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Continentalisation: Balkan Peninsula Integrat's Concept

Nikola YANKOV[1]

[1] Prof. Univ. PhD, D Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov, Bulgaria, e-mail: nikolanikol@gmail.com

Abstract: The article is commenting the relation between Globalisation and Continentalisation. It states that a new direction for Europe is rethinking the continentalisation under the prism of the Balkan Peninsula EU integration process. This new direction we name re continentalisation. In Balkan Peninsula context, it means formation of a Pan Balkan states' entity. In this regard, the article presents the idea of the Balkan Peninsula external integration process and its result – an integrat. We present some ideas about specific tools for conceptualising and developing of the integrat. The accents are put on matters as networking, the role of the universities in preparing integration development has oriented specialists/entrepreneneurs – namely strategic thinkers and visionary individuals. Some answers of the question "What have to be the next steps for BP integration process? Are given. Some ideas about Trans border integration axes and corridors as a tool are presented.

Keywords: *Continetalisation; Recontinentalisation; Balkan Peninsula; Balkan integration process; Diagonal development.*

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1. Introduction

One aspect of the great theme and phenomenon Globalisation is to understand the relation: **Globalisation – Continentalisation**.

If the globalisation is a trend of increasing the interactions between many and different states, stakeholders and agents all over the world and their competition [11], the continentalisation concept is connected with the efforts different types of entities within the boundaries of a certain continent to be created. It also means mutual interactions between national economic and social networks on the territory of a continent or sub-continent. In the case of Europe, the continentalisation affects the super structural, structural, and infrastructural and info structural networks of all countries.

2. Theoretical Background

In a general frame we are looking for a holistic approach which to cover the present relation (and the chain) "**Globalisation – Continentalisation (sub continentalisation) - Balkan Peninsula integration process" (BPIP) - Balkan Peninsula integrat.** According to Rifkin, the continentalisation is the next stage of the globalization. He is adding also that the European Union is the first continental economy and political union to begin transitioning into the Third and Forth industrial revolutions [2].

Some aspects of the continentalisation we present in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions and accents of the continentalisation

Process of Continenta-lisation and sub conti-nentali-sation	**Dimensions and accents**
	A reemerging trend – rethinking the vision about the ***EU of 27 + …"***
	Continental governing unions[1] and a continent countries working together
	EU project for integration of countries, cooperation, democracy, free movement of goods and people, and achieving synergies in different areas.
	Common approach for resolving strategic issues which face the continent (the EU) as a whole etc.

[1] Continental unions are being formed in Asia (The ASEAN Union), Africa (The African Union) and South America (The Union of South American Nations). In North America, between the northern states of USA and Canadian provinces for forming integrated continental markets.

The joint development of the European states show the necessity for rethinking the continentalisation (sub continentalisation) process which started years ago and at the present moment face serious problems [3; 5]. We mark it as a process of re-continentalisation. We believe that it is a new approach for the reshaping the European Union. Therefore, the next step is what the institutions have to do for the intelligent ***re-continentalisation*** of Europe.

One of the re-continentalisation problems will be resolved with the Balkan Peninsula integration process.

We believe that the re-continentalisation needs diagonal approach and that the pattern of development in XXI century has to be changed, based on the ***Paradigm of the Diagonal Development*** [2] [6]. It means that new types of development to be followed. Some of them are - agility, digimodernity [4], hybrid [10], streamlining [11], etc as a whole the re-continentalisation means diagonal thinking [6].

Talking about continentalisation, we have to answer of the question: How integrated Europe has to be in future and what has to be the scale, degree, types of such integration. This direction arise other questions about the **degree** - Very Large or Large, medium or small scale of integration; the **type** - forced, fast or incremental, slow; **the extension** - including all states or grouping depending them in function of their readiness and wish to join EU.

Other problem is the elaboration of a clear Vision for the states from the Western part of the Balkan Peninsula.

Third basic question is what is best - ***stronger strategic convergence OR incremental integration?***

In this order of thinking the EU Balkan Peninsula integrators, face dilemmas as:

* Or Globalization **vs.** Continentalisation;

* Or Balanced/non balances globalization **Vs.** Continentalisation;

* Or strategically rethinking the Continentalisation and re-continentalisation.

The answers of those questions will result in a common European Future shape – the ***EU of 27 + …"*** [3].

[2] This paradigm is connected with the Paradigm of Rational economy in the paradigm of the rational economy and the Paradigm to return to the nature and common sense.

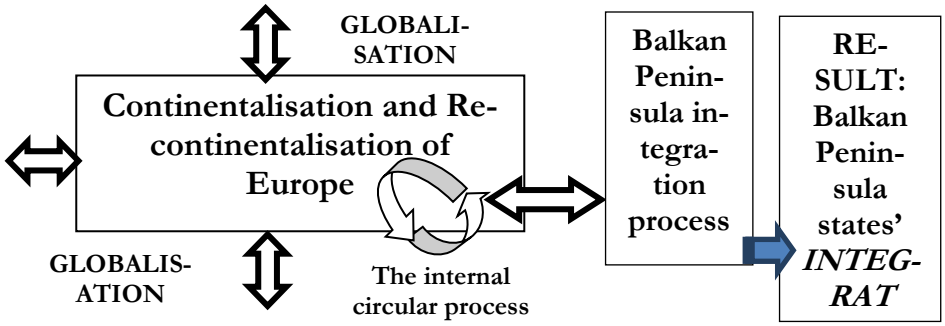
[3] The Top meeting of the 28 member states of the under the Bulgarian Presidency of the European Union in Sofia EU Western Balkans summit Declaration, 17 May 2018 was declared unequivocal support for the European perspective of the Western Balkans. Among the many statements it promote a market- and investment-friendly environment in the

3. Argument of the paper

Continentalisation and sub continentalisation of Europe by forming conceptual and real entities (***integrats).*** In continental aspect, those could be networks of countries, mega regions, regions and sums of their sub networks and knots. As a whole, they could form the outlines of the new (Pan) European Union. The question nowadays is what has to be the next steps for BP integration process?

The relation "Globalisation ←→ Continentalisation (of Europe) ←→ Balkan Peninsula integration process has to have as a result an entity which we call the ***BALKAN INTEGRAT*"**. **Figure 1** visualises this idea.

Figure 1. Direction in the processes of globalisation and continen-talisation.



Some of the questions regarding the vision for the ***EU of 27 + …"*** further continentalisation are systematised in the following matrix – Table 2.

4. Arguments to support the thesis

The Balkan Peninsula plays specific role in European Economic space, has concrete and specific functions. In addition, it is an important subsystem of European continent and a bridge, connecting Europe with Asia.

For the constructing of a Vision for the inter Balkan states integration one has to answer the following question: What have to be the shape of a Balkan Peninsula integrat model? The answers need combined usage of two approaches:

Western Balkans to move faster towards a digital economy and to sustainable and climate-friendly societies in line with the Paris agreement.

* **"Top-Down**" (Hyper vision: European Union authorities, Multi aspect strategies, Programmes, Funds, European-planning bodies etc.) **And**

* **"Down-Up"** (acting on local level - states, mega regions, regions, municipalities. And on this levels - setting common goals for Balkan Peninsula integration process, tracing Trans border axes and corridors, regional integration processes (business and market integration); mutual marketing, common activities in social, ecological and other areas. The integration base are strategies for mutual (symmetric and non-symmetric) market penetration.

Table 2. Some questions regarding the Balkan Integrat

	FORMULATION OF THE QUESTIONS
Strategic questions for outlining the Balkan Peninsula integrat	**Could** the European Balkan Peninsula sub-continent be transformed into a multi states integrat and what type it will be its profile - very large scale, small scale of integration?
	What type of integration – Vital parts of, or the entire: super structure, basic structures (business, economic, social etc.), strategic infrastructures and info structure (which supports the different information systems)?
	What could be set common goals for Balkan Peninsula integration process?
	What has to be the levels of multi aspect integration process - low medium or high?
	How to meet the need to have a modern vision for a Pan Balkan Peninsula countries' entity (integrat)? In addition - **What** should be its model?
	What should be the common goals and approaches and next steps of the ***Balkan Peninsula integration process (BPIP)?***
	What have to be the next integration goal for strategic associated member to the new EU of 27?
	What could be strategic tools of the Balkan countries integration process?

In this frame arise one very important question is "With what conceptual strategic tools for Balkan countries integration process to start? In this regard, we think that some of them are matrix, networking, trajectories etc.

The next matrix of some of the relations between different networks presents Figure 2.

After the establishment of the «soft» connections follow the building of physical, structures and infrastructure, which as a whole facilitate the Trans' border Balkan Peninsula integration process [7; 8; 9].

Figure 3. Illustrates the integration process in this direction.

NETWORK AND SUB NETWORKS AND KNOTS	***TYPES OF RELATIONS, LINKS AND INDEPENDENTS PROCESSES***	***NETWORK AND SUB NETWORKS AND KNOTS***
First knot (state)	**Communication – exchange of strategic and operational information; Commercial; Energy; Joint efforts development dialogue; Partnership and integration; Exchange of knowledge; Joint strategizing, project conceptualization and planning; Mutual project realization etic.**	***First knot (state)***
Second knot (state)		***Second knot (state)***
Third knot (state)		***Third knot (state)***
forth knot (state)		***forth knot (state)***
Fifth knot (state)		***Fifth knot (state)***
…….		…….
……..		……..
Development of new properties of the network – e.g. flexibility, resiliency etic.		

Figure 2. The matrix model of BP network connections

Aspects of the comprehensive Balkan Peninsula integration				
Vertical	**Horizontal**	**Diagonal**	**Geographical**	
Super–structu-ral **Structu-ral** **Infrast-ructural** **Infost-ructural**	**Countries** **Macro regions** **Regions (administrative)** **Municipalities** **Localities**	**Balkan peninsula non-European union member states and EU member states**	**WESTERN BALKAN STATES:** SLOVENIA, CROA-TIA, BOSNIA AND HER-ZEGOVINA,, SERBIA, MONTE NEGRO, ALBANIA, MACEDONIA (FYROM)	**EASTERN BALKAN STATES-** ROMANIA, BULGARIA GREECE, MOLDOVA
INTEGRATION BETWEEN: Balkan states – EU; Balkan countries, full fledge members of EU and other Balkan Peninsula countries; Trans border territories of the full fledge members of EU; Non-EU member countries on the territory of the Balkan Peninsula; Non-EU member countries on the territory of the Balkan Peninsula				

Figure 3. Outlining the Balkan Peninsula multi aspect integration

A **holistic vision** for the BPIP could an integrator of different interconnected, interdependent, and dependent networks. They have to be approached not only as multi structural systems, but also perceived as a set of overlapping and mutual connected entities.

The **super hub** could be an i**ntegrator** of the following networks:

- States with different role, interests, initiatives, projects and positions in the region.
- Economic unions with different interests in Balkan Peninsula joint development (e.g. European Union, surounding countries etc.);
- Functional and infrastructural networks of: ports, development institutions, transport corridors, natural ecological systems, industries, markets, universities etc.

The networking of the integration process is presented in Figure 4.

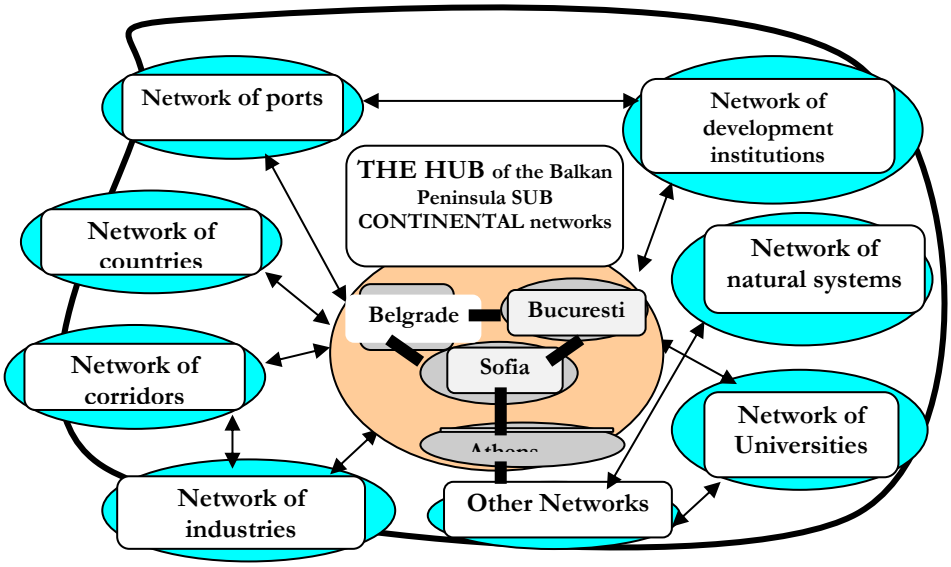


Figure 4. The networking model of the Balkan Peninsula integrat

A specific tool in the tracing and after that developing of Trans border meridian and parallelI axes and corridors. Their development, if intelligently directed (with concepts, visions, strategies) will results in well-developed co-opetation and more European Union oriented Balkan countries**.**

The basic idea is that Trans border (inter states) axes and corridors could be a base for future horizontal and vertical integration of Balkan Peninsula. Created and jointly developed, they could be the backbone of real Trans border regions multi vector (horizontal, vertical and diagonal) integration. The actions in localities lying on those axes aim to connect people, specialists, business activities, business organizations, administrative bodies, information cultural, sports and tourist networks, joint planning groups etc.

The inter states axes and corridors ***concept as an integration tool.*** Some experimental models of Trans-border axes (corridors) if takes shape or already traced between Bulgaria, Romania and Greece could [8]:

- be transfered in other territories and in the Western Balkans states integration process;
- make the marketing agility to grow;
- be a backbone for development of an trans border medium class region;
- integrate neighbouring countries medium class regions through connecting axes and corridors

Inter BP states axes/corridors concept could be pivot for mutual Trans border integration/cooperation processes

The normal integration and functioning in TBRs needs a proper integrator or ***integrators***.

5. Arguments to argue the thesis

First of all the universities have to train and to prepare Balkan integration development oriented specialists/entrepreneneurs. Namely strategic thinkers and visionaries, who will search opportunities for integrated B**P** development, the goals oriented universities have to train following the logics in the process of development: 1. VISION ≥ 2. COMMON STRATEGY for ***Balkan Peninsula integration process implementation*** ≥ 3. REGIONAL VERTICAL AND HORISONTAL STRATEGIES for each state.

The Universities have to play an important, even major role and to be one of the principal stakeholders of Balkan countries integrated development. They have to:

- Offer special courses for creating awareness regarding the Balkan states internal and external integration process;
- Build-up and management of Trans border ***think tanks*** (strategic projects teams and network;

- Encourage original entrepreneurship's initiatives.
- Train the regional oriented entrepreneurs - a matter of utmost importancy for the trans border development.

* Prepare regional and especially Trans border entrepreneurs which to imply new types of academic initiatives as developing Trans states axes and corridors.

The training of regional, and especially of Trans border entrepreneurs' activity, implies new types of academic initiatives. Alternatively, in the postmodern age specific types of regional entrepreneurship emerge, namely *collective entrepreneurial initiatives.*

It is needed a concept for inter-university network for training and research the process of co-operation and integration of the Balkan Peninsula integration specialists to be graduated. As a whole, a specialized structure has to make the Agenda for joint formulation of the cooperation and integration activities and strategies within the BP [1]. Such rather inter universities network has to offer and suggest not only knowledge but also decisions regarding the future development of BP.

6. Conclusions

The Balkan Peninsula sub-continent has to be approached as an integrat. It has to have a Vision for construction of an integrat. For that, it is needed training for the specific integration's problems formulation and resolving.

The coordinated, joint, comprehensive and mutual closest territories development will "produce" synergetic Trans border) effects

Presently it is needed reformulating the well-known expression **THINK** Globally (Continentally, Penininsulary), and the most important - **ACT LOCALLY (**Nationally, Regionally, Municipally).

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