

## **Democratisation, Democracy and Ethnic Conflicts in the Balkans**

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Observing the Balkan states (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia) one can distinguish several criteria for their classification. From the perspective of the topic of this paper their most important feature seems to be that they all have and take part in more or less similar and sometimes mutual ethnic conflicts. Second, a great majority of these states are in certain stages of the post-communist democratisation process.

The classic theory of democracy has examined the issue of ethnicity in politics mostly periodically, and in a cursory manner. Since the end of the Cold War the interest of many scholars has been focused either on the security aspects of ethnic conflicts (ethnic aspects of security in the region) or merely on political aspects of the transition toward democracy (i.e. its general pattern). This is a scholarly attempt to combine these two approaches, i.e. to explore the ethnic conflict and its impact on the democratisation process and democracy and *vice versa* in the context of the Balkan states and conditions. In addition, the issue of ethnic conflict and its elimination for a long time has been *terra incognita* for scholars in these countries. Present-day researchers seem more attracted by the security situation in the Balkan region, while the possibilities of conflict elimination within the context of democratisation and *vice versa* are mostly overlooked or even ignored.

According to definitions, democracy is rule by majority as well as a procedure used for the non-violent elimination of political, economic conflicts and other discrepancies in positions, i.e. interests in society. However, sometimes, even without violating or abusing one of the procedures mentioned, one party in the conflict is dissatisfied or merely partly satisfied with the decisions. This shows that the conflict has not been fully resolved (and in this way eliminated), that it has been 'resolved' in just a formal and not in an essential regard.

Conflict in general could be defined as dynamic and manifest conflict processes consisting of certain phases. In this case the term conflict is used in a more specific meaning: *a political process (dynamic situation) in which engaged parties have incompatible attitudes and behaviours*. Internal as well as international conflicts have three interrelated components: (1) conflict situation, manifested in expressing various political aims or conflict of interest (see Galtung, 1990: 247) that cannot be simultaneously achieved and for that reason can be qualified as mutually exclusive; (2) conflict behaviour (in the first place aimed at achieving the aforementioned political aims); and (3) conflicting attitudes and perceptions having an emotional dimension (feeling of anger, mistrust, fear, scorn, hatred, etc.) as well as a cognitive dimension (maintenance of certain stereotypes and beliefs regarding the opposite side) (compare: Michell, 1981: 29). As has been noted, one should stay away from the notion that conflict behaviour should always be something that must be stopped. Moreover, it should not be assumed that

conflict in a wider sense of the term is something that should be necessarily avoided (Wiberg, 1998: 176).

The collapse of communism and the re-emergence of a number of small, multiethnic and easy to manipulate states, which have rather poor democratic traditions (partly thanks to the fact that many of them were born in war conditions), represented two earthshaking events. They heavily influenced the re-emergence of numerous ethnic conflicts and tensions within the states as well as in interstate relations in the region and beyond. For instance, in addition to the four ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (Serb-Croatian in Croatia, Serb-Moslem, and Serb-Croatian in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serb-Albanian in Serbia), there are now four new conflicts (Moslem-Croatian in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonian-Albanian, Macedonian-Bulgarian and Macedonian-Greek) and several potential intra-state and international conflicts of successor states. Slovenia used to be a member of the Serb-Croatian conflict in Croatia in 1991. Since that time Slovenia has been the only conflict-free successor state that managed to establish relatively stable and democratic interethnic relations. This is seen as one concrete way of overcoming the Balkan legacies as well as a concrete contribution to peace in the region and beyond.

The situation in the Balkans has a special weight for the prospects of European security and European integration, which—according to some authors' beliefs—could be effectively thwarted by ethnic conflicts. It seems that the basic reasons for this belief came from already clearly demonstrated manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism as elementary and general indicators and generators of ethnic conflicts in Europe and elsewhere. This belief is further corroborated by the inclination toward establishing ethnically pure states, confinement to one's own borders, national particularism, selfishness, xenophobia or hegemonism, domination, authoritarian rule over other nations or parts of them, and so on.

The formal and substantive aspects of the democratisation process itself in the respective countries seem to be equally important. Formal democracy could be understood as a set of rules, procedures and institutions. These include such things as inclusive citizenship, rule of law, separation of powers, elected power-holders, free and fair elections, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, associational autonomy, and civilian control over the security forces. Key features of substantive democracy could be taken as the following: (a) the character of constitutions and the way in which human rights are perceived; (b) the role of political parties and the extent to which they provide a vehicle for political participation; (c) the role of media and the extent to which they are capable of introducing a broad political debate; (d) whether and how far the administration is able to transform itself into a genuine public service in which individuals have trust; (e) the extent to which local government is able to manage local concerns and respond to them; (f) the existence of an active civil society, in the sense of independent associations and institutions able to point out the abuse of state power, etc. Thus, one could examine the political systems, for example, of the newly democratised countries of the Balkan region, and in this context, one could make the distinction between formal and substantive democracy in order to evaluate the development of key facets of democratic practices in these countries. The political systems of observed countries constitute, at least in some cases, a particular variant of democracy; it is a *sui generis* political model influenced both by the legacy of communism and by strengths and weaknesses of modern and historical features of Western democracy, including their nationalistic and even chauvinistic elements.

By making the distinction between formal and substantive democracy, one can reach a more differentiated understanding of the democratisation process as it is experienced by each Balkan country. Understandably, the experience of only several years (or decades, in certain cases) in promoting democratic systems is not enough to make meaningful assertions as to the foundations and prospects of democracy. In any case, one can make assessments about whether a process of genuine democratisation is under way, and how it can affect the elimination and/or the

prevention of the escalation of ethnic conflicts in these societies by *managing, mitigating, regulating, mediating, transformation, resolving*, its marginalization, etc.

One can detect the existence of interdependence between the process of democratisation and the modes of ethnic conflict elimination in the Balkan countries. The political and social status of diverse ethnic groups as well as the level of their involvement in the process of democratisation in each country are based on (1) the speed and course with which ethnic issues have been recognized; (2) the level of ethnic tension that is existent when the democratic process begins; (3) the size and power of different ethnic groups; (4) the ethnic composition of the previous and the present regime; (5) the political positions of the leaders of the main ethnic groups; (6) the presence or absence of external ethnic allies; and (7) ethnic composition of the military and police forces.

A model created by Senghaas consists of the six main conditions or preconditions for lasting peace, which form a hexagon called 'Civilisatorian Hexagone' (*Zivilisatorisches Hexagon*). The form of the hexagon is chosen in order to demonstrate that all conditions should be fulfilled simultaneously, i.e. one condition cannot be neglected for a longer period. The first condition is that monopoly of power (*Gewaltmonopol*) should be in the hands of a democratically controlled authority,<sup>1</sup> and not controlled by interest groups (for example, warlords) or even individuals. The second condition is that the rule of law (*Rechtsstaatlichkeit*) should be maintained in keeping with a broadly accepted constitutionally and democratically adopted legal code. The third condition is control of affects and interdependency (*Affektkontrolle und Interdependenz*), i.e. the acceptance that political and/or social decisions should not be taken on the basis of any affects and that groups and individuals in society as well as groups and individual states depend on each other. The fourth condition is democratic participation (*Demokratische Partizipation*), which means that all citizens within a state shall have equal opportunities to democratically participate on national, regional and local levels in policy making. The fifth condition is social justice (*Soziale Gerechtigkeit*), i.e. a just distribution of resources at both international and national levels. Finally, the sixth condition is the culture of conflict behaviour (*Konfliktkultur*), which demands that actors on all levels should learn to deal with conflicts peacefully, especially through the balancing and equalisation of diverging interests calling for compromises and certain sacrifices by all parties, but without winners and losers (see 1998).

### **Democratisation, democracy and ethnic conflicts**

Some authors consider that terrorism and ethnic violence will continue in a decreasing number of countries. Although democracy will win, many countries will face great challenges during the process of democratisation (see Fukuyama, 1991: 659–63; Hobsbawm, 1990: 164). This poses the question of the extent to which democratic countries can help those who want to be like them. This raises new questions. Most of the questions boil down to whether democracy can be exported by force (see Barzun, 1987; Gillies and Schmitz, 1992).

Wiberg mentioned that before the war broke out in 1991, the EC offered several billion ECU as a sort of reward if the confronting parties in socialist Yugoslavia would find a political

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<sup>1</sup> In 1995 it was stressed that for fruitful consociation and stable democracy, it is important to have cooperation between elites of different groups (Lijphart) and the possibility that individuals and organizations belonging to different ethnic groups will cooperate and affiliate themselves beyond the borders of their respective ethnic or federal units (Lipset). The development of the situation in the former Yugoslavia and processes in some other countries showed that "political elites monopolize the mediating role between the groups, and reduce the possibilities of direct cooperation between citizens and organizations from the areas they have the control over. It is said that elites support heterogeneity of the society as a whole, i.e. between the ethnic groups, but act very energetically in order to impose homogeneity within the groups they control (Elazar)" (Stanovic, 1996: 68).

solution to their conflicts (1994: 234). Cohen notes that European Ministerial Council and the European Commission Chairmen suggested to Yugoslav leaders in Belgrade in late May 1991 that the EC would be willing to intervene and obtain an intercession from the IMF and other international financial institutions with the purpose of ensuring further support for Yugoslav economic stabilisation (by supporting country's currency exchange, new investments, consolidating the foreign currency reserves, etc.). The EC would also have been ready to immediately begin talks on Yugoslavia's associate membership if the leaders could overcome the problems linked to the country's constitution and constitutional order.<sup>2</sup> In addition, if a political agreement were reached, the EC would provide between USD 4 and 5 billion in financial aid (1995: 219).

In 1992 and 1993 Yugoslavia was threatened by American presidents, who sent warnings to the Belgrade government that any expansion of the war into Kosovo would lead to intervention (see Caplan, 1998: 753). Preventing violent escalation of ethnic conflicts was successful in Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria. In other cases (particularly in Cyprus 1974, Croatia 1991-1995, Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992-1995, and in Yugoslavia, 1997-1999) the conflicts escalated; in some cases they were transformed into long lasting warfare.

The Second Yugoslavia's disintegration and the ethnic/political conflicts in the successor states have created one of the major challenges for the international community in the post-Cold War era. One could conclude that major international actors have appeared insufficiently capable of making permanent analyses of the ethnic conflicts. Better results could be used not only for preventing conflict escalation, but also for deescalating them by peaceful means. One could assume that some NGOs and other kinds of organizations that characterize democratic societies could offer the requisite competence, knowledge, skills and enthusiasm, all of which would be useful in a conflict, but do not have the means to realize their programs, ideas, and activities. Uninvolved third parties, such as governments, international organizations (NATO, UN, Contact Group, OSCE, etc.) or their members, have at least to some degree such means and sources. They, however, are handicapped by the incapability of eliminating the conflict without involving themselves in it to impose a solution.

One can also define a few characteristics of a democratic state's engagement during the process of disintegration often called 'the Yugoslav crisis'. First, the states are vulnerable to foreign and/or local propaganda and political pressures linked to conflict. This mediator's vulnerability is a temptation for the parties in the conflict to perceive the situation as an opportunity for waging a propaganda war over the mediator issue. The suitability of the mediator, in terms of efficiency and acceptance, is additionally reduced by the victory of one party in that war. A mediator that is vulnerable in the above sense is more likely to allow their initiatives to be conditioned by propaganda and political pressures rather than by the requirements of successful mediation.

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<sup>2</sup> All three Yugoslavias have had a very rich history of national constitutional disagreements since 1918, when the country was created. From the very start, Serbs wanted a state modelled after the French one, while the Croats and Slovenes preferred the Swiss model. These conflicts brought the country to the brink of collapse, if not across it few times. However, authors of the 1990 Constitution of the future independent Croatia abandoned their model when deciding on how to organise their republic, and defined Croatia as a unitary national state of the Croatian people and other nations and nationalities which are its citizens: Serbs, Moslems, Slovenes, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews et al. (Constitution of the Republic of Croatia Chapter 1, Items 12, 3). Certain authors were of the opinion that this accounts for the fatal mistakes the consequences of which became apparent already in 1991. On the other hand, Serbs in the Third Yugoslavia as well most of other constituent nations of the successor states have attempted to normatively (constitutionally) and factually centralize their newly created states as much as it has been possible, and to decentralize other states in which they have minority position to a similar degree.

An East Asian group of countries would in this aspect have fared better than the EC, because it would have the additional advantage of not being composed (for the most part) of either Moslems, Catholics, or Orthodox Christians. It is considered that countries less vulnerable to foreign or local propaganda and political pressures linked to conflict are more appropriate for the role of mediator. While Serbs and Russians are linked by Orthodoxy and Slav ethnic origins, the Albanians' religious division creates, in fact, links with the Moslem, Catholic and Orthodox world. In the case of Kosovo, a prediction that the dominant links of local Albanians with the Moslem religion would be the most important was incorrect (more details Isakovic, 1999: 19).

The propaganda war seems to have been started even before the escalation of the Kosovo conflict.<sup>3</sup> One of its characteristics appeared to be that the sides tried to distinguish between the 'bad' and 'good' members of the opposite side: the Albanian side issued statements to the effect that their struggle was not aimed against all members of Serbian nation, but against Milosevic's regime, while the Serbian side distinguished between those Albanians who cooperated with the state and the terrorists who from time to time attacked those who cooperated. Political leaders of Albanian political parties in Kosovo were somewhere in between. One author concluded, 'the biased international media coverage has repeated itself; the Serb side (also independent sources such as human rights institutes, independent media and the NGO Serb Media Centre in Pristina) has been largely ignored by leading media such as CNN, the *New York Times* and even the BBC' ('Questions before bombing Serbia', 1998). The need for avoiding intensive and similar measures against civilians was suggested, particularly if the measures lasted continually for some two weeks (for more details see Simic, 1993). The Serbian side also ignored warnings that CNN had become the sixth informal permanent member of the UN Security Council.

In some situations (as in Croatia or Bosnia-Herzegovina) at least it was possible to achieve a temporary and fragile peace by force. However, it seems to be more efficient when ethnic conflicts are eliminated using even illusory arguments in the proper or narrow meaning of that term. '*Conflict-resolution is not about harming or killing people. It is about killing problems and harnessing the human and circumstantial attraction to violence. Violence is always part of the problem, never the solution*' (Øberg, 1994: 140). In the case of conflicts in Kosovo and some other places the most rational way seems to be, at least theoretically, that all not directly engaged actors play the role of conflict mediator within or as part of a complex enterprise or consortium. They would try to employ their democratic and other advantages and to avoid expressions of their weaknesses, temptations and handicaps (more details Isakovic, 1999: 28). However, the some politicians or parties in conflicts use more force as an argument, and some use more arguments.

It was concluded that 'international pressure will play a positive role only if it initiates the creation of authentic democratic potentials' (Lutovac, 1997: 14). One author considered 'one requirement for a stable peace...would seem to be the emergence of a new and truly democratic leadership in FRY—one which is respectful of the rights of all its constituent peoples'. It was assumed that in that case Albanians would be less categorically opposed to solutions through the restoration of autonomy and concluded that there is no 'evidence that the Serbian public is

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<sup>3</sup> In 1995 Radojkovic noticed that the Kosovo situation, in comparison with the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was "different, because of repression, for the press there exists mainly in the framework of the secession movement." The state Radio-Television of Serbia (RTS) center in Kosovo "treated also Serbs as minority and by 1989 it turned entirely to Albanian as language of information—the remaining minorities in Kosovo were completely neglected. After closing RTV Pristina in its old form in 1990, the balance was lost again, this time to the detriment of Albanians. However, because of their boycott this center of RTS is not able to realise provided quotas in Albanian language; new subsidies and staff are required." It was concluded, "it seems that it is convenient for Albanian political parties to maintain such situation as a permanent source of tensions, making use of it as a proof of violation of their human rights" and of the European standards (more details: 1996: 418).

particularly unhappy about the country's democratic deficit or opposed to Milosevic's Kosovo policy—not yet, at least' (Caplan, 1998: 756).

Generally, democratisation has a potential to help mitigate ethnic conflict. However, in the case of FRY and most of the other successor states such a potential was wasted. The transition towards democracy produced a fertile ground for ethnic hatred, animosity and the political demands of power-thirsty political forces and leaders. The democratic turnabout allowed many ethnic tensions, including the difficult Kosovo conflict, to surface. But because this same democracy was young and fragile it was not able to manage them properly and peacefully. It seems that this thesis has a wider validity in the Balkans, which are known as a focal point of ethnic conflict and which have been traditionally (at least, temporarily) 'eliminated' or 'resolved' through both morally and legally extremely unacceptable options, including forced expulsion, ethnic cleansing, bombardment, and more.

### **Ethnic conflicts and democratisation and democracy**

The republic/nation elites in Yugoslavia operated, before the quarrel between them began, 'pretty much like the European balance-of-power system of the nineteenth century'; coalitions were issue-related and shifting. When these rules collapsed, Yugoslavia drifted from 'mature anarchy' into a 'raw anarchy' (see Wiberg, 1994a: 231–2). The first multi-party elections came at the worst possible moment; ardent nationalists won everywhere and 'the runners-up included even more extreme nationalists, giving the winners little leeway for compromises.' It was stressed that, 'they engaged in various demonstrations of sovereignty, accelerating the conflict spiral: attacks on remaining pan-Yugoslav institutions increased Serbian fears and actions inspired by these fears' (Wiberg, 1995b: 100). Democracies do not wage wars, as in war circumstances they actually often become temporary (as much as wars could be perceived as transient phenomena), constitutional dictatorships having at least some characteristics common with permanent dictatorships.

Later development proved that democracy is an imperfect decision-making system because it includes—among other elements—mass manipulation, which is usually easier in young rather than old and mature democracies. In a post-communist society, manipulation can be directed toward numerous issues, including the very idea of democratic society.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, acceptance of democracy's imperfections is considered as a strong side of the system. In the Second Yugoslavia, ethnic mobilization became possible with democratisation. However, the mobilization was threatening and finally played a major part in destroying democracy itself.

Interethnic relations in the Balkan states are burdened by the bitter historical legacy and presence of strong ethnic stereotypes. They are present both in society in general and to some extent in what is usually called civil society (associations, trade unions and political parties<sup>5</sup>) (see Wiberg, 1995: 95). In addition, within current interethnic relations one can still discover marks of their communist and/or other authoritarian past.

A study of ethnic conflicts should take into consideration the significant difficulties and distinctions in the ethnic groups' structural position at the moment when the democratisation

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Uzunova and Vydrin said that in a 1991 opinion poll in Russia, "a mere 10 percents of respondents adequately understand what a democratic society is. Another 11 percent support the idea of democracy, but understand it in an egalitarian or a liberal sense. The absolute majority of respondents is formed by the 47 percent who have no idea of what a democracy is and the 23 percent who defined it in a totalitarian, authoritarian or anarchistic sense" (1995: 44-45).

<sup>5</sup> It was concluded, "the civil principle, established as a basic social value, insists upon the equality of conditions, rights and guarantees of all citizens, and is an adequate guard against ethno-nationalistic particularism of any kind" (Basic, 1996: 54).

process is at its very beginning and during its development. Within the context of current and future interethnic relations in observed countries, the crucial question seems to be how to eliminate or prevent the escalation of existing ethnic conflicts, in order to give democratic power a chance to assert itself.

The advantages of democratisation and the development of civil society may be used as a platform for conflict elimination in the Balkans depending on, among other conditions, the forms which (new) escalations of ethnic conflict may take. It seems that the more violent conflict escalation is, the harder it is to use the advantages, including eliminating the conflict in a non-violent way. For the purpose of examining this thesis, this paper will analyse the cases of terror and terrorism as means often used in conflict escalation to achieve the goals for which armed force would otherwise have to be employed.

As etymology shows, the chief weapon of both terror and terrorism is fear; 'this fear is created for a political goal, it is linked to maintaining or seizing power. Both terror and terrorism have dual targets, dual addressees: the victim of the violence and the threat recipient. Finally, both terror and terrorism are in discord with certain norms of political behaviour, which are different in case of terror and in case of terrorism, because, as a rule, terror is an action taken by those possessing legislative power, while individual terrorists are non-sovereign individuals, private individuals, differently subjected to a legal order' (Dimitrijevic, 1985: 111). Merkl by definition eliminates governmental violence as a form of terrorism so long as the state has a legitimate monopoly of violence. Even here there are differences between types, situation, activities, tactics, and the degree to which psychological, social, and other dimensions are important (1986).

When reviewing the intimidation methods and actions used by 20<sup>th</sup> century terror states in the Balkans and elsewhere, one gains a picture of orders that are considered suitable or even ideal for achieving goals of numerous terrorist organisations. The same fundamental phenomenon can be found in both cases: the mass production of fear justified by superior goals and principles utilized as a means for ruling over society.

There is a technical possibility for two or more terrorist organisations, which are fighting to achieve different goals, to use the same terrorist actions due to their limited communicative values. Certain communication is possible by choosing the place, time, means and some other circumstances and modalities of action as well as by the (un)selective choice of physical victims. Yet all this may not be sufficient to reflect the terrorists' ideological, political and other values and goals in greater detail. If these attempts would be exhausted just in violence, the messages the terrorists use to generate fear would be lost.

For this reason terrorists resort to additional propaganda and other messages to announce their goals and win publicity among the intimidated people, often via mass media. Through statements, announcements and other messages that they sometimes force the media to convey they try to enhance or at least partly modify the impact of their violent acts, before committing them when possible. These messages are used as resonators or amplifiers of intimidating messages, which is often obvious when terrorists are portrayed as 'omnipotent men-machines', 'extremely efficient', even 'ready to do anything', etc.

On the other hand, the intimidated people and others wish to gather as much information as possible, in order to make themselves feel secure or out of curiosity or sensationalism. Nowadays is difficult to maintain secrecy concerning the data on terrorist acts—including the fact that they were committed, particularly if the terrorists themselves want publicity and if the acts were committed in public. 'Informing on an act of terrorism benefits the terrorists, because it fulfils one of their needs. However, it must also be emphasized that failure to report on a terrorist act allows for a much more dangerous type of informing, by word of mouth, rumours, which are by nature more difficult to control and prone to irresponsible exaggerations' (Dimitrijevic, 1985:

228). As in the era of mass media few lies can remain hidden for long, these secrets may leak and incur greater damage than the fear which media reports on terrorism would cause.

Some authors maintain that reporting should be censored, as media coverage practically guarantees that terrorists achieve their goals of attracting attention. This stand is based on the presumption that terrorist acts would not be conducted if their perpetrators knew those acts would not win publicity and on the understanding that there would be no terrorism if it were not for contemporary communications (Schmid and de Graaf, 1982: 15), and corroborated by the fact that it is not always possible to affect main social causes and conditions conducive to terrorism, especially when it is assisted and supported from abroad. Finally, the authors think that by advocating the opposite stand, one would to an extent give terrorism and its unacceptable brutality legitimacy (see more details Netanyahu, 1986).

However, journalists—particularly in democratic systems—are usually not willing to accept outside censorship of their reports (see Rehak, 1993: 198-201; Pelletier, 1991/1992: 6-7; Chambers, 1990: 21-23). Some authors maintain terrorism appears when and as long as one group feels unfairly treated, notwithstanding media behaviour, the ability of the army and police to counter it, etc. (see Beeman, 1986: 29-36). In addition, it is considered that the application of contemporary technology in combating terrorism could jeopardise and violate certain civic and human freedoms and rights (such as the right to convey and receive information). Clutterback analyses ways in which the two imperatives may be fulfilled in the search for a compromise (see 1991: 2-10). One could conclude that some governments are, along with conflicts (particularly escalated ones), among the worst enemies of human rights. These governments could take their chance by provoking conflict escalation on purpose to hide its own violations of rights.

If the failure in publishing news on terrorist acts can be ruled out as too risky, the question remains: how to inform the public about them. As a rule, newsmen are willing to publish news about every specific terrorist act, attaching to it a dose of sensationalism. In any case, terrorism is a negative sensation and—in keeping with the mass media rules—should be treated as such. As it was noted by Radojkovic, ‘only a few rare phenomena can compare’ with the attraction of terrorism (1988: 10).

When terrorism is in question, mass media face the obstacles, which include primarily the restrictions imposed on them by the legal and political rules of the state or the ethics and customs of the community. It seems that from them stems the use of double standards in the journalists’ position on terrorism: positive terrorists are qualified by words with positive connotations (dissidents, freedom or independence fighters, resistance movements, etc.), while negative terrorists are awarded derogatory attributes (gunmen, criminals, mercenaries, terrorists, even communists and some similar terms).

A compromise solution to the problem might be found in the principle that the media should inform on terrorist and similar acts but not in a way that would turn them into the terrorists’ mouthpiece. This means that informing should be accompanied by explanations of the ultimate goals and background of the terrorist acts. The behaviour of Romanians in late 1989 (during the events following the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu when the secret policy launched a campaign of terrorism) showed that TV of Free Romania’s guided information and explanation of terrorism could have a psychological and social impact. This would work against the terrorists. Instead of fear, other feelings prevailed: revulsion, aversion, even defiance of the terrorists.

There is a broad area between the commitment to inform the public about terrorist acts and the avoidance of being the terrorists’ mouthpiece. This could contain a large space for bureaucratic arbitrariness in determining what will (or will not) be published, as well as journalists’ inclination for sensationalism and the terrorists’ efforts to gain publicity. Therefore, this stand does not fully resolve the problem of the media’s position toward terrorist acts, mostly because it is too general. ‘Theoretical thought is faced with the insoluble riddle of valuing contemporary forms of terrorism. Due to its proneness to the same factors imposing double



standards on the media, it, too, can fall prey to them. If departing from the position that there should be full understanding of terrorism, theoretical thought risks to clash with moral and humanistic values, because terrorist methods are directed against them. If, however, science departs from the position that every existing order is justified, it risks fully turning into apologetics and abandoning the critical distance and option of revolutionary change. This temptation is attractive as well, again, because of the difficult evaluation of means used in terrorism' (see more details Radojkovic, 1988: 47-50). The above problems prompted one author to try create a neutral definition of terrorism as the use of force or threat of force supposed to achieve a political goal by producing fear, frustration or uncertainty (Mozaffari, 1988: 182).

The abovementioned dilemma for media attitudes on violence has not been resolved because people are still not willing to condemn every sort of violence independent of who is committing it, in which circumstances it was committed, who its victims are, what the perpetrators' goals and motives are, etc. (more details Isakovic, forthcoming). Even in those societies that can be considered as democratic with long democratic traditions, escalated ethnic conflicts make all sides restrain democracy and/or reduce formal (for instance, freedom of expression) and substantive (the role of media as a means for introducing political debate) democratic principles and practices along with the certain human rights.

Both terror and terrorism, thanks to its violent form, thus degrade and degenerate the achievements of democratisation, the advantages of democracy and results of the development of civil society (which can be used as a platform for conflict elimination). It seems that the more violent conflict escalation is, the harder it is to use the achievements and advantages, including eliminating the conflict in a non-violent way.

It was noticed that during the Kosovo crisis statesmen and diplomats hardened the attitudes of the actors in a conflict and helped to solidify their locked positions by attacking those actors. Those who wanted to prevent violence would have addressed the problem and asked how they could contribute to solving it. In addition to diplomatic skills and other knowledge needed for the abovementioned purposes, they would need facts, analyses and some basic knowledge about conflicts as well as a reasonable amount of understanding of history and psychology ('Kosovo - Why it is serious...', 1998). In the case of the Kosovo conflict, the question of whether mediators fulfilled the conditions for their role remained to be ascertained.

It seems that the problems with democracy in Serbia and Montenegro, and later the FRY, were generated by various factors. These included: the relative lack of democratic traditions during the communist era and in previous times; the violent ethnic conflicts escalations in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina with simultaneous EU and UN sanctions; and the recent conflict escalation in Kosovo, which brought EU and UN sanctions again. In keeping with these traditions, after the Albanians were 'cleansed' from Kosovo and after the NATO intervention, the KLA was 'not committed to a democratic future for Kosovo'. The KLA's vision is not a multiethnic Kosovo, but one 'from which Serbs have been ethnically cleansed' (Layne, 1999).

In general, successful democratisation needs national unity as a basic precondition, which can hardly be fulfilled during an existing ethnic conflict, particularly in multiethnic societies. Even in democratic societies with long democratic traditions, escalated ethnic conflicts can cause the reduction of democracy and/or democratic principles and human rights, and limit the functioning power of democratic institutions and processes. Balkan states are no exceptions. On the contrary, restrictions and suspensions seem to be more severe and more durable there. As a rule, ethnic conflicts, especially escalated ones, have negative impacts on democracy, and at least partly disable the development of the democratisation process. The more conflicts, the harder it is to achieve democracy and even more so to experience it (cf. de Nevers, 1993: 31-48).

A situation of fear—which within conditions of ethnic conflicts stimulates ethno-national mobilization and division—cannot be assessed as favourable for the development of democracy. The kind of democracy that may appear within such conditions could be similar to that existing in

some of the old Greek city-states: exclusively reserved for the ruling class of citizens and not accessible for others, i.e. slaves. In the Balkans there are no slaves any more but there are national divisions. Within these circumstances, threats, which generate fears and the 'rally-round-the-flag' effect, could be qualified as counterproductive from the point of view of actors who use them as a means but whose purpose might nevertheless be the democratisation of threatened states.

The lack of socio-political cohesion and a higher GNP in Serbia, and particularly in Kosovo, have probably contributed to the nervous way in which the state, the KLA and the other actors acted in the (periodical) use of terrorism even when a goal could be reached by non-violent political means. In Kosovo and elsewhere, that 'what the predominant group sees as "law and order" may be seen as intentional discrimination by others; and what the former sees as peaceful assimilation may look like planned ethnocide in the eyes of others' (Wiberg, 1995: 49). However, the more the sides use terror(ism) the more they will be lacking in socio-political cohesion, which will bring additional readiness to use terror(ism), and on and on in a recurring cycle. What can help the Serbs as well as the Albanians in Serbia is a stable and socio-politically united society and state. Thus, external threats seem to be counterproductive in so far as they aim to eliminate the conflict and protect minorities (Albanians, who are minority in Serbia, or Serbs, who are minority in Kosovo). The more outsiders threaten to use force, the more they reinforce the cycle of violence and make future democracy a distant phenomenon. In the same way, chauvinists also get what they need, as the threats became valid reasons, i.e. excuses for achieving their goals, the (to summarize briefly) isolation of their ethnic group and whole society from the rest of the world.

According to Joenniemi, there is a question whether it is acceptable for the international community to tolerate jeopardising principles of democracy and human rights in the name of non-violence if all principles are relative. 'With some security spaces being based on systematic repression and murdering, the luxury of operating with absolute principles is no longer there...With human rights and democracy played against non-violence, the compromise could also be about non-violence'. Thus, 'the emergence of an international society built on common values such as human rights and democracy presents the peace movements with some formidable challenges' (1999: 57). It seems one of the challenges appears as soon as one tries to analyse a case like the NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia, which punished the Serbian violation of the human and other rights of Albanians, Bosnians and/or Muslims (in Srebrenica and some other places during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina), including at the first place those which belong to their 'third generation': the right to peace, the right to development and the right to a healthy environment (see 'NATO's War...', 1999).

The proper way to defend democracy is development, i.e. widening the rights which compose it. In general, the more democratic mechanisms for eliminating ethnic conflicts are available the less likely it is that they will become violent conflicts that endanger democracy; the less conflicts become violent the more chances there are that they can be removed in a democratic way. However, sooner or later democratic systems, especially if endangered, may start to defend themselves by means which may be passed in a democratic procedure but in their essence are undemocratic, as they cause harm to some of the previously mentioned substantive aspects of the democratisation process.

One can conclude that economic potentials in the region seem to be satisfactory for relatively small armies, and the smaller they are, the more they an efficient civilian control is viable. In that case, there is little political and economic space for military autonomy and self-promotion. In addition, security should be maintained not only by soldiers and armaments, but also by the experts and procedures associated with diplomacy and conflict resolution (see Wiberg, 1998: 178). Otherwise, states as well as armies in the region could begin to follow the unfortunate destiny of the Second Yugoslavia and its YPA.

## Conclusions

In the examination of the relationship between democratisation, democracy and ethnic conflict one can verify the thesis that this relationship is two-sided; democracy has the potential to help mitigate and eliminate ethnic tensions, but the transition toward democracy creates a fertile climate for hatred, biases and the resulting conflicts. There is an open question concerning what concerned countries and the international community can do in order to promote democracy without exacerbating ethnic conflict.

Trying to answer this question, one should have in mind that democratisation can dampen or even eliminate ethnic conflicts, or prevent their escalation under certain conditions. First, it is necessary that the forces pushing for genuine democratisation recognize and acknowledge ethnic diversity within the state along with the fact that nobody is perfect. Second, they also have to find a method to accommodate the interests of different groups that is commonly accepted as fair. On the one hand, the democratisation process provides a propitious setting for allaying ethnic problems and preventing their transformation to conflicts or their escalation. On the other hand, successful democratisation needs national unity as the basic precondition. Another precondition both for democratisation and for preventing or dampening ethnic conflicts is at least some economic prosperity, which can also be harder to reach or maintain in conflict situations.

Majority nations in the Balkan countries previously mentioned will not be secure unless the human rights of their minorities are protected to a necessary and feasible degree. In these conditions, minorities should be deprived only of the democratic right to self-determination or to secession<sup>6</sup> (as that right is commonly interpreted on the Balkans<sup>7</sup>). As one author has stressed, ‘as soon as minorities become majorities, new minorities appear. If the present number of nation-states is doubled, the number of minority problems may also be (roughly) doubled’ (Eriksen, 1992: 221).

As the Balkan region has a long and extensive history of minority problems, one author stressed the question: ‘How can political parties, attempting to bridge ethnic cleavages, find a common denominator of national security that will satisfy the Bulgarian majority and Turkish minority in Bulgaria; Romanians and the Hungarians minority in Transylvania; Serbs, Croats, Muslims, and Albanians in the former Yugoslavia?’ (Remington, 1994: 71). Majorities should be deprived only of the ‘right’ to imperil and violate democratic and human rights of minorities, as these are the guaranties and safeguards of minorities’ distinct identities and dignity. In this way, Balkan states could protect their territorial integrity and gradually lose its reputation of being the European ‘powder keg’. For this reason, the countries observed need developed economies, stable democracies and systems of human rights protected by law along with traditional and other habits (more details Isakovic, 1994: 35).

The less loyal a minority to the state in which it has been living, the more the state will presumably use repression; looking from the other side, the more repression is used by the state, the less likely it becomes that a minority will become loyal and perceive the state power (authority) as legitimate, rather than as ‘plain domination’ (see Duverger, 1972: 18).

Although democracy is not a perfect system, as long as it exists it creates potentials and possibilities for the peaceful elimination of ethnic problems and conflicts. Before any proposal for conflict management is made, one should understand and learn how to cope with conflicts through peaceful political means. However, if the existing system cannot be qualified as

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<sup>6</sup> Glenny suggested that maybe a solution could be within the scope of the principle “all rights to minorities, excluding the right to secession” (see 1995: 57).

<sup>7</sup> One author concluded the “so-called ethnic principle of self-determination has never been seriously considered by the international community to be the sole, or even primary, factor in assessing claims to statehood. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of ‘one people, one state’ echoes in the speeches of every dissatisfied minority” (Hannum, 1990: 7).

democratic, the complex dilemma appears over what could and should come first: developing democracy or preventing ethnic conflicts.

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