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Exit and/or Voice? Youth and Post-Communist Citizenship in Bulgaria

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Hirschman's (1970, 1993) theoretical constructs of Exit and Voice represent a useful way to think about citizenship. Exit refers to a desire to emigrate and can be construed as apolitical, private, and passive—a threat to citizenship—whereas Voice refers to political commitment and can be construed as ideal citizenship. A survey of 560 Bulgarian university students in 1998 explored their emphasis on Exit and Voice (as options for themselves in the future) and the association of each option with different economic, political, and psychological factors. One in four students wanted to emigrate, and half of them considered leaving the country for a period of time. Exit plans appeared mainly to be triggered by a wish to participate in the consumer culture, but were also associated with a critical view of the political system as well as a rejection of tradition in conjunction with a Western identity. Although most of the students shared vague or ideal Voice-related plans, few wanted to become actively involved in politics. An emphasis on Voice reflected not only a somewhat limited political engagement but also a more traditionalistic attitude associated with plans for a career and family. The findings indicate that a normative separation between Exit and Voice as theoretical concepts does not cover the complexities of the Bulgarian students' emigration and political involvement plans.

KEY WORDS: exit, voice, citizenship, youth, post-communism, globalization, consumerism

Citizenship first and foremost refers to a citizen's rights and obligations in society, but also to practices that make individuals competent members of a community. But the global context of citizenship is changing as the nation-state is changing, and the concept of citizenship has therefore become the focus of both political and academic discourses (Castles, 1997). In Europe one can observe a particular interest in citizenship as an effect of the collapse of the old communist regimes, as well as the threat of ethnic and nationalist crises and conflicts that

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may result from this collapse (Turner, 1994). In these countries, including Bulgaria, the meaning of citizenship changed radically during the 1990s. The transition from a totalitarian system with a planned economy to a liberal and market-oriented system implies enormous changes, which have affected the citizens in a number of ways. In other words, the citizenship "contract" between the state and the individual has been and still is being negotiated. Freedom of speech and the possibility to freely cross national borders, to emigrate, are important examples of citizens' rights and choices in the new democracies.

In Bulgaria, the political and economic transition process has been, and still is, rather difficult and ambivalent. The difficulties came to a head in the winter months of 1996–1997, due in large part to the lack of acceleration of economic reforms. People were dissatisfied with the lack of progress and many poured into the streets to protest, demanding a new election. Another important development in Bulgarian society has been the hundreds of thousands of citizens who have chosen to emigrate to another country—for a brief or long-term period, or permanently.

This article concentrates on the young generation of Bulgarians, using students as the sample. The young and educated are among the groups most likely to leave, and they are easily accessible in this type of study. The political commitment of the post-communist generation has implications for the future development of democracy in Bulgaria. But when young people choose to leave the country, this exodus may be seen as evidence of discontent and a lack of trust in the ongoing reform process (Kovatcheva, 1999) or as a passive, private, and anomic reaction (Hirschman, 1993). In the case of Eastern Europeans going to the West, this may also be perceived as a desire to participate in the consumer culture (Morawska, 1998, 1999). To what extent do Bulgarian students emphasize emigration as an option for themselves, and how much do they emphasize political commitment to try to change the situation in their country?

Following Hirschman (1970, 1993), I refer to emigration as Exit and political commitment as Voice. I explore students' plans for Exit and/or Voice in terms of their association with specific background, reasons, or behavior, whether politically, psychologically, or economically focused. The findings are discussed with reference to Hirschman's work on Exit and Voice in the 1989 transition in the German Democratic Republic (1993) and with respect to postmodern features of increased globalization and consumerism.

Exit and Voice in Bulgaria During the 1990s

Exit. Bulgaria experienced a dramatic decrease in its population during the 1990s. In 1985, before the transition process started, the country had close to 9 million people. In 1998, the number of inhabitants had dropped to 8.2 million. Two years later the number was 7.9 million. Important causes include lower fertility and higher mortality rates, which are among the worst in Europe (Council

of Europe, 1999). Moreover, there has been a heavy stream of emigrants out of Bulgaria.

According to the European Commission (1998), the number of people choosing to leave Bulgaria for a short-term or permanent stay in another country reached some 650,000 during the period 1989 to 1996. The overall emigration rate in the late 1990s stabilized at around 45,000 persons per year according to the European Commission (1998) and at about 30,000 according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1996). The National Statistical Institute in Sofia claims that it is difficult to pinpoint the actual net migration, as some migrants return to Bulgaria and some emigrate once again at a later date (Karamfilov, 1996). (A separate factor not addressed here is that many Bulgarian Turks left for Turkey, particularly during 1989–1990, after which many returned.)

One major worry about emigration is the so-called "brain drain." The emigration potential appears to be highest among people with the highest education levels (International Organization for Migration, 1997) and among students. Topalova (2000) showed that 86% of the Bulgarian students in her study were "ready to choose emigration" (p. 150). Another study reveals that 85% of a Bulgarian student sample expressed a desire "to live for some time in another country" (Kovatcheva, 2000a, p. 125). For the most part, young people are the ones who choose to leave (UNDP, 1996). Kovatcheva (1999) described the desire of young people to emigrate as one of the main topics of public discourse during the political crisis of 1997. Emigration was interpreted as a sign of discontent with the country's economic situation and as a sign of a lack of faith in the reform process. However, emigration may also be considered a flexible strategy that young people may choose when they face the unfriendly labor markets in the post-communist countries (Kovatcheva, 2001).

Voice among post-communist youth. There appears to be consensus among authors who describe youth and political participation in the former Eastern Bloc countries that the youth movements in these countries, which helped to bring down the system in 1989, were consigned to secondary and politically marginalized roles during the 1990s (Konvicka & Kavan, 1994; Stock, 1994). One reason for this, according to Stock (1994), is that Eastern European young people now are facing "a privatization of risks," as there is no attempt to maintain a collective identity (p. 142). Tymowski (1994) claimed, on the other hand, that the "collapse of youth activism" is not a matter for concern, but rather a "healthy consequence of the arrival of normal politics" (p. 116).

Young people in Bulgaria, mainly students, have had a political role during the transition process. Together with the wider democratic movement in the country, their protests in the streets and on campus brought about a change in presidents in 1990 and a change of government in both 1990 and 1997 (Kovatcheva, 2000b; Wallace & Kovatcheva, 1996, 1998). Mitev (2001) also documented a massive commitment among youth during the protests of February–April 1997, but found surprisingly reserved attitudes in December 1998.

Perhaps this is the "healthy consequence" of "normal" politics? Mitev suggested that the revolutionary potential has not disappeared but instead reflects a form of trust. Nonetheless, he also concluded that "Bulgarian society is not able to find mechanisms for systematic realisation of the innovative potential of the young people" (p. 248). This agrees with Wallace and Kovatcheva (1998), who concluded that young people still lack an institutionalized political role in Bulgaria—that their interests are not formally represented in society.

Theoretical Features of Citizenship

Marshall (1965) viewed citizenship rights as being established through legal, political, and social entitlements. More recently, citizenship has come to be viewed as requiring citizens' active articulation of their needs, along with active involvement to meet these needs (i.e., Lister, 1997). Hence, citizenship is both a legal and a normative concept. Legal citizenship includes laws and legislation, whereas a normative understanding incorporates "membership, belongingness, independence and equality, responsibility and participation" (Hall et al., 1999, p. 502). Normative citizenship represents a broader, more sociological definition that implies a greater emphasis on the relationship of the citizen to society as a whole (van Steenbergen, 1994). This article mainly refers to normative citizenship.

As a normative condition, citizenship is not absolute. It is constantly being shaped and (re)defined, and it can be presented at different levels, for example, minimal or bad versus advanced and good (Dekker, 1993). But of course there will be disagreement on what is meant by "good" in this context (Oliver & Heater, 1994). The historical values of citizenship—for example, loyalty to the state, upholding its laws and favoring the community—probably have too narrow a definition for today's situation. Today, according to Ichilov (1998), the dominant pattern appears increasingly to be that of highly individualistic, unstructured, changing perspectives where compelling ideologies give way to compulsive ideas. This pattern, called postmodernity, represents a vision of society and political culture that may have adverse effects on citizenship orientation and behavior (Ichilov, 1998). With respect to postmodernity and theories of late modernity (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991), youth researchers today point to the increased fragmentation of opportunities and risks that young people especially face (i.e., Bynner, Chisholm, & Furlong, 1997; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). This is just as relevant in the case of Eastern European youth (i.e., Wallace & Kovatcheva, 1998), as discussed below.

Citizens' new risks and opportunities. Youth in Eastern Europe most likely encounter more risks than opportunities in the fragmented world of late modernity or postmodernity because of the sociopolitical problems they face. Kovatcheva (2001) described how the most important consequence of the reforms, in terms of post-communist youth, is the breakdown of the established regulators for a smooth passage during this life stage. She referred to economic hardships,

lack of clear-cut career tracks from school to work, a youth unemployment rate reaching 39% in 1998, devaluation of moral norms, political parties trying to adapt to a new market situation, and so on. Other risk factors typically mentioned are loss of identity, becoming second-class citizens, and the collapse of the communist youth culture combined with the absence of a successor culture (Flesch, 1992, quoted in Nagle, 1994). Flesch referred to this problem as going from a system of high (if ambiguously received) security to new insecurities that young people must try to deal with. Although this means less forced participation, it also means less state support, which in turn leads to individualization and privatization of their problem as well as social exclusion (Wallace & Kovatcheva, 1996, p. 209).

All in all, the relatively homogeneous situation for young people during communism has been replaced by an increasing heterogeneity. The freedom to be politically involved and the freedom to leave the country are two examples of this new heterogeneity.

Features of Increased Globalization and Consumerism

Apart from facing risks and opportunities influenced by political and economic conditions on a national level, post-communist youth also must relate to risks and opportunities influenced by increased globalization and consumerism. In Central and Eastern Europe, the desire to participate in the consumer culture is, according to Morawska (1998, 1999), a major incentive for crossing borders. She suggested that the mass media in a globalized culture have played a fundamental role in raising such aspirations, particularly for young people. Contemporary migration has a more "blurred" nature than before—the typology, in terms of reasons or motives, is less clear.

Globalization of culture. Citizenship previously was delimited by a national collectivity; today, citizenship rights are recast as human or individual rights. This change represents a decoupling of rights and national identity (Soysal, 2000). Multiple forms of citizenship are not anchored in national collectivities or the nation-state. An example is membership in the European Union. Other examples of increased supranational complexity are the work of organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe. According to Roche (1992), this development is "as challenging to the dominant paradigm of citizenship . . . as we have seen post-industrial change to be" (p. 191). How do such globalized political and organizational processes affect people's identity in terms of citizenship? They most likely influence the normative perception of what citizenship includes and how national and European citizenship is understood. Turner (1994), for example, referred to a growing cultural awareness of a "European identity" and how this phenomenon challenges nationalistic conceptions of political citizenship (p. 157).

To the Central and Eastern European nations, the effort to join global capitalism has definitely had side effects. Genov (2001) described Bulgarian society

as "already globalized with all the pains, costs and prospects connected with the process" (p. 54).

Consumerism—a major incentive for emigration. Consumption is seen as having an important role in the emergence of a postmodern culture (Miles, 1998). How and why we consume, and the parameters within which we consume, are considered important in terms of how we construct our everyday lives. This is no less important in the case of young people, who are drawn into consumption because it is in the interests of the market. Researchers on youth and citizenship describe how young people's access to the consumer market brings the possibility of new forms of freedom, independence, and choice (i.e., Jones & Wallace, 1992). Following Giddens' (1991) theories of late modernity, consumerism implies "individualization" for young people and for the construction of self. However, the description of consumerism often takes on negative overtones, representing a threat to citizenship per se. New forms of exclusion of individuals and groups in society arise, based on the lack of money to participate in the consumer culture's premises. Miles (1998), on the other hand, argued that even if consumer goods and services surround us, they need not represent a negative influence on our lives. He contended that consumerism should rather be looked upon as an arena within which social lives are constructed, particularly within "advanced capitalist societies."

During the transition process, Bulgaria has become a kind of liberal market economy but would appear to be far from an advanced capitalist society. How important, then, is consumerism as a feature in post-communist societies? Wallace and Kovatcheva (1996) argued that there are differences in the ways in which young people are situated in relation to the consumer culture, depending on the different state systems that have existed, and not least on the present material situation. Nonetheless, consumerism as an idea or ideology has definitely reached Bulgaria, offering a dream to strive for.

Exit, Voice, and the Events of 1989

I make use of Hirschman's theoretical concepts of Exit and Voice in my attempt to explain Bulgarian students' plans in terms of emigration and political engagement. Hirschman (1970) first introduced Exit and Voice as well as a third concept, Loyalty, to describe people's responses to dissatisfaction in firms, organizations, or states. Exit refers to the act of simply leaving (i.e., emigration) because a better good, service, or benefit is available or provided elsewhere, whereas Voice is the act of complaining or protesting (i.e., against the regime) with the intent of achieving recuperation (Hirschman, 1970, 1993). Hirschman used the construct of Loyalty to explain why anyone would use Voice when Exit is available. Hence, Loyalty may lead to active political participation, but it may also represent passivity—suffering in silence, waiting for an improvement in the situation. Hirschman felt the Exit-Voice perspective could help put the 1989 events in a new

light, and used the concepts in an article about the transition process in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) (Hirschman, 1993). The concept of Loyalty is less explicit in Hirschman's study from 1993, and I refer to it only to a small degree here.

Hirschman (1970) asserted that there is no preestablished harmony between Exit and Voice, that they are mutually exclusive alternatives, and that they tend to undermine each other, particularly with Exit undermining the development of Voice. Furthermore, the choice of Voice over Exit usually reflects loyalty or commitment. However, in his article on the transition process in the GDR, Hirschman (1993) concluded that the events around 1989 revealed a very different relationship between Exit and Voice. Here he argued that Exit (emigration) and Voice (protest against the regime) worked in "tandem" during these historical events, actually reinforcing each other and jointly bringing about the collapse of the regime (p. 177). Obviously, Hirschman (1993) saw the choice of Exit and/or Voice at that particular moment in history in terms of normative perceptions of what is considered *good* and *active* citizenship: The citizen is now allowed to make a choice. However, Voice is definitely presented as the ideal citizen behavior (political, public, and responsible), whereas Exit is connected to apathy, withdrawal, and a private reaction. Exit appears to be valuable to the extent that it reinforces Voice.

Research questions. The present study is based on two main research questions: (1) To what extent do Bulgarian students emphasize the importance of emigration (Exit) as a goal for themselves, and to what extent do they emphasize their political commitment to change the situation in their own country (Voice)? (2) Is the students' emphasis on Exit and/or Voice related to specific background, reasons, or behavior, whether politically, psychologically, or economically focused? I discuss the students' citizenship potential on the basis of the findings, with reference to relevant theoretical features of post-communistic citizenship.

Method

Participants

Of the 700 questionnaires distributed, 560 were completed and returned, a response rate of 80%. Among the 560 students, 42% were studying at Sofia University (the capital) and 58% at Plovdiv University (the second largest city). The questionnaire was handed out in lecture halls or in the university cafeteria, outside in the yard, or at a nearby cafeteria for students. In Plovdiv, most of the data were gathered in lecture halls.

Students from 73% of all fields of study were represented; 63% were female. The sample was representative of the student population except within the fields of technology, agriculture, health and medicine, theology, architecture, and communications and media (these fields represent 27% of the total student

population). The sample was mainly urban; fewer than 10% reported coming from a village. Half of the students were 18 to 20 years of age, and the average age was 22. Most of the students (89%) were 19 to 24 years of age.

Are students representative of youth in Bulgaria? Students were chosen as a sample first and foremost because they are easily accessible. Students as a group are not representative of youth in general. However, they were a highly relevant youth group with respect to the topics of emigration and political involvement. Highly educated youth seems to be an important group among those who choose to emigrate from East to West in general, and there is a significant relationship between educational participation and political involvement (Bynner & Ashford, 1994).

How representative are Bulgarian students as a group, relative to young people in Bulgaria in general? In 1998 there were about 1.2 million persons between 18 and 28 years of age (estimated with statistics from the National Statistical Institute in Sofia). Hence, a total of 237,353 university students (in 1998–99) represented about 19% of the total population in this age range. According to Kovatcheva (1998), the student group is somewhat biased toward the middle and higher income groups in the country. Minorities—Roma and Turks who also are low-income groups and represent about 15% of the population—are not represented in the student sample. Neither are the approximately 20% who drop out without completing secondary school. These groups largely coincide, according to Kovatcheva.

In the present sample, about two-thirds of the parents had higher education (higher than secondary), either vocational or academic. According to estimates based on public statistics, the average income per capita in 2000 among people with university or other higher education was about 19% higher than among people with only secondary education; it was 51% higher among those with higher education than among those with only primary or lower education (UNDP, 2000).

In 1998, when the data were collected, the average monthly wages in Bulgaria were about $113 U.S., or around 200.000 BGL (Bulgarian lev; estimations based on statistics in UNDP, 2000). As assessed from the students' reports of their parents' income, 16% of the mothers and 40% of the fathers earned more than 200.000 BGL per month. As many as 52% of the mothers and 40% of the fathers earned between 100.000 and 200.000 BGL per month; about 32% of the mothers and 20% of the fathers earned less than 100.000 BGL per month.

Measures

This article refers to six scales from the questionnaire. With the exception of the Hopelessness Scale (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974) and the Anomy Scale (McClosky & Schaar, 1965; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991), the scales were created especially for this survey.

Table 1. Standardized Factor Loadings for the Attitude Items (Future Orientation Scale)

Factor 1: Consumption	
To have a nice car	.77
Material well-being	.76
To have a high income	.76
To be able to spend money on luxury	.74
To earn a lot of money easily	.72
Factor 2: Emigration / Exit	
To leave Bulgaria	.89
To emigrate to a Western country	.89
To live abroad for a while	.75
Factor 3: Career	
To have a good education	.82
To have a profession that I enjoy	.74
To fulfill myself as a personality	.71
Factor 4: Political involvement / Voice	
To contribute in one way or another to the development of this country	.79
To become actively involved in politics	.69
To fight against injustice in this country	.63
Factor 5: Family	
To be able to give priority to family instead of work	.84
To have my own family	.75

The Future Orientation Scale included 16 items. The students were asked to think about their future and to judge how important different life goals and values were to them, on a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 7 (very important). The scale had an internal consistency of $\alpha = .78$. A factor analysis with varimax rotation confirmed five factors, with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0, together accounting for 66% of the variance.

Table 1 shows the factor loadings of each item within the Future Orientation Scale and their division within the five factors. Factor 1 consisted of five items related to money and welfare, referred to as consumption. The factor explained 19.2% of the total variance ($\alpha = .82$). Factor 2 consisted of three items related to emigration, explaining 14.4% of the total variance ($\alpha = .83$). Factor 3 consisted of three items related to career, explaining 13% of the variance ($\alpha = .74$). Factor 4 consisted of three items concerning political engagement, explaining 10.1% of the variance ($\alpha = .53$). Factor 5 included two items emphasizing the importance of one's family, explaining 9.4% of the variance ($\alpha = .55$).

The factors of emigration and political engagement were of core interest in the study, as dependent variables in a regression analysis, and will be referred to as Exit and Voice, respectively. The rest of the factors were of interest as independent variables. The relatively low α in terms of Voice ($\alpha = .53$) is due to low homogeneity of the items included. If item 10 ("to become actively involved in

politics") were removed, the internal consistency would increase to α = .62. Still, it was preferred to let this item remain in the scale in order to reflect Hirschman's presentation of Voice as political, public, and responsible. Removing the item would mean that the more proactive political content of the scale would be lost.

The Losses Scale contained nine items expressing different kinds of economic, welfare, and social loss caused by the transition process. The students were asked whether things had changed for the better, stayed the same, or changed for the worse in terms of (1) economic situation for your family, (2) social welfare from the state for any kind of support of your family (social security, kindergarden, etc.), (3) work opportunities for your parents, (4) educational opportunities for yourself, (5) leisure opportunities for your family, (6) social status of your family, (7) strength of family relations, (8) strength of social relations outside family, and (9) crime in your family's neighborhood. The scale had an internal consistency of α = .77. However, one item (2) was removed because of a high number of missing values. The internal consistency for the remaining eight items was α = .71. Dummy variables were made for all items in terms of values scoring 3 ("changed for the worse"), and finally a sum-score variable was made for the regression analysis.

The Hopelessness Scale (Beck et al., 1974) was constructed on the basis of hopelessness being identified as "one of the core characteristics of depression" (p. 861); this scale is mainly used in clinical studies of depression and suicidal behavior. The scale consists of 20 true/false items about the future. The internal consistency of the whole scale (all 20 items) in this study was α = .83. A sum-score variable was made for the regression analysis.

The Anomy Scale (McClosky & Schaar, 1965; Robinson et al., 1991) intends to measure psychological dimensions of anomie, hence individual responses to the social and political community. The nine agree/disagree items in the scale express attitudes that describe both society (as normless and deregulated) and individual psychological conditions (as feeling awkward and out of place). The internal consistency of the whole scale of nine items was α = .60. A sum-score variable was made for the regression analysis.

The Political Behavior Scale contained six yes/no items indicating political behavior, such as voting in the last election or discussing politics with friends. Dummy variables were computed, and all items were included in the regression analysis (see below).

The Political Attitudes Scale contained 12 items with positive and negative statements about the political transition process in the country, with a possible range of scores from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). The internal consistency of the whole scale was α = .75. A factor analysis resulted in three factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0, together accounting for 50% of the variance. Factor 1 consisted of seven items related to disappointment and negative views concerning the ongoing political transition process (for example, "The changes have had too many negative side effects for me personally"), explaining 26% of

the variance (α = .77). Factor 2 consisted of four items that reflected an open-minded and Western-oriented attitude in terms of the political transition process (for example, “I think the best thing we can do is to open up towards the West”). The factor explained 15% of the variance (α = .60). Factor 3 consisted of one item only: “I think we have to hold on to our own traditions in this country.” This factor explained 10% of the variance in the total scale. The factor scores were used in the regression analyses.

Findings

The variables of Exit and Voice were of core interest in this study and were derived as two of five factors from factor analysis of the Future Orientation Scale, a procedure described above. To explore Bulgarian students’ emphasis on Exit and Voice, I analyzed descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation, and percentage for each item within the factors of Exit and Voice, respectively. The relation between the factors of Exit and Voice was measured using a bivariate correlation. Furthermore, separate regression analyses were performed to explore the association of Exit and Voice with selected variables. Of 560 cases, 363 went through the regression analyses. The reason for this decrease is that the cases were excluded listwise in the case of missing values, hence not pairwise or replaced with a mean score. An α level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

The Students’ Emphasis on Exit and Voice

The first research question was to what extent the students emphasize the importance of leaving Bulgaria (Exit) versus the importance of political commitment to change the situation in their own country (Voice). Table 2 shows the

Table 2. The Students’ Emphasis on Exit and Voice

	Mean	SD	Percent	*N*
Exit				
Leave Bulgaria	2.40	1.84	16	543
Emigrate to a Western country	2.84	1.99	23	548
Live abroad for a while	4.38	1.95	49	554
Total for the scale	3.21	1.67	—	557
Voice				
Become actively involved in politics	2.38	1.75	14	547
Contribute to the development of the country	5.25	1.57	70	553
Fight against injustice	5.57	1.51	76	554
Total for the scale	4.41	1.17	—	556

Note. Percent refers to values 5, 6, and 7 in a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 7 (very important).

descriptive statistics for each item of the Exit and Voice factors, respectively, as well as for the total scales.

Table 2 shows that the mean importance, in terms of both leaving Bulgaria and emigrating to a Western country, was rather low. Still, almost one in four students considered it of importance to emigrate to a Western country. Living abroad for a while was emphasized as important among as many as half of the students. In terms of Voice, Table 2 shows that large proportions of the students considered it important to contribute to the development of the country (70%) or to fight against injustice (76%). On the other hand, only 14% of the students considered becoming actively involved in politics as important.

A bivariate correlation was performed to test the relation between Exit and Voice, showing Pearson's $r = .08$.

Reasons for Exit and Voice

The second aim of this study was to explore the students' emphasis on Exit and/or Voice in terms of their association with the following independent variables: gender, socioeconomic background, feelings of hopelessness and anomie, political behavior and attitudes, and future orientations. Two regression analyses were performed with Exit and Voice as dependent variables.

The regression analysis in Table 3 shows that the students' emphasis on Exit turned out to be strongly connected to the emphasis on money and welfare, the so-called consumption factor ($\beta = .35$, $t = 6.8$). Furthermore, an emphasis on Exit was associated with political attitudes: a positive openness toward a Western orientation ($\beta = .16$, $t = 3.2$), critical attitudes in terms of the political system's transition process ($\beta = .13$, $t = 2.3$), and a lack of belief in the importance of holding on to one's own traditions ($\beta = -.15$, $t = -3.2$). Exit was also related to hopelessness for the future, as measured by the Hopelessness Scale ($\beta = .12$, $t = 2.2$). It was not associated with any of the variables describing the background of the students.

The second regression analysis in Table 3 shows that the students' emphasis on Voice was slightly, but insignificantly, related to the consumption factor. However, the emphasis on Voice was associated with other future goals, namely plans for a career ($\beta = .18$, $t = 3.4$) and a family ($\beta = .10$, $t = 2.1$). As opposed to Exit, Voice was negatively related to pessimistic attitudes about the future as measured by the Hopelessness Scale ($\beta = -.26$, $t = -4.8$). Emphasis on Voice was related to only one of the six items describing political behavior: discussing politics with friends ($\beta = .20$, $t = 4.2$). However, as opposed to Exit, critical political attitudes or openness toward the West and Europe were not associated with Voice. On the contrary, emphasis on Voice was related to the more conservative attitude of holding on to one's own traditions ($\beta = .10$, $t = 2.0$). Voice was not associated with any of the variables describing the background of the students.

Table 3. Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Exit and Voice (*N* = 363)

Variable	Exit			Voice		
	B	SE	β	*B*	SE	β
Background						
Gender	.05	.18	.02	−.09	.13	−.04
Parents' education	.29	.16	.09	−.10	.12	−.04
Parents' income	−.05	.05	−.05	−.04	.04	−.06
Socioeconomic loss	−.02	.04	−.02	.02	.03	.03
Psychological distress						
Hopelessness	.05	.02	.12*	−.07	.02	−.26*
Anomie	.04	.05	.05	.06	.03	.10
Political participation						
Voted in last election	−.23	.18	−.06	.07	.13	.03
Participated in political demonstrations	−.02	.18	.00	.04	.13	.02
Attended activism toward government	.62	.45	.07	.33	.32	.06
Attended political meetings	−.16	.29	−.03	.29	.21	.08
Discuss politics with friends	−.17	.17	−.05	.53	.13	.20*
Member of political organization	−.40	.48	−.04	.25	.35	.04
Political attitudes						
Disappointed with the transition process	.22	.10	.13*	.00	.07	.00
Open-minded and Western-oriented	.27	.09	.16*	−.03	.06	−.02
Traditional/conservative	−.25	.08	−.15*	.11	.06	.10*
Personal future goals						
Consumption	.49	.07	.35*	.10	.05	.10
Career	−.22	.13	−.09	.32	.10	.18*
Family	.12	.07	.08	.11	.05	.10*

Note. R^2 = .26 and ΔR^2 = .22 for Exit; R^2 = .24 and ΔR^2 = .21 for Voice.
*$p < .05$.

Discussion

The study showed that one in four Bulgarian students considered emigration, and half of them considered leaving the country for a period of time. A majority of students had broad and idealistic Voice plans, but very few considered becoming actively involved in politics.

The desire to Exit was strongly triggered by the wish to participate in the consumer culture. It also reflected a political system-critical view, a rejection of traditions, as well as a particular interest and openness toward the West. The association with hopelessness indicates a certain psychological distress that probably works as a push-factor in terms of emigration.

The emphasis on Voice, on the other hand, reflected a limited political commitment and a more conservative political stand: to hold on to one's own traditions, as opposed to opening up toward the West. Associated with plans for a

career and a family, an emphasis on Voice expressed a more local identity than an emphasis on Exit. Hope for the future indicates a reason to stay.

The findings blur the impression of Voice and Exit as distinct concepts, where Voice represents political and community-oriented citizenship while Exit represents apolitical and passive citizenship based on private interests. Hence, a normative separation between Exit and Voice as theoretical concepts does not cover the complexities in terms of emigration or political involvement plans.

The Students' Exit Plans

Seen in the light of the declining population in Bulgaria, and with the knowledge that the young and educated are among the first ones to leave, it may seem relatively dramatic when as many as one in four students plan to emigrate. The East-West "brain drain" phenomenon is often referred to as worrisome. Apart from losing specialized human capital, the loss of "intellectual potential" in the nation may also undermine the social base for the implementation of the reforms. On the other hand, it is probably not that dramatic when half the students wish to live abroad for a while. Temporary employment in a Western country may bring new skills and ideas on a "two-way road" (Vizi, 1993). Another essential aspect, however, is that as barriers to Exit have disappeared in Eastern Europe, barriers to entry in the West have been erected (Brubaker, 1990). It is rather difficult for Eastern Europeans to obtain a work permit for Western Europe (or other continents). The Schengen agreement has made this even more difficult. Hence, although freedom to travel was seen as fundamental to the liberation of Eastern Europe, what has actually happened is that different classes of travelers have been produced (Wallace, 2001)—some can travel relatively freely, others hardly at all.

The Students' Voice Plans

The students' plans in terms of political commitment, Voice, were broad and ideological more than they reflected interest in a concrete involvement in the established political system. This may reflect contempt for institutionalized politics and politicians, something that has been found in other studies among Eastern European youth. Mátrai (1998) found low political participation rates among young people in Hungary, mainly because of a low degree of interest in politics, a dislike for politics, distrust in politicians, and a low sense of political efficacy. Kluegel and Mason (1999), however, concluded that post-communist youth are more likely to sympathize and participate in nonelectoral political actions. Some suggest that the collapse of youth activism in Eastern Europe may reflect normal and healthy politics (Tymowski, 1994); others believe that political involvement is more of a latent factor with young people. Mitev (2001), for example, asserted that the revolutionary potential has not disappeared through the changes, and that support given to the ruling political coalition is a form of trust. Mitev

suggested that one reason why young Bulgarians avoid organizing their political involvement is because of a "hangover from the times of the totalitarian super-organisation of society" (p. 248).

Reasons for Exit and Voice, and Implications in Terms of Citizenship

Hirschman's distinct concepts of Exit and Voice (1970) became more blurred in his GDR study (1993). Hirschman's main finding during the 1989 revolution was that Exit and Voice seemed to reinforce rather than undermine each other when people had the opportunity to choose among them. Still, Hirschman (1993) appeared to maintain a normative separation between the concepts, describing Voice as political, public, and active, and Exit as apolitical, private, and passive. The present findings indicate that a normative separation between Exit and Voice as theoretical concepts does not cover the complexities in terms of the Bulgarian students' emigration and political involvement plans.

Political reasons. The impression from the present study is that an emphasis on Voice may not be considered as political dissent. The Voice factor was only partially confirmed as political. First and foremost, it was not significantly related to political participation, except for discussing politics with friends. The perception of Voice as a political factor was also undermined because of the lack of association with critical or supportive attitudes toward the political process. The concern about retaining the country's own traditions, as opposed to a Western orientation, reflected a more conservative or traditional value orientation. Apart from this, a possible explanation for the lack of system-critical attitudes may be found in the relatively stable political situation in the country since the election in May 1997. Following Hirschman's arguments, a reason for this may be that Voice reflects loyalty toward the system more than it reflects a political commitment. It might be that the students are patiently waiting for better days to come. On the other hand, political commitment may also be more of a "latent" factor that the students might mobilize when they feel it is necessary (see discussion in Mitev, 2001).

An emphasis on Exit was not associated with active political participation. However, these students' disappointed and critical attitudes toward the political and economic transition process at least indicated a political stand. The impatience with respect to opening up to the West may also be considered a political voice.

The (globalized) dream of the West: Private and passive? Whereas migration once occurred mainly for economic reasons, Morawska (1998) argued that today it is also affected by a progressive globalization that opens people's eyes to new options and possibilities, and that this phenomenon is particularly strong among younger people. This study shows that plans to emigrate were associated with an openness toward the West. A connection between emigration aspirations and a European identity was found in a study by Kovatcheva (2000a). Topalova (2000)

showed that the European identity is very strong among Bulgarian students, and much stronger than among older age groups. The question is whether young people's aspirations for the West and Europe represent a threat to the traditional notions of citizenship. Are plans to Exit to be considered private and passive despite these students' system-critical voice?

European identification and adaptation is not only an individual process but also a national one in today's Bulgaria; for example, the country is a candidate for membership in the European Union (EU). Before 1989, citizenship was delimited by a national collective, but also by a particularly strong Soviet sphere of influence (see, e.g., Glenny, 1990). Today, Soysal's (2000) reference to a postmodern decoupling of rights and national identity is about to become the reality in Eastern Europe, and in Bulgaria as well. Membership within the EU represents one example of this type of globalization. From this perspective, young people's openness toward the West and Europe may actually be considered a relevant and rational aspect of citizenship, as it may help to secure the process of integration and democratization. Bulgarian youth researchers also indicate that young people may spearhead this process. For example, Mitev (1999) and Topalova (2000) considered young people's aspirations toward Europe as important political signals in today's Bulgaria, and asserted that young people's values and identities may contribute to the process of democratization and integration. Although one may point to the negative side effects of these aspects of globalization (see, e.g., discussion in Slowinski, 1999), the Bulgarians' aim for integration, for example into the EU, does not appear to be controversial in today's Bulgaria.

Finally, as Topalova (2000) suggested, the willingness to leave among so many young Bulgarians probably also reflects "a natural striving of the young to travel and learn new things" (p. 150); moreover, young people's emigration may also be seen as an individual (and impatient) integration into Europe. From this perspective, Exit may be considered not as apathy and withdrawal, but rather as an active strategy to cope with a difficult situation. People have grown weary of the lagging pace of the transition process in Bulgaria, and thus choose to organize their own personal transition. Greater mobility may be seen as a desirable consequence of globalization and the liberalization of markets (Appadurai, 1996). Nonetheless, this "global mobility discussion" is in a sense artificial because of the increasing barriers to crossing borders. An eastward expansion of the EU will, however, once again dramatically change this picture and bring new challenges to how people look at citizenship and the nation.

Feelings of hopelessness. An emphasis on Exit was associated with the psychological distress of hopelessness, as measured by the Hopelessness Scale. Hopelessness reflects, as Beck et al. (1974) described it, a negative view of self, personal world, and future. Voice, on the other hand, was negatively associated with hopelessness. The association between Exit plans and lack of hope for the future may be understood in terms of the status quo situation in the country, and emigration may be a way of coping with this. The students' lack of hope for the

future is probably more worrisome than their wish to leave Bulgaria for a brief or longer period of time. On the other hand, their pessimism is not to be considered anomic and passive. As discussed above, a system-critical voice, as well as a proactive openness toward the West, were associated with the students' Exit plans. Moreover, Exit was not related to feelings of anomie.

The negative association between Voice plans and hopelessness shows that students emphasizing Voice have the opposite future perspective relative to students emphasizing Exit. This optimistic perspective probably reflects a certain satisfaction, and it may explain their previously discussed loyalty or patience in the face of the political situation.

Economic reasons. Hirschman (1970) described Exit as an economically market-oriented choice. The difficult economic situation is also an obvious reason for leaving Bulgaria. The present study has shown that neither the parents' income nor the family's socioeconomic losses (push-factors) explained plans to Exit (or to Voice). However, the Bulgarian students' Exit plans may still be considered market-oriented, as they appeared to be triggered by the economic possibilities (pull-factors) in another country. This is exemplified by the strong emphasis these students placed on consumption in their future plans. The importance placed on prospects for higher welfare agrees with previous studies of Bulgarians' emigration motives (IOM, 1997; Kovatcheva, 2000a; UNDP, 1999). The finding confirms Morawska's presentation of Central and Eastern European people's motives for emigrating (1998, 1999), that the desire to participate in the consumer culture is a major incentive.

An individual cost-benefit judgment is in evidence among the students who emphasized Exit; in contrast, the students who emphasized Voice were planning for a career and family. The latter agrees with other studies showing that people who had no desire to leave the country placed more importance on family than those who planned to emigrate (Kovatcheva, 2000a), or that ties to family, friends, and community were the most important reasons for staying in the country (IOM, 1997).

The dream of consumption: A threat to citizenship? As the factor of consumption was definitely prominent among the students who considered emigration, this is a crucial factor when discussing their citizenship potential. One may claim that a consumer focus represents a threat to citizenship per se—if citizens are individual consumers rather than political citizens. A consumer orientation among young people in today's social and economic situation in Bulgaria is also a paradox. Although they must relate to a more complex world of new possibilities, values, and identities—often accompanied by Western standards and consumer orientation—this world is still unattainable for most people because of the weak economy. Emigration may be considered a solution to this dilemma.

Another paradox is that the population has gained something in terms of political, civil, and human rights, but at the same time has suffered great losses in social rights. The new liberal democratic state has not developed the kind of

welfare society that offered a certain degree of safety for people during the socialist regime. During the 1990s, people witnessed escalating inflation and unemployment. Most people suffer under a weaker economy, and young people have trouble entering the job market. In many ways the welfare state has not yet managed to fulfill its role in Bulgaria. A crucial question becomes whether one can expect good and active citizenship when people are out of work and have no place to live (Helve, 1997). The situation may be described as one of premodern and postmodern challenges at the same time—a paradox in the citizenship discussion, and a paradox that goes a long way toward describing the situation for young people in Bulgaria. Within this perspective, it is understandable that young people leave Bulgaria for the prospect of better welfare in another country. More than an escape from a difficult situation and an uncertain future, however, emigration may be considered a flexible coping strategy (Kovatcheva, 2001).

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