
Editors' Note

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The multinational polities of Socialist Yugoslavia and the EU, although outstandingly different in respect to authoritarian communist vs. liberal democratic character of regime, even to a layman seem to have a lot of similarities, such as everlasting search by the elites for compromise and agreement or similar dynamics in relations between more and less developed countries, etc.¹ However, only the 2008 financial crisis triggered a debate on the similarities between Socialist Yugoslavia and the European Union (EU) especially in the public in the Yugoslav successor states. These debates were motivated by using the 1980s political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia as a kind of calamitous historical example to warn of a potential outcome of the current crisis in the EU.

In the scientific community, the very few writings devoted to comparison of Socialist Yugoslavia and the EU have mostly focused on similarities that have been founded in the socialist Yugoslav and European elites' lack of common vision and of unity of purpose to deal with the ongoing economic and political challenges. Moreover, these writings mostly approached disintegration as an outcome of the failure of the integration models to attenuate the uneven development patterns (Acceto, 2007; Kovač, 2012; Badovinac, 2016; Becker, 2017). However, some writings approached the crisis as a failure of structural adjustment to introduce full democratic participation by the citizens in decision-making processes at the supranational level. Kovačević & Samardžić (2016) and Kovačević (2017) emphasized how Socialist Yugoslavia and the EU have rested upon an output legitimacy, one that is based on

¹ This thematic block was supported by the Croatian Science Foundation [UIP-2019-04-2979].

the compliance of citizens while the system exercises economic and political success. The authors stressed that the output legitimacy-based polities did not provide a definite answer to the question of: Who are we and why are we together? According to Kovačević and Samardžić, this kind of shortage of supranational identity can to a great extent be prevented by introduction of full democratic participation in decision-making processes at the supranational level that would prospectively boost a common consciousness about European polity in the ranks of the EU citizens.

The only writing that has hitherto pointed to the lack of ethno-cultural identity as a permanent source of potential instability of these two multinational polities has been the one by Aleksandar Pavković (2014). As Pavković argues, the instability stems from the indefinite character of socialist Yugoslav and EU identities since the identities of both polities have only been conceptualized on the acceptance of a political statement by the citizens – the statement of European peace and prosperity and the brotherhood and unity of Yugoslav peoples that was envisioned to bring prosperity through the practice of self-managing socialism. According to Pavković, the acceptance of political statement by the citizens has not been enough to boost emotional attachment to community, which in the case of modern national states has been supplied by national identity composed of the mixture of civic and ethno-cultural values.

Following Kathleen McNamara's (2018) call for comparison of 'the EU as an emergent polity with historical episodes of state-building and nationalism', this thematic section tries to provide a modest contribution to further comparison of Socialist Yugoslavia and the EU regarding the building, enforcing and acceptance of respective supranational identities. Some of the articles collected in this thematic section were originally presented as papers at the *27th International Conference of Europeanists: Europe's Past, Present, and Future: Utopias and Dystopias*, organized by the Council for European Studies from June 21st to June 25th 2021. The articles stem from the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ) installation research project *Integration and disintegration of the European Union: Dynamics of Europeanism and Euroscepticism (IDEU)*, that involves young scholars from the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, as well from diverse Faculties at the University of Zagreb and University of Rijeka. The main aim of the project is to contribute to de-ideologization of European integration and European identity debates through research on the development and dynamics of Europeanism and Euroscepticism. Moreover, by comparing the building of supranational identities in Socialist Yugoslavia and the EU, the project aims to provide a deeper understanding of current integrational and disintegrational processes in the European Union.²

² More information on the project and the research team is available at: <https://www.idi.hr/en/projects/competitive-research-projects/integration-and-disintegration-of-the-european-union-dynamics-of-europeanism-and-euroscepticism>

Supranational identity-building relies on different mechanisms than the building of national identity, which usually has common language, national myths and histories at its disposal. In this thematic block three mechanisms which were employed in the construction of European and Yugoslav identity are analysed: censuses and surveys which constructed supranational categories; youth labour actions which initiated transnational mobility and contacts among youth; and promotion of women's rights which aimed to help the construction of new supranational identities.

Mario Munta, Stevo Đurašković and Miloš Kovačević, in their paper "The Youth Shall Inherit the Earth? Supranational Identity-Building in Socialist Yugoslavia and the EU Compared", deal with Youth Labour Actions in Socialist Yugoslavia and the European Solidarity Corps in the EU. The comparison has showed that youth labour actions in both polities were employed to subtly create supranational identities, but in rather different ways. Youth Labour Actions had an implicitly mandatory character and openly promoted ruling socialist ideology. European Solidarity Corps, on the other hand, is a far more voluntary program and is not so straightforward in promoting EU values. Recent changes in the European Solidarity Corps indicate that it will intensify the promotion of European values. The authors conclude that it is an expected move as the EU "does not manage national formal education systems through which it could also work directly on the ideologization of young people from an early age".

In "Place of Women's Rights in Supranation-Building: Comparison of Socialist Yugoslavia and the European Union", Ana Maskalan compares what promotion of women's rights meant for these supranational polities. In both cases women's rights were promoted primarily from above to create a distinction to the Other (the capitalist West in the case of Socialist Yugoslavia and the non-white, Muslim in the case of the EU). Feminism faced backlash by leading communists in Socialist Yugoslavia who saw it as a bourgeois phenomenon, and in the EU by the right-wing parties and even some national governments. From a critical perspective, Maskalan identifies the discrepancy between the proclamations of gender equality and their realisations in both polities. Socialist Yugoslavia did not manage to erase strict gender divisions in occupational system and glass ceilings. In the EU gender equality is often subordinated to the goals of competitiveness.

Nikola Petrović, Filip Fila and Marko Mrakovčić, in their article "Yugoslavs and Europeans Compared: Supranational Polities and Supranational Identification", compared the share of Yugoslavs in Socialist Yugoslavia censuses with the share of EU citizens who chose primary European identification in Eurobarometer surveys. Although neither polity openly promoted supranational identification, some citizens declared themselves as supranational. The levels of supranational identi-

fication were rather low, however these contingents were the source of social and political movements calling for deeper integration. Determinants of supranational identification in both cases were also compared. It is concluded that having non-exclusive nationalities, i.e. having nationally mixed parentage and not belonging to the republics' titular nation in the case of Yugoslavia, and having multiple nationalities and not having citizenship of the country in which the respondent resides in the case of the EU, have been the strongest predictors of supranational identification.

It can be concluded that supranational identity-building in both cases showed both important similarities and crucial dissimilarities. The papers demonstrate that general mechanisms of supranational building were similar: non-intendent constructions of the sources of supranational identification and open promotions of solidarity among youths and women's rights. On the other hand, due to the authoritarian socialist Yugoslav regime in respect to liberal-democratic EU, socialist Yugoslav identity-building could proceed through much more coercive means. This is reflected in different shapes that the analysed mechanisms had: obligatory censuses vs. voluntary surveys, to some extent coercive vs. voluntary youth actions, broad economic and educational reforms aimed at women's emancipation vs. treaties promoting gender equality. However, having far more capacity in promoting supranational identity and creating a nascent Yugoslav identity which some parts of the population accepted did not help Socialist Yugoslavia survive the disintegration processes of the late 1980s and early 1990s. EU elites are also working on the promotion of common supranational identity and seem to be eager to intensify it. It remains to be seen what will be the consequences of EU's identity-building amid various crises which have affected the EU.

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