



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conference on

Coping with Shrinking: The Yugoslav and the Serbian Experiences

29 and 30 June 2007
Leonardo Centre, Belgrade

Introduction

In cooperation with the Anglo-Serbian Society, the Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies (LIEIS) and the Belgrade Institute for European Studies convened an international conference on "Coping with Shrinking: The Yugoslav and Serbian Experiences" on 29 and 30 June 2007 at the Leonardo Centre in Belgrade. In the course of three double sessions and on the basis of short introductory presentations, about 20 participants from Serbia, the UK, Germany and Luxembourg discussed a number of closely related questions and topics: the dilemmas and challenges of shrinking European empires and Balkan countries; the rise and fall of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav ideal; the Serbian search for a new identity and a new role; the multi-faceted impact of shrinking on the vitality of Serbia; the consequences of territorial growth and shrinkage.

This meeting was designed as an initial brainstorming discussion in order to explore some of the key questions and to inaugurate a series of conferences on the fundamental topic of shrinking and shrunken state entities, including the psychological, political, economic, cultural and geopolitical implications of territorial shrinkage. This theme is particularly topical at a time when the international system is characterised by the expansion of existing empires and the possible formation of new empires, as well as the extension of both 'soft' and 'hard' power. Indeed, what we are also witnessing is the loss of territory and the fragmentation of former empires and multi-national states, above all Yugoslavia. How does shrinking change a country's self-identity and its identity as it is perceived by others? Is territorial shrinkage the result of a brutal violent dismemberment or the outcome of a process of peaceful atrophy?

In some sense, the case of both Serbia and Luxembourg illustrates the complexity of this issue: Luxembourg had to cede over two-thirds of its territory to its neighbours but it did not

lose much of its diversity. By contrast, the shrinking of Serbia is not yet over and its effects are uncertain: Montenegro has left the state union and Kosovo is set to follow sometime in 2007 or early 2008, but the future shape of Serbia remains unclear. These and many other questions were part of the discussions and the lively exchange of ideas.

I. Dilemmas and Challenges of Shrinking European Empires in the Past

In his introductory presentation at the start of the first session, Immanuel Geiss (University of Bremen) analysed the phenomenon of territorial shrinkage from the perspective of world history. In such terms, shrinking is just as normal as expanding. Thus, the shrinking of Serbia is not – and should not be viewed as – an anti-Serbian conspiracy. He argued that states are best described as mechanisms of power and rule. Following Aristotle's account, the power of states can be defined in terms of quantity and quality. The former consists of territorial size and population, while the latter includes the rule of law, the existence of a constitutional government, the level of education and the prevalence of wealth. Simply put, the power of any given state is quantity times quality to the power of two (quantity x quality²). Generally speaking, existing power centres expand and new power centres emerge at the periphery. Expansion occurs where resistance is weakest and where power vacuums arise. Likewise, shrinking occurs where there is imperial overstretch, internal crises and other similar phenomena. Whereas empires tend to have a looser structure, national states and nation-states tend to emphasise unity and indivisibility, as illustrated by post-revolutionary France that describes itself not only as a republic based on liberty, equality and fraternity but also (and perhaps above all) as *la nation, une et indivisible*. This is important because after 1789, most, if not all, empires that faced protracted crises attempted to implement reforms along the lines of national states.

Moreover, I. Geiss also argued that modern technologies and modern infrastructure change the power relations between and within states. For instance, the availability of new techniques enabling state-orchestrated violence tends to be counterproductive and self-destructive, as state terror from above begets terror by non-state actors from below. Similarly, the unevenness (*das Gefälle*) of the process of civilisation (Norbert Elias) has bred violence and policies of exclusion towards all those deemed 'unfit', e.g. the contempt for so-called barbarians in North-South and West-East relations. However, the nation state that originated in the West after 500 years of chaos following the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 was characterised by a number of features that are preferable to other institutional and practical arrangements in the East, including the rule of law, constitutional government and the importance of civil society in the Latin West (as opposed to theocratic and autocratic regimes in the East, e.g. in the Russian and post-Byzantine empires).

In his reflections on Serbia's shrinking, Christopher Coker (London School of Economics) referred to the two senses of Milan Kundera's idea of the unbearable lightness of being in his eponymous book. First, what you have become in your own eyes or those of others. Second, what you simply are, your being or essence, devoid of any process of becoming. Crucial to these two dimensions are the actual conditions of shrinking. It seems that the 1960s were the key decade: according to the Socialist narrative, the 1960s marked the loss of empire, which was a good thing because empires had done nothing for the working classes. So the fragmentation of empires was a form of shrinking without defeat and in many ways can be

attributed to the Communist victory in 1945. This sort of depiction draws an implicit distinction between imperial power and great power: Russia is the oldest European power and on many accounts it remains a great power, but its territory is now smaller than at any other time in history since 1694. By contrast, Britain used to be an imperial power but faces the prospect of further disintegration, with the distinct possibility of an independent Scotland in the next 10-12 years. In the British case at least, the Empire was an outdoor relief for the middle classes, leaving the aristocracy to occupy the high ground. The UK is now left with imperial institutions, an imperial monarchy and an imperial capital, and Tony Blair's intention was to modernise this set-up. The consolation price for the loss of empire and territorial shrinking is to put down markers in order to protect what is left of imperial Britain: language (English) and globalisation (thought to be the result of the Empire). India's liberal democracy is an illustration of this narrative.

Armand Clesse (LIEIS) responded to these two presentations by raising a number of conceptual questions. First, what constitutes a consolation price for a former empire? Is this a function of a country's ego, e.g. Britain's excessive ego, especially after the 1956 Suez crisis? Second, how useful is the distinction between the core and the periphery, above all in the case of Yugoslavia and, particularly, Serbia? Third, what about imperial reflexes and the sense of superiority, e.g. Russia's posture vis-à-vis its neighbours? Fourth, is there such a thing as a country's optimal size? This final question is directly relevant to current cases like Belgium that could split into as many as three or four parts.

In response, Slobodan Markovich (Belgrade Institute for European Studies) remarked that the British Empire did not suffer the same syndrome in the way that Germany faced a post-Weimar syndrome, not least because the Commonwealth still gives an impression of imperial remnant and global power. As such, the British monarch is sovereign, albeit nominally, over a greater territory than Russia's President. Moreover, London is still the greatest stock exchange in Europe and is also fast becoming the world's financial centre. C. Coker contended that Britain lost its Empire twice: initially in 1783 and again after the Second World War, but the first loss was much more traumatic than the second. Incidentally, Susan Strange used to describe the Commonwealth as methadone to cope with the withdrawal symptoms. In this sense, a country's dominant narrative is central to its perception and self-perception. Adrian Pabst spoke to this point and argued that France's self-image is governed by a series of myths of exceptionality, from the purported movement of liberty in 1789 to *l'exception culturelle* and France's disproportionate weight and over-represented status within the EU. Curiously, as was also remarked, Serbia joined France's organisation for *francophonie* in 2002.

Eric Beckett Weaver (University of Oxford) made the point that state terrorism, smuggling, political assassination and other similar activities have often been prominent in irredentist movements that arises because of the dissatisfaction of a formerly ruling nation after the break-up of a greater country, and as an example cited post-WWI Hungary. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Hungarian government refused solutions to tensions in Europe that did not include a return of territories to Hungary. For example, when Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and Aristide Briand separately proposed forms of European and Central European political union, their visions were repudiated. On the contrary, the emphasis was on rearmament and war. This was as much a reaction to the atmosphere at the time as it was the result of a series of post-imperial syndromes that contributed to the destabilisation of the international political and economic order. This was confirmed in discussion when a number

of participants mentioned the fact that Hungary was the first country to enact anti-Jewish laws in the inter-war period. Weaver concluded that while Serbia might work towards European integration, irredentist nationalists could also wish for a destabilisation of the region and all of Europe in the hope that this would prove the un-sustainability of Serbia's current borders.

For his part, Vukasin Pavlovic (Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade) talked about territory, the gulf between the core and the periphery and East-West relations. Generally speaking, to have one's own state seems to be the best way to protect one's distinct ethnic identity. But the character and the function of the modern state differ from pre-modern feudal and imperial arrangements, including the growing importance of the difference between small, weak and big, powerful states. The Hungarian historian (and member of Imre Nagy's government) Istvan Bibo used to speak about the misery and the fear of small states. So then what is the answer to the dominant model of globalisation that privileges concentration and centralisation? Is it realistic to envision an equal partnership for all, including Serbia, within a European and within a broader global framework? One factor that seems to be decisive for the trajectory of different countries is the changing sense of vulnerability, which may – to a large extent – determine the behaviour of individual states.

These various introductory remarks gave rise to a longer discussion on these and other related topics. I. Geiss said that in the past, Russia and Turkey in the East and Germany and Italy in the West constituted the big powers and that small countries were crushed between these two poles. What has since then changed is that within the EU bigger states have a non-hegemonic position which does not deprive smaller states of sovereignty and power. But there are important exceptions to this rule: Poland is a big middle state but aspires to the same status as Germany and other big states, thus causing friction with big and small member states alike. In this respect, A. Clesse highlighted the vulnerability of states and the problem of coping with the feeling of loss without any adequate compensation.

Misa Djurkovic (Belgrade Institute for European Studies) mentioned the theory of 'decisionism' and the self-consciousness or awareness of loss and compensation. She argued that Serbia is currently in decline as a result of a loss of confidence and the absence of any moral compass. In this, Serbia is not alone. In some respects at least, Russia in the 1990s could be compared with Serbia. First, Russia could no longer exist independently because it had been destroyed by the oligarchs. Second, the current elite is bent on recovering the country's sovereignty and independence, by reigning in the power of the oligarchs at home and asserting its power abroad. However, the main difference between Russia and Serbia relates to national self-confidence and the traditional symbols of power, both of which are much more marked in the case of Russia and tend to be absent in the case of Serbia.

In the final part of the first session, C. Coker turned to another dimension of the phenomenon of shrinking. He made the point that cultural shrinking is as important as territorial shrinking and the loss of power. The Romanian writer Emile Cioran used to remark that the National Portrait Gallery in London features a wide range of 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century figures of power, whereas paintings of 20th-century statesmen and military leaders tend to have much softer traits. In some sense, countries and their leaders seem to become nicer as they self-abdicate. In this context, the decline of the French language is wholly in league with the decline of French power and the growing identity crisis of the French who are searching for a new role in the EU and a place in a world that no longer corresponds to their peculiar outlook.

Architecture also reveals national perception and self-perception, as evinced by the change in the imperial character of Paris before and after Napoleon's second exile and the changing nature of Vienna. Concerning the compensation for territorial and other loss, the British Empire has in some sense survived its own demise through the colonisation of humour: by perpetuating a distinctly English form of humour and by keeping a British narrative in the minds of newly independent nations, Britain enjoyed a consolation prize in the way that is not true for the former empires and kingdoms of France and Belgium.

Finally, A. Clesse said that there are different forms of anger, more passive or more aggressive ones, in Russia and in Serbia. He wondered whether Russia is now more nationalistic than Serbia because it has a different self-awareness as a result of the loss of protective belts – a reduced Russia that has lost its ethnic diversity. This political phenomenon may be akin to the medical phenomenon of 'phantom pain' where a body has sensations of pain in a limb which it has lost.

II. The Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Ideal, and the Serbian Search for a New Identity and a New Role

At the beginning of the second session, S. Markovich made some introductory remarks in relation to the history of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Interestingly, the Ottoman heritage still matters for recent and current events and debates. Indeed, the consequences of the 1354 arrival of Ottoman Turks on the Balkans extend to the controversial question about the status of Kosovo. Like Yugoslavia and Serbia since 1991-2, the Ottoman Empire lost a substantial part of its historic territory. This process of shrinking began on the periphery and was to a large extent the consequence of a weak central authority, under the influence of Enlightenment ideals of tolerance. The Ottomans set up a system of millets, i.e. recognised groups and/or religious communities that co-existed peacefully with the dominant Muslim population. This configuration should not be likened to multicultural models that lack a common culture and instead segregate along national or ethnic lines. Historically, nations emerged before nationalism and they only did so as a result of the disintegration of central state authority.

This brief sketch has important implications for patterns of shrinking in the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans. First, nations were formed by a myriad of allegiances (religious, ethnic, linguistic, etc.). Second, education was central – national identity was fluid and strongly influenced by the language of instruction – Turkish or Serbo-Croat. Third, the German (and Italian) experience of belated nation (*verspätete Nation*) also applies to Turkey and the Balkans. Fourth, nations threaten empires. Indeed, the Turkish nation finally destroyed the Ottoman Empire. Likewise, the period during which the Balkans were once again perceived as violent, divided and fragmented was also the period of ultimate Europeanisation: wars were no longer ethno-national wars but on the contrary wars of nations (or nation-states) over territorial control. Each of the nations took as their paradigm the point in history when they were strongest, e.g. Dushan the Mighty in the case of Montenegro or the Greek desire to recreate the Byzantine Empire, etc. There is also something like a "post-San-Stefano syndrome" in cases like Bulgaria: first this is a syndrome of a defeated nation, which is subsequently exacerbated after the loss of the second Balkan war, the First World War and the

absence of victory in the Second World War. NATO and EU membership precludes Bulgaria from making territorial claims but cultural claims persist.

Moreover, according to S. Markovich, the history of the Ottoman Empire and of Yugoslavia and Serbia seems to bear out Krock's thesis that unification and expansion is followed by shrinking and disintegration. This process has produced a number of countries without majorities based on a single nation, including Bosnia, Montenegro (where only 42% of population are Montenegrins) and Belgium. If George Schöpflin is right that an ethnic majority of 85% is required for the survival of multi-ethnic and multi-national states, then Macedonia, Bosnia and Montenegro might not survive as unified states.

In response to this presentation, A. Clesse observed that the periphery seems to be at the heart of the problem of shrinking. Shrinkage appears to begin with the 'shedding of the periphery' and revolves around the fate or status of the periphery compared with the core. C. Coker remarked that in some cases the periphery is not only a geographic notion but extends to ideology, such that a change in the dominant paradigm can trigger a process of fragmentation and disintegration. For example, the URSS was doomed when Eduard Shevardnadze declared in 1988 that the Soviet model was no longer based on a class system. Absent this overriding principle, the constituent parts of the Soviet Union lacked a common basis and therefore began to assert themselves against Moscow's central authority.

Spyros Economides (London School of Economics) analysed the case of Greece in relation to the Ottoman Empire. He explained that the 1922 defeat of Greece at the hands of Kemal Atatürk's emergent Turkey was a case of defending the Greek nation rather than the Greek state and Greek territory. But the defeated state resulted in a shrinking nation and a 'consolidated population', thus creating a new state project. At the same time and until 1947, the Greek state continued to grow and expand. This new state had to cope with the integration of about 1.5 million Greeks – an influx due to ethnic cleansing that had been 'legalised' by the Treaty of Lausanne. These ethnic Greeks were mostly destitute and illiterate, and their political weight helped make the Communist Party a growing force. The implications of territorial shrinkage and demographic growth were economic, social, cultural and linguistic. In consequence, irredentism and nationalism emerged, including claims to retake Constantinople. This is even reflected in the names of football clubs that still exist today. In short, the Greek case was much more a case of failing expansionism than one of state shrinking.

It was also argued by Jovo Bakić that especially after the 1848 Revolution, the idea of Yugoslavism was much more widespread in Croatia than in Serbia. In fact, under the Habsburg monarchy, Yugoslavism was a device for Croatian nationalism, since Yugoslavism was largely based on Croatian symbols. What changed in the 20th century was the 1903 coup d'état in Serbia and the need for the new Serbian political elite to find a solution to the profound crisis that had beset the country. So this new elite turned to Yugoslavism – hitherto a useful instrument of mobilisation during the Habsburg reign. Some of the leading Serbian advocates of this new ideology were Jovan Skerlić (1877-1914) and Jovan Cvijić (1865-1927). The process of historical change that had begun in the late 19th century and had accelerated in the run-up to 1914 favoured the Serbian variant of Yugoslavism, culminating in the 1918 creation of a new state. Only some intellectuals from Voivodina articulated an enlightened form of nationalism. Moreover, according to the works of the sociologist Anthony

D. Smith, whereas the Croatians tended to be a lateral ethno-nation, the case of Serbia is best described as a demotic ethno-nation. One difference between these two conceptions is the pre-eminent role of the Church which has over time fuelled the Kosovo myth of 1389 – the battle at Kosovo Polje (“Field of the Blackbirds”) between the armies of the Serbian prince Lazar and the Turkish forces of the Ottoman Sultan Murad I. To Serbian nationalists, this battle remains a symbol of the inalienable belonging of Kosovo to Serbia, precisely because the Turkish victory in 1389 led to the collapse of Serbia and the complete encirclement of the crumbling Byzantine Empire by Turkish armies.

The subsequent discussion centred on the historical dimension of Yugoslav and Serbian identity. Radmila Nakarada (Belgrade Institute for European Studies) focused on the manner and the dimensions of Yugoslavia’s and Serbia’s recent shrinking: first, the shrinking of capabilities to retain self-confidence; second, the shrinking of capabilities to project power; third, the shrinking of capabilities to act autonomously. As a result of the end of the Yugoslav project and the gradual dismemberment of Serbia, Belgrade is now engaged in a search for balance between a more pro-European and pro-Atlantist orientation and a more pro-Russian and pro-Eastern orientation. But the secession of Montenegro seems to leave Serbia little room for manoeuvre. If Hanna Arendt’s term of ‘frightful arbitrariness’ is accurate, then Kosovo will be seen as such an exceptional case; when Kosovo becomes independent, Serbia will struggle even more with finding a modern identity. The feeling will prevail that Serbia has been treated like a rogue state, even after the peaceful ousting of Slobodan Milosevic. Serbia will have lost many resources, territorial, cultural and social.

A. Clesse drew the attention to psychological factors involved in the process of shrinking. He said that a comparative analysis of Serbia and Britain highlights the differences at the level of confidence and self-confidence of countries that undergo shrinking. The conceptual questions this raises include, first, what the impact of shrinking might be on the general mood of a nation, and thus on its attitudes and its behaviour and, second, whether in the country that is shrinking frustration may breed anger, aggressiveness, intolerance. C. Coker addressed the case of the British Empire and argued that the reason why Britain ushered in the process of decolonisation was that neo-colonialism worked better because Britain could draw on the Sterling zone and a network of multinational corporations, something which Portugal never managed. At the time of transferring political power, what changed was the form, but not the substance, making Britain much less anxious and less traumatised than other empires that had to deal with substantial territorial loss.

Moreover, A. Clesse also spoke about the importance of wealth and the adverse impact of shrinking on economic prosperity and the diversity of sources of wealth: for instance, the ‘loss’ of Montenegro has deprived Serbia of any direct sea access. Generally speaking, people tend to move into the most affluent areas – from rural to urban areas, depleting thereby demographically the less developed areas and reinforcing the overall predicament. Are federal entities such as Yugoslavia in general characterised by a more even economic and social development?

In discussion, it was said by some participants that an independent Kosovo could produce distinct economic advantages for Serbia. First, the internal politics could become much simpler. Second, the transfer of funds to Kosovo has been costly for Serbia and seems to have been rather ineffective. Third, there is likely to be more certainty in trading with this province.

But despite the fairly substantial foreign direct investment (FDI) and the return to self-confidence in both economic and political terms, the process towards the independence of Kosovo will be very problematic and the final status negotiations fraught with difficulties.

At this juncture, A. Clesse interjected a number of questions: what about regional discrepancies? Do larger countries always exhibit greater internal discrepancies? Wealth can be confined to small parts or pockets, e.g. in today's China. Surely the political system and organisation can play an important role: within some federal models, there are opposing forces such as the drive towards centralisation vs. subsidiarity and decentralisation. Are there inherent tendencies in smaller states towards a more even economic development? C. Coker argued that demographic shrinking is historically unprecedented. In the past, Europe's expansion was accompanied by demographic growth. But at present, at least three parts of the world face demographic shrinking: first, in Europe where paradoxically the populations of Protestant countries are exhibiting higher growth rates than those of Catholic countries; second, in Russia which is losing 7 million of its most productive people and faces a protracted decline, whilst at the same time experiencing a soaring Muslim population; third, in China where the gender imbalance will lead to a long-term decline due to negative fertility and perhaps also a certain cultural malaise (selfishness, insecurity, etc.).

III. How to Deal with Shrinking and Shrunken State Entities and Their Vitality

At the start of the third and final session, A. Clesse reiterated that the objective of this meeting was to stimulate curiosity and to produce more research and scholarship. Among the conceptual questions and problems that are central to the phenomenon of shrinking, there are, first, the emergence and intensification of frustration, tension, anger, aggressiveness and intolerance and, second, the tendency of citizens to close their minds and to shut themselves off, leading to more inwardness and introspection, perhaps generating nationalism and xenophobia. Some of Belgium's constituent parts might correspond to this description – especially Flanders.

S. Markovich said that the 1990s brought an unprecedented level of traumatising for Serbia, including at the level of popular perception and popular mentality. During the First World War, Serbia had suffered the highest loss of life as a proportion of the population, about 25%. So when the first Yugoslavia was created, defeat and victory were intertwined. Quoting from Jovan Dučić, Mother Serbia poisoned the rest of Yugoslavia with a lethal mix of martyrdom and heroism. The second Yugoslavia was also born traumatised, partly due to the death of Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia (about 16-18%). This was the direct result of the Serbian decision on 25 March 1941 to oppose the Nazis, a decision that amounted to an act of collective suicide. At the time they were praised by Churchill who later forgot and ignored their plight. On 28 June 1948, Stalin addressed the Serbs, expelling them from Comintern, marking the beginning of their isolation within the new Cold War order.

What held Yugoslavia together was undoubtedly the charisma of Tito and the pillars of power. Both the army and party were central to Tito's system: the army was the most ideologised branch of power. Such was the depth of change over the last few decades that

after 2000, the army lost all political leverage – the gendarmerie could arrest the entire army leadership. This was the culmination of a long process that had begun earlier but been accelerated by the 1999 war, when NATO bombed Serbia for 77 days. For the first time since 1854, all of Europe united against one state, humiliating the Serbs and affecting their narcissism. Without drawing any direct comparison with Nazi Germany, it is nevertheless interesting to note that Holocaust survivors did not speak. As Primo Levi said, those who touched the bottom were speechless.

The subsequent discussion drew a distinction between narcissism and victimisation. According to some participants, one of the more profane reasons for the silence about 1999 is the divergence between the political discourse on a possible union with the West and Euro-Atlantic integration, and the discourse on national pride and autonomy. V. Pavlovic argued that Yugoslavia was a good project, even though it had been dominated by the Serbs. What Serbia tried to do during the 1990s was to take on everyone and not to grant the same rights to others which it claimed for itself. Something is wrong on both sides when 2 million people – the Kosovo Albanians – do not want to be part of a political community. Culturally, Kosovo is central to Serbia but there are many political obstacles. In some sense, Tito lived too long, and in 1990s Serbia was ruled by people who waged war rather than working towards negotiated solutions. A. Clesse wondered whether Serbia is becoming a demilitarised, perhaps even a pacifist society and how pride, self-esteem, perhaps even a new hedonism might be emerging.

Going back to S. Markovich's earlier mention that more than 50% of Serbs are on tranquilisers, C. Coker remarked that Prozac was apparently put into the water system in the URSS in order to make the Soviets less paranoid and thus to minimise the risk of nuclear warfare. He also referred to Paul Kennedy's point that there are at least two ways to slow down decline. First, from the 1870s onwards, Britain pulled the brake and tried to come to terms with its relative decline compared with the emergent powers of Germany and the USA. Second, in the 1990s, Serbia decided to ignore its decline as part of the demise of Yugoslavia by adopting a strategy that consisted in crashing into oncoming vehicles, i.e. wage war against its neighbours. Traditionally, it is a false memory syndrome that induces people and countries to engage in warfare. But instead of a consolation price, Serb politicians exacerbated the national psyche and thus persuaded population to go to war. There is also the important difference between shame and guilt cultures. Serbia is a shame rather than a guilt culture because guilt is private whereas shame is public. Paradoxically, atoning for shame can take the form of waging war.

In discussion, some participants drew attention to the devastating impact of each world war on the demographic and psychological state of Serbia. The fact that the bulk of victims were civilian is significant because the militarisation of Serbian society led to an ideology of total war and blurred the distinction between the military and the civilian population, thus reinforcing the victimisation of the Serb nation relative to other nations – a trend that entrenched the growing cultural and psychological gulf between the various parts of Yugoslavia. Moreover, a guilt culture requires a strong culture, but Serbia is not a strong culture and thus it is a shame culture: about 8.5% of the populations are 'institutional believers', 25% believe in God and as many as 98% have a nominal allegiance to the Serb Orthodox Church (these are partly overlapping groups). Only about 5% of population – those who support political parties and NGO – want Serbia to be a guilt culture rather than a shame culture. I. Geiss spoke about how for a long time Germany was deluded into thinking that it

was encircled and undermined by a world of enemies, such that it simply could declare a total war on its internal and external foes in the name of building a world empire that would last a thousand years. Interestingly, neither the USA nor the USSR ever wanted to take on the entire world; both fought to establish and secure their respective zones of influence.

Vojislav Stanovcic (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts) argued that both shrinking and expansion concern nationalism. It is clear from the best works in historical research that nationalism is the strongest force of our age. Nationalism became the dominant ideology after the Renaissance and the creation of nation states. Both Fichte and Hegel were very enthusiastic about the French Revolution, but soon they discovered that French troops were occupying, not liberating. Germany unified on the basis of Hegelian political philosophy, and the idealism of sovereign nations and the self-determination of the people led to the Wilsonian system of international relations. However, new conflicts and new wars were often the result of new powers and nations. Indeed, liberalism and the Reformation are in some sense part of nationalism. As the most attractive ideology, nationalism is all-pervasive and remains a major force today, which is why it is almost impossible to dissuade people from embracing nationalism, including today's China.

Historically, Yugoslavia was destroyed by internal nationalism, with the support of external powers. This example has instilled fears on the part of some that a similar fate might await Russia, whereas others call for the break-up of the Russian Federation into four independent parts, perhaps according to the old Roman principle of *divide et impera*. Generally speaking, nationalism is both disruptive and integrative (Italy, German, even the British Empire). There are over 600 secessionist movements, only 10 states are mono-ethnic and mono-cultural, so the challenge is how to devise a constitutional and legal framework to ensure peaceful co-existence. The concept of consociation (Lijphart) may well be crucial to the present and future of Europe, but in other cases like Nigeria, even 60 units would not be enough to capture the 250 or more rival groups that vie for power.

R. Nakarada referred to S. Markovich's earlier remarks and contended that every state in the former Yugoslavia was preparing to go to war and that all sides enjoyed the support of external powers. Paradoxically, the Yugoslav federation was characterised by both non-alignment and militarisation. The reality has always been more complex than most forms of categorisation would allow. Moreover, the demonisation of Serbia has continued well beyond the rule of Milosevic and has accentuated the process of victimisation, thus exacerbating traumatism and postponing any genuine reconciliation. Milosevic himself was mistaken in believing that NATO either would not bomb at all or bomb for only three days and then negotiate. Finally, the democratic elites have defined their policies in peaceful terms, through diplomacy, but there is also widespread apathy. It is not clear whether this is part of pacifism, demilitarisation or hedonism. But what is clear is that there are also hidden reservoirs of radicalisation, including among the young, which could erupt after Kosovo's independence.

In this context, A. Clesse asked whether Serbia feels beleaguered and encircled now and whether as such Serbia shows signs of the Wagenburg syndrome. Is there a rise of cynicism? Of nihilism? A general change of values? Is there a feeling of mutilation? He also said that there is plenty of research on shrinking and the break-up of empires and nation-states, but not on the aftermath of these processes and events.

In response to these questions, S. Economides argued that some state entities that shrink and dissolve have specific inbuilt mechanisms of disintegration. For example, federal constitutions may have clauses on secession. The trigger can come either from within or without. But what has not been discussed is the disintegration of whole regions, in Serbia but also the Balkans as a whole, in relation to the EU. Indeed, in the 1990s, the EU abandoned its own talk of 'Balkans' in favour of 'South-Eastern Europe'. But since the late 1990s, this part of Europe is once more described as the Balkans, especially the Western Balkans – a symbol of underdevelopment and conflict. Balkan countries are those which are not yet 'ready' to join the family of European nations. This rhetorical change underscores the importance of images and the tendency in Brussels and elsewhere to depict the Balkans as the 'European other'. What is therefore needed is a leap of the imagination if the Balkans in general and Serbia in particular are to escape from these negative associations. The problem is that to 'balkanise' or 'de-balkanise' means all things to everyone - if 'balkanisation' means fragmentation, then does de-balkanisation mean recreating Yugoslavia?

In discussion, it was said that the period prior to 1918 was marked by the images and myths of martyrdom and pride. The event that completed changed peoples' mentality was the creation of a Serbian state because before the Serbs had lived outside a national state, and Yugoslavia later was perceived by many Serbs as a broader Serbian state. Political nationalism was in fact supported by the EU and the USA insofar as both stress the principle of national self-determination. Moreover, the case of Kosovo has seen a strange trend to break both historical and international legal principles in the sense that the rights of the Serbian population of Kosovo have been ignored.

Other participants contended that the 20th century was a century of fatal victories for Serbia, from the first Balkan war via the First World War to the Second World War. All these victories were fatal because the Serbs failed to cope with these unexpected outcomes. Even though there was equality between Serbs and Croats within Yugoslavia and the federal composition of the state was accepted by the Serbs, ethno-nationalism on both sides led to the gradual hollowing-out of the common identity and the disintegration of the shared political project. Moreover, members of lower strata in society tend to have only one possible source of human dignity – nationalism; when (not if) Serbia loses Kosovo, the Radical Party will be able to exploit widespread resentment to increase its popular support and base. Serbia as a normal European state is perhaps an illusion, but it is clearly the only viable future. V. Pavlovic disagreed with the claim about the effects of Kosovo's independence, pointing to the fact that after Montenegro's secession from the state union, Serbia did not descend into mayhem. There is even cause for cautious optimism because the best way to bridge conflicts between rival nations is to develop trade, educational exchange and cultural ties. Since nation and culture are inextricably linked, violent nationalism can be limited and mitigated by peaceful cultural cooperation.

Concluding Questions

In conclusion, A. Clesse set out a series of questions that crystallised the debates, arose from the discussions and could also form the basis for a larger, international conference which might take place in 2008. First, what are the causes of shrinking, the factors that explain how and why entities are shrinking or are shrunken? Are there cases where entities are shrinking to health or shrinking to death? Does shrinking happen through atrophy or dismemberment,



through the use of violence or on a voluntary basis, as a consequence of war or of defeat, as an organic process or through an abrupt intervention?

Second, research on the consequences of shrinking is not as developed as research and scholarship on break-up, secession and disintegration. How conceptually useful is the distinction between core and periphery? Do we tend to view shrinking through the particular prism of the core rather than the perspective of the periphery (e.g. Serbia in the case of the former Yugoslavia or Russia in the case of the former Soviet Union)?

Third, how best to qualify the nature of the loss or losses suffered by a country or an empire (e.g. colony, part of a whole, ‘historical place’)? What is the geo-strategic and geo-economic importance of the part that has been lost?

Fourth, if history oscillates between state formation and state dissolution, is there such a thing as an ideal or optimal size of a political entity? Is it about finding the right balance between a variety of factors (e.g. between territory and population)? How, if at all, does this change from homogeneous to heterogeneous entities?

Fifth, a potentially instructive counterfactual question is whether the shrinking of an entity such as Yugoslavia or the USSR could have been prevented or whether there was something inescapable about it?

Finally, is territorial shrinking sometimes accompanied by ‘mental’ shrinking? It seems important not to limit the analysis of shrinking to material facts and factors but also to include mental, intellectual, moral, psychological and other ones.

Adrian Pabst
Research Fellow
LIEIS