ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF SOUTHEAST EUROPE: 
MACEDONIA AND SANDZAK

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
San Diego State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Homeland Security

by
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Spring 2016
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

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18 April 2016
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To my mother for always motivating me, and for her everlasting inspiration. To my husband, for his eternal support.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Analysis of Cultural Influences of Southeast Europe: Macedonia and Sandzak
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The requirement to operate effectively in the international environment demands an international perspective and an understanding of the various political, economic and cultural factors that influence decision-making in foreign countries. Defining the region through historical revisionism, religious beliefs, values, and mythology, collected open source information is examined using Alternative Futures Scenario Analysis. Findings could help analysts to identify the multiple ways in which a situation might evolve in Southeast Europe.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After the end of the Cold War, throughout Southeast Europe, politicians have attempted to recreate the national identity in a more exclusive form to give a sense of “belonging” in a time of widespread disillusionment and despair.\(^1\) Civil War in the newly independent states of the former SFR Yugoslavia saw various versions of historical revisionism. History and myth are close relatives in as much as both explain how things got to be the way they are by telling some type of story. Accordingly to a historian who rejects someone else’s conclusions calls them mythical, while claiming that his own views are true.\(^2\)

Both Macedonia and Sandzak are the regions of inter-ethnic tensions and major social problems. This situation makes international investors reluctant, but Turkey sees these problems as a great opportunity to seize this region, and regain the position it once had during the Ottoman Empire. Turkey has implemented new instruments for spreading its influence, and that is by referring to common Ottoman history of the Balkans. It started using cultural and religious commonalities coming from the Ottoman legacy, so as to close kinship between people of the Balkans, positioning itself in the Balkan affairs and balancing the influence of power in the region.

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE FOR INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS

Analyzing a country or a nation requires an incredible amount of knowledge. We question how much do we know about these nations, about their leaders, ideology, and how do they express themselves, and this is where the language comes back so importantly. To

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interpret that kind of information and data is very difficult in English language. The real challenge is when you begin investigating the problem starting with the wrong context. To interpret data correctly one must have language understanding and cultural knowledge about the region in order to produce a more accurate analysis in assisting US policy makers.

The foundation of an ideology lies within shared historical narratives that shape perceptions of reality through story. The United States is no exception. Throughout the American society there is almost a dogmatic worship of freedom, liberty, personal property, and a mistrust of authoritarianism. American national myths are based on empirical facts from all aspects of public life: political, economic, cultural, moral, and create a complex interplay among them, creating a sense of the nation and its life as a unified, harmonious whole.3

Johnson and Berret in their research for intelligence analysis point out the importance of understanding historical narratives. Almost all analysts begin with the assumption that one must conduct a deep background investigation to become familiar with a society - examining from history, geography, social systems to interaction with other states. Understanding historic narratives can be critical to making sense of strategic choices of foreign populations. The 1999 bombing campaign against Serbia supplies an example. US analysts vastly underestimated the duration and the expense of the engagement, in part because they undervalued the role of historic narratives of victory and defeat. Serbia’s national holiday is not a celebration of a past battlefield victory, but of a glorious defeat in 1389 at hands of the Ottoman Turks.4

Colonel Anthony P. Arcuri in his research describes how beneficial cultural knowledge is for the United States Army. He says that without this understanding, the United States cannot develop and sustain effective multinational organizations nor can it devise and execute effective strategies to win the Global War on Terrorism. Military and political leaders must realize how important understanding an opponent's culture is to operating in

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today's global environment. This means understanding a culture at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Misunderstanding culture at the strategic level can produce policies that exacerbate an insurgency; a lack of cultural knowledge at an operational level can lead to negative public opinion; and ignorance of the culture at a tactical level endangers both civilians and troops.\(^5\)

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CHAPTER 2

DECIPHERING HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL REVISIONISM

YUGOSLAVIA AND KOSOVO MYTH

After the collapse of Yugoslavia, historical revisionism has manifested itself openly, without the protective self-management rhetoric. Although legalized, the reconstruction of the past proceeds in a manipulator manner under the guise of repudiating a totalitarian Socialism that stifled above all national awakening. The strong anti-communist and anti-totalitarian rhetoric were used as a smokescreen to cloud the dark periods of one’s own history in an attempt to normalize it and justify it mainly in the eyes of the Western powers.\(^6\)

Myth is one of the ways in which nations establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own systems of morality and values.\(^7\) The Kosovo myth does not differ fundamentally from this view.\(^8\) National myths are usually linked to key historical events that are perceived as turning points in the collective destiny of the nation. Myth of the Kosovo battle of 1389 was resurrected as part of the nationalist revival in Serbia in the later 1980s, and the different ends to which it was put during the violent struggles of the 1990s. Cultivated through centuries of Ottoman rule, the myth decreased in importance during the communist period but re-emerged in Serbia in the 1980s as a powerful mobilizing tool, often

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\(^8\) Alexander Greenawalt, "Kosovo Myths: Karadzic, Njegos, and the Transformation of Serb Memory," *Spaces of Identity* 1, no. 3 (2001).
compared with the supposed “genocide” of Serbs at the hands of Albanians in the autonomous province.\textsuperscript{9}

The term Yugoslavism has historically advocated the union of all Southern Slavic populated territories which today include Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, and Macedonia. According to the theorists of nationalism, this myth occupies a central place among the mythemes of the nationally oriented discourse, which is also manifested by virtue of Sculptor Ivan Mestrovic’s project, in the example of Yugoslavism.

In his case study, Dimitrij Bukvic explains in detail the Memorial Mausoleum Project. The Vidovdan Temple was to reinforce the myth of national awakening. Social circumstances and personal beliefs contributed to the fact that a part of Mestrovic’s oeuvre was aimed at promoting the ideology of Yugoslavism. The great Croatian and Yugoslav sculptor was a supporter of this ideology, as evidenced by his project of the Vidovdan Temple, a structure never erected, but originally based on a kind of synthesis of the Kosovo (national, Serbian) myth and the Yugoslav (supranational) ideology. The Vidovdan Temple was to reinforce the myth of national awakening (of Yugoslavs, in this case).\textsuperscript{10}

A model for Vidovdan Temple was first shown at the World Exhibition in Rome in 1911. During those years, the goals of Serbian nationalists, who aimed to unite all Serbs and southern Slavs into a single state, rendered Serbia as expansionist and aggressive. The two successful wars in the Balkans in 1912–1913 transformed Serbia into the single greatest threat to the multinational empire of Austria-Hungary.

It was a coincidence that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand visited Sarajevo on the St. Vitus (Vidovdan) day, but the assassination falling on that day added nationalist symbolism to the event. The Serbian Church designates it as the Memorial Day to Saint Prince Lazar and the Serbian holy martyrs who fell during the epic Battle of Kosovo against the Ottoman Empire on June 28, 1389. The assassin Gavrilo Princip symbolizes a connection with Milos

\textsuperscript{9} Florian Bieber, “Nationalist Mobilization and Stories of Serb Suffering: The Kosovo Myth from 600th Anniversary to the Present,” Rethinking History 6, no. 1 (2002).

Obilic\textsuperscript{11} who assassin of the Ottoman sultan Murad I. Princip too was guided by a nationalist mythology of redemption and sacrifice for a nation and people.\textsuperscript{12}

In the years after World War II, Yugoslavia’s reestablishment in 1945 under Tito’s communist regime was the start of a thirty-five years long era that ended with Tito’s death in 1980. The new administration attempted to forge a Yugoslav nation by uniting all ethnic groups within a single functional state. Under the slogan “brotherhood and unity “In the words of Daniele Sremac, Tito insisted on eradicating nationalism because he knew that Yugoslavia could not be united if a strong underlining ethnic tension was allowed to flourish. As a large ethnic group Serbs were perceived as potentially dangerous. Belgrade was the base of Serbian tradition and culture for centuries was now a target to reflect Communist ideals. Streets and monuments in the city, formerly named after Serbian historical heroes and leaders, were re-named to honor non-Serbian Communist leaders. Historical revisionism was in full force, as history taught in schools was focusing on World War II events, depicting Yugoslavia’s Partisans as sole liberators against Nazi occupation.\textsuperscript{13}

Yugoslavia had an important role in the Cold War period, positioned as someone to prevent the domination of the Soviet Union. “\textit{Keeping Tito Afloat}” draws upon newly declassified documents to show the critical role that Yugoslavia played in U.S. foreign policy with the communist world in the early years of the Cold War. After World War II, the United States considered Yugoslavia to be a loyal Soviet satellite, but Tito surprised the West in 1948 by breaking with Stalin. Seizing this opportunity, the Truman administration sought to “keep Tito afloat “by giving him military and economic aid. President Truman hoped that American involvement would encourage other satellites to follow Tito's example and further damage Soviet power.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11}Milos Obilic died 1389, he was a Serbian knight in the service of Prince Lazar, during the invasion of the Ottoman Empire. He is not mentioned in contemporary sources, but he features prominently in later accounts of the Battle of Kosovo as the assassin of the Ottoman sultan Murad I
\item \textsuperscript{13}Danielle S. Sremac, \textit{War of Words: Washington Tackles the Yugoslav Conflict} (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), 39-40.
\item \textsuperscript{14}Lorraine M. Lees, \textit{Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War, 1945-1960} (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).
\end{itemize}
\end{flushleft}
Ideological historical revisionism began gradually to take shape before the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. The first attempt of discrediting Yugoslavia began in the 1980s in the circles of the Serbian political and cultural elite. They considered that Tito’s Yugoslavia was built on a policy of deliberately reducing Serbian influence, this kind of revisionism in Serbia also contributed to the anti-communism movement from the West in the 1990s. Under the terms of the anti-communism, Serbian nationalism was actually hiding, and tried to make a revision in history, denying the role of Tito, Partisan movement, and the National Liberation movement. The official version on history of Yugoslavia was abandoned in favor of new legitimizing myths of the individual federal units. Surges of nationalism tend to present as morally ambiguous, and for this reason often create a fascinating picture. “National awakening” and struggles for political independence are often both, heroic and cruel.

In the words of Olivera Milosavljevic, revisionism after Tito’s death did not start yesterday and was not at all accidental. Nationalism by definition had to deal first with the Yugoslav state, and how the state foundation was the concept of “unity”. It had to deal with a leadership who created this movement of “unity”. In the early 1990s the first attempt to completely remove the National Liberation Movement from history started with destroying Tito’s monuments. They also removed his name from street signs. From Belgrade, the Fortress of Kalamegdan is where they removed four busts of national heroes, and the five-pointed star was taken down. All this happened under Milosevic. This first wave of nationalist tried to completely erase the Partisan movement from history, and replace it with the Chetnik movement.

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**KOSOVO MYTH IS BEING REPLACED WITH NEW BRONZE MONUMENTS**

The perception that Serbia must fight for Kosovo continues to live in the Serbian political life. Leaders are torn between desire and necessity to lead the country towards the European Union and restore the international reputation. By establishing good relations with the rest of the world on one side, Kosovo still made an important role in defying the national identity on the other. It took more than a decade after the fall of Milosevic’s regime to make the first concrete step towards the normalization of relations with Kosovo, and make advancement in the European Union integrations.

The visual turn in history popularizes the past in general. History seen rather than read does not have to be translated into the mind’s eye or thought about in the context of previous learning, it is immediately accessible to anyone.\(^\text{18}\) In 2015, Belgrade was erecting monuments in honor of World War I heroes. One of them was Gavrilo Princip. His legacy has long been a source of controversy in the Balkans, a region still sharply divided along ethnic and religious lines, and which emerged from an ethnically fueled war in the 1990s that followed the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. Serbs in Bosnia regard Princip as a hero, while the nation's Croats and Muslims widely view him as a killer and nationalist who sought to have Bosnia occupied by Serbia. At the outbreak of World War I, most Muslims and Croats preferred to stay a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.\(^\text{19}\)

While historical revisionism is often thought of in relation to extremist and nationalist groups, we all contribute to the revision of history when we are only interested in a version of events that protects our interest.\(^\text{20}\) Bronze sculpture of the last Russian tsar, Nicholas II,\(^\text{21}\) was erected in Belgrade in 2015. The monument was donated by Moscow, and symbolizes

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strong alliance with Russia, as they helped Serbia in the First World War, and consistently supported Serbia’s position on Kosovo.

The efforts to suppress nationalistic memories of Kosovo are present, as Belgrade is bringing back heroes from the First World War into the public sphere and school history books.
CHAPTER 3

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

OVERVIEW

Macedonia is still in the process of establishing identity as an independent state, in the contentious process not only within its borders but also beyond them. Without the protection of Yugoslav Federation, Macedonia found itself vulnerable under the influence of its neighbors. Macedonian nationalism came to the fore with Nikola Gruevski government and created a significant impact on the Macedonian-Albanian relations in the new state.

Macedonia gained its independence peacefully from Yugoslavia in 1991. Greece's objection to the new state's use of what it considered a Hellenic name and symbols delayed international recognition, which occurred under the provisional designation of "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." In 1995, Greece lifted a twenty-month trade embargo and the two countries agreed to regulate relations, but the issue of the name remained unresolved and negotiations for a solution are ongoing. Macedonia is currently experiencing a political crisis, with a wire-tapping scandal prompting large demonstrations from both opponents and supporters of the country’s government. Against the backdrop of the crisis, the northern city of Kumanovo in May 2015 experienced deadly clashes with Albanian extremists.22

The country went through an ethnic uprising when rebels demanding more rights for ethnic Albanians took up arms against the government in 2001. The conflict was suppressed

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by a peace agreement, which guaranteed greater recognition of Albanians. Tensions in the area have remained.23

**GOVERNMENT WIRETAP SCANDAL AND TERRORIST ATTACK**

Released periodically by the opposition, recorded phone calls allegedly describe the government’s direct orchestration of financial and electoral fraud, mass electronic surveillance, framing of political opponents for crimes, and even murder. For the first time Macedonia’s history as a modern independent state, ethnic Albanians and Macedonians seem largely united in the struggle against a perceived dictatorship. With nearly all television stations under the government’s control, an Albanian-owned station Alsat, is airing the wiretaps and offering extensive airtime to opposition voices, a remarkable gesture of solidarity. Albanian websites have published sharp anti-government commentary by ethnic Macedonians, something that was largely unheard of in the ethnically segregated media sector.24

The attack in Kumanovo came among a tense political situation in Macedonia, where opposition leaders have organized protests calling for an end to the government of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. Tapes published by the opposition have revealed an intricate web of corruption, bribery, systematic political interference in the appointment of judges and prosecutors, as well as in court decisions. Oppositions Social Democrat leader Zoran Zaev voiced concerns after the bloodshed in Kumanovo that the Gruevski government was using the shootout to distract attention from the political crisis in the country.25

In the raid of Kumanovo, 40 ethnic Albanians from Kosovo took control of the Macedonian police station on the northern border.26 A total of 37 terrorists were arrested.27

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26 Matt Robinson and Fatos Bytyci, "Gun Battle in Ethnic Albanian Region Deepens Macedonian Crisis,"
The ultimate goal of the group was the creation of an Albanian state within Macedonia. Although Albanian population in Macedonia has its own political parties, mayors, councilors, officials in public administration, and police officers, similar demands from other extremist groups have been heard in the past. Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov said that he had repeatedly warned over the years that the status quo, with regard to the country’s Euro-Atlantic integration had created a sense of frustration which has made Macedonia vulnerable to attempts at destabilization.28

**Macedonian Historical Narrative**

Historians necessarily narrate the past from the standpoint of the present, rearranging data and revising conclusions in modern manner. Shifting needs of narrators and audiences shape history’s substance and rhetoric.29 Scholars devoted their efforts to the issue of Macedonian nationality, trying to figure out the roots of the contested perceptions. Serbians claim that the Macedonians are southern Serbs, the Greeks believe that they are Greek Slavs, while the Bulgarians claim that they are “related to the Bulgarians”.

Ulf Brunnbauer has categorized Macedonian historical myth into three groups: myths of origins, myths of continuity, and myths of victimization. Myths of origins according to Brunnbauer, repudiate the fact that Macedonian nation is the result of ambivalent and unpredictable social process, where Macedonian nationhood is still being constructed and negotiated. The myths of continuity link the past with the present in emphasizing nation’s unceasing existence and affirmation throughout the centuries. The aim of this particular myth is to establish presence of the name “Macedonia” through all points of history from antiquity to present day. The myth of victimization portrays Macedonians as historical sufferers at the hands of numerous enemies. The division of the region of Macedonia after the Balkan Wars

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29 Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country-Revisited.*
is regarded as a traumatic event in the history of the Macedonian people, because it destroyed
the “ethnic” and “geographical” unity of the country. The Slavic population is portrayed as
the victim of harsh assimilation attempts in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, vividly described
by Macedonian historians.  

This categorization shows us that nationalism gets its power through myths,
memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritage. Smith argues that each nationalism
usually contains more than one myth of descent, that different images of past and future tell
us much about the divisions in the social and cultural life of a community experiencing rapid
change, and the difficulties it faces in trying to achieve social integration.

**Creation of a New Macedonian National Identity Through Historical Figure of Alexander the Great**

So-called day-to-day revisionism is still evident in all eastern European countries,
with many individuals rewriting their biographies to accord with the social identity they want
to project, portraying themselves more or less sincerely as dissidents and victims of the
former regime.

Since the nationalist VMRO-DPMNE party won the elections in 2006, the name and
cracter of Alexander is increasingly present in the public life. In its efforts to attain both
political security and social change, the party leaders saw persuasion as the main tool for
securing public acceptance of their political agenda. New propaganda was created by
insisting on a direct link between the old worlds of Alexander the Great and present
day Macedonia. The widespread obsession with one of history’s most successful military

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30 Ulf Brunnbauer, “Historiography, Myths and the Nation in the Republic of Macedonia,” in (Re)Writing
History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism. Studies on South East Europe, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer
(Münster, Germany: LIT Verlag, 2004).

31 Anthony D. Smith, Myths and Memories of the Nation, vol. 288 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press,
1999), 86.


33 Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
commanders, contributed to the extensive debate about the ancient roots of modern Macedonia - and its modern identity.\(^{34}\)

What began as a rebranding of the main airports in the country now grows in the emergence of a much wider scope. Renaming the airport, which is now called "Skopje Alexander the Great Airport", caused a fury in Greece, where the claim that Alexander was Macedonian Helen, and that the name Macedonia and the classic history of the region was exclusively Greek cultural property. The two neighbors are at odds over the right to use the name Macedonia ever since the former Yugoslav republic declared independence in 1991. Macedonia is firmly rejecting all diplomatic suggestions to change the name of the airport, but at the same time refrained from further provocations, at least until last year.\(^{35}\)

Once in Bucharest in April 2008, Greece blocked an invitation for Macedonia to join NATO, the government of Nikola Gruevski, led by VMRO-DPMNE, has initiated a series of projects celebrating Alexander the Great and other heroes of classical antiquity. The capital Skopje is the scene of a megalomaniac government project aimed at redefining the national identity through architecture. Based on the instructions stipulated by the government in the construction tenders, buildings are currently being constructed in “antique” and “baroque” style, while more than fifty monuments have already been completed and placed throughout the city center.\(^{36}\)

Critics argue that attempts to build a new Macedonian identity based on an assumed connection with the world of antiquity, which is described by the term “Antiquisation” have devastating consequences. One of the objections is that this kind of campaign further endangers the stability of a multiethnic society, in which the dissatisfaction of numerous minority ethnic Albanians are already on the rise. Others fear that emphasizing the heritage of classical antiquity separates Macedonians into two camps, those who support

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\(^{36}\) George C. Papavizas, "FYROM: Searching for a Name, and Problems with the Expropriation of History." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (2010).
“Antiquisation”,37 and those who think of themselves as Slavs. For generations, especially in the period when Macedonia was part of Yugoslavia, Macedonians kept Slavic identity separate, but linked to the identity of the Slavs in neighboring Serbia and Bulgaria. Finally, there is the objection that this populist politics keeps key allies away from Macedonia, as well as its neighbors. Experts emphasize that Bulgaria and Greece could use the rights they have within the European Union to delay or prevent Macedonia's accession to the European Union.38


CHAPTER 4

SANDZAK – SERBIAN REGION

REGION AS AN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR TURKEY

Sandzak is a region in Serbia's south, predominantly Muslim, with Bosniaks outnumbering Serbs by as much as four to one in the main city of Novi Pazar. This is the region of inter-ethnic tensions and the major social problems that make international investors reluctant, but Turkey sees these problems as a great opportunity to seize this region, and give back the position it once had during the Ottoman Empire. The western part is mainly inhabited by Orthodox Serbs and the Eastern part by Sunni Muslims. After 1991 the Muslim population proclaimed themselves as Bosniaks, which is identical as the Muslim population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The area's origins as an Ottoman settlement have many of its Bosniak residents thinking of Turkey, not Serbia as their historic home. 39

Turkey’s president Erdogan supports Muslim coreligionists in the region. He sees them as the inheritors of the Ottoman legacy. Turkey’s intentions are to restore the Ottoman Empire by winning over Bosnia, Albania and the Serbian region of Sandzak, where it will have a secure base for interventions in the Balkans. Entering Sandzak Turkey would have an open door to Bosnia. Bosnia acts like a Turkish extension through which Turkey reaches middle Europe in the political, economic, and cultural sense. 40

In December of 2014, Turkey’s National Education Council introduced a mandatory course for students of religious schools on the Ottoman language. These classes are electives in secular high schools, but Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is promising to make


40 Christopher Deliso, The Coming Balkan Caliphate: The Threat of Radical Islam to Europe and the West (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007).
all Turks learn their ancestral language. Following this example, an Association of Turks in Serbia, launched an initiative for the introduction of the Turkish language as an elective for elementary students.

**RADICAL ISLAM IN SANDZAK REGION**

Close observers of the Balkans have expressed concern about Islamist tension in Sandzak. Muslims from the Serbian area of Sandzak call themselves "Bosnian" but speak a Serbian dialect, and their religious institutions have been contested. Although living in Serbia they were subjected to the spiritual jurisdiction of Chicago-educated Mustafa Ceric, the Bosnian Grand Mufti located in Sarajevo and aligned with the Egyptian fundamentalist hate preacher Yusuf Al-Qaradawi. Sandzak Mufti Muamer Zukorlic has close ties and unconditional support from Bosnian Grand Mufti Ceric.

Sandzak region in southwestern Serbia is highly desirable and also is an enormously strategic territory for Islamic extremists and jihadists. The Wahhabi infiltration and radicalization have escalated over the past decade. In 2007 at the Pester plateau, Serbian government discovered a training camp for Wahhabists. Four Wahhabi members were arrested. Weapons of various calibers were found, along with ammunition, plastic explosives, clock movements, military clothing and medical supplies. They also found different types of terrorist propaganda materials, and various manuals on survival and handling of automatic weapons.

Leaders that operate in Bosnia are born in Sandzak and have close ties with Sandzak Wahabbist. A village in northeastern Bosnia Gornja Maoca, is the headquarters of Bosnia’s

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main Wahhabi leader, Nusret Imamovic. Gornja Maoca has frequently been used as a way station for extremists joining jihads in Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Yemen. In October 2011, Mevlid Jasarevic, a Wahhabi from the Sandzak region, left the village with two other residents on the day he attacked the US Embassy in Sarajevo.46

Ongoing Tensions in Sandzak

Facing problems in the region are a combination of high unemployment, a large generation of youth, and an undeveloped infrastructure. Seeing the opportunity, Middle Eastern and Turkish aid organizations arrived with employment, education, and religious opportunities. They helped build schools and mosques. A number of these organizations not only arrived with monetary aid and emotional support, they also came to spread the word of Islam and their interpretation of the Qur’an. Those who practice the old traditional version of Islam today find themselves at odds with those who proselytize what they consider “true” interpretations of the faith.47

In light of tensions among the differing interpretations of Islam among local Muslims, the split of the Islamic community in 2007, and the Mufti of Sandzak Maumer Zukorlic’s proclamation that the Serbian leadership seeks to split the Muslims of Serbia. Islam may have to be factored in when addressing potential sources of instability in the region. In addition, emerging regional reports about resurging Islamic radicalization ought to be analyzed with care. Belgrade’s politicians may use the global war on terrorism as a carte blanche in dealing with Muslims who appear to be radical. The notion of radical Islam in the Balkans was likewise used in the 1990s as a propaganda tool to shore up anti-Muslim sentiments. Conversely, changing traditional religious practices and increasing conservatism may be cause for concern.48


47 For information on Bosnia’s pre-war Islamic traditions see Florian Bieber, “Muslim Identity in the Balkans before the Establishment of Nation States,” Nationalities Papers 28, no. 1 (2000).

In 2014 tensions raised in Novi Pazar following a parade of young men dressed in green shirts and trousers, accompanying Sandzaks Mufti Muamer Zukorlic while marking the 70th anniversary of a mass killing of Bosniaks under the Communist regime. The Mufti led a parade of activists through Novi Pazar, men clad in military-style green uniforms and wearing red fezzes, carrying the flags of the Bosnian Army of the 1992-95 war. In addition, there were social media pages urging people to join the so-called "Army of Sandzak". Apart from calls to form an independent Republic of Sandzak and an army, the posts urged people to join up and to show the world “who the sons of Sandzak are”. The Army of Sandzak has allegedly been formed to protect the region's Bosniak majority and the territory of Sandzak in the country's south-west from attacks by Serbian nationalists.49

Mufti Zukorlic has carved out a position as the defender of Bosniak rights in Serbia, while pushing a somewhat radical version of Islam that avoids the taint of overt jihadism. He has also spent energy on public quarrels with fellow Muslim clerics that have not contributed to Islamic unity in the region. His attention toward political stances has caused a greater disharmony in an already troubled part of Southeast Europe.

CHAPTER 5

TURKEY AND WEST BALKANS

TURKEY’S ROLE AS AN ENERGY CORRIDOR

Turkey’s aim is to become a global energy hub and take dominancy in the Balkans. The rapid transformation of Turkey’s internal and external dynamics manifests itself in a wide range of fields. It also presents new risks and opportunities. Reconnecting with its history and geography, Turkey ascribes strategic value to time and place in a globalized world, and is leaving behind the one-dimensional and reductionist perspectives of the Cold War era. From foreign policy, economy and public policy to education, media, arts and sciences.50

Russian News Agency reported in January 2016 that Gazprom Energy Company, plans to build a pipeline through Turkey to the border with Greece, and intends to completely abandon gas supplies to Europe through Ukraine after 2018.51

If and when these projects move forward, Turkey is certain to play an important role. With its transcontinental location, political, and economic heft, Turkey is a country that both the Russians and the Europeans will pursue as a partner in the energy sphere. Turkey benefits not just from the political attention but also by ensuring that it gets a portion of natural gas supplies from these projects by collecting transit fees. Thus, Turkey's stance will serve as a key indication of which projects will be taken seriously. In the meantime, the evolution of the standoff between Russia and the West will serve as the broader backdrop to energy dynamics on the Continent.52

52 "Europe and Russia After South Stream," Stratfor, last modified December 19, 2014,
Turkey is active in the Balkans through the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). TIKA has Program Coordination Offices in almost all of the countries in the West Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia). TIKA has been mainly focused on the Balkan countries, with the Muslim population investing mostly in development of a social infrastructure. Turkey made a significant effort at spreading its soft power influence to broaden its presence among Muslim communities in the Balkans. For exercising its soft power, Turkey relied on non-conventional foreign policy actors of the Turkish state, such as TIKA, the Presidency of Religious Affairs Diyanet, and Islamic grassroots organizations such as the Gülen movement.

Following its soft power principle and by using historical legacy as a way of connecting with the population in the Balkans, Turkey also officially approached the region with new cultural and educational services. Turkey had expended its programs of scholarships in the region. In summer 2010 Turkey opened a Kemal Atatürk Cultural Center in Novi Pazar. The center is promoting Turkish history, culture, and aims to foster friendship between two nations. In the same year, Turkish state-run TV network TRT Avaz, added Serbian and Croatian to its new broadcasting languages along with Bosnian and Albanian. It now offers internet news and radio programs in all languages in the Balkans. Various Turkish soap operas broadcasted throughout the Balkans gained huge popularity and serve as propaganda to influence people’s views and opinions on Turkish lifestyle and society.

As for Michel Naufal, an expert on Arab-Turkish relations, fascination with the

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54 Grassroots movements are often at the local level, as many volunteers in the community give their time to support the local party, which can lead to helping the national party.

55 The Gülen movement is a transnational religious and social movement led by Turkish Islamic scholar and preacher Fethullah Gülen.


57 B. Senem Çevik, "Turkish Soap Opera Diplomacy: A Western Projection by a Muslim Source."
Turkish series is the result of a sort of reconciliation with the past. He thinks that people are rediscovering the good side of the Ottoman Empire, this federation before federalism, an empire where ethnic and religious communities co-existed.\textsuperscript{58}


### CHAPTER 6

**ALTERNATIVE FUTURES SCENARIO ANALYSIS**

Table 1. Alternative Futures Scenario Analysis Quadrant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H1: Analytical Skills and no Cultural Knowledge</th>
<th>H2: Analytical Skills and Cultural Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not understanding Yugoslav narrative equals not understanding Macedonian-Albanian conflict</td>
<td>• Able to anticipate what will happen in cross-cultural situations, when it comes to the Serb and Muslims Bosniaks from Sandzak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Destabilization of entire region will further destabilize Serbia (via Sandzak) and even further destabilize Europe and the West</td>
<td>• Wide understanding of multicultural situations, especially between Christianity and Islam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H3: No Analytical Skills and no Cultural Knowledge</th>
<th>H4: No Analytical Skills and Cultural Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of awareness of Turkey expanding in this region, its sphere of influence while presence of the West is weakened</td>
<td>• Unable to forecast Turkey’s Neo-Ottomanism concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Missing cultural cues that will alert the analyst of repeated history pattern</td>
<td>• Historic ties between Russia and Serbia are deepening because Russia sees Turkey as a competitor in the region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### H1: ANALYTICAL SKILLS AND NO CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Not understanding Yugoslav narrative is equivalent to not understanding Macedonian-Albanian conflict. The ethnic Macedonians transformed themselves from the constitutive nation to majority; on the other side, ethnic Albanians found it more difficult to accept the status of a minority. With the exception of a brief period during World War II, the Albanians have never been united in a single state. This tendency has remained present till
today in the concept of creating “Greater Albania”. They insist on being recognized as a nation, equal to ethnic Macedonians. In its essence, the conflict in Macedonia is a conflict between two different concepts of what Macedonia is and who Macedonians are.

There could be a potential destabilization of an entire region if Sandzak achieves independence. Many Bosniaks worry that having a Mufti at the head of their minority council, will brand Sandzak as a supposedly-Islamic republic with no legitimate political goals. The outspoken Zukorlic, however, defends his right to serve in both capacities.

The Balkans have a perfect terrain with hidden valleys, isolated villages where militant Islamists have already developed a network of sharia-run enclaves that serve as recruiting stations for local converts, and safe havens for jihadist from around the world. Political instability in the region impacts the economy, as it causes such problems as a degree of lawlessness. Which results in corruption and black market on a local scale, along with the presence of other problems such as drug and gun trafficking.

**H2: Analytical Skills and Cultural Knowledge**

For this Hypothetical Scenario, I am speaking from personal experience. Looking from an American perspective one must assume that freedom of expression is the same in other countries, and it is not. Decades of communism and socialist ideology have left consequences till present day. Most people cannot publicly comment on political opponent on social media, some journalist lost their jobs and some were detained. There is a certain level of censorship that makes it difficult for an analyst to get the real picture of public opinion. On the contrary from an American Hi-Tech society, people in the region are still buying newspapers, they have coffee drinking gatherings, which are an important cultural practice, and they shop daily in the bazaars where they discuss their opinions rather than posting them online. I recommend reading local newspapers from smaller publishers. They usually have a poll or a survey of “not politically correct” questions. In addition, understanding “low culture” which appeals to very simple and basic human needs, one can

get insight of an individual’s judgment of what is good, and the Marxist view of what is good for the collective.

**H3: NO ANALYTICAL SKILLS AND NO CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE**

Analyzing American history we can see the pattern of not recognizing great historical shifts, because of lack of knowledge about other societies and cultures. The United States was surprised by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 because it failed to anticipate the Japanese military response to the U.S. prewar trade embargo against Japan.\(^{61}\) There was the rise of Communism as an enemy of democracy during World War II, which subsequently failed to forecast the Cold War. Furthermore, the United States failed to anticipate the rise of Islamic radicals in the 1990s.\(^{62}\) During the Yugoslavian war, the downfalls of both the Shah of Iran and the Soviet Union did not recognize when their populations would react and how to support it. Each of these events had an ideological component hidden in a cultural context.

**H4: NO ANALYTICAL SKILLS AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE**

Sandzak has an historical importance for Turkey. This small wedge of territory provided a vital connecting corridor between Istanbul and the frontier provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Macedonia, Turkey took advantage of the isolation of the tiny republic to set it up as a local partner. Most of the Balkan countries have kept mixed feelings toward the Turks, perceived as the heir of the Ottomans who dominated the area for several centuries.\(^{63}\) In this context, the very fact that the Macedonian leaders were not reluctant to cooperate with Ankara pleaded in favor of this partnership. Turkey was among the first to recognize Macedonia’s independence. Over the past two decades Turkey has supported Macedonia economically, supplied weapons during the Kosovo crisis, they also donated

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ammunition and equipment. The Turkish minority have their own newspapers and primary school in Turkish language.

Russian-Serbian relations are based on religious and linguistic affinities. Russia provided Serbia diplomatic support and protested NATO’s 1999 bombing of the country. Mutual diplomatic support is perhaps the most notable element of Serbian-Russian relations today. And the leading example is Russia’s consistent denial of diplomatic recognition to Kosovo since the latter’s unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia in February 2008, after nine years as a United Nations protectorate. In turn, Serbia was one of the few European countries that did not issue sanctions against Russia for its March 2014 annexation of Crimea.  

In summary, aggressive geopolitical breakthroughs in the Southeastern Europe, has had significant results and can fundamentally change the balance of power because Turkey in this area is not only expanding its sphere of influence, but indirectly strengthens by weakened presence of the United States. Macedonia would be less able to control its borders, making the way for more immigration from Middle East and the North African region. Islamist terror groups such as the Islamic State could step up their efforts to develop a presence in Europe, especially in Muslim-populated regions such as Bosnia, Kosovo, and Southern Serbia's Sandzak region. Given the secularized nature of Balkan Muslims, a mass-scale radicalization appears highly unlikely, but small terror cells are sufficient to stage attacks, which would cause tensions to rise dramatically.

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CHAPTER 7

METHODOLOGY

I conducted research on gathering open source information. I collected information from sources not limited to the English language, which was my advantage. I used social media platforms, SDSU library, personal literature, and personal experience. For my conclusions I used Alternative Futures Scenarios Analysis. I gave different scenarios, which can identify the multiple ways in which situation might evolve. This strategy has been proven effective for thinking about situations characterized by complexity and uncertainty.66 This process can help decision makers develop plans to exploit whatever opportunities the future may hold or to avoid risks.

CONCLUSION

The United States and the European Union in their attempts to mediate an end to political crisis of the Macedonia need to focus on negotiations between the Macedonian and the Greek government. There is a need for increased awareness for the dispute over the final name of Macedonia. The country’s current instability could have been avoided had Skopje been allowed to proceed towards NATO and EU membership. Rather than move toward autocracy, President Nikola Gruevski would have been constrained by the strict EU requirements that have proved to empower democratic institutions in other countries of the Union. As Western meditation seeks to ensure stability in the region and to further democratization and strengthen the rule of law in both republics, the inner conflict requires more attention. Interethnic conflicts are a threat to democracy and stability in Macedonia, Serbia, and neighboring countries.

Cultural knowledge is learning about how a culture's history affects people's behaviors, values, and beliefs. To learn about the culture of one specific group, one needs to learn about that group as a whole. Every aspect of life is touched and covered by the culture of a particular society or group of people. By learning the culture, analyst can understand the meaning of Ideology. Ideology becomes significant in times and situations where there is uncertainty. If conditions were definite, and the link between policy and outcomes were completely certain, ideology would not be a factor. Ideological appeals to emotions and feelings then become effective means of social and political persuasion. Analysts with high cultural knowledge using observation are more likely to make informed decisions, and identify the multiple ways in which a situation might evolve.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDING ANALYTICAL INSIGHT

Learn and Practice Effective Strategies for Working Both Independently and Collaboratively

Overcoming professionals natural reluctance to share their most precious knowledge, presents some common and difficult challenges. It could be hard to collaborate between different fields, because of the tendency of each profession to regard itself as elite and special, thus cultural values may get in the way of cross-disciplinary sharing. Many professionals have little respect for those outside their field, even when all parties are supposedly seeking the same goal. A solution for an analyst is to be cross-trained in multiple disciplines. To have data and information on the history, culture, civilization, religion, politics, daily events, and geo politics.

Develop Artistic Literacy

Art is the vehicle by which we construct meaning and identity through the use of the creative intellect. In example of Skopje and Belgrade, understand the symbolism of

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sculptures and monuments in creating a collective identity. Being informed about the diversity of current arts practices, and understanding the ways in which such practices are shaping nations is beneficial for policy makers.

**Achieve Competency in a Language to a Specific Area of Research**

Culture is embedded in language. By achieving competency in a language analyst can learn about deep differences and similarities between cultures through comparing their means of expression. Knowledge also allows engagement with world literatures unmediated by translation.

**Acquire Knowledge of Diverse Cultural Traditions and Global Perspectives**

The study of different racial, ethnic, cultural, historical, and language communities provides a concrete standpoint for thinking reflectively and reflexively about one’s own community and the ways in which it shapes one’s identity and consciousness.
REFERENCES


