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# State, Society, and Globalization in the Balkans:

## Problems of Democratic Consolidation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia

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## State, Society, and Globalization in the Balkans:

### Problems of Democratic Consolidation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia

By Arnaud Kurze

**Abstract:** *This paper analyzes three explanatory variables—statehood, sociopolitical processes, and regional politics—that affect democratic consolidation in four Balkan countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and Serbia. The paper confirms the state-centric hypothesis that weak state structures slow down the democratization process and that nationalism, as an indicator of “stateness”, fosters ethnic democracies, reproducing instability and insecurity. Yet, it also underlines the importance of globalization and transnational politics for democratic institutionalization. It argues that regional actors, such as the European Union (EU) and other adjacent states, are crucial factors that impede—as well as generate—successful transition to democracy.*

#### INTRODUCTION

After devastating ethnic conflicts during the 1990s in the Balkans, democratic transition processes have produced a wide range of results in states that were part of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Cases such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)<sup>1</sup>, and Serbia for instance, contrast sharply with Croatia or Slovenia.<sup>2</sup> The latter fit into the general prognostics of democratization theory models when looking at their transition and state consolidation patterns. The former—despite visible progress in economic development and democratic political institutions—have transition and consolidation difficulties. This begs the question of why do the first four cases still struggle with their transition processes?

To explain these nuances cogently, the current theory canon has to be utilized differently. The state is—in spite of the globalization discourse—deeply rooted in the social structures (Mann, 2000 and 1994 and Evans, 1997). The independence proclamation of several Balkan states in the 1990s and recently of Kosovo demonstrate that sovereign nation-states are not out-of-fashion, but still en vogue. However, in “transitional democracies”, state structures highly differ from Weber’s defining elements

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<sup>1</sup> Although the name dispute between Greece and FYROM persists, an increasing number of states refer to the country by its constitutional name the Republic of Macedonia, rather than by the above temporary name under which a UN resolution recognized it officially in 1993.

<sup>2</sup> An indicator hereof is the accession to the European Union (EU). Slovenia joined during the 2004 enlargement round and Croatia—currently a candidate country in negotiations with the EU—has better statistical records than Bulgaria and Romania, which became members in 2007.

of a modern state (1918).<sup>3</sup> Instead, “states in society” are subject to fragmented and contentious authority, contended by different groups and actors (Migdal, 2001). More precisely, a heterogeneous society and a nationalistic discourse have led to the “balkanization” that still affects political processes in the region. Nationalism, contrary to early nationalist movements in Europe during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century—which were constituent of state formation processes—had an adverse effect during 1990s in the Balkans. State formation and nationalism did not occur concomitantly, leading to devastating consequences (Linz and Stepan, 1996). One of the questions this paper explores are the reasons why this is the case. Historical analysis and studies that focus on state-society relations, causes of ethnic conflict, and violence are helpful to situate the four cases—BiH, Kosovo, FYROM, and Serbia—in a larger context within the Balkans (Cohen, 1995, Gligorov, 1994, Bokovoy et al., 1997).

Additionally, however, globalization processes, such as waning national borders and progressive interconnectedness of political, economic, and social spaces, have impacted democratic transitions. Current interim state structures of entities like BiH, for instance, demonstrate how international and regional actors affect statehood. Although many policymakers, diplomats and democratization experts still insist on state sovereignty and governmentability concepts as ultimately attainable goals in transition processes, practice on the ground shows that involved actors increasingly rely on new elaborate and dynamic modes of governance, not only for economic regulation, but also in the security sector (Krahmann 2003a). As a result, “complex networks of state and non-state actors can be understood in terms of an emerging shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’” (Ibid 2003b, 5-6). Despite the transformation of the unit of analysis, this emerging phenomenon should be understood as a process and should be looked at as such, rather than creating separate categories for each of the actors and their respective *modi operandi*.

Yet, paradigmatic shifts in the art of governing society are not a recent phenomenon, but occurred throughout history. To cast Krahmann’s governance model into a broader socio-theoretical scheme, it is useful to briefly look at some of Michel Foucault’s work of the late 1970s. Analyzing security, territory and population, he introduced the term ‘governmentality,’ in order to stress the change from an early concept government in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Europe based on virtuous principles to an art of governing founded on specific tasks within the state (2009, 364-5). While the former relies on morals, virtues and common skills, the latter focuses on the rationality of the state and its *raison d’être*. This specialization process is accompanied by a hand-in-hand evolution of political knowledge and technology. In other words, technological progress allows not only for more sophisticated control mechanisms, but also legitimizes regulation via a public scientific discourse. In spite of recent globalizing trends, governments have sought to keep control over territory and populations. The creation of trading zone bolstered by respective regulations or immigration policies in Europe are some examples, for which the power-knowledge concept and multi-level governance theories constitute useful explanatory frameworks.

Suffice it to say that all the above conditions call for a transnational, sociopolitical and state-centric analysis in order to elucidate the intertwined combination of various

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<sup>3</sup> The newly created democracies are yet to consolidate their institutional structures, political processes, and emerging economies.

factors that affect domestic politics in these cases. This paper relies on a focused case comparison method of the four aforementioned Balkan countries in order to analyze and discuss explanatory variables that affect democratic consolidation processes. The cases were chosen according to the *Most Similar Systems Design* (George, 1979). They are all “ethnic democracies” with minority groups within their territorial boundaries, have similar economic development, and are part of the same geographical area. The principal difference consist of BiH’s tri-partite polity and semi-autonomous state status—still under the tutelage of the UN—compared to FRYROM and Serbia, which are sovereign nations. Kosovo, having declared its independence on February 17, 2008, is currently recognized by only a little over 50 states.

Three variables are crucial to understand the problematic at hand. First, statehood and “stateness”<sup>4</sup>, which are important variables for the analysis, as all selected countries have state structures or at least strive to create them. The state-centric concept, however, is loosened in order to integrate two additional explanatory variables that are anchored in different theoretical approaches. On the one hand, sociopolitical processes—including interaction of ethnic groups, social movements, and other non-state actors with the state—also impact democratic consolidation. In the selected cases, these processes are at the origin of so-called “ethnic democracies”. Despite emerging democratic structures, minority groups in these countries are exposed to discrimination, as state authorities favor the majority group, e.g. via different citizenship rights.<sup>5</sup> The dynamic character of state-society relations makes it therefore difficult to look at each of the variables separately. In other words, nationalism might be induced from the top by a government, but a social or ethnic group can also trigger identity formation from the bottom. By including state-centric and structuralist elements, the study discloses the process character of the consolidation phenomenon.

The paper stresses, on the other hand, that regional aspects, such as the European Union enlargement process, also influence state consolidation. Regionalization, however, should not be captured and studied as a separate phenomenon from recent globalization trends. Instead, they are “forces relative to and overlapping one another” (Kacowicz 1998, 1). Acknowledging border-transgressing and interconnecting phenomena that are characteristic of political, economic and social processes particularly since 1945, the impact of transnational politics as well as regional and/or global actors will serve as a proxy for globalization. This phenomenon, also referred to as “glocalization,”<sup>6</sup> has yet received little scholarly attention in Southeast European studies, and is accordingly addressed as the third variable here.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of this multi-causal research approach is to emphasize the process character of the relationships and to shed light on how the three variables—state, society, and globalization—affect democratic consolidation processes in the selected cases of BiH, FYROM, Kosovo and Serbia. Measuring transition and consolidation, however, is an elusive task has been a strongly debated issue in the literature.<sup>8</sup> This paper builds on

<sup>4</sup> According to Linz and Stepan, the concept of stateness goes beyond the institutional analysis and includes sociopolitical factors, such as citizenship questions, when addressing transition issues (1996, 16).

<sup>5</sup> For a definition of the term cf. (Linz and Stepan 1996, 24-5)

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on the term see (Bauman 1998; Robertson 1995; Swyngedouw 1997)

<sup>7</sup> Cf. also Figure 2 and 3 in the Annex.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion cf. (Schedler 1998; Schedler 2001)

the teleological concept of democratic consolidation, which underlines the “plurality of teloi” in order to explain the relationship between democracy, stateness, ethnicity, and transnationalism (Schedler 1997, 4). Put differently, while certain factors undermine democratic transition, others are institutionalizing democracy and it is exactly this dynamic, which is the focus of this study. Indirect indicators for capturing progress or regression are, for instance, advancements in EU accession talks, the use of non-violent tools for solving conflict, and increasing democratization of electoral structures and behavior.

By examining the four selected cases, the paper confirms the hypothesis that strong state structures are essential for democratic consolidation. Furthermore, it argues that nationalism fosters ethnic democracies, reproducing instability and insecurity. While transnational politics can generate positive incentives for consolidation, it can, however, be a source of conflict. The first section analyzes the different state structures, including the historical context to underline the differences in each country. Then, the paper examines the detrimental impact of nationalism in the Balkans and explores alternatives to overcome this conflict-generating constellation. Finally, the impact of transnational politics, including the EU and other regional actors, are looked at to demonstrate the contrasting effects on consolidation in each of the selected states.

## 1 THE QUESTION OF STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND WEAK STATE STRUCTURES

In their voluminous work on the issues of democratic consolidation in Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe, Linz and Stepan elucidate the necessity of sovereignty for democratization processes. “Democracy is a form of governance of a modern state. Thus, without a state, no modern democracy is possible” (Linz and Stepan 1996, 17). They elaborate on the territorial aspects of a state—defined by Weber—and list history, culture, and language as key variables in state building-processes.<sup>9</sup> This paper adapts their framework in order to elucidate the following question: does the lack of strong state structures hamper democratic consolidation in the Balkans? State structures in the Balkans are weaker than Western states, but such a simplistic binary classification of weak vs. strong is little helpful when looking at current trends in the region. While it is important to disclose variation, a categorical distinction is nonetheless useful for the four cases at hand. Serbia and FYROM epitomize stronger and more developed institution on a national level with international recognition; whereas Kosovo<sup>10</sup> and BiH are institutionally weaker states—as a matter of fact the latter is still under international tutelage. Little surprising then, that these different statehoods affect consolidation processes differently. Subsequently, each of the cases is looked at more closely to underline the various forms of statehood and state structures and their implication for democratization.

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<sup>9</sup> However, they are also aware that the analysis of consolidation processes has to go beyond the polity and include sociopolitical aspects, which they called “stateness” (Linz and Stepan 1996, 16).

<sup>10</sup> Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on 17 February 2008 and is recognized by 37 countries, including for instance France, United States, and Marshall Islands. Other states such as BiH, Russia, China, or Greece have not recognized its statehood yet.

### *Bosnia and Herzegovina: a Handicapped Hybrid State*

The case of BiH is a good example of how multiethnic social structures hamstrung the emerging state in the early 1990s. Shortly after the declaration of independence in 1992, the egregious interethnic conflict between ethnic Croats, Bosnian Muslims, and Bosnian Serbs broke out.<sup>11</sup> Since then, much ink has been spilt over the causes underlying this dark chapter of recent Southeast European history, yet the importance for this paper is to capture the ramifications for Bosnian polity and its consequences in view of consolidation issues. To elucidate the question of *why* weak state structures curtail democratization it is ineluctable to look at structural, social, and institutional factors.

The Dayton agreement formally put an end to the violence in 1995, but the “controlled democracy” model—which could best be described as a top-down approach applied by the international community—demonstrates how pre-conditions, such as war and ethnic intricacies, were least favorable for transition and consolidation (Bojkov 2003). In other words, the mediating powers—including the US—sketched an institutional blueprint that integrated the three conflicting groups in BiH, creating a single political unit in the hope to put the lid back onto the over-boiling pot. However, the plan resembled more a patchwork structure mimicking a single political unit in the midst of this interethnic imbroglio. In fact, the country was further subdivided into two entities, the *Republica Srpska* and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a tripartite rotating presidency, in order to insure the political voice of the three major ethnic constituencies within the national territory.<sup>12</sup> Suffice it to say that such a constellation resulted in a particularly vulnerable decision-making process that substantially slowed down reform.<sup>13</sup>

The perennial controversy over police reform—one of the EU’s conditions in order to obtain candidacy status—underlines the instrumental power of local and national political leaders in decision-making procedures. In a nutshell, Bosnian Serbs insisted on maintaining control over the police force on their territory, while Bosnian Muslims promoted the idea of a united force (Reuters 2007).<sup>14</sup> The BiH parliament most recently gave way to accession talks with the EU by adopting legislation on the police reform (Associated Press 2008a). It is less shocking that it took several years to come to an agreement—certain reforms such as health care or pensions in Western countries still require a broad consensus. Yet, to the extent to which the country was only able to implement this reform by giving in to external pressures is deplorable, as it corroborates Bojkov’s analysis of weak institutions within the state. The role of the High Representative for BiH—an international administrator that has the power to intervene in domestic affairs if the federation is unable to solve political issues—is yet another illustration of the relatively weak cohesion of state structures. It is a “democracy paradox”, based on a top-down—and in this case external—democracy promotion, which does not allow for more autonomy to the people in the region (D. Chandler 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Transnational nationalism—fueling the conflict from within neighboring countries, such as Serbia—destabilizes state consolidation and is addressed in the next section.

<sup>12</sup> For details on other issues such as human rights and elections, cf. Dayton agreement available at <http://www.hrt.hr/arhiv/dokumenti/dok/general.html> [accessed on 20 April 2008].

<sup>13</sup> The Swiss polity is a good example of slow reforms, but also illustrates how well established and consolidated structures integrate a diverse population and allow for peaceful political processes.

<sup>14</sup> During the war, police forces were involved in ethnic cleansing.

### *Kosovo's Inchoate Sovereignty*

Kosovo has similar problems, but breached the taboo of state sovereignty by declaring its independence from Serbia. This step towards auto-determination is welcomed by a variety of states—particularly those with a similar history record such as the U.S., Poland, or Croatia—but contested by countries in which secessionist movements and political cleavages are likely to destabilize society, such as BiH, Spain, or Russia. The highly politicized nature of the event highlights how transnational components come into play, which the paper elaborates in a later section. For now, it serves the purpose to note that for the past few years, the nebulous EU discourse on Kosovo resulted in continuously suspending discussions on Kosovo's final status. While Western governments see state creation as a step to prevent future conflict and foster consolidation, reluctant regional powers such as Russia—but also Slovenia which fears secessionist claims from its Hungarian minority—push hard to avoid a “Kosovo-and-Montenegro-Effect” (Fawn 2008).

One option to counter the effect, as Fawn describes in his article, is the use of force by Russian and Georgian authorities in order to suppress nationalist movements, which occurred in South Ossetia in the early 1990s, and recently in 2004 (Ibid, 273). Certain parallels can be drawn for Kosovo. In the summer of 1990 when Slovenia seceded from the Socialist Federal Yugoslav Republic, ethnic Albanian delegates to the provincial Kosovo Assembly declared that the Albanian population had the right to form a nation and have their own republic (Cohen 1993, 121-2). The immediate response of Serbian authorities was to assert control over local police forces and militia in order to suppress the increasing mobilization of the population. Eventually, backed by an article of the newly adopted constitution, Slobodan Milosevic had the power to repress the population in the Kosovar province in order defend Serbian national interest (Ibid, 123-6). Contrary to South Ossetia, the NATO intervention during the Kosovo war in 1999 and the UN peace-building mission (eventually continued by a EU contingent) established a presence of the international community, which contained further violent repressions by Serbian authorities.<sup>15</sup> What were the factors that drove ethnic Albanians to contest power in the first place?

The motivation to rise against the Serbian Leviathan was fueled by the lack of justice the state should provide to society (Gligorov 1994, 54) and the political opportunity window—Slovenia's independence declaration—which triggered the social mobilization in order to break off from the oppressive Serbian state apparatus. In other words, when the state lost its legitimacy vis-à-vis a minority group that had limited participatory options, the political arena turned into a new battleground for power and self-determination. In fact, social actors do not only perceive state structures in concrete measurable terms such as state capacity—e.g. how well can the government enforce laws or provide certain services—but also in a more abstract way, referring to the notion of justice and legitimacy. At that time, the Serbian-ruled state's ideational power was scattered into millions of pieces; however, the government had still the monopoly over the use of violence. Relying on his strong militia forces, the Serbian President hence

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<sup>15</sup> The author is aware that the international community ran into many difficulties, including ethnic polarization, the question of justice, economic reconstructions, and others. For a detailed discussion of these problems cf. (Pula 2003).

annihilated any hope of fair and democratic participation. History eventually proved that repressive measures were far from guaranteeing a stable state and society. Instead Milosevic had to give in to the power of the street.

### ***Serbia and its Intractable Legacy***

The Republic of Serbia—after a few territorial metamorphoses in the past decade—is only one of several successor states of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Szasz 1994). Yet historically, its dominant role in the Federation—notably due to the emerging political figure of Slobodan Milosevic in the late 1980s—is crucial to understand democratization processes in relation to its statehood. For this, the paper delves into a brief retrospective of Yugoslav-Serbian history of the past 20 years. By 1985, it was clear that communism had to be thrown overboard, as it was not a viable option for Yugoslavia anymore. In the Soviet Union, Gorbachev’s reforms of *glasnost* and *perestroika* bear witness of how Communist party officials faced a difficult steering task: allowing for opening, yet at the same time, still remaining in control over state and society. Yugoslavia, by and large, was confronted with similar difficulties.

Steven Pavlovitch describes the struggle of Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, to keep together a multi-national state and when prospects of maintaining unity diminished, sought to create an entity that comprised all Serbs and those willing to stay. Unable to incarnate a new Tito, he employed a Janus-faced discourse: promoting pan-Yugoslavia, while claiming statehood for Serbia (Pavlovitch 2004, 104-106). When the interethnic violent conflict started after heated, nationalist elections in 1990s, “Serbia’s President Milosevic was able to establish a semi-authoritarian system in the remaining parts of Yugoslavia that kept him in power until 2000” (Brusis 2006, 105). Legitimacy, in this case, was far from being based on democratic principles. The Serbian example thus illustrates the erosion of democratic ideals in the early stages of democratization of the Balkans after the implosion of Soviet Russia and subsequent timid attempts of introducing democratic elections and politics to the region. Conflict-generating nationalism—which the paper discusses in the following section—and Serbia’s trans-border politics not only fueled the war, but also legitimize the regime at the cost—alas—of innocent civilian populations.

### ***Macedonian State-formation: Sovereignty, Legitimacy, and Democratic Principles***

FYROM constitutes the other end of the spectrum compared to BiH. Despite linguistic and ethnic differences, state structures established in the early 1990s are still in place thanks to international support such as the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) and funding from the Soros Foundation (Cowan 2000, 4). The reasons for the stronger state structures compared to BiH are two-fold. For one, Macedonia seceded peacefully from former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, declaring its

independence.<sup>16</sup> International recognition and integration in organizations such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization and the Council of Europe consolidated the statehood from outside. In addition, historical factors played an important role because the federal structures of former Yugoslavia—in contrast to the centralized structures in Eastern Europe under the Soviet rein—enabled Macedonia to assume its statehood at a very low transaction cost. In other words, although many Macedonian cadres were trained elsewhere, such as Belgrade, they tended to return, and were the backbone of the administrative state apparatus in the nascent state structure (Kekic 2001, 187-88).<sup>17</sup>

Yet more importantly, Macedonia's secession from the Socialist Federal Yugoslav Republic in the early 1990s has particular model character for this study as it underlines the dynamic process of state and democratic consolidation. The selected variables for this study—state, society, and globalization—occurred concomitantly and created the right momentum to generate a peaceful transition. This case is somewhat paradoxical because emerging, fundamental democratic principles underpinned the consolidation process. Put differently, when a social group claims its right to secede, it questions the legitimate authority of the country or ruler under which it previously lived. Yet at the same time, it has to solidify its own legitimacy in order to produce enough counterweight to face the old structures. In Macedonia, this occurred initially through basic democratic principles: the leaders that hailed for independence were democratically elected. Instead of turning these events into violent contentious politics, the voice of pro-Serbian opposition groups remained low. Thus, sovereignty claim of Macedonian independence promoters was not contested to the extent that it could have threatened Macedonia's acquisition of statehood (Baer 2000, 55-6).

Finally, the above cases of emerging and consolidating statehood not only demonstrate the importance of state sovereignty during democratic transition, but also that this variable cannot be isolated from other intervening and explanatory factors. Transnational parameters as well as sociopolitical processes are crucial to understand whether a country is increasingly institutionalizing democracy, or whether its fragile democratic structures are threatened. The latter—under certain circumstances—leads to fragmentation of society, contentious politics, and in the worst case to escalation of violence. The Balkans bear witness of both kinds of developments, erosion as well as consolidation and the next section will focus on stateness, notably the consequences of nationalism on state and society in order to explore this relationship.

## 2 NATIONALISM: NEMESIS OF DEMOCRACY?

The concept of nationalism and democratic consolidation has spilled much ink among scholars who focus on transition issues. Before examining the consequences of nationalism in the Balkans at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, it is useful to outline a

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<sup>16</sup> The author is aware that Macedonia was seriously destabilized in 2001, as a result of the adjacent Kosovo conflict. Compared to the civil war in BiH, however, consolidated state structures and international support avoided further escalation.

<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless Macedonia was and still is a Southeast European transition country—with structural deficiencies, corruption and democratization efforts—that remains vulnerable to regional externalities, e.g. UN embargos against Serbia in the 1990s (Kekic 2001, 189-200).

few theoretical underpinnings and historical developments. While nationalism in 19<sup>th</sup>-century-Europe was not the cause for state-building processes—e.g. the creation of Bismarck’s German Reich in 1871—it nonetheless helped delineate the newly created German state’s territory and enhance its legitimacy (Linz and Stepan 1996, 23). In fact, strong state structures were the *sine qua non* for an integrative nationalist politics. Weber captured this trend, conceptualizing a highly organized, bureaucratic political institution to govern society. The government’s administrative capacity—combined with the monopoly of legitimate use of force—created the foundation for a legible and subjugated population (Weber 1918).

Yet, a century later, the historical context, political institutions, and international affairs have changed, and in the case of the Balkans, nationalism generated conflict, rather than unify different ethnic groups in this region. Benedict Anderson’s argument in *Imagined Communities* taps into the very roots of this problem. While culture is at the origin of nationalism, it is socially constructed and obeys political objectives. The phenomenon of transnationalism has accentuated nationalism as a tool of identity politics, thus corroborating Anderson’s hypothesis of which the Balkans are an exemplary—yet sad—illustration. In addition, the problem of “constitutional nationalism”—the incompatibility of extreme nationalist political parties to cope with their radical ideologies and to generate moderate political action and a democratic agenda—exacerbates the violence potential; ethnic propaganda and defamation hence lead to violence (Hayden 1992). As Gagnon notes, “violent conflict along ethnic cleavage [was] provoked by elites in order to create a domestic political context where ethnicity [was] the only politically relevant identity” (1994, 132). Drawing on the four cases, the paper discusses the consequences of nationalism, ethnicity and democracy.

### ***Dynamic Serbian Nationalism: From Ethnocentrism to Reconciliation***

In the case of Serbia, nationalism had two distinct functions in the past two decades. On the one hand, it was a tool to solidify the Serbian community after it became clear that the Communist system under Tito would sooner or later break apart. Milosevic, on the other hand, aimed also at unifying the minorities in territorial proximity to contemporary Serbia, including, e.g. ethnic Albanians and Montenegrins. A broader nation-state idea was utopian, given that Serbs only constituted 40% of the total population of Tito’s Yugoslavia, countered by a large Croat population (approx. 25% of the total population). Yet, historical and political reasons led to Serbia’s guardian role that its political elite tried to maintain for over a decade. Little surprising then, that the apple of discord was Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s, since Croats and Serbs had both territorial claims when the Yugoslav nation-state fell apart (Pescic 1996).<sup>18</sup>

As Daniel Druckman argues, social psychology elements are key in order to understand the dynamic between nationalism promoted by political leaders and the atrocious ethnic conflict that it fueled. He points out that group attachment—in this case to the greater Serbian community—was forged as people “see the nation as providing

<sup>18</sup> The raise of Serbian nationalism was sparked when the Kosovo issue emerged in the early 1980s, because the region was largely seen as the cradle of Serbian national consciousness and culture since the Middle Ages. Cf. also (Kostovicova 2005; Anzulovic 1999).

them and their progeny with security and safety as well as status and prestige in return for their loyalty and commitment” (Druckman 1994, 45). But this does not make a human being a cold-blooded murderer. Thus, what other factors have to be considered? According to Druckman, the so-called *intergroup bias* is crucial in this context:

Results from a wide variety of experiments leave little doubt that the mere classification of people into groups evokes biases in favor of one's own group. Just by being told that one belongs to a particular group as opposed to another—even if one has never seen or met any other members of that group—is enough to make the individual prefer the group over others (Druckman 1994, 48).

In addition to this, Milosevic's political and communication tools helped foster interethnic conflict. His infamous nationalist speech in 1989<sup>19</sup> was part of his discursive instruments, along with his control over mass media. In fact, as some authors point out, Milosevic used his speeches and mass communication to legitimize his ethnopolitics. His rhetoric institutionalized future ethnopolitical acts and found broad support within society (Bozic-Roberson 2004; Morus 2007). Interestingly but sadly, outside ethnic conflict—the war was waged in BiH and not in Serbia<sup>20</sup>—helped build nationalist support, decreasing the political contestation that the ruling elites faced in domestic politics, thus further legitimizing them (Gagnon Jr. 1994, 140 pp.). Over a decade after the cruel war in the Balkans, however, the situation has changed, which begs the question how nationalism has evolved in Serbian politics today?

Ironically, although Serbian leader Milosevic was able to control and manipulate the population since 1989, the masses were able to mobilize and rise against him on October 5 in 2000<sup>21</sup>, launching Serbia on the road to democracy. Needless to say that democratic consolidation did not occur over night, and the assassination of Prime Minister Djindjic in 2003 is a proof of how ultra-nationalist forces were and still are part of Serbian society. However, the wind of change has swept over the Balkans and the political discourse created at the time of Djindjic's funeral illustrates this transformation (Greenberg 2006a). During his term, Djindjic launched a new era in Serbian politics, and suffice it to look at the extradition of Milosevic to the ad hoc UN Tribunal in The Hague in order to witness this change (Greenberg 2006b). The implications of it are discussed in the following section. Nationalism, hence, is not a static anachronistic political tool that is responsible for conflict. Instead, “nationalist forms draw on a multitude of contemporary social categories and relations, making nationalism less a regressive backlash, and more a malleable social response to changing conditions” (Ibid, 321). When turning to BiH, a similar positive trend occurred in recent years, yet the context and conditions are—for obvious reasons—diametrically opposed to the Serbian case.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. also (Malesevic 2002, pp.175)

<sup>20</sup> The author is aware, however, that international intervention (particularly the bombings of Belgrade) eventually affected also the civilian population in Serbia.

<sup>21</sup> Mass protest and social mobilization forced Slobodan Milosevic and his regime to step down.

### *Nationalism in BiH: Recreating the Melting Pot*

Historically, the region that is occupied by BiH today has always been an ethnic melting pot.<sup>22</sup> Rather than examining how Serbian nationalism transgressed BiH borders and fueled hideous ethnic clashes in the region and therefore reiterating the above findings, it is more constructive to look at inclusive nationalism patterns within BiH and emerging Bosnian nationalism. In most recent history, the impetus for inclusive nationalism came from external forces, given the heteroclitic nature of the BiH population. While communist leaders promoted the idea of BiH as a republic within the Socialist Federalist Republic of Yugoslavia, the international community created a institutional, political, and social environment after the war in the 1990s, in which Bosnian Muslims increasingly developed a nationalist discourse and put it on their political agenda. Both cases are the result of structural, contextual, and political processes.

Referring to the first case, for instance, it is noteworthy that after World War II, the communist elite sought to establish a separate entity within in the Yugoslav federation in order to appease the tripartite ethnic makeup and generate stability. Although Serbian communists enjoyed a privileged position, political self-assertion of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Muslims during the 1970s and 1980s fostered an ethnopolitical balance of power in the republic, reflecting its ethnic composition (Cohen 1993, 140-1). Comparing the censuses of 1981 and 1991 in which respondents identified themselves as 'Yugoslavs' shows that the percentage was higher in the earlier results and underlines the unifying force under Tito (1993, 175). The turmoil of the 1990s, however, catalyzed an identity crisis among Bosnian Muslims.

This identity crisis is a consequence of the atrocious war crimes committed against Bosnian Muslims during the conflict. Before the 1990s, BiH residents had difficulties differentiating between the three main ethnic groups, as unity was achieved through diversity and muslimhood reduced to a secular notion (Robinson and Probic 2006, 241). Several authors analyze the emergence of this new Bosnian national identity during the reconstruction period after the war, focusing on the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo (Robinson et al, 2001). According to their analysis, a EU-sponsored commission—consisting mainly of Muslims—was in charge of renaming streets, plazas, and bridges in the city, with the effect that historical memory especially from the Ottoman Empire and the Middle Ages became an anchor of this new identity (2001, 966-70). As a result, there are two types of nationalism that occur in post-war BiH. On the one hand, there is the traditional type that relies on the territorial boundaries and thus increases the cleavage between the three ethnic entities, as a reaction to the past.<sup>23</sup> The tripartite polity structure of BiH, however, supersedes this trend and thus disables the nationalism-generating variable of state and statehood. In other words, real classic state structures—which could potentially fuel ethnocentrism and violence if flanked by a nationalist authoritarian regime, such as in Serbia during the 1990s—are lacking, which reduces the risk that traditional nationalism takes over as a regressive, destructive force. On the other hand, there is a new nationalism, cosmopolitan in nature that, while stressing cultural

<sup>22</sup> To depict centuries of political history goes beyond the scope of this paper, but it is nonetheless important to refer briefly to it in order to elucidate contemporary developments.

<sup>23</sup> For a study on the use of three different history textbooks in post-war BiH elementary schools, exacerbating ethnic cleavage instead of than fostering integration cf. (Baranovic 2001).

uniqueness, promotes diversity. The latter, unfortunately, still relies very much upon external incentives, e.g. the EU or the international community (Robinson and Probic 2006). The conflictual model of “ethnic democracies” is therefore still at the heart of the transition issue, although scholarly contributions underline that positive multi-ethnic nationalism is far from being a utopian goal (Cohen 1993, 359). Kosovo is yet another case that struggles with different notions of nationalism and continuously relies on outside impetus to embrace a multi-ethnic democracy.

### ***Kosovo: the Struggle Between Violent and Peaceful Nationalism***

Kosovar and Serbian nationalisms construed by each side—ethnic Albanians and Serbs—are not unique and therefore the claim for particularity does not hold true (Daskalovski 2003, 13-4). In other words, the two forms of nationalism are the epitome of Ben Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, as mentioned earlier in this paper. Using mythology and historical narratives, combined with a political rhetoric, both sides generate a discourse that has a detrimental effect on the other ethnic group. This begs the question whether ethnic difference justifies a nationalist discourse and what the consequences are in this case?<sup>24</sup> A 19<sup>th</sup>-century-style nationalist discourse certainly had a strong impact on the recent independence struggle and was, in fact, a conflict catalyst. A quick look at history and recent developments that occurred during the last few decades underline the dichotomous political discourse that shapes Kosovar identity today.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Serbs inhabited the territory known today as modern Kosovo and Albanians joined in later during the rein of the Ottoman Empire. While the Serbs reacquired the territory in 1912 from the Ottoman’s, Albanians had replaced the Serbs as dominant ethnic group in Kosovo since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Vickers 1998).<sup>25</sup> Political leaders debated whether to expel Albanians from Serbian territory in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1945, however, they were considered native populations of Kosovo. Needless to say that due to the territorial notion of nationalism, Albanians considered Kosovo as a part of Greater Albania (Daskalovski 2003, 16-7). During Tito’s rein, they gained increasing privileges—including their status as an autonomous region and a separate constitution from Serbia—which after the death of the communist leader in 1980, led to more frequent manifestation of Albanian nationalism and resulted in riots and discrimination of ethnic Serbs in the region (Ibid). A more peaceful resistance, however, was the parallel education in Kosovo after Milosevic curtailed Kosovo’s autonomy in 1989. Albanians taught their kids in private homes and businesses to protest against the Serbian rule during the 1990s (Kostovicova 2005).<sup>26</sup> Today, the political elites are mainly grappling with two forms of nationalism to forge Kosovar identity.

The years between the Kosovo war and before Kosovo’s declaration of independence were marked by a dichotomous nationalistic discourse. On the one hand,

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<sup>24</sup> Kosovo’s current population consists of the following ethnic groups: Albanians 88%, Serbs 7%, and other 5% (including: Bosniak, Gorani, Roma, Turk, Ashkali, Egyptian).

<sup>25</sup> While Serbs migrated to the territory of modern Kosovo during the 7<sup>th</sup> century, they did not incorporate it to the Serbian realm until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The battle of Kosovo in 1389 led to a five-century rein of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>26</sup> This was in particular the strategy of President Rugova’s nonviolent resistance movement and the “shadow government” to oppose Milosevic’s oppressive measures.

there was and still is a trend to create a collective memory highlighting war and repression. This 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism emphasizes the West's lack of support for Kosovar statehood, because the international community aimed at finding a solution that included Milosevic during the mid-1990s. As a result, the statehood question was always put aside (Ingimundarson 2007). The political reality today, on the other hand, has changed and it is difficult to imagine a Balkan region without the EU's presence. Thus, cooperation with the European Union—particularly with regards to trade, economic development, and institutional reform for a democratic transition—as well as with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for security and stability is no longer an option but an obligation (Ibid). Nonetheless, the first type of discourse still remains vibrant, as the recent declaration of independence demonstrates. In spite of this, current political leaders, such as President Sejdiu and the coalition government, have made efforts to integrate both forms of discourses into a Kosovar national identity (Ibid, 116; Associated Press 2008a). The recent independence, however, does not automatically turn Kosovo into a full-fledged state but requires serious efforts from the EU and Kosovar political elites. The former has to provide tutorship, while the latter have to implement an inclusive nationalism in order to reach out to a larger integration process in the region (Loza 2008). But as Macedonia illustrates, Kosovo is not the only state struggling with this issue.

### ***Macedonian Nationalism: the Gap Between Constitutional Rights and Practice***

In the case of Macedonia, the nationalist question demonstrates how democratic consolidation is a shaky balancing act between theory and practice. Although Western countries lauded its democratization record after the peaceful transition and statehood proclamation in the early 1990s, “stateness” issues—in other words the relationship between the state and various social groups living on the territory—became salient. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to recount Macedonia's history to elucidate the question of nationalism. The important thing to remember, however, is that the nation building process started relatively late in Macedonia, compared to other entities in the Balkans. This process was very complex, influenced by diverse ideologies, institutions, and actors (Brown 2003). For certain authors Tito invented Macedonian nationhood in order to create a tangible entity of the ethnically diverse southeast region of the Balkans (Danforth 1993, 4; Cowan 2000, 12).<sup>27</sup> Yet, discussions about the national inception of Macedonia do not change the ethnic diversity of the population. Figure 1 below shows results of the 2002 Census, underlining the different ethnic groups, notably the largest minority of Ethnic Albanians, who constitute one fourth of the entire Macedonian population.

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<sup>27</sup> Although the formation of Macedonian identity could be traced back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even Greek Antiquity, the peasants did not have a strongly developed notion of it (Danforth 1993, 7).

**Figure 1: Ethnic groups in Macedonia**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Roma	Serb	Other
<b>Percentage</b>	64.2	25.2	3.9	2.7	1.8	2.2

Source: Census 2002

In a multi-ethnic society, inclusive citizenship is a premise for democratic structure to function properly (Linz and Stepan 1996, 27). When different groups do not have equal rights, contentious politics emerge and eventually generate social mobilization and conflict. For Macedonia, the political and legal framework laid out the structural underpinnings to insure equality and multi-nationality:

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia of 1991, which guarantees the rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens, also contains provisions referring to the rights of the nationalities, aiming to achieve real equality of their civic status and the protection of their ethnic, cultural, and religious identity (Ortakovski 2001, 28).

As mentioned above, however, there is a discrepancy between the legal framework established in the Constitution in the early 1990s and actual political reality and practice. Symbolism plays a pivotal role in this context, because the new Constitution did not allow ethnic minorities to fly flags on national holidays—lawful under the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The reason for this: the ruling majority feared secessionist tendencies of the large ethnic Albanian population. This and other examples eventually led to “ethnonationalism”, as Macedonian ethnicity was conflated into nationalism (Zahariadis 2003, 261-2; cf. also Daskalovski 2006). Despite a relative successful integration and democratic transition in Macedonia, the above problematic highlights how fragile the consolidation process still remains. The last section of this paper discusses external influences, including regional actors and adjacent states that impact and exacerbate nationalist sentiments within Macedonia.

The aforementioned cases demonstrate how the question of nationalism is a broader socio-political problem that includes citizenship issues, political institutions and society. Several authors point out that a multinational state can only achieve democratic consolidation if it pursues an inclusive and not an ethnocentric politics. Hence, the traditional nation-state concept is obsolete and inappropriate to generate stability and peace. Instead it is the idea of a “state nation”—a term coined by Linz and Stepan—that offers a promising solution for these cases. In fact, efforts have to come from within society—particularly from domestic political leaders that forge the adequate identity discourse—and from the international community, which provides the necessary framework for stability and security in order to cope with this issue (Linz and Stepan 1996; Schneider and Schmitter 2004, 4). The last section of this paper looks at the impact of regional actors on consolidation processes.

### 3 THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON THE BALKANS: THE EU IN PERSPECTIVE

While transition literature has emphasized state-centric and sociopolitical aspects of democratic consolidation, it has paid less attention to the impacts of globalization on the processes. In order to assess the consequences of transnational politics on democratization, this section takes the four cases of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia and elucidates the impact of adjacent states and the European Union on the region. In fact, during the past two decades, the Balkans have been increasingly influenced by external forces that are not only economic in nature, but also concern human rights issues and identity politics. As a case in point, the EU has launched an integration agenda and pursues accession talks with several Balkan states. Do these negotiations foster a stable and democratic environment or are they detrimental to regional development? In this context, it is important to yet raise another question: to what extent are sovereign state structures crucial in order to guarantee a peaceful institutionalization process? Paradoxically, the EU creates sovereign states, to eventually integrate them in a supranational institutional treaty system, which, however, requires countries to curtail some of their original sovereign state power. What are the implications of such a strategy? Finally, the war crimes and human rights violations have spilt much ink and the ad hoc tribunals in The Hague are prosecuting several war criminals from various countries. What, however, are the consequences for integration and consolidation if a state does not cooperate? The subsequent close-up of Macedonia's name dispute with Greece seeks to answer some of the questions with respect to state sovereignty, regional power and identity politics.

#### *Cross-border Identity Politics: the Case of Macedonia*

To tie matters back in with the sovereignty process discussed in the first part of the paper, it is essential to briefly point to a political and diplomatic dispute between Greece and Macedonia that has been an ongoing apple of discord since the latter's state creation. As mentioned earlier, Greece still does not recognize the constitutional name "Republic of Macedonia"—despite international negotiation and arbitration efforts to settle the issue—because “[e]thnic and national minority politics in the region of Macedonia ... need to be understood as a site where a transnational array of actors are renegotiating identities and making claims within a reconfigured global political context” (Cowan 2000, 14). The current problem is deeply rooted in trans-border identity politics as well as ethnic nationalism and irredentism. Political leaders still cling to the idea of homogeneous nation-states instead of acknowledging their anachronistic character and considering them to be relics of the past.<sup>28</sup> It is time that the discourse changes, and to accept that the two different national identities are only socially and politically constructed. It would be far more constructive to realize that both entities—the Macedonian state, as well as the Macedonian region in Greece—can co-exist peacefully in a transnational environment (Danforth 1993, 10). Although the Greek trade embargo that hit Macedonia hard in the mid-1990s has been lifted, the Greek government is still intransigent. In fact, compared to

<sup>28</sup> For a historical account on the broader issue see (Danforth 1993).

other bordering countries, such as Serbia and Bulgaria who have normalized their relations with Macedonia, Greece remains the thorn in the EU's thigh, because it hampers the NATO and EU integration process in the region. This is the more important, since the EU plays a crucial role in generating regional stability. Furthermore, a nebulous European integration road map of Macedonia only fuels insecurity and conflict, former Macedonian Prime Minister Vlado Buckovski underlined in an interview (Wood 2006). This responsibility weighs heavily on the EU—which is currently also struggling to redefine its institutional structure.

What is the bottom line for democratic consolidation in this case? While both countries, Macedonia and Greece, have sought diplomatic and political tools to solve this issue—past and current negotiations have been and are still encouraged by the EU—the recent outbreak of violence of Ethnic Serbs during Kosovo's declaration of independence demonstrate the fragile nature not only of democracy, but also of statehood in the region. Insecurity has been contained by EU and international presence, but is no guarantee that a spill over effect might occur in the future if the EU lags to implement a cohesive integration process of the Balkans in cooperation with the respective governments.

### ***BiH—the EU's Carrot-and-the-Stick Method for Consolidation***

Earlier, this paper discussed the problem of BiH's hybrid state structures, which translates into a weak state and enormous external pressure from the International Monetary Fund and the EU to implement reforms (Krastev 2002). The following examines EU consolidation pattern for BiH by looking at economic development and institutionalization endorsed through the EU's conditionality principle. Rather than commenting on the vast literature on the subject, it is important to discuss the consequences of the EU strategy with regards to consolidation. But first, what exactly does conditionality policy stand for? The conditionality principle put forward by Brussels' technocrats is, put simply, an incentive to foster domestic reforms, ranging from restructuring the economy, reorganizing political institutions, and passing laws and regulations that are in line with the *acquis communautaire*, but all this, before actually being a member of the EU (European Union 2007). For certain authors, implementing these ideas was a success. Aneta Spendzharova and Dimitar Bechev, for instance, argue that in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, this carrot-and-stick method worked well in order to spur the required reforms that eventually led to the accession of both states (Anastasakis and Bechev 2003). The current debate on consequences of the EU's conditionality practice, however, is far from being settled. When examining EU conditionality and democratic consolidation in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the picture looks less optimistic.

Although Aneta Spendzharova and Dimitar Bechev are aware that the burden to implement reforms lies in the hands of domestic policymakers in the countries that strive for accession (2003, 151-2), they ignore to address the consequences of the different forms of conditionality in politics and reform processes. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, on the contrary, capture the intricate dynamic of external political pressure exerted by the EU, and point to the limited action margin that politicians have in the countries receiving aid. They show how the impact of conditionality requirement

depends on the context of conditionality, which they divide into two categories: democratic conditionality and acquis conditionality. In a nutshell they argue that despite high transaction costs, local policymakers are willing to transfer EU regulations into domestic legislation, if: they have enough political leeway to do so; and if the incentives—which in this case would be the accession promise made by Brussels—are sufficiently credible (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004). Yet, if the candidacy talks remain nebulous, the concept of conditionality loses its attractiveness:

In the case of the Balkans ... there is a lack of commitment both on the supply EU side as well as the demand regional side. On the supply side, the lack of EU commitment is reflected in a) the lack of a membership perspective; b) the lack of interim rewards tied to a structured and gradual prospect of accession; c) the prospect of diminishing funds for the region; and d) the diversion of international interest elsewhere (Anastasakis and Bechev 2003, 3).

Would it be justifiable, then, that certain authors find the leap from conditionality to control—in other words, from EU strategy to international intervention—less problematic? According to Bojkov, the latter is even more effective than conditionality or incentives in order to insure democratization process (Bojkov 2003, 46). The answer is no. The above discussion demonstrates that regional and national actors are walking a thin line between reforms from within and from outside in order to foster sustainable democratic rule. Only by launching a reciprocal process that takes into account local structural and contextual factors, yet offering authentic incentives (such as EU membership), can transition be successful.<sup>29</sup> The road to achieve this goal, however, is long and rocky, as the Kosovo example illustrates.

### ***Kosovo's Contested Independence***

There is plentiful literature on the negotiations of Kosovo's sovereignty status that depicts the struggle for statehood supported by many EU member states on the one hand, and the ferocious opposition of Serbia, on the other hand, which clings to its former province. Rather than reiterating these debates, the author sketches the recent trends since Kosovo's independence declaration. As mentioned earlier, the difficult task of the Kosovar coalition government lies in establishing the rule of law with respect to Serbian minorities in the North. Martti Ahtisaari, former UN Special Envoy to Kosovo, drafted a proposal on the protection of minority rights. It is a crucial document, because it outlines a roadmap for the elusive situation and underlines how international pressure served as a catalyst to strengthen democratization processes (Gowan 2008). Already before Kosovo's independence, the EU used its soft power to recognize Kosovo's separate status from Serbia. In 2000 for instance, Kosovo was granted autonomous trade measures (ATM), creating a customs status, which was the *sine qua non* for trade negotiation (Klasnja 2007, 17).

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. also (Perry 2007).

However, such a process requires an effort from all the involved parties in order to succeed. As David Gowan underlines, Serbia has its responsibility as well, but does not seem to play the role it ought to:

Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica has lacked realism in his handling of Kosovo ... [and his] policy and rhetoric following Kosovo's declaration of independence have been even more lacking in common sense (2008, 6-7).

This regional power politics imbroglio is far from being resolved any time soon. After Kostunica dissolved the parliament in March 2008, anticipated elections were held in May. They were not only significant nationally, but also for the entire region, and particularly for Kosovo's young statehood. In fact, the Serbian Prime Minister announced on a public TV station that Serbs in Kosovo were also able to cast their ballots, because, as he insisted, Kosovo still belonged to Serbia (Associated Press 2008b). Serbia hence not only ignores UN objections, but its reaction could also be described as "van Clausewitz reversed" strategy. In other words, since the war in the 1990s, Serbia's military means are limited and Serbian politicians seem to know better now than to use oppressive, violent force. Ironically, with diplomacy as the only mean in the political international arena, Serbian leaders have instrumentalized democratic tools as tools of realpolitik. The aftermath of the elections have shown that Serbia's inchoate democracy is using international law in order to push its agenda.<sup>30</sup> Although Kostunica's sable rattling has turned into a whistle blowing, Serbia is still flexing his political muscle in the region. Hence, the Serbian government knows better than to forcefully push through its national agenda on a newly independent and sovereign state; however, the clouds over the fragile democratization process not only in Serbia and Kosovo but within the entire region have yet to disappear.

### ***Serbia: Sanctions, Reconciliation, and EU Realpolitik***

Serbia is an insightful model of how regional politics affect the consolidation process, highlighting the limited capacity of the EU to intervene with a strong and cohesive foreign policy. The deployed tools could best be described as soft power tools, but limited does by no means imply incapable. With the EU trying to turn its economic power into a salient foreign policy. The nature of the EU's influence in the region is a double-edged sword and the recent developments demonstrate this. First, however, let's look at the worsening situation in Kosovo at the end of the 1990s. During the intensification of violence in Kosovo in 1998—Serbian forces, in an effort to clear the border of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) soldiers, did not spare civilians and employed summary executions—the EU imposed economic sanction on Serbia, such as freezing funds and investments as well as banning flights (de Neuilly 2001). Ironically, these instruments, while putting pressure on the authoritarian regime, also took a toll on the

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<sup>30</sup> The Serbian Government argues that the EU mission EULEX, succeeding the UN mission UNMIK, has to be backed by a UN Security Council vote. The international community has ignored these claims so far, favoring Kosovo's independence (Anon 2008).

civilian Serbian population in the long run. Although these measures were necessary in the eyes of the EU to put an end to the multi-year long skirmishes and killings between Kosovo and Serbia, the resulting deplorable economic situation is a continuous instability factor (Bildt 2001). Yet almost a decade later, the EU—aware that integration eventually serves as a stabilizing force in the region—launched negotiations with Serbia.

The path to regional integration, however, is anything but smooth. The major issue Serbia and the EU have been dealing with over recent years was the judicial cooperation with the ad hoc Tribunal for Ex-Yugoslavia in The Hague. While Serbia has only reluctantly cooperated with the international prosecutors, Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, used a kit of soft power tools in order to incite the Serbian government to cede.<sup>31</sup> Accession talks, which are preceded by association talks (the first step in a long chain of negotiation rounds before a state, aspiring to become a EU member, can actually join the ranks of states), were thus frozen in 2006 (Jovanovic 2006). Two problems result from such a strategy: On the one hand, international sanctions wore on the fragile state structures in Serbia; and on the other hand, Serbian society had and still has to understand the extent of the atrocities committed by their militia against Muslims and Croats, and other minorities. Carl Bildt, former Special Envoy of the U.N. Secretary-General to the Balkans (1999-2001) underlines the tribunal's dilemma:

To be successful ... the tribunal must be seen as an instrument of reconciliation rather than retribution. Only when the tribunal's verdicts are seen as fair by people of the same nationality as those sentenced can it really start to serve this purpose. But for that to happen, the tribunal must do more to dispel the perception that it is the instrument of any one power or nation (Bildt 2001, 154).

Looking at the current situation, however, things seem to have changed again. EU Realpolitik is at the forefront in order to keep peace, stability, and security, as Serbia signed a EU Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in April 2008 (Cirjakovic 2008). Why after years of tenacious bargaining—and emphasizing the necessity of judicial cooperation with Serbia—did the EU give in? Suffice it to say, that once more, regional politics are at the root of the cause. It was the EU's response to calm the unrest in Kosovo, notably by ethnic Serbs, since Kosovo's independence declaration in February 2008. The EU uses its soft power tools, because it lacks a coherent Common Foreign Policy. Institutionalization of democracy is thus a learning process and despite the surprisingly pro-Western results of the May 2008 elections in Serbia, the situation remains precarious. The Kosovo question will show how the EU will to sell its gesture as genuine—and as a catalyst that will eventually positively impact the country—or whether the enlargement fatigue has robbed the last bit of credibility of the EU's political discourse, giving way for populist and nationalist Serbian leaders in the near future.

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<sup>31</sup> While the Serbian President Tadic gave way to a more cooperative politics with the UN ad hoc Tribunal during his first term, the acquittal in April 2008 of Ramush Haradinaj, former commander of Kosovo Liberation Army and former Kosovo Prime Minister, exacerbated the conflict again. It illustrates the highly political nature of the Tribunal, Serbia's contestation of the international structures and the EU and international community's struggle to foster integration in the Balkans.

## CONCLUSION

This paper analyzed three explanatory variables—statehood, sociopolitical processes, and regionalization—that affect democratic consolidation processes in four Balkan countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and Serbia. It confirmed the state-centric hypothesis that weak state structures slow down the democratization process and that nationalism, an indicator for “stateness”, fosters ethnic democracies, reproducing instability and insecurity. Yet, it also underlined the importance of the globalization-related variable for democratic institutionalization. It showed how regional actors, such as the European Union and other adjacent states in the Balkans, are—impeding as well as generating—successful transition to democracy.

The first section of the paper addressed the issue of statehood, underlining how state structures in the Balkans are weaker than in Western democracies. Nonetheless the four selected cases show nuances: Serbia and Macedonia have stronger and more developed national institution, recognized internationally, whereas Kosovo and BiH are institutionally weaker states. The latter is still under international tutelage, which drastically affects consolidation processes and Kosovo’s recent independence is still inchoate. Although international support backs its statehood, Serbia and other states ignore to recognize its new status, thus spurring instability.

Subsequently, the paper looked at sociopolitical processes depicting the evolution of nationalism in the four cases. While BiH had an ecumenical approach under Tito, it was always seen as an ensemble rather than a territorial entity with ethnic cleavages, the war in the 1990s set off ethnocentrism. Bosnian Muslims still grapple with it today, but the international state structures, put in place during the Dayton peace talks, dampen these ambitions and catalyze a more inclusive form of nationalism. Kosovo struggles with a similar issue. For centuries it has been an apple of discord claimed by adjacent powerhouses, and current 19<sup>th</sup>-century-style nationalism fuels statehood and indivisible nationhood ideas; however, international actors and EU presence promote a more integrative and cosmopolitan solution. In Macedonia’s case, the independence in the early 1990s has led to ethnonationalism, discriminating ethnic Serbs, due to the fear of secessionist tendencies and interethnic violence. The challenge for the future lies in embracing a national policy that balances this inequality. Serbian nationalism, on the contrary, emerged under Milosevic’s authoritarian rule. Nonetheless, the social movement that put him out of power in 2000 illustrates how nationalism is far from being static, but can also emerge from within society, setting off democratic transition.

Finally, the paper discussed the impact of regionalization processes in the Balkans. EU integration policies based on conditionality principles highlighted in the case of BiH that 1) the EU struggles with the implementation of a strategy that takes into account local cultural, political, and economic factors and 2) that only a sincere dialogue including both sides can cope with these issues. The independence declaration of Kosovo in February 2009 also proves how fragile transition processes are in the region, because in spite of international support, Serbia ferociously ignores Kosovo’s new status and the past elections have intensified the relations. As for Macedonia’s name issue with Greece, the consequences are less severe compared to the Kosovo incident; however, identity politics can lead to contentious politics and are a destabilizing factor if an integrative solution cannot be found. The economic sanctions put on Serbia by the EU and the

international community—while necessary in the eyes of Brussels—have detrimental effects vis-à-vis current efforts to integrate Serbia into the EU. Also, although the EU had a firm stance on its judicial cooperation condition, the instability that Kosovo’s independence has caused incited the EU to rethink its policy strategy. The road to democratic transition in the Balkans is still rocky and long, but despite slow progress, improvements are visible. The above analysis has demonstrated how strengthening state institutions from within and outside can help foster integrative social processes and structures. The Balkans is not a prisoner of its own past, particularly because the recent developments show dynamism; yet a substantial effort is needed by all involved parties to improve consolidation in the future.

ANNEX

Figure 2:

**Paths for Democratic State Consolidation**

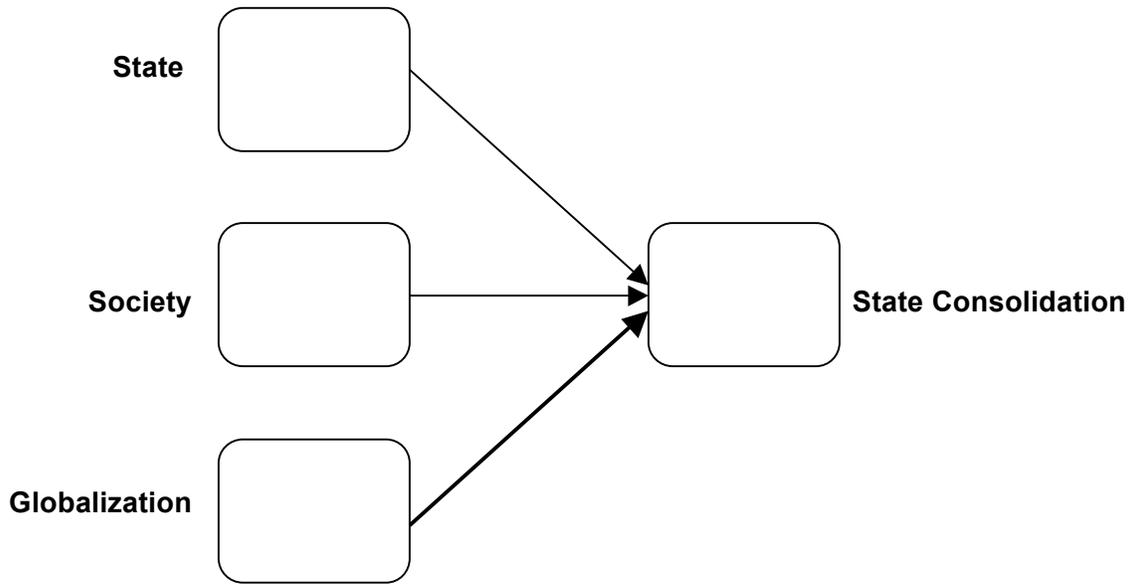
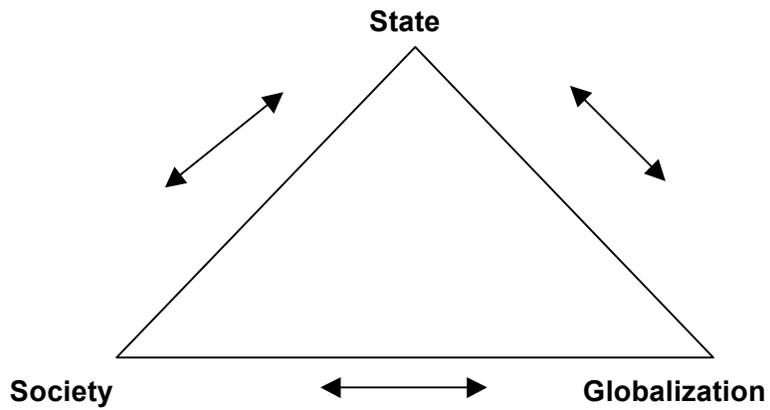


Figure 3:

**Dynamic State, Society, and Globalization Processes**



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