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# What about the Balkans? Reconsidering the European core-periphery divides

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## Résumé

In recent years, critical scholarship in the field of international political economy has largely explored structural differences and similarities between the countries of the European periphery. Most of the debates, however, focus mainly on the "Southern" eurozone periphery and the Eastern-European one. Systemic accounts on the structural features of the integration of the Southeastern European countries (SEECs) in the European asymmetries under the single market and euro regime have been rather rare. In contrast, in Peter Gowan's work, the disintegration of Yugoslavia and restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe have been widely explored. To analyse peripheral re-integration of Southeastern Europe in the European division of labour, this paper builds on Gowan's insights on the role of imperialist rivalries and the Washington Consensus statecraft in the capitalist restoration in the Balkans. Such reconsideration of the formation of the European core-periphery relations from the point of view of the capitalist restoration in the Western Balkans (WBs) allows not only to expand the current classification of the European peripheries. It also brings new theoretical insights into the mechanisms of the deepening of the European inter-state inequalities after the mid-1980s. While the current studies consider the structuration of the European core-periphery along three channels, i.e. international asymmetrical flows of commodities, money capital and industrial capital, the case of the WBs suggests that asymmetrical flows of labour should also be taken into consideration. Moreover, geopolitical conflicts and rivalries between the world superpowers represented a key element of the neoliberal remaking of the European integration.

**Mots-Clés:** Peter Gowan, postsocialist transition, core, periphery divide, Balkans, EU

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