

overlapping of identities with crosscutting friendship ties. Despite diverging historic memories, such identities cannot be mutually exclusive. In the volume *Izveštaj iz tamnog vilajeta* (Report from the Dark Vilayet), set in the context of the Bosnian war, Vojvoda shows how the protagonists search for their identities and realize that these are overlapping and contradictory. Exile, too, functions prominently as a "third space". Here, identities are remembered and thus (re-)constructed, but it is also clearly shown how these identities have ceased to be real and are thus unable to be maintained.

While there is no doubt that the image of a "third space" is present in Karahasan's works, Vojvoda sometimes overstretchers its applicability. For example, it is unconvincing to apply the "third space" to other settings, such as the "Third World", a construct questionable in itself (44-46). Vojvoda does so in an attempt to assign a post-colonial status to Bosnia, with the Ottoman and Habsburg empires as "colonizers". This does not provide a satisfactory analytical framework for the fact that identities are always negotiated – even in spheres that are different from the realm of officially ascribed identities (73). In fact, state ideology has collided with individual identities in most historical settings throughout world history. Certainly, it has not been limited to countries under colonial rule. What is more, if Vojvoda's line of argument were valid, any identity construction beyond the control of the discourse forming elites would need to be considered as a "third space". The "third space" would turn out to be merely the retreat of the individual into the private sphere and, with it, the construction of his own individual identity. This is a phenomenon common throughout the world – nothing new or in any way specific to Bosnia.

I would contend that a strong analogy exists between the concept of the "third

space" and topoi encountered in the works of Ivo Andrić and Meša Selimović, for example, who portray Bosnia as a bridge between East and West and between Islam and Christianity. Although Vojvoda acknowledges such similarities, she insists that the "third space" concept goes beyond these (66). Yet, throughout her book, she does not succeed in making clear precisely what the difference is. However, despite the shortcomings I mention, the book is diligently composed and makes intellectually engaging reading.

Dareg Zabarah (Frankfurt/M.)

Jelena OBRADOVIĆ-WOCHNIK, *Ethnic Conflict and War Crimes in the Balkans. The Narratives of Denial in Post-Conflict Serbia*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013. 254 pp., ISBN 978-1-84885-003-3, £ 58.00

The book under review presents a case study on "ordinary" public perceptions of the 1991-1999 conflicts in former Yugoslavia. The focus is on the reflections, interpretations and narratives circulating in Serbia concerning the atrocities and human rights abuses conducted by Serbs and Bosnian Serbs during these wars. Drawing on her own ethnographic fieldwork, the author sheds light on the hitherto untold stories of "ordinary" Serbs, who have been excluded from both national and international political debates and from civil society activities aimed at confronting the past. Her ambition is to analyse how citizens – people on the streets of Serbia – have dealt with the historical record of civil war and systematic violence against civilians. It is argued that the ordinary people have been ignored in the efforts made towards transitional justice in Serbia. Civilians' narratives are indeed a forgotten dimension in political debate and in academic literature, leaving

us with few insights on how Serbians perceive the role they played in the wars of Yugoslav succession.

The book discusses transitional justice as "that set of practices, mechanisms and concerns that arise following a period of conflict, civil strife or repression, and that are aimed directly at confronting and dealing with past violations of human rights and humanitarian law" (25). From an anthropological perspective, such legal procedures and policy orientations, designed to find truth and come to terms with the past, simplify what has happened and overlook the existence of different narratives and interpretations. As Obradović-Wochnik argues, "while anthropologists have long pointed out that pasts are contested and difficult and post-conflict lives and societies are messy, fragmented and contradictory, the legalistic origins of transitional justice have perhaps helped develop a narrow idea of 'confronting the past', ignorant of those anthropological complications, at least in Serbia's case" (29f.).

Her study, consequently, departs from the field of transitional justice and the issue of the accountability of states and state leaders involved in atrocities, genocide, ethnic cleansing and systematic human rights abuses. She contextualizes the demand from the international community and from domestic civil society that the Serbian regime confront its past by publicly acknowledging its wrong-doings of the 1990s. Despite such demands, she argues, the Serbian regime has been reluctant to talk about its involvement in the civil war or to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). There is thus a clash of interest between the organizations who want to confront the past and the officialdom that wants to deny it, leaving civilian Serbs in-between.

There are two guiding strands in the book: first, ordinary civilians' experiences

of narrating, believing, and keeping silent about the violence of the 1990s; and secondly, the tension liable to arise when these are confronted with the ideas of transitional justice presented by the international community and by domestic civil society. Obradović-Wochnik explores how narratives about Serbia's violent past are manifested in private spheres. She argues that "individuals in Serbia do not express beliefs and ideas about the past in the coherent unequivocal ways which transitional justice projects seek. Instead, they produce narratives which are fragmented, contradictory – containing both acknowledgement and denial – ambiguous, confused and impossible to quantify, generalize or homogenize" (8).

Obradović-Wochnik conducted semi-structured interviews with 36 individuals. Although the interviews present interesting story-telling about people's confrontation with the violence that beset Serbia, the reader is left to wonder how far their replies represent Serbian society at an aggregated level. The author stresses that she is not looking for absolute conclusions, but rather seeks to identify possible interpretations. However, such an approach provides only snapshots of perceptions and interpretations. The study thus reveals its weakness: While it gives new insights into possible interpretations of Serbian engagement in the recent wars, it does not provide significant new empirical data to remedy existing research gaps more substantially. The author claims that "quantity does not have much relevance in research where the purpose is a description of cultures" (12f.), but I would argue to the contrary.

Nevertheless, the author provides interesting empirical evidence of Serbs who were shocked by the violence and the atrocities that took place in the 1990s and who still have major difficulties dealing with this past. The interviewees tell many

incoherent and contradictory stories, reveal difficulties in accepting the facts, and ask themselves how such things could “be allowed” to happen. They develop counter-narratives to the dominating public ones. Such parallel narratives, the author argues, represent ordinary people’s responses to being marginalized in the public debate. They feel they have become a forgotten dimension in the top-down transitional justice projects in Serbia. Instead, “we should not ignore the ‘ordinary’ [people], or their everyday worlds and discourses, nor think of them only as passive recipients of ‘our’ knowledge about the conflicts. Invisibility of certain voices from the public debate on confronting the past in Serbia does not mean that they have nothing at all to say on the issues” (227). The author thus detects a serious disconnection between the Serbians on the streets and the ongoing transitional justice projects promoted by domestic civil society and the international community. The respondents in this study appear alienated from these initiatives to understand the violent past and guide the political present in Serbia.

Daniel Silander (Kalmar/Växjö)

Ana Juncos, EU Foreign and Security Policy in Bosnia. The Politics of Coherence and Effectiveness. Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2013 (Europe in Change). 204 pp., ISBN 978-0-7180-8240-5, £ 70.00

Ana Juncos’ book on the role of the European Union (EU) in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a welcome contribution to our understanding of the EU’s involvement in the post-conflict reconstruction and integration of the Western Balkan states. In particular, the use of process tracing to understand why the EU acted in the way

it did at different time periods (from 1991 onwards) provides insights into why the Union’s approach to the Balkans in general, and Bosnia in particular, has fundamentally changed in the last 25 years. This process tracing is framed by an analysis of the coherence and effectiveness of the EU’s actions.

The book is divided into seven chapters. In the introduction, Juncos frames her research question: Has the institutionalization of the CFSP, i.e. the development of foreign policy institutions at the EU level, increased the EU’s effectiveness and coherence in Bosnia? (3). Chapter 2 goes into detail about EU foreign and security policy. Juncos analyses the developments in this policy area from the start of European Political Cooperation in the 1960s until the most recent changes to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. Chapter 3 puts into practice the two main analytical concepts, *coherence* and *effectiveness*. In chapter 4, Juncos examines the EU’s early engagement in Bosnia once Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in the early 1990s. In particular, she examines the European Monitoring Mission to observe the ceasefire in Slovenia and the EC Peace Conference, which started in 1991. She concludes that, during this period, EU policy had a low level of coherence and effectiveness, and argues that this was a result of weak institutionalization, as it was only the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 that provided stronger provisions for foreign policy coordination.

In Chapter 5, the author explores the EU’s intervention in Bosnia after the end of the violent conflict in 1995. Focusing on the EU’s administration of Mostar, Juncos concludes that the EU was generally less involved in the immediate post-war period than NATO and the UN. She argues that the EU’s non-intervention decision put it in a weaker position in post-war Bosnia