Lessons from the Break-Up of Yugoslavia

Brad Roth, Professor of Political Science and Law; Dalia Ibrahim, Undergraduate, Political Science; Sheham Saif, Undergraduate, Political Science; John Sedarous, Undergraduate, Political Science

Wednesday, November 28, 2018 12:30PM-1:30PM Rm. 2339 Faculty Administration Bldg

The Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik, Croatia, hosts an annual multidisciplinary short course on ethnic conflict, co-founded by WSU Political Science Professor Otto Feinstein during the 1990s Yugoslav wars. WSU student participants go on to travel to conflict sites in Bosnia and to the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. Professor Brad Roth, whose research has explored multiple legal aspects of the Yugoslav dissolution, led the 2018 trip and supervised three related Undergraduate Research (UROP) projects.

Armed conflicts among rival ethno-nationalist-dominated forces tore apart Yugoslav communities with long histories of multi-ethnic cooperation. “Ancient hatreds” explanations have thus given way to a scholarly focus on structural and institutional factors, as well as on the effects of political demagoguery.

Dalia Ibrahim is investigating the role of accounts of past atrocities (remote and recent) in mobilizing support for ethno-nationalist political agendas. Sheham Saif is examining the relationship between the configuration of electoral processes and the rise of ethno-nationalist political entrepreneurship, with a focus on the 1990 Croatian election. John Sedarous is comparing and contrasting ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia and in the United States, with an eye to the relative roles of deep-seated societal divisions and the tactical provocations of political instigators.

Brad R. Roth is a Professor jointly appointed in the Department of Political Science and the Law School, and a member of the Wayne State Academy of Scholars. He is the author of Governmental Illegitimacy in International Law (Oxford University Press, 1999), Sovereign Equality and Moral Disagreement (Oxford University Press, 2011), and a wide range of book chapters, journal articles and commentaries dealing with questions of sovereignty, constitutionalism, human rights and democracy.

Dalia Ibrahim, Sheham Saif, John Sedarous are undergraduate students in the Irvin D. Reid Honors College, majoring in Political Science.

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