

Research on Serbia, Croatia and the European Union

I am currently working on a project exploring the causes behind Serbia and Croatia's markedly different rates of progress towards European Union (EU) membership following the fall of their respective authoritarian governments in 2000. After the electoral defeats of the Tudjman and Milosevic regimes in Croatia and Serbia, Croatia has made great strides towards EU membership while Serbia continues to lag behind in its efforts to integrate into Europe. Through an examination of voting behavior, party systems and coalition government formation in these two states, I seek to demonstrate that the difference in these two countries' trajectories can be best explained, not by fundamental differences in political culture or societal values, but by focusing on the nexus between what are essentially similar social pressures and markedly different party systems. The results of this study stand to make a contribution not only to our understanding of the difficult political challenges facing these two states, but also to the wider literature on the European Union's eastern expansion.

As part of this project, this summer I spent three months conducting field research in Serbia and Croatia. The research consisted of gathering electoral, demographic and economic data for the countries different localities, analyses of media reports and interviews with government officials, NGO leaders, academics and local representatives of the EU, OSCE and United Nations. I also traveled throughout the region visiting different cities and regions effected by the wars which accompanied the collapse of Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

The main product of this research will be a book length project tentatively titled, *Voting for Europe: Elections and Party Constellations in Serbia and Croatia*. However, the project also touches upon a number of issues which can be "spun off" as separate articles and mini-projects. Thus far, the project has produced the following journal manuscripts:

- "The Serbian Radical Party in the 2004 Local Elections," *East European Politics and Society*, 22:4, 2008, *Forthcoming*
- "The parliamentary elections in Serbia, 11 May 2008," *Electoral Studies*, *Forthcoming*
- "An Electorate Adrift: Refugees and Elections in Post-Milosevic Serbia," with Jelena Grujic, *Under Review*
- "Serbia and Russia: *Bratsvo* and Brinkmanship on the EU's Frontier," *Under Review*

In addition to these manuscripts, I will also present parts of the project at various academic conferences and to a mixed audience of academics and policy-makers at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC.

I have also had the good fortune of working with a Samford student on part of this project. With funds from the Alabama Power Foundation, Jenna Edwards (International Relations, 2009) joined me for three weeks in Croatia and Serbia where we gathered information and conducted interviews related to Croatia and Serbia's cooperation with the International War Crimes Tribunal Yugoslavia (ICTY). As a result of this research, Jenna and I will present the paper, "Party Systems and Cooperation with War Crimes Tribunals: Comparing the Serbian and Croatian Experiences," at the 2009 Southern Political

Science Association Conference in New Orleans. Jenna will also join me to deliver a presentation to the Woodrow Wilson Center in February of 2009.

Support for the project has come from a number of sources including the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), the American Political Science Association (APSA), the Alabama Power Foundation and the generous support of Samford University in the form of a Faculty Development Grant and other travel funds. This is a project which continues to generate new avenues for research and I look forward to continuing my research for years to come.