

autoritär geführte Mächte ihren Einfluss in der Region ausbauen können, gestiegen ist. Die Teilnehmer und Teilnehmerinnen der Podiumsdiskussion waren sich darin einig, dass die EU und die NATO für diese Unterstützung prinzipiell

bereit sind. Doch der Weg zu einer vollen Integration bleibe schwierig und langwierig, weil das Erreichen gewisser Standards und die Einhaltung von Prinzipien nicht ganz außer Acht gelassen werden dürften.

Symposium

First Southeast European Student Symposium 2023

Organization: Southeast European Studies Student Symposium and Southeast Europe Association (Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft / SOG)

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Introduction

The Southeast European Studies (SEES) Student Symposium originated as an initiative by students from the universities of Graz, Jena and Regensburg. It aimed at providing an opportunity for networking among SEES students and researchers who have a subject-related connection to Southeast Europe. Furthermore, it was conceptualised as a platform for exchange and feedback on current research papers and projects, thus resulting in a wide range of topics. In total, 76 participants registered for both days of the Symposium, including 16 presenters that were previously selected through an application process. Approximately 90 percent of registered participants are currently enrolled at a university, with 49 percent enrolled in a master's degree. While the majority of registered participants came from Germany and Greece, the Symposium was attended by participants coming from 19 different countries. When possible, the presentations were grouped into panels according to overarching topics.

Day 1, Room 1

The Symposium kicked off on Friday morning with a presentation by *Pauline Haak* (B.A. Southeast European Studies and History, Jena) titled "The Optimists – Family, Violence and Marginality in Migration Narratives of Romanian Women". Pauline's bachelor's thesis focuses on the perspectives of Romanian migrant women

from marginalized socio-economic backgrounds in Halle, Germany. Through interviews, she was able to examine these women's experiences of intersectional discrimination in Germany.

The second panel started with *Julia Leimeister* (B.A. Social Sciences, Fulda) presenting her on-going bachelor thesis on "The Not-Diaspora", that is the Romanian diaspora in Germany. Focusing on the research question "What are the social mechanisms behind Romanians' disappointment in their diasporic community?", Julia provided an in-depth analysis of the self-construction of the Romanian diaspora in Germany and its "in- and out groups", thereby observing that there is no perception of a close-knit collaborating Romanian diaspora in Germany. The second panellist was *Erza Plava* (M.A. Political Science, Jena). During the presentation of her master's project "The Kosovo Albanian Diasporas Impact on the Kosovo Conflict", the role of the diaspora as peacemaker vs. peacemaker was discussed in the theoretical framework of international relations. The main focus was therefore on the Kosovo Albanian diaspora in the three main centres of that time: Germany, Switzerland, and the USA.

Day 1, Room 2

In Room 2, the first panel opened with a presentation by *Laura Schatz* (M.A. Southeast European Studies, Graz) titled "Gender and Ethnicity

in EU Enlargement Policy – An Intersectional Analysis of IPA II Funding in North Macedonia” in which she presented the results of the ongoing research for her master’s thesis. By analysing policy documents and complementing the analysis with 18 semi-structured interviews, Laura identified a lack of transparency in IPA funding structures and an overall lack of intersectionality. Furthermore, *Sonja Stojadinović* (M.A. Southeast European Studies, Graz) discussed her research on “Chinese and EU Conditionalities in Investments in the Western Balkans – Similarities and Differences”. To analyse the description of the rise of Chinese presence in infrastructure investments in Croatia, Greece, North Macedonia and Serbia, she examined academic sources regarding Chinese and EU infrastructure investments in the Western Balkans, mainly in the form of loans and grants. Additionally, she analysed official websites of Chinese banks and EU institutions.

The second panel started with a presentation by *Grégoire Soria-Metais* (PhD candidate, Brussels), on “Business and State Capture in Serbia’s Media Environment – A Strategy for Capturing the Fourth Power.” Grégoire introduced the phenomenon of “state capture” as the reason for politicised media in Serbia. He then focused on conceptualising a new variant of state capture in Serbia, in which actors are less focused on enriching themselves. The second presentation, given by *Sophia Freidhoff* (M.A. East European Studies, Regensburg), focused on “The Political Instrumentalization of the Romanian Revolution in 1989 in the Media”. Working on the influence of “telerevolution”, Sophia analysed up to 500 video resources in Romanian from the archive of the state broadcaster TVR from December 22 to December 31, 1989. Further analysis is set to focus on newspaper articles. She described her research as a historical approach mixed with political sciences methodologies.

Day 1, Workshops

Workshop 1: “Working with Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopaedia and the Humanities” (*Gleb J. Albert*, University of Zurich). The workshop started with the question what the experiences of the participants with Wikipedia are and for what they use the platform. Afterwards, the participants were presented with facts about Wikiped-

ia. In the further course of the workshop, two strands of criticism on Wikipedia (conservative and progressive) were discussed, including factual errors and political bias/tendency. Afterwards, the participants were introduced to the central principles of Wikipedia and finally they were shown how to edit articles in Wikipedia.

Workshop 2: “Reading Methods for Academic Texts on Roma in Southeast Europe” (*Ben Orendt*, FSU Jena). To begin with, the participants were shown pictures to raise awareness of their own biases. Ben Orendt then introduced the terms “race” and “ethnicity” and explained that they should be considered as a category when writing about the Roma minority as the term helps unveiling processes of racism and discrimination. The final part of the workshop consisted in analysing and discussing text excerpts by different authors to determine how the concepts “race” and “ethnicity” were applied.

Workshop 3: “Writing about Southeast Europe – Cliches, Creativity and Responsibility” (*Lea Horvat* and *Ana Sekulić*, Women* Write the Balkans/WWTB). In this final workshop of Day 1, a more personal perspective on Southeast Europe was presented. After a short introduction on the topic, participants analysed and reflected on possible biases, positionality, and characteristics of writing about the Balkans.

Day 2, Room 1

The second day of the Symposium started with a presentation by *Johannes Nüßer* (M.A. East European Studies, Regensburg) on his current master thesis “The Environmental Consequences of Building the Hydro Power Plant Iron Gates/ Djerdap/ Porțile de Fier from Romanian and Yugoslav Perspectives”. In his research, he analyses the newspapers *Politika* and *România Libera* for similarities and differences in reporting on the Hydro Power Plant. Furthermore, *Eleftheria Tanka* (M.A. International Relations and Mediterranean Studies, Nicosia) talked about “The Content of the Set of Ideas of Boutros-Boutros Ghali and of the Annan Plan and the Internal Political Circumstances that Influenced the Attitudes of the Greek Cypriots” and presented the two peace plans for Cyprus and their reception on the island. The main

focus of the presentation was the development of the hypothesis that the internal political circumstances led the Greek Cypriot community to reject both plans.

The second panel was opened by *Simon Campbell* (M.A. Southeast European Studies, Belgrade/Graz) presenting his current research on “How Railway Infrastructure at Serbia’s Northern Borders Enfolded Affective Relationships of Mobility and Racialisation for People-on-the-move”. Describing the current situation at the EU’s external borders (border violence and pushbacks), Simon linked the current railway routes to deportation trains from the past during WWII (camps, prisoners etc.) and to slavery and imperialism. Afterwards, *Elpida Vlaidiki* (Recent graduate student in International and European Studies, Piraeus), presented her research on “Management of the Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Turkey since 2011 – The Role of the EU and the UN”. Through a multilevel governance approach and by using databases of the Ministry of National Education of Turkey, the World Bank, the EU and UNHCR, Elpida identifies three phases of education policies in Turkey for Syrian refugee children. By analysing qualitative and quantitative data through a comparative approach, she builds on the hypothesis that the contribution of major international organisations is crucial in managing education for refugees.

Day 2, Room 2

In his presentation on the soon-to-be-published monograph “Censorship of Translated Literature in Totalitarian Albania – Case: ‘Robinson Crusoe’”, *Ledio Hala* (PhD Candidate, LMU Munich) examines several Albanian-language versions of Robinson Crusoe as an example for censorship in totalitarian states. The presentation included an introduction to the concepts of “ideological atheism” vs “western atheism” and the Soviet publication criteria system, Glawlit. Unfortunately, the second presentation of the panel by *Giulia Lisdero* (M.A. Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe, Bologna) on “Linguistic Polycentrism in the post-Yugoslav Space – Is Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian Perceived as a Common Language?” had to be cancelled due to illness.

Workshop: “Science Blogging Opportunities and Challenges of Open Science for Young Researchers in the Humanities” (*Thomas Schad*, HU Berlin). After discussing the definition of open science and the field’s history, Schad shared his experiences in science blogging. Furthermore, guest trainer *Vincent Vaessen* exhibited the structuring and publishing of a blog entry. At the networking meeting that followed, attendees were able to connect with others by answering questions about their studies and the region in breakout rooms.

Keynote: “From Popular Uprisings to Electoral Campaigns – Affective Politics of Anti-Government Alliances and Protests under Turkey’s Authoritarian Transformation” (*Derya Özkaya*, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz). Building on multi-sited ethnography, Derya Özkaya elaborated on the transformative potential and the challenges posed by the affective constellation conjured up in different protest events against Turkey’s authoritarian regime. Despite this gloomy topic, the focus on “hope” as an emotion with a potential for positive change brought the symposium to a wholesome end.

Overall, the first edition of the SEES Student Symposium successfully fulfilled its promise of bringing together students with an interest in Southeast Europe. The presentations and the productive discussions that ensued, as well as the input from workshops and keynotes led to new thought-provoking insights and new connections with lovely people all over Europe.

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