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"Understanding the EU enlargement process in the Western Balkans as a key component of regional peace - The Case of Serbia"

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Contents:

ABBREVIATIONS

BREXIT[1] - It is an abbreviation for the term "British exit"

CEEC – Central and Eastern European Countries

CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy

CJEU – Court of Justice of the European Union

CSDP – Common Security and Defense Policy

CEFTA – Central European Free Trade Agreement

EC – European Community

EAEC/Eurotom – European Atomic Energy Community

ECSC – European Coal and Steal Community

FRY – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

IFI – International Financial Institutions

NAM – Non-Aligned Movement

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NF –Neo-functionalism

Pfp - Partnership for Peace

SECI – Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative

SEE – Southeast Europe

SFRY – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

UN – United Nations

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

USA – United States of America

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[1] Brexit referred to the possibility of Britain withdrawing from the European Union (EU), now considered the actual process of Britain's exit from the EU.

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Abstract

The European Union, since its earliest incarnations, has at its core been focused on reducing the likelihood of war and violence on the European continent. This paper seeks to investigate the long term goal of European enlargement in terms of its impact on peace in the western Balkans – a region which has historically been bedeviled by instability and ethnic strife, not to mention being the subject of geopolitical wrangling by Great Powers. Using Serbia as the primary case - in the context of it being a present candidate country for EU membership- this paper will draw upon extensive existing literature and direct source material in the form of interviews and written correspondence with academics, officials in the Serbian military and government - both active and inactive- to provide greater insight into the impact that the EU enlargement process is having on peace in the western Balkan region. This paper will begin by forming a foundation through an understanding of the theories of European integration. It will then focus in on the realities of enlargement fatigue on the part of the existing member states in contrast to the accession fatigue which is slowly beginning to gain some level of traction within candidate countries like Serbia – with the length of the EU enlargement process proving to be one of the most unpopular elements of the process for potential member states. Finally, highlighting the importance of the EU and its intrinsic mandate as a peace-building institution, the potential threats to its survival, and what this can mean to the western Balkans in terms of maintaining peace in the region is comprehensively explored.

Keywords: SFRY; EU; EU enlargement; geopolitics; Serbia; Peace; western Balkans; succession; Brexit.

Introduction

The Near Eastern Question,[2] and more particularly the question of the Balkan region[3] and its place in the geopolitical landscape of Europe, has historically been an essential and relevant question for the peace and security of Europe - and by extension the entire world. The area received its name in 1809 from a German geographer Johann August Zeune who named the area for its central mountain range; he used the term "Balkanhalbinsel" which translates in English to the Balkan Peninsula (Todorova, 2018). The notion of this relatively small, but strategically placed peninsula, being as critical as it has been to the question of stability in the European region has perplexed geopolitical observers for some time.

Numerous terms have been used, sometimes interchangeably in relation to the Balkan region, i.e. Southeastern Europe (SEE), western Balkans, south western Balkans etc. For the purpose of this research the term 'Balkans' will be used interchangeably with the term 'western Balkans' – which is the area of primary focus in this study. This will be used in the context articulated by the European Union's official documents. The western Balkans as noted by the EU includes primarily the republics (and in the case of Kosovo, former autonomous province) of ex-Yugoslavia, namely: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), The Republic of North Macedonia (formerly known as FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, excluding Slovenia but including Albania.

Although the term of the 'western Balkans' has minimal historical grounding and is but a recently coined term, its use in this research paper is primarily grounded in the European integration process within the region. This process was formally initiated in June of 2003 at the EU-western Balkan summit in Thessaloniki. At the Thessaloniki Summit, the EU made a

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[2] According to Harris the Near Eastern Question has also been described as the question of "Turkey in Europe". Goldstein also defines the Eastern Question as "the problem of who was to succeed the Ottoman Empire". For more on the Near Eastern Question see: Harris, N. D. (1913). *The Effect of the Balkan Wars on European Alliances and the Future of the Ottoman Empire. Proceedings of the American Political Science Association. For more on the "Eastern Question" refer to: Goldstein, E. (1987). British peace aims and the eastern question: the political intelligence department and the Eastern Committee, 1918. Middle Eastern Studies, 23(4), 419–436.*

[3] According to Encyclopedia Britannica, geographically, the Balkan region comprises: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia—with all or part of each of those countries located within the Balkan Peninsula. Portions of Greece and Turkey are also included within what is geographically designated as the Balkans, and is even included in some descriptions. However, historical and cultural definitions of the region usually set aside these two countries.

commitment to the above mentioned countries and territories (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro) designating them as the western Balkans. Throughout this text, the term 'western Balkans' will be used interchangeably with that of the 'Balkans', drawing on much of the historical essence of the latter term.

Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, and even prior, the western Balkans has been a regular feature at the center of Great Power geopolitical struggles. The end of World War II and the Cold War that followed saw most of the states of the Balkan region form into a federalist union under one party control- a continuation of a South Slavic movement that began in the 19th century- headed in this new iteration by the leader of the then Yugoslav Communist Party (League of Communist of Yugoslavia) Marshal Josip Broz Tito. Under Tito, Yugoslavia became a critical part of the geopolitical back and forth during the Cold War – for the West, a bulwark against the encroachment of the Soviet Union, and for the East a way of testing the 'temperature' of the West. A sense of uneasy 'stability' on the international stage, combined with Tito's statesmanship and a firm hand at home - through a ruthless one party system - held this unique mixture of ethnicity, religion, and identity, known as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), together within a Federal system for almost half a century.

With the death of Tito in 1980, a decade of economic instability, almost unbridled nationalist fervor, and a changing geopolitical climate, eventually brought SFRY to its demise. The decade that followed proved to be one of conflict and infighting, with the questionable motives of some external actors – which included members of the then European Community (EC), now the European Union (EU) – proving to be critical to the future of the ex-Yugoslav republics.

For most of the ex-Yugoslav republics, integrating into what was the EC at the time was seen as the almost natural move once they were done extracting themselves completely from SFRY. However, the disjointed and ineffective manner in which the EC went about dealing with the Yugoslav crisis not only threatened to set a problematic precedent but forced the development of a more robust Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – although this assertion is still up for debate. Progress in the realm of what was to become a more coordinated

European foreign policy apparatus – after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 – didn't do much in alleviating the sour taste in the mouths of a large swath of people who identified as Yugoslav citizens and continued to maintain a commitment to a united Yugoslavia. The fact that the EC proved incapable of maintaining a united front in dealing with the Yugoslav Crisis, while showing early signs of fragmentation has also carried on to this day – more than two decades later. At the time Germany blatantly stepped outside of the Community's commitment to hold off on any form of unilateral state recognition. This led to France's Foreign Minister to, in an unprecedented move, directly accost the German foreign minister at the time, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, with the words: "if you do that [recognize Slovenia and Croatia] you will set Europe back twenty years." (Crawford, 1996).

Evidently, as will be explored, that particular development and the manner in which Yugoslavia's disintegration unfolded have yet to be completely forgotten. It currently appears that pragmatism has prevailed and the path to the EU for the non-member states of the region is moving forward. Nevertheless the residue of negative sentiment among those in some quarters of former Yugoslavia rears its head every so often. Hesitancy and reticence toward the EU integration prospect still exists, especially in Serbia. The most recently available Gallup International poll carried out in 2016 highlighted Serbia as the most Eurosceptic of all the candidate countries, by a large margin (Ritter. Z & Zapryanova, G, 2017). Potential reasons for this reality will be explored in much greater detail.

In the case of Serbia in particular, which falls in line as the primary subject of this study, after the fall of the Milošević regime in October 2000, the European Union (EU) was almost immediately seen by an influencial political elite as a major avenue toward stabalization, reform, and progress – irrespective of some doubts among the populace. Once Serbia & Montenegro (FRY/Federal Republic of Yugolavia) were initially included into the EU's Stabilization and Association Process, it was recognized that the EU afforded a substantial degree of practical benefit irrespective of the doubts that still remained. Bonomi and Uvalic (2019) highlight that: "EU measures after 2001 in the areas of financial assistance, trade, and legal harmonization have sustained in a major way the country's political and economic reforms, facilitating fast economic integration with the EU economy, financial and banking integration, the adoption of many laws in conformity with the *acquis communuataire*, new business opportunities, and increasing

foreign direct investment." With time it has become clear to both the broader populace as well as political leaders that the EU path does hold some value. For Amato as well, he notes that it became clear that "the consensus uniting governments and people in the Balkans is that the region cannot achieve prosperity and stability outside the process of European integration." (Amato et al., 2003) Whether Amato's words are completely accurate is something that will be considered. Nevertheless it does carry substantial support from external voices critical in the process of EU integration. The notion of external actors being the main drivers of peace in the region is something that domestic leaders have had to contend with for some time.

Irrespective of the harbored negative sentiments that may exist, a pragmatic reality within most of the western Balkans has been realized however, and that is: the path to the EU should at least be pursued as a present goal for countries within the region.

The break-up of Yugoslavia caused numerous ripple effects which are still being felt to this day. The region has not fully recovered. This begs the question of whether the integration process could have been better undertaken with a unified Yugoslavia as opposed to the present patch-work project of individual former republics being integrated on drastically different time frames.

The primary hypothesis of this research is that the EU enlargement is an instrument to stabilize and develop the western Balkans. Questioning whether the EU enlargement process is a key component of peace in the Balkans is at the core of this study. The hypothesis is tested by engaging in extensive content analysis of various academic and scholarly publications, media releases, and assessments of the wars of Yugoslav dissolution. This will be done so as to assess how the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) disintegrated, the internal and external factors for disintegration, the role that the EU (then the European Community) played at the time, and the role that the EU is currently playing during the present process of enlargement.

Empirically, the quantitative method of questionnaire-surveys[4] was used as a means to assess the enthusiasm levels of a sample group of students at the Faculty of Political Science,

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[4] The surveys carried out by the author is in no way a representative sample, but rather a limited illustration that mainly supports the broader trends confirmed in larger scale studies done by companies like Gallup.

University of Belgrade in Serbia. This allowed for some perspective on sentiments concerning the EU integration process.

Qualitatively, semi-structured interviews were carried out with numerous experts i.e. policy-makers and government officials, in order to gain an idea as to their interpretation of the present European political landscape and the above mentioned research question of whether the EU enlargement process is a key component of regional peace.

For the purpose of this study, it will prove critical that the foundation be laid in the form of providing an outline of the fundamental theoretical approaches in the study of European integration. The "two great monoliths" (Hix, 2005) at the core of the study of European integration in terms of approaches are: Neo-functionalism (NF) and Inter-governmentalism. Understanding these two approaches will form a foundation from which further insight will be pursued. The reality is that the EU has wavered back-and-forth in the direction of the two aforementioned approaches at different times throughout its history. This will be explored further. The domestic, regional, and international reasoning behind the question of what the EU has to potentially offer prospective member states is something to be explored before moving into further study on this question of the EU enlargement process being a key component to peace in the western Balkan region. The above mentioned considerations will be at the core of **Chapter 1.**

Chapter 2 centers on a look at the internal dynamics of the EU, especially in the context of what can only be defined as a gradual spread of enlargement fatigue on the part of member states. This would prove essential to understanding the nature of the present enlargement into the western Balkans. O'Brennan (2014) argues that "the EU's engagement with the western Balkans is proving uneven and unsatisfactory…" he continues that, "the enlargement process is now on 'life support' and 'flat lining' along a trajectory of 'frozen negotiating chapters' and mutual mistrust toward (despite the promise made at Thessaloniki a decade ago) an increasingly uncertain destination". He goes on to surmise that "The main reason for this is 'enlargement fatigue' amongst the member States of the European Union." One can also add that a growing despondency among perspective member states concerning the length of the process which adds another problematic element to the entire process. 'Accession fatigue' for lack of a better term, ought to be just as much of a concern as the aforementioned 'enlargement fatigue'. This research

paper is supplemented by a questionnaire[5] of a selected sample-sized group of students, whose sentiments on the long term viability of the Union and Serbia's place in it – among numerous other important questions- are outlined and analyzed in detail later in this research.

In addition, **chapter 2,** which makes up the bulk of this research, will contain a look at the wars of Yugoslav succession and the actions or inactions of the European Community at the time. In addition, a look at the EU as a collection of states is compared to the federalism of Yugoslavia – the difference in the way the two were organized and how Yugoslavia's break-up compares to the instability currently being experienced by the EU. Furthermore, the growing skepticism in Serbia concerning the EU process and a brief look of Croatia's five year stint in the EU thus far and the perceived benefits and/or disadvantages suffered would prove insightful as to what awaits the rest of the western Balkans. Croatia provides a template in numerous different aspects, from the negotiation process to commitments in the realm of protecting minority rights etc. much of which Serbia is currently in the process of committing to or will have to commit to. The European Union has historically exercised some latitude as it concerns the extensiveness of the negotiation process. The reasoning behind this does vary depending on the country at hand, geo-political circumstance etc. For example, the economic crisis of 2008 and the concomitant socio-cultural upheavals which are still being felt at the present, a 'Brexit'[6] process that has brought the EU to the brink of a process never before undertaken –of a member state leaving the Union - and a Europe still experiencing the tail end of a wave of immigration from the Middle East potentially threatening the security of the region and pushing its social fabric to its limit. All of this does make enlargement, under such circumstances, an understandably tough ask for the Union. On the other hand however, one must question the limits of EU political conditionality - how much and how fast can the EU expect reform on issues that have proven intractable even for long-standing member states.[7]

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[5] The surveys carried out by the author is in no way a representative sample, but rather a limited illustration that mainly supports the broader trends confirmed in larger scale studies done by companies like Gallup.

[6] Brexit referred to the possibility of Britain withdrawing from the European Union (EU), now considered the actual process of Britain's exit from the EU.

[7] Issue being referenced here is the question of territorial integrity, self-determination, and succession, i.e. Spain and the question of Catalonia, Cyprus and its divided territory, in similar contrast to the question of Serbia and Kosovo.

Finally, in **chapter 3**, an attempt will be made to look at EU enlargement primarily through the lens of the EU being a peace-building experiment – considering that peace-building has been the EU's "raison d'être" (Ejdus, Juncos 2017). The EU enlargement process can be characterized, as by extension, a part of overall peace-building; keeping in mind that "The project of West European unification … [it's] central idea was to make war between France and Germany impossible" (Hoffmann, 2000) – and by extension wider Europe. In the words of Frank Schimmelfennig, writing in 2001, some years before the largest EU enlargement in 2004, he noted that, "enlargement can be seen as an instrument to stabilize Central and Eastern Europe, to control the negative externalities of political and economic transformation in the East, and to expand the borders of the EU zone of peace and prosperity." (Schimmelfennig, 2001). Exploring the EU enlargement process as being an endeavor to ensure peaceful relations among states within the western Balkans in general is a core part of this study.

In recent history, and especially in the context of the Eurozone debt crisis, and the global economic crisis of 2008, the EU has been viewed through the lens of it being an economic endeavor - with most of the consideration being placed on the free movement of goods, services, people, and money i.e. investment. The economic well-being of the Union's inhabitants has been placed at the forefront of considerations, in addition to an emphasis on the availability of markets, the conditions for direct investment, reducing unemployment, and a myriad of other economic concerns.

Although the EU has of recent placed greater emphasis on the economy - and this is a core function of the Union in its present incarnation - the Union can however on the other hand, through the enlargement process, be used as a tool to ensure a greater degree of cooperation within the western Balkans – placing a priority on the its original mandate. This ought to be acknowledged as a core benefit of the European Union. A return to the EU's original mandate of preventing war and violence on the continent must stretch to include the western Balkans. Peace in the western Balkans is still fragile, and the EU provides an avenue to fortify this fragile peace.

The EU enlargement in the western Balkans can provide prospective member states with something to aim for. Existing within a Union of former foes has historically proven to assuage

long held grudges and often direct hostilities. Britain,[8] France, Germany and Italy have proven that war can become but an afterthought through deepening relations within a Union and more widespread integration. This spirit, the spirit of cooperation (or what some have argued to be one of domination) as a bulwark against war and confrontation, can become a model for the western Balkans. This model in the eyes of many observers is through the path of EU membership. The western Balkans has adopted this as its primary focus according to O'Brennan (2014). He notes, "European integration constitutes the dominant force in the economic, political and geopolitical life of South Eastern Europe and membership of the EU remains the ultimate aim of every country in the western Balkans" O'Brennan (2014). As to how this translates once in the future and expresses itself into greater cooperation among ex-Yugoslav states will be made clearer with time.

One of the major concerns, especially in the realm of social sciences, is that the subject of study is continuously undergoing some degree of change while at the very moment in which the study is taking place. It is likely that by the time this study has been published that circumstances may have changed and the realities of the EU, western Balkan politics, and geo-politics in general may look substantially different than what they were at the time. Much has been made about the fact that Britain is currently undergoing the process of extricating itself from the EU, after its EU referendum of 23 June 2016. The process has been lengthy and filled with much speculation – and even after the formal removal there are still substantial negotiations to take place. Nevertheless, regardless of the diverse opinions shared by observers, academics and politicians, there is no telling as to the precedent that will be set. The fundamental goals of this research are to investigate views and perspectives in the context of historical facts and make assessments that could potentially be applied for future benefit.

This research was made possible by the willingness of individuals in the realm of academia, political life, the military and student population within Serbia to volunteer their time and opinions to create a robust and comprehensive study. Some of the difficulties included: scheduling of interviews and difficulty in ensuring timely correspondence with sources. Nevertheless these obstacles were successfully overcome. The graphics and figures featured in

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[8] Noting Britain's late entry into the EC on 1 January 1973, it was not one of the founding members, but nevertheless was and is a beneficiary of the European integration's core aspiration of averting the propensity for war inherent in traditional nation-state relations.

this research are the following: **Fig.1 - A graph of surveyed undergraduate Serbian students on their views on Serbia's prospects of becoming an EU member within the next five (5) years; and as to whether they believe the EU will exist in the next decade**. **Fig.2 – A graph illustrating the views of a randomly selected group of undergraduate Serbian students on their sentiments concerning Serbia's future. Fig.3 – A graph illustrating the views of a randomly selected group of undergraduate Serbian students on their view of the relationship between Serbia and Croatia. Fig.4 – A graph illustrating the views of a randomly selected group of undergraduate Serbian students on their view of the relationship between Serbia and NATO. Fig.5 – The National composition of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Fig.6. EU membership views among non-member Balkan countries; a table of a Gallup poll research carried out in 2016**. **Fig. 7 – A graph illustrating the sentiments of a surveyed group on whether accession into the EU is a good thing for Serbia. Fig.8** – **A graph illustrating the views of a randomly selected group of undergraduate Serbian students on their sentiments concerning Serbia's future (same as figure. 2**). Annexed are four (4) attached documents. **Annex 1** is the questionnaire given to a random selection of 20 undergraduate students at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences. **Annex 2** is the Serbian translation of the aforementioned questionnaire that was used. **Annex 3** is a list of questions used to interview Senior Advisor to the Serbian Minister for European Integration Dr. Vladimir Ateljevic. The interview was carried out orally and copious notes were taken. All the information discussed in the interview was carried out on the record.

Chapter 1: Theories of European Integration

1.1 Neo-Functionalism

The most enduring theory of European integration, which forms the basis upon which all other theories are judged, is neo-functionalism. At its core, neo-functionalism (NF) argues that European integration is a process that would lead to a gradual furthering of the integration process, meaning that it is bound to happen. The nature of the process is of such that a greater level of integration will in turn require even more integration for the initial goal to be achieved. The notion of *"spillover",* meaning - integration in one functional area leading to integration in another - is an essential component of this school of thought. As one area becomes more integrated, other areas will follow. This is at the very core of neo-functionalism.

The source or sources of this push for integration is another critical aspect of understanding neo-functionalism. According to Hix (2005), "Domestic social interests (such as business associations, trade unions and political parties) press for further policy integration to promote their economic or ideological interests, while the European institutions (particularly in the Commission) argue for the delegation of more powers to supranational institutions in order to increase their influence over policy outcomes." The push for further integration is two-fold as noted by Hix. Firstly, domestic forces see the potential to increase and expand their sphere of influence in addition to advocating for their own interests. On the other hand, the continuously growing bureaucracies within European institutions seek to increase their own influence and in turn push for more integration. These two primary forces coalesce to create a deterministic process, with the outcome being the success of regional integration and the voluntary submersion of national sovereignties into a larger entity (Haas, 2004).

From a much broader perspective, neo-functionalism as a theory was developed within the context of a post WWII environment – both in the world of academia and in the realm of actual policy. The EU and its predecessors i.e. European Coal and Steal Community (ECSC), European Economic Community (EEC), European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC/Eurotom), can all be viewed within the context of a post WWII environment that sought to create a more peaceful international environment, with international and regional institutions being created so as to reduce the likelihood of war. The creation of institutions, like the above

mentioned, were policy initiatives of a post-war context with the intent to prevent future conflict especially in the context of the experiences of the inter-war period (period between WWI & WWII). Neo-functionalism therefore provided the theoretical backdrop for these developments. According to Ernst Haas, the primary authority and credited founder of neo-functionalism, "NF was developed explicitly to challenge the two theories of IR dominant in the 1950s, classical realism and idealism." (Haas, 2004) Haas sought to provide a theoretical proposition that broke from the sharp distinctions provided by realism and idealism. Both theories were embedded in world views that saw the world in diametrically opposed terms. On the one hand, states could be viewed as so consumed by the power dynamics within the international arena that most of their assessments were made through the lens of power i.e. realism. While on the other extreme idealism's obsession with international law and an outright neglect for the power dynamics intrinsic in traditional nation-state relations was also on the other end of the scale. Neo-functionalism, ideally seeks to bridge the two extremes, with the European Union providing itself as an ideal tool through which this could be analyzed.

For Hass, it was another means through which to explain a path to peace outside of the traditional IR theories of "classical realism and idealism". Rosamond (2005) notes that: "Like all academic projects, neo-functionalism was not solely related to its object of study (European integration/the European Communities), but also to the prevailing mores and cultures of academic discourse during its lifespan." Neo-functionalism provided the theoretical foundation, as limited as it was, for what was to become, over the next fifty plus years, one of the leading examples of regional integration in the form of the European Union. The European Union itself is merely a tool through which one can better understand the theory of neo-functionalism. Meaning, it can be applied to other regional bodies of a similar nature, and does not merely have to be confined to the European context.

One of the most fundamental and essential focus points in neo-functionalism is the following, as articulated by Ernst Haas: "The link between integration theory and IR in general has always been the same for me: how do sovereign states cease to be sovereign of their own free will? How do nations shed their penchant toward intolerance for the other? The study of integration is a step toward a theory of international change on the macro level." (Haas, 2004) Neo-functionalism's primary subject matter has only been the EU in as far as it is the most

progressed example of regional integration. NF as a theory finds ample subject matter for application within the overall discipline of peace studies and peace research. Fundamentally, the theory attempts to investigate the core nature of the state and the forces engaged in the push toward integration – with integration being assumed to be a pathway to peace.

Neo-functionalism, it appears, contributes little in the realm of explaining what have become the clear social and cultural uncertainties presented by increased integration. The economic cycles of 'boom and bust', modern security threats, geopolitical uncertainties of a more regional nature have all been placed at the feet of integration. The legitimacy of any state structure or supranational entity is held to account in times of instability and uncertainty. For some observers, it appears as if the post WWII architecture has reached the end of its usefulness. Others have forwarded the position of whether these uncertain times equate to merely an 'ebb' in the grand scheme of global societies' ebbs and flows. Much of the criticisms of NF is that it does not give sufficient explanations for the aforementioned questions. The EU's current state is fluid- as is the reality with much of the subject matter in social sciences – nevertheless, it is at times like these that its analysis may provide a timely snapshot that may prove most prescient.

For Haas, the motivation for his seminal work which became, 'The Uniting of Europe' (Haas, 1958) was very much embedded in the events of the day. Schmitter (2005), points out about Haas' initial interest in studying (for his doctoral dissertation) the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community – what would later become the European Union) that, "His interest, however, in the potentiality for integration in western Europe was shared by others." The same can be said about the western Balkans integration into the EU at this present point in time. For as Schmitter (2005) points out once more, "he [Haas] took a considerable risk since the ECSC was an obscure organization that did not fit comfortably within the established categories of the discipline of international relations at the time." In contrast, the EU today is almost at a place of being warn from study, certainly not obscure. Western Balkan integration into the EU has also been a source of much research, especially by esteemed academics from the region. Furthering this research holds firmly in line with the tradition set out by Haas.

As noted earlier, in the case of social sciences, changes in institutions and social developments are primarily prompted and carried out by human actions and/or inaction. This creates a fluid and ever-changing environment. For this, new theories and explanations are

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developed with the goal of explaining new phenomena. During the 1970s there was a sense that Europe was experiencing a degree of Euro-sclerosis (Haas, 2004). This thawing of the integration fervor was used as a means to discredit neo-functionalism as a theory. Numerous explanations were introduced with inter-govermentalism proving to be the most resilient - as articulated by its most premier scholar Andrew Moravcsik. Inter-governmentalism stands as the second of the two 'grand' theories in the study of European integration.

1.2 <u>Inter-governmentalism</u>

Inter-governmentalism is a somewhat self-explanatory approach to European integration. Deriving from the 'realist school' of international relations, the state is viewed as one of the central actors behind the process of integration. Each European state is driven by its own individual interests whether geopolitical or national. With this in mind they negotiate and take actions with these interests at the forefront of their considerations.

The influence of French President Charles de Gaulle in imposing - through tact, policy, negotiation, and other means- an inter-gorvernmental interpretation of the EU in practice, is something that cannot be overlooked. What today we know as the EU has experienced a substantial degree of reinterpretation, with attempts from numerous stakeholders to influence what the Union would eventually look like. For Andrew Moravscik (2006), "the EC can be analyzed as a successful intergovernmental regime designed to manage economic interdependence through negotiated policy co-ordination." For those who advocate an inter-governmentalist approach as that which best describes the EU, the above mentioned description by Moravscik fits the Union almost perfectly.

Moravscik challenges NF and its adherents by contending that there is no need for a *sui generis* theory to explain the EC (Morvscik 2006), rather, the tools already exist for its explanation and simplification. Intergovernmental bargains and negotiation between states are the mechanisms which sufficiently explain the European Union. The most fundamental critique of NF is that time has proven the theory to be irrelevant. As a theory or a means of explaining European integration it has outlived its usefulness. There is no question that European integration has by no means been linear or straightforward. In fact, it has been subject to fits and starts. The deterministic nature of the process, as posited by NF is, in the view of Moravscik and his

adherents, faulty. This is so because the process of deeper integration has been subject to considerable inconsistency. In addition, the notion of *spillover* - integration in one functional area leading to integration in another- has also been inconsistent. The process has proven to be dependent on a myriad of other factors for which NF does not account.

In all fairness, inter-governmetalism as an approach does have the benefit of hindsight. Since the peace of Westphalia, relations between peoples have been based on the notion of the nation-state being the primary actor in international relations. Inter-governmentalism is relying on the certainty of a reversion to what has become the norm and established practice for most of modern history - which is that the nation-state will continue to dominate international relations among peoples. History has shown that *'progress'* or integration in the case of the European Union is in no way linear. Given the fact that it is subject to bouts of regression, or ebbs and flows as noted earlier, the nation-state's role will increase and decrease over time. It – the nation-state and its representative governments- reduction to having a minimal role or being non-existent is impossible to foresee. In the short to mid-term, inter-governmetalism may appear to be a more accurate description of European integration. It essentially is making a bet on states guarding their sovereignty relentlessly, and for this reason is fully entrenched in the realist school of thought.

The French President Charles de Gualle was one leader whose policy initiatives sought to firmly establish the then European Community as a 'union of states' essentially rejecting the supranational interpretation of the European Community, forwarded by some at the time. The Fouchet Plan of 1961 was: "a major, if unsuccessful, diplomatic initiative by the then French President, Charles de Gaulle, to alter the emerging institutional balance of the European Community away from the supranational model of the Founding Fathers in the 1950s, towards a looser, intergovernmental approach based on cooperation among 'sovereign' nation states" (Teasdale 2016). De Gualle's attempt to firmly establish European relations on a footing that would re-emphasize the sovereignty of states has been an ever-present theme in the discourse of European integration over the last half century. In addition, it has been used as a major critique of the Union, with many arguing that the Union improperly curtails the sovereignty of nation-states – the underlying implication being that this is a negative development.

The consistent shift from the EU being pushed in the direction of greater integration as opposed to that of an intergovernmental approach has consistently been a back and forth tug of war within Europe. The present process of Britain exiting the European Union has to a large degree been based on the argument that sovereignty is being removed from the state and placed in the hands of an ever strengthening supranational entity. Inter-governmentlism sees the reaffirmation of state sovereignty as natural. One can even argue that the phenomenon of 'Brexit' was part of this redirection toward a desire for a more inter-governmentalist approach to how the EU functions.

In conclusion, these two theories which have dominated the understanding of the EU for half a century, affords observers two distinct approaches. The inter-governmentalist approach focuses more on the state being the primary actor in the bargaining and negotiating processes of the EU. Governments place their preferences at the forefront of consideration when coming to collective agreements and determining the direction and further integration of the Union. As it concerns neo-functionalism, the primary actors are more dynamic. As noted before (Hix, 2005) "Domestic social interests … press for further policy integration to promote their economic or ideological interests". In turn, these interests are eventually made reality through treaty revisions which, in due time, takes much of the power out of the hands of sovereign states. Garrett and Tsebelis (1996) note that, "much of the important action over European integration takes place between treaty revisions. From the neo-functionalist perspective, treaty revisions invariably spark "spillovers" that empower actors and generate policy dynamics that were unintended by the governments that signed them." These "unintended" consequences are then fortified by the Court of Justice for the European Union (CJEU), which almost invariably falls on the side of re-affirming and strengthening the institutions of the EU.

As is the case in much of the social sciences, that no one theory or approach can fully explain any phenomena in every time and space. Neo-functionalism was developed in a unique post-war context in which existing state structures had been dismantled and new ones were in the process of being formed. The vision of a supranational entity, as audacious as it was, was conceivable. Although at the time its beginnings were limited to the integration of coal and steel, there was much room for the envisioning of a future of even greater integration. State priorities were much different than they are today, and the appetite for resistance against calls for 'unity'

was almost non-existent. With time, contexts change, actors evolve, and new knowledge is revealed, both in the real world of politics and in the academic sphere. Inter-governmentalism provided a critique of neo-functionalism. It afforded an explanation of changing views on the part of policy makers, leaders (like de Gaulle) and academics to the new realities facing states. It was a necessary response for explaining a change in direction of the development of the European Union.

Both theories, to this day, are implicitly present in the events which are taking place in and around the EU. Much of the challenges and questions surrounding the EU today are guided primarily by different interpretations of the very nature of the Union. The two aforementioned theories provide alternating interpretations which will continue to impact how the EU develops and changes in the future.

1.3 The reasons for EU enlargement in the Balkans: Domestic, Regional & International

The EU provides Serbia and the wider western Balkans with the opportunity to become integrated into what is one of the leading examples of regional integration within the last century. One particularly unique phenomenon in the western Balkans is that there is a fundamental consensus between governments and populations that the path toward integration into the European Union is a positive thing for the region (Amato et al., 2003). Although this assessment is subject to some criticism, and the enthusiasm among western Balkan nations toward EU integration does vary, it can unquestionably be said that the region has, in the main, oriented itself toward the European path. This is a particular rarity in Balkan politics but nevertheless a welcoming reality which allows domestic politicians the ability to have a clear vision around which to formulate and implement policy. On the other hand however, it does give the EU enormous leverage to layout requirements that may have otherwise been politically unfeasible if not unthinkable within the domestic political sphere of individual candidate countries within the region.

The dynamics of EU membership is of such however that potential member states must first apply for membership, thus signaling a desire by the population and their representatives of a willingness to become part of the Union. One can argue that domestic politicians are essentially placed at the mercy of the degree to which the EU seeks to expand or shrink the conditional

parameters for entry; but there are limitations that even the most pro-EU observer must admit. The desire of western Balkan nations to enter the European Union is not everlasting. The notion that the EU is one of the primary pathways to prosperity for western Balkan countries is a view held more so by external actors. In some cases, this almost whole-hearted reliance on the EU path is a notion which is firmly rejected by domestic policy makers. In an interview carried out by the author of this research with Dr. Vladimir Ateljevic, Senior Advisor to the Minister for European Integration of the Republic of Serbia, the notion that the EU is the only way through which Serbia can achieve prosperity is "absolutely not"[9] the case. As it concerns the progress and movement of the EU accession process, it is without question he notes, "that people want to see results…people need to see that some things are happening."[10] The need for concrete visible results as it concerns the integration process is a critical element in ensuring that the overall process is legitimized. For the Serbian population, EU membership must emphasize visible and tangible results as opposed to what some may construe as the over-emphasis on abstract ideals by some voices within the EU.

1.3.1 Reasons for EU enlargement in the Balkans – Perspective: Serbia

The Republic of Serbia, like most of the nations within the western Balkans was given a commitment by the European Union at the EU-western Balkans Summit. Thessaloniki, 21 June 2003, that a pathway to the European Union is a guarantee. In the summits declaration it was proclaimed that: "The EU reiterates its unequivocal support to the European perspective of the western Balkan countries. The future of the Balkans is within the European Union." (EU-western Balkans Summit Thessaloniki, 21 June 2003, 2003).

Each nation reserves its own considerations for becoming a part of the European Union. From the perspective of Serbia, the European Union is a strategic commitment that the nation has committed itself to. Substantial resources from every ministry within the country's government have in some way been directed to the process of European integration. Some[11] with intimate knowledge of Serbian national security policy pointed out that 'European integration and

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[9] personal communication, November 26, 2019
[10] personal communication, November 26, 2019
[11] This source has been kept secret and mentioned in an anonymous capacity due to a commitment given by the author to maintain a degree of secrecy. The author's academic mentor is aware of the circumstances surrounding the arrangement.

membership in the European Union' is a critical component of the overall national interests of the country; among other priorities being 'the maintenance of sovereignty', 'independence and territorial integrity', 'economic development and collective prosperity'. In no way are these interests to be viewed as incompatible with the goal of European integration. In fact, these national interests in most cases are affirmed by the nation's commitment to the European path.

Within Serbia, there appears to be an anecdotal notion that the European Union is somehow in peril, and that the country's eventual entry into the Union would be at a time in which the Union has either lost its relevance or will no longer be as impactful as it has been historically. The research directly carried out by the author of this paper, signals an interesting finding. As illustrated in figure one below, according to a survey[12] carried out by this author of 20 undergraduate students from the University Of Belgrade Faculty Of Political Science, the respondents in fact do believe that the EU would be in existence for at least the foreseeable future – contrary to the anecdotal notion mentioned above. When asked whether they thought that "the EU will exist in the next ten (10) years", the respondents of the survey overwhelmingly answered 'yes'. Some 85% of students believe that the EU will be in existence after the next decade. Only a minimal 15% felt the contrary. On the other hand, when asked whether they thought that "Serbia will be a member of the European Union by 2025", almost unanimously they answered 'no', with only 10% voicing 'yes'.

The doubts as voiced by the respondents in the survey carried out are concerned primarily with the process and timing of Serbia becoming an EU member state and much less to do with the EU itself. The skepticism surrounds more so the EU enlargement process as it concerns the length of the process and less about the question of whether the EU would be in existence. As would be explored much later on, there is a degree of skepticism as it concerns the benefits of EU membership (on the part of the Serbia populace).

With membership of the EU being considered as critical to the national interests of Serbia, it also proves interesting to investigate the sentiments which exist throughout the society as to feelings concerning the direction of the country. Students were also asked simply as to their 'feelings about Serbia's future'. Interestingly, as pointed out in figure 2, on a scale from 1 to 5 (1

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[12] This survey was not representative. It is used primarily as an illustration.

= very poor, 5 = excellent) some – 35% were of the opinion that Serbia's future is 'good'. A slightly lower number of 30% noted 'bad', while 25% and 10% of the respondents noted 'fair' and excellent 'respectively'. Interestingly 70% of the students had a 'fair' and above assessment on Serbia's future. This is an intriguing development especially considering that all of the respondents are under the age of thirty (30), which essentially is the future generation of the country.

Essentially, the evidence laid out in the results of the survey points to a generally doubtful disposition as it concerns Serbia's path to the EU – or at least as to the time frame. As it concerns the nature of the process and how it has gone so far, there appears to be a degree of doubt. In figure 4, which looks more at the regional dimension of the process (which would be investigated later), the above noted notion is affirmed as well. In a poll carried out by Gallup international (figure 4.), Serbia proves to be the most Eurosceptic of the countries surveyed. This will be further discussed in the following section.

Finally, much has been made about Brexit and its potential impact on the viability of the EU. It has been surmised in some quarters that the EU has not only lost some degree of credibility, given that a member state has sought to leave, but the run on impact that this can potentially have on other member states and candidate countries. One source with intimate knowledge of Serbian national security policy notes that this has "no influence" on Serbia's strategic commitment to the EU path.

As it concerns Serbia's fundamental reasoning for becoming a member of the EU, it appears that there is a consensus among those in leadership positions throughout the country that Serbia can accomplish its domestic, regional, and international goals within the framework of the EU enlargement process. The relationship between Serbia and other influential global players like Russia and China does not appear to contradict with its goal of EU membership. The EU itself has been able to maintain a relatively cordial relationship with both China and Russia - although the relationship with Russia has experienced somewhat strained and tense periods in recent times. Government officials in Serbia have made it clear however that they are aware that their commitment to the EU process would require priority be placed on EU conditionality requirements as opposed to bilateral arrangements with Russia. Overall, it does appear that Serbia's leadership sees some degree of symbiosis between EU values and that of its own.
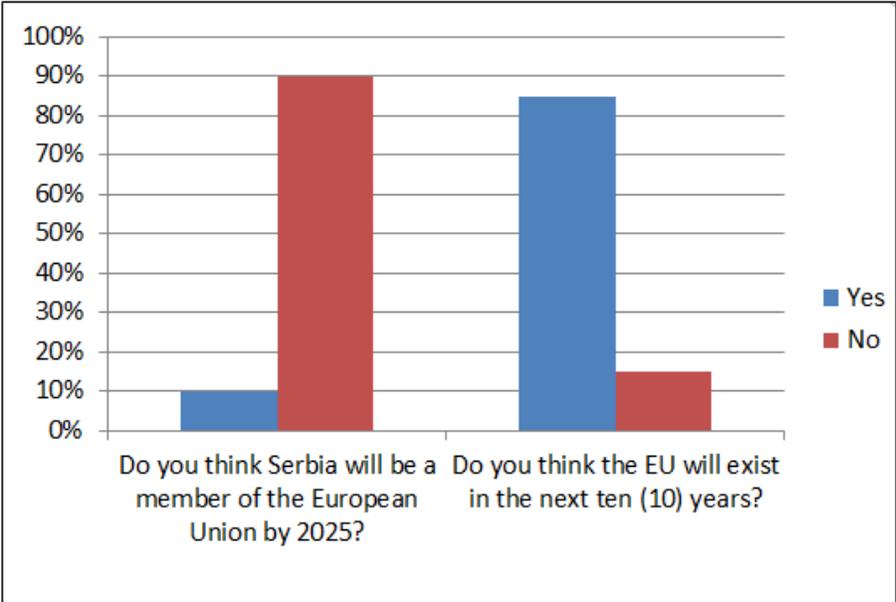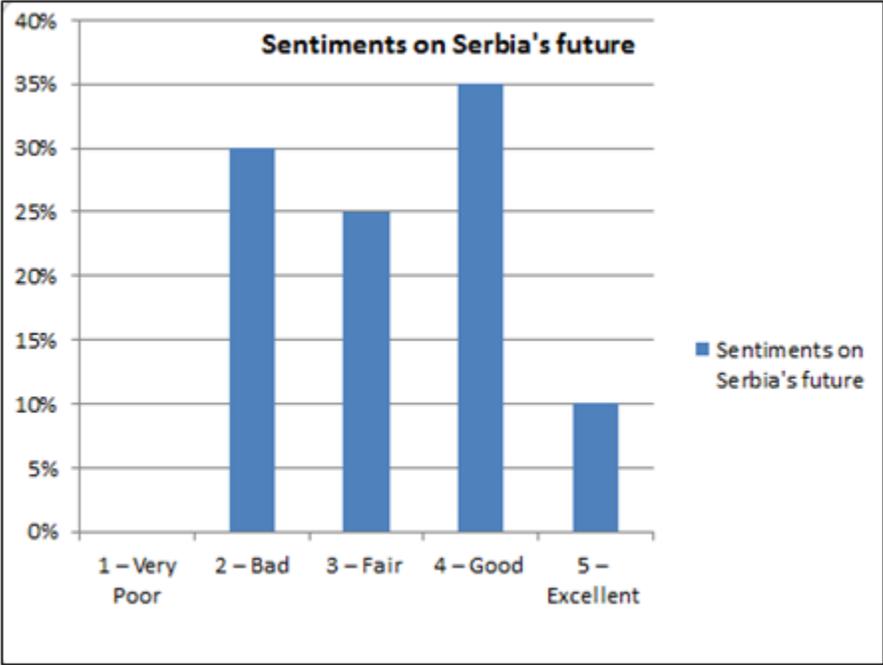
Fig.1

Fig.2

1.3.2 Reasons for EU enlargement in the Balkans – Perspective: Regional

The notion that the western Balkans' primary pathway to 'peace and prosperity', to paraphrase Amato (Amato et al., 2003), is through the pathway of the European Union is something that has been brought into question on numerous fronts. Firstly, on the one hand, from the perspective of the European Union it places far too much undue pressure on the capacities and capabilities of the Union to be the solution to 'every and any' problem faced by not only member states but also candidate countries. On the other hand, such a notion assumes incapability on the part of the nations of the western Balkans to engage in mediation and bilateral resolutions to the problems of their own region.

One of the core questions that have surrounded relations in the western Balkans and the dynamics of much of the multilateral initiatives undertaken by regional actors has been the question of relations between Serbia and Croatia in particular. In recent history a new dynamic has arisen. Croatia has become a member of the European Union earlier than Serbia has. This creates a dynamic in which Croatia has, and will continue to have a say, in how the negotiation process goes for Serbia – which is still in the position of being a candidate country. As 1 of the 27 members in the Union, Croatia now has some degree of influence on the smoothness of the process as it concerns Serbia's entry. Although Croatia's influence is not unlimited and the reality is that there is only so much influence that Croatia can exert on its fellow members, a negative disposition on the part of Croatia toward Serbian membership can undoubtedly make the road tougher.

Serbian government official Dr. Ateljevic has noted[13] that Croatia's own domestic considerations have sometimes informed Croatia's position toward the negotiation process between Serbia and the EU. In 2016 Croatia choose to block the opening of accession chapters 23 and 24 which dealt with the rule of law, the judiciary and human rights. This was done even though in 2011, Croatia made a commitment to: "resolve bilateral issues with neighboring countries and would not block their EU accession process if conditions set by the EU are met" (Dragojlo. S & Milekic. S, 2016, para. 12), it appears that domestic considerations still motivate its leadership to take positions on issues – even if the intention is merely to send a message.

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[13] personal communication, November 26, 2019

The relationship between Serbia and Croatia still occupies the minds of many policy makers and those in government within Serbia. Privately one anonymous source[14] pointed out that the Croatian position toward Serbia in the context of the EU negotiation process is blatantly "hypocritical". "Croatia as a member of NATO and the EU is making large problems [for Serbia] throughout the accession process, but did not meet the EU standards itself during the negotiation process… it is a shame that one such country has entered the EU." The aforementioned comment is, without question, a stinging assessment by any measure.

The gap in positions between Serbia and Croatia can sometimes appear vast. This regional dynamic is something that has to be addressed in the long-term to improve the cohesion of the EU, when Serbia does become a member.

In research[15] carried out for the purposes of this study, it became clear that the vast majority of respondents do recognize that there is a problem with the relationship between Serbia and Croatia, as illustrated in figure 3. The relationship quite frankly is viewed as bad. More than half of the respondents, 55% believe that the relationship between the regional neighbors is bad. 30% view it as 'fair', while 15% view it as 'very poor'. None of the respondents view the relationship as 'good' or 'excellent'.

As noted by Dr. Ateljevic the most direct threats to peace and stability in the Balkans at the present are the regional concerns left back from the 90s. He notes the importance of the need to "resolve all bilateral disputes of the 90s."[16] The EU enlargement process, from a regional perspective, affords the region an opportunity to break through the thick murky waters of old resentments and grudges and find new common ground within the framework of the European Union. The EU may be able, as it has sought to, to provide a means through which to resolve disputes of old as well as iron out the regions disputes. Through the enlargement process, the EU in some cases addresses much of the divergent views on issues which Croatia and Serbia may have. For example, Chapter 31 of the Chapters of the acquis – Foreign, Security and defense policy requires member states and applicant countries to be in alignment with EU statements,

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[14] This source has been kept secret and mentioned in an anonymous capacity due to a commitment given by the author to maintain a degree of secrecy. The author's academic mentor is aware of the circumstances surrounding the arrangement.

[15] This survey was not representative. It is used primarily as an illustration.

[16] personal communication, November 26, 2019

among other requirements. This will effectively, if successfully done, create some degree of cohesion between Serbian and Croatian foreign policy.

Croatia and Serbia made up much of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) as it pertained to the ethnic composition of the country. Up until 1992, as indicated in figure 5, Serbs comprised 36% of SFRY while Croats comprised some 20%. As the two major ethnic groups of ex-Yugoslavia they made up an important part of the overall cohesion of the former Yugoslavia. To this day, peace in the region is heavily dependent on the ability of Croatia and Serbia to find common ground on issues like the protection of minority rights and boarder security for example.
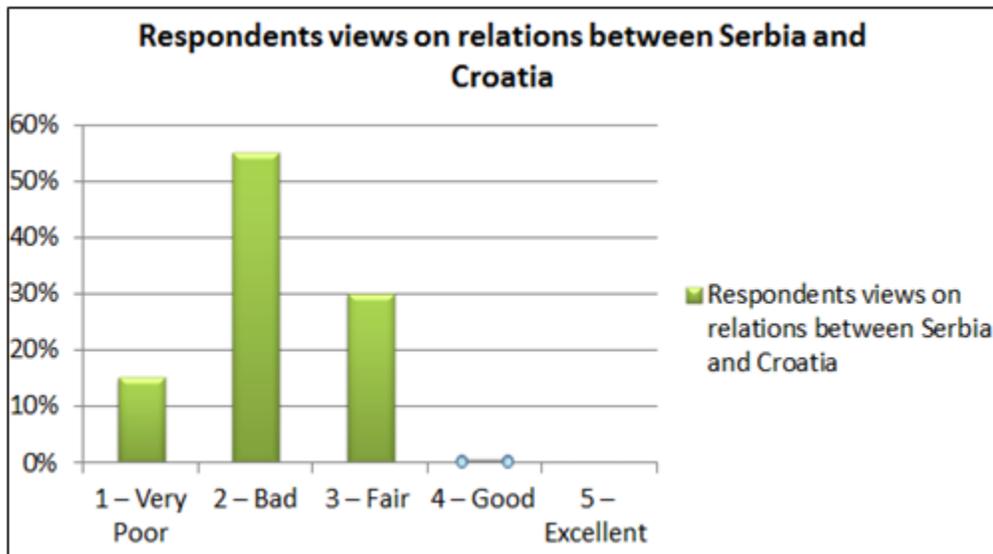
Fig.3

1.3.3 Reasons for EU enlargement in the western Balkans – Perspective: International

The issues which affect the western Balkan region prove critical for the entire globe primarily because it tests the ability of many of the world's institutions to deal with outstanding issues which affect peace. Global institutions and the influence of global actors have historically been linked to the question of peace in the region. Prior to the EU taking the firm initiative on the question of peace in the western Balkans through the EU enlargement process - as signaled by the Thessaloniki Summit - the US engaged in initiatives that were to set the groundwork for the EU pathway. The Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), although a regionally based initiative, was externally initiated by the United States. Within Southeast Europe (SEE), this

initiative was one of the early steps in rehabilitating the region after the instability of the 90s. Started in 1996 as part of the Dayton Peace Accords, the body still exists as a means of cooperation within the region. The SECI comprises of: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey and Montenegro. Its main goal is to develop a "sustainable economic strategy in the region" (South-East Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI), 2012). SECI programs and projects are implemented with the technical support of many global actors; "the World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, World Customs Organization and, to certain extent, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Also, SEECI closely cooperates with the Stability Pact, Central European Initiative, Organization of the Black Sea Economic cooperation, specialized UN agencies and programs and other organizations" (South-East Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI), 2012).

SECI was an initiative that, among other things, began the process of rehabilitating the region. International actors play an integral role in the full reintegration of the western Balkan region into the global economic and political architecture. Peace in the western Balkans is not only a question of the European Union but also of the international community. The place of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in playing a constructive role in ensuring access to credit, and expertise should not go unmentioned.

One of the main criticisms of the international community is that international financial institutions played a crippling role in the destabilization of Yugoslavia, even before the 1990s and the wars which followed. Although one must concede to the reality of the structural issues faced by the country – as Susan Woodward (1995) notes, "As early as 1983 the government [government of SFRY] acknowledged a deep depression. Gross domestic product fell 1.3 percent in 1983, and average capacity utilization in industry was below 70 percent," – the international communities role only exacerbated the problems. Woodward (1995) further points out that, "It [the IMF] proposed, in effect, an anti-inflationary macroeconomic stabilization policy of radical austerity, trade and price liberalization, and institutional reforms to impose on firms and governments monetary discipline and real price incentives." As would be discussed in further detail later, this austerity proved problematic to Yugoslavia's survival.

Furthermore, during the 1990s, UN sanctions and the role of IFIs in destabilizing and undermining regimes in the region has had lasting effects on populations throughout the region in addition to the economic prospects of the region.

The EU's insertion into the western Balkans, along with other entities, has the potential of giving the region a stabilizing effect. Engagement in the region promotes cooperation and communication between regional and international partners which brings the region closer to the goal of a long-lasting peace. As would be discussed in further detail in the following chapters, the EU affords the potential member states and the nations of the region the opportunity of consolidating democracy, rule of law, respect for human and minority rights, in addition to the free movement of goods, services, and people. The transition away from hardline positions based on the distrust of the past is something that the EU can facilitate by bringing potential member states more in line –formally- with some of the commitments already made by present member states, concerning some of the aforementioned principles i.e. respect for rule of law etc. As noted at the EU-Western Balkan Summit (EU-western Balkans Summit Thessaloniki, 21 June 2003, 2003): "We all share the values of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human and minority rights, solidarity and a market economy, fully aware that they constitute the very foundations of the European Union."

The relationship between Serbia and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) also proves important in the manner in which Serbia regains its place in the international community as a respected partner for peace. Lingering uncertainty still exists over the relationship between Serbia and NATO especially in the context of the March 1999 bombing of Belgrade by NATO. The EU enlargement process generally goes hand in hand with an improved relationship with NATO. EU cooperation in many cases aligns with that of NATO cooperation. Of the 27 EU members 20 of them are currently also NATO members. Membership in both organizations isn't mandatory however it does provide seamless alignment for greater and more effective cooperation. It does not appear that Serbia will pursue a NATO membership path. In a survey carried out by the author of this research, the relationship between NATO and Serbia is viewed as extremely poor. Over 60% of respondents believe that the relationship between Serbia and NATO is outright 'bad'. No respondent views the relationship as 'good' or 'excellent.' However, cooperation between the two has been growing. In 2003, in the same year of the EU-

western Balkan Summit, Belgrade formally applied for PfP (Partnership for Peace) membership, In 2006 Serbia joined the PfP and a NATO Liaison Office was opened in Belgrade.

For EU enlargement to work, priority must be placed on continuing to build international partnerships which align with the values of the EU - even those outside of the EU enlargement process. NATO is certainly one of those for consideration.
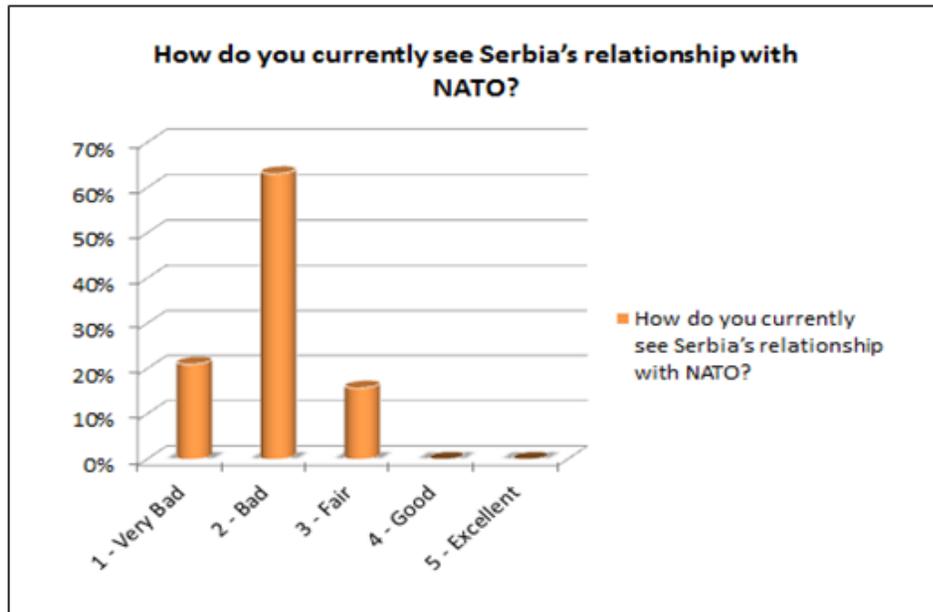
*Note: 1 of the 20 respondents did not respond to the question.

Fig.4

1.4. Supranationality & its Primary Criticism

The European Union as an institution has been critiqued in numerous different directions (especially in the context of Britain's exit from the Union). The question of the nature of the EU and its legitimacy falls directly in line with, and underpins, the question of whether the EU and the enlargement process is an instrument to stabilize and develop the western Balkans. At the core of this critique are the questions of national sovereignty and the growing supranational nature of the European Union.

The nature of the European Union is something that has come in for much criticism from the direction of those who believe that the traditional state is being threatened by the Union's institutional encroachment. The notion of supranationality is a concept that the EU is at the

forefront in terms of setting precedent and addressing the concomitant challenges of this new reality. Understanding broadly, the nature of the Union and where it stands in terms of its essential character is important in moving on further.

The EU and its comprising institutions effectively mimic the very nature of the traditional nation-state. For Tsebelis, G., & Garrett, G. (2001), the institutions of the EU operate in a similar manner as that of a traditional state. They note that, "in terms of the roles [of the institutions] they perform in the three core functions of the modern state: to legislate and formulate policy (legislative branch), to administer and implement policy (executive branch), and to interpret policy and adjudicate disputes (judicial branch)." The Council and the Parliament represent the legislative branches of government, while the Commission represents a sort of Executive Branch. The judiciary is in fact embodied by the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) which engages in interpretation and adjudication. The EU, through its treaty system has essentially negotiated a system, among traditional nation-states, to subjugate themselves to a higher authority – that being the EU decision making bodies.

The reality of intergovernmental bargaining is still very much present within the EU and evident within the activities of the Union. Member states are still unquestionably at the mercy of the will their domestic populace in agreeing to the terms of treaties crafted by the Union. Furthermore, the reality of 'Brexit' is a clear reminder of the regular 'threat', so to speak, of domestic politics, and the use of referenda to re-establish and re-affirm the nation-state's place.

One of the major criticisms of the EU is that it effectively supersedes domestic institutions – the underlying implication being that this is a negative development. The EU uses its institutions, which are imbued with the powers bestowed upon them through treaty negotiation, to establish its own authority above all else. One of the main organs of the EU used for this purpose – in interpreting questions of law and jurisdiction – is the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). The CJEU has ruled on cases in which it affirmed the notion of what is called the *precedence principle*. According to the EU principle, if EU law, as ratified by Treaty, comes into any form of contradiction with national law then EU law takes precedent over the law of its member states. The EU, in one of its official publications notes that, "According to the precedence principle, European law is superior to the national laws of member States. The precedence principle applies to all European acts with a binding force. Therefore, member states

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may not apply a national rule which contradicts to European law." (Precedence of European law, 2010) The CJEU established the precedence principle in the case of Costa Vs. Enel of 15 July 1964. In the aforementioned case it was decided that member states ought to implement that which was handed down by the EU. Laws issued by EU institutions are to be essentially integrated into the legal systems of the member states and if in contradiction, the domestic laws are either to be repealed, rescinded, or suspended.

This has proven a sticking point for many. In effect, it entrenches the notion that the EU is a supranational body. At the very minimum it does have supranational characteristics. Moravcsic (2002) does argue convincingly that the "threat of a European superstate is a myth", but given the precedence given to EU law over that of the member states - a clear encroachment and subjugation of the traditional notion of the legal authority and supremacy of the nation state- it is difficult to concur completely with that notion. Member states are forced to effectively submit to the Union's authority and transfer its sovereignty to the EU's institutions.

With this in mind – the fact that the EU, after sufficient scrutiny, does amount to a supranational body - leads to the question of whether member states' political elites and the populace alike are willing to accept the encroachment on the nation-state's sovereignty?

Many so-called 'nationalist' and 'right wing' voices throughout Europe have been adamant in the defense of the traditional nation-state. One of the most widely heralded voices, and considered to be an architect of 'Brexit', Nigel Farage has been an outspoken voice against the encroachment of the EU. His argument focuses on the very nature of the body, which imposes authority over that of the nation-state. Individuals across the European political scene like Nigel Farage, Marine Le Pen and others have proved to be a consistently present thorn in the side of those in favor of deepening the EU. Although there arguments are not new, and have been present in some measure over the half century-plus existence of the EU, they have found new life and momentum in recent times.

Anti-EU voices like the above mention find their strongest argument by critiquing the long-term goal of what they describe to be that of EU bureaucrats i.e. to form what has been described as a "United States of Europe" (Farage, 2016). This, they argue, is an untenable reality for those who believe in the traditional rights of states to represent the interests of their people

directly. For Farage and many others of his ilk, "EU membership increasingly holds us [Britain] back from representing our own interests on the world stage. We are unable to negotiate global trade deals because we have to allow the EU do it on our behalf. But outside we would be free to act in our own national interest, unrestrained by EU bureaucracy" (Farage, 2016). The fundamental historical argument of the EU and the inherent justification for supranationality is that the historical catastrophes of the past i.e. WWI, WWII, demands European unity – that the region "will still be better off together than apart." (Kittle, 2019)

Much of the EU criticism and anti- EU fervor generally is more pronounced and holds greater sway in times of economic crisis i.e. the Eurozone Crisis, and socio-cultural uncertainty. A look back to the so-called Euro-sclerosis of the 1970s and the difficulties of that period also provides another example of the social instability which follows economic crisis. The *scapegotism* which proves concomitant in times of instability and insecurity, (primarily but not exclusive to economic factors) is one of the critical issues facing the EU presently. Electorates generally look for institutions and leaders to blame. The EU, appearing so far away to many, provides an ideal scapegoat. The evident inability to effectively or rather convincingly grapple with the plethora of issues facing the European continent and even western civilization begs the question as to the legitimacy of existing institutions. In the mind of the average citizen, when times of difficulty arise, the questions as to the purpose of the institutions which govern the society become primary in the mind.

The case of Britain proves all the more relevant. Socio-cultural and economic uncertainty may sometimes cause reactions from an electorate that may in the short term appear necessary but may eventually lead to unforeseen consequences. As Dr. Ateljevic notes quite eloquently, in the case of Britain's exit of the EU, the British people are more likely to suffer the more[17]. Not to mention the fact that the political process will prove, as it already has proven, to be enormously "burdensome"[18]. Up to the present moment, two British Prime Ministers have lost their prime minister-ship as a result of an ineffectiveness to carry out the 'Brexit' process effectively or a loss of confidence in their leadership on the part of the population and/or their political party.

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[17] personal communication, November 26, 2019
[18] personal communication, November 26, 2019

The question of supranationality and the legitimacy of the EU even extend to the concern as to whether there exists a democratic deficit within EU institutions. Are citizens of the Union's member states experiencing effective representation by the institutions of the Union, or are many of these institutions proving to be excessively bureaucrat laden, ineffective, or quite frankly unnecessary? Even within the member states of the European Union, the questions exist as to whether the government agencies are excessively bloated (an argument that's regularly made within the realm of American politics- and adopted by Farage and others- a quintessentially libertarian argument in favor of less government intervention and bureaucracy), and are they fit for purpose.

The alleged democratic deficit in the EU has been challenged convincingly by Moravcsik (2002), who argues that, "Concern about the EU's 'democratic deficit' is misplaced. Judged against existing advanced industrial democracies, rather than an ideal plebiscitary or parliamentary democracy, the EU is legitimate." However, the distance that the EU appears to have from the 'average citizen' carries a strong perception that creates a sense of detachment which opens up the Union to sharp critique. This impression, whether accurate or not, is sometimes all the populace needs to feel a sense of disenfranchisement which can translate into an overall sense that the EU as a democratic institution is illegitimate.

This concern – the EU's democratic deficit – is potentially one of the fault lines which have the potential to affect the EU's desirability to member states and candidate countries alike. In the context of an EU battling with what can only be described as enlargement fatigue within certain influential member states, the EU must ensure that its institutions and processes both appear and in actuality are legitimate. In addition, the growing accession fatigue within some candidate countries provides another concern for the parties involved. If the underlying concerns are left unaddressed, this could negatively affect the overall enlargement process and long-term peace within the western Balkan region.

Chapter 2: Enlargement Fatigue vs. Accession Fatigue

2.1 The history of the wars of Yugoslav succession & their impact on relations with the EU

Laying out, as succinctly as possible, the history of the wars of Yugoslav succession provides the much needed context for a greater understanding of overall EU engagement within the western Balkans. This also provides much needed historical context for the current EU enlargement process taking place within the region. Historically, external actors have consistently played a role in the domestic considerations of states in the western Balkans. One can argue that this is the case for many a nation across the globe- colonialism, genocide, internal fragmentation are not phenomena specifically unique to the western Balkans region - but it should be noted however that the Yugoslav conflict does ask unique questions, considering that the "implications of this conflict [Yugoslav conflict] transcend local boundaries". (Nakarada, 2008)

The 1990s brought a situation of direct armed conflict on the soil of the former Yugoslavia in a manner that had not been witnessed on the European continent in almost fifty years at the time. The beginning of the disintegration of Yugoslavia – in its third iteration as SFRY - was a process which began long before the actual outbreak of violence. The breakdown of a federal system which functioned under what was unquestionably the firm dictatorial hand of Josip Broz Tito came to a tragic end after what appeared to be a project with substantial promise.

Yugoslavia (Jugoslavija) - quite literally being translated as "Jug" (South) "Slavija" (Land of the Slavs) - and the underlying concept of a South Slavic Movement was a long running aspiration of much of the influential elites in the region. Historian Dr. Latinka Perovic (2015) notes that, "The idea about unification of South Slav nations was born in the 19th century expressing the aspiration of some for liberation from the Ottoman Empire and of others' from the Habsburg Monarchy." The idea of Yugoslavia, even in its many different forms from: The Kingdom of Serbians, Croatians and Slovenians (1918–1929) to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929–1941) to SFRY (1945-1992) - not to leave out the "third Yugoslavia" of 1992-2003, comprising of Serbia and Montenegro but forming under much different circumstances- was initially a pathway of avoiding what one can only describe as incessant molestation from Great Powers. In the case of Slovenia and Croatia, the Habsburg dynasty ensured dominion over both the Croats and the Slovenes while the Serbs had been incessantly bedeviled by the Ottomans,

only gaining full recognition as an independent state at the Berlin Congress of 1878. This history of foreign powers being so actively engaged in the region makes it problematic for one to lean primarily on internal factors being the cause of Yugoslavia's disintegration. In fact, the failure of foreign powers, to act – in a country whose history has been affected by the insertion of foreign powers - proves to be arguably more of an indictment on them as opposed to the questions concerning Yugoslavia's own internal struggles.

After the death of Josip Broz Tito in May 04, 1980, much of the seams slowly begun to burst out of what had appeared to be a relatively stable federal arrangement. The country was burdened with enormous debt generated from the over-borrowing of the Tito years. The economic uncertainty generated a degree of social insecurity and instability, which in turn focused in on the weaknesses of a system so heavily dependent on political repression. Nationalism then became a means through which to express socio-economic frustrations. Džalto (2018) argues that the disintegration of Yugoslavia was a "synergy of multiple internal and external factors". He goes on to boil down the internal aspects to three main factors: "the crisis of the federal authority, the rise of nationalism, and economic instability."

Many have queried as to why the EU, given its apparently strong commitment to peace, didn't attempt to engage SFRY in gradually becoming part of its Community? The pursuit of such a path could have potentially avoided much of the bloodshed which engulfed the 1990s. It can be argued however that Yugoslavia's political and economic systems were not sufficiently compatible with that of the EU at the time. In fact, part of its disintegration was due to economic reforms for which the Federation was unprepared for. Furthermore, its political system was far from democratic. Yugoslavia as a Federal state had much more internal issues to figure out before it could have considered broaching the topic of integration into the European Community.

The republics of ex-Yugoslavia are a complex. For all intents and purposes they consist of peoples who are ethnically of similar origin, but have been layered with identities, religion, mores, and cultural norms of distinctly foreign peoples. Nikola Pasic, politician, former head of government, and a renowned historical figure in Serbian and western Balkan history noted in the document "Serbian-Croatian Understanding" around the time 1883-1889, in an almost perceptive and prophetic tone, that: "As things stand now, Serbians and Croatians are not that close as it seems, although they speak the same language and have the same literature – for they have taken

different courses towards what is crucial for a state's power. Their courses towards Serbian-Croatian unification are in such discord that would soon destroy that state in the times calling for mutual understanding should these two nations already be unified." He goes on to emphasize the distinctly different approach held by Croatians and Serbs in the realm of nation building and the need for reform in this regard. He asserts that: "Slavic civilization calls for re-education of the Croatian intelligentsia, in wants it to act in the spirit of concord, in the spirit that suits Eastern Orthodoxy or at least refrains from undermining it, it wants it to shake hands with the Serbian nation that has proved to be a pillar of the Slavic trait the powerful brother in the North..." (Pasic 1995).

Even at a time in which a union of south Slavic peoples was yet but an aspiration, perceptive observers were able to acknowledge the potential for fracturing and division. Some have argued that it was only with the firm hand of an absolutist regime - that did however make provision for some degree of intellectual freedom and cultural expression - that a union of such similar but yet different peoples could survive. Regardless of one's conclusion, it is clear that SFRY under the leadership of Tito provided the longest lasting union of South Slavic peoples out of all the other iterations. If the criterion for success is primarily based on the length of time of its existence, then SFRY as an incarnation of South Slavic desire for unity stands above the rest.

SFRY, for most of its existence was led by a critically important figure whose impact and presence was as important as any other for the survival of the Yugoslav Federation, Josip Broz Tito.

It's worth spending some time on the individual of Josip Broz Tito, who, like most communist leaders engendered a cult of personality which allowed him to maintain a firm hand at home while being a respected statesman abroad. The balancing act engaged in by Tito after his break from Stalin in 1948, of receiving financial aid and support from the West while being able to maintain a political and economic system much different from that of the West was a unique feat in and of itself. As it pertained to Tito as a statesman, the renowned American diplomat George F. Kennan described meeting Tito in the summer of 1960 in some very simple terms as: "a Balkan communist of humble origins, tough and simple, no longer young; the personality [shaped by] endless battles and dangers; a trifle smug with success, yet also somewhat out of place in the white uniform and pretentious setting of head of state" (Gaddis, 2011). He goes on to

point out that Tito had "an excellent, pragmatic political mind" (Gaddis, 2011) - something the Communist leader used fully to ensure the survival and sustenance of his regime.

On the level of international affairs and geo-political maneuverings, Tito made it so as Yugoslavia became an important part of the geopolitical landscape. It's important to note that regardless of the Communist nature of Yugoslavia, Tito was able to secure a consistent stream of aid from Washington DC. According to Gaddis (2011), "Since 1948 the United States had supported Tito's regime with economic and even military assistance, despite its communist character". This was an enormous achievement especially "given the objections of anti-Tito exiles, skepticism about foreign aid of any kind, and the widespread belief that all communists were enemies, whether they had split with Moscow or not" (Gaddis 2011). Tito's cunning and pragmatism as a leader kept him moving along with relative ease on the tight-rope of balancing the two-superpowers of the Cold War. Not to mention the fact that he was at the center of building a coalition of developing nations which provided - even if it may have been only in theory - a third way known as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). NAM provided Tito with an anti-imperialist narrative that gave him, and SFRY, a great deal of cache in relations with the newly de-colonized world.

The geopolitical context that Yugoslavia was placed in, coupled with a tightly controlled domestic situation, ensured that any form of separatism was squeezed out of existence. It does prove useful to note the relatively open intellectual environment which existed in Yugoslavia, which was incomparable to almost any other purely communist state. This environment catered to the ability and freedoms of intellectuals and thinkers to question some of the existing failings of Yugoslav society especially during the mid-1960s. Chomsky (2018) points out, in an article titled: "The Repression at Belgrade University",[19] that the existence of journals like *Praxis,* which was founded in 1964, played a role in accessing the "sensitive issues of Yugoslav society: the meaning and perspective of socialism, bureaucratic and authoritarian tendencies in the party and the state apparatus, advantages and weaknesses of the existing forms of self-management and its possibilities for further development."

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[19] Originally published on February 7, 1974

In instances in which the independence and freedoms of intellectuals and educational institutions were threatened, widespread resistance and even coalitions of international intellectuals were able to ensure that a degree of freedom was maintained. A letter published in 1975, and written by a group of renowned intellectuals including Noam Chomsky and Sir Alfred J. Ayer - among numerous others - pointed to an international awareness of Yugoslavia's open intellectual and academic culture and a desire to preserve it. The letter noted: "Dear Marshal Tito, The international community of scholars and scientists feels increasingly concerned about the news of repressive measures against intellectuals and attempts to curtail academic freedoms in Yugoslavia." It goes on to highlight: "Particularly shocking is the recently introduced law for the Republic of Serbia, abridging the self-management of the universities and authorizing the Parliament to suspend, on political grounds, university teachers from their positions. It is understood that the introduction of the law is part of a concerted attack on a number of internationally known and respected Marxist philosophers and their students. If the law is applied, it threatens with ruin the entire inner organization of Yugoslav universities, the autonomy and self-management of which has been a pride of the nation and model for the world at large" (Chomsky 2018). The point is that regardless of Yugoslavia's leadership being dominated primarily be Marxists who at times were not hesitant in using force in dealing with dissent - even against those of their own intellectual persuasion- they did show an awareness of, and flexibility in accommodating international opinion and experimenting outside the realm of communist structures. One can argue that Yugoslavia's ability to last under Tito was due to the ability to be surprisingly flexible in certain segments of society. Repression was, as in any other communist state, a useful tool for maintaining order. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the unique flexibility with which Tito managed Yugoslavia was one of the main characteristics which ingratiated Tito not only to influential observers within the international community but also to large segments of the Yugoslav population even after his death.

Many have posited explanations for Yugoslavia's disintegration, and the EU's apparent negligence in playing a more constructive role throughout the country's dissolution. The end of this sometimes turbulent arrangement which characterized SFRY was multi-faceted. It can be divided into domestic and international factors. Within the domestic realm, there are three segments which must be considered as pertinent to Yugoslavia's dissolution - the political, economic, and social dimensions, in no particular order. Determining which of these holds

priority is almost like the 'chicken and the egg analogy' of which came first: 'the chicken or the egg'? For Hobsbawm (1995), it was more a case of economics. He notes, "The European Community was realistic enough only to admit states to membership whose backwardness and poverty would not put too great strain on the rest…" He goes on to rhetorically ask, "Who wanted to pay for the poor?" For him, it was more a question of a global trend in which pragmatic calculations lay at the forefront of considerations of those involved. He states unambiguously that, "The pressure for breaking up Yugoslavia came from 'European' Slovenia and Croatia; and the splitting of Czechoslovakia from the vociferously 'Western' Czech Republic. Catalonia and the Basque country were the wealthiest and most 'developed' parts of Spain, and the only significant separatism [in Brazil] came from the richest state of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul." As Samary so concisely puts it, the mindset of the Slovenes could have been characterized as, "Better last in the city than first in the village." (Samary, 1995)

On the political front, the political system of SFRY and the government's ideological commitments connected political realities strongly with that of the economy. Furthermore the social reality and ethnic composition of SFRY, comprising of six (6) different republics and two (2) autonomous regions maintaining their own unique identity was an arrangement which existed with some degree of tension – regardless of the anecdotal notions of unity pervasive among many Yugoslavs. Woodward (1995) points out that, "Certain conditions were necessary to turn ethnic differences into ethnic conflict and ethnic conflict into national conflict and war over territory. Those conditions applied throughout the former Yugoslavia. The breakup of the country did not lead to improvements; instead, economic deterioration and psychological insecurities were exacerbated by the prolongation of uncertainty over sovereignty and borders and by war itself."

One of the key dynamics domestically within Yugoslavia was the relationship between the republics. Woodward (1995) notes that, "Although outsiders wishing to emphasize the historical character of contemporary Yugoslav politics insist on a long-standing Serb-Croat conflict, the far more important relationship in Yugoslavia was between Slovenia and Serbia. Political alliances between Slovenia and Serbia had been essential to stability in the first Yugoslavia, and it was generally believed that Slovenia acted as a brake on autonomist forces in Croatia …" A recalibration of interests on the path of Slovenia – seeing itself as better off

outside of an economically struggling federation – and a more dire reality within Serbia created a divergence of interests which contributed to the federations demise.

The federalist arrangement, although initially freely entered into – and the culmination of a long-awaited aspiration- came to be seen as somewhat forced and not mutually beneficial to the parties involved by the time the late 1980s rolled around. Under the conditions of this Yugoslav Federalism, that which can be described as 'federalism imbued with socialism' - in the SFRY incarnation - "federalism could not develop its autochthonous integrative power, but rather depended upon the integrative power of the dominant political factor—the monopolistic party" (Samadžić 1996). As this dominant political factor began to deteriorate, so did the overall federal arrangement. Political elites within the different republics began to develop starkly divergent views on how to deal with the problems affecting the Federation. Woodward (1995) points out the divergent sentiments within Serbia and Slovenia, by noting that, "in contrast to the political ferment occurring in Slovenia, demands for greater pluralism and constitutional democracy in Serbia were aimed at federal-level reform and against the disintegrative federalism of the 1943 principles established by the war-time partisan government, the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ). The Slovenes [on the other hand] cherished these principles." (Woodward, 1995)

The federalist system of SFRY, by the end of the 1980s, was inundated with points of potential conflict, and problems which proved difficult to correct. Politically, Samardzic (1996) goes on to note that "As with its genesis, its evolution, structure and functioning had always depended upon the basic conception of inter-ethnic relations within the ruling party." He further notes that, "As a monopolistic political party in the state, the communist party was both the creator and destroyer of federalism."

On the international level one can argue that Yugoslavia found itself caught up in what can only be described as a wave of separatism. By all accounts, Yugoslavia's disintegration was in line with a much broader pattern taking place across Europe. Woodward (1995) concurs, noting that, "The dynamic of disintegration in Yugoslavia followed a pattern seen in all the European cases in 1989-91: in order of occurrence, the Soviet bloc, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia."

The first major act by a republic within of SFRY to seek a different path was carried out by Slovenia on December 26th 1990 in the form of an independence referendum. The referendum was passed, and by the next year in June 26 1991, Slovenia declared independence. The 'Ten Days War' immediately followed in which the Yugoslav People's army attempted to re-establish control of Yugoslav's borders. On July 07, 1991 an agreement between Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Yugoslavia's federal authorities and the European Community was signed - the Brioni Declaration, in which violence was stopped, with Slovenia eventually being able to extricate itself in a mostly bloodless fashion.

Croatia's own declaration of independence in the aftermath of a referendum held on May 19, 1991, was made on June 25 1991. Croatia's leaving of SFRY was not as simple as that of Slovenia. For one, it had a much more mixed population and was considered a core part of the Federation. War broke out with the Yugoslav People's Army. A cease-fire was eventually brokered by the UN in early January 1992. Over the following years, Serbs in Krajina proclaimed the Republic of Krajina as distinct and apart from Croatia, however, by May 1995, the Serbs were driven out. Thousands died and even more were displaced. By the official signing of the Dayton Peace Accords on 14 December 1995,[20] Croatia's traditional territory was recognized.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's case was the most bloody of all. In March 1992, it also held a referendum in which the Bosnian-Serbs boycotted. By 1992 the republic then declared its independence in May 1992. The Bosnian war which lasted for the next three years until the Dayton Peace Accords of December 1995 claimed, over one hundred thousand lives,[21] with many more being displaced. Macedonia had held a referendum on September 1991. The process was mainly event free.

The most lingering of all the confrontations in the disintegration of Yugoslavia was the instability in Kosovo. In 1998 violence began in the autonomous province, with the ethnic

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[20] The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), Dayton Accords, Paris Protocol or Dayton-Paris Agreement, is the peace agreement reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, United States, in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on 14 December 1995.

[21] According to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the final estimates of individuals killed in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992-1995 rests at 104, 732.
https://www.icty.org/en/press/new-war-demographics-feature-icty-website

Albanians calling for independence from Serbia. With the Serbian government attempting to ensure the territorial integrity of its republic, it engaged in violence to put down the unrest. In the eyes of the international community the Kosovo issue was a continuation of the overall Yugoslav problem which saw, throughout the decade, conflict in Croatia, and Bosnia & Herzegovina in particular. In the minds of the Serbian leadership at the time, it was seen as a domestic issue, with the use of force being considered as totally legitimate to subdue separatist forces within the country.

NATO eventually intervened with a bombing campaign in March of 1999 on Serbia's capital of Belgrade. The campaign equated to a violation of Serbia's territorial integrity for some, while seen as a necessity to avoid another humanitarian catastrophe by others. In addition, ensuring that the conflict did not spread to Macedonia was another of NATO's priorities. NATO articulated its position as follows:

"On 28 May 1998, the North Atlantic Council, meeting at Foreign Minister level, set out NATO's two major objectives with respect to the crisis in Kosovo, namely:

- to help to achieve a peaceful resolution of the crisis by contributing to the response of the international community;

- to promote stability and security in neighboring countries with particular emphasis on Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." (NATO's role in Kosovo, 1999)

The situation in Macedonia concerning its own Albanian minority population had the potential to be exacerbated by an out of control and prolonged Kosovo issue. Woodward (1995) points out that, "The Albanian community in Macedonia is only one of more than twenty-five ethnic groups, but it is the largest, composing approximately 23 percent of the population. One-third live in a concentrated area in western Macedonia, adjacent to Albanian areas in Kosovo and Albania." NATO's intervention was therefore seen by many external actors as a necessity.

NATO's intervention eventually caused the Slobodan Milošević regime back off. Milošević's removal from office soon came on October 05 2000 with mass public demonstrations forcing him from office. Milošević's overall role in Yugoslavia's demise and the

wars of the 90s proves complex in and of itself. His overall presence on the political scene is part of a much broader context. According to Professor Nakarada (2008), "Ulogu koju je Milošević odigrao u poslednjem jugoslovenskom poglavlju ne može se razumeti ako se ne uzmu u obzir društvene okolnosti unutar kojih se on pojavio na političkoj sceni". The fact is that the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the accompanying bloodshed and chaos, was, a coalescing of historical grievances and a reversion to nationalist fervor that was pent up over a substantial period of time. Milošević came to power at the cusp of Yugoslavia's most tumultuous time, playing directly into the nationalist fervor spreading throughout much of Yugoslavia.

In 2008, Kosovo declared independence. The issue is still a contentious one with a large portion of nations across the world not recognizing the independence proclamation as legitimate.

Finally, the falling apart of Yugoslavia can be seen as part of the overall restructuring of the global arena. As Professor Nakarada (1998) rightfully points out, "jugoslovenski raspad nije incident koji se dogodio iz- van logike tekućih procesa prestruktuiranja globalne arene, već je jeđno njegovo značajno poglavlje."

2.1.1 Yugoslavia and the EU: States within a state?

Some similarities have been drawn between the nature of Yugoslav federalism and the supposed growing federalist nature of the EU. With the EU arguably becoming more and more akin to a federalist state, fears have increased among some observers (as noted earlier), while also drawing commendation from some quarters as being the embodiment of the goal of the EU's Founding Fathers.

Academics Kovačević and Samardžić (2016) have investigated extensively the manner in which the two entities compare. Firstly, they establish a fact which is commonly forgotten that, "both Yugoslavia and the European Communities (EC) were founded on the basis of free will of their composing parts." The geopolitical context aside (as indispensible as it was in both cases) both entities offered their constituent populations the potential of being stronger together. In the case of SFRY, it was able to last for about 40 years with relative stability, ensuring a degree of negative peace for a substantial period of time. Similarly, the EU has provided, since its beginnings until the present day, a degree of stability unprecedented in European history. Without question there were numerous other factors involved in ensuring peace in and around

SFRY and the EU. It is important to note however that peace and security were central components for the justification of the initial coming-together of the republics and member states of both entities.

A fundamental difference however is that Yugoslavia was "never a pluralistic political system" (Kovačević, B., & Samardžić, S. 2016). Even with the very legitimate questions concerning a democratic deficit within the EU at present, the fact is that each member state of the EU, at the very bare minimum, pass the threshold of having reasonably well-respected electoral processes, not to mention the checks and balances inherent in most democracies. This was not the case for SFRY. In fact it was a one party system with very limited if any checks and balances.

In both cases, the crisis mainly concerns the existence of a clearly defined political community. Federalism sometimes wavers between the two extremes of a centralist perspective, and on the other hand to a more loose and de-centralized arrangement. However, one indicator that, to a large extent, determines the success of a federal state is the nature of the society and its values. "In the cases of the EU and Yugoslavia, the existential crisis was revealed once the fundamental questions of political community—'Who are the people?', 'Who holds pouvoir constituant—member states or individuals?', 'Who is competent to decide on the fundamental systemic change?'…In the case of Yugoslavia, once these questions finally obtained their ultimate answer this never-finished state eventually dissolved. In the case of today's EU, the nature and possible consequences of a decision that would eventually resolve the key polity question remain open." (Kovačević, B., & Samardžić, S. 2016) This key polity question, coupled with an illiberal form of government, socio-economic instability, and geopolitical changes broke Yugoslavia.

The circumstances are starkly different for the EU. It's not only been through a period of 'euro-sclerosis' before i.e. 1970s, but it also is an entity steeped in liberalism everywhere it turns. Even if the Union does fall apart, liberal theory dictates that democratic states do not resort to war amongst themselves. In accordance with this notion, war in the manner of SFRY's dissolution is highly unlikely.

The EU's legitimacy, like that of SFRY is partially dependent on the results it provides and its output for its populace. It was and is heavily dependent on the confidence imbued in it by the European public. It is even likely that populations are willing to forego some of their national sovereignty to secure output and deliverables that would increase their standard of living and improve quality of life. The doubt generally arises in times of questionable and limited results. Chomsky notes of the EU's successes as it relates to its encroachment on national sovereignties by highlighting that, "The Schengen Agreements reduced the sovereignty of individual states and led to a more civilized society. It's quite nice to be able to go from, you know, Belgium to Austria without crossing borders. There have been many other forms of integration, like educational, cultural, commercial, etc., which have been very successful…" (Chomsky, 2018, p.202).

Numerous explanations, as mentioned in the sub chapter prior, from diverse directions, have been given for Yugoslavia's dissolution. Some like, Davor Džalto (Džalto, 2018) has divided the causes into two categories: internal and external. Most scholars generally fall on either one side or the other with differing degrees of extremity. On one end of the spectrum, the West's actions in the recognition of constitutive Republics within Yugoslavia has been pointed out to be one of the more critical external destabilizing factors in SFRY's dissolution. Some have even argued it to be a conscious effort on the part of the West to dismantle Yugoslavia - removing it as a force in the region. On the other hand, some have over-emphasized the brewing internal discord among the ethnic groups within the Federation. Whether it was the disgruntled Croats convinced that "As long as the "center" was in Belgrade, it was easy to suspect it [Yugoslavia] as "pro-Serb" (Samary, 1995), or the Slovene's who felt that an economically sluggish Yugoslavia was an impediment to them enjoying a higher standard of living – encapsulated in the phrase, as mentioned earlier, "Better last in the city than first in the village" (Samary, 1995). Or, the notion that anti-Serb discrimination was implicit in the partitioning of Serbia's territory to give autonomy to Vojvodina in the north and Kosovo in the South - all summed up in the slogan "a weak Serbia means a strong Yugoslavia." (Samary, 1995)

The EU on the other hand is facing a situation in which its expansion and enlargement has created a worrying reality of having what some have described as a core-periphery divide. It should be pointed out that, "Successive enlargements… [have led to] a Union with a core of

highly developed economies forming a golden triangle, and a southern and eastern periphery with a number of countries between core and periphery." (Magone et al., 2016) The stress that this can potentially place on some member states to reconsider the Union's benefits and their overall membership within the EU is something that would only be seen with time. Even though EU membership affords newer member states (much of which makes up the periphery) access to cohesive funds, one nagging reality is that "Unfortunately, as a recent Bertelsmann report on the twentieth anniversary of the internal market highlights the core countries Germany, Denmark, the Benelux and Austria were the ones that profited the most from the integrated market, while the southern, central and eastern periphery benefitted less. (Bertelsmann, 2014 as cited in Magone et al., 2016) This economic disparity is sure to place some strain on the EU in the similar way Yugoslavia experienced an economic disparity (although somewhat different in nature) among its constituent republics.

While the economic disparity may appear to be to the detriment of the EU's periphery, the socio-cultural questions brought along by the influx of people from the Union's periphery to the member states which constitute the core highlights another point of contention. The EU's freedom of movement allows citizens of member state countries to move freely within the Union. It has been argued that this inadvertently leads to a depression in wages for the actual citizens of certain core countries – not to mention the effect on socio-cultural norms and demographic changes.

All of the above may in the end prove to be an over-simplification of much more complex phenomena, in both cases – that of SFRY and the EU. For SFRY, its Federalism rested on two main premises which proved to be faulty: 1) that Communism was a sustainable mode of state organization in the long term and 2) that Yugoslav identity was strong enough to prevent a reversion to simpler historical ethnic definitions. According to Professor Slobodan Samardžić, "Experience shows that the only federations which have failed are those which had socialist (communist) social and state systems." He went on to note that, "in addition to this common feature (a socialist system), they had one more identical characteristic: they were multiethnic federations in which the federal units were also the national states of the leading nations. With the demise of communist rule, the federative arrangements also fell apart, as did the states

themselves. New ones were created on exclusively ethnic-historic foundations" (Samardžić, 1996).

Looking at the demise of Yugoslavia through the lens of what one can argue was a compromised Federal state system from early on does make room for a more informed assessment. The fact that there was not a more concerted effort on the part of SFRY's leadership to engender a Yugoslav common identity shows how important the question of identity still proved to be. Looking back, regardless of how successful one can surmise that SFRY was, the vast majority of inhabitants still primarily identified with their 'original' identity, e.g. Serbs were Serb, Croats were Croats, Yugoslav identity came in second at best.

Fig.5 below indicates the ethnic composition of Yugoslavia around 1992, soon after the outbreak of armed conflict in 1991. The data shows that by population Serbs dominated the Federation with 36%, the Croat population made up some 20%, while the other segments of the population: Muslims (Bosniaks), Albanians, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Yugoslavs made up 10% or less individually. One can argue that one of the realities in SFRY which was sometimes overlooked was that only a minority of the populace identified as Yugoslav. For, Sekulic, D., Massey, G., & Hodson, R. 1994), "Urban residents, the young, those of nationally-mixed heritage, Communist party members, and persons from minority nationalities in their republic were among those most likely to identify as Yugoslavs". This proved insufficient in creating a more common identity which could have helped bind the Federation closer together.

TABLE 2-1. *National Composition of Yugoslavia, 196191*
Percent (except total)

National group	1961	1971	1981	1991
Total	18,549,291	20,522,972	22,427,585	23,528,230
Serbs	42.0	39.7	36.3	36.2
Croats	23.1	22.1	19.8	19.7
Muslims	5.2	8.4	8.9	10.0
Albanians	5.0	6.4	7.7	9.3
Slovenes	8.5	8.2	7.8	7.5
Macedonians	5.6	5.8	6.0	5.8
Montenegrins	2.8	2.5	2.6	2.3
Yugoslavs	1.7	1.3	5.4	3.0
Other	6.1	5.6	5.5	6.2

Sources: Frits Hondius, *The Yugoslav Community of Nations* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), p. 13; Ruža Petrović, "The National Composition of the Population," *Yugoslav Survey*, no. 3 (1983), p. 22; Petrović, "The National Composition of Yugoslavia's Population, 1991," *Yugoslav Survey*, no. 1 (1992), p. 12.

National composition of Yugoslavia, 1961-1991

Fig.5

For the European Union, its most difficult challenges may most likely lay ahead. The exit of Britain from the Union provides an example of how the Union may potentially deal with member states who wish to opt out of the arrangement. The likelihood of a similar disintegration the likes of that which was experienced by Yugoslavia is highly unlikely, nevertheless the Union has been forced to grapple with, and will continue to grapple with problems and challenges akin to those faced by federations.

2.1.2 The role of the EU in the break-up of Yugoslavia

The role that the EU played in the disintegration of Yugoslavia is a consideration which affects the sentiments of many throughout Serbia to this day. There is the perspective carried by some, even in the present, that Europe's response to the instability within Yugoslavia was unproductive. The early recognition of Croatia (and Slovenia) as an independent state, prematurely by Germany (in opposition to what was agreed within the EC), brought back disturbing and harrowing memories of a fascist Croatia in alliance with a fascist Germany. This may be a stretch for most, but it is worth noting the historical context. The reality, in fact, was historical but somewhat less devious – at least according to Professor Noam Chomsky. According to Chomsky (2018), "Germany has a historic interest in the Balkans. When Hitler

moved in, that was not an innovation. Germany had been influential there. I think it was just trying to restore its influence over that part of Europe…" It should be noted however that this decision by Germany was clearly without the collective support of the European Community. Even to this day the reality of Germany's rogue action is acknowledged by high level Serbian military officials, as distinct from that of the EU (which was the EC at the time). One high ranking Serbian military official noted that, "the EU was not that large of a factor in foreign affairs – [at the time] – individual countries like the US, Germany, and Great Britain had a greater influence on the dissolution of SFRY through direct action, and so did the USSR by their inaction".

It was on December 23 1991, when the Washington Post declared, "Germany today became the first major power to recognize the Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Slovenia as independent states…" (Germany recognizes Croatia and Slovenia, 1991). This was an unprecedented step for Germany to engage in such brazen contradiction to what had become the post WWII norm – a norm that Germany had been at the forefront - of multi-lateral international action. Beverley Crawford notes that Germany's decision was in open disregard to the EC agreement which was to specifically recognize the two states under specific EC conditionality requirements (Crawford, 1996). On the other hand, the rationale argued by the government in Bonn at the time, as reported by the Washington Post, was that recognition of both these two states would be the most effective way of ceasing what it saw as "Serbian aggression" (Germany Recognizes Croatia and Slovenia, 1991) toward its neighbors. The EC viewed Germany's unilateral recognition of Croatia and Slovenia as a breach of consensual norms in international law (Crawford, 1996). France's Foreign Minister went as far as to ask, "Where is the spirit of Maastricht?", and to even threaten German foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher that "if you do that [recognize Slovenia and Croatia] you will set Europe back twenty years." (Crawford, 1996).

The decision to unilaterally recognize these two republics (Slovenia and Croatia) of the then Yugoslavia, was drastically out of character for the post WWII Germany, a nation which had consistently placed emphasis on multilateralism and consensus building among its neighbors and partners. The Germans had at the time done much work in rehabilitating the image of a post-Hitler Germany, and the reunification of East and West Germany proved to be somewhat of a

culmination of its productive partnership for peace during the second half of the 20th century. Its decision to go outside of the EC's multilateral framework at the time was shocking to many.

Regardless of what one may surmise as the rationale for Germany making, what was at the time, the unprecedented step of breaking from the EC agreement, it is without question that what amounted to nothing less than a civil war was already in full swing on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The rationale for Germany engaging in undermining the EC was as a result of numerous inadequacies on the part of the Community, and Germany's sense to act and impose its newly minted sense of strength on the region by some form of bold action. Some have tended to attribute Germany's actions to more devious motives, most not being based in fact and questionable at best, but it is without question that Bonn's actions at the time forced many prominent voices within Europe to reconsider its collective approach toward conflict. Not to mention the fact that it proved to be "unquestionably one of the most precipitous acts in post–Cold War Europe" (Hodge, 1998), partly responsible for hastening the beginning of a bloody decade in the western Balkans.

The recognition of Slovenia and Croatia was partly an attempt by Germany to establish itself on the regional level. As Professor Radmila Nakarada (1991) points out, "The Europe of today [early 1990s] is confronted with the competing expansionism and arrogance of its would-be masters: on the one hand, the European Community seeks to dominate Europe politically and economically; and, on the other, Germany (together with Austria and Hungary) wishes to make its mark as the new regional hegemon." A full two decades later, the question of how the European Union – through its enlargement process – can possibly be attempting to stabilize the region when its member states proved so eager to pursue their own geo-political interests at such an inopportune time comes to mind. What can be gleaned from Professor Nakarada's assessment - made almost two decades prior to the present day - is that Germany's aspirations were always clear. The European Community appeared to provide Germany with the means for accomplishing its own geo-political aspirations, and when the EC collided with these aspirations (by committing to not recognize Croatia and Slovenia) Germany veered away. Germany's actions, and the passivity of other actors, opened up a "Pandora's box" (Nakarada, 1991). The contents of this 'Pandora's box' are still being sifted through, even to this day, with the ongoing EU enlargement process.

Even though Germany's position on the independence of Slovenia and Croatia was initially rebuked, at least verbally by other members of the EC, their disappointment with Germany did not reach to the level worthy of a punitive response. In fact, their inaction betrayed a tacit acceptance and reluctance to 'shake the boat' of Europe further. As Chomsky (2018) notes, "Ofcourse, Europe went along with Germany, which it usually does-it is, after all, the motor of Europe-which meant that they were supporting the breakup and certain conflict. Then the internal conflicts broke out."

It could be argued however, that Germany's geo-political aspirations to establish itself as a regional hegemon (which some have argued it has successfully done) is not necessarily in direct contradiction with the stabilization that the EU enlargement provides for the western Balkans at this present time. Although Germany is a critical member of the EU, "the motor of Europe" (Chomsky, 2018), it is still restrained by the institutionalized decision making processes of the Union. As influential as Germany is, it is still 1 of 27.

Fundamentally, it appears that Professor Nakarada and Chomsky separately concur with the notion that the precursor to the EU, the EC, engaged in an approach which prematurely closed the door for a more effective solution to the problems facing SFRY, and hastened disintegration to violence. The manner in which Europe went about addressing what became the dissolution of Yugoslavia is at the basis of much suspicion around the EU enlargement process.

2.2 The internal dynamics of the EU: Can the EU sustain expansion?

The European Union is uniquely placed at the forefront of regional integration. Its successes and failures set a pathway for similar entities in many different parts of the world to follow suit or to avoid the pitfalls which may exist. The manner in which the Union deals with its problems provides a template of what to follow and what to not follow. Its template has proven to be successfully replicated in numerous regions around the world to varying degrees, but overall with much less success. However, one area in which the EU's process is unique, to the degree that it is extensive, is as it concerns its rigorous membership process. The EU criteria for enlargement known as the Copenhagen criteria (named after the European Council meeting in Copenhagen 1993) outlines the following broad criteria as necessary for joining the EU (European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations, 2016):

- political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;

- economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces;

- Administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the *acquis* and ability to take on the obligations of membership.

As simple as the above criteria may appear, the process is much longer and detailed. The above criteria provide a very broad overview of what the enlargement process entails. Furthermore, there is an additional caveat that the EU makes clear in its official publications on enlargement, that: "The Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is also an important consideration. The EU reserves the right to decide when a candidate country has met these criteria and when the EU is ready to accept the new member" (European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations, 2016).

The fact that the EU has essentially reserved itself the right to adjudicate the readiness of a potential member state unilaterally enforces the fact that EU membership is not a right. The EU ensures that it reserves the capacity and freedom to slow down the overall speed of enlargement if it recognizes the need to do so under which ever circumstances it so chooses. This does leave the potential for some to question the legitimacy and degree of 'good faith' imbued in the overall process. Nevertheless, the EU maintains this position, with the underlying understanding that having some degree of flexibility as it pertains to who is accepted for entry does ensure the proper functioning of the Union. Now, as to the contradictions that may be historically present in the unresolved cases of states already within the EU e.g. Cyprus (territorial dispute) and Spain (Catalonian issue) is another question that the Union does appear to struggle to answer.

A more detailed analysis of the enlargement process would reveal an extensive 35 chapter process that deals with issues as broad as and fundamental to the European Union as Chapter 1: Free movement of goods, to much more detail infused subjects as found in Chapter 12: Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy.

The argument can be made that the European Union has already begun fulfilling its commitment made at the Thessaloniki Summit on 21 June 2003 to integrate the western Balkans within the EU. Croatian accession to the European Union on 01 July 2013[22] was a realization of this commitment in part. So was Serbia's elevation to candidate status in March 2012[23] and the formal opening of negotiations on 21 January 2014. Most western Balkan countries, with the exception of Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo,[24] have achieved candidate status and are embarking on the negotiation process. However, the internal dynamics of the EU has proven to provide some degree of hesitancy among member states to speed up the process. Much of the debate within the EU has been a back and forth between a 'deepening' of the EU, which focuses on fundamental reform and entrenchment of the Union's institutions, and expansion, which focuses on widening the 'net' of EU membership. Recently, what was to be the beginning of the negotiation process for Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia was held off by French President Macron. The recent delay– insisted upon by the French President – which stopped the beginning process for EU accession was somewhat of a shock to observers throughout the region. What this has revealed, in this case of the Republic of North Macedonia and Albania, is something that has been hanging over the EU for some time – especially post Eurozone Crisis. There exists, within the EU, especially in the context of 'Brexit' a reticence to place the need for 'expansion' over the necessity of 'deepening' and reform. Recently, President Macron argued that "the EU must reform itself before adding new members and called for an overhaul of the accession process" (Stamouli, 2019). Macron's sentiments were based primarily on the notion that before the EU even considers progressing further in any expansion phase, it must firstly engage in substantive reform. For him, he sees the process as "bizarre" and insists on reform.

The present atmosphere in Europe provides a complex question for decision-makers throughout the continent. Does the EU have the staying power to ensure that it maintains itself as

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[22]Croatia a Member State as of 1st of July 2013,
 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/croatia_en
[23] In March 2012 Serbia was granted EU candidate status, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia_en
[24] According to the EU, their official position on Kosovo is as follows: UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) placed **Kosovo** under the transitional administration of the United Nations. Kosovo's authorities declared independence on 17 February 2008. The European Union took note of the declaration of independence, left to the member States to decide on the recognition and asked the Commission to enhance the cooperation with Kosovo. The Stabilization and Association Agreement between EU and Kosovo has been initiated in July 2014 and entered into force in April 2016.

a viable option to improve the fortunes of potential member states? Can the Union survive Brexit as well as the pro-nationalist, anti-liberal wave engulfing Europe and much of the western world at present?

The reality of Brexit forces EU technocrats and pro-EU voices and observers to now wrangle with the question of what is the 'nature of the EU' in terms of expansion? Is it the nature of the Union to push on with expansion in an unbridled fashion, almost in the sense of it being mission-oriented? Or must it observe the realities of the day and make pragmatic considerations with the goal of preserving the Union for the long-term. The latter appears more prudent. So what is the most viable way forward for the European Union in terms of expansion? And how does this translate in terms of stabilizing the western Balkans and ensuring peace? The fact is that in times of crisis national polities can rely on much of what forms the basis of a nation; their common culture, history, or symbols. This is not the case as it concerns the EU. Moravcsik (2002) notes of the EU that, "As a multinational body, moreover, it lacks the ground-ing in a common history, culture, discourse and symbolism on which most individual polities can draw." In circumstances like these, the EU accentuates the hard-core inter-governmentalist bargaining, with national interests taking priority. Note Moravcsik's use of the phrase "multinational body".

In suspending expansion for the time being, France has made a consideration that some have summarized can be of a domestic nature. One author questioned: "Is Mr. Macron a Balkan-blocker because he does not want to give ammunition to France's anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim far right?" (North Macedonia, A kick in the teeth, 2019) The Germans on the other hand are firmly against 'reform'. One Balkan observer Loic Tregoures put forth the argument that, "France has no special interest in the region [Western Balkans]…" as opposed to Germany who've had a historical hand in the region. He goes on to note that the region, "has become collateral damage in Mr. Macron's disputes with Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, who has rebuffed the ideas of EU reform" (North Macedonia, A kick in the teeth, 2019)

Peace in the western Balkan region is at this point connected somewhat to the EU integration process (although not completely). As noted earlier "the consensus uniting governments and people in the Balkans is that the region cannot achieve prosperity and stability outside the process of European integration." (Amato et al., 2003) For President Macron – a leader considered certainly more pro-European than his primary domestic opponent Marine Le

Pen - to express such reservations against moving forward with enlargement subject to EU reform is telling. It is becoming clearer that although the EU path is a promising direction in which to stabilize the region, it cannot be relied on as the only pathway for peace.

More and more, influential member states are appearing to be more consumed with internal issues; with domestic concerns taking priority as it pertains to the dynamics of the expansion question.

The European Union can settle for being a well-run and efficient collection of states. In the realm of cross-border travel i.e. management of the Schengen area, business regulations etc. it can be argued that the EU has operated well, but will it be truly fulfilling its mandate if it doesn't expand and pursue an aggressive enlargement policy? Can the Union and its leaders be satisfied with this role of the EU or will the goal of an 'ever closer union' spanning the full breathe of Europe be achieved? Whether the Union can sustain expansion comes down to a question of timing. At the moment the EU is grappling with problems it has never experienced before. Pro-EU leaders are forced to make accommodations for strong anti-EU sentiment at home, with this carry-over instability affecting the enlargement process and raising a host of questions. Lest we forget, that the EU referendum in Britain was part of a larger attempt by the then Prime Minister David Cameron to re-work the relationship that the country had with the EU. His negotiations were rejected by the people in a referendum, and now the EU is here. Could Macron and France be next? And if this is the case, does this create the chances of the EU sliding into a dormant role, and by extension placing its commitment to western Balkan enlargement – and by extension the region's peace - on standby?

Much of the process toward EU membership is hedged on what has become the widely accepted notion that the people of the western Balkans are desirous of becoming part of the European Union. As the time frame for membership remains vague, enthusiasm on the grassroots level can change. This possibility can affect the commitment of domestic politicians to go through with some of the more difficult aspects of integration.

2.3 Case study: Serbia – Has pro-EU enthusiasm begun to wane?

According to the majority of indicators, the majority of Serbia's population appears to be in favor of the country joining the European Union. According the government's calculations at

least "50%-55%" of the population are in favor of EU membership, while "20%-25%" are firmly against.[25] These are the numbers used by the Serbian government in their present considerations moving forward toward the EU path.

These numbers are not guaranteed to stay the same, and it is without question that as the process continues and more is asked of the Serbian leaders from Brussels, and regional uncertainty throughout Europe and within the EU potentially exacerbates, it is likely that perspectives may change. This reality can potentially affect the political fortunes of domestic politicians, potentially forcing a change in priorities. Even with the above mentioned government perspective in mind, other credible surveys do provide another perspective. Gallup International (Ritter. Z & Zapryanova, G, 2017) points out that of the six (6) western Balkan countries surveyed in 2016[26]: "Serbians exhibit highest level of euro skepticism".

The detailed data is reflected below:

EU Membership Views Among Non-Member Balkan Countries, 2016

In general, would membership in the European Union benefit or harm _____?

	Benefit	Harm	Neither/Both
	%	%	%
Kosovo	84	4	4
Albania	80	10	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	59	21	13
Macedonia	58	18	13
Montenegro	49	25	17
Serbia	40	34	17

GALLUP WORLD POLL, 2016

Source: https://news.gallup.com

Fig.6

The data represented in the table above allows for two immediate considerations. Firstly, the estimates of the current Serbian government of 50%-55% approval of the EU path may be somewhat optimistic. Secondly, there appears to be strong pessimism surrounding the EU

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[25] personal communication with Dr. Vladimir Ateljevic, November 26, 2019
[26] This is the most recent poll made available by Gallup.

integration process and its benefits in Serbia. This is proving difficult to shake. Even as there is a consensus in Serbia among the major political parties as to the EU path, Gallup International's research indicates lingering pessimism. One possible explanation forwarded for this degree of pessimism is the Kosovo question.[27] Ritter. Z & Zapryanova, G, (2017) point out that: "The dominant expectation among EU countries that Serbia recognize Kosovo's independence before joining the bloc likely exacerbates this resentment."

One outstanding concern among some is that Serbia's EU membership application may become dependent on the recognition of Kosovo's independence. Some government officials of EU member states appear to hold a different position – at least when publicly questioned about their thoughts on the Kosovo question in relation to Serbia's EU membership. When asked on his thoughts about the question of Serbia having to recognize Kosovo as a precondition for EU membership by the author of this research (at the ISAC Young Leaders Security Seminar on October 09th 2019), Sweden's Deputy Head of Mission, for the Embassy of Sweden in Belgrade- Joachim Waern- noted that the EU has never taken the position that Serbia must recognize Kosovo, rather the EU has maintained that there is a need for a working arrangement between the two parties (Waern, 2019).

The question of Kosovo's recognition is a political death pill for any politician who even broaches the issue showing some sympathy to recognition. In addition, the fact that the question still engenders such an emotional response on the part of the general populace places domestic politicians in the unenviable position of balancing negotiation with domestic political concerns.

The path to the EU for the western Balkans was formerly set into motion in Thessaloniki in 2003. A decade and a half has passed since then, and the EU looks even more fragile. Consistent mass support for the Union is not a guarantee. In a country like Serbia, in which the need for stability and certainty is given high priority, an EU enlargement process that seems uncertain is guaranteed to begin to lose support among the populace. It is also incumbent upon EU leaders to imbue the process with a degree of certainty which adds legitimacy to Serbia's overall aim. Recently Gallup International (B92, 2018) performed a survey within Serbia as to the popularity of global leaders among the population. Only German Chancellor Angela Merkel

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[27] The Kosovo Question refers to Kosovo's unanimous declaration of independence and the refusal of the Republic of Serbia to recognize this. Serbia still considers Kosovo a province of the country. Negotiations are ongoing.

came in the top three (3), with Russian President Vladimir Putin coming in with 81% as the most popular global leader among Serbians, and Chinese President Xi Jinping with 61%. In addition, overall, "Fifty-four percent (54%) of Serbs approved of Russia's leadership over the past two years [2014-2016], while only 28% approved of the EU's leadership" (Ritter. Z & Zapryanova, G, 2017). A remarkable piece of data by any stretch. For the approval numbers of Russia's leadership to almost double that of the EU shows not only the general skepticism with which the EU is viewed but the premium placed on what is widely considered to be the firm and steady leadership of Vladimir Putin. The EU has proven to be lacking somewhat in the area of portraying confidence in its institutions and processes. At least from the perspective of prospective member states like Serbia, it appears that the EU is viewed as being somewhat vague and non-committal. This sense of uneasiness is not seen as a positive for the EU.

With this in mind, the responsibility falls on Serbian leaders to ensure support for the enlargement process among their populace. The EU enlargement process, if pursued in an ad hoc manner has the ability to dissuade the populations of candidate countries in the western Balkans from getting fully behind the process. Consistent progress in terms of actual foreseeable gains is critical to ensuring widespread support in the future.

The case of Croatia provides a snapshot of the early post-accession period – especially in the context of it being the second republic of ex-Yugoslavia, and the first state of the western Balkans to be admitted as a member state of the EU. Have the alleged benefits of membership begun to become evident in the case of Croatia? And has Croatian membership begun a process of better relations with its neighbors in the western Balkans?

2.4 How beneficial has EU membership actually been? (The Case of Croatia – 2013-2019)

Since Croatia has become a member state of the European Union on 1 July 2013, much of the western Balkans has been able to observe the transition process as a template for making adjustments during the negotiation process. In addition, Croatia's entry in the European Union has provided a sufficient sample size of six (6) plus years for an assessment to be made of the nature and the effect of the process and its results on the actual population. Considering the impact that EU membership has had on the nation itself in terms of the economic, social, and political benefit would unquestionably prove insightful. EU membership is a step that is

guaranteed to change the nature of a society in the short, mid-term, and long-term. Depending on one's perspective this could be for better or for worse.

On one end of the spectrum, the data shows that Croatia has seen some benefits since becoming part of the EU. The EU, on the surface provides a great deal of opportunity for smaller member states in terms of freedom of movement, greater access to a wider range of goods and services which in turn allows for cheaper prices for consumers, and access to a substantial amount of funds which can be used for a host of developmental projects. According to the Balkan Insight's Anja Vladisavljevic: "Most experts say Croatia has seen significant benefits from joining the European club – including access to a larger trading market and increased exports, as well as the possibility of drawing money from EU funds" (Vladisavljevic, 2018, para. 2). The Croatian Chamber of Commerce (HGK) in particular pointed out that: "The greatest effect of EU membership can be seen in the economy as the removal of administrative and non-tariff barriers led to lower business costs..." (HINA, 2018, para.2) In addition, "By joining the EU, Croatia was also given access to $10.7 billion euros in grants from EU structural and investment funds. The latest figures provided by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds show that contracts worth $4.8 billion euros have been concluded by 31 May this year [2018]…" (HINA, 2018, para.4) The access to funding that would have not been available - to the same degree prior- opens up the potential for development and increased investment throughout the country (if used efficiently).

Notwithstanding the funds now available to Croatia from the EU coffers, one can observe from the main economic indicators, that there has been a substantial degree of progress. According to World Bank data, annual GDP growth has moved from -0.5% in the year that Croatia became a member of the EU, to a steady 2.5% growth rate in 2018 – peaking at 3.5% in 2016 (The World Bank, 2019). In addition, the GDP per capita of Croatia has consistently increased. In 2012, the nation's GDP was at $13,658.8 USD per capita, while in 2018 it had increased to $15,870.3 USD (Trading Economics, 2019). From a purely economic perspective Croatia has done better within the EU than outside.

However, the overall improvement of the country's fortunes has not been as balanced as one may have anticipated. On the other end of the spectrum Croatia's integration into the EU has not been as smooth as one would have thought. Some analysts and observers have argued that

the distribution of benefits and fortunes have not been even throughout the overall society. In the labor market, the fear of a potential brain drain and the movement of skilled labor outside of the country could in the mid to long term do much more harm than good. The nature of the EU as a body that allows, and in effect promotes, the free movement of labor to and from different parts of the Union creates a situation akin to what some have described as a "mass exodus" (Vladisavljevic, 2018, para. 3).

A major critic of Croatia's entry into the EU, or more specifically the timing of their entry, is Dr. Paul Stubbs. Stubbs points out that Croatia has suffered from: "massive emigration, with people wanting to work elsewhere in the EU" (Stubbs, 2018, para. 4). He goes on to note that: "The problem isn't that Croatia has 'out-migration', the problem is the fact that it doesn't have 'in-migration'. Croatia isn't attractive to anyone else in the EU, [and] there is no mobility" (Stubbs, 2018, para. 4). On the social front, this is one of the most challenging realities not only for Croatia but the numerous western Balkan nations presently seeking EU membership. The likelihood of the EU becoming a gate-way to go out of their native homelands regardless of the economic windfall that appears most certain to come (noting the potential for starkly different impacts on individual economies) is something that not only the EU would have to consider but also the future member states themselves.

The political dimension of Croatia being part of the EU primarily deals with whether the EU is seen as a viable means of dealing with the problems facing the populations of member states. The question of legitimacy comes to the forefront once more in this regard. Has the European Union been able to engender some degree of cachet in order to be trusted by the populace of its member states to help solve their problems? And do new member states like Croatia feel a sense of belonging within the Union?

In the case of Croatians primarily, there has been a substantial increase in their sense of belonging within the Union. According to the Euro-barometer - based on surveys and research released in May 2014- when asked whether Croatians feel like citizen(s) of the EU, 55% answered in the affirmative, (European Commission, Eurobarometer, 2014). In 2019, when the same question was asked there was an increase of almost 10%.

Furthermore, as it concerns the overall perception of the EU by Croatians, Stubbs (2018, para. 5) notes that, only 16% of Croatians have a negative view of the EU. The majority are in the middle, while 36% are strongly in favor. The fact that the firm 'Yes-es' more than double the firm 'No's' is a clear indication that the EU still maintains a solid degree of legitimacy and favor in the eyes of Croatians. This is without question a positive discovery that ought to sit well with pro-EU supporters.

In the realm of peace, there are still some issues which Croatia has yet to fully grapple with. The question of the protection of the rights of minorities within the country – with Serbs making up the largest minority – has still been a question hanging over the authorities in Zagreb. A recent statement by the Serbian National Council in Croatia – a group responsible for coordination among Serbs in Croatia pointed out a scathing rebuke by noting that, "The position of Serbs in Croatia has not been improved and has actually deteriorated in a number of ways. This is particularly true of the level of tolerance and the rights which were introduced during the period when Croatia was entering the European Union." (Pavlic, 2018, para.1) The Croatian government has maintained however, that minorities are well protected under its Constitutional National Minority Rights Act. The law was also amended in 2010 to include – among other things – the rights of minorities to have representation within the Croatian Parliament. Questions concerning the return of exile and refugee Serbs, many of whom lost their property during the wars is still an outstanding issue which has not been fully addressed.

Issues like the rise of right-wing extremism, a problem that Croatia – like numerous other European countries have had to grapple with –is something that is still very much present within Croatia. Regardless of the improved economic fortunes of EU membership it appears that Croatia is still subject to the broader pattern of the rise of right-wing movements being experienced in and across the Western world. In a report less than two years old, the Council of Europe voiced concern over the rise of right-wing extremism within Croatia and the celebration of fascism within Croatia. It was pointed out that, "The increase has been reinforced by the "glorification" of ideologies from World War II — especially of Croatia's fascist Ustasha regime, which fought alongside Nazi Germany, according to the report by the CoE's Anti-Racism Commission." (**Neo-fascism on the rise in Croatia, Council of Europe finds,** 2018**).**

The gradual increase in military spending by Croatia – prompted on by NATO – is another concern that questions the overall direction of this newly 'minted' EU member state as it concerns peace in the western Balkan region.

Regardless of what appears to be the numerous beneficial elements of membership, in some regard expectations have had to be tampered down. The EU is not a perfect institution and it is incapable of solving all the problems which member states may face. In the case of Croatia, that which that EU has provided is an improved economy and more robust economic situation. The question still comes to the forefront however; does economic improvement mean peace and stability?

2.5 The limits of EU Political Conditionality

The EU has without question used the tool of political conditionality to transform potential member states not only in the direction of democracy, but also in the realm of respect for rule of law and the like. To quote Schimmelfennig and Scholtz, who engaged in an extensive panel study of 36 countries of the East European and Mediterranean neighborhood, they noted that: "In using political conditionality, the EU sets the adoption of democratic rules and practices as conditions that the target countries have to fulfill in order to receive rewards such as financial assistance, some kind of institutional association or – ultimately – membership." (Schimmelfennig, F., & Scholtz, H. 2008). The 'carrot and stick' notion of the EU is something that has been used to ensure a degree of compliance with EU norms. For Bechev (2006) "Beyond the carrot-and-stick strategies proceeding from the application of membership conditionality, the EU has wielded considerable ideational power as promoter of certain normative notions of appropriate state behaviour." The EU has in many cases, as supported and forwarded by Bechev, not only sought to ensure the assimilation of potential member states to core democratic values, but to also shape state behavior. Bechev's assessment supports the notion of the EU using the enlargement process and potential funding as a means of affecting the behavior of member states and those hoping to become member states.

The fact that the EU has used conditionality as a means of pushing the western Balkans in a particular direction is not surprising. However, some have questioned the efficacy of this carrot and stick method historically employed by the EU with varying degrees of success.

Papadimitriou (2001) points out that, "Since the collapse of the Communist order and the resurgence of ethnic tensions in the Balkans, the EU has tried to act as a stabilizing factor in the region by employing a mixture of threats and promises." He further notes that, "it is arguable that neither the 'carrot' nor the 'stick' end of the EU's Balkan strategy has been employed successfully." Some have argued that the EU has itself not been as reliable an actor as it should be. It's tardiness in fulfilling commitments to the western Balkan nations and struggles in keeping its own 'house in order' undermines the very purpose of conditionality as a means to initiate sustainable progress in the region.

Some have argued that the EU goes a bit further in leveraging membership with conditions that go beyond the core purpose of the tool of the principle conditionality – the core purpose of the tool being to promote: free and democratic elections; respect for the rule of law; respect for human rights etc.; in addition to the undertaking of economic reforms leading to the creation of a market economy (Papadimitriou 2001). It has been argued that the EU seeks to affect state postures and historical alliances i.e. Serbia and Russia. If this is the case, it essentially then undermines the EU's appearance of 'good-faith' in the overall enlargement process.

As an entity, the EU does reserve the right to set the conditions for membership and assimilation into its body; however the absence of a commitment to stick to the standards and precedents of past rounds of enlargement and the fundamental spirit of the Thessaloniki Summit threatens to negatively impact the entire enlargement process. The core conditions, as noted earlier which center around democratic reform, human rights, and market reform are conditions which play an integral role as to the well-being and long-term viability of the Union. Anything further proves disingenuous. However, potential member states ought to be aware of the necessity of the right form political conditionality.

The notion of political conditionality being the end all be all of the EU's tools in directing potential states toward more comprehensive assimilation to the standards of the EU is somewhat misguided. For the EU to place too much emphasis on the 'carrot and stick' analysis could potentially negatively impact the overall enlargement process. Such an approach may prove to demotivate political elites to engage in any form of substantive reform. Bechev (2006) points out correctly that the EU "conditionality policy is one amongst several instruments in the EU's toolbox." (Bechev, 2006). As effective as conditionality proves to be in certain respects, it is the

EU's overall grander appeal which would motivate states, their leaders and populace, to go through all the way with the enlargement process.

Maintaining conditionality to core democratic principles initially set out by the EC is a reasonable ask of western Balkan candidate countries. However, even within this realm there are limitations. Some politicians and observers have argued that incentive-based instruments do prove effective but only under certain limited circumstances. Freyburg T., & Richter Solvieg, (2010) suggest incentive-based instruments trigger fundamental democratic changes once certain preconditions are met. In the case of the western Balkans in particular, or more specifically, nations and regions affected by the historical circumstance of ethnic strife, the question of national identity plays an integral role in how incentive-based instruments play out. Meaning, if the question of national identity were to get in the way, whatever the benefit at the end of the arrangement to be –in this case EU membership- some theorists argue that it would be interpreted domestically as something to not be complied with. Thus, conditionality is provided with a limitation that many have pointed out was not successfully surmounted, in the case of Croatia for example. In other words, nation-states within the western Balkans are primarily formed on ethnic-historical foundations. When conditions are laid out which attempt to force prospective member states to relinquish certain ethnic and historical symbols, then this causes a challenge that may prove insurmountable in the accession process.

Although on the surface it may appear that political conditionality ought to be a straight-forward process it nevertheless comes across obstacles depending on the challenge at hand. The fundamental questions of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights etc. are generally aspirations that prospective member states would easily acquiesce to. In fact, much of those values are enshrined in many of their own respective constitutions. However, as it pertains to national identity and the myriad of issues surrounding that the question, the issues appear to become more intractable.

Finally, the issue of conditionality comes down to a basic equation as widely acknowledged, which is, that: "conditionality will bring about substantial change if the expected political costs of compliance with EU requirements do not exceed the benefits of a – credible – membership perspective (Ethier 2003; Grabbe 2006; Schimmelfennig et al. 2006; Vachudova 2005, as cited in Freyburg T., & Richter Solvieg, 2010). It is difficult to surmise that any

perspective member state would bare a political cost beyond that which can be overcome by the justification of what EU membership can provide. As bright and glittering as the prospect of EU membership may look, few if any a national politician would sacrifice their political fortunes or dear to compromise on the question of national identity for the fleeting carrot of EU membership.

A consistent theme throughout this study is that EU membership is a critical part of the puzzle in establishing a long term peace within the western Balkan region. It would be false to construe this as meaning that EU membership guarantees peace in the region or that EU membership is the last missing piece of the puzzle. Rather, the two elements of: 1) The process toward EU membership and, 2) Eventual EU membership, increases substantially the chances for peace in the region.

On the other hand, as the length of time for membership becomes an ever more present concern, it is incumbent upon the EU to stay true to its own commitments so as to legitimize the process even further. The impression ought not to be given that a lengthy EU membership process is as a result of the domestic concerns of individual member states or internal EU squabbles, rather, it must be ensured that if candidate countries keep the commitments clearly laid out by the EU, that they are rewarded in kind. As former head of the European Commission Jean Claude Junker rightfully points out, "If this country [EU candidate country] is delivering, we have no right to say no to the European aspirations of this country," to do so, the European Union would appear "as a weak body on this continent." (Mischke, 2019, para. 24)

Chapter 3: Does EU survival equate to Balkan Peace?

3.1 The EU's original mandate

"Peacebuilding is at the heart of the European Union's (EU) raison d'être" (Ejdus, Juncos 2017).
The above-mentioned statement is one that is at the very core of the European Union. As
Professor Nakarada (2006) points out, "Prvi, jer se EZ/EU samo-definisala kao mirovni
projekat…EZ/EU je obezbedila svojim članicama pola stoleća mira, šireči stabilnost i
demokratiju vlastitom ekspanzijom." The essence of the European Union is peace building and at
its core it is a peace project. Nevertheless, the fact is that in practice the EU means many
different things to many different peoples. The populations of all current 27 member states as
well as the current five candidate countries: Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro,
Serbia, Turkey[28] have sought to pursue the EU as a means to accomplish different goals at what
their political elites have interpreted is at the behest of the vast majority of the population.

As pointed out by Ejdus and Jancos, the EU aims to "preserve peace, prevent conflicts
and strengthen international security" (Treaty on European Union, Art. 21(2)), as noted in the
Lisbon Treaty is at the core of the EU's work. The post WWII environment in which the EU was
founded was a time in which the geo-political atmosphere was ripe for engaging in a
fundamental re-working of the global order. The EU is a critical part of the overall architecture
of liberal institutions created with the intention to ensure greater peace and prosperity around the
world.

The EU's original mandate is peace. It has sometimes, but not always, used the means
available at its disposal to move regional neighbors in this direction. As an institution, the EU
has had over half a century of success among its founding member states in preventing war and
ensuring relative stability throughout much of Europe.

Although there have been numerous historical initiatives for peace which have come and
gone - some proving obsolete - the EU has been able to grow and expand its breathe while
simultaneously internally correcting many of the challenges which it faces. The EU stands at the

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[28] Note: Turkey has been a candidate country since 1999 - the longest period of time that any country has been in
such a position.

forefront of regional integration, and has exponentially increased the standard of living for the populations within its member states.

3.2 How EU enlargement in the Balkans can be the EU's crowning achievement

Instability in the western Balkans, whether due to external factors or internal conflict – or a combination of both - has undoubtedly been a concern for peace and security in Europe and the world. World War I was an example of how a combination of events can prove to be a defining moment in unleashing a plethora of unforeseen consequences for the European region and the wider world. Solving the question of peace in the Balkans is a responsibility that the European Union has taken on whether consciously or not.

Over the last century, the world experienced what some scholars have described the "long peace."[29] Notwithstanding the Wars of Yugoslav dissolution which contributed to 'disturbing' this so-called "long peace", the trajectory of war and violence since the end of World War II and more recently the fall of the Berlin Wall has been in a downward direction. Steven Pinker's lengthy study in his book *The Better Angels of Our Nature* goes into, with great specificity, the precipitous reduction of war and violence in our times. In this thesis, the attempt has been made to argue that the Balkan region's push toward the EU can be classified as an important part of this overall process toward a more peaceful world. It was not so long ago when Barack Obama, in his final address to the UN proclaimed at the United Nations that,: "Indeed, our international order has been so successful that we take it as a given that great powers no longer fight world wars; that the end of the Cold War lifted the shadow of nuclear Armageddon; that the battlefields of Europe have been replaced by peaceful union" (Obama, 2016).

As true as Obama's words may be from a macro-historical point of view, the world still faces challenges which causes one to question, in the short and mid-term, the efficacy of the institutions meant to solve societal problems. Europe is at the 'center of the world' specifically in regard to the fact that it has progressed the furthest as it concerns regional integration through the form of European Union. As a body the European Union attempts to set the standard as it

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[29] A period which, according to scholars, began at the end of World War II, and which is marked by the absence of war among the world's great powers.

concerns regional cooperation. The Union's expansion into the western Balkans is an endeavor that has the potential to widen the net of the EU's original mandate of being a "peace project." (Nakarada, 2006)

As one of the many post World War experiments to come under stress in recent years, more intensely since the 2008 global financial crisis, and the Eurozone debt crisis, the EU has for the most part been able to hold itself together by the seams. Brexit proved to be equivalent to 'throwing a monkey wrench' into what appeared to be an easing of the financial instability of recent. It appears that economic instability has been followed by socio-cultural unease; Brexit provided an outlet for this to be expressed. The logistics of Britain's exit from the EU is something that will reveal its own answers in due time. Nevertheless, with all of this in mind, the EU is still a positive prospect for the western Balkans. As O'Brennan (2014) points out, "Despite its economic woes, the EU still continues to act as a lodestar for the countries of the region as they recover from the traumatizing conflicts of the 1990s and seek to integrate with the variegated architecture of the European integration process."

Becoming a member state of the EU requires the relinquishing of sovereignty on the part of its members. In this case, Serbia, as well as much of the western Balkans have committed to the EU for a myriad of reasons. Much of the nations of the western Balkans have only recently been reminded of the horrors of war. For Hodge (1998), "The whole purpose of European multilateralism is to transcend national interests and banish war from the European continent." One can add that this is the entire purpose of the European's variant of regional integration and the European Union as a whole. Since the Treaty of Paris in 1951, direct military conflict among European powers, for all intents and purposes, has been non-existent. The European Union's model guarantees that the destruction of one essentially means mutual destruction. The hope is that this avoidance of war, conflict, and redressing old grievances among neighboring countries can be extended into the western Balkan region. This will provide the nations of the region with a solid sense of belonging, economic prosperity, political stability, and a lasting peace. If the EU is able, notwithstanding the plethora of issues it faces at present, to extend its successes in the realm of peace toward the region of the western Balkans, this will be one of the crowning achievements of the Union. The EU's success in the western Balkans can provide a template for other regional bodies to follow suit.

Conclusion

As a body, the European Union has experienced ebbs and flows, accelerations and decelerations as it concerns both its expansion and its deepening. During the immediate aftermath of WWII the pace of Europe coming together was at an almost breath-taking speed. The Treaty of Paris, the Treaty of Rome, and the Merger Treaty all took place within a fifteen (15) year span - from April 1951 (Treaty of Rome) to April 1965 (Merger Treaty). The Euro-sclerosis which ensued in the 70s was accompanied by a global economic downturn on both sides of the Atlantic. The 70s brought much of the global political and economic infrastructure into question; it forced some introspection, which in turn prompted much needed reform. It appears that the world is at such a moment once more.

Europe was able however to overcome that difficult period. It's re-occupation with integration was once again signaled with the Single European Act in 1986 which was the spark that initiated the Union moving consistently throughout the following decades:

- Treaty on European Union – Maastricht Treaty - 1992

- Treaty of Amsterdam - 1997

- Treaty of Nice – 2001

- Treaty of Lisbon – 2007

At present, notwithstanding the lone entry of Croatia post the 'Great Recession', it appears that European Union is once again experiencing a slowdown in the deepening and expansion of this European project. We've looked at the role that Europe has played in the western Balkans since the wars of Yugoslav succession in the 90s and can, with some degree of certainty, surmise that although the region is better equipped to achieve sustainable peace with the goal of EU enlargement maintaining its viability, it ought not to be viewed as the western Balkan's saving grace or *'port of final call.'* The European pathway is an integral part of establishing peace in the region but the initiative rests on the nations of the western Balkans themselves.

The purpose of this research was to explore the role of the EU in the western Balkans, with main focus on the enlargement process as a pathway to peace. We've explored the two main theories within the field of European integration – neo-functionalism and inter-governmentalism. From this end we attempted to lay a foundation as to how the EU integration process is understood from the perspective of theory. Both see cooperation as an objective of the Union but diverge on the question of the means through which this cooperation is achieved. The founding fathers of the Union leaned more on the neo-functionalist interpretation plainly because it was more integrative and led to a more federal style union of states.

The EU enlargement process however is sometimes affected by the domestic concerns and national interests of individual member states. When member states operate with this modus operandi at the front of their minds this brings into question the commitment of the EU to enlargement, and affects the level of engagement and trust that potential members have in the process. The rise of nationalism and the far-right movements across Europe have created within some circles an aversion to EU enlargement. This has slowed up the process somewhat. The responses by leaders to this reality will prove critical. For some, the response to this slowdown is less integration or in some cases a slowdown of the enlargement process. I argue that this ought not to be the case. The response to the push back to EU enlargement ought not to be less integration but more. Haas points out, concerning the results of more integration, that, "The alleged primordial force of nationalism will be trumped by the utilitarian-instrumental human desire to better oneself in life, materially and in terms of status, as well as normative satisfaction" (Haas, 2004) Ideally, the EU's ability to spread its reach to the western Balkans would be dependent on the ability of member states to convince their own populations to look beyond the short-term realities and realize that the long-term peace process is in their interest.

The dissolution of SFRY and the manner in which it took place has haunted the continent. Whether consciously admitted or not, the events of the past in and around the former Yugoslavia has informed policies and capacities of the EU to this day. The CFSP's development was hastened by the inadequacy of the then EC to properly deal with the SFRY's dissolution. Committees like the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) established in 2001, and the Political and Security Committee are bodies mandated to now develop a response in times of crisis. This was not the case prior to the wars which brought an end to Yugoslavia. A disjointed

approach on the part of the EC unquestionably made for a much more complicated and bitter circumstance as it concerns EU relations with the former ex-Yugoslav republics, most notably Serbia.

Concerning the enthusiasm and the confidence of western Balkan populations to the EU enlargement process, Serbia in particular has been pointed out - according to the Gallup poll in fig.6 - as somewhat doubtful of the benefits of the EU. This ought to be a concern in Brussels. Confidence in the EU and its enlargement process works to rejuvenate interests and commitment to the EU and its endeavors overall.

The European Union in its present form, as challenged as it may be in some respects, provides a pathway which allows nation-states to focus more on questions of development and common integrated policy. This reality has been somewhat successful in taming the aggressive tendencies so intrinsic to the nation-state.

Finally, two important questions were looked at (in a survey[30] carried out by the author of this research) as it concerned feelings about Serbia's present condition and of the nation's future. Two main questions were asked: 1) The feelings of respondents concerning whether accession into the EU is a good thing for Serbia, and 2) The feelings of respondents concerning Serbia's future.

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[30] This survey was not representative. It is used primarily as an illustration.

Fig. 7

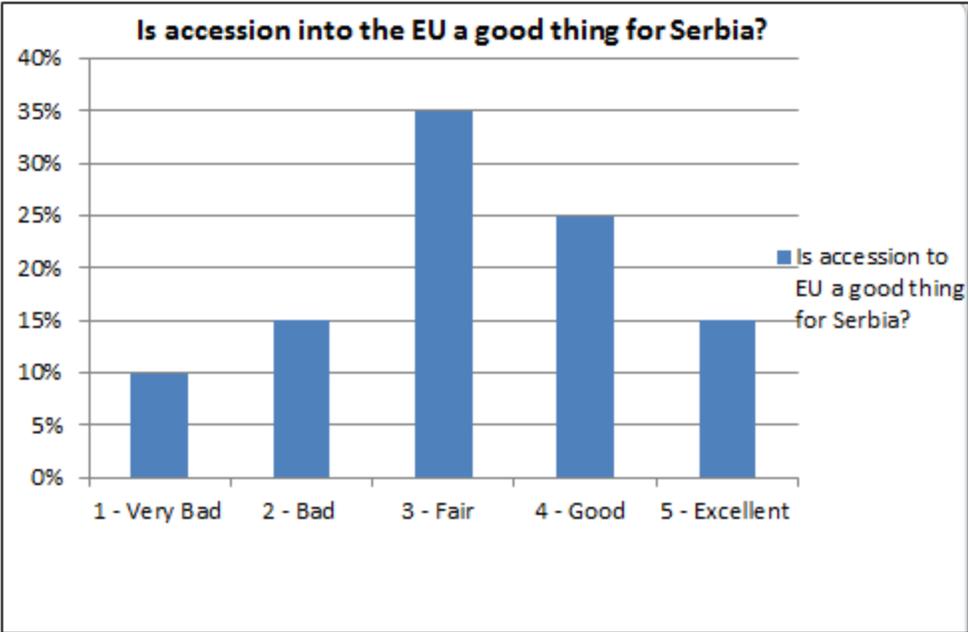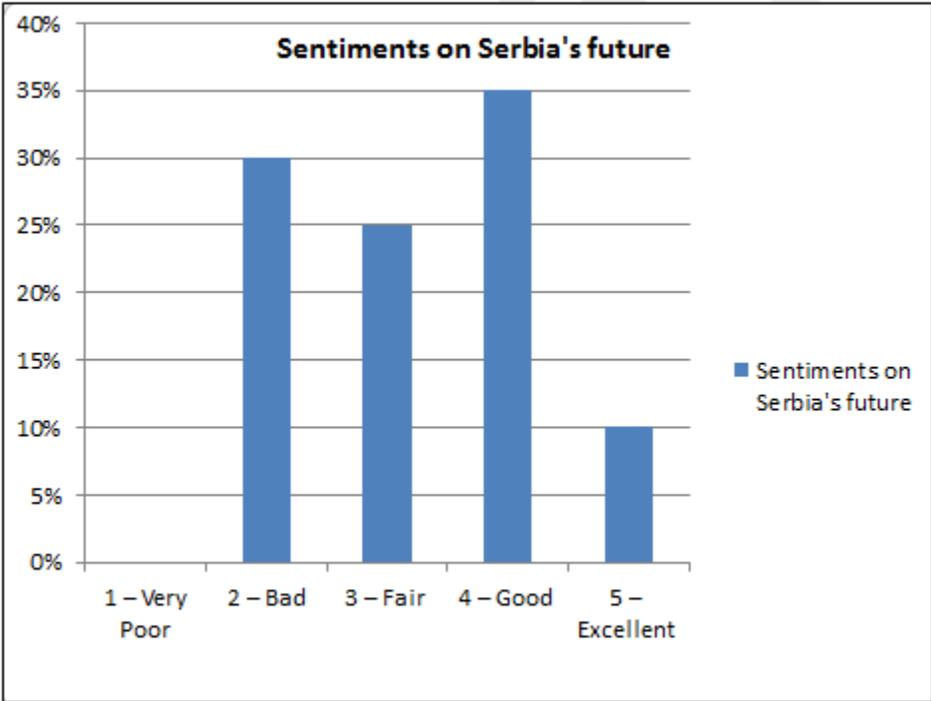**Fig.8**

The two graphs above show an interesting dynamic. The first graph shows the data reflected for the answer to the question: "Is accession into the EU a good thing for Serbia?" The second graph shows the data provided for the answers to the question: "What are your feelings about Serbia's future?"

A look at the data provided in the two graphs proves compelling. On the one hand, the group sees EU accession as a mixed bag for Serbia, but more on the positive side. The largest group of 35% views it as solid, or average. On average however, more people see the process as a good thing overall, with 40% viewing it as a 'good' or 'excellent' thing for Serbia, as opposed to only 25% viewing it as wholly negative; either 'bad' or 'very bad'.

Concerning the sentiments of the group about Serbia's future, the respondents have a somewhat similar response. Some 70% view the future for the country as fair, good, or excellent, while some 30% view the future negatively.

What affects the western Balkans more than anything else as it concerns the overall move toward stabilization and a lasting peace is the strong almost undying emotional attachment to the, victories, defeats, grudges, and alliances of the past – as is the case with many regions the world over. Irrespective of whether one can conclude this to be a positive or a negative reality, the fact is that it has consistently played a role in the direction of the region historically – for better or for worse. As noted so eloquently by Štrbac, K. & Mitrović, M (2011) "It can often be perceived that the entire region is a hostage to its history, and that it will move towards progress once it replaces discussions on history with strategies for the future." Each individual society and collective region can make itself victim to its history by heeding the extremist peripheral voices of division and regression. However, this will invariably result in the stunting of initiatives meant to lead to progress and to benefit the broader collective. The present generation of western Balkan leaders are now equipped with the experience of the past, a European Union which has proven to be for the most part a productive partner, improving democratic safeguards, and a general fatigue among the young populace of the region of being considered Europe's step child. The time is ripe and progress is at the door. Only a collective effort by all parties and an EU with a genuine interest in the long-term peace of the region and in the improvement of the lives of western Balkans inhabitants will provide the results so longed for within the region – a stable and

prosperous reality. These hopes can however be destroyed if the short-term interests of all parties – whether domestic or foreign actors - become most important.

Finally, the acclaimed historian Yuval Harari forwards an optimistic tone for the 21st century by pointing out that, "The liberal world of the early 21st century is more prosperous, more healthy, and more peaceful than ever before. For the first time in human history, you are more likely to die from obesity than from starvation. For the first time in history, you are more likely to die from old age than from plague. And you are more likely to die from accident than from human violence. The liberal miracle can be summarized in the idea that liberalism created a world in which sugar is more dangerous than gunpowder" (Harari, 2019). The European Union, as imperfect and flawed as it has proven to be, is still part of that liberal miracle. The goal of the enlargement process is to ensure that the benefits of what the EU has to offer become part of the regional fabric of the western Balkans. This, more than anything else, will be the Union's crowning achievement.

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Appendix 1

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UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCES

Regional Master's Programme in Peace Studies

MASTER'S THESIS

"Understanding the EU enlargement process in the Western Balkans as a key component of regional peace - The Case of Serbia"

Questionnaire – Students

Scale:

1 – Very Poor

2 – Bad

3 – Fair

4 – Good

5 – Excellent

_____

Instructions:

Some of the questions require more explanation while most are multiple choice which you can circle. Others will require a ranking of 1-5 in accordance with the above scale, which you can also circle.

1. Are you a student at the University Of Belgrade Faculty Of Political Science?

   Yes   No

2. What is your gender?

   Male   Female

3. What is your age range?

   18-24   24-30

4. Which year of faculty are you on?

   Year 1   Year 2   Year 3   Year 4

5. Which part of Serbia are you from?

   _____

6. How would you grade Serbia's present economic situation?

   1   2   3   4   5

7. Do you believe that the dissolution of Yugoslavia was a good thing or a bad thing?

   1   2   3   4   5

8. Is accession into the EU a good thing for Serbia?

   1   2   3   4   5

9. Do you think Serbia will be a member of the European Union by 2025?
   Yes   No

10. How would you evaluate the relationship between Serbia and Croatia presently?

   1   2   3   4   5

11. How do you currently see Serbia's relationship with NATO?

   1   2   3   4   5

12. What are your feelings about Serbia's future?

   1   2   3   4   5

13. In your opinion, what is the effect of western Balkan integration on peace in the region?

   1   2   3   4   5

14. Do you think the EU will exist in the next ten (10) years?

   Yes   No

15. Given the present regional atmosphere in the western Balkans, in your opinion, how
    likely is war between western Balkan nations?

   1 – Very Unlikely | 2 – Unlikely | 3 – Likely | 4- Very Likely | 5- Certainty

Appendix II

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UNIVERZITET U BEOGRADU

FAKULTET POLITIČKIH NAUKA

Regionalni Master Program iz   Mirovnih Studija

MASTER TEZA

"Razumevanje procesa proširenja EU na zapadnom Balkanu kao ključne komponente regionalnog mira – Slučaj Srbije"

Upitnik – Studenti

Skala:

1 – Veoma Loše

2 – Loše

3 – Solidno

4 – Dobro

5 – Odlično

_____

Uputstvo:

Neka od pitanja zahtevaju više objašnjenja, a većina je višestrukog izbora koji možete da zaokružite. Drugi će zahtevati rangiranje od 1 – 5 u skladu sa gornjom skalom, koji takođe možete zaokružiti.

1. Da li ste student Univerziteta u Beogradu Fakulteta Političkih Nauka?

   Da   Ne

2. Koji je tvoj pol?

   Muški   Ženski

3. Koji je vaš starosni raspon?

   18-24   24-30

4. Koja ste godina na fakultetu?

   1 Godina   2 Godina   3 Godina   4 Godina

5. Iz kog dela Srbije dolazite?

   _____

6. Kako bi ocenili sadašnju ekonomsku situaciju Srbije?

   1   2   3   4   5

7. Da li verujete da je raspad Jugoslavije bila dobra ili loša stvar?

   1   2   3   4   5

8. Da li je ulazak u EU dobra stvar za Srbiju?

   1   2   3   4   5

9. Da li mislite da će Srbija do 2025. biti članica Evropske unije?

    Da   Ne

10. Kako biste trenutno ocenili odnos Srbije i Hrvatske?

    1   2   3   4   5

11. Kako trenutno vidite odnos Srbije prema NATO-u?

    1   2   3   4   5

12. Kakva su vaša osećanja o budućnosti Srbije?

    1   2   3   4   5

13. Kakav je, po vašem mišljenuju, uticaj integracije zapadnog Balkana na mir u regionu?

    1   2   3   4   5

14. Da li mislite da će EU postojati u narednih deset (10) godina?

    Da   Ne

15. S obzirom na sadašnju regionalnu atmosferu na zapadnom Balkanu, po vašem mišljenju, koliko je verovatan rat između nacija zapadnog Balkana?

    1 – Neverovatno | 2 – Malo verovatno | 3 – Verovatno | 4- Vrlo verovatno | 5- Sigurno

Appendix III

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UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCES

Regional Master's Programme in Peace Studies

MASTER'S THESIS

Thesis Topic:

Understanding the EU enlargement process in the western Balkans as a key component of regional peace - The Case of Serbia.

Expert Questionnaire

Questions (Expert: Vladimir Ateljevic – Senior Advisor to the Minister for European Integration)

_____

Note*: Questions were asked orally and answers recorded through note taking

_____

1.   It has been made clear by both the preceding and present Serbian government administrations that one of their primary goals is for Serbia to become an EU member state. Does a diminished EU – meaning the desire of certain

member states to leave the Union i.e. Britain – make joining the EU a less desirable prospect?

2. How do you view the present relationship between Serbia and Croatia?

3. Does Serbia's commitment to joining the EU undermine its cooperation with Russia?

4. Is a drawn out, or unduly lengthy integration process (in the case of Serbia particularly) a positive or a negative development for peace in the western Balkans? – Meaning, some have argued that a lengthier process may keep prospective member states on their 'best behavior', and this will ensure less instability in the short to mid-term. In your view is there any merit to such an argument?

5. What is Serbia's greatest challenge as it concerns joining the European Union (e.g. the perception of internal corruption, perceived closeness to Russia, an extensive enlargement process, EU expansion fatigue)?

6. In your opinion, would you consider Serbia joining the EU as more of an endeavor to improve the economic prospects of the country (**economic reasons**) or, to improve relations between western Balkan countries (**security considerations**) - more specifically the former Yugoslav republics? Or can it be both (or even other additional considerations), and to what degree?

7.   In your opinion, since Serbia was granted EU candidate status in March of 2012, has there been any substantial resistance domestically to the proposed EU reforms?

8.   In your opinion, is it possible that the extensive negotiation process can lead to some level of fatigue on the part of the Serbian population? And if so, what impact can this have on the political will of 'political elites' to see the process through?

9.   According to some observers the consensus uniting governments and people in the Balkans is that the region cannot achieve prosperity and stability outside the process of European integration. Is this a fair characterization in the case of Serbia? Or is there room for another way to 'prosperity and stability' outside of the EU, if the EU path loses its viability?

10.   In your opinion, what are the most direct threats to peace and stability in the western Balkans at present?