

Transcript

Speaker 1: [inaudible]. Hello and welcome to the graduate or radio show dedicated to Berkeley graduate student research. My name is Stephanie Gerson, and I'll be your hostess for the show here on k a l x. So today I'm talking to Brian Shawl, a phd student from the Department of Economics. So welcome Brian. Thank you. And we're going to be talking about ethnic identity and cultural values in the Balkans. [00:00:30] So to start out the Balkans, what countries are we talking about specifically?

Speaker 2: Uh, in this paper I looked at Bosnia, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro, which is now two countries. Uh, and Slovenia, actually three countries is the Serbian. There's now three separate countries.

Speaker 1: Okay. Uh, and I apologize that it's not politically correct in a very literal sense that [00:01:00] I'm going to be referring to this area as the Balkans, but just for ease of not having to go through all those countries.

Speaker 2: Sure. Certainly the, I mean, the, the terminology that gets used as either the Balkans, um, I'm mostly interested in the former Yugoslavia. Yeah. Um, although this group of countries includes other countries outside of the former Yugoslavia. OK. Um, and southeastern Europe also gets,

Speaker 1: yeah, I think I'm just going to stick with the shortest, the bones. And so yes, he wrote a paper about ethnic identity and values [00:01:30] in the Balkans in this area. And you start with the premise that ethnicity influences policy outcomes in developing, transitioning and even developed economies worldwide. So can you talk a little bit about how the relationship between ethnicity and policy outcomes has generally been understood?

Speaker 2: Right. Well, so, so there has been maybe over the past 10 or 15 years, quite a lot of literature on the relationship of ethnic identity or [00:02:00] ethnicity and certain economic Alison outcomes policy outcomes. Uh, probably most of the research deals with the link between ethnic diversity and public goods provision. So public goods or like library schools, these sorts of things. And most of the papers, the relationship has generally been that that more diversity, it tends to lead to lower public goods provision. So they're less schools, less libraries, and [00:02:30] tens there tends to be, uh, an idea that, that it's sort of ethnic conflict that, that there's some not conflict in the terms of war. Um, but some sort of friction between groups where groups opposed some sort of redistribution distribution to other groups. [inaudible] um, so that's part of the, what's coming of the economic literature I think in, in other fields like sociology, um, are different conclusions about that.

Speaker 1: Okay. And so you're examining the relationship between yeah. How people [00:03:00] identify themselves ethnically and the values that they hold. So let's start with ethnicity according to which variables is ethnicity defined or can ethnicity be defined and how is it defined specifically in the Balkans?

Speaker 2: Well, in the region it is actually sometimes a difficult thing to figure out. Um, and actually that's, that's part of how, how this paper got motivated for me, for me being in the region and, and basically, [00:03:30] um, at various times of, of living there, I lived there from full time, from about 2001 to 2004. And then I go back frequently now for my research. But, um, it's a very confusing idea, especially to an American for an American. It's just an alien concept. Everyone knows what ethnicity they are. And you are and um, the each other and what [00:04:00] they are and each other. Yes, certainly. Certainly. Um, the two dimensions are generally language and religion. So in Slovenian, Macedonia living speaks Slovenian, Macedonian speak Macedonian, so they're kind of relatively easy. Although, um, Macedonian is very similar to Bulgarian and there are some issues with that distinction, uh, for certain groups. Then you have Albanians which speak Albanian and are predominantly Muslim. [00:04:30] Um, the then you have Serbs, Croats and Bosnians, um, Bosley and Muslims. And uh, that's where, that's where the distinction especially becomes blurry because, um, you have one language which was a formerly co called cerebro creation and now it's called generally Serbian message, a Serbian Bosnian or Croatian as three separate languages. I'm going to need a diagram.

Speaker 2: [00:05:00] Um, and uh, and also now I'm sure that [inaudible] now that Montenegro is broken apart from Serbia and Montenegro, Montenegrin has more frequently been referred to as a separate language. Formerly these were no minutes, just different dialects of the same language. And over time, especially since since the wars of the late nineties or the mid nineties, these languages actually have grown further apart for those a little easier. It's not a problem for me to distinguish between between the ethnic [00:05:30] groups because, because for those three ethnic groups, it's religion that becomes the, if you can think of it as as a common language, that's not necessarily the, the politically correct term now days because they are considered different languages, Serbia and Bosnia and Croatian. But it's a very similar language. Like I speak, I get basically by learning one of the languages, I get basically three for the price of one. Um, so it's, uh, [00:06:00] it's religion that actually defines things, but it gets more complicated than that.

Speaker 2: Right. Because it was a social assistant for a long time and for many parts of the former Yugoslavia, people didn't practice religion. So you have this ethnic identity that is based on primarily religion, that where the people that are identifying are primarily atheist, but they still identify but they still identify as Serbs crops or identify according to do they have their, cause they don't, they don't say I identify [00:06:30] according to my religion, they just identify, they identify as Croats or Serbs according to what? Just because they've always identified and their parents identified. Right. It's, it is largely, um, is

largely historical. Just to be clear, uh, you know, crutch or Catholic, Bosnian or Bosniac Muslims or Muslims and Serbs are primarily orthodox or exclusively orthodox. You know, I would, I would actually ask people at some point in time, okay, so what [00:07:00] if I'm at a Serb and I convert to Catholicism, so what do I become then do they say, well, there was actually a wide range of opinions that people gave me. So some people said that, well, you're going to be more of a croquette than a Croat because you are a, because when, when people are kind of minorities in a new ethnic group, they have to sort of prove that they're of that group. Um, some people said, well, no, you're, you're still going to be a serve no matter what.

Speaker 1: [inaudible] so the three main groups [00:07:30] though, just to clarify, are claws and Ian's who are Christian of false. I'm already wrong actually. So Bosnians who are Orthodox Bosniaks who are Muslim serve serves, who are Christian and Croats who are Orthodox Croats or Catholics or orthodontists. Reread that paper. Okay. So let's move on to values. So can you give some examples of some of the values that you looked at and [00:08:00] why you chose them?

Speaker 2: Right. So, um, what I looked at as I tried to focus on some core values. Um, so, uh, these are things like what are the, what's the importance of family, friends, work, leisure. I tried to look at some things that are related to tolerance. Uh, I've tried to look at some things that were related to institutions. So what kinds of questions were you asking? A, so these are, these are questions. So the, the core values being how important is your family? And you kind of rate it on a scale of one to [00:08:30] six or something like that. Institutions being, um, how confident are you in the police? How confident are you in your local government? Also things such as, uh, corruption, attitudes. So is it ever justifiable to take a bribe? And also things like nationalism, national attitudes, how strongly identify with your your ethnic group.

Speaker 1: And I understand you're trying simplify, but did you weight all the values equally? I mean, what [00:09:00] if, what if two ethnic groups, you know, agree on a value that's not very important to either one of them, but disagree on one that actually really is important, one or both,

Speaker 2: right. I, I did play around with a lot of different permutations on that. You know, these are, these are cultural context con constructs, right? So they're not, um, they're not very easily measured. They're not very easy to compare. But I mean if there, if there is this high ethnic [00:09:30] tension between different groups, understanding maybe why it's there or maybe why certain groups wanted to break off from other republics in the former Yugoslavia. Um, was it because they actually preferred different types of institutions and they wanted to actually set up, um, a small state with, um, let's say, you know, more anticorruption enforcement or, so these are kind of important policy issues. You know, the measurement is not, it's frankly not, not great and it's very difficult [00:10:00] to get a good way of making, let's say apples to apples comparisons about

things. So you have to do a little bit more playing with things in, in this sort of research than you would in maybe a mainstream economic.

Speaker 1: Right. Okay. And so the reason you're interested in this is because as you just mentioned, so the relationship between ethnicity and values influences policy outcomes and in turn, the kinds of policies that you might prescribe. So [00:10:30] what would be the policy implications if there were a direct relationship between ethnicity and values? Right. If people have the same ethnicity held similar values versus if there were no significant relationship between ethnicity and values,

Speaker 2: it's, it's a little bit, um, it, it might be a little bit difficult to, to say that explicitly, uh, but um, you know, it, if people are really different, should we [00:11:00] be actually almost encouraging people to, to break off into ethnic states because they just can't agree on, um, some sort of policy outcome or institutional environment that that's satisfactory to them. If they're really the same, then there's not as much justification for, for breaking them off other than just historical, um, historical preferences. I mean really they, they have the same sort of preferences they've been growing up in the same sort of environment. Right. Um, and [00:11:30] you know, maybe sort of sort of the trust building exercises you might go through in, in these communities for example, might be different. You know, maybe it may be trying to help these people to realize that actually we have a lot of similarities.

Speaker 1: Yeah. But are you assuming that similar value similarities kind of outweigh any historical antagonism? Because maybe I have the exact same values

Speaker 2: as my neighbor who's another ethnicity, but because of, you know, generations and generations of, [00:12:00] sure. But okay, well I mean this what you're saying is yeah. Yeah. And you would still piecing the puzzle, right? Right, right. It's not really, yeah, and it's not that one outweighs the other I guess. I guess I should rephrase that. It's just that they would warrant different kinds of policies. I mean you would treat the situations differently and of course, you know, my research is, is not the kind of thing that I'd want somebody, I mean like most academic research, I mean the last thing you would want is for some policy maker to tomorrow pick it up and say, okay, now we have to, [00:12:30] we have to do this. Because actually a lot of, I think a lot of bad policies come out of, of that sort of thing where people latch on to, you know, one paper you have to put a little warning label on your paper if you want to use this kami going on.

Speaker 2: I think that's true for most papers actually used by themselves. Well, like I said, you know, with, with the relationship between, um, ethnic diversity and public goods provision, you know, the first paper that comes out about ethnic diversity in public goods provision. [00:13:00] Well, I mean it shows this relationship, but what's the policy implications of that? Well, okay, hold on. Let's wait for a few years. Let's see if other people find similar things in other settings. And then let's start thinking about the policy implications. Say, well wait a couple minutes before I asked you about the policy

implications in your paper. How about that? Okay. So for those of you who are just joining us, you're listening to the graduates on Calex. I'm talking today with Brian Shawl about ethnic identity and cultural values [00:13:30] in the Balkans. So before we move on to the results, actually I know that this study was also partly inspired by a personal experience you had with a group of people called [inaudible].

Speaker 2: Okay. I did. Okay. Alright. So yeah. Can you talk a little bit about that? Right. So young you'd see a group of ethnic [inaudible] that have historically lived in Kosovo. [00:14:00] Uh, it's sort of a small group. Can you just, where's Kosovo? Oh, sorry. So Kosovo is now a new country, um, officially recognized as a new country, um, by the international community. It is what was the most southern part of Serbia. And, uh, so Serbia is sort of in the eastern part of the former Yugoslavia and it's kind of a historically and culturally important region for, for the Serb identity. [00:14:30] Uh, there's a lot of kind of historical battles that were fought. There are a lot of monasteries, uh, Orthodox Christian monasteries that are there in Kosovo. You have Albanians and serves as the primary ethnic groups. And then you also had crowds. Um, and when I was living in Dalmatia in domain as a part of Croatia, I found out story about these young Ypsi, again, ethnic crunch from Kosovo that, uh, basically settled in, in a village of Kistin yeah. In, in Dalmatia.

Speaker 1: [00:15:00] So they were ethnic Croats who had moved from Serbia to Croatia,

Speaker 2: specifically from Kosovo, so from customers. So, um, even within Serbia, um, there, there would be [inaudible] from Vojvodina, which is the northern part of Serbia and Voivod cures from, uh, Kosovo. And they're totally different. Completely different. Okay. I don't remember, uh, it's probably in my paper, I don't remember exactly when they settled in, in Kosovo, but it was several hundred years ago. So they, uh, they were basically invited by, [00:15:30] by the Croatian government to settle it in, in Dalmatia. Um, and they just didn't fit in. Um, they had um, know fertility and Croatia, sort of normal European, probably 1.4 children and or 2.2 2.0 children. They would have, they had lots of children, large families. They had a very, very strong religious figure you might think of sort of a very strong tribal leader. And so people sort of very strongly [00:16:00] focused on what he said and, and they acted very collectively in a large group. And the village of Kistin you just didn't like it. They actually built a huge church and there was sort of almost a, an allergic reaction of the local residents. And it was so bad that actually at one point, um, there was some graffiti on some of the homes, the youngest see homes saying, um, give us our Serbs back. So this was an area that, that during the, during the conflict, um, serves,

Speaker 1: [00:16:30] so it was left [inaudible] came, but the, with the native crow or the, I guess the Dalmatians wanted the, the sort of can instead of their Kosovar.

Speaker 2: Right. And that might have been a, you know, that might have been a broad based sentiment, but it certainly was a rejection of the young Nipsey. And when I thought

about about this group a little bit, you know, all the characteristics that people described and talked about and sort of rejected were actually very similar to what you would find [00:17:00] for, for Albanians in Kosovo Kosovar Albanians. You would also find it for a Serbian people living possible. Okay. So they all were very similar even though that the serves and Albanians in Kosovo weren't getting along very well historically. Um, they were actually probably more similar to each other then, then the serves in Kosovo where to the serves and Serbia in let's say, serves in Belgrade and serves in, in Kosovo had very little income.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Okay. Okay. So that's taking [00:17:30] us into your results. And, uh, I have to say I'm flattered you thought I would understand your data tables and graphs that you sent me, but I confess, I stuck to your written description of the results. So let's, uh, let's talk about some of your results. Okay.

Speaker 2: Well, uh, just broadly, like I said, I tried to compare a few different ethnic groups that we would traditionally think of as being in conflict who are very different from each other. So Serbs and, and Albanian serves [00:18:00] in and, and karate. And, and I sort of broke that out by both location again. So Republic of where they were either Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and also by ethnicity as well. So you have served in Serbia, Serbs in Bosnia, serves in Croatia, et cetera. And you know, I was actually pretty surprised by this, but, um, it does seem that that location seems to matter for, for center Mallory and cultural values more than ethnicity. Um, [00:18:30] and that was actually particularly surprising since, especially with the serves, there is sort of a, um, a long swath where it's almost continuous Serb. Um, you know, it's not, it's not like the, uh, these Yag Nipse, like I said, which were actually geographically separated from Croatia for hundreds of years. Um, there, there wasn't as much contact certainly between being served in Serbian serves in Bosnia as you know, every, as your neighbor would be in, in Serbia, but they were [00:19:00] less similar to this.

Speaker 1: Do you visualize this? Did you make a map of cultural similarity? How that would, I haven't, I haven't figured out a good way of doing that. Ah, okay. So the fact that people tend to have more values in common with their geographic neighbors who are ethnically different than from people of their same ethnicity, who live far away, was this surprising to you?

Speaker 2: Um, it, it was consistent with my experiences. Um, but I don't think it's something that I'm, uh, [00:19:30] that I necessarily expected to pop out of the data as well. Um, also, one thing that was very, very surprising was that, for example, Serbs and Serbia and Albanians in Albania seem very similar. Um, were, uh, even more similar than, than, um, you know, serves work to other Serbs in other republics. Um, and, and so the, the basically southern Serbian or Kosovar Serbs [00:20:00] in Albanians were, were quite different from their ethnic, um, their ethnic compatriots.

- Speaker 1:** And you're looking at communities that migrated hundreds of years ago. So there's no, there's no ties anymore. Families that keep in touch.
- Speaker 2:** I mean they are, there are certainly, but they're, there are newer ties. What I was looking at is sort of the more slow moving. Yeah.
- Speaker 1:** Are there economic flows between [00:20:30] ethnic communities that are living in different countries? There certainly are. Yeah. And
- Speaker 2:** like I said, certainly since the war there, there are actually probably stronger ties between these different, let's say, ethnic minority groups and their compatriots in a country where, so Serbs and Croatia and, and serves in Serbia have probably stronger ties now than they would have, um, maybe 25 years ago.
- Speaker 1:** Yeah. Okay. So returning to your original question, based [00:21:00] on your results, how would you characterize the relationship between ethnic identity and policy outcomes in the Balkans?
- Speaker 2:** Um, I would pass on that. Good. Yes. Yes, that's right. It's good. I agree. Um, well it's, it's still a very complicated dynamic. Right. Um, and so ethnic identity is not something that we, um, I think certainly as economist, we really don't [00:21:30] have a very good handle on it. Um, what makes up an ethnic identity? Um, and, uh, other fields have spent certainly a lot more time thinking about, about these issues than economists certainly have. Um, but it's, uh, again in, in the region, in the Balkans, it's, it's a very elusive concept still. Um, why do you know, why is it the Serbs and Serbian Albanians in Albania are, why are they more similar to each other than they are to their compatriots? [00:22:00] Well, there are some reasons for it. Um, and you know, the, the Albanian state, you know, hasn't generally supported the Kosovo independence movement, for example. Um, because it has its own ethnic groups that are too afraid are going to break off into, into different, uh, you know, ethnic enclaves. But, um, it's a region that's not very well understood, I think. And it, um, it's something we're trying to still understand.
- Speaker 1:** All right. So for those [00:22:30] of you who are just joining us, I'm talking to Brian show from economics about ethnicity and cultural values in the Balkans. So are you making your results available to your subjects are, and how do you think they would react to learning that their value based differences are more geographic than ethnic?
- Speaker 2:** Hm, good question. Uh, [00:23:00] I don't really necessarily have some subjects per se. I mean I'm, I'm in contact with people back there. I haven't managed to put a funding together to actually do the exact survey that I would like to do in the Balkans. But how would people react? Um, I think it's, I think it's still a confusing issue for everybody in the region. Um, uh, in certain areas there would be certainly more open to the idea of certain individuals. We'd be more open to the idea that, that everybody was sort of the

same. [00:23:30] Um, and other people would be very opposed to the deal that everybody was specifically

Speaker 1: after the young EFC learned that they were more similar to the people back home in Serbia than to, you know, their Croatian, their fellow Croatians, patients. They're pretty, pretty aware of that, but they still identify themselves as Croatian then, I mean, could that lead to some kind of cultural identity crisis or at least confusion?

Speaker 2: Um, I, [00:24:00] uh, I, I haven't, I haven't spent much time with him over the, uh, over the recent few years, but, um, I think certainly they definitely realized there's something a little bit different in, in Croatia. Um, I think there's probably certain urges to move back to Kosovo, although that might not be practical for them right now. [inaudible] um, and they may be just caught in the middle. Uh, you know, they can't re can't really move back to Kosovo. Um, they don't really feel that comfortable in Croatia. [00:24:30] Um, and it might be, you know, a process of either forced adoption or just, um, yeah, they, they just become this enclave, this kind of strange group that, um, doesn't really fit in. Exactly. Um, doesn't really try to assimilate that much where maybe they do try and assimilate it. It's, it's sort of unclear where they're going to go.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Okay. So in your paper you write that your findings [00:25:00] and I quote, might augment the design of peacebuilding policies in other regions of similar ethnic heterogeneity that are at risk of conflict or that they may help in the building of cohesive post-conflict societies.

Speaker 2: That sounds a lot better when you say it.

Speaker 1: Ah, well, so the obvious that here is Iraq, but if you don't want to go there, can you just talk a little bit about how your findings might be applicable outside the Balkans?

Speaker 2: Sure. [00:25:30] Well, so the whole idea of ethnicity, I think it is important for, I mean it is a lot of my research, um, in, in the Balkans just does parallel a lot of things that they're going on in Iraq. Um, but also parallels a lot of things in the u s as well. I mean, if you think that, that, for example, people living in Oakland and people living in Berkeley are as similar to each other as different ethnic groups in, in the Balkans. You're completely wrong. I mean those are the kind of the socioeconomic status and yeah, [00:26:00] and the socioeconomic size related to ethnicity, race, religion. In the U s is more drastic than it was in the former Yugoslavia. And so, you know, B B where, you know, if you think that we have this, this very strong American identity that, that, um, you know, that, uh, that people don't have, um, maybe an urge to just, just pull away from or, or, or anything like that just yet.

Speaker 1: Do you have any specific examples? People in Brooklyn, people in Oakland? [00:26:30] Uh, no. I'll pass or just in general? No, well you're saved by the bell anyway. Okay. So finally, I'm curious what inspired your interest in this region?

Speaker 2: Right. Well, so I, I was

Speaker 1: here at Berkeley. I was actually studying, uh, comparative in development economics, but I hadn't really spent very much time in a developing country or transition country. Um, and, uh, at the time basically, um, Milosevic had just been overthrown [00:27:00] in Serbia. Things were just starting to happen in Serbia. Um, whereas in a lot of transition countries, like for example, the Czech Republic, they were, it was just a matter of when they were going to join the European Union. So things were just starting there. And I could see things from the beginning. And you know, it was, it was also a matter of the, the region being kind of this nexus of a lot of different issues that are important to development economics. So conflict, ethnicity, you know, transition from, from a socialist system, you [00:27:30] know, poverty, all these sorts of things that they were just, um, it seemed like an interesting laboratory. Okay. And actually I have one last question. I know you learned Serbo Croatia, Croatian or maybe just one of the three that you can use them all.

Speaker 2: Um, I speak Bosnian, Croatian and sir.

Speaker 1: All right. Okay. So you learned three and one for your work and you said that you get a lot of mileage out of it here in the bay area. So, uh, what coffee shops can we go to [00:28:00] to hear people speaking or what has it been like to be able to speak it around here?

Speaker 2: Uh, it's, it's actually pretty surprising cause it's not uncommon that I, I go into a coffee shop somewhere and, and uh, you know, the, the person that's serving coffee is talking to, to a person in the back and in one, let's say one of the three languages or that I'm just walking from my home to campus and I walk past some people that are, that are speaking the language and you know, I haven't spent as much [00:28:30] time with them but there are different. Um, there, there's a, a refugee group, uh, a large refugee resettlement group from Bosnia here in the bay area and also from Croatia as well. And so, I don't know, you would think that learning a language that basically, uh, what, um, maybe 15 or 20 million people in the world speak wouldn't be that, that you still, but it actually winds up being fairly useful.

Speaker 1: How do you say, how do you say great?

Speaker 2: [00:29:00] Um, dough bro would be good. Great. Would be velikie basically

Speaker 1: the lucky. Okay. Well it's been very lucky. Lucky dog. I was talking to you, Ryan, you've been listening to the graduates, a radio show dedicated to graduate student research on k a l x Berkeley background music was produced by Chris Peck. You can check them out at my space.com/chris Peck. [00:29:30] My name is Stephanie Garson and I am still hunting for new producers for the show. Come on, y'all. Do you want this show to

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survive? So if you are in producing, ah, it is a lot of fun and you learn a lot, or if you know someone who might be interested in producing, please visit us on Facebook, search for the graduates, Cadillacs on facebook.com and let us know and you should visit us on Facebook anyway [00:30:00] because it's always great to get feedback from listeners and know that you're out there. You can download podcasts of the show from iTunes university and join me next Monday from 12 to 1230.