

Deliberation and Anti-Deliberation Writers' Workshop

Date and time: 24 June 2024, 9am-5.00pm

Venue: The London School of Economics and Political Science, Old Building, Vera Anstey Room

09:00 - 09:30 am | Welcome and Introduction

Denisa Kostovicova, Professor of Global Politics, LSE

Irena Fiket, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory University of Belgrade

Ivor Sokolić, Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, University of Hertfordshire

09:30 - 11:00 am | Session 1: Institutional Deliberation

Chair: Ivor Sokolić

Parliament as a generator of anti-deliberation

Speaker: Valida Repovac Nikšić

Discussant: Stefano Bianchini and Vujo Ilić

Parliamentary Debates in a Competitive Authoritarian Regime: a Temple of (Anti)-Deliberation?

Speaker: Tara Tepavac

Discussant: Denisa Kostovicova and Sanja Kajinić

The (in)decent French proposal – deliberation and anti-deliberation in North Macedonia

Speaker: Nenad Markovikj and Aleksandar Takovski

Discussant: Denisa Kostovicova and Gjylbehare Bella Murati

11.00 - 11.15 am | Coffee/Tea Break

11.15 am - 12.45 pm | Session 2: Community Level Deliberation

Chair: Denisa Kostovicova

Anti-deliberation as barriers to entry? How the perceived quality of the public debate impacts on the political participation of women in rural Kosovo.

Speaker: Elodie Douarin and Julie Litchfield

Discussant: Sabiha Shala and Venera Çoçaj

Protection or damming the Balkans' last wild rivers: impact of deliberation on transnational awareness and the local outcomes

Speaker: Sanja Kajinić

Discussant: Mirza Buljubašić and Tara Tepavac

Antideliberation as Intergenerational Far-Right Narratives in Bosnian Families and Communities: Groundwork Assessment

Speaker: Mirza Buljubašić

Discussant: Ivana Stepanović and Ivor Sokolić

12.45 - 2.00 pm Lunch

2.00 - 3.00 pm | Session 3: Deliberation and Post-conflict Reconciliation

Chair: Irena Fiket

From Armed Conflicts to Online Friendships: The Role of TikTok in Bottom-Up Deliberative Reconciliation in Former Yugoslavia

Speaker: Ivana Stepanović

Discussant: Irena Fiket and Venera Çoçaj

**The role of the international community in building deliberative democracy in Kosovo:
Deliberating across differences**

Speaker: Gjylbehare Bella Murati and Sabiha Shala

Discussant: Elodie Douarin and Julie Litchfield

3.00 - 3.30 pm | Coffee/Tea Break

3.30 - 4.30 pm | Session 4: Deliberative Mini-publics

Chair: Ivor Sokolić

Deliberation in an Anti-deliberative Environment: Attitudinal Evidence from Deliberative Mini-publics in Serbia

Speaker: Vujo Ilić, Irena Fiket, Gazela Pudar Draško

Discussant: Damir Kapidžić and Valida Repovac Nikšić

Deliberative quality in post-conflict citizens' assemblies

Speakers: Damir Kapidžić

Discussant: Stefano Bianchini and Nenad Markovikj

4.30 - 5.00 pm | Closing Discussion and Remarks

7.00 - 9.00 pm | Conference Dinner Coopers Restaurant and Bar, 49 Lincron's Inn Fields,
WC2A 3PF

Abstracts:

Session 1: Institutional Deliberation

Valida Repovac Nikšić

Parliament as a generator of anti-deliberation

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has a complex political system based on territorial and ethnic power-sharing. Bosnian society is still healing from past conflict and is deeply divided. The country is going through an economic transition, and much work must be done regarding reconciliation and democratization. Partitocracy, clientelism, corruption, and threats to election integrity are the main features of Bosnia today. These illiberal and autocratization trends are hindering reforms and Euro-Atlantic integration. BiH is divided into three subnational units: the Republic of Srpska (RS), the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), and the District of Brčko. Serbs dominate the RS, while the FBiH is divided into ten cantons and a mixed entity of Bosniaks and Croats, with Bosniaks being the majority. A single ethnic group mainly controls these subnational units, and they are the primary arenas for political contests. In BiH, the public space is becoming increasingly limited due to the rise of hate speech, threats, and slander. These destructive practices have replaced dialogue and rational argumentation. The situation in the institutions is not any better than outside of them. In this chapter, I aim to address the current crisis of the political culture of parliamentarism, where deliberation and discussion should be encouraged. However, that is not the case, and anti-deliberation tendencies among MPs are prevalent. I examine the sessions of both houses of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from May 2023 to May 2024 and analyze publicly available transcripts of the parliamentarians' discussions and their communication with the media and civil society representatives. This qualitative research also envisages semi-structured interviews with 20 government and opposition parliamentarians in the current gathering. This research examines the communication within the highest legislative body of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The objective is to determine to what extent deliberative ideals such as common good and goal, respect, rational argumentation, and interruption are called into question. The argument is that such violations contribute to developing negative examples of relationships and communication that the general public accepts as the norm. This chapter demonstrates how the anti-deliberative trend among political elites in key institutions produces negative public discourse and deepens radical polarization in an extremely sensitive post-conflict society.

Parliamentary Debates in a Competitive Authoritarian Regime: a Temple of (Anti)-Deliberation?

This paper explores parliamentary discourse in the Serbian Parliament from the perspective of (anti-)deliberation, to examine the extent to which the parliamentary plenary is a place of deliberation, or rather anti-deliberation. Based on empirical evidence from the case of the Serbian Parliament, functioning in the context of undermined democracy and heavy socio-political polarisation, this paper aims to deepen our understanding of violation in deliberative ideals in the parliamentary discourse, by exploring the extent to which (anti-)deliberation in parliamentary debates contributes to further undermining of the deliberative role of the Parliament, as well as the role and reputation of MPs, in a competitive authoritarian regime.

Based on the notion of deliberation as communication that resides upon justified arguments, mutual respect and debates on the common good with transformative potential for interlocutors' relations, the paper seeks to improve our understanding on how the deliberative ideals are being upheld or violated by the MPs, and determine any patterns in regard to the topics discussed in the speeches of the MPs, as well as to MPs' party affiliations, education levels and gender. For this purpose, the paper will analyse the parliamentary transcripts from Fourth session of the Second regular sitting of the Serbian Parliament in 2018 held in November 2018. This particular session, encompassing 62 items on the agenda discussed in a unified debate and passed without a meaningful discussion, is an illustrative example delineating the way in which parliamentary (anti-)deliberation can serve to either counter or fuel socio-political polarisation. The way this particular session was scheduled, conceived, as well as chaired was heavily contested by the opposition, which served as one of the tipping points leading to a partial yet significant parliamentary boycott in 2019. The analysis is based on the Discourse Quality Index (DQI) adapted to explore the following deliberative ideals: other-regarding logic, reciprocity, common good orientation, respect, rational argumentation, and interruptions.

Nenad Markovikj and Aleksandar Takovski

The (in)decent French proposal – deliberation and anti-deliberation in North Macedonia

Public deliberation, is not an unbound process of random exposition of arguments, but more a structured and clearly regulated procedure (Neblo, 2005) with a set of rules whose ultimate outcome is the general common good. However, bilateral disputes in the EU accession process between candidate and member countries often end with elite-driven solutions without substantial public participation especially if the disputes contain underlying identity feuds. Such example is the bilateral dispute between Bulgaria and North Macedonia that culminated in the imposition of the Bulgarian veto to the accession process of North Macedonia in 2020, regardless of the Agreement of Friendship, Good-Neighbourliness and Cooperation signed between the two countries in August 2017.

The persistence of the Bulgarian veto on North Macedonia's EU accession process ultimately resulted in the so called "French proposal" created by the EU which is fundamentally a guideline on overcoming the dispute between the two countries. One of the fundamental points is the inclusion of the Bulgarian minority in the preamble of the Constitution of North Macedonia which requires constitutional changes on the Macedonian side. The required changes have not been

enacted since two visible polarizing discourses appeared in Macedonian society that have their ideological carriers in the pro and contra political campuses. The exclusion of the public and the absence of public deliberation of the issue presents an additional challenge for overcoming disagreement. The paper examines the process of argument exchange between the major political parties in the country concerning the “French proposal” and the pro futuro constitutional changes, based on the instruments provided by the Discourse Quality Index (Bächtiger et al. 2022) in the period prior to the parliamentary and presidential elections in North Macedonia scheduled for May 2024. The units of analysis will be selected from deliberative acts such as public addresses of politicians, TV debates on relevant media outlets as well as speeches during pre-electoral public events. The ultimate goal is to measure the quality of the arguments given by the pro and contra political campuses in a highly polarized social atmosphere that hinders rational exchange of arguments.

Session 2: Community Level Deliberation

Elodie Douarin and Julie Litchfield

Anti-deliberation as barriers to entry? How the perceived quality of the public debate impacts on the political participation of women in rural Kosovo.

The political arena can become more masculinised following a violent conflict, especially when some political parties and political actors are linked to previously warring groups (Kostovicova, 2023). Some researchers have further emphasised that women in particular may be put off from participating politically in these settings (e.g. Hadzic and Tavits, 2019). Here we propose to revisit these views in the context of Kosovo, focusing on an under-represented group, namely Albanian women over 40 living in rural areas (Litchfield et al., 2021). We rely on novel data collected on 500 respondents in December 2023 and propose a quantitative analysis of their perception of the public debate, and how it relates to their political participation. Specifically, we focus on statements reflecting the degree to which they feel they can express controversial opinions publicly and the degree to which they view the political debate at different levels in Kosovo as being conducted in a respectful manner. These statements measure a key dimension of the deliberative ideals: respect (e.g. Bächtiger et al., 2022). We validate these clusters by investigating how respondents in each generated grouping differ in terms of their experiences, socio-demographic characteristics and views and norms in other areas. In a final step, we compare the level of political participation (as voting, protesting, signing petitions, and joining political parties) or civic association membership in each cluster. Preliminary work suggests that subtle differences in the perception of the quality of the political debate do generate important differences in participation. In particular, the degree to which the political debate is perceived as respectful in Kosovo or the population broadly lead to membership into different clusters and is associated with small differences in political participation overall, but meaningful ones when focusing on more disruptive activities such as signing petitions or protesting.

Sanja Kajinić

Protection or damming the Balkans' last wild rivers: impact of deliberation on transnational awareness and the local outcomes

This chapter analyses selected case studies from the Western Balkans to which to apply the deliberation/anti-deliberation framework, focusing on environmental social movements - in particular, the tense debate on numerous hydropower plants planned to be built on Europe's last wild rivers in Southeastern Europe. There are 1726 existing hydropower plants on Balkan rivers, 108 are being constructed, but what is actually at stake are the plans to build other 3281 hydropower plants on these rivers, often in protected areas, as documented by a transnational environmental campaign that opposes this plan. The tensions are high for both sides in this issue - for local communities and activists trying to protect the ecosystems, and for the investors, builders, and governments promising jobs and economic benefits. The case studies at this point would focus on rivers Kruščica and Neretva in Bosnia-Herzegovina and river Tara in Montenegro. The methodological approach will use the framework of deliberative democracy literature to test the usage of specific deliberative ideals by participants. The deliberative ideals analysed will be: reciprocity, using counter-arguments, common good orientation, respect, and depending on available sources, interruptions. The study will take into consideration a wide range of actors - from local community members and transnational activists and artists lobbying for protection to local and national authorities, investors and constructors, where possible. Research design will include, when applicable, social categories such as gender, ethnic and national belonging, but also age, employment status and level of education. The comparative empirical study will rely on available sources such as media coverage (articles, films and video, reports and studies), social movements debates, civil society consultations where available, social media discussions, as well as discursive and visual materials produced by all sides.

Mirza Buljubašić

Antideliberation as Intergenerational Far-Right Narratives in Bosnian Families and Communities: Groundwork Assessment

This study explores the intergenerational transmission of far-right narratives as antideliberation in Bosnian families and their interaction with communities, focusing on four distinct scenarios that highlight the dynamics of antideliberation and resilience. In the first scenario, families with entrenched far-right beliefs create environments where such extremism is normalized and unchallenged, leading to the seamless transmission of extremism narratives to children. The second scenario explores how children from moderate families can still adopt far-right views due to external influences such as peer groups, community narratives, and digital media exposure. The third scenario delves into the potential for resilience among children raised in far-right households, emphasizing the critical role of alternative narratives encountered in social structures i.e., in diverse educational settings and supportive family members. Finally, the fourth scenario examines how children from moderate families can develop resilience against far-right narratives through open dialogue, critical thinking, and community engagement. The study draws attention to the complex interplay of familial, social, and structural factors in shaping youth radicalization

via intergenerational antideliberation and highlights the importance of promoting inclusive, empathetic, and deliberative environments to counteract far-right extremism.

Session 3: Deliberation and Post-conflict Reconciliation

Ivana Stepanović

From Armed Conflicts to Online Friendships: The Role of TikTok in Bottom-Up Deliberative Reconciliation in Former Yugoslavia

Social media's role in the reconciliation processes in the former Yugoslavia is often overlooked or dismissed as online spaces such as TikTok are considered as playgrounds for entertainment, right-wing propaganda, and hate speech. Yet, these platforms also foster friendships, reconciliation, and left-wing activism. This study analyses discussions on TikTok live streams, focusing on the 1990s conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and the pursuit of peaceful coexistence and economic cooperation between ethnic groups in the region. Employing digital ethnography and narrative analysis, this research explores the dialogues of 30 TikTok users from the former Yugoslav republics between February and December 2023. The research focuses on reconciliatory dimensions of TikTok conversations, investigating the "friendship narrative" and specifically its key deliberative aspects: reciprocity and common goal orientation. These elements are vital in understanding how the narratives foster reconciliation, highlighting the significance of mutual exchange and shared objectives. Transcending the outdated notion of brotherhood and unity, the friendship narrative suggests that cultivating good neighbourly relations can advance the goal of regional cooperation, sustaining peace and preventing future conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. The friendship narrative extends to the users' interpersonal relationships on TikTok, where they define and negotiate the meaning and ethics of friendship, both online and offline. The paper also addresses the challenges of meaningful conversations within social media spaces shaped by the digital economy. While TikTok live streams generate revenue through monetary gifts, the conversations about reconciliation surpass mere financial motivations, embodying a form of online activism aimed at regional peacebuilding. The concept of "algorithmic friendship" emerges as a novel aspect of online reconciliation, where platform algorithms unintentionally promote connections that bridge ethnic divides. This grassroots, "plebiscitary" approach to peacebuilding through interpersonal relations shows the potential of digital spaces to catalyse a deliberative culture and open new avenues for reconciliation.

Gjylbehare Bella Murati and Sabiha Shala

The role of the international community in building deliberative democracy in Kosovo: Deliberating across differences

The enduring repercussions of a decade-long period of oppression and armed conflict have significantly impacted inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. The demographic landscape has undergone a profound shift, with the former majority group transitioning into a minority, resulting in a diminished political influence and representation. This power transition has brought about substantial changes in policies, legislation, and government priorities, further shaping the post-

conflict environment. Since June 1999, Kosovo has been a focal point for international peace operations aimed at facilitating various peace-building activities. The international peace facilitators have assumed the roles as promoters of democracy and human rights in the region. The demographic shifts resulting from political change required the former majority to adapt to new norms, languages, and practices associated with the emerging majority.

International actors saw an opportunity to enhance the democratic process by involving the community more extensively, aiming to improve legislative and political outcomes and foster trust in the democratic process. However, this initiative faced resistance from both the former majority, grappling with identity challenges and resisting adjustment to their new minority status, and the emerging majority, skeptical about the credibility of such democratic initiatives. Deliberative democracy initiatives aimed at fostering peaceful and coexisting society by international actors became contentious, encountering opposition from both sides. This chapter endeavors to scrutinize and dissect the discourse surrounding minority-majority relations in post-war Kosovo. The primary objective is to assess the impact and effectiveness of deliberative initiatives implemented by international actors in fostering democracy and advancing human rights for all. It delves into the question of how these deliberative initiatives by international actors have contributed to human rights awareness and the strengthening of democracy in a post-war setting. The examination extends to both the internal dynamics of deliberation, namely on power dynamics between international actors, political elite representing ethnic groups and the outcomes that follow such deliberative processes

Session 4: Deliberative Mini-publics

Vujo Ilić, Irena Fikeš, Gazela Pudar Draško

Deliberation in an Anti-deliberative Environment: Attitudinal Evidence from Deliberative Mini-publics in Serbia

Over the past few decades, numerous studies have affirmed that participation in deliberative events enhances attitudes toward deliberative qualities. Participants, including citizens, experts, and decision-makers, tend to exhibit greater respect for the perspectives of others and feel their viewpoints have been valued following deliberation. However, the bulk of empirical evidence regarding the attitudinal impacts of deliberative mini-publics on participants originates from established liberal democracies with robust civic cultures. There is a pressing need for deeper insights into the attitudinal effects of deliberation within challenging environments. This study analyzes participant attitudes from five deliberative mini-publics held in Serbia between 2020 and 2024. Serbia has witnessed a steady decline in the overall quality of democracy, including its deliberative aspect, over the past decade. The institutional and media landscapes have become saturated with anti-deliberative sentiments. While decision-makers have introduced certain participatory and deliberative mechanisms in recent years, these measures have primarily bolstered authorities during political crises, characterizing the environment as a 'facade deliberation.' Through standardized evaluation questionnaires administered to over 200 participants who participated in five deliberative mini-publics, we examine attitudes toward the deliberative process and the actors involved in mini-publics within this context. Our findings reveal a tension between positive attitudes towards deliberative qualities of the process and negative

perceptions of political actors. We contextualize this insight within the broader framework of distrust in political institutions in Serbia and the wider region, raising questions about the overall political ramifications and the potential for institutionalizing deliberative mini-publics in anti-deliberative environments. As established liberal democracies progress in the institutionalization of deliberative forums, there is a significant risk of isomorphic mimicry in autocratizing countries within the region. The creation of superficially functional deliberative institutions to conceal authoritarian functions could negatively influence attitudes toward deliberation and undermine the ideals of deliberative democracy.

Damir Kapidžić

Deliberative quality in post-conflict citizens' assemblies

Quality of deliberation has largely been measured in processes that take place in consolidated democracies and in places with little experience of conflict. However, these conditions do not apply to most countries in world, and it is thus imperative to analyze deliberative quality under more difficult circumstances. This paper aims to broaden the debate by measuring the quality of deliberation in post-conflict contexts with weak democracy. At the same time, in order to achieve comparability of results and evidence it focuses on citizens' assemblies as a structured form of a deliberative processes. The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina is chosen as four citizens assemblies were held there between 2021 and 2024. Data was collected through pre-and post-surveys of participants of the structured deliberative processes and interviews with participants. Based on analysis of the survey data, interviews, and observation of participants' public statements, the paper makes the claim that deliberative quality is achievable at the micro- and meso-level, even under structural conditions that would not favor such outcomes.

Authors' biographical notes:

Denisa Kostovicova

Denisa Kostovicova is Professor of Global Politics at the European Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is a scholar of conflict and peace processes with a particular interest in post-conflict reconstruction and transitional justice. She is the author of *Reconciliation by Stealth: How People Talk about War Crimes* (Cornell, 2023) and *Kosovo: The Politics of Identity and Space* (Routledge, 2005). Dr Kostovicova co-edited 8 volumes, including *Rethinking Reconciliation and Transitional Justice After Conflict* (Routledge, 2018). Dr Kostovicova's research has been funded by a number of prestigious grants, including those by the Leverhulme Trust, MacArthur Foundation and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), among others. Her academic research has been published widely in world leading scholarly journals, such as *American Political Science Review*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Security Dialogue* and *International Journal of Transitional Justice*. Dr Kostovicova currently directs a major research programme funded by the European Research Council, titled '[Justice Interactions and Peace-building \(JUSTINT\)](#).' She has authored a number of policy papers on issues concerning Western Balkans' European integration, post-conflict recovery and regional security. Her academic research and policy contributions have informed policy making at the EU, UN, and in the UK. Dr Kostovicova has a PhD from the University of Cambridge. Prior to joining LSE, she held junior research fellowships at Wolfson College, Cambridge and Linacre College, Oxford.

Irena Fiket

Irena Fiket is a Senior Research Fellow and academic coordinator of the Laboratory for Active Citizenship and Democratic Innovations at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade. Her current research interests lie in deliberative democracy, citizens' participation, democratic innovation, and social movements in the Western Balkans. She has published on these topics in journals such as *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, *Italian Political Science Review*, *Javnost—The Public*, *European Union Politics*, and others. She has been involved in numerous international projects, and she has most recently served as the academic coordinator of the Jean Monnet Network 'Active Citizenship: Promoting and Advancing Innovative Democratic Practices in the Western Balkans' and principal investigator of the Serbian team for a Horizon 2020 project, EnTrust.

Ivor Sokolić

Ivor Sokolić is a Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Hertfordshire and a Visiting Fellow at the European Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He contributes to the ERC funded project "Justice Interactions and Peacebuilding: From Static to Dynamic Discourses across National, Ethnic, Gender and Age Groups", which examines transitional justice processes across the former Yugoslavia. He holds a PhD from the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies and an MSc and BSc in European Politics from the Department of International Politics at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. In 2019, Ivor published a book

based on his research on Croatia, titled *International Courts and Mass Atrocity: Narratives of War and Justice in Croatia* (Palgrave MacMillan). He has published articles in *Cooperation & Conflict*, *Nations & Nationalism*, *Nationalities Papers*, *Südosteuropa* and *The Croatian Political Science Review*.

Valida Repovac Nikšić

Valida Repovac Nikšić is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Sarajevo. She has previously worked in the Directorate for European Integration at the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Valida holds a degree from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo. She completed her Master's thesis in Political Philosophy as part of the European Regional Master's Program in Democracy and Human Rights in South-East Europe, offered by the University of Bologna and the University of Sarajevo. During the academic year of 2010-2011, she was a visiting Ph.D. Candidate within the Fulbright Program at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2014, Valida obtained her Ph.D. in Sociology from the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Sarajevo. Her research interests lie in Political Sociology, Political Theory, and Critical Social Theory. Her work focuses on various areas, including cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, populism, active citizenship, and democratic innovations. She has published a book titled *"On Cosmopolitanism - Theoretical Debates"*. She is currently the academic coordinator of the ERASMUS Mundus IMCEERES program for the University of Sarajevo, in partnership with the University of Glasgow and the University of Tartu, Estonia. Valida is currently coordinating the ENCODE project for the Horizon Europe Program. She also holds the position of Vice-Dean for Science and Research.

Tara Tepavac

Tara Tepavac is a researcher assistant at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory at the University of Belgrade (IFDT). She holds a joint MA degree in Interdisciplinary South-Eastern European studies from the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Belgrade and the Karl-Franzens-University in Graz and is currently pursuing her PhD in Law and Politics at the Karl-Franzens-University in Graz (Austria). Her research focus is primarily on the functioning of democratic institutions and processes in semi-authoritarian regimes, particularly on the role and performance of parliaments and independent bodies, democratization, democratic innovations and deliberative tools and processes. She has published several public policy and academic papers, and coordinated a number of national, regional and international projects in the civil society sector.

Nenad Markovikj

Nenad Markovikj, PhD is a tenured professor at the political science department of the Law Faculty "Iustinianus Primus" in Skopje. He is one of the founders of one of the biggest think-tanks in North Macedonia – the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje (IDSCS) and an associate researcher of the Prespa Institute. He is a member of the editorial board of the biannual political journal "Political Thought" published by IDSCS and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in

Skopje. Prof. Markovikj is a former president of the Macedonian political science association (MPSA) and one of the founders of the Balkan political science association (BPSA). In the period between 2019 and 2024 he was a member of the Security Council of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Aleksandar Takovski

Aleksandar Takovski is an Associate Professor at AAB College, Kosovo, where he teaches Linguistics and Literature. His research interest spans across several areas including political discourse, critical discourse analysis, social semiotics and monumental architecture, nationalism, political and ethnic humour, extracurricular didactic resources and informal teaching/learning. He has published two monographs and a series of articles in renowned journals such as *Discourse and Society*, *Journal of Language and Politics*, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *HUMOR*, *European Journal of Humour Research* and has contributed to some of these journals in the capacity of a reviewer.

Elodie Douarin

Elodie Douarin is an Applied Economist. She received a PhD in Economics from the University of London (Wye College) in 2008, and joined SSEES UCL in 2012, after a post-doc in the Economics department of the University of Sussex focusing on the micro consequences of conflict. She also worked as a researcher at Kent University (2007-2009) and as online tutor at SOAS (2008-2014).

Her recent work has focused on social norms, with two main streams: one investigating the factors that shape social norms, and a second examining how social norms and individual beliefs impact on behaviours, either in the economic or political sphere. She started working on Kosovo in 2010, while a post-doc on an EU-funded project focusing on the micro consequences of conflict. She has published on the impact of war on livelihood choices and on the impact of war victimisation on political participation. In other strands of her research, she has been working on social norms relating to gender roles, and their impact on women's engagement with work outside of home, and the links between individualistic values and pro-sociality, or using wellbeing measures to assess people's tolerance towards corruption.

Julie Litchfield

Julie Litchfield is a Senior Lecturer in Economics in the Department of Economics at the University of Sussex. She is an applied microeconomist with over twenty years of teaching, research and leadership experience.

The focus of her research is the study of poverty, inequality and income distribution, in particular how welfare is affected by a) migration and b) conflict. She was a Work Package Leader for the EU-funded MICROCON programme leading a team researching the relationship between conflict and poverty, and as part of this work analysed the impacts of conflict on livelihoods and welfare in Kosovo. She was also a Co-Investigator and Theme Leader with Sussex's Migrating out of Poverty

Research Centre, funded by DFID, with projects running in Ghana, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, focussed on analysing the links between poverty and migration.

Her current research is focussed on the analysis of the impacts of wartime experiences on political participation, values and attitudes. She holds a British Academy grant with Elodie Douarin using experimental methods to collect primary data on wartime sexual violence in Kosovo to uncover the extent of bias in reporting and to explore the mechanisms that link traumatic experiences with political participation.

Sanja Kajinić

Sanja Kajinić, PhD (CEU, Budapest, 2014) is an Adjunct professor at the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Bologna, teaching Bosnian Croatian Serbian language, as well as a module on Gender and Popular Culture in Southeast Europe. At the Department of Cultural Heritage of the same university, she has also taught a course on the History of the Balkans. Her research interest focuses on the politics of memory and history of social movements in South Eastern Europe. She is the author of the monograph *Post-Yugoslav Queer Festivals* (Palgrave Macmillan 2019) and has written several articles on the post-Yugoslav social and cultural history. As a recipient of the Marie Curie Early Stage Training Fellowship, she spent 2007/2008 academic year at the Women's Studies Center at the Department of International Relations of the University of Lodz in Poland. She has participated in the research projects "GACY '68: A Game-changing year - Czechoslovakia and Europe in 1968" as well as the project "Democratization and Reconciliation in the Western Balkans" within the Jean Monnet Network. She is a member of the Italian Society of Women Historians (SIS), of the AWSS (Association for Women in Slavic Studies), and of the Association for Cultural Studies.

Mirza Buljubašić

Dr. Mirza Buljubašić, a criminologist, has PhD, MA, and BA in Criminology, along with degrees in Criminal Law and Security Studies, all with honors. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement. His career spans roles as a research consultant, supervisor, and researcher, focusing on political violence, encompassing atrocity crimes, terrorism, and extremism, as well as punishment, transitional justice and intergenerational criminology.

Ivana Stepanović

Ivana Stepanović is a permanent research fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg and lecturer at the University of Pannonia, Kőszeg Campus in Hungary. She is the Academic Coordinator of the UNESCO Chair for Culture Heritage Management and Sustainability in Hungary. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia, MA in Human Rights South-East Europe from University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and University of Bologna, Italy and BA in Philosophy from Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade,

Serbia. Her teaching and research activities focus on social media research, reconciliation in former Yugoslavia, online activism, and the impact of artificial intelligence on societies.

Gjylbehare Bella Murati

Gjylbehare Bella Murati is an Assistant Professor of International Human Rights Law at Haxhi Zeka University, Kosovo. She earned her PhD from Ghent University, Belgium, her LL.M. from Essex University, UK, and her B.A. from the Universities of Prishtina, Kosovo, and Utrecht, Netherlands. Her prior roles include serving as an associate postdoctoral research fellow at the Human Rights Centre in Ghent, Belgium, and as a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg, Germany. Before embarking on her academic career, she garnered experience in various national and international organizations. Murati specializes in human rights and the rule of law in post-conflict societies, state-building, international organization accountability, and transitional justice.

Sabiha Shala

Sabiha Shala, a Full Professor of International and European Law at the University of "Haxhi Zeka" in Kosovo, served as Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Research for six years. With a Ph.D. from the University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis and extensive experience as a part-time professor and consultant for international organizations like the EU, UNHCR, UNDP, and OSCE, her expertise spans international public law, European integration, and women's political participation in Kosovo and the Western Balkans.

Vujo Ilić

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