

## CALL FOR CONFERENCE PAPERS & PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

**Project:** **Captive States, Divided Societies: Political Institutions of Southeastern Europe in Historical Comparative Perspective (2005-2007)**

Center for Applied Policy Research (Munich), Romanian Academic Society & Romanian Institute for Recent History (Bucharest)  
Project sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation

**Workshop:** **July 07-09, 2005, at the Romanian Black Sea coast**

The Center for Applied Policy in Munich and the Romanian Academic Society in Bucharest and partner institutions invite papers for the first conference in the Volkswagen Stiftung sponsored project 'CAPTIVE STATES, DIVIDED SOCIETIES' The workshop will take place at the Romanian Black Sea Coast in the second weekend of July 2005. Papers are invited which deal with the institutional history of post-Ottoman Southeastern Europe. Only papers discussing more than one country and using a comparative methodology will be considered. Proposals by two researchers who plan to work together on one of the chapters in order to broaden the comparative scope are also welcome. Travel and accommodation will be covered for authors whose papers are accepted. Abstracts (2 pp.) should include methodology, outline of subject and the countries covered from the region and be sent together with a short bio to both project directors:

Wim van Meurs, Center for Applied Policy Research, Munich & Radboud University Nijmegen: [meurs@lrz.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:meurs@lrz.uni-muenchen.de)

Andrei Pippidi, University of Bucharest & Institute for South-East European Studies in Bucharest & editor of the "Revue des études sud-est européennes/Journal of south-east european studies": [Pippidi@sar.org.ro](mailto:Pippidi@sar.org.ro)

Abstracts are expected by **March 31**. Applicants will be notified in April.

The purpose of the workshop in July is twofold: firstly, to rethink, flesh out and consolidate the conceptual framework. Secondly, to build a team of twelve researchers/authors and five reviewers who will produce, together with the project directors and assistants, in the three-year project an innovative politico-historical textbook on Southeastern Europe and a policy paper informed by the textbook research.

For more information, see the project website: <http://www.cap-lmu.de/projekte/fge/captivestates/index.php> or contact the project assistants:

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Edvin Pezo, Center for Applied Policy Research, Munich: [pezo@lrz.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:pezo@lrz.uni-muenchen.de)

### What we expect:

- Ph.D. (or equivalent) in history, political sciences or area studies and preferable some years of additional research experience in/on several Southeast European countries
- Commitment to a team-based interdisciplinary project for a three-year period
- Institutional affiliation with a relevant academic institution
- Fluency in English and preferably working knowledge of one or more regional languages

### What we offer:

- A unique opportunity to broaden your research expertise in terms of multidisciplinary approaches, by developing research competence for a new country or a wider theme.
- The corresponding funding: an author's fee and a travel stipend allowing for several research trips in and beyond the region
- An inspiring team of like-minded researchers and several team meetings

- Opportunities to present research results to relevant audiences (in academia and in policy-making) via the envisaged publications and workshops/presentations.

### **Project Objectives**

- To develop a better approach to interpreting the history of the region, leading to a clearer understanding of the present, and an attempt at forecasting the future, of a zone of great political, strategic, economic and social interest for Europe
- To offer a survey of the current situation of institutional development in the region (“rules of the game”) relevant for the present process of transformation and integration; current institutions will be studied in their historical evolution, continuity and discontinuity, with a focus on causes of the current institutional patterns operating in the Balkans.
- To increase public awareness to the need of sustainable and informed input of the European Union in the transformation of Southeastern Europe, an area missing from the first wave of enlargement, but likely to feature in the next ones.
- To create a sound basis for the development of policy advice in order to provide practical guidance for decision-makers, planners and designers of policies from or for the region.

Major studies dealing with post-communist transition and European integration tend to either marginalize Southeastern Europe as a whole or pay scant reference to historical legacies and peculiarities. Conversely, area-studies handbooks and national or regional histories tend to focus on national or regional path dependencies. The Balkans as a historical region will have to be identified by its similarities and dissimilarities to Europe as well as to Eastern Europe as a whole. Due to the complexity of the region, a truly integrative textbook will have to overcome a number of structural problems to bridge the gap between historical perspective and current policy relevance as well as the numerous gaps between individual and mutually exclusive national perspectives and narratives.

Taking 2007 as a symbolic target date, the applicants envisage an ambitious textbook project. The first prerequisite is the focus on political institutions a strategic choice and a preference for a broad regional perspective without striving for comprehensiveness of representativeness. The concept of „political Institutions“ is intentionally broad and encompasses normative arrangements – both formal and informal – that provide order and orientation to society and politics. The authors for a thematic chapter are challenged to come up with a theory-driven narrative informed by cases from different centuries and states or subregions, but without the obligation to include each state for the entire time span.

The second prerequisite is a functioning, experienced team of experts. Apart from involving younger and more experienced scholars as well as historians, sociologists, and political scientists, the project will create and develop networks of institutions and experts to facilitate individual authors' comparative research in other states or periods. The networks should be driven by the common endeavor rather than by institutional arrangements. Thus, apart from a broad regional expertise, the authors and reviewers need to have demonstrated the capability to work in a team. The incentive for individual authors is the possibility to probe new aspects of a theme and to broaden the regional or historical scope of the author's expertise. The project will provide the resources for travel and, more importantly, local experts as interlocutors, guides and commentators. Such an audacious strategic choice combined with a lean, but effective setup seems to offer the best prospects for innovative and challenging research.

Correspondingly, the team of authors, reviewers and editors will produce a textbook on the past and present of political institutions in Southeastern Europe. Apart from the academic textbook, however, the team will also produce a booklet addressing the policy and media communities dealing with Southeastern Europe. By 2007, the region will, most likely, again be high on the European agenda (and Europe on the regional agenda!) At that time, a synthesis that neither resigns to the allegedly insurmountable legacies of the past nor offers optimistic generic solutions to structural modernization deficits may be in high demand. The institutionalist approach will highlight structural characteristics and common traits of the region without precluding domestic and international reform strategies today. Last, but not least, a research network that has not been created on paper but emerged from a real cooperative endeavor has the best changes of sustainability and growth. With the support from the network, individual researchers and national institutes might probe the national dimensions of the different themes in the

textbook further, providing younger scholars with alternative perspectives to classic national history or generic transitology.

The papers should address one of the following 12 themes and will be grouped in 3 sections at the July workshop:

## **A. The state**

### **1. *The captive state as the main institution of autocracy***

This section examines the institution of 'autocracy' from Atatürk to Milošević. What accounts for this pattern of a state permanently held captive by a person or group, be it a military caste or an oligarchy? Beyond external conditions favoring autocracy, how does autocracy *work*? What accounts for, on one hand, the low resistance of these societies to predatory elites, and, on the other, to the fight amongst such elites as the main feature of politics? Once the foreign environment becomes favorable to democracy, what are the implications and legacies of the 'captive state'?

### **2. *Center versus periphery. Constitutional arrangements and informal practices***

Centralism is usually associated with autocracy, but the con-federalism of former Yugoslavia was also with some justification charged of being a 'subversive' institution. Regardless the formal institutions, are there any discernible patterns of behavior that have emerged after the region became independent from the Ottomans, and again after 1989? In the end of day, what lessons from the Balkan past are useful for the region's constitutional rethinking in order to fit the European requirements?

### **3. *The state as provider of law and order***

The ineffectiveness of the rule of law is often denounced as one of the main obstacles to economic and political development in most countries of the region. Not only does the weak rule of law deter much-needed foreign investment, it also undermines efforts to build a meaningful participatory political process and a clean administration of both public and the private sector. Although many reforms have been designed to strengthen the rule of law, they mattered little, as they were implemented only to a limited degree. Three legal traditions - Ottoman, Austrian-Hungarian, and Communist - coexist due to regional fragmentation. In some cases we find them in vertical stratification, where Communism inheriting the old imperial rule. The Habsburg legal state functioned quite well, and scholars of the Ottoman Empire claim the same for the law of Mahomet. What does then account for the poor state of the rule of law in the Balkan states?

### **4. *Particularistic institutions of governance. The role of bureaucracies***

To a greater or lesser extent, most parts of the Southeastern European region have a history of governance that has been more autocratic and 'corrupt' than its Western counterpart. Balkan history suggests an antagonistic pattern (the state versus the citizens, the urban settlements against the rural background). Informal networking, 'gifts' and bribes traditionally helped to attenuate the excesses of exploitation and repression. The widespread administrative and political corruption is often attributed to historical factors. The underlying assumption is that a specific 'Balkan' culture exists which perverts any formal institutions into practices of particularism, such as cronyism or patrimonialism. The main question the section will address is to what extent the considerable delay in achieving performing administrations and functional market economies of many Balkan states is due to the existence of strong particularistic practices, which make the administrators part of a 'predatory elite' thriving on state capture instead on governing for the public interest. Did this model originate before or during Communist times, and how was it developed and transformed during transition to fit the needs of 'negative' social capital groups? What is the role of particularism as source of social exclusion, setting borders between those who enriched during transition, benefiting from freedom, and those who, due to their higher distance from the centers of power have only grown more dependent and parochial?

### **5. *Foreign intervention and role models - shaping institutional development in the Balkans***

This section looks at the foreign influence on state-building. The pattern of patronage, which used to be so successfully present in the early modern societies of the region and which remains even today an easily recognizable feature of Balkan politics, can also be applied to the relations between the Great Powers and the recently emerged nation-states or statelets since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even the present policy of some European states towards the Balkans bears the mark of past allegiances and favoritisms. Each intervention of the West in the Balkans, on the other side, ends up in accusations of 'taking sides', of cultural bias and exclusion. What does the experience of intervention in state building in the Balkans teach us on the risks and challenges of such attempts? What of this large past experience is relevant for the European task of assisting the present state and region building?

### **6. *The role of the state in sustainable development***

The importance attributed to dependence theories in explaining the poor economic performance of the Balkans, both by domestic and foreign scholars has led to an underestimation of the role the state plays in fostering economic development. Why does the performance of Balkan states vary so greatly in terms of economic performance? Why do some states fail in imposing and preserving an economical order, hindering the emergence of sustainable development, while others –the case of Slovenia- manage to reach levels comparable to Central Europe? What has been proved historically as the greatest challenge of the Southeastern European states in bringing about the development of their societies? All other things being equal, how much and in what way has the state mattered for economic performance in Southeastern Europe, and what lessons can we learn from this experience? Which post-Ottoman institutions –for instance property or taxation- mattered more for development and in what way?

## **B. Political society**

### **7. *Formal and informal institutions of pluralism***

Multiparty democracy has traditionally been severely limited in the region by autocratic monarchs or military leaders, populist or radical ideologies, foreign sponsoring of parties and politicians. Nowadays, with the exception of Greece, durable party systems struggle to emerge again, but the collapse of the Turkish political establishment in the 2002 elections, as well as the victory of King Simeon party in the Bulgarian ones show how far the target still is. What accounts for the difficulty to build stable and coherent party systems in the Balkans? Why do political elites, regardless of their party of origin face so often problems of legitimacy?

### **8. *Challenges to the 'official' order: the role of subversive political organizations***

In recent times subversive or underground organizations which were so important in the Balkans past played an important role again. Why do these organizations prove able of better mobilization capacity than formal, transparent ones? What social roles do they fulfil and will this pattern change in the future?

### **9. *The marginal and the excluded. Political destinies of minorities and women***

What was the legal framework and the practice concerning political rights of the distinct, hard to assimilate ethnic groups, like Roma (everywhere), Vlachs (in Serbia, Croatia and Greece), Albanians (in former Yugoslavia), Greeks (in Albania), and what of the current practice is due to a certain tradition of regulating minority rights? The enfranchisement of women is also to be taken into account, as it was implemented in different conditions in Christian or Moslem societies. The Western perception of Southeastern backwardness was reinforced by the marginalization of social or gender categories within the Balkan national communities. Under the Communist regime, the label of modernization formally covered (without being able to hide) the broad differences and the internal tensions.

## **C. Civil society**

### **10. *Political illusions and delusions of the Balkan intelligentsia***

The serious dysfunctions provoked by the limited access of graduates to professional careers became, after WW I, when the Universities produced a much greater number of postulants than the state jobs could nourish, a reason for the intellectuals to criticize the structure of the society. These criticisms rose to prominence as reactions to modernization, i.e. Westernization. In public debates, the attitude to the East vs. West confrontation served, and still serves, as a mark to distinguish the camps. While some thinkers deplored the backwardness of Balkan countries, some others took pride in the originality of an 'organic' development and denied the necessity of modernizing their society at a quicker pace. Outside the state, radical ideologies thrived. What of these legacies still matter today?

### **11. *The Ruler and the Patriarch: the Church between state and society***

Does the Church play a significant role in explaining state-society relations in these predominantly Orthodox and Moslem countries? All other things being equal, does it matter that a country is Catholic, Orthodox or Moslem in Southeastern Europe in terms of its current political regime and culture?

### **12. *The institution of public opinion***

The status of the press in Balkan countries has always been ambiguous. Periods (generally short) of complete liberty alternated, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a vigilant censorship over the news.. Hugh Seton Watson quoted often the east European media as a symptom of 'civilizational underdevelopment' of these societies. Freedom of media often helped promote hate-speech, corruption and intolerance. For the first time we plan to make an analysis going further beyond formal aspects of media freedom, focusing on the role of public opinion in general in the democratization of Southeastern European societies. What formal

and informal arrangements- such as ownership of the media- seem to be associated with a free and democratic press and where do these arrangements come from themselves?