POLITICAL COMPLEXITY IN WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

Transition and transformation of western Balkan countries constantly produce a large portion of western Balkan states. The wars in these areas started in 1990 up to 2001 and they have been fundamental for social and political transformation of these societies. This process of transition was very complex in organizing, structuring and designing them. Transformation transition has been violent destructive with genocide and severe violations of human rights and freedoms. This dynamic transformation was connected with democratization, state building and nations building of western Balkan countries and nations toward EU and NATO integrations. We will attempt to analyse numerous social and political problems that are provoking western Balkan Countries. Understanding and solving the complexity of the Western Balkan’s political situation is needed. The hard will of inner political strengths and contribution of external political forces in its relations. We always consider the US, NATO and EU impact with its socio-political affairs and reforms in the Balkan region.

Keywords: Politics, Western Balkans, Wars, Reforms, Transformation, Complexity, Migration, EU, Impact, Political Affairs.

1. Introduction

Western Balkan states have been undergoing fundamental multiple transformations that are complex in their nature and very heavy to explain. The complex transformations of western Balkan Countries where the process of democratisation and transformations take place in combination, with nation and state building and EU NATO integrations as most important issues of region. State and nation building of the Western Balkan states occurred with the post-conflict

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transition as well as the transition from communism to democracy, which made the situation very
difficult. The fundamentals of free market, rule of law, democracy political communication,
human rights and freedoms are still being established in these countries. This period of transitions
is overloaded with all criteria posed by the European Union, for countries ambitious to become
members of EU.

The nationalism in Western Balkans had capacity for creation of political elites which
produces nationalism in all newly independent states. After the independence the communist
leaders as well as former democratic dissidents the used nationalism in order to stay in power.
They also postponed the transformation and democratisation of the Western Balkan states.

Most of analyses and studies of the region are focused only in one selective segment of
political situations as specific issues. As results of this reality, there is no complete picture of the
region. Generally speaking, there in Western Balkan the focus of political discourse is on a nation
and state building process, without concentration on real political issues as liberal democracy,
market economy, institutional reforms and reforming policy (adapting EU).

Western Balkans politicians are giving less importance to democratic values and economic
reforms, for them centre of attention of their politics is nationalism and patriotism.
All Western Balkans states where separated from one larger political complex, Yugoslavian
federation, as common state of all nations in western Balkan. Dissolution of Yugoslavian
federation union into smallest pieces, the region was faced with tragedy as results of mutually
antagonist community. After the conflicts an epoch of stabilizations comes, together with
European integration as well as reconciliation projects.

Our goal in this paper is to explain the reasons that led to the complexity in Western
Balkans, and the EU initiatives that were supposed to help in resolving these harmful questions
and to encourage the support of the nations and states of the Western Balkan to the become full
membership in European Union.

The Western Balkan states not only didn’t regulate these divergences, nationalism
discriminations, hate among its citizens but in the contrary they take and support one part. This
improper state policy brought about the questions of legitimacy in citizen’s valuations, creating a
large distinction between state, political elites in one side and its own citizens in another side.

Western Balkans represents the very weak integrated and the most unstable region in
Europe. Based in this connotation, the intention of the European Union is to integrate the region
as soon as possible, and to make Balkan as a political priority for EU.

The leadership, political parties and political elites of Western Balkans have been
unsuccessful, in their mission for improvement of political conditions, or they have been dishonest
or illegitimate. Another problem is public administration, which still is very large and inefficient,
and very expensive, according to this is clear why integration is needed.

This interventions or involvement of a European dimension represents the penetration of
EU policy, into national arenas of policy constructions and political action in every country.

The process of integration and transformation is much broader in practice than in theory.
This situation produces political complexity in the region, but there are more other factors that did
impact on social conditions. As important factor for political complexity we will mention globalization, disintegration of Yugoslavia, organized crime, drugs trafficking and criminal-political ties, transnational crime, cultural globalization and Islam.

2. The Reasons of Socio-political complexity in Western Balkan Countries

2.1 Globalization

One of the most powerful dimensions of complexity is globalization. Thru globalization, as processes of integration of different nations, cultures and civilizations, it is generating a large human connectivity and exchange of stocks, ideas, and other aspects of human life. Globalization has opened limitless open doors for states to develop their lives of their citizens. Released borders, faster communication, civilization, cultural, job and working exchange, free market and others are some, of many, positive characteristics connected to the term “globalization.” But globalization has showed to have its negative side, including, large-scale difference, between reach and poor, social segregation and cultural divisions.

We will elaborate on the multiplication between globalization, wars, organized crime and terrorism. Globalization has brought numerous advantages to the world however has also encouraged certain level of “culture conflict”, social disorder and imbalances.

Such actions have produced to the escalations of wars and conflicts amongst states and different ethnicities. Underground groups and the spread of various interpretation of Islam have additionally been undesirable results of globalization.

This process of globalisation is not a new or simple phenomenon; there are a lot of advances in transportation and telecommunication, specially the rise of the Internet use as major driving tool in promoting interdependence of economic and cultural activities between nations, states and corporations around the world. The Globalization implies the fall and destruction of obstacles and limitations between national division lines or borders and it is making simple the flow of products, assets, thoughts, services, job activities employment etc.

Related with this explanation, in his book Malcolm Waters stressed the definition of Globalization, according to him “Globalization is a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly”

Another very famous sociologist Anthony Giddens talking about Globalisation in his book The Consequences of Modernity, he is stressing that: “Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”.

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But Anthony Giddens also mention that modernity also has its dark side that has become very important in the present century, such as the frequently degrading nature of modern industrial work, the growth of totalitarianism, the threat of environmental destruction, and the alarming development of military power and weaponry. As we can see from the elaboration above globalisation in general around the world is producing a lot changes and impacts, normally these changes had a strong impact in particular aspects in western Balkan countries. One of the greatest impacts of globalisation in Balkan region is transition and transformation of political system from communism to democracy. Thru this transition, Western Balkan states were faced with conflicts and wars and finally the breakdown of Yugoslavia.

2.2 Disintegration of Yugoslavia

The breakdown of Yugoslavia and the process of dissolution of eastern socialist countries, as Soviet Union, the interest for economic, political, social and cultural dealings in one side of the world become very significant for people in other sides of the world. The attraction for profit and development rapidly motivated the flow of stocks and capital across borders. This has brought the ease ways of cross-border transportation and communication.

The dissolutions of The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with highly destructive wars in 1991 culminated in the secession of Slovenia and Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In less than three years, around four million Bosnian citizens were displaced and around two hundred and fifty thousand were killed.

In another part of Yugoslavia during the early 1990s, the Albanians from Kosovo created parallel institutions, in different field of public services such as health care and schools and education. This complex and dynamic situations was very hard to be controlled and managed by central government in Belgrade. Albanians were under hard pressure of Slobodan Milosevic regime, they had no elementary human rights and freedoms in their own state. After 1995 Western Balkan was faced with extreme movement process between the Albanians in Kosovo followed the birth of an underground armed force known as the KLA. The newly born army KLA, started an armed uprising and conflicts against Serbian authorities in period of time from 1998 to 1999.

In one part of former state, the international community and world press, in this time characterized Republic of Macedonia, the Balkan “oasis of peace” because it wasn’t involved in the regional wars. But this peace was broken after the first actions by ethnic Albanians in Macedonia in 2000, mostly along Macedonia’s border with Kosovo. In 2001 the ethnic conflict was intensified leading to Albanian Macedonian conflict in Macedonia. After the conflict in Ohrid, on 8 August 2001 the leadership of Macedonian government and main political parties in Macedonian parliament, signed agreement which aimed to finish the brutal conflict between

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4 S. Lenard J. Cohen, Jasna Dragović-Soso *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration*, 2008 Purdue University Press
Macedonian security forces and armed Albanian fighters in the state. The conflict in 2001 resulted in more than 200 victims, among them civilians in sides, Albanian soldiers and Macedonian defence forces and policemen. The Balkans wars that lasted about a decade (1991-2001) produced a lot of problems and many unwanted implications.

Post conflict environment of political unpredictability social confusion, and economic disorder created attractive situation for the development and stability of corrupt and criminal activities, regularly in the name of “nation building” and “ethnic issues.” Strong ties between political authorities and organized crime additional stimulate the expansion of non-transparent societies and criminalisation of states. The lack of political will to fight organized crime produced non-functional institutions for preventions from criminal activities. The region was faced with other negative factors, such as embargos, unclear immigration regulations, and struggle for better life conditions in the West also influenced to create conditions for criminalisation of Western Balkan societies.

2.3 Transition Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Western Balkan

Fall down of the communism in Eastern Europe brought several reforms to the Western Balkan States. The majority western Balkan states, motivated by the democratic European State, thanks to the rapid social transformations and by destrucions of state authority and power of the state security apparatus, people get lost in different social system. The confusion was about what to accept as their value system, custom, belief, tradition, European law, and popular culture. As results of such situations many people move back to religion and customs to avoid anarchy.

The fast development of Western norms and values in the region caused “culture shock”. The disorganization of society is the essential reason of organized criminal activity. One cultural system is disordered in the sense that there are conflicts between values, norms and beliefs within a wide and dominant culture.

Thru process of westernizations Western societies, directly or indirectly, West impose their influence in Balkans, where is different cultural systems to their own.

Generally speaking, the majority of the countries in the region have no tradition of democratic norms and they have had difficulties in fast adaptations to the new situation. Such condition may have led to the lack of regulations and the enlargement of crime in the Western Balkan.

With phenomenon of globalization, the income from the global criminal economy: including drugs trafficking, and trafficked with human been is very high. As results of the impact from globalization and integration the notion “Western Balkans” became synonym for organized crime, corruption, mixture of state with leading political parties, miss use of state resources, electoral manipulations and other undemocratic behaviours.6

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6 Ognian Shentov Partners in Crime: The Risks of Symbiosis Between the Security Sector and organized crime southeast Europe Center for study and democracy Sofia 2004
In large number of Western Balkans Countries, there was a sentence, even from people with high position in state hierarchy or other officials, they said: “Every country has a mafia, but only in ours does the mafia have a country.” This negative statement is based on the fact that, organized crime in Western Balkans Countries developed through active cooperation with the state interior and legal affairs institutions. Or in different interpretations in most of Western Balkans Countries organised crime is operated and, more deeply, operates through and inside of official state institutions. The most spectacular example of this is in Serbia; where there was a debate about that the criminal organisations were an instrument of Milosevic’s regime, and that it served for his goals in politics, military issues. The tradition for unlawful support between the state security office and organized crime in the period of transition in Western Balkans Countries has his ties before 1989. The poor organisation of communist regime forced the majority of citizens to rely on illegal activities. In this social condition of chaos, the globalization as processes create new forms of integration but they also lead to new forms of socio-political complexity, as a result of contact between norms drawn from different cultural systems.

We are explaining how this social complexity and why increased social mobility, growing inequality has contributed to the increasing number of conflicts, organized crime activities, corruptions etc. Our question isn’t the numerous benefits that globalization has brought to the world’s peoples. But negative aspects of globalization in Western Balkans Countries have led to the development of various deviations and movements for social, political and economic change, as transnational organized crime and terrorist groups should be calculated as a globalization results.

In beginning of nineteen in twenty centuries region was under strong influence of nationalism and conflicts between Balkan nations. The international community did nothing to solve the problem. The first step of international community to the Yugoslavian wars was the arms embargo imposed on all six Yugoslav states in 1992. All this social interaction together with process of globalization the wars and conflicts in the region had powerful influence on the drug trafficking in the Balkans. The road thru Balkan is well known for the trafficking of drugs, mostly after the 1990s. In this roads are involved different type of drugs especially from the eastern countries to European Union. The route is from the East to the West but before realization its final goals it is traveling thru Balkans.

2.4 Socio-political complexity and Islam

Another outcome of globalization and the Yugoslavian wars is the dissemination of different interpretations of Islam in the Balkan region. Western Balkan states were faced with another very important element of political complexity the interpretations of Islam. The Islamic religious groups in one side, with different interpretations of religion believed that Islamic law is a sacred law that should not be subject to interpretation. Strictly speaking, they accept an exact appliance of Sharia law that is mainly centered on Quran and Hadith (words and deeds of the messenger of Allah Muhammad) that left little or no space for reformations inside Islam. This type of commentary of religion was not unique, in other sides in Balkan region there were also present
Islamic thoughts based on liberal interpretations of Islam or traditional exegesis. As results of this process and debates, they did instrumentalization of Islam, as a platform for political ideas and ideologies. Different interpretations often cause frictions between groups inside of the same community. However, for the first time the Islamic movement in the Balkans was associated with the Bosnian conflict (1992-1995).

The embargoes from UN enforce Bosnia and Herzegovina to do alliance with most fundamental states in the world, which supported Bosnia with human resources and money. The greater part of the organizations supplying arms to Bosniaks came from Islamic countries. This is one of the most controversial situations, which demonstrate how much the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, depended on outside support for arms. This situation was consequence from arms embargo imposed to Bosnia by international community. Analyzing about fast growth of numerous criminal markets and extreme Islamic ideologies in the region, in process of transition when democracy came, must be connected with sociological aspects and criminology to explain such actions. In sociology, crime and criminal activity are explained or described as an act or conduct that violates social rules, including a legal rules, laws or informal rules as violence of social norms.

3. Conclusion

As conclusion and taking everything into account, we will say that the social complexity globalisations, social deviations, organised crime, economic stagnations and fail EU-NATO integrations, is real picture of Western Balkan states. The Balkan region is on the terrible situations if we compare with states of European Union. The region is faced with ambition of European Union to safe stability, to create successful and functional democratic societies on a solid road towards EU integration. But difficulties for successful integrations are obvious in all structure of social and political organisations. As we mention in Western Balkan countries the phenomenon of irresponsibility is result of social complexity, wars, transition division of population, wrong interpretation of religion, fake patriotism, incorrect state building etc. Our aim in this paper was to mention that the solution is not in one dimension but is multidimensional and complex.

The security and defence issues of Western Balkans countries must be integrated in international security system (NATO). The reformations of their security institutions and following in their footsteps will be final solutions for Western Balkan region. In other side for economic development and sustainable institutions is needed European Union membership. And finally with integration in EU and NATO maybe there will be bright future for us.

And finally the important key to understanding the relationship of different factors and actors such as globalisation, organised crime, drug trafficking and different interpretations of Islam

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in western Balkan context is fail to hold and understand, the more complex reality of Balkan politics.

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6. Ogniàn Shentov Partners in Crime: The Risks of Symbiosis Between the Security Sector and organized crime southeast Europe Center for study and democracy Sofia 2004