

## Zitierhinweis

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sions on victims and perpetrators] have not only been the common denominator of political debates in Eastern, Central and Southeastern Europe, but have underlined the culture of remembering throughout the continent' (7).

In sum, trying to overcome the 'bloc division of Europe' this edited volume contains highly relevant insights into the divergences in the memory cultures in postsocialist countries as well as into common European memory practices. The argument would have been even clearer if captured in a comprehensive summary at the volume's end. Moreover, it seems that if we are to overcome this 'bloc division', it would be equally important to dismantle the west as a mnemonic bloc too, as well as to emphasise the cross-fertilisation of the eastern and western memory narratives and practices. Only Laczó, in his chapter on Hungary, points out how concepts such as 'historical trauma' and 'collective guilt' have travelled eastwards, and equally importantly, how such mnemonic cooperation has challenged the antifascist consensus and the progressivist's interpretation of modern European history in the western countries.

The volume is perhaps most valuable in what is not its primary aim, namely in reflecting on the disciplinary practises of writing contemporary history, and—on a meta-level—on historians' self-positioning in society. Certain strands of postsocialist scholarship, for example in Slovakia, have diverged more and more from global trends (Michela). The return after 1989 to old conceptual modes, prominently to a linear description of national history, and the conversion of historical sciences into a political instrument has undermined the authority and legitimacy of historians, who are supposed to be critical and 'objective' in their work (Filandra, Luthar). In times

of a widening gap between academic and public discourses, other societal actors have surfaced who enhance the competition on how the past is to be interpreted. Especially the media have put historians under social pressure. The book's authors' critical analyses of postrevisionist revisionism constitute a substantial contribution to the broader disciplinary debate about professional values and (the desirability of) historians' interference in the public sphere.

Christel Zunneberg (Berlin)

**Miruna Troncotă, *Post-Conflict Europeanization and the War of Meanings. The Challenges of EU Conditionality in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo***, Bucharest: Tritonic 2017, 255 pp., ISBN 978-606-749-087-9, lei 27.00

Miruna Troncotă earned her PhD in International Relations with a study on the Europeanisation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from a constructivist perspective. In her new book *Post-Conflict Europeanization and the War of Meanings. The Challenges of EU Conditionality in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo*, she adds the Kosovar case to her previously established expertise. The aim of her study is to understand how the Europeanisation process has been conditioned by postconflictual settings. She achieves her objective by showing how, in the period 2008-2014, the societal elites involved contributed to divergent interpretations of EU conditionality, which determined a 'war of meanings' that effectively delayed integration. Conversely, the concept of 'postconflict Europeanization', i.e. the idea that EU conditionality is more likely to be contested in states emerging from conflicts, is neither convincing nor can it be generalised in any way.

Europeanisation is the way through which the European Union seeks to transform countries with a European perspective into member states. The process takes place through the tool of EU conditionality, which is a foreign policy approach that has variously been defined as 'governance export' and 'norm diffusion'. Despite a rich literature on the topic, there is no analysis of this phenomenon applied to postconflict realities. The EU adapts its strategy in consideration of its respective interlocutors; yet, its transformative role turned out not to be transformative at all in both Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Rather, stagnation and institutional paralysis have characterised the inter-institutional dialogue. Indeed, the case studies have shown problems inherent in limited statehood that in fact also resulted in failures of EU conditionality throughout the period 2008-2014. For example, the Sejdić and Finci Judgment of December 2009 has not been implemented in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and neither has the Brussels Agreement of 2013 in Kosovo. Adopting an interpretivist approach in a qualitative study that exploited interviews, discourse analysis, and desk research of the relevant literature, Troncotă concludes that the elites involved have contributed to such failures through divergent interpretations of EU conditionality.

The book is a very interesting piece of analysis, easy to read and a very good tool for dissemination of knowledge on the state of the art of Europeanisation in the Balkans. Troncotă contributes to the mainstreaming of European values, seen as a process of building common meanings for common narratives, and crucial to avoid the re-escalation of interethnic tensions and the recurrence of conflicts. Political elites have often rather tended to give space to divisive histories by portraying other ethnicities as perpetrators. Public debates have

become fragmented and have trapped the interlocutors in their respective versions of interpreting the past. I happen to have attended the book presentation which was organised in Pristina. Troncotă started her introduction to her book with a provocation, by stating that she did not know what Europeanisation means. Is Europeanisation simply the act through which the EU makes external countries 'European'? As the author cleverly noted, becoming 'European' is a journey more than a prize. The EU in fact challenges identity, and thus the process of Europeanisation ultimately asks external countries to become more flexible with regard to their own identity. This seems to be a condition if they want to embrace the 'European' dimension. And yet, contrarily, the bargain and concessions of this sort that the Balkan states have faced over the last two decades have been paralleled by 'balkanizing' processes in the rest of Europe. Brexit and Catalonia are only the most virulent examples of such processes.

The problems of the book lie in its comparative technique and in the approach chosen. As Giovanni Sartori convincingly wrote in his essay *Comparing and Miscomparing* (1991), either one compares two cases that are similar in every way except for the phenomenon under scrutiny, or the two cases are dissimilar in every way except for the similar phenomenon that is analysed. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, however, are way too similar to allow for a useful comparison of that sort. Consequently, the comparison suffers from the author's preference for Bosnia-Herzegovina, with Kosovo emerging more as additional evidence to claim the category of 'postconflict Europeanization' than as an analysis with its own value. If the author initially defines Europeanisation in a constructivist perspective as a dynamic asymmetrical interaction between a set of actors who give

contextualised meanings to the tools of EU conditionality, then towards the end of her analysis she betrays this definition by repeatedly referring to the rationalist model of 'stick and carrot' as a metaphor for how the process of Europeanisation works.

As a result, this change in approach frustrates the reader. The author presents the multiple understandings and competing truths of politics, points out representations, values and norms, but does not effectively problematise them. A more effective choice would have been a more critical approach that uses similar methodological tools, but strives to unveil the power struggle hidden behind the social conflict; in this case, the political and diplomatic conflict between the two Balkan states and the EU. Troncotă constantly refers to the noncompliance of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo to EU norms, and to the fact that the local political elites always include identity, emotions, and symbols in their discourses in order to justify the failures of meeting EU expectations. However, she makes no straightforward attempt to explain the motivations of both local and EU politicians for acting the way they do. In the end, the reader remains puzzled about who is to blame for the poor results of EU integration.

The book is a good piece of research that contributes to increasing our knowledge in the field of Europeanisation. The two case studies show how local politicians exploit the benefits of an integration perspective without changing their ethno-political attitudes, while the EU elite is found to be too concessive towards states not meeting the conditions. The comparison however suffers from too many similarities between the two cases, and the reader is left with the sensation that there might have been more to tell. Troncotă had the means and findings to take a braver perspective and

present her argument and conclusion more effectively. Nonetheless, her work can be a great starting point for discussing civil society issues on EU integration.

Gian Marco Moisé (Parma)

**Othon Anastasakis / David Madden / Elizabeth Roberts, eds, *Balkan Legacies of the Great War. The Past Is Never Dead*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. XIV, 90 pp., ISBN 978-1-137-56413-9, \$ 69.99**

This book gives an overview of the legacies of the Great War in Southeastern and Eastern Europe. In addition, the authors discuss how the war was started and give detailed information on the historical situation of each of the countries that were later involved in the war. In particular, attention is given to the national uprisings in the mainly Slav populated countries of the Balkans, the political divisions in Greece, and the contexts of the Black Sea region.

The authors take different positions on the historical events that led to the First World War. Especially *Margaret MacMillan* ('Too Much History and Too Many Neighbours: Europe and the Balkans before 1914', 13-22) raises 'What if'-questions, emphasising how the Great War could have started many times before it actually did. She mentions earlier crises such as Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 and the two Balkan Wars of 1912/13, as well as the imperial territorial crises between France and Great Britain in Africa (1898) and the Russian-Japanese war of 1905. *Richard Crampton* ('Was the First World War the Turning Point at Which Bulgaria Failed to Turn?', 50-58) and *Basil C. Gounaris* ('Unwanted Legacies: Greece and the Great War', 66-80) in their respec-