

**SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS UNIVERSITY IN SKOPJE
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY**

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY: CONTRIBUTION OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**Proceedings of the International Conference
on the occasion of the centennial anniversary
of the Faculty of Philosophy
2-5 September Struga 2020**

Skopje 2021



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BALKANIZATION – INVENTION AND MISUSING

The main object of this presentation is to show how the term Balkanization appeared and its misusing during the past decades in common usage of the word. Mowrer wrote that the meaning of the word “Balkanization” is a creation for the region hopelessly mixed races of a medley of small states with more or less backward populations, economically and financially weak, covetous, afraid, a continual prey to the machination of the Great powers and to the violent prompting of their own passions.

Liridona Velju asserts that Balkanization has not clear definition. According to her opinion this term has been most often used to describe a wide range of complex and problematic situations, people and events (Velju, 2020: 1). Sanja Lazarević Radak writing about the using of the term Balkanization notes that this term has been interpreted as a complex phenomenon intertwined in the character structure of the Balkans, a heritage of the nations that had the misfortune to be ruled by foreign Empires. (Radak, 2014: 273). **According to the definition of Balkanization**, in Encyclopedia Britannica, this term defines or presents division of a multinational state into smaller ethnically homogenous entities. The term also is used to refer to ethnic conflict within multiethnic states. It was coined at the end of World War I to describe the ethnic and political fragmentation that followed the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in the Balkans. The term *Balkanization* is today invoked to explain the disintegration of some multiethnic states and their devolution into dictatorship, ethnic cleansing, and civil war (www. Encyclopedia Britannica). However there is some omission in the definition of the term Balkanization. I assert this because of the fact that the term Balkanization has been widely used by the authors to depict not only political events, but also it refers to the economical and social conditions and situations in different countries around the world. An American journalist Paul Scott Mowrer gave us a similar but different definition of the term Balkanization. According to him, the term

Balkanization means “ the creation, in a region of hopelessly mixed races, of a medley of small states with more or less backward populations, economically and financially weak, covetous, intriguing, afraid, a continual prey to the machinations of the Great powers, and to the violent promptings of their own passions”. (Mowrer, 1920: 25) So, it is obvious that the term Balkanization has not referred only to the political and territorial fragmentation of the states. As Maria Todorova noted the term Balkanization entered the lexicon of journalists and politicians at the end of World War I when the disintegration of the Habsburg and Romanov Empires into a proliferation of small states reminded them of the secession of the Balkan countries from the Ottoman polity that had begun much earlier. (Todorova, 2009: 34)

It is obvious that this term was coined by the western intellectuals, journalist and diplomats. Arnold J. Toynbee of the University of London gave a public lecture on "Balkanization: Its Cause and Its Cure." He defined "balkanization," in the sense in which it was used by the Germans during the World War, as the breaking of a large empire containing many different nationalities their characteristic languages and institutions into its component cultural parts, each of which might or might not be competent maintain its political and economic independence against external aggressions. As typical instances he cited the breaking up of Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century into the present Balkan States and of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in South America into the nineteen states which at present occupy continent (Cram, 1935: 362).

The using of the term Balkanization after the First World War had a stereotypical notion and pertained to the negative meanings of developments in political, economical or social field. Here I will give few examples. Austin Harrison writing about the European decline and the situation in postwar Europe noted that the Balkanization of Europe implies the impoverishment of Europe which necessarily means the antagonism of Europe and enslavement to the military idea (Harrison, 1920: 82) According to Brailsford it would be difficult to overstate the evils with which this process of Balkanization threatens the whole life of Central and Eastern Europe, cultural, economic and political –“ This phenomenon of Balkanization seems at first sight to mean that nationality has asserted itself as a positive and shaping force. On a closer view one inclines to regard it rather as a sign of dissolution. The war has shaken the fabric of civilization on the Continent” (Brailsford, 1920:59-60). Harold Bloom introduced “balkanization” to mourn everything he detested in

his discipline: the proliferation of the ideologies of gender and various sexual persuasions, multiculturalism unlimited, the clones of Gallic-Germanic theory (Todorova, 2009: 36) He accuses, for example, ‘members of the school of resentment (Marxists, Feminists, Deconstructionists, etc.)’ of a ‘Balkanization of English studies’ A senior British official talks about the Balkanization of his country’s civil service: ‘The more you balkanize the service and create more agencies, the greater the risk may be that you will import people who may not behave as they might have behaved, with the same degree of propriety and fairness to those whom they serve (Goldsworthy, 1998:5). Using the words of Toynbee about the term Balkanization, Cram extended its usage to the ancient time in order to elucidate the existence of innumerable Greek city states and dissolution of the Alexander the Great and Roman Empires as well (Cram, 1935, 363-364). There are other examples for using the term Balkanization in order to denote negative occurrence in Europe and USA as well, but I think that abovementioned examples are more than sufficient to present the using or let to be more precise misusing of the word Balkanization.

The invention and applying of the term balkanization in negative manner has challenged a prominent Greek diplomat Ioannes Gennadius to react on the usage of this word with pejorative and negative of this word by the western intellectuals, journalists, politicians and diplomats. He asked why the words Balkan, Balkanize and Balkanization signify a state of constant unrest, lawlessness and upheavals. Gennadius considered that the applying of these terms is completely inaccurate (Gennadius, 1922:137). In order to express his resentments with the western approach to the region and the usage of the term Balkanization he wrote that the rest of Europe, during the past period, has been more thoroughly balkanized than its southeastern part (Gennadius, 1922:137). His opinion has not been far from the truth having into account the events that occurred in western part of the continent in the second half of the 19th century.

The political changes in Europe after the Second World War contributed to temporarily failing to remember the use of term Balkanization for the southeastern part of the continent. Velju is completely accurate when she asserts that after the creation of the Yugoslav federation in 1945 “the world had the chance to see a divergent and antagonistic trend to that of disunity in the Balkan Peninsula. Yugoslavia was an antithesis to Balkanization” (Velju, 2020: 4). However the using of the term to denote something negative did not disappear from vocabulary of the politicians, intellectuals, diplomats and

journalists. A second round in the use of “balkanization” emerged with the beginning of the decolonization process after World War II (Todorova, 2009: 35).

Regarding to the applying of the term balkanization in order to be explained territorial fragmentation and instability, as a result of the politics and interests of the foreign powers, the African case is very interesting for analysis. Postcolonial African leaders agreed that balkanization associates for the territorial fragmentation of the continent divided into many weak states. (Neuberger, 523). They has used the term balkanization to mark the territorial fragmentation of Africa, although, as Neuberger pointed out, that the question is what degree of fragmentation is considered as normal and when it does begin to be associated with balkanization (Neuberger, 523) Writing about the creation of East African federation Julius Nyerere said that he balkanization of Africa is a source of weakness the continent. In his article, published in 1964, he espoused vigorously for removing of the entire process of the balkanization of East Africa (Gibson, 2016, 34). Nkrumah, in his speeches and books, warned that Africa not to remain balkanized (Neuberger, 524). Nyerere and Nkrumah were not singular politicians who used the term Balkanization in order depict the situation in Africa. African leaders like Leopold Sedar Senghor, Ahmed Sekou Toure, and others had used the same term. Even today we can find studies where the African authors deals with the term balkanization as a remnants from the colonial past of the continent. Thus, Bofo - Arthur writing about the economical issues stressed that the internationalization of capital was the linchpin of globalization during those periods, which resulted not only in the domination but also balkanization of Africa by the imperial powers of Europe. European interests were the driving force. (Bofo-Arthur, 2000). However such using of the term Balkanization in order to explain the fragmentation of Africa as a result of the policy of the former colonial power has met with criticism by some western authors. Skurnik considered that the term 'balkanization', as applied to colonial policy in suggests a European 'divide and rule' policy, intended to fragment African unity. An examination of the policy of France towards fragmentation of French West Africa indicates that the term is inaccurate to describe French policy (Skurnik, 1967:332)

The applying of the term Balkanization with negative connotation can be finding in Indian political vocabulary. The former Indian president Rajendra Prasad referring to the political instability in the newborn Indian independent state and the question of the possibility of cession of some regions from India wrote that Jawaharlal Nehru prevented further balkanization of the country.

(Prasad, 1987: 157). Nehru vehemently rejected the theory of Indian communist for multinational state which would lead to the balkanization of India (Prasad, 1987: 145). Even today Indians are very sensitive about the integrity of their country and the involvement of the foreigners in their internal affairs. Malhotra and Neelakandan criticizing some stances of western authors and politicians regarding the internal affairs in India, blamed the London Institute of South Asia for openly calls for the Balkanization of India (Malhotra and Neelakandan, 2016:298)

The violent dissolution of the former Yugoslav federation followed with bloody wars and ethnic cleansing has returned the term Balkanization to the southeastern part of Europe. Many Western intellectuals, scholars, diplomats and politicians has started to be concerned of the possibility of balkanizing of Europe instead of Europeanizing the Balkans (Simić, 2013:113).

Goldsworthy considers that imagination was manifested in the fear, frequently expressed in the Western media in the early 1990s, that if the war in the Balkans were to continue, a new Balkanization could undo the foundations of Europe itself. The ghosts of the First World War, reawakened by artillery fire in Sarajevo, made the Balkans the focus of attention (Goldsworthy, 1998:13). Recent literature has emphasized the negative connotations carried by the word 'Balkans'. These are exemplified by the term 'Balkanization' which has come to mean fragmentation into mutually hostile entities. Balkanization is the exact opposite of integration and, as such, it can be seen to represent Europe's past. Indeed, according to Ole Waever, it is not an external threat that today is Europe's defining 'other', but this conflicted past. (Davies, 2003:2). I must to add that the spiteful Balkan politicians and nationalisms are not only to blame for the possible Balkanization of Europe. Some behaviors of the member of the European Community, latter EU, contributed to the spreading of the fears for the Balkanization of Europe. The use of international recognition as an instrument for outside intervention meant the adoption of the political line of a forceful Germany. The Yugoslav crisis presented an occasion for a reunited, self-confident Germany to demonstrate its political muscle and, in effect, to safeguard vested Germano - centric economic and political interests in northern (ex) Yugoslavia - in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Schierup, 1994: 116). Greece continued to appear more 'European' than other Balkan countries. In a reflection of the complexity of the constructions of identity, the philhellenism which survived the Colonels' regime of 1967-74 seems to have been more seriously affected by Greek mem-

bership of the European Union. Once formally within the walls of the new 'Europe', Greece began increasingly to be seen as the other in the EU's nest. Goldsworthy, because of the attitude of Greece during the Yugoslav wars and its policy towards Macedonian independence, wrote symbolic 'Balkanization' of the Hellenes. (Goldsworthy, 1998:204)

Radak is a completely right when she claims, that during 1990's the term Balkanization entered into wide use as a kind of infection threatening to affect the whole world. (Radak, 2014: 279). We have come upon such examples of using the term Balkanization. Demands of the Scots and Catalans for independence from Great Britain and Spain and their insistence on widening of cultural and linguistically rights was a reason for Hobsbawm to use the term Balkanization to depict the policy of the European Union in regard the regions within the framework of the Union. According to his opinion the policy of the European Union of favoring regions against nation-states is a policy favoring separatism. Hobsbawm thought that Balkanization "will not solve any problems of linguistic and cultural identity" (Hobsbawm, 1996: 1078). The term Balkanization, in negative connotation, again is used for territorial fragmentation of some European states, but in this case is connected with cultural and linguistical questions as well. It is interesting to note that the term Balkanization of Britain appeared in *The Guardian*. According to Radak, the Balkanization of Britain became a popular phrase. She wrote "England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland had their Yugoslav counterparts. Scotland was equaled with Croatia, Wales with Slovenia, Northern Ireland with Bosnia, while England recognized herself in Serbia in the attempts to keep larger political and territorial units" (Radak, 2014: 280).

USA has not been absent from the applying the term Balkanization in order to denote some negative trends in American society. Mestrovic thinks that the American society still has a long way to go before it reaches the pitch of Balkanization in the former Yugoslavia, yet the existing divisiveness is already tinged with considerable hostility. (Mestrovic, 1994: 109) He points out that President Clinton and many others have hinted that the USA itself is succumbing to a sort of cultural Balkanization an "Eastern" phenomenon as evidenced by race riots and many other sorts of divisiveness. For example, according to him, Hispanic and African Americans forcefully criticize the logic of the predominantly white and Protestant culture that is imposed on them in the name of melting-pot America. Women and gays have taken on the status of fictional ethnic groups in the USA. There is open discussion of

secession in Hawaii, Northern from Southern California, the two halves of Texas (Hispanic versus Caucasian), even the cities of New Orleans and New York as "states. (Mestrovic, 1994:62) William Frey introduced the term demographic balkanization as a "spatial segmentation of population by race-ethnicity, class, and age across broad regions, states, and metropolitan areas ... driven by both immigration and long distance internal migration patterns" (Frey,1996:76) . Few years later Frey writing about some trends on the immigration issue in USA notes: "Current immigration along with ongoing domestic migration forces are creating a demographic balkanization that portends increasing divisions across broad regions of the country. If the new trends continue, today's multi-ethnic immigrant gateway regions may very well turn into individual melting pots in which different Hispanic, Asian, African American, Native American, and Anglo groups coexist and intermarry while still retaining some elements of their own national heritage. Although this ideal image of "one America" may be approximated in these regions, it will be less achievable nationally. In the rest of the country, which will look demographically quite distinct, different political agendas will come to the fore, and there will be a lower tolerance for the issues and concerns of ethnically more diverse populations in other regions "(Frey, 1999:79). Ellis and Wright, commenting about the term Balkanization, applied by Frey on the immigrant issue in USA, express completely different view and clarification. According to their opinion Balkanization is at best a poor analogy and "at worst, it is racist. Immigration- driven balkanization implies that newcomers to the country take responsibility for the break-up of U.S. society. We disagree. A threat to U.S. society stems not from immigrants, but from a new nativism, some of which derives directly from seductive phrases like balkanization. Words like balkanization help sustain an anti-immigrant, pro- Anglo conformist agenda that many immigrants rightly perceive as hostile to their language and culture" (Ellis and Wright, 1998: 694). So, they did not accept the applying the term balkanization to portray some developments within American society concerning the immigrant issue. Ellis and Wright, doubtlessly, consider the term balkanization as negative stereotype inapplicable for their country. Siegel, applies the term balkanization in negative connotation. According to his opinion this term refers to the extent to which Americans identify themselves as members of separate racial or ethnic groups that view one another with hostility (Siegel, 2006: 787).

My researches have brought me to the conclusion that the term Balkanization has a negative connotation in its using and applying. However, I found

an example of using this term with a positive meaning. Although Hanč the occurrences that took place in Central and Eastern Europe in 1918 considered opposite of Balkanization as the term signifies lack of order, he accepted this term if it symbolize struggle for freedom by the oppressed peoples (Hanč, 1944:22-23). It is very remarkable his definition for the word balkanization – “What the term Balkanization really means id the lack of international organization which would guarantee freedom to both big and small powers and which would make each the master of its own destiny” (Hanč, 1944: 23).

Despite the fact that the word Balkanization has been invented by the Western intellectuals and its meaning has been misused in order to mark negative approaches on political, economical, cultural and social conditions and events around the world, I must to emphasize that during last decade there are critics from the scholars about the using of the term Balkanization. Cufurovic considers that entering the political discourse at the end of the First World War, the notion of ‘Balkanization’ became “synonymous with dehumanization, de-aestheticisation and the destruction of civilization” (Cufurovic, 2017: 43) Simić thinks that as was the case in late 19th century, the Balkans and balkanization at the beginning of 21st century still represent, for a large segment of the Western community, a part of the constitutive myth of the Occident as a separate civilization, different from the Orient (East) which begins “on the border of Europe with the Balkans (Simić, 2013:129). According to Velju the word ‘balkanization’ will always convey something pejorative about the Balkan people. However, wrote Velju, “the question of whether or not the usage of ‘balkanization’ should be considered as a politically (in)correct act does not exclude and moreover should include continuing endeavors of debunking the discourse” (Velju, 2020: 9). Bideleux and Jeffries sadly accept that the concept of ‘Balkanization’ does convey some significant aspects of the predicaments in which the peoples and polities on this peninsula have had the misfortune to find themselves since the nineteenth century (Bideleux and Jeffries, 2007: 2). Hupchik does not spare from critics the attitudes of the western powers in regard the situation in the Balkans –“The nationalist ambitions of all Balkan peoples would collide violently in the decades following the Berlin Congress, the Western European-imposed terms of which became the fundamental motivation for the peninsula’s subsequent divisive events. (The same Western Europeans came to label those events disparagingly as “Balkanization”. Nor would Europe in general be spared the consequences of the radicalized Balkan nationalisms generated by the Berlin settlement” (Hupchik,2002: 267).

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