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Review article: Europeanisation at the crossroads

Introduction

This review article introduces us to the series *Southeast European Integration Perspectives* (SEIP), edited by Wolfgang Petritsch and Christophe Solioz. It has also been published as a Foreword to the volume edited by Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (2012) *Resisting the Evil: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Contention* Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 17-24.

Review

South-east Europe is routinely presented as undergoing multi-faceted (post-)war transition, transformation and (re)integration processes since the early 1980s. Sooner or later, the 'European dream' – meaning European Union (EU) membership – is supposed to become a reality for all Yugoslavia's successor states plus Albania, but significant changes have also transformed Europe over the last decades,[1] fundamentally reshaping both European integration and Europeanisation.

Key political transformations are related to the EU's 'Big Bang' enlargement of 2004-2007; new regional co-operation schemes;[2] all-encompassing economic, political and cultural globalisation; and the eruption of the global and generalised – thus not only financial – crisis affecting 'advanced' societies.[3] In addition, social changes concerning migration, generational shifts, citizens' participation in a multi-level polity and an emerging European public sphere are also at stake. Europeanisation dynamics thus engage a wide range of transformations of statehood and of modernity, affecting both states and their respective societies.

Europeanisation, including and going beyond functional EU integration,[4] refers to a multi-dimensional process of social transformation involving simultaneously the integration of societies, the transnationalisation of states and globalisation. In our view, transnational approaches (the EU as being constructed from within) and globalisation approaches (the EU as shaped by global processes) are intertwined. Furthermore, Europeanisation may mostly be viewed, especially in south-east Europe, as 'limited' to

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1 See the frontrunner of the SEIP series, edited by Hannes Swoboda and Christophe Solioz (2007) *Conflict and Renewal: Europe Transformed* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

2 See the volume edited by Wolfgang Petritsch and Christophe Solioz (2008) *Regional Cooperation in South East Europe and Beyond: Challenges and Prospects* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

3 Castoriadis, Cornelius (1997) 'The Crisis of Western Societies' *The Castoriadis Reader* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 253-66.

4 Delanty, Gerard and Chris Rumford (2005) *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization* London: Routledge.

social and system integration within the EU,[5] but we understand Europe at a pan-continental level – thus encompassing the EU and its neighbourhoods (to the east and the south), including those countries seeking membership, and extending to the respective limits of the Council of Europe and of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

We are not referring to a one-way process. As the 'reconstructed past' illustrates, south-east Europe is an integral part of a common European history in permanent reconstruction. All countries have conflicting memories and are, to this very day, involved in a complex process of, firstly, coming to terms with their own past; secondly, acknowledging each other's conflicting memories; and, thirdly, trying to (re)construct a common European memory as a part of transnational memory spaces.[6] The prerequisite for this is the capacity of each collective to interrogate its own past as the result of its own actions. Only this would enable a move from a culture of culpability to a culture of political and historical responsibility.

Such a comprehensive approach cannot ignore the necessity of clarifying countries' specific socio-historical context and the transformations which have an impact upon their respective socio-political fields and social-cultural frameworks. This requires a deep multi-disciplinary knowledge, on the one hand, and a decisively new slant driven by free inquiry and unlimited interrogation, a truly critical approach, on the other. Critical, from *krinô*, meaning 'judging', 'separating', 'distinguishing'; permanently calling into question the established institutions and orientations of social life; examining how societies are organised and what role individuals are to play therein, and what are the prospects for change. The series Southeast European Integration Perspectives (SEIP) intends to provide a space for such an elucidation process.

We started to publish various country-specific books focusing on Bosnia and Herzegovina and on Croatia with the Nomos publishing house, firstly within the framework of the series Democracy, Security, Peace.[7] These volumes argue for a more nuanced understanding of these countries. Wide-ranging contributions analyse how the interpretation of national sovereignty has evolved in these post-communist states, critically assess the democratisation and transition processes, investigate the prospects for

5 Lockwood, David (1964) 'Social Integration and System Integration,' in George K. Zollschan and Walter Hirsch (Eds.) *Explorations in Social Change* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 244-56. Social integration refers to 'relationships between the *actors*' and system integration to 'relations between the *parts* of a social system' (p. 245), meaning both '*groups*' and '*structural* elements' (p. 249, note 6) – italics from the original.

6 SEIP volume No. 3, edited by Wolfgang Petritsch and Vedran Džihić (2010) *Conflict and Memory: Bridging Past and Future in (South East) Europe* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

7 On Bosnia and Herzegovina, see: Christophe Solioz and Svebor Dizdarevic (Eds.) (2003) *Ownership Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Contributions on the International Dimensions of Democratization in the Balkans*; Christophe Solioz and Tobias K. Vogel (Eds.) (2004) *Dayton and Beyond: Perspectives on the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina*; Christophe Solioz (2005) *Turning Points in Post-War Bosnia: Ownership Process and European Integration*. On Croatia, see: Srđan Dvornik and Christophe Solioz (Eds.) (2007) *Next Steps in Croatia's Transition Process: Problems and Possibilities*.

civic engagement, and discuss the pervasive effects of external assistance as well as the considerable economic challenges.

The first SEIP volume, *Serbia Matters*, assesses the country's state of affairs in the early years of the 21st century and presents pertinent analyses and compelling arguments as to why Serbia's accession to the EU matters as much for Belgrade as it does for other south-east European countries.[8] Against the background of the EU's current 'enlargement fatigue', the open bilateral issues blocking the enlargement process and the deepening global economic crisis, both the EU and Serbia can only regret not having done more earlier. Beyond Serbia's tactical manoeuvring, hard choices – notably regarding Kosovo – have still to be made: real, hard-headed, strategic thinking is required in Belgrade.

The second SEIP volume presents a comprehensive analysis of major trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace, brokered in Dayton, until 2009.[9] The discussion of the contradictory development of the Bosnian 'national question' and the rise of 'ethno-nationalism' is followed by a critical assessment of relevant political, socio-economic and societal developments. The volume further looks at the reasons for the continuous obstructions imposed by ethno-politics, presents a convincing explanation for the weak democratisation performance of the international community and dissects the factors jeopardising the country's Europeanisation.

Along with the country-specific books, other SEIP volumes explore 'social imaginary significations'[10] focusing on the importance of cultural dynamics. Damir Arsenijević's *Forgotten Future* documents and critically evaluates contemporary poetry within the field of cultural production in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the late 1980s.[11] Developing a new thinking about poetry in the framework of a political critique of culture, the author focuses on alternative cultural practices which have articulated a more equitable organisation of Bosnian and Herzegovinian society. The author himself points deliberately to the book recognising, naming and building a tradition of the transformative potential which, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was abandoned by liberal conformists, as the majority silently accepted the exclusionary logic of ethno-nationalism. Undoing all false, de-politicising options and strengthening a new soli-

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8   SEIP volume No. 1 edited by Wolfgang Petritsch, Goran Svilanović and Christophe Solioz (2009) *Serbia Matters: Domestic Reforms and European Integration* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

9   SEIP volume No. 2 by Vedran Džihić (2010) *Ethnopolitik in Bosnien-Herzegowina: Staat und Gesellschaft in Krise* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

10 Following Cornelius Castoriadis, an 'imaginary signification' is a representation which is neither 'real', thus available to perception, nor 'rational' in the sense of being deductible via the rules of thought. In the author's view, societies are not created through a natural rationalism or through historical progressive determinism, but are instituted through creation, through imagination(s). See Cornelius Castoriadis (1997) *World in Fragments* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, p. 6; and the author's seminal work (originally published in 1975): *The Imaginary Institution of Society* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987.

11 SEIP volume No. 4 by Damir Arsenijević (2010) *Forgotten Future: The Politics of Poetry in Bosnia and Herzegovina* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

darity, the book signposts a way towards a politics of hope based on citizens' responsibility and action for change.

Ivan Čolović's essays in political anthropology analyse culture in south-east Europe as a catalyst for hatred and war.[12] *The Balkans: The Terror of Culture* scrutinises the role played by intellectuals and the 'culture' they promoted in inciting the wars. The mainstay of the revival of the epic tradition, the myth of the founding heroes and the alleged organic unity between the nation and the soil is the representation of culture as a means by which national territory is occupied and maintained. The author pays particular attention to the post-war patriotic discourse and its use of culture to determine the rhetorical strategies through which it preserves its ability to trigger conflicts.

The volume edited by Paul Stubbs and Christophe Solioz, *Towards Open Regionalism in South East Europe*,[13] investigates regional co-operation as a multi-directional process and a multi-level polity forging new realities in a 'region in the making'. Taking such diverse themes as the economy, crime, borders, culture and civil society, the essays explore some of the facets of 'open regionalism', consisting of multi-actor, multi-level and multi-scalar processes producing a complex geometry of interlocking networks. The book situates 'new regionalism'[14] in south-east Europe in the historical context of the legacies of Yugoslavia and the wars of the Yugoslav succession. Contemporary processes of Europeanisation are also examined as complex, contingent and radically unfinished. This volume seeks to move beyond the constraints of objectivist notions of regionalism as consisting of sets of relations between sovereign nation-states, to address complex constructions of (new) meaning and place – infusing 'integration' with new dimensions and values.

The first common denominator of these volumes is an investigation into one of the core 'imaginary significations': the idea of the nation-state and its conservative and nationalist drift which is widening the gap between the EU as a post-modern political construct and a Europe facing the rise of nationalism and xenophobia. If not the inevitability of the nation-state form *per se*, the volumes question its changing role and focus on the necessity of taking into account other forms of collective identifications and action as being simultaneously engaged at various levels. The transnationalisation of economies continues to deepen, thus reducing the role of the nation-state, while EU membership requirements include a transfer of sovereignty to European institutions. Meanwhile, the intensifying euro crisis in recent years – leading to unavoidable closer European political integration – will trigger an additional transfer of sovereignty. This will further shrink the space for political decisions at a national level. Against this background, networked regionalisation – as an alternative, flexible political architecture with its own innovative dynamics – becomes increasingly relevant. Nation-states

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12 SEIP volume No. 5 by Ivan Čolović (2011) *The Terror of Culture: Essays in Political Anthropology* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

13 SEIP volume No. 6 edited by Paul Stubbs and Christophe Solioz (2012) *Towards Open Regionalism in South East Europe* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

14 Söderbaum, Fredrik and Timothy M. Shaw (Eds.) (2003) *Theories of New Regionalism* Basingstoke: Palgrave; and James W. Scott (Ed.) (2009) *De-coding New Regionalism* Aldershot: Ashgate.

are newly positioned in the framework of an enlarged EU, but regional co-operation schemes also receive a new meaning and significance.[15]

The other key issue discussed is the complex interaction between foreign intervention and local dynamics. 'Policy makers', typically foreign actors in a hegemonic position, develop mostly one-dimensional intervention strategies. Ignoring the 'social imaginary signification' which stamps a society, disregarding the necessity to enter into a real partnership with the 'policy takers' and applying a 'law and order' approach based on strict conditionality often prove to be counterproductive and also generate a dependency syndrome. This should be seen as a systemic problem affecting not only development aid but also characterising the EU's crisis strategies. Against the background of the catastrophic recessions hitting Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, the imposed 'diagnosis and therapy' – determined by Germany, Europe's economic powerhouse and paymaster – were far too one-dimensional and unilateral. Whenever mentioned, 'partnership' and 'ownership' become catchy but essentially empty words. The other side of the coin is that local stakeholders often do not take ownership, not because the external actors will not let them but because they do not agree among themselves about what their future as a state and society should look like.[16] 'Blaming the outsiders' becomes a cheap political strategy. Hence the relevance, on the one hand, of local responsibility in forging a true dialogue in order to foster a consensus for change and, on the other, to engage in a real partnership with foreign agencies.

The third common thread running through these volumes is the state-civil society relationship in the context of a war-to-peace transition process. Civil society organisations – more specifically, citizen initiatives aimed at social transformative action, and thus related to state-building – are viewed as forces for change entitled to influence politics and, therefore, as strong enough to counter-balance the state. However, what is often presented as 'civil society' is little more than a collection of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that developed not as an expression of broader citizen movements, but as the result of specific circumstances that included substantial international support. After more than twenty years of civil society activism and NGO development in south-east Europe, strategies for strengthening civil society and social activism have produced mixed results. The expectation that the emergence of a civil society would bring about political change, exert pressure and have an impact at the political level has not (yet) been fulfilled.

Overall, however, can we consider that civil society is a promising laboratory for the reinvention of participatory democracy and social emancipation? Furthermore, is civil society in the (post-)Yugoslav sphere therefore at a dead end? If so, why? Because civil society is not relevant in war-torn societies, or because it is 'Europe-biased'? These

15 Telò, Matio (Ed.) (2001) *European Union and New Regionalism* Aldershot: Ashgate, Second Edition, 2007.

16 Loza, Tihomir (2005) 'Afterword' in Christophe Solioz *Turning Points in Post-War Bosnia: Ownership Process and European Integration* Baden-Baden: Nomos, Second Edition, 2007, pp. 153-5.

are only a few of the questions in a research field which, in the past, has lacked academic precision.[17] The new SEIP volumes – introduced below – deal with these questions.

Western societies had, in history, only a very limited capacity for exerting an emancipatory influence upon the rest of the world. Also, the EU's belated intervention in south-east Europe – beyond any doubt, a necessity – has shown mixed results. On the one hand, democratisation experts seem to have forgotten Robespierre's appeal ('Peoples don't like armed missionaries')[18] and, furthermore, that the productive/economic system, the liberal regime and the ideal-type of the 'European citizen' are not exportable as such.[19] On the other hand, a more realistic option fostering local responsibility and thus ownership-enhancing strategies has been dramatically lacking or, if present, was not fully implemented, as illustrated by the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Why so?

Beyond the intrinsic difficulties of understanding a 'different' society, this gap may best be explained by a misleading conception of history:

> *The denial and the covering up of the instituting dimension of society through the imputation of the origin of the institution and of its significations to an extra-social source.[20]*

The institution of society is, as a matter of fact, neither sacred nor natural:

> *Social historical forms are not 'determined' by natural or historical 'laws'. Society is self-creation.[21]*

Accordingly, political life is an instituting process:

> *The activity and struggle around the change of the institutions, the explicit (even if partial) self-institution of the polis as a permanent process.[22]*

To face this truly political dimension brings us to consider each society as always already constituted and as inhabited by a capacity for self-alteration.[23]

Such understanding convinced us at an early stage, firstly, to privilege resolutely the view 'from within'; secondly, to search for locally-anchored democratic alternatives

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17 Solioz, Christophe (2011) 'Civil Society: Any Way out from the Dead End?' *SEER Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe* 14 (4): 493-504.

18 The apparent source, *Sur la guerre (1ère intervention)* (a Jacobin Club speech delivered on 2 January 1792), states: '*Personne n'aime les missionaires armés*' [No one likes (or loves) armed missionaries] – though Robespierre himself does refer, in the previous sentence, specifically to *un peuple étranger* [a foreign people].

19 Castoriadis, Cornelius (2003) 'Third World, Third Worldism, Democracy' *The Rising Tide of Insignificancy* New York: notbored.org, pp. 52-3.

20 Castoriadis, Cornelius (1991) 'Power, Politics, Autonomy' in *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy* New York: Oxford University Press, p. 153. Extra-social meaning: gods, God, founding heroes or ancestors, Nature, Reason or History as ultimate 'principle'.

21 Castoriadis, Cornelius (1991) 'The Greek *Polis* and the Creation of Democracy' *op. cit.* p. 84.

22 *ibid*. p. 105.

23 Castoriadis (1991) 'Power, Politics, Autonomy' *op. cit.* pp. 144-5.

aimed at the reinstitution of society; and, thirdly, systematically to involve leading policy-oriented scholars, practitioners and socially-engaged artists from the region. Of course, what matters is not only *who*, but also *how* the 'social imaginary significations' are reconstituted. Acknowledging that each understanding is social-historically instituted, and convinced that the elucidation of society's (also imaginary) institutions enables a society to self-constitute itself, we see the necessity of providing local actors with the opportunity to question the *status quo* and, through their self-reflective activity, contribute to change.[24]

Against this background, we are delighted to introduce to our SEIP series two intertwined volumes focusing on anti-war engagement as a potential 'alternative history' of Yugoslavia's dissolution. The first one, *Resisting the Evil*, illuminates the insufficiently-studied topic of (post-)Yugoslav anti-war engagement through a series of both activist and scholarly accounts written by authors coming from all of the republics and provinces of the former Yugoslavia.[25] Employing a distinctly transnational approach and contextualising painful biographical narratives, this volume positions resistance to the wars of the Yugoslav succession at the centre of a variety of intersecting power relations and ideological vantage points. Rather than opting for any kind of one-dimensional interpretations of the complex phenomena that it studies, this book shows that a multi-scalar recovery of marginalised voices and experiences opens up a possibility for – or even requires – new forms of scholarship which transcend the mainstream insistence on 'detached', 'objective' analysis.

Next, *We Were Gasping for Air*, Bojan Bilić's revised doctoral thesis, goes beyond the widely-exploited paradigms of nationalism and civil society to provide a closer link between the empirical data on (post-)Yugoslav anti-war enterprises, on the one hand, and the western conceptual apparatus for studying collective engagement on the other.[26] Focusing primarily on Serbia and Croatia, this book follows the stages of the (post-)Yugoslav anti-war protest cycle and positions the inter- and intra-republican cooperations and contestations in the context of Yugoslavia's almost half century-long socialist experience. By grounding his work in the influential tradition of political process theorising, the author claims that (post-)Yugoslav anti-war undertakings appropriated and built on the already-existing social networks created through student, feminist and environmentalist engagement. He shows that anti-war activism is also a field characterised by power struggles, and tracks the tensions that have accompanied its professionalisation and institutionalisation in the post-Yugoslav space.

24 Castoriadis, Cornelius (2007) 'The Social-Historical: Mode of Being, Problems of Knowledge' *Figures of the Thinkable* Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 225-6.
25 SEIP volume No. 7 edited by Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković *Resisting the Evil: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Contention* Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012.
26 SEIP volume No. 8 by Bojan Bilić (2012) *We Were Gasping for Air: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Activism and its Legacy* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Both volumes achieve greater significance against the background of the increased gap between the two central drivers of modern times: the project of autonomy[27] and the project of the unlimited expansion of rational mastery. This imbalance increased in the late 1980s with the destruction of Marxism-Leninism and the implosion of the bureaucratic regimes in the 'Eastern Bloc'. To put it bluntly: this collapse buried beneath its ruins the radical emancipatory politics itself and left the adoption of the liberal-capitalist model as seemingly without alternative.[28] The radical inadequacy of the programmes supposed to embody the project of autonomy – the liberal republic or Marxist-Leninist socialism – may well explain an omnipresent political apathy and generalised conformism.[29] However, the endeavour towards autonomy and emancipation has not vanished. These volumes attest to and investigate attempts to surpass collective pseudo-memory and an exacerbated national consciousness as well as the encountered difficulties and contradictions.

With these volumes, and forthcoming ones, we intend to shed new light on some segments of the ongoing transformation and Europeanisation processes in south-east Europe. Beyond the usual round of academic debates, combining cutting-edge policy research and interdisciplinary approaches, Southeast European Integration Perspectives intends to promote innovative and provocative thinking about a region in the making. This stands for the creative power of knowledge in a changing world and of citizens in changing the world.

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27 Following Castoriadis, the beginnings of autonomy as a social-historically effective project refers to the Greek *polis*. As summarised by David Ames Curtis: 'The project of autonomy is expressed in the simultaneous creation of philosophy and politics as the reflective questioning of instituted traditions and the attempt to alter these traditions and institutions through conscious collective action.' David Ames Curtis (1991) 'Foreword' in Cornelius Castoriadis *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy op. cit.* p. 7.

28 Castoriadis, Cornelius (1997) 'The Pulverization of Marxism-Leninism' *World in Fragment* Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 68.

29 Castoriadis, Cornelius (1990) 'L'époque du conformisme généralisé' *Le Monde morcelé: Les carrefours du labyrinthe* III Paris: Seuil, pp. 23-24.