

WORKING PAPER

16+1 within Western Balkan's Antagonism enroute to EU

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Abstract

The Balkan region connects Asia and Africa to Western Europe. As such it has been an important geopolitical "space" throughout the history. It continues to be so as the apparent major migrant route to Western Europe. The "Balkans" hosted various cultures (religions) and the region was ruled by different global empires. The world powers have been regularly clashing and exercising different interests over the Balkan peninsula. When the region's peoples can celebrate diversity and rich history they opt for instability. This has been particularly the case with the former Yugoslavian republics that together with Albania represent the Western Balkans. The region is in need of finding the "common ground" that would bring long term stability and economic prosperity i.e. Scandinavia. In reality what we have today is different Western Balkan's countries inspiring for closer political and economic ties with the global powers. Unfortunately, this aim sometimes comes at the expense of the "backyard neighbors". There are numerous reasons for the region to remain divided by the ethnic lines including the external influences. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Western Balkan's open wounds can only be healed by the region itself. Initiatives such as 16 + 1 can represent a forum to tackle some of the open regional questions but only if the region is seen as a "whole" by the Peoples Republic of China (China). In addition to the global powers' misapprehension of the regional dynamics there are even more important reasons (interests) within the region itself that hinder more prosperity and stability. It is hard for a small population (economy) country to exercise rights in international relations, let alone when located in an unstable region. Economically weak and scattered Western Balkan countries represent the breathing ground for "popular" political messages. The local politicians are not shy to keep the long term power grab by exerting "populist nationalism".

Key words: *regional relations, collective identity, nationalism, ethnicity, education*

Introduction

"Balkanization or Balkanisation is a geopolitical term used to describe the process of fragmentation or division of a region or state into smaller regions or states that are often hostile or uncooperative with one another".¹ The term has been adopted and widely used to describe hostile division of some type. But how have we come to the point of naturalizing a region's woes into an every day word? It must have been one of the most divisive regions of modern history.

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkanization>

When we look at today's North East Asia we see a highly volatile and complex regional relations. Namely, there is a well-known antagonism among South Koreans towards Japanese for their apparent cruel colonization of the Korean peninsula. For the same reason, Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK) also experiences extensive antagonism towards Japan. Further, there is resentment between the two "Koreas" divided by the global powers along the 38th parallel in 1948. The border was somewhat modified to Military Demarcation Line after the bloody Korean War that lasted from 1950 to 1953. In addition, Russia as the Soviet Union remnant continues to play an important role not least due to its size and bordering with China, DPRK and (across the strait) with Japan. After all it was the Soviet Union that "installed" Kim Il Sung when the Soviets were trying to keep the Americans away from their far east border. China also has very emotional and painful relationship with Japan due to its apparent cruel colonisation of the mainland. China in particular has been one of the most important influencer on the widely believed nuclear capable DPRK. Namely, China played a critical role in the Korean War in limiting the advance of the South Koreans and their allies Americans. China scarified by entering the Korean War that eventually led to a period of almost whole of Korean peninsula coming under DPRK rule. By entering the Korean War directly, China has at that time moved the focus and resources away from Taiwan. Finally, the US as the most powerful country in the world with the most widespread military basis has been keen to continue to exercise its influence in the region. It has also marked itself as the sole atomic bomb user in the world's history by devastating Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is apparent that North East Asia region has been going through major challenges to keep the volatile peace (there are some positive regional movements in 2018). Many times it was the major powers that actually did disservice to the locals such was the case of dividing the Korean peninsula. However, how do people of same origin and/or region end up in hostile "Balkanisation" (division) such was the case with the two Koreas? Is it a natural process for peoples of same origin to essentially arrive to a point of killing each other? We cannot put the blame squarely on the external influences. Every volatile region has its own story to tell and the Balkan region is no different. The phenomena throughout the volatile regions comes in form of "collective identity" where different groups of people find each other at the opposite ends of the regional and/or international affairs.

Methodology

Looking at the "Balkanization" or process of desegregation between peoples and territories, we hypothesis that it is only a natural process. We try to understand what "collective identity" means for regional armed conflicts. We then try to relate the societal level of consciousness (stage of development) to that of collective identity and nationalism. Finally, we try to find some origins of the increased nationalism - where do the increased "sense of belonging" emotions come from i.e. lack of education, low economic standards, organized crime, misuse of religions, world power influences, history etc. We conclude on what is the most important for a world power to bring stability and prosperity to the Western Balkans.

When we talk about Western Balkans we primarily include: Slovenia (EU), Croatia (EU), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, and (disputed) Kosovo.

The Origins

According to a research, the remainings of “first human” were found in Africa i.e. Ethiopia². The anthropologist Jared Diamond also argues that the “first humans” moved from Africa to other parts of the world. In the same book *Guns, Germs and Steel*, the anthropologist dedicates whole chapter on how “China Became Chinese”. The basic idea is that much of the South East Asia was influenced by the natives of today’s mainland China. He explains the movements of people (changes in their body size, shapes and skin color due to different climates), spread of domesticated plants and animals, and the eventual spread and influences of the native languages.

Definition of Modern History varies but can be safe to assume it is about half a millennial. The timespan of “recent” open wounds in North East Asia and that of Western Balkans is primarily of the 19th and 20th century. This represents a very small time length compared to when the first humans are believed to have lived in Africa seven million years ago.³ As humans, we are set to debate the more recent history which also makes sense as we have more information on it. It is utopian to look at the world relations and assume that there should be higher level of understandings between different nations as we all come from one place and we have one planet earth (until we settle on other planets). Nonetheless, it is intriguing of how different groups of people can have such strong “collective identity” emotions. Dividing the region under ethnic lines as was the case in Balkans was possible by the fertile ground of highly emotional “sense of belonging”. The desegregation of former Yugoslavia has been ongoing for thirty years now with the latest open question being Kosovo. For Serbians it represents the “heart of Serbia”, the “cornerstone of Serbian identity” while the majority of people that live in Kosovo actually have their own “collective identity”. Even though it is a natural process (as we can see throughout the history of different world regions) for the peoples to move and evolve, for the borders to change and for languages to disappear we will never be able to look at the world affairs solely through those lenses. Western Balkans is abundant with “populist nationalism” with the focus on “protecting the national identity, territorial sovereignty and integrity”. This territorial and ethnic divide is then only exacerbated by the different religions that exist in the region. There is a thin line between a healthy dose of own tradition and culture to that of misinterpretation of other peoples’ culture and traditions.

Antagonism

Is the source of Western Balkan’s antagonism driven by “nationalism”? If so what is the source of the increased “nationalism” or strong feeling of “collective identity”? Does religion play part in it or it only follows the ethnic lines? How does the antagonism affect the regional

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-31718336>

³ Diamond, J.D., 1997 *Guns, Germs and Steel*, W. W. Norton, New York City 36 p

economies and trade? How does the increasingly multipolar world relations affect the region's stability? What internal interest and agenda there is that leads to the regional volatility? What is the solution to the regional instability? Is the solution further disintegration into smaller countries divided by ethnic lines until we reach fully homogenous territories? Is the solution highly influential control by external factors? Will the external factors be able to understand the regional dynamics and approach the region as a whole? Is the solution to have local "strongmen politics" that would bring stability through authoritarian style? How similar is the Western Balkan situation to volatile regions of the world? How is Western Balkans affected by the "populism" sweeping the world?

According to Richard Barrett, "the level of growth and development of consciousness of a society depends on the ability of the leaders and government to create an economic and social climate that meets the needs of its citizens".⁴ He argues that there are seven levels (stages) that a society must go through to reach what he called "full spectrum consciousness". The seventh level or the highest level of society consciousness adds to the sixth level by expanding the cooperation with other nations to tackle the global problems. At "full spectrum consciousness" the focus is on environmental sustainability and the notion that not just the humans but all forms of life are interconnected. This brings a whole new perspective on globalization processes whereby 'we are all in this'. The states, international and regional organizations relinquish their independence and sovereignty for the benefit of all humanity and life on earth, with the aim of saving the planet from self-destruction. The society that achieves the highest stage of consciousness facilitates and actively participates in global system of governance that guarantees ecological sustainability i.e. "we all win or no one wins".⁵ The seventh stage of societal consciousness is preceded by the sixth stage that focuses on building strategic alliances among nations that share same values and see the future in a common way. There is a strong emphasis on common good, quality of life and environmental awareness within the strategic alliance club. A classic example of the level six is the European Union (EU) to which all the Western Balkan countries have set as the ultimate destination. However, joining the club will also require a new type of understanding of "collective identity", the one that is not inwards looking but open to form strategic alliances based on the same values and principles. The EU founding principles are: liberty, democracy, a respect for human rights and basic civil liberties, rule by law, dignity of human being, equality and solidarity.⁶ Paradoxically, by relinquishing some of the sovereignty, the Western Balkan countries are in the position to have more influence on the regional and world stage. The strategic alliances' nations build a more resilient and sustainable (environmentally and economically) region.

Richard Barret stage five is mainly consistent of building the trust among the people of a country and trust in the "system". Trust can occur only when people of a nation share common vision of the future. However, Western Balkans countries are each having to cope

⁴ <https://www.valuescentre.com/sites/default/files/uploads/2012-12-18/The%207%20Levels%20of%20Societal%20Consciousness.pdf>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <http://www2.cnrs.fr/en/224.htm>

with the non-common view of the past, let alone the future. Even though all the countries share the vision of joining the EU, the internal divisions of these countries are very much present either by ethnic lines, historical events or geopolitics of the day. This is not helping the achievement of Richard Barret fifth stage where “experts have a larger say and there is unity in vision for the future that is not subject to political agendas”.⁷ At fourth stage of the seven in total, the nations achieve more equal spread of wealth while personal growth, development and self-actualization are encouraged. Western Balkan countries tend to be run by the political “elites” with continues internal divides among the rich and poor. Once a political party enters the “system” it turns into a money making machine. It does not matter whether the party is on power or not, the politicians have their own “hush” understanding while in public they put up a theatrical political process. That is why for example Serbia has had the same faces in politics since the nineties. It is similar case in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, (disputed) Kosovo and to lesser extent in Croatia and Slovenia. At the level four a nation’s structure is based on “intelligence and merit”.⁸ This is in sharp contrast to what we have in most of Western Balkan countries whose system merit is based on political parties’ membership and activism. That is why it has been very difficult to reform the money losing state owned enterprises because they are mostly used to employ the obedient and loyal members of the political parties. Finally, level four nations never start wars, they practice tolerance and abolish death penalty.⁹ There is no death penalty in Western Balkans but it is common for regional leaders to issue strong words (further exacerbated by media) towards neighboring countries (ethnicities) as if we are still living in the troublesome nineties.

Western Balkan’s Stage

Apart from Croatia and Slovenia as EU members, the Western Balkan’s countries tend to be in the first three stages of the Richard Barrett “Seven Levels of Societal Consciousness”. The first three stages are consistent of basic requirements i.e. protection, safety, economic security, sense of belonging, loyalty, harmony, effective infrastructure, services and system that protects the rights of all the citizens.¹⁰ According to Mr. Barrett these basic building blocks represent the foundation of a democratic society. The first three stages include: 1. *survival* - territorial protection, employment opportunities for all, access to medical facilities to all; 2. *relationships* - old racial, ethnocentric or religious wounds are healed in spirit of reconciliation (the open questions are publicly discussed) and respect for minorities become essential¹¹; 3. *Self-esteem* - efficient delivery of public services and enforcement of law and order.

⁷ <https://www.valuescentre.com/sites/default/files/uploads/2012-12-18/The%207%20Levels%20of%20Societal%20Consciousness.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.valuescentre.com/sites/default/files/uploads/2012-12-18/The%207%20Levels%20of%20Societal%20Consciousness.pdf>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

At the *relationship* (second) stage it is crucial to care for subgroups' citizens as otherwise the loyalty of those groups cannot be counted upon in difficult times. Pockets of various insurgency can easily arise and civil war can erupt when exclusion and discrimination reach significant levels.¹² Western Balkans is the classic example of what happens when the minorities are not cared for. The self-esteem is the highest level of the lower stages of societal consciousness and is achieved when efficient institutions of governance are put in place. The laws, rules and regulations are established and are exercised efficiently. Efficient and effective taxation and delivery of public services is available to all while criminal activity is limited or mostly wiped out and citizens are protected from unscrupulous businesses.¹³ Western Balkan countries are in the process of building the efficient governing institutions whereby the EU membership talks (excluding EU members Croatia and Slovenia) act as the external check of the progress. The region is still to enter what Richard Barrett calls the "transformational stage where social relationships based on ethnicity and/or class shift to social relationships based on cultures of meaning".¹⁴ That is when Western Balkan countries will essentially enter the next phase of development that is marked by regional and global cooperation with the aim of reaching regional and global common goals.

Collective Identity as Nationalism

Owen Wooly, the professor at University of New Mexico writes about collective identity as "shared definition of a group that derives from its members common interest, experiences, and solidarities". He further argues that "collective identity is neither fixed nor innate, but rather emerges through struggle as different political actors, including the movement, interact and react to each other".¹⁵ Indeed, there seems to be no beginning and the end of the search of "collective identity" within Western Balkans. Just recently we were all (excluding Albania) part of the one country Yugoslavia, under one flag only to disintegrate into smaller countries, each with its own "collective identity". The search of "who we are" and "where we want" to be in world affairs is a continuous process in Western Balkans. The problem arises when the sense of belonging turns into "nationalism", especially for the countries that have not yet reached the Richard Barrett "transformational stage". But, is being a "nationalist" necessarily a bad thing?

As with "collective identity" there are many theories of "nationalism". According to Professor Richard Jenkins the political spectrum called "nationalism" is very diverse and broad.¹⁶ That is why defining "nationalism" becomes even more elusive. Nevertheless, Professor Jenkins talks about two main themes: "ethnicity" as perceived differences or similarities in culture and the second as political membership and participation as

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ <https://www.valuescentre.com/sites/default/files/uploads/2012-12-18/The%207%20Levels%20of%20Societal%20Consciousness.pdf>

¹⁵

http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9781405124331_chunk_g97814051243319_ss1-66

¹⁶ Jenkins, R.J., 2008 *Rethinking Ethnicity*, SAGE Publications, London 147 p

“citizenship”. Even though the two are intertwined, the former has historical roots while the latter is related to modern times. It is important to note that ethnicity is constantly evolving and as such it is never fixed.¹⁷ This is all more reason (not) to understand such strong feeling of “collective identity” in Western Balkans. Llobera argues that in order to develop a nation, there must be a “reservoir” of ethnic potential.¹⁸ Is that the reason why many of the former Yugoslavian Republics have been keen to stress their new “collective identity”? However, Hobsbawm believes that ethnicity and nationalism are two separate items. According to him, nationalism is a recent pragmatic political phenomena while ethnicity is primarily used to show authenticity. Hobsbawm continues - “to differing degrees, they offer a similarly functionalist argument: nationalism provided an ideological means, following the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, for the modern incorporation of élites and masses into a shared political space, the nation-state.”¹⁹ The precise difference between nationalism and ethnicity remains hard to establish. The answer can be found in midst of continuous historical changes and the evolving traditions.²⁰

Many scholars and experts look at Scandinavia as one of the closest regions to reaching Richard Barrett’s full spectrum societal consciousness. So how does “nationalism” look like in Denmark? Being part of the EU, Denmark is as an example of sixth level societal consciousness country. During Christmas time “Dannebrog” (Danish flag) can be seen in every supermarket and as trees’ decoration. A birthday cake in Denmark is often decorated by something “Danneborg” i.e. colors or candles. The nation’s identity has almost become consumers’ marketing strategy. Soccer fans regularly color their faces in “Danneborg”. Contrast that to the high risk sporting matches in Western Balkan e.g. Serbia vs Croatia. Denmark celebrates the fact that it is a small country and unique in its own way. Western Balkans have seen their fair share of territorial fighting. Important as national and ethnic identities, the shared imagined community of Scandinavia has been crucial for the prosperity or reaching the sixth level of societal consciousness. Contrast that to Western Balkans where politicians are eager to stress the differences among the regional countries. Family celebrations flying of the Danish flag in front of a house spreads the celebration through whole of nation. Contrast that to flying a flag of a country or ethnicity (as is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina) in Western Balkans and a completely different connotation can be made. “Collective identity” flags essentially establish boundaries and potential confrontation “with the other side”.

In Western Balkans there continues to exist a murky line between love for once country and resentment towards other regional ethnicities and/or countries. Collective identity or sense of belonging can become so strong that pieces of persons identity and own way of thinking can be questioned. This is then replicated to groups of people; eventually find its way into the mainstream. The media and politicians are not helping - we end up in situation where

¹⁷ Ibid. 147 p

¹⁸ Ibid. 148 p

¹⁹ Ibid. 149 p

²⁰ Ibid. 150 p

the peoples of Western Balkan countries are unable to envision common goals for the region and trust within is non-existent.

The Constitutional Nationalism?

The following are the inserts from Western Balkan countries' constitutions.

“Republic of Serbia is the state of *Serbian* people and all citizens that live in it..”²¹.

“...The Republic of Croatia is hereby established as the nation state of *Croatian* nation and the state of the members of its national minorities..”²².

“..as free and equal citizens, members of peoples and national minorities who live in Montenegro: *Montenegrins*, Serbs, Bosniacs, Albanians, Muslims, Croats and the others, are committed to democratic and civic Montenegro”. Article 2 states that “Bearer of sovereignty is the citizen with Montenegrin citizenship”.²³

“..*Bosnians*, *Croats* and *Serbs* as constituents' peoples (along with others), and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina... Article 1 states that “Bosnia and Herzegovina shall consist of the two Entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska (hereinafter "the Entities").”²⁴

“..Macedonia is established as a national state of the *Macedonian* people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanians and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia.”²⁵

“..Slovenia is a state of all its citizens and is founded on the permanent and inalienable right of the *Slovene* nation to self-determination”.²⁶

“..The Republic of *Kosovo* is a state of its citizens”.²⁷

“..the independence of the state and the integrity of its territory, dignity of the individual, human rights and freedoms, social justice, constitutional order, pluralism, national identity and inheritance, religious coexistence, as well as coexistence with, and understanding of *Albanians* for, minorities are the bases of this state, which has the duty of respecting and protecting them.”²⁸

The preamble of German constitution states “inspired by the determination to promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe, the *German* people, in the exercise of their constituent power, have adopted this Basic Law.” Article 1 states that “The German people therefore acknowledge inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of every community, of peace and of justice in the World.” Article 3 states “all persons shall be equal before the law. No person shall be favoured or disfavoured because of sex, parentage, race, language, homeland and origin, faith, or religious or political opinions. No person shall be

²¹ https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/ustav_republike_srbije.html

²² <https://www.zakon.hr/z/94/Ustav-Republike-Hrvatske>

²³ <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/me/me004en.pdf>

²⁴ http://www.ccbh.ba/public/down/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_bos.pdf

²⁵ <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/mk/mk014en.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.us-rs.si/media/constitution.pdf>

²⁷ <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Constitution1Kosovo.pdf>

²⁸ <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/untc/unpan013810.pdf>

disfavoured because of disability “²⁹. *Italian* Constitution Article 3 states that “all citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions”³⁰. *Sweden* constitution hardly speaks of any peoples or nationality at all. French constitution preamble speaks of *French* people but then the Article 1 states “France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organised on a decentralized basis.”

Even though the translation can be somewhat mistaken, the preamble of Chinese constitution states: “The People’s Republic of China is a unitary multi-national State created jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Socialist relations of equality, unity and mutual assistance have been established among the nationalities and will continue to be strengthened. In the struggle to safeguard the unity of the nationalities, it is necessary to combat big-nation chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism, and to combat local national chauvinism. The State will do its utmost to promote the common prosperity of all the nationalities.” Further, Article 4 states that “all nationalities in the People’s Republic of China are equal. China’s achievements in revolution and construction are inseparable from the support of the people of the world. The future of China is closely linked to the future of the world”.³¹

There is a clear tendency in Western Balkan constitutions to explain “whose state a state is”. While some are more advanced such is Slovenia, Montenegro and (disputed) Kosovo as “states of citizens”, most of them mention that a state belongs to a particular nationality. Germany has clearly put global perspective on regional and world affairs by embedding its relations with the outside world in the constitution. Western Balkan countries are still to achieve the sixth level of societal consciousness that builds strategic regional and world alliances of common aims and values. When the region’s countries start looking outward they too will be able to reach level six of societal consciousness i.e. join the regional and world strategic alliances with common vision of the future.

Conclusion

Are we witnessing the liberal democracies’ system exit worldwide or is it only about temporarily “democratic recession” (as the political sociologist Larry Diamond put it)?³² From east to west, north to south we are seeing worldwide “populist” messages taking over. The populist movements throughout the world is turbocharging the Western Balkan’s politicians. Being mainly within the third level of Richard Barrett’s *Seven Levels of Societal Consciousness*, Western Balkan countries love to have “leaders”. Most have (had) their own “strongmen” leadership: Serbia – Aleksandar Vucic, Montenegro – Milo Djukanovic, Macedonia – Nikola Gruevski (recently ousted), Bosnia and Herzegovina – Bakir Izetbegovic and Milorad Dodik, Albania – Edi Rama, (Disputed) Kosovo – Hashim Thaci. The EU

²⁹ <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/80201000.pdf>

³⁰ https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione_inglese.pdf

³¹ http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372962.htm

³² https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Diamond-26-1_0.pdf

members Croatia and Slovenia have largely remained immune to the “strongmen” leadership over the last decade.

While national identities remain an important part of (democratic) self-government, the world is becoming increasingly “small”. The increased movements of people is facilitated by the decreasing costs of technology i.e. Internet. In that respect the national identities will have to be modified to de-facto multicultural but as we have seen that has been a very taxing process in the EU (especially with the spike in global migration). Western Balkan peoples are watching what is happening in the EU that will hopefully find common ground around many of the internal issue that it is facing. Just recently the French president has called on the pause for the EU enlargement process. He has also spoken of “European civil war” between liberal democracy and rising authoritarianism.³³ One advantage of democracy over authoritarianism is the ability to hold the leaders accountable and oust them in elections. However, as we have seen in Western Balkans, the mere possibility of having elections is not enough to develop an efficient and robust democratic society. According to a research it takes at least four rounds of election-based changes of governments to reach a basic level of democratic system of governance. However, in Western Balkans it is common for politicians to label the opposite side as “traitors” and/or “corrupt”. Governing by dividing people is very much present throughout the region and can be difficult to control in the future if the economies do not improve. "A populist leader who gets into power is 'forced' to be in a permanent campaign to convince his people that he is not establishment - and never will be," according to Prof Nadia Urbinati from Columbia University.³⁴ This has been the case with many of the Western Balkan countries’ leaders over the last decade.

The potential long term regional reconciliation will mean that we are part of one strategic alliance and have given up on the part of “collective identity” that hinders prosperity. The source of the increased nationalism is a mixture of bad economy, lack of education, organized crime (that thrives where there are borders) history etc. However, most importantly the current generation politicians are simply not ready to take the whole region forward. All Western Balkan’s peoples want the same thing and that is the opportunity to thrive and achieve self actualization i.e. reach the higher level of societal consciousness. Whether it is the EU, USA, Russia, Turkey or China, the world powers would be more helpful approaching the region as a whole and not further divide it by ethnic lines. It is difficult to exercise foreign relations as a big country and it is understandable that different powers will have different interest throughout the world including the Western Balkans. Nevertheless what is the price for the potential further division by ethnic lines in Western Balkans?

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³³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43794856>

³⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-43301423>