

“Reconstructing the Balkans: The Effects of a Global Governance Approach”

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Introduction

This article explores the practical limitations of globalizing political, social, and economic norms by focusing on post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Southeastern Europe. Through the primary vehicle for reconstruction – the EU’s Balkan Stability Pact – the states of Southeastern Europe have been asked to shed their allegiance to a traditional conception of sovereignty in favor of economic, political, and social integration with their neighbors. According to former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering, “The matter is not the dissolution of national sovereignty, but rather the sovereign choices nation states are making to devote more power to local and regional authorities or to pool their sovereignty in supranational authorities.” But are the states of Southeastern Europe ready to embody this new understanding of sovereignty? The West has offered this template for reconstruction, but one is left to question whether the language for reconstruction provided to Southeastern Europe resonates with the capabilities, expectations, or desires of the region’s leaders and citizens.

This must be balanced against the fact that, given the divergent positions of the many populations in the area, Western involvement may be one of the few cohesive elements in the region. No matter how inappropriate, the social, political, legal, economic, and security ‘scaffolding’ erected by the EU may provide the necessary room for those in the region to rebuild on the ground.

This following chapter explores this tension by examining how leaders and citizens in Southeastern Europe have responded to the Balkan Stability Pact’s programs. Specifically, it investigates two questions: (1) is the ‘global governance’ approach the best one to adopt in aiding post-conflict societies (or, are global governance practices perhaps not global in their applicability?); and (2) what are the tradeoffs of this approach in terms of securing domestic support and durable reforms (or, does adopting a global governance approach close off alternative, local problem solving mechanisms)? By refining the scope of global governance’s practical reach, this chapter hopes to encourage those who support global governance practices by pointing to the real progress that can be made when transparent, open reconstruction efforts are undertaken, while cautioning those involved in the reconstruction to remain mindful of adopting an insensitive, overly generalized approach.

I. Background on global governance literature

Before one can evaluate the appropriateness and utility of a ‘global governance’ approach, it is important to gain a good understanding of precisely what such an approach entails. This task is not as easy as it may first appear. It is important to be clear on terms, because ‘global governance’ has come to mean many different things. In the journal dedicated to the study of this emerging phenomenon, Lawrence Finkelstein defines ‘global governance’ as “governing, without sovereign authority, relationships that transcend national frontiers. Global governance is doing internationally what governments do at home.”¹ In order to gain leverage

¹ Lawrence S. Finkelstein, “What Is Global Governance?,” *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 1, no. 3 (1995), p. 369.

on this still-vague understanding of the increasingly important phenomenon, researchers are called to “look for **patterns of authority and governance in the absence of a formal system of authoritative government**”²

The concepts of authority and its political companion, legitimacy, are central to the study and practice of global governance. According to Michael Barnett, individuals who study global-local relationships reveal, “authority is invested in non-state actors because of transnational processes and global developments, problematized the concept of sovereignty and questioned whether states are authoritative and how and over what domains, and become eyewitnesses to a local that has a cast of characters that claim authority over different domains and according to different legitimation criteria.”³

The premise underlying global governance literature is the idea “that traditional boundaries of jurisdiction can scarcely apply anymore.”⁴ This principle reinforces a second central organizing tenet for research in global governance – a **conscious attempt to de-emphasize state boundaries and the focus of territoriality** in international relations theory.

These two parameters help to shape the primary goals of global governors. “The current concern of global governance is to establish a liberal peace on its troubled borders: to resolve conflicts, reconstruct societies, and establish functioning market economies as a way to avoid future wars. The ultimate goal of liberal peace is stability.”⁵ While global governance certainly extends beyond conflict prevention and reconstruction, this mission lays squarely within its mandate.

II. How this approach resonates in Europe today

Reconstruction efforts in the Balkans have been guided by a strong commitment to this concern of building stable neighbors. The wars in the Balkans in the 1990s disturbed many Europeans by shattering the illusion that the new Europe would be free of the bloodshed of the past.⁶ Leaders from across Europe proclaimed that the level of violence found in Bosnia should never be seen again and developed a reconstruction program whose goal was to bind Southeastern Europe tightly with European institutions. This effort has been coordinated primarily through the European Union’s Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (referred to in this chapter by its common name, the Balkan Stability Pact), working in consort with the OSCE and UN missions in the region. Several decisions adopted by members of these organizations made international reconstruction possible.

- Helsinki Final Act;

² Latham, 32. **Get full cite!! (in Hewson and Sinclair).**

³ Michael Barnett, "Authority, Intervention, and the Outer Limits of International Relations Theory," in *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*, ed. Ronald Kassimir Thomas Callaghy, Robert Latham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 48.

⁴ Philip Windsor, "Introduction," in *Global Governance: Ethics and Economics of the World Order*, ed. Meghnad Desai and Paul Redfern (New York: Pinter, 1995), 3.

⁵ Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (New York: Zed Books, 2001), 34.

⁶ Cite this

- Charter of Paris;
- 1990 Copenhagen Document;
- Others

The Balkan Stability Pact was announced officially at the Cologne summit in June 1999. According to its founding document, the Pact has “the objective of lasting peace, prosperity and stability for South Eastern Europe.”⁷ The way the Pact has worked to achieve this goal is through drawing “the region closer to the perspective of full integration of these countries into its structures.”⁸ By entering into Stability and Association Agreements with the individual states of the region, the EU hopes to encourage political and economic liberalization in exchange for integration into EU structures, financial assistance, and aid with political reforms. This process is hoped to convince individuals in the region that sustaining an investment in the development of their economic and political infrastructures is a better use of their time and resources than yielding to lingering ethnic or social tensions. The idea is that *all* the states in Southeastern Europe should be able “to live in peace, confident that democracy, respect for human rights, and economic prosperity will be fostered and that they can be fully integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures.”⁹

The Pact was joined by members of the EU and EC; Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, FYROM, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Moldova; members of the G-8; Norway, and Switzerland. The Pact is administered by a Special Coordinator who oversees a thirty-person team based in Brussels. Partners also include international organizations such as UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, UNHCR, NATO, OECD; the World Bank, EBRD, IMF; and regional initiatives: Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC), Central European Initiative (CEI), South East European Co-operative Initiative (SECI) and South East Europe Co-operation Process (SEECF). Modeled on the CSCE, the Special Coordinator oversees three working tables: democracy and human rights; economic reconstruction, cooperation, and development; and security issues (which is broken into security and defense and justice and home affairs).

- More detail about the three tables and how they operate.
- Accomplishments since 1999

III. Is this approach appropriate?

The EU is likely right in thinking that the promise of economic prosperity will be the greatest inducement to reform. But the Balkan Stability Pact is structured around the assumption that individuals in Southeastern Europe can be convinced to leapfrog the step of becoming individual, sovereign states, and jump straight into the process of regional integration. This goal of regional integration attempts to reduce any desire for further fragmentation in the region by de-emphasizing a statist conception of sovereignty for the rebuilding governments.

⁷ “Cologne Document,” The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Cologne, Germany, June 10, 1999.

⁸ “Cologne Document,” The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Cologne, Germany, June 10, 1999.

⁹ “Bonn Declaration,” released at the U.S.-E.U. Summit, Bonn, Germany, June 21, 1999.

The traditional conception of sovereignty, which has defined international relations since the treaties of Westphalia in 1648, is one where states possess the right “to freely determine, without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”¹⁰ The conception advanced by western diplomats to leaders in the region softens this definition by *encouraging* involvement by the states in the region into the economic, political, and social affairs of their neighbors. Under Secretary of State, Thomas Pickering put the idea this way: “The matter is not the dissolution of national sovereignty, but rather the sovereign choices nation states are making to devote more power to local and regional authorities or to pool their sovereignty in supranational authorities.”¹¹ This fits the notion of global governance put forth by Mark Duffield precisely:

Global governance has a reality not in a single institution but in the networks and linkages that bring together different organizations, interest groups and forms of authority in relation to specific regulatory tasks. Moreover, the dominance of the liberal paradigm means that in relation to such networks we should talk more accurately of global *liberal* governance (Dillon and Reid 2000). While establishing durable structures and relationships, global governance is also fluid, mutable and non-territorial. New relations of governance can emerge in response to changing perceptions and assessments of risk. Global liberal governance is an adaptive and selectively inclusive system.¹²

The assumption is that by building cooperative ties in the region through economic and social integration the states in Southeastern Europe will begin to look past the ethnic and political tensions that have led to instability in the past. This rhetoric has been supported by international aid programs that focus on integrating the countries within Southeastern Europe with each other and larger European structures (strengthening supra-national ties) while ensuring that local communities have the authority to control sensitive issues like education and language (easing sub-national fears).¹³

Over time this approach may work, but this new conception of sovereignty is much more a vision for Southeastern Europe than it is an implementable policy. Even the modern nation-states of Western Europe – states that are much more secure in their identities, abilities, and positions than their neighbors – have struggled with this new understanding of sovereignty. Individual leaders in the region may say they are willing to integrate with the other states in the region out of their desire for western aid, but the United States and its allies should view these pledges with a grain or two of salt.

Additionally, introducing an inappropriate form of statehood to Southeastern Europe has potential negative ramifications. In a quick review, statehood combines both internal authority

¹⁰“Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperations Among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV), United Nations General Assembly, 25th Session, Supplement No. 28, at 121, *United Nations Document A/8028*.

¹¹ Thomas R. Pickering, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Remarks to the American Society of International Law, Washington, DC, April 7, 2000.

¹² Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars*, 44-5.

¹³ For example, the ‘Regional Approach’ is a key element of the EU’s Stabilization and Association Process for countries of Southeastern Europe as outlined in the Balkan Stability Pact. Available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/sap/index.htm>.

and external sovereignty.¹⁴ That means that the state must have both the authority (the power and legitimacy) and the capability to retain control over the internal affairs of the state at the same time that other states recognize that state's authority and capability in this endeavor.

It is questionable whether several of the states in the region meet this understanding of statehood, and it is even more questionable how pressure to integrate strengthens these states' internal authority and capability to control their internal affairs. If anything, it sets up a system much closer to what was found toward the end of the feudal era, when multiple centers of power from different levels of government competed for control over localities that were held together by a loose attachment to larger social or religious affiliations. Again, this might be the appropriate evolution for developed states, but the feudal era was marked by its lack of bureaucratic structures able to support essential practices such as the collection and dispersal of state revenues, the provision of education and collective defense.¹⁵ If the international community is willing to make a sustained commitment to providing these services for the region, the arrangement may be viable over time. But the United States and its Allies should be certain they possess the will for this sort of commitment first.

IV. What are the Tradeoffs of a Global Governance Perspective?

How has the Balkan Stability Pact affected reconstruction in Southeastern Europe? One of the chief criticisms of international efforts in the region has been the tendency of the international community to undermine local authority by retaining significant control over the reform process.¹⁶ The tension that exists between the international community and the states in Southeastern Europe concerning which entity exercises authority over the territory illustrates this struggle.

- Balkan Stability Pact initiatives attempt to de-emphasize traditional conceptions of sovereignty;
- UN administrative activities in Bosnia and Kosovo prevent the actual exercise of the state's authority;
 - They wrest control from local decision-makers;¹⁷ and,
 - The take away any motivation local leaders may have had to reform.¹⁸
- Reform-minded local leaders are forced to try to change their systems of governance knowing they have no discretion as to how and little authority to carry out changes.

The importance of local ownership of reforms becomes clear when related back to the discussion of authority. According to Barnett:

¹⁴ Fernando Teson, *A Philosophy of International Law*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998. p. 40.

¹⁵ Martin Van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

¹⁶ "Reshaping International Priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Part Two: International Power in Bosnia," ESI, March 30, 2000; "In Search of Politics: The Evolving International Role in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *ESI Discussion Paper*, November 1, 2001, 7-8.

¹⁷ "Stability, Institutions, and European Integration," Brussels Discussion Paper, EastEast Institute and the European Stability Initiative, October 31, 2000. Accessed on September 6, 2002 at [http://www.esiweb.org/pages/rep/rep_stab2.html].

¹⁸ "Lessons from Bosnia and Kosovo, Part I: Governance and Development – A Real Life Story of Private Sector Growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina," European Stability Initiative, February 13, 2002.

... authority suggests compliance that is secured through an appeal to reason, prior cultural beliefs, and community standards. The appeals and reasons given by an authority must be grounded in the beliefs, aspirations, and interests of the community. In this way, 'authority is only justified to the extent that it serves the needs and interests' of the community and its members (Raz 1990a: 5). Blending normative theory and definitional claims, the insinuation is that authority only operates as a legitimate force and can be sustained when claims are grounded in established values of the community.¹⁹

This dampening effect can result from more than the international community's exerting explicit control over the direction and form of the reconstruction process. In his investigation of human rights practices in Kenya in the 1980s and '90's, Hans Peter Schmidt argues, "transboundary" networks "can have ambiguous long-term effects on domestic regime change. Not only do they offer protection and support; under certain conditions they create 'blind spots' for dialog and compromise."²⁰ Schmidt continues, "While the international contacts remained in the 1990s an important safeguard for human rights actors, *long-term* and sometimes even *exclusive* reliance on such networks with the outside world constrained actors in the domestic political struggle for political reforms. International contacts in the form of 'vertical networking' cannot substitute for the developments of a solid domestic political following and successful 'horizontal networking'..."²¹

This means that even if the international community were to increase the discretion available to local leaders (a task the current UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken up with vigor) the presence of international 'scaffolding' closes off certain avenues of discussion and courses of action.

V. Is there a viable alternative?

While a strong international presence may close off local reform initiatives, one may question whether this is entirely a bad thing. As anyone even vaguely familiar with present-day Bosnia, it is often the local leaders who are the main opponents of meaningful restructuring. If left to their own devices much of Bosnia would be party to rank clientelism, corruption, and criminal activity.

More generally, there are high costs associated with a regional grouping of weak states.

- World Bank Report on economic trap
- Thomas Carothers on entrenched political interests

While local leaders and citizens must buy into reconstruction efforts for them to truly take root, often these efforts are too technically and politically complicated for even the most committed reformer. One international watchdog group, the European Stability Initiative, views the EU accession process that is built into the Balkan Stability Pact as the only approach to

¹⁹ Barnett, "Authority, Intervention, and I.R. Theory." , 56.

²⁰ Hans Peter Schmidt, "When Networks Blind: Human Rights and Politics in Kenya," in *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*, ed. Thomas Callaghy; Ronald Kassimir; Robert Latham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)., 150.

²¹ Ibid. 150.

institution building that may be strong enough to overcome comprehensive impediments to reform.²²

- The strength of twinning²³
- An alternative role for the Stability Pact Office²⁴

VI. Conclusion

This paper examined the activity of post-conflict reconstruction in the Balkans. What practical effect does a global governance approach have on how reconstruction efforts are carried out in the Southeastern Europe and what does this reveal about global governance practices more generally?

- Global governance is not ‘one size fits all’. We must be very careful not to conflate global with universal/homogenous
 - Post-conflict societies may not be prepared to jump past strong sovereignty
 - Over-eager international involvement may stifle local initiatives that are needed for durable reform
- If done poorly this approach allows states to languish; promotes donor fatigue; and undermines other, potentially more effective reform efforts.
- If done properly (with attention to local buy in, nuances of particular areas, and commitment to comprehensive approach), allows for the strongest mechanism for fundamental reconstruction possible.

²² “Stability, Institutions, and European Integration,” Brussels Discussion Paper, ESI and EWI, October 31, 2000.

²³ “Stability, Institutions, and European Integration,” Brussels Discussion Paper, ESI and EWI, October 31, 2000.

²⁴ “Democracy, Security and the Future of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe: A Framework for Debate,” The EastWest Institute in partnership with the European Stability Initiative, April 2001.

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