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# EUROPEANIZATION OF THE BALKANS WITHIN AN IDENTITY-BASED FRAMEWORK

ABSTRACT    The process of Europeanization has been traditionally associated with an economic and political transformation, often undermining the value-based residual effects such as the state's or group's acquiescence to take on a European identity. This dual nature of Europeanization is particularly important in the Balkans, where a highly established sense of self is deeply embedded in the fiber of its people. The goal of a unified Europe, and the Balkan ability or even willingness to become "European" is central to this paper's analytical approach. A key facet of Europeanization is to create, promote and, more importantly, sustain a sense of a pan-European identity. However, within multi-ethnic and conflicting environments the idea of a national identity is often irresolute, as in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The paper tries to conceptualize the notion of Europeanization from a firmly identity-based framework, discrediting the essentialist approach to identity formation in favor of a more constructivist model. It argues that the notion of a European identity is in fact a shared social value, rather than a tangible idea easily applicable to every situation, and with the Balkans being a particularly difficult case study. In essence, the underlying question is what does the process of Europeanization really mean and how viable is it in the context of a complex environment such as the Balkans?

**Keywords**: Europeanization, Balkans, nationalism, identity

The Balkans are an area noted for complex notions of often deep nationalism in an environment lacking traditional identity-based boundaries, more often than not, exemplified by conflict, political instability, and arrested economic development. It is a land mystified with taboos, mythical projections of cultures and peoples unknown, ever so removed from the consciousness of an average European. This often isolated and least understood region is returning to the agenda of European politics in the context of the European Union's enlargements initiatives. These efforts also serve as a catalyst for investigating whether Europe, apart from the myriad of benefits associated with EU membership, is also able to inherit the concept of a collective European identity as a residual effect. What does the process of Europeanization really mean and how viable is it in the context of a complex environment such as the Balkans?

Europe is undergoing a legitimacy deficit, and the question of national priorities taking precedence is even more evident in the Balkans. Although geographically belonging to Europe, conceptually there is a significant difference. The social integration of most Balkan countries stricken with ethnical tensions and incapable to process the recollections of the war could be the biggest challenge for the EU. Apart from statehood, the absence of a common language is also an obstacle for the formation of a pan-European identity. The goal of a unified Europe, and the Balkan ability or even willingness to become "European" is central to this paper's analytical approach. A key facet of Europeanization is to create, promote and, more importantly, sustain a sense of a pan-European identity. However, within multi-ethnic and conflicting environments the idea of a national identity is often irresolute, as in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. These states are non-consensual with respect to identity divergence. Ethnically divided groups within these states do not form a collective national identity; adding the European factor into the mix can prove to be erroneous and potentially risky.

This essay hopes to address the current debate on the concept of pan-European collective identity within a Balkan framework. It strives to focus upon in particular on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo in light of existing theoretical frameworks. It tries to argue that the notion of a European identity is in fact a shared social value, rather than a tangible idea easily applicable to every situation. In the Balkans the idea of a collective European identity is a value not broadly shared, but in contrast, the pervasive ideological notions are those of a nation based on collective histories, ethnic bloodlines, language and cultural heritage. It is a unique domain where over centuries blood was spilled and many lives lost in the name of nationalistic creeds. Any attempts of vast and rapid Europeanization efforts will unlikely forge necessary coalitions capable to promote European ideals. Thus, the main question this paper implicitly tries to answer is whether it is possible to weave the concept of Europeanization into the fabric of Balkan cultural domain, and in essence, will there ever be a European identity in the Balkans?

The concept of Europeanization has traditionally been associated with the impact of the European Union on domestic policy, coalescing political, social and economic factors. This phenomenon, however, is much more encompassing and often quite elusive

in its definition as is with regards to its origins. It represents a certain reality, but for the purpose of our discussion, it also embodies a symbolic and even mythical ideological notion. Although the scope of Europeanization is often geographical and process-oriented, its focus has therefore become quite narrow and *de facto* limited to EU. Considering the concept of Europeanization a phenomenon strictly reserved to EU is erroneous on many accounts. Although EU's policy implementation and direction gives the process of Europeanization a certain guided momentum, it has, however, undeniably transcended borders to areas of Europe where membership is still a distant goal, as exemplified by most Western Balkan states, or in a particularly complicated case of Turkey. In fact, defining the merits as well as limitations of this phenomenon, the response is varied. Although scholars such as Claudio Radaelli place the EU center stage in their efforts to formulate a clear definition, stating that Europeanization is a *processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) implementation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things," and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies*,[1] others, such as Laderch include notions of national identity and citizenship to their definition.[2]

More often than not, Europeanization is closely associated with EU's integration and enlargement initiatives, but its concept is far more reaching. Howell discusses the need to treat the idea of European integration separately and differently from Europeanization, although both are naturally interconnected.[3] It is fair to say that scholarly debate has been Euro-centric indeed, focusing on Member States or Prospective Member States' willingness and ability to adhere to EU-directed policies and rules, with Europeanization as an expected consequence or in some respects a unwritten prerequisite. There is a tendency to overlook the binary nature of Europeanization, as it can be said to be a political as well as value-orientated notion. This is exemplified in Olsen's attempt to establish a more precise guideline for how the concept is understood: *(i) Changes in external territorial boundaries. (ii) Europeanization as the development of institutions of governance at the European level. (iii) Europeanization as the central penetration of national and subnational systems of governance (iv) Exporting Europeanization as a form of political organization and governance typical and distinct for Europe beyond the European territory (v) The Europeanization being a political project aimed at intensifying and strengthening the unification of the European Union.*[4] Olsen's classification is re-

1    C.M. Radaelli, 'The Europeanisation of Public Policy' in K. Featherstone, C. Radaelli (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanisation*, Oxford 2003, p. 30.

2    R. Laderch, 'Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1994), pp. 69-88, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1994.tb00485.x>.

3    K. Howell, *Developing Conceptualizations of Europeanization and European Integration: Mixing Methodologies*, 29 November 2002 (*ESRC Seminar Series / UACES Study Group on the Europeanization of British Politics*), at <http://aei.pitt.edu/1720/1/Howell.pdf>.

4    J. Olsen, 'The Many Faces of Europeanization', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 5 (2002), pp. 921-952, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00403>.

inforcing the very notion that Europeanization and European integration are virtually indistinguishable, aimed at creating a political sphere, where by means of integration, power-sharing is established between nation-states and the European center. Furthermore, a political space where the members are in periphery, interconnected by an extensive network of political and economic commitments and regulations is at the core of this phenomenon, but, and for the purposes of this paper, the intrinsically important factor has been left out – the value-oriented aspect of Europeanization. This value-oriented aspect of Europeanization, particularly with respect to identity creation or erosion, rather than consequential political changes, is what concerns us from here on.

European integration etymologically suggests a creation of a European entity, a union of individual parts, or member-states. Europeanization, on the other hand, also concerns itself with the residual value-based effects of creating such a whole. Namely, there is an emphasis on the consequential inter-relationships that are formed, whether it is between individuals, institutions, and other sub-national actors. Moreover, Europeanization is a space-transcending concept, for its reach and influence can certainly be observed outside of its "European" periphery.

In an attempt to analyze the multidimensional aspects of Europeanization, Harmsen and Wilson offer a supplemental discussion that encompasses value-based features of the concept, which includes referrals to reshaping of cultural and national identity.[5] This is critical when analyzing Europeanization processes in areas politically or even geographically considered non-European, such as Western Balkans or Turkey for example. Several Balkan states have already joined the EU, but does an adherence to EU laws, policies and application of political and economic changes within a country's domestic policy, automatically assume the acquisition of European identity? This is probably the most challenging and elusive aspect of Europeanization, especially in a region where nationalism is embedded in the spirit, culture, politics and collective identity of its people. Safeguarding a national identity in the age of globalization can prove to be already quite an indomitable task, but when a people's collective memory has unhealed scars of wars fought, lives lost, blood shed, all in the name of one's religious or ethnic identity, certainly the stakes become much higher. One is forced to ask whether Europeanizing a country, people, or a region with such deeply rooted notions of self is even feasible.

More importantly, Europeanization is a dual process, one that aims to absorb or embed itself in a given cultural, political domain, but it can also be created, amended and filtered by its recipients who might perceive it as an attempt to sabotage their already established and irrefragable identity. A common concern for groups whose notion of self is well defined and deeply internalized is that Europeanizing of their existing ipseity will inevitably portend its replacement with a universal or generic concept. This is particularly alarming when a group's identity is its only source of legitimacy, as is the case with sub-minority populations in Kosovo– Roma, Ashkali, or Gorani – who are not

5    R. Harmsen, T. Wilson, 'Introduction: Approaches to Europeanization', *Yearbook of European Studies*, Vol. 4 (2000), pp. 13-26.

in possession of their very own geographically defined political space as means of actu-alizing their existence, geo-political power, or in this case lack thereof. Europeans see Europeanization, guided by or through European integration, as a mean of cultural and political transformation. It is often times assumed that Europeanization is a direct and immediate result of integration and aims to "Europeanize" the newcomer to become more European. In the Balkans this process isn't that obvious for two reasons. Firstly, because the phenomenon in itself aims to Europeanize a domain, a people, a culture, it firstly assumes to possess an established, even if minimal, sense of "Europeanness", therefore having in essence a supplementary or complimentary effect. There is an as-sumption that the newcomer is already more or less European, as it was perceived for example by absorbing the East into the European Community after the fall of commu-nism; perhaps emerging post-satellite countries like Poland, for instance, were politi-cally and economically feeble or even considered culturally less sophisticated, however historically unequivocally European nonetheless – inherently one of us. The applicabil-ity of the concept of Europeanization of a region that traditionally has been considered non-European, or *Other*, poses serious and challenging obstacles.

These challenges are undoubtedly considerable when dealing with the Balkans, as the region has always and still does today generate an image of the "Other" – an image that is often pejorative in nature. Its inhabitants have come to *denote the parcelization of large and viable political unity but also had become a synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian*.[6] There is an unspoken understanding of European superiority over all that is Balkan. Although geographically inextricably part of Europe, politically and socially its identity is far removed from being European. The notion of *us-versus-them* has been long in the making, argues Maria Todorova, hav-ing *become, in time, the object of a number of externalized political, ideological and cul-tural frustrations and have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and Self-congratulatory image of the "European" and "the west" has been con-structed*.[7] Europeanization would have to replace the phenomenon of Balkanization that Paul Scott Mowrer described as […] *the creation, in a region of hopelessly mixed races, of a medley of small states with more or less backward populations, economically and financially weak, covetous, intriguing, afraid, a continual prey to the machinations of the great powers, and to the violent prompting of their own passions*.[8] The continuous process of Balkanization on a continent that is undergoing Europeanization to many is synony-mous with geopolitical instability, cultural inferiority and, more importantly, perhaps solidifies the belief that the region is not and has never been truly an integral part of Europe, consequently impeding the Europeanization process. This debate can certainly provide an opportunity for testing the potency of Europeanization of those countries in the Balkans who have already joined the Union. Has accession transformed the Eu-ropean imagery of the "Other" inasmuch as the "Other" been able to eliminate itself

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[6]    M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford 2009, p. 453.

[7]    Ibid., p. 455.

[8]    Ibid., p. 34.

of this undesired Balkan identity? Furthermore, because the Balkans are so readily perceived as an outsider, it forces the concept of European identity to be constantly redefined.[9] The ability to provide an outline of how Europeanization contributes to creating this collective identity and whether this European identity can in turn be applied to the Balkans is the essence of this disquisition. For there is a strong conviction that the success of the European project relies on more than just a country's willingness to adhere to imposed political and economic domestic changes, but more importantly Europeanizing the very essence of what it means to be a whole. Samuel Huntington argues this idea by talking about civilizational affiliations, not necessarily driven by politics or economic factors, but affiliations of people based on the common human denominator, stressing the cultural as well as religious homogeneity, rather than integrated markets as the key to a lasting project.[10]

These considerations must now venture deeper into the discourse by examining what truly constitutes an identity. Europeanization of an identity does not occur in a vacuum, and if that is so, what processes actually take place to establish that an identity has been Europeanized? Have Bulgarians, for example, replaced their cultural and historical identity, and therefore severed their ties with Balkan distinctiveness as a result of joining the EU? And more importantly, is this transformation irremeable? Does EU membership somehow shed a Balkan country of its less-than desired Balkan image and perhaps as a result in the eyes of its now *fellow* Europeans wipes the slate clean of the bloody past, economic and cultural inferiority all that easily? Or perhaps Europeanization, if at all possible, is a process that requires far more ambitious efforts and most of all time.

On our continued discourse on Europeanization in the Balkans, with a specific emphasis on identity formation, it is imperative to spend some time thinking about the essence of one's identity and how is it created. If the above mentioned perceptions of the stereotypical putative Balkan imagery are considered, it would be appropriate to deem that the very essence of Balkan identity is therefore essentialist. In the very least, essentialism, as a school of thought that discounts variations in groups and places an enormous emphasis on fixed traits, or their essence, is certainly a concept more often applied to the discussion of the Balkan identity. It is often treated with stereotypical assumptions and presumptions based on historical, ethnic and cultural foundations. Paradoxically enough, let us not overlook the fact that Balkans is a region comprising of various countries, ethnic and religious groups, multiple languages, cultural norms and traditions, and yet its multifaceted and deeply complex nature is all too often genericized. On the other hand, Europeanization certainly aims to do the same by trying to create a collective pan-European identity, but rarely do we minimized the vast ethnic, linguistic and cultural feature of the continent to create a standardized notion of a European identity; perhaps because it does not really exist. Undoubtedly an individual

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[9]     R. Belloni, 'European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Limits', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2009), p. 34.

[10]    S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York 1996.

might consider himself Polish or Norwegian *and* European but also, Scandinavian or Slavic. The question then arises whether foremost, such a classification is even appropriate when dealing with the Balkans.

Interestingly enough, it was a 19th century Serbian geographer, Jovan Cvijić, who reinforced the essentialist approach with regards to the Balkans, by contemplating the idea of *homo balcanicus* characterized by a distinct Balkan *mentalité*.[11] To conceptualize such a notion would essentially mean that 'being' Balkan is an identity that is *sui generis*. An essentialist approach implies a resistance to change, a permanence that adheres to the belief that once an individual or a group, as that of belonging to the Balkans for example, is simply innately constructed as such with a set of characteristics, traits that are almost inherent and therefore unmodifiable. If such logic is followed, one could go as far as attributing the explosion of "ancient hatreds" in Bosnia in the early 1990's as essentially stemming from the Balkan inheritant proneness to violence, and not a direct result of political changes directly resulting from Yugoslavia's dissolution.[12] Moreover, to conclude that Europeanization is virtually impossible, for one must be Europeanized from "birth" and consequently, an individual or group in possession of an already Balkan identity is one whose identity cannot be altered and nor replaced. Moreover, the argument can be elaborated upon even further by solidifying an existing presumption that a Balkan identity is in fact generic, and whether one comes from Albania and is Muslim, he or she is virtually indistinguishable from an individual who speaks Serbian and calls Republika Srpska his home. Fundamentally, this theoretical and categorical approach is deeply fallible and should be discounted entirely.

Fortunately, essentialist approach to identity formation is counteracted by constructivist school of thought. The shortcomings of an essentialist argument are thwarted by constructivists who see identities for instance as outcomes of social, historical and ideological construction. In other words, constructivists see creation, erosion or alteration of identities as being influenced by ever changing processes and are consequently created by social interaction.[13] Constructivists deny the essentialist assertion that an individual or a group is born with a set of characteristics that ultimately shapes a corresponding identity. A regional identity is contingent on social interaction and processes that include, but are not limited to, the synergy amongst various actors as well as exchange of shared knowledge and values. Moreover, in acknowledging that identity is never static, but rather dynamic in its nature, constructivists theorize how identity can actually serve a dual purpose: promote a sense of cohesion with respect to Self and maintain a sense of difference with regard to the Other. In doing so, a construction of the concept of Other versus Self actually has a unifying and solidifying effect on

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[11]   J. Ancel, *Peuples et nations des Balkans. Géographie politique*, Paris 1929; J. Cvijić, *La péninsule balkanique. Géographie humaine*, Paris 1918.

[12]   For further discussion on the concept of "ancient hatreds", please refer to R. West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon. The Record of a Journey through Yugoslavia*, London 1937.

[13]   T.E. Adams, 'Social Constructivist Approach to Political Identity' in R.L. Jackson (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Identity*, Vol. 1, Los Angeles 2010, p. 742.

a group.[14] According to these conceptualizations, regional identity is acquiescent and not permanent, affording Europeanization as a concept considerable merit in its endeavors. The discursive boundaries so often created when dealing with deeply rooted identities as well as cultural and historical representations of Self can in fact be eliminated, or at least lessened with time and increased social interaction. That also might mean that, if constructivist approach is adopted, Europeanization can in fact infiltrate to the core of a group as to effectively reshape and "reprogram" its values, perceptions and ultimately its identity, even in the Balkans where nationalism is exceptionally imbedded. Certainly this remains to be seen.

Balkan identity is far from stagnant and has undergone a series of transformations in response to the historical circumstances and ever-changing political reconfigurations. More importantly, this transformative facet has also been a process of externalization as well as internalization of this identity. Perceptions of what it meant to be Balkan by the outsiders looking in during the Yugoslav hegemony under President Tito were considerably different and perhaps even less disparaging, then the periods following the Federation's dissolution. Europe, although never entirely abandoning its cautious approach towards its southeastern periphery, certainly credited the region with more esteem than its communist counterparts in Eastern Europe under Moscow's steel grip. Despite the considerable disparities with relation to the West, Yugoslavia was nonetheless relatively liberal and considerably far more Westernized than the Eastern European countries behind the Iron Curtain. Where most Soviet satellites were in extreme economic degradation with political and religious expression curtailed and freedom of movement strictly suppressed, citizens of Yugoslavia enjoyed considerable autonomy. In fact, during this period under Tito's direction the region was quite visible in the international relations arena, particularly for its role in the Non-Alignment Movement. This positive imagery of the Balkans, however, underwent a drastic transformation, both externally and internally. To its European audiences, the dissolution of Yugoslavia exposed the inner-demons that have been hiding for decades, neatly safeguarded under the premise of ethnic harmony and solidarity. Internally, each respective unit of once thriving whole had to come to terms with the fact that all their differences that once ago were celebrated and promoted a sense of cohesion, were now the very same characteristics that instilled hatred, paved the way for the unit's disintegration and resulted in unspeakable crimes. The legacy of peaceful multinational existence was once again overshadowed by the depreciatory and stereotypical image of the Balkans becoming permanently embedded in the political discourse of the 1990's. With the onset of the Balkan Wars, the region's identity was once again reinvented, for up until then its defining parameters were quite elusive and less constrained by ethnically-driven features neatly disguised under the verisimilitudes of Yugoslav unity and brotherhood. Sub-identities within the Yugoslav identity were considered ancillary. The cocktail of different religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural components was carefully managed by Tito's state apparatus, and

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14    This solidifying component has its origins in a study of ethnic identity formation by Frederik Barth in his work, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, Bergen–Oslo 1969.

it was only until this apparatus claimed defeat that the turbulent nature of the various Balkan sub-identities found its exodus in the ethnic wars and pro-independence movements that followed suit.

The politics of Balkan identity during this period became highly nationalistic and hostile. Each group aimed to assert its superiority over the other, torn over the conflicting nationalistic aspirations, the generic-nature of "*being Balkan*" was no longer considered complimentary. In fact, ethnically-driven nationalism became a dominant force at this time so much so that countries, like Croatia for instance went as far as trying to politically and culturally remove itself from all that is Balkan. This controversial demarche to align Croatia with Central Europe was endorsed by Croatia's first President Franjo Tuđman.[15] Moreover, post-Yugoslavia realities and the resulting socio-political vicissitudes also created internal rifts. Growing Serbian nationalism gave momentum to events that would ultimately alter Balkan identity as we know it. The duality of the nationalistic fervor within Serbian politics also created what became what Slobodan Naumović described as *two Serbias* – a nationalistic one most associated with patriotic sense of Serbdom, while on the other hand a Serbia who sought its future being part of "Europe".[16] Naumović[17] in his discourse on Serbian identity elaborates on a concept of internal disunity. Although he addresses the concept of disunity within a Serbian context, it can nonetheless prove applicable with other Balkan identities. He outlines four basic features of "narratives of disunity" that often share commonalities with "*ethnic self-stereotyping*": *a) they are publicly shared, b) oversimplified mental images c) that a social group creates about itself, d) in order to differentiate itself from other groups, thus e) upholding a sense of selfsameness and continuity.*[18] Naumović's conceptualization of disunity makes a salient connection to identity formation. Public narratives formulated on the basis of social disunity will subliminally contribute to an enhanced sense of Self within a given ethnic group, and when this sense of Self is exuberated, it automatically accentuates the differences within the Other, consequently having an exclusionary effect. With regards to identity formation or assertion, it categorizes one group versus another, which in term can have complex consequences.

The Balkans are certainly accustomed to dealing with identity-based conflicts. No other value-based element has had such incendiary consequences in region. Moreover, it has always been Europe's concern to maintain security and stability in the Balkans, hence creating socio-political mechanisms aimed at controlling factitious nature of Balkan identity-based politics is absolutely necessary. Europeanization efforts cannot afford to overlook this aspect of Balkan realities. Identity-based politics with regards to

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[15]   W. Bartlett, *Croatia. Between the Balkans and Europe*, London 2003 (*Postcommunist States and Nations*, 16).

[16]   S. Naumović, 'National Identity Splits, Deep Rooted Conflicts and (Non) Functioning States: Understanding the Intended and Unintended Consequences of the Clash between the "Two Serbias"', *CAS Sofia Working Paper Series*, No. 1 (2003).

[17]   Idem, 'On "Us" as "Them": Understanding the Historical Bases and Political Uses of Popular Narratives on Serbian Disunity', *CAS Sofia Working Paper Series*, No. 1 (2007).

[18]   Ibid., p. 6.

EU's enlargement initiatives are particularly significant when dealing with the region's most volatile entities: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo. Both countries lack (ethnic) identity-based comity in almost every sphere of life, with incommiscible ethnic communities living side by side. Both struggle internally with deeply strenuous and conflicting nature of their identity-based politics, and, more importantly, both countries share the alacrity of one day joining the European Union. In our continued analysis of Europeanization as a potential force in coalescing the existing realities with the countries' sanguine aspirations, the question once again arises whether this transformative power is capable of not only assuaging internal conflicts within these countries, but also converting its citizens to appropriate a new sense of European self. The possibility of EU membership to both is surely alluring enough to perhaps implement changes not only in domestic policy but reevaluate historical burdens, ideological convictions in favor of a more prosperous future. Such was the case for most Eastern European countries that joined the EU in both the 2004 and 2007 enlargement initiatives. Almost ten years after the first eastern enlargement, Europeanization efforts, both political and cultural alike (this includes value-based notions such as identity) can be extolled, and considered EU's most successful foreign policy.[19] Geoffrey Pridham[20] discusses the policy of political conditionality and subsequent Europeanization efforts as being highly successful in promoting democracy building initiatives, and human rights protection. In order to consider the feasibility of such success and the level of acquiescing acceptance of a pan European identity establishing a stronghold in both Bosnia and Kosovo, we must spend some time discussing their respective internal composition.

Bosnia is a particularly difficult case-study in analyzing the feasibility of Europeanization on Balkan politics, culture and, most importantly, identity. Its deeply complex, multinational composition complicates EU's maneuverings within its domestic politics. Reaching a consensus on virtually any issue with an external actor, such as the EU, can prove to be highly ambitious as the country foremost lacks an *internal* mutual alliance among its three main ethnic groups. Let us consider the profound impact of Renan's defining parameters which constitute a nation, presented in his lecture delivered in Sorbonne in 1182, as "a soul, a spiritual principle", based upon two things: *One* [that] *lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form* [...] *in possession of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form* [...]. *To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present.* [...] *A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one*

[19]   F. Schimmelfennig, H. Scholtz, 'EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood: Political Conditionality, Economic Development and Transnational Exchange', *European Union Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2007), pp. 187-215, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1465116508089085>.

[20]   G. Pridham, 'Change and Continuity in the European Union's Political Conditionality: Aims, Approach, and Priorities', *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2007), pp. 446-471, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13510340701303303>.

*has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. A nation's existence is, if you will pardon the metaphor, a daily plebiscite, just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life.*[21]

Renan's framework of what constitutes a nation, simultaneously outlining a national identity, is critical in analyzing Bosnia on two accounts. Firstly, if the above decree is to be understood literally, Bosnia is in fact a unique case of a country at its core that cannot be considered a nation per se, at least to its fullest extent. It lacks what Renan referred to as *large-scale solidarity* and the *desire to continue a common life*. On the other hand, Renan's ideas also emphasize the fact that religious affinities, geographical and linguistic considerations are not among the ingredients which constitute a nation.[22] Under such proviso, Bosnia is very much a nation. The dichotomy of Bosnia's internal struggles is critical when adding Europeanization factor into the equation. There is a perhaps an unspoken assumption that a lack of coherent Bosnian identity will facilitate a successful absorption of a European identity instead and with due time, long after eventual accession in to the EU, Bosnia will undergo a process Renan called *collective forgetting*.[23] These assumptions cannot fully become realities, because the hindering element of Bosnian identity-politics is that although three ethnic groups coherently will minimize the existence of a unified Bosnian identity, each one will nonetheless reinforce their respective Serbian, Croat or Muslim identity instead. Bosnian identification politics is governed by principles of irredentism, guided by deep nationalism. Nationalism, in the Balkan context, is *par excellence* related to identity-politics. There is no politics without the identity-based nationalism, Europeanization can therefore be seen as Europe's pragmatic attempt for a solution in the Balkans; an attempt to replace ethno-nationalist agendas in favor of European, multinational democratic policy changes and open market economy. The appeals of Europeanization and the many benefits of EU membership are supposed to bridge the ethno-national divisions and encourage a policy of political rapprochement. Moreover, Bosnia became a candidate country back in 2003 and five years later signed the bilateral Stabilization and Association Agreement, but it is nonetheless far from acquiring membership. Although undoubtedly there are significant changes to domestic policy that brings Bosnia that much closer to realizing its ultimate goal, but the underlying issues remain unsolved. Since the neighboring Croatia joined the EU in July of this year (2013), the sentiment in Bosnia of becoming more European is increasingly discouraging. Although EU's regional approach in the Balkans began immediately after the carnage in 1990's, in reality Europeanization in Bosnia has failed to instill considerable changes. This includes a sense of belonging to Europe. Economic considerations could always act as leverage in promoting a set of ideals, but even within this respect, Bosnia is lagging behind. A recent article published

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[21]    E. Renan, 'What is a Nation?' in H. Bhabha (ed.), *Nations and Narration*, London 1990, p. 9.

[22]    U. Ozkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism. A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke 2010, p. 30.

[23]    E. Renan, 'What is a Nation?', p. 11.

in *The Prague's Post*, a Czech online English-language journal, discussed how Croatia's accession into the EU will negatively impact its neighbor's already weak economy. The failure to meet *the structural reform and harmonization of legislation required to meet stringent EU standards for food exports. In practical terms, this means that Bosnia's farmers and food producers have lost their largest market. More than 22 million Euros of food exports are destined for new EU member Croatia annually. With unemployment already above 40 percent, Bosnia's economy is not in a position to absorb such substantial losses.*[24]

The concluding observation is that regardless of the genuine nature of Europe's approach toward Bosnia and Herzegovina, the politics of Europeanization is still nonetheless ambiguous and weak. The decade-long status quo in the country also deepened Bosnian suspicion of Europe and its credibility in influencing visible changes in the country's dire circumstances. The social, political stability and economic prosperity that was once promised with EU's increased presence in Bosnian politics never came. Except for a number of institutionalized apparatuses, agencies and political appointments, EU's presence has been deemed a failure. Europeanization was not able to instill a sense of calm and assurance, but on the contrary, with a number of its Balkan counterpart's part of Europe or firmly in the negotiation process, Bosnia finds itself in an increasingly delicate and unfamiliar territory. On the one hand, its ethno-politics is consumed with conflict and is blurring the defining parameters of its own internal image, but, on the other hand, there is even no forecast of trading-in its legacy of turbulent ethno-nationalistic creeds in favor of a universal, modern and culturally sound Europe. In the eyes of Bosnia's ruling elites, European integration initiatives outweigh the benefits, as they are seen as a way to undermine their respective political power base. The possibility of joining the European Union has not been a sufficient instrument for the Bosnian politicians to foster and adhere to European values, norms and rules. In essence, Europeanization in the case of Bosnia has actually been counter-productive and ineffective in the EU's policies of rapprochement.

The other case we will now briefly consider is that of Kosovo in light of Europeanization efforts. Europe's initial commitments came about immediately after the 1999 conflict, when the approach drastically changed from only providing humanitarian assistance to the then-province.[25] Under the Stabilization and Association Pact, eventual membership in the EU was an option if a series of institutionalized policy changes were made and requirements fulfilled. Several Balkan countries were able to meet these standards. Kosovo, however, similarly to Bosnia and Herzegovina, has followed a different path. The only difference between the two cases is that Bosnia's failure to comply with EU-mandated changes to integration policies has been lagging behind for much longer than Kosovo's achieving international recognition in February 2008. The country certainly contains aspects of identity-based politics, but it has been referred to as

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[24]   H. Salem, 'Croatia Joining the EU, Cuts off Bosnia Food Exports', *The Prague Post online*, 10 July 2013, at <http://www.populari.org/files/docs/204.pdf>.

[25]   T. Boerzel, 'Transformative Power Europe? The EU Promotion of Good Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood' in *ERD Workshop "Transforming Political Structures: Security, Institutions and Regional Integration Mechanisms"*, Florence 2009.

a "hybrid" of two political regimes, neither democratic nor authoritarian.[26] Its internal identity can also be a hybrid of sorts, for although the term Kosovar theoretically defines a citizen of the country, it is a term mostly associated with the Albanian majority. A Serbian minority in any of Kosovo's enclaves would unequivocally deny any identity-based association with Pristina. Hence, once again the same questions and concerns dealt with Bosnia apply in Kosovo as well. Perhaps Kosovo's nascent identity can actually prove to be an asset when it comes to Europeanization efforts. Perhaps Kosovo can learn from the mistakes of its Balkan neighbors and acquiesce to EU's demands in hopes of reaching Europe faster. This certainly remains to be seen.

Certainly, the initial stages of forming a new collective identity for the Balkans in an effort to bring the region closer to Europe have begun to crystallize, but the road is nonetheless arduous. Europeanization in the Balkan context, especially with regards to identity formation is certainly a process that undeniably is destined over the *longue durée*. Furthermore, even of all Balkan countries eventually join the EU, this in itself does not necessarily minimize the potency of each respective national identity, nor does it guarantee their potential dissolution or transformation into an exclusively European one. The blueprint for successful integration of the Balkans in the EU, as well as the simultaneous promotion of a universal European identity is contingent upon cultivating a political climate that shifts away from the repetitive practice of analyzing the Balkans through a Western perspective. Furthermore, the existent "*Us versus Them*" paradigm so often applied to the discourse on the region, whether from a political or cultural standpoint, only acerbates the already fragile and often misunderstood relationship between Europe and its Balkan periphery. Europeanization process in all of its aspects cannot be fully realized, if the approach undertaken promotes the pejorative elements of what means to be Balkan, while simultaneously underlining the superiority of retaining a European identity and worldview. It is important to consider that European Union, at least in principle, cannot be treated as such – a union of parts within the continent of Europe – unless it incorporates *all* of the parts that make it a whole. This unequivocally includes Southeast Europe.

Indisputably, the EU has undertaken considerable action to bridge the regional divide and move that much closer towards an eventual complete integration. The approach, however, has been in favor of conditionality, a policy that can be viewed as restrictive rather than a policy that encourages the process of integration. This is particularly important when dealing with fragile Balkan states, as although for the most part the benefits of membership are enticing, they do come with a price. An example of EU's Europeanization efforts is the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, however, in practice its mandate has fallen short of its ambitious endeavors. Instead, Europeanization process with all-encompassing elements – political, cultural, and economic – especially in the Balkans, should be undertaken with utmost care while recognizing that the process will require considerable time and more importantly the level of success will

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[26]    L. Diamond, 'Thinking about Hybrid Regimes', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2002), pp. 21--35, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.2002.0025>.

vary from country to country. Furthermore, unlike assessing the state's motivation for "becoming" European based solely on purely economic benefits, as can be for example conceptualized by the rationalist bargaining theory, the concept of becoming European based on value-based, identity framework is, in the author's opinion, something entirely different. Undeniably, the economic benefits of joining the EU far outweigh the potential disadvantages, but the concluding assessment rests upon the belief that replacing or even diluting a Balkan identity in favor of a pan-European identity cannot be automatically assumed nor expected. On the contrary, a deeply embedded sense of self, based on ethnicity, religious and cultural norms and traditions, history, particularly in the Balkans cannot be so easily transformed. Perhaps in the context of Balkan reality, Europeanization can only go so far; it can contribute to bringing about political and economic changes, but the value-oriented elements such as one's identity and respective affiliations will be left in most part unaffected.

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