One of the dominating issues for Europe in 2015-16 was immigration. It aroused the forces of nationalism and populism, and was exploited by demagogic politicians. It became entwined with and complicated policies against terrorism; and also affected and embittered debate about both capitalism and sovereignty. It helped bring down one government—David Cameron’s—and is threatening others. It presents all European countries with a dilemma: between their international obligations to accept refugees, and their rights as states to decide whom to admit.

Nowhere was the effect more direct than in South East Europe, which found itself in the forefront both of the wave of immigration and of the ensuing debate. All the countries of South East Europe are affected in one way or another by the rising waves of immigration from the Middle East, North Africa and beyond. In some form or another, they have become destinations and/or transit routes to Europe, and their internal and external politics have been dominated by border considerations and migrants’ numbers. SEESOX has attempted to make sense of these developments in a series of seminars and conferences conducted during last year, often in cooperation with other centres and institutes, focusing on the nature and impact of the crisis from humanitarian, legal, socio-economic and political points of views. It sought to disentangle the diversity of positions in South East Europe, against a dominant paradigm that tends to see the migration crisis through narrow nationalistic lenses, and/or as part of a mismanaging (and mismanaged) European context.

In addressing individual countries, the focus was on Turkey’s internal migration challenges and its relationship with the EU; Greece’s “reception crisis” amid a debilitating economic environment; and the Western Balkan “transit crisis” within unstable domestic politics. In addition, we have been addressing how the migration issue feeds into a climate of “geopolitics of fear” in a region surrounded by insecure neighbourhoods to its east and south.

Events are moving at a rapid pace, and predictability is a rare commodity. We shall keep on monitoring and discussing a topic which will continue to bedevil domestic and international politics for a long time. Indeed we “live in interesting times.”

Othon Anastasakis and David Madden
Throughout the past academic year, SEESOX continued its engagement with the big themes which affect our region during the current turbulent times. It seems that “crisis” is the catchword which encapsulates the present regional and European environment – in political, social, economic and humanitarian terms. The region of South East Europe is not simply an “exporter” of crises, it has become lately an “importer” of crises, be they from the Eurozone, migration or the new geopolitical threats from the neighbourhoods to the east and the south. Our seminar series during Hilary term focused on the “South East European realities amid Europe’s multiple crises” (page 8-9), and explored how the countries in the region, notwithstanding their own internal long-standing problems, are, or are not, coping with the pressures from outside. At the same time, Global SEESOX, a major theme of our research, is now focusing on the theme of Diasporas, with particular concentration on the Greek case and how this relates to the Greek crisis and beyond (page 7).

Indeed, all the countries of the region, and their domestic affairs, are influenced in one way or another by their diasporic populations: the numbers of which are significant, as a result of past and more recent migratory waves to the advanced western societies. This is a new territory for SEESOX and will become more prominent in the coming years. Looking back at an excellent academic year, I would like to thank the delightful group of SEESOX scholars, visiting and more permanent, who contributed so fruitfully to the realisation of our thematic goals.

Othon Anastasakis, Director of SEESOX

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**SEESOX News bites**

- The SEESOX/A.G. Leventis visiting fellow for the academic year 2016-17 is Dr Lamprini Rori. Lamprini was the Marie Curie Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at Bournemouth University. Her research project is entitled Emotions and politics in the mass media: The 2015 Greek referendum campaign. She holds an MA in Political Sociology and Public Policy from Sciences Po Paris, an MA in Social and Political Communication from Paris I University (Sorbonne), and a PhD in Comparative Politics from Paris I University (Sorbonne).

- SEESOX has great pleasure in announcing that the Governing Body of St Antony’s College has awarded David Madden the honour of Distinguished Friend of St Antony’s College. The award is in recognition of David’s intellectual contribution to SEESOX and the College.

- SEESOX is delighted to announce that Adis Merdzanovic will be continuing his research at SEESOX for another 18 months. In addition to his own work (page 5) he has proved an invaluable member of the SEESOX team, co-convening the Hilary Term Seminar series, and adding his own insights on the countries of the region in our discussions.

- We would like to welcome Antonis Kamaras as one of the core researchers of the Greek Diaspora Project (see page 7). Antonis will be our consultant and analyst in Greece.

- Othon Anastasakis participated as expert in a project on the state of social democracy in the Western Balkans sponsored by The European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity.

- SEESOX is happy to introduce a new fellowship for the next three years, funded by Onassis Foundation, for the Greek Diaspora Project.

- SEESOX welcomed three new Academic Visitors from Turkey in 2016: Ezgi Başaran, Altuğ Günal, and Deniz Ulke Arbagan. (You can read their stories on pages 4 & 5 of this newsletter.) And in September 2016 SEESOX will be hosting two additional Turkish academics: Yaprak Gursoy from Bilgi University, and Mehmet Karli from Galatasaray University.

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Kostis Karpozilos has degrees from the Universities of Thessaloniki and Sheffield, and a Ph.D. in History at the University of Crete. His thesis focused on revolutionary diasporas in the United States and the trajectory of Greek American radicalism in the 20th century. During his stay at SEESOX he worked on an international history of the Greek Left.

“The A.G. Leventis Fellowship at SEESOX proved to be an intellectually stimulating experience. During my stay at Oxford I had the opportunity to engage in the ongoing debate on how societies in times of crisis turn to history in order to extract promises of a positive outcome and a better future. This question has been pivotal in my work, which encompasses the radical political movements of the 20th century. Moreover, I had the opportunity to finish the manuscript of my second book that addresses the interplay of immigration and political radicalism in the United States with a particular emphasis on the case of Greek Americans. Entitled Revolutionary Diasporas the book illustrates my research on the diverse worlds of ethnic and immigrant radicalism in the United States from the early 20th century to the postwar era. The SEESOX seminars, the weekly European Study Center seminars and workshops, the lectures and talks create an atmosphere of dialogue and exchange bringing together people from diverse disciplines and backgrounds. As we all know the academic world has its own rules and rituals - conferences, publications and public appearances. All these are of course important. But at the same time my experience at SEESOX entailed something broader: it offered me the privilege of developing my conceptualizations further and rethink history and politics in ways I had never imagined. Therefore I would like to thank my colleagues and friends at the European Studies Center and particularly the SEESOX team for this intriguing and thought-provoking academic year.”

Kostis Karpozilos

The Greek Left from the Balkan Wars to the Eurozone crisis: A national/international history
Public seminar: 2 February 2016
In 2015 Syriza, a party of the European left, rose to power in Greece amidst an unprecedented social and financial crisis that exemplified the structural constrains of the common European project. Why did the Greek people choose a party of the left to tackle the challenges of the 21st century? Kostis Karpozilos addressed this question on 2 February, 2016, highlighting the importance of historical legacies in the contemporary Greek political landscape. Presenting his ongoing research project Karpozilos proposed a national/international history of the Greek left from the Balkan Wars to the Eurozone crisis. This historiographical perspective entails also an expansion of geographical and linguistic boundaries towards the diverse worlds of expatriates, immigrants, and political exiles that shaped the revolutionary projects of the 20th century. The history of the Greek left underscores the globalizing dimensions of political radicalism and offers an opportunity to rethink the links connecting national and transnational historiography.

Greek-American Radicals: The Untold Story
Documentary and debate, 4 November, 2015
Greek American Radicals: the Untold Story is a documentary narrating the story of Greek-American radicalism from the era of mass migration till the McCarthy period in the 50s. A history of collective struggles, radical ideas, exciting journeys and forgotten traditions interwoven with the times of upheaval, social and political movements, persecutions and collective disillusionments. Focusing from the Great Depression to the demise of ethnic radicalism in the 50s, Greek-American Radicals: the Untold Story brings forth an alternative vision of Greek-American history that highlights the transformations and multiple interrelations between ethnicity, class and radicalism. The documentary was based on the research and script of Kostis Karpozilos, A. G. Leventis Fellow at SEESOX.
Academic Visitors: In their own words...

Ezgi Başaran—Academic Visitor 2016-2017

Ezgi Başaran is a journalist from Turkey. She is currently an academic visitor at St Antony’s College. Before coming to Oxford, she was the editor-in-chief of Radikal, a prestigious liberal-left newspaper in Turkey, contributing a column five times a week. Ezgi Başaran’s primary focus is Turkey’s Kurdish problem, and she continues her research in more depth at St Antony’s College.

“The rise of illiberalism in Turkey has directly influenced my daily life and career. Radikal was under pressure from the government from 2009 onwards. Then, as a result of an increased government crackdown, I had to step down as editor-in-chief in January 2016. Later the newspaper itself was shut down. After a 2.7 billion TL tax fine imposed by the government, the company which owned it was forced to sell two influential newspapers, as well as its popular news channel. I came to SEESOX with a broken wing. The 40-year-old Kurdish conflict had descended into a bloody war – again – after the peace process had collapsed. At SEESOX, I gave a seminar on the contemporary Kurdish conflict of Turkey and why a war had reigned after a peace process. I am also deepening my research on the subject and writing a book. The second issue on which I focus at SEESOX is the decline of free speech and the rise of authoritarianism in Turkey. I was part of the panel discussion with the title ‘Who is afraid of free speech in Turkey’. SEESOX is this extraordinary place where journalism and academia can work hand in hand and produce works that analyses and help the understanding of current events shaping South East Europe. Studying at SEESOX has become the most enriching experience of my life. I hope to continue my work on Turkey with my SEESOX family in the coming year.”

Altuğ Günal—Academic Visitor 2016

Altuğ Günal is a full time lecturer at International Relations Department of Ege University in İzmir/Turkey, the vice chairman of the Ege Strategic Research Center and the editor of the International Peer-Reviewed, Ege Strategic Research Journal. He holds a master’s degree in international relations and PhD degree in European Studies. He has had research, post doctorate or visiting fellow posts at the University of Exeter (UK), Aalborg University (Denmark), Yaşar University (Turkey), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway), and University of Zagreb (Croatia). He is a specialist in Balkans issues, the Cyprus question, humanitarian interventions, federations, and the European Union.

“The time I spent at SEESOX was my most productive ever. At SEESOX, as a scholar specializing in Balkan and Cyprus issues, I had the chance to regularly meet and exchange views with some of the best scholars in the field from different nations whom I wouldn’t otherwise come across. The atmosphere, not only at SEESOX but also at St Antony’s College, and generally in the University of Oxford, was motivating, friendly and peaceful which, without doubt, helped me to concentrate on my research, and be creative. The library of St Antony’s College was another pleasing factor that contributed to the quality of my research. My presence at SEESOX was a unique experience which I will never forget and will always reap the benefits.”
Dr Adis Merdzanovic is a Junior Research Fellow at St Antony’s College, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. He obtained his PhD from the University of Zurich and, before coming to Oxford, was a Swiss Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. His research focuses on constitutional and political order in divided post-conflict societies using the perspective of political theory. At SEESOX he is working on a project dealing with the state and challenges of liberalism in the Western Balkans (concretely in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia) and the region’s prospects for European Union accession. “When I started my project at SEESOX in March 2015, I was looking at an area in which internal problems like the lack of good governance or the rise of illiberal political practices dominated our understanding of the major challenges. Now, we are faced with a multitude of other issues that emerge from the geopolitical context. The combination of these two trends creates a particularly convoluted situation for the understanding of which a constant exchange of ideas and data is necessary. This is the strength of SEESOX, as I experience it. By bringing academics and practitioners together, it is in an ideal position to actively engage in these discussions and provide much needed context. Such direct exchanges have proven not only to be beneficial to academics, but are also highly appreciated by larger audiences. I am extremely grateful to the Swiss National Science Foundation for awarding me a continuation of my funding which allows me to remain part of SEESOX for the next academic year. I look forward to continuing our discussions, in the hope that its results ultimately help bring stability and prosperity to the region.”

Adis Merdzanovic

Deniz Ulke Aribogan is a professor of International Relations at Istanbul University. In 2015 she was appointed to CRIC (Center for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict) at University of Oxford as a senior fellow. She is also an academic visitor at SEESOX.

“Having met outstanding academics from various disciplines at SEESOX, I believe it will be the most fruitful year of my career: to enrich and deepen my vision of European affairs.

Coming from an IR background with specialization on terrorism and security issues, my aim is to build a bridge between the two institutions that I’ve been affiliated with; SEESOX and CRIC. As I’m working on a project, based on the sales/marketing techniques of ISIS and its ability to attract the attention of the youngsters who are in need of binding themselves with a “group identity”, the refugee teens in Europe became a focal point for me.

Most of the recent terrorist organisations grew out of refugee camps or ghettos, hence Europe’s most important problem seems to be reaching out to these people and integrating them into the society by using effective measures through education and other socialization networks. During my stay which will end next spring, I will be editing a book related to this theme.

Thanks to the vast resources and high qualified academic network offered by the University, I will be able to focus on my studies, while at the same time find the opportunity to join high level conferences and lectures in order to develop new visions and perspectives”.

Deniz Ulke Aribogan
SEESOX on Greece

On 25 April Apostolos Doxiadis presented his view on the rise of Greek Centrist Public Intellectuals (CPIs) during the countries crisis. A prolific and well-known author himself, Doxiadis provided an intriguing picture of the contesting narratives generated by the Greek crisis.

The CPIs, according to Doxiadis, appeared on the Greek scene after the 2008 riots in Athens. They shared a common belief that the events exemplified the rise of extremism and a prevailing atmosphere of anomie. They expressed dissatisfaction with ruling political parties and disagreement with anti-establishment rhetoric. Common platform of the CPIs were: opposition to populism, extremism and established politics; and support for structural reforms, institutional changes and the common European project. There were five great legends of the crisis: the Money–Tree (the government as a source of unlimited money), the Pill of Bla-Whi (nostalgia for the past), the “Great Myth” (the nation under attack until a young leader takes command), the “David and Goliath” story (Greece fighting against superior enemies), and finally the “Magic Solution” (an easy fix to the crisis). The negation of these five great legends was the rallying point of the CPIs. Doxiadis talk was an excellent methodological example of how to discuss the role and limits of public intellectuals.

At a SEESOX seminar on 24 May 2016, Lea Börgerding, a MPhil International Relations student, outlined a somewhat different reading on the events occurring between January 2015, i.e. the coming to power of the SYRIZA government in Greece, and August 2015, the finalisation of the third economic adjustment programme. By that time, Germany’s exposure to the Greek debt had declined and public opinion was turning against it. So, why did Germany give in? According to Börgerding, the Greek strategy, even though it was never consciously pursued as a strategy, inter alia consisted in successfully stigmatising the German position. The analysis emphasised that, given favourable circumstances, image-related concerns may prevail over purely political and economic cost-benefit considerations in international relations.

A controversy revisited: Arnold Toynbee, the Koraes Chair, and the Western Question in Greece and Turkey

Special lecture, 10 February, 2016

Richard Clogg, Emeritus Fellow at St Antony’s College, and widely respected historian on Greece, briefly rehearsed the story of the rise of Arnold Toynbee from brilliant young academic to global historical guru. Appointed as the first holder of the Koraes Chair in 1919, he resigned the Chair in the mid 20s under heavy pressure from the rich Anglo Greeks who had funded it, and from members of the academic community in London. The reason was critical reports Toynbee had written about the treatment of Turkish nationals by the then Greek administration in Asia Minor in 1921. Richard Clogg had written the story of this episode using Toynbee’s own papers. He had included an intriguing suggestion by Toynbee himself that the first holder of the Chair should be “more of an active Philhellene”. Subsequently Clogg had access to the full story in the form of letters from Toynbee to his mother in 1911-12 which revealed him as anything but a Philhellene: indeed a Mishellene. It was clear, Clogg concluded, that Toynbee was unwise to have applied for the Chair.
Greece’s long drawn out economic crisis is by now an indisputably pivotal event in the country’s history. As such, it has and will continue to redefine the nature and role of Greece’s diaspora, a foundational pillar of Greece as a modern nation-state and a major feature of Greece’s evolution in economic, political and social terms.

It is for these reasons that SEESOX has decided to undertake a detailed research project focusing on how the Greek diaspora connects with the crisis, how it can contribute to the crisis’ resolution and, even more importantly, to Greece’s long term transformation. This endeavor, entitled ‘The Greek Diaspora Project’ has secured its core funding needs from a group of generous donors for an initial three year period. We believe that an understanding of the Greek diaspora is more necessary now than ever before, as Greece needs to mobilize all available resources in order to renew its institutional foundations, create an internationally competitive economy and restore its severely undermined international stature. Many of these resources either exist in the Greek diaspora or are potentially dissipated through the creation of a new diaspora wave, the so-called ‘brain drain’ phenomenon. Additionally, in the last two decades diasporas in general have risen in importance for a variety of reasons that relate to globalization such as the international movement of people, the lowering of transport and communication costs and the ability to conduct business across borders. Consequently the linkage of advanced, theoretical and empirical understandings of the contemporary diaspora phenomenon with studies of the Greek diaspora can have important, practical policy implications for the Greek polity, economy and society.

The Greek Diaspora Project, by thoroughly investigating this linkage, will seek to produce actionable policy research that can have a significant impact in the relational strategies of homeland and diaspora actors. This mission of the Greek Diaspora Project can be best grasped by the Project’s following component goals and priorities:

- Become the preeminent forum for debate between the wider diaspora scholarship and scholarship dedicated to the Greek diaspora;
- Relate Greece and its diaspora to countries which can serve as benchmarks in the way they conduct diaspora-homeland interactions, such as Israel, Ireland and India and conduct in-depth comparative studies;
- Inform Greek public debate and Greek policy makers on the Greek diaspora, its evolution and the policy implications of actual and potential interactions between the diaspora and Greece;
- Secure funding and research opportunities for a young generation of scholars dedicated to the study of the interaction of Greece with its diaspora;
- Promote partnerships, joint research projects and common methodologies and objectives, on the Greek diaspora, with academic institutions located in other areas where the Greek diaspora is particularly prominent or is growing dynamically (North America, Western Europe, Australia, the countries of the ex-Soviet Union, South Africa, the Middle East and China).

Finally, the Greek Diaspora Project will be comprised of three research pillars, focusing in the interaction of the diaspora with the Greek economy, Greek politics and the Greek Third Sector. The economy pillar will explore the interaction between diaspora skills, market-specific know-how and capital availability and the evolving structure of Greece’s crisis-hit economy. The political pillar will focus on the participation of the diaspora in the global and national debate, and more directly in public life and policy making, on how to address the crisis in Greece, as well as the potential of active involvement of the diaspora in its local communities of origin. The Third Sector pillar will assess the impact of diaspora philanthropy and volunteerism in Greece’s civic and cultural life as well as the Third Sector governance issues that need to be addressed in order to maximize the diaspora’s contribution to its activities.

Antonis Kamaras

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Enterprising diasporas: From brain drain to brain gain

Saturday 24 September, 2016
Rooms on Regent Park,
7 Sussex Place, London
https://rgconference16.splashthat.com/

In partnership with Reload
Greece and London Business School
In SEESOX’s Hilary Term seminar series, we focused on how South East Europe (SEE) is handling the multiple crises Europe is facing at the moment. Even before the Brexit decision added an internal crisis to the menu, the European Union had to deal with the financial crisis in the Eurozone, the refugee influx, and unstable neighbourhoods in the south and east (Syria and Ukraine). Despite the still prevailing constitutional, political, and economic challenges, SEE plays an important role in the resolution of these crises. The seminar series thus wanted to look at how the region has been coping with these multiple crises and what domestic developments or strategies either prevented or enabled appropriate political responses. It understood ‘crisis’ as a multidimensional concept incorporating economic, political, constitutional, social, or humanitarian aspects with which the countries are confronted, be it as a direct reflection of the contemporary crises or as legacies of past developments. What follows presents a brief overview of the topics discussed in the different seminars, while detailed accounts for each of them can be found on the SEESOX blog.

The first, scene-setting seminar featured Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s), Kalypso Nicolaidis (St Antony’s), Richard Caplan (Linacre), and Neil MacFarlane (St Anne’s) and dealt with ‘Geopolitics of Fear’. The speakers discussed whether or not we see a return of classical, realist geopolitics in the region or whether we are confronted with the result of years of indifference towards the region, allowing certain trends that ultimately produced the current climate.

Adam Bennett (St Antony’s College) and Peter Sanfey (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), co-

authors of a recently published book dealing with Economic and Policy Foundations for Growth in South East Europe (Palgrave) were the speakers of the second seminar. Their detailed study examines the economic development in SEE since the transition and especially after the 2008 financial crisis. The authors outlined the need for further reforms in order to secure sustainable economic prosperity. 2015

In the third seminar, Julianne Funk, a peace researcher from the University of Zurich, presented an intriguing approach towards peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She argued that we should not understand religiosity or religious differences only as potential or actual causes for conflict but that instead they can be used as tools for active peacebuilding.
After these more general outlooks on the region and its historical legacies, the seminar series moved on to concrete cases and topics. In the fourth seminar, Ziya Meral (Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research at Sandhurst) explained the current situation in Turkey that, in addition to being at the centre of the refugee influx, is dealing with multiple internal problems that may hinder proper responses to the on-going challenges.

The refugee crisis was the focus of the fifth seminar. Franck Düvell (COMPAS, Oxford) presented early findings from a large-scale project that sought to understand all dimensions of the refugee situation and gathered its data through qualitative and quantitative means including interviews with refugees and stakeholders along migration routes. As he argued, the handling of the refugee crisis put core European values at risk and had the potential of putting into question Europe’s entire post-war peace order.

Seminar number six addressed the situation in Greece, not only a central transit country for refugee flows but also in a dire financial situation itself. Analysing the performance of former governments and the situation on the ground, Dimitris Christopoulos from the Panteion University of Athens inter alia explained how the austerity measures implemented after the financial crisis impeded on the Greek authorities’ capacity to properly respond to the challenges of the migration crisis.

The seventh and last seminar took a comparative look at the state of political legitimacy in Romania, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. All three states experienced popular uprisings against the political class in recent times, but as Cvete Koneska (Control Risks, London), Gruia Badescu (St John’s College), and Jessie Hronesova (St Antony’s) explained, the evolution, circumstances, and results of such protests varied greatly. Nevertheless, it seems that there is a constant popular momentum building up that potentially may endanger the comfortable positions of many political elites in the region.

Adis Merdzanovic

For summaries of all the seminars of the series, please visit the SEESOX blog at seesoxcentral.blogspot.co.uk
Alongside the SEESOX Core Seminar Series, a number of seminars were given across the year on aspects of regional politics.

In October 2015, Professor Brad Blitz (Middlesex University), spoke on Migration, protection and reception: the “crisis” in the Mediterranean. He discussed how the “hardening” of the EU’s external borders, in parallel with the “softer” internal regime under Schengen, was actually affecting migration flows and respect for the rights of migrants. He concluded that the EU’s approach so far - mainly of throwing money at the problem - had led neither to greater respect for rights, nor to lessons being drawn from previous experience, with the existing toolkit insufficiently utilised.

In December 2015, Evripes Evriviades, Cyprus High Commissioner in London, spoke on Cyprus: prospects for reunification, peace with Turkey and regional stability. With the island standing at the crossroads of three continents, the Cyprus problem could not be ignored. The Eastern Mediterranean was of pivotal importance for the region, and also for the UK, Europe and Transatlantic security. The status quo was unacceptable. There was guarded optimism about the latest round of intercommunal talks. The Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci had made a big difference.

Also in December 2015, SEESOX hosted a panel made up of Sorin Moisa, MEP, Bogdan Chiritoiu, President of the Romanian Competition Council (RCC), Laura Stefan, Expert Forum, Bucharest, and Emanuel Coman (DPIR, Oxford). They discussed Good and Bad Governance - institutions in Romania and the rule of law, looking respectively at: judicial and public administration reform in the accession process – the first partially successful, the second much less so; the factors favouring better institutional performance by the RCC compared with other parts of the public administration; the unexpected success – and the problems - of the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s office; and the impact of the 2008 electoral reform – limited if any. Summing up the discussion, Kalypso Nicolaidis, St Antony’s, called for further study across the EU of how far structural tendencies in weaker member states threatened the rule of law; a weak state had taken drastic steps, with varying degrees of success, often dependent on leadership.

In March 2016, Dimitri Sotiropoulos, (University of Athens) discussed the derailment of democracy in the West Balkans, on the basis of research in Serbia and Macedonia. Clientilism, corruption and populism was causing a back pedalling away from effective representative democracy. This was a consequence of the disproportionate

SEESOX on regional politics

Focus on Cyprus, Romania and the Western Balkans
strength of the executive, a weak civil society and a lack of real market competition, generating organised crime, weak rule of law, state incapacity and restrictions on political pluralism – a slide towards semi-authoritarianism.

Adis Merdzanovic (SEESOX) spoke in March 2016 on Yugoslav legacies and EU accession; challenges of liberalism in the Western Balkans. From his research on the present and future state of political liberalism in the region, he identified the challenge: how can a State at the same time both position the individual as the source of political legitimacy and protect the rights of its respective ethno-religious groups? As candidate states for the EU, sharing similar historical and cultural legacies, the countries of the region lack the basic elements of political liberalism, while the EU focuses far more on economic liberalism. Can it be any surprise that social liberalism is still in demand across the region – thereby fuelling social protest and upheaval?

In May 2016, Valeriu Nicolae, Secretary of State for Social Affairs in the Romanian Government, discussed Social policy in a Romanian technocratic government: What can change in a year? He gave a frank account of the challenges faced by the government appointed after the protests against the political establishment. Asked how far a technocratic government can ever entrench sustainable change, he took a pragmatic but optimistic approach, while recognising the real constraints.

In June 2016, Rebecca Bryant (LSE), discussed Forced migration and the prospects for transitional justice in Cyprus. She looked at the possibilities for transitional justice measures as a means to come to terms with the shattering of communities, and aid in the process of return and remixing. The Greek Cypriot “myth of return” (to peaceful coexistence destroyed by Turkey in 1974) was matched by a Turkish Cypriot “myth of remaining” (which imagined that in a potential solution everyone would stay put). Both were at odds with what was actually being negotiated. Possible measures for transitional justice included: truth seeking regarding displacement, including destruction of property; mutual apologies for the way in which communities used displacement as a strategy; and mechanisms of material reparations as a foundation for interdependent return.
SEESOX on Turkey

SEESOX hosted three important seminars on Turkey during the 2015-16 academic year. The seminars explored current trends in Turkish politics.

On 16 November, 2015 Kerem Öktem, Professor of Southeast Europe and Modern Turkey at the University of Graz and a long-time associate of SEESOX, spoke about ‘Reverse transitology? Elections and political change in Turkey’. The talk examined the outcome of November 1st elections in Turkey where AKP won back the 10% of the vote they had lost in the June 7th elections, mainly from pro-Kurdish HDP and the extreme nationalist MHP. Öktem pointed out that there were a number of explanatory models for the vote swing: manipulation of the vote, consolidation of the conservative right wing block, deliberative choice of Islamo-fascistic tendencies, and voter intimidation. Öktem inclined to the voter intimidation thesis, drawing a parallel with the election campaign of the Committee of Union and Progress in 1912, which is also known as the ‘elections with a stick’ and which got the CUP victory despite strong opposition.

On 4 May, 2016 Ezgi Başaran (SEESOX) focused on Turkey’s failed peace process with the Kurdish movement in her talk entitled The boat is broken: What really went wrong with the Kurdish peace process? Başaran followed the process very closely as a journalist in Turkey. She shared her insights regarding the dynamics of the process and the motivations of various actors who were involved in it. She cited the lack of a serious negotiation structure, the mismatch between the motivations of different actors, the changing international environment, the changes in Northern Syria, and the change in AKP’s policies in the lead-up to June 7, 2015 elections in Turkey as the main reasons for the collapse of the peace process. Başaran concluded by describing the rather grim picture of Turkish-Kurdish relations in the aftermath of the collapse of negotiations.

Finally, the increasingly alarming state of freedom of speech in Turkey was addressed by a panel discussion on Who is afraid of free speech in Turkey? on May 11, 2016. The panel was co-organized with Free Speech Debate, Dahrendorf Programme for the Study of Freedom, St Antony’s College, and Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. It consisted of Ezgi Başaran, (SEESOX) Deniz Ülke Arıboğan (SEESOX/CRIC), Mehmet Karlı (CIS/Galatasaray University) Başaran reviewed the difficult conditions under which Turkish journalists need to perform their profession in her in today’s Turkey. Ulke Arıboğan then focused on the state of academic freedoms in Turkey. She drew the picture of legal and practical difficulties that academics face in their work and placed them in their long-term historical context of the evolution of academic freedoms in Turkey. Finally, Mehmet Karlı approached the issue from a legal perspective and reviewed various legal norms and institutions that stifle freedom of speech in Turkey. He concluded that incremental piecemeal legal reforms are no longer capable of changing the state of freedom of speech in Turkey.
The year began with a high level conference in Tirana, jointly organized with the Bank of Albania, on the question *Do crises change economic fundamentals in South East Europe?* It provided delegates with the opportunity to reconsider the effects of the global financial crisis that broke in 2008, and whether this had fundamentally altered the economic and financial environment of South East Europe. The conclusion was that there was little doubt that it had, and that there needed to be a profound reset of policies to deal with this new situation. Speakers included Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania, Gent Sejko, Governor of the Bank of Albania, Charles Enoch (IMF), Othon Anastasakis and Adam Bennett (SEESOX), Gillian Edgeworth (Wellington Asset Management), and many other officials and high level policy makers from the region. The conference was preceded by a key-note lecture, delivered by Othon Anastasakis, at the University of Tirana, entitled *Europe’s Multiple Crises.*

During Michaelmas Term, SEESOX seminars covered a number of political economy issues, including an analysis by Russell Kincaid (PEFM) on the role of the Troika in European stabilization programmes.

Boris Vujčić, Governor of the National Bank of Croatia, explored competitiveness trends and challenges for Croatia and the rest of the EU.

Adam Bennett and Robin McConnachie (Oxford Analytica) discussed the record of IMF programs and associated technical assistance in the Balkans.

In Hilary Term, Adam Bennett and Peter Sanfey (EBRD) launched their recent book (co-authored with Russell Kincaid and the late Max Watson) in a seminar on “The Eurozone crisis and South East Europe: Recovery or Illusion?”

In Trinity term, Gazi Ercel, former Governor of the Central B of the Republic of Turkey, discussed and compared Turkey’s responses to past and present economic crises.

Adam Bennett

**Integration or Disintegration: Europe at the Crossroads**

Conference, 26 April, 2016

On 27 & 28 April 2016, a high level two-day conference (led by PEFM) was held on the Future of Europe. The first day, hosted by the Oxford Martin School, explored the long term issues facing Europe under the rubric *Future of Europe: the Drivers of Change.* The issues covered this day included geopolitics, demographics, pensions, and innovation and competitiveness. Speakers were drawn from across the UK, as well as from Europe and the United States. The second day, hosted by St. Antony’s College under the rubric Integration or Disintegration: Europe at the Crossroads, narrowed the focus down to the more immediate concerns of aspiration, economics, and identity for the European Union, as seen through the eyes of the UK, Germany, Poland and Greece. Speakers included Lord Patten (Chancellor of Oxford University), Willem Buiter (Chief Economist of Citigroup), Sir Simon Jenkins (formerly of the Guardian), and numerous other eminent academics and political thinkers from Oxford and from Europe.
SEESOX seminars and events

Michaelsmas 2015 (October-December)

Migration, protection and reception: the ‘crisis’ in the Mediterranean
Brad Blitz (Middlesex University London)
The Trojan—past and future? A view from Washington
Russell Kincaid (Associate of PEFM; former senior IMF official)
IN ASSOCIATION WITH PEFM
Greek-American radicals: The Untold Story (2013)
Kostis Karpizlos (St Antony’s College)
Reverse transitivity? Elections and political change in Turkey
Karim Oktem (University of Graz)
European competitiveness challenges: The EU, Croatia and beyond
Boris Vujčić (Governor, National Bank of Croatia)
IN ASSOCIATION WITH PEFM
Democracy by Decree: Prospects and Limits of Imposed
Consociational Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Adis Merdzanovic (St Antony’s College)
IMF programs and technical assistance in the Balkans—what has been achieved?
Adam Bennett (St. Antony’s College); Robin McConnnachie (Oxford Analytica; former senior Bank of England official)
IN ASSOCIATION WITH PEFM
Cyprus: Prospects for reunification, peace with Turkey and regional stability
Euripides L. Evriviades (Cyprus High Commissioner to the UK)
Good and bad governance: Institutions in Romania and the Rule of Law
Bogdan Chiritoiu (Romanian Competition Council); Emanuel Coman (Corpus Christi College, Oxford); Sorin Moisa (MEP, European Parliament); Kalypso Nicolaidis (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Laura Stefan (Expert Forum, Romania)
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE EUROPEAN STUDIES CENTRE

Hilary 2016 (January-March)

Geopolitics of Fear: South East Europe in a dangerous neighbourhood
Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Richard Caplan (Linacre College, Oxford); Neil MacFarlane (St Anne’s College); Kalypso Nicolaidis (St Antony’s College)
Thinking strategic and acting pragmatic: The European Refugee crisis and Turkey-EU relations
Başak Kale (Middle East Technical University, Ankara)
The Eurozone crisis and South Eastern Europe: Recovery or illusion?
Adam Bennett (St Antony’s College); Peter Sanfey (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development)
IN COOPERATION WITH PEFM
The Greek Left from the Balkan Wars to the Eurozone crisis: A national/international history
Kostis Karpizlos (SEESOX/A.G. Leventis Fellow, St Antony’s College)
Alternative religious responses to the ethnic crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Faith-based peace and reconciliation
Julianne Funk (University of Zurich); Adis Merdzanovic (St Antony’s College)
A controversy revisited: Arnold Toynbee, the Koraes Chair, and the Western question in Greece and Turkey
Richard Clogg (St Antony’s College); Michael Llewellyn Smith (St Antony’s College)
Refugees, economics, geopolitics: AKP’s handling of Turkey’s multiple crises
Ziya Meral (Centre for Freedom of Religion and Belief, Sandhurst)
Srebrenica: Mapping Genocide and Post-Genocide Society
Svjetlana Nedimovic (Sociopolitical activist and independent researcher, Sarajevo); Geoffrey Nice, QC (Gresham College; Former ICTY Prosecutor)
CO-SPONSORED BY SEESOX AND OXFORD TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE RESEARCH (OTJR) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL OF KNOWLEDGE – FAMA METHODOLOGY AND GALLERY
Abusing democracy in the Western Balkans: Evidence from recent field research
Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos (University of Athens, Greece)
Massive refugee influx, collapsed borders, humanitarian crisis: Quo Vadis Europa?
Franck Duvel (COMPAS, Oxford)
Yugoslav legacies and European Union accession: Challenges of liberalism in the Western Balkans
Adis Merdzanovic (SEESOX Visiting Academic, St Antony’s College)
A crisis within the crisis: Migration flows in Greece in the turmoil of the bailout agreements
Dimitri Christopoulos (Panteion University of Athens); Kostis Karpizlos (St Antony’s College)
Political legitimacy in crisis: Reflections on Romania, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Cvetka Koneska (Control Risks, London); Gruia Badescu (St John’s College); Jessie Hronesova (St Antony’s College)

Trinity 2016 (April-June)

Unpopular voices: Greek public intellectuals of the political centre during the crisis
Apostolos Doxiadis (Writer); Kostis Karpizlos (St Antony’s College)
Financial reform in South East Europe: Turkey’s response to the past and current crises
Gazi Ercel (Former Governor of the Bank of Turkey)
IN ASSOCIATION WITH PEFM
The boat is broken? What really went wrong with the Kurdish peace process?
Ezgi Baṣaran (St Antony’s College)
Who’s afraid of free speech in Turkey?
Deniz Ulke Ariboğan (St Antony’s College); Ezgi Baṣaran (St Antony’s College); Mehmet Karlı (Galatasaray University Law School, Istanbul; Centre for International Studies, Oxford)
In association with Free Speech Debate, Dahrendorf Programme for the Study of Freedom, St Antony’s College, and Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford
Social policy in a Romanian technocratic government: What can change in a year?
Valeriu Nicolae (Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Romania); Jonathan Scheele (St Antony’s College)
An end to ‘Merkelism’? German decision-making in the Eurozone crisis as stigma management
Lea Boegerding (St Antony’s College)
Forced migration and the prospects for transitional justice in Cyprus
Rebecca Bryant (London School of Economics)
Conferences and workshops

CONFERENCE (Tirana) October 2015
Do crises change economic fundamentals in South East Europe?
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE BANK OF ALBANIA

SYMPOSIUM (Oxford) October 2015
“A Tale of Three Cities”: Max Watson Commemoration
IN ASSOCIATION WITH PEFM

CONFERENCE (Oxford) May 2016
Model transitions: Rethinking the success story of Southern European democratization
SUPPORTED BY ESC, ANTONIAN FUND, CONEX, UNIVERSIDAD CARLOS II DE MADRID AND SEESOX

WORKSHOP (Oxford) March 2016
Refugees in Izmir, Turks/Kurds in London
IN ASSOCIATION WITH UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD CENTRE ON MIGRATION, POLICY AND SOCIETY (COMPAS)

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SEMINAR (Tinos) July 2016
Europe and its neighbourhoods: Geopolitics and human flows
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IDIS) AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EUROPEAN & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF PIRAEUS

ESC celebrates 40 years
The European Studies Centre celebrated its 40th anniversary on 26 May, 2016 with a full-day programme of events. The ESC Annual Lecture was given by ESC Patron and University Chancellor Lord Patten on Why Britain Should Stay in the European Union.

A Tale of Three Cities: Commemorating Max Watson
Symposium, 16 October, 2015

On 16-17 October two linked events were held to commemorate the life and work of Max Watson, a core associate of SEESOX, and founder PEFM. The first, in St Antony’s College, was jointly arranged by PEFM and SEESOX and covered his career under the title A Tale of Three Cities. Tributes were heard from those who knew him and his work in Washington, Brussels and Oxford, covering his time with the IMF, the European Commission, The Bank of Ireland and the University. It built up a full picture of Max and his many achievements. The second was organised by the family and in particular his widow Janny in Dorchester Abbey, close to Max’s house. This concentrated rather more on his life and interests; but continued to build up the story of his extraordinary and multi-faceted personality and career.

Model Transitions? Rethinking the “success story” of Southern European democratization
Conference, 18 May, 2016

Model Transitions? Rethinking the “success story” of Southern European democratization was the title of this year’s Santander Fellow Workshop that was held on May 18 and which was sponsored by SEESOX, the European Studies Centre, Oxford University, and Carlos III University - CONEX, Madrid. Historians, political scientists and political sociologists debated in a comparative and transnational manner the relation between the economic crisis that broke out in 2008 and the current political attempt to question the memory of the transitions to democracy in Portugal, Greece and Spain - one of the most dramatic turning points in 20th century southern European history. The conference discussed and compared the alternative approaches which look at transitions from a bottom-up perspective, as opposed to the predominant elite approach. It also tried to tackle the complexities regarding the past and present of transitions, the contingency of theory and the cognitive limits of transitology, beyond success or failure narratives. Finally, the workshop touched on issues of memory, mourning and closure, approaching the topic of transitions also in terms of memory politics, memory wars and competing moral narratives regarding the past emerging at the same time in these three countries. The conference was convened by Maria Elena Cavallaro (St Antony’s College) and Kostis Kornetis (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid). Read the blog: http://seesoxcentral.blogspot.co.uk/2016/05/model-transitions-rethinking-success.html
Ambassadors’ forum

On 7 March SEESOX hosted the Fourth Annual Ambassadors’ Forum at St Antony’s College, Oxford. The round-table forum brought together the region’s Ambassadors in London with the SEESOX group for a focussed and strategic discussion. The question was how the region of South East Europe was coping with pressures from outside, and also from tensions within, Europe. The main subjects on the table were the refugee/migration crisis, the geo-political picture, the economy and the rise of political illiberalism. There was overall acceptance that the crisis of migration/reception needed practical solutions, that the region had its own role to play in helping to resolve the various crises, and that the EU in general retained its force of attraction for applicant states.

SEESOX aspires...

As I hope this Newsletter demonstrates, the task of SEESOX is to report, analyse and interpret trends and developments in South East Europe, in a multi-disciplinary manner, and in the context of: the past; what is happening in the neighbourhood, and elsewhere in Europe and the world; and what is coming over the horizon for the future. Our seminar series for the Hilary Term next year will look at the rise of illiberalism in SEE and how this is expressed in the fields of electoral politics, rule of law, judicial system, media, civic society and strong authoritarian rulers.

A strong focus is outreach, ensuring that the expertise of SEESOX is available to a wider audience. So, in addition to our regular seminars and other events at the European Studies Centre at St Antony’s, In September we are offering a seminar in Athens on “Europe, its neighbourhood and the politics of fear”; and will be speaking a presentation to the Global Strategy Forum in London in October on “The Geopolitics of Fear: South East Europe in a triangle of uncertainty (Russia, Middle East, North Africa)”. Part of this outreach and networking is the warm welcome we give to scholars and experts from other countries, especially those in the region. Elsewhere in the newsletter, our academic visitors remark on this aspect of SEESOX, and in particular to the mix of academics and practitioners, from various backgrounds:

“I came to SEESOX with a broken wing. SEESOX is this extraordinary place where journalism and academia can work hand in hand...” (Ezgi Başaran)

David Madden