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**BURSA ULUDAĞ UNIVERSITY**

**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**COURSE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

# **BALKAN GEOPOLITICS AND CHAMERIA QUESTION**

**(MASTER DEGREE THESIS)**

**Irieda HAMZAJ**

**BURSA-2019**



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**(MASTER DEGREE THESIS)**

**Irieda HAMZAJ**

**Supervisor:**

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sezgin Kaya**

**BURSA-2019**

## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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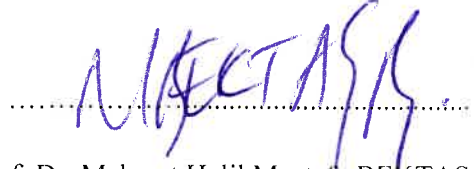
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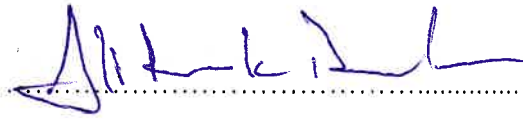
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**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**  
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## LETTER OF OATH

I declared that my master thesis on the topic of: “**BALKAN GEOPOLITICS AND CHAMERIA QUESTION**” has consisted of the scientific method of research; I followed the writing and ethics rules. Likewise, all the sources that were given are ultimately relevant to the thesis’ rules, therefore: I swear an oath with my dignity that I did not plagiarize paragraph on my thesis.

Date and signature

29.08.2019



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## ABSTRACT

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### BALKAN GEOPOLITICS AND CHAMERIA QUESTION

This study analyzes historical facts from the end of the Ottoman Empire until nowadays and shows the consequences that geopolitical games had upon the Balkan Peninsula. Within this study firstly it is presented the history and principles of both classical and critical Geopolitics, including a detailed explanation of the geopolitical position of Balkans and the Chameria Region.

Additionally, the whole historical prospectus of the Balkans in general and Chameria Question, in particular, has been explained according to classical geopolitical strategies. It is the first time that the Chameria Question is seen under the geopolitical perspective. The main query reveals the importance of this small land for both countries Albania and Greece as well as the direct interests that different actors such as Great Britain, the United States of America and Russia have for the region. To achieve this, sources from different languages such as Albanian, French, English, Turkish, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese have been used.

In sequence, based on the hypothesis of this study, it is observed that these geopolitical strategies are present and continue to lie underneath an elusive peace even in this century. These strategies after the 1990s made possible the change of state borders thus changed once again the balance of powers in the region. Yet for Chameria there is still no official solution that would appease the situation and satisfy both countries.

**Keywords:** Albania, Balkan Peninsula, Chameria Question, Geopolitics, Greece.

## ÖZET

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### **BALKAN JEOPOLİTİĞİ VE ÇAMIRIA SORUNU**

Bu çalışma, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son döneminden günümüze kadar olan tarihi olayları analiz etmekte ve jeopolitik oyunların Balkan Yarımadası üzerindeki sonuçlarını göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada öncelikle, Balkanlar ve Çamiria Bölgesi'nin jeopolitik konumunun ayrıntılı bir açıklaması da dahil olmak üzere hem klasik hem de kritik Jeopolitik'in tarihçesi ve ilkeleri sunulmuştur.

Buna ek olarak, genel anlamda Balkanlar'ın tüm tarihi tarifi ve özel anlamda Çamiria Sorunu klasik jeopolitik stratejilere göre açıklanmıştır. Çamiria Sorunu jeopolitik bakış açısından ilk kez bu çalışmada incelenmiştir. Ana sorğu olarak bu küçük toprağın hem Arnavutluk hem de Yunanistan ülkeleri için önemini yanı sıra Büyük Britanya, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Rusya gibi farklı aktörlerin bölge için sahip oldukları doğrudan çıkarları ortaya koyulmuştur. Bunu başarmak için Arnavutça, Fransızca, İngilizce, İspanyolca, İtalyanca, Portekizce ve Türkçe gibi farklı dillerden kaynaklar kullanılmıştır.

Sırasıyla, bu çalışmanın hipotezine dayanarak, bu jeopolitik stratejilerin mevcut olduğu ve bu yüzyılda bile zor bir barışın altında kalmaya devam ettiği görülmektedir. 1990'dan sonraki bu stratejiler, devlet sınırlarının değişmesini mümkün kılarak bölge güçlerinin dengesini bir kez daha değiştirmiştir. Yine de Çamiria için durumu yatıştıracak ve her iki ülkeyi tatmin edecek resmi bir çözüm bulunmamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Arnavutluk, Balkan Yarımadası, Çamiria Sorunu, Jeopolitik, Yunanistan.

## PREFACE

Being a child of the region I have always met with people whose parents or grandparents were expelled from the Chameria lands, I have heard their stories and the issue caught my interest. This is one of the reasons why I choose to write about the Chameria region. However, I always thought that, as it always happens in our lands, the real reason for everything is mostly hidden and only the consequences of plans made may be years before they get applied are visible. Geopolitics thought lifts the surface of the problem revealing the true colors of it, while giving us a whole different picture that lies underneath. Since I started to work with this strategy-oriented notion my apprehension changed deeply.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Almighty Allah that gave me the strength to get through every obstacle so I could hold on to my journey and finalize my work.

Secondly, I truly appreciate the patience and guidance that I received during all this long period from my supervisor Assoc.Prof.Dr. Sezgin Kaya. He encouraged me through, while always supporting in all ways possible. I feel very privileged to be one of his students.

Finally, I am eternally grateful to my parents and brothers for the unconditional care and the faith they have in me, and surely my dear friend Seçkin Arpalier for his help and assistance in the revision of my thesis.

I dedicate this thesis to the youngest of our family Vera, hoping that one day she will be able to read the works of her aunt.

**Irieda HAMZAJ**

**25.08.2019, Bursa**



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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Acronyms</b>
BC	Before Christ
CPA	Chameria Political Association
ELAS	Greek National Liberation Army
EU	European Union
LNÇ	Lëvizja Nacional Çlirimtare / National Liberation Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PKSH	Partia Komuniste Shqiptare/ Communist Party of Albania
UN	United Nations
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
US	United States
WB	World Bank
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

## INTRODUCTION

The end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century found the Balkan Peninsula boiling from hot conflict. This conflict was rising due to new ideas such as nationalism and the strategy-oriented notion Geopolitics. The creation of new states was made following the will of the Great Powers. Their direct impact made out of the region a buffer zone which will always swing from east to west. The small Balkan countries aware of this game played their part as good chess soldiers while trying to extend their power in the region. Classical Geopolitical scholars such as Kjellen, Mackinder or Kissinger gave them the ultimate reason and nice strategies to achieve their plans on expansion and power. Nonetheless, what was left in between had to suffer severe consequences. Chameria's history is one of many that had to suffer firsthand the taste of geopolitical games.

This topic has always been always studied under humanitarian terms looking only into the persecution starting from the beginning of the 1910s and climaxing with the genocide made by Greeks against the Albanian-Cham population in 1945. In other studies researchers from both countries Albania and Greece tried to prove why this land belongs to the respective states. However, what is aimed this thesis is to show for the first time another face of the problem, the geopolitical one, under a bigger scope while trying to stay faithful to the historical facts. Since this issue was one of the first which led the way to others to follow during the 1990's in the Balkans, therefore this work will cover a long-time period from the Ottoman times until nowadays.

During the Ottoman Empire Period, Balkan lands were unified under one General Ruler, the Sultan nonetheless there still uprising from here now reached its peak with the fall of the Empire and the creation of new nation-states. Chameria lands under the rule of the Ottomans were of great importance for their strategic position as well as because Mora and Parga were the centers of trade.

After the split of the Empire, with the implementation of new geopolitical strategies Chameria land was seen by Greeks as the Achilles heel that would break the Albanian resistance thus they would be able to conquer all the lands which once were under Epirus. Actions were taken to homogenize the lands, like regularly expulsions of

the Albanian and Turkish populations out of the lands of Chameria and Thrace. This is where the analysis of the question is taken.

The research questions of this study include the following matters according to the principles of classical geopolitics, before and during the World Wars in accordance with the Houshofer and Mackinder whilst after the wars according to Kenan, Spykman and Kissinger:

- How did the new geopolitical game, especially between Great Britain and Russia influence the creation of a new Balkan map?
- Why did Greece have an upper hand with its relations with the Great Powers compared to Albania and how did this situation influenced Chameria?
- What is the importance of Chameria Question for the region and is there any solution presented?

This study is composed of three chapters starting with the explanation of the theoretical frame of the problem, continuing by looking into the past of the Question and tries to give answers to our research questions. By writing this thesis, the main scope and allegation was proving that the geopolitical strategies applied by the Great Powers over the Balkan region led to lasting ethnic conflicts and regional destabilization.

## CHAPTER 1

### GEOPOLITICS AS A NOTION

Geopolitics is a notion that was first used at the end of the 19th century, it integrated deeply in the International Relations and shaped the world map as it can be seen at the present. Germany, Great Britain, France, Russia and the United States of America (USA) took lead in the studies of geopolitics while their governments tried to apply it on the ground continuing so the century-long rivalries and enhancing their power and territories.

#### 1. The History and Principles of Geopolitics

Geopolitics is becoming the most reviewed topic nowadays while all scholars and states put it as a crucial part of world politics. The word geopolitics originates from Greek. The word “γῆ” (Geo) meaning land and “πολιτική” (Politiki) meaning politics, thus basically is the impact that geographical features of a country have upon the internal and international political decisions.<sup>1</sup> geopolitics has been part of human history during centuries, deciding so the rise and fall of empires, kingdoms or early state forms. These types of organisations saw territory expansion as a mean of survival and power mostly achieved through war or diplomacy. As a matter of fact, there are different disciplines related to “Geo” that during centuries have played an important role into shaping human and state relations. That is why it is necessary to differ between several notions which are closely related to the field such as; geography, political geography and geopolitics.

Geography, etymologically explained from “geo” and “graphia” (writing or description), is the science related to the understanding and the specification of land, space and relief. Geography is classified under the realm of natural sciences and in itself

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/geopolitics> (Accessed 09.01.2018).

it is not changeable, its features and general positions are well determined. Even though weather or human activity can play a role into shaping the surroundings, its impact is not perpetual. On the other hand, political geography relates more to the blend of human and physical factors, the close affiliation between earth, space and man.

This close relation between geographical factors and political entities is attained in cases where humans associate political organisations with space, historical and cultural factors, while geopolitics is mostly an interrelationship of political sciences, physical geography and economics.<sup>2</sup> Yet, for Yves Lacoste, geopolitics is about the rivalry of powers for a certain territory. In this context the geographical territory is really important, but also the people who live on this territory and the power forasmuch they accept or they refuse due to the real or false history that has been told, having under consideration their fears and concerns about the future<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless geopolitics or political geography it cannot be classified as natural sciences, yet they represent a certain philosophy that was later on was transformed into theories of international relations. Though the roots of geopolitics and strategy date since early antiquity when many generals, philosophers or strategists studied these forms in order to empower their States; as it can be observed in an early example through the work of the great Chinese strategist Sun Tzu (544-496 BC) “The Art of War”:

*“The art of war is of vital importance to the State. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected. The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field. These are: (1) The Moral Law; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; (4) The Commander; (5) Method and discipline.”<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup>Hans W. Weigert, Henry Brodie, Edward. W. Donerty, John R. Fernstrom, Eric Fischer, Dudley Kirk, “Principles of Political Geography”, Appleton-Century-CroftsInc., New York,1957, pp.3-6.

<sup>3</sup>Yves Lacoste, “La Géographie, La Géopolitique Et Le Raisonnement Géographique”, La Découverte, Hérodote, 2008/3 nr.130,Institut Français de Géopolitique, Paris, pp. 17-42.

<sup>4</sup> Sun Tzu ,“The Art Of War” Allandale Online Publishing, Leicester, 2000, p.1.



Another example is the one between Rome and Carthage from 264 BC to 146 BC, where two powers a Maritime one (Carthage) and a Continental power (Rome) fought to obtain the Mediterranean hegemony.<sup>5</sup>

As illustrated in the examples or even from the words of Tzu above, nowadays the principles are grouped under what is called geopolitical perception and also rephrased in a more modern way by scholars the main principles of the domain are closely related to the spatial, human, economic, military and cultural factors. Within spatial it's understood the size, shape, location and the impact of the boundaries to the state. These are unalterable principles since they appertain to geographical elements. Human and cultural principles include population growth and pressure, migration, languages and religious composition of the population.<sup>6</sup> Based on these principles, the defined time and the importance of historical events, the domain is developed into two main branches; classical geopolitics and critical geopolitics. Under the classical geopolitical domain are encountered three main schools of thought which can be seen as well as the founders, Germany, Britain and the USA, or as seen differently, the debate about the continental, power maritime power and the air power. In the next part are being disclosed with their main principles and theoretical characteristics.

Analysing the ideology according to historical events and periods will also help us understand what happened in the Balkans during the last century. Starting from 1789 the French Revolution triggered the appearance of nation-states and coined the ideology of nationalism throughout Europe and further outside of the continent resulting into the dissolution of old empires or kingdoms into smaller entities and states. It should be acknowledged that one of the main traits which influenced the emergence of geopolitics is the appearance of nation-states, constructed upon this nationalistic identity, religion, history and language thus the idea of the state became a sacred thing to protect and diffuse among the citizens.

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<sup>5</sup>José Achilles Abreu Jorge Teixeira, "O Pensamento Geopolítico Da Rússia No Início Do Século XXI E A Geopolítica Clássica", *Revista da Escola de Guerra Naval*, Rio de Janeiro, nr.13,pp.122-146.

<sup>6</sup>Hans W. Weigert, Henry Brodie, Edward. W. Donerty, John R. Fernstrom, Eric Fischer, Dudley Kirk, "Principles of Political Geography", Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., New York, 1957, pp.3-6.

Posterior to the French Revolution, just almost a century later, The Industrial Revolution had its own impact all over the world especially into the consolidated nation-states, pushing them into expanding their territory in quest of power, land and new resources. This played a key role into shaping the ideology and borders of the Balkan States. Since Geopolitical ideology influenced the political shaping of the new states formed in the 1900's, it made the Balkan region more problematic and the zone was left in a perpetual power struggle between the small nation-states and also the big world powers. The power always shifted between east and west ensuing into internal and external issues carried until the time being. While displaying the main traits from the two time periods of the Geopolitical thought, the main features of the main case relating Albania and Greece, the Chameria issue are being analysed.

### **1.1. The Raise of Geopolitics and the Development of Geopolitical Schools**

In a modern way, under a disciplinary method, Geopolitics was introduced at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century-beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The pioneers of the discipline emerged from what today is gathered under the German School of Geopolitics. The first who studied the relation between space and power was the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904). Friedrich Ratzel, in the first years of his life, was highly passionate about pharmacology and zoology. In a quest of knowledge, in 1873, he voyaged to the United States of America where he discovered his new passion for geography. Based on his observations, Ratzel explains that the life of States and Nations is similar to the life of humans or all living organisms here on earth. States should be imagined in all their phases, starting from birth, growth and death and as all organisms should concentrate to their development and relation with the soil and space.<sup>7</sup>

Afterwards, Ratzel, highly influenced by the work of Hegel and Darwin, stated that State is considered the entity of people and space, so in order to keep its power, the sources and environment should be used in the most fruitful way possible. For him, since State was a living organism, it is in need of constantly expanding its territory and constantly changing. This was called also as the necessary "living space" (*lebensraum*) a must for a strong state to possess. Weaker states were destined to merge under the

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<sup>7</sup> Frédéric Encel, "Comprendre la Géopolitique", éditions Points, Paris, 2011, p.38.

power of stronger states; therefore the frontiers were flexible and changed from time to time.

Ratzel's work was presented in 1897, in his book *Political Geography (Politische Geographie)*.<sup>8</sup> Indeed from here takes place a journey which will change the perception of the world upon geopolitics, because many leaders started to parallelize the concept of politics with the projection of power beyond the borders of their country, considering that without a living space and a big resistance capacity, compared to other nations, their state would be destined to die.

According to Ratzel, every state is in a double war for survival, one with the world outside of its borders, and the other one with itself in order to obtain its independence. He believed that the political geography should be in the service of a patriotic ideology so it could confront the menace of the external world. In fact a nation should be open and ready to all external stimulations, always being firm to its own internal goals; this is how it will obtain the perfection. Apparently this is valid not only for the nations but also for all the beings, only in this way human, nations or organisms can reach their maturity and enhance their strength.<sup>9</sup>

Ratzel was of the belief forasmuch a race should live and die into and for the territory where they were firstly settled. As a matter of fact, even the Political Ego is feed by the magnitude of the territory thus the land within the national borders should be defended under all circumstances and only the people living on this land should have the right to benefit from it.

While the work of Ratzel is mostly seen under the perspective of Political Geography, the one who created the term Geopolitics was Rudolf Kjellen. Rudolf Kjellen was a Swedish political science professor who was inspired by Ratzel, Leopold Von Ranke, G.W. Frierderich Hegel and Carl Ritter. During a public conference in 1890 he introduced his new concept and developed it in his book "State as a form of life", but

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<sup>8</sup> Silviu Costachie, "German School of Geopolitics Evolution, Ideas, Prospects, Revista Română de Geografie Politică, Year XIII, no. 2, November 2011, ISSN 1454-2749, E-ISSN 2065-1619, Article no. 132113-235, p.271.

For Acces; <http://rrgp.uoradea.ro/art/2011-2/13-RRGP-235-Costachie.pdf> (Accessed:14.04.2018).

<sup>9</sup> Frédéric Encel, "Comprendre la Géopolitique", éditions Points, Paris, 2011, p.40.

the term didn't become part of the German literature until 1907.<sup>10</sup> Kjellén after studying different national constitutions came to the conclusion that state is not opposite to society but they form a synthesis together. States responsibilities consist on social and economic welfare while ensuring law and order for his citizens. Kjellén explained three main characteristics' of state: Topopolitik, Physiopolitik (*Lageand Raum*) and Morphopolitik. The first two consist on the positioning and the territory of the state and the last one analyses the shape, form and richness of the state. Based on these three characteristics he shaped the analysis of Geopolitics.<sup>11</sup>

According to Kjellén, the five most important keys that would shape German Geopolitics were *Reich*, the territorial and military strategic for of the state; *Volk*, state seen under racial conception; *Haushalt*, the states' self-sufficiency (autarchy) based on land resources and its reaction to the alteration of international markets; *Gesellschaft*, the social and cultural organisation of a nation and *Regierung*, the pacification and organisation of people through army and governmental bureaucracy. For him states self-sufficiency was really important, because if a states' economy depends only from imported goods this leads to a state which would not be able to obtain absolute independence.<sup>12</sup>

However it was only after the First World War that the geopolitics gained importance. Germany left the war defeated from the Peace Conference of Versailles thus the main sensitive issues become the national territory and the borders of the state. Territorial and nationalistic disputes were facts of the new international relations' system preparing a favourable ambience for the appearance of geopolitics.

In the eve of World War II a dedicated follower of Ratzel and Kjellen, Karl Haushofer, was under the spotlight of the time. Haushofer, a career military, was a nationalist and passionate to make Germany a great and powerful country. He started studying other cultures and visited Japan and China in 1919 thus realised the importance

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<sup>10</sup> Constantin Hlihor, "Geopolitics From a Classical to a Postmodern Approach", Italian Academic Publishing, Palermo, 2014, pp.18-19.

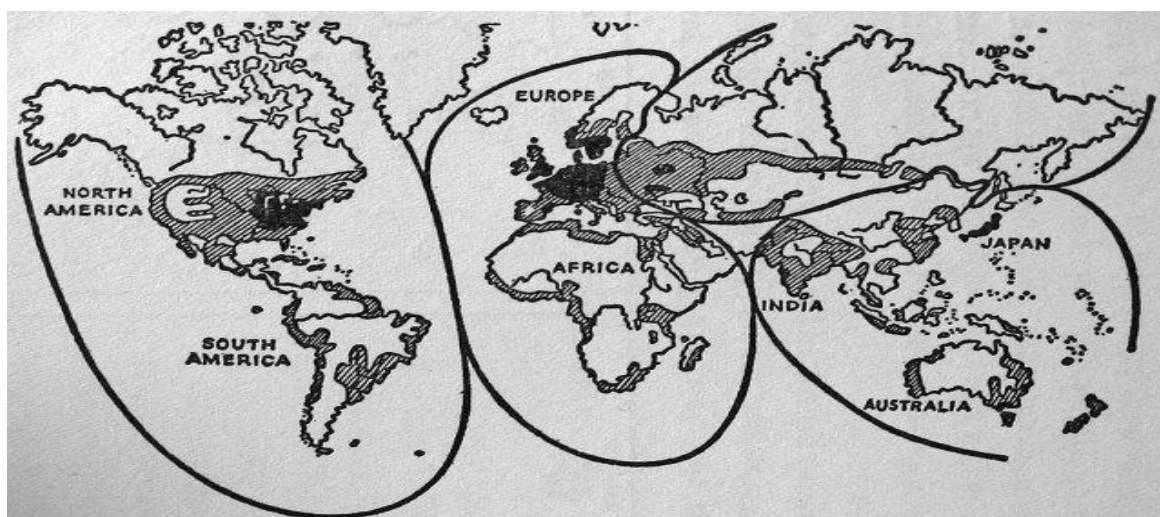
<sup>11</sup> Ola Tunander, "Swedish-German Geopolitics for a New Century – Rudolf Kjellén's "The State as a Living Organism", Review of International Studies, vol. 27, no. 3, 2001, pp.40-42.

<sup>12</sup> Mattern, Johannes. Geopolitik: Doctrine of National Self-Sufficiency and Empire. The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore: 1942. pp.540-543.

of geographical positions and geographical strategy of a country<sup>13</sup>. After the Great War he served as a lecturer of geography and founded the German geopolitical journal “Zeitschrift für Geopolitik”. Haushofer became the inspiration of his student Rudolf Hess, close to Hitler, and saw his theories applied in the field. These theories, especially the term “wehrgopolitik” war politic, got adopted by the National Socialist Party in Germany and forged the basis of the military gathering which preceded World War II.<sup>14</sup>

Haushofer firstly made the difference between political geography, which studies the distribution of power of a nation on the continental surface and the land, climate and took the idea of “Lebensraum” living space developing it further and enriching it with nationalistic ideology as a remedy for the post-war Germany. From the living space principle he focused on the most important for his country; reuniting all the Germanic populations in one big Great Germany.<sup>15</sup> Through the help of detailed maps and deep analysis he tried to prove the injustice made by the Versailles Conference to countries like Germany, Turkey or Russia.

Due to his voyages, Haushofer analysed the development and expansion of the American and Japanese empire thus he concluded the pan-regional theory<sup>16</sup>, defining so the zones of influence for every big power.



**Map 1.1.1.1. Pan Regions and Spheres of Influence of the Great Powers**

<sup>13</sup> Costachie, “German School ...” op. cit. p. 270.

<sup>14</sup> Hans W. Weigert, Henry Brodie, Edward. W. Donerty, John R. Fernstrom ,EricFischer, DudleyKirk, “Principles of Political Geography”, Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., New York,1957,pg.6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp.42-43.

<sup>16</sup> For Map 1.1.1.1. <https://ericrossacademic.wordpress.com/2015/03/05/of-heartlands-and-pan-regions-mapping-the-spheres-of-influence-of-the-great-powers-in-the-age-of-world-wars/> (Accessed: 23.10.2018).

However, Haushofer was very critical towards the Anglo-Saxon scholars and ideology and afterward the same criticism was made towards Ratzel and Kjellen as he stated that both of them were derived from English school.<sup>17</sup> He was of the idea in which America was a declining power and sick with Capitalism and individualism so it was destined to fall, the best illustration of this was the 1929 crisis.<sup>18</sup> Haushofer stated that England and USA started the “anaconda politics” by dominating the Planetary Ocean. He opposed the continental power and sea power (Theories of Mackinder and Spykman) and was more on the appliance of a discipline of action. This meant that for every problem, a solution should be provided to political leaders and afterwards the public opinion should be formed. Henceforth he explained that the only solution to withhold the Anglo-Saxon “invasion” is an alliance between Germany, Russia and Japan.

*“Indubitable, the biggest and the most important change in world-wide politics of our times is the formation of a strong continental block to include Europe, The North and East of Asia”*

Geopolitics is both a mean to promote ideas, an instrument in the hands of power so they could apply it. The big territories and territory enlargement of Germany especially in alliance of pan Germanic states is seen as the right move to strengthen German Power.<sup>19</sup>

Haushofer’s ideas were not totally applied by Nazi-Germans, especially after the invasion of Russia by Wehrmacht, an action against his geopolitical predictions. Out of this, between the years 1936-1941 he still continued to justify Hitler’s actions under a geopolitical perspective, since all was for the sake of a greater Germany.<sup>20</sup> He was questioned in the Nuremberg process and committed suicide on March 10, 1946.

While in Germany the above scholars were influencing through their ideas, in Great Britain it was Sir Halford John Mackinder (1861-1947) who dominated the scene. Mackinder among other professions was an explorer, a politician and left an academic legacy through his remarkable work.<sup>21</sup> His two main ambitions and achievements were

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<sup>17</sup> Costachie, “German School...” op. cit. p. 271.

<sup>18</sup> Frédéric Encel, “Comprendre la Géopolitique”, éditions Points, Paris, 2011, pp.40-44.

<sup>19</sup> Costachie, “German School...” op. Cit. p. 271.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 44.

<sup>21</sup> G Sloan, ‘Sir Halford J Mackinder,’ in (eds) CS Gray and G Sloan, Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy, Cass, London, 1999.

to build and develop the geographical sciences in the Great Britain so they could reach the level of the continental Europe, thus make their people think imperially through teaching the notions of space and geographical world. In the other hand he wanted to built a theory which would guarantee the superiority of Great Britain upon its' main opponents of the time, Germany and Russia.<sup>22</sup>

In 1904 Mackinder introduced his main theory emphasising the continental power: The Heartland theory. According to him, the world is divided into strategic areas; the pivot area which can be only influenced and dominated by a continental power, since it is well closed and protected by harsh mountain geography and cannot be reached by a sea power. Geographically speaking, the area is a fortress in the middle of World Island ( composed by Europe, Asia and Africa), comprising a part of Russia, China Mongolia etc, more precisely surrounded by the Baltic sea from the North side, the Hindukush Rangesin from the South, the Altai form the East and the Carpathian mountains from the West side. There was only one way in order to access this zone and that was only from the Eastern Europe, the Balkans.

This is why Mackinder concluded with the following main theory; the one who rules Eastern Europe, commands the Heartland (pivot area) and the one who rules the Heartland command the World-Island, and who rules the World Island commands the World. Mackinder sustains this theory mostly into geographical conditions since most natural resources and world population is concentrated in the World Island. In the other hand, to dominate the Interior Marginal Crescent both a sea and continental power is needed, however for the domination of the Land of Outer Crescent a sea power was enough.<sup>23</sup>

Mackinder worked on this theory for almost forty years and developed it in accordance to the British superiority in the "Great Game". Both, Russia and the British Empire tried to take under their influence upon the world island. While Russia spread as a continental power upon the Asian continent, mostly the pivot area, The British Empire, having a strong naval power, tried to seize the water-marked lands, thus

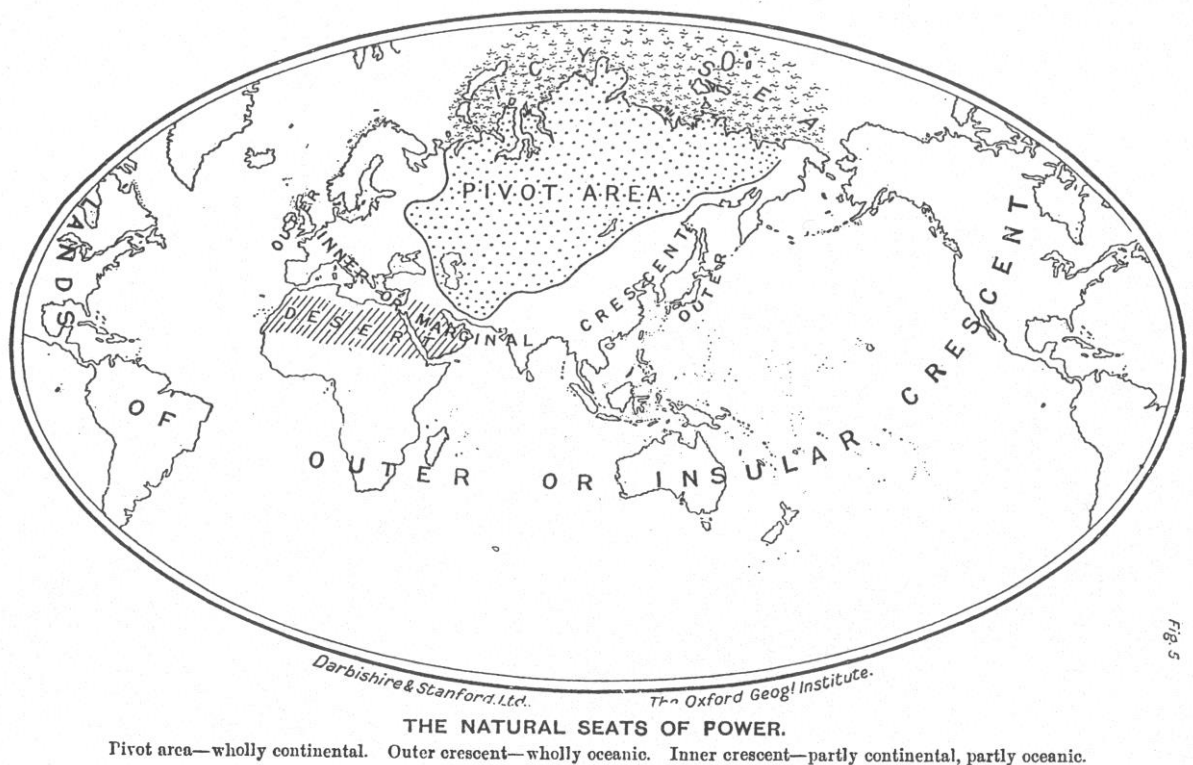
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<sup>22</sup> Semra Rana Gökmen, "Geopolitics And The Study of International Relations" PHD thesis, August 2010, pp.29-30.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. pp.31-34.

surrounding Russia and leaving for it only some small possibilities for a warm sea access.

However, Mackinder <sup>24</sup> stated that even though the world passed through different time influences while shaping the geopolitics such as land, sea domination and land transportation, the heartland still possessed the main importance into world domination, so The Balkan Peninsula had one of the most crucial roles into this.<sup>25</sup>



### **Map 1.1.1.2. World Division according to Mackinder**

As a matter of fact, the development of technology that came alongside with the Industrial Revolution (period starting from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century) turned the table of power. Possessing the fastest vehicles, the biggest ships, the newest types of guns and especially the invention of airplanes (1903) shadowed the privileges of continental powers since reaching them from air was very attainable, thus conquering a new land could be completed in a shorter time. The new military strategies were recreated

<sup>24</sup> For Map 1.1.1.2. <https://ericrossacademic.wordpress.com/2015/03/05/of-heartlands-and-pan-regions-mapping-the-spheres-of-influence-of-the-great-powers-in-the-age-of-world-wars> (Accessed:23.10.2018).

<sup>25</sup> <https://mrelrodsaphg.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/geo-political-theories.pdf> (Accessed:01.11.2018).



conform the vastly developed technologies and technological competition. Alongside the diverse technology, changes were included even into the geopolitical thought. As to be expected the leaders of the industrialised world, Great Britain and the USA, also led the new strategic theories combined with the new revelations.

With the involvement of then president Wilson into WWI the American geopolitics started to rise. What America was trying to achieve is the shift of imperial powers from Britain to itself. From the American school of geopolitics, also influenced by Mackinder's ideas and strategy, Spykman and Mahan lead the way. Admiral Thomas Mahan (1840 -1914) was working in the US navy. Mahan started to write about the strategy and geopolitics even before Mackinder, thus was influenced by his ideas far less than Spykman. His military navy career helped him to evaluate the importance of seas upon countries, as in times of war or peace, using the sea ways for trade, economy or military strategy.<sup>26</sup>

Mahan, a naval officer, saw borders as not fixed line but as flexible and changeable according to a countries influence. A country to be called a hegemonic force should be able to build a fleet as strong that could destroy the enemy's one in one strike. The economic trade and naval superiority was seen a must for a hegemonic power, thus he estimated that sea power wasn't a peripheral power but a crucial one. He strongly believed that the maritime geopolitical perspective was the only way to dominate the world politics, by seizing strategic island, controlling trade sea lines and bases. The American policy-makers got highly influenced by Mahan's strategy and theory and gave a big importance to the navy development.<sup>27</sup> According to Mahan, the world should be examined in all its resources and in sea as in land one should consider well the distances, learn the climate changes and do researches about ways to have naval superiority.

This superiority, having two fundamental advantages; political and strategic, makes possible the enlarging of the influential zones throughout the world.<sup>28</sup> As a matter of fact different scholars, such as Constantin Hlihors, agree on the following opinion; the work of Mahan is seen mostly as a theory that justifies the strengthening

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<sup>26</sup> <https://mrelrodsaphg.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/geo-Political-theories.pdf> (Accessed: 01.11.2018).

<sup>27</sup> <https://mrelrodsaphg.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/geo-Political-theories.pdf> (Accessed:01.11.2018).

<sup>28</sup> Frédéric Encel, "Comprendre la Géopolitique", éditions Points, Paris, 2011, pp.44-46.

and preservation of his country<sup>29</sup>. In regard to this, he developed a geopolitical scheme, “The Anaconda politics” notably surrounding European continent with maritime bases which are always ready to any offensive in order to obtain the superiority and control, because whoever conquered the seas has conquered the world.

Mahan’s position was of a policy and strategy that would be close to the British one and supported the idea of collaboration between the two maritime powers. His idea on the sea power was related to five elements which he considered to be important into preserving the superiority alongside the geographical traits of the state like; the geographical position, physical composition and the territory range what also mattered was the national and political character of the specific country. His ideas were applied like when the USA conquest of Hawaii or the USA position during the Cuba crisis. Even though many politicians and scholars took his work into consideration or were influenced by his theories, Mahan’s policy<sup>30</sup> was never considered as the official geopolitical strategy of the USA.<sup>31</sup>



**Map 1.1.1.3. Comparison between Mahan’s Vision and Mackinder’s Vision**

The Second World War created a bad image of geopolitics since it got closely related to the expansionist policy of Adolf Hitler. Many nations held a distance to this thought while talking about it was a taboo. However, after the Second World War, in

<sup>29</sup> Constantin Hlihor, “Geopolitics: from a classical to a postmodern approach”, Italian Academic Publishing, Palermo, 2014, p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> For Map 1.1.1.3. [https://www.geopolitica.ru/sites/default/files/slide10\\_0.jpg](https://www.geopolitica.ru/sites/default/files/slide10_0.jpg) (Accessed: 04.05.2019)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

the USA the geopolitical studies started to gain more and more importance considering the threats that were presented to the world due to the split into a Bipolar World System. While the real term was mostly not mentioned, in some universities, geopolitics was even part of the curricula where the principal lessons and ideas of Nicolas Spykman (1893-1943) or Robert Strausz-Hupé (1903-2002) were taught.

Hupé and Spykman saw the key of world domination into “the balance of power” changing so the focus of geopolitics from space to world supremacy.<sup>32</sup> This balance would have to be done between the maritime and the continental power, military force and diplomacy, Europe and Asia also the most important USA and Russia. Furthermore his idea extended to a point in which Hupé considers that a sole centre is in worlds benefit because in this way it can act as a referee force which controls, equalises and stabilises the world. The state which is seen being suitable to take the role was the USA.

Hupé’s work was further developed by Nicholas Spykman. He took the idea of the balance of powers and put it under Realpolitik perspective while analysing the USA maritime strategy. Spykman’s belief was that America’s security was directly related to Eurasia’s balance of power.<sup>33</sup> He revised Mackinder’s theory and remodelled the world map dividing it into Heartland and Rimland. The Rimland surrounds the Heartland and also the domination of the oceans was the key to the conquest of the heartland and world domination. However the role of the Heartland was less significant under Spykman’s perspective than Mackinder’s, Rimland held the importance of world domination.

While the Heartland had a very good defensive position, the offshore lands and the Rimland held a position that by time would gain more importance because these lands had good natural resources, most of the population was concentrated in these zones and they had a great access to the seas and oceans.

*“Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world. Control the coast and you will control its interior”<sup>34</sup>*

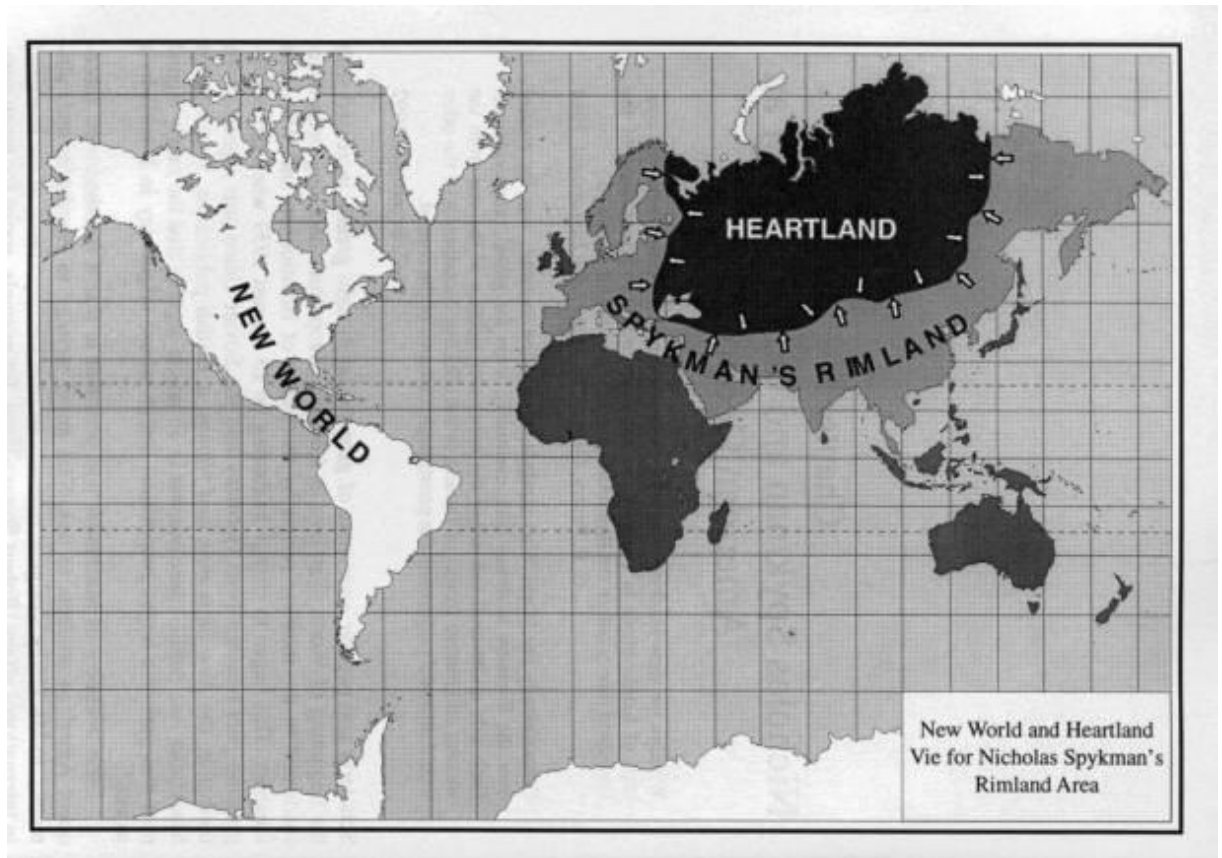
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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.,pp. 25-27.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp.27-29.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. pp.27-29.

As part of this, three powers were seen as adequate into achieving the status of world power, the USA, the Great Britain and Japan, this would be done by dominating Eurasia granting so the world dominance. Nonetheless the world balance would be achieved through a well divided Rimland<sup>35</sup>



<sup>36</sup> **Map 1.1.1.4 Nicolas Spykman vision of the World**

New and different strategies were pursued in the next years. Thanks to two geopolitical scholars, who also served as USA diplomats for a long time, the negative perseverance of geopolitics started to change. These scholars were Kennan and Kissinger and they constructed not only USA foreign strategy but also the whole periods. However, during the 1946 Russia started to make actions that really perturbed and disturbed USA interests and US policy-makers started to raise their concern. World Bank and the International Monetary Fund creation were strongly opposed by Russia. Especially in Eastern and central Europe and in Asia the support toward Communist

<sup>35</sup>Francis. P. Sepma, "Geopolitics. From the Cold War to the 21st Century", Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2002, pp. 76-92.

<sup>36</sup> For Map 1.1.1.4. <https://coldwargeopolitics.wordpress.com/2016/03/12/geoPolitical-theories-driving-proxy-wars-during-the-cold-war/> ( Accessed: 20.04.2019).

parties was increasing day by day, while regardless the strategies used, it was difficult to change the Russians hostility towards the newly founded organisations.

The power vacuum created due to wars was shortly filled up by the communist parties and ideology. This is why in 1947 George F. Kennan published an article in *Foreign Affairs*, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct.” In his article Kennan explained that, due not only to historical but also ideological reasons, the Soviet Union would try to enlarge its boundaries and its political influence beyond the immediate post-war geographical frontiers. According to him, what it was adequate for the USA to do is to apply a long-term policy, where the USA should be vigilant, patient and firm. Kennan thought that by constantly shifting the geographical points in accordance to the ones of the Soviets, they could apply though a counter-force in the region. By applying this policy, his concern was not the protection of Europe or Asia from the Soviet ideology and policy but the protection and security of the USA, since as it was seen during both world wars, its’ security was dependent on the balance of power in European and Asian continents.<sup>37</sup>

For Kissinger as well the balance of power was of main importance, especially if it serves the interest of the United States, this is why the term Geopolitical for him was related to the manipulation or reading to the other countries leadership in order to serve and defend the interest of their country, in this case the USA. The country should be careful into perceiving the change into the balance of power, while changing the policy conform these changes. For Kissinger the validation of any strategic doctrine last as long as the particular political terms that placed the particular policy in the first place, while in the regional level the country should take into account the geographical resources and assets. It is also informed by the geographical distribution of resources and assets, especially at the regional level.<sup>38</sup>

The head of the state thus has the obligation to keep a firm equilibrium, this equilibrium refers thus to the balance between internal and external tasks, so the political or military or any other force correlation including the economic correlation as well. The phenomenon of power was always under Kissinger’s attention while making

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<sup>37</sup> Constantin Hlihor, “Geopolitics: From a Classical to a Postmodern Approach”, Italian Academic Publishing, Palermo, Italy, 2014, pp. 28-39.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. pp 28-39.

geopolitical analysis, while taking into consideration both the subjective and the objective realities.<sup>39</sup>

The second part of the Cold War saw another perspective over the world politics; French School of Geopolitics. It was born as an alternative and reaction to Ratzel ideas while giving a different alternative thought into the field. The main traits of this school were the criticism and the paradigm of possibilism confronting Ratzel's determinism. This was seen as a new trend into Geopolitics, and the pioneers of this branch was Élysée Reclus (1830-1905) and Paul Vidal de la Blache (1845-1918). The main idea of this approach is that the states are mostly shaped by the power struggles and the wars; this is why the political maps are not correct since they do not match the political geography or the human geographical phenomenon.<sup>40</sup> So in order to begin the study of political geography maps should not been considered as a starting point, on the other hand state is considered as responsible to the changes. This is why political boundaries were seen as flexible and changeable in accordance to the political environment.

This scholarship allowed political geography to examine phenomena and objects outside of states, such as transportation, communication, and trade. In such an investigation, the analysis of communication networks was more important than the analysis of the land. According to Vidal, a political study to be done in human geography must expand beyond the territorial state. The shift of the balance between political science and human geography to geography is thought to increase the objectivity of the research, so the territorial state will not be regarded as an absolute and constant understanding. However for another French researcher, Jacques Ancel, political geography was not much different than geopolitics, as he saw no difference between them. Since French school was opposing to the ideas of the British and German one, Ancel under this thought opposed the idea of a cultural border as Houshofer explained in his book "Greizen" (1927) while talking about the Pan Germanic cultural borders and territory.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. pp.28-39.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.p. 40.

Thus, possibilism was about breaking a mindset which considers the territorial state as given. At the same time, environmental determinist thinking about geographical laws regarding how states think is criticized, and the political will over large territories is taken into account in research on political behaviour. French possibilist thought lost its influence on political geography after the Second World War and later on became a reference point for criticisms of classical geopolitical theories based on environmental determinism.<sup>41</sup> This school was widely supported by then French head of state General de Gaulle, who after the withdraw from the military Atlantic bodies, decided to encourage a different perspective of geopolitics, the idea of continentalism, also called as the De Gaulle doctrine, which supported the cooperation between Western Germany and Russia, known as Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.

## **1.2. A brief view on Critical Geopolitics**

After the Cold War, in 1990, world system was changed but the change was commented as from bipolar to unipolar for some and multi-polar for others. This change was also reflected in the intellectual apparatus of International Relations theories. Changing the strategic doctrines and questioning the realist-related and classical theories was one of the main features of post-cold war theories. Critical Geopolitics is one of them.

The term Critical Geopolitics is firstly used by Simon Dalby in 1990, in The Analysis of the Representational strategies of the Committee article. Simon Dalby was born in Ireland on February 16, 1958. His education started in Ireland, where he completed Trinity College. He moved to Canada to get his university degree at University of Victoria and his P.H.D from Simon Fraser University. Simon Dalby along with his career as a university professor of geography and environmental studies at Wilfred Laurier University, he is the Acting Chair of the Master in International Policy Program, and a CIGI Chair in the Political Economy of Climate Change. Being one of the leading figures of Critical Geopolitics, he is diversifying the field and

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid,pp. 40-45.

broadens his researches especially on the Environmental issue, climate change, environmental governance, global political economy and critical security studies.

The other scholar which was from the first ones to develop critical geopolitics was Geraoid O Tuathail, he is an Irish scholar of International Relations. Born in 1962, Tuathail's (Toal) field of research include nationalism, political geography, post-Communism, and globalization and also he was closely interested in the Bosnian Case, participating so in the United States Congress to testify about political events and developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>42</sup>

Firstly, Critical Geopolitics was developed by these scholars and it tries to investigate the geographical assumptions of world politics and explain practices that determine the space of international politics. In this context it investigates how geographical claims and assumptions function in political debates and political practice. Thus it seeks to disrupt mainstream geopolitical discourses to foreground the politics of geographical specification of politics. The critical re-examined the key writers of classical geopolitics, illuminating the role of geographical knowledge in legitimizing the balance-of-power politics of the nineteenth and twentieth century's.

In a more broaden term it is somehow related to constructionist approach and Foucault-ian scholars especially on the relation of state with power. Power is not only seen as "bad" coercive and disabling as classical theories say but it can be also positive and productive. Political subject come into being exactly from these power relations. This is why Critical Geopolitics approaches geographical knowledge as an essential part of the modern discourses of power. Geography is a power of "royal" authority over space, backed up by powerful court bureaucracies and armies and States create architecture to safeguard its territorial boundaries by raising its military force (Lefebvre). Military power now a day is sometimes understood in terms of information power. According to Dalby, information is crucial in terms of who possesses it. This is why

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.balsillieschool.ca/people/simon-dalby> (accessed: 15.03.2019)  
<https://toal.org>(Accessed:15.03.2019).



military, political and economic intelligence can be used on conform the geopolitical understandings and organize the information in order to suggest policy actions.<sup>43</sup>

Regarding to the division of the geographical space, Toal and Dalby still keep Mackinder division but they add other factors into consideration but Heartland and Pivot areas. So it can be observed that Critical Geopolitics pays more attention to micro level parts of power than to macro level or global economics. According to Toal; “Intellectuals of statecraft construct ideas about places, these ideas affect how, the people process their own notion of places and politics”. Thus State identity and interest do not precede foreign policy; instead it is forged through foreign policy practices. International Borders are best viewed as entities that are constituted through bordering practices. This is why it can be stated that European Integration is beyond the state centred understanding of space.

Dalby and Toal support the idea of Henry Lefebvre who argued that space is not a simple quantified area and the physical mapped space is transformed into economic space with roads, canals, commercial and financial buildings and air routes. The state and society engage in production of political landscape representing ideology, knowledge and production of symbols of power.

O’Tuathail and Dalby made a division between formal, practical and popular geopolitics that all are related to the spatialising of boundaries, dangers and geopolitical representations of the self and other.

According to Tuathail, globe is not only a visualized closed system of a closed unchangeable and occupied order; instead its borders are discussable. Critical Geopolitics visualize tough the space as a contest between centralizing states and rebellious margins or it can also be argued that there are more “localized geopolitics” group-based according to its ethnographic structure.<sup>44</sup>

State emphasis on the role of administrative state, in reproducing state space with bureaucracy and police and even the fiscal tools of governance. Since populations

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<sup>43</sup>[https://www.academia.edu/6361321/Conflict\\_studies\\_and\\_critical\\_geopolitics\\_theoretical\\_concepts\\_and\\_recent\\_research\\_in\\_political\\_geography](https://www.academia.edu/6361321/Conflict_studies_and_critical_geopolitics_theoretical_concepts_and_recent_research_in_political_geography)(Accessed: 15.03.2019).

<sup>44</sup>[http://www.mmg.mpg.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdf/reza\\_TheoryPaper-AbstractAndCON-Reza-may03.pdf](http://www.mmg.mpg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/reza_TheoryPaper-AbstractAndCON-Reza-may03.pdf)(Accessed: 15.03.2019).

represent territories; governance is a science of managing people and represents the essence of political economy. Many ethnic groups live inside and outside one country's border, these ethnic groups and cultures determine latter on if they will obey to the limits of one states jurisdictions or will resist and create along the border a zone of conflict. Our space and their space are more seen under the terms of cultural borders, homelands and national identity.<sup>45</sup>

This causes a "critical border" issue. These borders can be geographic borders (as in the Case of Turkey seen the ethnic conflict in south-eastern part of the country) ideological (Bosnian case seen mostly as Muslim-orthodox conflict) or both (Macedonian case, the conflict between Albanians and Macedonians is considered in both plans since ethnicity is closely related to their Muslim-Orthodox ideology).

Every state though tents to control these border zones more than others since borderlines are the abode for surveillance gamers and predatory drones as well as controlling the developments in their "influential zones or countries". A perforating influence along the border creates a zone of conflict visually marked with destruction and damage that characterize a typical borderland. It is well known that peace conferences seldom led in to a fully peaceful environment. The impact over middle east and Balkans mostly as well as the constantly changing border resulting in annexing new territories (Crimean Case) and creation of new states (Kosovo Case) are examples of that.

To conclude, it might be argued that Critical Geopolitics alongside with other post-modern theories has doubted in the state-power relations as defined mostly in Classical Geopolitics as well as in relist point of views. Space for them it's not only changeable but also we have a global space and the subordinate spaces of nationalistic, ideologically and racially generic space. The main thinking of this theory is split from spatializing the boundaries of danger in three different ways, popular geopolitics (Information showed by massmedia, movies etc), practical geopolitics (The one in which every country and its foreign policy, bureaucracy and political institutions apply)

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<sup>45</sup>[http://www.bisav.org.tr/merkez.aspx?module=yuvarlakmasaayrinti&dizi=1&altturid=80&menuID=9\\_6\\_80&merkezid=6&yuvarlakmasaid=1000](http://www.bisav.org.tr/merkez.aspx?module=yuvarlakmasaayrinti&dizi=1&altturid=80&menuID=9_6_80&merkezid=6&yuvarlakmasaid=1000)(accessed:15.03.2019).

and finally formal geopolitics (the one is seen in strategic institutes think tanks and academia).<sup>46</sup>

The revival of geopolitics, from the 1970s onwards, was also marked by the development of empirical geopolitical analysis. Yves Lacoste has attempted to combine the theoretical foundations of both geography and history, and rather than developing a geopolitical theory, he has focused on developing a methodology for geopolitical analysis such approach is characterized by a number of specific features.<sup>47</sup>

This is first the use of maps, often in the form of what Lacoste has named diatopes that is a type of representation formed by the superposition on the same graph of maps using different scales, which are intended conceptually to be to Geographers and Space, what diachronicity is to Historians and Time. Often resorting to different levels of spatial analysis, from the small to the large scale, Lacoste has developed a classification of spatial sets in eight levels of spatial analysis. There is clearly an emphasis on him frequently resorts to using comparisons of scales as well as the study of the intersections of spatial sets. Whilst there is clearly an emphasis in regional questions in the work of Lacoste, he has nevertheless more recently been dealing with more global vistas.<sup>48</sup>

Critical Geopolitics focuses on analysing the influence of a now global world with new issues which affect world politics, it sees closely the impact of ecological politics and the resource conflict, the new perception of the boundaries and the territorial conflict starting with it; the impact that identity has upon geopolitics and a countries policies. Moreover since after the 1990's new international relations perception started and with the further development of technology new challenges came along. Globalization new actors in the political power, old actors like Germany or Japan become part of this through their industrial development while their status changed from foes to friends. This new era also brought old and new conflicts back especially in the regional conflicts treated as a battle field for different civilizations as Samuel Huntington also writes in his book Clash of Civilizations, all these concluded in new

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<sup>46</sup> P.Claval, "Hérodote and the French Left", In K.Dodds and D.Atkinson (eds), Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought, New York, 2000, Routledge, pp.239-267.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. pp.239-267.

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.ayrintiyayinlari.com.tr/images/UserFiles/Documents/Gallery/2014.pdf> (Accessed:15.03.2019).

social movements that also take part into the decision making and the new geopolitical perception.<sup>49</sup>

So, weighting up all sides of the theory, it makes a general critic of the past geopolitical perception while showing what new actors should be considered while analyzing geopolitics and the new role of states.<sup>50</sup>

## 2. Geography and Geopolitics of the Balkan Peninsula



**Map1.2.1.1 Political map of the Balkan Peninsula**

The Balkan Peninsula is located in the South-Eastern part of Europe<sup>51</sup>. It is separated by natural borders from the west; Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea, from the north; the rivers of Sava and Danube, from the south; Aegean Sea and Marmara Sea which also serves as a connection of the Black sea to the Mediterranean. Within this

<sup>49</sup> Constantin Hlihor, "Geopolitics: From a Classical to a Postmodern Approach", Italian Academic Publishing, Palermo, Italy, 2014, pp.60-70.

<sup>50</sup>

[http://www.bisav.org.tr/merkez.aspx?module=yuvarlakmasaayrinti&dizi=1&altturid=80&menuID=9\\_6\\_80&merkezid=6&yuvarlakmasaid=1000](http://www.bisav.org.tr/merkez.aspx?module=yuvarlakmasaayrinti&dizi=1&altturid=80&menuID=9_6_80&merkezid=6&yuvarlakmasaid=1000)(Accessed:15.03.2019).

<sup>51</sup> <https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Balkans>(Accessed:12.05.2019).

geographical territory twelve countries are part of it, might this be partly as in the case of Turkey, or some parts of Serbia, most of Romania as well is not part of the peninsula, or as a whole: Albania Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia and Slovenia. Its' surface is about 193,000 sq mile. <sup>52</sup>

The regions' climate differs from Mediterranean at the Adriatic and Aegean coasts where the weather is humid subtropical, at the Black Sea coast it has oceanic climate, meaning it has rainy winters while summers are hot and dry. In the interior of the peninsula the climate is mostly continental and humid especially in the north where the mountains are, and in the winter it can be snowy and cold. This range of climate make possible to all types of flora and fauna to grow in prosperity, while all types of fruits and vegetables can be grown in most of the fields and valleys. Much underground richness is also found like petrol, iron, coal, etc while it can be found the biggest reserves in Europe of chrome (Bulqizë-Albania), nickel and lead (Mitrovica-Kosovo). The peninsula is blessed with various potable water resources that have a reserve to cover all the populations' necessities. <sup>53</sup>

The general landscape of the Balkan Peninsula is mountainous as well as with basins and steep, rivers and valleys. In this peninsula there are mountain ranges such as; the Dinaric Alps along the coast of the Adriatic Sea, the Pindus mountain range in the northern part of Greece and south of Albania, in Bulgaria is found the mountain range from which the whole region took the name; the Balkan Mountains, etc.

As a matter of fact, the region has been known under different names in different time periods. The actual name "Balkan" originates from Turkish language meaning a territory of steep and wooded mountain range. Before it was known for a long time as the Illyrian peninsula from the people living in the peninsula, while part of the Roman Empire, it called it as the Illyricum Province. However the term of "Balkan Peninsula" was used for the first time in the political literature in 1808 by the German geographer August Zeune. In 1835 Jean Ormanlins D'Halloy called the territory as the peninsula of

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<sup>52</sup> Seçkin Arpalier, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Arnavut Milliyetçiliği", "**Büyük Arnavutluk İdeası'nın Kosova'nın Bağımsızlık Sürecine Etkisi (1981-2008)**", Bursa Uludağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations, Master Thesis, pp.13-19.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.pp.13-19.

Slavogreece, while in 1863 Theobald Ficher and Moritz Wagner used the name of Peninsula of South-Eastern Europe (Südosteuropaiche Halbisnel).<sup>54</sup>

This region is like a bridge between two biggest geopolitical powers, Russia from one side and the West (the USA, The Great Britain, France, Germany) from the other side, and most of the times it has served as a buffer zone between them.

Talking about Balkan Geopolitics it should be analysed from two perspectives: internationally and regionally. This separation is necessary into better understanding the history and fate of the Balkan Nations. Firstly, the internationally understanding of the Balkan geopolitics especially in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning o the 20<sup>th</sup> century must be seen under the strict eye of the Classical geopolitics. Balkan is seen as a key into world domination, theory started from Mackinder and supported by all the other geopoliticians. The one that dominate the Balkan Peninsula can dominate the world island, thus the world. From this thought onward the international power struggle has always been present into the Balkans; the great powers were always trying to seize the upper hand into ruling these lands. As a matter of fact even before putting the geopolitics into focus, this Peninsula has always served as bridge between East and West, between different religions, political entities or cultures.

These lands have known as their ruler for the last millennium three empires, has been one of the causes of one World War and served as a buffer zone during the Cold War. This great power interest was used by the small nations in the Balkan lands in order to increase their power and profit more land by using all necessary means into convincing the “powerful state” to take their side, this is why geopolitics is needed, to understand these three way relations. The well known geopolitician Carlo Jean, points out that, in a study on geopolitics, the first step is the definition of the area of observation; the second step is the examination of the common historical trajectory and geopolitical representatives that have a strong impact on the perception of diverse groups, in determining their interests as well as in pre-political political situations. The third step is to analyze the current situation in terms of objectives and power.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Thellësia Strategjike”, translated by Mithat Hoxha, 1st edition, Logos publications, Skopje 2010, p. 159

<sup>55</sup> Carlo Jean, “Manuale di geopolitica” , Editori Laterza, Roma-Bari 2006, pp.41-45.

The Balkan Geography keeps control of three strategically important ways and channels of a continental scale. This fact is an asset of geo-strategic value of this area: Albania controls the Straits of Otranto; Macedonia and Serbia control strategic crossing through the Vardar and Morava valley corridor; Slovenia and Croatia and Italy control the space of extraordinary importance especially about the economy and commercial; Trieste, this is due to the fact that the sea is deeper in that place than in any other place in the European continent. As planned at the Helsinki summit in 1997, six of the ten corridors of transport about oil, gas and telecommunications, are passing precisely through the Balkans (corridors 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, respectively).<sup>56</sup>

## Pan-European Corridors



<sup>57</sup> **Map 1.2.2.1 Illustration of the most important corridors of the Peninsula**

<sup>56</sup> <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/untc/unpan013027.pdf> (Accessed:05.06.2019).

<sup>57</sup> For Map 1.2.2.

[https://www.google.com/search?q=balkan+corridors&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GCEA\\_enTR815TR815&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=G-G\\_QAo8cS\\_esM%253A%252CUvTGDhHN4GpkXM%252C\\_&vet=1&usg=AI4\\_-kTR-uj9GPGFiPUA3Rk4AwTunLEbw&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwigu-](https://www.google.com/search?q=balkan+corridors&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GCEA_enTR815TR815&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=G-G_QAo8cS_esM%253A%252CUvTGDhHN4GpkXM%252C_&vet=1&usg=AI4_-kTR-uj9GPGFiPUA3Rk4AwTunLEbw&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwigu-)

Although the Balkans have an Indo-European linguistic identity, the features of each language speaks of its unique diversity. Most of the Balkan populations speak in Slavic while Albanian and Greek language which has no resemblance to them. On one hand the Albanian language has no resemblance to the Greek one and they even have different alphabet and language structure. On the other hand, even the Slavic language spoken in most of the populations of the region, contains another diversity precisely within itself, and they are recognized as different languages.

Another characteristic feature of the region is that the populations are mixed with each other during the long reign of the Ottoman Empire and later for the part of ex-Yugoslavia that each country (this phenomena is more common or the populations near respective border) is able to speak the language of the neighbouring country and this is not only because of minorities but also the cultural and economical exchange.

Culture consists of the values which are respected by members of a nation or the state, by the norms they base their lives on, and the material goods they create. In this vision of culture, cultural diversity in the Balkans is very dense this why it can even create a situation where it is caught between the influence and pressure of greater external powers while their neighbours keep a hostile and rival attitude, this phenomena was explained by the term "shatterbelt" used for the first time in the year 1961 from Gordon East - an American researcher at the University of Indiana.<sup>58</sup>

A third theory is the one of Huntington's clash of civilizations. How obvious is the clash of civilizations in the Balkans? Huntington says that in the Balkans<sup>59</sup> has not only seen the clash between Islamic and European civilization but also between Western civilization and the eastern (Orthodox) civilization and that the Balkans are again balkanized by religious "artifacts " or what Misha Glenny notices on the other hand – Two spheres are being resurrected, one wearing the robe of Eastern Orthodoxy and one with the Islamic veil.<sup>60</sup>

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uBwKDjAhUBy6YKHV\_eCPAQ9QEwBHoECAYQCg#imgdii=ThKLUF2ISlbRTM:&imgrc=UEOnDh mDvO5TIM:&vet=1(Accessed: 06.05.2019).

<sup>58</sup> Andrew Baruch Wachtel, "The Balkans in World History, introduction", The Balkans as borderland and melting pot, Oxford University Press, Inc, 2008, pp.1-3.

<sup>59</sup> Map 1.2.3. <https://i.redd.it/5uaz25biwdhx.png> (Accessed:06.07.2019).

<sup>60</sup> Samuel, Huntington, "The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order", Simon and



Seen under a broader perspective and historical context, the conversion to Orthodox religion, in contrast from conversion to other religions, was also associated with the written language, namely Cyrillic alphabet. Today, this line between the Orthodox religion and the language is still in progress. By contrast, Catholic cultural areas use the Latin alphabet. A unique example of this correlation between religion and the written language is the fact that Serbs and Croats, even though they speak almost the same language, use different alphabets.

What is related to religion and written language is cultural identification. Serbs have traditionally considered Russia as their cultural protector and creator, while Croats have always considered themselves closer to the West. On the other hand Greece, even though a state belonging to the Orthodox belief, due to its cultural ties is always close to the West, since the West sees Greece as the cradle and the source of the Western civilisation<sup>61</sup> The case of Albania is unique compared to other Balkan countries, having a mixed population in terms of religious belief it is changing its position sometimes due to external factors, but mostly staying loyal to the West.

These positioning were really important especially during the 19<sup>th</sup> century since a crucial rivalry was taking place between two of the Great powers of the moment; The Great Britain and Russia. The fight being over Asia, its' key of accession into the continent the Balkan Peninsula and back then Ottoman Empire's lands were not left out of the map. As a matter of fact Balkan also was seen as a key factor into the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, since the beginning of the century Greeks and Serbs started their fight for independence. With the division of the Empire, these powers would be free to use the lands as they wished.<sup>62</sup>

For this reason a double attack was made from both powers, while The Great Britain encouraged and supported the Greek uprising, sometime after Russia attacked the Ottoman Empire in 1828-1829, leaving the Ottoman Empire in a hard position, giving the upper hand to the Greek and making things easier for both powers. The same

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Schuster Paperbacks, 2003, p.127.

<sup>61</sup> Arpalier, "Büyük Arnavutluk...", op.cit., pp.13-19.

<sup>62</sup> Barış Özdal, "19.Yüzyılda Orta Asya'da Rus Çarlığı ve İngilterre Arasındaki Rekabetin Diplomasinin Gelişimine Etkileri", Barış Özdal, R.Kutay Karaca, (ed.), Diploması Tarihi 1, 3.Edition, Bursa, Dora Publications, 2018, p.573.

attitude was seen even during the whole process of dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, resulting so in the increase of the rivalry.



**Map.1.2.3.1 Religious and Ethnic percentages of the Blakans during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Being at the same time an unprecedented juncture of politics, empires, states, civilizations and cultures from most the Western Balkans has thus shaped a contagious conflict heritage that, before and after the Cold War, would lead to an arduous ethnic, political, military, social, and economic clash. In this giant stratification of cultures, nationalism has occupied itself as a supreme feeling in the Balkan countries. Racial hatred was continually fuelled by territorial, religious and cultural disputes as a pride which, in turn, fuelled vengeance. That is why ethnocide and genocide have been

permanent in this region. However, geographic and historical factors are of particular importance to the Balkans.

According to Prof. Jeffrey Sach, there is a direct link between geographical distance and the income per capita. According to his studies, it turned out that the more far-away European countries are from the Great Britain (which is the first country to pass the limit of \$ 2000 income per capita in 1852 and realized the industrial revolution) the more time it took to reach this revenue limit and to have this development.<sup>63</sup>

The second factor, he says, is the role of history, related to the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans. The third factor is the geopolitical ties. Balkans may be far from some markets, but close to others, so location, and the ability to attract foreign investment is very important for geopolitics, as it is for the importance it holds as a strategic passage from the Rimland to the heartland. For all this reasons Europe was in need of the Balkans as much as the Balkans is in need of Europe.<sup>64</sup>

### 3. Geography and Importance of Chameria Region



**Map. 1.3.1.1. The Borders, Surface and Composition of Chameria**

<sup>63</sup> Isufi, Albana, "Religjioni dhe politika në Ballkan, 2007, <http://www.evropaelire.org/content/article/982205.html> (Accessed: 18.06.2019).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Chameria's<sup>65</sup> territory starts from the actual Albanian border in the north, the Janina<sup>66</sup> valley in the east, has its coast at the Ionian Sea in the West and goes up to Fanari River (Ambracian Gulf ) in the south. The origins of the name Chameria is still a well discussed topic and all parties that have a close relation to the area, have their own explanation. There are three main views over the origins of the name. Firstly, the Albanian linguists defend the view that the name of the region means “Big and Bad Rock” and while considering the latitude of the region they judge it's more than convincing explanation.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand the Greek view says the name Çam (Cham) comes from the river Thyamis<sup>68</sup> <sup>69</sup>that flows in the area, trying so to make evident the Greek roots of the region.<sup>70</sup>

However due to political and strategic reasons and being firm on the helenic origins of Epirus, Greeks prefer to call the region as Southern Epirus (Toponym used in most non-Albanian academic literature as well), putting into evidence their claims over the Northern Epirus, lands that are in the southern part of Albania. According to the Albanian thesis, Epirus was the province and one of the states of South Illyria<sup>71</sup>, stretching from the Ceraunian Mountains and the secondary flow of Vjosa River to the north, to the Amber Bay in the south, and from the Pindi Mountains in the east and Ionian coast to the west.

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<sup>65</sup> <https://opinion.al/greqia-nuk-ndalet-shqiperia-te-zhduke-nga-harta-dhe-librat-emrin-cameri/> (Accessed: 16.07.2019).

<sup>66</sup> Janina is known under this name in Albanian language while in Turkish is called Yanya and Ioannina in official Greek while within Greece is also called Yannena.

<sup>67</sup> Lush Culaj, “Shqipëria dhe Çështja e Çamërisë 1912-1939”, Instituti Albanlogjik i Prishtinës, 1.Edition, KGT publications, Prishtina, 2008, p.11.

<sup>68</sup> Today this river is known under the name of Kalamas.

<sup>69</sup> There are also some Albanian scholars that defend the same view, while highlighting the Illyrian past of the region and explaining the toponym under that perspective. For more read: Pëllumb Xhufi, “Arbërit e Jonit, Vlora, Delvina e Janina në shekujt XV-XVII”, Onufri Publishing House, 1.Edition, Titana, 2016. Kristo Frashëri, “Historia e Çamërisë, Vështrim Historik”, UET Press, 1.Edition, Tirana, 2015.

<sup>70</sup> Selman Sheme, “Vështrim Gjeografik”, Romeo Gurakuqi, Ketrina Çabiri (ed), Group of Authors, “Epiri i Jugut, Çamëria” UET Press, Trana, May 2014, p.9.

<sup>71</sup> There is a great debate between Albania and Greece over the historical origins of Epirus. The Albanian thesis is based on the idea that the tribes (Chaonians, Thesprotians and Molossians) composing the state of Epirus were Illyrians, thus Albanians, to defend this thesis they state different Greek authors like Strabo and Plutarch who stated that these tribes were barbarians, meaning non-greek. While Greeks defend their thesis based on the alphabet and some linguistic evidence found on the area and their way of state-formation. Both thesis have different explanations over the Etymology of the word Epirus, Albanians state that it is a derivation that comes from Albania and “Epër” means high land, while in Greek “Ἠπειρος” (Apeiros) is a word that originates from Apeiro meaning coast, while Apeiros is explained as Terra Firma. For more: Frashëri, “Historia e Çamërisë, Vështrim Historik” op. Cit. pp.1-30.

While for the Greeks, Epirus, holding the same geographic borders, was another Greek state that dates from 370 BC.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, in the last decade Greece is trying to avoid using the word Cham or Chameria, going as far as lobbying into taking the word off the academic textbooks and more. The last Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, his Excellency Nikos Kotzias<sup>73</sup>, made openly into television and other type of media the following statement:

*"During the recent meeting<sup>74</sup> of the Greek-Albanian Commission of Greek-Albanian Experts, the Greek side has insisted on deleting from the textbooks terms such as 'Albanian territories in Greece' (Chameria) that are unacceptable and insulting the unity of our country (Greece). But also the expressions and maps in which the Greek geographic region appears with the name "Chameria".<sup>75</sup>*

Finally the last explanation of the etymology of this toponym is Turkish. The Turkish view explains that the name comes from the Turkish word Çam, meaning pine tree, while in Turkish the area is called Çamlık (area planted with pine trees).<sup>76</sup> Chameria has a typical Mediterranean subtropical climate, with soft and humid winter and hot and dry summers, while the features of the relief create the microclimate that stretches from the west to the east, where in the mountain ridges there is permanent snow, and the Ionian Sea coasts have an average annual temperature of 13-15 degrees Celsius. The region has a reach ecosystem that is suitable into cultivating Olives, Vineyards, citrus, corn and wheat, while the now Greek State takes most of the supplies from this region.

One other fact of great importance is the hydro resources of the zone, rivers like Kalama, Akeron, Lluri and Araktor pass through the whole region, as well as Kalama

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<sup>72</sup> Kristo Frashëri, "Historia e Çamërisë, Vështrim Historik", UET Press, 1.Edition, Tirana, 2015, pp.18-19.

<sup>73</sup> Was assigned as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece on January 23,2015 and resigned from his position on October 17,2018. For more: <http://www.ekathimerini.com/233727/article/ekathimerini/news/greek-foreign-minister-nikos-kotzias-submits-resignation> ( Accessed: 16.07.2019)

<sup>74</sup> These meetings were held in the city of Korça, Albania on January 19-21, 2018.

<sup>75</sup> <https://opinion.al/greqia-nuk-ndalet-shqiperia-te-zhduke-nga-harta-dhe-librat-emrin-cameri/> (Accessed: 16.07.2019)

<sup>76</sup> Erjada Progonati, "Arnavutluk-Yunanistan İlişkilerinde Bir Azınlık Sorunu Olarak: Çamerya Arnavutları'nın Yeri Ve Geleceği", Gazi Unisversity, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations, PHD Thesis, p.107.

Delta, Edessa Waterfalls etc.<sup>77</sup> The importance of the geographical position of the Cham coast from the standpoint of strategic assessment is used firstly to reach faster the Italian coast, a natural controller of water corridor between Adriatic and Ionian Sea, and Channel of Corfu Island. Furthermore one of the most important transcontinental corridors, Corridor X has the end in the Cham coast. Another important road is the one of Sajadha-Filat (Philates) that passes through the Kalama River and connects the island of Corfu with Greece. The touristic corridor of and Adriatic: Patras – Preveza – Gumenica –Saranda –Vlora – Durrës – Budva – Dobrovnik – Rijeka -Trieste, or the other historical road of Ioannina - Konitza - Tre Urat (Three Bridges) – Korça - Manastir – Skopje.<sup>78</sup> These roads and corridors have been used from time to time by different world powers in order to fulfil their interest of invasion. During World Wars Italians and Germans used these roads to achieve their dream on reaching the Heartland.

The total surface of the region is 15.647km<sup>2</sup> and has nine prefectures: Arta (Ambrakia); Folorina, Grebena, Gumenitza, Ioannina, Corfu, Kostur, Preveze, Nasllëç. In different time periods of the history, this land was part of different types of land gathering. These differences are going to be explained with more details in the next chapters.

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<sup>77</sup> Sheme, “Vështrim Gjeografik” op. cit. pp.13-21.

<sup>78</sup> Sheme, “Vështrim Gjeografik” op. cit. pp.13-21.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL CHANGES IN THE BALKANS

The Balkan Peninsula has always been a land of rich history. Having a strategic position in the world map it is the bridge between east and west. This strategic position has always been the apple of the eye of most of the geopolitical theories and great powers, may they be of the recent century or earlier. All this has caused the destabilization of the region changing its internal borders according to the will of the strongest power of the moment. These changes are still present today and will be in the future as long as the region will hold the strategic position that has had during centuries.

#### 1. Division of the Balkan Lands According to “Vilayet” System

The administrative system of the Ottoman Empire was divided into the “Vilayet” (provinces) system, which was governed by the beylerbeyi (provincial administrative units), and was formed by the unification of villages and banners. The Arabic word “eyalet” (provinces), has the meaning of administration and executive units, more adopted after 1591.<sup>79</sup> Due to political, economic and physical distance conditions, the provinces are divided into three sections: Salyaneli-Yıllıklı<sup>80</sup> (Annually), Salyanesiz-Yıllıksız (non-Annually) and İmtiyazlı<sup>81</sup> (Privileged).

Regions such as Anatolia, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Şam (Damascus) and Van, including Rumelia which comprises almost all the lands in the Balkans, are designated as Salyanesiz (non-Annually) provinces. Borders and system changed with the Vilayet Nizamnamesi (provincial regulations) after the Tanzimat Period of the Ottoman Empire.

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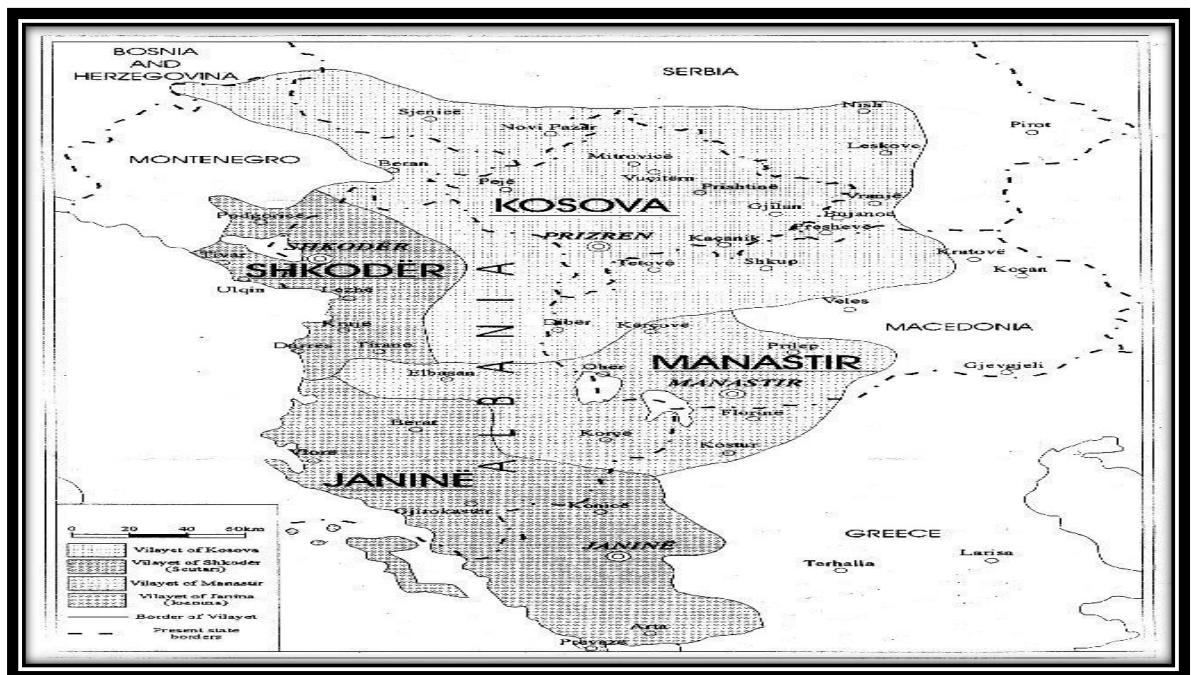
<sup>79</sup> Halil İnalcık, “Eyalet İdaresi: Cizye ve Gayrimüslimler”, “Osmanlı İdare ve Ekonomik Tarihi”, İstanbul, İSAM ed., 2011. p. 57.

<sup>80</sup> Salyaneli (Annually) Provinces: Egypt, Tunisia, Tripoli, Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Yemen is the name given to the administration of distant provinces. Tımar Sistemi (the manorial system) is not implemented. After the salary of the tax collector is paid, the rest is transferred annually to the coffers of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>81</sup> İmtiyazlı (Privileged) Provinces: The provinces of Wallachia, Boğdan and Erdel, which are far from the center and free of internal affairs, have military and tax obligations. The Crimean State is exempt from tax. The Hejaz State, which houses the holy lands, is exempt from tax and tax obligations.

Thus the Ottoman Empire adopted the usage of Vilayet Sistemi (provincial system) in 1864.<sup>82</sup>

With the transition to the Vilayet Sistemi<sup>83</sup> (provincial system), the regions where the majority of Albanians lived were divided into four different provinces: Kosova Vilayeti<sup>84</sup> (The Vilayet of Kosovo), İşkodra Vilayeti<sup>85</sup> (Vilayet of Scutari), Manastir Vilayeti<sup>86</sup> (Vilayet of Manastir) and Yanya<sup>87</sup> Vilayeti<sup>88</sup> (Vilayet of Janina).



**Map 2.1.1.1. Greater Albania consisting of “Vilayet” (Province) Borders (Shqipëria e Madhe)**

This division affected negatively Albanian nationalism and its geopolitical situation. Due to physical impossibilities, the Albanian people experienced communication disruptions and the interaction needed by nationalist movement had a

<sup>82</sup> Nazım Kartal, “İl Sistemine Geçiş Sorunsalı: Türkiye’de 1864 Vilayet Nizamnamesi ile İl Sistemine Geçilmiş midir?”, International Journal of Economics and Business Administration, Vol.:10th , 23rd Issue, 2014. p. 1. For Access: [http://ijmeb.org/index.php/zkesbe/article/viewFile/17/pdf\\_1](http://ijmeb.org/index.php/zkesbe/article/viewFile/17/pdf_1) (Accessed on 06.07.2019)

<sup>83</sup> For Map 2.1.1.1. Greater Albania consisting of “Vilayet” (Province) Borders (Shqipëria e Madhe); <https://www.panoramio.com/photo/4673989> (Accessed on 06.07.2019)

<sup>84</sup> Alb.: Vilajeti i Kosovës.

<sup>85</sup> Alb.: Vilajeti i Shkodrës.

<sup>86</sup> Alb.: Vilajeti i Manastirit, Mcd.: Битолски вилает.

<sup>87</sup> Chameria land where administered by this Vilayet.

<sup>88</sup> Alb.: Vilajeti i Janinës, Gre.: Ιωάννινα (Ioannina).



negative effect on the provision of this movement. The Balkans were seen by the Ottoman Empire not only as an imperial land but also as a homeland. Therefore has been experienced in many aspects of life in a diverse spectrum of mutual interaction like political, geopolitical, economic, cultural, religious aspects of social life. Albanian nationalism and geopolitics were developed by advancing on conditions set by the Ottoman Empire in the region.<sup>89</sup>

On the other, hand these provincial borders drawn by the Ottoman Empire formed the boundaries of the Greater Albania<sup>90</sup> Idea which was the sole aim of Albanians. In relation to current borders, Greater Albania Idea refers to the area that covers the whole of Albania and Kosovo, the southwest of Serbia, the east and south of Montenegro, the west and northwest of Northern Macedonia, and the northwest of Greece. These are the borders of Albanian lebnesarum, lands which not only comprise more than half of the Albanian population but also have a great strategic importance as well as economical one.

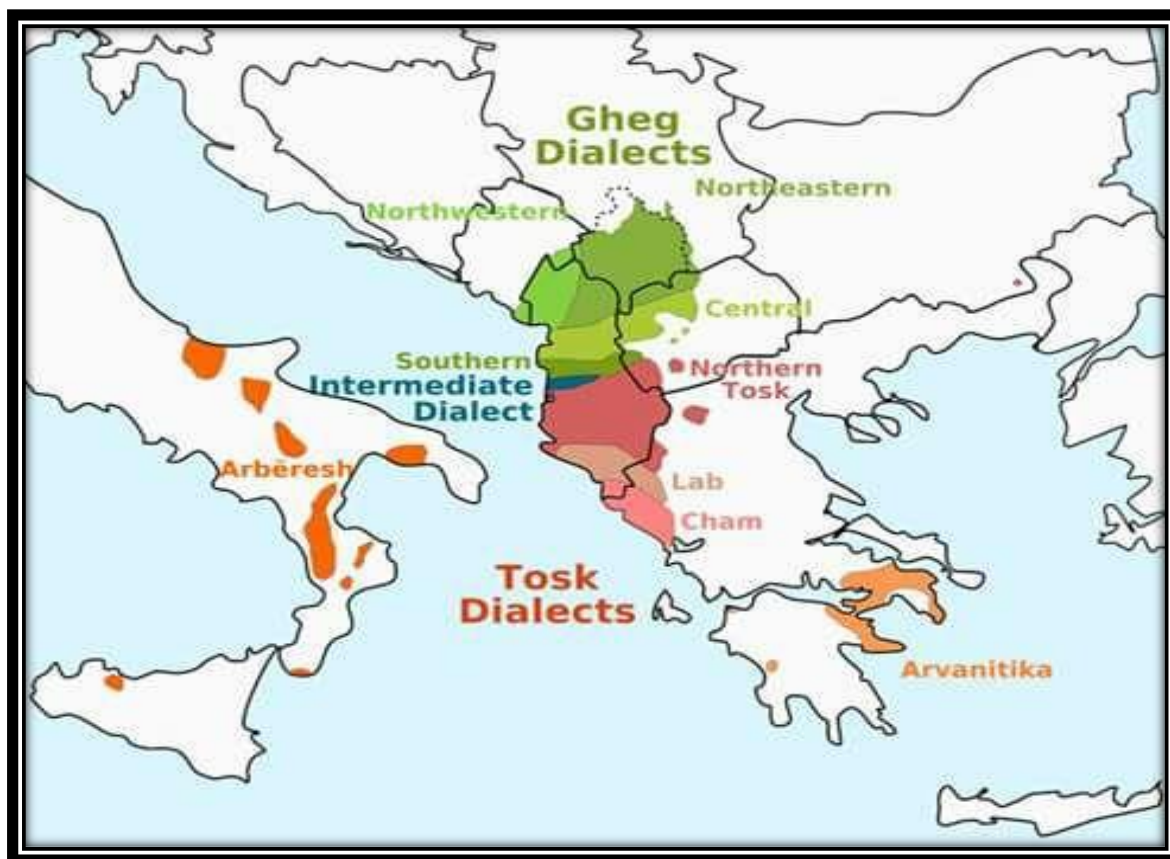
The division of the Albanians, who were divided in terms of religion and sect, was inevitable due to their administrative and geographical position within the Vilayet system. This division has not only been experienced administratively and geographically but Albanians also experienced a linguistic separation. Albanians living in the north speak the Gegë (Ghegs) dialect while those living in the south speak Toskë

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<sup>89</sup> Seçkin Arpalier, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Arnavut Milliyetçiliği", "Büyük Arnavutluk İdeası'nın Kosova'nın Bağımsızlık Sürecine Etkisi (1981-2008)", Bursa Uludağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations, Master Thesis, p.30.

<sup>90</sup> Alb.: Shqipëria e Madhe, also this idea called differently like; Alb: Shqipëria Etnike, Eng.: Ethnic Albania, Alb.: Shqipëria Natyrale, Eng.: Natural Albania, Alb.: Ribashkimi Kombëtar Shqiptar, Eng.: Albanian National Reunification For details; Tim Judah, "Kosovo and the Region", "Kosovo: Whats Everyone Needs to Know?", New York, Oxford University Press, 2008. p. 120. For Access: [https://books.google.com/books?id=WjTRCwAAQBAJ&pg=PA120&dq=Albanian+nationalists&hl=en&sa=X&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Albanian%20nationalists&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=WjTRCwAAQBAJ&pg=PA120&dq=Albanian+nationalists&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Albanian%20nationalists&f=false) (Accessed on 06.07.2019).

/ Toskërish (Tosk<sup>91</sup>) dialect. The Shkumbin River<sup>92</sup> in the middle of Albania forms a natural border between these two<sup>93</sup> dialects.<sup>94</sup>



**Map 2.1.2. Albanian Dialects**

The Ghëgs living in the northern part of the river led to the clanization in the mountainous areas, and the Tosks living in the southern part of the river made up of more educated feudal aristocrats<sup>96</sup> and urban tribes and socially differentiated between Albanians through dialects. This separation had its impact into the state formation and

<sup>91</sup> Chams of Çamëria speaking southern dialect (Tosk).

<sup>92</sup> For Map 2.1.2. Albanian Dialects; <https://orientalreview.org/2015/11/04/greater-albania-is-a-myth-to-preserve-the-countrys-unity-i/> (Accessed on 07.07.2019).

<sup>93</sup> Both dialects are divided into four small dialects, as well as some Arberësh (Ghëg-Tosk mix) speakers who live in southern Italy. Today, the majority of Albanians use the Ghëg dialect in northern Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia, while the Tosk dialect is used in southern Albania and northern Greece. Although the 36-letter Latin alphabet is based on the Ghëg dialect used by the Albanian majority, Tosk dialect has been standardized in Albania with the regulations of the communist leader Enver Hoxha of Tosk origin.

<sup>94</sup> Aydın Babuna, “Albanian National Identity and Islam in The Post-Communist Era”, Stratejik Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara, 2003, pp. 1-2. For Access; <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/AydinBabuna.pdf> (Accessed on 07.07.2019).

<sup>95</sup> The dialect of Çamëria is part of Tosk dialect.

<sup>96</sup> There is also an Albanian bureaucrat class studying in Istanbul.

being a power to deal with the other newly formed Balkan states. This is why it is not possible to talk about geopolitical strategies of Albania at this point of history, while the other countries such as Serbia or the Bulgarian Kingdom had already set an eye on the lands would make them shoring the Adriatic sea. In short, the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire, the Vilayet system directly affected the geopolitical policies of the nations in the Balkans.

## 2. Greece Gains Independence

In the 19th century danger and tension was all around the world. Another area of danger and tension in Europe was the Balkans in the 1800s. Balkan Peninsula sheltered a variety of people and its centuries-old hostility and rivalries. The decline of the Ottoman Empire's power in the Balkans had given the Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, and Romanians chance to win their independence. Also, these new actors were themselves wild rivals and potential foes and they had an eye on the territory of one another. This situation was used by the Great Powers for their geopolitical interest.<sup>97</sup>

Developments in the Balkans at the beginning of the 19th century signaled that there would be extensive changes in the region in the same century. In particular, the strengthening of nationalism in the Balkans as one of the results of the Great French Revolution of 1789 and the Napoleon Wars had devastating effects on the Ottoman Empire which had a multinational structure. The Greek Rebellion, which attracted much sympathy in the Western world, is undoubtedly of special importance in the 19th century Balkan developments.<sup>98</sup>

The Greeks, who were in a good economic position, had been active in the trade centers such as Vienna, Odessa, Izmir, Istanbul, Thessaloniki, Peloponnese (Mora) and Cairo also they were well organized between them in these centers. Although there were

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<sup>97</sup> Robin Lobban, "Rivalries: the Balkans", "The First World War", Oxford University Press, Oxford 1988, p.14.

<sup>98</sup> Kader Özlem, "19. Yüzyılda Balkanlar'da Yaşanan Bazı Önemli Olayların Diplomasinin Gelişmesine Etkisi", Barış Özdal, R. Kutay Karaca, (Ed.), Diplomasi Tarihi 1, 3rd Edition, Bursa, Dora Publications, 2018, pp. 595-598.

different opinions among the Greeks, the most dominant group was the one that wanted the establishment of an independent Greek nation.<sup>99</sup>

The secret organization Filiki Eterya (Friendship Society), established in Odessa in 1814, played an important role in the rebellions for independence. For the establishment of an independent Greece, Filiki Eterya tried to revolt the Greeks within the Ottoman Empire and even aimed to confuse all the Christian elements in the Balkans. After a failed rebellion in Moldavia and Wallachia (Eflak ve Boğdan), the main focus of the uprisings was shifted to the Peloponnese in 1821. Tsarist Russia played an active role in these activities of the Greeks. Thus, the Peloponnese Rebellion was carried out directly by the Greeks and spread rapidly by leaping to the islands due to its geographical proximity.<sup>100</sup>

One of the notable points in Greek rebellions was the suitability of the conjuncture. The nationalist movement was the concrete reflection of the Great French Revolution of 1789 and the Napoleonic Wars in the Balkans. It is possible to summarize the main reasons of the Greek rebellion with the spread of nationalism among the Greeks, European and Greek intellectuals work for independence, activities of Filiki Eterya and rebellion of Ali Pasha from Tepelenë (Tepedelen). As a matter of fact, Ali Pasha was mostly trying to consolidate an autonomus Albanian Paşalık (name given to lands ruled by a pacha), however later on this idea was carried away into forming a greek state by the greeks.<sup>101</sup>

It turned out that the Ottoman Empire was unable to suppress the rebellion and even asked the governor for help. The Aegean Sea ceased to belong to the Turks and the foundations of the problems which have survived until today were laid by the Treaty of Edirne in 1829. Five months after the Treaty of Edirne, on 3 February 1830, a new London Protocol was signed between England, France, and Tsarist Russia, declaring the establishment of an independent State of Greece. On April 24, 1830, the Ottoman Empire was forced to accept Greece's independence. In the following years, the Greeks

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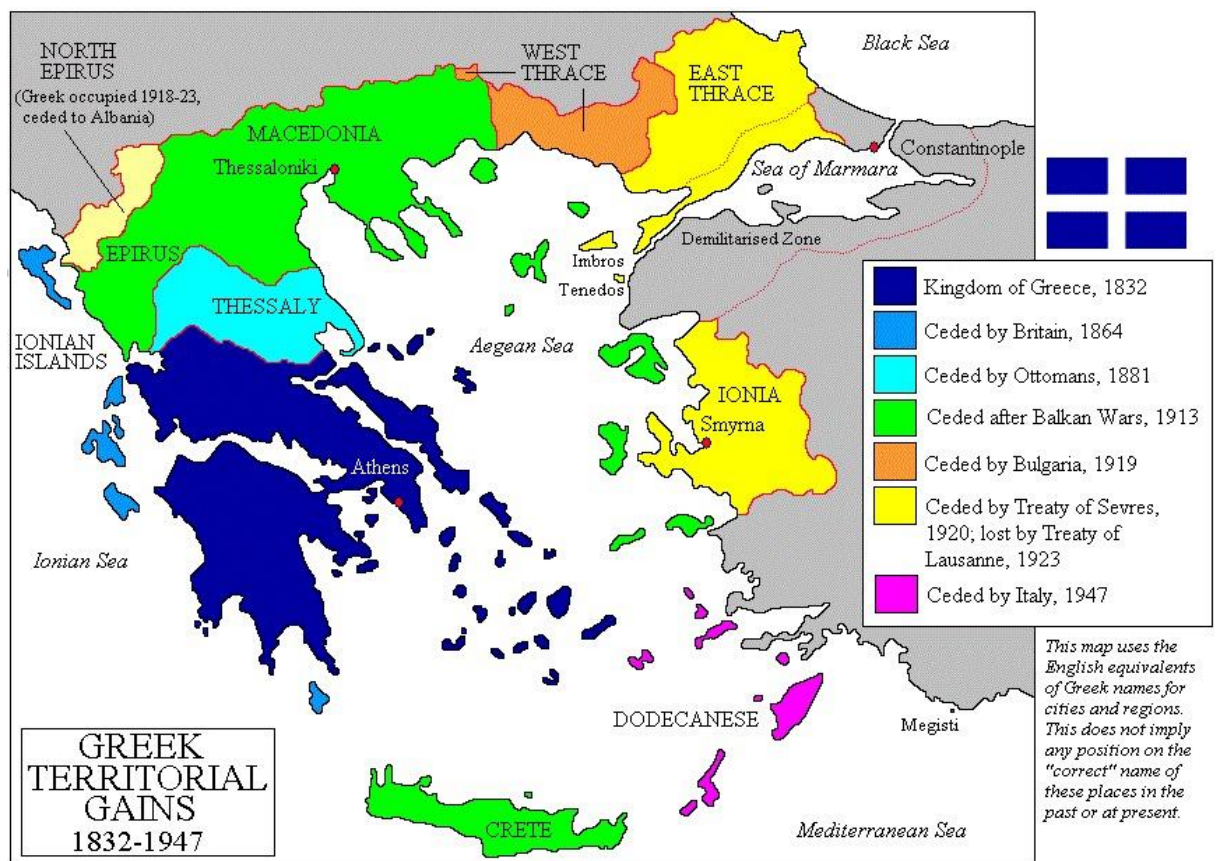
<sup>99</sup> Sacit Kutlu, "Milliyetçilik ve Emperyalizm Yüzyılında Balkanlar ve Osmanlı Devleti", İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Publications, 2007, p. 50.

<sup>100</sup> Oral Sander, "Siyasi Tarih – İlkçağlardan 1918'e", 24th Edition, Ankara: İmge Bookstore, 2012, pp. 298-299.

<sup>101</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu, "19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789-1914)", 6th Edition, İstanbul: Alkım Publishing House, 2010, pp. 255-259.

continued their expansion in the Ottoman lands. The Greek independence process has shown that European states can unite against the Turks in the denominator of religion.<sup>102</sup>

States such as Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania, which gained their independence with the support of foreign powers, especially Tsarist Russia, have emerged in the region. On the other hand, the Albanians, the majority of whom are Muslims, have not received the support of the great powers as much as the other Balkan peoples. Albanians suffered many injustices due to the power rivalry between Italy and Austria-Hungary in the Western Balkans.<sup>103</sup>



**Map 2.2.1.2. Greek Territorial Gains (1832-1947)**

<sup>102</sup> Özlem, “Diplomasi...”, op.cit., pp. 599-601.

<sup>103</sup> Bernd Fischer, “Albanian Nationalism and Albanian Independence”, De Gruyter Open, *Seur Review*, DOI: 10.2478/seur-2014-0005, 2014. p. 37. Access for article; <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/seur.2014.10.issue-1/seur-2014-0005/seur-2014-0005.pdf> (Accessed on 10.07.2019)

However, religion was not more than a way to achieve proximity with these nations to put their direct influence on them. The first goal of Russia and Great Britain was to see the split-up of the Ottoman Empire since they could not leave another power having what was considered the key, or gate between East and West. So it is seen a silent collaboration between these powers and giving to Greece the necessary aid into its path of independence. This is a starting point into the rivalry of Russia and Great Britain that would continue with the Great Game.

### **3. Treaty of Berlin in 1878 and its Regional Effect**

Since the 1870s, when Tsarist Russia began to pursue Pan Slavism<sup>104</sup> policy in the Balkans, Slavic elements in the region were provoked against the Ottoman rule. Against these provocations, the Ottoman administration had difficulty in controlling the Balkans.<sup>105</sup> After the defeat of the Russo-Turkish War (War of 93) in 1877-1878, the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Ayastefanos (Yeşilköy) on 3 March 1878, which contained very severe conditions. According to the Treaty, the territories of Kosovo, Scutari (Shkodër), Manastir and Janina Vilayets, where Albanians composed the vast majority of the region, was foreseen to be divided among Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia. This division made true their geopolitical aspirations to coast the Adriatic sea possible, while Russia through its influence upon the Slavic countries would have a way out into the warm seas.

Albanians living in the region took action against these developments. It was officially decided on 10 June 1878 to establish the League of Prizren (Lidhja e Prizrenit) in the Sanjak of Prizren in Kosovo Vilayet. This League, one of the turning points of Albanian nationalism, was established under the leadership of Abdyl Frashëri to protect Albanian territory for their geopolitical strategy. While Albanian nationalism is only a cultural-level movement, this movement has reached a political level with the league

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<sup>104</sup> Pan Slavism is the name of Russia's policy of collecting Slavic races into a single state under its rule, especially during the Tsarist Period after the Crimean War (1853-1856).

<sup>105</sup> Özlem, "Diplomasi...", op. cit. pp. 209-210.

established.<sup>106</sup> The main goal of the Prizeren League was to provide at any cost the partition of Albanian lands.<sup>107</sup>

The League of Prizren, also known as the League for the defense of the rights of the Albanian nation (Lidhja për mbrojtjen e të drejtave të kombit Shqiptar), was not an organization against the Ottoman Empire, but rather an organization established by swearing on the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the protection of the rights of the Sultan.<sup>108</sup> The four Vilayets of Kosovo, Scutari, Manastir and Janina by the Albanians aim to establish a single autonomous province of Albania affiliated to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>109</sup> However they still aimed to escape from the direct influence of the Sublime Porte, and the success of the League would have strengthened the Ottoman influence in the Peninsula.

The League of Prizren was founded to prevent the expansion of Slavic and Greek elements neighboring Albanians and to defend their territory. The joint decree issued after the League of Prizren negotiations was in the same direction.

*“We wholeheartedly wish to live in peace with all our neighbours, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria... We do not want and not ask anything of them, but we are all determined to protect what is ours.”<sup>110</sup>*

The decree was issued with the signature of 47 Albanian Beys, including 300 delegates including Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic Beys, to make their voices heard to

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<sup>106</sup> Jonilda Rrapaj and Klevis Kolasi, “Theoretical Framework: Modernist Theories of Nationalism and Structural Transformation”, “The Curious Case of Albanian Nationalism: the Crooked Line from a Scattered Array of Clans to a Nation-State”, Ankara University, The Turkish Year Book of International Relations, Vol.: 44th, 2013, pp. 209-210.

<sup>107</sup> Nuçi Kota, “Shqipëria dhe çështja e kufijve Shqiptaro-Grekë”, Bota Shqiptare Publications, Tirana, 2016, p.29.

<sup>108</sup> Denis P. Hupchick, “The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism”, New York, Palgrave, 2002, p. 404.

<sup>109</sup> Nathalie Clayer, “La Production D’imprimés”, “Aux Origines Du Nationalisme Albanais: La Naissance D’une Nation Majoritairement Musulmane En Europe”, Paris, Editions Karthala, 2007, p. 463. Access for book; <https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=umotBF3KFWgC&printsec=frontcover&hl=tr#v=onepage&q&f=false> (Accessed on 14.07.2019).

<sup>110</sup> Enver Bytyqi, “Coercive Diplomacy of Nato in Kosovo”, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, s. 9. Access for book; [https://books.google.com.au/books?id=IgzNBwAAQBAJ&pg=PA8&dq=Serb+historiography+kosovo&hl=en&sa=X&redir\\_esc=y#v=snippet&q=wholeheartedly%20&f=false](https://books.google.com.au/books?id=IgzNBwAAQBAJ&pg=PA8&dq=Serb+historiography+kosovo&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=snippet&q=wholeheartedly%20&f=false) (Accessed on 14.07.2019).

the delegations at the Berlin Congress on 13 July 1878, three days later. Britain, France and Austria, which were dissatisfied with the harsh conditions of the Treaty of Ayastefanos and the progress of their balance of power in the region, also opposed this heavy agreement. For this reason, it was decided to discuss the issues regulated by the Treaty of Ayastefanos at the congress of Berlin.<sup>111</sup>

Albanians, being the only people from the Balkans who do not have representatives in the Congress of Berlin, having no official representation led to the refusal of their demands thus giving the upper hand to the other Balkan countries. The demands of the Albanian people were not accepted and even their national assets were not wanted to be recognized. As Bismarck pointed out at the Congress of Berlin: “*There is no Albanian nation. Albania is only a geographical term.*”<sup>112</sup> As it is understood from the statement, the existence and rights of Albanians were ignored in the congress.

On 13 July 1878, an international congress was held in Berlin under the presidency of Bismarck. The congress was attended by the Ottoman Empire, Tsarist Russia, Great Britain, France, the Kingdom of Italy, Austria-Hungary and the German Empire. With the Berlin Treaty signed, the Ottoman Empire was forced to accept the autonomous principals of Serbia, Romania, Montenegro and Bulgaria. Also the Sanjak of Thessaly was left to Greece in 1881.<sup>113</sup> This development gave Greece a geopolitical advantage over Albania.

#### **4. Geopolitical Laboratory: The Balkan Wars (1912-1913)**

As the Ottoman Empire lost its influence in the Balkans, the actors in the region searched for a new geopolitical struggle. Tsarist Russian policy of bringing the “Eastern Question”<sup>114</sup> to the agenda had prepared the basis for the Balkan states' attempts to form an alliance among themselves against the Ottoman Empire. After the Ottoman Empire lost its power, Tsarist Russia saw the Habsburg dynasty as its geopolitical rival. The

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<sup>111</sup> Özlem, “19. Yüzyılda Balkanlar’da”, op. cit. pp. 461-462.

<sup>112</sup> Rrapaj, “The Curious case...”, op. cit. p. 200.

<sup>113</sup> Krasner, Stephen D. “Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy”. Princeton University Press, 1999. p. 31.

<sup>114</sup> The Eastern Question (Doğu Sorunu / Şark Sorunu) is the plan for the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire by the Great Powers (Russia, Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, Germany (after 1871)) without disturbing the balance of power in the international system.



real aim of this policy of the Tsarist Russia is to create a strong bloc against the Habsburg monarchy, rather than the loss of the Ottoman lands of Europe.<sup>115</sup>

Bulgaria was the most effective state among the regional actors in this process. In March 1912, a treaty was concluded between Serbia and Bulgaria. This agreement was the basis of the Balkan alliance against Ottoman Empire. In May 1912, Bulgaria concluded a similar treaty with Greece. In October 1912, multilateral treaties were signed between Montenegro, Serbia and Bulgaria. Although the negotiations between the Serbian and Bulgarian sides were agreed on the sharing of the territories of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans (except for the territory of Macedonia), the same did not apply to Greece. For example; Bulgaria and Greece wanted to include Thessaloniki for their own geopolitical interests. Since the priority objectives were the Ottoman Empire, the disputes were temporarily shelved. Against the Ottoman administration, this time, not only a Balkan state, but a large bloc consisting of four allies<sup>116</sup> took place.<sup>117</sup>

Similar to Bulgaria's purpose in Greater Bulgaria, Greece wants to realize Megali Idea (Greater Greece). While the borders of the Megali Idea included Macedonia's Aegean coast and Crete, the alliance between Athens and Sofia was established in order to achieve this aim before the war.<sup>118</sup>

Although the Greek army, which consisted of 110.000 forces in military terms, was far behind Bulgaria and Serbia, the most important feature of the Balkan states was the naval power. While the Greek Navy controlled the geopolitically important Çanakkale exit to prevent the Ottoman Empire from sending ships to the Aegean and Adriatic coasts, it also tried to prevent the Turks from reinforcing their troops in Europe.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Barbara Jelavich, "Balkan Tarihi: 20. Yüzyıl", Vol.: 2nd, (Translate: Zehra Savan-Hatice Uğur), 3rd Edition, İstanbul: Küre Publishing, 2006, pp. 101-102.

<sup>116</sup> Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia

<sup>117</sup> Georges Castellan, "Balkanlar'ın Tarihi", (Translate: Aysegul, Yaraman-Basbuğu), İstanbul: Milliyet Publishing, 1995, pp. 386-387.

<sup>118</sup> Armaoğlu, "19. Yüzyıl...", op. cit. pp. 925-929.

<sup>119</sup> Richard C. Hall, "Balkan Savaşları 1912-1913", "I. Dünya Savaşı'nın Provası", (Translate: M. Tanju Akad), İstanbul: Homer Publishing House, 2003, p. 23.

#### 4.1. The First Balkan War (1912)

On October 8, 1912, the smallest country in the Balkans, Montenegro declared war on the Ottoman Empire and the regional rehearsal of World War I took place in the Balkans. Bulgaria and Serbia declared war on 17 October 1912 and Greece declared war on 19 October 1912.<sup>120</sup>

Although the Ottoman commanders doubted the loyalty of the Albanians when the First Balkan War started, Albanians fought alongside the Ottoman army as usual. Considering the fact that the Ottoman army lost the war very quickly and Macedonia's resignation from the Ottoman rule led to the disconnection of the land between Albania and the empire.<sup>121</sup> Greece's and Serbia's tendency to expand into the country's territory accelerated the Albanian independence process. For this reason, İsmail Qemali (İsmail Kemal Bey), who realized the Albanian lands could not be protected anymore by the Empire, declared the independence in Vlorë<sup>122</sup> (Avlonya) in southern Albania on 28 November 1912 with partial support and assurance of Italy and Austria-Hungary.

This support was based on a secret treaty signed in 1901 to ensure the balance of power between Italy and Austria-Hungary. According to the Treaty; Albania as a whole is likely to remain under the Turkish flag. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, it was emphasized that the land should be kept in one piece independently compared to the other powers.<sup>123</sup>

The development which marked the First Balkan War was the rapid advance of the Bulgarian army towards Istanbul. The old Ottoman capital Edirne was occupied by the Bulgarians. The Bulgarian army, which also took Tekirdağ, went as far as Çatalca<sup>124</sup> and threatened Istanbul. Bulgaria carried out its second operation in the direction of Aegean Sea and reached to Thessaloniki. It has also taken over a part of Eastern

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<sup>120</sup> Özlem, "Diplomasi...", op.cit., p. 656.

<sup>121</sup> Fischer, "Albanian Nationalism...", op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>122</sup> The city is called the "City of Independence" (Qyteti i Pavarësisë). Along with independence, Vlorë was declared the capital of Albania. The second capital of Albania was moved from the capital Vlorë to Durrës (Tr.: Dıraç) on March 7, 1914, when the Austrian Prince Wilhelm Von Wied became the head of state. After the decisions taken at Leshne Congress (Kongresi i Lushnjës), on 8 February 1920, Tirana became the capital of the Albanian state. For details; Robert Elsie, "Historical Dictionary of Albania", "Historical Dictionary of Europe", 2. Edition, No. 75, Scarecrow Press, Plymouth, 2010, p. XXXIV.

<sup>123</sup> Nuri Dragoj, "Prapaskenat e Konferencës së Londrës (1912-1913)", Tiranë, Iceberg, 2014. p. 37.

<sup>124</sup> Today district of İstanbul metropolitan municipality.

Macedonia.<sup>125</sup> Bulgaria won great geopolitic and geostrategic advantage against other the Balkan's states.

Greece occupied all of the islands in the Aegean Sea except for Imroz and Bozcaada. It also expanded in the direction of Macedonia. Greece, which besieged Thessaloniki, occupied the city shortly before the Bulgarians on 8 November 1912. Greece gained great geopolitic and geostrategic advantage in Aegean Sea. While Serbia occupied Kosovo with the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, they landed in Macedonia after their victory in Kumanovo and reached as far as Prilep, Manastir and Ohrid. Then Serbia moved to Albania to besiege Shkodra (Scutari). Montenegro moved towards the East and conquered part of Macedonia and occupied Shkodra on April 22, 1913. The First Balkan War ended on 3 December 1912 with the Çatalca Armistice Agreement.<sup>126</sup>

#### **4.2. Albania Gains Independence**

As it is mentioned above, the Albanians who participated in the First Balkan Wars alongside the Ottoman Empire declared their independence on 28 November 1912 in Vlorë based on the developments during the war. This independence movement, led by Ismail Qemali, had the primary goal to defend its homeland against Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria, whose eyes were on its territory.

Albania's independence and borders<sup>127</sup> were discussed at the London Conference (13 December 1912- 30 May 1913). An Italian propaganda for the construction of the great Albania began to take shape in the London Conference 1912-1913. This was to serve as a pillar of a future Italian hegemony in the Balkans and therefore as a dam against Germany's and Austro-Hungary's advance towards the Mediterranean. This support on the Albanian territories was serving only as an instrument into creating a

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<sup>125</sup> Castellan, op.cit., p. 387.

<sup>126</sup> Özlem, "Diplomasi...", op.cit., p. 656.

<sup>127</sup> For Map 2.4.2.1. According to 1913 Borders of Albania; <https://www.quora.com/Why-was-Albania-given-territory-in-1913-Treaty-of-London-werent-they-too-weak-to-make-demands> (Accessed on 19.07.2019).

“New Order” in the region based on the national identity and the political aspect of the peninsula conform the Italian needs.<sup>128</sup>

On March 20, 1913, at one of the meetings of the London Conference, the agreement between Austria and Hungary and Russia was reached. Austria-Hungary was the losing side and this had consequences in the Balkans giving Serbia and Montenegro superiority over Albania. The Albanian lands of Kosovo and Chameria were out of bounds, including the 1 million Albanians inhabiting these lands. During the London Conference, upon the insistence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Italy and Germany, with the approval of Tsarist Russia in principle, Albania's independence was approved on July 29 1913 under the guarantee of the great states (Britain, France, Tsarist Russia, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Italy Germany).<sup>129</sup>



**Map 2.4.2.1 According to 1913 Borders of Albania**

<sup>128</sup> Donato Martucci, "Le Terre Albanesi Redente II Chameria", *Albaniastica* 2, Corner Editor Press, Marzi 2012, pp. 9-10.

The great powers have always supported Serbia and Greece in their independence processes. Owing to the majority of Albanians are Muslims, the independence of Albania has been shaped with cyclical interests and discontinuous partial support by the great powers. For this reason, the Albanian people have suffered many injustices in the region. During this period, Albania suffered a geopolitical loss. The biggest indication of this is that two-thirds of the Albanians and more than half of the Albanian population remain outside the borders of the established Albanian state in the border-setting stages.<sup>130</sup> In addition, it has been invaded by its neighbors and Western states for a long time after its independence.

#### **4.3. The Second Balkan War (1913)**

At the London Conference on 29 July 1913, Albania's independence was recognized under the guarantee of the great states. Because this independence was under the tutelage of the great powers, Austrian Prince Wilhem Von Wied was appointed as interim president of the Albanian state on 7 March 1914. Albania which country was the only one superficially affected by the Second Balkan War.<sup>131</sup>

On the other hand, in the Balkans, Bulgaria was the country which gained most of the land at the end of the First Balkan War, while the other countries of the region started to get concerned. The division of Albania and Macedonia bothered the Greeks and Serbs. The withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans made possible the formation of a multifaceted power vacuum in the region. Based on the reasons mentioned above, Bulgaria declared war on Serbia and Greece on 29-30 June 1913. Bulgarians, who thought of defeating the Serbian and Greek armies and marching on Romania, were defeated by respectively Greek and then Serbian forces.<sup>132</sup>

With these developments, the Balkan states convened on 10 August 1913 in Bucharest with the call of the Austro-Hungarian and Tsarist Russia As a result of the

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<sup>130</sup> Eduart Caka, "Millet Sisteminde Arnavutların Durumu", "Osmanlı Millet Sisteminde Arnavutların Konumu (XVII-XIX. Asırlar)", *Journal of Balkan Studies*, ed. Muhammed Ahmetaj, Vol.:6th, 1st Issue, 2015. pp. 17-21.

<sup>131</sup> Elsie, "Historical Dictionary...", *op. cit.* p. XXXIV.

<sup>132</sup> Jelavich, "Balkan Tarihi...", *op. cit.* p. 105.

conference, land sharing and new border lines were determined among Balkan states. While the Bulgarian-Greek border was established with the Bucharest Treaty, Greece expanded its territory considerably as the winner of both Balkan wars. Greece, which took over the territory of Southern Macedonia and a part of the Chameria (Epirus), included Kavala in the East. It was one of the important topics discussed during the signing of the agreement to whom Kavala belonged.<sup>133</sup>

The Treaty of Athens between the Ottoman Empire and Greece was signed on 14 November 1913. In this context, Janina, Thessaloniki and Crete were left to Greece. The islands of the Aegean Sea are mostly under the control of Greece and Italy. This gave to Greece a huge geopolitical advantage. The self-confidence of the Balkan wars led Greece to join the World War I (WWI) and embark on an adventure in Chameria (Epirus) and Anatolia.<sup>134</sup> In this process, while Albania gained limited independence under the guidance of a foreign prince, Greece achieved a significant geopolitical superiority against Albania with its major land gains.

Both wars in the Balkans have clearly demonstrated the division of interest between the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. This war of interest paved the way for the WWI with an assassination in the Balkans. The Balkan Wars took place as a rehearsal of the WWI limited to a smaller region. In the other words the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) were “Geopolitical Laboratory” for the international actors. The desire to maximize state interests caused the WWI.

## **5. Balkan Developments During World War I (1914-1918)**

Albania was already in a state of anarchy and there was no central government authority before the outbreak of the WWI. Austrian Prince Wilhelm Von Wied was appointed as interim president of the Albanian state on 7 March 1914. In the same year, after the outbreak of the WWI Albania declared that it would remain neutral during this four-year period. Nevertheless, Albania had returned to the battlefield because of its

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<sup>133</sup> Özlem, “Diplomasi...”, op. cit. pp. 662-663.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p. 664.

importance in its geopolitical position. It was occupied by 7 different armies, namely Greek, Italian, Austrian, Serbian, Montenegrin, French and Bulgarian.<sup>135</sup>

The Greeks invaded southern Albanian cities Gjirokastra<sup>136</sup> and Korça<sup>137</sup> in October and November 1914. The Greeks declared that these two cities became part of “Northern Epirus” into Greece. Also Montenegrins took Shkodra (Northern Albania), and Serbians occupied much of Elbasan and Tirana which is located Central Albania. Italians occupied Vlorë and the island of Sazan which is located Southern Albania. Greek forces were compelled to withdraw from Southern Albania by Italians. Gjirokastra, Sarandë<sup>138</sup> and Janina invaded by Italian forces.

By the end of 1916, Austro–Hungarian forces were in control of Northern (Shkodra) and Central Albania (Durrës). In October 1916, Pogradec<sup>139</sup> (Ohrid coast) occupied by Austrian and Bulgarian troops. The Southeast (Korça) withdrawn by Greek army and it was held by the French forces on 10 December 1916.

In fact, Italy was an ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and the alliance treaty was last revised in 1912, but its relations with Austria-Hungary have long been tense. Italy's complaints about Italian minorities within the borders of the Austro-Hungarian empire led to frictions at many points. For example, in 1913, the Austro-Hungarian Empire issued the Hohenlohe decrees (edicts) and dismissed all Italians from the public service in Trieste, which was considered a part of “Italia irredente”.<sup>140</sup>

Likewise, there was mutual distrust in the new Albanian state established under international tutelage at the end of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. This country was vital to Italy because of Vlorë port which controlled the Strait of Otranto. According to the Italians, if Vlorë was in the hands of a more powerful or equivalent state to Italy, it would be considered as the end of their existence.<sup>141</sup> By the end of the WWI, Italian forces were in possession of most of Albania on 11 November 1918. Italy has always

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<sup>135</sup> Elsie, “Historical Dictionary...”, op. cit. p. XXXIV.

<sup>136</sup> Alb. Gjirokastër, Gre. Αργυρόκαστρο – Argirokastro, Tur.: Ergiri.

<sup>137</sup> Alb. Korçë, Gre. Κορυτσά - Korytsa, Tur. Görice.

<sup>138</sup> Alb. Sarandë, Gre. Άγιοι Σαράντα - Agioi Saranda, Tur. Ayasaranda

<sup>139</sup> It is located in the city of Korça.

<sup>140</sup> John Gonch, “Italy Before 1915: The Quandry of the Vulnerable”, ed. Ernest R. May, *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1984, p. 217.

<sup>141</sup> William A. Renzi, *In the Shadow of the Sword: Italy's Neutrality and Entrance Into the Great War, 1914-1915*, New York, 1987, p.31.

set Albania as its first goal in achieving its hegemony. Italy's aspirations for Albania led to a new actor in the competition in the Balkans.<sup>142</sup>

In spite of the presence of all foreign troops, there was a relatively few conflicts in Albania during WWI. Actually, it was a period of consolidation for Albania. In fact, foreign troops built structures, roads, railroads, and bridges, all of which were lacking in a serious scale in Albania. In the aftermath of the WWI, Albania made efforts to form a new government.<sup>143</sup>

Greece was the last country to participate in the WWI. The most important reason for this was the domestic political situation. The differences of opinion between King Constantine<sup>144</sup> I and Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos<sup>145</sup> since the beginning of the WWI prevented Greece from participating<sup>146</sup> in the war until 1917<sup>147</sup>.

Greece's relations with its neighbors concerning the foreign policy also led to its participation in the WWI. Before the war, relations with the Ottoman Empire were not good due to the First Balkan War. Also Greece did not have good relations with Bulgaria due to the Second Balkan War. Prior to the Balkan wars, Greece signed an alliance agreement with Serbia which its other neighbor. However, despite the attacks of the Austrian-Hungarian armies against Serbia, the Athens administration preferred to remain neutral.<sup>148</sup>

Shortly after Romania joined the war, Romanians wanted to sign a peace agreement because of their loss in the war. This strengthened the dominant position of the Alliance States in the Balkans in 1917. Within this conjuncture, Greece's geo-strategic position has been of particular importance for the Entente States. Its geo-strategic position has brought Greece to the forefront as the main base of action against the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. Entente States wanted to use Megali Idea to support

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<sup>142</sup> James Joll & Gordon Martel, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı Neden Çıktı?", Translated by Orhan Dinç Tayanç, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Publications, 1st Edition, İstanbul, 2016, p. 45.

<sup>143</sup> Elsie, "Historical Dictionary...", op.cit., p. XXXIV.

<sup>144</sup> King Constantine I was close to the Alliance.

<sup>145</sup> Prime Minister Venizelos pursued a pro-Entente policy.

<sup>146</sup> Although Greece invaded Albania in 1914, it did not experience any military conflict. Therefore, its participation in the WWI was accepted as 1917.

<sup>147</sup> Kader Özlem, "I. Dünya Savaşı'nın Diplomasinin Gelişimine Etkileri", Barış Özdal, R. Kutay Karaca, (Ed.), Diploması Tarihi II, 1st Edition, Bursa, Dora Publications, 2019, p. 37.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. p. 37.



Venizelos in domestic politics and persuade Greece to join the war; Venizelos has also been in this expectation.<sup>149</sup>

Unable to persuade King Constantine I, Venizelos went to Thessaloniki<sup>150</sup> in 1916 and established a new government with the support of the people in the islands and Northern Greece. This development led to the emergence of a dual political structure in Greece. In order to eliminate this dual structure and to ensure the participation of Greece in the war, England and France had taken troops to Athens and forfeited King Constantine I from his throne, and his son King Alexander I was succeeded. Following the coordination of the administration, Greece launched a war against the Alliance on 26 June 1917 and became the last state to enter the WWI.<sup>151</sup>

During the WWI, Greece made great gains despite some of them being short-lived. Between 1918 and 1923, the Chameria (Epirus) remained under Greek occupation and then ceded to Albania. Greece has taken over Western Thrace<sup>152</sup> from Bulgaria in 1919 and today is still under control. As a result of the Treaty of Sévres<sup>153</sup> signed on 11 August 1920, Eastern Thrace and Izmir and its environs were left to occupant Greece until the Treaty of Lausanne signed on 24 July 1923. During this period, the Antant states provided a great deal of arms as aid to Greece. This experience directly influenced Greece's Chameria policy in terms of “Megali Idea” in the coming years.

Until the 1920s five major powers had direct interests over Albanian lands, Austria-Hungary, Italy, France, Russia, and Great Britain. These interests were evident in the cleavage they did to the Albanian lands. Hiding under the excuse that Albania had no state-forming features and ideologically closer to the Orient (Ottoman Empire), their primary purpose was to split Albanian lands between them and weaken Albania while weakening other countries in the region and prioritized the faithful Western state, Greece.

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<sup>149</sup> Gürhan Yellice, “Birinci Dünya Savaşı ve Yunanistan: Çanakkale’den Milli Bölünmeye”, *Journal of Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları*, XVI/32, Spring 2016, pp. 218-219.

<sup>150</sup> Gre. Θεσσαλονίκη/Thessaloníki, Alb.: Selaniku, Tur.: Selanik, Mcd.: Солун/Solun.

<sup>151</sup> Özlem, “Diplomasi Tarihi II”, *op.cit.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>152</sup> Western Thrace is an area where Muslim Turks live intensively.

<sup>153</sup> For details; [http://sam.baskent.edu.tr/belge/Sevr\\_TR.pdf](http://sam.baskent.edu.tr/belge/Sevr_TR.pdf) (Accessed on 14.08.2019).

The weakening of other Balkan countries was accomplished through the distribution of Albanian lands, between Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, these countries not having a homogenized population would result in the birth of internal and regional conflicts, thereby reducing Russia's influence on the peninsula. Thus the old Roman tactic, *Dividi et Impera*, was practically and successfully applied to the Balkan lands. Greece, on the other hand, could not allow this, so it consistently persecuted Albanian populations mainly in Chameria and Turkish populations, and the Thracian zone. After an ethnic cleansing especially against the Albanians of Chameria and the violent assimilation of the Orthodox Cham population, Greece managed to have the "homogeneity" needed to be a stable country and to maintain and expand its "Lebensraum".

On the other hand, these powers came to the extent that France took possession of Korça, Austria-Hungary reached central Albania, Italy, on the other hand, ruled Albania for about 5 years, while Bitania tried to strike the balance through Greece. Russia, through its vassal, Serbia sought to access the warm seas and secure control of the junction points of the peninsula's trade and communication corridors at the same time on both continents thus Mackinder's ideas on the conquest of Eastern Europe was put into place.

## **6. Geopolitical strategies of World War II (1939-1945)**

At the beginning of the World War II (WWII), the attempts to occupy Albania started again as in the WWI. After the invasion of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935, Mussolini was subjected to intense reactions. Italy's aspirations for Albania continued during the WWII. Likewise, before the WWII began, the army invaded Albania for fuel, metal and grain requirements on April 7, 1939. On April 13, 1939 during The Great Council of Fascism Mussolini stated:

*“Albania is the Bohemia of the Balkans. Whoever is in charge of Albania, has the whole Balkan region in his hands. Albania is a geographical persistency of Italy, It assures us the*

*control of all Adriatic. No one can enter the Adriatic from now on, we have sealed the bars of the Mediterranean jail.*"<sup>154</sup>

This was a clear geopolitical statement of Mussolini based on the teaching of the German school of geopolitics. Italy had taken over Albania with its 100,000-strong army of land, naval and air forces. After the occupation, the crown of Albania was given to King Victor III Emmanuel of Italy and Ahmet Zogu<sup>155</sup> had to flee the country. Italy's rapid sovereignty over Albania has broken the status quo in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans.<sup>156</sup>

In their history, Albanians have neither gained independence from the struggle against the Ottoman Empire, nor have they shown armed resistance to the many occupations they have suffered during the WWI. However, in the WWII, Albanians established an armed organization called the National Liberation Movement (Lëvizja Nacional Çlirimtare / LNÇ)<sup>157</sup> which consisted of 70,000 partisans in 1939 to fight for the first time in the name of Albania, and resisted the invasions of Italian and Nazi Germany.

During the war, with the support of Yugoslavia and under the leadership of Enver Hoxha the "Communist Party of Albania" (Partia Komuniste Shqiptare / PKSH) was founded on 8 November 1941. The second most important resistance group established during this period was the National Front (Balli Kombëtar) which reached 50,000. The National Liberation Movement under the leadership of Midhat Frashëri was founded on September 29, 1942 at the Peza Conference. This group was composed of conservative and nationalist people who were disturbed by the communist view.<sup>158</sup>

The objectives of the National Fronts (Ballist) were; to save the country and to establish independence, to establish a sustainable democratic regime after the war and to unite Kosovo with Albania. But there was a group within them willing to participate

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<sup>154</sup> Donato Martucci, "Le Terre Albanesi Redente...." op. cit. p.10.

<sup>155</sup> Ahmet Zogu, who served as Prime Minister for 2 years, President for 3 years and King for 11 years in Albania, never returned to Albania and lived in exile for 22 years. He died in Paris on 9 April 1961.

<sup>156</sup> Arpalier, "Büyük Arnavutluk...", op. cit. p. 47.

<sup>157</sup> It is also known as the "Antifascist National Liberation Movement" (Lëvizja Antifashiste Nacional Çlirimtare/LANÇ).

<sup>158</sup> Elsie, "Historical Dictionary...", op. cit. p. XXXVI.

directly in the wars, as well as a more powerful group in favor of waiting for US and British intervention to prevent deterioration.

The fact that the group, which did not participate in the war and lost the support of the people day by day, cooperated with the Nazis against the communists, resulted into the lost of all populations trust in the Ballists. The view of the people who suffered from fascism to unite Kosovo with Albania was also perceived as a fascism movement and it was considered cold at the time. For this reason, while nationalism movements weakened, communism gained power day by day.<sup>159</sup>

While the developments on the Albanians front were like this, the occupant Italians turned their faces towards Greece. Benito Mussolini asked for help from Albanians with the promises of Greater Albania for the invasion of Greece. Although Albanians knew that these promises were empty for them, they had a supportive attitude towards Italy in the occupation because they had problems with Greece about the Epirus (Chameria ) region. Yet the Italians did not achieve the expected success during the Greek occupation. Following this failure, Nazi Germany took control of Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania in a short time. The territory of Kosovo<sup>160</sup>, which belonged to Yugoslavia, was left to the Albanian administration<sup>161</sup> on the 12th of April 1941.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Rrapaj, "The Curious case...", op.cit., pp. 217-218.

<sup>160</sup> Due to the rich coal deposits, Mitrovica (Trepca region) and Vushtri remained under German rule. Ferizaj and Kaçanik were left to Bulgaria.

<sup>161</sup> For Map 2.6.1. Albanian Territories During the WWII;

[https://www.turkcebilgi.com/b%C3%BCy%C3%BCK\\_arnavutluk](https://www.turkcebilgi.com/b%C3%BCy%C3%BCK_arnavutluk) (Accessed on 18.08.2019)

<sup>162</sup> Rrapaj, "The Curious case...", op.cit., p. 219.; Elsie, "Historical Dictionary...", op.cit., p. XXXVI.



**Map 2.6.1. Albanian Territories During the WWII**

As the Germans acted in favor of Albanians, reaching the nearest physical boundaries of the Greater Albania Idea also this gave to Albanians a great geostrategic advantage. At the time, the presence of puppet administration in Albania, run by the Germans, did not please the public. With the support of Yugoslavia, the rising communist Albanians did not want to have problems with Josip Broz Tito. During that period, conjunctural reality led Albanians to resist the invaders because they saw the compatibility of all expansionist policies with fascism and their priority was the political survival rather than following expansionist policies. As the course of the war changed, the occupying forces began to withdraw from the region.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Arpalier, “Büyük Arnavutluk...”, op. cit. p. 49.

The National Liberation Movement, which was successful in the resistance, also succeeded in being active in Albanian politics. Enver Hoxha was appointed chairman of the provisional government established by the Anti-fascist congress in Përmet Town on 24-28 May 1944. Thus, the foundation of the years of oppression and pain that the Albanian people would live under the dictatorship regime was laid. In 1946, the People's Republic of Albania<sup>164</sup> (Republika Popullore e Shqipërisë) was established and Enver Hoxha was elected as the president.<sup>165</sup>

The defeat of Greece against the Turks in Anatolia in 1922 ended the Megali Idea policy. Following the defeat, the King was exiled, while the Chief of the General Staff, the Head of Government and 4 ministers were executed. King II. Georgios accepted on August 4, 1936 the dictatorship of Metaxas. This historical political literature was introduced as "August 4 Regime".<sup>166</sup>

Metaxas has set up a police regime in the country where fascism tendencies were clearly visible. Metaxas undertook similar practices as Mussolini in Italy, not only dissolving the Parliament but also closing political parties and trade unions and imposing a ban on strike for workers. Metaxas applied censorship to the press. He has never lagged behind his peers in Europe and has given him the title of archigos, meaning leader. The establishment of dictatorship in Greece in the second half of the 1930s was largely influenced by domestic political developments. However, it can be argued that the fascist tendencies in Europe during this period had more effect in this esteem.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> The country continued with this name from 1946 to 1976, adding Socialist to its name in 1976 and it was expressed as Socialist People's Republic (Republika Popullore Socialiste e Shqipërisë) until 1991.

<sup>165</sup> Elsie, "Historical Dictionary...", op.cit., pp. XXXVI-XIII.

<sup>166</sup> Todor Bistraški, "Balkan Siyasetinde Generaller", Translated by Kadriye Cesur-Hüseyin Mevsim, Ankara: Ürün Publications, 2012, pp. 73-74.

<sup>167</sup> Özlem, "Diplomasi Tarihi II", op.cit., pp. 117-118.



**Map 2.6.2. Battle of Greece (1940-1941) During the WWII**

This process directly affected Greece's position<sup>168</sup> in the WWII. The German and Italian leaders agreed Germany would take action from the Suez front in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans by the Italian navy. According to the attack plan to be implemented, with the seizure of Romanian ports would bring as well the neutralization of Russia, if this one is not successful it was foreseen to take action in the military field making an attempt from the land against Greece and Turkey.

Italy attacked Greece on 28 October 1940. But Italy did not succeed in this attack. Metaxas' most important reform in the country had been in the military field. While the army was reinforced with new weapons, border fortifications were

<sup>168</sup> For Map 2.6.2. Battle of Greece (1940-1941) During the WWII; <http://www.thefewgoodmen.com/thefgmforum/threads/greece-crete-1941.478/> (Accessed on 18.08.2019)

strengthened and supplies were stocked. The results of these developments were seen in the resistance against Italy in the WWII. Following the failure of Italy, the German forces gathered in Bulgaria and began to enter Greece on 6 April 1941, occupied Athens on 25 April and Crete on 31 May 1941. The internal political polarization in Greece gradually began to emerge during the German occupation.<sup>169</sup>

The year 1944 is a black mark in Greek history. The Chameria region, located within the borders of Greece and which is densely populated by Albanians. On 27 June 1944 Greeks committed genocide against the Albanian-Cham population after years of regular persecution. Thousands of people, including women and children, were massacred, women were raped and kidnapped, and many mosques and houses were burned. The “Chameria Problem” persists chronically.<sup>170</sup>

Following the withdrawal of German troops from Greece on 12 October 1944, the country suffered a violent civil war that lasted for five years as a result of violent actions by rival and then divided into enemy ranks. Due to these reasons, Greece has experienced a different process than the other Balkan states with the conducted massacre and civil war during the WWII.<sup>171</sup>

The end of WWII cut in half the geopolitical dreams of Germany, Italy and Japan for world domination and the Notion was banned from that time on from all schools and cathedras being considered as evil and as one of the main reasons of the war in the world, yet it never eridicated from the state policies of the Great Powers.

## **7. Chameria issue, a Balkan holocaust.**

At the beginning of 1844, Greek Prime Minister Jorgo Coletti formulated and presented as a political program the so called "Megali Idea". This program consists in the creation of an Ethnic Greek state by taking the so called historically ethnic Greek-inhabited lands now belonging to Turkey, Northen Macedonia and Albania. This was

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<sup>169</sup> Özlem, “Diplomasi Tarihi II”, op.cit., pp. 177-178.

<sup>170</sup> For details; <https://tr.scribd.com/document/168616807/summary-of-genocide-in-chameria> (Accessed on 18.08.2019)

<sup>171</sup> Şecaettin Koka, “İkinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Balkanlar”, Balkanlar El Kitabı, Vol.: 1st, Osman Karatay, Bilgehan A. Gökdağ (ed.), KARAM & Vadi Publications, Ankara, 2006, p. 661.



the real reason behind the non recognition of the existence of the Albanian nation and the then Greek state felt no need to support the creation of an Albanian state.

The Megali Idea has been the platform of all the political and military activities of the Greek government the years following the declaration of Greece's independence. Part of this strategy has been and remains the annexation and modernization of the Albanian areas of Chameria and the Hellenization of all southern Albania. In order to fulfil this irredentist ideology the Greek state in a repetitive way tried to raise tension and hate between the Greek community and other communities living in the claimed territories with the sole goal to eradicate the minorities from the claimed land. This attempt was seen successful.<sup>172</sup>

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a big impact into the Balkans, and a new term came with it, the Balkanization. Balkanization was no other than the plans on the redistribution of the old Ottoman Empire land among smaller states. This served to the aims of the geopolitical actors of the time. While the other countries had already picked their side, meaning the Slavic countries sided with Russia and Greece sided with the Great Britain and the USA, Albania was still in between, still being faithful to the old Empire. The only way to achieve more power in the geopolitical game was land-empowering the main Balkanic actors and for this the division of Albanian land was seen as a must.

The project for the division of Albanian lands between the neighboring Balkan states was completed after the Balkan Wars, with the unjust decisions of the Conference of Ambassadors in London in 1913, which finally settled the borders of Albania. This conference sanctioned the separation from the native trunk of Kosovo, Albanian lands in Macedonia and Chameria. Years after, the Conference of Ambassadors convened in Paris on November 9, 1921 decided to reaffirm the Albanian-Greek borders, having its decisions taken in London on 12 December 1912 and 22 March 1913 and the one of Florence Protocol on 17 December 1913.

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<sup>172</sup> TSOUTSOUMPIS, Spyros, "Violence, resistance and collaboration in a Greek borderland: the case of the Muslim Chams of Epirus" «Qualestoria» nr. 2, December 2015, pdf  
[https://www.academia.edu/24269752/Violence\\_resistance\\_and\\_collaboration\\_in\\_a\\_Greek\\_borderland\\_the\\_case\\_of\\_the\\_Muslim\\_Chams\\_of\\_Epirus\\_Qualestoria\\_n\\_2\\_dicembre\\_2015](https://www.academia.edu/24269752/Violence_resistance_and_collaboration_in_a_Greek_borderland_the_case_of_the_Muslim_Chams_of_Epirus_Qualestoria_n_2_dicembre_2015)(Accessed on: 05.09.2019).

The League of Nations Council ordered the Conference of Ambassadors to complete the work left halfway between 1913 and 1914 for the final delineation of the Greek-Albanian state border line. For the final delimitation of the concrete boundaries on the ground, a committee was set up with representatives of England, France, Italy and Japan. This committee was established on January 8, 1922 and decided to leave the Cham lands out of the official Albanian territory. These events deepened the Cham tragedy and the issue of the Albanian minority in Greece in general, but gave an upper geostrategic hand to the countries involved, which was the main reason of this division.<sup>173</sup>

An unprecedented culmination in the policy of Greek circles of forced assimilation marks the attempts of 1923-1926 to forcibly expel the Cham population towards Turkey. At the Lausanne Conference on January 30, 1923, the Convention was signed enabling the exchange of Greek and Turkish national minorities in the respective countries. The exchange involved most of the Albanian population of Ioannina, Preveza and Parga. Back in the times when the idea of nation was still not perceived by the common people, the Christian Cham population would identify itself as “Kaur” or as Greek, and the Muslim Cham population as Turkish. This resulted in the displacement of thousands of Muslim Chams along the Turkish minority towards Izmir or other cities in Turkey.

The displaced Muslim Cham population owned more than 80 percent of the arable lands of Chameria, thus their departure increased the hellenisation of the lands and helped Greece obtain the strategic key and profit all the land. Taking over the Southern Epirus paved the way for its next goal, seizing the other half of ancient Epirus, lands part of the southern Albania. Greek governments’ aim was simple; their states living space should be widened in order to obtain power and continue living, so it can be observed that their policy was totally fidele to lessons of the German school of geopolitics.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> <https://gazetaimpakt.com/ceshtja-came-dhe-vorio-epiri-ne-tavolinen-e-mareveshjes-me-greqine/> (Accessed on: 18.08.2019)

<sup>174</sup> [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38679/2002\\_Apr\\_2.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38679/2002_Apr_2.pdf) (Accessed on: 20.08.2019)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323547427\\_The\\_Rights\\_of\\_the\\_Cham\\_Albanians\\_of\\_Greece\\_in\\_the\\_Context\\_of\\_the\\_Treaty\\_of\\_Lausanne](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323547427_The_Rights_of_the_Cham_Albanians_of_Greece_in_the_Context_of_the_Treaty_of_Lausanne) (Accessed on: 20.08.2019)

Despite strong opposition from the Albanian government and efforts by the international community to stop the displacement of the Albanian population, the Greek authorities, calling them Greeks of Turkish origin, managed to forcibly expel 35,000 Albanians from Kastoria and Florina and 55,000 Albanian Muslims of Chameria. With the coming of the fascist government of Ioanis Metaxas in 1936, the situation of the Albanian population in Chameria became even more difficult. The first victim of Greek fascism was the population of this province, which was burdened with heavy taxes. It also begins systematic shocks to physical disappearance and modernization through forced eviction from their homes and lands.

Two months before the beginning of the Italian-Greek conflict in 1940, the fascist government of Metaxas committed perhaps an unprecedented act in world history. Over 8,000 men between the ages of 16 and 70 were imprisoned and taken to the remote islands of the Aegean. Out of this contingent of victims, 600 were massacred and 300 others thrown into the sea half-alive on their sailing trip. This new campaign of atrocities preceded the final act, “purifying” the province of the Albanian Muslim element, modernizing, assimilating and consolidating Chameria at the end of World War II. With the occupation of Greece by Germany, it was expected that returning Chams from exile would retaliate against the Greek forces which had caused them suffering. But it happened quite differently.<sup>175</sup>

They chose the path of cooperation and coexistence; they jointly cope against the plight created by the new German occupiers. To this end, influential people in the province worked diligently to create an atmosphere of understanding between the two Greek and Albanian communities and to fight common enemies. However, there was a small percentage of the Cham community who chose to comply with the Germans. Their main reason was the promise the Germans made; after the war the Albanian lands would be united once again to form the Ethnic Albania, a dream to all Albanians leaving in the irredentist Albanian lands. Following this, the Greek government

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<sup>175</sup> [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38679/2002\\_Apr\\_2.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38679/2002_Apr_2.pdf) (Accessed on: 20.08.2019)

approved the War Law<sup>176</sup> against Albania, Law that is in power even nowadays despite the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership.

The new war Law was as follows:

*“Athens, November 10, 1940, Issue 379.*

*Decree.*

*On the designation of enemy states within the meaning of binding law no. 1636/1940 of Italy and Albania and the application in respect of these states of the provisions of these laws. Athens, November 08, 1940.*

*Pious Citizens of Your Highness, Ministers of Justice, Finance, Ajiis Tabakopoulos, Andhr. Apostolidhis.*

*Force Law no. 2636 1940, "On the Legal Acts of Enemies and the Seizure of Enemies, Enemies", Jeorjios B ': King of the Greeks*

*Based on the proposal of our Council of Ministers, we decided and ordered:*

*Article 1 - Enemies*

*Enemies within the meaning of this Article shall be considered:*

*a. States, the presidents of these States and the legal persons of their national jurisdiction, who are each designated as an enemy in particular by Royal Decrees published on the proposal of the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, within the meaning of this law.*

*b. Natural persons who have the nationality of hostile States, as the case may be, (a), or who have their habitual or permanent residence.*

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<sup>176</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323547427\\_The\\_Rights\\_of\\_the\\_Cham\\_Albanians\\_of\\_Greece\\_in\\_the\\_Context\\_of\\_the\\_Treaty\\_of\\_Lausanne](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323547427_The_Rights_of_the_Cham_Albanians_of_Greece_in_the_Context_of_the_Treaty_of_Lausanne) (Accessed on: 20.08.2019)

*c. Legal persons of private jurisdiction and any association of persons or property, as long as they have their headquarters in the enemy states, as the case may be, or are under the legal or economic influence of the enemies under this article.*

*Article 6 - Enemy assets.*

*Sequestration.*

*Enemy assets in Greece upon the entry into force of this law shall be prohibited and the disposition of such assets to enemies or in violation of the provisions of this law shall be invalid.*

*Article 7 Enemy property in Greece*

*Enemy assets in Greece are considered as the following property elements as long as they are legally or economically owned by enemies within the meaning of Article 1: Real estate and movable property located in Greece.*

*Article 21 Power and Implementation*

*1. This Law shall enter into force on 28 October 1940.*

*Athens, November 10, 1940.*

*Jeorjis B '*

*Council of ministers*

*Mayor Metaxas*

*Members: Ajis Tabakopoulos; i. Dhurendis; A. Apostolidhis; i. Arvanitis; A. Ikonomu; S. Polizogopullos; N. Papadhimas; I. Spen xas; S. Papavassiliou; P. ikonomakos; K. Burbulis; H. Lis; H. Alivizatos; Th. Nikoludhis; J. Zafiroopoulos; K. Manjadhaqis; Xifos; M. Qiriakopullos; K. Koxias.*

*The big state seal was verified and put on*

*Athens, November 10, 1940*

*Justice Minister Ajis Tabakopoulos. Mandatory Laws no. 2637.  
1940*<sup>177</sup>

Nevertheless this law was premeditated in order to secure the upper hand over Chameria lands and give a motive into the expulsion of Cham population a few years later. In December 1944, the province of Filat and a large part of Chameria were liberated by ELAS troops (the Greek National Liberation Army) from the German troops. The Cham troops involved in the "Ali Demi" battalion and other formations also made a significant contribution in the battle for the liberation of Chameria. The liberation of Philae led to many Cham families located in Konispol and other places near the border. Many returned to their villages and homes.<sup>178</sup> Despite finding everything robbed, destroyed or burned, they began to cultivate the lands and built their lives from scratch in the hope to finally live freely and get back to a normal life.

Regardless the good faith and all the efforts, this situation did not last long. In January 1945, Zervist gangs returned to track down the Cham population which had returned from Albania. They committed a massacre in Chameria for the second time. Napoleon Zervas gang cut the way of the Cham population because they were afraid they wouldn't return to Albania. After gathering all the men in the same place and began firing machine guns to kill them. The massacre continued with the remaining women, children and men, such as Zenel Tahiri and his son, Haki Beno and his mother, Adem Toljen, Dalip Hamzai, and more than 100 others. Public authorities warned that none of the Cham families should be protected. The ones, who were fortunate enough to escape this slaughter, reached the Albanian border.

The next wave of ethnic Albanian cleansing, from their land in Chameria, was again entrusted to the infamous General Zerva, in March 1945. This time, it was precisely Philat village, the cradle of the Cham resistance that would be destroyed, burned and deserted. Although Philat's men had fled, mobilized in small units of

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<sup>177</sup> <https://gazetaimpakt.com/ceshtja-came-dhe-vorio-epiri-ne-tavolinen-e-mareveshjes-me-greqine/>  
(Accessed on: 20.08.2019)

<sup>178</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323547427\\_The\\_Rights\\_of\\_the\\_Cham\\_Albanians\\_of\\_Greece\\_in\\_the\\_Context\\_of\\_the\\_Treaty\\_of\\_Lausanne](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323547427_The_Rights_of_the_Cham_Albanians_of_Greece_in_the_Context_of_the_Treaty_of_Lausanne) (Accessed on: 20.08.2019)

volunteers, Zerva's war machine was poured into Philat with utter savagery. There were again killings, slaughter, burning of people and houses<sup>179</sup>

According to all the information gathered on the Cham issue, in the fall of 1944 and during the first months of 1945, the authorities of northwestern Greece carried out ferocious attacks, expelling about 25,000 Cham - inhabitants of Chameria from their homes. They were chased to the Albanian border after they were robbed of their land and property. Hundreds of Cham males ages 15 to 70 were exiled to the Aegean islands. A total of 102 mosques were burned. Greek authorities subsequently adopted a law sanctioning the expropriation of Cham property, citing the co-operation of their community with the occupying Axis forces as a major reason for the decision.

According to the Memorandum of Cham emigrants in Albania, which was not only presented to the European Chancellery but to the United States as well, between June 1944 and March 1945, a total of 2771 innocent civilians were killed. During the same period, 68 villages with about 5800 houses were also burnt and looted. Other material losses account for 110,000 heads of livestock, 2,400 cattle, 80,000 quintals of olive oil, and 21,000 quintals of wheat without accounting for the great drama of the modernization of these lands. A considerable part of Greek politics during the Cold War years, as well as the Greeks of their history, have defended and continue to defend their thesis that the Albanians of Chameria have voluntarily left their ancestral lands as if they were related with Germany, Greece's opponent. These justifying theses, however, could not extinguish the traces of the genocide.<sup>180</sup>

As for the properties of the inhabitants of Chameria, they were initially distributed to the Greek settlers coming from Piraeus, who did not delay to deepen the crimes against those Orthodox Albanians who remained in this area. Subsequently, by royal order the U.B. en2185152 and by decision 278154, the property of ethnic

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<sup>179</sup> [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38679/2002\\_Apr\\_2.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38679/2002_Apr_2.pdf) (Accessed on: 20.08.2019)

<sup>180</sup> According to Article 2 of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

<https://ihldatabases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=2F091964230EADCECC12563F700550817> (Accessed: 20.08.2019)

Albanians in Chameria was confiscated to give away free of any charge or sell at ridiculous prices to Greek volunteers who left the south of the country, to "bravely" encounter a lonely Orthodox Albanian in these areas. Nevertheless, the Greek state did not leave the Cham Albanian Orthodox Christians alone. Describing the latter as "members of the Greek subculture", the Greek state attempted to assimilate them in the national and religious basis.

According to a report by the United Nations International Research Commission, the Greek state has stolen and looted the properties and assets of 50,000 Chams, while 500,000 Chams are living in the Republic of Albania. Such an unprecedented process in the context of the Charter of Human Rights, is still happening today in the new millennium, and with all the media buzz, Athens continues to live up to their increasingly annexist plans for Albania.

Since then, all Greek governments have ignored the tragedy and genocide inflicted on the Cham population. Athens has never agreed to open the Cham issue and answer why they deprived Greek citizenship of this indigenous, ethnic Albanian population. The Greeks has never answered why they confiscated the possessions of these people, who owned large houses and land, in one of the wealthiest and most beautiful parts of Greece. Athens has repeatedly ignored the existence of the Cham problem, and on the other hand has caused political and diplomatic problems and complications, using the Greek community in Albania, which is inexistent compared to the Cham one. In the Greek literature it is almost impossible to find the toponym Chameria, while they refer to the same geographical region as Epirus or Thesprotia.<sup>181</sup>

One of the key leaders of the British Mission in Greece General Chris Woodhouse, reflecting in his memoirs has made clear his military mission in Greece and reports all the orders the British had given to the Greek Martyrs with the sole purpose of cleansing Epirus from Albanians.

*“Part of the Cham race is Turkish, part Albanian and part Greek. In 1941–43 they collaborated with the Italians making the Greek guerrilla resistance in that area difficult. I have never heard them resist any enemy. In 1944, Zervas uncorrected by the*

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<sup>181</sup> TSOUTSOUMPIS, Spyros, “Violence, resistance...” op. Cit. p.119.



*British Allied Mission under my command chased them from their homes to facilitate anti-enemy operations.* "182

After the forcible expulsion from their homes, the Cham population tried to organize and gain the rights that belonged to them. Despite being informed of what was happening in the Balkans, the Great Powers chose not to act, maintaining their interests of the geopolitical balances in the Balkans. This kind of behavior paved the way for only 50 years later in the Balkans to have other atrocities against Muslim Bosnian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 and against the Albanian population in Kosovo.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup><http://ihsb.al/publicistike/genocidi-grek-ndaj-camerise-dhe-rol-i-famekeq-i-misionit-britanik/> (Accessed on:10.08.2019)

<sup>183</sup> <http://shekulliagency.com/histori/mizorite-greke-dhe-genocidi-cam/>(Accessed on:30.08.2019)

### CHAPTER 3

## THE ELUSIVE STABILITY OF THE REGION AND CHAMERIA CASE

After two big wars the Great Powers had already took their part of the pie, a new world order was set, thus they tried to establish stability in the zone. This resulted to be more difficult than planned since internal tension between the small Balkanik states still continued. The misdistribution of the peninsula land in the London Conference rose tensions which explodet after the Cold War. However these internal hostilities were never a real threat to the interests of the Great Powers.

#### 1. Greek-Albanian Relations and Chameria Question Developments during the Cold War



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**Map. 3.1. 1. The Balkan Peninsula during Cold War**

<sup>184</sup> For Map: <https://www.etsy.com/listing/115861758/map-of-the-balkans-rumania-yugoslavia>(Accessed on: 30.08.2019)

In Albania, the Second World War gave great power to the National Liberation Movement (Ushtria Nacional Çlirimtare).<sup>185</sup> This organisation was practically a communist resistance movement led by Enver Hoxha and affiliated closely to the Yugoslavian partisans, and both organizations in reliance on their beliefs were having close ties with Russia. After the end of the Second World War and by the end of year 1944, Enver Hoxha's partisans controlled most of Albania and formed a provisional government.

The Communists held a single candidate election in December 1945 and in January 1946 declared The Republic of Albania with Enver Hoxha as Prime Minister. In 1944-48 Albania continued to have a close relationship with Yugoslavia, this was on the grounds of numerous reasons concerning not only their ideology but also because Yugoslavia had helped to create the Communist Party of Albania. This ideology helped Russia to increase its influence over the Balkan Peninsula while Albania as well started to create even closer ties with Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) especially after the break with Yugoslavia in 1948.<sup>186</sup>

Given the difficult economic and social circumstances the state was going through, the Communists believed that the priority task was to build a political system which would be in line with their ideology. Deep reforms were foreseen to be feasible, but they began initially with the persecution of political opponents within the country. Former National Front (Balli Kombëtar) fighters were persecuted, others killed or expelled of the country, all other opponents of the regime, including wealthy families at the time, had the same fate. The new Hoxha government began to rule with an iron fist.

On the other hand, the international circumstances created after the war favored the creation of such a state, the Allied Powers of the anti-fascist war had cracks in their relations resulting from the rivalry to control areas of geostrategic importance. Albania had been in the midst of this rivalry since its creation as a state, and the climate of the

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<sup>185</sup> The National Liberation Movement (Ushtria Nacional Çlirimtare) was also known under the name of National Liberation Front.

<sup>186</sup> Xhelal Gjeçovi et al., "Historia e Popullit Shqiptar IV Shqipëtarët Gjatë Luftës së Dytë Botërore dhe Pas Saj 1939-1990", Toena Publications, Tiranë, 2008, pp.168-170.

Cold War was already felt in the Balkans before partition became evident between east and west.<sup>187</sup>

However, the recognition of Hoxha's government was not an easy task. Having different ideology and supported by West's big rival the USSR, Great Britain and the USA demanded to send a commission in order to inspect the situation in Albania. This demand was accepted by Hoxha's government, after the inspections, no clear answer was given, but the USA and Great Britain were obligated to recognize the new government because this was the only way to prevent Greece and Yugoslavia from attacking Albania. Needless to say, the geopolitical games after WWII were applied silently in total accordance of the geopolitical thought of Kissinger and mostly in forms of spreading ideological influence, this is why there were seen several cautious attempts of the West in overthrowing Hoxha's regime.<sup>188</sup>

Greece, on the other hand, after the World War had to face another war, this time within its borders. The country's economy was scrambled and the instability kept rising. This civil war initially manifested itself as a leftist right-wing. The first stage of the civil war since the end of 1944, the arrival of British troops in Athens has been a factor in the political developments of the country.<sup>189</sup>

The return of King Georgios II to the country in 1946 was considered the second stage of the civil war. This novelty brought a different dimension to the civil war. With this development, the civil war gained an international character. Upon the return of the king, the communists led by General Markos withdrew to northern Greece and started the uprising on 21 September 1946. Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito sent a communist military unit to General Markos while Bulgaria and Albania also helped him. Consequently, the civil war gained an international dimension at this point.<sup>190</sup>

In addition, Britain had provided all kinds of military and political support to prevent communism from coming to power in Greece since the beginning of the Civil

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<sup>187</sup> Xhelal Gjeçovi et al., "Historia e Popullit Shqiptar...", op.cit., pp.174-184.

<sup>188</sup> Beqir Meta, "Albania and Greece 1949-1990 The Elusive Peace" Academy of Sciences of Albania Institute of History, Tirana, 2007, pp.21-40.

<sup>189</sup> Şecaettin Koka, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Balkanlar", op.cit., p. 661.

<sup>190</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu, 20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, (Vol.:1-2: 1914-1995), Genişletilmiş 14. Press, Alkım Public House, İstanbul, pp. 430-431.

War. At the beginning of 1947, while government forces had difficulty in suppressing the rebellion of communist groups, the aid of the British started to become necessary. In spite of the British passivity in the Greek Civil War, the Soviet Union's increasingly strengthened position forced the US to take the initiative.<sup>191</sup>

In March 1947, the United States' weight in Greece became apparent. In particular, US President Harry S. Truman, known for the Truman Doctrine helped Greece in 300 million dollars and gave more 100 million dollars in financial aid to Turkey. In Greece, balances started to change. The USA involvement in the civil war and the Truman Doctrine relieved the Athens government. Athens started to make plans of invasion while sending several requests to Britain and the USA demanding their support into conquering the South of Albania, but all was in vain. Both powers rejected these kinds of requests demanding from Greece and Yugoslavia to keep peace with Albania, the main reason for this was that another clash in the Balkans would lead to something bigger while another war would stop the USA to complete its plans into shaping the peninsula according to its interest. Moreover, the deterioration of Yugoslavia-USSR relations after 1948 left General Markos in a difficult position. These two developments ended the civil war in Greece.<sup>192</sup>

As a result, the Greek Civil War, which took place in two stages, ended with the victory of the Athens administration and Greece was excluded from the Soviet expansionism. The Civil War bill for Greece was heavy. While 70,000 people were killed by the government and 38,000 people in the rebels' wing, the country was in ruins, so much so the destruction of the country during the WWII period was far behind the one of the Civil War.<sup>193</sup>

Greek-Albanian relations after the war would remain tense due to problems created not only before the war but also after it. The main reason for this tensioned atmosphere was related to claims that Greece has for the south of Albania, or as they call it, the northern Epirus. Another reason had to do with the different types of regimes in both states and the non-recognition of the Albanian Communist government by the Greek one as the Albanian Communists helped the Greek Communists in the Civil War.

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<sup>191</sup> Jelavich, "Balkan Tarihi...", op. cit. pp. 331-332.

<sup>192</sup> Armaoğlu, "20. Yüzyıl...", op. cit. p. 431.

<sup>193</sup> Jelavich, "Balkan Tarihi...", op. cit. p. 334.

However the real purpose of non-recognition has to do with the fact of the recognition would strengthen Albania's position in the international arena by impeding the realization of the conquest of Southern Albania.

This intention can be seen clearly when Greece opposed Albania's adherence into the United Nations Founding Conference by openly provoking with their claims regarding the borders with Albania. The same behavior was seen at the Paris Peace Conference in July-October 1946, where Greek Prime Minister Caidaris demanded that Albania should be treated as a lost and hostile party, and Greece as an ally of the Western states had the right into taking over Southern Albania.<sup>194</sup>

In 1950, Greeks claimed Albanians not only helped the occupator but also helped to train the guerrilla forces in two camps within its borders, Durrës and Gramsh. They addressed these claims to the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General while continued with their claims over the south of Albania. This claim was seen as very dangerous because if one fourth of Albania was given to Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy would demand the same by enabeling so to give a strategic point of the Balkans to one of the main actors of the geopolitical games.<sup>195</sup>

On the other hand, not only were they demanding to lay hands on Southern Albania, but for them the Cham issue did not exist. As explained in the previous chapter, in their point of view what happened in Chameria was justified since the Cham population had collaborated with the Fascists and the Nazis during the war, thus this was not genocide but a simple consequence of the war. While taking into account the fact that Albania opened the doors for the Chams deported from their lands, actions on this issue continued in full support of the Albanian-Cham population. The government of Albania and the Cham population has repeatedly knocked on the doors of the Great Powers and international conferences demanding a return to their lands, compensation for the damage done and the stopping of anti-Albanian policies Greece pursued. In years 1945-1947 the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)

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<sup>194</sup> Beqir Meta, "Greek –Albanian Tensions 1919-1949" Academy of Sciences of Albania Institute of History, Tirana, 2006, pp.207-251.

<sup>195</sup> Beqir Meta, "Albania and Greece 1949-1990 The Elusive Peace" op. cit. pp50-53.

helped the Cham refugees somewhat in terms of their accommodation and food treatment, but no further assistance was provided<sup>196</sup>.

The other actors of the regions like Turkey and Italy were always in favour of the territorial integrity of Albania and refused to support the Greek claims. In the Turkish newspapers of the time was written that Turkey not only supported the full integrity of the Albanian territory but it had the intention to minimalise Russia's influence over the country by offering international assurance. France asked USA and Great Britain demanding from Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia to guarantee the independence of Albania, but this request was seen as unnecessary by the British, though it was refused.<sup>197</sup>

After Albania became a member of the Warsaw Pact Treaty, Russia and the block helped in improving the relations with Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia stopped to give strategic information to Greece and became really sensitive about the Albanian question. Nevertheless Tito did not shut the hopes of future collaboration with Greece. According to US secret information, he could not do much thing about North Epirus issue for the sake of their current relation within the Soviet block, but if balances changed so would their position.

The Soviet Union tried to reconcile and put normal diplomatic relations between Greece and Albania while decided that the matter should be closely followed by General Artyom Segeyev. After the talks held with both countries, Greece promised to improve the relations but no real action was made. Albania on the other hand, as a proof of good will decided to support Greece in the Cyprus matter during the twelfth session of the UN General Assembly in 1957. This movement decreased the tension for a while enabling the signature of the agreement for de-mining of the Corfu Channel as part of the decision taken by the International Court of Justice.<sup>198</sup>

On October 22, 1946, the Corfu Canal incident occurred, in which two British destroyers fell into mines in the territorial sea of Albania (Saranda Bay). The British Navy lost 45 officers and sailors in the event, and 42 others were injured. The Ionian

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<sup>196</sup> Beqir Meta, "Greek –Albanian Tensions 1919-1949" op. cit. pp.207-251.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid. pp.70-75.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid. pp. 100-105.

Islands in their historical designation comprise a group including the islands of Corfu, Paxo, Lefkada (Sainte Maure), Ithaca, Kefalonia, Zante, Cerigo, and a number of smaller islands which depend on them, including Sazan Island which dominates the Bay of Vlora, Albania. Some of them are close to the Cham coast. While it can be observed that these islands are of particular geopolitical importance, the latter control the most important sea routes from Turkey to Europe.

Austria-Hungary and Italy have been keen to ensure the Ionian Islands, of strategic importance at the entrance to the Otranto Canal, owned by Greece, are actually neutralized and not used for military purposes by Greece and the Entente countries. Austria-Hungary and Italy were also keen to break away from Greece's sovereignty of Sazan Island, which controlled Vlora Bay, the Otranto Canal and generally the northwestern coast of the new Albanian state.

On April 9, 1949, the panel of The International Court of Justice took its decision on the Corfu Channel Incident. It ruled by 14 votes in favor and 2 against: "The United Kingdom did not violate the sovereignty of the People's Republic of Albania with the actions of the British Navy in the Albanian territorial sea on 22 October 1946" However, in February 2009, when the book "The Corfu Channel Incident: Justice Done" was published, British documents on the Corfu Channel Incident had not yet been made public. At the time, based on the court documents, it was concluded that on October 22, 1946, the UK had violated Albania's sovereignty.<sup>199</sup>

In 1960 the Greek demand on Northern Epirus and the Cham Question was once again brought into spotlight at the General Political Committee of the U.N. The Albanian side defended itself by following the example of the German occupation of France using the Belgian lands. It was stated that in this case just like it is not possible to condemn Belgium as a collaborator of the German occupiers; it is not possible to condemn Albanians why Germany used its land to enter Greece.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> LALAJ, Ana, "Burning Secrets of the Corfu Channel Incident", Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, September 2014, Washington D.C. [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/cwihp\\_wp\\_70\\_burning\\_secrets\\_of\\_the\\_corfu\\_channel\\_incident.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/cwihp_wp_70_burning_secrets_of_the_corfu_channel_incident.pdf) (accessed on 10.09.2019)

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. p.130.



The end of 1961 would also mark the breakdown of relations between Albania and the Soviet Union. Albania refused to bow to Moscow in terms of state ideology and internal principles. This event was seen as a good opportunity by the Western States to pull Albania towards itself. But Albania could not join the West because of the profound ideological change they had. Albania remained alone in the international arena and needed a strong state to support it. The Hoxha government chose precisely a pragmatic solution and decided to approach Communist China. Chinese-Albanian relations became tighter after June 1960, at Bucharest Meeting; the People's Party of Albania did not join Khrushchev's call to condemn the Chinese Communist party<sup>201</sup>

In the 1960s, Albania maintained great relations with China and served as a spokesman for Chinese interests at the UN, and lobbied repeatedly for China to be accepted as full member of the OK. These efforts also proved successful thanks to the support of other countries in this regard and in 1971 China became a member of the United Nations. Yet, this relation with China would not last. In the early 1970s, China changed its foreign-policy strategy. It adopted the tactic of supporting the superpower, the US, to fight the other superpower, the Soviet Union. For this reason China pursued a policy of rapprochement with the US and in April 1971 "Ping-pong" diplomacy was officially started. It is worth noting that this approach was thanks to the geostrategic policies which Henry Kissinger applied, and in February 1972 President Nixon paid an official visit to China.

All this approachment was not well received by the Albanian government, and for the following years its relation with China started to slow down. China decided to withdraw the aid it provided to Albania, and Chinese technology specialists left the country. In 1977-1978 relations became even more aggravated, with China and Albania sending diplomatic notes to each other during the first half of 1978. Finally, in June 1978, China sent its last note, recalling the economic aid provided from 1959 to 1977, and blaming Albania for the breakdown in relations. This situation led to the further isolation of Albania and the deterioration of the economic situation.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Xhelal Gjeçovi et al., "Historia e Popullit Shqiptar...", op.cit. pp.300-305.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. pp.305-308.

In the years 1975-1976, after the breakup with the Soviet Union and the frost of relations with China, Albania had a rapprochement with its neighbors, especially Greece. The Greek government had expressed a desire to restore diplomatic relations, leaving aside the issue of Northern Epirus. Following the 1967 coup that led to the suspension of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Albania and Greece were experiencing the best relation in years. During these years the visits of the two countries' trade ministers were exchanged, leading to the signing of several agreements in the field of air transport, health and border services.

On the other hand, Greece's concern was that after the breakdown of Albania's relations with China, Albania could again return to the sphere of Soviet influence and thereby disrupt the geopolitical balances built on the Balkans. After securing the side Albania had already chosen, Greece demanded the construction of cemeteries for fallen Greek soldiers during World War II. The Hoxha government was not in a hurry to give an answer, and was keen to take small steps in bilateral relations.

The disruption of relations with Albania and the two major Communist powers of the Soviet Union and China gave the United States, Italy, Britain and France hope for rapprochement with Albania. All these states offered their assistance to the Hoxha government. USA and UK offers for trade co-operation were immediately rejected, although Albania's tones with the US were tougher than with Great Britain.

On the other hand, relations with France were initially more culturally focused. Subsequently, small trade exchanges and the export of Albanian chrome to France began. France never liked the USSR and US military influence, presence and rivalry in the Balkans, so it tried to get even closer to Albania to increase its own influence over this strategic geographical area.

Relations with Italy are not much different from those with Britain, the only difference lies on the fact that they maintained a low level of trade relations with the country. Enver Hoxha, on the other hand, said that Albania could never forget the dangers it had come from Italy, the dangers it always considered.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Beqir Meta, "Greek –Albanian Tensions 1919-1949" op. cit. pp.200-217.

During the last years of the Cold War, Albania was in a difficult situation both economically and politically. In 1981 Mehmet Shehu, the country's prime minister, committed suicide and four years later, on April 11, 1985, Enver Hoxha died. The Americans had predicted that Ramiz Alia would be Enver Hoxha's successor. In some documents recently declassified by the CIA, the situation is shown in 1984 and 1985. For the CIA, Alia turned out to be the most lucrative of the purges, as she had no rival for power. In its slow emergence from isolation and in an era of Hoxha's successor insecurity, Albania can once again become a focal point for East-West rivalry.

The West already has improved chances of success from the country's technology offering. These trends depend on changes in domestic conditions that foreigners cannot anticipate. Judging by the duration of recent initiatives, Albania would maintain the tendency of opening up to the outside world.<sup>204</sup> During these years, nothing could be done over Chamerina. It can even be observed that because of the delicate historical events, this Question has been frozen and almost forgotten.<sup>205</sup> With the collapse of the Communist regime after the 1990s, and in order to solve the problem, events started to become more mobile the Chame Question was present again on the bilateral negotiating table.

## **2. The Change of Regimes and Its' Impact Over the Region in General and the Chameria Question in Particular**

In 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the iron curtain of the Cold War which divided the two worlds, fell. Regime change in the Balkans continued in the next two years. the starting point of the new movements has been Gorbachev's "peresrojka"<sup>206</sup>. Despite its stances, the peresrojka affects the socialist republics of Bulgaria, Romania,

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<sup>204</sup> <https://sot.com.al/dossier/cia-vdekja-e-mehmet-shehut-dhe-eliminimet-ne-ppsh-i-sherbyen-me-shume-ramiz-alise-ja-si> (Accessed on: 20.08.2019)

<sup>205</sup> TSOUTSOUMPIS, Spyros, "Violence, resistance..." op. Cit. p.119.

<sup>206</sup> Perestroika (перестройка) a Russian word meaning "Restructuring" while it was used by the meaning of :the policy or practice of restructuring or reforming the economic and political system. First proposed by Leonid Brezhnev in 1979 and actively promoted by Mikhail Gorbachev, perestroika originally referred to increased automation and labour efficiency, but came to entail greater awareness of economic markets and the ending of central planning. Taken from Oxford dictionary <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/perestroika> (Accessed on 30.08.2019)

and Albania, without forgetting the long-dissident Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia. Major changes happened once more with the state borders within the peninsula. One of them was the split of Yugoslavian Federation.

The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia is one of the most significant events since the end of the Cold War. Serbian nationalism has been the main cause of the violent disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. After the end of the Cold War, Yugoslavia was moving in the opposite direction to the former communist countries of Europe. Slobodan Milosevic's coming to power in 1987 and his game with the nationalist card made it impossible to continue and implement social-political and economic reforms in the former Yugoslavia. Serbia continued its policy of violence, first attacking Slovenia, then Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and finally Kosovo. The two international conferences on the former Yugoslavia, held in The Hague (1991) and London (1992), respectively, have failed due to the West's unwillingness to intervene militarily against the Serbs. This was due to the fact that Serbia was always backed by Russia so they did not want to overturn once more the Balkan matters into global ones.<sup>207</sup>

With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, many segments of Albanian society began more determined political activism and began agitation against the government. The most active groups were the most frustrated intellectuals and students. In response to their demands, Ramiz Alia granted the Albanians (only a small group among them) the right to travel overseas, relaxed the executive powers of the Security Council, and adopted several measures of free trade. In December 1990, Alia legalized the creation of political parties, signaling the end of the communist monopoly over the executive. Political, economic and social uncertainty brought about the collapse of many governments between 1990 and 1992. In March 1992, the Democratic Party's decisive victory brought Sali Berisha, the first president elected to a democratic and electoral stage, into power since the early 1920s.<sup>208</sup>

During this time, Greece managed to distance itself from all the Balkan conflicts by building an external policy based on the Greece-US-Turkey geopolitical triangle. This

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<sup>207</sup> Bashkim Rama, "Ballkani pas Rënies së Murit të Berlinit", M&B publications, Tirana, 2013, pp.60-86.

<sup>208</sup> <https://shtetiweb.org/2016/07/10/renia-e-murit-te-berlinit-dhe-ndikimet-ne-shqiper/> (Accessed on 20.08.2019)

distancing, as well as the fact of being a member of NATO and European accession, in addition to geopolitical advantages, made it possible to play the role of political and economic leader in the Balkans. The Greek strategy was to strengthen Greece's position in order to become the gateway to other Balkan countries on their journey to the European Union. Greece tried to pursue a foreign policy that was in line with its geopolitical goals. For this fact, it expressed support for Turkey's EU membership processus. Moreover, it decided not to mention the issue of Vorioepiri in the talks with Albania, however in bilateral meetings, when Albania voiced concern over the Chameria Question, Greece's stance changed.<sup>209</sup>

The years 1990-1993 for Albania a have been years of a difficult transition. Concerning the Greek-Albanian relation, even though the old Communist Albanian state may not have given importance to the fulfillment of any of the demands and rights of the Greek minority in course over the years, it has never violated the fundamental rights of this population: neither has it expelled them, much less on collective charges, nor has it denied them the right to enjoy their property, especially after the 1990s. It must be admitted that Greece has offered assistance to Albania in various fields over the years, especially after the fall of Communism, denial of the Cham issue cannot be justified, as it constitutes a violation of the principles of law.

At a meeting in May 1992 between the Albanian Prime Minister Meksi and the Greek Prime Minister Micotaqis, the tone of the talks on the Cham issue was high.<sup>210</sup>The Albanian Prime Minister, after expressing his good will for the respect of the rights of the Greek minority in Albania under international law, dwelled on the Cham issue, saying that this population demanded the same rights to be respected under international acts emphasize that no territorial resettlement was required, but was "a request to return to their homes, and have back their properties.

The Greek prime minister responded only a limited number of Chams fled Greece because they were considered as criminals. The request on returning to their property in Greece would bring back bitter memories and old hatred. Micotaqis exemplified the case with the movements of populations after World War II, and

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<sup>209</sup> Bashkim Rama, "Ballkani pas Rënies së Murit të Berlinit", op. cit. 283-288.

<sup>210</sup> Sheme, "Epiri i Jugut, Çamëria", op. cit. pp.237-239.

especially of the German population of millions, and that no one sought restitution of the property left behind.<sup>211</sup>

The Genocide of Chameria was brought to the agenda in January 1995 at the Fourth General Assembly of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization in The Hague. In the general assembly between 20-26 January 1995; important decisions were taken, such as: “The return of the people of Chameria to their homeland and the return of their citizenship rights, the right of the Cham people to return their property, the recognition of the rights arising from international agreements, the recognition of the historical facts of the Chameria Question, and it was asked from Greece to take serious steps for the rights and give solutions”

After all these years, Greece still has not accepted the genocide of the Chameria. However, with a bill adopted on 30 June 1994, the Albanian People's Assembly decided that June 27 will be the “Day of Remembrance of the Chamerian Genocide”. Every year on 27 June, the Albanian Chams reaffirm their hopes of returning to their homeland.

Years later some actions were made by Greece in order to find a solution about the matter. Greece adopted law no. 2664 of 1998, which left the owners with an eight-year term to reclaim their property in the Greek state. However, for the Chams it was impossible to get a concrete start on this as it required a series of procedures. Visas were refused to persons born in Chameria; and following the abolition of the visa regime between Albania and Schengen area, returning to their lands was a normal right for Cham people, however they were stopped at the border.

By doing so, based on the interpretation of Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, Greece has violated this article in the application of European law, as Albania is part of the Schengen area and the Greek authorities cannot ban anyone at the border without any reasonable excuse.

Also, the existence of the 1940 War Law, not yet abrogated with Albania, made it more difficult to expropriate property at all levels of the Greek judiciary, all the more so for the Cham population collectively accused of collaborating with the occupier, and

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid. pp.237.

as enemy population which after 1953 obtained Albanian citizenship has lost all its rights.<sup>212</sup>

Nevertheless, Cham population is always protesting and trying to hear its voice. In August 1999 Chameria Political Association (CPA) addressed a petition to the Albanian government when the Greek Prime Minister Kostas Simitis was visiting Albania and in November 1999 the president of CSA during a meeting of OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) repeated the same requests that were in the petition. Cham population demands:

- 1. The implementation of basic human rights on the part of the Greek state;*
- 2. The recognition of Cham assets restitution and any other rights which derive from it. These assets have been forcefully captured by the Greek state.*
- 3. Recognition of the right of the Cham population to return to its autochthonous lands;*
- 4. Recognition and protection of the Cham problem from the international community.*
- 5. The same rights that the Greek minority in Albania enjoys.<sup>213</sup>*

These requests would become Albanian governments' official requests from year 2000 until nowadays. There is still no evidence about the current bilateral meetings between both countries, while the Chams living in Albania and the Chams living abroad are always trying to coordinate in order to achieve their goals, and human rights, since their requests have no border-changing intention, or geopolitical one.

### **3. The Importance of Chameria region for Albania and Greece**

During the last century, Chameria has been a constant part of the debate between Albania and Greece. For Albania the problem remains again about 'Freedoms and Human Rights'. The Cham population and the Albanian government do not require land

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid. pp.229-231.

<sup>213</sup> [http://www.albanianhistory.net/2002\\_Vickers/index.html](http://www.albanianhistory.net/2002_Vickers/index.html) Accessed on 20.08.2019)

restitution but have the right to point out the claims of this population returning to their own property in Greece. And this must be resolved either internationally or through negotiations between the two states.<sup>214</sup> Albania is in no position to request land from Greece, while during all history has never been a country that occupies or attacks, but has always defended itself from all type of aggression.<sup>215</sup>

If Albania pursued a classical geopolitical strategy, it would have big benefits. This is because there is a vast Albanian minority in four different Balkan states, and there are two Albanian nations present in the Balkans. The Regional hegemony would be dominated by Albania, all geostrategic routes would be under its control. However, this scenario is very unlikely to happen due to a weak government and its dependency on foreign aid. On the contrary, the Western powers would not like to see a powerful independent Balkan state. This would restore the threat of possible cooperation with Russia or other Regional powers, such as Turkey. The Western powers are trying to keep the balance of powers in the region.

The region, being a rich land and possessing there important strategic features , transbalkanik way of Egnatia, the spring of one of Albanians important rivers is in the mountains of Pindi in Chameria, and the strategic advantage over Greece to reach faster to italu though the western markets. All these would surely help Albania, however after the border markation with the Florence Protokol, Albanian government accepted its fate, even though within population the dream of all Albanian lands united lie in their hearts.

Cham population is of the belief that Albania's path to the European Union cannot cross the east, but crosses the West. It goes far beyond European values. If Albania were to remain silent in the face of human rights abuses, it would never have a place in the EU. Therefore, the human rights of the Albanians of Chameria should be a deviation of Albanians foreign policy.<sup>216</sup>

Greece on the other hands is trying constantly to expand territory at the expense of Albania. Despite the massacres carried out in Chamerias, Greece came to the Albanian side with other demands such as that of Vorio Epirus, the law of war, the demarcation

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<sup>214</sup> <https://punetegashtme.gov.al/interviste-e-ministrit-bushati-per-gazeten-greke-to-vima/> (Accessed on 20.08.2019)

<sup>215</sup> Balkan Web: <https://balkanweb.com/polemika-e-enver-hoxhes-me-kreun-e-qeverise-greke-caldaris-me-1946/> (Accessed on 10.09.2019).

<sup>216</sup> Sheme, "Epiri i Jugut, Çamëria", op. cit. pp.240-250.



of the sea, the rearrangement of international waters (On the Vjosa River in particular). Since the late 1980s, Greece's other demand for the burial of Greek soldiers in Albanian lands during World War II has demanded more rights for the Greek minority in Albania. A minority that is very negligible compared to the Albanian population.<sup>217</sup>

Greece hopes that in long term, all these efforts will be rewarded and in the future Greece will be able to prove their claim about the South of Albania being Greek. Hence, demanding the right to demarcate the border and take the entire southern region below its actual borders. In order to achieve these goals, there are also being used the autocephalous Orthodox Church influence in Albania. If Greece recognizes the Cham Question, it might entail severe consequences for the country. Hence, it has to give up any claims he may have over Verio Epirus, miles to the Ionian Sea, discussions over the Vjosa River, the Greek cemetery or the Megali idea. If you know the Cham question, then in the future there will be demand from the Cham to join my motherland, leaving Greece without more fertile and strategic lands. Greece will thus lose power and can no longer be a competitive actor in the race for regional geopolitical domination between the Balkan states.

Since 1990 the Orthodox bishop of Albania has been a Greek bishop. According to Albanian data, he has always worked to achieve Greek demands in Albania by intervening in Albanian politics. The Orthodox Church has come to the point where countless churches have been built in the centers of cities in southern Albania (a region that historically has had a Muslim population), and moreover has placed deep Greek inscriptions on the foundations of these churches. This was done with the intent that after many years, based on archaeological manipulated data southern lands will be called Greek.

Greece's acceptance of Chameria would undermine all these strategic efforts undertaken by Greece. Albania found itself in an unfavorable position vis-à-vis Greece has agreed to cooperate at least on key demands Greece has on Albania, such as the issue of cemeteries or the maritime agreement while Greece always reminds Albania that the key to Albania's EU integration is Greece<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid. Pp.240-250.

<sup>218</sup> <https://infomagazin.net/2019/03/25/presidenti-grek-shqiperise-ceshtja-came-eshte-pengese-per-ne-be/> (Accessed on:20.08.2019)

#### 4. The Importance of Chameria case for The Balkan Peninsula

In the 1990's in the Balkans started the long way of transition from a eastern socialist type of government to a western capitalist type. The old geopolitical balances shifted towards west, while even Russia was following in the West's footsteps. This transition would be slower and painful for the countries, while they would achieve only a semi-peripheral role in the capitalist Western World. The western geopolitical actors in the spirit of good relations enhanced their hegemony by extending their cultural and intellectual beliefs and investing in the Balkans. Thus Europe would achieve cheap highly educated labour and provide quasi-total economic dependence of the countries subsequent to the unpaid debts towards the EU countries. Greece, on the other hand, was out of this treatment mostly for its loyal beliefs and since it was part of the Union since 1981.

This new neo-colonial metamorphosis of the Peninsula transformed the countries into dependent semi-periphery weak or even worse, failed states, unable to survive without the tutelage of the West. The European Union, in order to ease the internal tensions of the Balkans pushed them into developing by applying different standards according to its' geopolitical interests. In 1993 EU applied the Copenhagen Policy and tried to discipline the Balkans by being harsh and punishing the "disobedient" countries.<sup>219</sup>

The primary goal for the integration of most of the countries in the EU and NATO lies under struggles between EU-USA and Russia for the domination of the post Communist Countries.

Russia, on the other side, has never forgotten its old strategic goals. Geopolitics has served as a guide for Russian foreign policy objectives and concerns. For example, Russia has constructed a new geopolitical approach, the old 'southern periphery of Russia' was renamed into 'the Russian sphere of interest'. Accordingly, Russia started to show itself as an important power to the international arena but with an objective not really than in the past while the strategy changed and the ideology was replaced with the common interest. Russian geopolitical strategists, politicians and diplomats also began

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<sup>219</sup> HORVAT, Srećko, STIJKS, Igor, (ed.) "Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism", Verso Publishing, London, 2015, pp.21-45.

highlighting strategic and economic interest of Russia in the Balkans. Therefore, Russia by applying multi vector foreign policy and network diplomacy tried to achieve its main target to keep the Balkan countries away from the EU or NATO integration, thus preventing the spreading of their influence over the peninsula. In order to achieve this it constructed a strategic partnership with China while constructing a new strategy based on energy.<sup>220</sup>

Mahan's Anaconda Policy applied through its NATO military bases in the Mediterranean Sea and also Balkans, gives to the US a strategic interest into a free and peaceful Europe. The Balkans serve as a key for the US while managing both Russia and Chinese Power since it has always served as a playground for the Great powers. According to US strategic policy, Russia sees the Peninsula as a strategic point of advantage into its mission for a bigger role in Europe's affairs and to reduce American influence. For America, China and Turkey want to take their part by enrolling their external aspirations on the Balkan countries. Even though Turkey is a NATO member, its empowerment in the region would place at stake American strategy and also would be a threat to another US ally, Greece.<sup>221</sup>

The Peninsulas' countries can not bear the continuous external economic and military pressures, so their feed-back was by rivaling each-other to gain external sponsorship and regional hegemony. Bosnian and Kosovo wars become no more than proxy wars between EU-US and Russia for the control of the zone. Western hegemony continued through the NATO-led missions in the respective countries while both were seen as official protectorates of EU and NATO, whereas now there are NATO military bases in Albania, Bosnia and Kosovo.

Following Kosovo's independence, which in the 1980s seemed only a utopic idea, the Cham people hoped that the time had come for the chamber question to be recognized internationally. These hopes were backed even from the other Balkan

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<sup>220</sup> MULALIĆ, Muhidin, KARIĆ, Mirsad, "The Western Balkans Geopolitics and Russian Energy Politics", *Epiphany*: Vol. 7, No. 1, 2014, ISSN 1840-3719. Pp. 88-98.

<sup>221</sup>Dr. Thomas E. Graham Jonathan E. Levitsky, Esq. Ambassador Cameron P. Munter, Ambassador Frank G. Wisner "Time for Action in the Western Balkans Policy Prescriptions for American Diplomacy", The National Committee on American Foreign Policy, The EastWest Institute May 2018 - New York. PDF Access <https://www.eastwest.ngo/sites/default/files/Time-for-Action-in-the-Western-Balkans.pdf>(accessed on: 10.09.2019)

countries. Other Balkan actors have a personal interest in the internationalization of the Cham question.

Other Balkan actors have a personal interest in the internationalization of the Cham question. One of the most active at this point is Turkey, which has immediate interests of the same kind with Chameria over Greece. Turkey presses on Greece over minority issue because it seeks for it to gain official recognition of the Turkic Muslim minority in eastern Thrace as well. Turkey also points out that Greece has failed to ensure educational, religious and cultural rights for all minorities in Greece to comply with EU standards. For this fact, Turkey often refers to the Chameria question, although this is still taboo on the Greek side and is not accepted.<sup>222</sup>

Serbia on the other hand claims to have the same problem as it makes the parallel between the Cham question and the Serb population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although this is not the same case, their ultimate goals are the same, the union of the two lands.

Northern Macedonia faced a similar problem in 2001 with the Albanians leaving in its' actual borders. The clashes in Macedonia, which took place at various intensities, officially ended after signing the Agreement of Ohrid on 13 August 2001 between Macedonian and Albanian political parties. However there is still a high risk in the repetition of the event.

This is why the great powers are always cautious regarding the solution of the matter. USA and EU are clear into their declaration that they would respect all type of agreement which will be settled by both countries. A false pas in the question would start a chain reaction in all Balkans this will elicit unpredictable and uncontrolled results, and would hit up the region once again. Thus Balkans still is a big question at the backyard of the Western powers, while their rivalry of becoming a regional power and possessing the strategic lands of the Peninsula still endures.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> HORVAT, Srećko, STIJKS, Igor, (ed.) "Welcome to the Desert ." op. Cit. pp.21-45.

<sup>223</sup> [http://www.albanianhistory.net/2002\\_Vickers/index.html](http://www.albanianhistory.net/2002_Vickers/index.html) ( Accessed on: 21.08.2019)

## 5. New Approaches Old Tacticks, Chameria Nowadays



**Map. 3.5.1. The Balkan Peninsula after year 2000**

After year 2000<sup>224</sup>, the Cham Question regained the attention of domestic politics and was occasionally included in Albania's agenda in its relations with Greece, but no initiative succeeded. In the special session of the US Senate on 20.08.2002, the cham problem was discussed and the Albanian media reported that; The US Senate has given its approval about the solution of the Chameria Question. The discussion of this Question in the international arena has formed an international ground on the matter, and this is considered as the first victory for the Chams. The Greek representative who was participating in Congress was not giving satisfactory answers to the members. The Senate Members found the Greek defense not sufficient or acceptable.

It is worth noting here that the following years, there were two failed attempts to pass a resolution on Chameria in the Albanian parliament, respectively in 2004, and in 2013, when its publication was declared by the head of the Justice and Integration Justice Party as an addition to the parliamentary register, published just three days before the June 2013 parliamentary elections, a fact which could naturally raise further

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<sup>224</sup> For Map: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-the-Western-Balkan-region-with-triangles-corresponding-to-the-regions-from-where\\_fig1\\_264985653](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-the-Western-Balkan-region-with-triangles-corresponding-to-the-regions-from-where_fig1_264985653) (Accessed on: 30.08.2019)

debate. This situation was because all parties did not want to aggravate their relations with Greece, since they needed its support for the EU integration process.<sup>225</sup>

All the above mentioned facts forced the Cham diaspora to take matters in its own hands and continue their efforts for recognition in the international arena. They decided to take a step further, thereby on 30.10.2016 at the hotel "Ambassador" in Hague, the Netherlands during the Inclusive Assembly of Cham and Arvanit, the chairman of the Comprehensive Initiative Cham and Arvanist Council, Rrustem Geci, read the text initiator of the declaration of independence of Chameria. Thence Chameria announced itself as a separate and sovereign state and signed the Declaration of Independence.<sup>226</sup>

All these efforts echoed and had an impact especially in Europe. The acceptance of the Cham issue and its introduction into the European Union agenda was accepted on 28.09.2016 by Commissioner Johannes Hahn himself. During a hearing, Han emphasized the fact that the sea issue, unlike the Greek ambassador in Tirana, is recognized by the European Commission as an unresolved issue between the two countries as well as the Cham issue. This statement restored tensions between Athens, Tirana and Brussels, while Greece urged the Commissioner to withdraw the statement. However this request was never fulfilled.<sup>227</sup>

Two years later the Cham issue was more present than ever among both nations. Intensive bilateral meetings and negotiations took place. The Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, met on 21.06.2018 in Rhodes with his Greek counterpart Nikos Kotzias. "It is clear that Greece and Albania are negotiating a completely new agreement on the designation of maritime zones" Ditmir Bushati told 'To Vima' journal in Greece. He stresses that the agreement must be based on the principle of equity and respect to the decisions of the Constitutional Court, which overturned the previous agreement of 2009. Finally, on the Cham issue, Mr Bushati acknowledges the difference of attitude with Athens, but notes that Albania does not see the issue as a territorial

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<sup>225</sup> <http://www.oranews.tv/article/reagon-pdiu-zgjedhja-e-idrizit-akt-sovran-shihni-problemet-tuaja>(Accessed on: 21.08.2019)

<sup>226</sup> <http://www.zemrashqiptare.net/news/50099/shpallja-e-pavaresise-se-camerise.html> (Accessed on: 21.08.2019)

<sup>227</sup> <http://www.gazetatema.net/2016/09/29/greqla-revoltohet-me-bashkimin-europian-pas-njohjes-se-ceshtjes-came-kjo-eshte-e-papranueshme/> (Accessed on: 21.08.2019)

divergence with Greece. However, it demands respect for the rights of movement and property for the Chams, according to the European Convention on Human Rights.<sup>228</sup>

Greece, on the other hand, has had greater gains in terms of recognizing the rights of the Greek minority in Albania, the issue of demarcation in the Ionian Sea, and the construction of a Greek cemetery in the south of Albania. Under this spirit, the signs in the roads of Southern Albania are placed the Greek language alongside the Albanian one, in Gjirokastra, Permet and Kelçyre Greek cemeteries have been built. The sea issue was never ratified by the constitutional court and the presidency of Albania. Although this may be seen as a breakthrough in bilateral relations, Albania, for the sake of the desired membership in the European Union, has had to lower its own demands and fall into a weaker position towards Greece.

The old geopolitical games are being continued by Greece in spite of the new tactics used. As Kjellen states in his work, a state needs to expand its borders in order to live, so Greece, in order to secure the longevity of the state, is expanding its influence over neighboring countries such as Albania and Northern Macedonia, by using two powerful cards, NATO and EU. To do so, it must resort to silent tactics hidden under the guise of good spirit between neighborhood, while sometimes it changes strategy and it uses higher tones, or becomes openly threatening.

On September 29, 2018, Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos, during a visit to Paramithia, a Cham town, has warned the Albanian state that if it wants Greece's support to integrate into the European Union then it must accept the position in which the Chams are complicit of the Nazis. The president has said that this is a historical truth and should be accepted as such. Pavlopoulos has emphasized that Albania should never again mention the Cham problem.<sup>229</sup>

America, on the other hand, does not worry too much about Greece's long-term plans as it has achieved dominance over the Balkan region. US bases and NATO bases in Albania and Kosovo guarantee control of these strategic territories on the peninsula. Russia, on the other hand, with Serbia's strong ally, manages to keep the US away from the Balkans.

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<sup>228</sup> <https://www.tovima.gr/2018/06/23/politics/ntitmir-mpoysati-diapragmateyomaste-nea-symfwnia-gia-tis-thalassies-zwnes/> (accessed on:21.08.2019)

<sup>229</sup> <https://www.gazetatema.net/2018/09/29/presidenti-grek-pavlopulos-shperthen-ndaj-shqiptareve-shtremberoni-te-verteten-dhe-shperndari-genjeshtra-camet-ndihmuan-nazistet/> (Accessed on:21.08.2019)

The Chameria question will not be resolved until these balances of power change. Albania needs to strengthen its position in the Balkans and build a strategy to make it more advantageous than Greece, and to be able to hear the voice of the Cham in the international arena. Revising the international treaties which brought the Balkans into this situation is both necessary and dangerous. Necessary, because this is among the few ways to solve problems in the Balkans. Dangerous, because it will lead to the demand of changing state borders and consequently to war.

Although in our day classical geopolitics has been replaced by the critical one, the Balkan states continue to follow the guidelines of classical geopolitics. Therefore it can be considered that behind good neighbor relations there is still the threat of conflict in the region only EU membership and NATO could make them forget about internal problem and force them more into collaboration, moreover these unions should be strong in order to keep the peace in the region



## CONCLUSION

The Balkan Peninsula has been constantly changing from prehistoric to the present. This is mainly due to its strategic location. The most radical change in these lands was experienced at the end of the 19th century. After the Industrial Revolution, large states sought new ways to become stronger. It aims to reach raw materials faster for their industries and seize the market by increasing their impact on weak states. Along with Turkish lands, the Balkans are defined as a bridge between east and west, considering that all the important trade routes to get goods from the Far East and bring them to Europe in the process of industrialization pass through these lands. In this period, the concept of geopolitics began to shape the world politics.

Initially, Friedrich Ratzel and Karl Ernst Haushofer, representatives of German Geopolitics, examined the relationship between space and power. Thus, they described the state as a living organism which had to try to survive. Later, British and American researchers examined various strategic points of the world that could make a state a world power. However, Mackinder's "Whoever rules Eastern Europe dominates the Heartland; whoever dominates the Heartland, rules the World Island; whoever rules the World island rules the World" theory has increased the geopolitical importance of the Balkan Peninsula.

In this study, the problem is addressed under two dimensions where classical geopolitics is applied while considering all historical processes. First, it is observed that the love for geopolitics has continued even during the cold war through the foreign policy among the Great Powers in order to dominate the Heartland. Secondly, stands out the foreign policy of the regional states in order to increase their own power and to expand their living space.

In this study it is concluded how small populations become victims of geopolitical games of the big countries. The Chameria question is not just a nationalist conflict, but is fueled by the geopolitical sentiment of the Great Powers. During the Cold War, the Great Powers tried to avoid frontal collisions with each other; in fact the division of the Balkan map was precisely this, creating a buffer zone so that the interests of the Great Powers could not have direct contact. The Cham population, on the other

hand, tried to make its case known internationally in order to return to their lands. These demands for the fact that they pose a risk of a chain reaction in the Balkans were never taken into account by the international arena.

These geopolitical strategies were repeated in the 1990s with the partition of Yugoslavia. The great powers, again for the sake of their interests, are turning a blind eye to crimes committed by small Balkan states with large geopolitical projects. The results were not different from the one of 60 years prior.

The question of Çameria is not only supported by the population of Cham. Serbia, Northern Macedonia and Turkey due to be having similar problems they tend to deal with this question.. Thus, Turkey, by using the Cham genocide can also make hear the plight of the Turkish minority in Greece. Moreover, new hopes began in the region following Kosovo's secession from Serbia. Because based on the massacres in Bosnia and later in Kosovo, it was thought all mistakes made in 1913 will be corrected. Against this background, the people of Chameria began to take action and to announce their long-standing complaints, along with the Albanians in the Prezava Valley and northern Macedonia in southeastern Serbia.

On the other hand, in 2001 Çamiria Liberation Army (UÇÇ-Ushtria Çlirimtare e Çamërisë) was established. Even if the Greek government stated in the media reports or public meetings that there was no such thing, there was a particular concern. Despite all these developments, on October 30, 2016, the President of the Comprehensive Initiative Pine and Arvanite Council (Këshillit Nismëtar Gjithëpërfshirës Çam dhe Arvanit) declared the independence of Chameria in Hague, the Netherlands. But this independence has not been recognized by any state and has been limited to being only symbolic. In the conjecture reality, it is unlikely that the independence declared by the people of Cham will succeed or ideas like Great Albania Megali Idea (Great Idea) are improbable, because this implies that the balance of power in the region would change.

This drastic change in the status quo is not supported by the Great Powers. Chameria independence has high peril in terms of geopolitics so, it risks turning the friends into enemies by destroying the effective strategy built against Russia in the last hundred years. Therefore, in all official declarations, the Chameria Question according

to these powers declares that it should be solved only between the two states. Moreover, while the Albanian government continues its desire to adhere as a member of the European Union, it does not seem rationally possible to make an official territorial claim on the territory of Chameria.

Although in present times classical geopolitics has been replaced by the critical one, the Balkan states continue to follow the guidelines of classical geopolitics. Therefore it can be pointed out that behind good neighbor relations there is still the threat of conflict in the region while only EU membership and NATO could make them forget about internal problem and force them into collaboration.

As a conclusion it is seen that the region is directly influenced by the US and the EU especially after the Cold War. With this effect, the regional states which are closest to the West can obtain the maximum benefit in the region. Thus, the fate of small peoples in the peninsula is shaped only by the power balances adopted by the Great Powers and their geostrategic plans.

## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Balkan yarımadası tarih öncesi dönemden günümüze kadar sürekli bir şekilde değişim içinde olmuştur. Bu çoğunlukla stratejik konumundan kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu topraklarda en köklü değişim 19. yüzyılın sonunda yaşanmıştır. Sanayi Devrimi'nden sonra, büyük devletler daha güçlü olmak için yeni yollar aramıştır. Endüstrileri için hammaddelere daha hızlı ulaşmak ve zayıf devletler üzerindeki etkilerini arttırarak piyasayı ele geçirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Türk topraklarıyla birlikte, Balkanlar doğu ve batı arasında köprü olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Çünkü Uzakdoğu'dan mal almak ve sanayileşme sürecinde olan Avrupa'ya getirmek için tüm önemli ticaret yolları bu topraklardan geçmektedir. Bu dönemde jeopolitik kavramı dünya siyasetini şekillendirmeye başlamıştır.

Başlangıçta, Alman Jeopolitiği temsilcilerinden Friedrich Ratzel ve Karl Ernst Haushofer alan ve iktidar arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemiştir. Böylece devleti, hayatta kalmaya çalışması gereken canlı bir organizma olarak tasvir etmiştir. Daha sonra, İngiliz ve Amerikalı araştırmacılar, bir devletin dünya gücü haline gelmesini sağlayabilecek dünyanın çeşitli stratejik noktalarını incelemiştir. Bununla birlikte Mackinder'in "*Kim Doğu Avrupa'ya hükmederse Kalpgâh'a (Heartland'a) hâkim olur; kim Kalpgâh'a (Heartland'a) hâkim olursa Dünya Adası'na hükmeder; Kim Dünya Adası'na hükmederse Dünya'ya hâkim olur.*"<sup>230</sup> teorisiyle Balkanlar'ın jeopolitik önemi artmıştır.

Bölge için Büyük Britanya, Fransa, Almanya, Rusya ve diğer güçler arasında büyük bir rekabet başlamıştır. Gücünü arttırmayı amaçlayan bu büyük aktörler Balkanları ele geçirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu içinde gerçekleşen Rum ve Sırp ayaklanmaları doğrudan bu güçler tarafından desteklenmiştir. Özellikle Rusya Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na saldırılarını arttırmıştır.

Bu jeopolitik oyunlara büyük bir güçlü ve yükselişte olan Amerika Birleşik Devletleri de katılmıştır. ABD'nin Başkanı Woodrow Wilson'un Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na katılmasıyla birlikte Amerikan jeopolitiği yükselmeye başlamıştır. Amerika

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<sup>230</sup> Tayyar Arı, "Jeopolitik Determinist Teori ve Dış Politika", "**Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri Çatışma, Hegemonya, İşbirliği**", 8th Edition, MKM Publishing, Bursa, 2013, p.189.

jeopolitiğin elde etmeye çalıştığı şey, emperyalist güçlerin Büyük Britanya'dan kendisine kayması olmuştur. Akabinde bölgedeki nüfusu dikkate almadan Balkan haritasını kendi güç çıkarlarına göre yeniden düzenlemiştir. Balkan devletlerinin büyük çoğunluğunun homojen bir nüfusa sahip olmamasının nedeni budur.

Aynı şekilde Çamıria Sorunu'un ana kaynağı da bu stratejinin sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Çamıria toprakları kuzeyde resmi Arnavutluk sınırı, doğuda Yanya vadisi, batıda İyonya Denizi kıyısına ve güneydeki Fanari Nehri'ne (Ambracian Körfezi) çıkmaktadır. Çamıria eski Yanya Vilayeti'nin altıda yer almaktadır. Bu vilayet Arnavut olan Tepedelenli Ali Paşa tarafından yönetilmiştir. Fakat Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun çöküşü ve 1912-1913 yıllarında Arnavutluk'un bağımsızlığı ile birlikte, bu bölge iki devlet (Yunanistan-Arnavutluk) arasında kalmıştır. Bu iki devlet arasında sınırlar meselesi tartışılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu yüzden, Avusturya-Macaristan, Büyük Britanya, İtalya, Fransa ve Rusya arasında Aralık 1913'te Floransa'da toplanma kararı alınmıştır. Fakat bu kararı etkilemek isteyen Yunan gönüllüleri tarafından Epir isyanı başlatılmıştır. 1913 yılının Ekim ayında Epir isyanıyla birlikte Yunan gönüllüleri Arnavutluk'un güneyine baskın düzenleyerek bölgedeki sakinlerin köylerini yakıp yıkarak terörize etmiştir.

Yunanistan'ın hedefi, bölgenin gelecekteki statüsü üzerine Floransa'da yapılan uluslararası tartışmaları sabote etmek amacıyla özerk bir Vorio Epirus (Kuzey Epir bölgesi) gerçekleştirmek olmuştur. Aralık 1913'te, Büyük güçler, Floransa Protokolü'nün şartları konusunda mutabık kalarak Çamıria bölgesini Yunanistan'a bırakmıştır. Fakat bu toprakların nüfusunun büyük çoğunluğu Arnavutlardan oluşmaktadır. 1913'ten 1945'e kadar Yunanistan, topraklarda homojen bir nüfusa sahip olmak amacıyla Yunan olmayan nüfusa zulmetmeye başlamıştır. Çam konusunda toplanan tüm bilgilere göre, 1944 sonbaharından ve 1945 yılının ilk aylarına kadar geçen sürede Yunanistan yetkilileri bölgede vahşi saldırılar düzenlemiştir. Yaklaşık 25.000 Çam - Çamıria sakini Yunanlılar tarafından arazileri ve mülkleri soyulduktan sonra evlerinden kovulmuştur. Haziran 1944 ile Mart 1945 arasında toplam 2771 savunmasız sivil Yunanlılar tarafından katledilmiştir. Bu dönemde 5800 evden oluşan 68 köy de yağmalandıktan sonra yakılmıştır. Toplamda bölgede 102 cami yakılmıştır.

Yüzlerce 15-70 yaşları arasındaki Çam erkekleri Yunanlılar tarafından Ege adalarına sürgün edilmiştir. Yunan makamları daha sonra karar için ana sebep olarak toplumlarının işgalci Mihver Devletleri'nin kuvvetleriyle işbirliğini öne sürerek Çam mülkünün kamulaştırılmasını onaylayan bir yasa kabul etmiştir. Büyük Güçler'in durumdan haberdar olmasına rağmen jeopolitik çıkarlarını göz ederek gelişmeler karşısında harekesiz kalmayı tercih etmişlerdir.

1945-1947 yılları arasında Birleşmiş Milletler Yardımlaşma ve Rehabilitasyon İdaresi (UNRRA), Çam mültecilerine barınma ve yiyecek yardımları konusunda bir şekilde başarılı olsa da bu başarı sınırlı seviyede gerçekleşmiştir. Evlerini terk etmek zorunda kalan Çam halkı kendilerine ait hakları kazanmak için organize olmaya çalışmıştır. Arnavutluk hükümeti ve Çam nüfusu defalarca Büyük Güçlerin ve uluslararası konferansların kapılarını çalarak topraklarına geri dönüş, verilen zararın tazmini ve Yunanistan'ın takip ettiği Arnavutluk karşıtı politikaların durdurulması talep etmiştir. Fakat tüm çabalarına rağmen hiçbiri yerine getirilmemiştir.

Soğuk Savaş itibarıyla Arnavutluk ve Yunanistan iki ayrı siyasi kampta karşı karşıya gelmiştir. Bu sebepten dolayı Çamıria Sorunu 1991'de Arnavutluk'taki komünizmin çöküşüne kadar geçen sürede dondurulmuş sorun olarak arka planda kalmıştır. Neredeyse elli yıl boyunca tarihin en ağır diktatörlüklerden birine maruz kalan Arnavutluk, tüm uluslararası etkileşimlerden izole bir şekilde varlığını devam ettirmiştir.

Arnavutluk'taki tek partili devlet döneminden sonra Ocak 1991'de, Çamıria halkının çıkarlarını "sesini duymak ve savunmak" amacıyla Çamıria Ulusal Siyasi Birliği (Çameria Shoqëria Politike Atdhetare, CSPA) adında bir siyasi lobi kurulmuştur. O zamanki Yunanistan Dışişleri Bakanı Karolas Papoulias, 1991 yazında Çam nüfusunun talepleri ikili bir komisyon tarafından yerine getirilmesi gerektiğini söylemiştir. Fakat mevcut Yunan yasalarına göre bir tanesini oluşturma şansı olmamıştır. Yunan devleti tarafından toprağın talep edilmesi (veya kamulaştırılması) için yasal bir yol bulunamamıştır. Bundan dolayı Çamıria mülkü için maddi tazminat ödenmesi amacıyla Tiran hükümeti tarafından sorun Uluslararası Adalet Divanı'na taşınmıştır. Ancak bugüne kadar yeterli seviyede ilerleme kaydedilememiştir.

Çamıria Sorunu sadece Çam nüfusun tarafından desteklenmemektedir. Sırbistan, Kuzey Makedonya ve Türkiye'den gelen bazı milliyetçi gruplar da benzer sorunlara haiz olmaları sebebiyle bu sorun ile ilgilenmektedir. Böylece Türkiye, Çam Sorunu'nun Yunanistan'daki Türk azınlığıyla bağlantı kurarak azınlıkların kötü durumuna uluslararası arenada dikkat çekmek için yararlı bir araç olarak görmektedir.

Dahası, Kosova'nın Sırbistan'dan ayrılmasının ardından bölgede yeni umutlar başlamıştır. Çünkü Bosna'da ve daha sonra Kosova'da yaşanan katliamlara dayanarak 1913'te yapılan tüm hataların düzeltileceği düşünülmüştür. Bu arka plana dayanarak, Çam halkı, Sırbistan'ın güneydoğusunda bulunan Preşova Vadisi ve Kuzey Makedonya'daki Arnavutlarla birlikte, uzun süredir devam eden şikâyetlerini duyurmak için harekete geçmeye başlamıştır.

Buna karşılık 2001 yılında Çamıria Kurtuluş Ordusu (UÇÇ-Ushtria Çlirimtare e Çamërisë) kurulmuştur. Yunan hükümeti, yayınlanan medya raporlarında veya halka açık toplantılarda böyle bir şey olmadığını ifade etse bile özel olarak bir endişenin var olduğu gözlenmiştir. Bu nedenle hükümet Yunanistan'a girmeyi yasaklayan Çam aktivistlerin bulunduğu resmi olmayan bir listenin hazırlandığına inanılmaktadır. Tüm bu gelişmelere rağmen, 30 Ekim 2016 tarihinde Hollanda'nın Lahey kentinde bulunan "Asmbasador" otelinde, Kapsamlı İnisiyatif Çam ve Arvanit Konseyi (Këshillit Nismëtar Gjithëpërfshirës Çam dhe Arvanit) Başkanı Rrustem Geci tarafından Çamıria'nın bağımsızlığı ilan edilmiştir. Fakat bu bağımsızlık hiçbir devlet tarafından tanınmamış sadece sembolik olmakla sınırlı kalmıştır.

Konjonktürel gerçeklikte, Çam halkı tarafından ilan edilen bağımsızlığın başarıya ulaşması ve Büyük Arnavutluk gibi fikirlerin gerçekleşmesi mümkün gözükmemektedir. Çünkü bu, bölgedeki güç dengesinin değişmesi anlamına gelmektedir. Statükonun bu denli köklü değişikliği Büyük Güçler tarafından desteklenmemektedir. Çamıria'nın bağımsızlığı jeopolitik açıdan son yüz yıl Rusya'ya karşı inşa edilen etkin stratejiyi yıkmaya sebep olarak dostları düşmana çevirme riskini taşımaktadır. Bu yüzden tüm resmi açıklamalarda, bu güçler tarafında Çamıria Sorunu ancak 2 devlet arasında çözülmesi gerektiğini söylemektedir. Ayrıca, Arnavutluk hükümeti, Avrupa Birliği'ne üye olma isteğini sürdürürken, Çamıria toprakları hakkında resmi bir toprak iddiasında bulunması rasyonel anlamda mümkün gözükmemektedir.

Öte yandan, Yunanistan ise topraklarında Çamıria Sorunu olduğunu kabul etmeme politikası sergilemektedir. 2018 yılında son bakanlar arasında yapılan görüşmelerde, konuşulan program gizli tutulmasına rağmen, basına yapılan açıklamalara dayanarak, Arnavut tarafı hala Çam halkının evlerine dönmesi ve haklarını alması konusunda kararlı olmasına rağmen, Yunanistan en azından yakın geleceğe kadar bu sorunu kabul etmeyeceğini belirtmiştir.

Son olarak, bu çalışmada tüm tarihsel süreçleri ele alarak klasik jeopolitiğin iki seviyede uygulandığını belirtmek gerekir. İlk olarak Büyük Güçler'in arasında Kalpgâh'a hâkim olabilmek için sergilenen bir dış politika olduğu gözlemlenmektedir. İkincisi bölgesel devletlerin arasında kendi güçlerini artırmak ve yaşam alanını genişletmek için sergilediği dış politika öne çıkmaktadır. Böylece bölge Soğuk Savaş ile birlikte ABD ve AB etkisinde kaldığı görülmektedir. Bu etkiyle beraber bölgesel devletlerden Batı'ya en yakın olan devletler bölgede maksimum fayda sağlamaktadır. Böylelikle bölgedeki küçük halkların kaderi sadece Büyük Güçler'in benimsediği güç dengeleri veya jeostratejik planlara göre şekillenmektedir.



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