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Security and Integration Issues in the Relations between the European Union and the Western Balkans

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This study is part of a doctoral research that is being conducted in the Postgraduate Program in Political Science at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. It focuses on the relationship between the European Union (EU) and the Western Balkans States (WBS) - the former Yugoslav republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, plus Kosovo and Albania - in the period 2000-2013.

The main idea of the research is to investigate the nature of the EU-WBS relations in terms of security, which is attached to the discussion of issues like enlargement, security dynamic in the WB and the role of EU in the global order.

This paper, therefore, aims to build a state of art about the question if the EU's enlargement towards the Western Balkans may be seen as an example of the EU's normative power with hegemonic content. This study does not ignore that there is major advantages of replacing the normative power concept by the concept of hegemony. Indeed the very meaning of the normative concept implies some hegemonic extent. However, we are using this approach and these concepts to reinforce the role the respect to norms and the fulfilment of commitments have in the EU-WBS relations.

The methodology is basically qualitative and involves the development of theoretical tools to indicate the existence of hegemonic content in the EU-WBS relations. Hopefully, using this methodology, we are able to determine future steps about the prospects for both the future of EU enlargement as for the WB states themselves, and to evaluate to what extent there are advantages and disadvantages in this process for both parties.

Key words: European Union, Western Balkans, Stabilization and Association Process, enlargement, integration, security.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the relations between the European Union (EU) and the states that belong to the geographical region of the Western Balkans (the former Yugoslav republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia¹, Montenegro and Serbia, plus Kosovo² and Albania). The research problem is: What is the nature of the European Union's approach towards the Western Balkans (WB) States?

In this research, we assume that EU's normative power has a hegemonic content, in the sense that the spread of European standards is the main instrument of EU's power as a regional system. In this perspective, based on the theoretical approach of Laïdi (2009), it is clear that EU becomes influential in the international system much more by the strength of its rules than for its military or economic power. The hegemonic status of that power is gained by imposing its standards beyond its borders in the pursuit of its strategic interests, where the EU demonstrates its strength as a regional normative system. This is the case of the accession process of candidate countries, where the rules are enforced, and not mutually agreed upon: the EU consolidates itself as a power and a regional model by bringing to its sphere of influence states that are not part of the bloc yet. This approach, which is developed in the discussion section, supports the hypothesis of this study: the integration of the WB states to the EU can be understood as a normative hegemonic relation controlled by the regional European entity.

This regional relation became more prominent during the 1990s and early 2000s. It can be said that Macedonia was the first country to initiate the development of bilateral relations with the EU, around 1994, on financial issues and economic cooperation. In 1997, the Council of Ministers prospected a regional approach to the WB, with the determination of conditions for economic relationship between the EU and these countries. In 1999, the debate about daily life of EU's foreign policy was already revolving around the process of stabilization and association of the Balkan region (COHEN; LAMPE, 2011).

The understanding between the EU and the Balkans states would only have official status in November 2000, with the official launch of the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) of the Western Balkans at the Zagreb Summit, in relation to the following states: Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia (then formed by the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro). The year 2001 was also important, being the first year of the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) project, specially conceived for the SAP countries. The CARDS is the administrative-regulatory instrument designed to provide financial assistance to WB states participating in the SAP. In the same year, the EU signed the Stabilisation and Association Act (SAA) with Croatia and Macedonia, which began in 2004-2005.

The year 2003 was also a milestone for the EU-WB relations, when the European Council at Thessaloniki confirmed the SAP as the EU's foreign policy project for its Balkans neighbors. Besides, an important part of EU-WB negotiations was the establishment of full cooperation agreements between the ex-Yugoslav republics and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), as a condition for accession negotiations to the bloc. As a result, negotiations with Serbia, which had begun in 2005, were halted in 2006 due to non-fulfillment of certain conditions of cooperation with the ICTY by the Serbian governmentⁱⁱⁱ. This disruption also hit Montenegro, whose talks resumed after it split up from Serbia, in the same year. Thus, while Montenegro continued the talks for accession, Serbian negotiations only evolved from 2007 on. In 2007, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its membership proposal, which is still under review by the European Commission. Albania, in turn, presented its application for membership in 2009 and also has not achieved the status of candidate country yet. The closer state to full accession is Croatia. In June 2011, the European bloc ended negotiations on Croatian membership. Once completed the process of accession ratification in all member states and Croatia, the entry into force of the agreement is scheduled for mid-year 2013^{iv}.

In the evolution of EU-WB relations, it is possible to realize two fundamental characteristics. The first is the normativity of this relation. The EU's approach towards the Balkans states involves a normative perspective - after all, the accession's application generates a long process of normative commitments, involving association agreements, reports, plans, financial assistance, harmonization of internal rules and many other instruments. The bloc's membership presupposes the fulfillment of the Copenhagen Criteria^v, which consists in a requirement set by the European Council in 1993. The WB countries also need to participate of the SAP^{vi}, by fulfilling the commitments stipulated by the EU and sending regular reports on its political, economic and social agenda.

Nevertheless, the EU-WB relations cannot be classified as strictly normative since security (both internal and external) of the EU and its member states somehow depends on their neighbors. This means that there are specific strategic interests of the EU and its members to promote stability and peace in the region and bring together the WB within its sphere of influence. The power dynamics between the one who produces the norm - the European Union - and those that must fit the norm - the Western Balkans states - mainly depends on factors such as regional security and viability of the Balkans states. Thus, the understanding of security and state-building issues is essential to the enlargement towards Eastern Europe.

Moreover, we can assume the second feature of the EU-WB relation is that it constitutes a security issue for the EU. Concerning security, one of the biggest challenges for the EU are concentrated in the Western Balkans, which are geographically Europe's business (RUPNIK, 2011). Then, when dealing with the EU's foreign policy to the Balkans and the dimension of the integration process, it is necessary to consider the European security as a major strategic interest of the EU-WB relations.

Assuming the influence of the world economy as a guideline for policy decisions, it is hard not to see the EU enlargement as an expansionist policy, in other words, as a regional power projection. Once that state sovereignty is closely linked to the limits to legitimate interference, and that those limits are far beyond the EU's borders, especially after the end of the Cold War, it can be said that the EU enlargement process constitutes a tool to "Europeanize" its neighbors through the use of its normative powers. When defining compliance with certain standards (which are imposed, not negotiated) as a requirement for inclusion in the bloc, the EU is, in a sense, "calling the shots" that must be followed in the European continent and therefore exercises its normative-hegemonic power, as we assume that it happens in the EU-WB relations.

The Western Balkans form a region of singular importance to international security and to the internal and external security of the EU member states - after all, they are its closest neighbors. And, being security conceptually related to collective and individual protection, in the face of internal and external threats, which are interrelated (CEPIK, 2000), the centrality of the Balkan issue becomes evident for the EU. Thus, the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Balkans requires a critical analysis of EU's strategy of approach towards the region. In terms of research agenda, the instability in the Balkans has generated problems like displacement of refugees, pan-balkan terrorism (especially strong among the Albanians of Macedonia) and the feasibility of Kosovo as an independent state, which are subjects of international scope.

Another element that drives the development of this research is the contemporary situation of the states that were originated by the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Only two of them have economic and social development rates compatible with the main EU member states (THOMAS; MIKULAN, 2006: 20): Slovenia, which was virtually untouched by the wars of Yugoslavia's breakup; and Croatia, candidate country current in the accession phase. Regarding the other four remaining states of disintegration - Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, they have lower rates of development; which is almost an incompatibility with the rest of Europe. Problems such as effectiveness and political legitimacy, corruption and patrimonialism prevent these countries of having a political and economic performance next to other European states.

Nevertheless, considering the importance of the EU in terms of process integration and supranational governance model (TOCCI, 2008), it is essential to understand the dynamics of the EU's integration process towards the Western Balkans. The relevance of this research topic is also evident when it comes to parallel issues such as the existence of possibly unfeasible and untenable microstates within the EU. (MONASTIRIOTIS, PETRAKOS, 2010).

2. DISCUSSION

The main theoretical frameworks of this study are related to two fundamental concepts: security and integration.

2.1 Security

The main discourse of the EU as a global actor is centered on the security issue, as it can be seen by the following excerpt of the annual publication of the "Panorama of the European Union" report:

A war between the countries of the European Union is currently unthinkable, thanks to unit built over the last 50 years. Given this success, the Union is now working to bring peace and stability beyond its borders. The best way to prevent conflict is to create more prosperity worldwide. (UNIÃO EUROPEIA, 2009).

Indeed, the snippet above can be framed within the concept of "security community" of Deutsch (1990), whereby a group of states is committed to resolve their problems through institutionalized procedures without resorting to large scale physical force. This means that, while a community bond is linking certain countries, war as dispute settlement is inconceivable. By that logic, a problem that achieves one or more member of the community must be stabilized or securitized, as Waever (1995) points out.

Intuitively, the word "security" suggests the notions of perception (i.e., something is perceived as a threat by an agent) and protection (the way an agent feels facing a threat). So, it is correct to say that securitize an issue together would raise it to the category of threat, on behalf of collective protection and thereby make it more important than other issues. This reasoning leads to the understanding of "security complex", defined as a set of states whose security fears and perceptions are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from each other (BUZAN; WAEVER, 2003: 44).

This seems to be the case of the European integration process. An opposing view can be found in Mérand, Irondelle and Foucault (2010)^{vii}. They advocate a phenomenological perspective of security, whereby its definition cannot be limited to objective criteria, such as the survival of the state, but it must mean the way the theme is experienced by Europeans, be they political leaders or ordinary citizens. However, as the EU is provided, of course, by States, the units of analysis of this research are twofold: a subsystem (EU) and its units (the member states plus the Balkans states). Thus, the approach offered by Mérand, Irondelle and Foucault (2010) will not be adopted here.

According to the theory of the regional security complex (RSC), at the end of the Cold War, the territory of Europe is home to two major regional security complexes that constrain traditional European balance of power: the EU complex and the complex of Russia. The EU is classified as a RSC, in this case, because it involves a closed and strongly institutionalized regionalism, with the correlation of the foreign and security policy of the countries with the regional integration process.

As for the Balkans states, according to Buzan and Waever (2003), they indicated the possibility of forming a RSC apart from the EU in the early 1990s. However, this result did not occur due to the different dynamics of securitization in Europe. In terms of interaction and patterns of securitization, local actors connect to each other, but the power of the actors surrounding them is so great that the Balkans can be easily absorbed as a sub-region within the EU's RSC. Due to the asymmetry of power between the actors of the European security system, it is in the hands of external powers to "push" the Balkans into the EU's complex, after all, "the Balkans will not be left at the mercy of their fate" (BUZAN; WAEVER, 2003: 377). With the prospect of EU accession, this situation becomes final.

The Western Balkans can be better defined, in this sense, as a subcomplex of EU's RSC - and not as a case of overlap. The interpretation in terms of superposition states that the dynamics of the area (as a region outside the EU) is reacting to repression motivated by external powers of security complexes that surround it (the EU, the complex of Russia, and even North American complex, which has easy entry into the region). However, the current trend is that the Western Balkans states want it and are going to join the EU (COHEN, LAMPE, 2011), which makes the position of the Balkans, in the medium term, as a EU' subcomplex. The relationship between the security subcomplex and the RSC is that the subcomplex is embedded into a higher security complex.

Not coincidentally, most of the reforms required in the process of EU accession refers to the security sector. A study organized by Ebnöther, Fluri and Jurekovic (2007) offers an overview of what it is to be done on the external and internal security of the Balkans states candidates. The need for a functional insurance industry to ensure regional stability is also supported by Jones (2007), for whom the Balkan region is the main threat to instability in Europe today, albeit on a small scale. Notwithstanding, this author, while giving due importance to this strategic region, does not deal with the Western Balkans states in the perspective of potential candidates, failing to address important issues such as the contribution the EU can make to the security sector of these countries.

2.2 Integration

The analysis of the relations between the EU and the Western Balkans states raises the question of the EU's role in the international system in general, and towards his neighbors and likely future members, in particular. Unquestionably, integration and cooperation are the best instruments for stability, either by offering economic consequences or minimizing border conflicts (STETTER; DIEZ; ALBERT, 2003). The EU's role, then, involves the search for Europe' stability, but it is not enough to define even what the EU is or what its approach towards the Western Balkans really means.

Initially, European integration was conceived as a process of economic interests - although the political integration was a particular interest of the European Community founding father Jean Monnet. Nevertheless, although some dimensions remain unevenly developed, the evolution of the process toward integration in terms of foreign policy, security, judicial cooperation and public policy has raised the EU to the level of a unique and exemplary integration phenomenon.

European integration theories are a relatively new and dispersed field in the international relations. A good systematization of these theories is offered by Wiener and Diez (2009), for whom European integration theory is a field of systematic reflection on the process of political cooperation and institutional development in the EU. The key point they defend is that theories and approaches of integration can form a "mosaic" that allows the understanding of the EU in its different facets - each has its own approach and, therefore, they complement rather than compete among themselves. Thus, there would be a "grand theory of European integration" that would include many different approaches, interconnected and not compartmentalized. This study is based on this understanding to try to explain how the EU can be seen as a normative hegemonic system.

The normative power is seen by Laïdi (2008b) as the EU's biggest political resource and, therefore, the most likely form of power that can be exercised by Europe in the international system. The great advantage of the EU's foreign policy then would be its ability to shape and disseminate rules and values in the international system through non-coercive means, which moves the debate beyond the traditional dichotomy between civilian power and military power, a discussion initiated by François Duchêne and Johan Galtung, respectively. This normative power derives mainly from the peculiar nature of the EU, whether by its institutional structure that combines multiple layers of authority, whether the way the world views the EU (TOCCI, 2008) since it is a postwestphalian entity. Some authors believe that the EU's normative power is a consequence of the weakness of its foreign policy in front of actors like the U.S. and NATO.

Even if this power derives from its strength or its weakness, it is undeniable that EU's role in international relations involves a normative component. Here, normativity means an attempt to standardize behaviors according to the values of the agent that is promoting the standardization^{viii}. This does not necessarily mean an objective imposition, but it generates an expectation of non-deviation, which means that "norms become closely associated with power, in so far as only major international actors have the power to shape or determine what is considered 'normal'" (TOCCI, 2008: 04). In this logic, "all major international actors would have 'normative' foreign policies by definition, in that they all contribute to determining and shaping the 'norm' in international affairs" (TOCCI, 2008: 04).

2.3 Normative power

It is in this sense that the debate on the EU as a normative power started – Normative Power Europe (NPE), in Manners' words (2001). According to this author, the EU's role in the international system should be seen as one of normalization, by shaping conceptions of what is or is not normal or common, through the dissemination of common principles that would form the basis of the EU's construction. Thus, the EU would behave as a promoter of global standards and universal principles that inform its external relations: democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, market economy, among others, which appear in the founding treaties of the EU.

Here, we need to investigate what the EU really is^{ix}. To Manners (2002), being a hybrid of interstate and supranational forms of governance, the EU would have purchased a normative power distinct from other forms of state power. So, its foreign policy agenda is normative, whereas seeks to promote certain norms and values beyond its borders. This perspective is clearly ideal: this is the role that the EU should have, rather than what it actually has (MANNERS, 2002). However, to MacDonald (2007), studies like the one of Manners (2001; 2002) represent an idealistic liberal vision, which believes that the relative weakness of the EU (in terms of military force and other coercive instruments of foreign policy, in comparison with other state actors) is, in fact, its strength.^x

In turn, Laïdi (2009) conceptualizes the normative power as a power based on preference for general rules of behavior, "which has three essential characteristics: to have been negotiated and not imposed; to have been legitimated equally by international bodies; and to be enforceable on all actors of the international system notwithstanding their rank within it" (LAÏDI, 2009: 01). However, we need to discuss until what extent the freedom of choice goes in relation to this power, after all, the choices of an actor does not often stem from its free preferences, but from the options that are made available at a given time and from the outcomes that may arise. As the same author points out, "Europe hardly ever negotiates the contents of its norms with its partners. Basically, it's a case of 'take it or leave it'. And (...) the extent of acceptance of European norms obviously depends more on the balance of power than on free choice" (LAÏDI, 2009: 05).

Indeed, the EU's discourse revolves around the promotion of peace and security, liberal democracy and respect for human rights, among other values, as it can be seen in official statements of any European institution. And, in what is related to this research's interest, the Stabilisation and Association Process - whose goals are to consolidate democracy, the market economy, and other so called "European values" - can be considered a form of normative power action, in the extent that the Balkan states are urged to adopt these values to meet the requirements of the accession process - the choice, then, is not really "free".

In order to understand this perspective, it is necessary to conceive the EU "as a specific actor, even if this specific actor is perceived, rightly so, not as a state in its holistic form, but as a system that for a long time to come will combine national policies, intergovernmental policies, and common policies" (LAÏDI, 2008b: 38). This concept may even eliminate some problems concerning the legitimacy and scope of European policies in the international system, because it treats the EU as a system rather than as a particular agent. Analyzing the EU as a system whose main feature in international relations is its power to set standards with hegemonic content shifts the issue of EU's actorness to the question of how relations occur within this system, that is, how and why this normative power is diffused.

In this sense, it is necessary to treat the normative power as a kind of soft power, Joseph Nye's concept that Laïdi (2008a) uses concerning the EU. In Nye's words (2002), soft power would be the power that a political actor has to attract and co-opt influence without the use of military force or economic resources. Following this reasoning, we start from the Laïdi's argument (2009) to analyze the EU as a system with hegemonic normative power:

(...) Europe, which Europeans often look on as a weak actor with few means, is in reality perceived as an influential player on the world scene, less on account of its military power than on account of the force of its norms. The second is that Europe, seen from the inside as a region in the process of overall deregulation so as allow market forces full leeway, is often - in the rest of the world - seen as a hyper-regulatory actor intent on exporting its norms. Finally, (...) when one weighs Europe's political influence, it is not enough to refer to its military weakness leaving aside the influence derived from its single market. We must take another approach and explore whether Europe is not above all a "normative hegemon". A Hegemon, in that its claim to enforce its norms beyond its own frontiers, whereas up to now norm application has been essentially endogenous. A hegemon also in that the spread of these standards is increasingly based on a balance of power rather than genuinely mutual consent, even if Europe does attempt to avoid the traditional trap into which many empires fell: assuring stability while avoiding that stability turn into domination over the rest of the world (James). And finally a normative Hegemon in that by means of regulations that are both fixed and coercive Europe, in an increasing number of domains, has demonstrated its strength in an epoch of globalization. This strength is however exerted rather than claimed. (LAÏDI, 01: 2009).

Then, the theoretical perspective here proposed considers the EU as a system, in which the relations between the system itself and the units that seek to integrate to it (the candidate states) are normative-hegemonic relations. Thus, we do not ignore that there are many advantages in replacing the concept of normative power by the concept of hegemony, as Diez (2011) suggests. In fact, the very meaning of the normative concept implies some degree of hegemony (LAÏDI, 2009). What we proposed here is to treat the concept of hegemony as a relation of social forces instead of a predicate: "These social forces are engaged in a constant struggle over hegemony, but they do not 'own' hegemony: they can acquire hegemonic status, but they cannot become hegemons" (DIEZ, 2011: 04). On this view, it makes sense to think about the EU as a normative system with hegemonic status or as a role model, and not as a hegemon or imperialist actor in international relations.

2.4 State-building

Therefore, after the 2004 enlargement, the EU began to focus more on the Western Balkans countries, albeit with extreme caution since the enlargement process^{xi} - and the integration itself - came to be viewed with suspicion by European population (BROWN, 2007). Besides the popular distrust of the broadening and deepening of integration, other difficulties stood in the way of the EU: post-conflict, setting boundaries and sovereignty issues in Bosnia, Serbia and Kosovo; weak state structure in virtually all potential candidates (especially in Albania and Bosnia); physical

structural problems in Macedonia, Serbia and Albania ... Amidst all these demands, would the EU be able to overcome these challenges and “Europeanize” (and by that we mean to put in European standards^{xii}) these states?

To Knaus e Cox (2005), the answer is yes. With the combination of different strategies and specific models to each country, the EU would be the most capable actor to promote political, economic and institutional development of these states. The authors distinguish three interesting models of state-building in this task, two of which are centered on peace and conflict issues. The first one is the *authoritarian state-building*, used in Bosnia and Kosovo, in which there is the creation of international structures that assume domestic issues; it is a top-down model. Second one is *traditional capacity-building* model, which is based on non-coercive instruments used by development agencies. Third model, *member-state building*, is the most sophisticated one, and was applied more strongly in Croatia: it is the institutional transformation driven by the desire for EU membership - a corollary of the principle of conditionality.

The latter would be the most effective model to generate deep and lasting changes in these states' structure - and therefore, Knaus and Cox drew attention to the necessity of the application of this model to Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Albania, back in 2005. Recently, a book organized by Rupnik (2011) shows that the agenda of the EU-WB relations changed by not only focusing on peace and war issues to give space to the transformations generated by the application process to the EU. Rupnik (2011) offers an analysis of this transformation, either by case studies of Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo, either by approaching horizontal issues such as citizenship rights, the rule of law, public opinion and external actors such as the U.S. and Russia.

The EU strategy for the Western Balkan states, seen in this project as an example of normative power with hegemonic content, is treated by a normative perspective by Petruca (2012), to whom the case study of Serbia shows that the EU has been consistent over time in promoting its standards within the policies designed for the Western Balkans. Björkdahl (2005) adopts a social constructivist perspective to consider the EU as a norm-maker, and concludes that Macedonia has been very receptive as norm-taker. In the same logic, Ciambra (2008) sees the EU as a peculiar exporter of standards in relation to Macedonia, emphasizing the experience of institution-building as the first step towards a competitive, efficient and regulatory performance of the EU in the global system.

Nevertheless, when building their theoretical perspective of European normative power, these authors do not address the hegemonic content that is revealed behind the EU's actions. A starting point for this perspective^{xiii} is given by Türkes e Gökğöz (2006), who see the EU strategy for the Western Balkan states as a hegemonic project, with the purpose of restructuring these countries to their incorporation into the neoliberal economic structure. Our study shares this vision when we state that the EU's strategic interests are at the heart of their approach to the Western Balkans: these interests are not only about security, but also about economics. The impact of the latest economic recession in the Balkans states can be accompanied by the study of Bartlett e Monastiriotis (2010).

Following a similar logic, the statement of Chandler (2008) on the supposed "mission" of the EU in the Western Balkans should also be considered:

(...) the dilemma facing Western Europe, or the EU, with the end of the Cold War – how to relate to and manage its new eastern ‘empire’. The response of the EU has been to engage in external regulation and relationship management interventions but at the same time deny that it is exercising its authority over the region. (...) it is this dilemma, this denial of power, which has driven the enlargement process. This denial of the new West/East hierarchy of European power, and the EU's de facto ‘empire’ to the east, has taken the form of democracy-promotion and state-building and the rapid extension and drawing out of the enlargement process to the Balkans. (...) State-building through democracy promotion involves no less expenditure of resources than empire, in fact, if anything, state-building is more invasive and regulatory. The EU has not been hesitant to intervene, merely reluctant to assume political responsibility for intervention. The state-building process of EU enlargement has been able to be highly regulatory precisely on the basis that the regulatory mechanisms invest political responsibility in the candidate countries while denying the EU's domination. (...) It would appear that the Balkan states were fortunate in that their wealthy neighbors to the west had not only identified their central problems but also happened to have the solutions to them already at hand. (CHANDLER, 2008: 70-72).

Still on issue about the state structure of the Western Balkan countries, considering the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution, it is necessary to understand the role of war in state-building. In reality, it is necessary to emphasize that war, in itself, does not matter so much, but rather the result of it, which is the ability to exercise domination in a stable way, which depends on the effectiveness in the exercise of authority, but also on legitimacy (McNEILL, 1982). Thus, the war is an important variable, especially because clearly defines the winners and losers in the political competition. This can be seen in the Balkan region: the two cases of relative "success" in terms of state-building - Croatia and Slovenia - only "escaped" the war, did not suffer the adverse effects of armed conflict on its territory. The cases which one might call "failure" in terms of state capacity - the other former Yugoslav republics - were extremely hurt by having lost their wars.

2.5 Failed States

It is interesting to note that the states most affected by the wars of Yugoslavia's disintegration form what part of the international literature called "failed states" (ROTBURG, 2004). "Failing" or "failed" states would be those that emerge from post-conflict situations without minimum state structures and are subject to reconstruction by the international community through peacekeeping missions (such as the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina) or international administration by the UN (as in the Kosovo case). The common characteristics of failure (KRASNER, 2004) would be the existence of: internal war and upheaval; ethnic or religious hostility; state's incapacity to control its territory and borders; fall in the provision of public goods such as health or education; weak democratic institutions; military coercion as a tool of executive power; and weak state infrastructure. These factors are similar to the situation in which Bosnia and Kosovo have passed during the last decade, which is why the concept of failed states is going to be applied to them. Other analytical tools on the subject can be found at Economides (2011), Rotberg (2004) e Marko (2005).

We are also being guided by the definition of "embedded democracy" (MERKEL, 2004), which constitutes a substantive perspective of democracy, whereby stable constitutional democracies are embedded internally and externally in a wider socio-political environment. Internally, this occurs through five partial regimes, which correspond to: a) electoral system, b) civil rights c) political freedoms, d) horizontal accountability e) effective power to govern. Externally, these five sub-systems of democracy would be embedded in three spheres of conditions conducive to democracy, which protect the sub-systems of external environment, internal shocks and destabilizing trends: a) staticity b) civil society c) economic and social requirements of democracy. Thus, following the study of Cerami (2006), the WB' states are going to be treated as semi-consolidated democracies, because they lack the third ring of external embedding of democracy, which is the social and economic requirements necessary for deepening of democracy, as the author points out.

Other authors deal with more specific questions about the rebuilding of states that have passed through periods of conflict. Hayden (2005) questions aspects of institutional governance in the case of ethnically divided states, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, and asserts the necessity of a functional state - rather than an engaged international community - to ensure human rights of its citizens. Delevic (2007) and Balfour and Stratulat (2011) provide an overview of what is to be done in the Balkans states, primarily in terms of democracy, organized crime, freedom of the press and civil society. And Dobbins (2008) brings important data on the EU's role in the reconstruction of Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, although we do not share his theoretical perspective.

Besides that, Batt et al (2008) provide extensive case-studies about Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, with special focus on the Albanian issue in the region. Another interesting case-study about Bosnia and Herzegovina is provided by Ragaru (2007), mainly because it raises the question about the European capacity of combining civilian and military elements in the Bosnian post-conflict management. These Works are important for an initial knowledge about state-capacity reconstruction in the Western Balkans countries.

3. Considerations

The role that the EU will take on the international scene in the coming years is likely to be a normative model, although this does not mean a passive observer of the changes in the international system. As Grant (2007) notes, it is the EU's attitudes, in particular the performance of its normative power, that will determine whether the EU will be able to influence actors like the U.S., China and Russia.

Although the main EU strategy for the Western Balkans is the enlargement process, the European presence in the region can be economically felt since the Yugoslavia's disintegration. With the fall of the socialist regimes in the east, the EU supported and integrated the new Balkans states in its production networks (BEREND, 2010), which allowed the formation of a regional network of great economic importance to the EU. The main investors of these new states were EU member countries, and most of the local banking system assets had passed into the hands of European banks during the 1990s. According to Berend (2010), foreign direct investment in the first fifteen years of transformation of Balkan States reached 42 million dollars, which also have enhanced the role of European companies in the industrial system of the region.

The European economic participation in the remodeling of the Balkan States helped fuel the EU strategy towards them, which was launched at the European Council in Thessaloniki in 2003, when it was declared that the future of the Western Balkans was inside the EU. However, as Brown (2007) reminds, we could see that the principle of conditionality was already present in EU-WB relations: the economic and political support would continue only if such states fulfill European standards in various fields, as it is stated in the 2005 Enlargement Strategy Paper – the main one being the full collaboration with the ICTY^{xiv}. The same argument was indicated by O'Brien: "If the Western Balkan aspirants are well prepared, European leaders will probably invite them to join" the integration process (O'BRIEN, 2006: 71).

ⁱ We chose to quote the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as Macedonia.

ⁱⁱ Even though Kosovo lacks full recognition as an independent state by the international community - there are disagreements about its recognition by Member States of the European Union - it is already included as a potential candidate to the enlargement, under the auspices of Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council. Thus, Kosovo is considered a state "in fact", and so will be treated in the course of this study.

ⁱⁱⁱ The break in the pace of negotiations between Serbia and the EU was due to the failure to capture Ratko Mladic, commander of military force of the Republika Srpska, formed by Bosnian Serbs origin, during 1992-1995. Mladic was arrested in June 2011.

^{iv} Until April 2013: a) Acceding country: Croatia; b) Candidate countries: Island, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey; c) Potential candidates: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence). (COMISSÃO EUROPEIA, 2013).

^v According to the Copenhagen criteria, "membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union" (EUROPEAN COUNCIL, 1993). New members are only admitted when all requirements are fulfilled and only with consent of the EU institutions and the governments of the member states and the candidate state. They can only move from one stage of the process to another when all conditions have been met for each stage. Thus, the prospect of accession acts as a powerful incentive for reform. For more information, see Schimmelfennig e Sedelmeier (2009).

^{vi} SAP is part of a set of procedures that constitute the WB states process of accession to the EU, according to articles 6 and 49 of the Treaty on European Union. "This stabilization and association process is at the heart of the Union's policy towards the five countries concerned. It takes account of the situation of each country and is based on respect for the conditions defined by the Council on 29 April 1997 concerning democratic, economic and institutional reforms. On the basis of these criteria, the Union proposes an individualized approach to each of these countries" (COMISSÃO EUROPEIA, 2000). In short, it is a tool designed to help WB candidates to adopt and implement EU legislation, involving trade concessions, economic assistance, financial support for state reconstruction (through CARDS) and a series of association agreements, implying rights and reciprocal obligations.

^{vii} For these authors, there is no specific threat to the European continent in the contemporary international system, both in relation to the territorial integrity of states and to its fundamental political values.

^{viii} For more accurate concepts of normativity, see Forsberg (2011).

^{ix} Other views to investigate what the EU is about: Leca (2007); Zielonka (2006); Zielonka (2008).

^x MacDonald (2007: 03) about Manners' theoretical approach: "The EU is a benign force for good in the world that has little more than humanity's highest interests at heart, according to this view".

^{xi} An analysis of the enlargement process with all its pros and cons and its direct impact on European Neighborhood Policy can be found in Grant (2006).

^{xii} An interesting discussion on the impact of the accession dynamics in the candidate countries from the perspective of rational institutionalism can be found at Sedelmeier (2011)

^{xiii} In the same sense, Noutcheva (2008) analyzes the EU's foreign policy for Kosovo as being imperialist intended: "In the absence of a clear explanation of the uniqueness of Kosovo's case, this selective application of new rules strongly hints at the West's (and the EU's) hegemonic behavior, even if in the name of allegedly normative ends" (NOUTCHEVA, 2008: 50).

^{xiv} For a further look of the principle of conditionality in the case of cooperation with the ICTY, see Batt et al (2009).

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