

MINORITIES, MOTHER COUNTRIES, MAJORITY ON THE WESTERN BALKANS

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Recibido: 6 Agosto 2011 / Revisado: 18 Agosto 2011 / Aceptado: 23 Septiembre 2011 / Publicación Online: 15 Febrero 2012

Abstract: The most significant changes of ethnic territories in Europe have happened on the Western Balkans. The majority of changes are related to wars in former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1995, but processes that have started around the crisis are lasting ever since. We are trying to outline these changes and reveal some of the weak spots of the issue using three categories of ethnic spaces: core area of an ethnic territory, ethnically mixed territory, contact zones. Furthermore, the article gives a complex overview of the major territorial rearrangements, and the causes leading to them: the parallelly changing identities and ethnic territories.

Keywords: West-Balkan, ethnicity, ethnical core areas, ethnically mixed territory, contact zones, ethnic processes.

INTRODUCTION

The question of minority and majority is mostly a system of relations along the legal frames determined by the state borders and states. The state (and its borders) on the territory of the Western Balkans – similarly to their democratic system of legal institutions – are much younger than the mental borders and the system of relations that are rooted in the past and determine the relations of the single ethnic and regional identities. The national integration processes that started and mostly completed also here since the 19th century (depending on the territory and the ethnic group on even such a small place with even one hundred – one hundred and fifty years difference) made the concept of nation the basic element of the system of relations of minority and majority.

At the same time the development/establishment of the ethnic core territories lagged behind the blossom of the national ideologies. The hiatus between the ideologies and the real ethnic spacial structure in the mentioned one hundred and fifty years is mostly known via the „revolutional” (war period) and not by the „evolutional” (peace period) ethnic spacial structure transformations. In our opinion the system of relations that join and unite or separate certain groups or let them float in the state (identity) of instability or multi affiliation till today are especially important in these processes.

Of course, the real ethnic proportions based on data survey (e.g.: census) should be the basis of our examination, however, these data mean significant problems of methodology at the examination of the Western Balkans. In case of Yugoslavia covering the area before 1991 unified statistical data survey and methodic elaboration is available, at the same time Albania is unreliable due to its aloofness; this period does not reach even the category of guesses. With the falling apart of Yugoslavia after 1991, the states becoming independent developed their own data survey, data elaboration and statistical practice with various periods, methodology, let alone Kosovo without official census since 1981, and Bosnia and Herzegovina with similar condition of the lack of statistics since 1991. As our analysis is not exact and uses comparative data, our aim is not to display a perfect mapping, but to examine the trends of ethnic changes from a certain territorial aspect.

1. BASIC TYPES OF THE ETHNIC SPACIAL STRUCTURE, THE VIEWPOINT SYSTEM OF OUR EXAMINATION

The ethnic geographical examinations often result in a regional division considering the ethnic homogeneity and regional extension, at other times they trace or classify the development of the different genetic types of the various ethnic groups (specially the minorities), or their historical-regional development. Above all, the primary target for us is the first system of viewpoint, to set the single regional types of quantity and homogeneity, where we mainly differentiate between three different territories:

Ethnic core territory – an ethnic region mostly homogeneous from ethnic viewpoint, at the same time regionally extended and coherent, which is usually the most important (often highlighted by the organization of the state) for a given ethnic group, nation (apart from some exceptions). There are ethnic groups that have several such territories of similar importance, however, such a territory plays the role of the primary (prime), while the others play the role of the secondary (minor) ethnic core territories. In case of the ethnic core territories the centers (capitals) cities, national centers, places of emphasized status play important roles, which are mostly missing from the secondary ethnic peripheries at the same time.

Mixed ethnic territories – an extended territory that is ethnically inhabited by two or more ethnic groups, nations where none of the groups form absolute only relative majority. It is (usually) typical for such territories that the spacial, mental and cultural borders of the various ethnic groups are well separated, respectively certain segregation types occur (micro-regional, via settlements, within the settlements, occupation-specifically..., etc.), as well as the development of certain contact zones.

Ethnic contact zones – primarily the territories with mixed ethnic groups are called ethnic contact zones, where the characteristics separating the ethnic groups (language, religion, cultural traditions, common fate-consciousness, institutions and toolsystems of society organizations, etc.) prove to be partially penetrable and even within a short period of time. Thus such groups may develop or transform, whose identity is of common set,

often altering, considering their neighbours as absolute extreme. In ethnography and cultural anthropology often the contact surface between the more or less segregated zones (on the level of the micro region but rather at least of a settlement) of the mixed ethnic territories is called contact zone or sometimes the contact surfaces of the characteristics of such huge cultural anthropological areas where a kind of mix of characteristics of the neighbouring units occur. The concept of ethnic contact zone used by us can be rather compared to this later ethnographic category, with the difference that the most important criteria for us is the change of self-definition in the course of time (the frequent change of the group identity).

There are several divisions in addition to the above categories and are used in the ethnic geographical surveys but primarily we are tracing the development and changes of the mentioned categories in the Western Balkans in our study.

2. THE ETHNIC PROCESSES OF THE 19TH CENTURY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

In the 19th century, in the area of the Western Balkans, two Great Powers – the Hapsburg (later the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and the Ottoman Empire – could be found. The continuous fragmentation of these two has formed the states and nations determining the current situation and positions which up to the present can create new spatial units (e.g., Kosovo), partly as a result of internal ethnic-political potentials and partly due to the influence of the external great powers.

The two Great Powers lost their 19th century positions and character of multiethnic European empires in different ways. The Ottoman Empire gradually lost out, its Western and Eastern Balkan areas ceded to Europe piece by piece, while the Hapsburg Empire disintegrated in one, at the end of the long 19th century, following World War I (on the surface; internal processes had already weakened the structure in its depths).

In this still ongoing process, some of those nations and ethnic groups which had enjoyed some measure of preliminary sovereignty in mediaeval times, before the Great Powers were born (i.e., Croats and Serbs) were again given sovereign states; therefore, their self-

determination was not unprecedented. On the other hand, new nations and states were also born whose independent positions were determined not so much by their precedents in the Middle Ages but their positions, difference, regional or religious consciousness in the empires (such as the Albanians, Bosniaks, Macedonians and Montenegrins). This of course does not mean that the latter never had some preliminary state formations, but we do believe (and not necessarily in agreement with the self-conceptions of certain nations and peoples) that the occasional precedents were much less important than the later period of the birth of regional and ethnic self-identity – and this took place in the system of Great Powers mentioned above.

The specified Croat and Serb examples were stressed because these nations had kept their independence to a degree within a greater unit: the Croats through the institution of the Sabor (the assembly of a province) and the Serbs through the Patriarchate of Pec' which was revived by the permission of Sultan Suleiman in 1557.

Apart from the above nations and peoples, there were and there are still a significant number of groups living on the territory that up to the present do not form states (the Aromanians, the Roma, etc.), as well as groups living in minority whose homeland is not on the territory of the Western Balkans (Hungarians, Italians, Turks, etc.).

The previous erosion of Ottoman control during the 17th and 18th centuries primarily concerned the northern and western part of the area under analysis, namely the Pannonian areas of the Western Balkans and the frontier region defended by the Bosniaks and Croats. These territories had also shown a typical ethnic identity-development progress, partly due to their role as frontiers (the Croatian *krajin*as or military frontiers) and partly to the resettlements during and after the Ottoman period. The South Slav peoples rearranged themselves during the Ottoman period, after which there was a significant settlement of non-Western Balkan ethnic groups – Germans, Rusyns, Slovaks – primarily on the southern territories of the Carpathian Basin.

In the 19th century, secession of parts from the Ottoman Empire was continuous, first with a kind of autonomy, then progressively creating

independence, primarily in the second part of the century (NIEDERHAUSER 1972). The formation of the Bulgarian and Greek kingdoms, not covered in this study, as well as of the Serbian Kingdom, shaped such a development process (JELAVICH 1996)¹. Due to a fresh nationalism, these newly established states immediately started to shape the ethnic homogeneity of their independence-minded territories which were ethnically very heterogeneous almost everywhere (of course there were also ethnically homogeneous territories) and to dream of the present realisation of the mediaeval great statehood. These ambitions promptly resulted in conflicts between each other as well as a significant emigration of the population which would now simply be called ethnic cleansing or 'peaceful population exchange' (BANAC 1995). These power vectors of opposite directions came up against each other mostly in connection with the Western Balkans, but the direct, developed conflict was already transferred to the early years of the 20th century (MENDÖL 1948).

3. THE ETHNIC PROCESSES OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

As the Ottoman Empire lost almost all its European territory at the beginning of the 20th century, events causing significant ethnic changes occurred. Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia almost completely drove the former empire from Europe once and for all in the First Balkan War; however, the Second broke out over Macedonia between Bulgaria and its two erstwhile allies. Macedonia as a state and the Macedonians did not receive recognition in this period. Nevertheless, for another Western Balkan nation, the Albanians, this was the point (1913) the independent state structures and significant milestone of self-determination were formed², though often questioned by its neighbours at the time.

The borders drawn after the wars were brand new when World War I broke out. This war tore the Western Balkans from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the Central European Great Power disintegrated after the World War. In 1918 the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was founded, which did not even consider other Slavic ethnic groups to be 'real nations' as the name implies, and a large number of people making up the category of 'other nations' – i.e., Albanians and Hungarians

– left the Kingdom that was becoming ethnically homogeneous (PAP – TÓTH 2008). The Western Balkans then meant the territory of Albania and Yugoslavia. These state structures survived World War II, right up until 1991; just the same, the World War was a very important historical and ethnic-revolutionary event in the region.

Yugoslavia fell apart in 1941. Its place was taken by smaller state formations, one large state (Croatia, which also included the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, although large areas were occupied by the Italians), and a smaller puppet state called Nedic's Serbia. In addition, large areas were occupied by Hungary, by Greater Albania functioning as a puppet state of Italy, and by Bulgaria and Germany. During these four years, the larger part of the Jewish population of the region fell victim to terror, similar to the Roma and the Serbs who also suffered considerable losses – even though not as significantly – especially in the territories occupied by Albania, Bulgaria and Croatia. The number of victims of the (Communist and Partisan) terror following the war was also significant, but the victims were of other ethnic groups. The main targets were the Germans (who completely disappeared from the territory of Yugoslavia), the Hungarians, the political opposition and, regarding ethnic identity, the Croats in particular.

As we have already mentioned, developments in the period following World War II more or less took place within the international borders of 1918³, but the number of internal borders and of nations significantly increased. In Yugoslavia, the Macedonians and the Montenegrins were also acknowledged as nations, in addition to the nations already recognised prior to 1941, together with the independent federative member republics. This time it was only the Muslims of Bosnia and the Sandžak who were not recognised as a nation, which did take place later, in 1969.

In this period considerable ethnic changes and processes were initiated under the category and idea of 'constituent Yugoslav nation', introduced in the times of its first formation. In this country of strong nationalist feelings, this category could not integrate the majority, while in the second state it was only areas with very mixed ethnic composition (the major cities of Bosnia, and the big cities of

Yugoslavia in general) where people in larger numbers accepted the 'Yugoslav nation' concept.

The factors influencing the ethnic processes of the period 1945-1991 were inner migrations in the first place, as well⁴. Within Yugoslavia a very important internal colonisation took place in the 1940s, mainly from the Dinaric region to the Pannonian (KOC SIS 1991). At the same time, until the late 1950s some non-Yugoslav peoples emigrated from the country in larger numbers (Albanians, Hungarians, Italians and Turks).

Both processes contributed to the Yugoslavisation of the state and the homogenisation of the individual member republics. Migrations among the member republics had the same result until 1991, as did employment abroad that had selective impacts in the respective nations, ethnic groups and member republics.

In 1991, the declaration of the sovereignty of Croatia and Slovenia disintegrated Yugoslavia, and at the same time war events began which – by applying ethnic cleansing, concentration camps and forced population exchange – tried to achieve what history had refused, the creation of ethnically pure areas and nation states. These violent actions took most of its victims in Bosnia, which had had the most ethnically mixed population. The other significant war zone was Croatia, where the conflict between the Croats and the Serbs caused serious human, material and emotional damage. Hostilities actually occurred in each member republic, and the cause for conflict was always ethnic or religious affiliation. In Macedonia the conflict between the large numbers of Albanians and Macedonians resulted in minor armed exchanges, while in Serbia, the Albanian Kosovars erupted in armed conflict. Only Montenegro avoided active fighting, if we neglect the considerable damage done by the NATO bombings and if we do not consider it a separate actor in the Croat-Serb conflict, as it had been a member state of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with Serbia at the time. This is difficult, considering the occupation of the Dubrovnik area by the Montenegrin army.

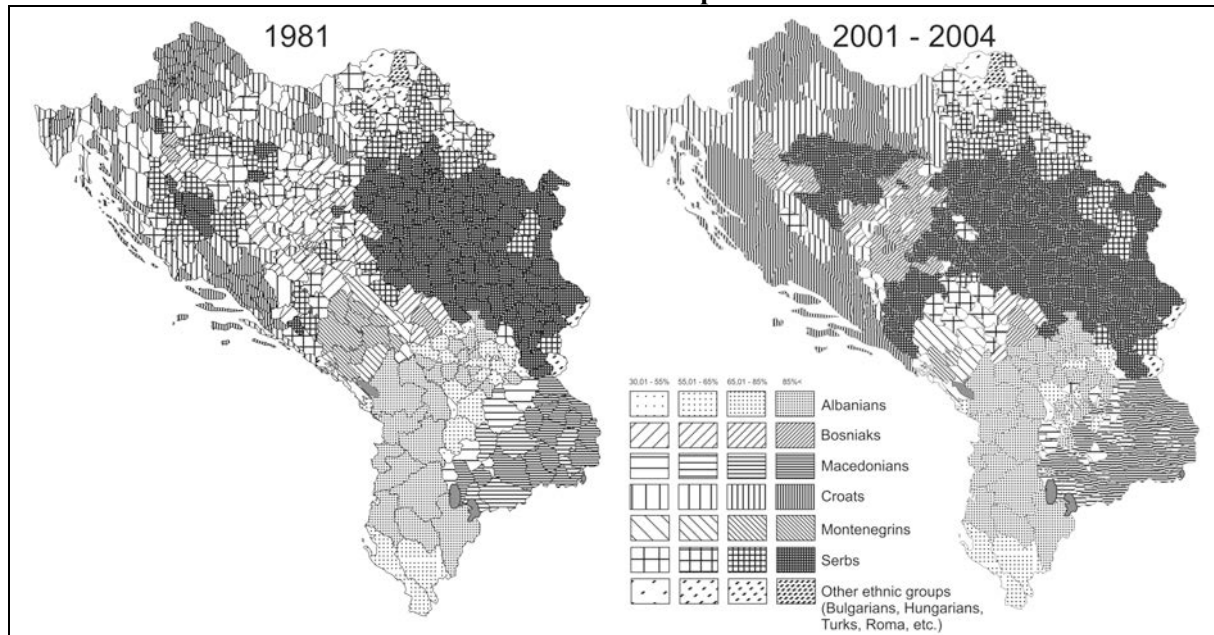
In 1995 in Dayton (and a month later, on 14 December, also in Paris) the parties signed the peace treaty in which they accepted the

principle of the inviolability of the external borders among the republics, but this almost legitimated the war's inner ethnic cleansing (even if the document rejected it in principle).

Ethnic fragmentation continues as an ongoing process, as in May 2006 Montenegro declared sovereignty after a problematic referendum and its national identity had less and less in common with that of the Serbs. In 2008,

Kosovo also declared its independence in a euphoric manner, as a result of the 'technique of slow crawl into sovereignty'. Kosovo again raises the issue of Albania, which in the future will probably strengthen its relations to the former Yugoslav province, but the inner changes it may cause in the two actors are currently difficult to define.

Figure 1
Transformation of the ethnic landscape on Western Balkans



Source: Federalni statistički zavod FBiH, Državen zavod za statistika Skopje, Macedonia, Republički zavod za statistiku Srbije, Zavod za statistiku Crne Gore, OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Popis Stanovništva Hrvatske 2001, Atlas of Albania 2009. Veliki geografski atlas Jugoslavije 1987. Ed.: VÉGH 2011.

4. ETHNIC PROPORTIONS, RELATIONS OF ORDER OF MAGNITUDE ON THE WESTERN BALKANS

If we review, how the ethnic structure of the Western Balkans looks today, we can find an interesting system, in both in its proportions and territorial location.

The largest ethnicity is the Serbs, then the Albanians followed by the Croats and Bosniaks, Macedonians, finally the Montenegrins, who just precede the Roma in their number, who have no state; moreover they are less than together the three greatest ethnic groups without state in the Western Balkans (Yugoslavians, Vlachs, and Roma).

The picture gets more interesting if we compare the proportion of the given nation

inhabiting the territory in majority and minority on the Western Balkans. In present case we counted also the areas as minority that are secondary ethnic core territories, though are not /yet/ united with the state of their mother nation, independently from the fact that they may be in majority in that region (here we mean the Serbian entity located within the frame of Bosnia and Herzegovina – BiH and the cases of Republika Srpska – RS).

The proportions mentioned above show well that the two ethnic groups, the Serbs and the Albanians have the greatest ethnic potential outside the mother country. As these two nations represent the case of „one nation – two states” in the Western Balkans via Kosovo and RS BiH mentioned earlier. Croatia has the third most significant group outside the mother country though this proportion lags far behind the previous two.

The nation parts outside the mother country are concentrated typically on one rarely on two territories (but in this case they somehow join on the territory). Such are the Sangria Bosniaks, the Croats in Herzegovina, the Montenegrins in Serbia, in addition to the two outstanding Serbian and Albanian examples. These territories mostly (though not in every

case) border on the mother country, at the same time they are without any centre (city, more dense core territory), as the present outer state borders were only administrative ones earlier, and during their transformation some territories got separated, as they were on the other side of the border, thus they remained without a centre.

Chart 1
The Proportion of the Major Ethnic Groups of the Western Balkans Today
 Source: national statistical offices

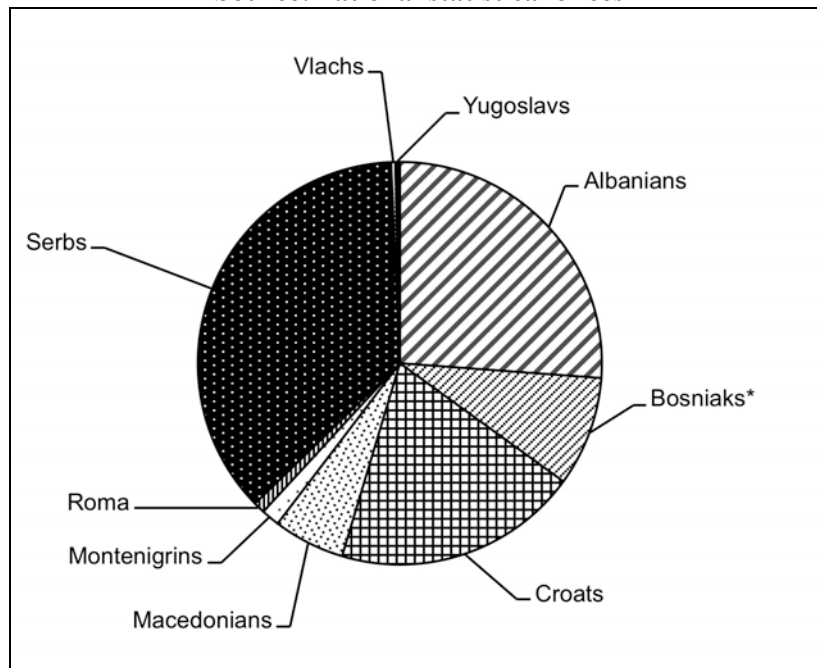
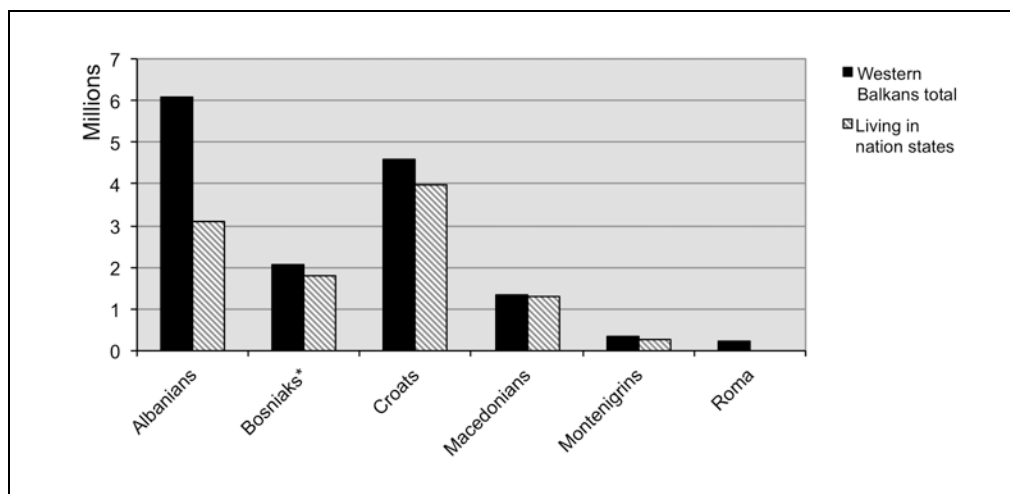


Chart 2
Minority – Mother Nation Relations on the Western Balkans Today
 Source: national statistical offices

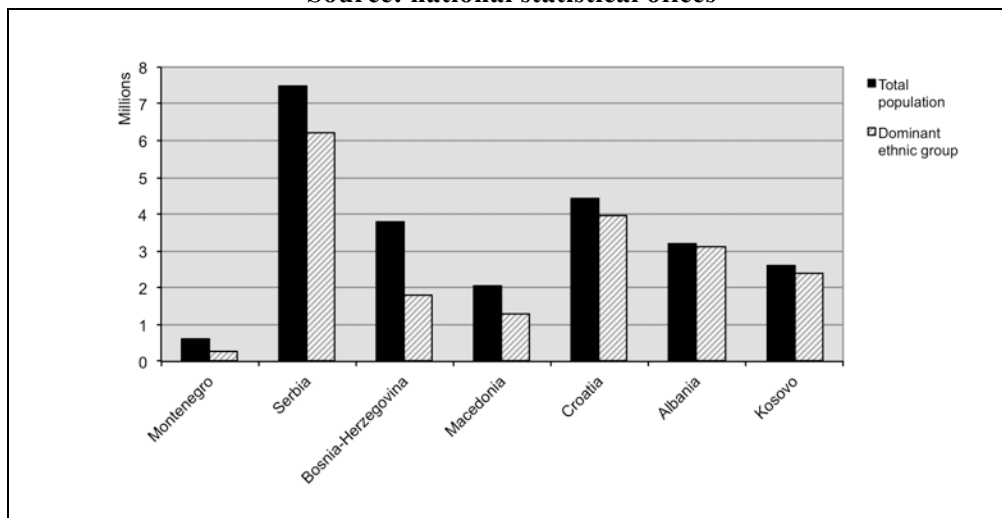


Finally let's see the ethnic relations of the single countries in the view of the proportion of the nation forming a state, the majority and minorities.

Typically there are three types. The first is where in addition to the majority forming the state the number of inhabitants of the minority (or the ethnicity forming the state that does not belong to this group) is significant sometimes

even exceeds the former one. Montenegro, BiH and Macedonia belong to this group. The second group consists of the states where the proportion of the minority is noticeable but not dominant besides the largest ethnic group forming the state, such are Serbia and Croatia. The „Albanian states” Albania and Kosovo are included in the third group, where the proportion of minorities is insignificant and hardly noticeable.

Chart 3
Majority – Minority Proportions in the States of the Western Balkans
Source: national statistical offices



5. SINGLE TERRITORIAL-ETHNIC TYPES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

5.1. Core territories

Examining the Western Balkans from the viewpoint of ethnic core territories we can state that we can talk about classic ethnic core territories only in a very restricted sense, and only according to the scale of the Western Balkans. Of course, the reasons for this are various and an outstanding one is the lack of the coherent central basin territories, which e.g. also helped the development of a completely different ethnic group in the Eastern Balkans.

The following roughly outlined ethnic map (presenting no settlements but opstinas⁵ – the smallest statistic units or county like regions) clearly shows that we can speak about the ethnic core territory defined by us mostly in the case of Serbs and Albanians examining it in the dimensions of the Western Balkans. Partly the shape of the state (very stretched out) and the separating role of the Serbian

ethnic islands (which ceased after 1995) make the Croatian ethnic core territorial character atypical, and divided. In addition to these three mentioned ones, the Macedonian ethnic structure shows some kind of concentration, however, the extension of the Southeastern Macedonian territories and their lack of a centre (both the national centre/capital and the most significant cities are located in regions of mixed ethnicity) can be called as an ethnic core territory only with strict restrictions.

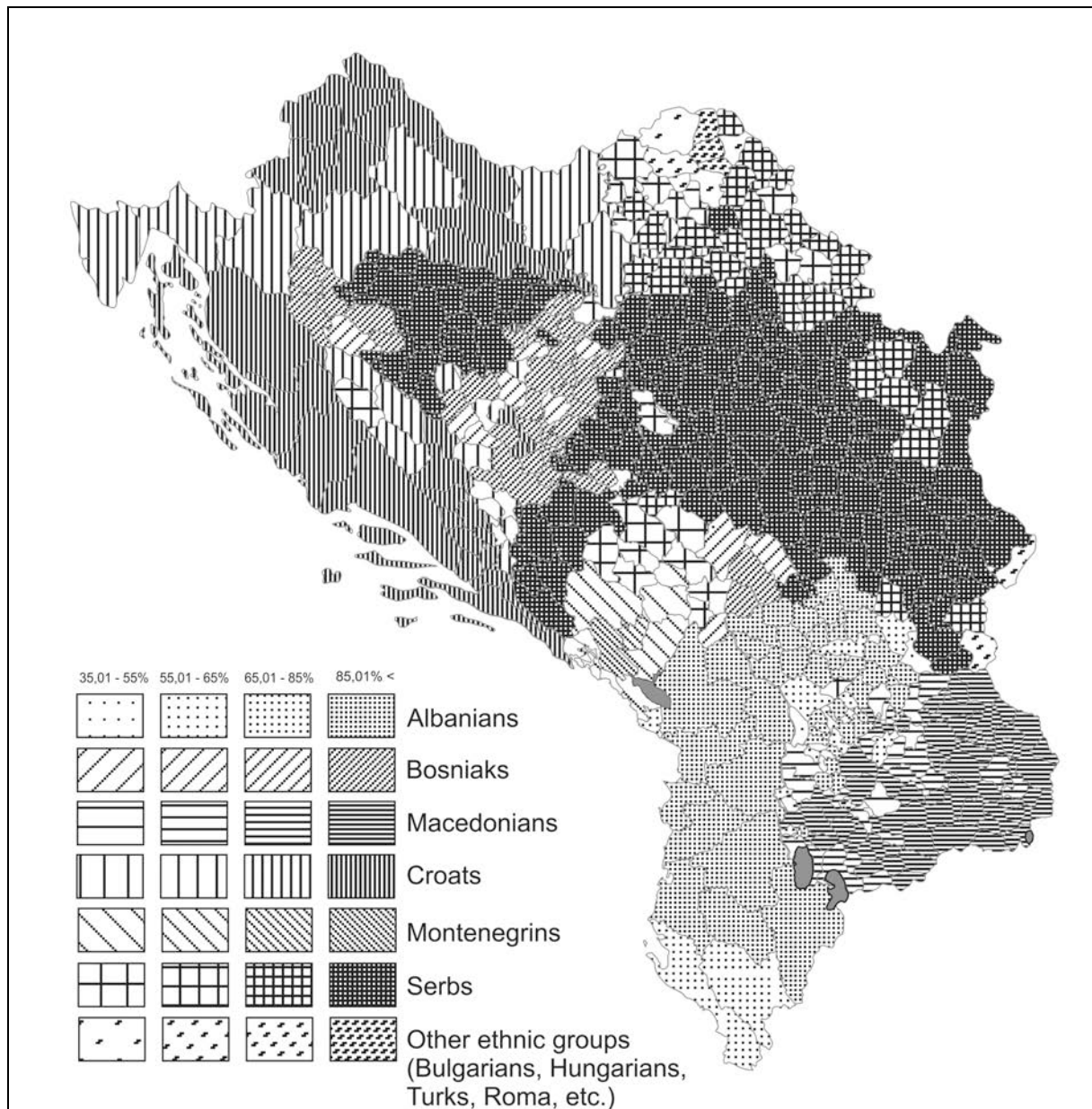
Should we look at the role and geographical location of the national centers in the Albanian, Serbian and Croatian examples, we can see the national centers in the centers of the most extended ethnic territories in the previous two. Besides we can talk about the availability of well-developed regional ethnic centers (Prishtina in Kosovo and Banja Luka in RS BiH) which function as the centers of the regional (and slightly being of quasi state status in both cases) territories with separate identity – ethnic peripheries.

In case of the Croats the national centre plays a kind of joining role by location. Though it is located within the Northern ethnic core territory, its influence, especially as the result of the centralizing politics since 1991, is very strong also on the seaside regions, where the dominance of the centers similar to the secondary Serbian or Albanian ethnic centers did not develop. In case of Croatia the self-consciousnesses uniquely based on the regional historical development and cultural differences (often in language) in the Western

Balkans contain more significant inner differences today than the ethnic differences. This regional identity difference makes Croatia rather similar to the European Mediterranean countries (Spain, Italy).

The two remaining examined and described ethnic groups (nations) the Montenegrins and the Bosniaks have no ethnic core territory that could be compared even to the previous ones.

Figure 2
The ethnic composition of the Western Balkans 2001 – 2005

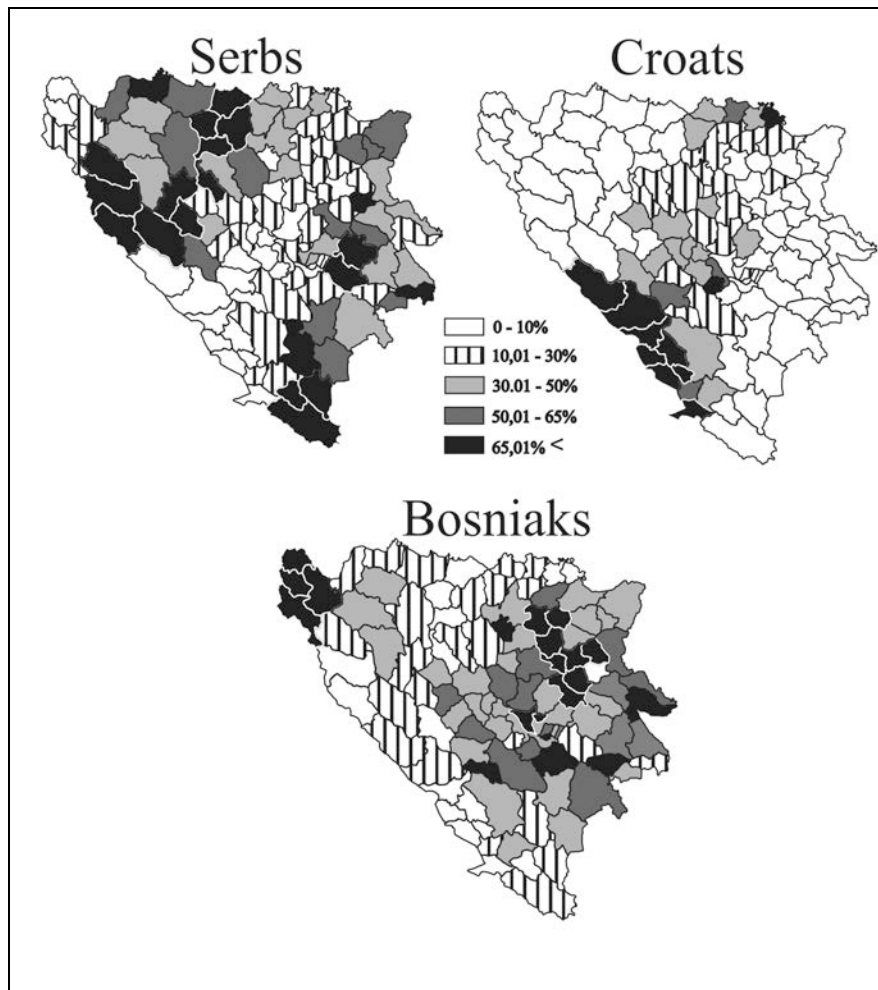


Source: Federalni statistički zavod FBiH, Državen zavod za statistika Skopje, Macedonia, Republički zavod za statistiku Srbije, Zavod za statistiku Crne Gore, OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Popis Stanovništva Hrvatske 2001, Atlas of Abania 2009, Ed.: VÉGH 2011.

The Bosniaks can consider only a BiH (that seems to be maintained artificially coherent) with several nationalities as their own state. According to the Dayton Agreement 49% of the territory of this state is the territory of RS BiH, where the resettlement of the Bosniak minority is a small scale and problematic process till today. Although most victims of

the war between 1992-1995 were Bosniaks, exactly this war process developed the territorial concentration of the Bosniaks, which showed even a more sporadic picture till 1991 than today, as against the concentration of Serbs and Croats inhabiting Bosnia preceding 1991.

Figure 3
The location of the three main ethnic groups of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1991.



Source: Federalni statistički zavod. Ed.: VÉGH 2004.

The case of Montenegrins is even more surprising as this state of really small territory is an onion-skin like ethnic structure, whose only very tight core is made up by Montenegrins. Getting away from its centre, its outer skin is more and more covered by the Serbian ethnic layers and they are getting continuously moulded into any of the core territories in the West or North. Montenegro seems rather a minority centre in the Southwestern part of the Serbian state on this map not depicting the state borders. This is primary the result of the territorial growth of Montenegro in the 19th century, where the

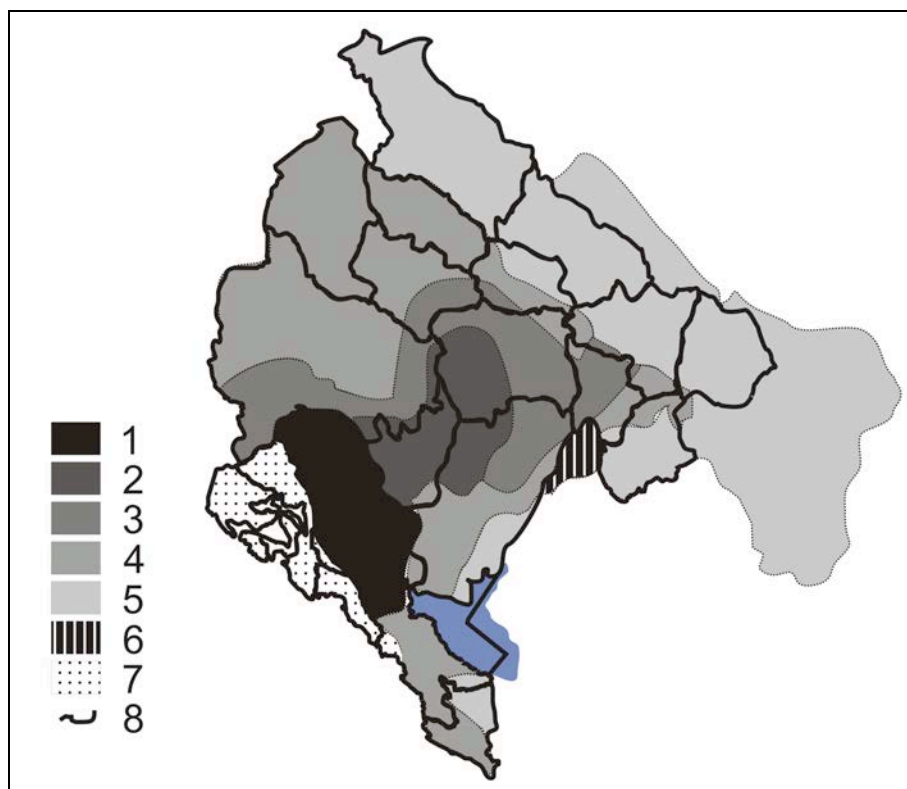
centre of Montenegrin self-consciousness (following a different way from the Serbian one) based on the tribal structure grew continuously in territory, through which the regions of expansion grew less and less attached to the Montenegrin identity separating itself from the Serbs, which can be primarily originated from the privileges of the Osman period, and the tight territorial independence that started in the 18th century.

5.2. Mixed ethnic territories

With the national integration processes and the spreading of the ethnic core territories the mixed ethnic territories were continuously loosing there extensions and each war action resulted in ethnic homogenization (through the ethnic cleansing) continuously from the wars in the Balkans. The effects of these were the most intensive first of all on the territories of the multi-ethnic groups and on the edges of the shaping ethnic core territories.

After the Second World War the Autonomous Province of the Serbian Vojvodina, the majority of BiH with the Serbian Sandžak, a significant part of the former frontier region of Croatia and certain parts of the Istrian Peninsula and Kosovo and Macedonia kept their mixed ethnic character. On the majority of these territories the single ethnic groups were well-separated, however, there are transitional groups among the Southern Slavic groups (Croats, Serbs, Bosniaks, and Montenegrins) till today, but this already belongs to the category of contact zones.

Figure 4
The Territorial Development of Montenegro in the 19th-20th Century



Legend:

- 1 – The borders of Montenegro in the 18th century
- 2 – The territorial growth of Montenegro in 1830
- 3 – The territorial growth of Montenegro in 1859
- 4 – The territorial growth of Montenegro through the Berlin Congress in 1878
- 5 – The territorial growth of Montenegro through the wars in the Balkans in 1913 – Certain territories of Sandžak and Metohia
- 6 – The Albanian territories under short Montenegrin military occupation after the I. World War
- 7 – The territorial growth of Montenegro following the foundation of Yugoslavia of Tito
- 8 – Present state and administrative borders of Montenegro

The last series of war actions started in 1991 with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. This affected all former member republics and as a result of the war actions first of all the mixed

ethnic territories (they are mostly peripheral territories from social and economic viewpoint) fall victim, as the primary targets of the arising nationalist ideas. The territories

inhabited by the Serbs in Croatia decreased dramatically, their proportion fall to 1/3 of that of 1991 (according to some people even to ¼). The focus of Serbs moved from the former frontier region to the regions along the Danube, which borders on Serbia.

It is interesting to examine the region of Istria from several viewpoints, whose multi-ethnicity is preserved till today. We can find here Vlachs (Istroromans), Montenegrins, and other former Yugoslavian ethnic groups (mostly Serbs, Albanians, Bosniaks), which settled here in the Yugoslavian period, in addition to the two largest groups, the Slavs (Croats and Slovenes) and Italians. The homogenization of Istria is primarily also the result of the 20th century, parallel to the mentioned examples. Compared to the data taken on the territory of Istria in 1910⁶, when the proportion of the Slavs and the Italians (Slovenes and Croats together) was 52.5%, respectively 38.8% , the proportion of the Slavs decreased to 41% to 1921 – thanks to their massive emigration to and opting for the citizenship of SHS kingdom. Following the Second World War in 1955, after the London Agreement abolished the Free Territory of Trieste (Zone B) and finalized the border of Yugoslavia and Italy only 44,000 Italians (21.53%) lived on the part of Istria attached to Yugoslavia. Small Slavic groups also emigrated from Istria with the Italians.

The war polarized the ethnic division also territorially in BiH, which member republic was an example of the earlier mentioned mixed ethnic territories. Thus the ethnic territory inhabited by the Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats developed and got largely homogenized. Only the Middle-Bosnian Croatian-Bosnian territories preserved something from their mixed ethnic character, though the segregation of the settlements and within the settlements became significantly higher than before 1991. The Croats are continuously moving out from the territory, only some inclusions remained, the most striking loss of Croatian territory can be witnessed at the border of the Croatian like Herzegovina and the Bosniak like Bosnia (Bugojno, Jablanica, Konjic). The Serb entity of BiH continues to set strong barriers and nationalist rhetorics (e.g.: Milorad Dodik) in the way of the few dispelled non-Serbs who intend to return.

The proportion of the Albanian nationalities was already 21.73%⁷ at the proclamation of the independence of Macedonia according to the official data. This population densely concentrated in the NW border region of the country, in an almost homogeneous Albanian medium, which on one side is dangerously close to the centre of the country, on the other side it counts as the ethnic Albanian “appendix” of Kosovo desiring autonomy.

Due to the situation that got more and more heated and bloody in Kosovo for the second half of the 1990ies, more and more Albanians fled from Kosovo and settled in Macedonia. As a result of that and of course due to the natural increase of the Albanians that is much higher than that of the Macedonians, the proportion of the Albans became 25.17% for 2002 at the time of the next census. The territorial concentration of the Albanians got denser for this time and extended also to SE (East from the Kičevo–Struga line). Of course, also the armed solution was imported to Macedonia with the mentioned refugees from Kosovo.

The Albanians demanded greater rights and territorial and cultural autonomy for themselves and this lead to armed conflicts between the Macedonian forces of defense and the separatist Albanian irregular troops in 2001.

Peace was concluded in the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which made satisfied none of the extremist parties (Macedonians or Albanians) but it is the only document to be followed for the cohabitation of the two ethnic groups since that time.

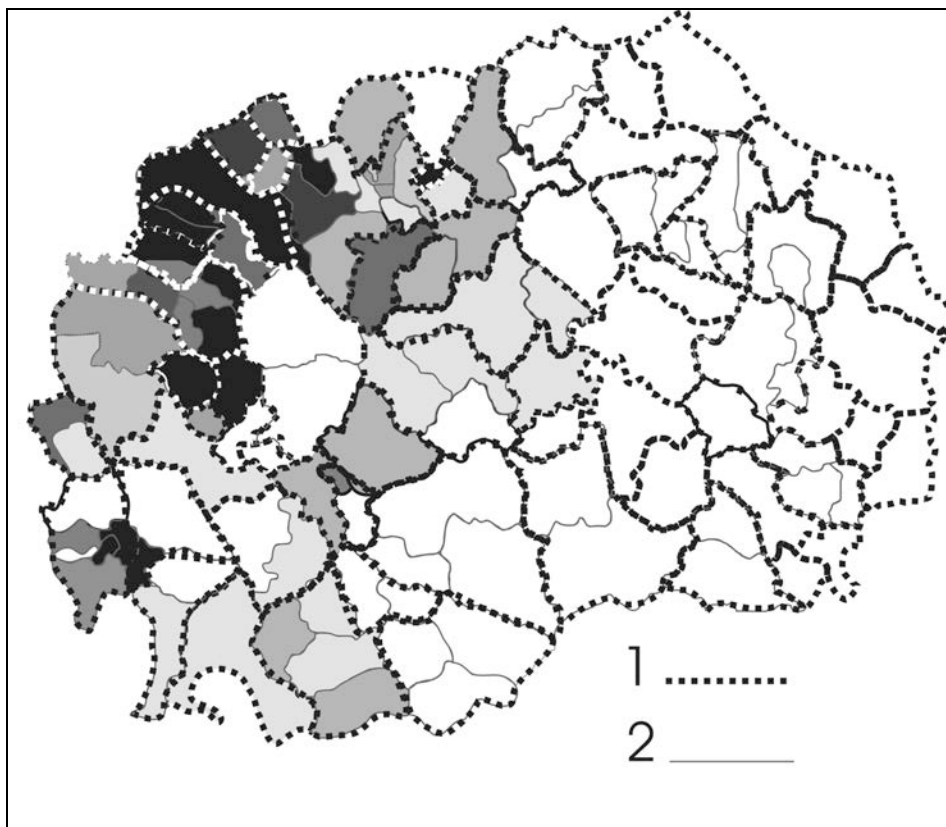
This framework agreement specified an inner border-restructuring and decentralization, at the same time the reconsideration, and merging of the administrative units based on nationalities, which was based on the data of the census in 2002. According to this 84 općinas were formed from the 123 ones (provided that we do not divide the capital, Skopje into its units functioning as općinas, then it is only 75), and the 33 općina groups and eight regions. Parallel to their creation the new territorial units received important rights and self-management functions (which they did not exercise before) for example on the field of public service, regional development, improvement of local economy, finance, education, health and social tasks.

The Albanian Macedonian mixed ethnic territories continuously grew by gaining ground increasingly in numbers, politics and inhabited areas, however, the segregation indicators (small number of mixed settlements, small proportion of mixed marriages) between the two groups are specifically high, the ethnic separation is visible also on macro, meso and micro levels (region, district, settlement, settlement section). However, this phenomenon is not related to Macedonia getting more independent, but to the inherited lines separating the ethnic groups (different religion, the ethnicization of the level of social hierarchy, etc.).

The example of Kosovo cannot be included in the range of problems of mixed ethnic regions from any viewpoint, as Kosovo is an ethnic

region that got extremely homogeneous and segregated on every level. The ethnic homogenization of the former South-Serbian province took place in several steps, in various social-political environments. One of the demographic sections, the „peace period”, the era under the Yugoslavia of Tito, when there was an absolute Albanian majority on the territory⁸ (with the exception of some općinas) due to the higher natural increase of the Albanian ethnicity in Kosovo, and the intensive emigration of the Serbian ethnicity in Kosovo. The Serbian government tried to stop the emigration of the Serbs from the territories by laws at the end of the 1980ies, but these measurements came too late⁹.

Chart 4
The Proportion and Location of the Albanians according to the New and the Old Administrative, Općina Arrangement
 (1-new administrative border, 2-old administrative border)



The second homogenization period is the period that started with the dissolution of Yugoslavia of 1991, which lasts till today. There are no statistic data about this app. 15 years (even the census of 1991 cannot be considered as official data on the territory of

Kosovo, only the Serbian party acknowledges it), there are only estimations, however, based on them it can be stated, that the Serbs grow less, emigrated and were forced to leave on a much higher scale, and even the most optimistic estimations say that the proportion

of Serbs is only 5-6% . This at the moment small Serb group lives in a united block, only North from the Ibar River, in the Northern part of a divided Kosovska Mitrovica općina, furthermore in the općinas of Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić. The central political will of Kosovo governed by Albanians cannot be even felt on these areas, and when at the last time, in the summer of 2011 the government of Pristina wanted to extend its scope of authority also on these territories, again actions took place that received international coverage.

Sandžak was never autonomous in any sense, although since its annexation it has been ethnically different, and in certain historical moments the question of its autonomy has been raised¹⁰. The province, inhabited by Bosniaks, assumed its ethnic character during the Ottoman Empire through Islamisation, as did Bosnia, and certain phases of its ethnic development are also very similar to those of the former member republic. This appeared most of all in the ethnic difference of the migration and natural increase indices, which were unlike to those of the neighbouring regions – and this difference derives primarily from the Islamic influence. By the time of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, a considerable part of the Muslims living here defined their ethnic character by the Bosniak identity. Among the Muslims of Sandžak this group forms the majority, they form a majority of approximately; however, a demonstrable group remained – although in a quite insignificant number compared to the others – who do not identify themselves according to the Bosnian state area but declare themselves Muslims, the Yugoslav category that is set to their religion (about 20,000). The proportion outlined above will probably change in favour of the larger, Bosniak group in the future, since besides the certain statelessness of the Muslim identity (in Bosnia this category is not welcomed for being out of date), the Bosniak nationality promises the security and a possible external support of the mainland.

The beginning of the 1990s did not differ much in Sandžak from in the Serbcontrolled Bosnian territories, with the exception of the period of open war. The mixed ethnic villages, towns (Serb-Bosniak) on the Serbian-Bosnian border were changed into Serb dominated areas by the same measures as in Bosnia (ethnic cleansing, displacement, terror etc.). The centre of this type of ethnic cleansing was Priboj and its

district, which lost about 50% of its Bosniak population between the censuses of 1991 and 2002. In the same period, their number in the towns and opštinas of Nova Varoš, Sjenica and Tutin decreased 12–20%. Some of the migrants moved to Novi Pazar, which served as a centre (which still lost 6-7% of its population), not to mention the fact that many left Serbia and settled in Western Europe, Turkey or right in Bosnia. The Serb proportion declined in these territories as well, primarily due to its negative natural increase indices and to migration towards economically and ethnically more secure Belgrade and Central Serbia.

With the conclusion of the Dayton Agreement and the secession of Kosovo and Montenegro, the situation of the Serbian Sandžak became a typical border position, where the territory is surrounded by 'three Serbias'¹¹ and Kosovo. Since the fall of the Milošević regime – and especially since the pro-Europe turn in Serbian politics – the changes still have not reached the roots of the tensions although the chance of ethnic conflicts decreased. Many sources of conflict still exist: the low standard of living, high unemployment rate (up to 70%), and the presence of religious and political extremist groups, or the political rivalries of the Bosniaks among each other, which results internal groupings with serious conflicts (Ljajić, Ugljanin, Zukorlić). The Wahhabi groups there are frequently in the media. These groups are supported from Saudi Arabia through Sarajevo, by the imams of certain mosques, although Serbian Grand Mufti (and Sandžak Mufti) Muamer Zukorlić, a committed member of his community, believes in a more modern and progressive Islam¹².

After Serbia met its obligation to establish a national/minority council for (primarily) educational, native language and cultural matters of the ethnic groups in November 2009, the Bosniak Cultural Community list led by the Chief Mufti received the majority of the council's mandates in the June 2010 Sandžak elections. Since then, Zukorlić has introduced the idea of cultural-educational autonomy as the realisation of the political aims of the local Bosniaks. This was not acceptable for Serbia, which has recently lost its Kosovo province which referred to its autonomy and had a majority Albanian population. In July 2010, the Bosniak National Council was formed, although it is not recognised by the Serbian

Ministry of Human Rights and Minorities, referring to its anti-constitutional formation (two thirds of the elected persons were not present, though it is not a constitutional requirement). During the months that have passed since then, there has been continuous conflict between the Ministry and Zukorlić, who called for international observers to come at the beginning of September 2010. Due to the situation, the OSCE is more and more active in promoting a solution.

Vojvodina is the other province in Serbia beside Kosovo, which had significant autonomy in Yugoslavia after 1945. Similarly to Kosovo the state of autonomy was granted here also because of the minorities. The biggest minority in this province, which consists of several regions (Bacska, Banat, Sirmia) historically are the Hungarians (the proportion of the Serbs showed relative majority also on this territory after 1945), however, there are Slovaks, Rusins, Romans, Croats and Montenegrins as well in smaller numbers. This classic multi-ethnic region developed due to the Post-Osman resettlement policy of the Habsburg Empire from the 18th century. Its excellent agricultural potentials attracted the immigrants, of whom the Germans were outstanding, but disappeared from the ethnic palette of the territory because of the retorsions following the Second World War. Vojvodina has been continuously the basis of the centrally directed and spontaneous immigrants since 1918, since when its territory belongs to Serbia. The soldiers of the Serbian army received lands here in the greatest proportion after 1918, in the 1920ies the primary target was Vojvodina for those who opted for citizenship, after 1945 the most people searching for new home flooded this place during the period of socialist land reform and colonization (the presence of the Montenegrins in the province is due to that). Between 1950 and 1990 most Serbs from other member republics migrating to Serbia through the inner Yugoslavian migrations preferred the territory of Vojvodina as the target of resettlement (following the capital and its neighbourhood), then also the most refugees (from BiH, Kosovo and Croatia) of the wars following the falling apart of Yugoslavia settled here. These Serbian immigration waves in addition to continuously increasing the proportion of the Serbs in the province also raised the level of intolerance against the minorities at the time, due to that not only the

assimilation increased but resulted in the emigration of certain minorities (in addition to that of the Germans first of all that of the Hungarians and Croats). Today's ethnic structure developed in the province that regained autonomy as the result of the described processes (the government of Belgrade abolished the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo in the Milosevic era), where multiethnicity is characteristic only for some of its smaller parts. Significant question is whether these remaining multicultural regions represent a value for Serbia, which turned its back to the nationalism of the 1990ies, and choose a European perspective, or are they going to become the targets of further national core territories with the loss of Kosovo.

5.3. Contact Zones

The territories of the Western Balkans are covered by such states in addition to Albania and Kosovo, where the ethnic dominance is given by some Southern Slavic ethnicity group. The differences between them are first of all determined by religious and regional attachments. An important element of the later one is, to which part of the Empire the population on the given territory belonged to, to the Osman, or the Habsburg, and in what way and when the national integration process of the single groups took place. The Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks and Montenegrins can be well separated along these variables, but not the groups, where there is a multiple regional attachment, or the regional affiliation is not necessarily parallel with the national majority.

The most contact zone like territory and group of the present Western Balkans means the Montenegrin Serbs, which we wrote about at the mentioning of the (lack of the) Montenegrin ethnic core territory. This was the most altering "ethnic landscape" during the successive 10-year-period censuses of the former Yugoslavia. Of course, this developed not as a result of the active emigrations and migrations, but due to the plasticity of the self-definitions. The plasticity of identity in the territory is due to the tight interweaving of the Serbian and Montenegrin self-consciousness, which continuously advanced and came closer or withdrew from the 19th century. The politics of Belgrade always considered the Montenegrins a regional Serbian identity, while they never doubted the attachment to the Serbs in the core territory of Montenegro, though they always emphasised the difference.

To belong to the Montenegrin tribal structure was more important, which, however, ceased to be a dominant force to shape the society due to the aspiration for modernisation in the 19th century. This process was due to the efforts of the Montenegrin sovereigns, who considered themselves the crown of the “Sparta of the Serbs” and imagined a leading role for themselves in the Serbian national integration process that started at this time. However, the Serb national integration process developed on other roads, and the Montenegrin separation became rather a burden. Due to that the central government in Belgrade and its local promoters endeavoured to wipe out any supporter and also the memory of the Montenegrin statehood and independence in the Yugoslavian Kingdom founded after the First World War. Partly due to the resistance that developed at this time and the socialist ideas (and Montenegrin communists who had important position in the later socialist state) that gained strength among the Montenegrins, Montenegro appeared as a separate member republic (and with significant growth in territory) in the federative socialist Yugoslavia founded on the basis of AVNOJ of 1943. The Montenegrin self-consciousness meant the mixing of the national and regional characteristics in this state but it did not become estranged from the Serbian one to a great extent. In 1991 and 1992 when the Titoist form of the state dissolves the Montenegrins stuck to idea of the “remainder Yugoslavia” lead by Serbia all along. This participation in the war as the fellow-in-arms of Serbia and the accompanying loss of prestige and economic embargo resulted in the strengthening of Montenegrin identity, which was lead by the political elite of the Montenegrin core territory, expressing and fulfilling its independence. However, on the way to independence the mostly (but not only) Northern territories with stronger Serbian attachment (in identity and economy) insisting on their Serbian identity did not follow the ideas of the area around Cetinje. This is visible from the results of the census, from which it is apparent that the state is formed of two Serbian parts, the Montenegrins and Serbs (there are other minorities in significant proportions in addition to these two ethnic communities). Montenegro as an integrant state counting on its economically significant tourism on the seaside tries to provide an alternative to its citizens without Montenegrin linkage through its standard of living and (not Serbian-like)

cultural diversity (the schoolbooks with special Montenegrin sonants differing from the Serbian and all other Southern Slavic languages are creating a stir recently). Contrarily to that Serbia is continuously drawing closer to Europe, which goes hand in hand with its (slowly commencing) economic boost, by which this option is to be reconsidered as well. What is more, in spite of the geographical characteristics of the country (it is difficult to access, the seaside is obstructed by mountains) it counts as the most important exit by sea for the landlocked Serbia till today. The duality continues to prevail and it is a question on which side the self-consciousness of the Montenegrin Serbs are going to land.

The group of Yugoslavs is another significant element of the question of contact zones in the Western Balkans. As this ethnic category was born out of the Southern Slavic national and state integration (it is not a specific territory, it is rather determined by a specific sociological, social group) of the 20th century, no territory of living of this ethnic category developed in strict sense. A further problem is that not all the states formed after the Yugoslavian disintegration preserved this category in their censuses, only the Serbs and the Montenegrins (though they do not reach even two-thousand in Montenegro), however, we can see from the censuses of 1991 and the previous ones that we can meet this category on a larger scale primarily on the territories with mixed ethnicity. This ethnic group meant and means a kind of self-definition category for the people tightly attached to the Yugoslavian state (work place – military forces, police, and membership in the socialist party): Note that those who did not agree with the nationalist ideas forcing apart Yugoslavia from the 1980ies will have chosen the Yugoslavian self-definition at the census in 1991. In Croatia, the self-definition Yugoslav did not appear in the published ethnic data, among the listed 23 ethnic categories (contrarily to the Vlachs amounting to 12 people in the country, or the Austrians amounting to 247 people). The census in Serbia in 2002 registered more than 80,000 citizens with Yugoslavian identity, 67.7% of them lives in Vojvodina with mixed ethnicity, and 27.4% lives on the administrative region of Belgrade. The remaining little bit more than 10% falls to the lot of Old Serbia, where no territorial concentration of theirs can be demonstrated. Is

it possible that Serbia especially undertaking the Yugoslavian past, and within it Vojvodina of mixed ethnic groups could be the “mother country” of the former Yugoslavs in the future? At the same time it may happen that this ethnic-social group will continuously disappear – probably for the good of the ethnic groups in majority.

The question of the identity of two Catholic ethnic elements is also bound to Serbia and Croatia, that of the Sokac and Bunyevac in Vojvodina. This two groups are close to the Croatian Catholicism concerning their religion, while their territory of living Bacska rather belongs to the Serbian ethnic territory physically. History, ethnography and the linguistic evidences and tradition itself clearly strengthen the Croatian attachment, and certifies it, however, the political interests are often stronger than the rational arguments and the „divide-and-conquer” technique is a frequent political instrument. The identity of these two groups (the Bunyevac represent a separate ethnic category, while Sokac do not) was not a central topic before 1991, however following the dissolution of Yugoslavia especially the Bunyevac became divided. Thus at the moment there are “three types” of Bunyevac on the territory of Bacska in Vojvodina. One of them is the group of the Croatian Bunyevac, the other is that of the Serbian Bunyevac, while there is a third one, they identify themselves only as Bunyevac. According to the census in 2002 20,012 Bunyevac lived in Serbia and only 1% not in the mentioned historical region; there are 70,062 Croats, 80% of them lives in Vojvodina. The Serbian Croats consist of 3 groups, the people in Bacska (Sokac and Bunyevac), in Syrmia and the people migrating to Serbia during the Yugoslavian era. The first of this three categories was already mentioned, the third is the smallest which is bound first of all to the cities (often the work that was in connection with the united Yugoslavian factories, or the military produced this category). The third group is that of the Croats in Syrmia, who mainly fall victim of the nationalist atmosphere following 1991. To force the population of complete villages, to destroy their religious and cultural monuments, and to resettle Serbs instead of them was not even rare – according to the census in 2002 the number of the local Croats is hardly more than 10,000. If with that together we deduct the number of the people living in Old Serbia

(14,056) from that of the Croats then the question of Bunyevac and Sokac means app. 56,000 citizens in Vojvodina in addition to the registered Bunyevac (of course, this is only an estimation, as for example there were about 50,000 people living in Vojvodina who did not name their ethnic group in 2002 according to the census). The uncertainty of these groups is also important, as provided they get assimilated to the majority, again a piece of the multi-ethnic society of Vojvodina will become a part of the thickest ethnic category, decreasing the several-hundred-year-old mixed ethnic character of the territory.

In connection with the contact zones the ethnic groups of the Western Balkans with Slavic mother tongue are important that were converted to Islam in the Osman period. The biggest such ethnic group is the Bosniaks, whose national problems were earlier mentioned. The Bosniaks at the same time are a national group recognized by everyone through successful national integration advancement in the 20th century. Deriving from this the question of contact zones is not recent in spite of the fact that it is still a nation that is still building its territory of living, creating the system of state institutions (functioning state, or at least a unit with functioning military/entity within BiH), and the corner points of communal memories (there are history-consciousness anomalies till today). We can talk about two other smaller groups in addition to the Bosniaks, who have similar characteristics, but have immatured ethnic self-consciousness compared even to the Bosniaks. These are the Gorans (Gorani, Goranci, Goranian) and Torbes.

The Torbes or the Islamic Macedonians by other name live in the western and middle parts of Macedonia, mainly on the Albanian-Macedonian territories with mixed ethnicity. They were converted to Islam in the Osman period, however they have kept their Slavic language, and though their certain groups became Albanian in their language (due to the attraction of the biggest Islamic group) they mostly kept their Macedonian language. As they are located in a very sensitive area, in the probable expansion zone of the Albanians, it is very important for the Macedonians to keep this group, therefore we cannot experience here any Anti-Islamic feeling, which e.g. determined the Serbian and in smaller extent the Croatian attitude in connection with the

Bosniak question in the 20th century. Their fate and ethnic development is related to the future of the Macedonian state first of all. Presumably they are going to maintain their duality in a working state inhabited also by Albanians and Macedonians, but it is incalculable which group they would approach in a conflict situation.

The situation of the Gorans differs from the previous ones so far that they live in a fairly closed region in the high mountains in the Sar Mountains and three states share their territory of living. The majority of their settlements is located in the region of Dragaš in Kosovo, the app. 10-15 inhabited settlements belong to Macedonia and some (4-6) villages to Albania (it is difficult to determine the concept of settlement in this region due to the alteration of the summer and winter pasture lands). The Gorans were significant bridge-heads for the Serbs in Kosovo getting gradually Albanian, through the dispatched Bosniak teachers. Due to that the majority of that group declared themselves Bosniak (Muslim) or Serb till the 1990ies. This significantly changed with Macedonia getting independent, when their group in Macedonia started to have significant influence on the Gorans living in Kosovo still under Serbian supremacy getting in worse situation. Therefore during the turmoil in Kosovo a part of the Gorans living there fled to Skopje and other Macedonian cities (due to the atmosphere of wars and Serbian general Anti-Islamic feelings and also due to the closeness of Macedonia). After returning to the now independent Kosovo they mainly defined themselves not as Serbs or Macedonians but as Gorans. In addition to that they expressed their claim for autonomy within Kosovo and even they raised a claim for a major state (according to this opinion the majority of the Albanians in Kosovo are Slavs who became Albanians, thus they are part of their ethnic group). It is no wonder that the Albanians in Kosovo do not feel drawn to the Gorans, whom they mostly believe to be renegade Albanians and they consider their becoming conscious of themselves as rather a propaganda of the Slavs. The Serbs continue to consider the group as Islamic Serbs, and the Macedonians try to mix their case with that of the Torbes (by common interest group organs and NGOs) thus maximizing their basis among the Muslims. As their territory of living borders on Macedonia and the rest of the Serbs in South-Serbia diminished in the last ten years (note that

during the stationing of international peace keepers!) we cannot see a real chance for the growth of the Serb identity. Should the Albanians of Macedonia follow the path of secession the small appendix of the Sar Mountains in Kosovo may get into international limelight.

SUMMARY

We tried to outline the trends of change, and development of the ethnic structures in the Western Balkans using three ethnic categories and raising questions considered important by us. We did this from the unconcealed aspect, through which we contrasted the multi-ethnic regions that developed due to the long-lasting (mostly peace) processes with the ethnic core territories gaining ground gradually. Of course, you may reproach us for being partial in favour of multi-ethnicity but we profess that the ethnic expansion developed by force and at the expense of ethnic cleansing is not an alternative to the peaceful coexistence, which we hope will commence also in the Western Balkans, as well.

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Попис на населението, домаќинствата и становите во Република Македонија 2002 година / дефинитивни податоци.

Notas

¹ For this reason we believe in a significant traditional desire for autonomy and such as an 'entrance to independence' and that nation-building with an analogue character can be found even up to the present (Kosovo as the best example).

² Although the winners of the wars would have divided this territory – similarly to Macedonia – between themselves as well, Great Power interests hindered it. Of course one obstacle was the Albanian people, which was neither Slavic nor Greek, nor was its stage of development of empowerment and national consciousness as advanced as the Macedonians'. The fact that – due to their peripheral and high mountain character – the Albanian territories were much more ethnically homogeneous than the other mentioned areas, contributed to the formation of the independent Albania; however, about half of the Albanian ethnic areas remained outside the new borders.

³ Ethnically, the most significant border changes were in Dalmatia and Istria, primarily affecting the

Italian population. Smaller ones had also taken place on the Albanian without any particular ethnic factor, compared to those of 1918.

⁴ Until the 1990s, there were only assumptions in Albania considering the albeit small number of minorities, and we have very little knowledge about the internal ethnic structures and about how they have changed since 1945.

⁵ Opštinas (opština) or općinas are such administrative, self-managing units (rarely even one settlement or in cases of cities even their parts can function as opštinas) including several settlements, where the most significant administrative and public service functions occur in the smallest territorial unit. There is such a system first of all in the successor states of Yugoslavia.

⁶ The listed statistic data apply to the complete ex-Yugoslavian Istria, the Slovenian and Croatia part together.

⁷ Date of the 1991 census, which was not accepted by the Albanians, therefore a new census was ordered in 1994, where this proportion was 22.67%.

⁸ The proportion of the Albanians in the province showed an absolute majority even at the moment when Kosovo was attached to Serbia, however the migration of the wars and the following periods on the Balkans reduced this and transformed it on some territories (BANAC 1995).

⁹ These decrees restricted the trading of the lands and other real estates among the ethnic groups.

¹⁰ During World War II, between November 1944 and March 1945, an autonomous administrative unit came into being in the practice on Sandžak territories liberated by the Partisans. After this, it was divided between Montenegro and Serbia, and the six Serbian municipalities – with Muslim Bosniak majorities – formed an autonomous 'Novopazari' District up to 1947, after which it was divided and annexed to administrative units with Serb majorities (with their centres in Kragujevac and Užice).

¹¹ We refer here to the southern part of Central Serbia situated to the east, in the south, to the northern parts of Montenegro which declare themselves mainly Serb, in the west, to the Serb entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska, and to its opštinas of Foča, Srpsko-Goražde, Višegrad, Rudo, Čajniče which were the most concerned by the ethnic cleansing

¹² There are different data concerning the number of Wahhabis here; however, this number is presumably under 200 – 300, and there are only three or four local imams who wanted to achieve more power through them. The news concerning them culminated in April 2007, when a group clashed with Serbian police, their leader lost his life, and the police confiscated several guns and explosives. In 2009, twelve Wahhabis from Novi Pazar were sentenced to a total of 60 years imprisonment by the judges on charges of organising terrorist acts.