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Security Issues in the West Balkans

1. What is the Problem?

Our interpretation of security is very complex. It includes issues of military defence, civilian life, environment, population, culture, economy, and accommodation as well.

As for the Balkan region, we must repeatedly observe military conflicts of varying intensity; they have become the most significant and unique element of the region's security affairs. On the one hand, they are interstate conflicts that are caught in a system of causes and purposes in which games – and occasionally direct military actions of the Great Powers – have played a central role. On the other hand, they are conflicts, insurrections or less intense actions of terror that were derived from the social or national dissatisfaction in local Balkan societies; more rarely, they were initiated from outside. The present work attempts to demonstrate a numerous instances of this phenomenon.

It is possible to observe how the ignorance or incompetent treatment of local (though, not yet military) social conflicts sometimes played a very important role in the evolution of military conflicts. The arrangement of settlements and the system of institutions, the difficult and often overlapping systems of different ethnic areas, and the self-concept, neighbourhood-concept and future-concept of the society often contributed to the evolution and sometimes even to the escalation of conflicts (to the ideal of Great Bulgaria, Great Serbia, Great Croatia, Great Romania, Great Albania, etc.).

During the history of peninsula, extreme forms of wealth and poverty could be concurrently observed, virtually in the same neighbourhood.

The issues of wealth and liveability as well as military conflict have been crucial factors in interior and international migration even up to now (labour migration, etc.).

Migration is not an issue of security only because of the country of origin; it is also because of the target and transit areas. With alteration in the coverage of accommodation areas and with the break-up of local – and frequently sensitive – political balances, security often arises as a social issue as well (e. g, Serbian migration towards the North from the Osmans or present-day conflict areas in the Vajdaság region). Greek-Turkish population exchange, the vicissitudes of the Turkish and Pomanian populations in Bulgaria, the "selling" of the Saxons in Eastern Transylvania, etc. are the extreme solutions to social conflicts in certain regions. The extension of accommodation areas for Albanians towards the South (into West Macedonia and Serbia) and the Bosnian-Serbian and Croatian-Serbian refugee affairs are recent result of the aforementioned series of events. Therefore, we have reason to conjecture that the series of these „final solutions" has not ended yet. Research about the system of settlements and populations can reveal the stages of this ever renewing process.

As a gate between West Asia and Europe, the Balkans repeatedly mediates medical risks as well. These epidemics (cholera, bird flu, plague, etc.) sometimes appear in the region, and because of migration, they can be understood as a risk factor for European societies. The evolution of dangerous epidemics is one of the most critical potential consequences of illegal migration.

Many authors describe the Balkan societies as are archaic compared to modern Europe. The strength of kin relationships and the role of clans and village communities seem anachronistic. At the same time, these are the effective forms of social self-defence in the Balkans. Their importance can be observed in the organisation of the legal and illegal economies (30–70% ratio of "black" and "grey"), arrangements of armed conflicts, and the efficiency of international criminal gangs. Familial and national bonds supposedly play a dominant role inasmuch as scientific researchers, practical security experts and economic advisors all must address when considering security issues, namely information exchange's lack of security.

Regarding its natural circumstances, the Balkan Peninsula belongs to one of the less stable European regions. The consistent earthquakes

have serious consequences (Skopje, Banja Luka, Kotor, etc.), drought (and problems of irrigation), the extensive degradation of the soil, and river flooding all pose serious issues to environmental security. The 20th century's modernization experiments (industrialisation and urbanisation) have left considerable environmental damage. War did not only cause extensive destruction but also created an enduring risk for environmental security (for example, minefields in Bosnia-Herzegovina).

In summary, it is possible to state that complex social conflicts as well as environmental sources of danger are permanently present in the Balkan's region. Researchers who study the region might have the impression that social and environmental stability are only temporary phenomena or that, to a greater degree than in any other region in Europe, a complex system of social conflicts forms the base of its social structure.

2. The question of the borders and the geographic environment of the region

We begin with the assumption that the extension of the region's borders is not evident. Many impoundments exist since many scientific disciplines deal with the Balkans. The natural, socio-historical, and political approaches are three larger groups. Nearly all approaches have minimum and maximum versions that depend upon which areas are considered as belonging to the Balkans and which are not. This not only determines the approach of spectators and/or researchers or the extension of the research subject of the research; it also establishes the attitude of the states that are connected with this region. Since inclusion in the Balkans implies belonging to a negative category, those who have the opportunity to do so try to escape from the region.

Within the present text, we have created our Balkans-concept based on the latter point of view. We consider Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia to belong to the Balkans. We consider Slovenia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey as transit areas, or so-called contact zones. Members of the contact zone can easily be argued into or out of belonging to the Balkans. This, first and foremost, can be explained by the fact that they were either evidently Balkan states (or parts of them) for an extensive period or that historical inclusion among the Balkan states (via territorial expansion, like Romania; for political and economical reasons, like Greece, etc.) could somehow preserve their 'Balkanness.'

The peninsula was named after the Balkan Mountains, which means 'woody mountain.' Beyond this, the Rodope and the Dinara Mountains as well as the Pindos and the Carpathians constitute the peninsula's most important areas. No basin or plateau has evolved that would made it desirable for the system of settlements to become a united state that encompassed the entire peninsula. Little half-basins, basins, hollows, and closed mountain ranges resulted in the evolution of a fragmented state structure. The main roads lead from the South-East to the North-West; therefore, it was not a serious problem to cross the mountains. Athwart roads appeared as subsidiary ones. The region usually served as an area of conquest of local great-powers.

Illustration 1 – the West Balkans

3. The Concept of the West Balkans

As a regional category, the West Balkans is separated from the Balkan Peninsula and evidently has a political origin. On the one hand, Yugoslavia designated this as an area where there were (and continue to be) civil war type conflicts after the demise of the bipolar world-order; on the other hand, Albania designated the West Balkans as the highest, most arid, and isolated post-socialist part in Europe and was deeply concerned with the Yugoslavian crisis (i.e. the Albanian population in Kosovo). From among the ex-Yugoslav member republics, Slovenia gained its independence from Yugoslavia under fairly peaceful circumstances; therefore, it is one of the most successful states that joined the EU in 2004, and it has managed to leave the conflicts in the West Balkans behind. In the beginning of the

Illustration 2 – the West Balkans
Source: www.ec.europa.hu

21st century, the category of West Balkans include Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania.

The main reason for the division of the Balkans into Southern and Western parts is politics. The concept was first used by EU bureaucrats in order to distinguish countries with socio-economic problems but pose little security risk and have a commitment towards Euro-Atlantic integration, like Bulgaria and Romania (both of which are currently EU and NATO member states); that is, the East Balkans and the aforementioned states known as the West Balkans. The main feature of West Balkans' countries is that they not only must go through social and economic difficulties, but even an anti-federal state – where the interests of the member republics were totally different and problems were complicated even by ethnic and religious crises as well as historical affronts – had to be abolished.

Today, it can usually be said about the West Balkans that all of its countries pose a risk to security politics to differing extents. Unsolved ethnic and demographic problems as well as their resultant potentiality for nationalization and changes to the borders concern all of these countries. During discussion of threats and risks, we must be circumspect because every step can potentially affect the entire region.

Today, the concept lives an independent life; today, it is not as bad to be Balkan as it is West Balkan. At the moment, the concept of the West Balkans is equivalent to a non-EU member state – since, if the European part of Turkey is ignored, only the West Balkans countries are not members of the European Union. According to current opinions, this may remain the situation for a while.

4. Border Demarcations and Border Problems[1]

The issue of borders is one of the West Balkans most considerable security problems. The region's external borders (mainly in the ex-Yugoslav state frontier) must be distinguished from the internal borders (they are very similar to the ex-Yugoslav internal administrational frontiers). Apart from a few exceptions, the question about external borders seems to be in order (e. g., the Slovenian-Croatian land border and

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[1]   Reményi, P. – Végh, A.: Az ezredforduló határkérdései, határváltozásai a Nyugat-Balkánon. *Földrajzi Értesítő*, Vol. LV, Nr. 1–2, 2006. 195–211.

the Slovenian-Croatian-Italian borderlines should be treated as exceptions). The most considerable security risk is connected with illegal border transport (smuggling, international organised crime, refugee smuggling, etc.) and the conflicts that are evolving because of the development of the Schengen system.

The region's new, internal state borders represent another type of risk. This risk derives from several factors. These include: the continual questioning of the legitimacy of new state border, the discrepancies between political and ethnic borders, and recent military conflicts whose real reasons have yet to be solved but that are, nevertheless, temporarily suspended.

The conflict's consequences are diverse. Interstate relationships are burdened by unsolved ethnic crises, isolation that is due to ethnicity and makes states inoperable, and schismatic efforts that destabilise the region. Evidently, the unstable situation does not favour the economy; therefore, social conflicts continue to accumulate and contribute to the growth of illegal activities and the creation of new security risks.

5.1. Emergence of the Problem

The most remarkable stage in Central Europe's regime change after the demise of the bipolar world order was the transformation of Yugoslavia, which was the earliest proponent of the West among socialist countries. As opposed to other countries experiencing regime change, a series of civil wars broke-out in the former Yugoslavia. The civil wars came in waves, and the opponents were continuously changing. Only international cooperation could result in the suspension of conflicts. After the wars, there was no chance to reunite the Yugoslav state, and sovereign states evolved in the region; however, the main problem that led to civil war (ethnically non-homogenous states) has remained until today. The region's economy and security as well as harmonic regional development remains unstable. These uncertainties concern not only regional states but also their neighbours (including Hungary) and, because of the expansion of the Euro-Atlantic integration system, Europe's entire system of security politics.

After the break-up of Yugoslavia, certain states were founded that had not historically existed in the same form. Borders that had been internal-administration borders for seventy years suddenly became

interstate, and although national accommodation areas and state areas often overlap, they were drawn in such a way that they were rarely ethnic borders as well.

Within the areas of the former Yugoslavia, state and ethnic borders are aligned only in the case of Slovenia and Croatia; the Montenegro's state borders are similar to its ethnic borders only in the West. The Muslim-Bosnian-inhabited areas called the Sanjak are in the North.

Within Yugoslavia, Macedonia was only bordered by Serbia, but even this is contentious. On the one hand, it was bordered by the western part of the Kosovo autonomous province; on the other hand, it was bordered by the areas belonging to Old Serbia but inhabited by Albanians (Bujanovac, Presevo) and Bulgarians (Bosilegrad).

Apart from the not very ideal shape of the country, the Croatian ethnic-corpus penetrated the southern areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly in the eastern areas of Middle Dalmatia. At the same time, there are ethnic islands of Serbs in these economically unattractive yet strategically important areas, e.g., in South Slavonia and Krajina.

Along no border do Serbia's political and ethnic areas align. This statement pertains to the former Yugoslavian republic in two ways. If we consider the state as a whole (including its two autonomous provinces), then it is spectacular that there are considerable Albanian and Hungarian accommodation areas within Serbia's borders. If we only consider the Serbian nuclear area (Old Serbia), then it is spectacular that without even addressing the autonomous provinces the national accommodation area penetrates into each of the other Yugoslavian member republics.

We deliberately discuss Bosnia-Herzegovina as the last example. It as the most populous nation in the republic, yet there was only a small, relative majority; from among the former Yugoslav member states, it was the last to gain nationhood (according to the declarations of the Yugoslav Communist Party, in 1968; according to a census and practically only during the Bosnian war, in 1971). Furthermore, the Muslim Bosnian majority lived in homogenous ethnic blocks only in very few (and mainly urban) areas. The Bosnian population, therefore, lived in a more territorially-concentrated way and within a much smaller geographic area than the Croatian or the Serbian populations who primarily lived in rural, town-like settlements. Moreover, considerable Croatian and Serbian ethnic-communities were accumulating along the borders and, thus, weakening the ethnic-character of Bosnia-Herzegovina's state borders.

When Yugoslavia broke-up, questions centring on the newly evolving states were highly controversial. According to Serbian party's point-of-view (which was permanently being emphasised during the conflicts, mainly in regards to those in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina), the borders between member republics were only administrational and not international borders; therefore, after the civil war, the principle of ethnic-borders – and not the principle of inviolability of state borders – needed to be validated. Nevertheless, the Croatian and Bosnian points-of–view emphasised the internationality of the borders of former Yugoslavian republic, referred to the Yugoslav Constitution, and imagined their independence exclusively within the former member republic's borders. The international community adopted the latter point of view during the settlement process.[2]

Nearly all of the new, independent successor states believed that not only had the ceasing (transforming) Yugoslavia had a multi-ethnic and multicultural character but that a solution to the crisis that had resulted in the break-up of Yugoslavia had to be found; therefore, the problems of the misalignment of state and ethnic borders was transferred to a lower administrative rung – from federal state to the newly independent states of the former republic.

5.2. Internal and External Border Changes after the Nationalisation

In June 1991, Yugoslavia was dismantled first by the nationalisation of Slovenia and Croatia and later by the separation of Macedonia and Bosnia (November 1991, March 1992). Military conflicts evolved in the newly independent states, and the main reasons for these events were ethnic (expect in Slovenia where, since there was nearly no ethnic conflict, the war was no more than a federal Yugoslav military law enforcement action).

5.2.1. Croatia

By 1991, the areas inhabited by Serbian majorities had already begun to mobilize with Serbian support, and Karjina's 'shadow state' had already been created. Although before the war Croatian political leaders

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2 Mesić, S.: *Jugoszlávia nincs többé*. Budapest, 2003. 405.
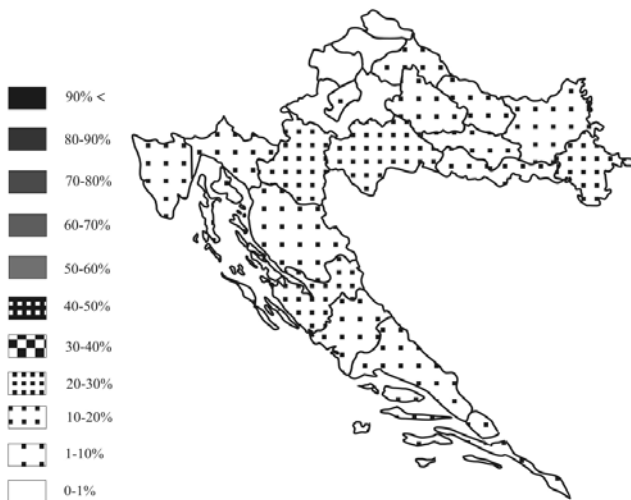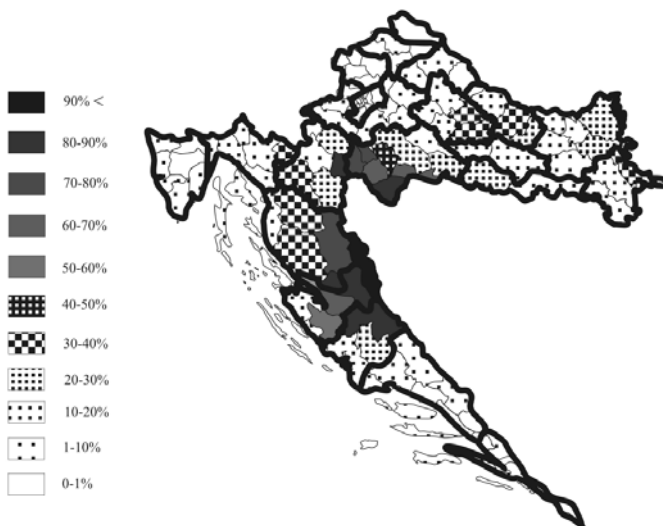
Illustrations 3 and 4 – The Ratio of the Serbian Population in Croatia in 1991 (at opcina level) and in 2001 (in the county system)

Source: Reményi P. – Végh A. 2006

promised to grant territorial autonomy to Serbians, the conflict could not be resolved in this manner. Written in 1991, the Croatian Constitution considered international norms; ethnic and minority rights were provided by law, but political and territorial autonomy were only revisited in 1992 with an amendment, after the war had already been taking place. The Yugoslav/Serbian army invaded nearly one-third of Croatia and was supported by Croatia's 12% Serbian population. On 20 December 1992, the President of Croatia proposed a new administrative system that concerned the whole country, and on 29 December 1992, the Croatian Parliament implemented the county system. Since the autonomy demands of the Croatian-Serbian population were based on the opcina (town / district) system that was inherited from Yugoslavia, this new type of administration abolished the older system. At the level of opcinas, Serbians had had a relative majority in 2 and absolute majority in 11 areas.

When the counties' borders were established, the interests of the Serbian ethnic-community were not considered (the war was still in progress at that time); therefore, from an administrative point-of-view, their more or less homogenous ethnic-blocks were fragmented; this does not even address the demographic effects of later military actions. The 'Lightning' (Bljesak) and the 'Storm' (Oluja) operations caused nearly two-thirds of the Serbian population to emigrate from Croatia; their ratio dropped to 5%, and the regions reoccupied in these operations were integrated into the county administrative system.

According to the 2001 census, the ratio of Serbian population currently reaches 10% in only three counties, and nowhere is it larger than the Vukovar-Szerémség county's 15.41%. Comparing illustrations 3 and 4, a realignment of the centres of the Serbian population's 'classic' (prewar) territorial locations in Croatia can be observed. This can be attributed to the fact that Krajina's Serbian population was under Croatian sovereignty during the abovementioned military operations while the areas along the Danube (Eszék-Baranya and Vukovár-Szerémség counties) were regained by "peaceful" reintegration. Although the ratio of the Serbian population decreased even here, there was not such a considerable mass emigration along the Danube because of this reintegration. With the drastic reduction in Croatia's Serbian population, the country's largest minority was effectively integrated.

5.2.2. Macedonia

At the moment of independence in the republic that had the short-est border within the former Yugoslavia, the Albanian populations' ratio was 21.73%. This population is concentrated in the north-western bor-der region of the country and is in an almost completely homogenous Albanian block that is dangerously close to the centre of the country and is an offshoot of independence-seeking Kosovo province.

As the Kosovo conflicts became more and more serious and bloody in the latter half of the 1990s, greater numbers of Albanians immigrated to Macedonia. Consequently, the Albanian population in Macedonia increased to 25.17%. By that time, the territorial concentration of the Albanian population had become greater in the South-East (South of the Kicevo-Struga line). In addition to the refugees from Kosovo, the chance of a military solution was also imported to Macedonia.

The Albanians continued to demand more rights as well as territo-rial and cultural autonomy; this resulted in a military conflict between Albanian separatist groups and Macedonian defence forces. The Ohrid Agreement did not adequately satisfy either of the extreme parties' demands yet embodied the peacemaking process inasmuch as it is the only document to date that has contributed to the peaceful co-existence of these two ethnic groups. This agreement modified and decentral-ized internal borders and, based on the 2002 census data,[3] reconceived administrative units as ethnic units. Accordingly, 84 opcinas (provided that Skopje, the capital, is not further divided into the smaller opcinas units that compose it, only 75), 33 so-called opcina groups, and 8 regions were constructed from the original administrative unites. In conjunction with their creation, the new administrative units were granted important rights and self-governing abilities (for example, in the fields of public service, improvement of the countryside, local economic development, financial affairs, education, health care service and social services).[4]

Behind the scenes, the more extreme Macedonian political opinions – Svetski Makedonski Kongres (Macedonian World Congress) and the VMRO-DPMNE (Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Democratic Party

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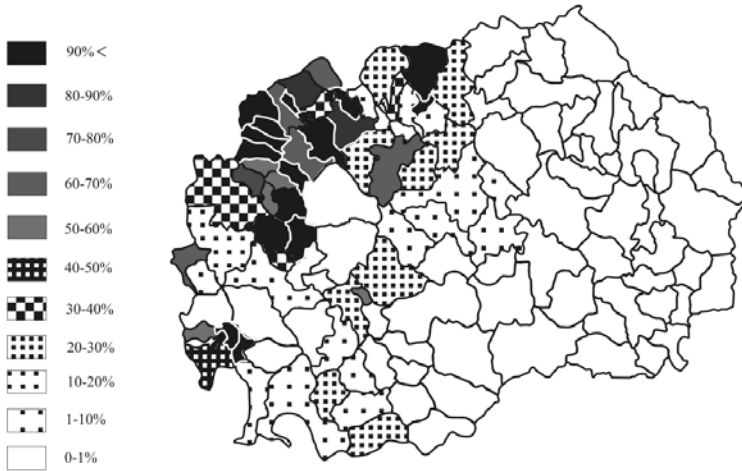3   Ramkoven Dogovor. 13. 08. 2001. Ohrid.
4   Idem

Illustration 5 – The Ratio of the Albanian Ethnic Group in Macedonia, 2002

Source: Reményi P. – Végh A. 2006

for Macedonian National Unity) – managed to prevail in posing a public referendum that would have prevented a territorial division reform, but this resulted in failure; therefore, the Ohrid Agreement's intentions are being realized. The majority of Macedonians treat the new internal border as a 'state within the state,' even if it has very limited political potential. The new administrative unit would be centred in Tetovo and would have considerable regional autonomy; it would include about one-fifth of Macedonia, and autonomy would not be constitutionally declared. Although the agreement does not mention Skopje as a common capital, its division on an ethnic basis (just like the example of Kosovska Mitrovica) is a foreseeable prospect since the city seems to be spontaneously separating along ethnic lines.

In contrast to Croatia, the administrative modification was not based on ethnic and minority interests, and when the borders are taken into consideration, it even seems to oppose the interests of a Macedonian nation-state. (This can be seen, for example, in the Struga region, where Macedonian areas have been integrated into the administrative units of an Albanian majority).

5.2.3. Serbia

Even today, the alteration of the federation's internal borders is a very complex process that is saturated with unanswered questions. The future fate of Kosovo is being negotiated even at present. The province has become a nearly homogenous, ethnically Albanian area, although there is a slight Serbian population that lives primarily in rural areas. This homogenisation can be divided into two periods. (*Illustration 6*)

The first is the demographic period or the 'peacetime.' During Tito's Yugoslavia, this is when Kosovo became an area of Albanian majority because of a natural increase of Albanians living there and the high emigration rates of the Serbian population (except for a few opcinas). At the end of the 1980s, the Serbian Government did its best to legally prevent further mass emigration of the Serbian population from this area, but these measures proved to be too late.[5]

The second homogenisation period began in 1991 with the break-up of Yugoslavia and has continued until present. There is no statistical data about this 15 year period (The 1991 census cannot be accepted as official data because only the Serbian party supports it); there are only estimates, but even based on these, it can be determined that emigration and the Serbian population's purchase has been increasing; even the most optimistic estimates only claim that they comprise about 5–6% of the region's population.[6] These small Serbian populations only live in a unified ethnic blocks that are situated North of the Ibar river, North of the divided Kosovska Mitrovica opcina, in Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic opcinas.

During the Milosevic Era, the need to find a solution to the situation in Kosovo became increasingly urgent, but Serbia was internationally isolated, burdened by its military conflicts with Bosnia and Croatia, and did not see a reason to open one more front, so it allowed the foundations of an Albanian shadow state to evolve (no tax was introduced in Kosovo, and there was no obligatory military service). In addition to this political change, the UCK (Republic Army of Kosovo) had ceased passively resisting. By the second half of the 1990s, plans for political solutions had been developed; however, these did not consider the reasons behind the Albanian population's actions.

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5   Službeni List SRS 30/89, 42/89, 22/91
6   Kosovo i njeno stanovništvo Anketa Statističkog Društva Kosova 2003

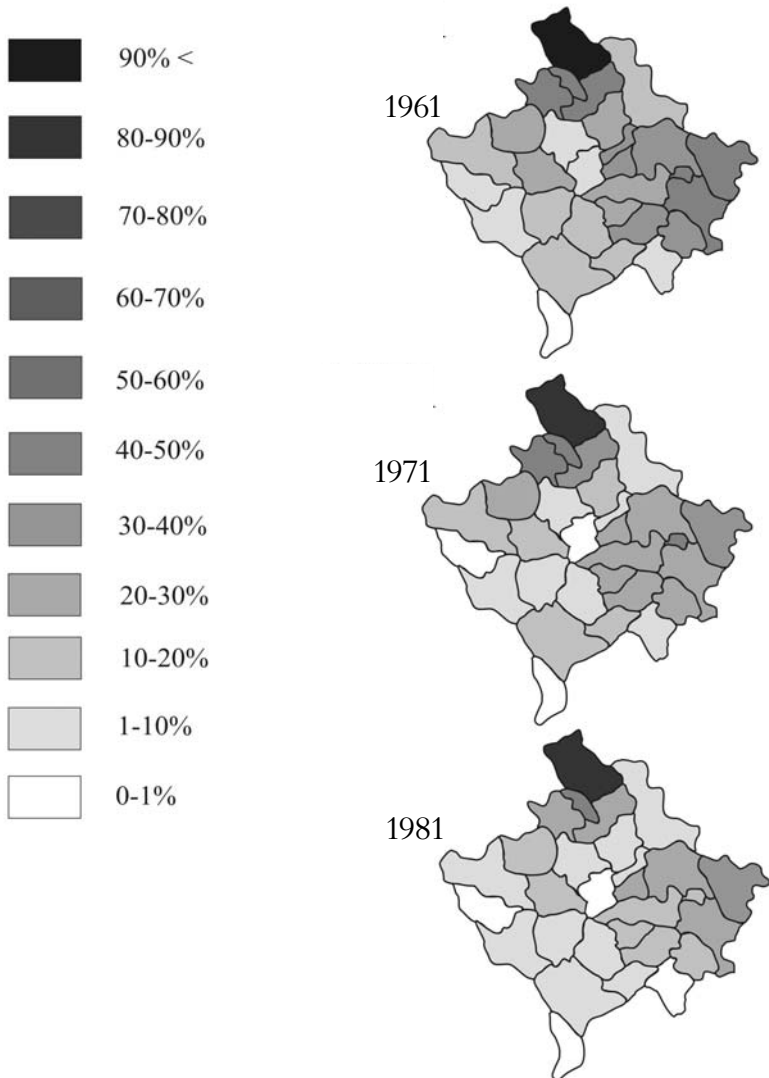|	
90% <	
80-90%	
70-80%	
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0-1%	

1961

1971

1981

Illustration 6 – The Ratio of the Serbian Population in Kosovo according to the Official Census Data
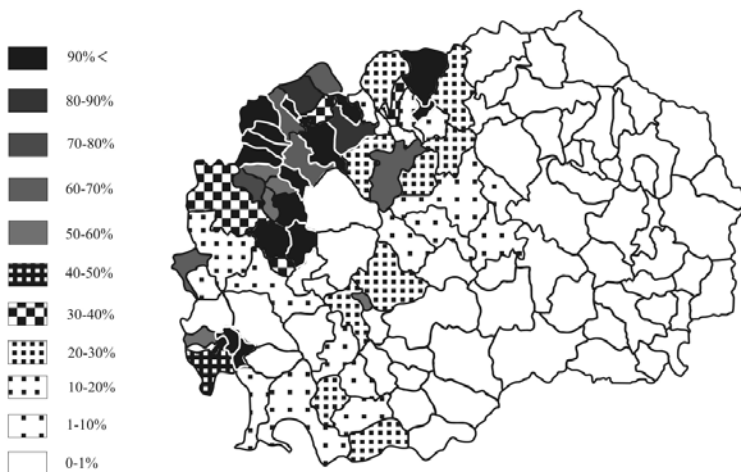*Source: Reményi P. – Végh A. 2006*

Illustration 7 – The Cantonisation Plan of Kosovo
(1 – Serbian cantons, 2 – Albanian cantons, 3 – towns important to Serbian cultural values, 4 – capital)
Source: Reményi P. – Végh A. 2006

The first so-called decentralisation theory was published in 1994 by Dobrica Cosic; the next was offered by Dusan Batakovic's in 1998. Batakovic's suppositions were later modified by several people, including Zoran Dindic, the assassinated Serbian Prime Minister, and Nebojsa Covic in 2001, who was Assistant Prime Minister and the leader of the Serbian Coordination Centre of Kosovo.[7]

According to the aforementioned plan, Kosovo would regain the autonomy it had lost at the end of the 1980s, but as 'autonomy within the autonomy,' the Serbian areas would not be subject to the authority of the (Albanian) Parliament nor to the administration of Kosovo; rather, as in areas of Old Serbia, they would be directly linked to the authority of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia. It should be noted that this area is much larger than the entire ethnic-Serbian area, and its Southern offshoot would completely separate an Alba-

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[7]   ICG International Crisis Group (2002): Report N 124. Putokazi za budućnost Kosova I. Rešavanje konačnog statusa Priština/Brisel 2002. mart.

nian-inhabited zone from Kosovo. This division is based on culture rather than ethnicity, as is evidenced by the fact that Serbia's medieval religious centres are situated within this area, which is at the moment inhabited by an Albanian majority. Success on any level of the afore-mentioned solution will result in a process of state-formation that is similar to the developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it would not resolve the current conflicts.

Ibrahim Rugova posited a plan for the division of Kosovo in which, for the sake of an independent (and purely Albanian) Kosovo, Bujano-vac and Presevo opcinas that currently belong to Old Serbia would be attached to Kosovo in exchange for the Serbian opcinas (Leposavic, Zubin Potok, Zvecan and Northern Mitrovica).

From an ethnic point–of–view, both Albanian and Serbian concepts partially ignore the division of Kosovo's Serbian population; they only consider one-third of the Serbian population and ignore the Serbian majority that lives in the province's rural areas. This Serbian majority has never been in a privileged position but has, rather, always lived on the periphery.[8] According to the solutions offered above, evacuation and population exchange would remain a hovering threat to this group.

There is a very small chance that Serbians will reintegrate Kosovo. Although the UN Declaration 1244/1999 treats Kosovo as the part of Serbia, the Albanian population and political parties consider it unim-aginable. The Ahitsaar Report was not a great success. Limited inde-pendence in Kosovo would translate to a loss for Serbians and further dependence for Albanians. This does not even address the high costs to EU to retain a permanent military and police presence there.

At the moment, the internal ethnic borders have disappeared, much as they did in Croatia. Homogenisation was achieved at the cost of seri-ous war conflicts and ethnic-cleansing. The evolution of future borders depends on how and when 'peace' will take shape and evolve in Kosovo.

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8   ESI, European Stability Initiative: Princip Lozane, Multietničnost, teritorij i budućnost kosovskih Srba. Priština/Berlin 2004.

5.2.4. Montenegro

The prospects for the Balkans' youngest state are difficult to predict. No doubt, the country has excellent natural resources for tourism; however, at the same time, there are considerable differences among interior territories. Tourism as well as the development and enrichment of the coast are probable prospects, but the interior's elevations and arid regions will profit little from it; thus, this development may become a source of interior-conflicts. The relationship between Serbia and Montenegro is also very problematic. A considerable portion of the population is Serbian, and their apparent demand is to remain in contact with the mother country.

Apart from Serbians, the Albanian population in the country's Southern region (Ulcinj) cannot separate itself from the Albanian question that dominates the area either. The situation of Sanjak's Muslim population and its future political intentions are difficult to predict at the moment but will surely be treated as a security risk in the future.

5.2.5. Bosnia-Herzegovina

From among the ex-Yugoslav member republics, the concept of multi-ethnicity was most widespread in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but this resulted in a terrible civil war. There were no real ethnic borders in Bosnia before 1991 (illustration 9). Ethnic homogeneity was not tangible, even at the lowest level, the level of opcinas. Although there were certain ethnic islands where one of the three major nations was in majority, these territorial locations were not by any means suitable for determining borders according to ethnicity.

Although the aforementioned ethnic border/state border relationship was intensified by the civil war's homogenizing effect, it was weakened in particular cases. The conflicts along the borders that divide an accommodation area into two parts have slackened. This is especially around the North-Western borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina from where a large number of Serbians escaped from Croatia's Krajina. Because of this, the ethnic character along the state border became stronger. Nevertheless, the crises in West Herzegovian and along the river Drine – where earlier mixed populations had homogenised due Bosnian influence – have
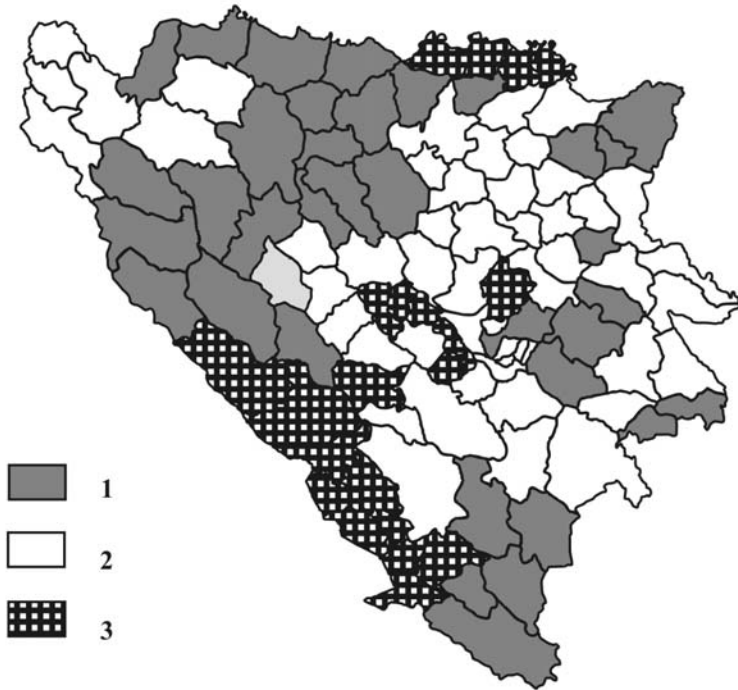
Illustrations 8: The Ethnic Division of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1991 (absolute or relative majority)
(1 – Serbians, 2 – Bosnians, 3 – Croatians)
Source: Reményi P. – Végh A. 2006

escalated. It is generally true that the Bosnian nation is concentrated in the central areas of the independent Bosnia-Herzegovina (except for the neighbourhood of Bihac) while Serbians and Croatians live in a wide and long zone that borders their mother countries and inhibits this central Bosnian area. This is evidently unfavourable for long-term stability in the state.

The Contract of Dayton that ended military conflicts established an inter-entity border (IEBL) that separated areas belonging to the two combating states (Republica Srpska – RS and Federacija Bosnia i Hercegovina – FBiH) and, thus, created the two entities known today as
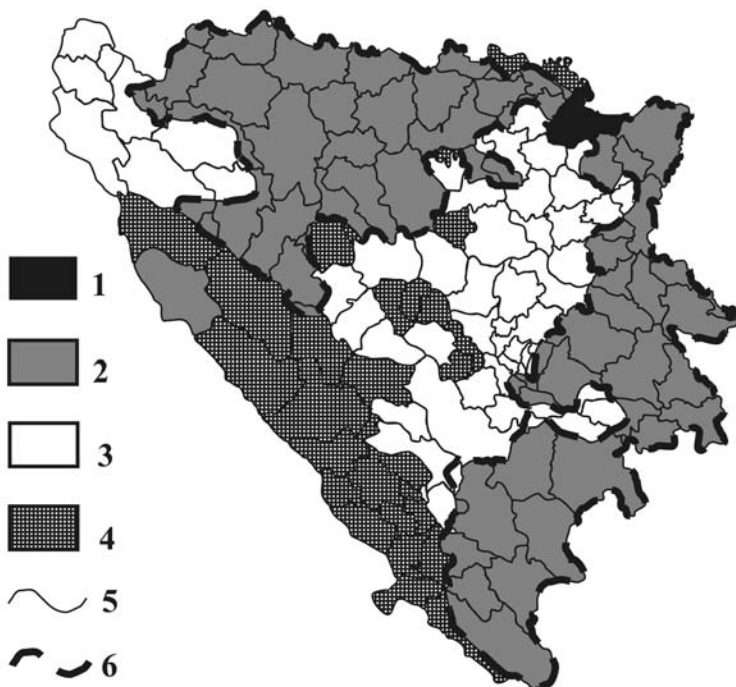
Illustration 9: The Ethnic Division of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2002
(absolute or relative majority)
(1 – Brcko District, 2 – Serbians, 3 – Bosnians,
4 – Croatians, 5 – opcina borderline, 6 – RS borderline)
Source: Reményi P. – Végh A. 2006

Bosnia-Herzegovina. The ethnic principle overruled nearly all other
factors – except for in a few cases (Corridor of Posavina, Corridor of
Gorazde) – in determining the borders.[9] The purpose was not to rec-
reate ethnic balance – since it was impossible in 1995 and is impossi-
ble even today – but to terminate military conflicts. Crystallizing the
boundaries of these front lines and creating new, permanent ethnic bor-
ders was the peace treaty's most critical point, and it has remained so

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9   Aganović, M. – Jovanović, Z.: *Bosnia and Herzegovina spatial structures and regional
    policies*. Trieste: Vision Planet Project Interreg II.C International Adriatic Confer-
    ence, 1999.

since then. Although minority re-immigration began in 2000 (Serbians to the FBiH, Bonsnians and Croatians to the RS), it has only slightly modified the ethnically homogenous character of the areas.

In order to satisfy the demands of the Croatian population, whose state was still at war, a canton structure with significant autonomy was created within FBiH. However, it was not granted its own entity during the settlement process. The cantons have their own legislative, executive, judiciary and – perhaps the most important of all – armed law enforcement bodies. When the canton borders were created, the establishment of pure Croatian cantons (based on ethnicity) was taken into consideration; therefore, the areas (cantons) of West Herzegovina that are primarily inhabited by Croatians function as a state. The Bosnian population's return to the region has been slow, and in 2001, only an international military intervention could prevent the one-sided realization of Croatian autonomy and self-government.[10]

It seems evident that greater decentralisation of the Bosnian-Croatian half of the otherwise extremely decentralised state and the creation of new borders within the state (that separate areas that occasionally differ in regards to their state and public administration) is resulting in an increasingly fragmented state.

Beside the original administrative border of IEBL, the ethnic border is the most significantly discrepant. In the case of the IEBL, the state and ethnic borders overlap in a majority of cases, but in several areas, it is possible to see a different an ethnic border. At the opcina level very few mixed-population areas can be mentioned; therefore, except for in a few cases, ethnic borders are very sharp.

This is important because the three ethnicities are organised around and control their communities based upon on diverse interests. These interests are not always distinguished by IEBL or canton borders but, in certain case, by opcina borders. Therefore, the area is further fragmented by the interests that are mainly ethnic and are often independent of administrative borders (e. g., the sharp ethnic-borders within the cantons inhabited by Bosnian-Croatian mixed population).

Another serious criticism of the entity's borders is its unfavourable effects on territorial development. The ethnic principle overruled

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10 Juhász, J. – Márkusz, L. – Tálas, P. – Valki, L.: *Kinek a békéje? Háború és béke a volt Jugoszláviában*. Budapest, 2003. 328.

territorial divisions' of labour, going even as far as cutting certain opcinas into two pieces (Sarajevo, Mostar, Doboj).

The experiences of the last decade prove that military conflicts have
ceased, yet flat, organic territorial development and the stability of the
state are not necessarily served by the current administrative system.
The function of the IEBL barrier is much larger than lawmakers earlier
envisioned. Ethnic-borders remain at several levels, and rarely did they
lose their importance. Nevertheless, without the IEBL, the transformation of the currently fragmented structure is unimaginable.

Since several administrative levels can be observed within the state of
Bosnia-Herzegovina, the relationship between the ethnic and administrative borders can arise in several respects. The state's external border and
the ethnic border are problematic because the two out of the three state-
constituting ethnicities live along the borders of their mother nations
and because the centrifugal powers within the country are considerable.
The (forced) modification of the state administration on ethnic grounds
resulted in more importance being attached to the inner ethnic-borders.
Borders of this type can be observed at each administrative level; the IEBL
and the majority of canton borders also belong to this type, but several
opcina borders are, at the same time, ethnic borders.

The member republic with the most complicated ethnic structures
had to face the most complex questions of administration. The country
could remain united only via extreme decentralisation and the autonomy of particular ethnic groups. The state administration is organised
on an ethnic basis; it is a balanced between the three state-constituting
ethnicities, and as known from the conflicts in the last two decades, the
country's development does not appear likely. The complexity of ethnic relations can be observed in the fact that questions concerning the
territorial structure are still agenda items as well as in the fact that the
modifications of Bosnia-Herzegovina's constitutional reform and public
administration of are still current and urgent issues.

5.3. Conclusions Regarding the Questions of Borders

It can be said that everywhere within the former Yugoslavia ethnic-
homogenisation can be observed. The most important differences derive
from the fact whether within the new state borders new ethnic-borders and enclaves evolved (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia) or a given

area (country, province) simply got rid of its ethnic minority in order to become ethnically homogenous (Kosovo, Croatia, entities of Bosnia). Within each of the examples, this change gave birth to new border types and the transformation of existent structures.

It is believed that considerable alterations will occur in the near future in the region and that these will derive from the still incomplete processes of nationalisation (Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina or the Albanian population of the region) or through the quick expansion of Euro-Atlantic organisations in the region.

The first factor will lead to more fragmentation, namely the evolution of new borders and, in conjunction with this, new ethnic-conflicts. Euro-Atlantic integration will, alternatively, result in integration of unpredictable velocity and with unforeseeable features.

The relationship between these two powers is quite questionable at the moment. Will quick social and economic development become more important than the realisation of national programs? Which principle will win: the most complete national independence? Or the integrative system?

6. Changing Roles of Towns in the West Balkans[11]

Since they suddenly became capitals of new states or entities, small towns apparently have achieved a more important status in the hierarchy of settlements. Occasionally, the importance of very small towns has grown drastically. Banja Luka, the capital of the Bosnian Serbian Republic (according to local sources, there were 140,000 inhabitants prior to the war; due to refuge waves, the number of the population reaches 200,000 today) or Pristina (150,000, capital of Kosovo) have not yet reached more than 200,000 inhabitants, but Sarajevo (400,000 inhabitants), Podgorica (120,000), Tirana (450,000) and Skopje (450,000) are also only mid-sized towns. The new borders also separated towns that had cooperated earlier. Examples include: Slavonski Brod and Bosanski Brod on the two banks of the river Szava, which runs along the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, or the strategically

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[11] Hardi, Tamás – Pap, Norbert: Az államhatár megvonások hatása a Kárpát-medence és a Nyugat-Balkán városhálózatára – példák. In Pap, N. (ed.): *A Balatontól az Adriáig*. Pécs: Lomart Kiadó – PTE Kelet-Mediterrán és Balkán Tanulmányok Központja, 2006. 241–252.

important city Brcko.[12] In addition to the increased importance of small towns, more developed cities area losing their attractiveness as the new state areas become increasingly smaller. If Kosovo secedes, for example, Beograd will become a capital of 1,5-million in a country of 7 million inhabitants, and a kind of primate city – similar to that of Hungary's capital Budapest – will evolve. The new states do not have a well-developed system of urban settlement. Currently, 20–40% of their urban population lives in the capital.

South-Eastern Europe's system of settlements differs from the systems of Middle and Western Europe. A network of towns is much rarer, and the population density is usually lower than anywhere else in the Western part of the continent. Considerable centres evolved only at the peripheries, first and foremost Istanbul; Athens (with a current population of 3 million inhabitants) was in the 19th century only small town with 50,000 inhabitants. The capitals of those countries that evolved in the 19th and 20th centuries were small, countryside towns. The main reason for this was the Balkans' natural-geographic features. The mountainous region did not favour the development of highly concentrated populations, but it should also be remembered that much of this region belonged to the Turkish Empire and was its periphery for centuries. This is why except for a few administrative and commercial centres (e.g., Skopje) no considerable cities evolved.

The states that developed after the withdrawal of the Turkish Empire did their best to cultivate the cities they had inherited. The modernizing capital became a symbol of national pride, and cities that had been previously less noteworthy became capitals instead of the earlier centres (e. g., Bukarest or Sophia). During this period, the degree of urbanization in this region's states was extremely low; at most, 20% of the population lived in urban areas. The growth of the urban population in these countries occurred during the period of state socialism. Quick urbanisation was supported by two ideologies: on the one hand, the dominant ideology emphasised the leading role of the working class within society; on the other hand, it was possible and even necessary because of the crystallisation of the young nation-states' borders. The process could only be accomplished in the 20th century in certain countries. At this time,

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12   Reményi, P. – Végh, A.: A Brčkoi Körzet: megoldás vagy zsákutca? *Balkán Füzetek (*Pécs), Nr. 2, 2005. 62–79.

not only the capitals were modernised but regional centres, the capitals of the member republics in the federal Yugoslavia, also became stronger. The number of cities and so-called 'socialistic cities' (industrial centres based on a particular industrial field) grew. The number of cities in the region grew 150% in the second half of the century. In the middle of the 1950s, there were 402 cities registered in the region; today, there are 1098.[13] Also, the populations in the cities have drastically increased. There are three cities in the region with populations reaching 1 million inhabitants, and at the end of the 1980s, there were over 2 million inhabitants in Bukarest. The construction of blocks of flats and housing estates became a dominant tendency, sometimes even in small towns.

During the socialist decades, urbanisation in the Balkans was basically altered. The ratio of the urban population and the number of cities grew to a significant degree, and with the exception of a few areas, they started to approach the European average. This process contributed to the growth and extension of urbanisation grew in the region; that is, territorial differences decreased in this respect.

7. The Effect of New State Borders on Different Aspects of the System of Settlements

7.1. The Capitals

Regional capital cities can be divided according to their problems into the following groups:

2. Traditional capitals (Tirana, Beograd)
3. New capitals (Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Podgorica, Skopje)
4. 'Para-capitals' (Pristina, Banja Luka)

Since they are capitals in the traditional sense, Tirana and Beograd must be singled out from other regional capitals.

The Albania capital is situated on the Southern edge of the lowland coast. In the last decade, the population has reached half a million. There are large discrepancies between incomes. Newly-built villas, excellent restaurants and luxurious cars contrast starkly with the majority's standard of life. The role of the service-industry is gradually becoming as

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[13] Kocsis, K. (ed.): *Délkelet-Európa térképekben*. Budapest: MTA Földrajztudományi Kutatóintézet, 2005.
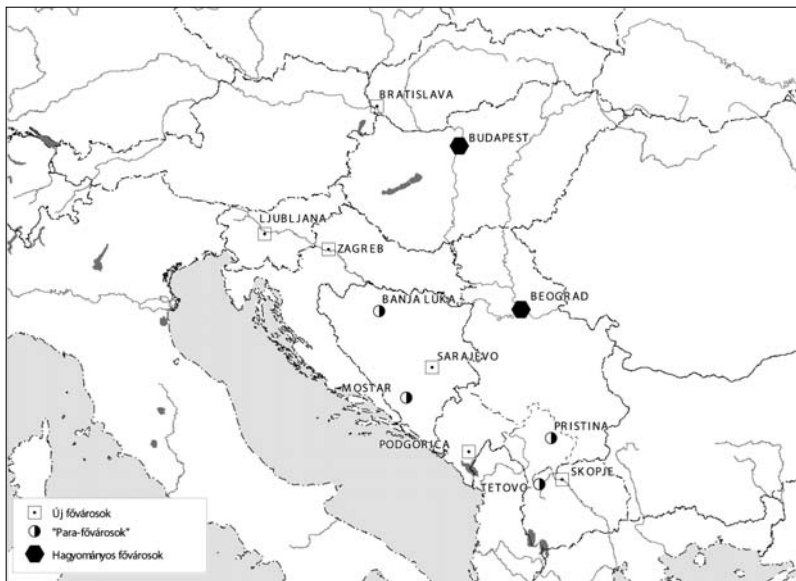
Illustration 10 – The capitals described
Source: Hardi – Pap 2006

important as the mechanical industry. The country's gate to the sea is Durres (earlier Durazzo). In the socialist period, Durres became a considerable industrial centre. Two-thirds of the country's commercial trade is done via this settlement. Mainly Kosovo's Albanian inhabitants and those from the capital spend their holidays on the city's coast. The country's Northern regional centre is Skodra, a political counterpoint to the capital's agglomeration. In the country's Western lowland, the effectiveness of the state's presence and its authorities is questionable.

Before the fall of Yugoslavia (1991), Beograd was the capital of a federal state that consisted of 255,804 km^2 and had 20.3 million inhabitants. In those years, the Beograd's population constituted 7.6% of the state's entire population. If Kosovo were to achieve its aim of secession and the current federative state is broken-up, the capital's population a – which in 2002 was 1.58 million – would constitute 21% of the Serbian population.

As can be observed, the traditional capitals create a weight within the countries if their populations are reduced in size, and the so-called veg situation can evolve this way.

The category of new capitals is a recently advanced one; cities belonging to this category are the mid-sized, town-like capitals that suddenly grew to the rank of capital in the newly independent federative states. The majority of these cities (Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Podgorica, Skopje) were originally regional centres; only Zagreb and Bratislava are historical capital cities. The others were mainly provincial seats or regional administrative centres. Therefore, these cities had to face three developmental challenges after the countries attained statehood.

1. Administrative and other institutions must be established so that the settlements are able to become the real political and administrative centres of a given country. Therefore, Parliament, departments, airports, etc. need to be established, and the existent institutions should be further improved.
2. On the other hand, these cities have become symbols of their respective nation-states. Since many countries did not exist in earlier periods as sovereign entities, national monuments, gigantic streets, etc. had to be built in order to emphasise nationhood (e. g. Clinton avenue).
3. The settlements mentioned were previously within a federative state's system of settlements, but their new rank of capital demands their integration into the European system. From among the three necessary improvements, this is perhaps the most difficult since the contacts between them and other important capitals have yet to be developed.

It is evident that each capital must face these challenges to a different extent. So-called 'para-capitals' also must be mentioned. This concept covers regional centres that are being nationalized. Pristina in Kosovo and Banka Luka in the Bosnian Serbian Republic belong to this group. These centres are in an interesting transitory situation. Because they are at a higher level in the international hierarchy of settlements, they are regional or federal centres that are directly connected to great powers. At the same time, their character as capitals and their institutional systems are weaker than ones of the so-called new capitals (see above). Banja Luka or the former quasi-centre of the Pale region cannot even be called regional centres. Mostar, the Croatian centre of the

Illustration 11 – Some examples of 'loser' capital cities
Source: Hardi – Pap 2006

Bosnian-Croatian Federation, also belongs to this category. Although its para-capital status is more uncertain because it is not officially an independent entity, it is a visible centre of organisation.

The reconfiguration of borders also resulted in considerable migration. Masses usually emigrated to the regional capitals of the countries for ethnic reasons during the 20th century, and this tendency can even be observed today. This is a considerable problem in several Balkan cities because the majority of new inhabitants do not officially migrate or change their address. That is, the population data for particular cities is uncertain. This kind of disorder also poses a serious challenge for public services. Furthermore, the expanding use of motor vehicle creates chaotic transport conditions.

7.2. The 'loser' cities in border reconfiguration

The creation of new borders meant that several cities lost their earlier attractiveness and contacts. From the point of view of a settlement system, the losses can be summarised as follows:

Illustration 12 – Some examples of 'winning' capitals
Source: Hardi – Pap 2006

1. The loss of a part of the sphere of influence
2. Evolution of new peripheries
3. Relegation within the administrative hierarchy of settlements
4. The decrease of the importance of geographic position
5. Decrease in population

The most spectacular phenomenon is the partial loss of a city's sphere of influence (illustration 12). At the same time, new peripheries are evolving from the separate sphere of influence on the other side of the borders. This is a serious obstacle for parties on both sides of the borders. The population in separated areas of the sphere of influence lose their available urban services; because of this, the region becomes peripheral, and its society and economy begin to show signs of decline. This can be seen, for example, in of Croatia's narrow coastal zone Dalmatia where border areas were separated.[14]

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[14] Illés, I.: *Közép- és Dél-Kelet Európa az ezredfordulón*. Budapest–Pécs: Dialóg Campus Kiadó, 2003.

7.3. The 'Winning' cities in the New Borders

As was natural, the changing settlement system and state structures not only declined but also included the certain settlements' facilities.

The evolving peripheries needed a new central settlement; therefore, settlements in the lower levels of hierarchy became centres. Because of this, there are certain towns in the West Balkans that win (e.g., Serbia's Novi Pazar became a border town with the de facto separation of Kosovo. It has remained the centre for Serbia's Muslim population).

It was not only the central power's will that caused certain settlements to begin developing; rather, their geographic position became more important within the new state structure. The best example of this is the case of Novi Sad (Újvidék), which – with its 217,000 inhabitants – is Serbia's second most important settlement after Beograd. In Macedonia, the case of Bitola or Tetovo (the centre for Albanians) is very similar. As an effect of transition, the town of Skodra is also becoming more significant.
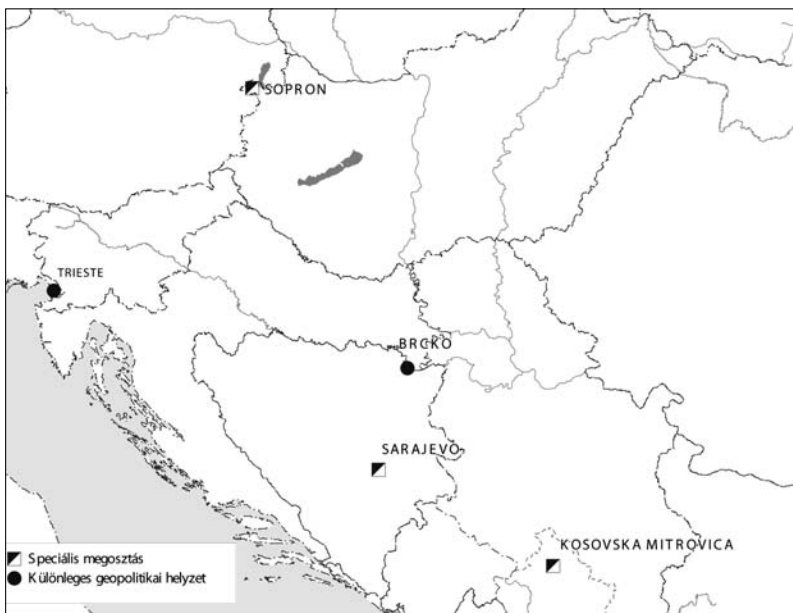

Illustration 13 – Some examples of cities with special geopolitical situations
Source: Hardi – Pap 2006

7.4. Towns with serious geopolitical and ethnic problems

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the region was divided into nation states by the break-up of multinational empires and federal states; thus, the political borders that evolved were not always identical to ethnic borders. In the case of the ethnically diverse towns, religious and ethnic groups are highly segregated. Kosovska Mitrovica and Sarajevo are good examples of this. Kosovska Mitrovica in the Northern part of Kosovo is divided into a Serbian-inhabited area and an Albanian-inhabited area that is by the river Ibar; likewise, Sarajevo has almost become a purely Bosnian city. The Sarajevo's Serbian-inhabited area, Sprski Sarajevo, morphologically belongs to the town, but from an administrative point of view, it belongs to another entity. The international community should make serious efforts so that those in city are able to properly work and live.

In other cases, the geographic or strategic importance of particular cities was so large that international powers could not allow certain cities to lose the advantages deriving from their geographic positions. Triest, the former sea gate of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, is a good example of this. In 1954, Triest was a 'free city' and the Southern endpoint of the iron curtain. Later, it was divided into parts in such a way that the narrow coast zone of the city was given to Italy and the inner, Istrian areas to Yugoslavia.

Brcko is a port town similar to Triest, but it is located on the bank of the Szava River. It is an important town because the Bosnian Serbians' state begins here with the so-called Brcko Corridor. If this settlement belonged to Croatia or Bosnia, then the Bosnian Serbians' state would be threatened by fragmentation. This is why the great powers separated the town from the national framework and created it as a separate entity.

8. The So-called Exceptions

The West Balkans' region has several potential crisis areas with problems that either cannot be integrated into the problems discussed above or are definitely local issues; however, these troubles can have a far-reaching effect because of the sensitive political balance within the Balkans. Local political crisis areas that might pose a serious security

risk under certain circumstances include but are by no means limited to
the following:

- Discussed sea border in the Gulf of Piran
- The special area of Brcko
- The Exit of Ploce
- The Corridor of Neum
- The Exit of Bar
- Stateless ethnicities within the region
- The problem of the Sanjak area
- Minefields and other remnants of the war

9. Summary

Even today, the West Balkans is one of Europe's largest unstable
regions. This instability resulted in civil wars not very long ago, and
the issues igniting of these wars have still not still been completely set-
tled. The region's basic problem may be found in the West Balkan's sys-
tem of border, where borders do not only mean border demarcations but
also means lines that separate divergent social and economic phenomena
(ethnicity, language, dialect, poverty and wealth). Complex and often
fragmented, these artificially modified structures continuously recreate
security risks that repeatedly reach a critical mass and explode.

If a region exists in which European integration should (independ-
ent of economic interest) play a pacifying and stabilising role, the West
Balkans is that area. The extremely fragmented structures do not allow
problems to be addressed at the nation-state level, and international law
enforcement is necessary in several places. It seems that the easiest way
to solve these problems would be within the frameworks of a common
European integration, if a Europe of states could replace the Europe of
regions. Despite our awareness of the developmental differences between
the West Balkans and the European Union, we believe that the problems
stem centuries' old differences, even when approaching the issue with
a good-will. But it seems evident that for the sake of the region's stability,
the European Union should make sacrifices.