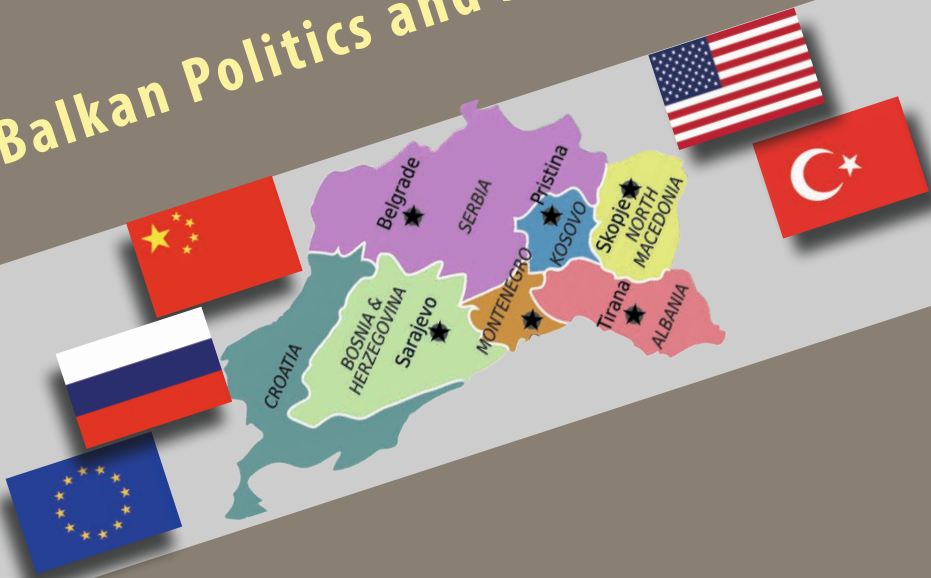


Balkan Politics and Society



Soeren Keil and Bernhard Stahl (eds.)

A NEW EASTERN QUESTION?

Great Powers and the Post-Yugoslav States

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Soeren Keil and Bernhard Stahl (eds.)

A New Eastern Question?

Great Powers and the Post-Yugoslav States

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKK	Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
AKP	Justice and Development Party – Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi
ANP	Annual National Program
BAF	Balkan Air Force
BFSU	Beijing Foreign Studies University
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BISU	Beijing University of International Studies
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CGTN	China Global Television Network
CICIR	China's Institute of Contemporary International Relations
CIDCA	China International Development Cooperation Agency
CIIS	China's Institute of International Studies
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease SARS CoV-2
CRI	China Radio International
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DPS	Democratic Party of Socialists
DS	Democratic Party Serbia
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community
ES	English School
EU	European Union
EUFOR	EU's Operation Althea
EULEX	EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUPM	Police Mission in Bosnia
FDI	Foreign direct investment

FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FYROM	Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
HR	High Representative
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IDPs	Internally displaced people
IFIs	International financial institutions
IFOR	NATO Implementation Force
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPAP	Individual Partnership Action Plan
IR	International Relations
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KAP	Kombinat aluminijuma in Podgorica
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
LNG	Liquefied natural gas
LSGs	Leading small groups and commissions
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIS	Naftna Industrija Srbije
NISMA	Social Democratic Initiative
NPC	National People's Congress
OBOR	One Belt One Road
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
OSA	Bosnian Intelligence Agency
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBSC	Politburo's Standing Committee

PDK	Democratic Party of Kosovo
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PIC	Peace Implementation Council
PKK	Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan
PLA	State Council and the People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
R2P	Responsibility to protect
ROC	Republic of China
RS	Republic Srpska
RSCT	Regional Security Complex Theory
RZD	Russian Rail Monopoly
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SAP	Stabilization and Association Process
SDA	Party of Democratic Action
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SEE	South and Eastern Europe
SFOR	NATO's Stabilization Force
SFRY	Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SKCG	League of Communists of Montenegro
SNS	Serbian Progressive Party
SNSD	Alliance of Independent Social Democrats
SOE	British Special Operations Executive
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
TCM	Traditional Chinese medicine
TİKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TRT	Turkey's state-run Radio and Television Corporation
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCRO	United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMIK	UN Mission in Kosovo
UNMOP	United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka
UNPREDEP	UN's Preventive Deployment Force

UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNPSG	United Nations Civilian Police Support Group
UNSC	UN Security Council
US	United States
USSR	Soviet Union
VC	Venice Commission
VMRO-DPMNE	Centre-right party of Macedonia
VV	Self-Determination Movement
WEU	Western European Union
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II
YNA	Yugoslav People's Army
YTB	Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities

INTRODUCTION: A NEW EASTERN QUESTION?

Bernhard Stahl and Soeren Keil

“I really believe the ‘Eastern Question’ that has haunted Europe for a century and which I thought the Crimean War had adjourned for half another will fall my lot to encounter – dare I say to settle.” (Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield)¹



Map 1: Post-Yugoslav Countries and their Neighbor States

Source: https://www.d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=69052&lang=de

¹ Letter to Lady Bradford, 3 November 1875, cited in: Sicherman, Harvey (2002). Disraeli's Secret, The National Interest, Spring 2002, (67), p. 49.

There is an increase in the scholarly literature arguing that we are observing the emergence of a new geopolitical battleground between different great powers in the post-Yugoslav states (Bieber and Tzifakis, 2020, AIES, 2020, van Meurs, 2014). For the countries of the former Yugoslavia, such an interaction is nothing new, after all, it is here that WWI started with the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Arch-Duke in June 1914. Further, during WWII, resistance against the Nazi occupation of the territory was overshadowed by an internal conflict between Royalist-Western allied forces and Partisans, which received most of their support from the Soviet Union, thereby mirroring the growing global conflict that would characterize the Cold War period. The post-Yugoslav states, so the argument, has often been a miniature version of wider global developments and conflicts. This area with its historic diversity, its history of conflict and cooperation, has been engaging with regional, great and superpowers for a long time, so contemporary developments need to be seen in this context.

We argue that the newly emerging 'Eastern Question' in the post-Yugoslav states is characterized by a number of important developments. First, the dominance of the Euro-Atlantic alliance and the integration of the region's countries into Euro-Atlantic structures has come to a halt, thereby substantially reducing the influence of the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) in the post-Yugoslav states. Second, new actors have emerged and grown in importance. Some, such as Russia and Turkey, have been involved in the region for a while, but have recently become more prominent and more openly opposed (and sometimes hostile) towards EU and US interests in the region. Others, such as China or the Gulf countries, have recently emerged as important actors, focusing on trade and cultural exchange, but also promoting distinct political priorities in their engagement with the post-Yugoslav states. Third, the countries in the region are changing and have changed in the last 15 years. Democratization has been faltering in the majority of countries in the region (with the exception of North Macedonia), while renewed authoritarian tendencies are visible in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and even in Slovenia and Croatia,

which are already members of the EU (Bieber, 2020). These new internal dynamics in the countries of the former Yugoslavia affect their foreign policy – European integration is becoming harder to achieve, while the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership is becoming more contested in countries such as Bosnia, but also in Montenegro, which already joined the alliance in 2017.

This book, in line with our assumption about historical continuity and foreign policy analysis framework, utilizes the theoretical framework of the English School (ES) in International Relations. In doing so, we aim to provide a theoretical discussion that helps understand the most recent developments across the region as outlined above. The authors of the following chapters, country experts and the bringing together of multiple disciplines were all given guiding questions and a clear structure to follow to ensure internal coherence and opportunities for cross-country comparisons. We are aware that we are studying a ‘moving target’; in the process of finalizing this book, we have seen political change in a number of post-Yugoslav states, including the historical defeat of the Democratic Party of Socialist (DPS) in parliamentary elections in Montenegro and the coming to power of new political actors through Vetëvendosje and Prime Minister Albin Kurti in Kosovo. We have also observed democratic decline in Slovenia, which has been hailed as a success story in post-Communist transition in the past, as well as continued political crisis in Bosnia.

This chapter will continue by providing the analytical and theoretical framework of this extensive study. The ES allows us to focus on historical continuities and change, order and justice in the international system and a wider discussion on foreign policy change amongst great powers towards the post-Yugoslav states and amongst the post-Yugoslav states towards the great powers. In the first part, the theoretical framework of the English School in International Relations will be presented. This will provide a guide for the reader on how to assess and look at the region and its states’ engagement with the great powers. Due to the theory’s proneness to historical patterns, the chapter also comprises a reconstruction of historical patterns of great power intervention. What is more, the

introduction will provide the theoretical and methodological guide for each chapter in this volume—a framework which all authors have been asked to follow. By outlining the reasoning behind this conceptual choice (and the important historical perspective in the English School literature), we will highlight how the engagement of the great powers with the post-Yugoslav states can be framed in a historical perspective, specifically assessing continuities and changes—and, most important for our purposes, current developments.

Theoretical Arguments

Our book seeks to examine regional change. This change may have occurred over the last 30 years manifesting in changing foreign policies, changing power constellations and/or changing conflicts. All of these may originate—our first assumption—in the so-called second or third image of international relations (Waltz, 1959) i.e., change will be attributed to the international system as well as the respective societies (not so much to individual leaders). Hence, a flexible conception is needed to be able to grasp such trends and to assess the political outcomes. This is why we opt for the English School in this book. While we are aware of the weaknesses of the theory—acknowledging the so-called Second debate in IR²—we appreciate its strengths: historical arguments, normative claims of order and justice and indicators for historical change (i.e., “primary institutions”). In the following, we will sketch the ES’ dealing with regions before we present our conceptual framework.

The English School is a loose network of scholars from the Commonwealth with its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s but which has started to thrive again in recent years (cf. Suganami, 2011). In the first decades of ES research, regional aspects did not play any role because the theory’s progression focused on general and global

² The ES belongs to the so-called “traditionalists” of international politics which contested the scientific turn in the 1960s (the “Second Debate of IR”). The basic text of the Second Debate from the then leading ES-scholar is Bull (1966). For details, see Kurki and Wight (2010).

aspects such as the evolution of the international society, its features and its possible transformation (Stivachtis, 2015, p. 69). In recent years, however, many ES studies on specific world regions were published (e.g., Stivachtis and Habegger, 2011; Buzan, 2009; Pourchot, 2014; Quayle, 2013; Pella, 2014), while particular takes on EU conditionality and enlargement (Diez and Whitman, 2002; Diez et al., 2014) complemented the picture. The Balkans, though, still represent a research gap in this regard. It only occurs in the research on Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), which is close to the ES that one chapter is devoted to in “The Balkans and Turkey” (Buzan and Waever, 2003, pp. 377–396). We start our endeavour where this chapter ends and have asked for changes ever since. By doing so, we will dig into those characteristics of ES and RSCT which will be applied in our study.

A key feature of the ES is the **centrality of the state**: international relations is about “the politics of states with regard to their external aspects” (Devlen et al., 2005, p. 180). Of course, states are different in terms of power and influence (Buzan, 2004, pp. 63–66). While “regional powers” “owe superior political and military means in relation to their neighbours, “great powers”” capabilities allow them to generate impact beyond their region. Great powers do not possess capabilities in all sectors or issue areas, but they are treated by others “on the basis of system level calculations about the present and future distribution of power” (Buzan and Waever, 2003, p. 35). Only “super powers” act on a global scale owing “first class military-political capabilities” (ibid., p. 34). For our study, Turkey qualifies as a regional power while it looks debatable whether we treat Serbia and Croatia as possible regional powers. EU actor-ness is taken as given in our study (Niemann and Bretherton, 2013), considering its fit to well-established actorness criteria, be it authority, autonomy, recognition (Jupille and Caporaso, 1998), or presence and capability (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006, p. 24). Hence, the EU well qualifies for great power status together with Russia and China. The US should be regarded as the sole superpower.

The second characteristic of the ES is the **importance of history** for their arguments. Because political science stems from law and history studies, the ES subscribes to this tradition. The broad

structural argument is that (political) history swings between three poles called “empire”, “hegemony” and “anarchy” (Buzan and Little, 2009). On a global scale, the system of states might be located somewhere between hegemony (Cold War, US) and anarchy with a recent trend to the latter. Regionally, the situation might look different. Admittedly, the regional aspect is not well elaborated in the ES’s writings (Buzan, 2014, p. 57f.) Yet, for our purpose, we borrow some insights from the complementary RSCT (Buzan and Waever, 2003). For RSCT, a region is a construct, not an essentialist entity, and it is shaped by the distribution of power and historical patterns of enmity/amity. Furthermore, there are security threats which are interdependent in the region (and not a mere extension of global threats such as terrorism, Covid etc). Two cores in the region stand out: One is the conflict constellation of Serbs, Croats and Bosnians, and a second one comprises North-Macedonia³, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey (Buzan and Waever, 2003, p. 382). Buzan and Waever (2003, pp. 377–379, p. 391) make the argument that the Balkans were oscillating between being a proper regional security complex (in the 1990s, see below) or being a “sub-complex”, as part of the European security complex (1999–2007, see below). Following the insight that “security dynamics have a strong territoriality” (Buzan and Waever, 2003, p. 29), we tend to treat the Balkans or Southeastern Europe (SEE) as comprising the Post-Yugoslav states⁴, and the “Western Balkans” as a security complex which is “a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another” (Buzan, 2009, p. 160). By doing so, we already take a stance claiming that the West’s first attempt to make the region a ‘sub-complex’ of the EU has failed by admitting that no further enlargements will take place

³ In political speech, the name for North-Macedonia has been contested since the break-up of Yugoslavia. For practical reasons, we use “North-Macedonia” (due to the Greek-Macedonian settlement) throughout the book. Only if this is relevant for the contents the terms “Macedonia” or “FYRoM” are employed.

⁴ The term post-Yugoslav states refers to Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and North-Macedonia. Throughout this proposal we use the term ‘Kosovo’ to refer to the respective country notwithstanding the contested nature of the independence of Kosovo.

in the decade after Croatia's. What the EU's second serve will be like and what it will mean to the region is part of our elaboration to come.

In SEE, the EU's position has been so dominant that we posit it between empire and hegemony, again with a recent trend to the latter. Our studies will be apt to demonstrate how change takes place in regional security complexes, i.e., how the EU's impact as a benevolent empire transforms to a mere hegemonic status under the impression of external great powers becoming more active. This is the result of the EU's growing scepticism towards further enlargement as a whole, as well as the growing hesitance in the post-Yugoslav states to engage in deep-rooted Europeanization reforms as the carrot of eventual EU membership moves further away.

A third feature of the ES is its **devotion to institutions**. Over time, the international system has become an international society, a key term of the theory:

A society of states (or: international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in a sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions (Bull, 1977, p. 13).

The international society serves two functions. One is to maintain "order", i.e., the pluralist argument to contribute to the states' existence and survival while mitigating conflicts at the same time (Hurrell, 2007, pp. 3–4). The other function aims to foster justice, i.e., the solidarist argument to take care of the individuals in the international society (Joergensen, 2010, p. 111). Of course, the EU accession principles can be easily interpreted in this vein. Does the EU apply EU conditionality in a strict way contributing to humanitarian law and paying tribute to the rule of law ('justice')? Or does it ease the conditions – maybe even pervert them (Stahl, 2011a) – to go for quicker accessions aiming at stability ('order')?

The more content the states are with the world they live in, the more "legitimate" and stable the international society becomes (Watson, 2009, p. 315). Each state, though, faces the challenge to maintain a maximum of flexibility on the one hand (*raison d'état*)