monolithic Croat and Bosniak narratives. She persuasively shows that the process of how the citizens of Mostar interpret competing public narratives is a complex and messy one. While some individuals reaffirmed canonical historiographies as they changed, others refrained from simply overwriting previous experiences by taking on the new, nationalist narratives. People's different experiences and life courses significantly affected the evolution of their historical understanding (5).

Third, Palmberger focuses on the interplay between personal memories and memory politics in a way that is seldom found in the literature on memory and nationalism in Bosnia. She argues that public discourses are a 'powerful foil against whose backdrop people's narratives are constructed' (17), effectively demonstrating that individual understandings of the past consist of intermingled narratives of autobiographical memories, second-hand pasts in the form of narratives bestowed on them by older family members, as well as the public, institutionalized ways of addressing historical themes (29). And finally, Palmberger applies methodological creativity to capture people's narratives on contentious and sensitive topics, while striving to avoid exposure to bias (for example, by inviting participants to act as historical tour guides of their city). The result is a robust example of a well-executed qualitative multimethod study.

Tamara Trošt (Ljubljana)

Florian Bieber/Dario Brentin, eds, *Social Movements in the Balkans. Rebellion and Protest from Maribor to Taksim*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2018. 190 pp., ISBN 978-1-138-05214-7, £ 115.00 (Hardback), £ 39.99 (eBook)

Over the last decade, there has been rebellion and protest throughout South-eastern Europe. Greece has seen country-wide social mobilization since 2008; Slovenia was the scene of mass uprisings in the winter of 2012-2013; in the same year, mass demonstrations took place in major Bulgarian cities; and the civic activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina since the early 2000s had culminated in spontaneous, decentralized upheaval by 2015. As this tumultuous decade draws to a close, the editors of the volume under review, Florian Bieber and Dario Brentin, address these and other *Social Movements in the Balkans*. Their aim is twofold: to examine South-east European protests in terms of their heterogeneity and plurality, on the one hand, and as a phenomenon specific to this European subregion, on the other. This is an extremely relevant endeavour, also in light of the considerable potential for instability and conflict in the region in the years to come. This edited volume, with contributions from twelve scholars at various stages of their career, is based on an eponymous conference that was organized by the Centre for Southeast European Studies at the University of Graz in 2013.

The first five chapters—on the uprisings in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Greece—appear promising in light of the research aims set out by the editors in the introduction. Separate country analyses that answer the same research question(s) and/or include regular inter-case references allow for an (in)

direct comparison with plenty of room to discover both homo- and heterogeneity. However, the authors rarely make explicit comparative comments. Instead they provide a chronology and contextualization of events, and focus on connecting different social movements *within* each country under consideration as well as drawing *intra*-case parallels with past social movements. Moreover, despite their common research goal, the country studies are approached from very different angles.

As a result, the first part of this volume comes across as a rather mixed bag. *Heiko Wimmen*, for example, asks how and to what extent informal civic activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina compensates for the shortcomings of a dysfunctional system of institutionalized (ethnic) power sharing. *Kostis Plevris* examines the spatiality of social mobilization in Greece. *Ksenija Berk* explores how protest imagery in Slovenia embodies cultural and ideological exchange. Enlightening and thought-provoking though these different perspectives may be, applied to just one case study they are of limited value in terms of achieving the volume's overarching, comparative goals.

The second half of the volume, on the other hand, does contain several comparative case studies and thus makes an extremely helpful contribution to understanding social movements in the Balkans with all their similarities and differences. The chapters in this part of the book offer some enlightening insights, particularly when the different levels of analysis are recognized by the reader, a facet which, however, is not made explicit by the editors in their introduction. The attentive reader should be able to group the explanations for the dynamics of civic activism in the region on three different levels: individual, national, and international.

Marius I. Tartar's counterintuitive findings that weak economic development and quality of democracy do not provide a satisfactory explanation for protest participation in the region led him to search for an explanation on the individual level. In his intriguing longitudinal statistical study he compares protester profiles in all ten Southeast European countries. Tartar identifies twenty-five sociodemographic and behavioural factors that account for the varying propensity to participate in petitions and demonstrations—two of the most common forms of protest. Generally speaking, men, citizens with higher education, members of political parties, people with a cosmopolitan sense of belonging, individuals with a critical view on immigration, and those who have been politically socialized are more likely to demonstrate than their respective opposites. Tartar observes minor variations between protester profiles in the various states. For Bulgarians, for example, the level of education and church attendance are more important factors when it comes to participation in demonstrations than elsewhere in the Balkans (140-44).

A second explanatory mechanism for protest participation in Southeastern Europe can be found on the national level. Referring to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Greece, and Turkey, *Chiara Milan* and *Leonidas Oikonomakis* differentiate between the production and the consumption of protest repertoires—a distinction that may seem trite, but is in fact essential for understanding (the degree of) societal reverberation and mobilization. Single-issue protests in Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, such as what were dubbed the 'JMBG protests' about the disbursement of national ID numbers in 2013, failed to grow into a mass movement that could have addressed the underlying legitima-

tory crisis of the representational political system. The 'JMBG protests' did not resonate with the contemporaneous mass protests in other countries, Greece and Turkey among them.

With regard to this international level, Milan and Oikonomakis compellingly demonstrate how pre-existing local and transnational activist networks in Greece and Turkey were key to the protest movements' success: '[...] thanks to the help of the 'Take the Square Collective', Syntagma Square [in Athens] was put in direct Internet communication with the squares of Madrid, Barcelona and Sevilla' (120). The Bosnian 'JMBG protests' had no such ties with transnational movements and were isolated from other squares of the Real Democracy Movement. In the concluding chapter, *Mark Kramer* sums up the 'International Context of Mass Political Unrest in the Balkans' with reflections on the conceptual issues involved. He provides an outstanding analysis of how external actors such as foreign media outlets, transnational advocacy networks (TANs), and foreign governments deliberately or inadvertently influenced protest movements in Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey in 2013: 'The framing of protests in foreign media coverage, the support offered by transnational groups and organisations, the spill-over effect from protests in one country into neighbouring countries, the inspiration protesters can gain from unrest overseas and the facilitating role of diaspora communities are among the many ways the international environment can affect protest movements' (160). Kramer demonstrates how each of these practices of external interference can produce diverse effects. In 2013, for instance, Turkish diaspora communities in Western Europe supported protesters in the motherland, but they also ran

the risk of being instrumentalized by the Turkish government, which acted against the protests. Moreover, Kramer notes that not all Balkan countries are as susceptible to external interference as Turkey is. More so than others, Turkey has taken action to prevent domestic organisations from advocating their human rights and democracy cause to TANs (168).

Does the volume fulfil its aim of illustrating that there is a common element tying these protests together and of examining it as a phenomenon specific to Southeastern Europe? Given the lack of summarizing conclusion, readers are left to draw their own. One could argue, the answer is 'yes' to the first half of the question, and 'no' to the second. Two elements do seem to tie all the protests together: first, the circumstances and causes of the protests and, second, the spill-over of ideas and events. The recent wave of protests in new, post-communist democracies was a response to the inadequate democratic transition starting in the 1990s, which caused broad political, social, and economic grievances (worsened by the global economic crisis in 2008 and insufficient monitoring by the EU after enlargement), and which took place in the context of a European austerity regime in the continent's (semi-)periphery. In contrast to the waves of protests in the 1970s and '80s, which were directed against authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, recent protests focused on political systems with greedy elites (in some cases also democracies) and demanded political change (2, 4). Subsequently, it was effectively cross-border 'demonstration effects' that fuelled the mass protests. Such effects, Kramer shows, were fostered by factors such as the cultural and political similarities existing between Balkan societies, interpersonal ties, as well as access

to inexpensive means of direct communication (173).

Nevertheless, these similarities, skillfully illuminated by the authors, arguably do not justify defining the protests in Southeastern Europe as a regional phenomenon. While the three levels of analysis work well to explain the dynamics of 21st century social movements in the region, they would need to be compared and contrasted with social movements in other European and/or world regions in order to be identifiable as regionally specific. In the title of his chapter, Tartar rightly asks: 'Are the Balkans different?'

Without doubt, the book does give an indication of certain compelling differences between the East and the West. As Marius I. Tartar concludes in his chapter 'Mapping Protest Politics', there are notable differences on the individual level between protesters in the Balkans and their counterparts in Western Europe. For instance, whereas ardent churchgoers in Southeastern Europe are more likely to protest than the average citizen, the opposite is the case in Western Europe. However, 'protesters in both regions tend to have similar socio-demographical and attitudinal profiles' (147). In both regions, a positive relationship between democratic support and protest participation can be observed. Moreover, none of the authors provides evidence of either the national or the international dynamics that drove social movements in Southeastern Europe being in any way particular. On the contrary, the international driving forces they identify tend to question such regionality, not only because transnational networks and external interference by definition transcend regional boundaries, but also because the same mechanisms were at work elsewhere. In his concluding reflections, Kramer confirms how important

cross-border demonstration effects were during the upheavals of the past thirty years: in Eastern Europe and the USSR in 1989-1991; during the 'colour' revolutions in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan (2000, 2003-2005); and, not least, in the Arab world in 2011. In fact, the editors' point of departure that '[...] these past and present protest movements [...] have to be understood as part of a larger wave of social movements that took place globally: from Occupy Wall Street in the US to the Maidan Square in the Ukraine, from Gezi Park in Turkey to Tahrir Square in Egypt' (1) seems to be even more valid after having read the book. Social movements in the Balkans appear to be an expression of a global phenomenon in the region, rather than a regional phenomenon.

This conclusion might be somewhat disenchanting at first, but in fact underscores the importance of this study's contribution to general theorizing on protest participation, collective mobilization, and social networking in the 21st century. *Social Movements in the Balkans. Rebellion and Protest from Maribor to Taksim* serves as a test case for existing theories and—perhaps most importantly—and as an encouragement to conceptualize a global phenomenon that Gal Kirn, in his chapter about 'Maribor's Social Uprising in the European Crisis', terms 'democratic irruptions' and 'explosions' (30).

Christel Zunneberg (Oxford)