

EUROPEAN POLITICAL INTEGRATION AFTER KOSOVO : A DAMAGED PROJECT ?¹

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Introduction

In this paper I use as a context the events in the Balkans in the 1990s, particularly in Kosovo, to raise broader issues related to “imagining the new Europe” and the project of European political integration.

Although the discussion about the war itself is of vital importance, in this paper I shift the emphasis to a less discussed issue: its impact on the project of European integration and particularly to the reordering of Europe’s political space. The war in Kosovo pulled out the legacies of imperialism at a time when the EU was attempting a widening towards Eastern Europe and a deepening within it, reflecting different ways of “imagining” Europe. “Geographical imagination” and the historical production of meanings is fundamentally important in global politics, with different definitions being developed to reflect or to challenge old and new forms of political power. It is a crucial cultural factor of enormous political, economic and social significance as the assumptions, pre-images and stereotypes on which it is based predetermine decisions and strategies. Without grasping the significance of geographical imagination it is impossible to identify the broad direction of changes in Europe and in a global scale.

Some “imaginings”, however, are more powerful than others and the capacity to impose/endorse them is strictly related to the particular strength of some against “Others” in terms of class, ethnicity, gender, religion, location, economic and military power, etc. As part of this, I want to challenge some emerging putative neo-orthodoxies about contemporary notions such as “the hollowing out of the nation-state”, “a global space of connections and flows”, “the Europe of Regions”, “a Europe without boundaries” and others. While they have some validity in a few cases (e.g. global economic spaces) or they reflect progressive demands (e.g. no boundaries for migrants and cultural “Others”), in their main use they represent particular dominant interests and they are by no means universal.

The paper is an attempt to approach questions such as about Europe and “Europeanness”: where is Europe and on what criteria are its boundaries to be decided? Who are Europeans and on what criteria is Europeanness to be decided? What sorts of rights and responsibilities do European citizens have (or more accurately could and should they have) as part of an emergent European civil society and political state? And finally, how we may celebrate “difference” in a peaceful way and one that finds a way of holding together politically as “Europeans” with many and varied ‘Others’? These are open questions for which we have to work together. What we *do* know, however, is that we cannot pursue them through offensive military action, under any circumstances.

¹ The paper draws heavily on a collective project with Ray Hudson about European Political Integration and the Balkan question entitled: *Geographical Imaginations, Identities of Neo-Imperialism and the Project of European Political Integration*. A previous paper was presented in the *Seminars of the Aegean*, Paros Island (1999). I gladly acknowledge Ray’s input in this paper.

Looking through the War Glass: Imagining European Political Space

The war in Kosovo foregrounded the legacies of imperialism at a time when the EU was attempting major internal reform and eastwards expansion, reflecting different ways of imagining European political space. The complex set of processes after the break-up of the USSR and the capitalist transformation of former communist economies raises new questions about what kind of Europe is emerging, the location of its political boundaries, and who is to be included in or excluded from the European project (Hudson, 2000, Paasi, 2000). In short, the post-war geo-political map of Europe, based upon a clear distinction between “us” – the parliamentary democratic capitalist West - and “them” – the rejected communist East - was under question. This old map, however, included among “us” the USA and NATO, with the former taking the leading role. Thus, any political re-ordering, any new imagination about a future Europe necessarily would have to pass through the filter of the USA and its military arm, NATO.

The re-organisation of political space is a complex and often contradictory process in which different social actors and localities are constantly being redefined. Political geography, whatever the spatial scale, is fundamentally about different ways of “imagining” the world and the uneven capacity to endorse these imaginations. It may always have been the case that asymmetric power relations shaped the ways in which the world’s geopolitics were imagined or constructed, from the era of empires to the Cold War and the current versions of the New World Order. Now, the dominant version of imagining the world is based on the illusion of a single linear process of globalisation (Massey, 1999). The power relations embodied in this exclude places and societies that do not participate in the process, the “world map” is reshaped without them.

As such we see these various imaginations as a crucial cultural factor because of their assumptions and presumptions, the stereotypes they incorporate, their framing of questions and shaping of agendas by virtue of what they exclude as well as what they include. They both neglect and help define a socio-spatial production of meaning (Anderson, 1991). Just as European colonisations were once seen as a project to bring civilization to savages in dark lands, so neo-imperialistic intervention in Kosovo is seen as the way to guarantee “universal” human rights selectively within a Europe that, according to at least USA state officials, is unable to deal with its own problems. Both projects revolve around the essentialisation and reification of abstract universals – conveniently sidestepping the key issue of who has the power to construct and define these as universals and who has the power to implement the political/military solutions that flow from them.

In the case of the FRY, there was a “Balkan logic” contrasted with the record of human rationality in the “normal world” of what Chomsky (2000, p.101) called, the “enlightened West”. Kosovo was conceived as “A new collision of East and West”, as a *New York Times* (4.4.99) think-piece was headlined, illustrating Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilisations*: the imagination of “a democratic West, its humanitarian instincts repelled by the barbarous inhumanity of Orthodox Serbs”. Said’s (1989, p.136) perceptive comment relating to “an American imperial intervention affecting the theoretical discussion” is useful in this context. Whilst USA-made sanitized visions of a “unified world”, interconnected through technology and a variety of flows, dominated by market forces and liberalism, and free of social conflicts, may have some partial application, for Said (1989, p.136 emphasis in the original) they are “an imperial contest” which is a cultural factor of enormous political significance:

“..culture works very effectively to make invisible and even “impossible” the actual *affiliations* that exist between the world of ideas and scholarship on the one hand, and the world of brute politics, corporate and state power, and military force on the other”.

From this imperial contest, a powerful “post-modern” geographical imagination of the world emerges: a world of connections and flows in which political space is no longer defined by national territorial boundaries. Political spaces are seen as open, constantly re-constituted through the multiple identities

of political actors. Global economic forces and international régimes (such as the IMF and WTO) are replacing nation-states, national policies and finally the “old” concept of territorially bounded sovereignty. Openness, however, is not only conceived in terms of economic transactions, information flows, cultural values and the like, but also for military purposes. Without the demonstrated ability for global military intervention, other conceptions of open political spaces can fall apart.

Conceptualisation of political spaces relates to broader debates about theorising place (for example, see Allen *et al.*, 1998). Two aspects of the debates about place are particularly relevant here: first, places seen as bounded/closed/continuous as opposed to unbounded/open/discontinuous; second, places seen as culturally/socially/religiously homogeneous as opposed to heterogeneous. These issues have a particular salience in the context of imaginations of Europe and of the Balkans and are related to differentiated practices of nation-state building. In Western Europe there was a particular “modern” geographical imagination of the world: a bounded and closed political space for each nation-state, in which it is assumed that homogeneity predominates in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion. In terms of geopolitical relations, various systems of core-states and peripheral-states, with asymmetrical power relationships between the former and the latter, and a clear distinction between domestic and external realms of political action, are integral to this imagination. Asymmetries and inequalities in power and conflict relations between national states as well as capitals are central themes in this imagination. Growth in the imperial cores was seen as based not just on internal dynamics but also on external relations and the dependent status of peripheries. In this framework the celebration of “different identities” was simply out of the question. There was single dominant identity, that of white, male, heterosexual, Catholic/Protestant, Western European capitalist. All others, within Europe and globally, were seen as inferior and dependent, unable to write their own history and to master their own space and Western powers sought to impose their views on “others”, often via military force and violence.

Indeed, Mann (1999) argues that ethnic cleansing and genocide have long been integral to the process of constructing liberal modernity and its associated democratic forms. However, he distinguishes between the emergence of a liberal conception of the nation state in north west Europe and an organic conception of the nation state in central, eastern and southern Europe. This difference partly reflects historical timing, and the varying demands made of the state depending on when pressures for democracy began to emerge, partly the greater salience of ethnic difference and the identity of one nation with its own territorial state. “Organicist nationalists” came to believe in a distinctive national essence, their right to a state that would ultimately express this essence, and the right to exclude “others” who would weaken the nation. Whereas in north west Europe the primary social cleavage plane was that of class, and the “problem” for the national state was how to hold together class-divided societies, central, eastern and southern Europe “... was dominated by ‘multi-national’ dynastic Empires – Hapsburgs, Romanovs and Ottomans. Thus, entwined with the usual class conflicts, came imperial versus local conflicts. In the era of democracy, these conflicts have moved from conflicts between elites to conflicts between supposed national communities” (Mann, 1999, 28). As a result,

“... massive and murderous ethnic and political cleansing was not really the antithesis of democracy. ... Rather it was its underside” (Mann, 1999, 40). Mann thus argues that the historical-geography of state formation in the Balkans inscribed conflict based around ethnic difference as integral to the practices of the state well before the events of the 1980s and 1990s.

It was therefore not accidental that for centuries in Europe – Eastern and Western - cultural, religious and class differences led to violent suppression of the Other; this was integral to the process on national state formation, albeit with spatial and temporal variations in who was defined as the Other². And it remains an open question as to how cultural/class/gender/ethnic/religious variations and issues of multiple identities will be treated in the future at various spatial scales, within an increasingly politically and economically heterogeneous Europe. The millions of refugees within EU - equivalent of a sixteenth state in size, and one not easily amenable to conventional mapping - is a case in point.

² Moreover ethnic cleansing was encouraged and vigorously practised by the Great Powers in earlier time/places, from the colonies of Europe to the Great Plains of North America.

Nonetheless, the project of European integration is proceeding apace, based on imaginations of cultural homogeneity and unbounded spaces for economic transactions. However, the FRY, Bosnia and particularly Kosovo were standing as “obstacles” in the path of widening towards East. Their societies and spaces violated the required norms of homogeneity and openness to the west while Milosevic was not the ideal political partner. It became clear therefore, that the combination of strategic location, the non-aligned tradition of the country, and important cultural differences plus a non pro-western government could turn the FRY and Kosovo to a “black hole” in the East: a non-collaborating site among “ready-to-give-all” neighbors (Hadjimichalis, 2000). The atrocities by the Serbs and violation of human rights thus gave a cloak of legitimacy to disguise more significant geopolitical reasons.

The significance of this comes out particularly in the “Balkanisation” of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990’s, seen as “beyond the pale”, not part of civilised Europe. The stigma placed on Yugoslavia and to some extent on the rest of non-Catholic, non-Protestant, Balkan people is of significance for cultural politics. On the one hand, the West sees de facto recognition of cultural differences on an individual basis as necessary for legitimating post-modern values of equality and dignity. On the other hand, the Western allies are unwilling to accept publicly and permanently the “modern” Otherness of Balkan people as cultural groups and nation-states. “Balkanness” in this case acquires a crucial political dimension. It is accepted by the West only if nation-states as socio-cultural groups in the region follow the directives of NATO (in practice, the USA), the IMF and the EU. In a word: only if they became protectorates, as in the case of Albania and the KLA (UCK) or in Kosovo with the presence of KFOR.

In short, it is not difficult to predict whose imaginations of the Balkans and of Europe will dominate. The social costs however, remain to be counted.

Contested Imaginations of the National State

In recent years there has been a persistent line of argument that national states matter less, that they are being ‘re-organised’ in various ways, partly in response to processes of globalisation that seemingly take on a life of their own, leaving national states no option but to adapt to them. Jessop (1997) identifies three strands to this process of re-organisation: de-nationalisation (“hollowing out”), shifting state competencies, powers and responsibilities “up” and “down” to emergent supra-national, notably the EU, and sub-national levels; de-statization, re-drawing the boundary between state and civil society and shifting regulatory and governance responsibilities from the former to the institutions of the latter; and the internationalisation of policy regimes, as regulation is shifted to supra-national organisations that selectively incorporate and link national states (such as the IMF, G7 and G8, WTO, World Bank and NATO). Indeed, leading capitalist states, notably the USA, in collaboration with private sector TNCs, banks and financial institutions, and supra-national organisations in the public sphere positively encourage such developments as a way of creating global markets via persuading or coercing weaker national states and organisations that they are a good thing. Thus such (pseudo) global markets – and the accompanying transfer of power from national states that they presume – are largely constructed and/or permitted by national state action and agreements between the USA and other powerful national states and various international organisations. Great emphasis is placed upon the democratising aspects of shifting power to the local/regional levels, of bringing political decision making nearer to those directly affected by its consequences. Much less is said about the creation of various “democratic deficits” and the anti-democratic aspects of moving political power from state to civil society and/or to democratically unaccountable supra-national organisations (Hudson, 2000).

Nonetheless, despite – or maybe because of – such developments, the view that the significance of the national state is being eroded is being increasingly challenged (e.g. Boyer and Drache, 1995; Mann, 1993; Weiss, 1997). Equally, the political implications of creating undemocratic and unaccountable decision making organisations, often of a network structure, by shifting power from the national state is increasingly being acknowledged. As Susan George (1999, 9 emphasis added) has recently

remarked: “Despite the best efforts of the private sector and of international institutions to downgrade them, states have more power than they often appear willing to recognise”. George here hints at the fact that national states have often been complicit in encouraging the linked processes of political-economic globalisation and of the “de-nationalisation” of their own powers and this is a point of immense significance, analytically and politically. We wish to side with these critics but emphasise that our opposition is not to territorial bases of political power other than the national state but rather to anti-democratic forms and practices at whatever spatial scale. Indeed, reconstructing the relationships between democracy and various spatial scales of governance is a central element in the creation of a democratic, socially just and peaceful Europe. We accept that the “re-organisation” thesis has validity in some time/places and that there are new forms of economic and financial globalisation (“stateless monies”, for example) that take matters beyond the effective control of many (but not all) national states. However, we also insist that in other respects this thesis is fatally flawed from an analytic perspective and is politically dangerous, especially in terms of national states ceding power to politically unaccountable supra-national organisations. It ought to be vigorously resisted, especially in seeking to come to terms with events such as those in the Balkans in the 1990s and in seeking solutions to the problems that flow from them.

The USA – the world’s only genuine remaining superpower (Taylor and Flint, 2000, 90) – undoubtedly has a uniquely powerful role in pressing the interests of global capital. Almost half a century ago, President Eisenhower expressed this relationship in terms of the military-industrial complex³, a complex that remains of pivotal importance despite the ending of the Cold War. It survives and indeed prospers but for it to continue to maintain its momentum requires finding new “regional” wars, such as those in the Balkans, enabling fresh outbursts of not-so-creative destruction that devalorise capital and open up new possibilities for accumulation. In addition, however, echoing Eisenhower, Bhagwati (1998) introduces the concept of “Wall Street-Treasury Complex” to describe the leading role of the USA in furthering private sector interests via encouraging economic and financial globalisation in the contemporary era. The extent of truly global product markets for financial commodities is actually very limited, not least as time and space continue to pose barriers to process of globalisation, given the unevenness of time-space compression. Furthermore, capitalist social formations continue to be strongly territorially grounded, allied to strong national and regional identities, so that there are significant sites of resistance to processes of globalisation.

In many respects, then, national states, even those of the EU (the paradigmatic area for Euro-centric ‘re-organisation’ theorists) retain considerable powers (Anderson, 1995; Mann, 1993) and the “re-organisation” thesis is relevant to at best just a few national states (and even here the reading of recent changes is sometimes seriously flawed).⁴ But perhaps the main problem with the “re-organisation” thesis, especially its “de-nationalisation” and “internationalisation of policy régimes” strands, is that it ignores the lessons to be drawn from the historical geographies of imperialism and of combined and uneven development, theoretically and practically. Globally, the USA remains the dominant capitalist power, with little evidence of its powers being weakened. But it needs at the same time to be distinct and meaningful as a global power and both Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait and Milosevic’s atrocities in Kosovo offered an opportunity to do so in a very dramatic and forceful way. Other national states, notably those of the (enlarging) EU, are in a more ambiguous position. On the one hand they are “voluntarily de-nationalising themselves”, giving up some of their state powers to emerging European institutions (albeit institutions flawed by deep democratic deficits). On the other hand, in other respects they are vulnerable to “involuntary de-nationalisation” as a consequence of the strategies of the USA and its supra-national allies. In this regard, the states of the EU are in a sort of

³ Mandel (1975) later made the same point more generally in characterising late capitalism as a “permanent arms economy”.

⁴ For example, it is hard to map the re-organisation of the state in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s in terms of decentralisation as it was a period of almost unprecedented centralisation of state power in central government ministries. Although at responsibility was pushed back onto individuals and civil society, resources and power became even more concentrated in central Government ministries.

intermediate position within a global hierarchy. They also need, however, to be distinct and meaningful in their own way, to show others that Europe has a voice on its own.

In sharp contrast, there is no doubt that many other national states were cast in a dependent and marginalised mould from the outset, marked by their colonial histories which ran into emaciated post-colonial state forms that lacked significant power from the outset and so possessed very little in the way of national powers subsequently to lose. The political and practical legacies of imperialism are very visible here – as are the desires of dominant states to reproduce a global system based on asymmetrical relationships between national states.

Similar points can be made with regard to the former state socialist states and their post-state socialist trajectories, not least the former Yugoslavia. Economic crisis was used by social groups there and in the West to undermine the collectivist core of the economy and push Yugoslavia : “...towards a full capitalist restoration. The Yugoslav government accepted an IMF plan that shifted the burden of the crisis onto the Yugoslav working class” (Gowan, 1999, 85) – and in so doing helped fan the flames of ethnic cleansing and nationalist ambition. Thus in encouraging processes of globalisation and in seeking to make the discourses of globalisation hegemonic, the USA and to less degree EU, usually in active collaboration with international organisations such as the IMF and World Bank, are actively involved in seeking to “de-nationalise” other national states while reinforcing their own pre-eminent position in the capitalist world order. What this involves is neither more nor less than the latest forms of inter-imperialist struggle between powerful national states, with scant regard for the resultant human misery, as events in the Balkans in the 1990s starkly revealed.

European Political Integration: a damaged project ?

In a European context, the widening and deepening of the EU seems to lend some credence to the claims of “re-organisation” theorists but these are deeply ambiguous and ambivalent processes. On the one hand, the EU is both encouraging and resisting globalisation, while representing itself as a counter-weight to the USA. It is worth recalling that in the 1960s Jacques Servan Schreiber (1969) was arguing strongly for the emergence of a strong EEC (as it then was) to counter the political power of the USA state and the economic power of USA-based multinationals that were increasingly penetrating and dominating key sectors of the national economies of western Europe. This was a vivid expression of a vision of the EU as a unified political-economic space, with protective barriers and boundaries around it, formed by the mutual consent of sovereign national states in pursuit of their shared interests. Indeed Servan Schreiber’s vision embodied a normative claim that European national states needed to be “de-nationalised” in order that the EU could emerge as a super state and become a bulwark against USA neo-imperialist ambitions.

In some ways the “deepening” of the EU can be seen to lend support to this “de-nationalisation” thesis, shifting state regulation “up” a spatial scale to a larger version of existing national states but without the democratic checks and balances that have evolved (often via painful struggle) in the national states of western Europe. However, if the EU is an emergent super-state, it is one that is flawed, politically and militarily weak, and dogged by a deep democratic deficit. This, however, can be legitimated as a temporary, albeit undesirable, state of affairs since existing European national states are (allegedly) weakened and ineffective in the face of globalising pressures. The EU nonetheless remains clearly subordinate to the visibly dominant USA. While it is still possible (following Servan-Schreiber) to see the EU as a political project intended to counter USA political-economic domination, on this interpretation it remains a demonstrably incomplete project - as the recent events in the Balkans make clear.

The reasons for this can be traced back to the 1950s with the abandonment of plans for explicit political as well as economic union. For a “modernist” imagination of the EU that encompassed wider explicitly political ambitions was placed in suspended animation in 1954 with the formal abandonment

of plans for a European Defence Force (EDF). However, in the ensuing years elements of western Europe's political élites continued to hold on to ambitions for political and military union and this acquired fresh impetus in early 2000 after the Kosovo intervention when European powers once more realized their dependency on the USA. France, Germany and Italy were advancing the idea of an EDF among NATO circles but they found strong opposition by USA, Turkey (who even threatened to veto any such move) and scepticism by the UK. Moreover, such an EDF could provide a solution to a geo-political paradox: that is, that the EU as an economic giant lacks an effective common foreign policy and requisite military power. But the limited character of the emergent European Defence Force places clear limits on its scope for autonomous action, independent of NATO and USA⁵.

This is, however, another reading of the emergence of a "military" Europe. Bourdieu discussed the prospect of a "military" Europe and its negative aspects at a meeting in Paris, in May 1999, while American and European pilots were bombing the FRY and Kosovo. He emphasised that a major negative consequence of the intervention was the death of "social" Europe (assuming that it did exist) in favor of "military" Europe (*Humanité*, 15.5.99). Together with other speakers he concluded that this will have long lasting negative effects for the project of European political integration as it helped undermine one of the founding principles of the precursor of EU, that of peaceful European co-existence.

For a driving motive for the formation of the precursor to the EEC, the ECSC formed in 1951 with the Treaty of Paris, was to ensure a peaceful western Europe. It was to do so in two ways: first, irrevocably merging the main industries that produced the means of destruction in France and Germany; secondly, helping underpin an uneasy peace between East and West via participation in organisations such as NATO and the WEU (Western European Union). This bound moves to political supra-nationalism within Europe in a complex way to the global ambitions of the USA, especially given the strongly Atlanticist tone of UK foreign policies. After 1989, it became evident that peaceful solutions were reserved for western EU members, while for the Eastern periphery, labeled as "less democratic" and "culturally different", military intervention was a "forced necessity".

There is, however, another political and geographical imagination of the EU (indeed there are no doubt others). This sees it not as replacing national states but as co-existing alongside them as part of a multi-level and multi-dimensional system of governance in Europe. This would require that appropriate mechanisms be set in place to ensure political accountability to relevant constituencies at each territorial level of governance. To a degree, however, as the "de-statization" and "internationalisation of policy régimes" theses emphasise, it would also necessarily involve a networked and "de-territorialised" approach to governance. Not all communities of interest in Europe are territorially defined and delimited and there is no good a priori reason as to why one sort of community of interest be privileged over others within a truly democratic Europe. However, such a model of governance unavoidably raises issues of different types of democratic deficit. This is especially so in terms of foreign policy and international relations, given the uneasy relationship between at least some EU member states and NATO, itself a network governance structure that is increasingly democratically unaccountable in its new self-proclaimed role as global policeman. Following the collapse of the USSR, the Warsaw Pact and the "old" Cold War NATO had clearly become an anachronism. In searching for a "new" Cold War role, NATO is intent on "transforming itself from a defensive alliance into a mobile global police force which can hit a target anywhere in the world to defend the interests of the United States, defined, of course, as 'human rights' and the 'free market'" (Ali, 1999, 62).

⁵ The EDF proposal was formalised as a rapid reaction force of 60,000 troops at the December 1999 Helsinki Summit of EU leaders. Whether this will be sufficient to reverse Smith's (1996) judgement that the EU fell short of constituting effective geo- powers political institutions independent of existing military remains to be seen. Even so, it may be evidence of the first signs of an answer to Smith's (1995, 139) question, "who will die for Europe?" and in this regard at least evidence of an emerging sense of collective responsibility, may be even the first very tentative steps in the direction of a shared European identity.

The Kosovo operation represents the latest step in this transformation and the new policy (Blackburn, 1999, 112). The undemocratic procedures and the media propaganda, which has framed the context within which decisions about the intervention have taken place, have been a major step backwards in European politics. It was a painful reminder that European political integration has a military face in which NATO and the USA are partners. Indeed, the launching of the offensive operation came at a critical moment of the process of European political integration, while NATO had no choice but to seek such a transformation in its role – irrespective of the carnage and human misery that followed. On the other hand, both NATO and the EU were advancing a new role globally, which was both crisis-prone from the outset and against the UN and the Security Council (Zizek, 1999, 81-2):

“...the very first act of the new global police force usurping the rights to punish sovereign states for their wrongdoings already signals its end, its own undermining, since it immediately became clear that this universality of human rights acting as its legitimation is false, that the attacks are on selective targets in order to protect particular interests. The NATO bombing of Yugoslavia also signals the end of any serious role for UN and Security Council: it is NATO, under US guidance, that effectively pulls the strings”.

Only a NATO-led solution and protectorate status for Kosovo were acceptable to the USA and UK, and their NATO allies accepted this, with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

Furthermore, serious questions remain as to how cultural and ethnic variation and issues of (multiple) identities at national and even more so regional/local scales are to be treated within this damaged political-economic space, beyond the fairly empty rhetoric of a ‘Europe of the Regions’. Equally, serious questions remain about where the boundaries of this common space are to be drawn and what happens on and/or beyond these boundaries (in a wider Europe?). These relate to issues of “otherness” and processes of “othering” (Said, 1978) and the criteria by which ‘Europeanness’ is to be judged, how ‘we’ are to be differentiated from ‘them’. Bosnia and Kosovo showed clearly that the dualism of “us” versus “them” remains dominant in the European tradition and cultural heritage and characterizes the entire discourse on identities. They have also shown that despite physical changes in boundaries, their symbolic and cultural meaning remains because it is grounded in the “longue durée” of Fernand Braudel. Thus, European expansion towards the East will never result in the cultural homogenisation of the past. One product of this is various models of the future governance of the EU which legitimise an institutionalisation of uneven development and of uneven access to the Council of Ministers and other centres of political power (expressed in spatial metaphors such as “strong core” versus peripheries, “concentric circles, “flexible geometries” and so on).

The significance of these various points becomes painfully clear in examining the Balkanisation of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, seen as “beyond the pale”, not a part of “civilised” Europe. As a consequence, there was generally muted opposition to military intervention, even though it wreaked grievous material and political damage on the people of Serbia, neutering, in the short term at least, internal political opposition to Milosevic – maybe bombs and missiles were just what he wanted? Furthermore, it did little to put a stop to his repugnant policy of ethnic cleansing and material destruction in Kosovo. The “unintended” killing of innocent civilians and “accidental” attacks – most notably that on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade – further call into question the legitimacy and wisdom of NATO’s aerial assault.

Questions that Remain: Geography Matters

“*Redraw the Map*”: a cynical headline in *Wall Street Journal* (18.3.2001) summarised the rationale for the Kosovo intervention, two years after the end of bombing. Written by Lord Owen, former western representative in discussions with the FRY during the Bosnia crisis, the article concluded that the only solution in the Balkans is “...agreed changes of national boundaries *which must have the*

approval by the Great Powers” (emphasis added). And he goes on by specifying some of these changes: independence for Kosovo and Montenegro, re-partitioning of Bosnia, provision to the FRY of a land-corridor giving access to the Adriatic sea and so on. The language echoes the main article of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (18.3.99) in the first days of the bombing: “...the principle of territorial sovereignty cannot be a fetish...The notion on nation-state is inappropriate for the states of Central and South East Europe”. So much for “humanitarian intervention” in the face of such openly neo-imperialist sentiments.

There is clearly abundant evidence from the West that “organicist nationalists” want territorially defined states for “their” nations in which they are sovereign, that territorially constituted identities remain critical within a world of multiple identities and multi-level and multi-dimensional governance. But this should not become a “fetish” for the East, seen as somehow “different”. There is, however, no necessary reason why difference translates into conflict and violence, though it often does so. Struggles over territorial identities can become savagely embroiled in geo-political neo-imperial power struggles in a world in which some national states never had much power and autonomy whilst others remain strongly dominant. So much for Fukuyama’s end of history.

But this poses some real and hard questions about Europe and “Europeanness”: where is Europe and on what criteria are its boundaries to be decided? Who are Europeans and on what criteria is Europeanness to be decided? What sorts of rights and responsibilities do European citizens have (or more accurately could and should they have) as part of an emergent European civil society and political state? For a political state that is not underpinned by a strong civil society is doomed to an existence dogged by a “democratic deficit”. It also poses critical political questions as to the circumstances in which difference does not equate to conflict and violence, and in which multi-ethnic societies can peacefully co-exist in the same territorial unit (as in Bosnia over many years). In sum, how might the process of “becoming European” be shaped as one that accepts, tolerates and understands – maybe even celebrates in a peaceful way – “difference” and one that finds a way of holding together politically as “Europeans” in peaceful co-existence with many and varied ‘others’? These are open questions for which we have to work together. What we *do* know, however, is that we cannot pursue them through offensive military action, under any circumstances. This is not only a painful lesson to be learned from the history of the *longue durée* but one that is powerfully reinforced by the recent experience of a decade of military involvement in the FRY.

So who is to decide the shape and form of a future Europe? Gowan (1999, p.96-97) sketched out three possible political scenarios for Europe in the 1990s, which remain very relevant to the first decade of the new millennium, two of which were “absolutely unacceptable” to the USA in the 1990s and are even more so now, given the election of George W. Bush’s as President. The first option was a pan-European collective security system, embracing Russia and the USA as well as all the other states of Europe, in an institutionalised and norm-based framework – a much strengthened and streamlined Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). There would be clear rules that all should enforce and which would lead all to coerce any state that breached them. The second option involved a two-pillar structure involving the EU and Western European Union (WEU) in Western Europe and Russia and the CIS in the East. NATO would fade into the background as the ultimate guarantor of its members’ security, while the WEU/EU would expand into East Central Europe – something Russia could accept. The third option involved NATO, led by the USA, taking command of European politics. The OSCE would be marginalised, the WEU/EU would be denied a policy-making authority and a command structure autonomous from supervision by the USA – exercised through NATO – and NATO would expand eastwards but would exclude Russia. Europe would be re-polarised further East between a USA-dominated western Europe and a weakened Russia. During the early 1990s there was resistance to this third option, both from the Russians and also from many western European states. It thus became a vital issue for the USA to translate this option into reality. Gowan points out that Yugoslavia may, at first sight, seem to have little to do with these security debates among the Western powers. But what was going on was not just a ‘debate’: *it was a political battle over the future political shape of Europe and one that was deeply damaging to the European project*. And such battles between the Western powers were fought not only in words but also by

deeds and by creating facts. In this context, Yugoslavia was a central arena for winning arguments by these methods, whatever the costs to people who lived there. As Ali (1999, 86-6) puts it:

“The NATO assault on Serbia thus marks a watershed in European politics. It reflects a decision by the United States to abandon all notions of a ‘norm-based system of collective security’ in Europe. This may have been a wistful piety in any case, given a world ruled by Capital under US hegemony, but it is something that the Russians have been demanding ever since Gorbachev came to power and it is a demand that was echoed by a number of EU states, including Kohl’s Germany following the end of the Cold War in 1989. The central reason why the NATO operation has taken place is that the West believes that Russia is still too weak to prevent such actions and that a network of bases and fortified positions must be constructed to contain Russia in future, plugging the gap in the Balkans from Greece in the south to Hungary in the north.

Questions about the future of Europe, what it can become and what it might be allowed to become, thus take on added urgency in the face of the all too visible ambitions of the USA. It is all too clear that these will not be questions to be settled by Europeans alone. Revealingly, when President Clinton spoke of the need “to construct a better Europe for our children”, the “our” were clearly the children of the USA rather than those of Europe. Nothing could have made more explicit the asymmetries of power between Europe and the USA. As Europeans once went out to civilise “savages” in the colonies and mould them in their image, so too does the USA now seek to generalise a particular conception of “human rights” as universal and promote them in the Balkans and in Europe. Is this, however, the sort of Europe and conception of Europeaness that Europeans themselves want?

I believe that in this, as in other, respects, the *longue dureé* is important in understanding geographies of uneven development. I do not, however, wish to suggest that there was or is any inevitability or inexorability in the way that structural forces unfold over the *longue dureé* to shape the fates of places. On the contrary, I want to emphasise that it is important, theoretically and politically, to preserve space for action, for contestation, for the exploration of alterity. As events in Seattle, Prague, Nice and Quebec demonstrate, there is scope for resistance to forces that are often represented as irresistible and there is now a much deeper and stronger knowledge base available to those of Leftist persuasion (not least because of the internet and so on) to be aware of and discuss issues before they happen rather than reactively and after the event.

It is also clear that the non-elected representatives of the major powers are not insensitive to the challenges to their domination of decision making. The steel wall around the city centre of Quebec was dramatic confirmation that they now need to meet in gated communities, enclosed spaces cut-off from the surrounding world and those who would challenge their analyses and policy prescriptions. Indeed, it is not without irony that they feel obliged to meet in a sort of hermetically sealed protectorate, not unlike Kosovo, although one created for very different, but not unrelated reasons.

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