

THE IMPACT OF POPULISM ON TRADITIONAL SECURITY POLICIES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the growing impact of populism on traditional security policies in the Western Balkans, a region characterized by complex dynamics and numerous challenges in national security management. In the context of the rise of populism, which often represents a strong response to elitism and internationally accepted norms, this study analyzes how this phenomenon has influenced traditional security policies. Through theoretical analysis and case studies from Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the article highlights changes in security approaches, as well as the challenges and opportunities arising from this phenomenon. The study employs an integrated methodology, including document analysis and interviews with field experts, to provide a deeper understanding of populism's impact on security policy. The analysis reveals that populism has altered security priorities, promoting a stronger focus on domestic issues and challenging foreign policy and regional cooperation. This article concludes with recommendations for future policies and the need for a sensitive balance between populist interests and traditional security commitments to maintain regional stability and integrity.

Keywords: Populism, security policies, western Balkans, national security, regional stability.