

Sanja Tepavcevic

Global Crises, Resilience, and Future Challenges

Experiences of Post-Yugoslav and Post-Soviet Migrants

BALKAN POLITICS AND SOCIETY

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Sanja Tepavcevic

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Abstract

The idea to write this book was born during my teaching fellowship at the International Relations Department of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest in the Spring of 2017. I created and taught an MA course titled “Interests in Clash, the Clash of Interests: the Balkans and Great Powers”. The major aim of this course was to explain the causes and consequences of the 1990s wars in the Balkans. During one of the seminar exercises, which was based on real persons who experienced the siege of Sarajevo in varying personal contexts, the students were asked what they would do if they were in the place of these individuals. Most of the students responded that they would try to leave the city and the country, taking someone close with them.

Unlike many books to which I refer, this book is neither a chronicle nor an analysis of the siege of Sarajevo, the war in Bosnia, the former Yugoslavia and genocides. Nor is it solely an analysis of the collapses of Yugoslavia and USSR. Additionally, it is not solely a book about the current war in Ukraine, though these topics are present throughout the book.

Taking a comparative approach, and inevitably crossing the disciplinary boundaries, “Global Crises, Resilience, and Future Challenges” examines the impact of the collapses of the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia on migration trajectories of their population and on their resilience in consecutive global crises. These consecutive global crises, include the collapse of the Socialist bloc, the global financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine. Because of these crises, the lives of post-Yugoslav and post-Soviet individuals and communities are frequently on the move. How do the most affected individuals within these populations manage to survive global crises? How do their experiences from previous crises influence their behavior when a new global crisis emerges? By situating their narratives and participant observations into Albert Hirschman’s framework of ‘Exit, Voice, and Loyalty’ and combining them with concepts of resilience borrowed from social, behavioral, and natural sciences, this book presents stories of survival and lessons in resilience.