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Political Borders and Ethnic Boundaries: The prospects for political and economic integration in the Western Balkans.

Enika Abazi, Ph.D.
University 'Aleksander Moisiu' Durres

ABSTRACT

The paper debates the prospects for political and economic integration in the Western Balkan. The paper argues that the features that shape the boundaries of ethnicity are considered as the premise for any concrete analysis on the causes of insecurity in the Western Balkans that at the same time shapes the rigidity of political borders. Bringing the discussion of ethnic boundaries into security and integration debates helps to introduce the circumstances of interaction as an agency to explore the accounts of insecurities in the Western Balkans, this can therefore offer avenues for discussing the reality and possibilities of political integration. On the other hand, people's commonly shared economic interests shaped by the logic of profit speak for an opening of states' economic borders. The question of the ethnic boundaries and economic interests and the way they are affecting the integrating processes in the triangle Serbia-Albania-Macedonia will be discussed more in details. The paper offers a group-centered approach to security concerns and economic integration processes in the Western Balkans, defending the idea that the present reality in the region speaks for a shift of economic borders rather than political ones.

Key words: ethnic boundaries, economic and political integration, Western Balkans, cooperation.

Correspondence author: Enika Abazi, Ph.D., University "Aleksander Moisiu",
Lagjia Nr. 1, Rruga e Currilave, Durres, Albania. Email: eabazi@uamd.edu.al