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Mapping Western Balkans Civilian Capacities for Peace Operations

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Abstract: Over the past several years the United Nations has increasingly emphasized the role that civilian capacities can play in post-conflict peacebuilding and called for member states to provide expertise. This special issue of the *Journal of Regional Security* will explore the civilian capacities of the Western Balkans countries and whether there is political will to respond to the call to deploy civilian capacities to UN peace operations and other international organizations. Looking at how Western Balkan countries train, roster and deploy civilian capacities, it will also explore whether increased cooperation in this area could be considered as a security community practice, nurturing bilateral relations and building cooperation in the Western Balkan region. The article finds that there is still a great gap between the expressed policy intent of providing civilian capacities to peace support operations, and putting it into practice. There is also lack of a strategic consideration of how the training and deployment of civilian capacities to peace operations could build legitimacy in international organizations and enhance regional cooperation among the states in the Western Balkans. The article recommends the initiation of a regional dialogue on training and rostering of civilian capacities, realizing synergies and furthering regional cooperation.

Keywords: Civilian capacity, peacekeeping, peace support operations, civilian capacities, Western Balkans, security communities.

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Introduction*

In 2009, Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General, set in motion a reform process to explore the role of civilians in post-conflict peacebuilding. In his report *Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, released in 2008, he emphasized the role that civilian capacities increasingly have come to play in post-conflict peacebuilding.¹ To further strengthen this role, he proposed that “[a] review needs to be undertaken that would analyse how the United Nations and the international community can help to broaden and deepen the pool of civilian experts to support the immediate capacity development needs of countries emerging from conflict.”² An advisory group suggested that civilian expertise would in particular be needed in five key areas – basic safety and security, inclusive political processes, justice, economic revitalization and core government functionality.³ Subsequent reports of the Secretary-General emphasized that countries with post-conflict experience could be particularly well placed to provide such capacity,⁴ and in 2012 the UN General Assembly affirmed this, “*Encouraging national Governments, the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations to broaden and deepen the pool of civilian expertise for peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, including from countries with relevant experience in post-conflict peacebuilding or democratic transition.*”⁵ Western Balkan countries have progressed far in their political and economic transitions and have all to some degree been engaged in conflict. Because of their individual and common histories, they are thus possibly better equipped to address the needs of other countries experiencing conflict, moving from being “receivers” of to “providers” to peace operations.

Western Balkan countries are already contributing troops to global peacekeeping efforts. Some of these states have also expressed their intent to step up their contributions to multilateral peace support operations through the deployment and secondment of civilian capacities. This comes as a reflection of a global trend, where, with the evolution of the UN peacekeeping mandate, the role of civilians has shifted from a peripheral support role to the heart of contemporary peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. This special issue of JRS will explore further what civilian capacities Western Balkans

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1 For the purpose of this article, civilian capacities will be defined as civilian expertise in peace support operations, including the police.

2 UN GA 2009, 20.

3 UN CivCap Team 2014, see also UN GA 2011.

4 UN GA 2011, 2012a.

5 UN GA 2012b, 1, our italics.

countries can contribute with, presenting baseline studies of civilian capacities available for such operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, including mapping the practical and political challenges and opportunities in their deployment.⁶ The articles will also explore to what extent Western Balkans countries have identified a rationale for contributing to peace operations. Following up on a previous analysis of civilian capacities in Serbia, we expand our view and look at how the pooling, training and deployment of civilian capacities in the Western Balkans region can be seen as one element in creating policy and academic security communities in the region.⁷ Civilian personnel are trained at centres that cater to the entire region, yet there is a lack of sustainable regional politics of (mutual) civilian operations, and hence there is e.g. no regional roster although preconditions for such a roster do exist, as we will show later in this issue.

Methodologically, in order to examine the development of a possible security community in the Western Balkans on the topic of civilian capacity in peace support operations, we will look more closely at the practices of the individual countries as well as possible cooperation between them in this area. We understand the practices of the Western Balkan countries as ‘competent performances’ which may present “the dynamic material and ideational process that enables structures to be stable or to evolve – and agents to reproduce or transform structures.”⁸ Therefore, explaining this process requires us to “place practices in the driver’s seat.”⁹ The practices of Western Balkan countries in the area of civilian capacity have first been studied through individual baseline studies, presented in this special issue. In this introduction we analyze and summarize the findings of the individual studies in order to assess the overarching question pertaining to the possible contribution of individual and joint efforts in this area to support the development of a security community in the Western Balkans region.

Academic scholars and experts from the region have conducted the baseline studies in this issue, and the fieldwork has taken place between September 2013 and May 2014. All the studies have followed a similar set of questions, conducting semi-structured interviews with key interlocutors. When selecting countries for this study, our initial hypothesis was that Western Balkans countries are in the process of democratization, and that they share similar problems and challenges. Apart from the interviews, a comparative analysis of the respective legislative framework has been conducted. Raw data (descriptive statistics) was obtained from national and international institutions (such as the number and affiliation of personnel that have received specific training) that helped the authors evaluate the capacities of domestic actors.

6 We also draw experiences from the Albanian case study, previously published as a policy paper.

7 See Savkovic and Karlsruđ 2012; Subotic 2012.

8 Adler and Pouliot 2011, 4.

9 Adler 2008, 196.

The baseline studies take stock of the current status of civilian capacity in the respective states, what capacities have so far been provided to peace support operations (PSOs) globally, the current political awareness about the issue, and make suggestions to what legal or technical changes could be made to facilitate greater engagement with international organizations. They explore the challenges that Western Balkan states are facing in regard to planning, rostering, training and executing engagement in PSOs executed by the UN, EU, OSCE and NATO, and make recommendations to how to overcome these. The studies document the existing mechanisms, how civilian capacities are managed and financed, what policies are present, if there are any incentives offered by the Government or the Ministry in question,¹⁰ what level of knowledge stakeholders possess regarding the opportunities and requirements of specific operations, and how many and what kind of civilians have been deployed to date. Finally, each article provides analysis and recommendations for multiple levels and stakeholders, providing suggestions on how to move this agenda forward. This includes a set of recommendations focused on administrative capacities, human and material resources and comparative analysis of best practices in the region, ending with concrete recommendations for improving the respective states' policies in this field.

This introduction proceeds in four parts. First, we provide a background on the role of civilian capacities in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. We then move on to explore the concept of security communities, and how this could be relevant to the case of civilian capacities in the Western Balkans. Third, we draw upon the individual articles to provide examples of steps that have been made to train, roster and deploy civilian capacities, and note where there has been cooperation between two or more countries in the region. Finally, we sum up and provide recommendations for the policy community as well as for future research.

Civilian Capacities in Peace Operations

The evolution of peacekeeping has been evident through the expansion of peacekeeping to a number of new countries after the end of the Cold War; the expansion to multidimensional mandates in UN peacekeeping operations; the increasing number of organizations that have operated under Ch. 8 of the UN Charter (such as OSCE, EU, OAU, NATO); and last but not least, the different capacities offered.¹¹ The awareness of the importance of civilian capacities in peace support operations has increased significantly during the last few years. Peace support operations have changed fundamentally over the two last decades. Since the end of the Cold War, the UN has experienced a massive quantitative increase in the number of peacekeeping operations as well as a qualitative

10 For instance, previous BCSP research (conducted through interviews in 2009, 2010 and 2012) has shown that experience gained in PSOs does not in any way guarantee career promotion for servicemen, women, and police officers returning to Serbia.

11 Findlay 1996, 10.

shift towards supporting state- and peacebuilding efforts, including efforts to strengthen the ability of war-ridden countries to overcome fragility and step onto a path to stability and growth.

The shift in peacekeeping operations towards peacebuilding tasks began as early as the mid-1990s, with UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His seminal *Agenda for Peace* placed ‘peace-building’ into the nomenclature of international relations and listed a wide range of tasks entrusted to peacekeepers during the rapid expansion of peacekeeping operations after the end of the Cold War (with the Western Balkans region as one of the main areas of deployment):

[T]he United Nations found itself asked to undertake an unprecedented variety of functions: the supervision of cease-fires, the regroupment and demobilization of forces, their reintegration into civilian life and the destruction of their weapons; the design and implementation of de-mining programmes; the return of refugees and displaced persons; the provision of humanitarian assistance; the supervision of existing administrative structures; the establishment of new police forces; the verification of respect for human rights; the design and supervision of constitutional, judicial and electoral reforms; the observation, supervision and even organization and conduct of elections; and the coordination of support for economic rehabilitation and reconstruction.¹²

With the change in mandates and focus on peacebuilding after the Cold War, the role of civilians has shifted from a peripheral support role to that of military peacekeepers and civilians now being at the core of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. Peacekeeping missions have expanded and assumed civilian peacebuilding and statebuilding tasks to prevent the recurrence of violent conflict and promote “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.”¹³

Since Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued *An Agenda for Peace*, UN peacekeeping operations have increasingly taken on civilian tasks. In the UN there is now an evolving understanding that “peacekeepers are peacebuilders” and should implement early peacebuilding tasks.¹⁴ In 2010, the UN noted that: “Peacekeeping has evolved from a primarily military model of observing ceasefires and separating forces to incorporate a mix of military, police and civilian capabilities to support the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements and help lay the foundations for sustainable peace and legitimate government.”¹⁵

12 Boutros-Ghali 1995, 6.

13 Boutros-Ghali 1992, 3.

14 UN GA 2010, UN 2010, UN 2012.

15 UN DPKO and DPA 2010.

Civilian Capacities as a Springboard for Deepening Policy and Security Communities in the Western Balkans?

In the field of international Relations, the study of 'security communities' were defined by Karl Deutsch. He outlined a three-step definition of the concept:

A SECURITY-COMMUNITY is a group of people which has become "integrated."

By INTEGRATION we mean the attainment, within a territory, of a "sense of community" and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a "long" time, dependable expectations of "peaceful change" among its population.

By SENSE OF COMMUNITY we mean a belief on the part of individuals in a group that they have come to agreement on at least this one point: those common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of "peaceful change."

By PEACEFUL CHANGE we mean the resolution of social problems, normally by institutionalized procedures without resort to large-scale force.¹⁶

Adler and Barnett further elaborated the concept by stressing the role of shared values, norms, and symbols for stability, cooperation and peaceful relations between countries.¹⁷ Deutsch has been influential for the recent constructivist thinking, emphasizing the social character of global politics¹⁸ and inculcating the norms for appropriate behavior among the members of security communities.¹⁹

Security community scholars emphasize that a security community does not imply complete absence of conflict, but that conflicts are being solved through diplomatic channels and otherwise peaceful means.²⁰ As already noted in the introduction, in recent years there has been a turn towards studying state practices to better understand how security communities are formed.

In this special issue we will further explore this concept, from a bottom-up perspective. We will look at two particular groups with a common theme – the policy and the academic communities working on civilian capacities. Central to the understanding of security community concept is how state identities are formed in interaction with other neighboring states. We will focus on interaction, or the lack of it, at the working level between security professionals, diplomatic officials and various other relevant professions for the training and deployment of civilian capacities for peace operations. We are thus

16 Deutsch 1957, 5.

17 Adler and Barnett 1998

18 Adler and Barnett 1998.

19 Risse-Kappen 1996.

20 Subotic 2012; Pouliot 2006.

looking at both working level and state level practices, and how these can percolate up to the regional level.

In the field of civilian capacities, there has been quite extensive cooperation in the area of training over the last years, including the use of instructors from neighboring countries. Finally, this special issue also represents evidence of the deepening collaboration among the academic scholars and the NGO communities in the Western Balkan region.

We have already noted the efforts that the current UN Secretary-General has exerted to ensure that the UN is improving its efforts to bring the right expertise at the right time to countries in the aftermath of conflict. The Western Balkan area itself has considerable experience with both conflict and re-building of war-torn countries, and through this experience it has valuable experiences it can share, e.g. through deploying or seconding civilian capacities to peace operations. In the next section we will take a closer look at the practices in individual countries as well as efforts to cooperate across the borders in the Western Balkans region.

Mapping Civilian Capacities for Peace Operations in the Western Balkans

All the states in the Western Balkans where researchers who participated in this project hail from and look at – Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia – are already contributing troops to peacekeeping operations. Some of these states have also expressed policy intent to step up its contributions to multilateral peace support operations through the use of civilian capacities. Yet, as civilian capacities are under development, there is a shared trend of deploying primarily military troops and capabilities. Moreover, basic legislation which covers peacekeeping places the Ministry of Defense in the ‘drivers’ seat, leaving civilian participation in peace operations under-regulated (or regulation dispersed among several laws). This in turn has led to modest civilian participation in peace operations, and a regional pattern is again visible, with the majority of civilian deployments being police forces.

This being said, out of all six countries in the Western Balkans region, Croatia is the leading contributor of both military and civilian staff to peacekeeping missions. Although Croatian involvement in peace operations is primarily a result of its accession process to both NATO and EU, it is currently the only one that fields civilian staff other than police forces—there is one MFA member in Afghanistan and additional three judicial experts who were sent to the EULEX mission. In addition, since 2011, Croatia is the only country that distributes development aid, which is complementary with the civilian aspects of peacekeeping operations and might give an incentive for further increase of the civilian staff. As far as other countries in the region are concerned, there exist initiatives and the willingness to step up the civilian participation in missions abroad but insufficient coordination, limited resources and legal limitations pose a significant hindrance to this process. Apart from its military, Serbia is involved in peacekeeping operations with police

staff and the Ministry of Interior is the leading actor when it comes to deployment of civilian capacities. Although the baseline study has shown that there exists vast, untapped potential among the various civilian expert pools in Serbia, there is a lack of political will and coordination efforts on the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which ought to lead the process. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), on the other hand, is in the process of forming an institutional framework for effective management and deployment of civilian staff. Taking into account the lengthy period of BiH being a recipient of international assistance, there are a significant number of civilians who have obtained valuable expertise through transfer of good practices and long-term engagement with the international missions in the country.

When it comes to Montenegro, the participation of civilian staff in missions abroad is almost negligent, the police force included. Montenegro, being the least populated country in the Balkans, is troubled with the lack of resources and staff. However, there are initiatives for it to take a more proactive stance towards developing its civilian capacities, especially in light of its NATO accession process and the Montenegrin Partnership goals that address this issue. Macedonia, on the other hand, has civilian staff with excellent experience in handling inter-ethnic crises stemming both from the Kosovo war and the Albanian rebellion in Macedonia in 2001. However, Macedonia has so far only contributed to peacekeeping missions with military staff, and there only exists a nascent institutional framework for managing and coordinating the deployment of civilian staff abroad. Last, Albanian capacities for involvement in peace operations are mostly determined by its relationship with NATO, with a strong focus on military aspects and a negligent presence of civilian capacities. However, Albania has extensive cooperation and involvement of its civilian staff in Kosovo, where it developed a unique 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder' approach that has cultural background that reflects common values of both nations.²¹

Military troops have been deployed in line with the respective foreign policy goals of the countries in question: Croatia participated in NATO missions as a candidate state, Serbia participated in UN missions emphasizing its neutrality, and all Western Balkan countries participated in EU missions as part of their plans for EU accession. Contribution of civilian capacities has so far been lagging behind that of the military and the police, reflecting modest training and particularly rostering capabilities. The contribution of police officers is perceived as 'traditional' civilian engagement. A positive attitude towards provision of police capacities also makes room for more versatile engagements in the judicial sector.

We found that the biggest obstacle is the lack of a whole of government (WoG) approach, noting the lack of coordination on national levels between the relevant ministries who are de facto or potential stakeholders in the deployment of civilians to peace operations. This in turn lets each Ministry define foreign policy priorities or disregard participation

21 For more on this, see Duro 2014.

in post-conflict reconstruction, perceiving it merely as a ‘business trip’.²² Experiences from the missions, mainly by military servicemen, confirmed that there are many challenges and tasks (in peace operations) other than those the military is trained for. Experiences from individuals who have participated in missions have not been gathered and shared with the policy community, researchers and subsequent individuals ready for deployment, resulting in a limited understanding of the current practices of peace operations and the role of civilian capacities in them. Local demands do not correspond with allocated state resources, so supply and demand issues are present throughout the Western Balkans countries, most notably seen as lack of demanded resources – like the judiciary component in law enforcement missions that has only police component or lack of staff for OSCE missions, as demanded in 2014.

Where the state fails to provide solutions, the market may be able to fill the gap. In our case, civilian expertise located in civil society organizations is often recruited and deployed by international organizations (OSCE, Red Cross, UN) through individual contracting. In this way gender issues in Kosovo are handled by the Albanian gender CSO members,²³ and expertise in election monitoring in Serbia (perfected since the mid-90s) has been extensively exported under the OSCE logo. On the other hand, market influence is also visible in provision of medical care – although needed in numerous missions, states cannot compete with salaries and conditions offered on the market for medical staff. This leaves provision of medical care in the hands of altruistic representatives of the Red Cross and Medecins Sans Frontiers and military medical teams. Lack of language proficiency hampers the will to provide education experts in post-conflict countries, as there is a lack of French speaking teachers (French being the entry point for many African countries). Albania could provide relevant expertise to Kosovo as they speak the same language, which represents a problem for all the other representatives in Kosovo.²⁴

Assistance in emergency situations bears few political risks and favors civilian cooperation, yet so far the issues has not been systematically addressed; this type of assistance has so far been provided only on an ad hoc basis, which leaves room for improvement, as amply demonstrated by the cooperation, or lack thereof, during the spring floods of 2014 in the Western Balkans.

22 Viewpoint acquired through an interview with a Serbian police officer with extensive experience in peacekeeping missions abroad (Haiti, Afghanistan).

23 Duro 2014.

24 *Ibid.*

Conclusions and Recommendations

The idea for this special issue was initially put to paper in a previous article in JRS, calling for more research on whether and how countries in the Western Balkans can “contribute with their expertise and experience to peace support operations, whether they are managed by the EU, UN, OSCE or NATO.”²⁵

Nevertheless, there is still a great gap between the policy intent of providing civilian capacities to peace support operations, and putting it into practice. In all these states, there is a lack of knowledge and expertise in developing enabling policies and management processes, training, rostering and deployment of civilians to international or bilateral peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding initiatives. These shortcomings are hampering the ability to implement what is stated as policy intent by these countries. The practice has shown that it is difficult to discern any strategic approaches to the deployment of civilian capacities as a strategic element off oreign policies of the Western Balkans countries.

Applying the security communities’ concept, one may argue that there is to a significant degree a similar intent regarding cooperation in peace support operations in the Western Balkans countries. Macedonia lacks experience in police missions that Serbia has, yet all countries lag behind Croatia’s judiciary deployment in EULEX mission. Existing training centres in the region could be used more extensively, and additional expertise could be obtained by sending representatives to the ZIF training centre in Berlin – so far major contributors were OSCE employees.²⁶ However, few of the countries have actively reflected on the comparative advantage of having experienced conflict to a larger or lesser extent. Increased interaction in the area of preparing and deploying civilian capacities for peace support operations can also sow the seeds for further cooperation in these areas, thus giving momentum to the development of a security community in the Western Balkans region. This project can be seen as a contribution to this process, creating a community of experts on this particular topic, and sharing the findings of the project with the policymakers of the Western Balkan. This can in turn lead to more cooperation and coordination of efforts in the areas of training and deployment.

The area which currently sees most cooperation is training. The training centres in Croatia, Serbia and BiH are offering courses to participants from across the region, and trainers at these centres are also recruited from across the region. These centres could be built on to also develop regional rosters for selected categories. However, this would necessitate support from the member countries. Regional solutions would enable Western Balkans countries to train and roster civilian staff without incurring the full costs and could also lead to further cooperation in the areas of civil protection and

25 Savkovic and Karlsrud 2012, 181.

26 Correspondence with ZIF. [Email], 6 December 2013.

disaster management, rule of law and other related areas. There is thus a need to start a regional dialogue about the training and rostering of civilian capacities for peace support operations that would move regional cooperation forward.

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