

## The Impact of Economic Globalisation on the Rise of Nationalism: The Case of Western Balkan Countries

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### Abstract

*The Western Balkans went through a transition process when globalisation was at its maximum strength and expansion. This paper examines the Western Balkan economies during said transition period and the impact of the 2008 economic crisis on their social fabric. The aim is to investigate the repercussions of economic globalisation on nationalism. Using a comparative approach, this work firstly analyses the economic transition of Western Balkans, focusing on social consequences of economic globalisation. The results found in this first step are then compared with the electoral results of nationalist parties in the region. Furthermore, their attitude towards globalisation is examined. The findings show that the economic transition had strong consequences on unemployment, poverty, and inequality rates in the region; this fallout had a subsidiary role in the growth of nationalist parties. Finally, with the only exception of the Serbian case, nationalist forces appear to be in favour of globalisation.*

### Keywords

Comparative method; Economic crisis; Economic globalisation; Nationalism; Western Balkans

## Introduction

Nowadays, the impact of globalisation on nationalism is considered one of the core issues both inside and outside the academic context. The international focus mainly hinges on the rise of a nationalist far-right both in Western and Eastern Europe, where radical parties and movements are gaining increasing support. As stated by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, 'one of the most dangerous ideas for democracy can be summed up in the maxim that every state should strive to become a nation-state and every nation should become a state' (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 29, 30).

With regard to the Western Balkans region, ethnic polarisation of society along with nationalist rhetoric remain the key features of the political scene in the region, despite the fact that each country implemented democratic reforms since the beginning of the political and economic transition. Considering that the Western Balkan countries are moving toward integration into the European Union (EU), the stability of this region has become an important issue. Furthermore, on account of the recent history and the way nationalism was exploited in order to boost ethnic hatred in the 1990s wars, an in-depth analysis of the current nationalist parties has become relevant.

This work aims to contribute to that debate through an analysis of the consequences of economic globalisation on nationalism and nationalist parties in the Western Balkans region. In doing so, the paper firstly investigates how the social fabric of these countries was affected by the economic transition, which led to the opening and integration of their markets into the global economy. Then, in the second part of the analysis and findings, it analyses the main features of the nationalist political scene in the Western Balkans. Finally, it concludes with a comparison of the results found in the first part of the research with the electoral outcomes of these parties. Indeed, a comprehensive analysis of nationalism and globalisation requires a wider investigation that goes beyond the scope of this work. The paper can thus be considered as the first piece of a broader puzzle aiming to stimulate the debate about the issue.

## Literature review

The rise of a new wave of nationalism in the era of globalisation, as one of the crucial phenomena of today's world, has been at the core of many academic works. At first, this process puzzled many authors who predicted the demise of nationalism after the Cold War: indeed, the main features of globalisation, such as technological progress, expansion of democratisation, spread of liberal values, and economic development were expected to promote a supranational integration beyond any national attachment. According to Francis Fukuyama, liberal democracy furthered by technological and scientific progress would represent the ending point of humankind's political development, fostering the 'end of history' through a global recognition of Western values

(Fukuyama, 1992); moreover, Eric Hobsbawm depicted a fading future of nation-states facing the globalisation process in 'the era of triumphant bourgeois liberalism' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 38). When the expectations related to a globalised era beyond the nation-state were belied, authors such as Stuart Hall described the paradox of rising nationalism as the 'most unexpected turn of events' (Hall, 1992: 314). Others, including Anthony Smith, explained this disorientation through the analysis of the different paths taken by Western and Eastern Europe after the Cold War: in the first case, the nationalist discourse appeared to have been drained, whereas in the latter, the fall of the Soviet Union seemed to have reawakened it (Smith, 1995: 116).

Thus, the academic focus shifted toward the relation between nationalism and globalisation: within this debate, many authors claim that there is a causal mechanism linking these two phenomena. Hence, the paradox of the spreading nationalism was interpreted as a defensive answer against the globalisation process, or, in the words of Anthony Giddens, 'local nationalisms spring up as a response to globalizing tendencies, as the hold of older nation-states weakens' (Giddens, 2003: 13). This interpretation was shared by others, such as Peter Shearman in *Nationalism, the State and the Collapse of Communism* and Alberto Mellucci in *Nomads of the Present*. Furthermore, one of the main features of globalisation that has been pointed out is 'the homogenizing, integrative and Westernizing tendencies of globalization that appear most threatening to national identities and cultures, and provoke nationalistic reassertion' (Sabanadze, 2010: 31). In addition, the unfair distribution of resources caused by globalisation widens the gap in the living conditions both at national and international level and provides the traditional identity with a new meaning. Furthermore, the persistence of nationalism in the globalised era was explained by Smith in the light of its 'flexibility that has allowed nationalism continually to re-emerge and spread, at the cost of its ideological rivals' (Smith, 1979: 4), while others identified the primary cause of the rise of nationalism in the erosion of the state sovereignty, along with the increasing social or economic insecurity.

For what concerns the Western Balkan countries, much has been written regarding nationalism, especially in relation to the 1990s wars. As far as the primordialist view is concerned, Robert Kaplan stated in his well-known work *Balkan Ghost: A Journey Through History* that ancient ethnic hatreds were crystallised in the modern society through an ethnic attachment as a given fact (Kaplan, 1993). On the contrary, instrumentalist authors highlighted the political will as a driving factor of nationalism: in the case of the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian War, Norman Cigar explained the genocide that happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a political plan aiming to create a Greater Serbia and not as an outcome of nationalism (Cigar, 1995). Moving forward to the present time, nationalism in the Western Balkans has been studied as a feature of far-right parties and movements. Věra Stojarová stated that among the main variables impacting the success or failure of

these parties, economic globalisation had an auxiliary influence on their rise (Stojarová, 2013). Moreover, regarding the Serbian case, Djordje Stefanovic affirmed that the economic vulnerability boosted by globalisation had produced a fertile ground for the strengthening of the far-right, especially the Serbian Radical Party (Stefanovic, 2008).

Finally, the literature reviewed for the purposes of this paper insofar as economic transition and economic variables encompasses reports of international institutions or organisations such as the World Bank or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); moreover, national statistics and reports of the Bertelsmann Foundation were consulted.

## Theoretical framework

Theories on nationalism and globalisation do not provide an organic or linear explanation of the relation between these two phenomena. Furthermore, in theoretical works, there seems to be an asymmetry between the more developed field of nationalism and the discourse on globalisation, which is fragmented and influenced by the ongoing development of the process. For instance, there is no agreement among scholars on the timeframe of globalisation: the first group of authors states that globalisation has been an ongoing process since the Iron Age, while the second one considers that globalisation started in or just after the 1950s.

Considering that the increasing global interconnectedness and the rise of nationalism are not interacting in a stable pattern, two main approaches have been adopted to unveil the link between these processes (Osterhammel, 2013: 694-695). The first one sees the nation-state and nationalism on the edge of their demise in a time when globalisation is forcing the adoption of a new supranational organisation of the society; on the contrary, the second one states that the strengthening of nationalistic stances is happening in response to the logic of globalisation. Even if representing two diametrically opposed points of view, these two approaches share a common feature: considering globalisation and nationalism as antithetical.

In this debate, a third approach has been proposed: according to it, the two phenomena are not in conflict since they mutually take advantage of each other. As stated by Natalie Sabanadze: ‘nationalist actors [are] accepting, embracing, and even promoting globalization for various, often nationalist objectives. Their coexistence is not a battle in which only one is destined to emerge as the winner and the other as a loser: it is rather a mutually beneficial coexistence of two perfectly compatible tendencies’ (Sabanadze, 2010: 169). In this paper, the author has adopted the third approach, and nationalism and globalisation have been studied as complementary processes.

## Conceptualisation

Before analysing the impact of economic globalisation on nationalism in the Western Balkans, it is necessary to define these two phenomena. There is a wide consensus about considering globalisation as one of the most important forces shaping today's world, but at the same time, it is still challenging to find an appropriate definition of this process because of its complexity. Philip M. Nichols argues that 'the concept of globalisation is somewhat amorphous' (Nichols, 1999: 261) and that it can be considered as a process, as a condition, or as a discourse. It is mainly understood as a phenomenon in which conflicting dynamics coexist: Anthony Giddens defines globalisation as the 'intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa'. Such definition implies a dialectical process in which local transformations are not only the consequences of globalisation, but one of the basic elements of its development (Giddens, 1990: 64).

Globalisation is a multifaceted process in which different dimensions interact with each other: the economic environment is influenced by the social, cultural, and political ones and vice-versa, and, at the same time, they are promoting global interactions. Moving closer to this paper's research question, one of the main dimensions of globalisation on which researchers have been focusing on is the economic one. As said by Natalie Sabanadze:

"At the economic level, globalization manifests itself in the growing economic interdependence and convergence of economic practices. This includes the spreading of capitalist national economies integrated or seeking integration into the global economy through international trade, flows of capital, foreign direct investments, and multinationals. It also involves the promotion of neo liberal economic reforms facilitating such integration, as well as increasing deregulation of financial markets. In this context, state actors who promote such reforms domestically and create enabling environments can also be regarded as agents contributing to globalization" (Sabanadze, 2010: 17).

Moving forward, the other central phenomenon of this work is nationalism. This concept is strictly related to the concept of the nation and can be understood as a political doctrine or as a political movement. As defined in Cas Mudde's *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, nationalism is here considered as a political doctrine that 'strives for the congruence of the cultural and the political unit, i.e. the nation and the state' (Mudde, 2007: 16). Hence, nationalism in the Western Balkans is defined as the will and the strategy to achieve internal homogenisation and external exclusivity: the first aiming at the creation of a mono-ethnic state through different practices such as separatism, expulsion, assimilation, or genocide; and the second intending to 'bring all members of the nation within the territory of the state' by way of, for example, population transfer (Mudde, 2007: 16).

In conclusion, regarding the analysed countries, this paper focuses on the narrow definition of Western Balkans excluding Albania, which means that the analysis encompasses Yugoslavia's successor states, i.e. Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, and Kosovo.

## Methodology

In order to investigate the impact of economic globalisation on nationalism and particularly on nationalist parties in the Western Balkan countries, the analysis is done in two steps. Firstly, the economic transition of the countries in the region is examined in a comparative way, searching for the social consequences of the markets' opening toward the global economy. In this first part, the variables considered in order to measure the social repercussion were the unemployment rates, the variation in the incidence of poverty, and the unequal distribution of wealth, as measured by the Gini index.

The second step of the paper is focused on nationalism. The analysis is opened by an overview on the nationalist political scene in each country. The studied parties have been chosen in accordance with the analysis of Vera Stojarová in *The Far Right in the Balkans* (Stojarová, 2013). Thus, this part points out their attitude toward globalisation and economic policies, focusing on welfare chauvinism or their position toward EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) integration. Afterwards, their electoral results are compared with the variables (unemployment, poverty incidence, and Gini index) studied in the first part of the research.

With regard to the timeframe of the research, the examined period covers the period from the break-up of Yugoslavia<sup>21</sup> until the end of the most recent global economic crisis; in particular, the study of the economic transition is divided in three phases: the first one encompasses the 1990s, the second one analyses the growth period in the early 2000s, and finally, the third one considers the years between 2008 and 2012, affected by the economic crisis.

## Analysis and findings

### *The economic transition and the impact of economic globalisation*

In each country of the Western Balkans, globalisation, and more particularly its economic aspects, followed different paths based on the country's specific historical experience. Hence, if transition economies are in general pushed by globalisation to open and to connect to the global markets, what happened in the 1990s to the Western Balkans was rather the opposite due to several external factors: the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992-1995, the international sanctions against

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<sup>21</sup> The early signs of the 1990s wars in the Balkans started to emerge as early as 1987-1988. However, here the break-up of Yugoslavia coincides with the declaration of independence of Slovenia and Croatia in June 1991 (Pirjevec, 2014: 31-34).

Serbia and Montenegro, the dispute over FYROM's name, and the ethnic conflict in that same country in 2001 are some of the causes that contributed to the slowing down of the economic development of these countries (Bartlett, 2009: 22). Because of these events, the economic transition had stronger consequences in Western Balkans than in Central Europe, such as high inflation, fall of real GDP, rise of unemployment, and widespread incidence of poverty (Uvalić, 2012: 368). Furthermore, according to Martin Sokol, during the implementation of the transition, the historical legacies of the region pushed these countries into the 'super-periphery' of Europe, where 'political turmoil and instability were experienced and further fuelled by the catastrophic economic situation, social polarization, ethnic and regional fragmentation' (Sokol, 2001: 651).

It was not until the 2000s that the Western Balkans entered an economic recovery phase characterised by reforms aiming at macroeconomic stabilisation and growth, as well as EU integration. Nevertheless, the economic crisis had already spread throughout the region in 2009, causing a strong contraction in all countries' economies, the only exception being Kosovo. Furthermore, there was another recession after 2012, when the deepening of Eurozone's crisis led to a decrease in demand of exports from the Western Balkans, low inflows of foreign direct investments (FDI), and reduced access to credit (Bartlett and Prica, 2012: 2). Hence, it is possible to divide the economic transition in three phases: the first lasted from the break-up of Yugoslavia to the early 2000s, the second encompassed the years from 2000 to 2009, and finally, the third covered the period affected by the economic crisis (2008-2012).

As for the first phase, the economic transition was characterised by a severe deindustrialisation, a low inflow of FDI, and a drop in exports. In the two-year period between 1989 and 1991, the industrial production of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYROM dropped by 25%. This trend continued in the following years: between 1992 and 1995, FYROM's economic input dropped by another one-third, Bosnia and Herzegovina had an overall industrial collapse, while the industrial capability of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) was further compromised by UN sanctions (Bartlett, 2009: 26). Simultaneously with deindustrialisation, the region faced a drastic reduction in export markets during the 1990s. Finally, the opening of the private sector to small and medium enterprises (SME) was achieved in the late 1990s.

Since the early 2000s, the economic transition has been boosted by a more stable political environment and the influx of international credit: economic reforms were implemented throughout the region and resulted in macroeconomic stabilisation, sustained growth, and a stronger inflow of FDI. Furthermore, along with the development of a more open economy, the region has taken steps toward EU integration by signing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA): FYROM signed it in 2001, Montenegro in 2007, and Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008.

In this second phase, the real GDP of the region increased and the recovery from the previous fall in industrial production slowly began: in 2003, FYROM's industrial sector reached around half of its capability compared to the pre-1990s shock level; BiH's stalled at 14% of its 1989 level; and finally, Serbia and Montenegro's industrial production was particularly affected by the NATO bombing campaign in 1999 (Bartlett, 2009: 26). In these years, the region experienced an increase in trade thanks to EU's autonomous trade preferences. Moreover, there has been a raise in FDI inflow, especially involving the banking and telecommunication sectors (Bartlett and Uvalić, 2013: 1). However, at the same time, Western Balkans developed a high account deficit.

Despite the region's growth in the 2000s, by 2008 only FYROM had a higher GDP in comparison to the 1989 level, while the other countries had worse performances: with respect to its 1989 GDP, Montenegro's GDP stalled at 92%, Bosnia and Herzegovina's at 84% and Serbia's at 72% (Uvalić, 2012: 379). In this second phase of the economic transition, the economic growth led to an improvement in the living standards, and poverty fell in terms of the absolute percentage of population under the poverty line; nevertheless, this development showed an increasing gap in inequality (Murgasova et al., 2015: 20). The regional countries had high Gini indices: according to the World Bank estimates, Serbia's 2010 index was 29.6, Montenegro's 2009 index was 30, Bosnia and Herzegovina's 2004 index was 34, Kosovo's 2006 index was 30.3, and FYROM's 2010 index was 42.8. Another social problematic was the unemployment rate, despite the flourishing of the informal economies in the region: this phenomenon was particularly exacerbated by the youth and long-term unemployment. In 2007, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimated the unemployment rates as following: in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 28.9% of the population was unemployed, 34.5% in FYROM, 46.3% in Kosovo, and nearly 20% in Serbia and Montenegro (Uvalić, 2012: 383). These values show a rising trend in unemployment rates in the 2001-2007 period for all countries in the region except Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina (see table 1).

Table 1. Unemployment rates between 2001-2007(%)

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	12.2	14.6	20.8	18.1
<b>Montenegro</b>	24.8	-	30.5	19.4
<b>Kosovo</b>	57	49.7	41.4	46.3
<b>FYROM</b>	30.5	36.7	37.2	34.9
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	31.1	31.1	31	28.9

Sources: IMF, 2018; World Bank, 2018; Gollopeni et al., 2015.

In 2009, the economic crisis spread from the European core to the Western Balkans, causing a sharp contraction in industrial production and in the GDP of the region. The recession was



worsened by the current account deficits that were already particularly high at that time, with peaks in Serbia (17.9%) and Montenegro (50.7%) (Bartlett and Prica, 2012: 6). There were four main transmission mechanisms which propagated the economic crisis in the Western Balkans. The first one was the collapse of the global credit inflow in the region due to the crisis of the banking sector, principally owned by foreign investors. The second one was the collapse of FDI influx. The third one consisted of decreased remittances from migrant workers. Finally, the fourth one was the contraction of export demand caused by the recession of global imports (Bartlett and Prica, 2012: 8). In addition, the vulnerability of the Western Balkans to the economic crisis was linked to their Europeanisation: Montenegro and Kosovo had the Euro as their legal tender, and nearly 80% of private loans in Serbia were denominated in a foreign currency (Bartlett and Uvalić, 2013: 3).

The economic crisis with two recession peaks (the first in 2009 and the second in 2012) and the austerity measures caused a general fall in the regional living standards. The budgets for education and health sectors were sharply reduced, which had repercussions on the formation of a skilled labour force, while local governments faced cuts in their budgets (Bartlett and Uvalić, 2013: 5). The already high unemployment rates increased both in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (see table 2), while in Montenegro, FYROM, and Kosovo, this constant trend can be explained by the existence of a large informal economy sector. In FYROM, it was estimated to amount to between 20%-40% of the total output (European Commission, 2016: 27). In Montenegro, the unregistered workers are estimated to make up nearly 30% of the labour force (World Bank, 2017d: 10), while in Kosovo, the informal economy comprises between 30% and 35% (BTI, 2016: 18). Furthermore, the incidence of poverty increased throughout the entire region: in Montenegro it increased from 4.9% in 2008 (Ražnatović et al., 2009: 3) to 11.3% in 2012 (Ražnatović, 2013: 4), in Bosnia and Herzegovina it rose by about 5% between 2007 and 2012 (UN, 2015: 21), and in Serbia, it increased from 6.9% in 2009 to 9.2% in 2010 (BTI, 2012: 16).

Table 2. Unemployment rates 2009-2016 (%)

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	16.1	23	24	19.2	15.3
<b>Montenegro</b>	19.1	19.7	19.7	18	17.7
<b>Kosovo</b>	45.4	40	31	35.2	27.5
<b>FYROM</b>	32.2	31.4	31	28	23.7
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	24	27.6	28	27.5	25.1

Sources: IMF, 2018; World Bank, 2018; Gollopeni et al., 2015; Kosovo Agency of Statistics 2015, 2016.

*Analysis of nationalist parties*

Therefore, how much of an impact did the economic transition and globalisation have on nationalist parties in the region? What were their responses and electoral results? Before proceeding with a comparative analysis of nationalist parties' positions toward globalisation and an evaluation of the impact of social variables on their electoral results, an examination of each country's nationalist scene is necessary. Echoing Vera Stojarová, nationalism is here defined in relation to both internal homogenisation and external exclusivity; the work will also encompass those parties which claim to have a distinct identity within a nation state (Emerson and Stojarová, 2010: 42).

Since the 1990s, the Bosnian party system has been delineated along ethnic lines, with the war in 1992-1995 and the international intervention having played an important role in the shaping of its political transition. Furthermore, the main parties in the country are based on ethnic affiliations and exhibit nationalistic features: the Party of Democratic Action (Stranka demokratske akcije, SDA) is mostly composed of a Bosniak (Bosnian Muslims) electorate and strives for a united Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Croatian Democratic Union of BiH (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica BiH, HDZ BiH) seeks to reshape the division of the country in two entities (Republika Srpska and Croat/Muslim Federation of BiH) as delineated by the Dayton Peace Agreement, in order to achieve a mono-ethnic Croatian political unity; on the Serbian side, there are two nationalist parties, the Serbian Democratic Party (Srpska demokratska stranka BiH, SDS BiH), which considers itself a Serbian party and strives for the secession of Republika Srpska (SR), and the Union of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) which in recent years gained the majority of Serbian polls in BiH (Emerson and Stojarová, 2010: 46). In addition to these four parties, there are several minor political groups which can be defined as nationalist: the Croatian Party of Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hrvatska stranka prava BiH, HSP), the New Croatian Initiative (Nova hrvatska inicijativa, NHI), the Croatian Bloc of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hrvatski blok Bosne i Hercegovine, HB BiH), The Serbian Radical Party of RS (Srpska radikalna stranka Republike Srpske, SRS RS), the Radical Party of RS (Radikalna stranka republike Srpske, RS RS), the Serbian National Alliance (Srpski narodni savez, SNS), and the League of People's Rebirth (Savez narodnog preporoda, SNP) (Emerson and Stojarová, 2010: 55). If we compare the electoral results of the main four nationalist parties, it is possible to notice that, with the exception of SNSD, all other parties lost popularity between 2000 and 2006: SDA dropped from 18.8% in 2000 to 16.9% in 2006, HDZ BiH gained 11.4% in 2000 but only 4.8% in 2006, and SDS BiH fell from 16.7% to 7.7%. However, between 2006 and 2010, two out of three of these parties grew: in 2010, HDZ BiH had 7% and SDS BiH 8.4% (IFES, 2018).

During the 1990s, the nationalist parties in Serbia could be divided between a more radical group including the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and the Party of Serbian Unity (SSJ) (Pribičević in

Ramet, 1999: 202), and a moderate group including the Socialist Democratic Party (SPS), the Democratic Party (DS), and the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS). Nowadays, the party which still manifests nationalistic features is the Serbian Radical Party: SRS strives for the creation of the Greater Serbia, i.e. the annexation of Republika Srpska and Republika Srpska Krajina. Furthermore, along with the majority of Serbian parties, SRS does not recognise Kosovo's independence. SRS's electoral results show that after having gained 8.6% votes in 2000, the Radical Party maintained about 30% of votes between 2003 and 2008. Afterwards, the split led by Tomislav Nikolić and the creation of the Progressive Party caused an important loss of popularity for SRS: in fact, between 2012 and 2014 SRS did not gain any seats in the National Assembly. Finally, in the 2016 parliamentary election, the SRS obtained 8.1% of the votes (OSCE).

Regarding FYROM's political parties, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) was considered a nationalist party during the 1990s, while in recent years, it has adopted a more moderate program. Nowadays, the main ethnic party in FYROM is the VMRO-NP, born in 2004 from VMRO-DPMNE's split. Although it is possible to identify some nationalistic and xenophobic features in VMRO-NP, this party does not promote external exclusivity nor the creation of a United Macedonia (Stojarová, 2013: 55). Moreover, VMRO-NP supports FYROM's accession into EU and NATO and does not support welfare chauvinism (Stojarová, 2013: 50). With regard to ethnic Albanian parties in FYROM, one of the most important ones is the Democratic Albanian Party (PDSH), which promotes ethnic Albanian rights and supports Kosovo's independence. It is necessary to mention the paramilitary formations such as the Army of the Republic of Ilirida or the Macedonian National Liberation Army, which strive for a Greater Albania or a Greater Kosovo (Emerson and Stojarová, 2010: 57).

In Montenegro, nationalism and nationalist parties are not easy to frame because of the recent formation of the state itself. Hence, a census held in 2003 stated that '43.16% of citizens identified as ethnic Montenegrins, 31.99% as self-identified Serbs, 7.77% as ethnic Bosniaks, 5.03% as ethnic Albanians, 3.97% as self-identified Muslims and 1.10% as Croats' (BTI, 2012: 5). Thus, if we focus on the pre-secession period, it seems that most political formations were nationalist or irredentist, while nowadays, ethnic Montenegrin nationalism no longer exists. Nevertheless, some minor parties do fulfil the criteria to be considered as nationalist: on one hand, certain Serbian ethnic parties linked to the Serbian radical scene (SRS) strive for the creation of a Greater Serbia. On the other hand, some Albanian ethnic formations advocate for a Greater Albania (Emerson and Stojarová, 2010: 50). Before 2009, the main party which could be labelled as nationalist was the Serbian's People Party (SNS), but in recent years, it has moved toward more moderate positions. Thus, according to the 2016 BTI report, 'Montenegro represents a functional multicultural society,

although it is still divided around unresolved ethnic/national and religious identity issues' (BTI, 2016: 31).

Finally, the political scene in Kosovo is still characterised by the ongoing state-building process. The country is marked by a polarisation along ethnic lines, with ethnic Serbs in Northern Kosovo refusing to recognise Kosovo's declaration of independence. On the Albanian side, parties striving for the creation of a Greater Albania are marginalised: one of these is the Kosovar branch of the Albanian National Front, which calls for the unification of all Albanians in one country (Emerson and Stojarová, 2010: 49).

If we look at the electoral results of nationalist parties and compare them with the social variables analysed in the first part of this work, it is possible to notice that correlation between globalisation and the rise of nationalism emerged only in two cases. In particular, in BiH the poverty incidence increased from 18.6% to 23.4% (UN, 2015: 21) during the time period marked by the rise of nationalist parties in 2006-2010, while the unemployment rates and the Gini index remained stable. Regarding FYROM's electoral results, PDSH had a strong growth between 2002 and 2008, during which it almost doubled its votes, while in the following years it lost popularity, obtaining 5.9% of votes in 2011 and only 2.6% in 2016 (OSCE). During PDSH's expansion period, it is possible to notice an increase in both the incidence of poverty (from 24.6% in 2001 to 31.1% in 2009) and in the unemployment rates (from 30.5% in 2001 to 34.9% in 2007). Regarding Serbia, when comparing SRS's electoral results with the economic environment in 2003-2008, Stefanovic states that the party's popularity at the municipal level correlates with economic vulnerability and perceived ethnic threat (Stefanovic, 2008: 1211). However, at a national level, a direct relation linking the social variables studied in this paper and the electoral results of the SRS didn't emerge. Finally, the methodology applied here appeared inadequate to analyse the impact of globalisation on the nationalist parties in Montenegro and Kosovo. In the former case, the comparison between the electoral results and the social variables analysed was not possible because nationalist formations represented in the parliament ceased to exist after the country's independence. In the latter, every party, whether ethnic Albanian or ethnic Serbian, could be labelled as nationalist during the examined years.

Moving forward, almost every nationalist party in the Western Balkans analysed above shows a positive attitude towards integration into EU or NATO, with the main exceptions being the Serbian Radical Party and its sister parties in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, integration seems to be perceived as an anchor to political and economic stability. On the contrary, for what concerns SRS's position, the party strongly opposes international interference in Serbian economy and politics. Their program opposes EU and NATO integration and states that the

‘economic policy should be protectionist, aimed at economic colonialism, with the key industrial and natural resources controlled by the state. [...] On the other hand, the party supports small business and privatization’ (Stojarová, 2013: 49). Thus, excluding SRS’s policies, it seems that the nationalist parties in the Western Balkans consider isolationism as an obstacle to overcome in order to protect their national identity and culture. Globalisation and international engagement are thus seen as a safeguard for the national independence gained during the 1990s wars.

## Conclusion and future research

In conclusion, this work offers a general overview of the link between economic globalisation and nationalism in the Western Balkans since the break-up of Yugoslavia until the most recent economic crisis in the region. In particular, it emerged that the majority of the analysed nationalist parties are in favour of and promote the globalisation process, the main exception being the Serbian Radical Party. Thus, in the Western Balkans, nationalism and globalisation do not appear to be in conflict, but rather complement each other, as suggested by Sabanadze in *Globalization and nationalism: the Case of Georgia and the Basque Country*. Furthermore, regarding the socio-economic repercussions of globalisation, the analysis shows that in the Western Balkan countries, the economic transition had a strong impact on their social fabric with respect to unemployment rates, incidence of poverty, and increase in inequality. Nevertheless, a causal mechanism linking these variables with the rise of nationalist parties does not seem to exist. As is clear from our findings, only in the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYROM a relation between economic globalisation and the strengthening of the studied parties emerged. Nonetheless, the correlation appears too weak to support the argument that the rise in inequality, poverty, or unemployment rates leads to a growth in the popularity of nationalist parties. Thus, the study of economic vulnerability alone does not offer an explanation for the rising support of nationalist stances. The comparison between the social variables and the electoral results may bring stronger results at a municipal level as stated by Stefanovic regarding the case of Serbia (Stefanovic, 2008: 1204). In the case of Kosovo and Montenegro, on the other hand, the methodology applied here appeared not to be suitable for an analysis of their political nationalism due to their ongoing state-building processes. Because of the complexity of the studied phenomena, this work does not pretend to offer a complete overview over the link between globalisation and nationalism. Indeed, other factors may influence the popularity of nationalist parties, including the historical and political legacy of each country and changes to the class structures and party systems.

Future research on the nationalism in the Western Balkans could investigate, firstly, if the results of the present work may be replicated and applied to a single-case study. The comparative approach that has been used here was meant to produce a broader analysis of the link between

globalisation and nationalism in the Western Balkans. Thus, further studies with a more specific focus on a single nationalist party or a country in the region may bring a more in-depth contribution. It may be meaningful, as well, to examine other social variables behind the rise of nationalist parties. Finally, an examination of the rise of nationalist non-parliamentary groups may also be relevant in order to have an exhaustive analysis on the issue.

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