

## Abstract

This study analyzes the issue of self-determination, territorial integrity and international stability, within the Yugoslav context. However, it is not confined to the Yugoslav case of self-determination alone. The study stretches over other several cases of self-determination and analyzes the historical background of the phenomenon itself. The argument of this dissertation in terms of the history of self-determination, is that the phenomenon has gradually crystallized over the last two centuries. In addition, self-determination is viewed in connection with two other issues: territorial integrity and international stability. In fact, these two segments have been and remain intrinsic to every discussion of self-determination. The historical part of the problem also is comprised of scholarly work and the judicial practice that have lead to the final formulation of self-determination as it stands at the present.

The conclusion of this study is that the Yugoslav case of self-determination should not be singled out from other similar cases of its time. This covers not only the period following the end of the Cold War, but also the period prior to the South Slav unification of 1918 and thereafter. In all cases, the Yugoslav case reflects the features of self-determination as they appeared at the times under discussion. Evidence of this is best seen from the last period of the Yugoslav self-determination after the Cold War. In this period, Yugoslav self-determination was nothing but a part of the wider picture of self-determination covering all former Communist Federations (Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia). This further supports the argument that the Yugoslav case did not set any precedent in terms of self-determination that could be applicable in the future: self-determination as a principle has not been altered. It remains a political principle with a moral value only, without any legally binding effect and the relevance for the future rests in the fact that it has further crystallized one of the aspects of self-determination, that is, the principle of *uti possidetis*. The Yugoslav case has shown that the fixed territorial borders, as a rule of international law and relations that limits the territorial scope of self-determination, is a rule of utmost acceptance.

The Yugoslav case of self-determination, however, has some unique features. It concerns the nature of nationalism of its constituent nations, most notably the Serbs. The interpretation of self-determination put forth by these nations was unique as compared to the whole Communist world that collapsed after the Cold War. Namely, they perceived self-determination in pure ethnic terms, thus excluding other nations from being beneficiaries of the same right. This perception was not without practical implications. The realization of pure ethnic self-determination resulted in ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs and the destruction of other cultures within the territory of former Yugoslavia. In addition to stopping the war in the territories of former Yugoslavia, efforts of the international community have also been focused on preventing the implementation of ethnic self-determination. The issue of human rights, the rule of law and democracy take prominence in the efforts of the international community in these regards. In some cases, these efforts have been combined with the use of force and sanctions against some of the Yugoslav actors.