

PROGRAMME

Southeast European Studies Student Symposium

2. Edition



4–6 April 2024
online via Zoom

MORE INFORMATION

Insta: @sees_student_symposium

Email: symposium.see@gmail.com

**ORGANISED AND
SUPPORTED BY:**



Southeast European Studies Student Symposium

2nd Edition

2024

Greeting

Hey!

Following a more than successful kick-off event last year, we are delighted to welcome you to the second Southeast European Studies Student Symposium, hosted by the [Young Southeast European Association \(JSOG\)](#). The symposium is a wonderful opportunity to present and discuss research ideas on various aspects of Southeast Europe, such as its history, culture, politics, and economy, to an engaged and interested community of students.

In addition to the presentations and workshops, we would like to encourage you to use the symposium as a platform for networking both within your profession and in the discipline in general. You can interact with other participants, exchange feedback, share resources, and explore potential collaborations.

You can also join the JSOG, a network of young researchers and students who are passionate about Southeast Europe and contribute your ideas to the various projects we are planning, such as publications, events, and outreach activities.

We wish you three instructive and enjoyable days, and look forward to seeing you again at one of our many JSOG events.

All the best,
Zsófia and Philip, the speakers of the JSOG



Welcome!

Dear Participants of the 2024 SEES Student Symposium,

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you who have joined us for this online event. As students in Southeast European Studies, we are fascinated by this region, and we are delighted to have received so much interest in the first edition of the symposium. It is a pleasure to see so many of you willing to share your knowledge and insights but also your concerns and doubts.

Over the upcoming days, we will explore an array of topics related to Southeast Europe, encompassing identity and emotion, remembrance culture, human rights, social justice, the EU's role in regional matters, and much more. Additionally, we will delve into the intricacies of the fear of failure and the art of translating Southeast Europe. Through presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities, our goal is to foster meaningful discussions and establish new connections transcending borders. All of this centered around Southeast Europe as a unifying theme. Exciting, isn't it?

This symposium is meant to be a platform for respectful debates at eye level and tolerance for mistakes. We intend to connect BA and MA students, as we are all in the same boat, trying to figure out how to do our research, or even what to research. The symposium serves as an opportunity to help us all row forward, share our thoughts and learn from one another. We thus encourage you all to approach the symposium with an open mind and a spirit of curiosity, and with the willingness to challenge your own assumptions and broaden your horizons.

We wish you all two insightful and enjoyable days, and we look forward to seeing the valuable contributions that will come out of this event. Thank you for being a part of this. And now – let's go!

Contents

Greeting	iii
Welcome!	v
Practical Information	1
Programme	3
Abstracts	7
The Memory of the Holocaust in North Macedonia. National Narratives in a European Context (<i>Peter Wagener</i>)	7
“I want my son back the way he was.”	8
Deterioration of Queer Rights under the Auspices of the European non-Discrimination Regime in Serbia (<i>Bekim Lahi</i>)	9
Election Law Reform and Constitutional Implications in Bosnia and Herzegovina (<i>Anna Charlotte Richter</i>)	9
The Role of the EU in the Efforts Made to Resolve the Kosovo Issue (<i>Chara Polydorou</i>)	10
Shifts and Changes along the Balkan Route – the Impact of EU Integration at the Border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (<i>Vanja Tadić</i>)	11
The Kosovo Conflict. From Ahtisaari Plan until Today. The Consequences in the Regional Subsystem of Southeastern Europe (<i>Diana Dukati</i>)	11
The European Western Balkans Policy in the post-Dayton Period (<i>Timoleon Ilias</i>) .	12
Exploring the Emotional Landscape: Postmigrant Perspectives on Identity, Tradition, and Homeland Attachment within the Hungarian Community in Germany (<i>Katalin Kósza</i>)	13
Coalitional Empowerment in a Peacebuilding Initiative for Young Women from Kosovo and Serbia (<i>Ivana Dinić</i>)	13
Second Thoughts? A Study of Determinants Influencing Field Changes after Graduation among Recent Graduates of a Political Science Major at a Small University (<i>Amina Bahović</i>)	14
The Islamic Declaration. A Political Danger for Socialist Yugoslavia? (<i>Philip Piljić</i>)	14
North Macedonia: between Emancipation and Nationalism (<i>Nikola Donev</i>)	15
NATO’s Enlargement to Eastern Europe and Ukraine. Consequences for Southeastern Europe (<i>Konstantinos Katiniotis</i>)	15
The SEE Dimension on Ukraine’s Public Diplomacy Strategy during the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022 (<i>Kejda Mihaj</i>)	16

Increasing Russian Assertiveness in Bosnia and Herzegovina: a Discourse Analysis of Russian Ambassadors' Public Statements and the Russian Embassy's Social Media Posts (<i>Aldina Husejinović</i>)	17
Why stay here? – Examining Russo-Balkan Diasporic Friendships as Propellers of Economic and Cultural Change (<i>Anastasija Mladenovska</i>)	17
Workshops and Lectures	19
Getting to Know Each Other (<i>Orga Team</i>)	19
Filling up the Gaps: Queer Research in the Romanian Academia (<i>Ramona Dima</i>)	19
Learning to Fail (<i>Katarina Kušić</i>)	20
On Choice: Translating Literature from Southeastern Europe (<i>Ena Selimović</i>)	20
Historical Treasure Trove: a Moderated Talk about the Database Collection at the Institute for History at the University of Graz (<i>Siegfried Gruber</i>)	21
Networking Meeting (<i>Orga Team</i>)	21
SEE! Career Prospects (<i>Aleksandra Tomanić</i>)	21
Where to Go Now? – Networking Meeting (<i>Orga Team</i>)	22
Evening Programme	23
Get-Together (<i>Orga Team</i>)	23
Team	25
Acknowledgement	27

Practical Information

This list contains some practical information for the symposium.

- Please register [here](#) for the symposium, even if you are already listed as a speaker. The attendance of the workshops is limited. Places are allocated according to the principle first come first serve. Participants who also present have priority however.
- We use Zoom as our video conference platform. **We will sent you the respective links in an email shortly before the event.**
- Please note that all times given in the schedule below are in UTC+1 (Berlin time).
- We have prepared a [Google document](#) for literature tips you might want to share during the symposium. Please do not delete the suggestions of others.
- If you want share materials or resources with other participants, or if you want to leave your feedback, you can do so [here](#).

Programme

Thursday, 4 April 2024, Room 1		
Time	Speaker	Title
16.45–17.00	Orga Team	Introduction and Greeting
17.00–18.00	Orga Team	Getting to Know Each Other
18.00–19.00	Ramona Dima	Filling up the Gaps: Queer Research in the Romanian Academia

Friday, 5 April 2024, Room 1		
Time	Speaker	Title
9.00–9.35	Peter Wagener	The Memory of the Holocaust in North Macedonia. National Narratives in a European Context
9.40–10.15	Anela Dumonjić	“I want my son back the way he was”. The Embodied Reality of Loss in Daytonesque Bosnia and Herzegovina
BREAK		
10.45–11.20	Bekim Lahi	Deterioration of Queer Rights under the Auspices of the European Non-Discrimination Regime in Serbia
11.25–12.00	Anna Charlotte Richter	Election Law Reform and Constitutional Implications in Bosnia and Herzegovina
LUNCH BREAK		

Friday, 5 April 2024, Room 2		
Time	Speaker	Title
9.00–9.35	Chara Polydorou	The Role of the EU in the Efforts Made to Resolve the Kosovo Issue
9.40–10.15	Vanja Tadić	Shifts and Changes along the Balkan Route – the Impact of EU Integration at the Border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina
BREAK		
10.45–11.20	Diana Dukati	The Kosovo Conflict. From Ahtisaari Plan until Today. The Consequences in the Regional Sub-system of Southeastern Europe
11.25–12.00	Timoleon Ilias	The European Western Balkans Policy in the post-Dayton Period
LUNCH BREAK		

Friday, 5 April 2024, Separate Workshop Rooms		
Time	Speaker	Title
14.00–15.30	Katarina Kušić	Learning to Fail
14.00–15.30	Ena Selimović	On Choice: Translating Literature from South-eastern Europe
BREAK		

Friday, 5 April 2024, Room 1		
Time	Speaker	Title
16.15–16.45	Siegfried Gruber	Historical Treasure Trove: a Moderated Talk about the Database Collection at the Institute for History at the University of Graz
BREAK		
17.00–18.00	Orga Team	Networking Evening

Saturday, 6 April 2024, Room 1		
Time	Speaker	Title
9.00–9.35	Katalin Kósza	Exploring the Emotional Landscape: Postmigrant Perspectives on Identity, Tradition, and Homeland Attachment within the Hungarian Community in Germany
9.40–10.15	Ivana Dinić	Coalitional Empowerment in a Peacebuilding Initiative for Young Women from Kosovo and Serbia
BREAK		
10.45–11.20	Amina Bahović	Second Thoughts? A Study of Determinants Influencing Field Changes after Graduation among Recent Graduates of a Political Science Major at a Small University
11.25–12.00	Philip Piljić	The Islamic Declaration. A Political Danger for Socialist Yugoslavia?
12.05–12.40	Nikola Donev	North Macedonia: between Emancipation and Nationalism
LUNCH BREAK		

Saturday, 6 April 2024, Room 2		
Time	Speaker	Title
9.00–9.35	Konstantinos Katiniotis	NATO's Enlargement to Eastern Europe and Ukraine. Consequences for Southeastern Europe
9.40–10.15	Kejda Mihaj	The SEE Dimension on Ukraine's Public Diplomacy Strategy During the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022
BREAK		
10.45–11.20	Aldina Husejinović	Increasing Russian Assertiveness in Bosnia and Herzegovina: a Discourse Analysis of Russian Ambassadors' Public Statements and the Russian Embassy's Social Media Posts
11.25–12.00	Anastasija Mladen-ovska	Why stay here? – Examining Russo-Balkan Diasporic Friendships as Propellers of Economic and Cultural Change
LUNCH BREAK		

Saturday, 6 April 2024, Separate Workshop Rooms		
Time	Speaker	Title
14.30–15.30	Aleksandra Tomanić	SEE! Career Prospects

Saturday, 6 April 2024, Room 1		
Time	Speaker	Title
16.00–17.00	Orga Team	Networking End

Saturday, 6 April 2024, Bar evening		
Time	City	Location
20.00	Regensburg	Büro, Keplerstraße 15
20.00	Jena	TBA
20.00	Graz	TBA
BREAK		

Abstracts

The Memory of the Holocaust in North Macedonia. National Narratives in a European Context

Peter Wagener

Technical University of Chemnitz

05 Apr
09.00
Rm 1

The year 2023 marked the 80th anniversary of two different yet entangled events: On the 10th of March, the political elite in Bulgaria commemorated 80 years since the “rescue of all Bulgarian jews” from their deportation. On the next day, the 11th of March, politicians in North Macedonia commemorated 80 years since the deadly deportations of 97% of the jews from Macedonia to the Treblinka extermination camp, that were organised and carried out by the Bulgarian forces present in the annexed region at the time. The conflict over a “correct memory” of the Holocaust has reached a new quality in the two countries. Bulgaria effectively vetoed the beginning of EU-accession talks with North Macedonia over historical and identity-based disputes, after Greece did the same for nearly two decades. The frustration and reaction on the Macedonian side followed, as could be expected. Neologisms like *bugarizacija* (bulgarisation) or the revival of *se izbugari* ([smth.] bulgarizes) as a term for when something goes bad, show how people in Macedonia felt ones more like their national identity was under attack. While the past intergovernmental debates regarding the bilateral crisis revolved primarily around questions regarding constitutional minority rights and language recognition, the divergent views on history, and especially on the Holocaust, play a central role in the reception of the public due to its identity-constructing nature. Considering the effects of a broader Europeanization of the Holocaust remembrance, I analyse what constitutes the culture of memory regarding the Holocaust in todays North Macedonia in my BA-thesis. Next to an overview of the academical discussion until now, I want to share my analysis of where and especially how the institutionalized Holocaust-remembrance is taking place in Skopje (and beyond). Finally the problem of a national approach to history as a roadblock for the European Integration of North Macedonia will be discussed.

05 Apr
09.40
Rm 1

“I want my son back the way he was.”¹ The Embodied Reality of Loss in Daytonesque Bosnia and Herzegovina

Anela Dumonjić

Karl-Franzen-University Graz

This paper aims to reconceptualise the Dayton Peace Agreement as a sociopolitical straightjacket – a system designed to mercilessly crush all prospects for true peace, built on mutual aid, care and solidarity, on the account of its genealogy and impact being fundamentally intertwined and in line with war-time ideologies. Whilst an analysis on the scale of the entire country is more than necessary, this piece is primarily concerned with setting an analytical foundation. For this purpose, the chosen case study will be the genocide in Srebrenica, committed in July 1995. As genocide is a profoundly corporeal experience, this research attempts to examine the Dayton-induced paradigm (dis)continuities and shifts through the lens of bodies: how are they produced, how are they erased, how are they recognised and categorised, and how are they harmed ultimately. The ambivalent state of dead bodies' (in)visibility will be assessed through necropolitics as a mechanism of power, regulation and memory, in the hopes of indicating the limits of the “peace” agreement. The dead remain simultaneously unaccounted for, invisible, remnants of the past, while being heralded by ethnonationalist scum as the most fertile soil for twisted ideologies that only ever lead to death and despair. Victims' bodies are perpetually being found, lost, (mis)remembered, martyred, villainised, (de)humanised, weaponised, (mis)represented, reduced to numbers and statistics, cried over, denied, while all others are preoccupied with survival, stuck in between. Given the continuously lived experience of terror, it is quite clear that we were never worth saving – Dayton has acknowledged fascists as righteous in their cause. It's neither abstract, nor immaterial. Its necropolitical practice is subversive and constantly self-reproducing – on the one hand the pacification of pain, on the other hand relentless struggle, as time “[...] does not heal the agony of the families of the missing, only answers.”²

¹This is a prominent quote by Munira Subašić, the president of the organisation Mothers of the Enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa, as well as a general sentiment amongst all survivors regarding the remains of their murdered loved ones.

²“Međunarodni dan nestalih: Ne liječi vrijeme, već odgovori,” TRT Balkan. August 30, 2022, last accessed: July 29, 2023, <https://bhsc.trtbalkan.com/region/medunarodni-dan-nestalih-ne-lijeci-vrijeme-vec-odgovori-10081675>.

Deterioration of Queer Rights under the Auspices of the European non-Discrimination Regime in Serbia

Bekim Lahi
University of Belgrade

05 Apr
10.45
Rm 1

The paper I'm currently working on is supposed to be my MA thesis. With the working title "Deterioration of Queer Rights under the Auspices of the European Non-Discrimination Regime in Serbia", I am trying to research the actual effect of external reform leverage through processes like European Integration, Accession and already existing tools like the SAA on domestic non-discrimination legislation and policy in Serbia. This reform process is expected to collide with different factors, with some of them being the competitive-authoritarian political system of Serbia under the rule of the Progressive Party (SNS) or other factors of a weak and artificial civil society sector.

The research question of how European non-discriminatory frameworks, competitive authoritarianism and a challenged civil society lead to the deteriorating situation of Queer people in Serbia already gives the hypothetical idea that the position of Queer people is actually worsening. After around ten years of progress, beginning with the genuine introduction of non-discriminatory policy in 2009 (as a direct result of Europeanisation processes), the process of slow legal-political and societal bettering abruptly stopped around 2021, with its escalation found in the Europride ban in September 2022. With this unprecedented breach of elementary rights (right of assembly), the Serbian political elite under the control of President Aleksandar Vučić showed a sudden shift from the prior policy. Even with last-minute interventions making the demonstration finally go ahead, the EU/CoE-promoted non-discriminatory policy seems to have lost its leverage in Serbia.

I would like to discuss my work with other participants dealing with Europeanisation and HR issues with putting a focus on authoritarian political systems and the missing interest of the EU in the region or rather a stronger focus on policy goals of preferring authoritarian but inactive governments over progressive but unstable partner countries in the time of stabilitocracy.

Election Law Reform and Constitutional Implications in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Anna Charlotte Richter
University of Regensburg

05 Apr
11.25
Rm 1

This master's thesis delves into the intersection of election law reform and constitutional dynamics in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Drawing on two of the major legal precedents set by the Sejdić and Finčić Case (2009), as well as the Ljubić Case (2016), the research searches to explore the emergence and development of election law in BiH in the aftermath of the Dayton treaty as well as the implications of latest reform proposals by the High Representative Christian Schmidt (CSU) such as in 2022.

While Sejdić and Finčić particularly highlighted the discriminatory nature of the existing election laws, calling for reforms to ensure inclusive political participation for all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic background, the Ljubić Case further highlighted the complexities of

the institutional framework in BiH. By assessing the changes introduced by the most recent law election reform proposal in 2022, the research endeavors to analyse the extent to which these reforms address the constitutional concerns raised by the aforementioned cases. Examining the legal, social and political implications of election law reform, this thesis aims to unravel the intricate web of challenges hindering effective election law reforms by drawing on methods from political and social sciences relating to failed transfer of institutions. The findings of this study contribute to the scholarly discourse surrounding election law reforms and constitutional advancements in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By addressing the complexities of the failed transfer of institutions and integrating perspectives from diverse disciplines, the research aims to offer valuable insights for policymakers, legal practitioners, and scholars alike, fostering a more inclusive and democratic electoral framework in modern BiH.

05 Apr
09.00
Rm 2

The Role of the EU in the Efforts Made to Resolve the Kosovo Issue

Chara Polydorou
University of Piraeus

The paper focuses on the crisis that took place in the Western Balkans, specifically in Kosovo, in 1999 and analyzes the role played by the European Union (EU) until today. For the elaboration of the study, the research question is formulated: "How true is to say that the EU intervened actively and effectively in the Kosovo crisis? What role did EU' soft power and its mediation efforts played in this venture?", while in a second stage the question: "In which areas did the EU take measures to support and rebuild Kosovo?" will be also analyzed. Examining the role of the EU in the conflict, reference will be made to its role as a mediator in combination with the soft power and influence that it can exert by utilizing the economic means, the technical know-how and the institutional experience that it possesses. Within this context, an attempt will be made to analyze the crisis in Kosovo by providing the background of the situation prevailing in the Balkans in the late 1990s. Also, a description of the rivalry of the Great Powers in south-eastern Europe will be made. Particular emphasis will be placed on how the EU managed the conflict as well as the resolution of the final status of Kosovo. Finally, the handling of the post-crisis phase by the Union will be scrutinized in order to reveal the contribution of Brussels to the stability and peace of the SE Europe as a "stabilizer" and mediator. Overall, the paper aims to understand the normalization process of the crisis in Kosovo in the light of the role assumed by the EU from 1999 to the present with an emphasis on the events that happened in between.

Shifts and Changes along the Balkan Route – the Impact of EU Integration at the Border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Vanja Tadić

Karl-Franzens-University Graz

05 Apr
09.40
Rm 2

In my thesis I analyze the shifts and changes at the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina since Croatia became part of the European Union in 2013. This means that I want to answer the question how the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina has changed from EU Integration until today and how these possible changes had an impact on individuals crossing the border, the locals living there and the relationship between the two states. Further I am curious about the issues of Racism and Islamophobia at this certain border when it comes to pushbacks of migrants.

The pushbacks of migrants and amount of border deaths in the last years shed a negative light on this border region and on EU border migration politics. This research tries to unravel the reason for this development and give an outlook on the current situation. This particular border is therefore relevant because it became an external EU-border in 2013, it is more often used among migrants passing towards the EU since the formal closure of the Balkan Route in 2016 and lastly BiH has EU candidate status since 2022. What makes it even more currently applicable is the recent joining of Croatia to the Schengen Zone in 2023.

To enhance my research, I will do semi-structured expert interviews with people from both Croatia and BiH to gain different perspectives and experiences on my research question and the topics I am interested in. By experts I mean researchers, journalists, politicians and activists with different perspectives on the issue. Through the expert interviews I hope on expanding my findings from secondary literature and specify them on this particular border from up-to-date insights on the on-going processes at the border itself.

The Kosovo Conflict. From Ahtisaari Plan until Today. The Consequences in the Regional Subsystem of Southeastern Europe

Diana Dukati

University of Piraeus

05 Apr
10.45
Rm 2

This paper aims to study the Kosovo conflict, with particular emphasis to explore the consequences of the "Ahtisaari Plan" in the regional Subsystem of the SE Europe. In particular, to make clearer the causes that led to this conflict, the research starts with a brief reference to what had happened internally and in the region. More specifically, the problematic of Kosovo's secession will be analysed, which were the interest of the Great Powers in SE Europe and their favouritism towards certain minorities in the region. After a brief reference to the most emblematic events that followed up to 2007, it will be examined in the basis of the "Ahtisaari Plan". More specifically, in order to determine the future regime, which would lead to stability, security and peace both internally and regionally, the UNSC is called upon to vote on the future of Kosovo. Thus, in March 2007, Martti Ahtisaari presented his plan to the Council. The main objective for this plan was to be beneficial for both Albanian-speaking and Serbs of Kosovo. Finally, as far as it concerns Serbia, it seems that this plan would have a positive impact on Belgrade too, as the solution of the Kosovo issue is expected to help it

to chart a better European future. However, as the analysis will show, the reconciliation and coexistence of Albanian-speaking Kosovars and Serbs is a difficult task that will concern not only the two regions, but also the whole regional subsystem of South-Eastern Europe and even the EU. In conclusion, it will be referred to the current situation regarding the Kosovo issue and how it affects the relations and balances of the regional states.

05 Apr
11.25
Rm 2

The European Western Balkans Policy in the post-Dayton Period

Timoleon Ilias
University of Piraeus

The countries of South-Eastern Europe experienced a number of conflicts in the 1990s that would ultimately determine the future of the regional subsystem. Of them, the most notable occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Dayton Agreement was signed in 1995, bringing an end to the war sparked by the constant rivalries between the three distinct ethnic groups, without, however, providing a sustainable and final solution to the issue. It was not the EU but the US that provided a solution to this European problem. The failure of the Union to act in a coordinated and effective manner has led to a shift in the European Western Balkans policy. This incident also made the EU realize the necessity of its increased involvement in the area. The EU's proximity to those countries means that their issues might readily affect the Union.

In the light of the above, this paper aims to address the following research question: "How did the Bosnian crisis and the Dayton Agreement's shortcomings to end the ongoing political unrest among the three distinct ethnic groups contribute to reshaping the European approach towards the Western Balkan countries?". The EU has supported a number of economic, social, and political modifications aimed at ensuring peace, development, and security in the region, operating in line with the fundamental neoliberal principle that "democracies do not fight each other". Concurrently, accession talks were initiated. However, due to these countries' inherent fragility, the talks have not progressed.

The working hypothesis is formulated as follows: "To guarantee the seamless enlargement and integration of their future membership, political unions employ soft power and promote democratic reforms". The actions that signaled the shift in EU policy following Dayton are examined, primarily using qualitative data bolstered by certain quantitative data. The Union's efforts are seen as having been extremely significant for the development of the Western Balkan states and the South-East European regional subsystem as a whole, even though they haven't always yielded the intended results.

Exploring the Emotional Landscape: Postmigrant Perspectives on Identity, Tradition, and Homeland Attachment within the Hungarian Community in Germany

Katalin Kósza
University of Regensburg

06 Apr
09.00
Rm 1

This ongoing bachelor thesis deals with the multifaceted relationship postmigrant individuals maintain with their country of origin, focusing specifically on the Hungarian community in Germany. The methodological approach involves conducting biographical interviews in order to explore the lived experiences of individuals, how they perceive themselves and their identity, as well as the importance of preserving cultural traditions. In this way the research aims to examine the emotions postmigrant individuals feel towards their home-country and the way these tie them to their country of origin, as well as their perception as „the other“ in the countries they grew up in.

As it is a work in progress, the focus will be on the methodological approach of the author: the process of gathering contacts by working together with so-called gate keepers, as well as getting to know potential interviewees and the interview itself. This method takes into account the approaches to emotions as a historical category as well as interviews and oral history as a tool, as described by Portelli, Hitzer and Thompson. In this way the research aims to examine the emotions postmigrant individuals feel towards their home country and the way these tie them to their country of origin. The author has already visited a dance association for social anthropological research and used these contacts to gain potential interviewees. Further important fields are language lessons held by private teachers in order to ensure diasporic children learn the language of their parents correctly, so-called cultural clubs which organize numerous events like concerts, dance classes and performances, as well as religious communities.

Coalitional Empowerment in a Peacebuilding Initiative for Young Women from Kosovo and Serbia

Ivana Dinić
University of Regensburg

06 Apr
09.40
Rm 1

International women's empowerment calls have often been criticized for neglecting different positions of women with various ethnic, religious and cultural identities. As a potential "corrective", especially in ethnically divided post-conflict societies, the dialogue approach has been proposed to build strong women's coalitions that would base their solidarity on difference, rather than on essentialist gender or ethnic identities. Employing semi-structured and expert interviews, the dissertation explores to what extent women's coalitional empowerment has been enabled within one of the most significant peacebuilding initiatives in the Western Balkans, the OSCE's Dialogue Academy for Young Women from Kosovo and Serbia. I argue that achieving coalitional empowerment is limited by the developmental character of the Initiative favoring abstraction rather than acknowledgment of differences. Nevertheless, potentials for coalitional empowerment amongst young women from Kosovo and Serbia could be identified as a by-product of the dialogue setting. The findings are of broader

significance for the discussion on feasibility of cross-ethnic women's empowerment, and for the design of concrete methods within and beyond the examined Initiative through which regional feminism in the Western Balkans may be strengthened.

Second Thoughts? A Study of Determinants Influencing Field Changes after Graduation among Recent Graduates of a Political Science Major at a Small University

06 Apr
10.45
Rm 1

Amina Bahović

International Burch University, Sarajevo

Although changing fields mid-career or even after graduation has been a phenomenon for generations, it seems to have picked up both in terms of occurrence and visibility over the last several decades. This has been true both globally and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This paper follows the post-graduate career trajectories of a sample of students who have graduated from the Department of International Relations and European Studies at International Burch University, a small university in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The small-n dataset contains information about 40 individuals prior to enrolling, during studying, and after graduating, which allows the study to control not only for a single major, but also for other factors such as individual preferences and conduct in-depth process tracing of several different types of case studies. The cases of graduates changing their fields is juxtaposed to those who remain in the same field to establish a typology of the determinants that contribute to individuals changing fields. Although the results may be perfectly applicable to other fields due to different profiles of individuals having different proclivities towards other fields, this study elucidates both different paths graduates take in pursuing careers in other fields and the reasons behind such choices.

Keywords: field change, graduation, process tracing

The Islamic Declaration. A Political Danger for Socialist Yugoslavia?

06 Apr
11.25
Rm 1

Philip Piljić

Karl-Franzens-University Graz

Even more than 30 years after its first official publication, the "much quoted (and presumably little read)" Islamic Declaration (1990) is subject of controversial, strongly politically coloured debates. Alija Izetbegović, later the first president of BiH, wrote the document – with the help of other Muslim opposition figures – as early as 1970, around 20 years before the bloody dis-integration of the SFR Yugoslavia. He describes the Declaration as "[a] programme for the Islamisation of Muslims and Muslim peoples", which does not directly mention either Yugoslavia' or BiH', but which is – regarding the autochthonous Muslim population in this region – to this day often seen as an extremist pamphlet for the establishment of an Islamic Republic of BiH'. Even most of the Yugoslav public at the time regarded the pamphlet as an attack on the state. Under this accusation, a court in Sarajevo sentenced the oppositional Young Muslims, including Izetbegović, to long prison sentences in 1983. The polemical tone of the indictment and judgement is, however, also reflected in the research

literature, which in some cases does not scrutinise the accusations of the Yugoslav judiciary critically enough. My BA-thesis therefore aimed to separate the content of the declaration from precisely this politicisation in order to embed it in the Yugoslav context of the time and to examine its political motivation, objectives and significance in a neutral manner. So, who was/is the Islamic Declaration really aimed at? What are its central demands? Does it really have anti-Yugoslav traits or is this accusation not rather a product of its reception and instrumentalization in the 1980s?

North Macedonia: between Emancipation and Nationalism

Nikola Donev

University of Notre Dame/ Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje

06 Apr
12.05
Rm 1

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the successor states began projects of state building. The goal of these projects was to create a distinct national narrative which led to political mobilization around nationalist causes which resulted in interethnic conflicts across the region. A major aspect in creating nationalist narratives was the revision and creation of new history books for public education. The revised education of history have resulted in generations that garner strong nationalist sentiments and fear towards the "other". This paper will focus on the case of North Macedonia and how its educational system, specifically the subject of history, has created the "other" in the period following the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA). This will be achieved through an analysis of textbooks for young people in public education and other state projects related to fostering nationalist sentiments. This analysis will be followed with an examination of the clash between the liberal and nationalist discourses around the identity and history aspects of the Prespa Agreement. Furthermore, through an analysis of public opinion polling the paper will analyze how historical education in North Macedonia has affected the public's attitude towards the EU from a cultural/ Identitarian perspective, that is whether the public identifies more strongly as European vis-à-vis their ethnic identity.

Keywords: Nationalism; Education; Democracy; Prespa Agreement; Emancipation

NATO's Enlargement to Eastern Europe and Ukraine. Consequences for Southeastern Europe

Konstantinos Katiniotis

University of Piraeus

06 Apr
09.00
Rm 2

The Cold War ended in 1991, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, leaving the US as the sole global superpower and the whole geographical area between the Baltic and the Black Sea "vacant". In the meantime, the heir of the Soviet Union, Russia, was struggling to deal with internal and external problems, at least until Vladimir Putin's "enthronement" in 2000 and the gradual revival of Russia as a major actor in Eurasia. However, the US-led NATO had already started the process to include the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe in the alliance since the mid-1990s, a strategy that continued ceaselessly during the first two decades of the 21st century. In this case, though, the process of enlargement

to the East was mainly oriented towards two directions: Ukraine and Southeastern Europe (Balkans). Ukraine, located "in the gates of Russia", became the principal theater of antagonism for power and influence between NATO and Russia, leading to the Russo-Ukrainian War (2014-present). On the other side, the relation of NATO with Southeastern Europe is diverse; Greece and Turkey entered the alliance in 1952, ex-communist Romania and Bulgaria were ready to enter in 2004, while the Western Balkans (ex-Yugoslav states and Albania), in the shade of multiple wars, crises and nationalistic outbreaks during the early Post-Cold War era, had their integration process delayed or unaccomplished until today.

Taking all the aforementioned into account, the aims of the paper are twofold; first, examine the -geostrategic and other- reasons and aspirations behind NATO's enlargement to the East during the Post-Cold War era, under the spectrum of NATO-Russia-Ukraine relations; second, explore the impact of this enlargement on the creation of the proper conditions of peace, stability and security in the fragile regional subsystem of Southeastern Europe.

The SEE Dimension on Ukraine's Public Diplomacy Strategy during the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022

06 Apr
09.40
Rm 2

Kejda Mihaj

University of Piraeus

At the edge of the SEE, the dynamic relationship between Ukrainian and Russian cultures originates from their shared Soviet history. However, Russian aggressions, particularly invasions, have prompted Ukraine to emphasize its cultural uniqueness apart from Russia's, thus enhancing nation-branding efforts, especially during ongoing conflicts. This situation prompts crucial research questions: Which are Ukraine's soft power strategies amidst conflict, and what impact are these critical cultural interactions may have to the SE European sub-system?

The underlying idea suggests that armed aggressions, threatening the sovereignty of a small nation-state, intensify efforts in utilizing soft power, which affect interactions with regional entities.

A chronological review indicates the initiation of Ukrainian public diplomacy endeavors in 2015, triggered by the Russo-Ukrainian conflict that began in February 2014. This eventually led to the proposal and establishment of the Ukrainian Institute in 2017, fully operational by 2019. Strategic approaches like Communication and Public Diplomacy were deployed, including the development of the <http://Ukraine.ua> website and fostering a strong social media presence state the interest to study the approach of Kyiv to SEE states.

Essentially, Ukraine's utilization of soft power, prompted by conflict, aims to highlight its distinct national identity while challenging the pervasive influence of Russian cultural dominance. The creation of specialized institutional structures and effective use of diverse communication platforms underscore Ukraine's dedicated efforts to shape global perceptions and state the interest to study the approach of Kyiv to SEE states.

Increasing Russian Assertiveness in Bosnia and Herzegovina: a Discourse Analysis of Russian Ambassadors' Public Statements and the Russian Embassy's Social Media Posts

Aldina Husejinović

International Burch University, Sarajevo

06 Apr
10.45
Rm 2

How reflective are Russian ambassadors' discourses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a small state of outsized geopolitical significance in the region, to overall Russian foreign policy assertiveness? This paper postulates that the two are correlated, but not equally over time and not equally across topics and in contexts. In other words, Russian ambassadors to Bosnia and Herzegovina chose when to be antagonistic and when to be in concert with the dominant foreign policy discourses present in the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This paper draws on Russian ambassadors' direct quotes from 1997, obtained from Mediacenter's Infobiro archive on all news reports in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past decades, and social media posts published on the Russian embassy's Facebook page since 2013 to develop an official discourse. This data is then doubly coded binarily (antagonistic or in concert) against a set of topics developed through grounded theory, i.e., through a review of the topics of all discursive statements under consideration, in order to determine which topics and contexts arouse antagonism and which ones do not, controlled for an overall rise of Russian assertiveness on the world stage over time. The results advance our understanding of how large states instrumentalize small states through discourse, as well as which topics have been and are considered salient by Russia in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: assertiveness, Bosnia and Herzegovina, discourse analysis, Russia

Why stay here? – Examining Russo-Balkan Diasporic Friendships as Propellers of Economic and Cultural Change

Anastasija Mladenovska

Miami University

06 Apr
11.25
Rm 2

The Russo-Ukrainian war has sent more than 300,000 Russians and more than 100,000 Ukrainians to embark on journeys to Serbia where they are now finding themselves in a comfortable position. Instead of utilizing the Balkan route as a propeller to Central and Northern Europe, a lot of these immigrants are choosing Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and even Macedonia as places for settlement.

Forming groups while primarily identifying with the notion of "living abroad" rather than being a "migrant", they are vividly transforming the cultural and economic landscapes in Southeast Europe by investing, opening businesses, and bringing culture as an addition to the "Yugoslav nostalgia" that prevails in some parts of the region.

Legislators, as well as the public wonder whether these massive migrations would really prove to be fruitful for the region or if they would simply serve as tools for strengthening political rhetoric.

Then, there is also the question of agency and whether authorities have the sufficient training to deal with migrations resulting from the war under situational pressure.

Finally, what is the role of the EU and the West in helping Western Balkans achieve successful integration and employ strategies that will minimize authoritarian and nationalist practices when it comes to Russian migrants?

This paper will examine the historical role of the Balkan route as used for resettlement and will look into the phenomena and practices that are changing the Balkan landscape and making it more suitable for Russian migration, but also migration overall. It will focus on the economic and cultural change that has resulted directly from Russian migration and will present arguments that showcase how young Russians and international students are the drivers of these new waves of migration that might prove more useful and beneficial to the multiethnic Balkan landscape than projections estimate. Finally, it will look at the role the European Union (and other countries that might serve as external factors) have in Russian and overall migration in Southeast Europe. In other words, who is at stake and why?

Workshops and Lectures

Getting to Know Each Other

Orga Team

04 Apr
17.00
Rm 1

Meet your fellow SEE students! The networking event will be the first item on the programme and takes place on Thursday, 4 April at 5 p.m. We want to offer you the possibility to meet online, exchange your experiences with the studies, the field, the region as well as your expectations towards the symposium. Since we want to connect students from various places interested in the same region, we thought of a Zoom session with breakout rooms. You might know someone already and want to catch up online!?

Filling up the Gaps: Queer Research in the Romanian Academia

Ramona Dima
Södertörn University

04 Apr
18.00
Room 1

Starting from my experience as a queer scholar in Romania, this intervention aims to anchor my research on Southeast Europe (SEE) into key moments and contexts. This includes: reflections on making space for research on LGBT+ topics in an academic space which could be regarded as less favourable to such endeavours, organizing a unique international conference specifically aimed at queer research on and from within SEE, and opening discussions and novel topics for further research in gender studies with focus on Romania. The presentation is a subjective picture of how queer researchers can overcome both institutional and societal reluctance in connection to matters of non-normative sexualities. This intervention also investigates the process of constructing and analysing queer cultural archives in relation to main events in the LGBT+ activist scene in Romania during the past thirty years.

05 Apr
14.00
Workshop Rm

Learning to Fail

Katarina Kušić

Marie-Skłodowska Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Vienna

This workshop deals with failure as a crucial aspect of every research practice, regardless of the method we use or the career 'stage' we find ourselves in. We fail plans, methods, and deadlines, yet research always happens. In the interactive workshop, we will tackle two dimensions of failure through group reflections and short exercises. We will first ponder how different myths shape our expectations of 'good research' and we will discuss some ways of navigating them. Second, we will consider some practical failures in conducting fieldwork, writing, and engaging with the literature in different fields.

05 Apr
14.00
Workshop Rm

On Choice: Translating Literature from Southeastern Europe

Ena Selimović

Turkoslavia

Like all creative work, the art of translation is the art of choosing. And yet it wasn't always understood in this way, nor has the advent of AI translation simplified continuing debates of the role played by choice. This workshop will explore the wide array of what we mean by "choice" in the arena of translation—from the languages we learn to the work we do that foregrounds those languages. What choices are available to translators and language lovers more generally? Who gets to choose? How do we choose? And what are the stakes of the choices we make? The workshop will be grounded in excerpts from two novels I recently translated: Nebojša Lujanović's *Cloud the Color of Skin* and Maša Kolanović's *Underground Barbie*. These novels spark questions about choices that are internal and external to the work of translating. The first part of the workshop will take one sample sentence as a point of departure to delve into internal factors considered in translating a work, including debates about the italicization of words deemed foreign, the place of glossing, and the practice of footnoting. The second part of the workshop ventures into the role of the translator as editor and agent, focusing on getting rights to translate, crafting sample translations and synopses, networking and pitching to publishers, and negotiating fair contracts. As we collectively examine our linguistic and professional journeys during the workshop, I will share the choices I made in setting out on a different work trajectory as an "emerging translator" after graduating from a doctoral program; co-founding the translation collective Turkoslavia and deciding to apply for fiscal sponsorship; and launching a translation journal.

Historical Treasure Trove: a Moderated Talk about the Database Collection at the Institute for History at the University of Graz

[Siegfried Gruber](#)

Karl-Franzens-University Graz

05 Apr
16.15
Workshop Rm

Over the years, the Institut für Geschichte in Graz has collected a database of historical sources that deal with the region of South East Europe, more specifically Serbia and Albania. The holdings include a plethora of sources like censuses, tax lists, baptisms, marriage and death registers, interviews, autobiographies and photos from the 19th and 20th century. The collection offers the possibility to develop an abundance of research topics, ranging from family history to history of migrations. In this talk, Siegfried Gruber will present the collection and its content, while also providing insider information on the opportunities of researching this database.

Networking Meeting

Orga Team

05 Apr
17.00
Rm 1

On Friday and Saturday afternoon we invite you to gather in two shorter meetings after the presentations and workshops. Join us for some get together and see who else is there to discuss SEE things.

SEE! Career Prospects

[Aleksandra Tomanić](#)

Executive Director, European Fund for the Balkans

06 Apr
14.30
Workshop Rm

Discover diverse career paths related to Southeast Europe! In just one hour, gain insights from humanities and social science graduates who have successfully ventured into culture, academia, politics, media, business, and civil society. Tailored for students and doctoral candidates with a thematic focus on Southeast Europe, these talks offer a glimpse into career opportunities in or related to the region. Join us and be inspired by their experiences!

Aleksandra Tomanić has been the Executive Director of the European Fund for the Balkans since 2019. Prior to her appointment to this position, she was a senior adviser with the German development agency GIZ, in charge of the German-Serbian Initiative for Sustainable Growth and Employment.

Previously, she has worked as coordinator for regional initiatives and EU policies with the Serbian Government's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit – which was the reason of her relocation to Belgrade in 2013. Her formal professional career began in Brussels, at the European Commission, DG Enlargement, where she spent almost 4 years with the Enlargement Strategy and Policy Unit, covering various horizontal policies, civil society and media issues in particular.

Aleksandra was engaged in various forms of grass-root activism (from humanitarian to political) during more than 10 years.

She holds a Master's degree in European Studies of the Freie, Technische and Humboldt University of Berlin. She holds a degree in economics and management after studying at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum and Complutense University Madrid.

06 Apr
16.00
Rm 1

Where to Go Now? – Networking Meeting

Orga Team

On Friday and Saturday afternoon, we invite you to gather in two shorter meetings after the presentations and workshops. Join us for some get together and see who else is there to discuss SEE things.

Evening Programme

Get-Together

Orga Team

01 Apr
20.00

You are in Graz, Jena or Regensburg at the moment? Then let the symposium come to an end together with us at a local bar in the evening!

Saturday, 6 April 2024, Bar Evening		
Regensburg	20.00	Büro, Keplerstraße 15
Jena	20.00	TBA
Graz	20.00	TBA

Team

We are the organisational team. Feel free to contact us anytime!

Email: symposium.see@gmail.com

Insta: @see_student_symposium

- **Aris Dougas Chavarria**. MA graduate in South East European Studies in Graz, project manager at the European Center for Modern Languages. Interested in housing, gentrification, new forms of work, migration, ethnographic methods, and languages.
- **Oliver Kannenberg** is a research associate at the Institute for Parliamentary Research (IParl, Berlin) and associate lecturer at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg. His PhD project deals with the institutionalisation of parliaments in Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.
- **Enej Lovrečić** is a MA student of History at the Southeast European Studies in Graz. He is interested in the history of emotions, nationalism, and ideas of Balkan unification – with a focus on post-World War II Yugoslavia and its breakup.
- **Rebekah Manlove** is a BA student of SEE in Jena, where she focuses on the former Yugoslavia. Interested in multilingualism and border regions.
- **Gresa Morina** is a MA student in East European Studies (SEE History, Slavic studies, Albanian studies) at the University of Regensburg. Interested in culture and politics of remembrance, women's activism and LGBTIQ+ rights, as well as in Balkan languages – with a regional focus on the post-Yugoslav states and Albania.
- **Johannes Nüßer** just finished studying East European Studies (history and slavistics) at the University of Regensburg, with a focus on Romania and the region of former Yugoslavia and hydro power plants.
- **Anna Charlotte Richter** studies East European Studies (International and European Law, Linguistics) at the University of Regensburg. Interested in minority rights, human rights, transitional/transformational justice and constitutional law.
- **Sophia Strähuber** studies Southeast European Studies in Jena. She is primarily interested in the culture and history of Romania – currently in the memory of the late Ceausescu dictatorship in literature. She is also interested in women's movements and feminism in Southeast Europe.

Acknowledgement

We would like to wholeheartedly thank the following people for contributing to the symposium:

- Dr Ramona Dima
- Dr Ena Selimović
- Dr Katarina Kušić
- Dr Siegfried Gruber
- Aleksandra Tomanić
- seeFField

A special thank you is reserved for the Southeast Europe Association for co-organizing and financially supporting this event.

The organisational team

This booklet was assembled using the "A Basic Conference Abstract Booklet" template by LianTze Lim. All mistakes are our own.