

**METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY PRAGUE**  
**International Relations and European Studies**

**MASTER'S DISSERTATION**

**CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN THE WESTERN  
BALKAN COUNTRIES  
AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE PROSPECTS OF EU  
MEMBERSHIP**

**KONFLIKTY A KRIZE V ZEMÍCH ZÁPADNÍHO  
BALKÁNU A JEJICH DOPAD NA VYHLÍDKY  
ČLENSTVÍ V EU**

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**June, 2012**

## **AFFIRMATION**

**Hereby I declare that I have written this Master Dissertation on my own and that I have marked all the citations and sources in the text. All works cited and literatures used are stated in the attached bibliography.**

**In Prague, June 15th, 2012**

*Author's Signature*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>AFFIRMATION</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1. OVERVIEW	<b>8</b>
1.1.1. Aims of the dissertation	<b>10</b>
1.1.2. Methodology	<b>11</b>
1.2. DISSERTATION'S ORGANISATION	<b>12</b>
<b>2. THE WESTERN BALKANS HISTORY</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1. ROOTS OF (WEST) BALKAN DISPUTES	<b>14</b>
2.2. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	<b>18</b>
2.2.1. What influenced ethnic heterogeneity within FRY	<b>20</b>
2.3. THE RISE AND FALL OF YUGOSLAVIA	<b>21</b>
<b>3. THE LAST BREATH OF YUGOSLAVIA (1990 - 2000)</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1. INTER-STATE CONFLICTS	<b>27</b>
3.1.1. Case study: BiH Conflict	<b>29</b>
3.2. INTRA-STATE CONFLICTS	<b>33</b>
3.2.1. Case Study: War in Kosovo	<b>34</b>
<b>4. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO THE WESTERN BALKANS</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1. THE US AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES PERSPECTIVE	<b>39</b>
4.2. NEUTRAL PARTIES (UN, NATO) PERSPECTIVE	<b>41</b>
4.3. THE EU-WESTERN BALKAN RELATIONS	<b>43</b>
4.3.1. Re-establishing the EU-WB relations	<b>45</b>
4.4. THE CURRENT EU APPROACH	<b>48</b>

<b>5. THE WESTERN BALKANS' FUTURE</b>	<b>54</b>
5.1. THE EU OPTION: THE WESTERN BALKANS INTEGRATION	54
5.1.1. Analogy: “The marathon that needs to be overcome”	55
5.1.2. Why access the EU?	56
5.1.3. EU Enlargement – Challenges for both sides	57
5.2. EXIT STRATEGIES	59
5.2.1. Serbia stepping back	59
5.2.2. The cooperation code for a good neighbourhood	60
5.2.3. Wallensteen theory – (Horse trading and peace agreement)	61
 <b>DISSERTATION'S CONCLUSIONS</b>	 <b>63</b>
 <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	 <b>67</b>
 <b>APPENDICES</b>	 <b>77</b>
 <b>ABSTRACT</b>	 <b>80</b>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ARFY</b>	Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia
<b>ARBH</b>	Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>BiH</b>	Bosnia Herzegovina
<b>CAF</b>	Croatian Armed Forces
<b>CEFTA</b>	Central European Free Trade Agreement
<b>CFSP</b>	Common Foreign and Security Policy
<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>EC</b>	European Community
<b>EEC</b>	European Economic Community
<b>ESDP</b>	European Security and Defense Policy
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FRY</b>	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
<b>FYRM</b>	Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia
<b>KLA</b>	Kosovo Liberation Army
<b>LAPMB</b>	The Liberation Army of Presevo – Medvedja - Bujanovac
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>SAA</b>	Stabilization and Association Agreement
<b>SAP</b>	Stabilization and Association Process
<b>SAO</b>	Serbian Autonomous Oblasts

<b>SEE</b>	South East Europe
<b>SFRY</b>	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
<b>SLA</b>	Serbian Liberation Army
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>VRS</b>	Bosnian Serb Army
<b>WWI</b>	World War I
<b>WWII</b>	World War II

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. OVERVIEW

The Western Balkans is one of the most diverse regions in South East Europe regarding culture and ethnic composition.<sup>1</sup> Southeastern Europe is a relatively recent political designation mostly for the states of the Balkans.<sup>2</sup> The Western Balkans has a very rich history and culture. The Balkan peninsula, has always been on the international community radar because of the continuing conflicts and crisis in the region. Now is the time to end such disputes and switch the focus to overcoming and integrating as a region within EU structures.

The two World Wars have contributed to increasing the tension between ethnic groups, overlapping borders, forcing migration and provoking foreign intervention. The Western Balkans has been isolated for years from Communism and Dictatorship and its countries have struggled to be fully democratic. The harsh dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and the region's wider struggles with a post-communist transition, suggest continuing hardships and struggles for the peoples and states of a region, which has traditionally been seen as separate from Europe.

Nowadays, all countries in the region have the same objective. Their aim is to reduce or eliminate all the negative elements that are holding it back, and try to improve its regional concerns according to the criteria set by the EU. Some of the WB countries are members of NATO<sup>3</sup> and some other are known as potential candidates for membership into the European Union. At this historical moment, one of the achievements of the Western Balkans, is the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) as well as the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) for successful regional cooperation. The WB countries aspire to become EU members. Only two of them – Croatia and Macedonia – have been officially accepted as candidates for the EU membership. The other five - Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia - have been considered by the EU as potential candidates. The

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<sup>1</sup> The Western Balkans refers to Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. (See map, Fig.1.)

<sup>2</sup> John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe: A Century of War and Transition*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Albania and Croatia are members of NATO since April 2009.

advance of Croatia, FYRM<sup>4</sup> and Serbia as EU potential members is a positive and solid step towards becoming part of the European family.

In 1912, the Balkan war started, which affected its borders. Western Balkans territories were first drawn at the Paris Conference in 1919 after the Balkan war ended. In 1929, the so called Kingdom of Yugoslavia was founded. After the War, Communism spread its roots into the Western Balkan territories and thus affected the relationship created with Soviet allies. After the collapse of the communist regime, the struggle for democracy begun. First, there was the forced break up of Yugoslavia and second, the stalling of the integration process within the region. The countries of the region, most of them part of the former Yugoslavia, are still suffering the consequences of the Federation's dissolution. These countries, although they share similar ideals – generally speaking in politics, the economy and societal structure – have been involved in brutal conflicts, resulting in mass murder and genocide.

The region has been dominated by the idea of redefining borders, via forced migration of the people both into and out of the region. Ongoing clashes between the ethnic groups, especially in the territory of Kosovo, are as a result of poor regional cooperation, powerful organized crime networks and poor judicial systems. One of the most unsteady political and economic situations, the war in Bosnia Herzegovina and the war in Kosovo, led to a violent, destabilized situation. Eventhough Kosovo declared itself independent from Serbia in 2008, there is still no international agreement on its status. The EU is actively seeking a diplomatic solution while providing practical help. Some 1900 justice experts and police officers have been sent to Kosovo by the EU to help strengthen the rule of law.<sup>5</sup> The issues of an independent judiciary and rule of law enforcement are necessary political criteria in terms of the EU membership process. Most of the Western Balkan countries are still waiting for their application to gain the membership, but first need to fully implement the above mentioned agreements. Regional cooperation and finding a middle ground to end the conflicts will play an important role in the region's integration in the EU.

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<sup>4</sup> The official name of Macedonia is the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

<sup>5</sup> EU. EU members-in waiting: The Balkans. Retrieved on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://europa.eu/pol/ext/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/pol/ext/index_en.htm)

Is it important that this dissertation answers the following questions: What are the roots of the Western Balkans and how have the disputes within the region developed over time? What were the factors that affected the region and generated such conflicts? Have the disputes ceased completely? Do the ethnic groups of the region respect each other and are they ready to cooperate to create a better living environment and a brighter future? How the conflicts are related to the Western Balkans' EU membership? What influences the WB countries to be members of the EU? Are they close to fulfilling the criteria needed to join the Union? What instruments have been implemented thus far by the EU to secure peace and stability in the region? Did they succeed? What might be the benefits and the possible challenges of entering the EU? What might be the challenges facing the EU itself? The possibility of gaining membership to the EU would be higher if the region improved as a whole and not as individual countries that continually clash with one another. Finding a resolution to the conflicts, would bring hope for peace and stability in the region.

### **1.1.1. Aims of the dissertation**

The aim of this dissertation is to bring to the reader's attention some of the worse Western Balkans conflicts. The author will analyse those that have happened over centuries and that are still ongoing. Grasping the past and analysing the factors that affected the disputes, will serve to make us aware of current situations and enable us to take adequate measures for a stable and peaceful future.

The dissertation also seeks to provide well evidenced material about the onset of the conflicts within the region. To provide judgments on how the birth and the fall of a country, such as Yugoslavia, affected these disputes. Analyzing the factors that affected the crisis and the influence of external approaches, help us to understand the political relations between the countries. The question of whether the conflict and crises are ongoing in the West Balkan region helps us to understand the chances they have of joining the EU. At the present moment the region itself can be considered as a potential candidate to enter the EU family. Progress has been made under the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). Furthermore the greatest step towards EU membership was achieved last year for certain Western Balkan countries in gaining the status of candidates for membership to the EU.

Much credence is given to the optimist view that integration into the European institutions and its values represents the best conflict management and development approach for the Western Balkans. The need for European integration stems from disillusionment with the failures of managing the violent process of Yugoslavian dissolution throughout the 1990s. Then the difficulties faced by post-conflict international peace building missions, particularly the ones to Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo. Empirical illustrations have been drawn from these two countries of the Former Yugoslavia. Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo, the most volatile states in the region, are taken as case studies. Then the focus is shifted to the regional development programmes and other conflict resolution options for overcoming the WB conflict and crisis.

The dissertations' effectiveness is measured by examining the factors that contributed to a tense situation in the region. It further identifies the key interventions, partnerships and agreements made between the Western Balkan countries, as well as explaining their successes and failures in order to open space for new operational options. The future of the Western Balkans within the EU body hangs in the balance; therefore it is important to find appropriate solutions for overcoming the crises.

The impact of this present work is related to sharing the ideas of relevant resources and analyzing the ethnic, financial, religious, political conflicts and crises in the region. The explanation is made by comparing those ideas to the author's. The aim is to present a possible solution to the WB countries' crises, in order to integrate them as a group in the EU Enlargement process. Moreover, this dissertation seeks to discuss evidence on the progression towards sustainability in the region, exploring the conflict resolution's terms and regional integration.

### **1.1.2. Methodology**

Both critical sources, as well as the primary sources are used. With critical sources, there is a focus on examining and comparing literature by different authors, whereas, primary sources are used as case studies. The paper will take one particular case study and analyse it in greater detail than others: the conflict of two countries of the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo against Serbia. The method of data collection has been varied;

critical sources, audio-visual sources, testimonials from the citizens of the relevant countries, as well as a testimonial from the representative for the Kosovo Embassy in the Czech Republic.

Regarding the time scale, this research paper represents the culmination of five months' work. At the beginning, in February, work was started, collecting data and information, finding the relevant literature, revising the agreements and reviewing the audio-visual resources related to the topic. The collection of primary sources and testimonials took place around a month later, in March. Writing took place in April and May, with revision in May and June. Supervision of the current work has been carried out by the dissertation advisor. The author has tried to include a vast amount of literary evidence based on comprising strategies, projects, information on various programmes and contextual material provided by a thorough search of paper and electronic journals, International Relations and Security Studies and other relevant sources.

## **1.2. DISSERTATION'S ORGANISATION**

The whole work is divided into four main chapters and conclusions. Chapter two (according to the table of contents) will introduce the historical and political background of the Western Balkans, including the creation and dissolution of Yugoslavia as a main factor. Chapter three will examine in detail the final moment of Yugoslavia and the Serbs attempts to keep the country together. Such different intentions aggravated the situation and generated other types of conflicts in the region. Two case studies are taken into consideration; the conflict of Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo with Serbia. The next chapter will introduce the external political approaches toward the Western Balkans. Major emphasis will be put on the Western approach as well as the European one. The old relations between the European Union and the Western Balkans gave birth to aspirations to join this large community. EU policies towards the WB are further described. These include the SAP as a new path to security, stability, increased prosperity, and reduced poverty for all peoples living in the region. This chapter will also present the current steps that the Western Balkan countries are taking to join the Union. Chapter five will explore EU requirements of cease-fire within the region in order to join the Union. Other possible solutions are emphasized as part of the exit strategies of the

regions' crises. Wallensteen's theory on conflict resolution is applied to the case of Kosovo. Furthermore, the theory itself will be viewed as the most promising and cost-effective way to resolve the problems of the Western Balkan countries. The chapter will provide conclusions and suggestions for better integration of the Western Balkans into the European Union, thereby enhancing the security, stability and prosperity of the entire region. It concludes with the final chapter of conclusions and summing up of the previous chapters.

## 2. THE WESTERN BALKANS HISTORY

In this chapter the reader will be introduced to some of the factors that influenced the West Balkan region and served as a source of conflicts within the area. The chapter is divided into three subchapters; each of them linked to the other in order to reach the final conclusion. There is also a highlighting of the main factors that have influenced the current conflicts and situations within the region. By reviewing the history, the reader will be able to distinguish between the various factors that had an impact on creating conflicts, the ethnic composition of Yugoslavia, as well as the process of creating such a state - from its conception, until its dissolution. In addition, the chapter is focused on the roots of the creation of such disputes, the impact the ethnic composition has, as well as how these factors affected the current clashes between the WB. This topic can, in fact, be explored from many different angles; from the historical background, through cultural diversity, ethnic composition and the creation of a new state, such as Yugoslavia.

### 2.1 ROOTS OF (WEST) BALKAN DISPUTES

Situated in South East Europe, the Balkan Peninsula<sup>6</sup> has been populated since approximately 5000 B.C and the oldest people of the region are the Greeks and the Albanians.<sup>7</sup> The area embraces the center of ancient Greek and Illyrian civilizations. Although there exists a bright view of the historical contest of the Balkan Peninsula, its Western side has always been a hot spot of bloody conflicts. The Balkan war, which dragged on for several years and involving Serbs, Croats, Bosnians and Albanians, is still an ongoing issue. The never ending conflict of the Western Balkans has sealed the fate of the thousands of people who lost their lives. Men, women and children were slaughtered, violated, injured and disfigured by terror and genocide; their homes were devastated. This long period of war can be considered as “memories that do not need to be remembered”. Since the disputes are ongoing there is a need to understand their genesis.

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<sup>6</sup> The term "Balkan" is a Turkish word for mountain that usually refers to countries south of the Sava and lower Danube rivers.

<sup>7</sup> Edwin, E. Jacques, *The Albanians, an Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, (1995): 4.

The history of the Western Balkans is strongly related to its geographic location, as a strategic point on the map. Location has been a political motivator for both foreign interference, and also for the states within the region to generate disputes amongst themselves. Foreign invaders and internal clashes define the history of the region. *Geographic proximity* as such, has given rise several disputes. “This ‘common fate’ breeds frustrations and rivalries between states”.<sup>8</sup> Another factor is *cultural diversity* which has created quarrels between countries. The Balkans has a very distinct culture from countries in other regions, manifested in village architecture, costumes and folk songs. A mosaic of the cultural themes also influenced the area.<sup>9</sup> The region, considered as a continental crossroads of the Eastern Hemisphere, thus had an impact on creating diversity. Each invasion has had a decisive effect on all aspects of Balkan civilization, especially on the ethnic composition among its Western population.<sup>10</sup>

*Religious approaches* can be considered as another key factor generating conflicts within the region. After the division of the Roman Empire, in 285 A.D., the major part of the Balkan Peninsula belonged to its Eastern side, - Byzantine Empire with Constantinople as its center.<sup>11</sup> For almost 10 decades, the Byzantine Empire was the most powerful political, military, cultural and religious force in the area. Similarly, after the split of the Christian churches, Constantinople became the capital of the Orthodox world and by that gained great influence over the Balkan people. It can be easily noted how religion was influenced as years have passed. The vast majority of the Albanians belong to the Islamic faith, as a result of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, many autochthonous Slavs in Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, consider themselves Muslims. Meanwhile, Churches of the Eastern Orthodox tradition dominate. They were organized on a national and autocephalous basis as the Albanian Orthodox Church, Macedonian Orthodox Church and Serbian Orthodox Church. The Christian Orthodox can be found amongst Serbs, Macedonians, Montenegrins and a part

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<sup>8</sup> Stuart A. Bremer, “Dangerous Dyads: Conditions affecting the likelihood of Interstate war, 1816-1965.” *JSTOR* (1992), 312

<sup>9</sup> Romans, Venetians, Crusaders, Tatars, Kumans, Turks, Magyars, and Germans, to name a few. See more: Leonard Demi. *European enlargement and the integration of the Western Balkans*, (PhD diss. Naval Postgraduate School. California 2003), 3.

<sup>10</sup> The barbarian invasions from the north were extremely destructive and the later years of Ottoman Empire brought a long period of stagnation in the development of the Balkan people. See more: Barbara Jelavich. *History of the Balkans: 20th Century*, (V.2. Cambridge University Press. 1993.), 80.

<sup>11</sup> Also known as the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. See more: Raymond E. Zickel, and Walter R. Iwaskiw, *Albania, a Country Study*, (1994): 82; and Bury, J. B. *History of the Later Roman Empire*, (1923), 268.

of the Albanians, whereas the Catholic Romans are mainly among Croats and only a small part of the Albanian people.<sup>12</sup> During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there was a shift from the Christian regime towards a Turkish Muslim influence, as a result of the Ottoman Empire occupation. For roughly 5 centuries, this was the most dominant religious force in the area, thus rivalling the Christian people who failed to unite against a common foe".<sup>13</sup> In such a way it can be said that the religious approaches from both the Byzantine Empire and from the Ottoman Empire influenced the Western Balkans, creating certain clashes among people with different beliefs.

*The Balkan Wars* have had the same impact provoking further conflicts, thus increasing tensions between people and states. Despite the Balkan crises, the need for its current borders was a priority.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the Balkan Wars re-shaped the map of Europe, by altering the geographical borders of its countries. The First Balkan War was launched against Turkey by the members of the Balkan League, on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1912. The Balkan League was the main centre of the Ottoman Empire, with the aim to gain back their full independence and territories.<sup>15</sup> It was the Treaty of London, signed by nine countries to end the First Balkan War which *reshaped the Balkan borders*.<sup>16</sup> On 16<sup>th</sup> June 1913 a new conflict started over the Balkans, thus opening space for another war. The belligerents of the Second Balkan War fighting were Bulgaria against their former allies, Greece and Serbia.<sup>17</sup> Romania and Turkey joined sides with the latter two. Bulgaria, isolated in those conditions, was

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<sup>12</sup> George Georgiades, Arnakis, "The role of the Religion on the Development of Balkan Nationalism" In the book *The Balkans in transition: Essays on the Development of the Balkan life and politics since the eighteenth century*. Edited by Jelavich, Ch., and Jelavich, B., (University of California Press, 1963), 115-144.

<sup>13</sup> Leonard Demi. *European enlargement and the integration of the Western Balkans*, (PhD diss. Naval Postgraduate School. California 2003), 4.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>15</sup> The Balkan League was formed in 1912, by Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia, aiming to take Macedonia away from Turkey. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the countries gain their independence from the Ottoman Rule, but still had a considerable part of their ethnic population under the Ottoman Empire. On 8<sup>th</sup> October 1912 the League of Balkans declared war toward Turkey – which lasted 7 months (8<sup>th</sup> October 1912 – 18<sup>th</sup> July 1913) and made the latter to collapse after an obsessed domination of 500 years in the Balkan. The Treaty of London (signed in 30<sup>th</sup> May 1913) was the one that obliged to cease the war by dealing with the territorial adjustments of the Balkans.

<sup>16</sup> Austro Hungary, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Serbia.

<sup>17</sup> Bulgaria was proclaiming that Greece and Serbia made a secret compromise regarding the division of Macedonia. Such attitude brought unpleasant reaction to Bulgaria which started attack the two countries. Greeks and Serbian Armies fight off, as well as Romania and Turkey, which joint the attacks against Bulgaria later on and defeating it.

‘forced’ to sign the loss of its territories, set by the Treaty of Bucharest. Therefore, the boundaries of the Balkans were reshaped again.<sup>18</sup> (Fig.2)

Despite the contradictory aims and policies of the Great Powers, the Albanians, Montenegrins and Serbians were able to establish their independence after the Balkan Wars. WWI brought about major changes in the political map of the Western Balkans. The map of central Europe and Western Balkans was redrawn into several smaller states. The League of Nations was formed in the hope of preventing another such conflict at the time, therefore contributing in a better way for establishing the peace and stability in the region. Despite the creation and the good intentions of the League of Nations, the conflicts within the region could not be drawn to a conclusion. Such *demographic changes* served as another reason for creating ethnic tensions. Changes in both the Western Balkans’ political arena and in its ethnic structure were reflected in the demographic changes, as well as the immigration of ethnic groups within the region.<sup>19</sup>

Ongoing instabilities, mostly in the Western Balkan region, obviously were due to *conflicting Austro Hungarian and Serbian ambitions over the control of Bosnia Herzegovina*. The assassination of the Austrian archduke Francis Ferdinand in Bosnia by a young Serbian revolutionist (28th June 1914), resulted in an Austrian declaration of war toward Serbia. At that time a network of interlocking military alliances throughout Europe was created, thus precipitating WWI.

The Western Balkans, moreover the countries of the former Yugoslavia had many dynamic ethnic relations. From the time it was born, FRY was considered a heterogeneous state, made up of a *variety of ethnic groups*. Numerous conflicts between all ethnic groups currently living in the territory are still ongoing. Serbia was the first country that decided to create a “dynasty” by bringing together groups of different ethnicity in one common territory and naming it Yugoslavia. They were not only the first to create the state, but also had the

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<sup>18</sup> The Treaty of Bucharest was signed by Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia (10<sup>th</sup> August 1914). Serbia, Greece, Romania and Turkey regained their territories, whereas Bulgaria lost those that had gained during the First Balkan War.

<sup>19</sup> There was the emigration of Serbs and Croatians from Bosnia Herzegovina, mainly into their ethnic homelands. Since WWII there has been a lot of emigration happening within the region. According to one count, the number of adults who had migrated into the republic or province, where they were presently residing, varied from 4% (in Kosovo) to 21% (in Vojvodina). See more, Sergej Flere, *Explaining Ethnic Antagonism in Yugoslavia*, (1991): 199.

largest number of employees in the administrative offices and leading positions. Serbians made their language the official language of this largely heterogenic country and thus dominated all other ethnicities. People started to immigrate and move into their own ethnic matrix.<sup>20</sup> This was a small but important step towards the ethnic homogenization of the territories, most of which remain ethnically diverse. It is evident that the motives and reasons behind the migration of people, was due to ethnic reason rather than economic ones.<sup>21</sup> Along with the diversity of the ethnic groups, *the ethnic violence* started to take place within the Federation. Ethnic violence is perceived differently among people, and so are its roots. Many scholars argue that ethnic cleansing derives from the collision of the cultures, and the need for one group to express superiority over another.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Hayden analyzes the constitutions of the heir republics to former Yugoslavia and demonstrates how these *nationalist ideologies*; try to build homogeneous nation-states in heterogeneous territories. Such ideology, related to the clashes within the ethnic groups is further analyzed in the following section. It is of great importance to better understand the ethnic diversity and their influence on creating conflicts within the region.

## 2.2. ETHNIS COMPOSITION OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) was a very heterogeneous country in terms of the standard economic, sociological and demographic indicators and had a population of 23 million people.<sup>23</sup> In this subchapter major emphasis is put on the ethnic composition in the Former Yugoslavia, linked with the internal relations between each of the entities comprising it. The Yugoslav conflicts are an interesting anomaly to be studied. But why study its ethnic groups? Analyzing conflicts generated by ethnic groups help us to understand their dynamics, the creation and influence of the ethnic ties and ultimately prevent any further conflict that might arise due to ethnic origins. Eventhough the ethnic related conflicts in FRY had

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<sup>20</sup> Thus, 55 % of Serbs and 64 % of Croats in the 1971-1981 period entered into their own ethnic matrix republics. (Ibid. 199)

<sup>21</sup> Slovenia is the only major exception of this model. The reason of their migration was inspired by the economic effect. The magnitude of this phenomenon cannot be accurately assessed but 200,000 would be a fair estimate. (Ibid. 200)

<sup>22</sup> Robert Hayden. *Imagined Communities and Real Victims: Self-Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia*. (1996): 783-801.

<sup>23</sup> They were all Slavs except for the Kosovars and for the majority of the population in Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

importance for many other European countries, scholars expected a greater degree of cooperation than actually occurred among these ethnic entities.<sup>24</sup> The roots of ethnic conflicts between different groups can often be found in their historical heritage. When analyzing ethnic groups, it is important to emphasize how people perceive the term “ethnic”. Then how did the diverse ethnicity affect the region’s stability? What were its consequences?

Multi-ethnicity, as one of the reasons of shaking the peace and stability within the Western Balkans, generated different types of conflicts. Such disputes were dominant during and especially after the Yugoslavia’s period. Under the assumption that Yugoslavs have always had disputes within each other, it is vital to understand the ethnic composition of its territory by exploring the heterogeneity in this region. From 1945 until 1991, Yugoslavia was a multinational state surrounded by many cultures and without being dominated by a single group. Several groups that composed Yugoslavia were ethnic minorities within the country as a whole.<sup>25</sup> Bosnia Herzegovina had a much more diverse population. Slovenia and Montenegro had the most homogeneous demographic population within Yugoslavia.

Nowadays, although some of the WB states are ethnically homogeneous, there are still important exceptions to note. Macedonia and Montenegro still have a considerable number of Albanian people and Kosovo is partly inhabited by Serbs. Most of the Balkan countries have a single language and religion. An exception to this can be seen in the case of Albanians in Macedonia, who struggle to use their native language as an official one, but rather are, forced to use the Macedonian language.<sup>26</sup> Although, describing the ethnic diversity of the WB helps us to understand the background of the region conflicts, it is also important to highlight what factors impact the rise of such heterogeneity? Later on, focus is put on internal marriages between ethnic groups in all but a few countries, as well as the perception of ‘the Yugoslav’ identity among the people of the region.

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen M. Saideman. *Explaining the International Relations of Secessionist Conflicts: Vulnerability versus Ethnic ties.* (1997), 723.

<sup>25</sup> E.g., Serbs in Serbia, Croats in Croatia, Montenegrins in Montenegro

<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Kosovars also speak Albanian, but Macedonians speak their own Slavik language. Meanwhile the Serbs, Croats, and Montenegrins all speak dialects of Serbo-Croatian. (George Georgiades, Arnakis, “The role of the Religion on the Development of Balkan Nationalism”. In the book *The Balkans in transition: Essays on the Development of the Balkan life and politics since the eighteenth century*. Edited by Jelavich, Ch., and Jelavich, B., (University of California Press, 1963), 119.

### 2.2.1. What influenced ethnic heterogeneity within FRY?

#### *Intermarriages within different ethnic groups*

From the early 1950s through the 1980s, the most common marriages among two different ethnicities throughout Yugoslavia were found in Bosnia Herzegovina. Those marriages were mostly between Serbs and Croats; and Serbs and Muslims. This explains why the marriages mainly occurred in Vojvodina, Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia, which were all places with the greatest intermixing of population. From 1953 to 1981, there was a decline of majority national groups in all the republics and provinces of Yugoslavia, thus the country was becoming heterogeneous, although this was not the case in the two autonomous provinces in Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo.<sup>27</sup> In Vojvodina, the ethnic “duel” was between Serbs, representing the majority, and Hungarians as the next largest group of the province. In Kosovo, the Albanians were those representing the majority of the population compared to Serbs.<sup>28</sup> Between 1981-91, the ethno-national heterogeneity within Yugoslavia increased among the countries of the union.<sup>29</sup> Although, there was a lot of importance placed on territorial concentration among ethnic groups, the number of inhabitants in the federal republics was still increasing. During this decade, there were high levels of heterogeneity in Montenegro, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Serbia, but the opposite occurred in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina.<sup>30</sup> One of the reasons of this increasing heterogeneity was directly linked to the rates of intermarriage between civilians of different ethnic groups within the region. The phenomenon of inter-marriages, can be seen as an effective tool in increasing assimilation and integration of social groups.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Other factors*

On the other hand, evidence of the increasing heterogeneity, can be related to the censuses of *recognizing individuals as ‘Yugoslavs’- instead of as Serbs, Croats, Muslims, or any other national group*. The ethnic distribution was spread out evenly throughout

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<sup>27</sup> Ruza Petrovic. *Migracije u Jugoslaviji i etnički aspekt prema kartama*. (1987): 48

<sup>28</sup> This can be viewed as a result of the birth rate in both provinces. In Vojvodina was an increasing of birth-rate by Serbs; and in Kosovo by Albanians. The emigration of Serbs from Kosovo played also a significant role.

<sup>29</sup> In Slovenia, the concentration of its population increased from 97.7 % of Slovenes residing in the country in 1981, to 99.3 % in 1991. (Ibid. 15)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Peter M. Blau. et al. *Heterogeneity and Intermarriage*. American Sociological Review. (1982): 45-61

Yugoslavia, but when it comes to population registration, most of them were recognized as Yugoslavs rather than their ethnical origins. Between the 1971 and 1981 censuses, the numbers of Yugoslavs increased sharply from 1.3 % to 5.4 % of the total population. As Burg and Berbaum point out that the younger people living in Yugoslavia in 1980 preferred to be recognized as Yugoslavs, which led some researchers to conclude that Yugoslavia was developing an increasing sense of community. The multinational community was greatly supported, thus prompting people to identify themselves as Yugoslavs.<sup>32</sup>

Some ethnic groups are obliged to live within a certain state, while others live between states. It is very important for ethnic groups to maintain and protect their human rights and even establish their own state rather than obey the territorial borders forced upon them by another country. It is often seen that by *remaining constrained* within territorial borders, the identity and ethnicity of a certain group vanishes and even disappears with time, a process that “unexpectedly” generates conflicts between ethnic groups. It is also essential to know if there is any *connection between ethnicity and inheritance*, and if so, how these influence the country’s political and socio-economic situations. People tend to be accepting of one another and are more together when inheritance plays a role among ethnic groups. As Rothschild states, there is a strong connection between the inherited ties within ethnic groups through race, kinship (clan), religion and language. The disputes are also related to *nature of ethnic identity*. Horowitz argues that ethnic identity, by its nature, creates loyalty, interest, and fear of extinction.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the members of ethnic groups are not only interested in how the other group members live and the everyday aspects of the life in the group, but they also show an interest in international boundaries.<sup>34</sup>

### 2.3. THE RISE AND FALL OF YUGOSLAVIA

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) has played a crucial role in writing Western Balkan history. The diverse ethnicity and the impact of the external political approaches influenced the country to create its own independent identity, and to be known as

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<sup>32</sup> Steven L. Burg, and Michael L. Berbaum. “Community, Integration and Stability in Multinational Yugoslavia.” *JSTOR*. (1989)

<sup>33</sup> Donald L. Horowitz. *Ethnic Groups in Conflicts*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2000), 80

<sup>34</sup> Stephen M. Saideman. *Explaining the International Relations of Secessionist Conflicts: Vulnerability versus Ethnic ties*. 1997.

Yugoslavia. In this section there is an analysis of the conditions under which this state came into being. The focus is also put on its dissolution, as well as how that this whole process impacted continuing conflicts within the region. (Fig.3.)

### *Timeline of creation and deterioration of Yugoslavia*

By the end of the Balkan Wars, Balkan countries had established their independence from the Ottoman Empire. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, several Balkan states remained independent,<sup>35</sup> whereas others were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>36</sup> Although many of these countries differ in economic and political ways, they had major cross-linked territorial interests. Serbia aimed to unite all South Slavic territories under the Serbian rule and at the time, it had the military potential and diplomatic support to challenge the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On 28 June 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, by a Serbian nationalist in Sarajevo was the proximate trigger of WWI. Yugoslavia was born as a result of WWI.<sup>37</sup> It resulted in a Habsburg ultimatum delivered to the Kingdom of Serbia.

WWI reduced Croatia's will and other southern Slavic politicians to unite their respective countries under the so called South Slav Unification. Knowing that the balance of power would shift and Serbians would dominate every level of government, these countries soon realized that this would not be in their best interest. After the defeat of the central powers in 1918, a new state was considered to be born - the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. From the beginning, this union was conversationally known as "*The Kingdom*" by the people inside its borders, and as "*Yugoslavia*" by the rest of Europe. With the proclamation of the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, there were no more separate countries. In 1928, King Alexander dissolved the Parliament, abolished the Constitution and introduced a personal dictatorship for the creation of a new dictatorial power, "*The Kingdom of Yugoslavia*".<sup>38</sup> The

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<sup>35</sup> Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

<sup>36</sup> The remaining areas of the so called South Slav, which comprised Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Dalmatia, Slovenia, Backa and the Banat, were still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

<sup>37</sup> In 1918, Yugoslavia was formed from Serbia, Montenegro, and the Habsburg south Slav lands. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes became "Yugoslavia" after a royal coup d'état in 1929. (Leonard Demi, 2003: 4)

<sup>38</sup> The idea of Yugoslavia was first suggested in Croatia in the 1830s by a movement who wanted all south Slavs to unify culturally and politically to defend themselves against aggressive Ottoman, German, Italian, and Hungarian nationalisms. It was then assumed that the culturally advanced Croatian city Zagreb would be the centre of this proposed state. The idea remained only a dream for almost a century, for there was no opportunity

formation of this new arrangement was triggered by the assassination of the leader of the Croatian Peasants Party (Stjepan Radic) and four other members of this party.

At the same time, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, prior to three constitutional nations, became Yugoslavs and were not registered separately.<sup>39</sup> There were the Western allies who created Yugoslavia from the fragments of the two empires they had vanquished. The Serbian Prince Alexander, who had sided with the war's victors, agreed to unite his territory with the former Habsburg lands with Belgrade as its capital.<sup>40</sup> It had a territory of about 248,000 square km and a population of about 12 million.<sup>41</sup> The Croats were thus disappointed by the new state which gained control of their funds and replaced their old Habsburg institutions with Serbian ones.<sup>42</sup> No efforts to integrate the old states through compromise were successful. No parliamentary coalitions could be created that transcended the concerns of national groups. The former Habsburg subjects resisted the dominant Serbs, sometimes violently.<sup>43</sup>

During WWII, the states of Yugoslavia were divided based on what dominant war forces preferred and became part of these powerful countries accordingly. The Kingdom of Croatia was the new name for Croatia, by annexing Bosnia Herzegovina and Syrmia. One part of Slovenia was taken by Italy and the other by Germany<sup>44</sup>. Kosovo and West Macedonia<sup>45</sup> were appended to Albania. In the meantime, Serbia, viewed as a political marionette, was territorially occupied by the Germans. During this period, there were many bloody battles that took place in the region. *The internal conflicts were generated from the hate of the ethnic groups* that would “be kept under control” by Tito’s severe dictatorship. His ability to manoeuvre and manipulate was related to his will to maintain a good reputation for

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to form a new Yugoslav state until the end of WWI, when the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires were both defeated and dismembered by the allied victors. See more: Christopher Bennet. *Yugoslavia’s Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences*. (New York University Press, 1995), 22-23.

<sup>39</sup> Macedonians were regarded as Serbs and Bosnians as Muslim Yugoslavs. See more: Ivan Illes. *The Internal Structure of Western Balkan Countries*. (2011): 74.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Bennet. *Yugoslavia’s Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences*. (New York University Press, 1995), 29.

<sup>41</sup> Mihailo Crnobrnja. *The Yugoslavia’s Drama. Second edition*. (1996): 51.

<sup>42</sup> Christopher Bennet. *Yugoslavia’s Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences*. (New York University Press, 1995), 35.

<sup>43</sup> Necak. D. “Historical Elements for Understanding the Yugoslav Question”, Payam Akhavan and Robert Howse, eds., The Brookings Institute, (1995): 23.

<sup>44</sup> Italy occupied south-western part of Slovenia and also some part of Dalmatia and Montenegro, whereas the North-eastern part of Slovenia, ex-Styrian and Corinthian territories were occupied by Germany.

<sup>45</sup> The other part of Macedonia was occupied by Bulgaria.

Yugoslavia throughout the world. Well-known scholars disagree about different aspects of Yugoslavia's creation. The genesis of the Federation is related to the nature of the interwar Kingdom, the number of victims during WWII, the role of key personalities such as Stjepan Radic, Nikola Pasic, Draza Mihailovic, Alojzije Stepinac, and Josip Broz Tito, as well as the experience of Communism.

After the Cold War, Yugoslavia had a “self-governing system” and cooperated with powerful industrial companies. Their official characterization was a self-governing social and political community, based on the power and self-management of the working class and all working people.<sup>46</sup> There were, in some ways, tiny states within the country, which performed a wide range of governmental tasks. They had little time, energy and money for their local administrative governing that needed to get done.<sup>47</sup> The local authorities were independent in ways of governing.<sup>48</sup> At the same time they were under the supervision and the strict control of the Communist party which would lead to the aggravation and the disintegration of the Yugoslav system.

With the end of WWII, a considerable number of previously occupied territories were given back to Yugoslavia. Tito – the leader of the Communist Partisans - triumphed over the whole period of internal disputes in the country. In 1946, with the union of Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia,<sup>49</sup> the so-called “6 People’s Republic” was established – the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1974, the power shifted from the centre to the local branches of government. This shift was accelerated by the signing of the Yugoslav constitution, on whose behalf the two Serb Autonomous Provinces could participate in the National State Council.<sup>50</sup> The ambitious Serbs politicians did not see these changes as an opportunity to improve the political arena. On the contrary, they were noticing the decrease of their power and influence in the region. Tito’s intervention sounds inconsistent. While he was seeking to reduce the power of Serbs, he also

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<sup>46</sup> Ivan Illes. *The Internal Structure of Western Balkan Countries*. (2011): 76.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 82.

<sup>48</sup> They would deal with all matters which the law did not assign directly to national or federal levels

<sup>49</sup> Serbia included the Autonomous Province of the Vojvodina and the Autonomous District of Kosovo (later an autonomous province also). Ibid, 75.

<sup>50</sup> The two Serb Autonomous Provinces were Kosovo and the Vojvodina

allowed many Serbs into the Parliament and a considerable number of them into the army.<sup>51</sup> Until his death in the 1980s, he held an “absolute force of personality” over the country.

After Tito’s death, there was an obvious political and economic decline in Yugoslavia. This was especially reflected by Kosovo, where the Albanians demanded the full independence of their province, which provoked anger, violence and bitterness between both parties. Slobodan Milosevic came into the power of the Serbian Socialist Alliance, in 1987. Milosevic used his nationalist sentiment mainly to gain support and strengthen his own power. During the time that he was elected President of Serbia, and in 1989, he started a campaign to withdraw the rights of the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina.<sup>52</sup>

The split between the Alliance of Yugoslav Communists came in 1990. In June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from Yugoslavia, which provoked the anger of Belgrade. During that same year Macedonia declared its independence, without armed conflicts.

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<sup>51</sup> Josep Broz Tito is well-known as a controversial figure in the Balkans.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 77.

### 3. THE LAST BREATH OF YUGOSLAVIA (1990 - 2000)

This chapter will be mainly focused on Serbia's attempts to keep the FRY united, although the chances were small. Other states of the Former Yugoslavia had to oppose this rampant desire. Such clashes generated other types of conflicts within the region. Considering the opposing stance from the countries of the region, inter-state and intra-state conflicts were created at the time. Despite the lack of international intervention to save Yugoslavia, they did not have power or force to stop its dissolution either. Nonetheless, several narratives have emerged since the breakup. Principally within Serbia a conspiracy was created by a self-seeking national group<sup>53</sup> and foreign powers,<sup>54</sup> for Yugoslavia's dissolution.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the degree of the deterioration was immense, causing the country further crises, especially in the Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo conflicts.

Slovenia's process of gaining independence progressed in a more peaceful way, as compared to Croatia, because of the ethnic homogeneity and the economic development in the country. Even though Slovenia was divided into two "harmonic" groups the fear of regionalism still existed.<sup>56</sup> This distress has deep roots from its history. Croatia faced a difficult time while declaring independence as its territories were inhabited by a majority Serb population. Milosevic stated that if Croatia declared independence, the territories inhabited by Serbs would need to move to Serbia. The rise of the Serbs anger was reflected by the attacks against the non-Serbs inhabitants living in other villages of Croatia. By doing this they were declaring the independence of the Republic of Serbian Krajina.<sup>57</sup> This step generated a terrifying fight between Croats and Serbian forces, which was followed by peacekeeping interventions.

Although, changes were made and the situation was improved between Serbs and Croats, there were still ongoing conflicts within other WB countries. However, it is crucial to define and classify conflict and crisis, as the key for devising any credible and effective

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<sup>53</sup> Such as the Slovenes and the Muslim fundamentalist.

<sup>54</sup> Most notably the US, Germany and the Vatikan

<sup>55</sup> There are no credible evidence to support these number of narratives. See more: Sabrina P. Ramet. *The dissolution of Yugoslavia*. Research team 2.

<sup>56</sup> Slovenia was divided by natives to the territory, namely Italians and Hungarians, on the one hand; and immigrants who enjoyed the same citizenship rights as the natives, on the other.

<sup>57</sup> Villages in Khin and Eastern and Western Slavonia.

multinational response. It is of important to highlight the concept of conflict. Conflict is commonly perceived as containing three basic varieties: intra-state, inter-state, and trans-state, and its differing formats and permutations will continue to challenge governments and multi-national institutions over the coming decade.<sup>58</sup> Focus is put on the inter-state conflict and Bosnia Herzegovina is taken as a case study. The conflicts in Bijeljina and the Srebrenica massacre are further analyzed.

### **3. 1. INTER-STATE CONFLICTS**

This part focuses on understanding inter-state conflict and particularly aims at questioning the factors of realist thinking, such as the balance of power, military capabilities, interdependence and other variables of importance when working on the international system. Inter-state conflict is often generated by civilians of the Western Balkan's neighbouring countries. Considering that location as a potential source of territorial disputes between states, this will lead to the region's militarization. These may include conflicts over the status of disputed territories and the treatment of ethnic kindred in which intrastate conflicts can pull neighbouring powers into the fray.<sup>59</sup> The best example of describing such conflict is applied in the case of Bosnia Herzegovina, a chaotic place of disputes. Prior to that, the attention was put on some of the sources that created conflict during and after the creation of Yugoslavia. Considering separation as the major one, such factors include the inter-ethnic hostility, FRY political implications, national political movements, the rise of nationalism, the perception of self-determination, as well as the failure of establishing a common identity which creates aggression and political violence.

#### *Factors of BiH disputes*

After the deterioration of Yugoslavia, some of the states started to change not only the political regimes but also their geographic borders. This disturbance separated Yugoslavia into smaller Republics and Provinces, causing Serbia to become a smaller and less powerful country. People living in Montenegro and Macedonia were not even of the same ethnicity, but

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<sup>58</sup> Janusz Bugajski. *Presentation for the 2011 Annual Security Review Conference Working Session II: Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation: lessons learned and way ahead.* (2011): 1.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

rather different ethnicities brought together during the era of Communism, in order to weaken the Serbs ethnic unity. Serbian loss of power was also linked to the lack of political representation on the state administration during Tito's period. These facts indicate why the Serbian attitude resulted in *inter-ethnic hostility* and a distrustful ideology within the region. Moreover, political forces had a direct impact on the geographic border of the FRY. It was a federal union made up of six states; Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia, and two "autonomous provinces" within the Republic of Serbia; Vojvodina and Kosovo. Five of the countries and the autonomous provinces of this League of Nations were governed by a major national group, except Bosnia Herzegovina. After 1989, a new phenomenon began to occur in the region, that of the *separate nationalist political movements*. Their crucial point was related to the misconception of the terms, "nation", "Republic" and "sovereignty" among the people. They were defined in states that were recognized as nation-states by their respective ethnic majorities. As a result, all the other citizens of the country that did not belong to the majority ethnic group could not be treated equally. The clue to this division lays in the concept of *sovereignty*.

Furthermore, the level of *nationalism* for each of the comprising states of Yugoslavia rose after the free elections of 1990. With the decline of the League of Communists, the nationalist motto for each of the countries was: "Serbia for Serbs, Croatia for Croats, Slovenia for Slovenes and Macedonia for Macedonians". Only Bosnia Herzegovina, made up of three ethnic nationalities, had a slightly lower percentage of each nationalist party, respectively a total of 80% of Muslims, Serbs and Croats nationalists. During the same elections, the Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia (ARFY) party earned a smaller percentage of votes than the "reformed" communists.<sup>60</sup> The main objective of the other victorious parties of the Federal states<sup>61</sup> was to attain their *de facto* state sovereignty. By disabling the state government, their scope was to create a true nation-state, based on the sovereignty of the majority national group. The *self-determination* process can also serve as a trigger to explain the attitude of the separate nationalist political movement. This term is often perceived differently among the Yugoslavs. In its political arena, it can frequently be confused with the

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<sup>60</sup>Even though ARFY objective stand for a civil state of equal citizens, they manage to get only 5.6 % of the vote-less than the 6.0 % received by the "reformed" communists (Ibid)

<sup>61</sup> Examples: Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia, leaving Bosnia Herzegovina out.

concept of the rights of a civil state of equal citizens. The Yugoslav Constitution of the 1974, in its first line emphasizes “*the right of every nation to self-determination, including the right to secession*”. It is politically important to highlight the group of people to whom the message is addressed. In this regard, the statement is not referring to citizens of “republics”, but rather to ethnic “nations”. According to Hayden, the Yugoslav “republics” do not have the right to secede, unless this division happens among the “nations”.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, for a group to mobilize, it first *needs a common identity*.<sup>63</sup> If the identity fails to coincide with territorial borders, as frequently happens, a conflict may arise within a nation-state.<sup>64</sup> What causes conflict among people is frustration. Aggression is a key term in theories of political violence and political conflict. Most of the extremely violent ethnic conflicts, such as the conflict in Bosnia, fall into this category.<sup>65</sup> As a result, any sort of ethnic political violence results from a particular mix of fear, interest, underlying conditions and misguided state politics.

Such factors influenced the feeling of nationalism among the Western Balkan people. This generated separation among different ethnic groups, which led to the disputes and chaos in the region. Bosnia Herzegovina is one case of this model of conflicts. Inter-state struggles are often driven by the desire for dominance.<sup>66</sup>

### **3.2.1. Case study: BiH Conflict**

Bosnia Herzegovina is still one of the most chaotic states of the former Yugoslavia. A new war provoked by Serbs began in April 1992. The country is inhabited by three nationalities, Serbs, Croats and South Slav Muslims “Bosnians” and each of them has had its own representative in the political arena since the parliamentary elections of the 1990.<sup>67</sup> The disputes in the country sharpened after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The declaration of independence from other Yugoslavia countries led BiH to face two options: to share the

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<sup>62</sup> In addition, “Nations” are recognized as having several republics. In addition, Yugoslavia was formed by several nations, not republics. (Hayden, 1996.)

<sup>63</sup> Gurr, 1994., and Tilly, 1978.

<sup>64</sup> Tanja Ellingsen. *Colorful Community or Ethnic Witches' Brew? Multiethnicity and Domestic Conflict during and after the Cold*. (2000): .228-249.

<sup>65</sup> Threats to group identity and demands for the subordination of other groups characterize ethnic secessionist and autonomist movements.

<sup>66</sup> Barbara F. Walter. *The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement*. 343.

<sup>67</sup> Ivan Illes. *The Internal Structure of Western Balkan Countries*. (2011): 78.

country between Croatia and Serbia or totally stay under Serbs domination.<sup>68</sup> It was hard and difficult to deal with the two options, as all the parties wanted to benefit rather than lose from what would remain of BiH. The anger and disagreement of the Bosnian majority would have increased if the country had to be divided between Croatia and Serbia. On the other hand, neither the Croats in Bosnia, nor the majority of the Bosnians, would be supportive of the second option. The solution leading to the least problems would be declaring independence.<sup>69</sup>

Declaring independence would cost Bosnia Herzegovina a war. The war was brought about by the gluttony of the Serbs, thereby Sarajevo was blockaded. After proclaiming the Serbian Republic of Bosnia as their state, the Serbs also wanted to expand the borders of their territory within the area. ‘Ethnic cleansing’ was the aim of both parties during the war, although the Serbs were dominant, as they had both powerful military equipment as well as influence on the public administration of the country.<sup>70</sup> The conflicting parties were Serbs against the Bosnians and Croats.<sup>71</sup> At that time, the United Nations intervened throughout a peacekeeping process. Although with good intention, UN intervention went unnoticed from both parties, as the war progressed. “At best, UN peacekeeping forces have been passive spectators to outrages in Bosnia Herzegovina. At worst, they have collaborated with it, as Dutch UN troops did in the fall of Srebrenica by helping the Bosnian Serbs separate the men of military age from the rest of the population”.<sup>72</sup> During 1994, after the unsuccessful intervention of the United Nations, the US and NATO were determined to attempt to keep the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina under control.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> A referendum was held in Bosnia Herzegovina by Serbs and at the same time boycotted by them – because even though 99% of the Serbs voted that Bosnia Herzegovina should have to stay in Yugoslavia, still 99% of Bosnians and Croats favored independence for the country.

<sup>69</sup> This option was not supported by Bosnian Serbs, since they wanted to join their Serbian countryman.

<sup>70</sup> Even though 37% of the public administration were Serbs Officers of Bosnian origins, they occupied more than 70 % of the country. See more: Ivan Illes. *The Internal Structure of Western Balkan Countries*. (2011): 79.

<sup>71</sup> Even though Bosnians and Croats were allies during the war, they had swerving interests regarding territory division. Hence the conflict was within the three ethnic groups in the country; although the internal gaps between Bosnians and Croats would be resettled only after February 1994.

<sup>72</sup> Edward N. Luttwak. *Give war a chance*. (1999): 38.

<sup>73</sup> The Bosnian Serb military bases were bombed many times by the NATO aircraft, whilst the Bosnian and Croat forces were equipped continually by the US.

### *Ethnic cleansing in Bijeljina – “Rule of terror”<sup>74</sup>*

One of the first samples of ethnic cleansing in BiH was that of Bijeljina. In early 1991-1992, Bijeljina was the center of the local Serb Autonomous Region, organized by the local Serb majority - SAO (Serbian Autonomous Oblasts on North Eastern Bosnia) - a self-proclaimed Serbian autonomous region<sup>75</sup> within today's Bosnia and Herzegovina. It existed between 1991 and 1992, when it became part of “Republika Srpska”. The main city of North-Eastern Bosnia was Bijeljina, therefore was one of the first places to be dragged into the war, being located at a key strategic location. It was the Serbs decision to proceed with the ethnic cleansing of the school in Bijeljina. Despite the request of the party, school officials disregarded these orders based on the belief that all students and teachers are equal regardless of their nationality. Moreover, on February 1994, Serbs started to forcefully introduce religion in schools. “There was not a problem for me, I learned what I had to learn, how to cross myself and 10 commandments of the Bible and I went to Church, but the priest’s behavior was not appropriate, he liked beating us.” - says a Bosnian Serb girl.<sup>76</sup>

“Twenty years have passed but we still haven’t moved on. It’s as we still live in the past and that is something that bothers me as an individual, though I’m not the only one. Every war lasts for a certain time, but now we have a lasting hopeless. On the other hand, I feel exceptionally well, because I’m alive and can admit that. I never thought I would survive the war”

This is the testimony of Lazar Manojlovic, a survivor of 1000 sleepless nights filled with terror, during the Bosnia Herzegovina war. The Serb Democratic Party demanded that schools should be segregated and the majority of them should be occupied by Serbs students only, and that only a minor number of Bosnians would remain in the city of Bijeljina.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>IWPR, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Twenty Years Later*. (2012) Retrieved on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://iwpr.net/focus/bosnia-20-years-later>

<sup>75</sup>Oblast

<sup>76</sup>Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2012, Bosnia and Herzegovina: 20 Years Later. “*The Righteous man*” on *Western Balkans*. Retrieved on April, 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://iwpr.net/focus/bosnia-20-years-later>

<sup>77</sup>Firstly the Serb Democratic Party decided that 10% of the Bosnians would stay within the territory – those of 60 years of age, but considering that still a large number of Bosnians, they took the decision of only 2% to remain in Bijeljina.

## *Srebrenica Massacre*

The Srebrenica Massacre refers to the July 1995 killing, during the Bosnian War, of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslims who were systematically murdered.<sup>78</sup>(Fig. 4.) The massacre took place in and around the town of Srebrenica in Bosnia Herzegovina, by units of Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) under the command of General Ratko Mladić. The UN Secretary-General described the mass murder as the worst crime on European soil since the WWII.<sup>79</sup>On 10 July 1995, Srebrenica, a UN safe area of Bosnia Herzegovina,<sup>80</sup> was attacked by the Bosnian Serb Army. As Walter states, in such cases there is “the need of a ‘strong guarantee’, from an outside state to send massive grounds forces to the beleaguered country”.<sup>81</sup> Ergo, the civilians were under the protection of Dutch forces. More than 20,000 civilians were found in difficulty in Srebrenica. The Bosnian government said that the Serbs should be pushed back to the Stone Age. A small contingent of Dutch troops was brought by the UN to protect the enclave though. Sarajevo continued talking with Srebrenica, believing that its civilians were killed by Serbs shells. The Bosnian Serbs had been attacking the Srebrenica enclave for 4 days, taking a land stake to the South and the Dutch UN peacekeeper had been driven out from this observation spot. At this point, Serbs continued to attack by bringing reinforcements. The UN saw this act as a clear threat to Srebrenica. It was a time when BiH politicians needed the UN to intervene and drive the Serbs back. In spite of the good will of the UN intervention, the credibility among the people and UN peacekeeping forces itself, became another big challenge to be resolved.

Eventhough the UN was fighting over the Bosnian Serbs, they could not stop the Serbian advance into Srebrenica. At the time when Serbs walked into the Bosnian city of Srebrenica, almost the entire population of the city fled to the Dutch UN base in Potocari. Mostly women, children and frail Srebrenica’s civilians were sent to the Bosnia Herzegovina

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<sup>78</sup>In July of 1995, two years after being designated a UN safe area, the Bosnian town of Srebrenica became the scene of the worst massacre in the Bosnian War. (CCN. 2005. Retrieved on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/675945.stm>)

<sup>79</sup> UN. Press Release. SG/SM/9993 *May we all learn and act on the lessons of Srebrenica*”, says Secretary - General, in message to Anniversary Ceremony. Retrieved on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/sgsm9993.doc.htm>

<sup>80</sup> It gave its name to a UN so-called safe area, which was intended as an enclave of safety set up to protect its civilians from the war. Retrieved on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/acjug/en/krs-aj040419e.pdf>

<sup>81</sup> Barbara F. Walter. *The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement*. 347.

government department for refugees. At the same time men from 12 to 77 were taken to interrogation rooms in the Serb camps. They were "suspected for war crimes". According to Commander Ratko Mladic, Muslims had to hand over their weapons to guarantee their lives and he visited the people to show military victory and publicity on the International arena. One of the most terrifying aspects of the war was the family separation. It is estimated that there were people missing from the deportation of women, children and the elderly and 15,000 Bosnian Muslim fighters attempted to escape from Srebrenica overnight and were shelled as they fled through the mountains. In the summer of 1995, after the Srebrenica conflict, a successful four days offensive called "*Operation Storm*" brought hope to the country.<sup>82</sup> The international community forced the Croatian president, - Franjo Tuđman;<sup>83</sup> and the Bosnian Parliamentary representative, Alija Izetbegović,<sup>84</sup> to step down and decide on the fate of the country by signing the Dayton Agreement, in 1995.

### **3.2. INTRA-STATE CONFLICTS**

Intra-state conflicts are affected by certain factors, such as deep political cleavages, economic distress and growing inequalities. In the worst case scenarios, such conflicts can erode the state's and government's legitimacy, lead to a breakdown of law and order, and bring conflicts among people. According to Bugajski, state weakness can spawn the creation of armed criminal gangs and armed vigilante groups, provoke internal ethnic conflicts, anti-immigrant pogroms, separatist movements, and significant refugee outflows. Such development also stimulates the growth of organized crime and smuggling operations transcending national borders.<sup>85</sup> Intra-state conflicts are present also within the WB countries, Kosovo and Serbia respectively. The ethnic violence, most of the time is affected by the weight of *nationalism*. Ergo, it is crucial to distinguish the aims and reasons of 'nationalist' patriots and how it is applied in this case study. For nationalists it is important, not only to maintain the boundaries between in-groups and out-groups, but also to approach, commit and

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<sup>82</sup> Operation Storm is the cryptonym word used to describe a large-scale military offense accomplished by CAF combined with the ARBH, to retake control of parts of Krajina region, which had been alleged by separatist ethnic Serbs, since early 1991. Retrieved in April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1996/Croatia.htm>

<sup>83</sup> Tuđman was the first President of Croatia, right after the country declared its independence from Yugoslavia.

<sup>84</sup> Izetbegović was the first President of Bosnia Herzegovina.

<sup>85</sup> Janusz Bugajski. *Presentation for the 2011 Annual Security Review Conference Working Session II: Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation: lessons learned and way ahead.* (2011): 1.

maintain the social and gender roles, especially those reflected in the family. According to studies, nationalism can discourage the unity and group solidarity among different populations in a region. There is often a misuse and misinterpretation of the terms nationalism and patriotism. *Patriotism*, known as the *national pride*, has no negative stigma towards out-groups. An individual can simultaneously have in-group pride and respect for out-groups.<sup>86</sup> Scholars claim that there are a wide range of aspects that directly strengthen or weaken inner group relations and the attitudes of the in-group towards the outside one. Peoples' behaviours and feelings towards those of a different ethnicity are often shaped from a lack of positive feelings,<sup>87</sup> prejudiced behaviours and stereotyping, and even from discrimination and aggression.<sup>88</sup>

### 3.2.1. Case Study: War in Kosovo

*What influenced the slow integration process in Kosovo?*

The Conference of Ambassadors in London held in 1913, left out half of the Albanian lands and its citizens, giving Serbia, Montenegro and Greece sovereignty over Kosovo, Plava, Gutsia and Thiameria (Çamëria). From that date on, many disputes have constantly happened in the region, especially between Serbs and the Albanian population of Kosovo. Between 1913 and 1941 about 300,000 Albanians were forced to leave their home. The same situation repeated itself between November 1994 and January 1995 when 25,000 were forced to leave their homes again.<sup>89</sup> The Kosovo crisis has been going on for a long time. It goes along with the creation of Yugoslavia, after the World War I, which was originally the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Despite how Yugoslavia was born – whether the 1<sup>st</sup> Yugoslavia (between WWI and WWII), or Yugoslavia that Tito created, or the 3<sup>rd</sup> Yugoslavia that emerged under the Milosevic – there was always a Kosovo question. For the Albanians living in Kosovo, their land was unjustly left outside of Albania's border, therefore, this people could never live in harmony as part of Yugoslavia. For the most part, Albanians suffered in a contemporary and historical sense.

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<sup>86</sup> Robert M. Kunovich. and Catherine Deitelbaum. Ethnic Conflict, Group Polarization, and Gender Attitudes in Croatia, *Journal of Marriage and Family. JSTOR.* (2004)

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Malcolm, N. *Kosovo: A Short History.* (London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998): 286

From 1945 until 1968 Kosovo was under Serbian repression and persecution. This was reflected even in the lack of the right to speak their language within the territory. Such a situation influenced the prevention of the Kosovars from being taught the Albanian language. The Albanians living in the territory of Southern Serbia, in the towns of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja respectively, have been disappointed since Yugoslav times. The genesis of the ethnic tension in this area started in 1946, when the Yugoslavian government took a decision to divide these three municipalities from Kosovo and attach them under the Serbian Republic jurisdiction. This decision provoked anger and a feeling of injustice among Albanians of Kosovo. Even during the time when Kosovo was granted autonomy in 1974, the status of these three towns did not change.

Due to the Prague Spring of 1968, there was a rise of the reconciliation spirit between the two countries. There were some faculties of Albanian language opening for the Albanians of Kosovo. Tito upgraded the status of Kosovo in 1974, but he did not make it a republic. People were disappointed and demonstrated. Even though Kosovo gained its first Constitution in 1974, *de facto* could have been recognized as “Republic of Kosovo”, *de jure* was still called the “Socialist Province of Kosovo”, due to the refusal of Serbs to recognize it as such. Although, the international community asked that Kosovo should be granted republic status, this did not happen.<sup>90</sup> The country’s educational, political and economic difficulties were obvious at the time.

Milosevic’s rise to power marked a tougher policy and the autonomy of the province was revoked in 1989. The situation was becoming tense between Milosevic and the Kosovars. Much pressure was put on the political, educational and infrastructure issues. Albanian leaders were told to resign; the Academy of Sciences in Kosovo to be abolished; the Albanian street names to be shifted to Serbian; and the Albanians to be fired from their occupational fields. Between 1990 and 1995, approximately 130,000 Albanians lost their posts, 20,000 were expelled from their homes and 200 people were violated, illegally detained, and 200 were killed.<sup>91</sup> By the first half of 1992 - during the period when the nationalist fire began to burn the former Yugoslavia, - the Albanians held an unofficial Referendum in which they voted to

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<sup>90</sup> John R. Lampe. *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a Country*, (Second Edition, 2000): 365-415.

<sup>91</sup> Ramet, S. *Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in Post-1989 Eastern Europe*. (Lanham and Oxford, Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 148-308.

get back the Presevo Valley in Kosovo. The claim of bringing the territory back was due to the fact that the Albanians living in Southern Serbia have the same cultural approaches, economical developments and speak the same language as those of Kosovo. Moreover they still maintain close relations. There are not so many Serbs in the area and nearly 70.000 Albanians live in the region.<sup>92</sup> This is another fact that makes Albanians of the territory feel frustrated by the conflicts often generated by Serbian minorities.

The same situation was repeated in the summer of 1998. Approximately 25,000 Kosovars fled the country as their houses, villages and crops were destroyed. The Serbs implemented a resettlement policy and Albanian property was simply confiscated. By late September 1998, Western anxieties about Serbs actions in Kosovo had reached their peak. As international diplomatic negotiations were unsuccessful, ethnic violence threatened to spill over. The West no longer accepted Serb claims of an internal matter and felt that it had no choice but to start Operation Allied Force on 24 March 1999.<sup>93</sup> Between 2000 and 2001 there was an “emergency plan” in the place, to intervene and ‘liberate’ the Presevo Valley rebaptised as “Eastern Kosovo”. The Liberation Army of Presevo-Medvedja-Bujanovac (LAPMB),<sup>94</sup> was seeking to create a ‘Greater Kosovo’ project by getting back the territory of Presevo Valley. (Fig. 5.)

Regarding the *economic relations* of the two countries, the situation is not that different. Even though Kosovo and Serbia become members of CEFTA in 2007,<sup>95</sup> the rules of the agreement donot seem to be set. There is still an asymmetrical relationship between sides; while Serbia is transporting its goods into Kosovo, doesn’t allow the latter’ goods to cross the borders of Serbia: thus is considered unequal and partial free trade. According to *demographic surveys*, there were different ethnic groups in Yugoslavia. Serbs had the most numerous ethnic group in the country (36.3 % of the entire population according to the 1981 census), but they

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<sup>92</sup> NIA. *Southern Serbia (Presevo Valley): The Second Kosovo?* Retrieved on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, from <http://www.preshevajone.com/southern-serbia-presevo-valley-the-second-kosovo/>

<sup>93</sup>Concluded on 10 June 1999.

<sup>94</sup> In the Albanian literature can be found as UCPMD “Ushtria Clirimtare e Presheves, Medvedjes dhe Bujanovacit”.

<sup>95</sup> CEFTA, a trade agreement between the non-EU countries, was initially signed by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. These countries are no longer members of the Agreement, since they joined the EU. From 2007, the other CEFTA member countries are Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia and UMNK on behalf of Kosovo. Croatia is also part of the Agreement, but will soon leave, as it is set to join the EU in 2013.

did not stand as the majority ethnic group all over the region.<sup>96</sup> According to Flere, the ethnic tension, as a result of demography was also generated from different *aspects of the political administration*. Furthermore, the *demographic changes* brought ethnic tension in Yugoslavia. The emigration of Serbs from Kosovo was making the area, regarded as the source of Serbian nationhood and statehood, almost empty of Serbs and populated by ethnic Albanians. The demographic change had a negative impact on the never-ending disputes between Kosovo and Serbia - and still does. The ongoing clashes, mostly caused by the political system in Serbia, prevented Kosovo from gaining autonomy at the time.

In 1999, almost 860 thousand of Kosovo Albanians were driven out of their land by the Serbian Armed Forces.<sup>97</sup> The coexistence between Albanians and Serbs in the Balkans has been extremely difficult. This is considered the largest refugee crisis, since WWII. Eric Margolist claims that “The bombing in March of 1999 marked a humanitarian catastrophe. There was seen as a product of a horrible revival of Nazi ideology within Serbia”. He claims that the Serbs greatly suffered during WWII, from the Nazi occupation; therefore they adapted the same racism policies against the Albanians, calling them sub-human and threatening to build more Mosques in Belgrade”.<sup>98</sup> However, independence from Serbia was declared on 17th February 2008.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the intervention by outside actors, and the role of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) have an impact for Kosovo to gain its independence. Although declaring independence, Kosovo seems to still have some pending issues with Serbia. The difficult coexistence between Albanians and Serbs seem to have deep roots. There are historical reasons explaining why the relations among both ethnicities have been difficult to maintain. As Serbs were invading different territories, they pushed the Albanians of their traditional homes up to the highlands and the mountains. This marked the beginning of the bloody conflicts. According to Mr. Albert Kuqi – the political representative of Kosovo

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<sup>96</sup> Serbians were in majority within the Republic of Serbia (66.4 %), but not within the province of Kosovo (only 13.2 % in 1981, and declining.(Flere, S., 1991. pp 183-193)

<sup>97</sup> According to an estimate by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, even before NATO’s bombing of Serbia, 200,000 Albanians had fled Kosovo. The fears of conflict started in 1998 between the KLA and SLA made Albanians civilians an easy target of biting, massacres and killings.

<sup>98</sup> Retrieved on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulPsNrMMZ3E>

<sup>99</sup> BBC Press Release. 2008. Retrieved on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7249034.stm>

Embassy in the Czech Republic, Serbs are constantly promoting tense situation in the North of Kosovo.<sup>100</sup> The city is considered a disintegrated part of Kosovo.

#### *The international position toward the conflict*

During the rise of the Balkan Nationalism Movements, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Albanian's very existence was put in danger. Serbia, which was having a great revival at the time, refueled ethnic tensions among the groups in the region. Support from the Great Powers and Russia assisted Serbs in breaking away and getting independence from the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the presence and the rights of Albanians in Kosovo were ignored by two major international conferences. In addition, the Serbian occupation of Kosovo was recognized by the Great Powers.<sup>101</sup> All these politics were devastating to the Albanians in the region. Although, through the centuries, Albanians have preserved their own unique language and culture, they adopted the religion of their occupiers.<sup>102</sup> Despite all the difficulties the West Balkan region has had, nowadays there are some positive things taking place. After Kosovo gained its independence, the path toward 'Europeanization' seemed closer. This will be achieved if the internal WB crisis is solved. Before reaching that step, it is highly important for the Western Balkans to grasp more of the external political approaches towards them and especially in Kosovo's case.

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<sup>100</sup> City is called Mitrovica and since the end of the Kosovo War of 1999 it has been inhabited by ethnic-Albanian majority in south and an ethnic-Serb majority in north. Its northern part is the *de facto* capital of Serbian-majority North Kosovo. Even though the other Serbians that are living within the territory of Kosovo have recognized the independence of the country and are satisfactorily integrated with the Kosovars, those living in the north are always provoking conflicts between the ethnic groups.

<sup>101</sup> This was purely manifested at the Treaty of London and the Conference in Bucharest in 1913, held soon after the defeat of the Turkish Army, during the First Balkan War.

<sup>102</sup> It is important to note that the Albanians were never unified by religion. While the majority of them are considered as Muslims and other parts of the population are Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox, Albanians are very tolerant and secular towards different beliefs and almost never have they used religion to express identity.

## 4. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO THE WESTERN BALKANS

This chapter is mostly focused on the WB's desire and efforts to join the Union. The aim of this chapter is to analyze external approaches toward the WB, especially in the time of turmoil. Even though the explanation is related to the Western approaches – the US, UN and NATO, - emphasis is placed mainly on the European Union model. The WB's aspiration has long been to join the EU, therefore it is considered important to analyze this process in more detail. Major focus is put on the previous and current relations between the Western Balkans and the EU, from the foundation of the EU to the present. This is necessary for evaluating whether the relation is optimal or not. Then the chapter continues exploring the interests of both sides in staying closer to each other. Moreover, reasons and relevant challenges that arise from this pair are further analyzed. The work is divided into four subchapters, starting with the West's approaches toward the Western Balkans; then focusing on the neutral Parties, such as UN and NATO approaches. Then, in the following section EU-WB relations are discussed. Grasping the historical context of their relations would help to understand better how they developed throughout time. All this is done for a particular reason, to test the possibilities of the WB joining the EU, if the conflicts of the region cease.

Gaining membership to the EU would happen through the implementation of different instruments. The main goal is to create a unified environment within the WB, cease-fire in certain areas as well as increasing the cooperation between countries. Questions are raised with the current EU approach toward the WB countries: What exactly is the EU asking from the WB to let them access the Union? Have the Copenhagen criteria already been fulfilled? Is the Stabilization and Integration process working? Are the countries living in peace with each other? What further options do they have to join the Union? What should they do?

### 4.1. THE US AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES PERSPECTIVE

After analyzing and going through the process of the rise and fall of the former Yugoslavia, it is necessary to understand the external approaches towards it. Its international relations have to be examined. Moreover, this is linked with how politics have influenced the

foreign policies of the West Balkan states during the transitional system of governing. The political interests of the Great Powers toward the Balkans have deep roots. Great Britain and Russia were the two prime adversaries that often played an important role in determining diplomatic relations with the region.<sup>103</sup> Great Britain feared that the fall of the Ottoman Empire would allow Russia to dominate the Balkan area, therefore tried to support the current Ottoman power and at the same time increased the national security reforms of its own administration.<sup>104</sup> In addition, other European states (i.e. Austria), discerned the increasing power of Russia, and joined Britain's side. France, at odds with Britain over other Mediterranean issues, took a pragmatic approach, changing its position in every crisis to meet the demands of its own interests.<sup>105</sup> On the contrary, Russia's position was to unreservedly help the Slavic people of the Balkans, thus increasing its own power by trying to make the Ottoman Empire weak and ineffective.<sup>106</sup>

Later on, the US gave support for the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia from its creation. After its dissolution, help was given to the countries which previously composed it. The US's support of Yugoslavia was due to an emergency intervention. During the war in Bosnia Herzegovina the territorial integrity of the country was an important concern for most of the conflict. Yugoslavia was quickly supported by Great Britain and France. They had previously experienced some separatism; therefore were in favour of a "divided Bosnia". On the other hand, Serbia was very sensitive to secession. Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia were not in favor of Yugoslavia breaking apart. Furthermore, they considered the most serious issue to be the seceding of the Albanian majority in Kosovo, the Hungarians living in Vojvodina and the Muslims in the Sandzak region of Serbia.<sup>107</sup> They were all considered as potential separatist movements representing a serious threat to the Serbian split. Likewise, given Croatia desire to maintain its territorial integrity, its effort to divide Bosnia was quite obvious. On the other hand, Russia backed Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs, despite its secessionist conflict in

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<sup>103</sup> Raymond E. Zickel and Walter R. Iwaskiw. *Albania, a Country Study* (1994): 17.

<sup>104</sup> Charles Jelavich. *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism, Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879-1886*, University of California Press. (1958): 28.

<sup>105</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics, Structural Causes and Military Effects*, Assidion-Wesley Publishing Company. (1979): 160-193.

<sup>106</sup> Charles Jelavich. *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism, Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879-1886*, University of California Press. (1958): 28.

<sup>107</sup> Stephan M. Saideman. *Explaining the International Relations of Secessionist Conflicts: Vulnerability versus Ethnic Ties*. (1997): 742.

Chechnya and potential ones elsewhere.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, if vulnerability to secession truly constrained states, the Yugoslav conflict would have been quite short, because few actors would have supported the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia, and the Croats in Bosnia.<sup>109</sup>

Throughout the ongoing conflicts in the region there was no longer any spirit of trust and co-existence within the Western Balkans. From the time Yugoslavia was dissolved, the international community's intervention was suspended. No one was offering a solution to the disputes at the time. Since the war in Kosovo, the Kosovars have developed a level of gratitude towards America and its citizens. Although NATO and the UN intervened in Kosovo, in 1999, its people strongly believe that America and its citizens have helped their country to overcome the hard times.<sup>110</sup> However, the supporting relations between Kosovo and the US are not at the same level as before. Since 2003, there has been a shift of the American interest from Kosovo to the Iraq War. The fact is not a concern for the Kosovar politicians and its people. They consider it as a "normalization of relations" rather than "America's loss of attention". The supportive role of the US in the Balkans was aimed at the creation of a democratic state. "Since the objective has been fulfilled, there is no longer any reason for the US international politics to focus and intervene in the Balkans" – claims Mr. Albert Kuqi. Moreover, there is no longer a strategic interest in its Western side. Although the US political arena has had an impact on the history of the Western Balkan events, the UN and NATO were also involved at a certain degree. To understand their approach toward the region is it important to examine their crucial role during the intervention in the Kosovo war.

## 4.2. NEUTRAL PARTIES (UN, NATO) PERSPECTIVE

The UN, NATO involvement in the WB conflicts starts from the time of Yugoslavia's dissolution. The involvement of the international organizations did not limit external support for the various secessionists.<sup>111</sup> Clearly, the UN arms embargo enforced by NATO decreased the amount of arms reaching Bosnia and Croatia, though arms continued to flow. The US

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 742.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 742.

<sup>110</sup> According to many testimonials and interviews made with Kosovo students living in the Czech Republic.

<sup>111</sup> Stephen M. Saideman. Saideman, Stephen, M. *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflict*. (Re-published by Columbia University Press in 2001): 146.

condoned arms transfers from Iran through Croatia to Bosnia despite its membership in both NATO and the UN Security Council. The arms embargo, however, impeded the United States because domestic actors wanted to give more assistance to the Bosnians. However, the international organizations supported certain separatists, by encouraging them to continue their fight or maintain their holdings. The introduction of UN peacekeepers into Croatia essentially ratified the Serb conquest of one-third of Croatia, which Croatia altered forcefully in August 1995.<sup>112</sup>

The UN role in the WB was extended at the time of intervention in Bosnia Herzegovina. The aim was to maintain a Bosnian regime separate from Yugoslavia, therefore UN forces were constantly providing food and medicine to guaranteed safe areas. According to Saideman this can be interpreted ‘as support for an existing state as it fought off separatists (the Serbs)’.<sup>113</sup> Although Russia’s support for the Bosnian Serbs was increased, the UN forces did the opposite. The latter did not want to expand their intervention forces in the region. The US and its allies were only able to use force once decision making was moved from the UN to NATO. In the summer of 1995 their aim was to cut Russia out of the loop. No international organization could develop a consistent policy during the crisis. The conflict has a complex nature due to the fact that groups were seeking to secede from seceding republics. Moreover, bargaining among member nations generated the policies of international organizations. Such behavior influenced the preferences and policies of other involved parties. Since none of the outside states had any intention of maintaining any commitment beyond a certain, often declared date, its military presence had no positive effect on the success of the negotiations.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, the conflict in Kosovo continued.

In 1999, the Western powers decided to intervene immediately in Kosovo. The year of 2000 was just after the Kosovo war and NATO’s intervention. Yet NATO, which did not know the terrain, needed an ally for land operations. That was the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).<sup>115</sup> At the time, the Serbian government fought back the KLA. This action led US-led

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>114</sup> Barbara F. Walter, *The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement*. 351.

<sup>115</sup> In Albanian literature the term can be found as “Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves” (UCK)

NATO to start a bombing campaign that would force out the Serbian forces from Kosovo.<sup>116</sup> In June 1999, the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo came to an end. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (UNSCR) placed the province of Kosovo under UN administration. As Walter argues, “the ultimate success of a ‘peace treaty’ seemed to rest on a third party desire to become involved after a treaty is signed”.<sup>117</sup> At the same time by the assignment of this resolution Serbia reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the former Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, the attempts of the Albanians in Kosovo for secession were constant. They reached their final goal in February 2008, when Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia. Kosovo is recognized by 91 UN-member states, including 22 out of 27 EU-member states. However, Serbia is still one of the countries that rejects recognizing Kosovo as an independent state. Therefore, this fact is still considered as a barrier for Serbia’s path to EU accession. On the other hand, 90 percent of Kosovar citizens would be in favour of their country having a NATO and EU membership. Since they do not fulfil the required potential membership standards, they cannot enjoy such a status. However, there is a positive trend, meaning that Kosovo might join the SAA soon and resolve its ‘pending conflict’ with Serbia.

### 4.3. THE EU-WESTERN BALKAN RELATIONS

The Western Balkan approaches toward the ‘Europeanization’ model started in the sixties and seventies. Even though the relationship between the FRY and some other countries out of the Federation was a ‘Soviet’ relation, the Western Balkans, did not have the same stance towards Europe.<sup>118</sup> Western Europe improved relations with Yugoslavia by offering economical support, opening employment positions and giving loans for the country’s developments. Between the seventies and eighties, there was a clear sign of strengthened cooperation between Yugoslavia and Europe.

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<sup>116</sup> Antonio R. Pucci et al. *An uneven playing field: European Enlargement, Inequality and Double Standards: the Case of Serbia*. (2010): 8.

<sup>117</sup> Barbara F. Walter. *The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement*. 351.

<sup>118</sup> Albania and the former Yugoslavia were both allies with the Soviet Union. Even though, FRY was still maintaining the ‘self-governing’ system of its socialist ideology, its relations with the western countries were expanded, whereas Albania almost removed itself from the European map.

### *The WB-EU historical context*

In 1970, FRY was attached to the European Economic Community (EEC) and resigned the agreement in 1973 for an extension of 5 years.<sup>119</sup> This agreement distinguished a bright time for Yugoslavia, as it marked an influx of loans from the West, a development in international trade, as well as the scientific and technical cooperation of the country with outsiders. During Tito's government, it was an impossibility to join the European alternative. Tito's main target was to lead the Non-Aligned countries, rather than approaching the West.<sup>120</sup> The Western Balkans relations with the West were therefore frozen. The next decade - between the eighties and nineties - can be characterized as a period of confusion for the Western Balkans. The fall of Yugoslavia and the continuous disputes within the region<sup>121</sup> reflected an interruption of the relations with foreign countries. In addition, even within the countries of the region, the lack of trust, cooperation and healthy relations were increased and seemed hard to re-establish.

Together with the internal factors of the Yugoslav conflicts, the European Union foreign policy also influenced the region, since 1991. The European Community (EC) intervention was meant to happen through a cease fire, but UN peacekeepers were sent in later on.<sup>122</sup> Their aim was to keep an eye on the dispute between Serbia – held Croatian territories – and the rest of Croatia.<sup>123</sup> Germany pushed for immediate recognition of Slovenia and Croatia after the fall of Yugoslavia in 1991. However, the EC members required discussion time. On December 17<sup>th</sup> 1991, they resolved the debate by making clear the conditions for the states that originated from Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. These conditions were threefold, namely: 1) Respect for human rights; 2) Guarantees for the ethnic groups as determined during the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe; 3) Respect for all boundaries.

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<sup>119</sup>Office for Official publications for the European Communities, 1979, Retrieved on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://aei.pitt.edu/8241/1/31735055282218\\_1.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/8241/1/31735055282218_1.pdf)

<sup>120</sup>Josip Broz Tito. *Tito and non-alignment: President Tito's addresses at conferences of non-aligned countries*, Beograd: Thought and Practice . 1079.

<sup>121</sup> Especially the war in Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo

<sup>122</sup> The EC became the European Union when the Maastricht Treaty was ratified in November 1993; thus the EC was the relevant actor until 1993, when the European Union replaced it. See more: Stephen M. Saideman. *Explaining the International Relations of Secessionist Conflicts: Vulnerability versus Ethnic ties.* (1997): 741.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

Furthermore, a specifically enacted EC commission was tasked with verifying whether Slovenia and Macedonia met those three criteria. Germany decided to act before the decision of the commission had arrived, by recognizing Slovenia and Croatia. The rest of the EC copied Germany's decision in January 1992. Macedonia was not recognized by the EC members due to Greek opposition. Then, focus shifted towards Bosnia Herzegovina as conflict arose. Two months later, in March 1992, a war started and continued until the Dayton Accords were signed late 1995.

#### **4.3.1. Re-establishing the EU-WB relations**

Shortly after the War, Europe displayed an interest in restoring the Western Balkans. The main reasons to intervene and restore the place were clear cut: a) to rebuild the old relations that the conflicting countries in the region previously had; and b) to transform the administrative and legal system of Western Balkans into a democratic European governing style. The reestablishment of the co-operational relations between the countries of the region led to the starting of a broader process by the European representatives. This was established by implementing various agreements, pacts and other related instruments. At this time the Dayton Treaty played a crucial role in re-establishing relations because the need for the cooperation and integration between and within the countries of the Western Balkans is strongly highlighted in its body.<sup>124</sup>

From the previous experiences with the Central and Eastern European countries, the EU was aware that the Western Balkans would ask for something in return. Their most coveted aspiration involved access to the European Union. In order to build a healthy and realistic bridge between the WB and the EU, the latter chose to go through several steps. The cornerstone of this relationship was the *Stabilization and Association Process*. The SAP was launched as an important tool to support the Dayton Treaty, as well as to enhance the EU perception of the Western Balkans. SAP dictated that the countries must meet the three Copenhagen criteria,<sup>125</sup> as well as create a political dialogue between each other.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia Herzegovina, Retrieved on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/icty/dayton/daytonframework.html>

<sup>125</sup> 1) Political stability and respecting human rights; 2) Functioning market economy and market forces within the Union; and 3) Proficiency to take on the obligation of membership. (EU. *European Union accession Criteria – Copenhagen criteria*. Retrieved on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from

## **Stabilization and Association Process (SAP)**

The Stabilization and Association Process, along with the Dayton Treaty, was launched at a meeting with EU Foreign Ministers in Cologne, June 1999. This process was built on the Association Agreement that the EU had with Central and Eastern Europe. The lasting peace and stability in South East Europe begin at the same time. This was put into practice through democratic principles and values.<sup>127</sup> Moreover, SAP's main objective was to establish cooperation and to build new avenues for free trade within the Western Balkan region. As it is also stated in the "General Framework Agreement" of the *Dayton Treaty*, the tools for a cooperation process would be a success if one of the following cases was fulfilled: a) The cease-fire process would begin; b) Free and fair election would be conducted; and c) The recognition of fundamental human rights and the regional Stabilization would have been achieved.<sup>128</sup> The SAP was another step that the European model introduced in the WB region in order to encourage the countries to cease their conflicts and make progress toward the European values by joining the Union.

## **The Conferences in Feira, Zagreb and Thessaloniki**

In a similar fashion, there were other major conferences held in other European countries to decide for the Western Balkans fate.<sup>129</sup> In 2000, the European Union started to broaden the path for the Western Balkans towards the Union. By organizing three major Conferences with the representatives of each country and European Commissioners – the first Conference was held in Portugal. Feira European Council labeled the WB countries as 'potential candidates', except for Milosevic's FRY.<sup>130</sup> This conference clearly stated that each country of the region was allowed to enter the process of the EU integration, in accordance with its own ability to fulfil the requirements. The EU considered that the most urgent assignment needed to be implemented by each country of the region.

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[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/glossary/acquisition\\_criteria\\_copenhagen\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/acquisition_criteria_copenhagen_en.htm)

<sup>126</sup> EU, Retrieved on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2012, from

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/enlargement/western\\_balkans/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/western_balkans/index_en.htm)

<sup>127</sup> Máire Braniff. *Integrating the Balkans: Conflict Resolution and the Impact of EU Expansion*. (2011): 76.

<sup>128</sup> The objectives set by Europe were attained by the implementation of the Dayton and Paris Peace Agreement (Source: The State Department, the Office of the Spokesman, 1995. Retrieved on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from

<http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/bosnsumm.html>

<sup>129</sup> Conferences were held in Feira (Portugal), Zagreb (Croatia) and Thessaloniki (Greece)

<sup>130</sup> Nathalia Tocci. *The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting Peace in the Backyard*. (2007): 90.

Another Conference was held in Zagreb and distinguished itself in two ways: 1) the launch of the differentiated appraise, which stated that the countries fulfilling the stated requirements earliest would have earlier access to the EU and 2) the launch of CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Democratization and Stabilization).<sup>131</sup> This was another EU support package for the Western Balkans during the six year programming period (2000-2006). In 2003, the third Conference was held in Thessaloniki, Greece. At that time the EU had high expectations to have the leading role in the Western Balkans due to the following reasons: a) the EU considered Greece to be a supporting tool for the region's countries and b) the US influence was decreasing as they shifted their attention from the Balkan region to the Iraq War in 2003.

Although much was expected from this meeting, the integration of the countries was a slow progress. Only Croatia and Macedonia were able to sign the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2001, the other WB countries did not. In order to make SAA easier to accept to the Western Balkans, a bilateral Agreement called 'EU partnership' was proposed by the EU. This Agreement redefined the terms of the approaches. They changed from 'differential' to 'regional' terms, meaning that each of the WB countries had to be treated as a homogenous group, fulfilling the same requirements, with no pre-determined deadline in order to access the EU. Even though it was decided to be an equal treatment, only the EU had the power to decide whether the prescribed tasks were sufficiently met by each country or not.

#### *Joining the EU - An aspiration to become true*

The WB aspiration for the EU integration made them struggle and work hard to make this become true. The question now is: How easy this process has been thus far and how long will it take the WB to complete the integration process? This seemed to be a very tempting aspiration from the beginning. However, the present commitment to unanimity to bring them into new ways of cooperation is to be questioned. Despite the continuous disputes, there is a tradition of regional unity based on different perspectives as well. This can be directly linked with the periods of foreign invasion and religious ties, in cooperation among the respective movements for national liberation and in the basic similarities of peasant societies under the

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<sup>131</sup> The countries that would fulfil the tasks later, would have to go through a slow process to entering the EU

impact of the winds of change.<sup>132</sup> In this view the European integration of Western Balkans will soon be a reality. Therefore, in order to evaluate the WB path toward the EU, it is important to explore the current EU approach on the one hand and the WB attitude and attempts to join the Union from the other. Are the Western Balkan countries respecting all the demands and criteria being set by the Union? Are the countries working together to overcome the difficulties and disputes of the past? Are they unified yet? If not, what has gone wrong and how to make the cooperation process soon happen? To give answers, in the next subchapter the current evaluations are examined and what may be expected from the future is discussed.

#### **4. 4. THE CURRENT EU APPROACH**

When analyzing the current EU approach, is it obvious that there is an inability to support the Western Balkan countries to successfully overcome the current tensions and root causes of conflicts. The situation is therefore left in the hands of the WB themselves to solve the issue. “Hence, the EU policies even contribute to the reinforcement of the region’s state of a ‘negative peace’ (defined solely as the absence of violence). This development becomes specifically evident in the EU approach of establishing good neighbouring relations between the prospective member states and the countries surrounding them.”<sup>133</sup>

For more than 50 years, the European Union has indicated wide integration while taking in new members. EU enlargement has played an important role in the development of European integration since its formation. Today's EU, with 27 Member States totals a population of close to 500 million people and provides its inhabitants a much safer, wealthier, and more influential body than the original European Economic Community of half century ago, with its 6 members and population of less than 200 million. In 2004, the EU administered the biggest enlargement to date by welcoming 10 countries, many of them from Central and Eastern Europe. 3 years later Romania and Bulgaria joined, which shifted the EU borders to

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<sup>132</sup> Campbell, J. C. *The Geopolitics of the Balkans*, Roberts, H. L.: *Politics in a Small State: the Balkan Example*, *The Balkans in Transition, Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*. (University of California Press, 1963), 417.

<sup>133</sup> Luteijn, G., and Mathias, K. “Disembedding conflicting identities in the Western Balkans. Conflict Sensitivity in the EU Integration Tools”, Edited by Nikola Lazinica. *Main challenges in the future of Western Balkans Integration to the EU-The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*”, 2011.

the Black Sea. Next to be considered, are the South-east European candidates: Croatia, the FYRM and Turkey, whilst there are potential candidates such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo. The Western Balkans has applied for the EU membership and is still working hard to achieve it. Despite the good will they have and the work that has been done to join the EU, there is still a long way to go. Before achieving the standards set by the EU, there is a prior need to, at least, end the conflicts within the region. The need for a “golden middle” is urgent.

#### *The EU- WB Engagement background*

The European Union has played an important role and has been an active partner with the Western Balkans since 1991. One important step that the WB countries achieved was signing the *Stabilization and Association Process*. This act is a key point for five countries; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and the Federal Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia. As previously mentioned, SAP offers stronger incentives to these five countries, but also requests more demanding political and economic conditions.

Albania takes an active part in the EU economic and fiscal surveillance report arrangements applying to potential candidate countries since 2006. The National Strategy for Development and Integration (2007-2013) represents the key strategic policy document of the Albanian Government outlining its long-term national development and EU integration objectives. The European Union is Albania's most important political partner, with participation in various political dialogue meetings at ministerial level since 2001. Sub-committee meetings were held in 2009 and 2010 and the first meeting of the Stabilization and Association Committee was held in March 2010. The first *European Partnership* with Albania was adopted by the Council in 2004. In February 2008 the Council adopted a new European partnership with Albania.<sup>134</sup>

Bosnia Herzegovina as another WB potential candidate country for the EU enlargement process signed the SAA and another important Trade related agreement followed in 2008. This gave the country's products the opportunity to expand, thus increasing its

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<sup>134</sup>EC. *Commission Opinion on Albania's application for membership of the European Union*. Retrieved in March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2010/package/al\\_opinion\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/al_opinion_2010_en.pdf)

exports to and imports from the EU. Since that year, when BiH also signed the visa liberation dialogue, thus establishing a new European partnership. The current BiH – EU engagements are based on the framework of the security and defense agreements, such as CFSP and ESDP. In addition, the resources sent to the country are still at considerable levels. The BiH-EU relations are strengthened, thus improving the security situation in the country.<sup>135</sup>

Croatia applied to become a member of the EU in 2004. The country has been part of the Stabilization and Association Process that includes cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and regional cooperation. Negotiations for Croatian admission with the Member States were conducted within the framework of establishing and developing the Union's criteria. Accession to the EU implies recognition of the rules, observance of which is indispensable to guarantee the effectiveness and unity of the law of the Union. The Commission's opinion on the application for accession to the European Union considers Croatia as a proper candidate that meets the political criteria. Moreover, the country is about to meet the economic and acquis criteria and to be ready for membership by 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2013. The country has reached a high level of preparedness for membership while promoting South-East European values. Croatia's accession confirms the EU's commitment to the European perspective of all the Western Balkan countries.<sup>136</sup>

Montenegro has made progress in fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, as well as the SAP policy. To a certain extent the country has secured a functioning market economy and has strengthened its infrastructure. There have been many other new reforms implemented that make Montenegro's path toward the EU more stable and secure. Although, there is the need that Montenegro meets some other key criteria, related to elections, an anti-corruption framework, public administration reforms, enhancement of the freedom of media, strengthening the fight against organized crime and the protection of human rights. The

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<sup>135</sup> EC Enlargement. *Bosnia and Herzegovina - Relations with the EU*. Retrieved on May 27<sup>th</sup> , 2012 from [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina/eu\\_bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina\\_relations\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/bosnia_and_herzegovina/eu_bosnia_and_herzegovina_relations_en.htm)

<sup>136</sup> EC. *Commission opinion on the application for accession to the European Union by the Republic of Croatia*. 2011. Retrieved on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2011/package/hr\\_opinion\\_2011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/hr_opinion_2011_en.pdf)

Commission observers claim that Montenegro is making progress, therefore has been granted the potential candidate country position.<sup>137</sup>

Serbia's relations with the EU have been developed since after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Serbia's membership to the SAP and SAA made the country build a positive track record on implementing the obligations imposed by the signed Agreements. The European partnership with Serbia made internal political dialogue commence. Agreements such as those of the energy sector, the environment, social policy, justice, freedom and security started to be implemented, thus securing a safer path toward the EU. Regarding the economic framework, Serbia participates in an economic dialogue with the Commission and the EU Member States and has been receiving EU financial assistance since 2011. The country operates within an economic framework set by the EU from the period 2007-2011, thus being part of the Innovative and Developed Economic Programme. However, the strengthening of the rule of law, democracy, and economy, caused the Commission to recommend that the Council should grant Serbia the status of candidate country. In addition, it should be considered that the progress will have been completely achieved when "Serbia re-engages in the dialogue with Kosovo and is moving swiftly to the implementation in good faith of agreements reached to date."<sup>138</sup>

#### *WB current steps to join the Union*

At present, the EU faces several challenges related to its economic system. The current financial struggles that Greece, Portugal and Spain are facing show a weakness of the Confederation, but still this does not prohibit the Western Balkans from aspiring to Union membership. This aspiration is still considered an important goal for its nations. Regardless of the European crisis that is happening, the Western Balkans have to go through regional integration and take measures to share the Union's common values and principles, freedom of movement and goods, respect of human rights, religions, and cultures. The current situation of the WB countries shows us that attempts have been made to access the Union. Albania is

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<sup>137</sup>EC. *Commission Opinion on Montenegro's application for membership of the European Union*. Retrieved on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2010/package/mn\\_opinion\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/mn_opinion_2010_en.pdf)

<sup>138</sup>Commission Opinion on Serbia's application for membership of the European Union. Retrieved on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://www.media.srbija.gov.rs/medeng/documents/european\\_commission-opinion\\_en.pdf](http://www.media.srbija.gov.rs/medeng/documents/european_commission-opinion_en.pdf)

working hard at fulfilling the criteria to gain access to the EU. Croatia is scheduled to become the EU's 28th member next year, and "Macedonia is campaigning for an invitation this spring."<sup>139</sup> Serbia is revelling in its newly-won status as an EU candidate, while Kosovo, independent for only four years, is only starting the process.

The European Parliament's reporter on visa liberalization for the Western Balkans, Tanja Fajon states: "The countries of Western Balkan are part of Europe, they have always been and they will always be. Challenges of the 21st century are global challenges and no single and small country can face them alone. We need to be strong as Europeans. Only a strong European Union can be a strong and credible player in the international scene."<sup>140</sup> Croatia's success in having been granted access into the Union next year is an important step and brings our attention to the fact that the Western Balkans do respect European values, despite the crises the latter faces. Considering the fact that the WB themselves still have a latent crisis to solve, it is important to find a resolution, in order to extend the borders and become member of the EU family. The Balkans' EU accession is needed as a part of the overall success of Europe to establish itself as a viable and powerful global factor in the world of today and tomorrow. European integration is the greatest political economic and social success in the history of Europe.' – states Fajon<sup>141</sup>.

Despite the integration instruments that are implemented in the region, there has been little progress. Thus, the arguments can extend to every system and field, starting from the failure of the regional cooperation agreements and instruments, the emotional temperament of the Balkan people, their perception of the ethnic identity overlapped with nationalism, political, social and cultural fields. It seems that the factors are so deeply rooted in the way the Western Balkans are governed today, that one can include almost everything when judging the continuing ongoing disputes.

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<sup>139</sup> SETimes.com. Pekusic, B. et al., *Eye on the prize: Balkan countries still committed to EU membership*. Retrieved on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from

[http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2012/03/09/feature-01](http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2012/03/09/feature-01)

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

### *What could have been done differently in the past?*

The ‘historical wound’ would have been healed long ago if the EU had influenced those who generated the conflicts in the region in time.<sup>142</sup> This is directly related to the latent conflict in Bosnia Herzegovina; and the half latent conflict in Kosovo. As the attention is mostly put on the semi-latent Kosovo’s conflict, in 1989 Milosevic had the supreme right of the Kosovo Constitution. At the same time he sanctioned inhuman treatment, committing genocide and driving the Albanians of Kosovo toward the mountains and outside the country. Even after 20 years, ongoing ethnic conflicts have tortured the people of the region, decreased their hope, turned them into repressed people and moreover made them apathetic. Diplomatic relations would have been repaired a long ago, if the EU had politically intervened in the former Yugoslavia in 1989. Moreover, at that time, there was a blossoming of Yugoslavia’s economy; therefore the path toward the EU would have been easier and successful. The situation of the Western Balkans nowadays would have been different. On the one hand, they wouldn’t have had to strive so hard to have peace and stability in their region and would have easily become an integral part of the Union. Therefore it is of great importance to predict the future of the WB and to find possible conflict resolutions.

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<sup>142</sup> For example over Milosevic and other Yugoslav dominant political figures

## 5. THE WESTERN BALKANS' FUTURE

European integration is the most common term used within the context of EU enlargement. This process is related to the fulfilment of the main two ideas for peace and prosperity in the Western Balkans. Their ethno-political contravention management can have a long lasting and positive outcome and serve as a necessary condition for stabilization. Nowadays, the WB is considered a “region in transition” – therefore it is of great importance to build the confidence between the conflicted parties and encourage multiethnic co-existence between them to ensure the transition is successful.<sup>143</sup> The focus is put on the factors that effected the Western Balkans disintegration within the EU structures. What might have had an impact on their stagnation?

This chapter focuses on the factors that prohibit the Western Balkans path toward the EU. Analyzing them will assist in identifying potential solutions to overcome the factors which have prohibited the path towards EU membership. Later on the challenges of the European integration strategy are analysed. Its origins lie from the failures of the various instruments, implemented by the European Union after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and then with the difficulties faced by post-conflict international peace building missions, particularly the ones in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. The previous and current conflicts in the Western Balkans are of an old fashioned nature: territorial in nature. Such disputes no longer exist between EU countries and are not even considered as issues. Therefore it is necessary to circumvent the problem of territorial possession and to instead promote cooperation among countries within this region.

### 5.1. THE EU OPTION: THE WESTERN BALKANS INTEGRATION

Despite the ongoing conflicts within the region, the lack of the European institutions' intervention when Yugoslavia began to break up had a long lasting effect on the Western Balkans crises. In the early 1990s, the European institutions did not think that the enlargement of the region would have had a stabilizing impact on the region which could have ceased the armed conflicts. The enlargement step was only considered important during and after the war

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<sup>143</sup> Roberto Belloni. *European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects, and Limits*. (University of Trento, 2009): 4.

in Kosovo, in 1999. The European Union saw the enlargement as a valuable tool to bring about political change, and responded with the creation of the Stability Pact and the perspective of full integration of South East Europe (SEE) into Europe.<sup>144</sup>

### **5.1.1. Analogy: “The marathon that needs to be overcome”**

The Western Balkans marathon toward the EU has already started and the participating countries are aware that they have to face many difficulties. In other words, in order to reach the ‘finish line’ – equivalent to the ‘EU membership’ - there is a need to go through the whole training process and make sure the rules are followed. One can parallel the entire EU integration process with a *marathon*. Applying this metaphor, helps us to better understand the process. An inspiring marathon quote says "The person who starts the race is not the same person who finishes it". This quote can be seen as a good example that reflects the same way that countries progress, from the beginning until they reach the end. In addition, the WB has to make their attitude change, by cooperating and achieving a cease-fire with each other. Only through this can the countries reach their goal. Moreover, this would lead to secure a prestigious place in the final step of the EU membership.

The whole EU integration process is similar to that of running a marathon. The actors are the runners, the time keeper and the arbitrator, whose role is evaluating the whole process. Translated into the Western Balkans case, they are the ones that have to run this virtual marathon, face and try to cross many obstacles from the revulsion (the narrow roads) and to have all the necessary tools to reach the finish line, the coveted goal of the “EU Membership”. This process is guided, followed and evaluated by the European Community, in this case serving both as a time keeper and arbitrator. In the middle, it might seem that the difficulties increase and those states that get tired - in other words haven't been able to train and prepare adequately - don't have enough energy to reach the finish. The EU, from the other side, is constantly playing the role of the one that evaluates the time for all the potential candidates to earn the Union's membership. Even though the winner is tired at the end, he still gets rewarded. In the case of the WB, in order to reach the finish line, it is important to be motivated and have outstandingly powerful values and potential. The motivation is related to the fulfilment of the conditions, through regional cooperation and creating innovative system

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<sup>144</sup> Lykke Friis and Anna Murphy, *Turbo-Charged Negotiations:’ the EU and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe*, (Journal of European Public Policy, 7(5), 2000): 767-786.

tools. As Bill Buffun states: "The marathon is not really about the marathon, it's about the shared struggle. And it's not only the marathon, but the training", - the necessity for the Western Balkans is agreeing on further cooperation between each other and preparing stability programs that can bring progress to their region.

### **5.1.2. Why access the EU?**

The reasons why the Western Balkan countries want to be part of the Union are related to the benefits they would gain from this accession. Accessing the community might serve as a 'demographic challenge', as a start to 'fix' the borders of the Union's map. It would complement it. If we carefully notice the current Union member's map, the WB location can be considered as a 'hole in it'. In a similar fashion, Illes claims that "WB, despite its stretch of coastline, its littoral, is considered as a 'hole' in Europe when compared to the surrounding territory of the European Union".<sup>145</sup> But, still the Western Balkans is struggling to undertake joint action and become part of the EU integration. Their primary issue is to become part of the EU enlargement soon.<sup>146</sup> Becoming part of the EU would bring stability and produce welfare for the region. Small countries, by accessing the Union, would have tremendous benefits.<sup>147</sup> In contrast, big countries have the 'responsibility' to invest more and take care of other powerless Union's members.

Gaining EU membership means a certificate of the Western Balkans credit rating and security for investors. The Serbian Minister of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning, Oliver Dulic said: "Joining the Union brings the inflow of foreign investment and EU funds, as a great benefit to less developed countries like Serbia". From a more optimistic point of view, it can be said that the EU image will give the Western Balkans a better chance to be recognized in the international arena, as well as stabilize its internal politics. The EU can offer major financial support for a weak economic system. More financial and political support

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<sup>145</sup> Ivan Illes. Illes, *The Western Balkans and European Union Accession*. 103.

<sup>146</sup> Even though the Western Balkans are considered a tiny area, – as they contain 5.3 percent of the European area defined and 4.9 percent of its population, – still the 7 countries are part of a vivid historical background. Although, their integration in the EU is affected by long lasting consequences from various wars the region had.

<sup>147</sup> Small are also considered the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Croatia is expected to gain its Union membership by 2013.

would stop the crisis by increasing incomes and strengthening the monetary system as well as opening space for a common economic market and high quality products within that market.

There are more reasons to access the EU. The opportunities would be greater and more doors opened. Membership is important because it will increase the mobility of the youth, such as more opportunities to study abroad and attend educational programs throughout Europe. There would no longer be limits on mobility and there would be a wider and much more accessible labor market. The Western Balkans still maintain a high level of unemployment. "Entry into the EU would mean opening the market for investment by foreign companies and will open new jobs, as a direct policy of our country. Also, that would mean opening an opportunity for Macedonian exports to conquer markets in Europe and in other countries," as a Macedonian student claims.<sup>148</sup> Most of the Western Balkan countries are in a transitional period of building their social systems. The necessity of strengthening the capacity of institutions is high and only by accessing the Union would the high expectation of achieving a considerable degree of standardization become possible. The European funds would help improve the quality of the institutions and the administration. Despite the current economic crises the EU is facing, it still remains the most powerful supra national organization. The Balkan countries want to approach the EU as they see the stability and the security the EU offers the continent and its members, therefore it is of great importance: no matter how strong economically or politically the country is, it needs to be part of the EU. This is the great aspiration that all the countries have in general.

### **5.1.3. EU Enlargement – Challenges for both sides**

In the event that the Western Balkan countries integrate into the EU structures, the latter has to finance this whole enlargement process. In the current economic crisis in Europe, could the EU afford such economic investment? Does the EU have enough financial stability to incorporate other countries within its body? On the other hand, the EU would also benefit from having an influence in the Balkans. Thus, the region has to be open for other innovative approaches and support them.

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<sup>148</sup>SETimes.com, Pekusic, B. et al., Retrieved on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2012/03/09/feature-01](http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2012/03/09/feature-01)

### *WB challenges of joining the EU*

In the previous chapters the author has gone through the history and analyzed the conflicts of the WB. By doing so it has become obvious that WB's path towards Union accession is not as easy as is alleged. The ongoing conflicts still represent a major challenge to entering the Union. In order to enlarge the EU boundaries with the group of the Western Balkans, it is highly recommended that the latter respect and strengthen the EU's listed requirements, especially those related to the Regional Approaches. This is directly related to ending the regional conflicts (such as Kosovo-Serbia), and cooperating with each other in a regional fashion.

Such developments are of a great importance and until now they have partly been implemented through conventions and agencies. To name but a few: the Dayton Treaty, SAP and SAA – mentioned in the previous chapter - had in their core the prosperity and stability of the region. Although they tried to implement such a vision, it was not possible to completely apply it in practice. The Western Balkans conflict sensitive approach is still affecting the integration process toward Europeanization. It is important to find a solution of how to stop those disputes and create a stable and constructive environment within the region. The only sustainable way to reach positive stability is by making the cooperation between the Western Balkans works. On the other hand, securing peace in the region will highly reflect on the EU capabilities to maintain its original role as the head of the political institution for security in Europe. By welcoming unstable member states in the Union, the EU legitimacy for securing peace and stability would vanish.<sup>149</sup> This is strongly related to the will of the Western Balkans. How many sacrifices are they willing to make for their integration? Another big challenge of accessing the EU is related to its economic requirements. A current Union member produces high quantity and quality products, and imports them into other countries with no barrier. The Western Balkans wouldn't be able to maintain production of the same quantity and quality. Truly they are not distinguished as innovative centers and can be defeated anytime. It is not impossible for them to work hard on inventing ideas, technology and methods to compete with the big Union countries.

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<sup>149</sup> Luteijn, G., Mathias, K. "Disembedding conflicting identities in the Western Balkans. Conflict Sensitivity in the EU Integration Tools". Edited by Nikola Lazinica. *Main challenges in the future of Western Balkans Integration to the EU-The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. 2011.

## 5.2. EXIT STARTEGIES

The previous as well as current conflicts in the Western Balkans help to facilitate a constructive debate on how to prevent, manage and resolve these crises. Moreover, they are essential in understanding their social and political dynamics, which often can lead to post-conflicts rehabilitation and eventually EU integration.<sup>150</sup> The latter can provide a peaceful future, based not simply on mutual agreement, but rather on high economic prosperity. Then, why is it so difficult to find a consensus? In this subchapter the reader will be introduced to some of the potential integration policies that can facilitate the WB path toward the EU.

### 5.2.1. Serbia stepping back

So far the international arena has made some political intervention to Serbia in the way of finding the solution for the problems this country has with Kosovo. The Commission, along with the fulfilment of the Copenhagen European Council criteria of 1993 and the conditions of the Stabilization and Association process, has also highlighted the importance of ceasing the disputes and recommended negotiations between parties. There is a priority to accomplish this in order that Serbia's progress will be achieved. The European Commission therefore made recommendations for Serbian diplomats to work hard on establishing cooperation dialogue between the two countries and stabilizing the current situation. This would be accomplished by normalizing the tense situation that exists in Mitrovica. Through dialogue and cooperation, options for Serbia to join the Union would be more numerous. In the Commission's Opinion on Serbia's application for membership to the European Union report it is clearly stated:<sup>151</sup>

“Further steps to normalize relations with Kosovo in line with the conditions of the Stabilization and Association Process by: fully respecting the principles of inclusive regional cooperation; fully respecting the provisions of the Energy Community Treaty; finding solutions for telecommunications and mutual acceptance of diplomas; by continuing to implement in good faith all agreements reached; and by cooperating actively with EULEX in order for it to exercise its functions in all parts of Kosovo.”

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<sup>150</sup> Ivan Illes. *Annual Security Review Conference 2011 Working session II: Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation: lessons learned and way ahead.*

<sup>151</sup> EC. *Commission Opinion on Serbia's application for membership of the European Union.* Retrieved on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://www.media.srbija.gov.rs/medeng/documents/european\\_commission-opinion\\_en.pdf](http://www.media.srbija.gov.rs/medeng/documents/european_commission-opinion_en.pdf)

There is a great concern in case the conflict does not come to an end soon. In case international courts do not take action in time to resolve the disputes within the region, there exists the risk of another potential war in the Balkans. The reaction of the Balkans towards such injustices and never ending conflicts will be reflected in their increased feelings of impatience and anger. Moreover it will make them further proceed in an unorganized manner. This leads us to a great concern, not only for the neighbouring countries and people, but also for other external countries. If there is not any international political intervention, to assign 'MUST' tasks for each of the WB countries, the Balkan's temperamental dark side can be awakened, and another potential bloody war would be re-started in the region. The need for cooperation and discussion around the table above all the hot topics, - from all parties, - is a necessity for the Balkans.

### **5.2.2. The cooperation code for a good neighbourhood**

The Western Balkans has to devote special and continued attention to strengthen regional multilateral relations. Such options can be materialized in the proceedings of several initiatives and regional organizations. These initiatives can be developed through the engagement of a) creating new relations for good neighbourliness, b) establishing security and stability in the region, c) the draw of political support for project financing in priority domains of national and regional development.<sup>152</sup> The goal should be the promotion of cohabitation and relations of good neighbourliness in the region through the confirmation of the active and moderate role of the countries' foreign policies.

Albert Kuqi, the representative of The Kosovo Embassy in the Czech Republic, states that one of the options to solve the conflict between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, is the so-called "*cooperation code for a good neighbourhood*". Here two questions immediately arise: 1) would the international political arena have enough influential force towards Serbia to accept Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo as completely independent countries? Would Serbia step back from prohibiting the integration of the two countries to access the EU? And 2) can

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<sup>152</sup>MFA. *Albania and Regional Cooperation*. Retrieved on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://www.mfa.gov.al/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7197%3Ashqiperia-dhe-nismat-rajonale&catid=80%3Ashqiperia-dhe-nismat-rajonale&Itemid=65&lang=en](http://www.mfa.gov.al/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7197%3Ashqiperia-dhe-nismat-rajonale&catid=80%3Ashqiperia-dhe-nismat-rajonale&Itemid=65&lang=en)

the ‘redefinition of terms’ be considered as another option of conflict resolution?<sup>153</sup> This question is answered by Wallensteen’s theory further detailed below.

### **5.2.3. Wallensteen theory – (Horse trading and peace agreement)**

Finding a solution for a certain conflict is always hard but they are never solvable.<sup>154</sup> That is not an idealistic perspective, but a realistic one. It might require time, energy, political constraints, but at least there might be considerable options taking place to solve the disputes within the Western Balkans as well. In addition, given enough will from the conflicting pair and doors will open to finding solutions, although as Wallensteen argues “once a conflict has developed into a war, the options are fewer”. Many factors such as ethnic diversity, the external role of international organizations, democratization, the spread of free market mechanisms, concern for human rights, etc. are mentioned in the analysis. In the case of Kosovo, it can be said that war was an outcome of conflict between two states, Kosovo and Serbia, thus confirming Wallensteen’s approach on war, claiming that a war needs at least two members of the international system.<sup>155</sup>

The total number of ongoing Western Balkans conflicts is of an unprecedented amount. In spite of great efforts at conflict resolution, it appears that for each conflict solved between the warring parties, a new one emerges which requires the same means and standard operating procedures to solve the conflict. If an agreement cannot be reached among them, it is even more difficult for enemies to develop a shared agreement on the future of their interaction. According to Wallensteen, a peace agreement is a “particular result in a process that began before the agreement was signed and continues after the ink has dried”.

Globally the extent and sheer number of WB conflicts currently happening is staggering. Despite international efforts to resolve conflicts there seems to be no long term solution i.e. for every conflict solved a new one emerges. This leads to a vicious cycle of going over the same procedures and improvisation by the international community. A peace

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<sup>153</sup> Although maintaining the existing boundaries might be a formidable challenge for the Western Balkans, this can be seen as an option to end their conflicts. By confining the territories into a new fashion of negotiations, possibilities of ceasing the fire within the region, would necessarily be higher. Therefore, the integration into the EU structures as a group of countries would also be increased.

<sup>154</sup> Peter Wallenteen. *Understanding Conflict Resolution - War, Peace and the Global System*”, (2002): 29.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

agreement cannot be sustained if the stakeholders do not commit to it and if victors cannot agree among themselves then it is no surprise that enemies will develop a shared idea of the future of their interaction. Ideally a peace agreement is a process that has begun before the formation of the document and continues long after the ink has dried. Western Balkan conflicts may end.

## DISSERTATION'S CONCLUSION

This master's dissertation tried to trace the history of South-eastern Europe, and especially focusing on the West Balkan region across the twenty first century. The analysis was mostly focused on the process of the conflicts consequences and the factors that have deep roots. Major emphasis was put of analyzing the factors that served as a trigger for the conflict and crises in the West Balkan region. The historical context, the Balkan wars, diverse ethnicity, religious and cultural approaches were explored the most. The external factors have also have an impact on the development of Balkans turmoil. After analyzing and taking into consideration the factors, another goal was to evaluate whether the conflicts of the region have ceased or are ongoing. The reason for answering that question is strongly related to the old Balkan aspiration to gain access to the EU. This is the second most important thing that has been analyzed in this dissertation. The EU-Western Balkan relations have been analysed in detail. The implementation of certain agreement within the WB countries, have been evaluated, in order to test the progress that the region is making toward the path of the EU. Exit strategies on how to overcome the ongoing conflicts, especially the one in Kosovo, are introduced in the form of suggestion and recommendation, consulting various sources.

The Balkan states differ from one another by language, population, culture as well as religion. There are many similarities, but differences between the Western Balkan countries are present simultaneously. Over time, the Balkan people have developed significant ways to measure diversity amongst one another. The Western Balkans is a region of great heterogeneity regarding economic organization, ethnic composition, religious affiliation, class structure and influences stemming from sources of Eastern and Western civilizations. Such influences represented a very heterogeneous WB region in terms of the standard economic, sociological and demographic indicators. Yugoslavia had a population of 23 million people and they were almost all Slavs.

After WWII, reconciliation between states was established by bringing the states closer together economically and by taking away trade barriers. The former inter-state conflicts lines were therefore, to a large extent, overlapping with the "lines" of EU integration. However, recent conflicts in the Balkans have different conflict lines stemming from the fact

that religious and ethnic groups used to live together in the Yugoslav republics. By going over the Western Balkans history, the roots of the disputes that influenced the region were explained. The WB geographic location, diverse cultural influences, the religious division as well as other factors influenced the ongoing conflict of the region. Some other major factors were also related with the WB ethnic diversity. Such factors indicated the Western Balkans fate and served as a source of conflicts within the area. After distinguishing their genesis the focus was put on the creation of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. Its creation brought dissatisfaction among different countries that composed it. Therefore, the new desire for gaining independence generated other conflicts within Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia's deterioration inflamed other angry nationalist sentiments amongst Serbs and the other parts of the Federation. Serbs desired to keep the Federation united, whereas the Slovens, Corats, Bosnians and Kosovars, wanted to have their own independent countries.

The case studies highlighted the ongoing crisis in the Western Balkan region. Although Yugoslavia started to deteriorate, this fact was not accepted by the Serbs. The declaration of independence by some of the FRY countries inspired the others to continue in the same way. In contrast, the Serbian government and civilians were strongly opposed to this movement. It was at a time when the conflicts and crises continued to worsen in certain states of the region. The countries that had the worse experience from Yugoslavia's dissolution were Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo. Both countries were chosen as case studies to describe the nature of the inter-state and intra-state conflicts within the region. Having the objective of presenting a set of facts on how these conflicts degrade to the worse level, the goal was set to find some of the factors that effected the region's instability. Much attention was put on the semi-latent conflict in Kosovo. *Kosovo's conflict* has been a topic for the International Community for several years. The coexistence between Albanians and Serb has been extremely difficult. Since World War II, anger, fear and terror rose along with the largest refugee crisis and the hostility between Serbs and Albanians. The reasons that led to such a tense situation have deep roots related to the division of borders in 1913 at the Conference of Ambassador in London, then with the demographic changes within the former Yugoslavia. In such conditions, an important role is played by the international political arena. Outside factors such as the EU, the UN and the US have contributed to ending the conflict, managing the aftermath and establishing a democratic and stable government. The International

Community's intervention on humanitarian grounds raised the issue of Kosovo to the most debated level in diplomatic history. Particularly due to the role played by the KLA and especially its cooperation with NATO, Kosovo was declared an independent country in February 2008.

External forces influenced the region as well. By the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a feeling of nationalism that was prevailing and influencing the Balkans. Although the process of gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire was slow, the region was still a target for external political forces. Because of the strategic location and the conflicting political interests of the Great Powers, the Balkan Peninsula was a constant mess. The situation of the unresolved disputes generated many other types of contravention in the region: civil wars, inter-state and intra-state conflicts. The international relation role in the Balkans gained importance at the same time. From 1815 until 1914, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, countries of the Balkan Peninsula were concerned about their fate. In the entire WB conflict, the international political arena has reacted toward them at times in support and at others not.

The current Western Balkans obstacle shave arisen as a result of several factors. Identifying their economic state, along with political orientation prior to these times of difficulty, plays a major role in the outcome of these conflicts. Furthermore, Western Balkan conflicts are not simply region related; they should be seen in a much broader content. More often the Western decision makers solve one conflict by initiating a new one. In this chapter the focus is initially put on the historical content of the Western Balkans and their inner relations. This created division between the nations of the region, thus generating tense regional political cooperation and an unstable environment for the Western Balkans.

However, the threat that links the whole region and creates such conflicts within it is the lack of regional cooperation. While many factors contribute to the reluctance of WB countries position, it is obvious that they are scattered among their countries and people. There is a repetitive pattern that goes along with every perspective or viewpoint when approaching this region and that is lack of regional cooperative behaviour. Moreover, cooperation is perceived as the fundamental factor as it affects the whole background for a left-behind contemporary Western Balkans. An important step that the Western Balkans has

taken in signing the Stabilization and Association Process, offers to the (potential) countries, stronger incentives and also places more demanding political and economic conditions. The Western Balkans should continue its efforts to ensure that regional cooperation is effectively respected throughout the region and that there is no limitation to the exercise of ethnic rights based on geographic criteria. In order to develop a closer relationship with the EU, these countries will have to strengthen their political, economic and institutional development to the values and models underpinning the European Union.

We now expect that the Western Balkans, like the current 27 EU members, meets all criteria and is making progress. The region's countries need to be in the right position to adopt, implement reforms, end the conflicts and fulfil the EU standards. The main key is the political criteria, justice is essential and regional cooperation is above everything and important for all Western Balkan citizens. The issue of cooperation between the diverse ethnic groups in the region is the main factor which Western Balkans needs to work on. The integration of those countries into the EU will bring a lot of benefits to the region as well as negative things. An important thing to be achieved is further development in the regional sphere. Sitting at a round table would be an option to help the WB crisis. The role of the politicians and diplomats would help to mobilize the government to govern in a fair and democratic way for further cooperation and development of the region itself. In this regard, the European Commission is ready to help the Western Balkans as potential candidates to achieve these reforms. In addition, it would need the help of each respective government to achieve regional development. The EU membership perspective encourages further reforms and offers the Western Balkans the prospect of joining the world's largest political and economic union. Conclusion of the disputes, strengthening the institutional and administrative areas and introducing innovative ideas are the key requirements for accessing the EU.

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## APPENDICES



Fig. 1. Map of the Western Balkans<sup>156</sup>



Fig. 2. Map of Balkan War Boundaries - Treaty of London & Bucharest

(Source: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Intercourse and Education<sup>157</sup>)

<sup>156</sup> Sources: BBC news, CIA Factbook



Fig.3. The creation and disintegration of the Former Yugoslav Republic <sup>158</sup>



Fig. 4.Timeline: Siege of Srebrenica<sup>159</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Boundaries on the Balkans after the First and the Second Balkan War, 1912-1913. Map from "Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars", 1914:70, Published by the Endowment Washington, D.C.

<sup>158</sup> Source: BBC.[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), Retrieved on June 1<sup>st</sup> , 2012 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4997380.stm>

<sup>159</sup> Source CNN. Retrieved on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/675945.stm>



Fig. 5. Kosovo Conflict (the map of Kosovo and the three cities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja)

## ABSTRACT

The Western Balkans is a region where democracy is seen as the end result of conflicts and fights. Such conflicts have been a defining characteristic of the region since World War One. Then, with the creation and subsequent break up of the former Yugoslavia, the intensity of disputes increased, whilst the Democratic system become ever increasingly brittle. The continuing antagonism between the Western Balkan countries, present even today (to a diminished extent), have deep roots based on different historical backgrounds, foreign influences, the diverse religious faiths and divergent cultural approaches. Furthermore, the disputes that have arisen are mainly due to the variety of the ethnicities and the resulting differences in perspective of people within the region. The Western Balkans has always been considered as a place with a strategical geographic location – this location affecting foreign policy approaches toward the region. The impartial role that the Western Balkans played with the great powers, made them independent in a way, allowing them to create a protective crust, which isolated them from the rest of the world. This has been evidenced by the slow process of stabilising the region which still has internal territorial issues and ongoing disputes. Nowadays, more concern should be put on how these wartime decades connect and influence each other and what impact they had to the post war transitions, finding their main features. The Master's Dissertation not only discusses the destructive ethnic nationalism and ongoing crises in the region, but also analyses if the conflicts have been overcome and seek for perspectives of possible conflict resolution. This would impact the Western Balkans development and their path to the European Union.

**Key words:** The Western Balkans, Former Yugoslavia, ethnic tensions, ethnic diversity, access in the EU, conflict resolution, Bosnia Herzegovina conflict, Balkan Wars, War in Kosovo, Serbia, the European Union, violence, dispute, ethnic composition, crises, inter-ethnic hostility, nationalism, demographic changes, multi-ethnicity, factors of disputes, terror.

## ABSTRAKT

Západní Balkán je region, kde je demokracie vnímána jako výsledek ukončení konfliktů a bojů. Tyto konflikty byly definující charakteristikou tohoto regionu už od konce první světové války. Poté, s vytvořením a rozpadem bývalé Jugoslávie, se intenzita konfliktů zvýšila, zatímce demokratický systém se stával čím dál křehčím. Pokračující antagonismus mezi západobalkánskými státy, který je přítomný (v nižší míře) dodnes, má hluboké kořeny v historii, zahraničních vlivech, různých náboženstvích a rozdílných kulturních přístupech. Navíc, hlavním důvodem sporů, které tu i nadále vznikají, jsou různé etnika a následné rozdíly mezi lidmi v tomto regionu. Západní Balkán byl vždy považován za místo se strategickým zeměpisným umístěním, které mělo vliv na zahraniční politiky vůči tomuto regionu. Nestranná role, kterou Západní Balkán hrál ve vztahu k velmocem ho učinila svým způsobem nezávislým a umožnila mu vytvořit si ochranou skořápku, která ho izolovala od zbytku světa. Toto dokazuje i pomalý proces stabilizace tohoto regionu, který má i nadále vnitřní teritoriální otázky a probíhající spory. V současné době by mělo být více pozornosti přikládáno tomu, co tyto válečné dekády spojuje a jak se vzájemně ovlivňují a také tomu, jaký vliv mají na poválečné změny, a zároveň nalezení jejich hlavních charakteristik. Tato diplomová práce nejen projednává ničivý nacionalismus a současná krize v tomto regionu, ale také analyzuje otázku, jestli tyto konflikty už byly ukončeny a hledá perspektivy jejich možných řešení. Toto by ovlivnilo rozvoj Západního Balkánu a jeho cestu do Evropské unie.

**Klíčová slova:** Západní Balkán, bývalá Jugoslávie, etnická napětí, etnická různorodost, vstup do EU, řešení konfliktů, konflikt Bosny a Hercegoviny, balkánské války, válka v Kosovu, Evropská unie, násilí, spor, etnické složení, krize, etnická nesnášenlivost, nacionalismus, demografické změny, mnohonásobná etnická příslušnost, faktory sporů, teror.