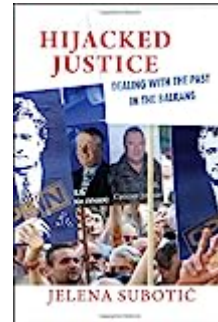


Jelena Subotic. *Hijacked Justice: Dealing With the Past in the Balkans.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009. xviii + 201 pp. \$35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8014-4802-7.



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Transitional Justice in the Balkans

One major problem in post-conflict societies is how to deal with the atrocities of the past, and how to deal with the perpetrators of those atrocities. It is increasingly becoming the norm for the international community to respond by imposing transitional justice to address the crimes of the past. However, the intent of these institutions of transitional justice is often very different from their outcomes at a state's domestic level. Jelena Subotic examines this idea and challenges common assumptions on the effects of transitional justice. This makes *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans* a particularly timely work that can be useful to both academics and practitioners.

Subotic specifically analyzes the aftermath of violence in three cases in the Balkans: Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia. In each case, she argues that the state is giving the appearance of complying with international norms and standards while political leaders are actually using such norms for their own political ends. *Hijacked Justice* is thus the domestic misuse of transitional justice norms (p. 6). Her analysis is a multilay-

ered approach, where each of her three cases illustrates each of the three types of international political pressure for compliance—coercive (Serbia), symbolic (Croatia), and bureaucratic (Bosnia). She also outlines the different types of coalitions and strategies elites developed in response to the pressures within the state to truly understand how domestic actors understand and interpret those norms. Elites have used compliance to their benefit, and she identifies the various ways in which they do so, thus showing how the reality vastly differs from the ideal. Elites comply with norms while ignoring their essence; thus the social change the international community hopes for does not take place, and nothing is done to correct the mentality that brought on the initial conflict.

The work is particularly strong in its research and discussion of the actual cases. The depth of research and the variety of sources—fieldwork, archival research, etc., is apparent. For example, Subotic's interview with the war crimes prosecutor's office in Serbia is contrasted with the politics of the rest of the country (p. 58). In this sense, she is able to capture many of the subtleties in the po-

litical process and effectively convey them to make her argument.

The work also does what it sets out to do. Subotic is very clear about her objectives and how she specifically contributes to existing political science theory. By including a focus on domestic politics in her argument, she is able to complement and further international relations theory. Furthermore, by combining various literatures, such as those on international organizations, comparative politics, regime theory, and transitional justice, she ties together discussions that have traditionally been more compartmentalized. This allows her to shed light on what international organizations actually do and what norms are being socially corrupted within the state. The fact that she is able to bring together aspects of various theories into her discussion of the specifics of compliance makes this a work that adds to debates not only on transitional justice, but also on the post-conflict situation in the Balkans.

What Subotic does not expressly mention but in effect discusses is elite theory and domestic politics. She examines debates between elites, and how these drive norm compliance. Despite this focus, she also addresses the general social mentality and reactions of the masses. The fact that she is able to some degree show this elite-mass interaction adds a greater depth to her work, even if it is not her specifically stated purpose.

The conclusion addresses what could have been a potential weakness—creating a seemingly broad theory yet only applying it to one region. Subotic addresses

this by briefly discussing similar cases in other regions—Indonesia, Burundi, and Cambodia.

Only by reading the entire work does it become obvious how clearly organized it is. However, one cannot look at the table of contents and tell which chapters discuss which case, although they are creatively titled. Subotic is able to effectively convey her complex theory, but it is a bit surprising that there is no chart or diagram illustrating her theory. It is a multifaceted theory, and a chart would have helped various levels of readers and further clarified how she applies her theory. For example, only after reading all the cases was it entirely clear that she is applying all three of her listed domestic political conditions to all three cases. Nevertheless, these are all minor points. The work as a whole achieves its goal of questioning common understandings of norm compliance.

It would be interesting to see a more detailed discussion of policy prescriptions, especially since Subotic make the point that she does not argue against transitional justice, but rather for a reevaluation of it. However, one book cannot cover everything. Policy prescriptions alone could serve as a basis for another work.

The debates on the causes of the Yugoslav conflict are exhaustive; the discussions on its aftermath are less so. The fact that this work discusses the latter makes it a good addition to political science theory, and a timely one. This work presents a case for changing the way transitional justice is carried out, making it worthwhile reading for policymakers, researchers, and students.

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