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THE POLITICS OF EUROPEAN VALUES IN EU's ENLARGEMENT: THE CASE OF THE WESTERN BALKANS[1]

Irina ŽARIN[2]

University of Kent – Brussels School of International Studies

Abstract

Values are a varying category that changes through time due to various reasons and for different purposes. European values follow the same pattern. Although, European values, as the founding stone of the EU and the essence of the enlargement process should have a constant character, they seem to frequently change due to challenges that the EU Member States face on the path of widening and deepening the EU. This article attempts to explain how and why certain developments in internal and external politics of the EU Member States affects EU political elites in creating EU conditionality policy towards Western Balkans in the accession phase of the enlargement process. In comparison to the other enlargement cycles, the Western Balkans is exposed to a more rigid, conditional and controlled accession process aimed at reshaping the "insufficiently adequate" attributes possessed by these countries to fit the EU Member States standards. However, the "reshaping" or even better "re-tailoring" the "European integration suit" worn by political elites sometimes proceeds not in order to advance but rather to hamper the accession process. To illustrate these theoretical insights, I examine the timely fashion of introducing new or to that point irrelevant European values to the accession process so that the efforts of Western Balkans are oriented in the wanted direction. I argue that the lack of homogeneity among EU and Western Balkans political elites determines the outcome of the accession process.

Introduction

Since its inception, the EU has faced many challenges on the path of an ever more united community in diversity. The past and current challenges have been of an equally internal as well as external nature but all of them have been managed by the EU Member States political elites.[3] One of the most prominent challenges in deepening and widening the European integration process is enlargement. Enlargement understands not just "physical extension" of the EUs' geographical borders but also a "mental alignment" of the involved parties. Previous enlargement cycles have shown that mental alignment needs to precede physical extension so that an accomplished threshold of mental alignment facilitates and fosters technical (physical) inter-locking of state structures on a supra-state level. Difficulties that have emerged as a result of a poor spill-over effect demonstrated that it is not just necessary to define "what" is being aligned but also "how" it is being aligned. In this article, the question "what" is answered by investigating the role and importance of European values that underpin the enlargement process. Bearing in mind the vast area that enlargement as a policy and process

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[2] Ms. Irina Žarin is a PhD candidate at the Brussels School of International Studies of the University of Kent.

[3] Further in text addressed as "EUMS".

covers, the article focuses only on the accession phase which starts with the opening of a specific form of political dialogue conducted in two connected stages, the so called "screening" process and "accession negotiations". Special emphasis is given to the moment of value internalization by political elites so the major assumption is of a casual nature whereby the more European values are internalized the more homogeneity among political elites is achieved. In this research, 'homogeneity' as a noun holds a wide meaning by encompassing the acts of 'value internalization' and 'norm compliance' within one set of actors defined as 'value/norm receivers'; coherence between values and behaviour (decisions) of political elites at the receiving end of the Europeanization process; as well as congruence of cognitive 'systems of value/norm receivers' and 'value/norm givers' guided by mutual efforts to substantially advance the integration process. The theoretical concept of lack of homogeneity among political elites has two aspects: the first of the EU political elites and the second of the acceding states political elites. The first aspect understands representatives of EU political elites directly engaged in the process of decision-making on enlargement issues while the second aspect understands political elites in countries of the Western Balkans with the same competences. In this part, theoretical explanations of value internalization touch upon the academic debate of norm compliance whereby a conclusion has been drawn that it is not an "either values-or norms" debate but rather a "and values-and norms" debate. The difference is viewed through the positioning and role of values, as the primary element, and norms, as a secondary element, of the mental alignment procedure. The question "how" is answered by examining the other assumption of a casual nature whereby the more norm compliance is achieved (due to an extensive value internalization effect) the more advanced European integration process will be.

Taking this into consideration, the article is organized in such a way that it presents, under the first sub-title, the current state of play in the enlargement policy, the European integration of the Western Balkans together with the effects of former rounds of Europeanization. The second sub-title explores the relationship between political elites of the EU and the WB and European values that are underpinning the enlargement process. The following sub-title explains the debate about values and/or norms and it leans on the next sub-title which deals in depth with the role and importance of European values underpinning the enlargement process. Finally, the concluding part offers a theoretical model of integration dynamics which suggests evidence of an existing triangle "political elites – European values – enlargement/European integration" and evidence of the casual effect it produces. In essence, the article considers the evolution of European values underpinning the enlargement process which leads to a more rigid, conditional and controlled accession process aimed at reshaping the "insufficiently adequate" attributes possessed by acceding countries to fit the EUMS standards. The "politics" of European values determined by their evolution will set ground, in a wider context, for future enlargement cycles and, in a narrow context, for post-accession policies.

The theoretical approach employed in this article presents a combined use of neo-functionalism, social-constructivism and political psychology aimed at providing a comprehensive explanation of a complexity of the investigated problem. The (European) integration process is perceived as a two-level political process managed by EU and WB political elites on an intra-regional and European level. This process is of a hierarchical nature so that intra-regional integration is placed on a lower (within WB) level while the European (path towards the EU) is on a higher level. Both processes are inter-connected, inter-twined, mutually dependant and strive to achieve the same goal – EU membership. Political elites on both sides, as directors of this process, are expected to use the same frequency of communication so that there is mutual understanding on how to proceed with Europeanization of domestic systems. This article extracts the interplay of values and norms

as the main ingredient of a consistent and comprehensive communication that allows progress in the process of European integration. Information about the integration process is retrieved from the mainstreaming scholarly debate, process tracing and archival research. Information about the role of political elites in this process as well as their relation to European values is gathered through elite interviews and discourse analysis with specific focus on the substance of verbal and non-verbal inter-action between the EU and WB on European values underpinning the enlargement process. In addition, informal consultations with some of the leading scholars in the values vs. norms debate gave more than helpful comments and suggestions for developing a solid theoretical structure.

Europeanization in transition

The accession of Croatia to the EU in July 2013 has opened a new chapter in the development of the European integration process and enlargement policy. The flaws of the previous blueprint for Europeanization of aspiring countries have already become visible while examining first results of the post-accession monitoring mechanisms in cases of Bulgaria and Romania. These mechanisms were especially designed due to the awareness that these two countries were the weakest ones in the 2007 enlargement cycle to fulfil the accession demands and the slowest ones in implementing membership obligations. As a consequence, stronger EU Member States were burdened with additional and unnecessary structural and policy readjustments to fit the needs of the laggards as well as to deal with unexpected effects of their insincere adherence to the accession requirements. [4] The incomplete value internalization has lead to a poor record of norm compliance which in the long term affected negatively the saliency of the conditionality policy and future credibility of the accession promise. Unaccounted expenses of finances from various EU funds in Bulgaria (OLAF investigations still haven't finalised investigations) and bad track record in dealing with corruption and organized crime in both countries among other deficiencies of Europeanization have shown certain limits of EU as a normative power. Together with the economic crisis, growing Euro-scepticism and a sharp swing to the conservative right in elections on a national level during 2013 and 2014, these developments have resulted with marginalization of enlargement on the European agenda, loss of public support for rapid continuation with the process and most importantly the "updating" of conditionality policy.[5]

The 'updated' conditionality policy produced a more rigid, controlled and conditional accession process and it reflected the perceptions of EUMS and their public on matters such as immigration, false asylum seekers, corruption, organized crime, maladministration and growing considerations of cultural and religious integration of acceding countries. [6] The political and public reaction to the behaviour of aspiring states which was not in accordance with European values underpinning the enlargement process have shown their discontent with the (non) existing internalization of these values in aspiring states as well as with the level of norm compliance. This has severely jolted the legitimacy of conditionality policy and questioned the actual transformative power of the EU in the Western Balkans. Many policy

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[4] The average score for the perceived speed of European integration ranges from 2.8 in Hungary, Portugal and Spain to 3.9 Austria. Standard Eurobarometer, no.79, European Commission, Brussels, p. 80, 2013, retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb79/eb79_publ_en.pdf.

[5] European citizens continue to be largely opposed to further enlargement of the EU: 53% of Europeans are against this policy, while 37% are in favour of it. Ibid, page 124.

[6] "The Unfulfilled promise: Completing the Balkans Enlargement", *Balkans in European Policy Advisory Group,* European Fund for the Balkans, Centre for South-East European Studies, Policy Paper, May 2014, retrieved from http://www.epc.eu. Habdank-Kołaczkowska, S. "Nations in Transit 2013: Authoritarian aggression and the Pressures of Austerity", *Freedom House*, retrieved from http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT%202013%20Booklet%20-%20Report%20Findings.pdf.

analysts have concluded that the question of what comes first – credibility of the promise of accession or sincere adherence to accession requirements – point out to a vicious circle at play. The ambition of not allowing repetition of the Bulgaria and Romania scenario has lead EUMS to insist that the EU Commission introduces stricter conditions to the enlargement process which altogether 'stretched' even further conditionality policy. Due to this fact, the continuous improvement of conditionality policy dictates the dynamics of Europeanization which can be perceived as a process in transition. Although candidate countries have been told that the so called 'new approach' of the EU Commission does not mean introducing new conditions, at least not at the initial stage of the accession process, the stretching of conditionality policy does include a new set of measures (i.e. opening, intermediary, closing benchmarks) which makes the whole accession process even more restrictive. At the end, the success in advancing Europeanization as a part of the European integration process is first and foremost the achievement of political elites as its main engineers. The better political elites from the WB understand what is asked from them and how to approach Europeanization challenges the better will EU political elites be in providing them necessary assistance along the way which is a precondition for achieving 'homogeneity' in communication about enlargement matters. Finally, the more the sincerity is invested by political elites in the acts of value internalization and norm compliance, the more progress will be achieved in the European integration process.

Political elites and European values

This article rests on the assumption that 'lack of homogeneity' is present among domestic political elites in the Western Balkans as well as between political elites from the region and the EU in relation to the perception and understanding of the role and importance of European values underpinning the enlargement process. As a result, it creates a causal effect on the progress of the two-level integration process whereby the more homogeneity is accomplished, the more European values will be internalized, the more compliance with norms will be pursued, which finally leads to more advancement of the integration process in general.

The concept of 'homogeneity' is of a dual nature and it encompasses the declaratory and practical aspect of perception and understanding of European values by political elites. The 'declaratory' aspect is mostly visible in various verbal, written and non written acts performed by political elites such as country Constitutions', National Assembly resolution on the process of European integration, leading and opposition political party programs, etc. They provide a wide framework of what European values represent, how they are understood and why they are being adopted as such. The 'practical' aspect is viewed through particular legislative acts of a national and regional character which are supposed to translate European values into practice. This moment of 'translation' understands the embodiment of values into norms which after certain amount of practice become rules of behaviour. Therefore, they provide a framework how this moment of 'translation' is supposed to develop. Bearing in mind the relationship between the EU, as a club of permanent Member States and the countries of the region as acceding/candidate/potential candidate states, the focus in progressing smoothly towards the EU rests on the 'practical aspect' of this exercise. The history of the EU has produced *guidelines* containing more than 100.000 pages of norms and rules of behaviour that aspiring states need to adhere to.[7] However, these guidelines known as the *'acquis communutaire'*, capture the notion of 'what' but not 'how' European values need to be translated into practice which gives room to *politicizing* what European values actually

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[7] According to the EU Commission as the original source, please see http://www.europea.eu.

represent in the process of enlargement[8]. The 'spill-over' effect in advancing integration can be only achieved if there is a common agreement on *methods* to assist internalization of values and compliance with norms so that through regular practice they can become rules of behaviour. In order to understand what presents a stumbling block to achieving homogeneity, I shall investigate further the two aspects of homogeneity so that: European values can be situated properly in the cognitive framework of both groups of political elites, value based inter-action between the two groups of elites can be identified and value-driven activity by political elites can be recognized and defined.

The cognitive framework

Glancing at the highest legal acts in the countries of the regions, one notices that 'European principles and values' as a phrase are placed either at the Preamble or the first following articles. They are mentioned as such only in the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and it reads that the country (Republic of Serbia) "is a state of Serbian people and all citizens who live in it, based on the rule of law and social justice, principles of civil democracy, human and minority rights and freedoms, and commitment to European principles and values".[9] European values/principles per se, such as rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights etc. and what they represent are mentioned throughout the texts of all five Constitutions in the region. In some articles they are being explained in depth in others just touched upon but in principle, values as 'European values' are recognized and perceived in a declaratory way. European values in a more precise way are presented in Resolutions of National Assemblies of different countries of the region. For example, the acceding countries, Serbia and Montenegro, have recently adopted new versions of Resolutions where European values have only been touched upon without entering into their substance. In the case of Serbia, there are two Resolutions which deal with this issue. The Resolution of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia from 2004 states in the Preamble that "sharing principles, values and goals on which the EU is based and by acknowledging historical and cultural specificities of the Republic of Serbia" while Article 8 proclaims that the National Assembly will "take over the obligation to actively spread European values and to inform the public of Serbia about the significance of entering the EU".[10] The Resolution of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia from 2013 states in its Preamble that "emphasizing firm for respecting values on which the EU is founded and reiterating commitment of the Republic of Serbia to the development of a democratic society based on the rule of law and respect of human and minority rights, principles of market economy as well as constitution of efficient institutions" the National Assembly intends, as states in Article 3 "to contribute with its active engagement to successfully lead and as soon as possible finalized negotiations on the accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU by respecting and improving values and principles on which the EU is founded".[11] In the case of Montenegro, the Preamble of this Resolution states that "respecting the founding values on which the EU is based and built upon" and "aware of the process and challenges set before the EU in accomplishing these values".....the Assembly of Montenegro "will continue to work on preserving multi-ethnical

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[8] Further in text addressed as 'AC'.
[9] Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Article 1, retrieved from: http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/documents/Ustav_Srbije_pdf.pdf.
[10] Resolution of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on association of Serbia to the EU, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no.48, 13.10.2004, Belgrade, page 1.
[11] Resolution of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on the role of the National Assembly and principles of negotiations of Serbia to the EU, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no.95, 16.12.2013, Belgrade, pages 1-3.

and multi-confessional values by strengthening and improving them in accordance with European values until full alignment is achieved, enriching in the same way the EU itself".[12] Unlike them, Macedonia and Albania, as candidate countries have not opened the debate about this document while in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a potential candidate, the discussion about this issue is far of their European agenda. However, these countries on a number of occasions have in a declaratory way through various speech acts demonstrated their loyalty to the all- encompassing European idea. Therefore, one can conclude that among the countries of the region, from a declaratory angle, there is an uneven reflection of political elites' "commitment" to upholding European values in constitutive documents such as these. One should also note that various European Commission progress reports suggested Constitution reforms in the Western Balkans as a necessity to allow fully fledged Europeanization of these countries. Secondly, this is also a reflection of political elites' limited "willingness" to change their perception and understanding of the role and importance of European values in the integration process. The above mentioned documents, where agreed, are a product of an accomplished national and political consensus on European integration. In political terms, they weigh heavily since their importance is based on securing promotion, respect and safeguarding European values/principles that guide the process of European integration. They do not just reflect the declaratory aspect but also touch upon the practical aspect, as well. The actual political landscape in the region portrays no deviation from the mainstreaming value orientation of the ruling as much as opposing political parties. In this sense, there are no real political opposition's only opponents who diverge from the means they use to attain the same goals. In the past years, the political parties programs have recognized the 'presence and actorness' of the EU in the region through the influence of its ideas and values. The EUs 'soft power' has had a significantly strong transformative effect since one of the first results has been detected in the change of the political elites' rhetoric on European integration. The political discourse in the region has been heavily loaded with ethno-nationalistic messages oriented towards political elites' self-preservation and defence from anything that could trigger a change to the status quo. Only recently, the discourse about the EU has been enriched with sophisticated notions about the main principles incorporated in the foundation of the European project. This subtle 'U' turn in most of speech acts carried out by representatives of domestic political elites has indicated that the actual mind set needed to be revisited but only to a certain extent and not in all areas of the European integration process. The domestic political elites' dedication to ideas projected through European values and principles are also assessed in the annual Progress reports on European integration produced by the European Commission. As of 2008, the language about alignment of national value systems with the set of European values has become stronger and more precise reflecting not only acknowledgement of the status of the progress of European integration in the countries of the Western Balkans but also challenges that the EU started to face on the external and internal field of affairs. The difficulties that EU experienced in maintaining a satisfactory level of internal adherence to European values transferred themselves to the external field of promoting, respecting and safeguarding European values.

On the regional level, in statutory programs such as the ones guiding and evaluating the work of the Regional Council for Cooperation (RCC), there is no mention of European values as a guiding principle or as an objective of 'regional cooperation'. Although the RCC is based on (regional) cooperation as a fundamental value of a modern European society, it does not refer to cooperation as a European value cherished for its ability to restore good neighbourly relationship. This is not a pre-condition only for EU accession but also for principal

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[12] Resolution of the National Assembly of the Republic of Montenegro on the method, quality and dynamics of the integration process of Montenegro with the EU, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, no: 00-71/13-7/5, EPA 366 XXV, Podgorica, 27.12.2013, pages 1-2.

normalization and improvement of countries relations. Therefore, in a declaratory sense, there is no further elaboration on that value per se. The strategic annual program of the RCC for the past five years has treated 'regional cooperation' as an "essential element of the overall enlargement and the Stabilisation and Association Process in particular".[13] In general, 'regional cooperation' is viewed as a supportive tool for achieving the ultimate goal of the European integration process. Although regional cooperation is evoked as one of the requirements for EU accession it is not precisely mentioned that it represents the founding layer of European integration of the Western Balkans. It is rather portrayed as an addendum to a process which almost runs independently from it. "....both the region and the EU continued to invest their efforts within the EU enlargement policy, aimed at maintaining its momentum and making progress in the accession process, however with different results."[14] In the documents it has been stressed that the RCC will "....further align its scope of work with the EU enlargement requirements thereby serving as an integrated regional platform. In performing these activities, it will be guided by the principles of regionally owned, driven and all-inclusive cooperation".[15] One can argue about whether regional cooperation defined and promoted by the RCC is really 'regionally owned and driven". Bearing in mind that more financial contributions of the EU and other international donors amount to more than 50% it is difficult to see how exactly countries from the region 'own and run' the initiatives proposed through the RCC framework. Although this is not the only way it certainly is the most important way of defining what are 'regional goals and interests', if they will be pursued and for what end. However, the new Strategy plan for the period 2014-2016 recognizes the need to develop RCCs activities while following the trend assumed by the EU in different fields of regional (European) cooperation. Since cooperation is recognized to be a multi-dimension tool for achieving and nurturing good neighbourly relations, it is stated that an over-encompassing Strategy named *SEE 2020* is necessary in order to keep the development of the region on track with the trend in the EU presented in its multi-annual Strategy *Europe 2020.* This Strategy rests on five (5) policy pillars which gave fourteen (14) policy dimensions with twelve (12) regional structures governed by five (5) priorities[16]. Among these priorities, the third priority singles out as of direct relevance to the enlargement process since it assumes support to EU accession by "strengthening the accession effort and contributing to further alignment of the economic governance of the region with that applied in the EU".[17] Therefore, one can conclude that i.e. economic governance of the region will be pursued based on the same set of values that govern economic governance in the EU. This can be applied horizontally to all dimensions or even better sectors of regional cooperation conducted by the RCC. Although the above mentioned documents do not perceive values, as it is supposed to - in a classical way, one can continue discussing the practical sense of a value known as 'cooperation'. Cooperation is deeply embedded in the relationship between the countries in the region and it determines the type of these relations. Therefore, regional cooperation pursued by the RCC is extensively presented in the above mentioned documents and it ranges from identifying different pillars, priorities and dimensions of regional cooperation to various forms of regional structures in charge of pursuing these elements. The

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[13] Annual Report 2012-2013 of the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council on regional cooperation in South East Europe, RCC, Sarajevo, 2013, page 7.

[14] Ibid, page 8.

[15] Regional Cooperation Council, Strategy and Work Plan 2014-2016, Sarajevo, 2014, page 4.

[16] The pillars are GROWTH: integrated, smart, sustainable, inclusive and governance for growth. The DIMENSIONS are: free trade area, competitive economic environment, integration into global economy, education/competences, R&D and innovation, digital society, culture and creative sectors, competitiveness, resource efficiency, employment, skills and inclusive education, health, effective public services and anti-corruption.

[17] Ibid, page 6.

perception of success achieved by regional structures in accomplishing regional goals differ between the region itself and the EU where the first are more than satisfied with achieved results while the later believe that more can be done specifically through a more concrete and focused employment of capacities placed at the disposal of the region. One of the most prominent examples is the "selectiveness" of 'cooperative relations' between the countries in the region regarding the status of Kosovo* as well as the selective support of certain EUMS in fostering these relations in the region. [18] This has enabled the EU to point out the necessity of upholding the value of 'inclusive cooperation' between all actors in the region if they are really committed to reconciliation, stability enforcement and peace preservation. These three elements were the founding stone for initiating regional cooperation/intra-regional integration and a precondition for a positive assessment and progress of European integration.

On the other (EU) side, the definition of values, describing them as guiding principles, standards and/or criteria for evaluating actions, policies and people is widely supported in the main EU documents such as the Treaty of the EU, the European Convention of Human Rights, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights as well as in the recent Communication by the European Commission entitled "European values in a globalized world" and the European Commission Annual report for 2012 "The EU as a community of values: safeguarding fundamental rights in times of crisis". [19] These documents contain a synthesis of what *European values* represent, who pursues and protects them, what sort of values, how they are being practiced and to what end. However, this synthesis is merely a collection of acceptable understandings of 'values' which does not make the concept of 'values' any more precise and less ambiguous. Although documents of a high profile such as the Treaty of the EU do not necessarily have to contain a definition of values, they also lack of an explanation how they are supposed to be understood. In the Preamble of the Treaty of the EU it is said, in a general way, that "values are *attachment* to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law". [20] The attribute 'European' signifies that these values are common and shared by all EUMS and it is explained in a more detailed way in the articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty. Article 2 of the Treaty of the EU states that "the Union is founded on the *values of* respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail". [21] In Article 3 of the Treaty of the EU it is declared that "the core values of the EU are also considered to be the *main objectives* of the Union: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights. They are common to all Member States and any European country wishing to become a member of the EU must respect them". [22] It has not been stated what 'values' actually represent and how the reader is

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[18]*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. Although the dialogue on normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo is ongoing the results have not substantially affected its political status. Kosovo is not recognized as a state by Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina which reflect the same position of five EUMS (Greece, Slovakia, Romania, Cyprus and Spain).

[19] The Treaty of the EU retrieved from http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:SOM:EN:HTML. The Preamble and articles 1-20 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights retrieved from http://www.eucharter.org. Communication of the European Commission "European values in a globalized world" (COM/2005/525) retrieved from http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/social_agenda/c10150_en.htm.

The Annual report of the European Commission for 2012 "The EU as a community of values: safeguarding fundamental rights in times of crisis", retrieved from http://www.annual-report-2012-focus_en.pdf.

[20] The Treaty of the EU, Preamble, page 1.

[21] The Treaty of the EU, art.2

[22] Ibid, art.3.

supposed to understand them other than just pointing out that they are "attachments" to certain principles as much as "objectives" of the Union. In this context, values can appear to be the main ingredient holding the EU all together which determines the essence of the Union but also a task the EU needs to accomplish in order to justify its existence. Also, when addressing their interlocutors, the EU representatives tend to recognize their status as 'important political partner' of the EU who, among other tasks, have "an important role to play as a partner promoting shared values in our shared neighbourhood".[23]

One can conclude that in both sets of documents the declaratory aspect is present in a satisfying manor although the compilation of EU acts is much more up to date and directs further development of this aspect. The practical aspect is insufficiently represented in the compilation of national and regional acts which leads to the following assumption that already at this stage there are significant discrepancies in perceptions and understanding or both of these cognitive actions are in place but choices of political elites are not guided by the same interests and/or capabilities. One explanation to that end, offered by elites themselves is that, they tend not to observe the value aspect of enlargement since it is found to be a rather unclear concept which underlines the significance of the perception/understanding problem within the elite communication framework.[24]

Value based inter-action

Political elites from both sides of the borders (EU and WB) are seen as integration promoters and directors of the integration process. However a certain hierarchy is observed in this relationship where the EU political elite acts as a 'value giver' while the WB political elite acts as a 'value receiver'. This 'inter-action' between elites as value 'givers' and value' receivers' is essential for achieving any kind of progress in the integration process. This transfer of values from one group of elites to the other as well as potential exchange of values between two different groups of elites is framed by a certain set of circumstances, particular language being used for communication (E-large talk) and a specific type of messages produced to deliver signals that are related to the two-level process of integration. The transfer/exchange can be either successful or unsuccessful. In the first instance, both parties will be receptive to signals communicated through messages about values and it will lead to undisturbed acknowledgment of a match-make between values being transferred by the EU political elite to the already existing value systems of WB political elites. In this case, the existing value systems have either underdeveloped areas or value-free zones. These 'gaps' allow the possibility for an easier change in the sense of modifying the existing organization of the value systems of political elites in the WB. In the second instance, problems in successfully terminating the transfer occur when newly transferred values stumble across tight and inflexible value systems on the receiving end. Unlike the second instance where there is no opportunity for the value to become embodied in a norm, the first instance allows this possibility by advancing the evolution of the idea of a human construct. The acknowledgment of a value as a norm by the majority of actors on the receiving end of the transfer makes way for further and deeper communication between political elites about eventual translation of values into practice, defined as a rule of behaviour. The acknowledgment of a value as a norm is understood as *internalization* while the translation of norm into a rule of behaviour is perceived as an act of *compliance.* A vast literature has been dedicated mostly to the questions of 'why' and 'what' is being internalized/complied with but

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[23] SPEECH by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia", no.140428/03, Belgrade, 28.4.2014. retrieved from: http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140428_03_en.pdf.
[24] Interviews with representatives of the WB and the EU political elite.

not much attention has been given to the question 'how' it actually happens. This has oriented the academic debate around the fundamental issue of legitimacy of demands of the EU which would make internalization of European values and compliance with EU norms more or less successful. My starting premise is that internalization of European values and compliance with EU norms is occurring on two levels of the integration process and that the dynamic is determined by the presence or lack of homogeneity between political elites in the WB and the EU. Homogeneity in reasoning the benefits in internalizing/complying with conditionality of the integration process gives national elites the necessary legitimacy before the public and credibility as a political partner to the EU. Both credibility and legitimacy are crucial for managing the two-level integration process in the desired direction.

Value driven activity

All human activities are value driven and yet sometimes we stumble across situations where values do not correspond to the expected type of behaviour. These situations have also been detected in the two-level integration process whereby the declaratory nature of values internalization has lead to limited or fake compliance[25]. This type of compliance further leads to 'insincere' type of behaviour that negatively affects the dynamics of the integration process. One among the most common examples was the case of 'rapid law adoption' in the National Assemblies of the countries in the region. For a number of years in a row, the EU Commission has identified a peculiar situation that the so called 'European laws' have been processed on a mass level through the Assemblies. The quality of these laws has been drawn into question almost immediately after their adoption. To start with, none of them passed the required public debates and on a number of occasions they were in collision with some other European laws. However, the most problematic aspect was the question of 'deliverance' that is, to which extent the law as such was implementable. The success in implementing law depends on certain mechanisms and these rapidly adopted European laws possessed none. Once faced the critique about it, the political elites in the region responded 'that they did exactly what the EU has asked them to do' which made the EU political elite say 'yes we did ask, but not to be done in this way'. The differences in perceiving and understanding how values need to be internalized and norms complied with has been longstanding as well as the awareness that much more needs to be invested to achieve this task. Interviews with EU political elites representatives pictured a high level of awareness related to this problem and they all concluded that it was the EU who pushed the region to do things properly. The newly adopted approach by the EU Commission on conducting the accession phase demonstrated that it is now up to the political elites in the region to invest more effort in 'getting the job done'. However, opinions differ greatly on how coherence between values, attitudes and behaviour can be achieved in the case of Western Balkans. First question raised was if national political elites of potential/candidate countries have honestly embraced those values. The second question was which (non) existing values of national political elites need to be introduced/adapted for achieving EU membership. The starting presumption is that as long as a set of mutually shared and common beliefs, values and attitudes of political elites is pertained in the founding layer of the two-level integration process, the success in furthering the integration efforts is probable. However, if the communication channels do not result with a mutually agreed understanding, as in the use of the E-large talk, then the alignment of cognitive and affective systems is being threatened to the degree of a potential suspension of dialogue between the integration promoters and accomplishers.[26] One example, that has been

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[25]Noutcheva, G. "Fake, Partial and Imposed Compliance: The Limits of the EU's Normative Power in the Western Balkans". *CEPS Working document*, no.274/July 2007.

[26] The "E-large" talk addresses the EU jargon found in documents on enlargement produced by EU institutions.

burdening the integration process of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, was cooperation with the ICTY. This was a very critical stage in the integration process since it required a rather painful break off with the past and openness for a new externally governed beginning. The diverging perception on whether 'war criminals', who were considered to be 'national heroes' in the respective countries of the region should be apprehended, resulted with months of suspended dialogue between these countries and the EU. The national political elites firstly in a declarative and then practical way 'demonstrated' that they did everything in their power to find the fugitives but the EU's doubt and dissatisfaction grew quickly. The pressure on resolving this issue mounted so high that cooperation with the ICTY became the key political condition in advancing European integration of these countries. The EUMS have firmly asserted that entering a new phase in the integration process of these countries will not be allowed if this condition has not been met. It took years of 'softening' the public opinion and several governments to fulfil this task which once accomplished highlighted the true nature of values in the European integration process. Another case of contested European values was the attitude and behaviour not just of national political elites but public as well regarding the respect for human rights and freedom of expression of the LGBT community manifested through the organization of "Pride Parades". Although the Enlargement Strategy 2013-2014 has emphasized that "religious or cultural values cannot be invoked to justify any form of discrimination", this issue proved remains controversial since and it still dominates the domestic political scene in the region.

The "Value vs. Norms" debate

Examination of the current academic literature on values, especially European values, and the actual political discourse on this issue, has lead me to the conclusion of an existing different usage and understanding of this term. To my understanding, when discussing about values, most theorists and researchers are referring to "norms" rather than "values" while the ongoing political discourse on the issue of "values" has a silent and underlying understanding of "norms". This has lead me further to the conclusion that there are three possible approaches mutually inclusive in understanding what norms and values are and how they relate to each other: 1) academia refers to "norms" rather than "values" since the research about norms has been more consistent and argumentatively in depth while the debate on values is somewhat ambiguous. This makes the debate on (European) values more present in the political discourse of elites while it has been hardly recognized in the academic debates. In some cases one can detect an interchangeable use of the two nouns to address the same issue; 2) political elites choose carefully their wording for operationalizing their political dialogue and they chose the word "value" due to its more positive meaning and encouragement for desired behaviour while the word "norm" usually associates to a sanctioned meaning and putative behaviour and is therefore avoided. Political elites perform this action consciously and intentionally not just in their internal political dialogue but also when communicating messages enlargement related to the wider domestic and foreign audience[27]; 3) values actually represent an essential *particle* of a norm significant to the extent that it has the *decisive impact in changing the position and role of other elements such as beliefs and attitudes which than leads to certain behaviour (political decision enlargement related).* Values, if changed, mostly lead to the change of beliefs and attitudes, however, the change of beliefs and attitudes does not necessarily have to lead to a change of values. So the question is, if values are to be internalized first so that norm compliance can happen later, is there a difference in tools that are applied? So far, academia recognizes several mechanisms

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[27] NPE interviewee, January 2014.

for both processes to occur but they do not make a difference between them. Therefore, we can assume that i.e. through social learning internalization of values first takes place followed by norm compliance and that there is a combination of mechanisms so called 'logics' of reasoning that allow mental alignments to take place[28].

Why do we need to distinguish values and norms?

In linguistic terms the noun 'value' has various meanings and usages and these understandings in different sciences result with its different applications. According to The Oxford Dictionary, the noun 'value' encompasses: "the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth or usefulness of something", "principles or standards of behaviour one's judgement of what is important in life", "consider (someone or something) to be important or beneficial; have a high opinion of".[29] In general, the meaning of the noun derives from the verb 'to value' in the sense 'to consider worthy' or to treat 'favourably'. One can distinguish different types of values but the most general classification is of individual (basic) human values and social (group, society) values. Since this article focuses on 'European value' as a system of values particular for a certain society then values discussed further are understood as 'social values'. Unlike individual values that are valued due to their *utility*, a social value is valued within a society and perceived in positive light or as something favourable. Therefore, it is valued because of its *quality*. A social value is a feature of actual groups or society and it needs to be viewed in a favourable way so that it can operate in a society. Therefore, it needs to be approved by the majority of the society. The operational mode of a value points out that it has or hasn't been *activated*. For a value to be operational in a given social context it needs to be held in general esteem by its members in a way that it shows a tendency on a part of its members to conduct their own affairs in accord with that value and a tendency to rely on other people in the group to do the same.

Values present a varying category in human lives and not all values have been resistant to evolutional changes of societies. Again, not all societies favourably view the same values attempting to become social values which allows the possibility for a value to be accepted in one particular society but remains unaccepted in another. For example, slavery was once perceived as a value but only until the consciousness about human rights started to grow which resulted in some countries with wars so that all men, regardless of their race, can equally enjoy basic human rights. Essential to the value is that it is *valued* within a society and that influences the shaping of *individual preferences* and *priorities in a given social context*. When discussing European values, we are addressing values of a normative character since they carry the underlying distinction of 'right' and 'wrong'. In essence they recommend certain forms of behaviour as desirable or acceptable and this is something that potential/candidate countries have to strive to achieve. A normative value establishes a norm of acceptable behaviour. A norm is a standard that must be met to qualify a performance for a particular purpose. A normative value is operative if it serves a society-wide distinction between praiseworthy and blameworthy activity. *Praiseworthy* activity of a normative value does not require explanation while *blameworthy* behaviour is considered to be corrected. Praiseworthy activity shows that internalization of values/compliance with norms has taken place and that acceptable behaviour is to be rewarded unlike blameworthy activity which is viewed as a result of a lack of internalization/compliance and can be sanctioned.

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[28] Scholars distinguish three types of logics: appropriateness, consequentiality and moral justification. The behaviour of political elites in the region suggests that it is very difficult to apply just one logic to meet all demands throughout different stages of the two-level integration process. A combination of at least two gives acceptable sense to the activities of elites that have already taken place.

[29] The Oxford Dictionary, retrieved from http://www.oxforddictionary.com/definition/english/value?q=value.

As in the case of values, norms as a noun, also has more than one meaning in scientific usage, as it can refer to (a) what is commonly *done* or (b) what is *commonly approved or disapproved*[30]. However, unlike values that have a rather abstract notion and their all-encompassing nature, norms are very concrete. In general, theorists agree on the definition of *norm as a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity*[31], Bjorkdahl is even more precise when claiming that, "norms are considered to express values that create new rights and responsibilities. Norms are social structures consisting of shared knowledge and inter-subjective understanding".[32]Bearing in mind that there are different types of norms which bear *separate sense of human motivation*[33], this sense of human motivation is directed by the reference to what is or is not acceptable by a community or society. Therefore, norms can have a role of constraining but also promoting certain behaviour which mostly depends from a cultural and social point of view. Authors, such as Finnemore and Sikkink, explain through the norm life cycle how a norm becomes adopted on the level of society. In a particular setting, such as the framework of the European integration process, elites as norm entrepreneurs (givers/receivers) are the first ones to encounter norms that that need to be changed or introduced to their existing normative systems. Once consensus on an internal level has been achieved they pursue promotion of the same norm on a wider (societal) level through 'norm cascading'. If they manage to attain this support then the norm has passed the so called 'tipping point' or 'critical juncture' and it remains to be internalized so that it becomes operational. Depending on the emergence of a norm(s) one can expect or not a change in behaviour. Subsequent research reports that particular social norm is unlikely to influence behaviour unless it is focal (i.e. salient) for an individual at the time of behaviour. The following paragraphs investigate further the link between values and norms based on the assumption that the value particle makes a norm focal/salient. Norms dictating the European integration process of potential and candidate countries are gathered in two places: the Copenhagen criteria and the *acquis communutaire*.

My understanding is that the moment of critical juncture has actually two phases, the first being related to the need of *having* a new/renewed norm introduced in the system and secondly, whether that particular norm is as such really *needed* to facilitate the wanted change. I tend to address this second phase as the *norm entrapment*, whereby norm entrepreneurs being norm takers need to decide whether they are *willing* and *able* to deal with all the consequences (which are not usually envisaged) produced by the emergence of a particular norm(s). Their ability/inability to cope with unforeseen implications of a an emerging norm stresses the link between the value systems of political elites as individuals and the value system of a society they belong to and represent in the political dialogue. For example, the value of (ones') *accountability* is triggered by introspective examination of being able or unable to perform fully the duty assigned to the position they occupy. The question of accountability of political elites in the WB has been prominent in most of the EU documents on enlargement issues as well as political discourse led by EU political elites.

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[30] Schaffer, L.S. "Toward Pepitone's vision of a normative social psychology: What is a social norm? *Journal of Mind and Behaviour,* no.4, 1983: 275-294.

[31] Katzenstein, J. Peter. "Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security" in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Idenity in World Politics*, edited by Peter J. Katzenstein, New York: Columbia University Press,1996 b: 5; Finnemore 1996a, 22 and Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 891; Klotz, A. "Norms reconstituting interests: Global Racial Equality and U.S. Sanction Against South Africa". *International organization*, vo.49, 1995b: 451-478.

[32] Bjorkdahl, A. "Norms in international relations: some conceptual and methodological reflections". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, vol.15, issue 1, Routledge, 28.6.2010.

[33] Deutsch, M. Gerard, H. B. "A study of normative and informational social influences upon individual judgment". *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol. 51, issue 3, 1955: 629-636.

The norm entrapment can be a result of 'communicative entrapment' since successful understanding relies on appropriately interpreted language.[34] "Norm entrepreneurs are critical for norm emergence because they call attention to issues or even 'create' issues by using *language* (i.e. E-large talk) that names, interprets and dramatizes them. Social movement theorists refer to this reinterpretation or renaming process as 'framing".[35] As Payne claims, "frames are basic building blocks for the construction of broadly resonant norms and they thereby serve to legitimize normative orders". [36] Frames determine borderlines for communication between political actors fashioned by the use of communicative tools such as persuasion, arguing and bargaining. The norm entrapment that I imply to is a phase which determines *if and how the norm entrepreneurs, being as much norms setters as norm takers, shall proceed with the second (norm cascading) and third stage (internalization) in the norm evolution.*

The initial phase of the accession process, the *screening* process, has served the purpose of acquainting both sides of political elites with the actual state of play in 35 Chapters of the AC. The secondary phase which is opened with actual negotiations on the AC, in essence doesn't understand negotiations *per se* but a one-way communication where 'norm setters' present the norms that 'norm takers' need to comply with so that their progress in European integration could be positively assessed. One needs to take note that there are various levels of an achieved progress which range from 'no progress', to 'sufficient', 'limited' and 'good' progress. These levels portray also the degree to which norm compliance has taken place. If we translate this scale of integration progress on the level of norm compliance, then we can talk about 'lack of compliance' which is equal to 'no progress', 'achieved' compliance in basic meaning equalled to 'sufficient' progress while 'politically nuanced' compliance is equalled to 'limited' and 'good' progress of the integration process. These equations, when linked back to the concretization of a value and its linguistic articulation, show that in the process certain elements have been circumvented along the way. The concretization of a value through the emergence of a norm still can't cover all possible consequences that derive from it. However, the importance of consequences, organized in accord with their meaning, is an element susceptible to the workings of the value particle.

European values underpinning the enlargement process

The actual misunderstanding and communication in the political dialogue between EU and national political elites in the Western Balkans is based on *different perceptions* of values underpinning the process of enlargement. This is primarily related to the *differing importance and function* attributed to values underpinning the enlargement process. The European society has been developing and upgrading its value system for the past 60 years on common perceptions of what should represent the key pillars of society. The WB has been recuperating for the past 20 years from bloodshed based on the same value systems that have torn apart the federation they used to belong to. The transition to 'democratic societies' or even better "liberal democracies" is still ongoing and along the way to the EU they face many challenges especially in defining themselves *vis-a-vis* the EU. The future enlargement of the

[34] About 'communicative entrapment' see Risse, T. "Global governance and Communicative Action". *Government and Opposition*, vol.39, issue 2, Blackwell Publishing, 2004:288-313.
[35] Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 897.
[36] Payne, A. Rodger. "Persuasion, frames and norm construction", *European Journal of International relations,* vol.7, no.37, Sage, 2001: 37.

EU depends on whether the aspiring states identify themselves with and adhere to the constitutive values and norms of the European community[37].

Political elite representatives from both sides have identified a rather troubled communication process. By deconstructing the so called 'E-large' talk as the communication framework, it has been said that actors participating in the dialogue are of a "different mind-set", "distant in perception", using a "not common vocabulary" with "phrase contested meanings" resulting with a "partial understanding".[38] They have concluded that common understanding of the significance of values can only be achieved if: the "EU jargon is translatable and understandable to fit the needs of all parties involved"; "the EU jargon is used as a code for exchanging ideas"; "development of language follows the progress of two-level integration process"; "enlargement rhetoric is used in an inclusive and efficient way".[39] This means that that the purpose of insisting on the importance of values needs to be utilized in the same manner so that it is to the benefit of both parties involved. On the EU side, for example, imposing double standards in a number of areas such as minority or ethnic rights where candidate states are asked to meet the standards that the EU Member States have not set for themselves or to this day practice them on a selective ground. Among most recent cases is the Roma expulsion in France, media freedom in Hungary, etc. This approach has not just been dictated by the public opinion but also by the lack of the future vision of the EU as much as by the EU so as by the WB political elite. On the WB side, it is more the question of accommodating preferences on a national level advocated by the national political elite as a result of a mixture of existing value systems and interests. The instrumental use or rather 'politics' of European values has been dictated equally by external and internal developments on both sides which started to overcome the pure rationalist explanation of interest-motivated activities. So far, communication between political elites took place in different forms of political dialogues that allowed two disconnected realities to meet and where the art of balancing two natures of the integration process (technical and political/values and norms) has been constantly at stake.

Most of the interviewees have been in accord with the values set forth in the constitutive documents of the EU supplemented with their perception of additional values that need to be included in the corps of 'European values'. According to their own understanding, Table 1 shows what values are to be considered as European values underpinning the enlargement process. These values have been organized with respect to 'given priority' as hierarchy of tasks that need to be accomplished jointly through cooperation between societies in transition and the EU. Values that have been coloured are not defined as such in constitutive documents of the EU. The final outcome of internalizing these values through the construction of 'community norms' is believed to be the content of the AC. However, most respondents have stressed that some values such as peace and democracy remain elusive concepts and their translation into practice is rather problematic and often contested.[40] Although, the two-level integration process is entirely conditioned by the internalization of these values, for example, there is no single chapter of the AC dedicated to them.

[37] Schimmelfennig, F. "The liberal community and enlargement: an event history analysis". *The Journal of European public policy*, vol.9, issue 4, 2002: 598-626.
[38] Interviews with political elite representatives of the WB and the EU.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

VALUES UNDERPINNING THE ENLARGEMENT PROCESS OF THE EU
Peace
Democracy
Prosperity
Cooperation
Opportunity
Solidarity
Equality
Inclusiveness
Rule of law
Human rights
Tolerance/acceptance
Compromise/dialogue
Environmental consciousness
Regional reconciliation and stability
Elimination of wars
Political culture
Multiculturalism
Copenhagen criteria
Market economy
Sustainable economic growth
Fair competition
Respect, transparency and independence of institution
Freedom of expression and movement
Sustainable global position

Table 1: Most important EU values underpinning the process of enlargement

The representatives of EU and WB political elites have equally recognized a lack of certain sets of values in the current value systems of aspiring countries. The lack of identified values shows not only the state of the concerned societies but also points out the direction in which further development should take place and where integration should be strengthened. One might conclude that shifts in policies and preferences of political elites follow changes of value systems. In the WB, policies based on the above mentioned problematic values, do need to be readjusted so that they are truly based on the values they preach as well as to correspond with the norms they practice in reality. On the other side, they have also identified certain 'flaws' in the national systems of values that are an opposition to established European values and a burden for the value internalization/norm compliance process. These flaws, as well as the 'opposites' of European values are presented in Table 2 and they are organized according to their importance and deep rootedness in the national value systems of the countries in the region of the WB.[41] These flaws are seen as a result of a continuing past attitude and therefore policies whereby elites make minor changes despite their poor performance. The actual introduced changes are a minimum needed to meet the conditions set forth by the accession process. Sometimes, as in the case of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina these changes appear to be demanding in relation to the adjustment of value systems. Superficial approach to these changes in the former case lead to a drastic loss of public support and defeat in the 2013elections, while in the latter case it left all political actors with an irresolvable stalemate. In most countries of the WB, political elites started introducing modifications to the existing national value systems in a linear outward-inward way whereby the firstly tackled the least and then the most important issues. Unfortunately,

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[41] Interviews with political elite representatives of the EU.

not that many less important issue where at the table which lead to the conclusion, as stated by Schimmelfennig, that "the quest for EU accession has to be partially understood as an attempt to tie the process of modernization to the transformation towards EU acceptability".[42]

ADAPTATION OF VALUES IN NATIONAL VALUE SYSTEMS
Absence of rule of law
The mentality of manipulating when in power
Accountability
Leadership
Miscomprehension of human/individual/ minority rights and freedoms
Nationalism
Absence of belief
Lack of sincerity
General lack of transparency
Respect for institutions
Partization of administration and institutions
Political clientelism
Political influence over judiciary
Suppressing media
Lack of the dialogue culture
Organized crime
Corruption
Future orientation and responsibility for the future
Respect of youth

Table 2: Values that need to be adapted for achieving EU membership

Internalizing European values needs to start first with national political elites since they need to demonstrate belief in values, trust in domestic and EU institutions to translate them into practice and vision of future engagement in the EU structures. Once they master these tasks they are ready to establish mechanisms for transferring these values through norms to domestic public. Political elites serve as a 'model' for the public to follow the path in value internalization/norm compliance. In that sense, it is expected from elites to demonstrate unquestionable commitment to the process in general, to be strong and durable in fulfilling integration demands, sincerely conduct reforms and emanate with accountability. Through this process, the "European integration suit" worn by domestic political elites is subdued to continuous reshaping since the enlargement process itself is experiencing changes along the way. These changes or rather modifications are a consequence of the internal and external developments affecting the functioning of the EU structures. It is not a coincidence that the EU Commission has adopted a new approach to the accession phase of the enlargement process which is to be initiated by assessing internalization of the value of 'rule of law' and its embodiment in standardized norms. "The accession process today is more rigorous and comprehensive than in the past. This reflects the evolution of EU policies as well as lessons learned from previous enlargements. The process is built on strict but fair conditionality with progress towards membership dependent on the steps taken by each country to meet the established criteria. A key lesson from the past is the importance of addressing the fundamentals first".[43] It has also been acknowledged that the rule of law is 'lacking' in the

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[42] Schimmelfennig, 2002: 620.

[43] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014, COM(2013) 700 final, p.2, Brussels, 16.10.2013, retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/strategy_paper_2013_en.pdf.

current national value systems in the WB and that it needs to be imminently introduced. This value has been proclaimed to be "at the heart of the [integration] process. Progress here determines the speed of the accession phase as a whole. It secures full respect for fundamental values and underpins that truly democratic society".[44] Furthermore, tackling the fundamentals at the very early stage of the negotiations "gives maximum time to enlargement countries to ensure that reforms are deeply rooted and irreversible".[45] These two values have not been chosen by accident to start with and finish off the accession process. They have been targeted due to previous poor track record in domestic political elite attempts to sincerely internalize these values and introduce norms of required behaviour and as a proof of where and how the Europeanization process needs to be stepped up.

Internalization of values and compliance of norms

For reforms to be 'deeply rooted and irreversible' a certain degree of value internalization/norm compliance is required. The degree and finally success of value internalization/norm compliance depends on the logic of political elites to rationalise the effects of these acts. Bearing in mind the difficulties in evaluating to which extent values have been internalized, the second best option was to monitor norm compliance which was assessed by the EU Commission through its regular annual reports on progress. Here, one could notice differentiation between certain levels of achieved progress that flow from 'no progress', via 'limited', 'sufficient' to 'good progress'. However, if values are to precede norms in accordance with the function they have than there should be a more comprehensive elaboration on the process of internalization.

In literature 'internalization' is presented as a process whereby norms are being adopted. Certain authors, such as Subotić, Sjursen and Manners, offer a different view on the matter. They recognize indirectly that there is a difference between values and norms as to regards 'what' is complied with and 'how' compliance takes place. Sjursen and Manners perceive that "values or conceptions of what is good may vary according to cultural and social contexts".[46] They are particular, for example to a specific community or a specific collective identity".[47] Previous tables containing European values underpinning the enlargement process show to which extent they are lacking or need to be modified by the political elites of respective WB states so that they fit the needs of the enlargement process. In addition, Subotić explains the concept of identity divergence and convergence as the tool to unveil why internalization of values is developing differently for respective aspiring states although they strive to achieve the same goal and undergo the same procedure for transformation[48]. The preference of 'identity' is introduced as a plausible utility to conceptualize tangibly, as much as possible, the abstractness of values. Values represent an important part of a collective self which can be demonstrated via two different preferences: the 'identity' and 'interests' of subjected parties to internalization/compliance. If we disregard for a moment the difference in nature of 'values' and 'norms' and persist in explaining how internalization/compliance

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[44] SPEECH by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, Belgrade, 28.4.2014.

[45] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014, COM(2013) 700 final, p.7, Brussels, 16.10.2013, retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/strategy_paper_2013_en.pdf.

[46] Sjursen, H. "The EU as a 'normative' power: How this can be?" *Journal of European Public Policy,* vol.13, no.2, Routledge, 2006:235-251. Manners, Ian. "Normative power Europe: A contradiction in terms". *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.40, no.2, 2002:235-258.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Subotić, J. "Europe is a state of mind: Identity and Europeanization in the Balkans". *International Studies Quarterly*, Georgia State University, no.55, 2011: 309-330.

works, then we would invoke the three logics that explain these processes appropriateness, consequentiality and moral justification. Different theoretical schools favour one of the three logics as the explanatory tool which facilitates the understanding of adherence to the 'transformative power' of the EU. Unfortunately, practical examples of how political elites in the WB behave as a reaction to the EU as a 'soft' and 'normative' power oppose these claims. Practical examples in the WB show that on a number of occasions there is a growing conflict between various 'identities' and 'interests' and in order to reconcile the divergent rationale that supports behaviour in relation to these preferences, the WB political elites applies a combination of different logics of rationalization. The most prominent example was the apprehension of ICTY fugitives by Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina who have hid for so many years in these countries although their respective governments claimed on a number of occasions that they are unaware of their whereabouts but they are doing everything in their power to find them. The price they had to pay by making these claims was the willingness to intentionally and knowingly divert the course of the integration process from a 'cooperative' to a 'selectively cooperative' process. Therefore, the perception of 'what' constitutes an 'identity' as well as an 'interest' is viewed differently among political elites of the WB and the EU. This is also the starting point in explaining the direction in which values have been abstracted as well as to which extent norms have been accepted. Through value internalization followed by norm compliance, the WB countries conform to the actions of the surrounding EU which allows them to fulfil a psychological need to be a part of the group. The particularity of the case of WB is that a single country is not strong enough to carry alone the weight of the whole process on the individual state level as much as on the regional level. The countries have been bounded by the knot of 'regional cooperation' which does not allow a 'one man show'. Therefore, the EU uses interchangeably the rhetoric of a country being a 'leader in the region' to boost self-confidence of state elites so that they could advance value internalization/norm compliance internally which would then 'spill-over' on the regional level and result with intra-regional and European integration progress. This would again 'spill-back' on the individual national level exerting outputs of the previously made decisions. However, behaviour of the WB shows that there is a limit to the desire to be a part of the EU which is assessed through the equation: values and identity plus norms and interests results with two-level integration. As Finnemore and Sikkink explain "identity is based on those aspects of the self in which an individual has special pride or from which an individual gains self-esteem" and "states comply with norms for reasons that relate to their identities as a [aspiring] member of an international society [EU] ".[49] Also, "state elite fashion a political self of identity in relation to international community so socialization suggests that cumulative effect of many countries in a region adopting new norms may be analogous to peer pressure among countries".[50] For internalization/compliance to take place it is necessary for political elites to be motivated to engage themselves in such a change. This can only be plausible if the existing change takes place in already established boundaries of a certain 'identity' and is correlating to actual 'interests' guiding them on their path towards the EU. Scholars recognize three possible motivations that respond to such pressure as legitimation, conformity and esteem. Legitimation has been widely examined in academia and usually linked to norms while conformity and esteem might be closer to the concept of values. Although, "many norm entrepreneurs do not act against their interests as they act in accordance with redefined understanding of their interest" one might add to it that along the way certain effort can also be invested in redefining the understanding of an identity.

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[49] Finnemore, M. and Sikkink, K. "International norms dynamic and political change", *International Organization*. Vol.52, issue 4, 1998: 887-917.
[50] Ibidem.

However, this can be a highly demanding task since the change of a collective mind-set and therefore identity usually does not happen overnight and sometimes is very difficult or even impossible to achieve. Bearing in mind the debate about values and norms and the processes of their internalization and compliance have brought closer the opposing rationalist and social-constructivist camps, this has enabled a new group of scholars the so called 'soft rationalist' to emerge. "Much of the behavioural logic in recent constructivist/social movement scholarship is consistent with thin rationalism, where agents may pursue non-material goals (normative values) but consequentialism - means and ends calculations - underlines their choices".[51] This has introduced 'strategic social construction' as a "process where agents make detailed means/ends calculations, maximize utility and by reflecting their own normative commitments seek to change their utility of others".[52] As Checkel notices, "learning and social interaction leads to agent compliance with normative prescriptions....social actors comply in some cases by learning new interests through non-instrumental communication and persuasion".[53] Persuasion is a tool used to convert what is seen as natural or appropriate into something perceived as wrong or inappropriate. If persuasion is used also to convert the impression of one-self identity as 'not appreciated' or 'inadequate', touching upon the values that constitute it as such, than this may trigger a rather sharp reaction of the subject to integration. The most recent overt attempt by a high ranking political elite representative in Serbia addressed the need to re-construct a nation's identity. In his speech at the National Assembly, as a newly appointed Prime Minister, Mr. Vučić said that "one of the greatest preconditions for Serbia's recovery is the *change of how we think*. Until now we have been regarded as a nation that knew against what it was but not for what it was. We need a *change of mentality*, and the key word is *modernization*. We need to cease demanding from Serbia, since economic recovery is insufficient if not accompanied by cultural, social and recovery of the whole society".[54]

Conclusion

In deeply divided societies and fragile states, the value consensus among the political elites presents the key condition for societies' integration and empowerment of the state. Some authors believe that domestic political discourse about the EU in the WB is used as a mechanism of 'double legitimacy'.[55] On the one hand, there is legitimation of transitional policy which does not correspond to the demands of the EU and on the other, the EU demands are used to promote importance of one owns identity. The identity of the WB is, however, rather problematic since it has been experienced as constructed according to outside perceptions rather than domestic ones. Searching for a new identity, which will be 'accepted' by the EU, understands also reconstruction of existing but depleted value systems which further on weakens the elites ability to adhere to the integration demands. Politicization of European values is a consequence of staggering of the value systems of the WB and the political elite's inability to live up to the accession demands. On the other side, the category

[51] Green, Donald P., and Shapiro, I. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science.* New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1994: 17-19.
[52] Checkel, T. Jeffrey. "Why comply? Social learning and European identity change", *International Organization*. Vol.55, issue 3, June 2001:558-561.
[53] Ibidem.
[54] Prime Minister Vučić address to the National Assembly of Serbia, Belgrade, 27.4.2014, retrieved from http://www.b92.net/info/vesti.
[55] N.Ćurak, Đ. Čekrlija, E. Sarajlić, S. Turčalo. "Politička elita u Bosni i Hercegovini i Evropska Unija: Odnos vrijednosti", Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Institut za društvena istraživanja, CIP, 2009.

of 'interests' surmounts the traditional explanation of material benefits that domestic elites would like to pertain in domestic policy as they visualize themselves as a future part of the 'EU political elite'.

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