

STATE (IN)STABILITY: Past, present and future perspectives for the nation state

*Topic for 2023: STATE (IN)STABILITY AND COMMUNIST LEGACY
IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE*

10 November 2023; Zagreb (Croatia) and Online
Organized by: Libertas International University

stateinstability.org

Keynote speaker

Sabrina P. Ramet is an American-Norwegian academic, Professor Emerita at the Norwegian University of Science & Technology (NTNU). She earned her Ph.D. in Political Science at UCLA in 1981. She has conducted more than 400 research interviews in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, and the United States. She is the author of 16 scholarly books, including *Alternatives to Democracy in Twentieth-Century Europe: Collectivist Visions of Modernity* (Central European University Press, 2019) and *East Central Europe and Communism: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1943-1991* (Routledge, 2023). She is also the editor or co-editor of 39 books, including *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2019). Vladimir Tismaneanu wrote of her: “Sabrina Ramet is one of the finest, most insightful analysts of East-Central European politics, societies, and cultures. Her historical knowledge matches her keen understanding of the intimate relations between ideas, institutions, and human behaviors.”

Sabrina P. Ramet major books include:

- *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Consequences of the Great Transformation*, 2nd ed. (Duke University Press, 1995).
- *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, 4th ed. (Westview Press, 2002 / Routledge, 2019).
 - Published in Croatian translation under the title, *Balkanski Babilon: Raspad Jugoslavije od Titove smrti do Miloševićeva pada* (Zagreb: Alinea d.o.o., 2005)
- *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics, and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia* (Duke University Press, 1998).
- *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Indiana University Press & The Wilson Center Press, 2006).
 - Croatian translation: *Tri Jugoslavije: Izgradnja države i izazov legitimacije, 1918.-2005.* (Zagreb: Golden Marketing - Tehnička knjiga, September 2009), 812 pp.
 - German translation: *Die Drei Jugoslawien: Eine Geschichte der Staatsbildungen und ihre Probleme* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011), 907 pp.
- *Alternatives to Democracy in Twentieth-Century Europe: Collectivist visions of modernity* (Central European University Press, 2019).
- *Nonconformity, Dissent, Opposition, and Resistance in Germany, 1933-1990: The freedom to conform* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).
- *East Central Europe and Communism: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1943-1991* (Routledge, 2023).

Call for Papers

In Eastern Europe, the past is not only always hovering over the present, it is not even passed. It waits, like some malevolent caged beast, ready at any moment to escape and bring back all the horrors.

Michael Korda

Central and Southeastern Europe, also known as Eastern Europe in the classical geopolitical vernacular, had been a stage for wars, state collapse and political instability throughout the 20th century, so much so that it is often best described by Timothy Snyder's book title *Bloodlands*. Classical geopolitics identifies control over the region as the key to domination over the Eurasian landmass. In the 21st century, Central European states (Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia) have integrated into the EU and NATO, and enjoy relative prosperity and democracy. On the other hand, several former Yugoslav republics, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, have failed to do the same. Huntington's third wave of democratization has been successful only in some parts of the region, with an autocratic counter wave more or less present in a number of states. The beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022 and the subsequent events revolving around it have once again accented the importance of Central and Southeastern Europe in international politics.

The common denominator for all the states in the region is their communist legacy, formed in a relatively short period of their histories, yet more decisive in its influence on their societies than any previous political system. Its influence through modernization, infrastructure development and political culture cannot be easily overlooked. Communist regimes differed from each other, but shared many commonalities, with varying numbers of dissidents across their borders. Some of those states were relatively quick and effective in their transition to democracy, while others have had less success. All of this beckons the general question of the communist legacy in Central and Southeastern Europe.

Communist one-party systems were autocratic and the state's role in their societies crucial. They demonstrated at least short-term effectiveness, and although even Huntington called them "effective political systems", they ultimately waivered. As the communist regimes collapsed, the states themselves demonstrated a degree of stability, except in the obvious case of Yugoslavia. However, questions regarding their stability, effectiveness and efficiency remain. Do factors from that legacy still influence their stability, effectiveness and efficiency? How well established has liberal democracy become in these states? How strong are illiberal tendencies in some of them?

The 4th international STATE (IN)STABILITY conference focuses on Central and Southeastern European states (Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova), and states which border with the region (the Baltic states, Germany, Greece and Turkey), in order to address the above and other questions. Analyses of the policies of other actors towards the region and its various parts are also welcome.

STATE (IN)STABILITY aims to establish the question of communist legacy in and around the region and its influence on the stability of its political systems and states. STATE (IN)STABILITY accepts a wide variety of research interests connected to the annual topic, while also welcoming classical topics regarding state (in)stability for panels slightly outside the annual purview of the conference.

Special emphasis will be given to the following issues and questions:

- Consequences and implications of communist policies
- Contemporary remnants of communist institutions
- Actors who defy and counter dominant policies (as in the case of support for Ukraine)
- Actors of illiberal and/or autocratic policies
- Possible sources of state instability in Central and Southeastern Europe

Expected contributions include a wide range of topics from various scientific disciplines including, but not limited to, the following: *Political Science, History, Geopolitics, Economics, Sociology, Political Theory, Political Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Security Studies, Anthropology, Law.*

Abstracts should contain:

- Name and Surname of author(s)
- Affiliation and contact info of author(s)
- Title of Paper
- 250 – 300 words
- 5 – 7 keywords

Abstract Example

John Doe, Unknown University (jdoe@unknownuni.edu)

How to Write a Conference Abstract

Abstract: This is an example of how to write an abstract for the conference. All abstracts should contain 250 – 300 words. They should be written in .doc or .docx format. They should be sent to conference@libertas.hr. The text should be Justified (CTRL+J). Submissions for the conference should contain authors name and surname, affiliation, title of paper, abstract and 5 – 7 keywords.

Key words: Conference, Abstract, Author, Affiliation, Title.

The abstract submission deadline is 31 August 2023.

Proposals should be sent to sbuzar@libertas.hr

All relevant information is also available at stateinstability.org.

Participation fees: the STATE (IN)STABILITY 2023 conference is funded by [Libertas International University](http://libertasinternationaluniversity.com) through the project *STATE (INSTABILITY): THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS*, and requires no participation or registration fees from participants.