

**UNIVERSITY “Ss. CYRIL AND METHODIUS”**

**INSTITUTE FOR SOCIOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL-LEGAL RESEARCH**

**Research Project 2021/22**

**"Can volatile societies support stable states -**

**cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Northern Macedonia"**

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In 2021, a research team from ISPPI launched a research project under the original title "Can volatile societies support stable states". The idea of this team was to start a regional research that should provide an excellent analysis of the current situation in four countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Northern Macedonia. We wanted to analyse these four countries in three contextual frames: an existing social conflicts, the impact of global politics, and their legal-political determinants.

This is the first public presentation of the results from the research team. These elaborations include acquired knowledge, as well as the positions of authors according to initial research issues. After this presentation, the project's activities will continue by organising an international conference and writing a publication, as part of this two-year project.

**Petar Atanasov**

**BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA – “BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE“**

The research on Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the context of identifying social conflicts, focused on two levels – socio-political and socio-cultural. At the socio-political level, the focus was on two contexts: political history of BiH and the state-ideological orientation of the state. At the socio-cultural level, the focus was also on two topics: socio-cultural divisions and identity as well as national/regional positions of the peoples/citizens of BIH.

As for the socio-political level, the research showed that today's situation in a country called Bosnia and Herzegovina bases its political position on several events that mainly took place in the Balkans after the “Eastern crisis” in the 19th century (1875-1878), but also that this country has built its genesis on events on recent political history related to the creation of Yugoslavia. Perhaps the most influential moment was the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the disintegration of the confederate state, which did not succeed to build a stable democratic and integrated political model that would be resistant to the processes of the third wave of nationalism in the world, in which both the state and the republics/peoples were pushed after 1989.

At the socio-cultural level, the research analyzed ethnic and cultural differences and divisions as the basis, which have a major impact on both people's lives and relations between different peoples or groups. The major factor in divisions is religion and ethno-religious differences, which are dominant in relations between the three peoples in the past and today, with clear and distinguishing lines. National issues and relations between peoples in Bosnia are now defined by the Dayton Agreement. This agreement brought peace, but in the long run it did not bring stability to society, nor a more secure future for the state.

Through this analysis of socio-political and socio-cultural factors, three key and strong factors related to the existence of social conflicts that today affects the Bosnia and Herzegovina's position – the endless politicization of ethnicity, ethno-religious identity versus state identity, as well as the political disintegration processes that obstruct cohesion and prevent social integration within the state:

* **Endless politicization of ethnicity** is the most influential negative process or factor for the stability of society. This politicization is continuously emanated from three standpoints and manifested as particular ethnic nationalisms. In fact, there are three similar but still different relational nationalisms: the majoritarian Bosniaks, minority Croatian and para-state Serbian. These three nationalisms are constantly in conflict, both centrally and regionally, generally used by the majority of political parties through manipulative approaches in the framework of the "political" struggle. Political elites dominate most of the time as remnants of the past and obstruct and prevent greater integration of society, not allowing the decreasing of ethnic monopoly and power.
* **Ethno-religious identity**, as a product or legacy of the past, it is still very strong versus the national (state) identity, which is completely fragmented. Today, there are three firmly divided ethno-national groups with distinguishing cultural characteristics. In order to overcome these divisions or to mitigate their negative impact, the political will is needed but even more important the collective will (of all three peoples) is needed to work in the direction of building awareness of living together and improving the living conditions of citizens. Massive activity is needed to bring Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs closer together, but with a focus on citizens as members of the same country. The biggest challenge to develop processes of modernization and secularization, is through de-ethnicization of the political model, that will stimulate bigger democratization of the state. Processes at a wider level do not helping them.
* **Political disintegration processes** manifest themselves through political struggle, but for three different ideas. The Bosniaks political elites are pushing for bigger centralization of the state, as opposed to the current entity position. The Serbs political elites are advocating for frozen Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Serbs from Republic of Srpska will live in their "own" part. Croats' political elites are advocating for a third entity, or at least to maintain the current situation where they have their share and influence in politics. "Bosnian" political elites have the power to influence and shape the fate of the state. The latest attempts to reduce the influence of ethnic factors in the political model are fiercely opposed by many political parties. That is what is seen, while what is not seen is that the political parties work hard to retain privileges and personal interests. They rule through well-developed political patronage and controlled media propaganda. The ideology of the state and its future are mainly non-important or just "captured" by powerful ethno-political groups.

As a historical paradox, the unchallenged common Slavic origin of all three peoples and the closeness of their languages in Bosnia, do not make the situation less complex. On the contrary, it is a country that today at least two out of the three peoples living in it do not "feel it” as their own. The biggest similarities with the Macedonian society are identified in relation with the first social conflict - the endless politicization of the ethnicity.

**Slavejko Sasajkovski**

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO, KOSOVO, NORTH MACEDONIA-POLITICAL-LEGAL DETERMINANTS OF THEIR STATE AND THEIR SOCIAL DISINTEGRATION**

These are four states that, among other things, are characterized by strong lines of conflict and their disintegration both as states and as societies. This problem in the cases of these states, their weakness as quite deeply divided states and societies along the lines of internal diverse conflicting social interests and the lack of political will and political culture for their proper and necessary balancing and overcoming of the base and within the general state and social interest, very easily and efficiently multiplied by the external state and national interests, many clearly publicly set, suggested, argued and implemented as political and geopolitical interests.

This general statement means more specifically:

1. The B&H as a (con)federal state, under the Dayton Accords, is not an option desired by any of the three peoples in the State. For Bosniaks, B&H is desired as a unitary state, just as it is for the so-called international community (primarily USA), for Croats and Serbia an original national-political option is to join their home countries.

2. The Montenegro as a state is crucified between the Montenegrin-Serbian national and state-building conflict. The concept of Montenegrin national identity is a typical relational concept of national identity in relation to and in conflict with the Serbian national identity. That is, the Montenegrin national identity can exist (only) as opposition, distance and distinction from the Serbian national identity.

3. The Kosovo does not have (fully and qualitatively) accepted international legal and international political legality, identity and subjectivity. The Kosovo is not a member of the UN. The Kosovo's membership in the UN, as the end and as the crown of its international legal identity and subjectivity, in conditions of international legal effect of UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99, is possible only in conditions of re-establishment of a unipolar international order of power with the United States as the axis of such an order.

4. The North Macedonia is disintegrated and dysfunctional as a state under the influence of two parallel destructive processes: the process of its (de/re) constitution as a binational Macedonian-Albanian state, and the process of destruction of the Macedonian national identity as a historical-civilizational and cultural-civilizational original, self-contained and self-existent identity. The Macedonian national identity is heteronomously (geo)politically imposed as a current and real existing identity, an identity of a demographic collectivity that really exists and lives in a certain relatively compact territory, but a national identity practically without its own ethnogenesis. That is, it allegedly has Bulgarian ethnogenesis. People who, with international agreements, voluntarily/"voluntarily" accepted that he will not/must not have a national minority, at least in two neighboring countries-in R. Greece and in R. Bulgaria. That people, however, can have a diaspora, that is, they are allowed to have it.

**Pande Lazarevski**

**COUNTRIES WITH DISPUTED SOVEREIGNTY - FROZEN CONFLICTS**

**IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES**

Although the initial assumption is that the subject of analysis will be the relation "society - state" in the named "states" in the title, from the very beginning the dilemma arises whether it is really about "states", regardless of the fact that three out of four named, are UN members , in a formal-legal sense, such identification is possible, while in one of them is it not possible, because it is an autonomous province (Kosovo and Metohia) of the Republic of Serbia whose status is regulated by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and, formally legally, it is administered by the United Nations (UNMIK), although it unilaterally declared independence in 2008 and is partially internationally recognized as a state.

Regarding the identification of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Northern Macedonia as a "states" ("de jure"), such a qualification is problematic since these are deeply divided societies without the capacity to practice the most important attribute of statehood, sovereignty, which raises the question whether they are states "de facto".

Namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was constituted in accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) for the implementation of which an international body is in charge (without a set time frame) - the so-called High Representative for BiH, as a kind of governor with executive powers. BiH, although a member of the UN, is in fact a loose confederation of two ethnically based entities, whose actions are subject to the High Representative's constant oversight.

Montenegro, although recognized as an independent state as early as 1878 and functioned as such until 1918 when absorbed in then established Kingdom SHS (at the 1909 census 95% of the population identified as Serbs), has been rocked by strong internal divisions since the second declaration of independence in 2006. The key issue (and internal division line) is related to the very identity of population (citizens) regarding if they consider themselves ethnically as "Serbs" from Montenegro or “Montenegrians” (that also reflects to the support for NATO and the affiliation to that organization) and the attitude towards the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The Republic of Northern Macedonia, which proclaimed its statehood in 1944 and, as a republic within Yugoslavia existed until the dissolution of the federation and the declaration of independence in 1991, is another country with negligible economic and political weight with deep ethnic division formalized and the solutions contained in the 2001 “Ohrid Framework Agreement” (Macedonians vs. Albanians). In addition, deep division exist among those who identify themselves as "Macedonians" (depending on the political-party affiliation that division is not perceived as a political rivalry between “Macedonian” political parties but rather as enmity or strong animosity and mutual disqualification). In addition to internal both ethnic and political division, it is important to mention identity challenges first from the Republic of Greece, and currently from the Republic of Bulgaria and the fact that Bulgarian citizenship, according to various sources, including the claim of the former Minister of Defense of the Republic of Bulgaria, Karakachanov, has been taken by more than 120,000 citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia).

Regarding the deep roots of this extremely sensitive issue, the very analysis must be multidimensional, to actualize the concept of sovereignty in the context of internal complexity and processes arising from the characteristics of the population, territory and capacity of government. In addition, the history of the Balkans and, in that context, the role of religious communities as a factor in building ethnic differences or closeness should be also taken into consideration.

Finally, the analysis could not be placed in an international-political vacuum. As relevant factors that determine the internal political dynamics, are the interests and actions of local and regional (Balkans) international-political actors, as well as including the local implications of the tectonic shifts in the macro political (global) stage in temporal continuity.

**Driton Maljichi**

**SOCIAL CONFLICTСS IN MONTE NEGRO AND KOSOVO**

Societies in transition that often imply abnormal situation compared to normal stable situation, where lusts, goals and failures usually appear. The transformative stagnation of societies in the Western Balkans has influenced the societies to be divided in us and them. Both geographically and politically, Montenegro and Kosovo are oriented towards the west. In the theory of social conflict the main burden for the integration or non-integration of non-dominant societies falls on the dominant group.

Without a single incident or disagreement, Montenegro was able to address the issue of statehood. Identity problems, particularly among Christian Orthodox, exacerbated the Montenegrin situation. Serbs and Montenegrins have opposing views on what kind of country they want. Serbs wish to be a part of Yugoslavia, or a vast or federal Serbia, but Montenegrins and other minorities seek their own country.

Historical aspect, Montenegrin identity, Linguistic Identity and Religious interethnic relations have been taken as factors that cause social conflict in Montenegro. The Montenegrin dream of having a independent state and language that is distinguished from Serbian were more easily realized compared to their dream of having a independent Montenegrin Orthodox Church. One state, one church, according to Orthodox doctrine. Montenegro is the only country nation in the Balkans to have two Orthodox churches. Serbians are associated with both the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. The Montenegrin Orthodox Church is not recognized by the Serbian Orthodox Church. Montenegrins continue to believe that they should have their own church, which should be independent of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Post-war and post-independence social conflict in Kosovo continues to be a hot topic in the country. The social conflict in this research is focused on the relationship between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. The purpose of this study is to find out why Kosovar society has yet to achieve stability in terms of interethnic relations and what factors influence social conflict.

In Kosovo, socio-political conflicts and socio-cultural conflicts are examined in this study. According to the results of the research, as socio-political factors were detected historical aspect, the census of 2011, association of municipalities, orthodox cultural heritage, parallel structure and the impact of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue on inter-ethnic relations, and as socio-cultural factors we have found that it is present the way of Serbs living in enclaves, the identity issues and the parallel education.

Kosovo continues struggling for international recognition and negotiations with Serbia for mutual recognition. Such reconciliation between two nations would be considered as a century agreement.