TRANSITIONS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN STUDIES?

Joel Halpern

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It is appropriate to begin with the views of a Slovene cultural anthropologist, Božidar Jezernik,,

"...the West in general has never been prepared to see the Balkans as it really is. Instead it has always looked for characteristics that were clear-cut, unambiguous and, above all, unchanging.... (A lot of travelers) did not see it for itself. The land and its people merely served as kind of mirror in which they saw themselves and noticed, first and foremost, how advanced and civilized they were.”^2

Another Slovene academic of a more recent generation, Slavoj Žižek, commented about the Balkans in his recent book:

"... one can identify at least three different modes of contemporary racism. First, there is the old-fashioned unabashed rejection of the Other (despotic, barbarian, orthodox, Muslim, corrupt, oriental . . . ) on behalf of authentic values (Western, civilized, democratic, Christian . . . ). Then there is the ‘reflexive’ politically correct racism: the multiculturalist perception of, for example, the Balkans as the terrain of ethnic horror and intolerance, of primitive irrational bellicose passions, as opposed to the post-national liberal-democratic process of solving conflicts through rational negotiation, compromise, and mutual respect. Here racism is, as it were, elevated to the second power: it is attributed to the Other, while we occupy the convenient position of a neutral benevolent observer, righteously dismayed at the horrors going on there. Finally, there is reversed racism, which celebrates the exotic authenticity of the Balkan Other, as in the notion of the Serbs who, in contrast to the inhibited, anemic Western Europeans, still exhibit a prodigious lust for life.”^3

This diverse collection of papers had its origins in a conference held at the

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1 At the beginning of my comments, in keeping with contemporary scholarly values pertaining to full disclosure, it is necessary to state I have had a past connection to the Southeast European Program in the Department of History at the University of Graz. I wish to appreciatively acknowledge the assistance of Siegfried Gruber for his help with the footnotes and to Christian Promitzer for inviting me to write this essay.


University of Graz on the 11-12th of June in 2010. The objective of the conference was summarized in an official announcement still posted on the web (as of this writing):

“Southeast European or Balkan studies have passed turbulent years not only what the political landscape of the region is concerned but also in respect to the requirements of the disciplines dealing with the region. The time has come for a critical reflection: What have we been doing and in which direction(s) are we going? What can area studies accomplish, where are their limits and what are the position(s) of area studies in a globalising world?”

The objectives of the conference were further amplified in a call for papers posted on the H-Mediterranean network on June 17, 2010, after the conclusion of the conference:

“Papers should delineate forms and challenges of globalisation from the 15th to the 21st century in fields such as migration, media, ethnicity, changing and multiple identities, commerce and economy, everyday life, lifestyle, youth culture, cultural transfer, transnational movements and phenomena, knowledge production and distribution and internet revolution.”

It is important to mention that there was an effort to be inclusive and special attention was paid to those “who have recently finished their PhDs in a language that does not enjoy world-wide attention.” These individuals were specifically mentioned as possible contributors.

Scholarly conferences are usually not isolated events and so it is worth mentioning that a similar conference entitled, “From the Balkans to Europe: Refocusing South-East European Studies,” was held at the Central European University in Budapest from February 10-12, 2006 and featured a discussion of the book by John R. Lampe. One could easily expand this list of related conferences rapidly by a quick search in the internet.

But before proceeding to the specific papers it is appropriate to mention historical events particularly with respect to the University of Graz, which has a long history of association with Southeast Europe. Thus Ivo Andrić, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1961, was a student at the University. He was best known for his novels which dealt with his native Bosnia during the period of Ottoman rule. His Ph.D. dissertation at Graz about the development of spiritual life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish rule was completed in 1924.

One might say that for his time he lived in a Yugoslav context. He was born a Croat, lived and worked in Serbia and, after retiring as a Yugoslav diplomat, he

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8 Ivo Andrić, “Die Entwicklung des geistigen Lebens in Bosnien unter der Einwirkung der türkischen Herrschaft” (PhD diss., University of Graz, 1924).
lived and wrote in Belgrade and died there in 1975.

While the province of Styria was not a particularly welcoming place for refugees fleeing Bosnia during the most recent 1990s conflict, in the 21st century, from an historical point of view, recently, the University presented a special exhibit about the “Images and Memories of the ‘Turks’ in Graz and Styria.”9 The University Library described the exhibit as one of changing images and memories from the early modern period to the present. There is a declared aim to feature a deconstruction of stereotypes regarding ‘Turks’ whose armies “threatened the land of Styria in the 15th to 17th centuries.” The period of the 1930s and World War II is not mentioned.

The immediate historical background of this Graz conference is extensive and complex and can be left to others. Suffice it to say that the papers finally selected for this volume and how they relate to the objectives announced for the conference can best be judged by the reader. Given my planned attention to overall themes I have restricted my comments to those of broad interest to potential readers and ones which have an emphasis on the Balkans – Southeast Europe as well as, when appropriate, broader contexts. That is how do studies of this geographic area relate to and forefront broader conceptual issues. That is I attempt to follow as a basic structural theme the challenge of exploring universal trends as manifested in the particulars of a geographic region.

This writer does not find the term “global” in and of itself more useful than the terms modern, universal and urban were to a previous generation of analysts. To this might be added construction, destruction and ideological deconstruction. That is I do not abjure the use of any of these terms but only suggest that they be placed within a framework of defined analysis. This is particularly true when such terms as Balkan and Southeast Europe give us a case study specificity to our defined task rather than focusing on the heuristic potentials of generalizing our focus of concern.

For example such randomly chosen indices as cell phone use in Turkey and Montenegro, birth rates in Belgrade and Baghdad: are measures we have in abundance with a view toward the future. How this relates to prospective patterns of universal values and behavior is most unclear as are the ways in which this data helps us interpret patterns of the past. The one pattern which is clearly traceable in many details is from the 15th-16th centuries and has to do with the Colombian Exchange which involves the transfer of New World crops to the Old World. This is particularly pertinent with reference to the Balkans concerning the origins of maize cultivation so important subsequently in the agricultural economy. Perhaps the term global might be applicable but the papers in this collection deal primarily with the last two centuries. The origins of Islam in Europe also date from this period – one of maximum Ottoman expansion into Europe, a major historical happening but not a global, a universal event but distinct in specific world histories.

Discussing "Globalization" (global, globalized etc.), involves the use of terms that have elusive meanings that vary with context, speaker, audience, or type of public space in which such terms are used. Determining the precise meaning of these terms cannot only be a daunting and frustrating task but also may be impossible, or even irrelevant, as far as a structured analysis is concerned. By contrast, discussions of the consequences of global warming can be extremely precise. These consequences of global warming and related patterns of ecological change including garbage disposal and pollution are increasingly evident but so far this subject appears to have not been of much interest to historians. “Green movements” would seem to have not been much concerned with. The consequences of the huge investment in rural real estate by returned immigrants reaffirming family ties and social networks with apparently not much focused concern on the long-term consequences of ecological change to their treasured homeland. The price for rapid urbanization and globalization has yet to be confronted. A homeland cannot be thought of as a junkyard but clearly an ancestral home can be a place for material discards as well as a sacred burial site of valued kin. Ecological devastation is, at least, a partial result of global warming but they are in a way twins for the future and both relate to human activities which can be diverse in their consequences. These phenomena along with declining birth rates will perhaps draw the attention of future historians and those interested in certain specifics of the blanket term globalization.

Students of Balkan history inevitably struggle with the term “Balkanization” which continues in widespread use as a negative term used in academia. This term is used to denote an outcome with reference to political disintegration or at least the process of breaking apart – recreation or new putting together is not part of this perspective. Terms such as “Macedonia” as in a mixed salad, can be a neutral if somewhat exotic term. Balkan is different from global in that it is brimming with specifics, albeit negative ones. But Balkan is not global.

Like Ivo Andrić in literature two outstanding academics can provide links to historical studies of the Balkans seen from a regional and even broader “global” perspective. Leften Stavrianos (1913-2004) was of Greek-Canadian origin from Vancouver, British Columbia. He was also an initial proponent of Global History in the United States. This was the title of one of his notable books, its latest version published in 1999. He also had many other publications dealing with World and Balkan Historical perspectives. His works on Southeast Europe are even more diverse. His perhaps best known volume in this respect is “The Balkans since 1453”. The most recent edition of this volume was in 2000 (it was originally published in 1958) and had a preface by the Balkan historian Traian Stoianovich (1920 – 2005). Stoianovich, although identified in his obituary as a professor of European and World history, has publications which

focus mainly on the Balkans. He taught at Rutgers University having studied with Braudel in Paris, his publications are concerned with social as opposed to political history.

With regard to research on the early relationships of Southeast Europe migrants abroad and their homeland and the pioneering role of women as scholars in Balkan affairs and world history the role of Emily Greene Balch (1867-1961) is significant. In 1946 she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace right after World War II for her activities with the League of Nations in conjunction with her role as a founder of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. This was subsequent to her career as a Professor of Economics and Sociology at Wellesley College. Her connection with regard to the Balkans relates to her interest in the background of the social conditions of South Slavic immigrants and their families in the U.S. and their work in mines and factory towns in at turn of 20\textsuperscript{th} century America. She was a pioneer in this research motivated by her concerns for social welfare manifested in her massive work “Our Slavic Fellow Citizens”\textsuperscript{13}. The late Stanford historian Wayne Vucinich personifies in his family background an example of the families about whom Balch wrote, Stavrianos and Stoianovich fall into this general category as well.

Perhaps the person of most public intellectual stature as a World Historian and with interests in the Balkans, especially Greece, is William H. McNeill. On February 25, 2010 at age 93 he was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Barack Obama in a ceremony at the White House. The citation recognized, “his exceptional talent as a teacher and scholar at the University of Chicago and as an author of more than twenty books, including The Rise of the West\textsuperscript{15}, which traces civilizations through 5,000 years of recorded history.”

He truly deserves the descriptive title world or global historian. Some of the titles of his books are, in themselves, descriptors of the incredible scope of his work.\textsuperscript{16} Specifically, with respect to matters Balkan, is his book “Europe’s Steppe Frontier, 1500-1800”\textsuperscript{17}; which includes the Great Hungarian Plain as its


\textsuperscript{13} Emily Greene Balch, \textit{Our Slavic fellow citizens} (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910).


western extension. Then there are his several books with respect to Greece.\textsuperscript{18} The above summary of his career helps document some of the intellectual bridges between the broader sweep of world history and the more specific events in Balkan or Southeast European history.

Wolf Schäfer the author of the first contribution with his seemingly mesmerized focus on “global history” opines, “Before the paradigm shift, civilizations were plural, now there is only one, a global techno scientific civilization. It has penetrated the pluriverse of local cultures and brought all local cultures into a singular universe.” It would appear that those authors cited above as world or global in their perspective had a different set of views. The longest and the initial paper in this collection is entirely focused on Global Studies as a matter of academic concern and is separate from what follows in that its initial specific references are to the Roman Empire and particularly to the Cold War period and to area studies specifically with respect to their history in the United States concerning government and foundation programs. Such developments did influence the growth of Balkan-Southeast European studies in the U.S. as has previously been noted, but it is perhaps worth noting that judging by their writings these global historians might have had some reservations about “a singular universe”.

Also in a recent Balkan or Southeast European context, concerning the Croatian, Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts in the 1990s and the findings of the World Court form a rich record which along with data on the web form a rich source for the future easily accessible but complex to evaluate. These happenings and the consequences of massacres such as at Srebrenica are not erased by the Dayton Peace Accords or UN actions. The Holocaust of less than a century ago may have been unique but ethnic genocidal events endure world-wide, Balkan events are not unique. We are not now “one” nor is becoming “one” society with a universal culture in the future in any way apparent. Global warming is becoming an historical reality. The realities of climate change although at least partly human in origin are vastly more important in every way than myth making about a hoped for Global culture as desireable as that might be.

Karl Kaser, a principal originator of this conference, in his chapter stresses the general impact of colonialism on the Middle East (Near East), especially since 1945 and the fact that at that time, the Balkans with the exception of Greece became increasing linked to what was then considered the Communist world. This, of course, was occurring at the same time that the Middle East remained an area much influenced by Western colonialism despite these seemingly divergent recent histories at the end of World War I. At this time the land-based Habsburg, Ottoman (as well as Czarist and Prussian) empires in Europe were disintegrating but leaving behind their material and cultural heritages, and important heritages as in architecture and political legal systems.

Maria Todorova is intellectually unique among our contributors in her multi-

national experiences. She received all her degrees from the University of Sofia including her PhD. in 1977. From 1973 to 1992 she taught at the University of Sofia and in 1988 she began her US career as a Visiting Fulbright Professor and after a distinguished series of appointments she became a Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana. She is the daughter of Nikolai Todorov (1921-2003), who became, briefly, acting president in 1990, following the ending of communist rule in Bulgaria. Previously he had taught at the University of Athens and subsequently had become Bulgaria’s ambassador to Greece. He also was a distinguished historian and honored member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. His volume on Balkan urban life was published by the University of Washington Press.

This brief biographical outline is not meant to be a preface to Todorova’s rich and diverse scholarship but merely to partially contextualize the heritages she blends in her writing. From Bulgaria to the U.S. is a long journey with important intellectual diversity. Not a journey from darkness to light but rather to very different ways of viewing the world far more compels than the verities of yesterday’s Cold War might imply. Many images come to my mind as I write these words deriving, in part, from my stay in 1975 as a US National Academy of Sciences fellow when her father so kindly mentored me when I was at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Maria had then just begun her career at the University of Sofia. But this essay is not about my memories or views, it is about her paper for this collection. But neither are my observations totally disconnected. As she writes of her best known book, at least in the English speaking world, “The central idea of Imagining the Balkans is that there is a discourse, which I term Balkanism, that creates a stereotype of the Balkans, and politics is significantly and organically intertwined with this discourse.” Her book is concerned with the region’s inconsistent but usually negative view in the West i.e. Western Europe and North America.

Her viewpoints are diverse and contemporary as in her 2010 volume, “Remembering communism: genres of representation”. At the same time they are historically specific as illustrated by her work in 19th century Bulgarian national history writing on the political leader Vasil Levski. Her long-term interests in Ottoman history and the study of Muslim minorities in Bulgaria also link her to an earlier generation of scholars noted above. She notes that “East European area studies were the distinct product of the cold war.” Maybe, but certainly not exclusively so as indicated in the careers briefly discussed above. The Cold War is not the beginning of the story. It is absolutely true from the U.S. point of view that relatively large funding was made available to American universi-

20 Maria N. Todorova, Imagining the Balkans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
22 Maria Todorova, Remembering Communism: Genres of Representation (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2010).
ties as a result of the Cold War but the professors I studied with and knew during the early 1950s were active in the 1930s and during World War II and in Balch’s case a generation or two before that.

Three of them were involved with my doctoral work at Columbia. One was Philip Mosely, who was one of the founders of formalized Russian and East European studies in the U.S. in general and at Columbia in particular. But he was already a university professor in the 1930s and, as noted, did extensive field work in the Balkans. My other professor, who is significant in this matter, was Margaret Mead. They were close personal friends and colleagues who collaborated on research pertaining to East Europe generally. Conrad Arensberg also was engaged in Europe related research prior to World War II. The recent death of Charles Jelavich in 2013 at 91, who together with his wife Barbara received their PhDs in history from the University of California, Berkeley, in Balkan history in 1949 and 1948 marked the end of that first generation of American scholars who became specialists in Balkan history having begun their careers before the onset of the Cold War. But it is pertinent that my graduate work at Columbia which began in 1950 did take place at the time when the Cold War had reached a maximum of intensity exemplified by the Korean war which began at that time.

My purpose in mentioning these historical details about the U.S. is not that Todorova is unaware of these events but rather that these matters are not at the core of her experiences. The Jelaviches and other American Balkanists such as Peter Sugar of the University of Washington predate the Cold War which really began in the late 1940s and is now for many now active in the profession a dim or receding memory, this despite the fact that it lasted for almost half a century, was a period, despite its many consequences, a receding memory often associated with childhood and now fading away.

Closer to our area of main concern the newly emergent states from the former Yugoslavia are currently without overt conflicts but the consequences of that period of the 1990s with its deaths, destruction and population movements are long-lasting and that historical record is still too new for much considered academic reflection. With regard to the current status of Balkan studies Todorova sees them as severely underrepresented in the United States but enjoying a certain degree of autonomy because of the interest in their diversity and their marginality she notes that they have an older and more stable pedigree as a historical region and a scholarly field.

I would think that what they can help us understand about the centuries old presence of Islam in Europe is of great contemporary significance and by no means due to recent migrations. After all Sarajevo is not so far from Rome - from a somewhat different geographic perspective Sofia is not so far from Istanbul which is still the seat of the Orthodox patriarchate as opposed to national versions of Orthodoxy. After all it was very much an obvious fact that Turkey still had a formal presence in the Balkans up to World War I.

In her paper Todorova poses several major questions. Her first, concerns the significance of Empires and changing attitudes and evaluations of their functioning which include, in part, romanticizing their role. She has particularly
looked at Ottoman, Habsburg, Romanov and Soviet legacies. This might be thought of as too exclusive a continental view excluding as it does the maritime powers of the West as they existed at the beginning of the 20th century (The Soviets, of course, need comparison with the West in the second half of the 20th century). The second point about nation state and nationalism, especially when applied to the most recent Balkan conflict in a modest sized nation state concerns – Yugoslavia. It was a creation from defeated enemy nations after WW I at the Versailles Conference. A different case was the collapse of Yugoslavia a half century later resulting in several small states plus mini states and mini entities. Only two, Montenegro and Serbia had had a previous existence. It would be a fit setting for a musical comedy if there weren’t so many killed and so much equal opportunity destruction. A number of these creations require UN and other external support, especially Kosovo and, to a degree, Macedonia. One could easily say “so Balkan” if it weren’t for the incoherent and often incompetent actions of others who in the current world can’t manage their own affairs, witness the often witless and racist actions of those who continue to kill in distant lands: Iraq, Afghanistan, the Congo, Sudan and Somalia and the not unrelated tragedy of the 9/11 attack in the U.S. The U.S. has had, of course a dominant role in these affairs. But the responsibilities also lie within the states concerned as in Syria. Conflicts in the Balkans of course share a common history with that part of Yugoslavia which was under Ottoman rule and Turkey does border on neighboring Bulgaria.

Todorova is right to call attention to memory studies and its linked companion myth creation. Could the cold war begin to seem preciously stable, if not actually warm and cozy in retrospect? For Russia and China once even aspired to health systems to serve all. On a seemingly more rational level of analysis Todorova is right to call attention to the “memory of violence and victimology as a cottage industry.” The continuing nightmares of some persons and families become sources of profit for others. A macabre reenactment of what was once known as a freak show complete with what the carnival barkers might of said, ‘this way to the gas or gas chambers approach to entertainment.’ Todorova’s last organizing point concerns the ideologies “and their political systems, most notably fascism and Communism.” Part of this history has to do with the violence of fascism with reference especially to the Yugoslav Balkans in World War II with its mass executions of civilians, concentration camps and a bloody civil war. The Balkans were a mini sideshow by comparison in the post World War II world. The extent of human suffering under communist rule has been widely discussed but the fates of the former ruling elites have received somewhat less attention. By contrast after communism former communist elites have often prospered. Bulgaria has been largely peaceful in the post WWII period perhaps largely because of its Slavic and Orthodox majority and its relatively small Moslem minority, a major contrast with then neighboring Yugoslavia. Perhaps in this context more similar to pre WWI Serbia.

In her chapter Todorova provides detailed multi-lingual documentation. Putting together the conceptual frameworks with the comprehensive scholarly output and documentation is a great challenge. But there is no question that the
reading of her paper is a real treat, a bit of an intellectual feast. Some of her ideas can serve as organizing themes for the papers that follow. Her sections on "The Question of Empire" and the following one on "the nation state and nationalism," link up well with Ulf Brunbauer’s comments on "Southeast European History" and his notion of "historical region" defined by the results of interaction and the need to understand the reasons for the "consolidation of relative stable zones of condensed interaction." One is struck by how these comments apply both to multi-ethnic empires as well as nation-states. Here the emphasis on process emerges as opposed to stability as an achieved condition of existence. One might add here that the idea of globalization is presumably an emphasis on process and as such is apparently linked to an achieved state of existence which might appear to emphasize "the end of history" as some have put it in the recent past. But it can also be focused on the process of becoming – creating a history.

Her more limited objective in the paper in this collection is to discuss methodological issues. In the interest of trying to forefront links it is appropriate here to refer to Heppner and Posch’s paper. In their conclusions they discuss the role of "Area Studies in the era of globalization." These are based on their quadripartite division of East Central and South East Europe into the Central and lower Danube areas, the Mediterranean or Littoral area and the South East European Inland area. They provide an extensive definition of each region based on both geographic and historical criteria. In some ways this is reminiscent of the earlier work of the French trained Serbian geographer-ethnologist Jovan Cvijić writing at the time of the ending of World War I. Part of Cvijić’s role in the preparation of his book on the Balkan Peninsula at the time of Versailles was that his writings might observe as part of the effort to establish the founding of Yugoslavia using as a base the surviving Kingdom of Serbia and lands in Europe of the now defunct Ottoman and Habsburg Empires.

But how do these categories fit into the "era of globalization," as used by Heppner and Posch? And within their overall framework of East Central and South East European studies within such a spatial framework of great national and ethnic diversity? One factor needing consideration according to Heppner and Posch is the role of tradition. If one wishes to link this paper to that of Todorova, who raises the question of methodology, maybe there is a role for the social sciences? Heppner and Posch have in mind the suggested opposition between tradition and globalization, this is perhaps akin to the earlier uses of the term modernization as opposed to tradition? Is some stable synthesis seen as possible or perhaps there needs be a focus on incremental process which may involve negative change in an observer’s view?

Historians are always confronted with chronology as a way of organizing their data along with an orienting theme or themes. For more than seven decades Communism and its pros and cons provided a focus for research in this part of the world. This was, of course, within an evolutionary framework that

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anticipated a series of events beginning with Barbarism and perhaps ending with an achieved Communist society. It is certainly significant that Heppner and Posch do not use this framework even as a purely historical referent. One is entitled to ask at this point how does one operationalize their geographic categories for analytical purposes? Clearly the differing views of Heppner/Posch and Todorova are not easily integrated which also indicates that the structure of the field is in flux and, fortunately there is no politically dominant framework.

Brunnbauer does provide a substantive link with his “moving Subjects” in his paper. He refers to Todorova’s idea that inherent in the name is a concept of history and thus “a reality of its own,” be it a geographic entity, a culture area, a historic region. One can ask for whom and when, be it in the perspective of an outsider or viewed from within. Part of these questions has, of course to do with marginality and being on the receiving end of the asymmetry of power. Cartoons have a way of expressing the importance of relationships and marginality in a direct way. There are two views of a western European supermarket in the 1990s in response to crisis – in one there is a depiction of “a crisis in the Gulf,” where shoppers are wildly grabbing material from shelves, in a second picture there is a headline of, “War in the Balkans,” and the same supermarket is almost deserted. To not forget contexts – the Balkans, Southeast Europe or even Central Europe are above all whether conceived of as regions or individuals or whole countries they are all marginal to external power centers. But being marginal is nicely defined by Brunnbauer in his observation that an historical region is not defined by “cultural essentials but by the results of interaction” i.e. one might say the unequal not reciprocal processes. An observation that might be added to this comment is that the process of marginalization itself can be heuristically interesting not only from the perspective of those being marginalized but from what it reveals about the nature of the powerful.

This is a much studied historical theme but so often with an overwhelming moral compass which stresses often the need for freedom, equality and/or democracy. Brunnbauer refers to the creation of “a complex matrix of social and communicative spaces.” Again one might add with porous boundaries and with an examination of the way in which boundaries are maintained as well as the ways in which inequalities are enforced. Stasis does not appear to be an option. But is this the way historians normally go about their work when they are not simply chronicling events? Historians are generally concerned with documents and, when possible, interviews as the basis on which their research is built. One does not normally think of historians as observers but is a new way of doing history being suggested here, as in an innovative methodology which has consequences of its own? Here historians can provide unique perspective over time on the idea of being Balkan over the centuries.

Brunnbauer’s raising the question of the imagined community or nation, “entanglements” which cross boundaries, the unequal distribution of power and its relationship to migration and mobility over time cites the German historian, Sundhaussen, as remarking that this is “one of the constitutive features of Southeast European history.” Brunnbauer remarks that included in this movement of people are the annual movements of pastoralists occurring at the same
time as ongoing migrations to towns. Further these movements have long histories and transcend geographic, cultural and economic boundaries. He proceeds to discuss networks which enable these movements and then proceeds to cite illustrative cases. One concerns a 19th century Ottoman official born in Albania, who, in addition to his administrative career, became a noted writer and educator who now has a significant place in Albanian history: Sami Frashëri. His life history is cited as an example of an Imperial biography, an illustration of a commoner from a small ethnic minority who achieved high status within Ottoman imperial society suggestive of a perhaps not uncommon life course. This gives us an insight into the complex ways in which imperial dominance was maintained. Recently on a visit to Vladivostok I had a chance to visit a local museum. Housed in a somewhat run down 19th century building their general collection contained bits of local history and there is a depiction of the natural world. But the understanding of the natural world is a reflection of the reality of the political world in a 19th century imperial context. Here there is a large bronze statue of the bearded white male with a local native assistant at his feet looking up to his teacher and presumably his employer. All these 19th century figures seem to fit into what Benedict Anderson calls “administrative pilgrimages.”

Brunnbauer then turns to another scholar, Wayne Vucinich, who was born in the United States in 1913 of immigrant parents from a village in Hercegovina. Although he was forced to return to the new state of Yugoslavia when both his parents died in the 1918 flu epidemic, he subsequently returned to the United States and went on to complete his education with graduate work in history. After serving in the OSS during World War II Vucinich went on to teach at Stanford University where he trained many future historians (In some ways his career parallels that of Jozo Tomasevich who also specialized in the Balkans and taught in California). Unlike Stavrianos, and especially MacNeill who were world historians, Vucinich’s interest focused on Southeast Europe but he did important writing on the Ottoman, Byzantine and Austro-Hungarian Empires and, uniquely wrote in detail about his peasant background and as Brunnbauer suggests about a life that we would now call transnational ranging as it did from the mountains of Hercegovina to a Montana mining town to a professorship at Stanford. Certainly Vucinich’s parents and their kin were the kind of people whom Balch wrote about. Although they probably never met their lives and interests overlapped in time. But like Frashëri in the 19th century Vucinich’s life was one of great social mobility. These individual movements involve specific linear time events, not easily predictable and very different than the recurrent and predictable pastoral nomadism whose systemic integrity is based on phased repetition.

Brunnbauer proposes what he calls “entangled history” as an analytical tool and a heuristic principle in which the researcher needs to search for linkages.

He makes reference to Wallerstein's, Modern World System which is obvious a way of doing World History. In this context global begins to take on a highly specific meaning as it becomes concerned with incremental process rather than classification. A world he suggests where interconnections were shaped by power. There are Marxian overtones, of course, but not to the exclusion of other interpretations. He advocates converting what are spatial concepts like the Balkans or Southeast Europe into “categories of entangled process - which can be analyzed.” But different analytical approaches are needed for systemic change as opposed to the working out of individual and unique biographical events which are each different conceptual entities even though they may coexist within a broader context for life experiences can be seen as measurable predictive events as in vital demographic events.

How can change be measured? One hardly needs to mention the great deal of historical demographic research that has taken place with respect to Europe and specifically with regard to our area of primary concern, the Balkans. Siegfried Gruber, one of the contributors to this volume has done considerable research with respect to the Southeast Europe as in 19th century Serbia and Albania as well as the broader European context. It is of interest to historians that the Principedom of Serbia, despite its being an almost entirely rural-peasant based nation in the 19th century, had a complete household and individual level census as early as 1863 with significant efforts prior to that. Results were extensively published in Serbian until 1884 when they also were in French. This data has provided a substantial baseline against which to measure subsequent change.

In his contribution to this volume Gruber has chosen to concentrate on the last two decades, specifically 1989-2009. But he additionally cites two demographic transitions, the first during the 19th and 20th centuries from high fertility and mortality to low rates. These trends have, of course, been widely discussed. The second transition involves the decline in fertility rates now, in certain areas, below replacement levels. These are, of course, linked in varying degrees, to rural to urban migration and the rise in divorce rates, all duly noted in Gruber’s contribution. He also calls attention to the European Value Surveys which aid in documenting these trends. While all these trends originated and first fully developed in Northern and Western Europe their spread to the various regions of the Balkans has not been uniform. In the former Yugoslavia the contrasts between Northern and Western Yugoslavia have indeed been both dramatic and consistent. These trends continue. However, these overall differences conceal differences within present day countries such as Macedonia. Thus there are important differences as between Orthodox and Muslim (Albanian) populations especially in rural areas.

Before proceeding further the obvious and central point that needs to be stressed is – what are then the core interests of contemporary historians, partic-

ularly those who write about the Balkans or, more generally, about Southeast Europe? It is true, of course, that social history is a well-developed field. Historians have written much about historical demography but, especially with regard to more recent changes as in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century they have not generally been associated with contemporary surveys of attitudes and values nor with observing how contemporary societies function. While historians can become knowledgeable about social science methodology it has generally been assumed that their concerns were about times past.

Both anthropologists and sociologists can base some of their studies on documents in archives and elsewhere just as historians can learn interview techniques and observe ongoing human behavior. Conventional disciplinary boundaries can, of course, be crossed but most researchers would agree that this requires a degree of deliberate effort. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case but when the effort has been made the results are often rewarding.

To cite the specific case of Macedonia – transformation over the last half century has been drastic. Perhaps the most dramatic change has taken place in remote mountain villages which have historically been more affected by change than their more prosperous counterparts located in valleys and plains. In 1931-32 a Polish graduate student from the Department of Anthropology at the University of London, Jozef Obrebski, visited the highlands of Macedonia. He took extensive field notes and made hundreds of photos. These data portrayed a vibrant society. When I first visited the village, in the 1970s, although the population had decreased in the recent past the village was still a functioning community. But at the time of my last visit in 2003 only three old people remained in this Orthodox village. The visits by the police patrols appear to have been the only regular point of contacts for these semi-hermits who remained. In the mid-1970s, however, this village was still viewed as a place to retire to as attested to by the symbolic presence of a relatively new Mercedes kept on blocks behind a house.

This phenomenon of village abandonment by Orthodox peasants is not limited to remote villages. In a mixed Orthodox and Muslim hillside village in the Ohrid-Struga area which I first visited in 1962, it was then that the Orthodox villagers were clearly the economically more privileged group. In 2003 when I returned to the area the situation was reversed and the Muslim population was ascendant. A large mosque had been constructed at the vibrant village center surrounded by new shops and new houses built by the income from remittances of emigrant workers. There was also hostility to outsiders and officials identifying themselves as from the Middle East seemed to have a prominent role in village offices.

The reception I received in the lowland Albanian village was in marked contrast. This was no doubt aided by my earlier acquaintance with a villager who recalled my coming to the village some 40 years earlier. Village officials were most hospitable and insisted on inviting me and my companions for lunch at a village restaurant. This village had also modernized due to the earnings of migrants from abroad. It is certainly notable that the head of the village council
proudly told me how people from his village had finally closed a nearby whore
house and gambling center. He was also concerned about the future economic
viability of the region since funds from abroad were mainly invested in new
family housing and not in potentially productive enterprises.

Caroline Leutloff-Grandits and Robert Pichler in their contribution refer to a
study of the Western Macedonian (Albanian) village studied by Pichler from
2006-2009, and first researched by Halpern in 1962, as well as a South Kosovar
community studied by Grandits beginning in 2010. The original and de-
tailed 1961 census did have somewhat similar characteristics to the 1863 Serbi-
an village also studied by Gruber. The Albanian Macedonian village was then
on the verge of undergoing the First Demographic Transition with high birth
rates and a youthful population combined with a large household size. Here the
19th century Serbian village and the contemporary Albanian village merit com-
parison only with respect to demographics. It hardly needs emphasizing that in
no sense was the 1961 Albanian community isolated. The intervening four plus
decades in Macedonia have indeed seen dramatic transformations. The social
relationships of the emigrants providing the funding are explored in Pichler’s
study. He observes that these migrants may reside in their homes only briefly
during their annual vacation time permitted by their jobs abroad. Will those
migrants ever get the chance or even have the desire for long-term village resi-
dence despite the urban amenities their self-financed construction has brought
to the village? A subsequent study will have to answer this question in detail.
But this pattern of migration has already existed in Macedonia and other villag-
es in the former Yugoslavia for generations and was certainly part of the life of
Vucinich’s Hercegovinian family and roughly similar patterns in Croatia were
described in Balch’s 1910 publication27. There is an abundant literature on this
problem about Croatia and by Croatians as well as numerous Serbian sources.
Voluminous data is cited in the “Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic
groups” 28 with further detail in places such as the immigrant archive collections
at the University of Minnesota with respect to Balkan communities in the U.S.
and their migrant histories.

At this point also in the interests of full disclosure it might be appropriate to
detail some of my contacts. In 1975 with my family I took a vacation trip to
Istanbul and during our visit we went to the main covered market and bazar.
We were easily identified as foreigners, in part, because we spoke English. To
avoid traders trying to yank us into their shops we started to speak in Serbian, a
language we both knew well. This turned out to be a big mistake. The result
was that one shopkeeper began to embrace us and extended a warm welcome
such as might be given to a lost relative and in the process strongly guided us
into his shop. It soon transpired that he was from the Macedonian village near
the Albanian community described by Pichler in this volume. He confirmed to
us a story we had heard earlier: Some of the rural Slavic speaking Muslims had

27 Greene Balch, Slavic fellow citizens.
28 Stephan Thernstrom, ed., Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic groups (Cambridge, Ma
in the early 1960s declared themselves as ethnic Turks, even though they spoke no Turkish but they were then permitted to leave Yugoslavia to go to Turkey. Some 40 years later when revisiting this village I learned that some of the Slavic speaking Muslims remaining in this village had declared themselves as Albanians even though they then spoke no Albanian. Clearly a diverse process of re-identification has long been underway.

Leutloff-Grandits and Pichler do mention, “the time of the military conflict in Kosovo and later in the Republic of Macedonia ... included a strong engagement in ethnopolitical matters.” In the case detailed in their paper there is reference to the Kosovo Liberation Army/ National Liberation Army and the view of their informants that the role of these organizations is “to defend the interests of our people.” The consequences of warfare are not mentioned. No details are given. I am not arguing here for a particular point of view but simply wish to point out that contributing funds for an insurgency is probably not the road to resolution of conflicts within the Macedonian state. As to Kosovo there is the well-known brutalities of Serbian forces and the armed conflicts in which many civilians died. The attempt by the Serbian forces to at least partially ethnically cleanse Kosovo resulted in a massive temporary flight of Albanian Kosovars to Macedonia and the related American bombing of Serbia including Belgrade. Like the Bosnian war which proceeded it these were major defining events of the last decade of the 20th century. Minor themes were the armed clashes within Macedonia. Given this history of recent violence in the area there has obviously been a period of violence in which the villagers studied were at least indirect or passive participants. Peace prevails as this is written but major problems of state formation remain unresolved including the newly built village homes and dreams of migrants remain hostage to a very uncertain future. Pichler’s and Leutloff-Grandits’ account and Leutloff-Grandits’ study are valuable researches but they are clearly part of a broader context which deserves explication. It can be hoped that future conflict within what had been Yugoslavia can be avoided but the outlook is uncertain as is the fate of the villagers of this area.

It is interesting how Western scholars who focus on a rather small area, such as Macedonia, seem to have no contact and can write with a seeming unawareness of each other even though all publish in English. Despite great efforts sometimes coverage can be very partial, even arbitrary. Todorova in her encyclopedic essay provides a minor but significant example. She refers to “a surge of pioneering research,” citing multiple examples of East European research by three anthropologists and a reference to Poland while ignoring the work of others, most notably the work of Keith Brown, who has concentrated on Macedonia with his specific interests in ethno-nationalism, and labor migration in a broad comparative framework as illustrated by a recent book. Such work might also be useful in contextualizing the micro studies of Leutloff-Grandits

and Pichler. The rather extensive publications of researchers from Scandinavia are also pertinent. Some broad reviews of the literature, not neglecting German and French sources, seems appropriate.

There is much diversity in these contributions in this volume alone. Thus Florian Bieber begins his contribution with a reference to NATO intervention in Serbia in the Spring of 1999 arguing that the countries of the Balkans need to be understood in a comparative perspective. In this connection he also takes issue with claims to uniqueness and incomparability and the notion of the Balkans as exotic, a topic which was the focus of the volume "Wild Europe" noted above. He refers to Nazism which he writes "can claim Balkan origins," noting Hitler's time among the flophouses of Vienna where he learned "how to hate infectiously ... in this breeding ground of ethnic resentments." Such comments can, of course, lead to stereotyping as Bieber points out but he also observes that notions of uniqueness can be more broadly researched in the field of comparative political science. This approach has, of course, been around since the 1960s and was much researched in Yugoslavia with deeply funded studies, mainly American, encompassing the former Yugoslavia in comparative studies with Western Europe and the United States.

He suggests that in examining recent comparative studies from former Yugoslavia that this work has made a substantial contribution to the understanding of ethnic conflict. But he cautions that the "ethnicity bias" has marginalized other fields of research, such as democratic consolidation. Here again the work of Keith S. Brown is pertinent as in the case of a recent volume. Bieber concludes with an urge for comparative area studies calling attention to the fact that "despite globalization ... regional and cultural knowledge remains relevant and downplaying the importance of culture, geography and regions merely affirms Western hegemony." In this connection he cites the benefits of "thick description," an approach advocated by the late anthropologist Clifford Geertz and based on his work in Indonesia and North Africa. Might a comparison of imperial styles of land based as opposed to sea based empires be appropriate here along with the diffusion of religious systems? The role of Ottoman imperial reach and the historic role of Islam within the Balkans and especially its role in Serbian state formation is useful to contemplate despite the overlay of Orthodoxy. It is possible to suggest that apart from dress and food and language Ottoman patterns persisted in state formation as in early tax and land records. Muslim Bosnian encounters with the Islamic world were different than those in Serbia but here methods of boundary maintenance between state entities are worth exploring. Islam as imported from the former imperial colonies overseas abroad as in Great Britain, France and Holland are different than Muslims in Bosnia or even to a much smaller degree Muslims within a reduced Serbia. No longer, certainly not after 9/11, is the U.S. on its territory exempt. Sarajevo is a word of many meanings which now have been a full century in

world focus. What are the origins of Mladić’s plan for genocide in Srebrenica, why was it necessary to even try to hide the bodies? Who belongs where and why? The politics of comparative ethnocide and church and mosque destruction can be compared in Bosnian and Kosovo geographic frames as well.

Tanja Petrović depicts the Balkans as defined by its Ottoman legacy and citing Todorova that it has been these elements or those perceived as such which have been involved in the Balkan stereotype. That is the decisive difference with the Orient which is seen as the unambiguous other, while the Balkans are a part of Europe although on the periphery perhaps leading to a situation with a potential for “confluence between postcolonial theory and anti-balkanism.” The author also refers to the colonial background of the Eastern EU enlargement. Petrović also notes that the process of colonization takes on concrete forms in the presence of the UN, EU and NATO in Bosnia and Kosovo, linked, of course to the presence of a resurgent Serbia. But Petrović cites the view of Tadić as president of Serbia that he was convinced that Kosovo has no future as an independent state “but only as part of Serbia … for which Serbia is responsible.” At the same time the Slovene Premier has stated that Slovenia has interests in the Balkans that parallel those of Portugal in the postcolonial world. That is “imperialism and colonialism”. Even small and marginal states can be compared in their ideologies with those who have the more developed economies. This area had decided advantages as new hierarchies based on economic power supplant those who held military and political power. This has many consequences, e.g. marginalized and exploited construction workers come to Slovenia from former Yugoslav republics such as Bosnia. This also affords Western powers an opportunity to implant Western democratic values, ignoring their socialist legacies and participation in the former Yugoslav state. Again the writings of Keith Brown would seem appropriate here as would those of Hannes Grandits. Some of these behaviors have more consequences than others – death and destruction are evidently at one end of a continuum while trade and tax policies are on a different scale. Covering complex events with a one size fits all blanket of colonialism or exploitation can obscure significant difference as in patterns of domination or exploitation.

The paper of Christian Promitzer does offer a fresh perspective in using travel accounts to reconstruct the differing pasts of this region. His view is to examine the underlying ideological structures related to the origins of area studies. He considers Austro-Hungarian accounts of this region from 1830-1912. The objectives are to “illuminate some aspects of the representation of the Balkans in the Austrian mind,” and as a source for regional description.

Recent events have been important in shaping Austria’s interest in this region. Key is geographic proximity. When I first arrived in Graz in early 1993 I remember the presence of Bosnian beggars including women and children in the main square of the old town. In a way this was a similar seeking of refuge as had occurred at the time of the 1878 annexation of Bosnia by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Promitzer notes that when NATO bombing of Serbia was underway in 1999, the Austrian politician, and subsequent Special Coordinator of the Western Stability Pact, Busek published his book about Austria
and the Balkans. Busek noted that the average Austrian has little knowledge of Southeastern Europe. He advocated the refreshing of "old links" and reminds his readers that at the turn of the last century Vienna had been in a sense a world capital and that this situation would never have existed without the nearby presence of Southeast Europe.

He also remarked that the cultural and scholarly life of Austria is much influenced by the Balkans and as a related consequence "the Western values of democracy need to be introduced into this area." The recent collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Yugoslav state has, of course, provided opportunities for Austrian economic and political elites. While these are important factors Promitzer wishes to concentrate on diplomatic, political and economic activities of the Habsburg empire, particularly in Bosnia. It was only at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 that Austria was able to consolidate its control over Bosnia. Subsequently in 1908 this area became, in effect, a formal colony of Austria. Promitzer calls attention to the fact that "Habsburg colonialism," does not end with Bosnia but was concerned with Montenegro, Northern Albania, Serbia and also Kosovo. There was also commerce on the lower Danube and in Bosnia and elsewhere in the Balkans and so the construction of railroads and factories and the opening of banks was an important step in manifesting dominance.

Promitzer calls attention to the idea of "frontier Orientalism," for the Austrian case as proposed by Andre Gingrich for Muslims in the Balkans during the Ottoman period. This concept was derived from Edward Said's concept of Orientalism and applied to the Balkans as a border zone by Todorova. This perspective is helpful in distinguishing the dynamics of Balkan history from that of Central Europe, and it should also be helpful in analyzing the use of stereotypes as presented in traveler's accounts. There is also the related question of the specificity of the Austrian accounts as they deal with the once existing Ottoman threat." An important component is that Austria-Hungary, while not a maritime colonial empire like those in Western Europe with their overseas dominions, nevertheless, the images of e.g. Bosnia that were conveyed had similarities to those outside of Europe. Persistent stereotypes such as "wild," "filthy" and "backward" seem to exist even without the employment of racial categories. These labels were, of course, in harmony with "the establishment of hierarchically devised symbolic geographies of Europe." My memories of 1993 in Graz include not only the beggars from Bosnia but also the marginalized way the families of refugees were treated in Styria in the old village inns in which they were confined. Since I spoke Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian I recall children coming to me and begging for a bar of soap so they could wash themselves and so that their mother could wash their dirty clothes. Dirty children and profiteering innkeepers provided not a scene of savagery but certainly one of humiliation engendered by Austrians of colonialized "others."

Ami Boué's 4 volume treatise on Turkey in Europe from 1840\textsuperscript{32}, is seen by Promitzer as a pioneering work. The Balkans has always been of marginal interest to the English speaking world, nevertheless, there are accounts by British women beginning in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Most notable are the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) who traveled through the Balkans to join her husband in Istanbul where he was the British ambassador. Montagu also wrote about her passage through central Serbia and was much impressed by its seemingly massive and endless oak forests. Her writings have been published recently in a multi volume work.\textsuperscript{33} By the middle of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century there were more than a few British women who wrote about Bosnia, some had lived for a period in Sarajevo. Their biographies are detailed with references in the book about English speaking women, in "Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans"\textsuperscript{34}. A number of women have written about Albania, notably, Mary Durham at the beginning of the last century and Margaret Hasluck in the inter-war period, both were also concerned with ethnography.

During the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and in the period before the First World War there were many Englishmen writing about Croatia, Dalmatia as well as about Serbia and Montenegro, a few were encyclopedic in their concerns. It would be very useful to have them compared with Austrian sources. Also significant were the writings from people of the Balkans as they began to encounter the West. Such writings had a special focus when they were prepared by historians, geographers and ethnologists for the Versailles Peace Conference. This was also the time prior to the First World War when there was an expansion of universities, development of museums and learned academies which began to produce studies of their own people from the perspectives of ethnology and geography as well as law and literature. An early pioneer in this field was the historian, lexicographer, ethnologist and folklorist Vuk Karadžić, who lived for a time in Vienna, and whose encyclopedic writings date from the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century and were translated by the pioneering historian, Leopold von Ranke. It would be most interesting to compare Anglo-American sources to those produced by German language authors. Promitzer’s contribution and Todorova’s references might provide a beginning for such work and one must not forget about work of writers and academics from the Balkans.

Three contributions have been left for the final part of this survey, they deal with micro organizational challenges of university teaching of language and cultures concerning Southeast Europe, Voss from an external German perspective and Parvev and Stassinopoulou from Bulgarian and Greek perspectives respectively. Voss uses terms such as Slavic and Area studies and the latter two are understandably focused exclusively on the state of affairs at their respective national universities. There is no comparative context here. It is probably true

\textsuperscript{32} Ami Boué, \textit{La Turquie d'Europe}, 4 vols. (Paris: Bertrand, 1840).
\textsuperscript{33} Teresa Hefferman and Daniel O'Quinn, eds., \textit{The Turkish embassy letters/Lady Mary Wortley Montagu} (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2013).
that Voss's contribution needs some sort of comparative context. How can we possibly understand the German situation in isolation from French and English views to say nothing of Scandinavia or even American perspectives? Or the Bulgarian and Greek papers without some views from their neighbors in the Balkans – the now independent states of the former Yugoslavia or to pass over Romania? Even the mention of Greece and Balkan in the same sentence or even paragraph might be deemed inappropriate. Perhaps all fit together within an overall European setting? Certainly considering the insider/outsider approach might prove useful. If past experience is a guide I have the impression that Greeks and Bulgarians would think more about their relations with the larger powers and major languages then they would think about their smaller neighbors.