

happened, primarily in the different economic positions that the post-Yugoslav countries found themselves in. The other is the way domestic elites responded to pressure by external (ie. Western) actors: both those who offered EU integration and those who insisted on transitional justice (ICTY). The book argues that the different position of the post-Yugoslav states at the end of the 1990s can be largely explained by using these two variables. The external incentive for liberalisation cannot produce liberal regimes, but it might play a decisive role in shaping transition.

The other major point that this book makes is in challenging the view that the resistance to liberalisation and transformation is led and organised primarily by those social forces who are to become the losers in transition. Boduszyński argues that it was the political, economic and social elite in general who opposed changes in order to secure its power. Thus, the winners, not the losers have opposed liberalisation. The system worked for them, and they tried to keep the benefits of the controlled regime change exclusively for themselves.

Mieczysław Boduszyński's book is to be recommended to all those who analyse political changes in the 1990s. It offers interesting and rather useful methodological tools for comparative analysis of transition in war-torn countries. In addition, it helps us to understand the motives and actions by political elites in the post-Yugoslav states during the first decade since their independence. This book will also be useful to researchers of further transformation of these societies.

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Review

Darko Karačić, Tamara Banjeglav
and Nataša Govedarica

**Re:vizija prošlosti: Politike
sjećanja u Bosni i Hercegovini,
Hrvatskoj i Srbiji od 1990. godine**

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Sarajevo, 2012, 240 pp.

Re:vizija prošlosti: Politike sjećanja u Bosni i Hercegovini, Hrvatskoj i Srbiji od 1990. godine (Re:vision of the Past: The Politics of Memory in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia since 1990) is a welcome sign that a new generation of scholars in the region is applying theories from memory studies to analyze the interactions between history and politics in the Yugoslav successor states. Although numerous studies have been produced about nationalism, transitional justice, and post-conflict reconstruction in the former Yugoslavia, research into the politics of memory, especially by local academics, is a relatively new field. This book is particularly useful because it presents overviews of how three former Yugoslav republics – Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia – have dealt with not only World War Two but also the conflicts of the 1990s. As the authors show in their detailed texts, political actors have often blurred the past and the present; they revised World War Two narratives to fit the new ethno-nationalist discourses predominant after the wars from 1991-1995, and incorporated selective elements of Partisan, Ustaša, or Četnik narratives into the commemorative practices

of the recent violence to show continuity and even justify the new cycle of atrocities. This comparative analysis of memory politics exposes how the rewriting of the past, specifically a *traumatic past* firmly lodged in the collective memory of these societies, is used to legitimize post-war elites and reinforce identities.

The book is organized as a collection of three separate chapters rather than a classical edited volume, which is perhaps one of its greatest weaknesses. A short Forward briefly sketches the layout of the book, but a more developed Introduction identifying the key concepts and theories of memory studies would have given it greater cohesion. The chapters on Croatia and Serbia do give readers useful syntheses of the leading international (Paul Connerton, Jan Assmann, James Young, Pierre Nora, Maurice Halbwachs) and domestic scholars (Todor Kuljić, Tihomir Cipek, Olivera Milosavljević, Olgica Manojlić-Pintar) working on cultural memory, but this is achieved only half-way through the book. Despite this flaw, the chapters provide extensive examples and case studies of memory politics in the last twenty years.

Nataša Govedarica, a dramaturge and activist in Belgrade's NGO scene, argues that the "transformation of memories about World War Two is a fundamentally significant aspect of not only the shifting and unstable relationship with the recent past, but the process of inscribing the borders of collective identity" (p. 183). Although she was referring to the situation in Serbia, this observation is just as relevant for the other two countries analyzed in this volume. As the monopoly over World War Two narratives disintegrated with the collapse of socialism and the Yu-

goslav state after 1990, the leadership in each of the successor states – at different times and at various tempos – changed the names of streets and squares, rewrote history books, destroyed old monuments and constructed new ones, revised the corpus of national holidays and memory days, and modified commemorative rituals to reflect the new nation-building myths. Govedarica shows this process primarily from a top-down perspective, focusing on how the changes in Serbia's political landscape (especially in 1989-90 and 2000) result in shifting positions towards World War Two. For example, the Milošević regime had maintained the continuity with the commemorative culture of socialist Yugoslavia, but after 2000 successive Serbian governments dismantled antifascist holidays such as Uprising Day (7 July) and passed numerous laws rehabilitating the Četnik movement and other collaborators.

But the politics of memory are also bottom-up processes, as Darko Karačić and Tamara Banjeglav show in the chapters on Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, respectively. Karačić shows how memory politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina are as fragmented as the state, with a number of organizations that are successors to the World War Two veterans' association (SUBNOR) actively engaged in promoting remembrance while the central state is unable to formulate a unified position. Unlike in Croatia, where former Partisans and other antifascist organizations have generally cooperated successfully with the state since 2000 to preserve the memory of the resistance against Nazi-fascism, in Bosnia-Herzegovina even the antifascists are divided by entity and ethnicity. While

the trend of ethno-nationalizing memories of World War Two is common across the entire region after 1990 (i.e., glorifying one's ethnic group as victims and heroes regardless of whether they had been collaborators or in the resistance), Karačić's chapter reveals how Republika Srpska took this to the extreme. During the war in the 1990s not only were the Četniks rehabilitated, but the Partisans were relabeled as a Serbian liberation movement, even though Tito's multinational forces were based upon the slogan of brotherhood and unity (pp. 56-58). In more recent years Republika Srpska's president, Milorad Dodik, has embraced the narratives of Serbian victimization in World War Two and used commemorations to justify the further separation of his entity from Sarajevo's control.

In Croatia, as noted by Banjeglav, the debates over World War Two were not only about ethnic divisions, but were also ideological and embedded in the narratives of the historic struggle for Croatian statehood. Hence the ongoing polemics between those who argue that the Ustaše fought exclusively for an independent Croatia and those who point out that it was the Partisan movement which preserved the continuity of statehood, as officially stated in the Constitution. Banjeglav effectively shows how these memory politics are both bottom-up and top-down with a variety of actors who are engaged in passing legislation, organizing commemorations, and determining the fate of Croatia's monumental heritage; which memorials should be removed, rebuilt, or constructed for the first time?

The chapters on Serbia and Croatia also stand out because of their analysis of the culture of memory of the war in the 1990s

and how external pressure (namely, the European Union accession process and the impact of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) affects memory politics. Banjeglav concludes that there is greater consensus in Croatia on the "Homeland War" in the 1990s than on World War Two, even though Serb civilian victims are often excluded from official narratives and the legal framework for building memorials dedicated to the latest conflict is still incomplete. However, she notes the positive impact of Croatia's bid for EU membership on memory politics, such as the destruction of memorials built to leading Ustaša figures, the reaffirmation of antifascist values by Croatia's political elite, and the acceptance of the European paradigm of Holocaust remembrance (p. 113). In contrast to the considerable involvement of the Croatian state in memorializing the war in the 1990s, Govedarica shows how the Serbian state has been reluctant in dealing with recent past. In fact, significant initiatives in that direction happened only after the influence of the EU or the efforts of Serbia's civil society sector, such as in the case of the Srebrenica declaration in 2010. Unfortunately the chapter on Bosnia-Herzegovina lacks a similar discussion of memory politics regarding the conflict in the 1990s. Although the contribution by Karačić includes a wealth of information on various monuments, commemorations, and shifting interpretations of World War Two, this chapter suffers from a chaotic presentation of the facts, which is not organized chronologically, thematically, nor geographically. This distracts from what is otherwise an exhaustively researched topic considering the complexity of the post-war situation

in Bosnia-Herzegovina; a focus on a few sites of memory or a stricter chronological framework would have strengthened the author's arguments.

As mentioned earlier, the book suffers from the lack of a more cohesive theoretical approach which could have been laid out in an introductory and comparative chapter. Moreover, despite being inherently comparative because of its analysis of three ex-Yugoslav countries, there is little reference to comparative memory politics in other parts of Europe. For example, Govedarica's discussion of the impact of the Škorpioni video depicting the murders of Bosniak civilians could have parallels with the role of documentaries and films in opening the dark sides of the World War Two past in Western European countries in the 1960s and 1970s. There is also considerable room for comparative analysis with other former communist countries and how their memory politics differ from or resemble those in the Yugoslav successor states, especially the Baltic countries or Hungary which are also dealing with the legacies of fascist collaborators up to the present day. While the chapter on Serbia brings up the role of victims (and auto-victimization) in the discourse of the past, a greater emphasis and reflection on this phenomenon throughout the book would have represented a significant contribution to the field. Despite a few rough edges, the volume is a valuable addition to the body of work dealing with the culture of memory in the former Yugoslavia, and one hopes a starting point for further research endeavors.

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Review

Véronique Pin-Fat
**Universality, Ethics and
International Relations:
a Grammatical Reading**

Routledge, London and New York, 2010,
157 pp.

The book *Universality, Ethics and International Relations: a Grammatical Reading* by Véronique Pin-Fat presents an interesting hermeneutical journey into the unsolvable philosophical issue of ethics and universal human rights in global politics. Thus, for students of International Relations theory (especially the normative wing dealing with ethics in IR) this book is a must-read.

The central theme of the book is what the author calls a "metaphysical seduction" of IR scholars, who are seduced by the search for eternal universal standards of ethics. They use specific words forming a distinctive grammar to explain their respective theories. It is precisely the author's intervention into these grammars that makes this book an original contribution to IR theory. The author tends to investigate the grammatical "digging" of IR scholars beneath the surface of the perceptive reality of international politics. In other words (as the author explains in chapter 1 relying on the interpretations of Ludwig Wittgenstein) the words that we use to name objects do not necessarily refer to the nature of objects themselves,