INTERPLAY OF MODERNISM AND NATIONALISM: UNRESOLVED TENSIONS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the interplay of Modernism and Nationalism in Southeast European recent history. While elaborating the roots of ethnic nationalism this paper tends to elaborate the tensions and the continues problematics of the region. From the 19th-century emergence of nationalism to the contemporary disaster challenges in Western Balkan situation, the examination navigates from historical perspective, with a broad focus on the complexities that have impacted the conflicts and continue to influence the present. The Balkans, well known for its multicultural mosaic, cops with the consequences of ethno-nationalism politics, influencing both the retrojection of nation-states and deepening differences among ethnic groups. Focused on the recent impact, particularly in the Western Balkans, the paper reveals how ethnic nationalism is a major and the ideology that continues to shape political discourse and societal attitudes. Through different empirical evidence, the paper highlights the mixed ways in which ethnic nationalism remains at the top in influencing political agendas and collective awareness. The exploration is based more in the acknowledgment of recent challenges, paying attention to all the historical legacies to pave the way for a more harmonious and inclusive future in the Western Balkans.

Key Words: The Balkans Nationalism, Modernism, Unresolved Tensions, Multiethnic Societies Contemporary Impact

MODERNİZM VE MİLLİYETÇİLİK ARASINDAKİ ETKİLEŞİM: GÜNEYDOĞU AVRUPA'DA ÇÖZÜMLENMEMİŞ GERİLİMLER

Özet

Bu çalışma, Güneydoğu Avrupa tarihinde Modernizm ve Milliyetçiliğin karmaşık etkileşiminin izini titizlikle sürmektedir. Şoven milliyetçiliğin köklerini araştıran çalışma, bölgeyi karakterize eden çözülmemiş gerilimleri ve ısrarlı istikrar arayışlarını ortaya çıkarıyor. Milliyetçi coşkunun 19. yüzyılda ortaya çıkışından Batı Balkan siyasetindeki çağdaş zorluklara kadar, inceleme tarihsel dönüm noktalarında gezinerek çatışmaları körükleyen ve bugünü şekillendirmeye devam eden karmaşıklıklara ışık tutuyor. Farklı kültürel mozaiğiyle tanınan Balkanlar, hem ulus-devletlerin oluşumunu etkileyen hem de etnik gruplar arasında bölünmeyi teşvik eden etno-milliyetçiliğin sonuçlarıyla boğuşuyor. Özellikle Batı Balkanlar'daki güncel etkilere odaklanan bu çalışma, etnik milliyetçiliğin siyasi söylemi ve toplumsal tutumları nasıl şekillendirmeye devam ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, ampirik kanıtlar ve vaka çalışmaları aracılığıyla, milliyetçiliğin siyasi gündemleri ve kolektif bilinci etkilemeye devam ettiği nüanslı yolları

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vurgulamaktadır. Araştırma, Güneydoğu Avrupa'da daha uyumlu ve kapsayıcı bir geleceğin önünü açmak için tarihsel mirasların dikkatli bir şekilde incelenmesi çağrısında bulunarak, köklü zorlukların kabul edilmesiyle sonuçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Balkan Milliyetçiliği, Modernizm, Çözülmemiş Gerilimler, Çok Etnikli Toplumlar, Çağdaş Etki.

Introduction

In the most complex of Southeast European history, the interplay of Modernism and Nationalism has seen a complex story of unresolved problems and a persistent way to the final destination which we all call stability. This paper aims to elaborate the chauvinistic ethnic nationalism that has both shaped and been shaped by the historical evolution of the Balkans, examining its contemporary impact and consequences. The region has long been a crucible of multiethnic societies, and this study navigates the intricate terrain of the ongoing impact of ethnic nationalism in Western Balkan politics.

The title of this paper sums up what we want to explore: "Balkan Nationalism: Threads of History, Weaves of Modernity". As we embark on this journey, it is crucial to understand the historical underpinnings of nationalism in Southeast Europe. The confluence of modernist ideas and nationalist fervour has left an indelible mark on the region, with unresolved tensions that have persisted over time. We begin by exploring how these two forces, modernism and nationalism, have shaped the socio-political landscape, leaving a complex legacy that continues to influence contemporary dynamics.

To understand the roots of instability and discord in the region, the historical development of chauvinist nationalism in the Balkans serves as a crucial backdrop. Our goal is to trace the origins of these complex issues that fueled historical conflicts and continue to overshadow the present. The Balkans, a region of rich diversity, is grappling with the consequences of ethno-nationalism, which is leading to the formation of national states while at the same time fostering inter-ethnic cleavages.

We then focus on the contemporary impact of chauvinist nationalism, examining how it manifests in the contemporary sociopolitical landscape. The consequences of these historical strands are far from being limited to the past, but continue to shape political debate, governance structures and inter-ethnic relations today.

Our particular focus is on the Western Balkans. Here, the enduring influence of ethnic nationalism continues to play a central role in shaping political decisions and social attitudes.

This article seeks to contribute to the differentiated understanding of the complex relationship between modernity and nationalism in Southeast Europe. We hope to illuminate the path to a more cohesive and inclusive future for the

Balkans by shedding light on unresolved tensions and the ongoing quest for stability. It seeks to unravel the threads of Balkan nationalism and to recognize the complexity that has shaped its past and continues to shape its present and future.

In the course of this research, it is clear that the challenges posed by jingoistic nationalism are deeply rooted and go beyond mere historical analysis. Understanding how these ideologies have evolved historically is as complex as unraveling their current effects on a region's social and political fabric. The Balkans, a diverse cultural mosaic, is both enriched and burdened by the legacies of nationalism, legacies that need to be closely examined in order to pave the way for a more harmonious cohabitation.

From the fragmentation of Yugoslavia to the challenges of state-building and identity construction in the post-Cold War era, we examine the various manifestations of nationalism in the modern era. As a geopolitical crossroads, the Balkans are fertile ground for the study of the interplay between national identity, ethnicity, and political power. This paper will explore how these ideologies interact with contemporary political developments and societal dynamics, navigating the shifting landscapes of nationalism in various Balkan states.

We aim to elucidate the nuanced ways in which nationalism continues to shape political agendas and influence collective consciousness in the Balkans through the analysis of case studies and empirical evidence. We will also examine how nationalism affects regional stability, diplomatic relations, and prospects for reconciling historical grievances.

In conclusion, "Balkan Nationalism: Threads of History, Weaves of Modernity' seeks to unravel the complexity of nationalism in Southeast Europe, recognizing its historical roots while critically examining its contemporary manifestations. We aim to contribute to the discourse on promoting stability and inclusiveness in the region by understanding the threads that weave the historical tapestry of the Balkans. This paper is an important contribution to a growing body of scholarship on Balkan nationalism, which can help guide politicians, academics, and international actors as they confront future challenges and opportunities.

1. **Interplay of Modernism and Nationalism: Unresolved Tensions and the Pursuit of Stability in Southeast Europe**

The complex and the interplay of modernism and nationalism in Southeast Europe, nationalist ideals, which often emphasized different ethnical identities, cultural and political eloquences, interacted with the effects of the modernist movement-characterized by a rejection of tradition, a push for innovation, and the encouragement of critical thinking. A fascinating journey from the antique period to Otoman empire to Yugoslavia and to the recent cultural, political, and social transformations. The Journey of Modernism and Nationalism in Southeast Europe it's a broad window where

we shape the identity, consciousness, and destiny of - Western Balkan or as I will refer in the paper as the Southeast European – countries in this part of the world by these forces.

Instead of moving forward in line with other European countries the Southeast European countries continuously felled behind. Countries always aimed for an integration to the EU system but consistently kept the status quo in terms of regaional problems, which posed extensive thread toward the path to the EU (International Commision in the Balkans, 2005, pp. 10-14). The current situation is not only unsustainable. It's in danger of plunging the region into a new phase of dangerous volatility. Every single strategy that tried to prevail economic and social problems and neglect unresolved status issues have been ineffective (International Commision in the Balkans, 2005, pp. 10-14).

One of the critical decisions sparking the resurgence of nationalism in the Balkans, which led to devastating wars, was made by the Serbian Assembly in March 1989 (Oliver, 2005, p. 4). The Assembly rescinded the political autonomy granted by Tito to the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Now, with the votes from these provinces under his control, and guaranteed support from Montenegro, Milosevic commanded four of the eight votes in the Federal government. By reducing Macedonia to a vassal state, he was able to manipulate the Federal Constitution at will and consolidate Serbia's dominance across Yugoslavia (Oliver, 2005, pp. 3-7). Out of a total of 170,000 people, 115,000 were dismissed from their jobs, according to the independent Kosovo Albanian Trade Union Association (Oxford University Report, 2000, pp. 16-17). More critically, there were widespread human rights violations. These included arbitrary arrests, torture, and detention without trial. Albanians were accused of 'oral offences' and taken to police stations for 'information interviews'. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Kosovo Human Rights Council have documented such violations (Oxford University Report, 2000, pp. 16-17).Some believe that the wars in the region, particularly in Bosnia, were an inevitable historical outcome, arising from deep-seated religious and ethnic resentments that were repressed under Tito but erupted into violence after his death (Oliver, 2005, p. 3). As the remnants of communist structures metamorphosed into new political entities, established elites managed to weather the regime change, converting their prior influence into new political and economic dominance (Elbasani, 2013, pp. 9-10). Specifically, The break-up of Yugoslavia is notable for the way in which its leaders fanned the flames of extremism as a strategy for holding on to power, often whthout an opposition In which could have offered at least an alternative (Elbasani, 2013, pp. 9-10). The region's continued lack of modernization is largely due to this manipulated nationalism and power retention tactics. In spite of the changing political landscape, the region has struggled to become fully integrated into the modern world. With old structures holding sway, the necessary reforms to modernize the country were slow-and sometimes non-existent. The result has been stagnation and a degree of isolation from the progressive changes taking place elsewhere in the world.

The countries of the Western Balkans faced the challenge of building national identities based on universal principles of democracy, human rights, and free market economy after the 1990s, a period marked by the peak of ethnic-based

nationalist politics that led to several wars and skirmishes (Nordman, 2016, p. 151). These countries, supported by international organizations such as the European Union, have attempted to address this challenge. Significant obstacles remain, however, despite these efforts.

It's important to note, however, that despite having moved forward, the Region continues to face significant challenges. While the status quo has been relatively stable, it still carries within it the seeds of fragility and potential disruption. Kosovo and Bosnia, for example, remain sensitive and unresolved issues. They often teeter on the brink of instability. The atmosphere remains tense as Serbia continues to take an aggressive stance toward Kosovo. In Macedonia, the current fragile peace is threatened by the persistence of ethnic divisions. It underscores the need for continued vigilance and pro-active engagement to ensure that these issues are addressed in an appropriate manner in order to secure lasting peace and stability.

2.   Chauvinistic Nationalism in the Balkans: Historical Evolution and Contemporary Impact

The influence of nationalism on worldwide peace and stability is a complex and contentious topic, often resulting in two starkly contrasting standpoints. Some perceive nationalism as a crucial foundation for ensuring tranquility and security, whereas others contend that it is fundamentally warlike and imperialistic. These differing viewpoints can be traced back to the ambiguous ideological nature of nationalism and its integration with other political philosophies, giving rise to various conflicting nationalist ideologies (Heywood, Political Theory and Introduction, 2015, p. 97). Expansive nationalism espouses the notion of a The tail-end of the 19th century underscored the antagonistic facet of nationalism, as European powers vied for African territories, seeking national prominence and their so-called 'rightful place' in the world. This form of nationalism became associated with militaristic administrations during the 20th century, notably Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the Japanese Empire (Heywood, Political Ideologies and Introduction, 2017, pp. 250-251) and also here could be included and the Balkans countries of Albania (Greater Albania), Bulgaria (Greater Bulgaria), Croatia (Greater Croatia), Hungary (Greater Hungary), Romania (Greater Romania) and Serbia (Greater Serbia).

The birth of nationalism and formation of nation states in the Balkans presented a challenging contrast to the deep-rooted traditions and daily experiences of the majority of its people. The rise of nationalism and the establishment of states in the region, following the decline of the Ottoman Empire's influence in the 18th century, were often accompanied by ethnic cleansing (Carmichael, 2002, p. 12). The inability of the diverse nations in the Balkans to work together and the enduring historical animosities that divide them can be traced back to the advent of nationalism and contemporary interpretations of historical occurrences.

This is because the geographical distance from the cradle of nationalism seemed to correlate with a distortion in its original form. Even the core concepts of nationalism such as a constitution, freedom, or republicanism were seen to

have distinct interpretations in the more easterly regions of Europe. Those brought up in the Orthodox world, untouched by the scientific revolution, renaissance, reformation, or enlightenment, were naturally inclined to ascribe unique meanings to the principles of nationalism (Sugar, 1995, p. 8).

The first seeds of nationalism in the Balkans were brought over from Western and Central Europe, often through historical and ethnographic works penned by local scholars about their own communities. The concept of Herderian cultural nationalism, which hunderscored inherent and, by implication, political connections among speakers of the same language, was introduced by several prominent intellectuals towards the end of the 18th century and the start of the 19th century. This notion was advanced significantly through the work of Jernej Kopitar, the imperial librarian of the Habsburg empire (Carmichael, 2002, pp. 12-13). Clerics and entrepreneurs were among the first in the Balkans to broach the topic of nations and nationalism in the modern context (Sugar, 1995, p. 9). However, the process of documenting popular knowledge became deeply intertwined with the 'fabrication' or reshaping of national identities in the Balkans. Other Balkan communities, like the Bulgarians and Albanians, began to delve into their medieval or other historical origins from the 18th century onwards, leading to an alignment primarily based on national rather than regional or dynastic affiliations (Carmichael, 2002, pp. 12-13). Shaped by local As the Ottoman Empire weakened, new ideas, including nationalism, began to take root. It allowed local intellectuals and leaders to conceive and foster an ethnic identity beyond traditional religious or local identities. Rather than simply imitating Western ideologies, Balkan nationalism was a complex and adaptive response to internal and external changes. These distinct developments of nationalism contributed to the historical development of the region and continue to shape the socio-political landscape of the Balkans today.

Nationalism in the Balkans has often been closely associated with chauvinism. The moment the concept of the nation-state started to resonate in this region, most Balkan people perceived it not as the rule of a majority ethnic group within a given territory, but as an exclusionary principle aimed at other ethnic components (Sahara, 2001, p. 129). This version of nationalism usually expresses itself through ideologies of ethnic or racial dominance, thus intertwining nationalism and racialism. Through a chauvinist's lens, their own people are viewed as unique, special, or even 'chosen', while other groups are considered weak, inferior, hostile, or even threatening. (Heywood, Political Theory and Introduction, 2015, p. 98).

An extreme instance of this can be seen in the nationalism that soured the relationships among Balkan nations in 1848 and has shaped their relations ever since. An egocentric, superior form of nationalism made interactions among the future Yugoslav nations challenging. The Serbs, proud of their won independence war, believed themselves to be the rightful leaders of all South Slavs. However, their western neighbors did not share this perception, viewing the Serbs as problematic, uneducated, and lacking finesse (Sugar, 1995, p. 12). The first Serbian uprising offered a clear demonstration of this tendency. Starting in 1807, they began to assault other Muslim groups. Hence, from their

inception, national movements in the Balkans incorporated ideologies of chauvinism and ethnic cleansing, and subsequent developments of nationalism have done little to alter this characteristic (Sahara, 2001, pp. 129-130).

Ilija Garasanin (1812-1874) exemplifies Balkan nationalism, having laid the groundwork for the policy of Greater Serbia. It seemed that Nikola Pasic (1845-1926), the then Serbian Prime Minister, had abandoned this policy when he signed the Korfu agreement on 20 July 1917, leading to the creation of Yugoslavia (Sugar, 1995, p. 12). However, Garasanin's idea, aimed at unifying Bosnia, Southern Serbia, and the Republic of Kosovo in an effort to restore the medieval Serbian state, did not take into account the rights of the non-Serbian population in those areas (Sahara, 2001, s. 129-130). And as a result, the nationalists in Yugoslavia argued that previous regime had betrayed the principal national goals of their respective nations and thereby lost the right to rule over that particular nation (Pavkovic, 2000, pp. 85-86).

Another example of Serbian ethnic nationalism leading to atrocities occurred with the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The Bosnian genocide erupted during this period, when Serbian nationalist forces, driven by a vision of a Greater Serbia, committed mass murder and ethnic cleansing against Bosnian Muslims, resulting in devastating casualties. Similarly, a grave humanitarian crisis marked by widespread violence and the displacement of large numbers of people resulted from the escalation of tensions between Serbia and Kosovo. These cases underscore the need for reconciliation and a more inclusive understanding of nationhood and highlight the enduring and pernicious effects of chauvinistic nationalism in the Balkans.

3. The Complexity and Consequences of Nationalism in Multiethnic Societies

National identity began to take shape as a political issue with the advent of national sentiment, which originated locally during the late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period amidst confrontations with superior authorities or nearby administrations. These national sentiments were reformed from the late eighteenth century onwards and throughout the nineteenth century, coinciding with the emergence of the modern nation-state. Despite many nation-states having a rather erratic territorial history and best characterized as unintentional entities, there was a felt need for a logical territory—a homeland—for a well-defined community (Renes, 2022, pp. 5-6). Citing Smith (2010, 13), Alaranta defines a nation as a "designated human community living in a perceived homeland, possessing shared myths and history, a distinct public culture, and shared laws and customs for all members" (Alaranta, 2015, p. 15). Further, Alaranta adds another definition of national identity, describing it as "the ongoing regeneration and reinterpretation by the members of a national community of the array of symbols, values, myths, memories, and traditions that constitute the unique heritage of nations, and the varying identification of individual members of that community with that heritage and its cultural components" (Alaranta, 2015, p. 15). Essentially, national identity represents a continuous societal struggle over the power to delineate who "we" are as a nation (Alaranta, 2015, p. 15).

In every nation, regionalism posed a challenge to nationalism, as regional factions perceived themselves as distinct from the overall nation, creating their own emblems, anthems, and other symbols (Renes, 2022, pp. 7-9). The establishment of nation-states was a process of nation-building where these emergent entities delineated themselves along ethnic lines, primarily based on language and religion. The concept of ethnicity itself became more rigidly defined in the context of burgeoning nationalism (Renes, 2022, p. 7). For an extended period, ethnicity was a vague concept associated with language, religion, lineage, territory, and economy (Renes, 2022, p. 7). As per Bereketeab, national identity signifies feelings, awareness, cognition, belonging, and commonality that foster the desire to live collectively (Bereketeab, 2017, pp. 6-16.). While "state" denotes political organization, "nation" denotes consciousness and sentiment. (Bereketeab, 2017, pp. 6-16.). National identity and the state are inextricably linked. Each influences the other. State institutions and policies typically reinforce a nation's identity, which derives from shared history, beliefs, values, and symbols. On the other hand, the development and evolution of national identity can also be shaped by the nature of the state - its political structure, governance mechanisms, and policies. For example, the state may be a promoter of certain cultural practices, languages, or historical narratives, all of which can reinforce national identity. Conversely, by promoting social cohesion and a shared sense of purpose among citizens, a strong, unified national identity can contribute to the stability and legitimacy of the state. In multi-ethnic societies, the relationship between national identity and the state may be more complicated. The promotion of particular cultural practices, languages or historical narratives can lead to tensions and conflicts between different ethnic groups. When the state promotes one culture or ethnic group over others, this may lead to feelings of alienation or marginalization among those groups that do not identify with the culture being promoted. The state can disrupt interethnic harmony and fuel tensions by emphasizing a particular ethnic identity at the expense of others. The role of government in these societies should ideally encourage mutual respect and understanding between different ethnic communities, promoting multiculturalism and inclusiveness and not favour one group against another.

The process of reconstructing national identity is not a task solely for the political elite; it should encompass all societal sectors. A successfully redefined national identity must mirror the richness and variety of its constituent identity groups, requiring a blend of grassroots and top-down strategies, the acknowledgment of grievances, the fulfillment of aspirations, and the making of compromises (Bereketeab, 2017, p. 14). In addition, the process of national identity transformation is a complex undertaking. In multi-ethnic societies, the creation of a cohesive national identity becomes a daunting challenge if the strategy adopted is not inclusive, if it fails to involve all ethnic groups in the construction of national identity. This lack of inclusiveness and respect for all ethnic groups could be a serious threat to the functioning of the state and could even lead to ethnic conflict. Such conflicts may lead to a rise in ethnic nationalism and create deep social cleavages. For this reason, the importance of an inclusive approach to the politics of the reconstruction of the national identity cannot be overemphasized. The state could emphasize a more pluralistic approach to national identity rather than advocating a singular national identity. Instead of advocating a single national identity, the state could emphasize a more pluralistic approach to national identity. Such an approach can be helpful in the management

of inter-ethnic relations, the prevention of conflict, and the promotion of a sense of belonging and unity among all citizens, regardless of their ethnic background.

The complexity of managing national identity in a multiethnic society is illustrated by the case of post-independence North Macedonia. After gaining independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, North Macedonia struggled to define its national identity in the midst of a diverse population. In addition to the Macedonian majority, there is a significant ethnic Albanian community.

Present-day political climates place significant emphasis on economic stability, especially in the shaping of national identity within multiethnic societies. The competitive nature of environments, coupled with territorial variations in value chains, as well as challenges posed by automation and intelligent machines, have all contributed to perceived and actual economic disparities. These factors also create uncertainty about the stability of both the economy and personal circumstances (Panzera, 2022, pp. 28-29). Moreover, in states that are not multiethnic, the rise of nationalist and populist parties is generally more beneficial. Recognizing and building national identity, coupled with consensus and support for nationalist and populist parties, risks posing serious threats to democracy. The emerging trend in multi-ethnic societies is the attempt to forge an economic identity and to refrain from aggressive nationalism and populism among different ethnicities. The emerging trend in multiethnic societies is to embrace an economic identity, moving away from aggressive nationalist and populist policies among different ethnic groups, and focusing on shared economic goals and prosperity to promote unity and peace and reduce the likelihood of conflict and divisiveness.

In multiethnic societies that could form an economic identity could also result on a solid attachment to places facilitates inter-actions among territorial actors that don't necessarily speak the same language but are interested in the proper functioning of their economic systems and, therefore, identify the opportunity of making exchanges and trades establishing communication codes, conditions for reliability, alliances, partnerships and collaborations (Panzera, 2022, pp. 28-30.). Overall, the North Macedonian experience underscores the importance of promoting inclusiveness, respect for cultural diversity and careful management of interethnic relations in multiethnic societies. Although the definition of national identity is a complex process, if handled sensitively, they show the potential for making a positive contribution to social cohesion and stability.

4. Ongoing Impact of Ethnic Nationalism in Western Balkan Politics

Ethnic communities often find themselves both as victims and as perpetrators of violence in the state's context. It's not unusual to witness the emotive potency of xenophobic movements in even the most progressive modern societies. To comprehend how identity can be exploited and why threats to identity can incite the fiercest and most violent defenses of selfhood, we must examine the relationship between individual psychological identity constructs and the intermediating forces of culture, leadership, and history (Wilmer, 2002, pp. 21-22). The shift towards democracy in the Western Balkans was marred by a surge of violence, and it was not only the advocates of ethnic cleansing who resorted to aggressive actions. With the escalating desire to accumulate as much as possible for oneself and one's loved

ones, people began to exhibit less concern for the rights and interests of others, leading to increasingly reckless behavior (Kecmanovic, 2002, pp. 3-5).

Even though contemporary Western Balkan nations seemingly adopt certain liberal institutions, the prevailing political paradigm is fundamentally non-liberal. This is illustrated by the predominance of nationalism as the core ideological bedrock of the state and the political-economic practices primarily aimed at enriching a small coterie of nation-building elites (Mujanovic, 2018, p. 9) To put it simply, ethnic nationalism has been a fundamental and constructive component of the flexible authoritarianism exhibited by the Balkan elites. In these nations, ethnicity is seen as the pivotal and sole basis for social cohesion, thereby making it the only relevant category of identity (Mujanovic, 2018, p. 10). The imprint of ethnonationalism is characterized by myths, collective memories, value systems, and traditions unique to each national group in the Western Balkans. These are further complemented by conducive external conditions, an individual's personal predilection towards similar ethnonationalistic behavior, and a group mentality that is universally observed (Kecmanovic, 2002, pp. 69-70). It's clear that the nations of the region continue to draw on ethnic identities to reinforce their borders, and that these identities are often used as political tools to shape policy. Ethnonationalist rhetoric continues to influence domestic and foreign policy, which is a source of tension and has the potential to further destabilize the region.

It's been observed that in the 1980s, with mounting pressures for democratization, astute politicians realized that they needed public support to maintain power. The most accessible source of support for these politicians came from nationalism, and consequently, in each republic, the most influential political parties that emerged were established based on ethnic affiliation (Dzalto, 2018, pp. 1-52) Nationalism in the Balkans isn't an inherent occurrence, but rather, a strategically designed political agenda by the elite. When nationalism became a state-endorsed program, it began to address the tangible material and economic grievances of the general population. This was because the new elites started to divert class resentments and funnel these grievances into reactionary ethnonationalism, as a means to legitimize their rule (Mujanovic, 2018, pp. 21-29). Interethnic tensions and conflicts have often been exacerbated by the diversion of socioeconomic grievances into ethno-nationalist sentiments. The result has been the creation of a social and political climate in which identity is linked to ethnicity, which in turn has been the cause of deep divisions between different ethnic groups. The result has often been an obstacle to dialogue and cooperation, and the creation of a cycle of mistrust and hostility that is difficult to break.

The inaugural large-scale display of nationalism in post-Tito Yugoslavia was the Albanian uprising of 1981. What began as a response to socio-economic concerns swiftly transitioned into a political rebellion, advocating for a reformation of Kosovo's status within the Yugoslav federation (Dzalto, 2018, p. 79). Within the republics, the relationship between majority and minority groups exposed several potential fractures: perceived or actual discrimination against minorities, a propensity for majority rule and office holding to align with ethnic demographics,

and a minority population large enough to sustain a critical or dissenting political voice, yet insufficient to translate political demands into policy shifts (Wilmer, 2002, p. 42).

As ethnic nationalism took center stage, notably during the 1990s wars, the new regimes endorsed fresh heroic cults such as ethnic paramilitary leaders, adventurers, ordinary criminals freed from foreign prisons to become political figures or patriotic combatants in the Balkan wars, political firebrands, and gangsters turned-war criminals (Abazovic & Velikonja, 2014, pp. 97-98). These individuals were glorified by the state-controlled media as great patriots. The new heroic cults even celebrated gangsters and former regular criminals transformed into war criminals, but promoted by state propaganda as heroes of what was depicted as liberation wars (Abazovic & Velikonja, 2014, pp. 97-98). It is broadly concluded that ethnic intolerance escalated in Croatia and most other regions of former Yugoslavia post-war. It may initially seem that Kosovo and Macedonia offer supportive evidence for the ethnic hatred theory, given the already high levels of intolerant attitudes in these regions in 1990 (Sekulic, 2014, pp. 49-50). Macedonia created discontent among its significant Albanian community when it adopted its first constitution, which identified the Macedonian people as the state-forming nation. They feared that their rights and participation in Macedonian society might be limited.

Conclusion

Our research has uncovered an intricate tapestry of the interplay between modernism and nationalism as we have traced the intricate threads of Balkan nationalism throughout history. Our journey has traversed the historical milestones that have left an indelible mark on the region, from the early stirrings of nationalist fervor in the nineteenth century to the contemporary challenges shaping the politics of the Western Balkans.

As a backdrop, we uncovered the roots of instability and discord in the historical development of chauvinistic nationalism in the Balkans. By understanding the roots of these ideologies, our goal has been to illuminate the complexity that has fueled historical conflicts and continues to overshadow the present. The Balkans, with their richly diverse cultures, are grappling with the consequences of ethno-nationalism, which both fosters fragmentation among their various ethnic groups and shapes the formation of their national states.

We then moved on to focus on the contemporary impact of chauvinistic nationalism, examining how it manifests in the contemporary socio-political landscape. The consequences of historical strands remain, shaping political discourses, governance structures, and interethnic relations in the contemporary period. Our research focused on the Western Balkans. Here, the lingering influence of ethnic nationalism plays a central role in shaping political decisions and societal attitudes.

In the course of our research, it became clear that the challenges posed by chauvinistic nationalism are deeply rooted and go beyond mere historical analysis. The complexity lies not only in understanding the historical development of

these ideologies, but also in unraveling their ongoing impact on the region's sociopolitical fabric. These legacies need to be examined in order to pave the way for a more harmonious way of living.

The chapters that followed the introduction explored the impact of these historical legacies on the current state of affairs by delving into specific historical milestones that have shaped Balkan nationalism. Each era left its mark on the region, influencing not only political structures but also social attitudes and identities, from the fragmentation of Yugoslavia to the challenges of state-building and identity construction in the post-Cold War era.

Our examination of the changing landscapes of nationalism in the various Balkan states extended to the various manifestations of nationalism in the modern era. In a region that serves as a geopolitical crossroads, this research illuminated the interplay between national identity, ethnicity, and political power. Through case studies and empirical findings, the book highlights the subtle way nationalism continues to shape the political agenda and influence the collective consciousness of the Balkan states.

In conclusion, by acknowledging its historical roots while critically examining its contemporary manifestations, this paper has attempted to unravel the complexities of nationalism in Southeast Europe. This paper aims to contribute to the discourse on promoting stability and inclusiveness in the region by understanding the threads that bind the historical tapestry of the Balkans. Also an important contribution to a growing body of literature on Balkan politics. As the region comes to terms with its historical legacy, the hope is that a deeper understanding of its complex past will be the basis for a more harmonious and inclusive future.

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