gas is a pressing issue that has been monopolizing conversations and raising concerns among member states for many years. Despite that, the European Union only recently started taking substantial steps in the direction of energy security. Russia's invasion of Ukraine was the climax of an ongoing chain of conflicts, the severity of which the European Union seems to have undermined. The rise of natural gas prices and the consequential large fiscal measures the EU utilized to ensure energy affordability resulted in alarming inflation pressures. These developments demonstrate that despite the concerning number of warning signs, the European Union has neglected to find ways to lessen its dependence on imports of energy from Russia, which weakens its geopolitical power and makes it vulnerable to disruptions in the global energy market. This paper detects past mistakes, examines the European Union's attempts to combat the issue and outlines effective ways to guarantee energy security.

Where is the problem located?

In order to understand the complexity of this partnership we must view it through a historical lens. The European Union has been facing energy security problems since 1973 when the oil embargo

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[2] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus, Greece.

imposed by OPEC during the Arab-Israeli war led to dramatic price increases. The majority of the member states suffered through severe energy shortages since they were heavily dependent on imported oil. Later on, the construction of the Trans-Siberian Gas Pipeline followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union created ideal circumstances for cooperation with the Russian Federation, considering the European Union’s pressing need to diversify its energy mix after the oil embargo. The rise of Vladimir Putin, who demonstrated an unprecedented and undoubtedly strategic interest in increasing energy exports resulted in Russia inheriting the role of the main energy provider in Europe. Specifically in the 1990s, Russia was the dominant supplier of natural gas to the EU, accounting for 63 billion cubic meters of the region's gas imports (Stern, 2006).

A decade later, conflicts started to emerge. In Ukraine near the end of 2004, a pro-Kremlin leader was overthrown by the "Orange Revolution" and was replaced by Viktor Yushchenko who favored closer ties with the West. In retaliation, Gazprom started negotiations led by Putin and demanded Ukraine pay $220 to $230 for 1,000 cubic meters of natural gas when it traditionally used to cost $50. Disagreements over the price resulted in significant decreases in the gas pressure of the pipes supplying numerous European nations in 2006 and 2009 (Reuters, 2009). Both gas supply disruptions lasted for about two weeks and had a considerable impact on the economies of the affected EU countries such as Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and above all Bulgaria and Romania (Pirani, 2009). The action can be interpreted as a strategic Russian method that aimed to weaken the pro-Western party and paint the portrait of Ukraine as an unreliable gas transit country with the intention of promoting a new pipeline. As expected, in 2011 the Nord Stream pipeline, which bypasses Ukraine and delivers gas directly to the EU, began operating.

A few years later, the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine alarmed President Putin since he feared that a similar scenario might unfold in Russia. A propagandistic campaign was launched that served a dual purpose: to discourage any attempts of revolution in Russia by showing the consequences of instability in the neighboring area and to portray the eventual annexation of Crimea as an act of heroic salvation and not a blatant violation of international law. The European Union’s stance was not indifferent; the EU strongly condemned the annexation of Crimea and imposed diplomatic sanctions targeting individuals involved in the destabilization of Ukraine (Kruk, 2009).

Nonetheless, although the Russian Federation had revealed its intentions to gain power by consistently taking advantage of it’s position as an energy supplier, since 2010, the European Union’s energy production had been steadily declining. Several factors had led to the drop, with the most important one being the switch to renewable energy sources, which have a lower carbon footprint than fossil fuels but are more expensive to produce. Furthermore, the lack of stricter measures is apparent when taking into consideration the fact that by 2020 Russia was providing 19.3% of hard coal and 41.1% of natural gas to the European Union (Eurostat, 2023a). These numbers are concerning and reveal that the EU hadn't been properly prepared to satisfy the rising need for energy as the population and economy of the European Union continued to grow. Moreover, the escalating demand for power was and continues to be fueled by an unprecedented usage of electronic devices and appliances in homes while in the transportation industry, the utilization of vehicles, trucks, and airplanes keeps increasing steadily. At the same time, the availability of traditional sources of energy is decreasing. Since many of the oil and natural gas reserves in the EU have been depleted, their extraction is becoming more challenging and expensive.

According to the Economist (2021), in the second half of 2021 price increases for electricity and natural gas were noted, which continued to be abnormally high at the start of 2022 as well. Despite President Putin's assurances that the country would provide more supplies in case of emergency, Russia not only stopped supplying the European Union with gas through the Yamal pipeline in October and December 2021 but also demanded the approval of Nord Stream 2, although the pipeline failed to adhere to the European Union's regulatory framework. The tension was exacerbated on February 24, 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine making energy security one of the most pressing issues that the European Union has faced in recent years.

The European Union's legal framework

The EU has made some progress in reducing its dependence on Russian energy, including attempts at completing an internal market in the area of energy and implementing stricter regulations on the imports of energy from non-EU countries. The internal energy market is an initiative aimed at creating a more transparent, costumer-oriented, and adaptable market across all EU member states. More specifically, it is designed to promote the liberalization of the energy sector through the adoption of energy packages that contain directives that among other things provide customers with a wider range of suppliers to choose from, boosting competitiveness.

The third energy package contains one of the most important regulations regarding energy security: Directive 2009/72/EC of the European Parliament. The regulation was adopted in July 2009 in response to the gas supply disruption that was previously mentioned and introduces a new practice known as 'unbundling' that guarantees independence and transparency. According to the directive, member states or non-EU players that wish to operate in the EU's energy market must take the necessary measures to ensure the separation of energy production and energy distribution. Unbundling aims to prevent monopolistic activities, provide fair and equal access to the transmission system, and safeguard consumer interests. Apart from that, a body of independent regulators was created in order to ensure the application of the legislation. Moreover, the fifth and most recent energy package 'Fit for 55' includes provisions that also target the European Union's sustainability goals such as the reduction of emissions by at least 55 percent.

The REPowerEU is another noteworthy project, proposed by the European Commission on May 2022, that outlines three main objectives that aim to strengthen the European Union's energy security:

1. Saving by turning off the lights, minimizing the usage of air-conditioning, choosing public transportation over driving, etc
2. Diversifying the energy mix by collaborating with more international partners
3. Accelerating clean energy by investing in renewable energy.

The Council decided to include the plan in the Recovery and Resilience Facility which basically allows member states to finance investments and innovations as long as they facilitate REPowerEU objectives.

The legal basis for most of the regulations is found in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. More specifically, article 194 of the TFEU sets out the general principles and objectives of the European Union's energy policy, which include maintaining the efficiency of the energy market, guaranteeing the security of the energy supply, encouraging resource efficiency, and safeguarding the energy environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As previously mentioned, Europe's shift towards Russia in the 1980s was partly motivated by concerns regarding energy security and attempts of cutting back on its links with the Middle East following the disastrous effects of the oil embargo. The European Union is currently facing a similar dilemma in trying to reduce its dependence on Russia while ensuring its energy needs are met. Therefore, in order to prevent recurrence of the incident the European Union must reflect on past mistakes and refrain from repeating them. The solution lies in diversifying the energy sources and utilizing a multifaceted strategy.

Financing is required for the creation of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower. These energy sources are plentiful, sustainable, and can aid in reducing reliance on fossil fuels. With the proportion of renewable energy in the EU's overall energy consumption rising from 9.6% in 2004 to 21.8% in 2021 (Eurostat, 2023b), the EU should keep promoting the advancement of renewable energy technology through finance, research, and other efforts in order to meet the target of 42.5% renewable energy by 2030 (Petrequin, 2023). Apart from that, the European Union should invest in liquefied natural gas and encourage the use of alternative fuels such as biogas and hydrogen, in order to provide Europeans with a wider range of suppliers.

Furthermore, the infrastructure for energy transmission and distribution needs to be improved. This is a crucial step in resolving the EU's energy security problem, which entails expanding the transmission network and adding new power plants, as well as improving the infrastructure that already exists so that energy can be delivered to where it is needed, increasing interconnections between member states. The Southern Gas Corridor is a network of pipelines and infrastructure projects that are intended to transport natural gas from the Caspian region to the European Union. The Southern Gas Corridor project started construction in the early 2010s but has encountered a lot of obstacles and delays since then. The main component of the Southern Gas Corridor is the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), which will transport gas from Azerbaijan through Turkey to Europe. From there, the gas will be distributed to Italy and other parts of western Europe through the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), and to central and eastern Europe through the Ionian-Adriatic Pipeline (IAP). As of 2023, the project is not yet complete, and undoubtedly has the potential to provide a new source of natural gas for the European Union that will help reduce its dependence on Russia and increase energy sovereignty by guaranteeing higher resilience and enhanced integration.

As for legal framework solutions, a unified approach to the energy security problem may be proven to be extremely beneficial. The best way to enhance the European Union's position against third countries would be to implement a common external energy policy that would move discussions with third parties from the member states level towards the EU level. This lack of unity was apparent in the aftermath of Russia's invasion, where calls from the EU and member states to reduce imports of Russian fossil fuels did not result in more forceful stances (such as sanctions) (Mišík, 2022).

The deepening of the EU is not an easy process and many member states are hesitant to give up on core competencies since they feel that their sovereignty is being threatened. Until all member states reach the level of trust that would allow further integration, better-starting positions in negotiations with their energy suppliers might result from more transparency within the European Union regarding the costs of imported energy since price discrimination is part of Russia’s political strategy.

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Green Skills in the European Labour Markets[1]

George Karachalios[2] & Vaios Kotsios[3]

Abstract

This paper aims at exploring the significance of green skills in the European labour market, highlighting their importance for workers in various occupations and fields of the European economy. The European labour market has undergone several significant changes over the past decade as a result of the increased demand for sustainable practices and the need for a green transition. New strategies and policies have lavishly evolved to address the challenges related to climate change and environmental decay. The concept of green skills has thus emerged, referring to the skills, knowledge and competences required for working in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. In this context, this paper analyses specific aspects of the economic, environmental, and social impact of green skills from the point of view of an increasing demand for green skills in various occupations. It finally examines the benefits of having a well-trained workforce equipped with green skills as well as the level of responsiveness for certain EU member states towards the need to address existential challenges of the green transition.

Keywords: Skills, Green Skills, Labour Market, Sustainable Policies, Environment, Climate Change.

Introduction

The significance of green skills.

The European labour market is experiencing an important shift toward a greener economy due to the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance energy efficiency and transition to renewable energy sources (European Commission, 2020a). According to the European Commission, the green economy is bound to create new employment opportunities in several sectors, specifically including those related to renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, green constructions, sustainable transport and waste management. Green skills are thus essential to ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the knowledge and skills required to work in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way (European Commission, 2020b).

One of the key benefits of green skills is related to the fact that they can strengthen economic development and create employment opportunities. Indeed, the green economy is expected to create more than 122 million of new jobs throughout Europe, particularly in the renewable energy sector:

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[2] Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Peloponnese, Deputy Governor and Member of the Board of Directors of the Greek Public Employment Service (DYPA), Greece.

[3] National Technical University of Athens, Scientific Associate of the Labour Market Forecasting Mechanism, Greece.

43 million by 2050. Furthermore, green skills can help enterprises reduce costs, improve their efficiency, enhance their competitiveness, and promote innovation and technological progress (IRENA & ILO, 2021; 2022).

Green skills are also key to mitigating the adverse effects of climate change and protecting the environment (ILO 2023). The green transition requires implementing such sustainable practices as reduced energy consumption, waste minimization, and use of renewables. Green skills are essential to the attainment of these goals, since they enable everyone to understand the environmental impact of their actions and make evidence-based decisions for a more sustainable future. Moreover, green skills can facilitate the development of new technologies and solutions that can help address environmental challenges, such as climate change and loss of biodiversity (CEDEFOP, 2012).

Clearly, the significance of green skills is not confined to economic and environmental issues. Indeed, their social impact is equally important. The green economy offers opportunities for social integration and reduced inequality, particularly in areas traditionally dependent on carbon-intensive industries. Moreover, green skills can promote social awareness and responsibility, as people become more conscious of their environmental and social impact (CEDEFOP, 2015).

Green skills are in high demand in occupations of all sorts.

Most of the skills required in various occupations depend on the nature of the job itself as well as the relevance of the occupational sector or field. Nevertheless, there are several horizontal green skills that seem to be relevant in all occupations (CEDEFOP, 2009). These are:

1. Knowledge of environmental issues: Working people should have a good understanding of environmental issues, including climate change, loss of biodiversity and exhaustion of natural resources.
2. Understanding of sustainability principles: Working people should understand sustainability principles and how these can be applied in their work.
3. Ability to use green technologies: Working people should be familiar with green technologies, such as renewable energy systems, energy efficient devices and sustainable materials.
4. Data analysis competence: Working people should be able to collect and analyse data on environmental performance and make recommendations for improvement.
5. Co-operation skills: Working people should be able to work with colleagues, stakeholders, and clients in developing sustainable solutions.

Since 2011, there were evidence (ILO & CEDEFOP, 2011) suggesting that industries would very likely be adversely affected by the green transition. To that purpose, specific examples have been deployed to demonstrate the actual impact on employment in each industry. The evidence clearly suggested that the road to a greener economy would benefit those who would implement socially responsible structural changes but on the other hand would cause severe economic and social adjustment costs to those who would not bother to change. More than ten years later and after the 2022 energy crisis, this prediction proved true as many countries faced the challenges of energy shortages and especially those that in a timely manner did not care for sustainable policy reforms. The ILO/CEDEFOP report also focused on each industry's training needs in green skills as they proved to be highly impactful in sustainability terms (see below: Table 1).

Table 1. Impact of greening in industries and related green skills

Industry	Employment effect	Training needs
Agriculture, forestry, including food/wood processing	Some jobs lost, but organic farming is estimated to have high growth potential. Some food-processing industries are stable or gaining in employment.	Retraining for new farming practices, crop diversification and organic farming. Retraining of farmers as forestry workers Skills upgrading, sustainability skills, climatology/meteorology skills, entrepreneurial skills for farmers.
Extractive industries and fossil fuel energy generation	Stable or losing jobs; projected to lose jobs in medium to long term	Retraining (in renewable energy sources). Skills upgrading (sustainable practices, energy and resource efficiency, new green technologies, clean coal, carbon capture and storage)
Emissions-intensive manufacturing	Losing jobs	Training for specialized sustainability skills. Training for compliance with environmental regulations. Environmental impact assessment
Automotive	Affected by economic crisis; job losses; may stabilize in medium term	Skills upgrading for car mechanics, technicians, and engineers. Training on design, maintenance and recycling, fuel efficiency.
Shipbuilding	Losing jobs	Retraining for other heavy industries, including installations for off-/onshore wind turbines and wave and tidal energy.
Cement	Losing jobs	Retraining. Skills upgrading (energy efficiency).

Source: ILO & CEDEFOP 2011: 65-66

Furthermore, the overall impact of the green transition on employment is believed to be significantly positive. This is based on the fact that wide-spread production of environmentally friendly goods and services will boost productivity in general. Moreover, green sectors tend to be more labour intensive than "traditional" fossil fuel-based industries. The ILO/CEDEFOP report once again highlights what kind of gains and benefits are associated with each industry as well as what kind of training is needed (see below: Table 2).

Table 2. Gains of greening in industries and related green skills

Industry	Employment effect	Training needs
Renewable energies: wind, wave and tidal power, solar, hydro, biomass, geothermal	Gaining, though job losses are expected in solar	Skills upgrading: energy efficient solutions, management and entrepreneurship skills, including project management skills
Green building and retrofitting	Gaining	Skills upgrading: energy efficiency, green technologies, new materials, energy auditing/certification
Telecommunications	Gaining	Skills upgrading for new green technologies (including renewable energy power generation network facilities)
Recycling and waste management	Gaining	Retraining from waste collection to recycling; skills upgrading in methane and energy recovery
Water and wastewater	Gaining	Skills upgrading: water resource management, water conservation and efficient use, wastewater treatment

Source: ILO & CEDEFOP, 2011: 75

The European Union is at the forefront of implementing sustainable policies with a view to become a climate neutral continent by 2050. All 27 EU member states committed to that purpose after the adoption the European Green Deal (European Commission 2019) which is an initial roadmap setting the key policies and measures needed to achieve the objective of tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. In this context, ambitious and interconnected policies on climate, energy, transport and taxation aimed at making the EU fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, as compared to 1990 levels. These changes necessitate green skills which are expected to have a significant impact on overall occupational employment. Table 3 below, illustrates the forecast of employment impact by detailed occupation over the next years.

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Table 3. Employment impact by detailed occupation

Occupation	Change
Building and related trades workers, excluding electricians	+3.1%
Science and engineering associate professionals	+3.0%
Drivers and mobile plant operators	+2.1%
Business and administration associate professionals	+1.1%
Science and engineering professionals	+2.4%
Sales workers	+0.7%
Business and administration professionals	+1.2%
Labourers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport	+1.5%
Numerical and material recording clerks	+1.1%
General and keyboard clerks	+1.2%
Metal, machinery and related trades workers	+1.0%
Electrical and electronic trades workers	+2.1%
Personal service workers	+0.6%
Production and specialised services managers	+1.6%
Customer service clerks	+1.4%
Administrative and commercial managers	+2.1%
Cleaners and helpers	+0.7%
Stationary plant and machine operators	+1.0%
Information and communications technology professionals	+1.5%
Legal, social and cultural professionals	+0.8%
Health associate professionals	+0.7%
Legal, social, cultural and related associate professionals	+0.9%
Teaching professionals	+0.4%
Health professionals	+0.6%
Chief executives, senior officials and legislators	+1.7%
Hospitality, retail and other services managers	+1.1%
Protective services workers	+0.8%
Personal care workers	+0.4%
Assemblers	+1.1%
Market-oriented skilled agricultural workers	+0.3%
Information and communications technicians	+1.2%

Food processing, wood working, garment and other craft & related trades	+0.4%
Other clerical support workers	+0.8%
Food preparation assistants	+0.8%
Agricultural, forestry and fishery labourers	+0.4%
Handicraft and printing workers	+0.4%
Market-oriented skilled forestry, fishery and hunting workers	-0.1%
Subsistence farmers, fishers, hunters and gatherers	0.0%

Source: CEDEFOP, 2021: 35

Benefits of a workforce equipped with green skills.

A trained workforce equipped with green skills has a number of benefits to offer to organisations and society at large (CEDEFOP, 2019). These benefits include:

1. *Enhanced environmental performance*: Workers with green skills can help organisations reduce their environmental impact by developing and implementing sustainable practices.
2. *Cost savings*: Sustainable practices can often lead to cost savings, including a reduced energy and resource consumption.
3. *Improved organisation reputation*: Organisations committed to sustainability can improve their reputation and attract customers that prioritize environmental issues.
4. *Job creation*: The green transition is expected to create new jobs in the sectors of renewable energy sources and sustainable transport.
5. *Economic development*: The development of the green economy can contribute to a country's overall economic development, since new businesses and industries will emerge.

Notwithstanding the benefits of green skills, there are still several challenges to address before the effective integration of green skills into the European labour market can be ensured (European Commission, 2019: 13). A key challenge is posed by the lack of awareness and understanding of green skills amongst employers and workers. A great number of businesses are not familiar with green skills and the benefits these have to offer to their activities. Similarly, a great number of workers may not be aware of the importance of green skills development and may even not be adequately motivated to develop such skills.

A further challenge is related to the need to ensure that green skills are adequately integrated into the education and training system (CEDEFOP, 2012). Despite the fact that some universities and vocational education schools have started providing courses and curricula related to sustainability and green skills, the availability of such courses and curricula is still limited in Europe; besides, their quality and relevance may vary significantly, which could lead to considerable mismatches between the skills employers require and those that workers actually have.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, there are also many opportunities regarding the promotion and integration of green skills into the European labour market. One such key opportunity is related to the increasing demand for sustainable practices and the green transition. This trend is expected to create new employment opportunities for green-skilled individuals. Moreover, the European Union has launched several initiatives and funding programmes to promote green skills development and support the green transition. Apart from ad hoc EU funding mechanisms promoting the green transition such as the Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and the Just Transition Fund, the EU sets also ambitious green objectives in other tools such as the European Social Fund (ESF+) or the Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF).

Main challenges and proposed responses regarding the integration of green skills into the European labour market

It is clear so far, that the major consequences of climate change and environmental degradation do not only harm the environment (ILO & CEDEFOP 2011, p.p.20-30). The associated negative social and economic impact is immense, posing huge and pressing challenges for policymakers. Especially, as regards employment, some of the challenges as well as its proposed responses are presented in Table 4 (see below).

Table 4. Employment challenges and proposed responses

Challenges	Proposed responses
Lack of awareness and training regarding the importance of green skills	Raise awareness amongst employers and workers and provide education and training programmes focused on green skills development.
Insufficient cooperation between industry and education	Promote stronger collaboration between industry and education and involve employers in the development of green skills courses and curricula.
Limited funding for green skills training and development	Increase funding for green skills training, including financial incentives of businesses that invest in greens skill development for their employees.
Lack of a standardised framework for green skills	Develop a standardized framework for green skills, including the establishment of a green skills accreditation system.
Limited sharing of best practices in implementing sustainable practices	Encourage sharing of best practices amongst businesses and educational institutions, including case studies and success stories.

Source: ILO/CEDEFOP, 2011: 20-30

EU initiatives for green skill promotion

There are several initiatives, currently underway in Europe, which are aimed at promoting green skills development. For instance, the European Commission's Skills Agenda (European Commission, 2020c) is focused on green skills in order to ensure that people have the skills required to thrive in a green and digital economy. The Agenda comprises measures such as the Upskilling Pathways initiative, which supports adults in acquiring new skills and qualifications, including green skills.

A flagship initiative of the European Skills Agenda is the Pact for Skills (European Commission, 2020d), which is aimed at bringing public and private organisations together and encouraging them to make concrete commitments in terms of upskilling and reskilling for adults. The Pact, brings together stakeholders from different sectors, including education, training and employment, to support the workforce’s green skills development.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) also offers programmes supporting green skills development in VET institutions. The ETF Green Skills and Environmental Awareness for TVET Teachers and Trainers is aimed at providing teachers and trainers with the skills and knowledge required to be able to effectively teach green skills.

CEDEFOP has also published several reports on green skills in Europe, including Green Skills and Innovation for Inclusive Development (CEDEFOP, 2015), which stresses the need for a holistic approach to green skills development, including the participation of stakeholders from education, industry and the government.

The European Union also provides funding for green skills initiatives through the European Social Fund (ESF+). Indeed, the ESF supports projects aimed at improving education and training, including green skills training projects. Other EU funding mechanisms also support projects related to the development of green skills (see below table 5).

Moreover, a number of higher education institutions in Europe have initiated programmes and courses dedicated in the development of horizontal and vertical green skills (see below Table 6).

It is obvious by now that upskilling or reskilling in green skills is an emerging trend following the environmental and climate challenges EU countries need to face. A more detailed analysis on how specific countries try to address this issue is following.

Table 5. Funding programmes for green skills training and development in the EU

Fund/Programme	Funding body	Description-
European Social Fund (ESF+)	European Union	The ESF provides funding for a series of education and training programmes, including ones focused on green skills development. This funding may be used to support both employers and workers in acquiring and developing green skills.
Erasmus+	European Union	The Erasmus+ programme provides funding to educational institutions with a view to developing and providing educational and training curricula focusing on sustainable development and green skills.
Horizon Europe	European Union	Horizon Europe provides funding for research and innovation projects focused on sustainable development and green technologies, which can help develop and apply green skills in the labour market.
Green Deal Call	European Union	The Green Deal Call is a funding initiative that promotes sustainable development and addresses environmental challenges. It includes funding opportunities for green skills development in various sectors and industries.

Table 6. Examples of green skills courses and programmes offered by higher education institutions in Europe

Course/Degree	Educational Institution	Description
MSc Sustainable Energy Systems	University of Edinburgh, Scotland	The programme helps students gain a complete understanding of the science and engineering underlying sustainable energy systems, as well as these systems' economic, environmental and social aspects.
BSc Environmental Science	University of Copenhagen, Denmark	The programme helps students gain a wide understanding of the natural and social sciences related to the environment, as well as skills in research, analysis and problem solving.
Certificate in Sustainable Business	Imperial College Business School, England	The programme has been specifically designed for professionals that wish to gain a deeper understanding of sustainable business practices and their application in various sectors.
Master in Sustainable Development	Sciences Po, France	The programme provides students with the skills and knowledge required to address sustainable development challenges at the local, national and global levels, placing special emphasis on policy, governance and social innovation.
Green Skills for Sustainable Development	European Training Foundation	The programme aims at developing the green skills of VET teachers and trainers, with special emphasis on sustainable development in various sectors and industries.

Green skills in Europe

Denmark

Green skills, as a separate VET-related issue, continues to play a key role in Denmark's national skills agenda. However, green skills are usually seen as a process that affects several occupations and sectors and thus should be integrated into a wider range of education and training activities. The greening of skills is also a matter of changing attitudes at every level of the organisations and institutions involved in the process. Several observers seem to feel that the "burning platform" of environmental concerns, which was high on the general political agenda a decade ago, has in recent years been somewhat overshadowed by the growing focus on the consequences of robotisation and digitisation. Some concerns have also been expressed about the successful implementation of a specific strategy focused on green skills, taking into account the lack of knowledge and weak support from teachers, students and workers.

However, since 2012, the so-called energy agreement (CEDEFOP, 2018a) has been the cornerstone of Denmark's policies aiming at mitigating climate change and supporting the transition to a greener economy. The agreement had the support by all political parties and covered the period 2012-20. The ambitious target was that the entire Danish energy supply should have been covered by renewable energy by 2050. The agreement also set more detailed targets for 2020 and specified a number of initiatives to be implemented. The agreement's targets were, thus, to reduce energy consumption by 12% by 2020, to increase the share of renewable energy sources to 35% by 2020 and cover 50% of electricity production using wind energy. The main initiatives of the agreement include the renovation of buildings in order to reduce energy consumption, a large-scale expansion of wind power, substitution of coal by biomass, a greater emphasis on energy efficiency and electricity-powered means of transport. In 2022 (CEDEFOP, 2022), the government approved more funds towards an 'increased sustainability and green transition' objective. To this end, it included special grants to support green upskilling measures offered both to unemployed and employed people as well as to implement legislative or policy initiatives related to promoting green skills.

Estonia

Estonia (CEDEFOP, 2018b) has heavily invested in reforming its skills forecasting processes in recent years, including the recently launched System of Labour Market Monitoring and Future Skills Forecasting (OSKA). This has improved stakeholder engagement and created a systematic process for skills forecasting. However, green economy, green skills and green jobs are not explicitly part of the system and are developed horizontally. In Estonia, green jobs and green skills are spread across different economic sectors and policy areas, and there is no coherent training approach or framework. Coherence between skills development policies, environmental and climate change policies has not radically improved in recent years. Therefore, there are no comprehensive and systematic linkages (e.g. objectives, activities, measures) between them. On the other hand, three different horizontal development plans have been developed so far: "Sustainable Estonia 21", the central reform programme, the competitiveness plan "Estonia 2020", and the "National Security Concept of

Estonia”. Several lower-tier development plans are also in effect, taking into account the general guidelines and principles set in the higher-tier development plans. “Sustainable Estonia 21” is a horizontal national strategy for sustainable development covering the period up to 2030. Inter alia, the strategy covers the most important challenges in education and future skills. The long-term development of the natural environment is governed by the objective of "ecological balance", which is related to the rational use of natural resources towards achieving ecological balance, minimisation of pollution and conservation of biodiversity and natural areas. However, there is no specific focus on or reference to green skills or jobs.

The central reform program, the competitiveness plan "Estonia 2020" (Vabariigi Valitsus 2017), describes and formulates the most important goals and activities for improving the state's competitiveness. It also addresses the issue of labour supply. While the short-term focus is on education and increasing employment, the need to reduce youth and long-term unemployment and promote vocational retraining and skills development is also covered. Increasing the skills of workers is recognized as a key activity to achieve the goal of higher productivity but also to maintain high employment levels.

According to a recent policy paper (Keller et al. 2023) published in Estonia, green skills teaching has become imperative from general to vocational and higher education. A critical point is to educate teachers and lecturers so as to spread the knowledge, skills and attitudes that help people understand the urgency to face environmental challenges in the context of the ecological balance.

France

The National Green Economy Survey estimates green jobs created in recent years. In 2015 there were 440,000 full-time jobs classified as green, while green occupations accounted for 144,000 jobs and greening occupations accounted for nearly four million jobs (CEDEFOP, 2018c). In France, a comprehensive skills development strategy has been published since 2010, following the “Environmental Round Table”, which included a mobilisation plan for green jobs as well as the National Observatory for Green Economy Jobs and Occupations. Most of the key actors involved in skills forecasting have integrated a perspective on the evolution of jobs and skills related to the green economy into their activities. Skills curricula are nowadays frequently renewed or adapted to take the green economy into account. Many diplomas now include awareness-raising or more specifically sensitisation to green issues. Some programmes have been thoroughly adapted to the techniques, knowledge and skills required by the ecological transition (or transition to the green economy/green transition).

Germany

In Germany (CEDEFOP 2018d), Vocational Education and Training (VET) for new green occupations is not as popular as VET for already established occupations. Furthermore, Continuing VET (CVET) offers are multiple in Germany, though participation is relatively low, due to weak incentives and low transparency. Targeted programmes to promote skills for green jobs are also available, including initiatives under the Global Action Program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It is to be noted that many previous green skills programmes did not seem to have a long-term impact. With few exceptions, skills for green jobs are not the main focus of ALMPs.

Nevertheless, since 2010, climate protection has been the main goal of green policies in Germany. Compared to this, the modernisation of laws governing nature protection and waste management was of secondary importance. Already in 2000, Germany introduced the Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG) [Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz], which aimed at the forced expansion of renewable energy sources. Since then, the law has been amended and adapted several times, the latest amendment taking place in July 2017. One key element of the law was a technology-specific feed-in tariff assuring priority feed-in to electricity from renewable energy (RE) sources.

In recent years, there has been a dynamic increase in the share of electricity based on renewable energy sources. In this context, new instruments have been introduced, such as auction schemes for renewable energy technologies. Furthermore, as a consequence of the Fukushima accident in 2011, the government implemented policies to decarbonize the energy system. The Energiewende (Energy Turnaround; Energy Transition) was based on the following two pillars: (a) expansion of renewable energy sources in the electricity and heat market and (b) increase of energy efficiency in all parts of the economy. At the same time, the phase out of nuclear power in Germany by 2022 was set. For a period after 2011, the Energiewende was at the forefront of political dialogue in Germany before being replaced by new issues, such as migration policy. Although there is no coherent strategy targeted at the needs of a green economy, policy activities have been undertaken to address the issue of sufficient supply of required green skills at different qualification levels.

The green agenda in Germany is coordinated in a federal level by the National Sustainability Council (NSC) which has been established at the Chancellor's Office. The NSC is equipped with renowned scientists and public figures and focuses on all 17 UN Sustainability Development Goals, including Technical VET.

Spain

In Spain (CEDEFOP, 2018e), the economic crisis had a negative impact on the national dialogue on green economy mostly due to general budgetary cuts, even though this trend subsided as the economy started to recover. While there is no specific process for identifying skills related to green jobs, there are general skills forecasting schemes and a growing awareness of the importance of green jobs and greening in general. The abovementioned skills forecasting schemes include a broad institutional framework, bringing together employment and education authorities as well as social partners. The skills identified are taken into account in the provision of training through Technical Vocational Education and Training actions for employed and unemployed workers. Consequently, several changes have been observed in training provision in line with the greening of the economy. In addition, the private sector plays an important role in identifying and providing training in relation to the greening of the economy. The Spanish Ministry of the Environment has also developed several programmes aiming to shape green policies at the national level. The Spanish Plan to Promote the Environment (PIMA) in Transport provides financial incentives to reduce the environmental impact of related economic activities, e.g. waste and transport, and to promote the use of alternative energy sources. For example, it offers financial incentives to companies for the adoption of carbon footprints, promotion of energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and substitution with less environmentally harmful ones.

The Ministry of the Environment also promotes "CLIMA (Environment) Projects". The CLIMA programme subsidises projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in "diffuse sectors" not attributable to the European regime of emissions trading (such as the transport, agriculture, construction and waste sectors).

United Kingdom

Since 2010, employment levels in low-carbon and environmental jobs in the UK have been significant and are expected to continue to grow. Policy has shifted its focus onto new environmental technologies, new ways of working and “greener consumption”.

The main legislative change relevant to the green economy was The Energy Act 2013 (TSO, 2013). The act set targets for reducing carbon emissions and directions on how to achieve them, such as: reforming the electricity market, encouraging low-carbon electricity production, ensuring security of supply, pipelines and storage, defining the role and powers of the Office for Nuclear Regulation. The aim is to address some of the challenges of climate change. Following these legislative changes, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) invested in four offshore wind projects and gave permission to build a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point (CEDEFOP, 2018f).

Efforts have been made to understand the size and performance of those services, products and technologies that contribute to the green economy. Research has also shown a significant increase in activities, production and employment in activities that contribute to a green, low-carbon economy. Unfortunately, there are no active national labour market programmes that focus on skills development for green jobs/green economy. However, some charities/not-for-profit organisations offer labour market programmes that create green jobs and support people to develop green skills. It is important to note that unions are playing a greater role in supporting the workforce and the transition towards a greener economy.

Conclusions

Developing green skills in a systematic and structured way is necessary to successfully facilitate the transition to a green economy and thus develop a culture of environmental protection, also providing significant social and economic advantages. Green skills are key to addressing environmental challenges, creating jobs and ensuring business competitiveness. The types of green skills required depend on the specific needs of each country, but commonalities do exist, such as renewable energy sources, sustainable agriculture, green construction, resource efficiency, environmental management and sustainable transport.

However, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the effective integration of green skills into the European labour market. By raising awareness, strengthening education, promoting cooperation between industry and education, increasing funding for green skills training, developing a standardised framework for green skills and encouraging the sharing of best practices, the European Union can help ensure that the labour market is equipped with the necessary green skills to achieve a sustainable and environmentally friendly future.

The development of green skills can be achieved through a variety of methods, including education and training, apprenticeships and work experience programmes. Businesses and government agencies can play a key role in developing green skills by offering internships and apprenticeships in green industries and providing training opportunities. The role of the state is crucial especially when it comes to coordinating the process of policies' greening. The development of a national skills strategy focusing on how to develop green skills for all is also a key element of integrating a greener approach to policies.

Several European initiatives are currently underway to promote the development of green skills, such as the European Commission's Skills Agenda for Europe, the Green Skills and Environmental

Awareness for TVET Teachers and Trainers programme of the European Training Foundation and the Pact for Skills.

Finally, as the world necessarily advances towards the goal of sustainability, it is vital for individuals, businesses and governments alike to embrace green skills and work towards attaining this goal sooner rather than later.

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The Road to Digital Single Market: How the EU Can “Enter That Orbit”?[1]

Konstantinos-Taxiarchis P. Bonis[2]

Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic was the breaking-even point for many of the EU’s orientations. One of them, was the digital agenda of the Union. Deeply inside the mind of the EU’s stakeholders, the transformation of single market, into a digitalized one, was the first step. Despite the ambitious perspective of that incentive, the truth lies elsewhere; In order to digitalize the traditionally lucrative single market, huge effort is required, adequate capitals and on the top of all, the member-states socio-political consent. It is neither an easy nor an ultra-difficult step for the European Union. The proper synergies of supranational and national level will maximize EU’s efficiency and optimality. In that paper, the evolution of Digital Single Market and the right path to achieve that target is being analyzed as thoroughly as possible.

Keywords: Digital Single Market, e-health initiative, spywares, national security, EU digital transformation.

Introduction

We are all accustomed with the fact that the EU is, amongst others, an economic giant, as Marc Eyskens vividly described (Leonard, 2018). Even though, the EU coped with a plethora of pathogenies, the previous decade, it is of paramount importance to mention that the single market is the cornerstone of the Union’s economic resilience. The latter was furiously disturbed by Covid-19 and the following tendency of de-globalization. The pandemic made urgent the digital transformation of single market, meaning that the traditional free flow of goods, services, capitals and workers will be applied also digitally. To the EU’s despair, the slow digitalization process, is making the integration of digital single market, even more problematic. We are “traversing” the fourth Industrial Revolution. From now on, the main concern, is, how basic technological knowledge can be transformed into deeper one, to facilitate the quotidian life of humanity, offering prosperity, peace and harmony. Whichever state actor will move faster towards that direction, eventually will be the dominant power of global international system. Should the EU be detached from that emerging reality?

The EU had made considerable steps towards Digital Single Market, meaning that is recognizing that reality. Since 2010, “Europe 2020”, the new 10-years strategic compass (the successor of Lisbon Strategy), set the foundations for a more coordinated action towards many policies, including the

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[2] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus, Greece.

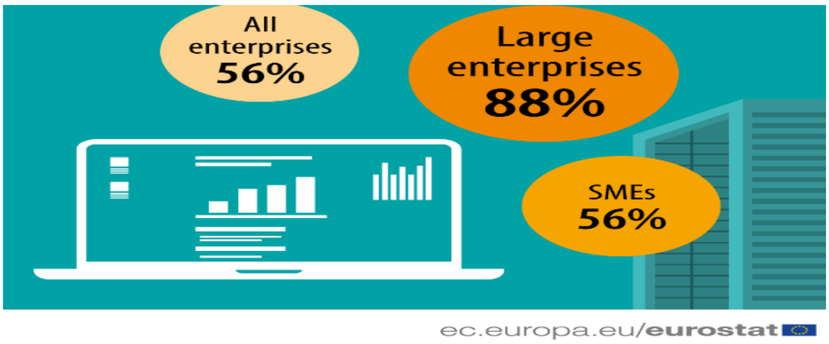
European digitalization. The major step happened in 2015, via the Digital Single Market Strategy, embraced by the Commission. Through time, the EU abolished roaming fees, disestablished geo-blocking, promoted e-commerce and reduced many of quantitative e-trade barriers. What's more, Union's action led to the digitalization of businesses and to the enhancement of cybersecurity framework (Ratcliff, Martinello and Litos, 2022). It was the European Commission, also, which proposed the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act initiatives, at the spring of 2022, leading to a renewed legislation of digital markets (European Commission, 2023).

Problem analysis

A logical question which should be arisen, is the following; If there is such a considerable legislation about DSM, why it is implicated that the EU's digitalization is far enough? The answer is quite obvious… Despite its stable progress, there are also other considerable countries which had already evolved, more qualitative than Europe. To be more precise, only a fractionally bigger than 50% of European enterprises have basic digital knowledge, while the adequate target is at least 90% (Eurostat, 2022a). What's more, the Digital Single Market, as anyone understands, requires innovation. Unfortunately, since 2019, Europe is not any more the innovative continent, despite the existence of breakthrough ideas and of an evident entrepreneurship (Tsanova 2019). Thus, there is a huge gap between demand and supply for innovation and patents.

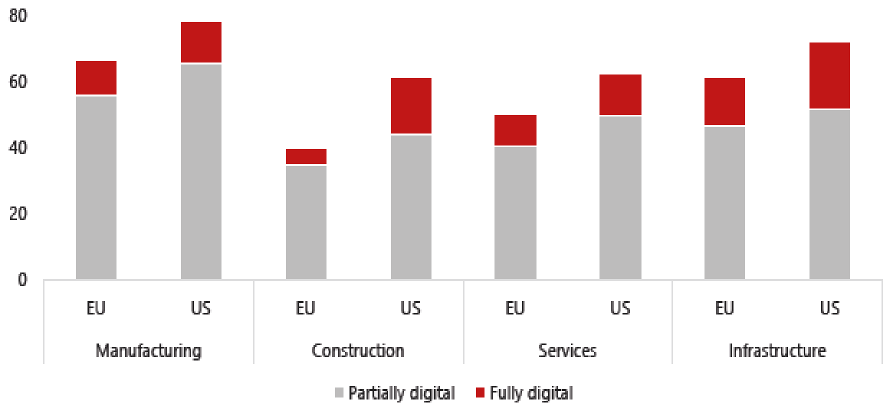
At the same time, the U.S enterprises are by far, more digitalized than the EU ones, in all the domains (EUIB, 2020). Even worse, China has made significant gains in the international trade and especially in the digitalization process. As a result, the EU is highly dependent from PRC, on semiconductor chips, the new "black gold". Not to mention, other emerging economic powers such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India or even more Brazil. This economic power could be transformed into digital power, into the next decades.

Figure 1: EU digitalization process in the domain of enterprises



Source: Eurostat (2022b)

Figure 2: Comparison of the innovation of EU and US enterprises



Source: EIBIS 2019. *Note:* A firm is identified as partially digital if at least one digital technology was implemented in parts of the business; and fully digital if the entire business is organised around at least one digital technology. Firms are weighted using value added.

Source: European Investment Bank (2020).

Suggestions

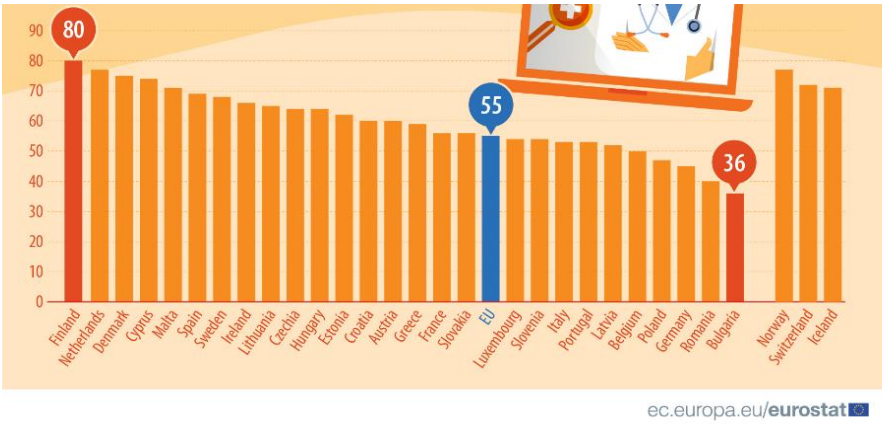
The existence of difficulties in DSM, does not mean that the EU must not take cutting-edge actions. The following suggestions will lead to the boost of European digitalization in a medium/long term basis.

a. e-Health

E-health was one of the conclusions made by the Council of the EU, on 9th June 2020, concerning European Digital Future (Council of the European Union 2020). E-health is defined as the combination of traditional medicine and technology. Via that process, medical data about patients are being stored in electronic platforms, easily accessible to them (Wankhade, 2021). Digital health provides better health monitoring for citizens, reduces administrative and personal costs, generates high employability and job positions, not to mention, the accessibility which is provided for the poorest patients, those without health insurance or those who live far away from the European urban fabric (Nievas Soriano et al, 2019).

Since 2017, most people (93%) considered urgent an e-health strategy, while a slightly reduced percentage, considered that digital health will totally benefit the EU (European Commission, 2022). Another survey, during Covid era, reveals that more than the 50% of the EU citizens had searched on the Internet about health information, symptoms or diseases (Eurostat, 2021). These two surveys are the same side of the coin. The EU’s vivid part, its citizens, are understanding the emergence of computerized methods of health.

Figure 3: Percentage of people searching for health information online, in the EU



Source: Eurostat (2021)

The creation of a universal “European Digital Health Platform” (therefore “EDHP”) should be an EU priority. All citizens, inhabiting in each EU member state will have secure access to their personal and health data. National Ministries of Health (and/or Ministries of Technology) should also grant the permission to “integrate” this data into a European level. Via EDHP, people will also be able to ask for electronic prescription rather than a visual one and they can consult specialized doctors in a 24/7 basis. The e-medicine will not replace the traditional one. There are a couple of programs which can help the funding procedure, such as “EU4health”, with a 5.3 billion € budget (European Commission n.d.), “Horizon 2020”, which promote R&I, a part of NGEU (specifically 1.3 billion €) and “Horizon Europe”, with budget 4.1 billion € for the period 2021-2027. The 3 last programs are effectively managed by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (European Commission, n.d.).

However, this health strategy could be evaluated with skepticism from EU27. Thus, the European Commission, should propose to the national governments to submit their national plans about the European ehealth strategy in a period of 7 months. Afterwards, the EU institutions will evaluate them. When a state’s position is problematic, the European Commission will ask for further clarification. In that way, a unique and genuine dialogue will be established between supranational and national level of European governance. Eventually, a survey proves that around 80% of states had harmonized their legislation with the EU, in the domain of electronic health record, causing optimism about the aforementioned venture (Villanueva, 2022). Furthermore, the EU should indefatigably support those citizens whose job could potentially be lost due to e-health strategy. The European Union, through the European Globalization Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers, secures that unemployed workers due to pandemic, or due to digitalization, will be aided to find a new job, and their skills will be upgraded to be better absorbed by the labor market. With a budget reaching 210 million € up to 2027, it is easier for national/ regional governments to use that fund and support their labor force (European Commission, n.d.).

b. Protection against spywares

Unfortunately, 2022 was the year where, the EU was stigmatized, amongst others, due to an illegal wiretapping scandal in Greece. Countries such as Spain, Hungary and Poland faced similar problems (Roussi, 2022). Privacy, the confidentiality of phone calls, democracy and the rule of law are fundamental principles, enshrined both in TEU and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. When, in 2022, around 93% of European households are having access to Internet (Eurostat, 2022c), we are all arguing that each household must be safe from illegal phone tapping. European Union cannot develop a DSM, without fundamental "security valves", such as cybersecurity.

For these reasons and completely respecting national sovereignty of each member state, the EU can progressively be protected by malware softwares. Taking into serious consideration PEGA report on the use of Pegasus spyware, the European Commission should demand from member states to prepare national plans. In these plans each member state will present its national legal framework, for the acquisition and the use of spyware softwares. When these plans will be returned to the European Commission, under strict deadline, the latter will evaluate them and it may demand further clarifications from member states. This fruitful dialogue will make crystal clear if member states are ready to cede to the EU, some part of their sovereignty in home affairs and security. If member states and the EU reach a compromise, then the European Commission is obliged to publish a new law which will guarantee the privacy of online personal information and the confidentiality of phone calls. Furthermore, this regulation will permit only targeted internet taping, exclusively for reasons of national peace and security, specified by member states. As a result, the abuse of spying softwares, will not be tolerated and transparency procedures will be inaugurated for European governments (Kabelka, 2022).

Conclusions

In this paper, the main problem under discussion is the slow digitization progress of Europe. The pandemic made urgent the shift towards "digital-friendly" strategies in order to redefine the technological blueprint of the EU. E-health initiative and/or protection from spywares was only a little proportion from the bundle of measures the European Union can deploy. All these actions, despite they seem proper and suitable for the correction of the problem, are merely theoretical. A strong and genuine coordination between member states is necessary because some of their interests, especially in the domain of home security, could be satisfied better in (sub-)national level. To conclude, the effectiveness of the EU's response to adopt a concrete, revised and cutting-edge Digital Single Market Strategy, lies in the real intentions of member states, even if it is not a state-centric strategy such as Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) or Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

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The European Union towards Cohesion Challenges: What's the Next Step?[1]

Athanasia Mouriki[2]

Abstract

Considering the important percentage of the annual budget spent on cohesion policy, this policy brief examines what it's the cohesion policy of the EU, the problems the Union is facing in this domain and the actions that have been taken. Cohesion policy's is aiming to eliminate imbalances between countries and regions. Nevertheless, a variety of issues observed on the achievement of this objection are being analyzed in this policy paper. The East-West divide, the North-South divide and the disparities between urban centers (capitals or large cities) and rural areas are the most severe issues. The "New Cohesion Policy 2021-2027" is trying to give concrete solutions. This policy brief recommends: More financial support, monitoring, spread the spirit of a united EU, avoid stigmatizing member states, and turning cohesion policy into an exclusive EU competence.

Keywords: Cohesion policy, Budget Policy, Cohesion challenges, New Cohesion Policy 2021-2027.

Introduction

Examining both the long-term and annual budgets adopted by the European Union, it is notable that the amounts spent on "cohesion" represent a significant part of the overall budget. Out of a total of €1.8 trillion for the long-term budget 2021–2027, the European Union intends to spend more than 30% on its Cohesion Policy (Jaganmohan, 2021). But what is meant by cohesion? What are the Union's main goals for its cohesion policy? Why is this policy the subject of such high spending?

"Initially, "cohesion policy" is the European Union's policy that aims to eliminate the gaps between member states as well as between various areas and regions within the same country. Through cohesion policy, the EU intends to lessen the economic, social and territorial disparities among its regions." (Kolodziejski, 2022). The EU supports underperforming member states and regions with funds provided by the European Structural and Investment Funds (European Investment Bank, European Cohesion Fund, European Social Fund, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Just Transition Fund, European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development). In order to handle funding for cohesion, the European Commission cooperates with the regional or national authorities (EUR-lex, n.d.).

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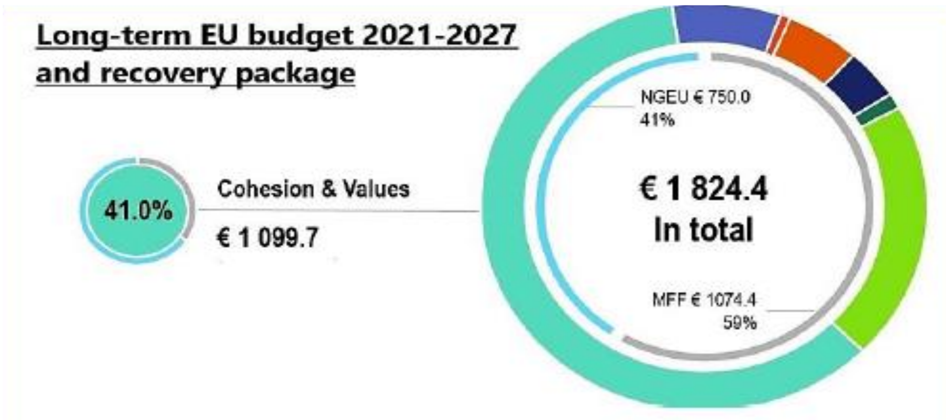
[2] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus, Greece.

Figure 1: Multiannual Financial Framework (2021)



Source: Ministry of Finance: Multiannual financial framework. Available at: https://www.minfin.bg/en/877 (Accessed: 13/11/2022).

Article 174 Treaty of Lisbon

"[...] The Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion.

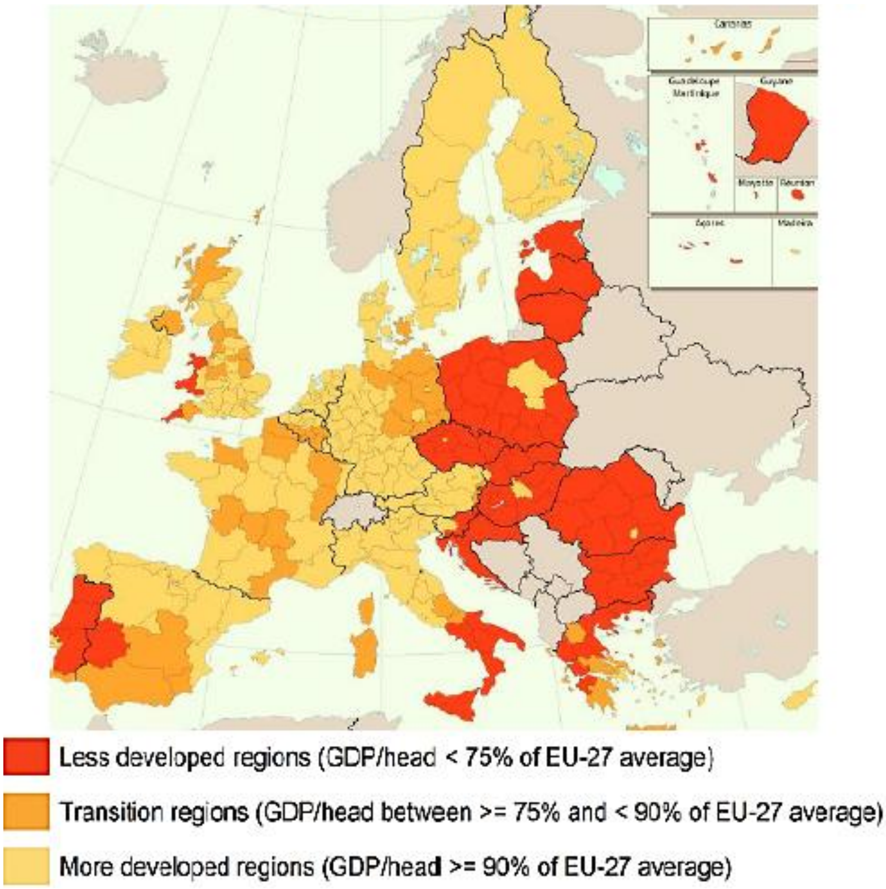
The Union shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favored regions. Among the regions concerned, particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density and island, cross-border and mountain regions."

(Official Journal of the European Union, 2008)

Concerning the EU as a whole

In terms of cohesion, EU Member States are divided into two groups. This division appears as an east-west divide. The first group consists of the Western and Northern European states, the wealthiest EU members, whose GDP per capita is above Europe's average. These states benefit from advanced education, enhanced employment opportunities, better administration, and improved health systems (Plateau et al., 2019). Moreover, the citizens of these countries feel part of the EU and usually oppose Euroscepticism. The second group consists of the Eastern and Southern European states that are underperforming compared to the states of the first group, and their GDP per capita is below Europe's average. Performance in inequality, poverty, health, education, employment, and governance is significantly weak. Interestingly, the majority of the "weaker" countries are the most recent additions to the EU, entering between 2000 and 2013 (Plateau et al., 2019). These countries often feel isolated and excluded from the EU. As a result, populist and eurosceptic movements frequently appear, forcing these states to swing between east and west. This east-west division is more than apparent in the map that follows.

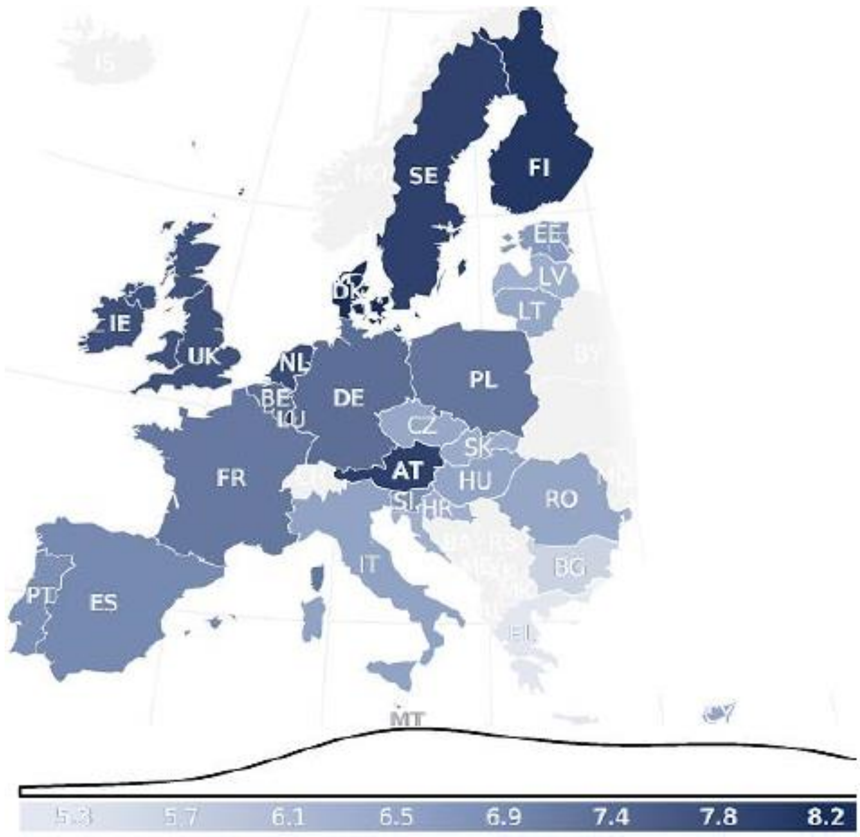
Figure 2: Map of Cohesion Regions 2014-2020



Source: Eurostat (2020). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/cohesion-policy-indicators/context/cohesion-regions (Accessed: 14/12/2022).

Generalizing the problem, North-West Member States benefit from a higher quality of life than South-Eastern States. In a Eurofound survey examining citizens' satisfaction with their quality of life, the division was confirmed. The highest-ranking countries were Finland, Sweden, and Denmark, while the lowest-ranking were Greece, Latvia, and Bulgaria (Eurofound, 2016).

Figure 3: European Quality of Life Survey

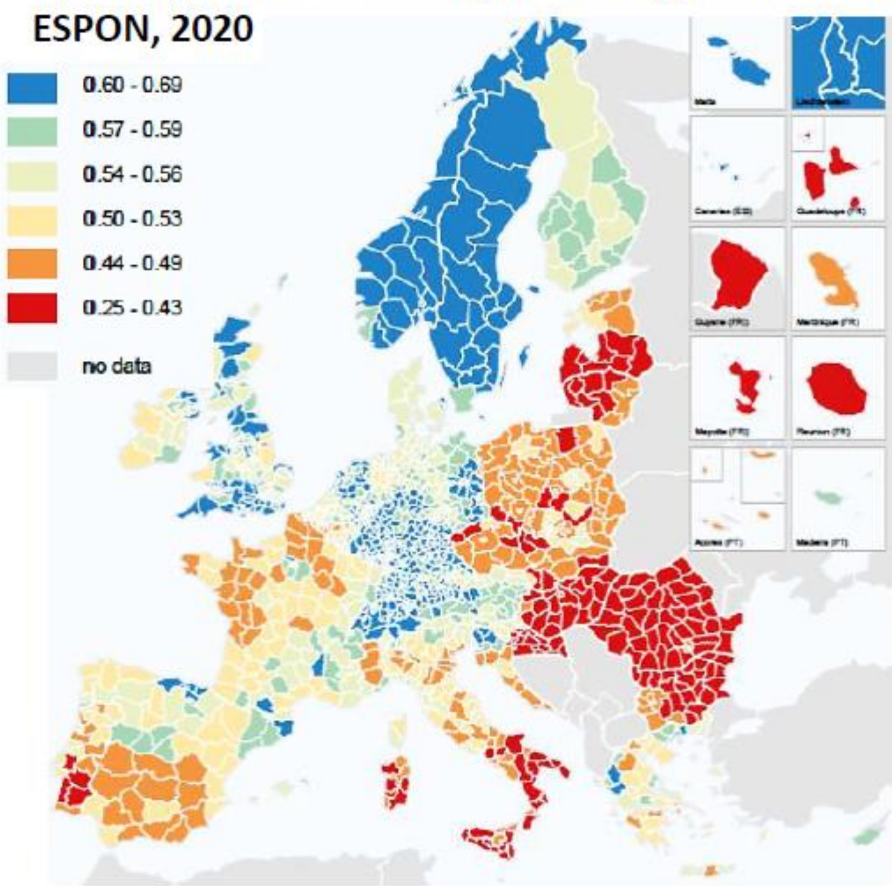


Source: Eurofound (2016). Available at: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/european-quality-of-life-survey (Accessed: 27/11/2022)

Concerning the interior of the states

As illustrated in the maps, differences occur not only between countries but also within each country. Internal regional disparities appear between less developed and more developed regions. Particularly, differences are being spotted between large urban centers, especially capitals or large cities, and rural areas. Capital regions have experienced faster growth, strengthening their position as centers of innovation and economic activity. On the other hand, many rural areas are falling behind due to inadequate assistance in development and research and the ineffectiveness of regional innovation processes. (EIB, 2022). Those disparities are reflected in the quality of life that each region enjoys, as pictured in the map below. Even in terms of life expectancy, it is higher in urban areas comparing to rural areas (European Commission, 2022).

Figure 4: Quality of life in Europe at Regional Level



Source: Böhme, K. et al. (2021). Available at: https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/Cohesion-as-an-Overall-Value-of-the-European-Union/cohesion-spirit.pdf (Accessed: 27/12/2022).

New Cohesion Policy (2021-2027). What Changes?

Despite the stronger cohesion in 2019 compared to 2007, the EU is constantly evolving, trying to fulfill its visions. The new cohesion policy for 2021-2027 aims to fill any gaps and improve the effectiveness of the policy in eliminating imbalances between countries and regions (European Commission, n.d.). More precisely, "The EU cohesion policy for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 aims to create a reformed regional development and cohesion policy focusing on five objectives:

"An EU:

1. smarter and more competitive (through innovation and digitization)
2. greener (shifting to a net-zero carbon economy)
3. more connected (by promoting mobility)
4. more social and inclusive

5. closer to citizens (by encouraging the development of diverse territorial types in an integrated and sustainable approach)” (European Commission, n.d.).

The funds responsible for meeting these objectives are the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund+, the Just Transition Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and the Interreg programs (European Commission, n.d.).

“Implementing this new plan, the EU will:

- reinforce areas damaged by the socioeconomic consequences of the shift toward climate neutrality
- promote digitalization by encouraging digital literacy, easing internet access, and investing in IT equipment
- handle demographic issues
- safeguard regions that are in danger of falling into development pitfalls.
- be better equipped to adapt to changing circumstances and unforeseen crises, allowing greater flexibility in resource allocation, planning, and crisis management” (European Commission, 2022).

Recommendations

Although the new cohesion policy 2021-2027 introduces substantial and necessary adjustments, there is still more to be done.

More financial support

In order to assist the underperforming Member States and regions, the Union should keep providing its ever-increasing financial assistance. Despite the creation of various funds responsible for financial support for "cohesion" and the Union's generosity on funding, more needs to be done. It is necessary that the Union further increase the amounts spent on cohesion policy while also allocating a constantly larger percentage of its budget to this particular objective. Unquestionably, states and regions may only recover through economic support, and the Union should be responsible for providing sufficient funding, through the already existing European Funds (Zerka et al., 2020).

Monitoring

In order to guarantee the adequate distribution and management of the funding, it is essential to establish a more efficient monitoring mechanism. Despite the European Commission's involvement in the monitoring process, the Union’s funding is not always spent effectively. We assume, therefore, that a stricter and more regular supervision of the management of funds is vital to ensure that each region and each country absorbs funds effectively and efficiently. This stricter monitoring can be done either by the European Commission (which already has some responsibilities in this field) or by a new body responsible only for supervision and coordination matters.

Spread the spirit of the united EU

European political leaders are responsible for establishing a strong and united EU. Leaders should communicate through interviews and statements that a strong EU will equally benefit ALL member states. Cohesion problems can be overcome only within a union of partners, while euroscepticism and rivalries only deepen disparities among member states. Progress is just a matter of time when citizens of all states trust the EU.

Avoid stigmatizing member states

As mentioned, the answer to cohesion challenges is unity. Northern-Western states, which perform well, should not stigmatize and isolate Southern-Eastern members. In particular, they should not assume that all economies in the South are similarly fragile, but instead focus on their individual weaknesses, which demand special solutions. The EU as a whole and each country individually should acknowledge each other's equality as partners. Contrary to what is frequently perceived by wealthier members, supporting struggling economies is not "charity" but a generous effort to strengthen the EU (Zerka et al., 2020).

Turning Cohesion Policy into an exclusive EU competence

As mentioned previously, states tend to act in accordance with their individual interests, often without considering the benefits of the Union. Therefore, it is proposed that cohesion be a domain where the EU will have exclusive competence, while the Member States will have no involvement in policymaking. This transition to "exclusive competence" will not be easy, but states must be convinced that cohesion problems can be overcome only by ceding power to the Union. The EU institutions will be responsible for deciding, distributing, and supervising funding in a way more balanced and fair to all member states.

Regional policy, however, should remain a shared competence of the Union and its members. Governments are very capable at decision-making on underperforming regions within their country since they understand better than an EU institution the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of each region. The transition to exclusive competence should only concern cohesion problems between different states.

Conclusion

European Union leaders have acknowledged the existence of cohesion challenges. In an attempt to overcome these issues, the Union has been spending significant percentages of its annual budget on its cohesion policy. Going one step further on what needs to be done, there are some crucial proposals mentioned in this policy brief: more financing support, monitoring of expenditure and reinforcement of the 'European identity'. By strengthening the European spirit and the "we" of European leaders and citizens, cohesion will be enhanced leaving a European Union powerful, united and more independent.

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Brain Drain, A Modern Issue for the EU[1]

Amalia Angeliki Theocharidou[2]

Abstract

The brain-drain phenomenon refers to the global moving of skilled alumni in order to ensure better work opportunities and higher salaries (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2023). Its main effect is the loss of human capital in the mother countries, in which gaps in the workforce are being created, leaving the spots for people with lower qualifications. The lost income will cause a tax increase leading to the payment inability and to an overall worsening of the economy. The last result is what makes the phenomenon so important. The economy and the education are the foundations of a country and with the worsening of the first in the fields of home industries, the public services are facing a failure, the state providing less to its people (Young, 2021).

Keywords: Brain drain, EU, labour market.

Introduction

The European Commission has decided to support the Erasmus+ program by increasing its budget, aiming to higher percentages of interconnectivity so that researches will be able to work with their colleagues without leaving their home-country (Leyen, 2018). The EU has also introduced in 2020, the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) for providing students access to high quality education as well as further introducing technology. This is hoped to increase the opportunities for teachers and academia, researchers and policy makers (European Comission, 2023). On November 10th, 2022, the Science|Business Network in an initiative guided by the European Commission of 3.3 billion euros budget called “Widening initiative” launched a conference amongst R&D leaders from many fields and many European countries in order to exchange policies and help equaling the gap between the different levels of development so that the workforce will come across a well-skilled environment and work better in their home-country (Science Europe). Lastly, the EU has launched a consulting initiative on brain drain so that not only skilled individuals of the field but also the EU citizens can have their say on the matter (European Commission, 2023). However, those initiatives haven’t been conducted carefully, leading to the increase of the brain drain (Khan, 2021).

What are the causes of brain drain?

The brain drain has multiple causes. A very important one is low salary. The salaries of the USA and Japan are higher than the ones offered in the EU. As it has been stated in the European Journal of

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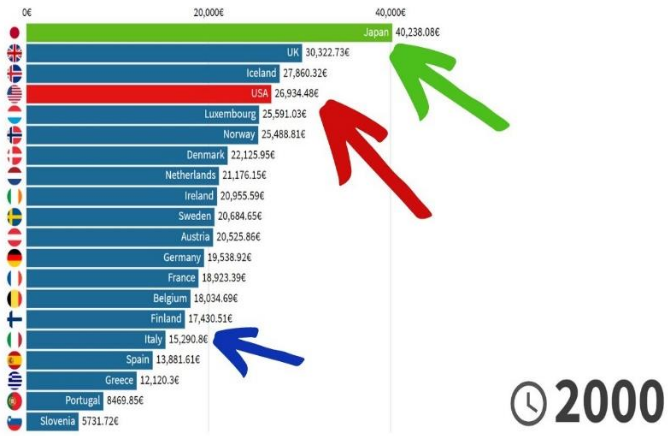
[2] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus, Greece.

Education (Khan, 2021), an average salary of an academic researcher with the impeded tax comes to € 62,793 EUR in the US whereas in Europe, it is estimated in € 40,126 EUR, which is 37% less than the American offering. The overall increase of the wages can be spotted in the average net salaries, in which Japan is in lead and the USA fourth, while there is not a European country above them. The cause of the imbalance might come from the massive fund cuts of the universities' budgets that had been imposed by the economic crisis of 2008. The salaries of the public sector are also mostly affected. This leads to an inner shifting towards the private sector in order for the wages to be higher. But this result has to be faced by many ways due to the different socioeconomic state of each country of the Union. For example, countries such as Luxembourg certainly can compete with the countries outside of it.

Figure 1: Average Net Salaries in Europe vs USA and Japan 2000/2019

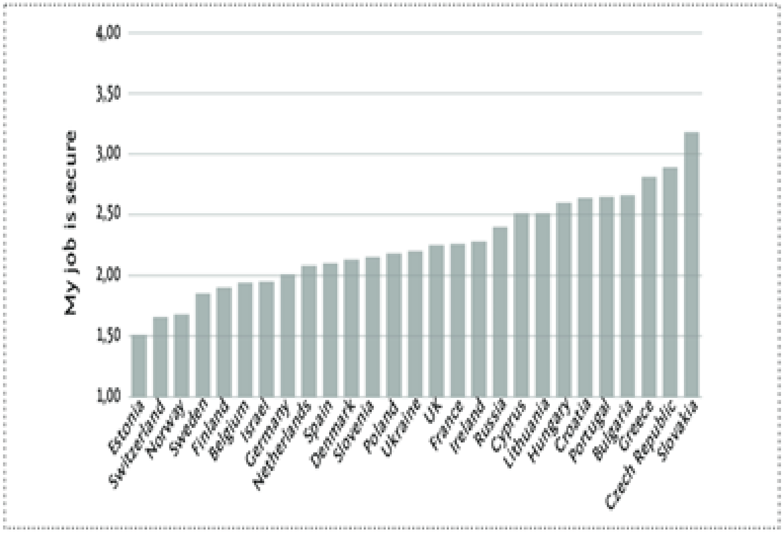


Source: data, S. A. (2022).

Job insecurity is another very important reason for brain drain. Especially early graduates face this problem as they're not given any permanent positions but only for approximately the 26% of alums coming from prestige universities of the continent such as Oxford University, leading to a great amount of work being applied on small workforces that are incapable of completing it and to an exclusion of capable individuals from the recruitment fields. Consequently, the small proximity of receiving a permanent position pushes to the abandoning of the home-countries for more affordable economies such as the USA.

Unfair recruitment procedures could also lead to brain drain. The wide range of the European countries have different recruiting ways. The most common ways are via universities or governments where injustice, excessive nepotism and a range of contacts are used discerned resulting to the promotion of people with special relations mostly with university professors as it is found that in most European countries, one's university mostly beholds the power for a possible recruitment. To continue the phenomenon is further supported by research conducted by academics in which southern European universities and organizations pinpoint the lack of fair competition in job opportunities (Mendoza et al., 2020). This is exactly what discourages people who just enter the job field to look for a place in their country knowing they will be rejected by unfair means.

Figure 2: Diagram 2: Job insecurity in Europe (1- low, 4- high)



Source: Istonova, L. & Fedakova, D. (2015). Predictors and consequences of job insecurity: Comparison of Slovakia and Estonia. Studies of Transition States and Societies, 21-37.

The migration policies are also a factor that needs to be taken into consideration as alums can also be attracted by the fact that many countries outside of Europe provide attractive migration policies and residency rights. As the European Journal of education states (Khan, 2021), the Europeans strive to get jobs that will open their way to H-1B visas that are one of the main ways to get a Green Card, regarding the USA. The appreciation of young talents pushes the people to leave the old-fashioned and highly nationalistic environments of their countries, in which is surprising seeing Sweden and Denmark that in contrast to their mostly innovative initiatives, it is observed that they follow a nationalistic method in recruitments.

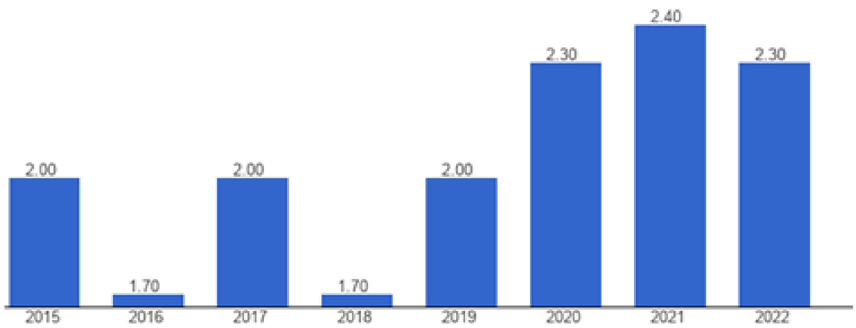
Internationalization in education is another important factor. One of the Union's projects was the creation of the European Research Era (ERA) so it increases the quality and level of the European education. That undertaking led to a greater mobility of the graduates to the American system that it's almost entirely based on private funds. At the times of the economic crisis and as the public sector is worsening, the individuals tend to turn to educational systems based on the private one as it is considered more stabilized, safe and with less disturbances than at the governmental field. As the private sector gained more attention, it led to the abandoning of the public one as the funds were cut, leading more people abroad (Khan, 2021).

How is brain drain affecting the EU countries?

For the better understanding, cases of the countries that were mostly affected by the brain drain will be presented, in order to examine its results and how it is being resolved currently.

Italy. 2018 studies proved the negative outcome of brain drain. It is noticeable that 10% of Italians who are highly educated professionals, decide to work abroad due to the economic crisis the country faced and even though its current recovery, the low salaries are quite repulsing. Specifically, Renee Kaplan points out how the Italian alumni face career paths, especially, rather apprehensively due to the high percentages of favoritism as well as the deterioration of the public sector (Kaplan, 2018).

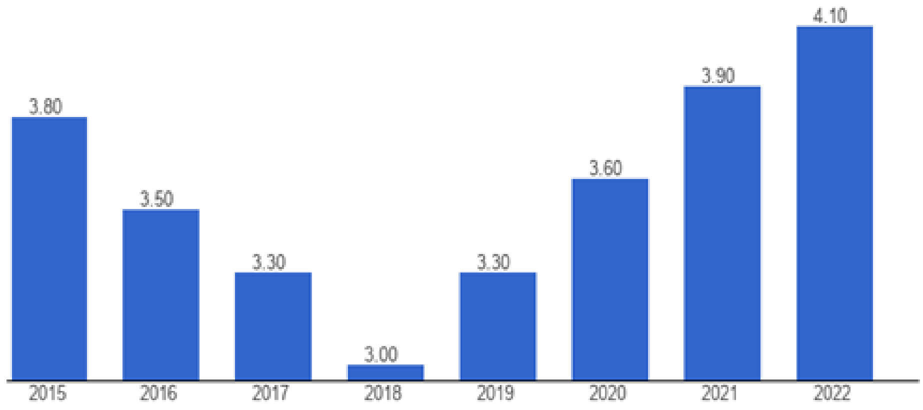
Figure 3: Brain drain data 2015-2022 in Italy



Source: The Global Economy. (2023, January 23). Available at: https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Italy/human_flight_brain_drain_index/ (Accessed: 11/05/2023).

Greece. It has been shown that since 2010 to 2021, around 400.000 Greeks have abandoned their home country, more than half of them being PhD holders and majoring in business, technologies and finance. Their main destination, either than Europe, are the USA, Canada and Australia. They mostly refer to not being able to find the appropriate job for their degree, being underpaid. Also, unemployment led the youth to search for jobs abroad (Marinakou, Giousmpasoglou, and Paliktzoglou, 2016). The high level of meritocracy in the public sector as well as the overall life quality are also additional factors leading to brain drain (Papakonstantinou, 2021).

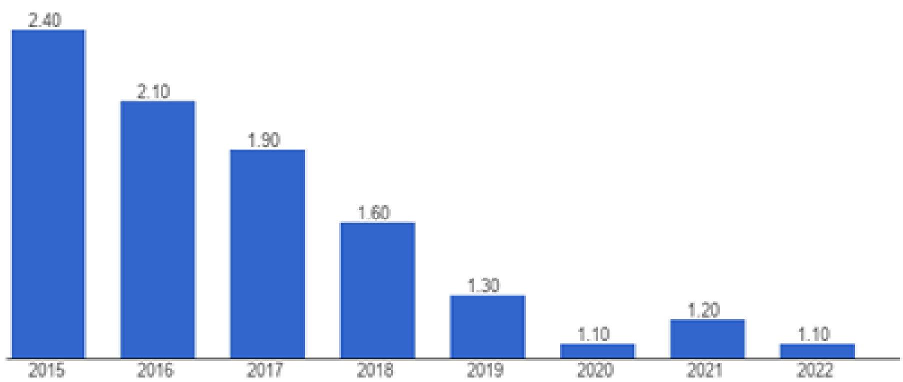
Figure 4: Brain drain data 2015-2022 in Greece



Source: The Global Economy. (2022, January 29). Available at: https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Greece/human_flight_brain_drain_index/ (Accessed: 11/05/2023)

Spain. Spanish academics refer to Spain's brain drain as a cause of the fast evolving economic crisis of 2007 which led to high percentages of unemployment, reaching 47.7% in 2015 and leading to a total loss of 87.000 skilled professionals by 2019. The crisis applied the same as Greece, low salaries and people exiting the country hoping of finding a job with better profit and the USA was one of the leading destinations (Youth employment, 2019). Another factor that played an important role to the decision of emigration was the personal-professional satisfaction. University reports show exactly how Spanish technology alumni chose mainly San Francisco for their destination, in thoughts of further growth in their field, thinking Silicon Valley was the perfect place for that. Despite the past researches, in the case of Spain, there is a positive outcome as the emigration rates have dropped sharply the recent years (Nelson, 2015).

Figure 5: Brain drain data 2015-2022 in Spain



Source: The global economy. (2022, January 29). Available at: https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Spain/human_flight_brain_drain_index/ (Accessed: 11/05/2023)

Conclusions

Brain drain has been an important issue regarding the future of Europe that has been up for discussion by many scholars and policymakers all around the European countries. The economic crisis that has been tormenting countries such as Greece and Italy underlines the urgency of the matter and at the same time asks for different types of policies. Starting, the women brain drain needs to be reduced, as it has been noticed that especially in the technological and medical domain there's a huge gap between the male and the female workforce. As a result, a possible solution could be offering more job opportunities to women in order to minimize the drain (De Lange, 2013). Continuing, the Reverse Brain Drain EU program has started to apply in many European countries in order to attract more researchers to their home country. In particular, in Greece, this initiative has been taking place since 2019 and promises a higher wage covered by the ministry of labor (STAMOULI, 2020). The Research and Innovation EU price is a price offered by Horizon Europe, a funding EU program that deals with science, global challenges and innovative Europe. Each country competes separately for funds that can surpass 95 billion euros. With the help of that program, the EU can attract the interests of many researchers in hopes to achieve the goal and win the price (Horizon Europe, n.d.). Web sites like Skills-OVATE combine the skills of the subscribed workers along with the available jobs in order to help the workforce to return to their home countries. The web site also cooperates with the EU allowing the people to remigate (CEDEFOP, 2023). Lastly, URBACT is a funding EU program that empowers the appliance of integrated policies along with brainstorming and dialogue between stakeholders and local entrepreneurs with the help of researchers who can now be professionally active in their country (URBACT, n.d.).

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CONTACT DETAILS:

url: www.hapsc.org

e-mail: sec@hapsc.org

tel., fax: +30 210 3645390

Offices - Mailing Address: 38 Voukourestiou st., Athens 10673

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