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BRIEF REFLECTIONS ON THE ANGLO-SAXON AND FRENCH CULTURAL APPROACHES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FIELD: FROM THE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY TO SOFT POWER PRACTICES

Leonardo Boy

ABSTRACT

Cultural diplomacy and soft power have become increasingly important to foreign policy when it comes to influencing people, countries and continents. While technological advances have made communication more agile and instantaneous, the international scenario has also become more competitive. Therefore, the cultural factor emerges as a unique element of differentiation between states that want to play an active role among other countries. This essay examines the culture approach of the French tradition of international relations balanced with the concepts of Joseph Nye in order to understand how countries are using this tool in their foreign policy. Over the years, an enormous amount of research has been done on the cultural field, but only recent studies have deeply explored the use of cultural diplomacy and soft power strategies. Thus, this study offers a different analysis of cultural foreign policy from historical and global perspectives.

Key words: soft power, culture, cultural diplomacy, international relations, foreign policy

Introduction

It seems fair to suggest that the construction of the modern state as a former of cultural identities has received great relevance in the study of international relations. The territorial integrity of the countries, as we see today, was based on the Treaty of Westphalia, which defined the sovereignty of states. These introduced, in a compulsory or spontaneous way or the sum of them, elements that were necessary to build up the national culture (Martins, 2007, pp. 48-49).

In past decades, the study of culture in international relations has been an objective of analysis at a time when cultural practices are gaining importance in establishing dialogue among civilizations. Questions about the conception of nation and identity have received considerable research attention, especially because countries are spreading their culture worldwide, e.g. language, ideas and way of life, as a new tool of intercultural relations.

Previous contemporary studies in the field of international cultural relations have been restricted to cultural nationalism and the internationalist spirit of minority groups. However, the role of sociocultural analysis of peoples is still poorly understood (Reszler & Browning, 1980, pp.381–399). This essay was developed to examine some studies that have been overshadowed by Anglo-Saxon scholars, mainly due to the fact that some important analyses were overlooked.

This study is organised into three main parts, the first of which deals with a bibliographic investigation about the culture conception, going through such areas as history, anthropology and international relations to delimit the field of the research. The selected areas are not intended to be an exhaustive account of the various theories. Section two is dedicated to a theoretical framework of the field in international relations, presenting some key principles behind the topic. In section three the concept of cultural diplomacy and soft power is further explored in case studies. The role of a cultural approach is explained in-depth at the end of this essay.

Nationalism, identity and cultural approaches

Culture is a multidisciplinary term, mostly because it can be found in several fields of study, such as sociology, administration, history and economics. Hence, we emphasise the cross-sectional and the different semantics of the word. Understanding these approaches, knowing how they work and how they relate with different cultural theories is extremely important in discussing the extent to which the concepts of nationalism and nation are useful in explaining the creation of identity.

Ernest Gellner (2012, p.101) acknowledges that:

The ideological system of a society does not merely contribute to the stability of the system by persuading its members that the system is legitimate ... It also makes possible the very implementation of coercion.

The scholar's theoretical framework takes into account the culture as a recent phenomenon that has supreme power over all individuals who live under the same regime and constitute a strong political expression. On the other hand, Eric Hobsbawm (1990) argues that the idea of identity, of classifying men and the creation of the "nation-state" is tightly linked to the nation's origin

myth, since from the interests of a bourgeois and political elite and, mainly, through liberal discourse, the true intentions of the new nationalism, clearly economic, were founded.

Hobsbawm (1990) has put forward the hypothesis that the national identity is a political and cultural construction that attempts to meet specific interests. As seen in his theoretical foundation, the creation of nations has more to do with the novelty of the revolution than with ethnic, racial and linguistic elements, as such. However, Benedict Anderson (2009) supports the notion that the idea of both nationality and nationalism has grounds in the creation of the self-portrait of nations¹. According to him, nationalism – characterised by the feeling of belonging to a nation – is not an invention in the meaning of falsification, as proposed by Gellner (2000), because there are no authentic or false nationalisms, but, instead, based on the distinction from which they were imagined and created. Still, in the same book, Anderson (2009) refutes Hobsbawm's (1990) hypothesis claiming that the rise of nationalism was prior to the nation, evidencing that during the history of mankind it was not always so. By way of illustration, consider the events that followed the Brazilian independence. When it occurred, just a few recognised themselves as Brazilians. This was developed throughout the 19th century (Carvalho, 1990).

In the midst of these interactions, researchers are confronted with the challenge of defining the term culture in the contemporary world. Although a considerable body of research has tried to simplify it as "the way of life of a people", they run the risk of bias, that is, the risk of giving credibility to punctual or summary elements (Martins, 2007, p. 29). According to Terry Eagleton (2005, p. 11), culture is one of the most difficult words to define due to the complexity that the concept has undergone along the human trajectory. Historically, the term was coined to understand human relationship with rural areas, more specifically, farm work and agricultural cultivation. Soon after, the terminology began to refer to the traditions of a people, embracing strongly their religious questions. One can note, thus, that the term has suffered the passage of material phenomena to questions related to the soul.

The modern view of culture, however, has completely changed the meaning previously employed by becoming a "... kind of ethical pedagogy which will fit us for political citizenship by liberating the ideal or collective self-buried within each of us, a self which finds supreme

¹ The study carried out by Anderson (2009) revealed that in the 19th and 20th centuries nationalism was possible mainly by (1) the role of the press and editorial capitalism and (2) vernacularisation (i.e., the shift from the use of Latin to popular language in order to unify the nation based on a common language).

representation in the universal realm of the state” (Eagleton, 2000, p.7). As mentioned, political interests attempted to establish a link between the cultural interests necessary to reach a new type of society and define a particular vision of humanity. Numerous scholars have carried out empirical studies on events such as nationalism and colonialism, largely as an artifice of domination and exploitation by imperialist capital. Pierre Milza (1980) provided one of the earliest discussions about the theme, in which he deepened his studies on international politics and *mentality phenomena*². In discussing imperialism, Milza explained a link between penetration and cultural politics, since acculturation practices³ act accordingly with political domination and the conquest of new territories. Milza went even further in his claim that the influence of a dominant culture is not exclusive to the imperialist era because in the second half of the 19th century in France and in the 20th century in England there were cultural diffusion initiatives inside and outside the European continent.

... their linguistic and cultural models, vectors of a liberal-democratic ideology which, under the shadow of universalism is in fact a powerful instrument of “clientelisation” of the elites, and thus of indirect domination. The influence of the ideas and culture of the French bourgeoisie on fractions of the Italian ruling class who thought and wanted unity, that of language and British models on Portuguese and Greek business circles ... (Milza, 1980, pp.362–363).

In the 15th century, Europe began the process of centralisation of the administrative, financial and military powers of the modern state, exercising dominion over educational, productive and ideological areas. The control of teaching was the main success factor of the construction of the national identity, mostly because it was possible to disseminate historical-cultural models that supported the state machine (Martins, 2007, pp.30–32). As Marilena Chaui (2009, pp.24–28) describes, in the 18th century, with the Illustration Philosophy, the word culture becomes synonymous with civilization, translating the political and ideological dimensions of societies. Therefore, based on the Enlightenment concept, it was possible to measure the degree of civilization of a society by the progress of its culture at the artistic, literary, philosophical and scientific levels. Contrary to the above ideas, in the 19th century, German philosophers emerged to break up this concept, inaugurating a new meaning that extends the cultural scope to human

² *Phénomènes de mentalité*.

³ We will use the acculturation concept of the study made by Reszler and Browning (1980, p.393), which defines the term as “all the phenomena of interaction that result from the contact of two cultures”. In addition, they underline “Acculturation is not only a complex and slow process but also, most of the time, painful. But assimilation, integration, clashing, rejection or syncretism of one culture by another constitute a fundamental part of history, which is itself inseparable from the notion of cultural identity.”

interaction based on practices, customs, knowledge, production systems and common values with their respective groups and societies.

... the term culture has a scope that it did not have before, and it is now understood as the production and creation of language, religion, sexuality, instruments and ways of working, housing, clothing and expressions of leisure, music, dance, systems of social relations – particularly kinship systems or family structure – of power relations, war and peace, the notion of life and death. Culture comes to be understood as the field in which human subjects elaborate symbols and signs, establish practices and values, define for themselves the possible and impossible, the timeline (past, present and future), the differences in the interior of space (the perception of near and distant, big and small, visible and invisible), values – true and false, beautiful and ugly, fair and unfair – the idea of law and, therefore, what is permitted and forbidden, determining the meaning of life and death and the relationship between sacred and profane (Chauí, 2009, pp.18–30).

As Chauí argues, a culture comes to understand language, beliefs, customs, art, laws, morality, knowledge and everything that refers to the traditions and skills acquired in the relationship between man and society, getting away from its ethnocentric and imperialist models of the 18th century to approach the anthropological concept⁴. After the second half of the 20th century, there was a growing need for societies to seek common characteristics – religious, ethnic and cultural – in individuals and groups. Particularly, the concern arose from the absence of a common collective history, vital for the differentiation between peoples (Martins, 2007, pp.31–33). For this reason, each nation began to establish a *mirror effect* in order to differentiate and create its own image (Reszler & Browning, 1980, p.395).

Reszler and Browning (1980, p.398) point out that it was in the interwar period that nations began to question the nature of people's identity and their own identity in a comparative way⁵. This finding is not congruent with the work of Martins (2007, pp.31–33), who claims that it was at the end of the Second World War that this happened due to the cultural instability caused by economic, social and political decline in most of the societies during the conflicts. The construction of identity, according to the author, was essential for the legitimacy of the individual as a citizen, mainly because it was possible to build up the collective memory

⁴ Anthropology, a study that aggregates elements related to the cultural diversity of peoples, emerged as a late scientific discipline at the end of the 19th century, with the *Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin. Even if the ideas of social Darwinism exalted the racist characterisation of the species, of individual competition, of the survival of the strongest, it is noteworthy that these did not accompany anthropology. Eriksen (2007, p.29) points out that "All the leading anthropologists of the time supported the principle of the psychical unity of mankind – human beings were born everywhere with approximately the same potentials, and the inherited differences were negligible."

⁵The scholars use this argument based on investigations of some written texts that exalted the Franco-German rivalry (Reszler & Browning, 1980, p.395).

indispensable for the historical culture of civilizations. The general picture emerging from the present analysis shows a growing concern among countries in the search of self-determination and self-assertion by the states in the international system.

The representations of the peoples as we know them today, French, Italians, Argentines, and so on, are representations existing not only due to a model of state education, as we have discussed before, but also to the sharing of a tradition in a community that was, in many cases, invented. According to Eric Hobsbawm (1983), many traditions regarded as ancient, in fact, are recent or invented. For Hobsbawm (1983, p.1), these practices are “normally governed by overly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to attribute certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” Reszler and Browning (1980, p.382) remind us that “The identity of modern nations is by definition cultural” and guided by a stereotypical representation. According to them, to maintain the identity collective, stable and unique, it must be formed primarily by religion, history, race, language, political and social institutions, legal systems and mythology. However, it is a misconception to view it as any of these elements, but rather the systems of values that make them interconnected, such as the artistic creations, intellectuals, traditions, and peculiar aspirations of a people (Reszler & Browning, 1980, pp.383–384).

In the era of globalisation, the strong dilution of human relations has brought some questions about the cultural field. Samuel Huntington (1993) in the book *The Clash of Civilizations* offers a concept for the contemporary international relations by observing the changes in the world hierarchy. He announces that the culture nowadays would be the cause of conflict or cooperation between countries. One recognises that Huntington’s (1993) narrative is problematic in the field of international relations, once the theme is told and portrayed as novelty by the scholar. Nonetheless, even if it has been the subject of several criticisms, his theoretical considerations have opened up space for studies on the cultural dimension in international relations – especially after September 11 attacks. One of those critics was Tzvetan Todorov (2010), who refutes Huntington (1993) by stating that cultures are in constant transformation and, throughout human history, they have not clashed, rather, blended and generated hybrid cultures. Todorov (2010, p.89) expands on this by stating that “The encounter between cultures does not usually produce a clash, a conflict, a war, but – as we have seen – interaction, borrowing, and cross-fertilisation.” Under such complexity, the study of culture is, for some scholars, the capacity to legitimise power, or as we have seen above, for others, a means of integrating different cultures. For this reason, the debates between local and global,

territorial tensions and the impact on national identities are the milestones of the postmodern agenda.

Current studies appear to support the notion that the identities are going through a phase of decline in postmodernity, where national characteristics are transformed and driven mainly by strong globalisation bursting with new identities. For Stuart Hall (2005), such changes provoke social instability because they pulverise the modern citizen, considered until then as something unthinkable since the “old identities” were seen as solid. The thrust of Hall’s argument revolves around the so-called “identity crisis”, which disarticulates the structure and organisation of modern societies and compromises the harmony of the social world. However, as in a double-lane road, in the opposite direction, there are groups that try to rescue the lost identity. Jean F. Freymond (1980, p.411) provides the rationale that nationalism can be also used to restore cultural balance. Accordingly, aggressiveness is seen as a form of re-appropriation of the reference systems, values or beliefs of a society that considers itself threatened by others.

The cultural approach in the International Relations field

The cultural dimension studies in international relations begin outside the Anglo-Saxon world, with the Mexican scholar Marcel Merle in 1980. Although he has not received recognition from the scientific community, the academic proposes the creation of a new paradigm centered on the cultural factor. According to him, the dynamics of states’ behavior could not be explained by existing paradigms, since they were not capable of responding to the complexity of the international system (Merle, 1985, p.342 cited in Suppo, 2013, p.13). In the words of Hugo Suppo (2013, p.13–16), the discipline of international relations integrates the cultural factor in all paradigms, but in a secondary way, as if it were a consequence of the political and economic action of the states. However, Suppo believes that the analysis of the cultural dimension in isolation, without taking into account the context in which they were inserted, makes the scientific process difficult. This can be explained by the complexity of controlling the methodological variables in the social environment which, in the cultural dimension, occupies the inter-paradigmatic debate. In this same conception, Simon Mudén (2011, p.417) considers that the issue with cultural analysis is the difficulty of making generalisations that can characterise as a rule for particular events, especially on a worldly scale. The scholar argues that the analysis of the cultural dimension is, for some approaches, “tendentious or malignant”, which means a derivation of realism whose state of nature presents

a permanent conflict between the parties in search for their own survival and, at the same time, understands the discourse of community and integration from the viewpoint of the balance of power alliances, which are principles originated from the liberal theory.

The subject gained momentum in the United States after the Second World War when the embryo of what would later be called the “fourth dimension of international relations” (Lessa & Suppo, 2007, pp.229–230) was born by the specialist Phillip H. Coombs.

Foreign policy cannot be based on military posture and diplomatic activities alone in today’s world. The shape of the world a generation from now will be influenced far more by how well we communicate the values of our society to others than by our military or diplomatic superiority (Coombs, 1964, p.IX).

Coombs emphasises the importance of the culture for the foreign policy of the state, breaking the classic premise that the state, in order to guarantee international weight, needed only military and economic power. Coombs (1964) regrets the lack of emphasis on educational and cultural issues on the international agenda, since a culture-based policy would mean closer rapprochement between European countries, especially as a positive response to conflict-stricken nations after the two great wars that marked the 20th century. In this way, the war trauma of the countries could be softened by initiatives of the cultural field, necessary for the restoration of the self-image of the nations.

From the 1980s onwards, more in-depth studies began in the area of cultural diplomacy, in which is observed the important contribution of the academic John Mitchell by his book called *International Cultural Relations* (1986). For the scholar, cultural diplomacy can be found on two levels:

- 1) In the establishment of cultural agreements between governments that broaden the channel of communication with several spheres of society; and
- 2) In the actions of diplomats, when they seek to achieve political and economic goals, so that in the name of foreign policy and national interest they carry cultural factors in their discourses and activities.

Mitchell (1986) distinguishes cultural diplomacy from international cultural relations, with the latter directed towards non-governmental and related initiatives, and may even be carried out by civil society. In principle, cultural diplomacy must seek advantages for the countries involved because that is how understanding and mutual collaboration take place. It is also noted

that Mitchell's reflections on the subject suggest that cultural diplomacy uses "selective images" for state self-promotion, while international cultural relations are more honest with respect to the country's self-portrait⁶. Indeed, this is a fact that requires carefulness, so the images that symbolise the country must represent it in an honest and not idealised way; otherwise, there will be serious consequences for their credibility in the international sphere (Mitchell, 1986, cited in Mark, 2009, p.19).

In the early 1990s, American political scientist Joseph Nye contributed to the academic debate about the changes in international dynamics from a key explanation that put forward the intangible nature of international politics. His input began with the publication of *Bound to Lead* (1990) followed by *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). Both of them demonstrate how ideas, customs and practices persuade indirectly other political entities abroad. Nye (2004) coined two terms: *Soft* to designate the power influence in cultural and ideological aspects of a country, opposed to *hard power*, characterised by the imposition of military and economic power with the exercise of brute force⁷. Soft power has the ability to subtly persuade the interests and behaviours of allied or rival countries to cooperate with expected results. In this context, culture can be seen with

... growing importance in international politics. For many scholars, even after the agrarian, industrial and technological revolution, society would now be in the throes of a cultural revolution . . . culture can play an important role in overcoming conventional barriers separating peoples; in promoting or stimulating mechanisms of mutual understanding; in the generation of familiarity or reduction of areas of distrust (Ribeiro, 2011, pp.23–24).

Considering that conventional forms of diplomacy are not effective in overcoming ideological and geographical barriers, the promotion of national identities brings countries closer together by producing a positive image of cooperation. In this context, it is clear that the lack of interest on the development of culture by countries may subject the state to stereotypes and prejudices, which can lead to a secondary position or even lose relative importance with other states. Culture as an instrument of foreign policy provides a channel of new possibilities for international relations, mostly because of its "ability to effect the outcomes you want, and if necessary, to change the behaviour of others to make this happen" (Nye, 2002, p.4). This is the

⁶ There is something unusual in Mitchell's argument. Since countries select and "hide" domestic realities, these behaviours are not far from the Realism theory of international relations, whose logical and individualistic behaviour forms the personality of sovereign states in the struggle to seize power in the international arena (Machado, 2012, p. 21).

⁷ This is derived from the Realism school of international relations theory, where quantitative values determine the power of the country on a world scale, i.e. population size, GDP and, especially, military power.

reason why cultural diffusion is one of the most powerful tools in the contemporary world, largely as a result of the popular culture dissemination and the media in globalisation.

In this way, Nye (2002, pp.36–41, 2004, pp.11–15) structures a distinguished analysis of other international relations theorists by highlighting cultural centrality as a key aspect of the foreign policy of states, since the power in contemporaneity is strongly linked to the values that the countries broadcast away. Even though the theory developed by him has received wide criticism from the international relations' mainstream, several theorists and researchers constantly use his nomenclature. This proves the importance of his work to systematise a different kind of power in the foreign policy agenda.

Cultural diplomacy and soft power: a case in point

It is generally accepted that, after the end of the Cold War, American hegemony was spread across the world in terms of values and customs – Hollywood films, musical genres (pop and Rock and Roll), clothing (T-shirts, jeans), food (McDonald's, Coca-Cola), and television (TV series, Walt Disney characters). According to Fraser (2005), in the 20th century, the American way of life ideologically conquered the world through American popular culture. It was inserted into other national cultures worldwide and absorbed by them as part of the local lifestyle. These ideals have been widely disseminated through various media, becoming part of the daily life of almost the entire West, resulting in what Nye classifies as the perfect example of using soft power on a world-wide level (Machado, 2012, p.22 cited in Fraser, 2005).

Simon Mark (2009, pp.2–5) warns that for a long time scholars of international relations have ignored the cultural diplomacy field. For him, the lack of interest stems from the difficulty in delimiting precisely the theme, often confused with public diplomacy, propaganda and international cultural relations. In this paper we use the term cultural diplomacy to refer to the foreign policy instrument financed economically by the state – in the light of John Mitchell's (1986), Simon Mark's (2009) and Edgard Telles Ribeiro's (2011) work. Cultural diplomacy must thus be understood as a soft power strategy. However, as we have previously pointed out, soft power is also part of the diffusion of a country's image through private actors, such as the United States by Hollywood studios. Let us make one caveat here; the United States should not be used as an example to designate the exercise of cultural diplomacy, since we understand American actions as advertisements.

In order to clarify the term, it can be said that what distinguishes cultural diplomacy from advertising itself are the actors involved in the strategy, since advertising is formulated by a private company and has aims of selling products or ideas (Jora, 2013, p.44). Therefore, soft power initiatives from the private sector are not necessarily linked to cultural diplomacy activities, since they do not have to follow a country's foreign policy agenda. In other words, cultural diplomacy represents the elaboration, production, and circulation of cultural goods and services designed to project national ideals abroad, seeking to increase the flow of technical, political and commercial cooperation to the state.

Examples of this broader scope of cultural diplomacy includes educational scholarships, visits of scholars, intellectuals, academics and artists both domestically and abroad, cultural group performances, artist performances and exhibitions, seminars and conferences, the operation of libraries, festivals abroad and support for festivals of other countries held domestically, establishing and maintaining professorships and chairs in universities abroad, the commissioning of busts, statues and portraits of national leaders, the presentation of books and musical instruments to visiting dignitaries and diplomatic missions abroad, an essay award and an annual lecture and sports (Mark, 2009, p.10).

It is possible to identify cultural diplomacy in various events, since they offer a range of options that can bring countries closer together and accentuate their intellectual, artistic and scientific productions. We can mention the work of Acir Madeira Filho (2012) on the experience of some countries in the development of these initiatives, specifically: France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Japan, characterised by tradition in the area, while Spain, Portugal and China have more recent activities.

According to Macher (2010, pp.79–82), cultural diplomacy began to be used as a tool by Britain, France, and Italy shortly after the Second World War in Hungary, where cultural institutes were founded. Macher states that the main purpose was to put an end to the Communist threat that hovered over the country. It should be noted that the cultural initiatives in these approaches do not date back to this time but rather towards the end of the 19th century in Europe, where exchanges between universities began to spread the language and intellectual productions of the countries, as well as their image and culture (Milza, 1980, p.364).

In addition, in the engagement of its activities, France has certain specificity due to the institutional character of the country's exposure abroad. Nevertheless, as confirmed by Milza's (1980, p.371) findings, at the end of the 19th century, France was considered by other countries as a *decadent nation*, losing relative importance. On the other hand, Germany was on the rise,

spreading a strong, prosperous, and highly serious model of nationalism. In response, France, during the war and the postwar period, insisted on redirecting its culture to a less regrettable image, with the aim, above all, of taking the place won by the Germans, commercially, financially and culturally.

To date, France is expanding its culture through the *Direction Générale de la Coopération internationale et développement* (DGCID), where the cultural diffusion activities of all government ministries and, to a lesser extent, the private sector are managed. The activities related to the diffusion of French teaching by the French Alliance are taught in 1,075 institutions around the world. The government agency Campus France facilitates the cooperation of French higher education institutions with their counterparts abroad. In addition, Radio France International, France24 and TV5Monde are responsible for spreading French culture abroad through media (Machado, 2012, p.27–29).

Another reference country is the United Kingdom. Although it has less emphasis than France in the matter of cultural diffusion, it still performs activities of great international repercussion through the British Council, Foreign Office and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) – the world's largest public radio and TV news broadcaster. It should be noted, however, that there is no unanimity of the scholars to consider that the United Kingdom exercises cultural diplomacy. According to Catherine Peila (2003, p.62), the British Council is not a public institution. Thus, by considering cultural diplomacy as a tool of the public sector, the United Kingdom cannot be added to the list of countries that use the government as a diffuser of the British culture; therefore, it cannot be conceived as a holder of cultural diplomacy.

Germany, on the other hand, although weakened after the World Wars, the country began the cultural diffusion and establishment of the Cultural Section (Kulturabteilung) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Auswärtiges Amt) in 1952. In recent years, the sector's investments have been directed to the Goethe Institute, with the opening of German language teaching centers in geographically strategic locations (Filho, 2016, pp.64–67).

China, unlike any other country, follows a cultural tradition of more than three millennia and has significant cultural history such as the invention of the compass, gunpowder, paper and so on. Even though China has high artistic value, the country still does not inspire expressions of approval or support in the international community regarding its culture. This is because the country has contradictions regarding the handling of human rights issues, freedom of speech and access to contents, and even issues related to intellectual property and piracy that would

push away Western countries. However, at the turn of the century, the country invested heavily in the creation of cultural institutes that besides teaching Mandarin also propagate Chinese culture in the world (Filho, 2016, pp.87–91).

Conclusion

The power of cultural diplomacy and soft power is embedded in a diverse world, which connects people, countries and continents in a single plan. Edgard Telles Ribeiro (2011, pp.24–25) argues that the influence of each state in the world will naturally depend on its political weight, to a greater or lesser extent, as well as its historical importance. Therefore, in order to understand the elements that can justify the action of the foreign policy of a particular state, it is essential to resort to the historical process and to the understanding of the structures and superstructures of the international system. Simon Mark (2009, pp.1–5) adds that cultural diplomacy has shown itself to be a strong ally of foreign policy when well used, providing the necessary opening for countries to feel close to each other and thus to establish lasting relations.

The most worrying thing, still, is that many governments have condemned culture as an irrelevant instrument of attraction between countries, unlike the great powers that want to intensify it. As previously mentioned in reference to the Franco-German rivalry, France had lost ground in the economic and military fields and decided to embark on the cultural path as a way to maintain its status quo.

Culture in international relations gains strength when it presents the reality of the multipolar world, surrounded by challenges that seek to predict the behaviour of actors as in a board game, either to minimise conflicts or find ways to cooperate. The fact is that the new ways in which culture is inserted are important in intensifying the relationship between states whose use of soft power allows the establishment of ideal conditions for partnerships and alliances. What is more, the collective conscience of the historical past does not guarantee that a state will last forever, or that the reformulation of foreign policy and the opening for the reception of new customs is essential for the continuity and increase of state power in international relations. Understanding these new approaches, knowing how they work and how they affect the dynamics in international relations is key to assuming the leading role in a globalised world.

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CAUSES OF THE DIFFICULT RELATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND RUSSIA

Nina Kuijken

Introduction

This essay will look at the causes of the difficult relation between the EU and Russia. Without any doubt we can say that the relationship between the European Union and the Russian federation is enormously famous. There are divergent views about the relationship and various theories are put forward. But why has the relationship been so difficult in recent years? That is something that will be discussed in this essay.

According to all different records, Russia is the biggest problem. The relationship has become even increasingly troublesome since the annexation of Crimea by Russia (Europa Nu, n.d.). According to the EU, this is a violation of the international law and the EU thinks Russia should return the Crimea to Ukraine, while Russia believes that this is within the international law and has her own vision on the conflict (Makarychev, 2014). As a reaction on the annexation of the Crimea, the European Union limited the diplomatic meetings and sanctions were imposed (Dolidze, 2015). As a reaction of the sanctions, Russia has decided to introduce an import ban for the counties who agreed to the sanctions.

According to the European Union, the annexation (and with that violating international law) of the Crimea is not the only problem.

Causes

The relationship between the European Union and Russia has never been one of complete harmony. More problems and discussions point between the EU and Russia are the current human rights in Russia, the increasing militarisation, the economic problems and the doubt of real democracy in the country. The cause of the bad relationship has various reasons. Therefore a number of different views will be taken.

International law

As described above, the international law is a big discussion point and one of the many reasons why the relationship is so difficult. The annexation of Crimea is just only one of the many proceedings. The EU also accused Russia of failing to comply international commitments, treaties and/or agreements (Lazareva, 2014). Violations of sovereignty and humanitarian ethics are the most common. The way power is controlled is seen as important by both parties. However, the way they implement their authority is quite different from each other. This can explain why Russia doesn't see the annexation of Crimea as violation of the international law, while the EU it sees as an illegal activity (Makarychev, 2014).

Normative gap

Another cause of the bad relationship could be the different identities from the European Union and Russia. This has to do with the different ideals and customs that are adhered to both. For example, the Russian identity is based on compulsion. In the EU it is based on authority and conditionality. Europe and Russia are both claim they value freedom, human rights, and sovereignty. They interpret these ideas very differently however. This is also the case with international law. The government in Moscow interprets it very differently than the EU does. This great difference in interpretation shows in the entitlement Russia thinks they had to Crimea. This makes collisions unavoidable. The differences in value and norms is called the "normative gap" (Makarychev, 2014).

2.3 Disinformation

Another reason for the worsening relationship is the miscommunication caused by both parties. Because of miscommunication the relation involves misunderstandings and accusations back and forth; they often use the same words, although they give it a completely different explanation. Even when they are talking about international rules, they sometimes use other interpretations. According to Makarychev (2014), this can be the result of the normative gap. Because of this miscommunication the mutual trust is lacking. That is why choosing words carefully is clearly important in international relations.

On the other side there is strategic communication in a negative sense (European Union, 2018). This involves the purposely distributing, and posting incorrect information and/or images. The goal of this campaign is to influence European citizens and European policy. They want to convince Eastern European countries that they would be better off with protection and stimuli of Russia, than those of the EU. They want to make the European Union look frail by weakening the reputations of her leaders. As a medium they use Russia Today (RT). RT is a Russian international television network. It presents news bulletins, talk shows, debates and cultural programmes. Russia says it provides a Russian viewpoint on major global events (Loffe, 2010). RT has been described as a propaganda outlet for the Russian governance and has been accused of spreading untruths, mostly about the European Union (Bidder, 2013).

Human rights

The current human rights in Russia are a big discussion point. The EU is committed to the promotion of human rights, fundamental freedom, and regards human right as the foundation for long-term stability of any county. That is why human rights are traditionally acute issues between the European Union and Russia. The EU is certain that the Russian government applies pressure on her citizens (Lazareva, 2014). It is mainly about the rights of minorities that are being violated. This varies from limiting fundamental freedoms as freedom of press and freedom of opinion, to preventing these rights being fought for by locking up activists. In the past, the EU has repeatedly criticised and expressed concerns about the human rights violations, the controversial anti-gay legislation, the obstruction of the right to demonstrate, and the lack of freedom of expression (Europa Nu, n.d.). Russia, in turn, also started to launch claims about human rights in the West. The Russian ministry published a report on human rights of national, and religious minorities in the EU countries. It is about violating Russian speaking people in Europe, and about cases of racism (Lazareva, 2014).

Economy and energy

The economic ties between Europe and Russia are often used as a cause for the difficult relationship. The economic relation between Russia and Europe is based on trade and energy (Lazareva, 2014). The sanctions from the European Union to Russia and the boycott of Russia on European agricultural products are mostly of economic nature. But first, how important are

the financial ties for the European Union and Russia? Europe and Russia are important trading partners from each other: they both have a significant share in each other's economy. For Russia, Europe is the main trading partner, dominating in Russian foreign trade, and is the main foreign investor in the Russian economy. For the EU, after the USA and China, Russia is one of the key partners in trade, and is dominating the area of raw materials and power supply (Lazareva, 2014). The energy policy of Russia is therefore closely monitored, and is an essential part of the relation between the European Union and Russia. Since 2014 the EU has been setting the "energy security". The strategy of the energy security aims to ensure a stable supply of energy for European citizens and the economy (European Union, 2018). It shows that the EU wants to reduce the dependence on Russia. As mentioned earlier, Europe had imposed economic sanctions against Russia. The energy break between the EU and Russia, and the economic sanctions are not conducive to improve the relationship. In fact, the reaction of Russia on the imposed sanctions is really harsh (the import ban that Russia has introduced, Dolidze, 2015).

Military and energy safety

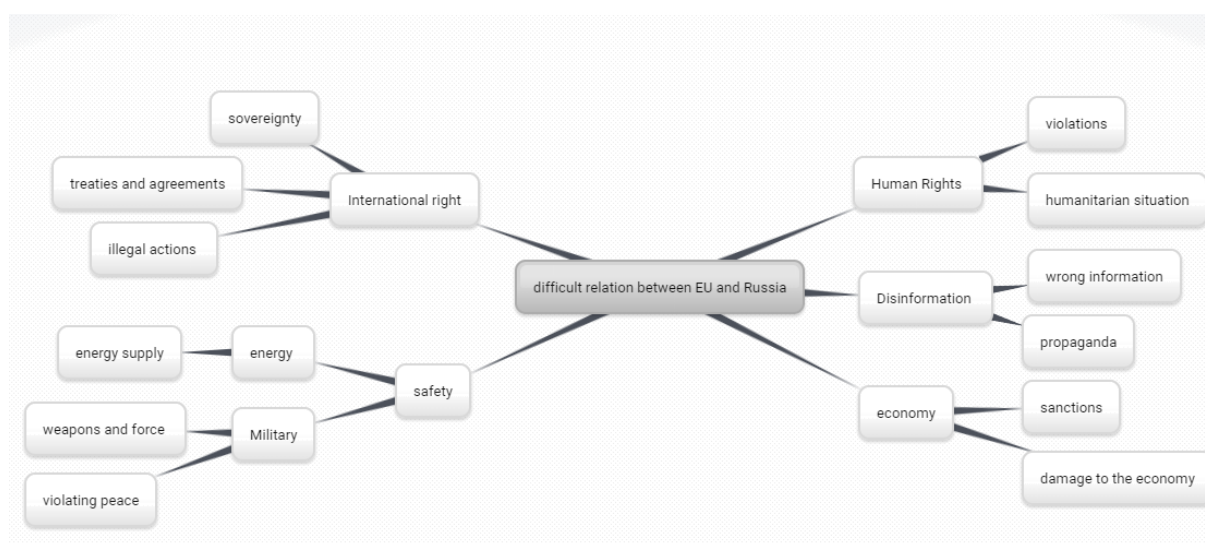
According to the EU, Russia is a military problem in various areas (EU relations with Country, 2017). A large part of the military problem in Russia is because the constant flow of weapons and forces from the Russian territory to Ukraine. This is why the aggressive military drop attacks by separatists in Ukraine are actually Russia's responsibility. Because of the Russian influences, it is expected that the pressure will be increased to stop them, and guaranteeing the safety of citizens. This is a major issue for the European Union, something that is being heavily lifted, and therefore Russia is held liable.

Another part of the safety is the energy. In this case it goes mainly about securing the energy. The EU wants a different approach to the energy relation with Russia. They want a partnership based on more liberal values. A good example is the "energy security" that the EU has been setting. The fact that the energy market is kept out of the sanctions can show that the energy issue is already one problem (European Commission, n.d.).

Conclusion

All of these causes are not completely separate from each other. International law has a lot to do with the human rights and vice versa. A lot of human rights that are being violated by Russia, are agreements in the international law. The military safety is intertwined with the law and human rights as well. Because military actions are often the cause of violation of human right agreements made within the international law. The problem of energy safety is directly connected to the economic relations, and the safety of the citizens from the EU. Miscommunication and the normative gap may be reasons for the problems concerning the international law. Both implement international laws, treaties, and words in a different way. Besides that, the sanctions that the EU have imposed on Russia, are called economic sanctions. These sanctions aren't solely of economic nature, the military problem and the international law are involved in the sanctions as well.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that according to the EU, Russia constitutes a threat, and causes a few problems. The difficult relationship can be represented as follow (Montessori et al, 2012):



What struck me during my research is that often the problems are solely discussed in studies and articles. Russia is often seen as the culprit. In many aspects I agree with the EU; Russia violates human rights, and could eventually become a problem for our economy and security. Besides that the Russians have violated the international law several times. However, I think that the differences in communication and the normative gap are not sufficiently taken into account.

There is very little discussion about how that could be solved. In my opinion, this is important because Russia seems to be unaware of any harm.

The sanctions seem to be the solutions for the difficult relationship and the danger that Russia may pose, but are these really solving the problems? They were introduced in 2014 and have been extended until now because Russia is not going to work with the sanctions. The opposite has even happened; Russia has in turn set up an import ban.

That something has to happen and Russia has to be forced to change something in a certain way is clear, and I agree with that. I merely have doubts about the current way of solving the problem.

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THE GENDER GAP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND WAYS TO OVERCOME

Yelyzaveta Malkina

The gender gap is the difference between women and men as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes.¹

The Global Gender Gap Index

The Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time. This year's edition of the report benchmarks 149 countries on their progress towards gender parity on a scale from 0 (disparity) to 1 (parity) across four thematic dimensions – the subindexes Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment – and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across and within regions and income groups.



Education encompasses access to basic and higher levels of education, while health looks at life expectancy and politics examines the difference between how men and women are represented within decision-making organisations.

Across the four subindexes, on average, the largest gender disparity is on Political Empowerment, which today maintains a gap of 77.1%. The Economic Participation and

¹ Briony, H., 2017. *What is the gender gap (and why is it getting wider)?*

Opportunity gap is the second-largest at 41.9%, while the Educational Attainment and Health and Survival gaps are significantly lower at 4.4% and 4.6%, respectively.²

When it comes to political and economic leadership, the world still has a long way to go. Across the 149 countries assessed, there are just 17 that currently have women as heads of state, while, on average, just 18% of ministers and 24% of parliamentarians globally are women.³

Also, among the 29 countries for which data are available, women spend, on average, twice as much time on housework and other unpaid activities than men. The average Italian woman spends 22 hours (or almost 3 full-time workdays) more than her partner on unpaid work per week, while this gap averages 5 hours in the Nordic countries. Altogether, the estimated annual value of women's unpaid work totals \$10 trillion, or 13% of global GDP.²

There is a notable absence of any of the world's leading industrialised nations – the so-called G20 – within the top 10, showing that economic power is not necessarily a recipe for better equality between the sexes.¹

First place among the 149 countries studied in The Global Gender Gap Report 2018 ranked by Iceland. It has closed over 85% of its overall gender gap. Iceland has been the world's most gender-equal country for nine years, which is part of the tendency for the Nordic countries to perform particularly well.

The secret of Iceland's success

Gender equality requires the collective action and solidarity of women human rights defenders, political will, and tools such as legislation, gender budgeting and quotas.

Firstly, Iceland's incremental progress can be attributed to the solidarity of women human rights defenders challenging and protesting the monopoly of power in the hands of men and the power of men over women.

Secondly, the success can be attributed to women taking power and creating alternatives to the male dominant "truths" and making the invisible realities of women visible, most importantly discriminatory practices including sexual harassment and abuse.

² The World Economic Forum, 2018. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2018*.

³ Neate R., 2018. Global pay gap will take 202 years to close, says World Economic Forum. *The Guardian*.

Lastly, Iceland's progress can be attributed to women and men sharing power with each other as decision-makers and gradually having more men supporting the give and take of gender equality.⁴

Wage gap

Women in the EU, across the economy, earn on average over 16 % less per hour than men.⁵ There are considerable differences between EU countries, with the gender pay gap ranging from less than 8% in Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia to more than 20% in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia and United Kingdom.⁶

Studies on the factors behind the gender pay gap show that a large part of the pay gap cannot be attributed to the differences in average characteristics of working men and women such as: age, education, occupation, industry affiliation, part-time or temporary employment, job tenure, firm size, or employment in private versus public sector.⁷

Studies of lawyers and business school graduates have found that men and women earn equivalent wages after graduation but diverge widely as they progress in their careers: 15 years after graduation male lawyers earned 52 percent more than their female counterparts and male MBA graduates earned 82 percent more 10-16 years out of school.⁸

Gender wage gaps at the higher levels of the wage scale are larger and declined more slowly over time than at lower and mid-income levels.⁸

To the degree that women continue to assume traditional gender roles within the family, they are more likely to take time off to have or raise children and may place a higher value on workplace flexibility than men. As a result, they may be willing to accept lower wages in return for greater flexibility.⁸

Although many countries are well-placed to maximise women's economic potential, they are failing to reap the returns from their investment in female education. In addition, too few

⁴ Marinósdóttir M. and Erlingsdóttir R., 2017. *This is why Iceland ranks first for gender equality*.

⁵ European Commission, 2018. *Report on equality between women and men in the EU 2018*.

⁶ European Commission, 2018. *The gender pay gap situation in the EU*.

⁷ Boll, C. and Lagemann, A., 2014. *Gender pay gap in EU countries based on SES*.

⁸ Blau, F. D. and Kahn, L. M., 2017. *Why do women still earn less than men*.

countries are preparing to meet the challenges and harness the gender parity opportunities posed by the changing nature of work.⁹

Causes

Gender gap is caused by sexism – discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. Sexism can affect anyone, but it systematically and primarily affects women and girls. It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles, and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another. Extreme sexism may foster sexual harassment, rape, and other forms of sexual violence.¹⁰

Social norms determine economic outcomes for women in several ways: they shape women's decisions about which occupational and educational opportunities to pursue; they affect the distribution of unpaid work within households and wages in paid care activities such as nursing and teaching, which employ a high proportion of women; and they reflect and reinforce discriminatory gender stereotypes and implicit biases that limit women's pay and promotion prospects.⁹

The UN report identifies four overarching and interconnected factors that impede gender equality in all forms of work, and at all levels of development: adverse social norms, discriminatory laws and insufficient legal protections, gender gaps in unpaid household and care work, and unequal access to digital, financial, and property assets.⁹ Systemic constraints contribute to persistent gaps in women's economic opportunities.

Systemic constraints	Persistent gaps
Adverse social norms	Labor-force participation
Discriminatory laws and gaps in legal protection	Unpaid work Types of paid work
Failure to recognise, reduce, and redistribute unpaid household work and care	Informal work Pay and prospects
Gender gaps in access to digital, financial, and property assets	Formal enterprise ownership ⁹

⁹ Tyson, L. D. and Klugman, J., 2016. *Closing the gender gap, according to the UN*.

¹⁰ Matsumoto, D., 2001. *The Handbook of Culture and Psychology*. Oxford University Press, p.197.

Consequences

Countries need to pay attention to the gender gap not only because such inequality is inherently unfair.¹

In addition, because numerous studies suggest greater gender equality leads to better economic performance.¹

Despite a closing of the gender gap in labour force participation rates in OECD countries over the past 25 years, women continue to be under-represented in entrepreneurship. A report from the OECD and European Commission – the Missing Entrepreneurs 2017 – shows that in 2016, men were, on average, 1.7 times more likely to be self-employed than women.⁵

It is also important to note that self-employed women, on average, tend to operate different types of businesses than men. Nearly one-quarter of self-employed women operate in health and social work sectors and service sectors including washing and cleaning of textile products, hairdressing and beauty treatment, and physical well-being activities. Consequently, women-owned and managed businesses appear, on average, to be less oriented towards achieving high growth and creating substantial employment for others.¹¹

Moreover, self-employed women tend to operate smaller businesses than men. They are two-thirds as likely as men to have employees or operate in teams.

Traditional gender roles may lead women to self-restrict their entrepreneurship activities to “feminised” professions, sectors and business fields. There is also a large body of research that points to gender-based differences in credit terms, such as higher collateral requirements and interest rates, despite controlling for characteristics like sector and business size.¹²

The report quotes recent estimates that suggest economic gender parity could add an additional \$250 billion to the GDP of the UK, \$1,750 billion to that of the US and \$2.5 trillion to China’s GDP.¹

¹¹ Halabisky, D., 2017. *5 ways policy could close the gender gap in entrepreneurship*.

Ways to overcome

A new OECD policy brief highlights five ways that policy can address the gender gap in entrepreneurship:

1. Improve the institutional conditions. Entrepreneurs are strongly influenced by role models and social context. It is therefore important to promote women entrepreneurs as role models and ensure that the education system is gender-neutral and does not discourage women from going into STEM fields (i.e. science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Another aspect is family and tax policies, which should seek to increase female labour market participation and female entrepreneurship.
2. Improve access to entrepreneurship skills programmes. Traditional policy action that supports the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills include entrepreneurship training, coaching and mentoring programmes, and support in building entrepreneurial networks. Such programmes are often tailored to the specific barriers faced by women and delivered to women-only groups of beneficiaries.
3. Increase the use of loan guarantees. Most government policies to improve access to finance for women entrepreneurs focus on interventions that provide grants, loans, and microcredit. A growing trend is to improve access to bank financing through loan guarantees. Evaluations of women-specific loan guarantees in Canada suggest that they create more jobs than mainstream programmes, while programmes in European Union countries also tend to show positive impacts.
4. Help women realise the growth potential of their businesses. There is a growing emphasis in entrepreneurship policy to help women acquire and develop the skills needed to successfully launch and run businesses with high growth potential. One approach is to deliver tailored support through women-only business incubator and accelerator programmes. Such incubators typically offer the usual business incubator support – premises, networking opportunities, training and workshops, etc. – but tailor them to the needs of women entrepreneurs and facilitate support. Experience in the United States suggests that dedicated incubators can be more effective than mainstream incubators, which rely on male-centric networks, fail to reach out to women's networks, select entrepreneurs through male-dominated selection panels, offer gender-insensitive programmes that do not address the needs of women.

5. Improve access to risk capital for women entrepreneurs. Both venture capital and angel investment markets are male-dominated and investments tend to be concentrated in male-dominated sectors like STEM-related sectors. Experiments in the United States show that investors are 60% more likely to invest in male entrepreneurs, even when the content of investment pitches is the same, which suggests that women entrepreneurs pitching to investors can expect a lower chance of success because of their gender. Options for gender rebalancing include attracting more women investors and advisors as part of traditional venture capital and angel networks, and forming women's venture capital funds led by women and specifically directed at investment in women-owned enterprises. Support may be forthcoming from public policies that encourage the formation of women-focused venture capital investments – by, for example, offering matching funds for investment in women-owned or women-led start-ups, early-stage and expansion-stage ventures.¹¹

Summary

It will take 108 years to close the gender gap and 202 years to achieve parity in the workforce. At current rates of progress, it may take another 202 years to close the economic gender gap globally.

As we can see, in spite of all the progressiveness of European society, there is still a huge problem of inequality in it. Because of stereotypes, dogmas and outdated rules of life, women are still afraid to choose technical subjects and medicine as a specialty, to start working for themselves or to be more ambitious in a business. Moreover, those who go to these goals are faced with such problems as different levels of wages, a glass ceiling, problems with loans, etc. Because of this, firms lack many wonderful employees who could be useful, science loses new ideas, and business - fresh and bold projects. This situation is detrimental to women, as well as to the economy, political activities, health care and education.

This is a huge problem, which can be invisible in everyday life, because everyone is accustomed to this model of society. In addition, stereotypes and outdated habits, incorporated from childhood, continue to live in our minds. Therefore, it is obvious that the first step towards overcoming this problem is to realise it, accept and tell to as many people as possible. In this essay is reviewed steps that politicians and economists must take to speed up the process of

smoothing inequalities, but it should also be noted that things would go faster if everyone will be aware of the problem and will confront with stereotypes in everyday life.

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