Lessons from “Post-Yugoslav” Democratization

Functional Problems of Stateness and the Limits of Democracy

Vedran Džihić
Dieter Segert
University of Vienna, Austria

State weakness is one of the main obstacles for democratic stability. Yet under certain circumstances even a mere electoral democracy may gain stable support from the citizenry. Mere electoral democracy is best understood as a regime of elite governance endowed by a certain support from the citizens but without any ambition of the ruling elite to increase the quality of democratic rule. This article explores the historical reasons of this specific type of political regime in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia. Departing from the empirical examples from the Western Balkans, the article comes to some rather general conclusions about the concept and sequence of democratization: Conducting elections too early may produce serious challenges to sustainable democratization. The general population’s primary interest mostly lies in the stabilization of state apparatus and its ability to produce common goods rather than in the fast establishment of electoral democracy and formal democratic institutions. For a better understanding of the real level of specific course and paths of democratic “consolidation,” the democracy rankings like Nations in Transit and Bertelsmann should focus on in-depth analyses of the main actors’ political and economic practices.

Keywords: post-Yugoslav democratization; mere electoral democracy; state functioning and democracy; problems of consolidation

Introduction: The “Post-Yugoslav” Puzzle

In recent years, new insights have developed on the difficulties of democratic transition while a country undergoes fundamental economic, social, and cultural changes at the same time. The literature on transformations in Eastern Europe identifies a weak state as one of the main obstacles to establishing a stable democracy.¹ The post-Yugoslav
area provides much evidence for this thesis. It confirms, firstly, the close correlation between democratization and development of the economy and society. Every political regime has to satisfy, to a certain degree, the social expectations of the population. That is especially true for democratic orders where citizens have the right to assess the performance of the governments during the next elections. Connected to this condition is the fact that a functioning state is another precondition of a stable democracy. In the post-Yugoslav area, the citizens need to concentrate on their own life and its protection, because there are only weak state services and benefits in support of common goods such as education and training, health, and protection of all against social insecurity. This struggle for individual survival makes more complicated the political participation of the population, which is one of the most important prerequisites of a sustainable democracy. Thirdly, the surprisingly stable support of the partly authoritarian-oriented political classes by the majority of voters stems from the specific situation in which the disintegration of the ethnic-federation and the birth of nation-states helps spread an ethnic-nationalistic attitude. This nationalistic mood connecting elites and ordinary citizens provided a base so that a mere electoral democracy could gain stability for several years. Nationalism is not only an elite-driven phenomenon. The deep economic and political crises of the Yugoslav society in the 1980s caused nationalism to emerge much earlier than the wars in the 1990s.

In the last two decades, the third or fourth wave of democratization became a major topic for political scientists who compared the many cases of democratization all over the world. The area of the former Yugoslavia, however, remained a blank spot on the map of these analyses. The different reasons for this could include the difficulty to form a single and coherent conclusion concerning this subregion. Slovenia proved to be a transition success without any big problems. Serbia, however, is a fractious country and Bosnia-Herzegovina is—despite enormous international support—still a highly crisis-driven country dominated by ethno-nationalist rhetoric and politics and with very unstable governing institutions. Kosovo became independent in 2008 and has made some institutional progress but remains one of the regions whose political development is such that the informed Western observer can only hope that the next day will bring no unpleasant surprises. Croatia is closer to Western expectations and about to close the negotiations with the EU Commission in 2011, but the rather formal success of democracy is shaken by economic and social problems as well as prominent cases of corruption (see the Sanader case). Macedonia’s constitutional design developed in the Ohrid Agreement of 2001 is fragile and the Europeanization process is insecure because of a long-lasting dispute with Greece. Montenegro appeared in Western news only recently when it acknowledged Kosovo’s independence in October 2008.

A second reason for this lack of analysis on the post-Yugoslav regions could be that before 1989 some Western observers tied their hopes to the Yugoslav “Third Way” and have been quite traumatised by the nationalistic violence after 1989.
Thirdly, the particular wars on ex-Yugoslav territory, which had a lasting impact on the whole region’s progress during the 1990s, have contributed to the fact that the debates and analyses of general transformation and democratization processes largely exclude the post-Yugoslav developments. The wars have rendered impossible the “usual” and more-or-less straightforward transition seen with many Central and Eastern European states.

Because of these and other reasons, democratization processes in the ex-Yugoslav region were seldom researched and rarely appeared in broader comparative studies. Apart from some large comparative works on democratization in the Balkans and some articles in relevant journals, this region’s transformation processes have only become a special focus of scholars of the Western Balkans, as well as a special topic of public and academic debates within the countries themselves. These debates conducted in the regional languages do not come to the general knowledge of the transformation and democratization researchers in the West.

For different reasons, post-Yugoslavia therefore has become a difficult case for the democratization paradigm. There has been a certain consolidation of institutions of democratic governance, and elections also have become the generally accepted way to change the elites at the top of the political hierarchies, but democratic participation has only slowly increased. The degree of democratic participation, however, depends on the respective country, and the elites use this limited participation in order to consolidate their own power. The civil societies suffer profound ethno-national divisions. In this context, a poorly functioning state jeopardizes the stability and vitality of democracy.

In the following article, we primarily analyze data from three parts of post-Yugoslavia: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia. We will not include Slovenia, mainly because that country was not strongly touched by the war, does not have large ethnic minorities, and was the only state that has had the early opportunity to integrate into Western European economic and political structures.

**Consolidation of a Mere Electoral Democracy—A Specific Political Regime and Its Historical Roots**

In recent years, Slovenia is the only country from the region assessed by Freedom House (Nations in Transit—“Democracy scores”) as “consolidated democracy.” However, during the past decade, the other countries have also made some progress towards freedom and democracy. In the democracy ratings of Freedom House, Croatia and Serbia are considered as “semi-consolidated democracy” and Bosnia as a “transitional government or hybrid regime.”

The authors of this article believe that this Freedom House assessment—despite its partial reflection of the real situation—overestimates the stability of the democracy in
the region. In our understanding, we should explain two different conditions: first, the superficial political stability (the regular succession of the governments only through elections) and, second, at the same time, the deeper contradictions and instabilities stemming from weak states and their inability to meet the social needs of their citizens.

We begin by trying to explain why a mere electoral democracy emerged with a certain degree of stability. Afterwards, we will explore the basic elements of uncertainty and ongoing instability by analyzing the weak state administration, especially the bad performance of the welfare state.

The mere electoral democracy is rooted in the ethno-nationalism that in the 1980s, started in all three countries. This type of regime is characterized by the dominating influence of small elite groups and, at the same time, by a low degree of participation of the population. However, the ethno-nationalism is not only based on the instrumental use of national sentiments by the political elites in order to gain or sustain their power. It has a specific legitimization amongst the population of post-Yugoslavia. It can rely on a strong desire for safety and security because of the deepening economic and societal crisis in the 1980s and the dramatic collapse of the previous state. The segregating, ethno-national state building has established a broad socio-psychological basis, a specific “mental level,” in the “post-Yugoslav” region. Most of the population sees a significant achievement of their new state as safeguarding their own nation against other new states and thus their subjective feeling of “personal” security within a bigger framework (the nation).

To be able to better understand the present difficulties of the democratization in these states, it is necessary to look at the period before the outbreak of war. Processes of crisis and instability, and a high degree of individual uncertainty, emerged in the 1980s and lasted in some states up to the end of the 1990s. A wide-ranging values crisis and fundamental political and economic instabilities of the old regime brought about a strong desire for personal safety and security. The previously mentioned mental dispositions in the population are not only acute “postwar phenomena” but have already developed during the crisis of the socialist Yugoslav regime in the 1980s.

The wars, however, became an important factor causing economic disruption and further deterioration of everyday life. In Croatia, for example, the Gross National Product (GNP) decreased from US$5,106 in 1990 before the war to US$2,079 in 2002. Only in 1995 did the economy start to grow again, although very slowly. During the war, 37 percent of the economic potential in Croatia was destroyed; the total damage is an estimated US$23 billion. This caused a decline in standard of living, high unemployment rates, and social hardship for the majority of the population. The consequences for Bosnia-Herzegovina, which had to endure the longest and bloodiest war on Yugoslav territory, were even more disastrous. The GNP fell from US$1,900 per capita in 1990 to less than US$500 in 1995. After the war, only 7 percent of the industrial facilities operational before the war were active. Immediately after the war, more than 80 percent of the population was dependent on
humanitarian help. The unemployment rate rose to 80 percent. Serbia played an active role in all the wars but never experienced combat or actions on its territory (with the exception of the NATO bombardment in 1999). The wars and the economic sanctions imposed against Milošević’s regime, however, have had an enormous impact on the living standards and the social situation of the population. In the years between 1990 and 1997, Serbia’s economic performance decreased by 60 percent and the unemployment rate rose from 19.7 percent in 1990 to 30 percent in 1997. Through the war in Kosovo in 1999, the economic situation continued to worsen and most people suffered severely declining living standards. The GNP fell by 19 percent in 1999 to a level that was 50 percent of the GNP in 1989. Unemployment rose to approximately 50 percent and poverty was widespread.

As noted previously, in the late socialist crisis and in the post-socialist wars, most citizens, confronted with a rapid deterioration of living conditions, developed a basic desire for safety and security that, to some extent, was satisfied by the political elite through nationalist mobilization. In the 1990s, the governing elite (especially Tuđman and his HDZ party in Croatia and Milošević and his structure of power in Serbia) moved towards a national state based on ethnic aspects strongly supported by most of the citizens. This gave the elite’s power a legitimacy that was then used to mobilize support for their parties in the elections.

Not much has changed in the mobilization of the population on a nationalist level and the desire for safety and security within a larger state framework. Examples include public reactions in Serbia when Kosovo declared independence in February 2008 and in the ongoing state crisis in Bosnia since 2006. This holds true although the new regimes impede rather than promote other important objectives and public interests such as in an effective social policy and welfare state.

How can we classify the type of governance described above? Mere electoral democracy is best understood as a regime of elite governance endowed by a certain support from the citizens. It is in fact a form of consolidated democracy but on a rather low level and without any ambition to increase the quality of democratic rule.

Another feature of this type of an elitist democracy are specific authoritarian power areas within the democratic system. In those exclusive domains members of the elite govern without a democratic mandate. Therefore this mere democracy has significant internal limits to the participation of the population and democratically elected representatives. In such societies, the sea of democracy is more or less inter-spersed with authoritarian islands. Therefore it can be understood as a type of “defective democracy,” but also as a type of governance that is unlikely to develop into the direction of overcoming its defects, which include governance domains outside of democratic control.

These nondemocratic “exclusive domains” obtain their strength thanks to historical and symbolic references to the “national question” and thereby hinder the further development of democracy itself. Well-known examples of the effects of “exclusive
domains” are the demonstrations in Croatia against the arrest for war crimes of Ante Gotovina, a former Lieutenant General in the Croatian Army, or the harsh public reaction in Serbia and the Republika Srpska after Kosovo declared independence. Other kinds of “exclusive domains” are certain areas of political institutions such as parts of security forces in police or in army not fully controlled by the elected government. The best-known example is the Serbian police’s long-term, apparent unwillingness to actively seek out and arrest the indicted war criminal Radovan Karadžić regardless of the fact that his arrest was a precondition for further integration of Serbia into the European Union. These “exclusive” domains or “non-democratic islands” represent serious obstacles for sustainable democracy development since they are opposed to the democratic progress towards greater political equality and a higher level of participation of all members of the political community.

If one explores the historic context of the respective phenomenon, one can find the problem of the right sequence of democratization. Under certain circumstances, especially within an uncertain national framework and intense ethnic conflicts that raise questions about defining the demos, early elections can become an obstacle for the development of a functioning democracy. That was the case in Serbia and Croatia in the 1990 elections shaped by the nationalist rhetoric of the main political actors. The HDZ party in Croatia and the SPS party in Serbia both used ethno-nationalism and a biased electoral system to gain overwhelming victories. In Bosnia, the most nationalistic party from each of the three ethnic communities also emerged as winners. Early free elections and focusing on the quick establishment of formal institutions of political competition brought about the promotion of ethnic politics and thus limited the political elite’s ability to compromise.17

**Functioning State Government as a Basic Precondition for Democracy**

In the Western Balkans, democratization occurred as a multi-ethnic federation collapsed and as new ethnic nations were established, which resulted in many unfavorable side effects for the emerging democracies.18 In the new established states, the political elite strengthened their positions in a specific way so that their form of governance can even be called elite-controlled or elite-usurped stateness.19

This usurped type of stateness is additionally consolidated by the neo-liberal economic paradigm internationally predominant in the 1990s.20 In a deregulated environment, the former principal actors in nationalist and war-economic structures became neoliberal managers who used comprehensive privatization to seize big parts of the national income. There are many examples for such types of “captured economy” and thus also “state-capture.” In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the penetration of corrupt or criminal networks into political or economic institutions results from the
persistence of war and post-war economies based on the exclusive claim for ethno-national rule within a given territory. The country’s ruling elites have succeeded in resisting all international and local efforts to reduce the direct influence of political parties and elites over the economy and thus state resources. For example, the Bosnian HDZ party leaders have used their considerable economic leverage—including control over one of the country’s most profitable industries, Aluminium Mostar—to finance parallel (and illegal) governmental structures that have persisted since the Bosnian war ended with the Dayton Accords in 1995. Other recent examples include the economic empire of the former prime minister and the newly elected President of the Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik. His empire provides probably the most radical example for profiting from a clientelistic and criminalized economy and for the interdependence of ethno-nationalism and economy. The Bosnian-controlled part of the country is not better off: corruption, crime, clientelism, and nepotism prevent the economic recovery of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and deepen the gap between the poor citizens and the rich political and economic elites.

Similar cases can also be found in Croatia and Serbia. In Croatia under Tuđman, the previously state-owned (or rather self-administrated) companies were divided among regime-close associates and some 200 families, resulting in a “ politicized privatization.” In addition, most state spending went to regime supporters of the populist policy of national unity. Therefore, the ongoing legacies of the politicized transformation to a market economy, which took place in the 1990s, include a system of self-referential elites using the “national interest” to disguise the interconnection of the political and economic fields. This results in a socio-economically polarized society where citizens rank bribery and corruption as the country’s second greatest challenge following unemployment. The perception of widespread corruption in Croatia further increased during 2010 reaching its peak at the moment where the former Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader was arrested in Austria because of his alleged involvement in corruption.

In Serbia, the almost complete breakup of the former Yugoslav common market followed by economic sanctions as well as development in the 1990s of Milošević’s criminal economy captured by elites led to mega-inflation, a dramatic decrease of real wages and living standards, high unemployment, a disastrous social situation, brain drain, etc. Even after the regime change in October 2000, the complex transition process in Serbia remained overloaded with particular problems of previous decades, such as large-scale corruption, nontransparent political and economic sectors, as well as stabilization of oligarchic economic structures personalized in new mega-rich tycoons such as Miroslav Mišković, Filip Cepter, Stanko Subotić. The capture of the state and the economy by a small group of individuals led to a deepening of the gap between citizens and the political elites (and their economic counterparts).

Under these conditions, the state was not able to fulfill the task of producing collective goods and distributing them fairly in socially appropriate ways. This is reflected
in weak social policies and very high disappointment of the population with economic and social policies (see data below). From this evidence, we may argue that the electoral democracy without a certain level of social welfare state is not sustainable. The importance of the problem regarding stateness has already been discussed comprehensively. Wolfgang Merkel recently stressed the positive legacy of state socialism in the shape of a functioning state administration in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe that have successfully managed to consolidate democracy. The investigated region especially lacks such a positive legacy, since the ethno-national elites of the collapsing Yugoslav state used their bureaucratic institutions predominantly as instruments in order to satisfy their own narrow interests.

We could also understand it as a typical second problem of the right sequence of transformation: as seen in post-Yugoslav history, problems result from first focusing on establishing an electoral democracy and only afterwards attempting to strengthen formal state institutions and improve state administration. Thus, a functioning state able to fulfill its redistribution function can be more important to citizens than free elections. Or in other words, the core problem of a political change is—under the influence of a society’s profound crisis of economy and identity—the consolidation of the state and its successful operation as an administrative organization providing important public goods, especially social protection and, together with that, the rule of law. We emphasize this observation with the following thesis: a functioning state administration that provides social protection is much more important for most citizens than the quick establishment of electoral democracy.

If it will be possible to practically implement Carother’s concept of simultaneously solving all important tasks of state-building together, remains to be seen. “State-building beyond the initial stage is best pursued at the same time as democratization, with an effort to find points of complementarity and mutual reinforcement.” This solution model seems particularly problematic, since Carother does not see any difficulties in the capability of Western states and their international institutions to externally support this democratization and state-building process.

First, however, the post-Yugoslav attempt at democratization puts into focus the problem of lacking a social basis for a mass democracy. An elite strategy of nationalistic mobilization tried to substitute for citizens supporting a government that provides the benefits of a welfare state. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia have provided some very impressive examples for such elite politics in recent years. Since the elections in 2006 in Bosnia, the ethno-national leader on the Serbian side, Milorad Dodik, and the Bosniak member of the Bosnian presidency, Haris Silajdžić, have both taken the state hostage through their nationalistic rhetoric. Since state institutions have widely been reduced to instruments for executing these nationalistic and populist motivated ideas of the leaders, their social and economic ability to act and govern has been reduced further. Not much has changed until now in Bosnia. While general elections in October 2010 brought only minor political changes,
they have been followed by a post-election stalemate with repeated strong nationalistic rhetoric and prolonged political deadlock. In Serbia, the conflicts between the national conservative block of Vojislav Koštunica and the camp of Tomislav Nikolić until 2008—especially the severe “fight” on the question concerning Kosovo—has led to a political remobilization based on ethnic nationalism and particularly to a decrease of the state’s ability to act and govern regarding social and economic areas. Even after the political change in Serbia in 2008 whereby the pro-European president Tadić and his Democratic Party came to power, the Kosovo question remains an important tool for political mobilization.

The post-Yugoslav experience confirms the close correlation of economic and social development and democratization. A lack of efficient and equal social policies and redistribution capacities results in high unemployment and poverty rates, a permanently increasing gap between low and high income levels, and an increasing number of the socially disadvantaged. Thus, even today, many citizens in Bosnia and Serbia are threatened by poverty despite improved macroeconomic statistics; the unemployment rates remain extremely high (approximately 40 percent in Kosovo, about 20 percent in Bosnia, almost 20 percent in Serbia, and approximately 15 percent in Croatia); the increasing social problems have intensified in the course of the international economic crisis since 2008. Furthermore, opinion surveys show that in Serbia, in Kosovo and in Bosnia, the citizens see their own individual difficult economic and social situation as the biggest problem of society, based on high unemployment rates, widespread poverty and the low standard of living. Some data from Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia provides an illustration. In 2009 and 2010 in Croatia, citizens rate as central social problems such issues as unemployment, standard of living, low wages, and the general economic status quo. A Gallup Balkan Monitor study conducted in 2010 indicated that 52 percent of the respondents have difficulties to manage on their household’s income in Croatia and up to 64 percent are convinced that the economic conditions in the country are getting worse. In Serbia, this number is even slightly higher. At the same time, in a global comparison, Serbia ranges second behind Cameroon when it comes to job insecurity, with 47 percent of workers sensing a danger of losing their employment. However, Bosnia-Herzegovina has the most pessimistic picture. Recent data gathered by the BiH Statistical Bureau has shown that unemployment has climbed to 40 percent and is increasing because of the effects of the global economic crisis. An average of about 40 percent of the citizens in the country—depending on which area they live in—would leave the country if they had the chance, 68 percent share the opinion that economic conditions are getting worse. A general, very pessimist, interpretation of the economic development of the country can be witnessed. The updated Gallup Balkan Monitor (2010) has also found that the majority of citizens in the Western Balkans are dissatisfied with their material situation. These figures contradict the expectations of increasing wealth and living standards that have been
associated with the transition to a market economy. The socioeconomically challenging situation is also reflected in UNDP data (such as the GINI coefficient) on the distribution of wealth and social exclusion. The current economic crisis further endangers achievements in the reduction of social exclusion, indicating that reduction of poverty is not sustainably ensured. For Serbia, the World Bank noted that poverty fell from a level of 13.4 percent in 2002 to 6.6 percent in 2007. However, 28 percent of Serbia’s population has consumption levels just above the national poverty line and the risk is high that many poor who were on the verge of moving out of poverty could find themselves falling back into poverty.34

One consequence of this development is increased disenchantment with politics, a general apathy, as well as a distinctive skepticism of citizens in political institutions and representatives. Since there are inadequate state services and benefits in support of common goods such as education and training, health care, and protection of all against social insecurity, to some degree, the citizens need to concentrate on their own life and its protection. Political participation of the population, however, which is one of the most important prerequisites of an efficient democracy, is made more complicated.

Summary: Looking from the Yugoslav Angle: “Lessons Learned” for Democratization Theory

The discussion of the post-Yugoslav experience of democratization leads to several theses and further research questions, which will be summarized in the following.

Firstly, despite the liberal type of socialism that could have provided a more favorable initial situation for the democratization in Yugoslavia—compared to the states of the Soviet-bloc socialism—the ethnic-national mobilization initiated after 1990 by the political elite and connected to the early elections were big obstacles in creating and developing a functioning democracy. Under certain circumstances, especially within an uncertain state framework or intense segregating ethnic conflicts, early elections can become a large obstacle to developing a functioning democracy. That was the case in Serbia and Croatia in 1990 when the nationalist rhetoric of the main political actors provided a crucial shape to later political developments. In Bosnia, in all three ethnic communities, the respective winner was also the most nationalistic party. Early free elections and focusing on the quick establishment of formal institutions of political competition brought about the promotion of the ethnicity of politics and thus reduces the willingness and ability of the political elite to compromise. This experience is a convincing example of the existence of a first sequence problem in transitioning to democracy.

It is important to understand that the politics of the elite was in all cases strongly requested by a population very uncertain about their future because of the preceding regime’s legitimacy crisis. The economic and social collapse and the existential
distress caused by the wars of the 1990s intensified the citizens’ desire for existential safeguards by greater allocation of state resources to their particular community.

Secondly, electoral democracy without a certain level of social welfare state is not sustainable. A second sequence problem became obvious when the specific form of a developing democratic regime accompanied by a functionally weak state administration had to face the problems of a threefold transition in the 1990s (from the socialist to the capitalist economic model, from a specific form of state socialism to free elections and democracy, and finally from war to peace). These problems were exacerbated by the usurpation of the state and economy (“captured economy” and “state capture”) by the new political and economic elites. These phenomena leave the state incapable or rather unwilling to produce common goods in the desired amounts and distribute them more or less fairly. However, without a reasonably efficient social welfare state with a fair and adequate redistribution policy, a modern democracy remains unstable, at all times and anywhere.

Thirdly, in the analyzed post-Yugoslav states, these two specific problems of sequence have resulted in a specific form of limited electoral democracy, which can be described as a stable hybrid form comprising democratic and authoritarian elements and representing a democracy consolidated at a very low level. In such a case, despite a certain level of surface political stability, deeper inconsistencies and instabilities—or even a crisis of democracy—are inevitable. We used the term “mere electoral democracy” for describing this type of regime. It is best understood as a regime of elite governance endowed by a certain support from the citizens but without much participation from the citizenry and with growing popular dissatisfaction towards the political and economic institutions. This democracy remains consolidated only on a formal, and thus very low, level. The elites used the limited form of participation in order to consolidate their own power. The civil societies suffer from profound ethno-national divisions. Another feature of this type of political regime emerges from the exclusive domains, governed by elements of the elite without a democratic mandate. The stable but not sustainable democratic type of regime in the analyzed states, which is rated as a “consolidation of democratization on a very low level,” again makes it more difficult to use the usual application of the term “consolidation.” If consolidation should be more than a sign of quality of a system of institutions recognizable “ex post,” then we need to use the main actors’ practices to analyze their beliefs and values. The existing ratings such as from Freedom House or Bertelsman foundation (BTI) cannot provide that now.

And, fourthly, a methodological statement: the post-Yugoslav case of democratization once again shows the productivity of an intra-regional comparison, as discussed in the mid-1990s. The development of this apparently atypical group of cases of the “third wave of democratization” exactly proves that an analysis focusing on a detailed understanding of such regional conditions and the specifications of the international (European) influence can be more productive for the general creation
of a theory than a comparison of a large amount of cases, which essentially needs to neglect such regional specifications.

To put it concisely, the limits of democracy become obvious under the extreme conditions faced by post-Yugoslavia; the weaknesses of democracy in Southeastern Europe contain important lessons for general democratization theory. 36

Notes


5. Our empirical data stem from two research projects on “Post-Yugoslavia” that both started in 2008. For more details, see our project homepage: http://www.univie.ac.at/POTREBA/

7. The reasons for the development of aggressive nationalisms at the end of the 1980s certainly were the non-processed history of the inner-Yugoslav ethnic conflict during the Second World War, on one hand, and little success of social national politics, on the other hand. (See, e.g., John B. Allcock, Explaining Yugoslavia [London: Hurst, 2000].)

8. Z. Golubović, Izabrana dela, ton 3, 4, 5/6 (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2007), 14 ff.


16. See Pavlović and Antonić, Konsolidacija demokratskih.


18. See Mujkić, Mi, građani etnopolisa; Vesna Pusić, Demokracije i diktature, Politicka tranzicija u Hrvatskoj i jugoistočnoj Europi (Zagreb: Duriex, 1999); Srdan Vrcan, Nacionalizam, moderna država. Između etnonacionalizma, liberalnog i kulturnog nacionalizma ili građanske nacije i postnacionalnih konstelacija (Zagreb: Golden Marketing- Tehnička knjiga, 2006).

19. See Nerzuk Ćurak, Obnova bosanskih utopija (Zagreb: Buybook, 2006). Such a regime is characterized by an administration loyal to the elite, whose loyalty to the political elite is safeguarded by a nationalistic ideology as well as a client-oriented distribution of material advantages and prestige. See N. Dimitrijević, Ustavna demokratija shvacena kontekstualno (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2007); Slobodan Antonić, Zarobljena zemlja. Srbija za vrijeme Miloševića (Beograd: Otkrivenje, 2002), on Serbia; V. Pusić, Demokracije i diktature, Politicka tranzicija u Hrvatskoj i jugoistočnoj Europi (Zagreb: Duriex, 1998), on Croatia; and Nerzuk Ćurak, Dejtonski nacionalizam (Zagreb: Buybook, 2004), and Mujkić, Mi, građani etnopolisa, and Bosna-Herzegovina.


24. See discussions on “puls demokratije” (pulse of democracy) on www.pulsdemokratije.net. Since 2006 the Internet platform “puls demokratije” has been publishing contributions of authors from Bosnia-Herzegovina and from the surrounding regions on many topics concerning the development of democracy. One of the questions discussed was in how far the Bosnian state is obstructed in its operational capability by the “nationalistic couple” Milorad Dodik and Haris Silajdžić. Similar discussions can be found in the political magazine Status (Mostar); see on this topic especially issues number 9, spring 2006, and number 12, winter 2007.

25. This question is a kind of bridge to the general debate on democracy. Linz and Stepan emphasize the significance of the so-called economic society as one of the decisive variables of democratic consolidation (Linz/Stepan, 1996); see also for empiric survey research: Dieter Fuchs, “Welche Demokratie wollen die Deutschen? Einstellungen zur Demokratie im vereinigten Deutschland,” in Politische Orientierungen und Verhaltensweisen im vereinigten Deutschland, ed. Oscar W. Gabriel (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1997). In recent years, the significance of socio-economic developments has been discussed in much detail based on the examples of the already consolidated societies of Central and Eastern Europe. (See e.g. Ivan T. Berend, “Social shock in transforming Central and Eastern Europe,” Communist and Post-Communist Studies 40 [2007]: 269–80; Dieter Segert, “Parteien demokratie in der Krise. Gründe und Grundlagen in Ostmitteleuropa,” Osteuropa 58, no. 1 [2008]: 49–62). These discussions refer to the social shocks and the extreme social polarization of the Central and Eastern European societies, which formally have an institutionalized democracy but still lack their stabilization and consolidation. Until now, however, the developments in the societies of the Western Balkan states have been excluded from this discussion on the limits of democratization. See also Branko Horvat, Kakvu državu imamo, kakvu državu trebamo? (Zagreb: Prometej, 2002).


27. Borislav Brozek, Siromaštvo i ekonomija (Sarajevo: Ceteor, 2005).


29. Although the Kosovo issue has been much emotionalized in Serbia (especially concerning the proclamation of independence in February 2008), the population ranked the status of Kosovo only third (24 percent) of all urgent Serbian problems in May 2008. High unemployment rates moved the Serbian population much more and was ranked first place of all urgent Serbian problems with 50 percent. Even the low standard of living is more important; 38 percent see it as an urgent problem. (See Strategic Marketing Research, Javno mnjenje Srbija, May 22–24, 2008). In 2010 the results for Serbia are similar. (See Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2010, Survey Data, http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/index.php/dashboard.) Opinion surveys in Kosovo show similar results: 45.2 percent of the Kosovar population sees unemployment as the biggest problem in Kosovo, poverty ranked second with 28.6 percent, and corruption third with 6.3 percent (see UNDP—Early Warning Report Kosovo, Report 28, April–June 2010, Prishitina 2010). Similar data came from surveys in Bosnia (see survey data of UNDP Bosnia on www.undb.ba).


36. Based on recent analyses of party democracy in several regions of Eastern Europe, we generated the thesis that this region should no longer only be seen as a kind of case study of a commonly known conception (of “liberal democracies” of the West) and their more or less successful implementation, but as a test laboratory for the stability of democratic institutions under the extreme economic pressure of globalization and of a decline of the welfare state. Eastern Europe should be seen as a trendsetter from whom the West can learn. (Ellen Bos and Dieter Segert, “Osteuropa als Trendsetter? Parteiensysteme in repräsentativen Demokratien unter mehrfachem Druck,” in Osteuropäische Demokratien als Trendsetter? Parteien und Parteiensysteme nach dem Ende des Übergangs- jahrzehnts, ed. E. Bos and D. Segert, 323–36 [Opladen: Barbara Budrich, 2008], cf. 333ff.)

Vedran Džihic is the 2010/2011 Austrian Marshall Plan Fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at the School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, and post doc at the Department for Political Science, Faculty for Social Sciences, University of Vienna, Austria.

Dieter Segert is professor for Political Science and the head of the same department; both are presently working together within the research project “Democratization of the Balkans.”