Minorities under Attack

Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies

Edited by Sebastian Goll, Martin Mlinarić, and Johannes Gold

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Dresden, Jena, and Berlin, December 2015
Minorities under Attack: Othering and Right-Wing Extremism in Southeast European Societies

SEBASTIAN GOLL, MARTIN MLINARIĆ, and JOHANNES GOLD

Most of the former socialist countries of Southeastern Europe (SEE), including Greece, are caught in a permanent state of economic crisis (cf. PARASKEWOPOULOS 2014: 386–390; ŽIVKOVIĆ 2015: 50–63). Rates of youth unemployment range between 35 and 50 percent, and strong dependency on foreign investments and private remittances, negative trade accounts, and the accumulation of private and public debts are just the tip of the iceberg. The peripheral markets of SEE, such as the post-Yugoslav “desert of transition” (cf. HORVAT/ŠTIKS 2015), are “caught between the Scylla of EU dependency and the Charybdis of the narrowness of the national market” and “locked into a process of peripheralisation” (ŽIVKOVIĆ 2015: 63).

Along with this economic process of peripheralisation and pauperization, discrimination against Roma people, religious and ethnic out-groups, and sexual minorities, as well as conflicts over the granting of basic human rights are frequent problems in SEE. Even pop-star Madonna was booed by audience members during a concert in Bucharest (2009)1, when she pleaded for equality and complained about discrimination against Roma people, gays and lesbians in Eastern Europe (WOODCOCK 2011: 63).

The mobilization of radical right-wing movements, along with the difficult situations faced by Roma and sexual minorities, has recently been written about by German-speaking journalists (Right wing: MAYER/ODENAHL 2010; Roma: MAPPES-NIEDIEK 2012). In the media, SEE is repeatedly portrayed as an area characterized by the exclusion of the “Other.” Viktor Orbán’s “illiberal democracy” and the strength of Jobbik in Hungary, the rapid rise of the Golden Dawn movement in Greece, continuing ethnic divide in Macedonia and Kosovo, the vast mobilization against sexual minorities’ rights in Croatia – are these unique developments specific to SEE? Is this region distinctive in terms of right-wing extremism, anti-Ziganism, ethno-national conflict, and homophobia?

Regardless of whether the reasons are laudable, at least SEE – the geographical bridge between the Middle East and Europe – is once again the hub of developments

that have spread throughout the entire region. The Arab Spring, the war in Syria, and
the rise of the Islamic State have spurred thousands of refugees to seek a safe haven
in Europe, via the Balkan route. Even countries that do not lie in the path of mi-
grants are concerned as the European Union (EU) discusses EU-wide quotas to
accommodate these refugees. Extremists in SEE seek to exploit these developments
with aggressive counter-demonstrations and hate speech, using this controversial
topic to connect with people all over Europe from a range of backgrounds who feel
threatened by asylum seekers. In mid-2015 the Slovakian government decided to
welcome only Christian refugees, highlighting how this anti-immigrant atmosphere
especially affects Muslims within the EU. Othering can take many forms, and being
part of the EU does not necessarily mean being more tolerant towards specific mi-
norities.

Social distance towards Roma people, for instance (figure 1), varies greatly
within the Danube-Balkan region.

![Social Distance towards Roma people in SEE Societies](source-and-data:image)

Figure 1: Social Distance towards Roma people in SEE Societies
Source and data: European Values Survey 2008
EU member states like Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria had more respondents who said they did not want “gypsies” as neighbors than former post-Yugoslav countries such as Montenegro or Kosovo, who are not part of the EU. Even Great Britain (34 percent), Germany (27 percent), France (26 percent), and the supposedly tolerant Netherlands (30 percent) all reported high degrees of anti-Ziganism.

There is no doubt that xenophobia, racism, homophobia, and anti-Ziganism is deeply rooted within every European society, as is evident in the rise of hostile atmospheres toward Muslims in Denmark, Germany, and Sweden. Recurrent debates in Germany on so called “poverty- and social welfare-migrants” from Bulgaria, Kosovo, and Romania, as well as anti-Islam movements like Patriotic Europeans against Islamization of the Occident (PEGIDA) are illustrating examples.

Multiple Types of Othering in Southeastern Europe

This volume will make a nuanced contribution to these ongoing debates. As editors we aimed to cover the geographical area of SEE as much as possible, and from a theoretical and methodological standpoint, to address the above-mentioned questions in a heterogeneous, multidisciplinary, and pluralistic manner. This approach is in keeping with the self-conception of the interdisciplinary Research Training Group Cultural Orientations and Institutional Order in South-Eastern Europe, which is based at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena.

Critics might complain that by focusing on SEE in this volume we are therefore portraying the Balkans as being unique from the rest of Europe with regard to othering. However, specific path dependencies found in SEE or the Balkans should neither be neglected nor essentialized as representing the “other Europe”; in doing so, one contributes to the mind-set described by Maria TODOROVA (cf. 1999; 2003; 2015) as Balkanism. At the same time, this region is not just an imagined geographical unit and negative projection of the West, but rather a unique area that produces a kind of self-mirrored othering (cf. Yugoslavia: BAKIĆ-HAYDEN 1995), a self-balkanization whereby one “sees oneself as the other” (KOLOZOVA 2011: 8) through the other’s eyes. It consists of socio-cultural mindsets and ways of behavior designed by the actors themselves in the context of “historically marginalized societies” (GIORDANO 2010: 20) and certain historical legacies (cf. TODOROVA 2003), such as the interplay of Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and Socialist heritages, along with the post-socialist transition (cf. BUDEN 2009) and, in the case of former Yugoslavia, violent conflicts.

While SEE is located in the ever-contested periphery of regional hegemons, certain attitudes have been derived from historical processes, specific experiences of modernization (cf. STERBLING 2012), and cultural orientations (cf. PUTTKAMER/SCHUBERT 2010). Practices of governance have been established that impede economic prosperity and perpetuate discourses of identity. These dis-
Courses of belonging are continuously shifting between different options and produce periphery identity constructions (GIORDANO 2010: 26).

However, ‘othering’ encompasses processes of structured and structuring demarcations, hierarchizations, and differentiation of the ‘self’ in comparison to the ‘other’ (cf. SPIVAK 1985; LACAN et al. 1997: 322). The ‘self’ in most of our case studies contain a group based on certain identitarian characteristics such as nation, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality. Occurrences of othering can differ across time and space, meaning that forms of othering are multiple and diachronic. The discriminated other can differ across time and space as well. For example, while being gay in the Netherlands is less likely to result in discrimination than being an immigrant Muslim, in some SEE societies this is reversed. Othering depends on social structures within a given cultural, institutional, and political framework, as well as on underlying historical legacies.

In former Yugoslavia, part of SEE, one of these dominant legacies is the still present experience of war. Under this circumstances, it is very challenging to escape using ethnic divides as a central social ordering structure; here, the ethnic or national ‘other’ has been the adversary on the battlefield, the paramilitary in asymmetric conflict settings, or the oppressor in authoritarian regimes. Ethnocentrism is therefore one core aspect of othering in SEE. In the first half-year of 2015 this was highlighted through a number of events. In Kosovo violent Kosovo-Albanian protests following nationalistic provocations contributed to chasing a Kosovo-Serbian member of the Kosovo government (BALKAN INSIGHT 2015). The increasing number of migrants to Germany and other Western European countries has brought the discussion of the asylum status of Roma people and their situation in their countries of origin to the forefront, with a focus on Kosovo (ZEIT 2015). In Macedonia a violent incident between armed Albanian paramilitary fighters and Macedonian security forces caused 22 gun deaths, reminding the EU of the unstable interethnic situation in that ethnically mixed country (DEUTSCHE WELLE 2015). Finally, developments in the banning of Serbian Cyrillic script from official use in EU member state Croatia raise questions on reconciliation and dealing with the past between former enemy nations (B92 2015). Violence and ethnic identity often go hand in hand and can be mutually reinforcing (FEARON/LAITIN 2000: 846).

Following the end of a decade of wars between ethnonational groups (1991–1999) the European integration process and societal changes in civil society shed light on previously silenced issues of othering, such as discrimination based on sexual difference. Homophobia as sexual othering is intrinsically tied to the stereotypical identity concept of the ‘other’ sexuality, implying promiscuity and an unstable lifestyle. Homophobia expresses prejudices and hostility towards lesbians, gays, and transgender persons, which are expressed through violence, hate speech, and institutional and cultural subordination (GIDDENS/SUTTON 2013: 645). Recent research on SEE indicates that homophobia is widespread in the region (cf. ŠTULHOFER/RIMAC 2009; SZALMA/TAKÁCS 2013), as is evident in the banning of pride parades in Belgrade (2011–2013), the stigmatization of gays and lesbi-
ans in everyday life (cf. JUGOVIĆ et al. 2007), and opposing “gender ideology” and “homosexual propaganda” in the name of pro-life values and democracy (see ŠLJIVIĆ/MLINARIĆ in this volume).

Both forms of othering – ethnonational and sexual – are merging with Right-Wing Extremism, and some of the most dynamic right-wing scenes in Europe can be found in SEE. The reasons for this are manifold, and are fueled by high levels of migration from the global south. ‘Othering’ is an essential part of right-wing extremist ideologies worldwide, in the form of, for example, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In SEE, homophobia seems to be more important for all right-wing groups than for their Western Europe counterparts; however, right-wing extremism goes beyond this. For us, it also contains dimensions of authoritarianism and anti-democratic attitudes, as well as usually downplaying injustices that took place under former fascist systems or movements. As there are numerous definitions of right-wing extremism and the radical right, we did not restrict the authors of articles in this volume to a specific one. However, we do use a definition that makes it possible to understand and study this phenomenon in two ways. STÖSS (2007: 24) distinguished between right-wing attitudes (authoritarianism, chauvinism, racism and pro-Nazism/pro-fascism) and right-wing extremist behaviors (voting habits, membership in organizations, hate crimes, and demonstrations). The term therefore provides an analytical framework to discuss not only attitudes in the wider population, but also to connect articles in the present volume to discussions about this phenomenon from the perspective of movement studies (CAIANI/DELLA-PORTA/WAGEMANN 2012; HELLMANN 1998). To do this, this anthology draws attention to developments outside of narrow political systems and analyzes the movement sector and right-wing subcultures. Naturally, it is extremely difficult to obtain data on right-wing extremism, one possible reason why this area is so under-researched. With this research focus, this anthology attempts to offer a comprehensive view of the whole complex of right-wing parties, right-wing movements, and the interplay with broader society.

Outline of Chapters

Volume contributions are composed as empirical case studies on diverse forms of othering in different national contexts and settings of SEE; some of them also seek to compare or analyze transnational aspects. In methodological terms these contributions take a multilayer perspective addressing a variety of different academic schools and approaches including historiographic perspectives, remembrance history, poststructuralist discourse analysis, intersectional feminist and queer research, network analysis, studies on social movements, quantitative approaches, societal comparison, and anthropology. The following outline of chapters is structured ac-
According to three central themes: ethnocentrism, homophobia, and right-wing extremism.\footnote{We do not consider this order to represent any kind of hierarchy.}

Johannes GOLD, in an approach based on quantitative data, examines the ethnic divide between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, from its declaration of independence in 2008 until 2014. By mapping the distribution of the Serbian community in Kosovo and categorizing these areas into different zones of interethnic contact, he discovers a variety of manifestations of ethnic othering, taking the forms of violence, protest, vandalism, and interethnic attitudes. Using a peace and conflict studies approach, he concludes that while interethnic relations in Kosovo are far from homogeneous, the Albanian–Serbian divide is still the dominant structuring element in Kosovar society.

“Skopje 2014 as an Ethnocentric Nation-Building Project?” is the question Zhidas DASKALOVSKI raises in his article about this extensive construction project in the Macedonian capital. This article offers a historical overview of the history of Skopje and modern Macedonia, as well as a summary of the current state of the project. After discussing arguments both in favor of and against the claim of ethnocentrism, DASKALOVSKI applies a typology of ethnocentric and liberal nation-building to the case. He concludes that the Macedonian nation is the main focus of Skopje 2014, and calls for a “more balanced articulation of the interests of minority groups.”

“The Exclusion of Minorities and the Construction of Identities” with regard to the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian people (R/A/E) in Kosovo is the topic of Claudia LICHNOFSKY’s contribution. Focusing on anti-Ziganism, the author outlines the historical developments of identity formation processes in Yugoslavia and analyses the precarious situation of these groups between Albanians and Serbs in the Kosovo conflict. The contemporary state of contested identity of R/A/E people is illustrated using interviews with representatives of these groups conducted by the author. She concludes that identity constructions occur especially in conflict and postconflict settings.

Željana TUNIĆ and Jelena KISIĆ focus on the usage and contemporary media-tion of a Croatian nationalistic salute. By employing concepts of remembrance history they illustrate the historical background of the salute “Za dom – spremni” (“For the homeland – ready!”) in Croatia’s fascistic regime during the Second World War, as well as its role in the dissolution war of the 90s. They conclude that dealing with the past is a heavily contested issue in contemporary Croatia.

Dragan ŠLJIVIĆ and Martin MLINARIĆ compare two prominent Christian-inspired movements from Serbia and Croatia. Dveri (Serbia) and In the name of the family (Croatia) have garnered attention through their rational-secular engagement against the “unscientific propaganda” and “intolerant ideology” of sexual difference in public and institutional spheres. Despite their differences, both movements other
homosexuals as a threat to the “normal” family within global pro-life networks. Šljivić and Mlinarić state that “sexual minorities are marked as others, and, especially in this time of economic crisis, they function as perfect scapegoats.”

Costas Canakis and Roswitha Kersten-Pejanic analyze speech-act dimensions of graffitied public discourse. This “writing on the wall” is part of the gendered, sexed, and sexual linguistic landscapes of two Balkan capitals – Athens and Belgrade. The authors conclude that “linguistic landscapes of Belgrade and Athens have become arenas for the discursive public negotiation of gendered and sexed predicates and meanings, as well as for the discursive construction of social categories.”

Sanja Đurin argues that the outcomes of the Croatian national discourse of sexuality during the 1990s are strong antagonisms and social divisiveness regarding issues related to sexuality. These forces are embodied in Croatia today through a homophobia that has led to an inability to implement modern sex education in schools. Since the school children of the 1990s are the young adults of today, the current conservative and homophobic atmosphere in Croatia can be seen as the result of the politics of sexuality from the 1990s.

Henry Ludwig describes debates and developments on LGBT issues in Albania since 1990. He concludes that 2009 to 2010 can be evaluated as a time of important changes for LGBT persons in Albania, with an increase in the number of LGBT organizations, the government’s announcement to introduce same-sex marriage, the introduction of the anti-discrimination law, and the start of the Pink Embassy as major elements of this process. Used to the patriarchal social system, these debates have led to profound questions about how visible otherness could be accepted in a society where traditional role concepts are connected to honor as one of the ruling criteria of everyday life. The role of mass media in Albania is an ambivalent one, with both positive liberating and negative humiliating aspects.

The article on right-wing extremism in Romania by Sebastian Goll starts with an outline of Romanian history and how it influenced the ideology and the aims of extremists today. The primary goal of this article is to combine sociological theories explaining the emergence of attitudes compatible with right-wing extremist ideologies with the mobilization of its supporters for demonstrations or membership in organizations. This article shows that the connection between extremist attitudes and behavior is complex and depends heavily on the organizational structure and strategies of specific extremist organizations.

Phillip Karl explains the success of the right-wing party Jobbik in Hungary through its successful networking with right-wing extremist subcultures via the Internet. This article highlights the importance of connections with the pre-parliamentary sphere for the electoral success of a party. Karl’s methodological approach contributes to the development of the analysis of Internet networks in studies on extremism, and for social sciences in general.
In Đorđe TOMIĆ’s analysis of the radical right in Serbia, he also draws parallels to the situation in other post-Yugoslavian states, arguing that its role was more and more marginalized in the political system after the war in Kosovo ended in 1999. However, after the neo-liberal economic reforms of the last decade failed to fulfill the expectations of the population, the radical right remains a force that could gain influence, as events such as the massive protests against the Pride Parade in 2010 showed.

Greece’s “Golden Dawn” has received a great deal of attention from the international press due to its violent appearance and its impact on Greece’s political system. This party profited from a discursive opportunity structure concerning immigrants. Without ignoring the propensity to violence of its party members, Maik FIELTZ goes beyond this characterization, arguing that this party uses a variety of techniques in different phases to take root in right-wing extremist subcultures and populations.

The article gives also insight into the history and inner organization of the Golden Dawn.

Antony TODOROV gives an overview of the origins, beliefs, and make-up of the different parties and organizations of Bulgaria’s very heterogeneous right-wing extremist scene. TODOROV also notes their common ideological ground, which is primarily centered in their hostility towards minorities who threaten the “unity of the nation.” The second part of his article deals with the voter potential for right-wing extremist or nationalist parties in Bulgaria. He focuses on the ATAKA party, which became a relatively successful party after it played a vital role as “kingmaker” in the political arena.

**Outlook – Playing the Othering Card in South Eastern European Political Cultures**

In many socio-political contexts in SEE, ethnonational identity patterns and “national” norms stemming from these notions of belonging are more common than civic concepts of society. Consequently, othering as a key mechanism of nationalism is a prominent tool for political entrepreneurs throughout the region. Especially – but not exclusively – in formerly war-torn countries, playing the ethnic or national card is standard for both extremist and well-established political groups.

In several countries, especially Bulgaria, Greece and Hungary, right-wing parties have been able to establish themselves as durable parliamentarian powers who can often put pressure on other parties in the political system. It remains to be seen how the EU will react to this development, especially in light of the refugee crisis. If member countries stick to strategies of avoiding a corporate solution, extremist parties may continue profiting from their othering message in other countries along the “Balkan route.”
Sexual difference has become more and more visible within the last decade in SEE, with contributions from this volume on Greece, Serbia, and Albania illustrating this development. In terms of homophobia, right-wing and neoconservative movements have succeeded in opposing equal treatment for sexual difference within the public and institutional sphere. By adopting and modeling “liberal” and “secular” concepts like tolerance, democracy, and anti-discrimination, they have been able to define themselves as “guardians” of the majority. These same groups, such as Dveri (in Serbia), also promote anti-immigrant policies. Different minorities have been “under attack” by right-wing organizations in recent years, with an enduring effect on the political cultures of SEE societies. The political party HRAST (see ŠLJIVIĆ/MLINARIĆ in this volume) in Croatia, for instance, joined a coalition with the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and supported the campaign of President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović.

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JOHANNES GOLD

After an eight-year government by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), in 2008 Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia. However the reality of this independence which was initially supervised by the international community did not meet the expectations of the Albanian majority: The new state had to establish constitutional power-sharing arrangements, including each ethnic group in the political decision-making process down to the local level.¹ A large number of programs for the resettlement of refugees were put into place, and reconciliation and inter-communal dialogue was initiated to heal the wounds of war, violence, mutual exclusion, and political opportunism. It seemed that the international community’s way of building a “truly multi-ethnic, stable and democratic Kosovo” (Head of Mission OSCE, WNENDT 2005: 2) – along with the initial humanitarian challenge and the daunting task of transition – did not match the expectations and readiness of the population in Kosovo.² The ethnic divide between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo remains a political, social, and security challenge as the case of mutual rhetoric, non-violent, and violent provocations and the subsequent chasing of a Serbian Minister from the Kosovar government in early 2015 showed.

However, aside from politically enacted or publicly articulated patterns of ethnocentrism, inter-communal relations in Kosovo are far from homogeneous, differing not only geographically, but also depending on the local economic, social, and political situation. Although historical path dependencies are of course utilized to a certain degree in articulations of othering, ethnic othering and ethnic hatred are not unchangeable features of identity groups in post-independence Kosovo. Rather, the question here is how deep-rooted and widespread the patterns of othering in the current state of Kosovar society really are.

¹ For example, see the dispute over the decision-making format in context of cultural heritage preservation: GOLD 2013; BALKAN INSIGHT 2012.
² Moreover, it cannot be expected to construct a new identity in just a few years. For identity formation see SMITH 1993; MOTYL 2002.
This article intends to map the degree and quality of ethnic othering in post-independence Kosovo, and to present Albanian–Serbian relations in different geographical areas and in different contexts. The question is not whether conflicts like Yugoslavia’s are at their core ethnically or otherwise motivated – this is a task for theorists in the area of nationalism. The question here is not how ethnicity is “talked into existence” (ADLER 2007: 122), but how it is “enacted” (BRUBAKER 2008: 358) in today’s Kosovo. Portraying the manifestations of ethnic othering between Serbs and Albanians during the first six years after Kosovo’s independence is therefore the aim of the present article.

Unlike the other contributions to this anthology, this analysis does not primarily focus on the structure or genesis of movements or parties that play roles in mobilizing people along divisions of otherness, nor does it aim to evaluate the discrepancies between demand and reality regarding minority rights. The obvious manifestations and controversies concerning ethnicity in Kosovo have been analyzed extensively (cf. BIEBER 2013; KIPRED 2009; BEHA 2014; OSCE 2012; OSCE 2014a), and mainly employ research designs based on qualitative data.3

To answer the question “How do Albanians and Serbs get along with each other?” the present article mainly employs quantitative material focusing on different indicators that are considered meaningful in characterizing interethic relations. First, the concept of othering in post-conflict societies is described, an overview is given on available research strategies, and the method of the present paper is introduced. This is followed by an ethnographical overview of Kosovo, as well as the assessment of the Albanian–Serbian divide. Finally, the conclusion brings together different analytical findings and generalizes the overall dynamic of Albanian–Serbian relations in Kosovo from 2008 until 2014.

Ethnic Othering in the Context of Post-Conflict Societies

Since othering is the central concept of this anthology, it is necessary to contextualize it (and the research about it) in post-conflict societies. As stated in the anthology’s introduction, “othering encompasses processes of structured and structuring demarcations, hierarchizations and differentiations of the ‘Self’ towards the ‘Other’.” It is the aim of the present article to sketch the manifestations of this dynamic between the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other.’

Analyzing the post-conflict society of Kosovo from the perspective of peace and conflict research, requires researchers to take into consideration at least two contextual factors that may be not present in societies that have not undergone a violent conflict. These two factors represent major lines of research in peace and conflict studies.

3 One of the few studies that employed mainly quantitative material is HUSZKA 2014.
First, conflict studies often have the goal of tracing the conflict back to specific reasons that might explain its structure and violent outbreak. In this context, the term “ancient hatred” (cf. MALCOLM 1999) is often cited, meaning that people fight each other simply because their ancestors did so. This thesis is frequently used by “ethnic entrepreneurs” (HOROWITZ 1999: 350) to mobilize their co-ethnics for violence. Once unleashed, ethnic violence almost inevitably leads to the strengthening of ethnic identities, and results in deeper divides that persist even after the violent conflict (FEARON/LAITIN 2000). In addition to rational deliberations in post-conflict opportunity structures, this may be the basis for future acts of provocation or revenge, and also often is employed as mobilization strategy in public and private speech in Kosovo. For this reason, the causes and consequences of violence are a constitutive element of research in conflict studies.

Without external help, a post-conflict society often is not capable of escaping the conflict trap, making post-conflict settlement mechanisms necessary which are conducted by the international community (KAUFMAN 2006). This engagement of the international community leads to the second context factor that has to be kept in mind when studying othering in post-conflict scenarios – that the peace- and state-building engagement of international actors like the United Nations, NATO, the European Union, and a variety of other governmental and nongovernmental organizations causes a complex system of dilemmas (cf. PARIS/SISK 2009; JARSTAD 2008; BIERMANN 2014). Two basic issues are of interest here: The first is international trustees’ tendency to impose formal power-sharing arrangements based on ethnic affiliations, with the goal of building a cooperative peace by forcing former adversaries into a common governmental structure. Leaving aside any discussion of the effectiveness of these constructions, one major consequence of the implied minority quotas is mutual enviousness between majority and minority, as neither of the groups ever feels represented as a result of real democratic competition. The second issue influencing the peace process often is the contested statehood, in this case between Belgrade, Pristina, and the international community. This widely is seen as a dominating factor for Kosovo. Within this constellation not only may state building become an obstacle, but it is also difficult to determine who is politically responsible for undesirable developments. For both majority and minority populations, the ethnic other is often the scapegoat who is instantly at hand.

For the reasons outlined in this section, othering that takes place between former conflict parties under the influence of international paternalism appears to occur under slightly different circumstances than it does in societies with long-standing peace and sovereignty. In addition, basic explanatory paradigms like accounts on modernization or the heritage of socialism also hold for Kosovo.4

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4 Like the other post-Yugoslavian or other Eastern European states, Kosovo is still undergoing huge economic, cultural, and societal transformations, as a result of leaving a socialist political system with only a marginally developed economic system.
Interethnic Relations in Kosovo: Methodological Considerations

As discussed in the preceding section, assessing Albanian–Serbian relations in Kosovo is considered a task of peace and conflict studies. During the past decades this discipline has seen a trend of quantitative studies on conflict scenarios like Kosovo (cf. COLLIER/HOEFFLER 2004; FEARON/LAITIN 2003). Also the leading Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), takes into account different quantitative indicators to determine the intensity of a conflict (HIIK 2014: 9). For the research period of 2008–2014 HIIK classified the situation in Kosovo as a “violent crisis.” This assessment indicates the general perspective of the confrontation between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo as remaining on a permanent level of “violent conflict of medium intensity.”

Although the HIIK conflict barometer appears to be a useful tool for mapping the state of peace and conflict around the globe, the situation in Kosovo cannot be generalized by categorizing it as similar to parts of Afghanistan as a “violent conflict of medium intensity.” To gain a more accurate assessment of the situation in Kosovo, a more differentiated set of indicators and measurement is applied in the following section.

A first step in approaching the interethnic relations between Albanians and Serbs is to take a closer look at the ethnic distribution of the Serbian population. Branding Kosovo as a multiethnic state and society often has a generalizing effect, which leads the observer to romantic notions of heterogeneous multicultural settlement structures. Mapping the distribution of Serbs on the basis of different ethnographical sources will provide a more realistic picture, since one of the underlying propositions of research on ethnic conflict is that “ethnic divisions make co-operation more difficult and victimization more likely” (COLLIER et al. 2001: 130), which can lead to conflict at the local level.

In the present paper, after having determined and categorized the possible zones of inclusion or exclusion of the ethnic other, three independent groups of indicators will be applied to measure the intensity, structure, chronology, and geographical distribution of manifestations of othering within Kosovo. As a further contextual factor, economic indicators show Kosovo as being among the poorest countries in the region, which may increase the mobilizing potential against “others”: Unemployment rate: 35.3 percent; youth unemployment rate: 61 percent; (KOSOVO AGENCY OF STATISTICS 2014b: 10); average monthly income of those with full-time jobs: 342 € (ibid. 2014a: 20); proportion of households that have problems paying their bills at least once a year:

5 The annual issues of HIIK’s Conflict Barometer can be accessed at http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/index.html.
6 From 2012 onwards HIIK considers the Kosovo conflict to have two parts. The first is the secession conflict between Kosovar authorities and the Serbian government, which at least from 2012 has generally been categorized as a non-violent “dispute.” The second part of the conflict is between the “Serbian minority vs. Kosovar government,” and has been continuously ranked as a “violent crisis” (HIIK 2014: 28).
7 As a further contextual factor, economic indicators show Kosovo as being among the poorest countries in the region, which may increase the mobilizing potential against “others”: Unemployment rate: 35.3 percent; youth unemployment rate: 61 percent; (KOSOVO AGENCY OF STATISTICS 2014b: 10); average monthly income of those with full-time jobs: 342 € (ibid. 2014a: 20); proportion of households that have problems paying their bills at least once a year:
be seen whether assumptions about possible interdependencies between the indicators can be made.

The first group of indicators is interethnic incidents between Serbs and Albanians. This can be expressed through ethnically motivated *protests*, which on the ground may comprise of up to 2000 participants. Such protests indicate general dissatisfaction with and mobilizing potential against the other ethnic group. This indicator also hints to the collective momentum of identity formation. In contrast to protests *vandalism and attacks on property* of the ethnic other in most of the cases appear as a more clandestine but direct form of showing exclusion. Their intensity can range from graffiti up to arson and the looting of dwellings. The last and most decisive kind of interethnic incident analyzed in the present paper is physical *violence against persons*, which ranges from the stoning of vehicles up to murder as a hate crime.

The second indicator is *resettlement* trends of Serbs returning home after fleeing in the aftermath of the 1999 war. The underlying assumption here is that the more returnees, the better the interethnic relations with the Albanian receiving community they are coming back to.8

The third and final group of indicators assesses the interethnic *attitudes* among Serbian and Albanian respondents to a regularly conducted survey in Kosovo; their ratings of current interethnic relations and their willingness to engage in regular interethnic contact is of particular interest.

Most of the data are available from 2008 until 2014, and have been aggregated on an annual basis by ethnicity, making it possible to present some general trends in Albanian–Serbian relations in Kosovo, and to relate them to major political developments. The source of the data, methodological challenges, and considerations about data quality will be discussed as needed within the analysis.

Ethnographical Overview

Before assessing interethnic relations in Kosovo, one should have a basic understanding of the current ethnic composition. Multi-ethnicity in Kosovo does not mean the equal distribution of ethnic groups, nor the existence of at least one strong minority. Especially in comparing Kosovo’s ethnic composition with census data from selected countries in the region, Kosovo’s Albanian majority of 86.4 percent is

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8 In recent years the international funds for resettlement have declined, and the standards for being classified as a refugee in need of material assistance for resettlement have been raised. As a result, the previously common pattern of resettling using assistance funding and then immediately selling the newly built house to Albanians is no longer as lucrative.
clearly among the biggest majorities.\textsuperscript{9} However, the 7.65 percent share of Serbs, compared to the others\textsuperscript{10} – each of which makes up far less than 2 percent of the population – indicates that, by numbers, the Serbian population is of special significance among non-Albanian communities in Kosovo.

\textit{Table 1: Ethnic composition of Kosovar population in 2014}\textsuperscript{11}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>absolute</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>1,627,006</td>
<td>86.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>144,147</td>
<td>7.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosniaks</td>
<td>29,673</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>20,030</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkali</td>
<td>17,670</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptians</td>
<td>15,026</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>14,084</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorani</td>
<td>11,139</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5112</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>1,883,886</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Kosovo-wide numbers presented in Table 1 are not the only indicator of multi-ethnicity. Of equal importance is the question of geographic segregation. Ethnographic and anthropological research on local settlements is also crucial in explaining the dynamics of interethnic relations in detail (KAHL 2005: 75f). However for the generalist aim of this analysis it is important to determine the geographical areas

\textsuperscript{9} Compared to majorities in Serbia (Serbs: 83.3 percent), Montenegro (Montenegrins: 45 percent), the Republic of Macedonia (Macedonians: 64.2 percent), Albania (Albanians: 82.6 percent), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosniaks: 48.4 percent), see the respective national statistical offices in the bibliography.

\textsuperscript{10} For an account on the others see Lichnofsky in this anthology, as well as: COCOZZELLI 2008.

\textsuperscript{11} The basic figures were taken from the Kosovo 2011 Census; however, for political reasons, many people from the Serbian and Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian (RAE) communities hesitated to state their ethnicity or to participate in the census at all. For a discussion of this problem, see: ECMI 2012. Furthermore, the four northern municipalities refused almost completely to participate. To address this gap, the census data here were supplemented by data collected from the OSCE in its municipality profiles (2011), as well as by data from the Kosovo Communities Profiles 2010 (OSCE 2010), which is based on research at the respective Offices for Communities and Returns of the municipalities. These data were also cross-checked with the ethnopolitical map of Kosovo (http://www.ethnopoliticalmap-ks.com/, 02.03.2015), which uses similar data. N/A here presents the sum of “Other”, “Prefer not to answer”, and “Not available” as stated in the census data.
Measuring Interethnic Relations in post-UNMIK Kosovo

where “opportunities for contact” (AMIR 1969: 319) are generally given. It is therefore crucial to have a picture of the distribution of the Serbian population.

Figure 1: Distribution of Serbian population in Kosovo.
Demographic data: cf. fn. 11, cartographic data: (OPENSTREETMAP 2015); (REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO - ASSEMBLY 2008); figure by author, created using ArcMap.

Looking at the ethnographic data by municipalities, Serbian settlement in Kosovo can be basically divided into four different categories:12

12 It is important to note, that there are no municipalities which show a Serbian population between 12 and 60 percent. Without risking speculations this phenomenon should be issue of further research.
No or very few Serbs (less than 1 percent): Out of the 38 Kosovar Municipalities, 19 have less than 1 percent Serbian inhabitants, ranging from zero (e.g., Hani i Elezit) to 2000 (e.g., Prishtina) persons. However, even in those municipalities with higher numbers, the Serbs are distributed among several settlements and therefore often are quite invisible as a group.

Small communities (1–5 percent): Municipalities that have from 1 up to 5 percent Serbian population are structurally similar to some of the aforementioned municipalities. However, with greater absolute numbers, Serbs in this category often live in small settlements where they are in the majority, creating small social communities. A typical example of this category is Rahovec, which contains the Serbian village of Velika Hoča, as well as a Serbian urban quarter in the town of Rahovec.

Medium-sized communities (5–12 percent): Municipalities that are 5–12 percent Serbian are similar to municipalities with small communities, but with greater absolute numbers of Serbs, as well as potential Serbian political participation. Here, Serbs live in enclaves, as well as in mixed settlements with significant Serbian presence.

Majority (60–100 percent): There are 10 municipalities in Kosovo where the Serbian population represents the majority. With 121,000 persons these entities make up 84 percent of the overall Serbian population. Most prominent due to their often disputed political status between Pristina and Belgrade are the four northern municipalities: Mitrovica North, Zupin Potok, Zvečan and Leposavić. The bridge over the Ibar River, which separates Serbs and Albanians, is one of the hot spots of this contest. Unlike the northern municipalities, the entities in the south have undergone some integration processes into the Kosovar state structures.13

Before conducting the data analysis, it is also necessary to identify some important sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) that are outside Serbian majority municipalities.14 In Prizren there is the seat of the SOC Bishop for Kosovo as well as an (since 2011) active priest Seminary, and it is also the site of important historical monuments. In Dečane there is the Visoki Dečane monastery, in Peć the seat of the SOC Patriarch, and in Djakova there is a church which is regularly destination of Serbian pilgrims who escaped Kosovo after the conflict in 1999.

With regard to their Serbian populations, Kosovar municipalities can be described as diverse: The municipalities with Serbian majorities can be divided into those in the north and those in the south, due to political circumstances. Municipalities with Serb minorities greatly vary in the sizes of their Serbian communities,

13 With the exception of the municipalities of Štipce and Novo Brdo all southern entities were created during the recent decentralization process that took place following independence (REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO - ASSEMBLY 2008: Art.5; for more on this issue, see also: LOEW 2013).

14 These clerical sites are important markers and expressions of Serbian national identity; this makes them essential for Serbian identity in Kosovo, as well as important symbolic targets for anti-Serbian actors.
which may range from practically non-existent and therefore more or less invisible to large enough to support true Serbian communities capable of providing for the basic social and economic needs of their members. Each of these categories is marked by different social and political structures, giving rise to different opportunities for inter-ethnic contact. How this potential for contact is enacted in practice, and which manifestations of interethnic contact can be observed will be the focus of the following section.

Assessing the Albanian–Serbian Divide

Assessing Albanian–Serbian relations will employ a range of indicators found in materials mainly published by international organizations.

The first group of indicators consists of incidents with interethnic background: protests, vandalism or attacks on property, and physical violence. Data come from a content analysis of the tri-monthly Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo from 2008 until 2014. This report describes, among other things, general political developments in Kosovo, and notes any security-related incidents. As this report merely summarizes the security situation and focuses on “noteworthy incidents” (UNSG 2010: 5) rather than counting the real number of protests, incidents of vandalism, or attacks, these aggregated data will be used as a benchmark for tendencies over time and region. Additionally, the UNMIK reported incidents where not counted in this analysis when it was not possible to determine who the perpetrator was and who the victim, when it was a clearly criminal background, when the incident was determined to be an act of political violence against the perpetrator’s own people, or when the attacks were against international missions like EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Enforcement Mission) or KFOR (NATO Kosovo Force). With this focus in mind, the following analysis will discuss the type, frequency, geographical distribution, and structural patterns of the incidents.

The next indicator describes Serbian resettlement in Kosovo. The data for the voluntary resettlement of Serbs in Kosovo was mainly found in official documents (UNMIK 2015; UNHCR 2009; REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO - MINISTRY FOR COMMUNITY AND RETURN [MoCR] 2009; MoCR 2013), which were back-checked with non-governmental publications (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] 2012; RAKIĆ 2011).

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15 The documents can be downloaded from the UNMIK website: UNMIK (2015). The responsible author of these reports is the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG).

16 For an impression of the amount of potentially ethnically motivated incidents in numbers in 2013, see: HUSZKA 2014: 8–10. From January until September, more than 250 anti-Serbian and around 50 anti-Albanian incidents were recorded.

17 Neither UNHCR nor other institutions provide a database searchable by year and ethnicity, and
These quantitative data will then be contextualized with statistics on attitudes concerning interethnic issues. United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP)\(^\text{18}\) data on Kosovo’s the population’s assessment of the general interethnic situation, as well as their feelings toward living and working together, will be presented and discussed.

In addition to presenting and contextualizing these data to show the general structure and tendency of Albanian–Serbian relations in Kosovo, the present paper also aims to relate the indicators to each other, revealing possible interdependences.

**Protests with Ethnic Context**

Following the Kosovar declaration of independence in February 2008, the number of reported Serbian protest activities has been very high. The main topic of these public demonstrations has been opposition against Albanian-dominated Kosovar statehood. Until the end of 2010 there had been no major changes observed in the structures of and reasons for these reported protests, which mainly took part in the north. However in Serbian areas in the south, protests appear not to be directed against the Kosovar state in general, but merely against the specific integration process into Kosovar structures: for example, the protest against perceived discrimination by the Kosovar Energy Corporation (KEK) (UNSG 2009: 6f). A turning point in Serbian protest activities was reached in mid-2011, when Prishtina authorities in order to achieve executive control over the north, ordered special police to the border stations to Serbia. This operation was heavily opposed by the Serbs in the north, and subsequently KFOR and then EULEX where engaged until the end of 2013 in order to provide freedom of movement. No more anti-Albanian, but anti-EULEX and, to a lesser extent, anti-KFOR protests was the subsequent main pattern. In sum Serbian protest activities on other issues declined slightly. Additionally, during the entire period of observation, the return of Albanian internally displaced persons (IDP) to a suburb in Northern Mitrovica was continuously hindered by Serbian inhabitants.

In 2008 and 2009, unlike the Serbs, the Albanian population had few reasons to engage in anti-Serbian protest activities. The few demonstrations can be described as reactions to Serbian protests. However, as events that took place in 2010 show, the Albanian willingness to protest can easily be triggered by very heterogeneous reasons. Protests were launched e.g. against Belgrade-organized elections in Northern Mitrovica, as well as in celebration of the Serbian loss to Turkey in a basketball match; this provoked Serbian counter-protests and subsequent clashes at the Ibar

\(^\text{18}\) Figures from different sources differ somewhat. However, by crosschecking and by making additional calculations it was possible to outline the quantitative dimensions and main tendencies concerning resettlement.

Since 2002 UNDP has published “Early Warning Reports” as well as, since 2011 the report “Public Pulse.” The analyses are based on a sample of approximately 1300 persons, containing subsamples of approximately 250 Serbs and approximately 250 persons from other ethnic groups. For more details see: UNDP 2015.
River Bridge. Serbian return-projects in the small and big Serbian community municipalities Klina and Istog also faced Albanian opposition and continued to some extent until 2014. Since their escalation in the north in 2011, Albanian protest activities seem mainly to be reactions to Serbian opposition to accepting Kosovo’s independence, which many feel is hampering Kosovo’s further development. A regular additional pattern is protest against Serbian groups from Serbia who are visiting national or religious sites in Kosovo for commemoration days or religious holidays. However, these Albanian protests in Serbian minority areas were not reported for all years.

In sum, Serbian and Albanian protest activities from 2008 to 2014 were similar in number, and protest mobilization for both sides was quite sensitive to political developments. Further, continuous opposition against any resettlement of the other group remained at similar levels for both groups over the examined six years.19

However, in contrast to this apparent similarity, the geographical distribution of the cumulated data from 2008–2014 gives a more differentiated picture of Serbian–Albanian protest activities:

In figure 2 it clearly can be seen that protests mainly take place in areas where the protesting group represents a majority; i.e., Serbian protests mainly occur in the north, and to a smaller degree in Serbian-dominated municipalities in other areas of

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19 The most prominent and continuous protests against Albanian resettlement in Serbian-majority areas take place at the return site Kro’ i Vitakut/Brdjani near Mitrovica, a “known hotspot for ethnic tensions since 2009” (UNSG 2015: 16).
Kosovo. The few Serbian protests in areas where Serbs were not the majority can be explained with public gatherings on the occasion of Serbian memorial days which are celebrated in these Albanian-dominated areas. Also perceived discrimination concerning public services appears to be a reason for protest in these areas. On the contrary Albanian protests mainly take place in the areas where they are in a big majority. In most of the cases the reasons are political, however as stated, Serbian resettlement is another mobilizing factor; this was also the case for the few Albanian protests that occurred in southern municipalities with larger Serbian populations. The column showing Albanian protests in the north are mainly centered on the Ibar River Bridge separating Albanians and Serbs in Mitrovica. In most of cases, these protests are related to Serbian activities at the other side of the river.

**Attacks on Property and Vandalism**

Due to their often-clandestine nature, determining the perpetrators of attacks on property or vandalism is more difficult than in the case of protest activities. In many cases it is not possible to distinguish between criminal (e.g., theft) and ethnic motivations. This often holds for incidents reported for property of Serbs, which are not present the whole year. Their houses are easy targets for burglars. This increases the number of anti-Serbian incidents but may not indicate anti-Serbian intentions. At the same time, even if the primary motivation is a simple economic one, the vulnerability of Serbian resettlers is exploited, indicating at least a slight anti-Serbian intention. There are also many attacks perpetrated by Albanians against Serbs with a clear ethnic motivation, such as graffiti of the acronym UÇK (Kosovar Liberation Army) at Serbian graveyards or vandalism at projected sites for Serbian returnees in Albanian-majority areas. Such anti-Serbian vandalism and attacks on property often occur on SOC property or on vacant Serbian return sites; attacks on properties actually occupied by Serbs at the time are much less frequent (UNSG 2015: 5).

Since 2008, reported vandalism or attacks on Serbian property have generally increased: After the turbulent year of independence (2008), incidents declined in 2009 and 2010, escalated in mid-2011, decreased in 2013, and increased again until 2014. Comparing this pattern to political developments, these changes may reflect anti-Serbian anger due to the initial strong Serbian opposition to independence followed by a slight relaxation on this issue in the two years that followed. The escalation since 2011 may reflect renewed manifestations of Serbian resistance and anti-Serbian vandalism. In addition to the overall political factors which trigger these incidents, also revenge-vandalism can be revealed as a pattern of incidents. For example, in Spring 2013 the official decision to dismantle an Albanian war memorial in the Albanian-inhabited southern Republic of Serbia was followed by a Kosovo-wide wave of vandalism at Serbian cemeteries (BALKAN INSIGHT 2013; OSCE 2013; UNSG 2013: 19).

In contrast to attacks on Serbian property, there were almost no reported attacks on Albanian property or vandalism in southern Kosovo; further, most reported burglaries at Islamic or Catholic religious sites could be traced to simple criminal inten-
tions by non-Serbs. However, anti-Albanian vandalism in the northern municipalities has clear anti-resettlement motivations: The return project near Mitrovica, which was described above, has prompted demonstrations and vandalism at the construction site.

These incident patterns also can be illustrated by their geographical distribution:

As discussed earlier in this section, relevant anti-Albanian vandalism only can be assessed for the northern, Serbian-dominated municipalities. Attacks on Serbian property carried out by Albanians are more frequent and mostly take place in areas where this property is unoccupied or unguarded, and in areas where Serbs comprise a small but relevant minority. Anti-Serbian incidents in the north again can be described as reactions to Serbian-triggered incidents.

Attacks on Persons

The indicator “attacks on persons” refers to violent attacks intended to cause injuries, as well as murders which were identified as ethnically motivated. These attacks also include protest activities that turned violent, as well as acts of intimidation or revenge. Unlike vandalism, witness statements regarding cases of attacks on persons allow for more accurate identification of perpetrator identity and intentions. The presented data here do not include attacks against Serbs working for Kosovo authorities. In these cases, it is suspected that the perpetrators are Serbs who see their fellow Serbs as traitors. Further, since 2011, violent attacks on KFOR or EULEX carried out by Serbs were also not counted; in the context of the 2011 esca-

20 For the entire research period only three (two Serbian, one Albanian) murders were reported to be ethnically motivated – far fewer than the number of non-ethnically motivated murders that took place in Kosovo during the same time period.
Before examining the development of violent attacks between 2008 and 2014, along with the geographical distribution of these incidents, the UNSG report for the period of March 16 to July 15, 2010 (UNSG 2010) should serve as an example concerning the variety of attacks that regularly take place in Kosovo. For this three-month period, the document reports five anti-Serbian and two anti-Albanian attacks. In June, two similar incidents occurred in the north of Kosovo: In the first a “group of Kosovo Albanian teenagers was attacked by several Kosovo Serb youths” (ibid.: 5); in what was most probably an act of revenge, the following day “three Kosovo Serbs were physically assaulted by a group of Kosovo Albanians” in the same area (ibid.: 5). Another pattern of anti-Albanian incidents occurred when a humanitarian transportation bus for Albanian inhabitants of the north was repeatedly attacked (ibid.: 5). Violent attacks frequently occur in the course of protests, such as during a Serbian demonstration against the opening of a civil service center of the Kosovar government, after which Albanian counter-protests resulted in eleven injured Serbs (ibid.: 4). The UNSG report also refers to an assault on a Kosovo Serb in the Serbian-majority municipality of Novo Brdo, as well as to the stoning of a humanitarian bus carrying Serbs in a Serbian-minority municipality in Western Kosovo (ibid.: 5). A serious attack was reported from a Serbian return site in Istog, a municipality with a bigger Serbian minority community, when the Serbian returnees were repeatedly attacked with stones and automatic rifles. However, no injuries were reported for this incident (ibid.: 6f).

Looking at the whole chronology of these attacks, reported violence against both Serbs and Albanians appeared relatively stable from 2008 until 2010. In 2011 anti-Serbian attacks doubled in number, while Serbs carried out almost no anti-Albanian attacks. This decrease was likely due to the 2011 increase of KFOR and EULEX troops in the north, who subsequently became the main target of Serbian assaults. After 2011, both Serbian and Albanian physical violence against the other ethnic group generally decreased to slightly below pre-2011 levels. This may be because both sides were exhausted by the 2011 escalation and the subsequent political developments, which led to decreased violence.

Similar to the indicators presented above, the geographical distribution of inter-ethnic violence is self-explanatory:
During this six-year timeframe, Serbs mainly attacked Albanians in the northern municipalities, where Albanians are a minority; there were no reports of Serbian attacks against the few Albanians living in Serbian-majority municipalities in southern Kosovo. Albanian attacks on Serbs mainly took place in areas where Serbs represented a very small and therefore vulnerable minority. Most of these attacks targeted humanitarian transportations for Serbs, or came in the form of violent opposition against resettlement projects, which often took place in mixed municipalities.

As the example showed the reasons for violence were quite diverse: Attacks took place in the course of protests, in the context of memorial days, connected to return activities as well as spontaneous hate crimes without an identifiable wider context.

**Serbian Voluntary Returns**

Despite the occurrence of interethnic incidents indicating the degree of tension between the Albanian and Serbian populations, a high rate of Serbian voluntary returnees\(^\text{21}\) can point at positive relations between Serbian returning community and the Albanian receiving community.\(^\text{22}\) Incidents in the context of Serbian return projects only show one side of the story, as the majority of resettlement projects are not answered by report-worthy protests or attacks by the receiving community. Further, interethnic friction is not the only reason many Serbs do not return to their homes: economic reasons, the general living perspective, and limitations on the

\(^{21}\) Forced returns, mainly from Western European countries, are not included in the following figures.

\(^{22}\) This section only takes into account Serbian voluntary returns, since the material available regarding Albanian returns is often unclear. However, since 2008, the annual Albanian share of returnees can be estimated at around 4 percent. For the year 2012, the number of still displaced Albanians – who mainly originate from northern Kosovo and live in southern Kosovo – is estimated at around 7300 (IDMC 2012: 4).
availability of funding convince many Serbs to stay in Serbia or other areas (ECMI 2013; IDMC 2012; OSCE 2014b; UNSG 2008: 4).

Refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and resettlement are major ongoing political issues in the triangle between Serbia, Kosovo, and the international community. Consequently it is disputable whether exact numbers can be presented. The main sources used in the present paper are the UNSG reports, as well as figures provided by the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (cf. UNHCR 2009) and the Kosovar Ministry on Communities and Returns (MoCR 2009; MoCR 2013).23

From these sources, it can be stated that after the NATO airstrikes and the subsequent withdrawal of the Yugoslav troops, around 245,000 persons fled Kosovo, fearing revenge acts by the Albanian paramilitary (MoCR 2009: 14; IDMC 2012: 3). In the aftermath of the anti-Serbian riots in March 2004, another 4200 persons left their homes to seek shelter in Serbia or in Serbian-populated areas in Kosovo (IDMC 2012: 4). In 2008 the main country of residence for displaced persons from Kosovo was Serbia, sheltering approx. 205,000 persons, of whom about 68 percent were Serbs and about 12 percent were Roma. Since then, around 20,000 persons from minority groups, including around 8500 Serbs, have returned to Kosovo (RAKIĆ 2011; UNHCR 2009). This makes an annual average of Serbian returnees during the UNMIK period of around 900 persons. The highest numbers of Serbian returnees in those years have been in 2000 (1826 persons) and 2003 (1550 persons). In 2011 a United Nations representative stated that in Serbia there “are still about 97,000 persons displaced from Kosovo with continued displacement-related needs” (UNITED NATIONS NEWS 2013).

Confronted with these figures, it is obvious that the development of Serbian resettlement during the UNMIK time did not meet the demand for a successful return policy at all. The numbers for the post-UNMIK voluntary return of Serbs shows a continuation of this trend:

23 It is difficult to assess the sustainability of returns, as there are no overall figures on resettlement projects where the Serbian settlers ultimately left the sites; one example is the case of a return site in the Ferizaj municipality, for which the reasons why settlers left remain unclear (UNSG 2011: 5).
Following the 2008 declaration of independence, the number of returning Serbs showed an all-time low of only 231 voluntary returnees, indicating that few Serbs were willing to return to the Kosovar state. The UNSG report from that time states: “The number of minority returns has declined sharply in comparison with previous years and remains disappointing” (UNSG 2008: 4). However, in 2010, increased activities by the Kosovar Government – which was urged by the international community to implement return strategies (MoCR 2009) – additional funding, and a generally improving interethnic climate resulted in a number of Serbian returnees that almost reached the average of pre-independence Kosovo. However, since 2011, this trend has continuously decreased, and in the last two years the number of Serbian returnees was only around 170 per year.

While it is methodologically questionable to draw a direct link between the escalation of violence in 2011 and the subsequent decrease in Serbian resettlement, figure 5 does indicate a significant change since 2011. This continuous decrease also indicates that the situation on the ground does not provide relevant reasons for Serbs to return to their homes.

**Attitudes on Interethnic Relations**

The last set of indicators presented in this article employs the results of a survey carried out by UNDP in Kosovo.24 The poll is conducted on a regular basis throughout Kosovo and asks about the general economic situation of the participants, their satisfaction with Kosovar and international institutions, and their read on interethnic relations. Three indicators from this survey were used in the present study: **ratings of interethnic relations, willingness to live with the ethnic other, and willingness to work with the ethnic other.**25

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24 Cf. fn 18. In the years where more than one survey was conducted, the figures have been averaged. Again, due to the sample and data quality, conclusions can only be drawn for Kosovo-wide attitudes, not for specific regions.

25 The available documents only included figures for these indicators until April 2013.
To estimate the state of interethnic relations, respondents have been asked whether they agree or disagree with the following statement: “Interethnic relations are tense and will continue to be such.” Figure 6 shows the share of Albanians and Serbs who agreed with this statement:

![Figure 6: Percentage of Serbs and Albanians who agreed that “Interethnic relations are tense and will continue to be such” (2008–2013)](image)

According to figure 6, shortly after the Kosovar declaration of independence, about 80 percent of Serbs perceived interethnic relations to be tense. For the following three years this agreement remained stable at around 60 percent, and from 2011 to 2013 a decrease to about 40 percent was observable. The reverse has been true for the Albanian rating of interethnic relations: In 2008, just 20 percent of respondents agreed that relations were tense; by 2012, this increased to more than 70 percent. These inverse perceptions make it clear that Serbs and Albanians see interethnic relations from 2008 to 2013 very differently, with 2011 being the clear turning point.

Political developments may explain this pattern: Initially, Serbs perceived the newly established Kosovar state as a threat, triggering negative feelings about interethnic relations. However, living in independent Kosovo – at least in the Serbian-majority municipalities in southern Kosovo – turned out not to be as bad as they had expected, which can explain the decrease of the negative attitude towards interethnic relations. It is surprising to some extent that after 2011 the Serbian attitude is further improving. One possible explanation may be the declining number of violent attacks on Serbs and the smaller number of anti-Serbian protests at that time.

The Albanian respondents on the contrary, at the beginning have been enthusiastic about their interethnic Kosovo where the “other is just fine, but only insofar as his presence is not intrusive” (KRASNIQI 2014: 156). However, after 2011 they realized that not only the Serbian resistance to the Kosovar state but also political reality in the triangle between Belgrade, Prishtina and the European Union were hampering development. In response, the Serbs were scapegoated for EU-imposed compromises that the Prishtina government had to agree on, which might have resulted in increasing pessimism regarding interethnic relations.
These remarkable changes in attitudes on interethnic relations during the observed period can be contextualized by the indicators of *willingness to live together* and *willingness to work together*. Preferences regarding living next to or working with members of another group is a frequently used indicator for measuring attitudes on social distance (cf. EVS 2011). Unlike rating interethnic relations in general, and for all of Kosovo, questions on the willingness to live and work together aim to assess attitudes that are more influenced by personal environment and experience than by public debates.

For the Serbian subsample in figure 7, from 2008 to 2013, a mean of 18 percent were willing to live with Albanians, and a mean of 35 percent were willing to work with Albanians. The willingness to live with Albanians varied by, at most, 10 percent, while the willingness to work with Albanians varied by, at most, 11 percent. Compared with the maximum variation of around 40 percent for interethnic relations (cf. figure 6), personal interethnic attitude appears to be both more stable over time and less influenced by political developments.

A slightly different tendency can be observed in the responses of the Albanian interviewees in figure 8: The mean for living together is 34 percent and for working together is 41 percent. For living together the maximum variation is 15 percent, for working together it is 18 percent. It can be observed, that the Albanian attitudes on this question where not as stable as Serbian attitudes. However compared to the much higher variation in Albanian ratings of interethnic relations (i.e., more than 50 percent), personal attitudes for this ethnic group still appear more stable than attitudes on the overall situation.
Generally speaking, to say that “Interethnic relations are tense and will continue to be such” does not exclude the speaker from being willing to live near or work with the ethnic other. Compared to the dynamics of the other figures presented above, the willingness to live and work with the ethnic other appears more stable.\(^{26}\) The main difference between the Serbian and the Albanian subsamples was that Albanians were slightly more willing to work with Serbs than Serbs were willing to work with Albanians. However, the slight decrease of the Albanian attitude leads to an approximation of the figures.

The main conclusion is that from 2008 to 2013 an average of 41 percent of Albanians were willing to work with Serbs, while an average of 35 percent of Serbs were willing to work with Albanians. However, the smaller numbers of respondents willing to have the other as neighbor and the critique that neither of the two groups had a clear majority in favor of regular interethnic contact allows no general positive assessment. Nevertheless, one can conclude that inter-ethnicity in everyday life is valued differently and more positively than a look at other indicators might indicate.

**Conclusion: Structure and Tendency of Interethnic Relations in Kosovo**

The research question of this analysis was: “How do Albanians and Serbs get along with each other?” The – at least for cultural scientists – provocative methodical approach indicated that interethnic relations or the extent of othering between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo can be measured using indicators, which were explored in this article, shedding light onto the general structure and tendency of interethnic relations in Kosovo.

\(^{26}\) This becomes even clearer looking at the detailed figures from the three monthly surveys in 2011: From June to November 2011 the percentage of Serbs willing to work with Albanians decreased by 5 percent, the Albanian figure decreases by 0.5 percent, so the escalation in July in the North did not have a huge influence.
In a contribution to an anthology, Kosovar social scientist Vjollca Krasniqi concludes after examination of her material: “Our survey data confirm that Kosovo is a place that is divided along ethnic lines, and not the site of keen interethnic interaction and exchange” (KRASNIQI 2014: 156). While it would be unfair to reduce Krasniqi to this generalization, the present analysis came to slightly different findings.

Although the majority of interethnic incidents took place in northern Kosovo, Serbs in Albanian-majority areas were also not completely safe. Further, while the data on Serbian returnees indicates that at least some resettlement projects are successful and were not cancelled due to Albanian resistance, this should not hide the fact that a low willingness to return reflects a generally negative assessment of conditions for Serbian returnees in Kosovo. While vandalism against Serbian property remains a widespread problem, the declining rate of violence is a positive sign.

Protest activities, attacks on persons, and, to some degree vandalism, all seem to follow major political developments. Here, these developments include stabilization after independence, the 2011 escalation, the subsequent contest in Kosovo and on the international stage, and some normalization after 2013. While these developments are mirrored in the attitudes about relations between Serbs and Albanians, subjective willingness to live and work with each other appears largely unaffected.

This shows that a small, relatively stable, share of each group sees the potential and need for cooperation. Interaction in ethnically mixed areas happens every day, in contrast to the largely separated situation in Serbian-majority municipalities. However, it appeared difficult to find quantifiable data to support these findings more strongly, showing once more the deficits of exclusively quantitative studies.

Nevertheless, with the allocated data it was possible to show, that Kosovo is not a country that can be described as “divided along ethnic lines” in a simplistic sense, and that its current categorization as a “violent crisis” is highly misleading and problematic. However, at the same time, post-independence Kosovo is also not a place of “keen interethnic interaction and exchange,” especially in certain areas. Acknowledging that processes of othering appear – despite some encouraging findings – to be structurally dominant, the still-pending process of reconciliation between the Albanian majority and Serbian minority will be a huge challenge for the coming decades.
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Skopje 2014: Construction of a Nation
and its Exclusionary Effects

ZHIDAS DASKALOVSKI

Introduction

This is a study of the ongoing government-sponsored reconstruction of the Skopje city center, which began in 2010. The project, labeled “Skopje 2014,” has drawn heavy criticism from various parties. One dominant line of criticism focuses on the supposed Macedonian ethnocentricity of the project. In this paper, we evaluate the criticism that the project excludes national minorities in Skopje and Macedonia, noting that this discussion is part of the larger debate on the pros and cons of revamping the capital. Although the project certainly includes nation-building aspects, it is multifaceted. In this paper we first offer a short history of Skopje and Macedonia, which is needed to understand the project and its context. Then we give a concise description of the activities undertaken within Skopje 2014, before presenting the various criticisms for and against this renovation project, focusing on the allegedly ethnocentric aspects. Concentrating our debate on ethnocentricity of Skopje 2014, we discuss the concepts of liberal nation-building and multiculturalism before summarizing the main points and concluding the paper.

A Short History of Skopje

The present-day capital of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, has a very long history. According to the archaeological data, the area of Skopje has been continually settled since the Bronze and Iron Ages, from the 12th to the 6th centuries BC. In the first century AD it became a large Roman provincial center named Scupi. By the end of the third century, Scupi became the metropolis of the province Dardania, and in the fourth century it became a seat of an episcopate. At that time Skopje was a large influential city in the Roman provinces in the Balkans, a commercial hub with numerous basilicas and churches, paved streets, bathhouses, a sanitation infrastructure, and a theater. In 518 AD an earthquake destroyed Scupi. Justinian I (527–565) rebuilt the city in Skopje’s present location, naming it Justinian Prima (JORDANOVSKI/WATTS 2004: 23), but the Slavic-speaking population called it
Skopje. In the Middle Ages it was a regional center of Tzar Samuil’s Empire, and King Dushan was crowned there, making Skopje the capital of his Serbian empire. Various armies and rulers controlled Skopje for brief periods of time until the Ottomans conquered the city in 1392, naming it Uskup. During Ottoman rule the medieval Christian town and its Byzantine legacy were transformed into a typical Ottoman cityscape (BALABANOV 2012; DEIPENBROCK et al. 2013). In 1555 the city suffered another powerful earthquake, while a great fire destroyed large parts of Skopje in 1594. In 1689, during the Great Turkish War the Habsburg armies, led by general Piccolomini, fought the Ottomans in the Skopje area. The Habsburg general Silvio Piccolomini burned the city, suspecting a cholera outbreak. This fire had disastrous effect on the city: its population declined from around 60,000 to around 10,000, and it lost its regional importance as a trading center. Following a two-century decline, the town started to grow and urbanize intensively by the end of the 19th century. A key development was the building of the Skopje-Thessaloniki railway in 1873. However, during the late 19th century, Skopje resembled a traditional Ottoman town whose urban appearance had not been significantly altered by its connection to the railway and other advances of the age (STILINOVIC et al. 2013).

Following the Balkan and the First World Wars, the city was occupied by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, becoming an administrative center of the Vardar region. The Serbian rulers revamped the city, constructing many new buildings that changed the Ottoman urban appearance. The Serbian administration introduced Western European influences into city planning and architecture, focusing its efforts on the reconstruction around the main city square. Constructing the large, prominent buildings on Skopje’s Square, “including the ‘National Bank,’ ‘City Theater,’ and ‘Officers’ House,’ embodied a new political, economic and cultural meaning of the city in the early 20th century” (DEIPENBROCK et al. 2013: 189).

Only after the Second World War was the city administered by the local Macedonians. Skopje became a capital of the Macedonian Republic within the Socialist Yugoslav Federation. As an administrative and commercial capital, Skopje grew significantly in the years following the war. Tragically, on July 26, 1963 another catastrophic earthquake struck the city, which destroyed more than 85 percent of buildings and resulted in widespread devastation (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP), 1970). Important public buildings such as the ‘Macedonian National Theater’ and the ‘Officers’ House’ were ruined, or were so profoundly damaged that they were demolished afterwards. After the earthquake, President Tito went to Skopje and promised to “rebuild the city as a symbol of brotherhood and unity of the Yugoslav people” (UNDP 1970: 31). Skopje became Yugoslavia’s city of solidarity, and the United Nations aided the socialist Macedonian government in the reconstruction of the city. The famous Japanese architect Kenzo Tange won an international competition for the master plan for the post-
earthquake reconstruction of the city. However, the master plan adopted in 1965 never fully materialized due to a lack of resources, leaving the reconstruction incomplete; in the end, Skopje was reconstructed from scratch in the typical socialist architectural style of the time.

Modern Macedonia

Modern Macedonia emerged in 1945 as one of the six constitutive republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. When Yugoslavia disintegrated in the second half of 1991, Macedonia chose to assert its own independence rather than remain in a truncated Yugoslav state, which was likely to be dominated by Serbia without the counterbalancing influences of Croatia and Slovenia. However, what was ultimately a peaceful and benign transformation of Macedonian society was preceded by an uneasy period of democratic consolidation. Among the different factors that negatively influenced this process were the struggle for international recognition of Macedonia; the Greek diplomatic and economic pressure for the republic to change its name; the disruption of the economy due to UN sanctions on Macedonia’s main trading partner, Serbia; and the financial impediments resulting from the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo refugee crisis. None of these factors, however, affected the consolidation of the democratic system as much as the disputation of the character of the state by Macedonian Albanians.

During the 1990s the Macedonian political elite clashed with their ethnic Albanian counterparts over the basic idea behind the concept of the state. Various aspects of the constitution and census taking; the laws on education, local self-government, and the public display of national minority symbols; and the ethnic make-up of the police, the army, and the public administration were all contested by Macedonian Albanians during this period. While Macedonians have insisted on a unitary nation-state, ethnic Albanians have refused to be considered an ethnic minority in a Macedonian nation-state and have advocated for official bi-nationalism. The political

1 A co-winner was the Urban Planning Institute of Zagreb.
2 Greece claims that the name is exclusively part of its cultural and historical heritage. Athens insists that Macedonia must add a ‘qualifier’ to its name in order to differentiate the country from the northern province of Greece bearing the same name. Greece also argues that the name implies territorial irredentism. Macedonia has renounced any claims on Greek territory, but it regards its name as a core part of its national identity. The view from Skopje is that Macedonians have a right to self-determination.
3 According to the latest, 2002 census, besides Macedonians, the largest ethnic group in the country population comprising 64%, of the total population, there are also 25% Albanians, 3% Turks, and 2% each Roma, Serbs, and others. See Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002, Book I, State Statistical Office: Skopje, 2005, 176.
transformation was formulated as a zero-sum game, pitting ethnic Albanian grievances against Macedonian fears for ‘their’ country’s security and integrity.

Armed conflict erupted between Albanian rebels and government forces in 2001, but was quickly ended through an EU- and US-mediated agreement signed in August of that year. The so-called “Ohrid Agreement” envisioned a series of political and constitutional reforms. A number of measures were implemented to meet many of the demands raised by the Macedonian Albanians throughout the 1990s and to introduce consociational power sharing. These measures included a system of double majorities requiring consent from minorities to pass key decisions in Parliament (i.e., the right of minority veto), as well as to elect members of the Supreme Court, Juridical Council, and the Public Attorney; as well as substantial municipal decentralization and confidence-building measures to overcome the immediate consequences of the 2001 conflict. Furthermore, the Ohrid Agreement established the policy of achieving equitable and just representation in public administration at the national and local levels as the highest priority, a key reform in the public sector. If one considers that Macedonia has a big multiparty and multiethnic coalition in power since 1991, and that although this is not a legal prerequisite, it is almost impossible to imagine a government not being a coalition of a Macedonian party and an ethnic Albanian parliamentary party, then it is clear that most of the elements of a consociational regime are in place.

The main goal of the Ohrid Agreement has been to accommodate the grievances of the Albanian community while preserving the unitary character of the state. This goal of preserving unity addresses the concerns of the Macedonian majority, who fear a federalization of the country and its eventual disintegration. Although Macedonian society is still split along ethnic lines, conflicts have been subdued following the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. Today, all of Macedonia’s political parties share the view that Macedonia should become a member of the EU and NATO. There is a strong consensus among political groups and citizens that market economics and democracy should be the basis of the country’s political system. The process of interethnic consolidation following the Ohrid Agreement is supported by the European Union. Indeed, to ensure that the government fulfills its obligations to the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the EU made the further integration of Macedonia into Europe conditional on full implementation of the agreement. Promotion of multi-ethnicity, political moderation, and tolerance are widely understood as being important characteristics of Macedonian politics.

A Brief Overview of Skopje 2014

In 2009, the Macedonian government announced a reconstruction project. This project, part of a project called Skopje 2014, aims mainly at renovating the city center. Using neoclassical and baroque architectural styles, the project includes the construction of almost new 20 buildings, including museums, theatres, concert halls, hotels, administrative offices, fountains, and colonnades, as well as footbridges over the Vardar and Roman galleys on the river banks. All of this new construction is to be decorated with a number of bronze and marble statues.

Among the many other monumental buildings being completed are a triumphal arch, a foreign ministry building, a constitutional court, a national theater, an archaeological museum, a city hall, a new criminal court building, a water management building, a dome-shaped cylindrical financial police headquarters, and a communications ministry. Other items on the agenda are rebuilding the city hall (which was destroyed in the 1963 earthquake) on the main square and reconstructing a number of buildings, including the Parliament, with domes and new facades. The agenda also proposes – among other improvements – planting willow trees in the Vardar river, creating artificial summer beaches on the bank of Vardar, and building a big panoramic Ferris wheel, new parking lots, and two pedestrian bridges over the river. The Art Bridge offers bronze sculptures of Macedonian painters, writers, composers, and musicians, while the Eye Bridge has sculptures of various historical figures who have influenced Macedonian history, from antiquity to the present time. The façade of the new ornate foreign ministry building also has 60 three-meter high concrete, stone, and bronze sculptures of late foreign dignitaries standing on its roof edge, including Winston Churchill, and the American presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

Skopje 2014 commemorates all kinds of historical figures linked to Macedonian history. There are statues of figures from the Ancient period of Macedonian history: Alexander the Great, his father Philip II, and his mother Olympia of Epirus; from early Christianity, such as Saint Cyril, Saint Methodius, Saint Clement, and Saint Naum (to whom the Slavs owe their alphabet); notable historical figures who were born or ruled in or around Skopje, such as the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, and the Tzars of the Middle Ages; of a league of freedom fighters that fought for Macedonian independence from Ottoman rule, such as Goce Delchev and Nikola Karev, both leaders of the historical VMRO (The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) movement; leaders of the 19th century national awakening movement, such as Krste Misirkov, Dimitrija Chupovski, and Gjorgjija Pulevski; leaders of the partisan movement during World War Two; and founders of socialist Macedonia, such as Metodija Andonov Chento.

The centerpiece of the project is a 22-metre high bronze equestrian statue of the Ancient warrior, Alexander the Great, standing on top of a white marble fountain in Skopje’s central square. The statue has been officially named “Warrior on a Horse”
because of the above-mentioned ‘naming dispute.’ On the other side of the Vardar River, near the entry to the Charshija, the old Ottoman Business District, a similarly sized statue of Alexander’s father, Philip of Macedon, has been built, around which bronze horses jump out of a nearby fountain. The statue and the fountain are officially named “Warrior,” again due to the ‘naming dispute.’

Various Criticisms and Arguments in Favor of and Against Skopje 2014

There are a number of arguments both for and against Skopje 2014. One criticism regards the aesthetics of the project. Architects have argued that “its hyperbolic, classicist representation of Macedonia identity is ridiculous, kitschy and ineffectual, and that it unnecessarily excludes they country’s sizeable ethnic minority groups” (GRAAN 2013: 169). These critics feel that the city is being cluttered by too many monuments in the city center: Over a hundred monuments and sculptures “are being installed within the radius of one kilometer, none of them less than four meters high and perched on a pedestal some 12 meters above the ground” (JANEV 2011: 8). Parallels can be made with the “imaginary world” of Disneyland, a place that tries to bring imagination and fiction together as reality (MURATOFSKI 2011). The critics contend there are too many different statues representing too many historical epochs, labeling the project Disneyland,” and complaining that what was planned to be a serious facelift of the city center has turned into a charade.

Critics have also complained about the costs of the project. They argue that Macedonia should spend its scarce resources more prudently and that citizens would have preferred to see these funds being invested into solving many of Skopje’s infrastructure problems (EDDY 2013). These critics argue that Skopje 2014 is an attempt to distract people from the country’s real problems, such as high unemployment, poverty, and stalled progress towards EU and NATO membership. Opponents of the project estimate the real costs of Skopje 2014 to be very high: at least 300 million Euro, and possibly as high as 500 million (KJUKA 2013; RIZVANOVIC 2013). Critics also complain about procedural aspects of Skopje 2014, citing a lack of transparency regarding the contracts given to the architects and designers. They have also noted that no international competition preceded the awarding of commissions, which a project of this scale and investment would have justified (KUBIENA 2012). Instead, individual projects went to local architects, none of whom seem to have the kind of international (or even local) track record to justify involvement in such a major project (BUGJEVAC 2010).

However, not everyone shares these critical attitudes towards Skopje 2014. Those in favor argue that revamping of the capital – previously an unremarkable, provincial town dominated by uninspiring Socialist-era architecture – was needed to raise national pride and attract tourists to Skopje. The center of the capital had been
neglected in the post-Socialist period, a fact that was clear to anyone travelling to Macedonia before the current reconstruction was undertaken. Before Skopje 2014, the two most distinctive sights of the city were the Old Turkish Bazaar and the modern socialist buildings constructed from the 1950s to the 1970s, and Skopje 2014 was intended to make a final break from the ugly, communist image of the city (KOTEVSKA 2011).

Those in favor of the project suggest that the eclectic nature of the project and the many monuments might indeed give a Disneyland feel, but that is not necessarily a bad thing; on the contrary, it offers value and something for everyone to be proud of. Moreover, many of the proposed new buildings “resemble old ones, or [will] even be direct replicas of buildings that collapsed in the tragic earthquake” (JANEV and Kriznik 2008: 5). For example, the Army Officers’ House, the Macedonian National Theatre and National Bank, and the fighters on horseback at the foot of the Stone Bridge are all reconstructions of previously destroyed buildings and monuments. This is especially meaningful for people in Skopje, as the look of the city before the earthquake was lost in the reconstruction that took place under Kenzo Tange and communist Yugoslavia (DEIPENBROCK et al. 2013).

Furthermore, the costs of the project will be paid off in the long term in the form of free rent for public offices and increased tourism. In April, immediately after the 2013 local elections, the government revealed its first report on the costs of the project, saying it had spent a total of 208 million Euro so far (MARUSIC 2013, Mayer 2013, EDDY 2013), a sum much lower than what critics have argued are the costs. Moreover, constructing new government buildings was done on the basis of a real need. Before the project, the government had to pay rent on office space for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other public bodies. Defenders of the project explain how the new state buildings will save on rent and, hopefully, enhance the efficiency of public administration (EDDY 2013). Moreover, according to Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, Skopje 2014 created up to 10,000 jobs at its peak, and has “helped the construction industry to survive” (EDDY 2013). During a time of global financial and economic crisis, the boost that Skopje 2014 gave to the construction sector indirectly helped the whole economy.

In any case, Skopje 2014 and other infrastructure investments do appear to already be helping Macedonia to attract foreign tourists, with the 2012 growth in tourism higher than the European average. The latest data from the Statistical Office reveals a 4.2 percent annual growth in tourism, and about half of these foreign tour-

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6 One should also note that the government has also introduced policies to boost tourism including a reduction in sales tax on hotels and catering from 18% to 5% and offering subsidies to travel agents to attract tour groups from various countries.
ists have spent at least one night in Skopje (ALFA 2014). Responding to the criticism that the project was not transparent, the government has responded that the plans for Skopje 2014 had already been envisioned by the previous local government of Skopje, which was dominated by the main opposition party, SDSM (Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia). The VMRO-DPMNE government simply took existing plans and enlarged the project, but did so in a way that remained within the legal limits. In 2006, the Ministry of Culture did announce a public competition, but since no international competitor won the bid, the design and execution were entrusted to local architects and artists (KOTEVSKA 2011). Although most of the local architects and artists were previously unknown to the public, they legally won the bids and produced valuable results.

The Dominant Discourse: Skopje 2014 as an Ethnocentric Nation-Building Project?

Although there have been many arguments both for and against Skopje 2014, the discussion regarding the ethnocentric aspects of the project is fundamental for the long term stability of this fragile multiethnic state. Through portrayals of Skopje 2014 as an inauthentic and counterfeit copy of other European cities, critics have constructed it as counterproductive national promotion and as both an economic and existential threat to citizen-subjects (GRAAN 2013). For most ethnic Albanians, members of other minority groups, and many ethnic Macedonians, there is a mononational state narrative of Skopje 2014. According to opponents of Skopje 2014, the project serves only to build up the dominant Macedonian identity, while the ethnic minorities – Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Serbs, Roma, Bosniaks, etc. – are not being adequately represented. This argument makes the claim that “the government has shown very little hesitation to exploit the symbolic alliance between the majority religion, artistic representation and nationalist and religious connotations in the urban space” (KUBIENA 2012: 91).

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7 According to estimates Skopje 2014, and the recent entry of low cost airlines such as Wizzair, Corendon and Pegasus Airlines have contributed to the 21% growth in number of inbound tourism flows to Macedonia via Skopje airport and the increased interest in Skopje as a tourist destination. (ANDRADE/IVANOV 2013) According to Euromonitor International, Macedonian inbound tourism flow is set to achieve a 6% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) growth, to record 1.6 million tourist arrivals by 2017.

8 According to the 2002 census, Macedonians were the largest ethnic group in Skopje, with 338,358 inhabitants, or 66.75% of the population. Then came Albanians with 23,475 (4.63%), Serbs (14,298 inhabitants), Turks (8,595), Bosniaks (7,585) and Vlachs (2,557). 8,167 people did not belong to any of these groups. Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2002, Book XIII: Total population, households and dwellings, According to the territorial organization of The Republic of Macedonia, 2004, 2002. State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia.
Asserting that Macedonia is a multicultural and multinational state, ethnic Turks and Albanians demand that statues of their historical figures decorate the city center as well. The new monuments, buildings, and institutions try to construct ethnic boundaries through symbolic power (JANEV/KRIZNIK 2008). They are a “direct expression of the ethnocratic regime in the social space” (JANEV 2011: 9), a paradoxical “(de)construction of a grand national narrative featuring myths of origin and struggle, a sort of an urban shrine of devotion to the identity of a single nation” (CAVOLLI 2011: 68). Moreover, opponents of the project link Skopje 2014 with what they believe is an overall Antiquisation strategy of the government (VANGELI 2011), a term coined by historians to explain the Renaissance practice of giving a city the appearance of ancient Rome or Athens, a phenomenon visible in and after the 15th century in Italy and all over Europe (KOTEVSKA 2011). According to critics, this antiquisation started when the ancient Macedonian names of Alexander the Great and his father, Philip II, were given to the main airport, the Skopje city football stadium, and the main north–south highway, and peaked with the start of the Skopje 2014 project. These critics hold that antiquisation and Skopje 2014 are not a manifestation of esthetic appreciation on the behalf of the government for the Classical period, but rather, an inadequate nationalistic myth-building. Moreover, critics have accused the government of ‘dividing’ Macedonians into two camps: those who trace their roots to the Slavs, and those who claim to be descendants of Ancient Macedonians.

For the proponents of the project, the criticism that Skopje 2014 is a continuation of this so-called antiquisation trend does not fully explain the project, because the project is intended to “engulf a whole lineage of history, from Ancient, to Medieval to modern Macedonia, plus to commemorate different world artifacts, styles, leaders and phenomena, not necessarily connected to the territory or the nation” (KOTEVSKA 2011). Indeed the project has included statues depicting rulers and tsars, philosophers and scholars, warriors and leaders, artists and statesmen, from the Classical era to medieval times, from ancient Macedon to the 20th century VMRO, from World War Two partisan leaders to 2001 conflict veterans. With the exception of monuments to Alexander the Great and Philip, all the other statues are of heroes of different time epochs.

Proponents explain that the project is not divisive but, rather, has unifying aspects, as the biggest monument of Alexander the Great is appreciated by all communities, including ethnic Albanians. Thus, for example, the association of the Vlachs in Macedonia, “Mandra” also claimed that the Vlachs, consider themselves to be direct descendants of Alexander the Great (F.R. 2009); the president of the Vlach party has reiterated this view (POPOVSKA-HRISTOV 2010). Moreover, in 2009, before Skopje 2014 had begun, a memorial house for the famous catholic nun, Mother Teresa, was built in the city center. Born in Skopje in 1910 as Agnësë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu, to a family that reports itself to be ethnic Albanian-Vlach, Mother Teresa lived in Skopje for 18 years, and is a unifying figure revered by all citizens.
In addition to Alexander the Great and Mother Theresa, statues of other heroes of minority groups are also included in the Skopje construction. In 2006, a statue of Skanderbeg, the Albanian national hero, was erected in Chair, an Albanian-majority municipality, “to symbolically express their indisputable right over the part of the city that forms the nucleus of the old city” (JANEV 2011:4). Statues of ethnic Albanian historical figures Pjetar Bogdani, Josif Bageri, and Nexhat Agolli were also put on the Artisans’ bridge, and a statue of the revered Serbian Tzar Dushan was also put on the new Eye Bridge. In addition, in 2011 Macedonia built the Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia, a memorial for the 7148 Jews from Macedonia killed during the holocaust, and to the larger history of the Jews in the Balkans. This memorial further enhances the multicultural nature of the Skopje 2014 project.

Proponents of the project also argue that Skopje 2014 strengthens identity in times of increased threats from abroad. Macedonian elites perceive their identity to be under threat: they have been denied the right to name themselves Macedonians by Greece, and denied the chance to join NATO or the EU. This sense of threat is exacerbated by the fact that Sofia supports the position of Athens, while the Serbian Orthodox Church blocks the international recognition of the independence of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. As kitschy and as laughable as Alexander the Great on a horse may be to a critic’s eye in today’s Macedonia, “we need to bear in mind that it serves a purpose for the political elites: people will always experience monuments like this one as authentic and deeply emotional” (KOTEVSKA 2011). Building monuments and landmark buildings can be instrumental in developing national identity, as well as in attracting visitors or investors. For these reasons, for ordinary Macedonians, the project is perceived as something “authentic” that makes them feel good and strong. Indeed, this revamping of urban space is “purposefully created to counter the Greek denial and the indifference of the international community for the Macedonian problems” (JANEV 2011b:34).

Ethnocentric vs. Liberal Nation-Building – A Typological Overview

Having discussed various arguments supporting or contradicting the ethnocentric aspects of the Skopje 2014 project, we turn our attention to liberal democratic theory and its relationship to nation-building. We will present the main ideas of the liberal theoretical framework and juxtapose them with the more common nation-forming practices. In the next section, we will then evaluate the ethnocentricity of the revamping of the Macedonian capital, on the basis of the presentation of the Skopje 2014 project and the elaboration of the liberal theory of nation-building. Liberals envisage a tolerant, inclusive society, populated by people adhering to a variety of cultural backgrounds and belief systems. The government “should be committed to tolerating the views and cultures of its people and, in general, committed to staying out of individuals’ decisions regarding the best way to lead their lives”
Accordingly, individuals are left to autonomously mold or pursue their own ideas of the good life. In public policy and law the state should be neutral when faced with opposing conceptions of the good life. As a result, within a liberal state, all citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious, gender, political, or other kinds of affiliation are equally free to pursue the ways of life prescribed by their individual, religious, or ethno-national characteristics.

The liberal nation is a form of historically bounded collective identification, which is in “a process of constant mutation, reaffirmation or transformation of its character, including the redefinition of the features that bind fellow nationals together, the scope of the nation and/or its past” (TRIANDAFYLLIDOU 2005: 180). Regardless of whether the nation emerges from a pre-existing ethnic group, as the primordialist school of nationalism would argue; awakened from its lethargy, as the perennialist view would contend; or formed to respond to the needs of men and women in the modern era, as modernists may suggest; there seems to be an implicit agreement that there is a moment when nationhood comes into being. For a nation to be, “the people should have a sense of shared political destiny with others, a preference for being united with them politically in an independent state, and preparedness to be committed to common political action” (BARRY 1999: 287).

Every nation has a certain ‘national narrative’, a set of historical, cultural, economic, and political experiences that are passed from generation to generation through the nation-building process and family stories. Components of this national narrative may include stories and legends related to a nation’s origins, great heroes, enemies, individual and collective suffering, or wars, as well as heritage related to poetry, literature, and music. Nation-building is ubiquitous process, as any given political system operates within a certain cultural framework, and is inevitably tied to a particular culture, language, or history. On rare occasions, however, states engage in liberal nation-building; i.e., nation-building that takes into consideration the interests of members of national minorities who wished to preserve aspects of their language or culture. More often, the nation-building process takes the exact opposite approach, and aims to negate the ‘historical narratives’ and cultural peculiarities of minority ethnic groups. The aim is to have the citizens accept a common national narrative and to create a nation by transforming collective identity of a society composed of one or few ethnic groups.

Advocates of liberal nation-building warn that, in traditional nation-building, the state not only establishes an official language, but also usually promotes a specific culture, a way of life and history that is usually that of the majority ethnic group; as a result, the cultures of various subgroups within that society are indirectly neglected (KYMLICKA 1995). In essence, liberal states by necessity “privilege particular cultural practices and traditions. They insist on a particular language or languages as the lingua franca of state business and societal intercourse, organize their year in terms of a particular calendar, recognize certain public holidays; prescribe what narratives are taught as history; and draw on particular cultural motifs and stories for the official symbols, insignia, flags and anthems of the state” (LEVEY 2011: 75).
This cultural privileging – typically, of a majority group – warrants some redress for cultural minorities, such as the recognition of their flags, insignia, and public holidays; as well as the inclusion of their history and culture in school curriculum and national anthems. According to this viewpoint, the state has a duty to support minorities, because individuals within a minority culture are in an inequitable position vis-à-vis the members of the majority culture. While individuals of the majority nation take it for granted that their language and culture dominate public life, persons belonging to the minority culture cannot take this privilege for granted. Further, any policy adopted in support of minority cultures would be independent of any conception of the good life, thereby satisfying the constraints imposed by the principle of liberal neutrality.

Consequently, justice in liberal, ethnically heterogeneous states is served if the state is a polity shared by all citizens of the country:

[T]he state which treats every citizen as an equal cannot be a nation state: it must be a co-nation state. It cannot be identified with a single favored nation but must consider the political community of all the ethnic groups living on its territory as constituting it. It should recognize all of their cultures and all of their traditions as its own (KIS 1996: 224f).

A state that is ethnically diverse is more legitimate if all its citizens – not just those of the majority group – consider the territory of the state their own homeland, accept the legal system of the state and its institutions, and respect the insignia of the state as their own symbols. These are goods to be jointly shared with all citizens. The political community of a multicultural country will be just if

it is formed from a union of ethnic groups living together. Its official symbols, holidays, its cultural goods handed down in school, and its historical remembrance will absorb something from the tradition of all the ethnic groups belonging to it, so that everyone can see the state is also theirs: likewise, everyone can see that the state is not their exclusive possession but is held jointly with the other ethnic groups forming it (KIS 1996: 237).

However, no state with a truly diverse society can equally recognize every minority. Liberal nation-building is a matter of degree; while states can be more or less liberal in their nation-building projects, none can be purely liberal or purely illiberal.

Ethnocentric vs. Liberal Nation-Building in Macedonia

After reviewing the discussion on liberal nation-building and the arguments supporting and contradicting an ethnocentric understanding of Skopje 2014, it is clear that this project is very difficult to evaluate. While the project clearly aims at nation-building and the strengthening of identity, the dominant ethnic component of this nation-building is the Macedonian one. Although there are aspects of Skopje 2014 –
as well as a number of buildings and monuments erected before the initiation of the project – that pertain to the ethnic identity of the Macedonian Albanian population (and, to a lesser extent, to the other ethnic minorities in the country), the magnitude of the ethnic Macedonian connection to the project is so overwhelmingly high that liberal impartiality or neutrality do not seem to be the core spirit of Skopje 2014. Consequently, one can challenge the extent to which this nation-building exercise is a liberal one.

Macedonia’s population and capital city are multiethic, and this fact should have been reflected more strongly in Skopje 2014. More monuments and a larger role of the ethnic minorities in the city museums would be needed to correct the balance of this nation-building project. True, one could argue that there have been relatively fewer important historical figures with minority identities who merited commemoration through statues and monuments. However, as in all instances when historical narratives are dominated by a white, male, Western European perspective, there is no need to understand history through the lenses of the dominant powers in the last millennia. Many of the actions of the dominant empires and states have not been just, and to claim that the locals or native peoples have simply not had a history is a mistaken belief. History has many angles, interpretations and perspectives. When there is a good will one can find ways to represent history of all segments of the society including the oppressed and the minorities. Skopje 2014 needs more fine tuning in that regard as in the moment it does not look that it meets the criteria for liberal nation-building.

Conclusion: Main Focus on Ethnic Macedonians, Others Largely Ignored

In this paper we have discussed the reconstruction of the Skopje city center, the project labeled “Skopje 2014” project. We gave a short history of Skopje, to explain the rationale for the reconstruction of specific buildings and statues, and to explain why revamping the city center was widely considered necessary. We provided a concise description of what Skopje 2014 comprises, and presented both favorable and critical perspectives on the project as a whole. After reviewing these arguments, it does not seem that one can make a simple judgment of the Skopje 2014 project: Much of the thinking about the Skopje city reconstruction project depends on the understanding of value and beauty in the eye of the beholder, including contested perspectives on the exclusion on different national ethnic groups.

One of the strongest criticisms focuses on the alleged Macedonian ethnocentricity of the project. We have discussed nation-building in both theory and practice, linking the processes with the liberal theory. Skopje 2014 is a multifaceted project with regard to nation-building. There are arguments that support the a liberal approach to nation-building, highlighting different historical periods and persons, pre-
senting statues and monuments of figures celebrated by different ethnic groups, and featuring artifacts from different eras in the Archeological and Museum of Macedonian Struggle. However, the main focus of the project is on the Macedonian nation, largely ignoring other ethnic groups in the country. Given that Macedonia’s population is multiethnic, and that Skopje is the capital city with many ethnicities, the project should be more balanced articulation of the interests of minority groups.

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Kosovo has always been a place where various ethnic communities and national identifications coexist, even more so since June 1999, when the war between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UÇK) and the Yugoslav army ended. The constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, which came into force on 15 June 2008, explicitly refers to a number of “communities” with special rights. In addition to the Albanian community, Serbian, Bosnian (or Bosniak), Gorani, Turkish, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities are recognized (REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO 2008, ch. III). Among the collective rights guaranteed to these communities is the use of their language in official documents, schools, and media. Since the Gorani, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities do not have a distinct standard language, they instead use Serbian or Albanian. According to the statistical office of Kosovo, 8824 people within the Kosovar population identify as Roma, 15,436 as Ashkali, and 11,524 as Egyptians (ASK 2011). The Roma live primarily in regions with Serbian majorities, while Egyptians and the Ashkali live in predominantly Albanian settlements. Members of all three communities are Muslims (ECMI 2010), as is the majority of Kosovo’s population.

A total of four parliamentary seats are reserved for the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, who are, often to their displeasure, categorized together as RAE (Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians) (KFOS 2009); this is especially contentious as there are a total of five political parties among these three groups. None of the other similar Kosovar communities – for example, the Bosniak and Gorani, both South Slavic-speaking Muslims1 – are asked to share parliamentary seats in this way. Politically, the Bos-

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1 Gorani and Bosniaks were ‘Muslimani’ (Muslims as a national appellation) during the Yugoslav period and speak Serbo-Croatian, but do not define themselves as Serbs. ‘Bosniak’ is the term for the Muslim population in Bosnia and ‘Gorani’ derives from the term ‘gora’ (mountain) because this population group lives in the Sharr/Šar mountains in the region of Dragash/Dragaš. Before 1999, Gorani and Bosniaks attended schools where teaching was delivered in Serbian (the Ekavian version of Serbo-Croatian). Bosniaks in postwar Kosovo accepted the standard form of the language used in Bosnia, which is the Ijekavian version of Serbo-Croatian. The Gorani party GIG, though, fights for their rights to be educated in Serbian in order to avoid dominance by the Bosniaks and consequent assimilation (BOŽIĆ 2010: 277). Macedonians, Serbs, Bulgarians and Bosniaks regard Gorani as members of their community (MÜLLER 2004: 3–4,
niak and Gorani differ over whether to integrate into the Kosovar system or to remain within the Serbian system: While part of the Gorani community regards itself as a regional subgroup of Bosniaks, other members of this group stress the distinction between Gorani and Bosniaks, and are more likely to advocate for and practice integration into the Serbian rather than the Kosovar political and educational systems (COCOZZELLI 2008: 292f). The existence of one parliamentary seat devoted to three groups shows that the distinctions between Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians are not entirely recognized by others; these groups are still seen as one community, despite the fact that Ashkali and Egyptian representatives consider Albanian their mother tongue, while Roma representatives refer to Romani as their mother tongue (BORETZKY 2002).

From the Ottoman Empire to the present day, the Roma, the Ashkali, and Egyptians have frequently been pejoratively referred to as ‘Cigan’ (‘Gypsies’) and, as such, excluded from full participation in society. This anti-Gypsist (or anti-Ziganist) discrimination has motivated those who are excluded to create their own communities, which they consider to have claims to representing nations. In this essay, I argue that the exclusion of the Ashkali and Egyptians from the Albanian nation was the starting point for the creation of new ethnic communities. After a brief description of anti-Ziganism/anti-Gypsim, I will outline the history of the Roma movement, citing publications by Roma agents, before going on to compare this movement with the creation of Egyptian and Ashkali ethnic identities and affiliations, and placing these processes and developments in their historical contexts. I will draw on interviews with members of the Ashkali and Egyptian communities to demonstrate how they regard the creation and existence of their ethnic communities, and how they differ from other comparable communities.

I will refer to the direct and indirect racism directed towards and the exclusion of those who are regarded ‘Gypsies’ on the part of the majority society by the term Antiziganismus (i.e., anti-Gypsism or anti-Ziganism). ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Zigeuner’, in

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COCOZZELLI 2008: 290). The Democratic Party Vatan includes Gorani who regard the term as a regional attribute to ‘Bosniak’ and criticize the members of GIG for still receiving salaries from Belgrade (COCOZZELLI 2008: 293). There are also cases in which Bosniaks obtain teaching in Serbian or in Albanian although the other system and language is available in the same school building (BOŽIČ 2010: 284).

2 Anti-Gypsism and anti-Ziganism are relatively new terms that encompass the stereotypes used against those whom this system of prejudice designates as ‘Gypsies’. It is almost exclusively used in German-speaking areas and is unknown in former Yugoslavia; I will use ‘anti-Gypsism’ as the English synonym. The term ‘Gypsy’ itself is pejorative in nature and an ascription from without rather than a self-appellation. The evidence of the gap between self-definition and definition imposed from outside the group is even more evident in Germany and the German language, where the pejorative term Zigeuner contrasts with the self-description ‘Sinti’ or ‘Roma’, which is the more usual term used by these population groups in Europe, although there are also people who call themselves ‘Gypsies’. Anti-Gypsism (or the German neologism of Antiziganismus) is not the negation of ‘Gypsism’ or ‘Ziganismus’, because such a term does not exist, in
Anti-Ziganism in Kosovo

German, is a racist construction used to refer to Roma and other populations, distinguishing them from the majority. Anti-Gypsy stereotypes are therefore directed against not only Roma, but also against people who may refer to themselves by names other than Roma, but who fit the particular sets of stereotypes associated with ‘Gypsies’. The concepts of using anti-Ziganism or anti-Gypsism offer a critique of this racist construction of ‘Gypsies’, independent of the self-appellation as Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Sinti etc. (REEMTSMA 1996: 8; GESELLSCHAFT FÜR ANTIZIGANISMUSFORSCHUNG 1998; WINKEL 2002: 10). In the present paper, I will use ‘anti-Gypsism’ as an analytical category for describing stereotypes against the Roma, the Ashkali, and Egyptians.

The ‘Othering’ of Kipt or Çingene during the Ottoman Empire and the Twentieth Century

In the Ottoman Empire, to which the territory of present-day Kosovo belonged, those called Kipt or Çingene (Gypsy) in administrative documents had a particular status within society; although they were Muslims, they were not recognized as ‘real Muslims,’ and therefore had to pay a poll tax (GINIO 2004: 127). The cities of the Ottoman Empire were divided into mahalle (quarters) along religious lines, except for the Ciganske mahale (Serbo-Croatian spelling of the Turkish ‘mahalle’), which was in the part of the Empire that was later to become Yugoslavia, and where so-called ‘Gypsies’ of all religions lived. Most so-called ‘Gypsies’ lived in these mahalle, according to the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, who wrote travelogues during his journeys through the Empire between 1640 and 1684 (FRIEDMAN/DANKOFF 1991).

This position of exclusion from the Muslim community (Umma) to which these groups were subject had a long-term effect, which continued to be felt for decades after the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire. All those deemed by the German Nazi regime to be ‘Zigeuner’ were the targets of persecution in satellite states of the re-

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3 Usually, only non-Muslims were obliged to pay these taxes because the Ottoman Empire was a Muslim state and favored those who were Muslim. This said, more tolerance was extended to non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire than to minority religions in other Empires. One example is the establishment of religious autonomy (millet) for the Christian Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish communities. Another is the mass migration of persecuted Sephardic Jews from Spain to the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century.

4 We do not know how these groups referred to themselves because there are no ego documents (Self-testimony) from this period. The term in the sources was ‘Kipt’ or ‘Çingene’, which is translated as ‘Gypsies’ in literature on the Ottoman Empire.
gime, such as Fascist Croatia (NDH) and occupied Serbia; approximately 20,000 people interned as ‘Gypsies’ were imprisoned in the concentration camp Staro Sajmište during World War Two (REINHARTZ 1991: 89). In Jasenovac – the biggest concentration camp in Croatia, which was later to become part of Yugoslavia – Roma and others who were persecuted as ‘Gypsies’ were imprisoned together with Jews, Serbs, and others (FINGS 1992: 22f). Jasenovac was under Ustaša\(^5\) administration, and was notorious for the killing of Jews, Serbs, and Roma.

Anti-Ziganism or Anti-Gypsism as a Form of Racism

In order to understand the exclusion of the Roma, the Ashkali, and Egyptians in Kosovo, we need to understand the structure of anti-Ziganism. Both anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsism represent particular forms of racism. Jews, in the position imposed on them as the internal ‘enemy’, have been viewed by some researchers as occupying a third space, referred to by Klaus Holz as “tertium non datur”\(^6\) (HOLZ 2010: 292–303). Markus End applies this idea to the racist construction of so-called ‘Gypsies’, positing that all those who are pejoratively called ‘Gypsies’ are seen as belonging neither to the relevant “in” (i.e., national or ethnic) group, nor to the opposite group (END 2012: 3–8). End argues that “the existence of a non-identical nation questions the norm in a world which is divided into national entities. The persecution of those who are seen as outside the norm can re-establish and reassert a firm national identity because any threat to the nation can be regarded as arising from these ‘strangers’ and as being avertable if they are suppressed and eliminated” (END 2011).\(^7\)

From an Albanian nationalistic narrative or perspective, the Serbs are the external enemy, while the Roma, the Ashkali, and Egyptians are the internal enemies:

[...]’migrants’ (and descendants of migrants) are seen as an external other, whereas ‘Gypsies’ are seen as an internal other. This indeed reinforces the old stereotype of the enemy from within, which has murderous effects (BALIBAR 2009: viii).

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\(^5\) The Croatian fascist organization that ran – under German and Italian protection – the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) between 1941 and 1944. The NDH included also Bosnia and Herzegovina and a smaller part of Vojvodina (nowadays Republic of Serbia).

\(^6\) Latin for “no third [one] is given”, i.e. only two terms are existent or available. This is also called the “law of the excluded middle”.

\(^7\) Original: „Die Existenz einer nicht-identischen Nation stellt diese Norm in der in nationale Entitäten eingeteilten Welt in Frage. […]Gleichzeitig kann durch die Verfolgung derer, die als außerhalb der Ordnung stehend gelten, eine feste nationale Identität wieder hergestellt werden, weil jegliche Bedrohung der Nation dann als eine Bedrohung durch diese ‘Fremden’ aufgefasst wird, die durch deren Bekämpfung und Vernichtung abgewendet werden kann.”
The vagrant lifestyle attributed to Roma and others who are pejoratively called ‘Gypsies’ – which, in fact, in the majority of cases is no longer practiced – has become a stereotype applied to all those with the dark skin and cultural markers that make them visible as Roma, whether or not they use this term to identify themselves. Another stereotype is that ‘Gypsies’ are spies (WIPPERMANN 1997: 51–54). The stereotypes associated with the appellation ‘Gypsy’ have partially been transferred to that of the term ‘Roma’, as well as to euphemistic or alternative terms, such as the German Wanderarbeiter (traveling worker), which is applied to Bulgarians and Romanians who look like Roma, despite the fact that they have migrated to Germany in the same manner as any other Bulgarian or Romanian citizen since the expansion of the European Union to the east. While the term Wanderarbeiter ostensibly avoids the ethnic stigma of the term ‘Roma’, this term clearly connotes a Roma ethnicity – again, despite the fact that Roma from Bulgaria and Romania do not adhere to traveling lifestyles. The use and connotations of this term indicate that the stereotype of the ‘vagrant Gypsy’ continues to prevail.

The Roma Movement and the Bond with India

After the Second World War, those who had been subject to persecution on the basis of ‘Gypsy’ stereotypes sought to collectively resist the negative qualities ascribed to them, and to create positive connotations with their groups. It was to this end that the Društvo Roma (Roma Society) was founded in 1969 in Belgrade, with the aim of promoting the idea that Roma were as valuable as any other citizens of Yugoslavia (DRUŠTVA ROMA undated). Group members worked toward recognition as a narodnost, meaning a national group within Yugoslavia whose national affiliation or identity was the titular nation of another, usually neighboring, state. This was the case for Hungarians and Albanians, for instance, who were classed as narodnosti, but who each formed the majority population in an autonomous province within the Republic of Serbia. The Roma of the autonomous province of Kosovo had been very active in working towards this goal during the 1960s, as we can see in the minutes of the Društvo Roma’s inaugural congress (DRUŠTVA ROMA undated).

The organization published a monthly magazine, Glas Roma (Voice of Roma), between February and October 1973, releasing a total of nine issues. It contained regular pieces on the history and present situation of Roma in Yugoslavia, including the discrimination they faced, and pointed out that negative stereotyping was an important factor in the high unemployment rate among Roma, as employers were deterred from taking on Roma due to their negative image. Further, the editors of the journal distanced themselves from those who used ‘Cigani’ (Gypsies) as their self-

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8 The periodical was re-launched in 1982, yet its renaissance remained short-lived, producing only one issue.
appellation, insistence instead on being called ‘Roma’. The magazine popularized the expression “Mi nismo Cigani, već nacija” (“We are not Gypsies but a nation”; KESAR 1969: 5). This slogan was also used in the daily newspaper Večernje novosti (Evening News), in a series on Roma in Serbia conducted by the Kosovo magazine Romano aliaj (Romani Word), and by Dragoljub Acković, who published the Belgrade magazine Romano lila (Romani Newspaper) during the 1990s.

People who were called (and who sometimes called themselves) ‘Gypsies’ also formed organizations at an international level, meeting in London in 1971 to adopt ‘Roma’ as the only valid appellation. They also established an anthem, a flag (green and blue with a red wheel), and a national holiday, the eighth of April (KENRICK 1971: 104). Roma from a range of different countries asserted themselves as being one nation, naming India as their homeland and country of origin. The Yugoslav delegation to the first World Congress was, other than the Czech-Slovak delegation, the only one from Eastern Europe. In the years that followed, Yugoslav Roma held important positions within the IRU; two of these figures were the former partisan, Slobodan Berberski, as well as Rajko Đurić, who was politicized by the student movement of the 1960s (ACKOVIĆ 2001: 70). The Roma organization in Yugoslavia developed at the same time as the international Roma organization, the International Romani Union (IRU). Yugoslavia was one of the states with the most favorable conditions for the emergence of new national movements; as a state comprising six nations and several national groups, it welcomed the creation of narodi (nations) and narodnosti (nationalities) (CVETKOVIĆ-SANDER 2011: 178–179).

The alleged Roma bond with India was established by Padmashri Weer Rishi, who at the time of the first World Romani Congress in 1971, was a cultural attaché of the Indian embassy in London. Rishi became interested in the international Roma movement and helped them to establish contact with Indira Gandhi, the prime minister of India at that time (PUXON 1991: 296). Rishi also founded an academic journal, Roma, which was published in Chandigarh, the capital of the two Indian federal states Punjab and Haryana. Roma became the most important publication of the IRU, the representative organ of the World Romani Congress (INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ROMANI STUDIES 1974: 50–55).

The original connection between ‘Gypsies’ and the Indian homeland had been made by ‘gypsiologists’ such as Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellmann10, who, in the eighteenth century, discovered similarities between Sanskrit and Romani. This led to the assumption that the Roma must have been in contact with Sanskrit speakers, and therefore must have originated from Hindustan (GRELLMANN 1787: 280–284). Although there are no sources to support this hypothesis, many linguists and Romani

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9 In 1945, the ‘Cigansko kulturno-prosvetno društvo’ (Gypsy Cultural-Educational Society) was founded in Belgrade.
10 The early ethnologists and linguists who researched the language of those they called ‘Zigeuner’ were driven by negative stereotypes of and a fascination with what they viewed as exotic populations, regarded as savage and less civilized.
Minorities and the Desire for Nation-Building

During the 1980s, Yugoslavia was shaken by economic and political crisis, as well as by the rise of nationalist conflict between the Albanian majority and the Serbian administration in Kosovo. This conflict subsequently escalated and did not leave space for those involved to identify with other ethnic affiliations. The efforts of the Romani organization Roma Society, who fought in Yugoslavia for recognition as a ‘nationality’ (narodnost), were in vain: Until the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, while Roma were said to have the same rights as other citizens, they were neither recognized nor named in the constitution.

The aspiration to engage in nation-building to emancipate the Roma community from negative stereotyping was a strategy that can be repeatedly observed among those who were called ‘Gypsies,’ and thereby excluded by the majority nation of specific countries. These processes did not unfold in isolation; instead, they mutually influenced one another, giving rise to increasing nationalism among other ethnic communities. For the ethnic entrepreneurs (as Brubaker put it) of Roma and Egyptians, there was no alternative to nationhood – rights were only given to nations, and national groups and conflicts were only taken seriously in cases where nations were involved.

In the present paper, I do not intend ‘nation’ to be regarded as an analytical category, but rather as a category of praxis. This usage is along the lines proposed by Roger Brubaker, who asserts that it is essentially irrelevant whether or not we categorize such communities as ‘nations’ or not; rather, the attribution of ‘nation’ stems from the desire of the group in question to be called such (BRUBAKER 2004: 9). This said, I will attempt to avoid the term ‘ethnic groups’, as it is not these groups that form the foundations for nation-building, but rather, as Brubaker suggests, the ethnic entrepreneurs who essentialize and group people (ibid.). Identification with an ethnicity or nation is a ‘we’-group feeling that often refers to the memory of a mythical origin or homeland (ELWERT 1989: 440–464).
In 1974 the autonomous province of Kosovo received a status close to that of a republic, yet remained without full republic status, although the vast majority of the population identified as Albanian on censuses. In 1981, one year after the death of President Tito, unrest occurred among students in Kosovo and led to mass protests and calls for independence (JUDAH 2008: 58). During the 1980s, the Serbian majority and the Albanian minority in the Republic of Serbia fought each other. In 1989, after nearly a decade of rising nationalism in Yugoslavia, Kosovo’s autonomy was withdrawn by the Kosovar parliament in response to pressure from the Serbian police. Those employed in the public sector had to sign a statement of assent to the new status of Kosovo or leave their jobs, with most choosing not to sign the document. As a result, the vast majority of the workforce in state economy, 90% (115,000 people) lost their jobs and were replaced by non-Albanians (SCHMITT 2008: 314). Albanian was banned as a language in the secondary and tertiary educational sectors; Albanian historiography, television, and radio were abolished, and Serbian became the primary language of education, administration, and culture. The vast majority of the Albanian population engaged in non-violent resistance, boycotting all administrative, political, cultural, educational, and health structures in Kosovo. They founded a parallel system to replace these sectors, funded by an optional tax of 3% of the income of every working Albanian in Kosovo and abroad.

These events created a situation in which minorities found themselves under pressure to take a position between the Serbian and the Albanian side. In Macedonia, which was also affected by nationalism at this time, a community emerged, calling itself the Egyptians, which fought for national rights in Macedonia. Their members came from the Albanian-speaking population in southwestern Macedonia, which was pejoratively called ‘Gjupci’ (Γυπποί) by the Macedonian population.11 This community speaks the Tוסk Albanian dialect, while Albanians in the region speak the Geg dialect. Nevertheless, this new group did not identify as Albanian (J.P. 1990: 3). Clearly perceiving their dialect as an ethnic marker, they initially referred to themselves as ‘Tосkаr’, as the daughter of the founder of the Egyptian community has explained (EGYPTIAN I 2011: 4f). In 1981, they identified as ‘Egjupci’12 in the census, but were counted under the category of ‘unknown’ (FRIEDMAN 1985: 53). Particularly from the 1980s onward, the pro-Yugoslav Egyptians sought to distance themselves from the separatist Albanians who called for secession from Macedonia and for unification as one community with the Albanians in Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, and Macedonia.

The existence of a community that called itself ‘Egyptian’ was widely discussed in Serbian newspapers and welcomed by the Serbian majority, which described this

11 The term ‘Gjupci’ has similarities with ‘Gypsy’ and is therefore used only for those who are viewed as different from Albanians, whose pejorative term was ‘Šiptari’ in former Yugoslavia. Today, Egyptians from south-western Macedonia claim that only they were called ‘Gjupci’ which proves their Egyptian origin.
12 Macedonian for Egyptians.
community with strongly positive attributes, in contrast to the Serbian majority’s view of separatist Albanians in Macedonia. Articles published in Serbian media at this time asserted that Egyptian women were not veiled, their families had an average of only two children, and this community opposed separatism (LAZOVIĆ/NIKOLIĆ-PISAREV 1990: 56f). The news also spread to Kosovo, where the existence of a community that called itself ‘Egyptian’ was welcomed by those Kosovars who spoke Albanian but, identifying with the Yugoslav state instead of with an Albanian one, faced exclusion by the Albanians. This led to the foundation in 1990 of the Association of Egyptians in Kosovo and Metohia. This organization reports having no connection to the Roma, instead viewing the group it represents as the descendants of those who were referred to as ‘Egyptos’ in historical sources (ABAZI 2012: 2f).

As the Kosovo-Albanian proto-party the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) did not want to cooperate or focus on any other topic than non-violent resistance against Serbian repression, the Egyptian organization of Kosovo contacted the Serbian government. A representative of the Egyptian organization, Qerim Abazi, took part in the 1999 peace negotiations in Rambouillet, which sought to end the conflict between the Albanian paramilitary KLA and the Yugoslav army (ABAZI 2012: 2f). Abazi was minister without portfolio in the Serbian-dominated provisional government of Kosovo at that time, as well as the General Secretary of the Association of Egyptians in Kosovo. He was a member of the Yugoslav delegation for the peace conference in Rambouillet. In addition to the Serbian representatives, this delegation consisted of Egyptian, Turkish, Gorani, and Romani representatives from Kosovo (BBC 1999). The Egyptians’ cooperation with the Serbian government led to a rejection of them by the pro-Albanian population in Kosovo; they continue to be regarded as traitors by many Albanians.

Cooperation and Collaboration

After the war in Kosovo in 1999, the Albanian majority turned against the Serbian minority, persecuting not only Serbs, but also those pejoratively referred to as ‘Magjupë’ by Albanians. This included Roma, who were seen as collaborators with the Serbian regime. This label was due to the fact that most Roma lived in Serbian settlements and went to Serbian schools; the Roma did not resign their jobs after the

13 Members of the association attempted to hold their own census in 1994 due to mistrust of the official figures and claimed that most Egyptians did not dare to tick ‘Egyptian’ in the 1991 census. Their census counted only those whom they identified as Egyptians, not who identified him/herself as Egyptian.

14 The Kosovo-Albanian delegation consisted of journalists, writers and academics as well as KLA leaders.
autonomy of Kosovo was abolished, and had to serve in the Serbian army because they were still part of the Republic of Serbia (POLANSKY 2008: 157; 162).

Egyptians were also targeted, due to Abazi’s participation on the Yugoslav side in Rambouillet. At this moment, a third community appeared on the political scene: the Ashkali. The Ashkali were Albanian speakers who had identified as Albanians before the war, but who were excluded from the Albanian nation in 1999. As Roma and Egyptians were suspected of collaboration with the Serbian regime, the Ashkali were accused of similar crimes, as Albanians do not distinguish between members of the three communities. This was an instance of the emergence into visibility of the stereotype of the ‘Gypsy spy’ and traitor, the internal enemy of the nation.

The idea of the Roma as collaborators is widely accepted within the Kosovar population, as well as in the media and literature on the post-war events in Kosovo (HRW 1999). It is even claimed that the Roma took part in paramilitary groups, plundered and looted during conflicts, and worked as grave diggers (ROM E.V. undated); their non-participation in the parallel system of Albanian resistance and the fact that they continued their jobs within the Serbian administration also made them objects of suspicion. Few people were asking what collaboration during the 1990s in Kosovo meant, and how this population group could have possibly behaved to avoid such accusations of treachery and collaboration. For Roma who speak Romani as their first language, and Serbian as their second or even first language, there was no benefit to taking sides with the Albanians, who were focused on the Albanian language and Albanian national self-government. Joining the parallel system of Albanian resistance would have meant fighting for the use of a language that they did not speak, and for the establishment of a state in which they would be a minority.

To fulfill the request of all ethnic communities in Kosovo for national self-governance and collective rights, in 1999 the international community agreed to give every relevant ethnic community dedicated seats in the provisional and UN-supervised parliament. In the first parliamentary period after the war (2001–2004), the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians together held four seats ( REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO ASSEMBLY undated). The system was slightly adjusted for the next election, and continues to function as follows: the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian parties have one seat each, which goes to the party with a Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian affiliation with the most votes. A fourth seat is reserved for either the Roma, Ashkali, or Egyptian party with the most total votes. In recent years, either the Ashkali party (PDAshK, later PDAK) has held two out of the four seats – or even more in years where these parties have received enough votes (i.e., 2001–2004, 2007–2010, and 2010–2014) – or the Egyptian party IRDK has held these two out of four seats (2001–2007; REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO ASSEMBLY undated). Since the founda-

15 Only Montenegrins and Croats did not receive collective rights.
tion of more Ashkali and Egyptian parties, no party of these three communities has held more than one seat.

Competing Nation-Building Processes

In periods of ethnic tensions, we would expect that people might unite or, as in the case of the Ashkali in Macedonia, join the next biggest community in order to resist dominance by the majority. In Kosovo, however, the opposite has been true. Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians compete with one another, although some switching of identifications takes place, primarily between Ashkali and Egyptian. These latter two groups vehemently distance themselves from the Roma, whom they see as those who were pejoratively called ‘Gabelè’ in the west of Kosovo and ‘Magjupë’ in the east. They argue that they are closer to Albanians, have never intermarried with Roma, and are culturally distinct. In the overlapping Ashkali/Egyptian narrative, members of these two groups were always counted as Albanians in censuses during the Yugoslav period, and until the 1990s and 1999, respectively, when they were excluded from the Albanian nation.

The distinction between Ashkali and Egyptian is not clear-cut, even for the members of these groups themselves. In essence, the controversy is over the correct term: Egyptians claim that the term ‘Egyptian’ has been found in historical sources since the fourteenth century. The Ashkali, conversely, denounce the Egyptians for using what they consider to be an artificial term, one which had never previously been used in society or within the communities themselves. ‘Ashkali’ is, from this perspective, the older term, which was known by older members of this population as late as the Yugoslav period. Ashkali representatives claim that they are very close, as a people, to Albanians, an assertion often supported by citing the idiomatic expression “Ashkali are the second hand of Albanians” (HOLTEY 1999). Ashkali call Egyptians ‘brothers’ and vice versa; the two communities do not segregate themselves from each other, as they do from Roma, with whom they do not want to grouped into the same category (ABAZI 2009; QERIMI 2000: 58). While Egyptians can cite the presence of Egyptian communities in other Balkan countries to support their claim to a transnational community, Ashkali are known only in Kosovo, and as a migrant community from Kosovo in Vojvodina, the northern part of Serbia. Egyptians – who claim that ‘Egyptian’ is the older term – perceive themselves as more educated, and regard the Ashkali as poor, uneducated, and easy to manipulate. To compete with the Roma, who refer to India as their homeland and origin, and with

16 ‘Gabel’ is rendered as ‘Nomad Gypsy’ in dictionaries (BUCHHOLZ 2000).
17 A variant of the term ‘Egyptian’ was used in early modern times and translated in ethnological and historical literature as ‘Roma’ or ‘Gypsies’. Egyptian ethnic entrepreneurs, however, claim that people referred to by these terms were forefathers of the contemporary Egyptians.
Egyptians, who claim to be from Egypt, the Ashkali have had to come up with an origin as well: They chose Persia, on the grounds that the Parthians, who ruled in what is now Iran and the surrounding region, called themselves ‘Ashkan’. Berat Qerimi (2000) got aware of this by his sister-in-law that Ashkali and Ashkan have phonetic similarities.

The term ‘Ashkali’ was not completely unknown before 1999; the group also appears in the work of the Serbian ethnographer Tatomir Vukanović, who categorizes those whom he calls ‘Gypsies (Roma)’ into several subgroups. Among these subgroups are the ‘Aškali’ (Serbian spelling of Ashkali), who were defined as Albanian-speaking Muslims in 1966 (VUKANOVIĆ 1966: 3) and as Romani-speaking nomads in 1983 (VUKANOVIĆ 1983: 138). In Kosovo, it is very unlikely that the Ashkali were nomadic during the 1960s; it is much more plausible that they instead identified as Albanians and Muslims. Most of those Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians interviewed by Vukanović for his research refer to Albania as their previous nation, from which they were excluded after the war in 1999. They behaved loyally towards Albanians during the Yugoslav period and, mostly, during the 1990s. One contemporary interviewee offers the following explanation for why they did not refer to themselves as ‘Ashkali’ at an earlier point in time:

No, no, the people used it [Ashkali, C.L.] even before 1999, but not so much. Firstly, because we were feeling that we are Albanians. We have the same culture, language, school, everything the same. […]We always say we are Albanians. […]We didn’t want… because it started tensions between Albanians and Serbs and if we had started to ask for identity at this time, we would have caused problems for the Albanian community. Between us and the Albanian community. […]People came back from, hmm, after the war, I mean, to the houses – many houses were burned, many houses were occupied – and the Albanian community didn’t like, didn’t accept the Ashkalis any more[…]. So what people did – even though most of them left Kosovo with the Albanians in 1999 – many of them returned back and they saw that the houses are occupied or destroyed or people were kicked out of the houses. […]For example my mother: She never liked to call herself Ashkali. She has been an Albanian and she never wanted anyone to call her an Ashkali or whatever. She was totally pro-Albanian. She totally felt like an Albanian because she grew up, she was born in an Albanian village, grew up with Albanians and you know. [Her] whole life she lived with Albanians. […]I can say wanted to feel like Albanians, but looks like they were wrong[…]

(ASHKALI I 2010: 3).

Evidently, the Ashkali perceive the war in 1999 as a watershed moment when they were violently excluded from the Albanian nation – a nation with whose members

18 Although the exact arrival of Egyptians in the Balkans is disputed.
19 Earlier narratives of origin claim Italy and Ashkalon (Israel) as countries of origin.
they had gone to school, fought against the regime, and hid from the Yugoslav army and paramilitary troops. Their only way of staying in Kosovo and resolving the question of where they belonged was to create their own community, which they perceived as ethnic and restricted to Kosovo.20

Another interviewee stressed that the Ashkali had the same rights as Albanians, Serbs, and other groups until the 1990s, which dispensed with any need to declare themselves to be Ashkali – a state of affairs which was profoundly altered after 1999, in the wake of the violent and anti-Gypsy exclusion of all those whom the majority population called ‘Magjupë’ (Gypsies). Or, as one Ashkali interviewee puts it:

I know a case now, for example a girl who was in love with an Albanian guy and she asks me, what to do. I say ‘If you’re in love, you marry him, but you may have consequences, because maybe he will never tell you that you are Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian. He will never call you Magjup, in other words. But maybe his father, mother or maybe cousin will tell you [you are these things] and you will be hurt, you will never be comfortable to live [with them]. And if you ever have children, they will never be comfortable to go to your family. And your family will never be comfortable to come to you, because you know, there is distance, there are no free marriages…’ The Ashkali will not be comfortable to go to Albanian families. I have nieces, nephews with Albanians and I don’t feel so comfortable[…] if they are having a party or something, I feel that if I go, the others will look at me differently. And not only me. They will look even at my niece, they will look differently, look at her family, you know, in this sense.[…]

I think it is more because of the war. […]There were always prejudices[…], but after the war[…]much more. So after the war I didn’t know any case of someone marrying an Albanian. I don’t, I don’t know any case. Maybe there are some, but I don’t know (ASHKALI II: 5f).

The ethnic divide between the Ashkali and Albanians became obvious after the war; according to the statements cited above, it appears that many Ashkali are afraid of interacting with Albanians’ families, and fear that the Ashkali family members who are married to Albanians will be ‘revealed’ as Ashkali. The interviewee above assumes that even if the husband or wife who marries an Ashkali does not have any prejudices, there will certainly be Albanian family members who will discriminate against an Ashkali – or a Roma or Egyptian. This is a clear contrast to the situation prior to the war in Kosovo, when Ashkali and Egyptians regarded themselves as Albanians and were more or less integrated into Albanian society.

20 Ashkali also have an organized community in Novi Sad, Serbia, but also look to Kosovo as their primary state of reference, as the members of this community are primarily migrants and refugees from Kosovo.
Conclusion: New Ethnic Affiliations Emerging Through Exclusion in Post-War Settings

It has become evident during our analysis that, in the aftermath of the war in Kosovo, a number of anti-Ziganist stereotypes openly emerged; this reflects wider findings suggesting that anti-Ziganism/anti-Gypsism is more likely to become virulent during periods of historical change and crisis. The acts of revenge against Serbs and other non-Albanians which were perpetrated after the war were productive for the Albanian nation in assigning the role of the enemy to specific groups, and then driving out this ‘enemy’ to make room for the project of Albanian nation-building; likewise, these acts of revenge were, eventually, productive for the persecuted minority, which found itself in need of an alternative ethnonym.

In this process, Egyptians and the Ashkali followed the Roma’s 1970s example of nation-building, as well as their attempts to create a positive counter-narrative to the negative stereotypes which proliferated about their group. The Egyptian and Ashkali communities are essentially products of the breakdown of Yugoslavia, both of them having commenced their nation-building processes during the late 1980s and early 1990s, as groups that spoke Albanian but that were not separatists and that did not identify with Albania. The Ashkali created a distinct ethnic community in order to survive the postwar situation in Kosovo, and to bolster their claim to a connection with Kosovo and Albanians; in contrast, the Roma are still more connected to the Serbian population, live in Serbian settlements (except for Prizren), and are largely included in the Serbian system. This situation is comparable to that of the Gorani and Bosniaks, who disagree as to whether they are one or two separate nations. Bosniaks are usually included in the Kosovar system (although there are exceptions), while the Gorani are mainly connected to the Serbian system and opt to teach in Serbian instead of Bosnian. Small communities have to decide which ‘side’ they are on; in the postwar situation, these communities have generally decided in favor of the option that appeared most advantageous to them.

All three groups of nation-building entrepreneurs have shown a need for an extraterritorial country of origin – India, Egypt, or Persia. A glorious history and a language of their own both aid in the attainment of recognition as a distinct ethnicity, as can be seen in the example of the Roma. Since class was never convincing enough for we-group building, nations and ethnicities are the convincing categories in this context, and as motivators for the assertion of collective rights and political attainments such as independence.

Ashkali and Egyptian ethnic entrepreneurs who perceive each another as brothers because they are Albanian-speaking Muslims do not agree on the right term for their community: Egyptians prefer to be part of a transnational nation that exists in several southeastern European countries, while the Ashkali prefer the local term, which had been in recent use in both ethnography and oral tradition. The ethnic entrepreneurs of the Roma, Egyptians, and the Ashkali have all passed through the same
process: exclusion by the majority population and nation, followed by the creation of a new identification with a name, a country of origin, and a narrative of migration to Europe. In order to be recognized by the majority population, they need to distinguish themselves from other minorities with similar perceived features. While the older community claims the newer one to be part of their own nation or community, the new one is eager to distinguish itself from the older one and assert its difference. This is why the Roma regard Egyptians and the Ashkali as Roma, and Egyptians perceive the Ashkali as Kosovar Egyptians. At the same time, boundaries between Egyptians and the Ashkali are highly fluid; the distinction in this case revolves mainly around which group has the ‘better’ name and narrative of origin, as well as the more effective strategy for survival.

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While commenting on Croatian EU accession, a Jerusalem Post journalist wrote: “But however much the Balkan state may have tweaked its legal system and upgraded its food safety and environmental protection standards, there is one thing Croatia has demonstrably failed to do: come to terms with its disgraceful record of mass murder during World War II” (FREUND 2013). It is clear that Croatia has undergone important reforms and that its official narrative has been altered to conform to European values and standards; however, the debate on World War II heritage is still quite present in public discourse, and remains a cause of division within this society (PAVLAKOVIĆ 2008). In other words, society’s relationship with the Ustasha and the entirety of the Independent State of Croatia’s (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska; NDH) reality can be characterized as problematically ambiguous.

In Western Europe the process of dealing with the past has had different periods of “amnesia” and sudden awakening (FRIEDLÄNDER 2007: 6). Only the second and even third generation after the end of World War II – the “grandchildren’s generation” – was the one that, especially among Germans, was able to fully confront the past (FRIEDLÄNDER 2007). As Saul Friedländer wrote, that generation had sufficient distance from the events in the Second World War, both in terms of time elapsed and personal engagement.

Still, the countries of Southeastern and Central Europe have gone through a “revival of memory,” i.e., a revisionism of national narratives and a re-construction of collective memory after the fall of communism in 1989 (BIONDICH 2004: 54; PAVLOVIĆ 2010). In this process, street names, history textbooks, and biographies of past heroes and anti-heroes have been changed, former villains have become victims, and victims have become executors. By changing the past, the value system has been transformed as well. The memory boom that took place after the Cold War could also be labeled an “oblivion boom.”

After the end of the Communist Party’s monopoly over interpreting World War II history, the collapse of the real existing socialism brought equally aimed versions of the past: Biondich emphasized that “Politics, history, and collective memory have been intimately intertwined and seem hopelessly inseparable” (2004: 54), although this observation hardly represents a peculiarity only of that period. Glorification of the pre-socialist “golden age” has frequently led to a rejection of anti-fascism, with
The previously repressed past automatically given a high value (KULJIĆ 2006: 225). The degree of historical revisionism has also depended on the role specific countries had during World War II. In the case of the Czech Republic, this country’s come-back referred to its inter-war democracy, while in Slovakia, the Baltics, and Croatia, glorification led “to ‘forgetting’ one’s own role in collaboration and mass murders” (RADONIĆ 2010). The situation in Croatia has been more complex, both due to the wars in former Yugoslavia – which intensified an already fiery nationalism – and the “project of general reconciliation” promoted by the first president of independent Croatia, Franjo Tudman (see below). The generation that should have questioned their fathers’ actions during World War II lived under a communist version of history, and secretly harbored a family interpretation of history that awaited its moment of liberation. The following generation, which participated in the war of the 1990s, has glorified and uncritically idealized the pre-communist era. War-time nationalistic discourse does not encourage questioning or looking too deeply into the shadows, and Croatian history has become, for all parties engaged, a resource for contemporary political battles (op. cit.: MACDONALD 2002: 133). The national memory of both the Croats and the Serbs has been constructed and reconstructed so as to trumpet the victims of one’s own side, while remaining silent about any own sins that had been committed. It was little more than a decade ago when the formerly belligerent post-Yugoslav countries began to conform – albeit with certain variations – their dominant public discourses to values held by the European Union, and to embark on more or less successful ongoing efforts to deal with their past. A sort of “Europeanization of the memory” is taking place, as Schmid referred to the process “of relativized transformation of national perspectives, as structural change and approximation of historical images in the sense of enrichment through European references” (op. cit.: RADONIĆ 2010: 53). In Croatia, too, the current dominant value systems are mostly connected with Europe and the European Union.

The broader aim of the present paper is to examine how contemporary Croatian society relates to the symbols introduced into the public sphere by the Independent State of Croatia, a Nazi Germany satellite state. This will be followed by an analysis of the relationship certain social groups have with this specific period of Croatian history between 1941 and 1945. In the transformation process of Southeastern European countries, the symbolic repertoire also had to change: The successor states of former Yugoslavia “often resurrected or co-opted national symbols, some dating from the World War II period, as Yugoslavia and its cache of communist symbols disintegrated” (PAVLAKOVIĆ 2010: 1709). One of the symbols that in last two decades has attracted increased attention not only in Croatia, but also among the international public, is the salute “For home(land) – ready!” (Za dom – spremni!). Introduced into the public sphere by the Ustashe (Croatian pl.), who used it as a sign of political party affiliation and patriotic identification, this salute was used to end every Ustasha document and speech. During the 1990s, however, with the rehabilitation of the NDH state, this salute made its comeback into the public arena.

From
2011 until 2014, the Croatian media reported 13 cases where individuals in Croatia were punished for making this or similar salutes (PENIĆ 2014).

This salute appeared in a similar form several times throughout Croatian history. One example is in the 19th century opera written by Ivan Zajc, “Nikola Šubić Zrinški,” in which a character cries “For home now in battle [we go]” (“Za dom sad u baj”). Another instance is in Josip Eugen Tomić’s novel For King – for home (Za kralja – za dom). Such historical references are usually the justification given by those who give this salute when confronted with its Ustasha history.1 However, it was the Ustasha who undoubtedly increased the prominence of this salute within the Croatian public sphere. Within this paper we shall explore the context in which this salute is being used, as well as its accompanying iconography. We will look at the values being propagated by those who use it today, investigating the dominant discourse of those who support the usage of the “For home(land) – ready!” salute. Revisionist tendencies within Croatian society that allow the fascist character of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC) and the crimes committed by its regime to be overlooked will also be examined. Contemporary Croatia has laws against the carrying and usage of Ustasha symbols, with the national constitution reaffirming the heritage of the Anti-fascist Council.2 The Croatian Parliament (Sabor) passed a Declaration on Anti-fascism in 2005. Although the above-mentioned revisionist tendencies certainly do not portray the mainstream within the Croatian society, the

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1 These or similar explanations were used in defense of those who still use this salute and who label it as purely patriotic. Such explanations have been met with sharp criticism and sarcasm by prominent Croatian columnists and intellectuals such as Boris Dežulović, Miljenko Jergović, and Damir Butković. Butković remarked that the very claim that “For home(land)- ready! represents an old Croatian salute is as unreasonable as claiming that the swastika is nothing more than an ancient Hindi symbol: It is of course true that this is an ancient symbol carved or painted onto the fences of numerous homes in places such as Bali or New Delhi, but this fact does not change the obvious meaning of the swastika in a current European political context, with our understanding of history and our notions of good and evil” (2014). Miljenko Jergović commented on the case of Josip Šimunić, a member of the Croatian national football team who was punished by FIFA for saluting after the match “For home(land)- ready!”: “The arbitrators, even the ones in sports, are, however, not interested in history of the swastika, nor impressed by the splendor of the Croatian opera scene. They are not interested in graffiti on Croatian streets, nor in the positions of anonymous commentators on Croatian news portals, nor in the opinion that this or that Croatian estate (stališ) has about Ustasha. This is the only reason why they’ve reached their verdict unanimously and with ease – including the vote of the committee member appointed by the Croatian side – on a man whom we consider a hero in Croatia” (2014). The Jutarnji List newspaper allegedly came into possession of the FIFA document on Šimunić’s case, where it was stated that his gesture could not be “referred to as an act of patriotism. The word ‘ready’ (‘spremni’) is, however, not mentioned in the opera. Also, Arbeit macht frei represents a part of the novel written by the German philologist Lorenz Diefenbach in 1873, but it is nevertheless associated with the inscription at the entrance to the Auschwitz concentration camp.”

2 State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia (Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobodjenja Hrvatske; ZAVNOH).
potential danger that these tendencies might represent for the society in question should not be underestimated. In the following section, a brief historical overview of the context of this salute’s usage will be presented, followed by an analysis on its contemporary application.

The Ustasha Salute: Historical Role and Current Debates

Immediately after the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia, the Ustasha 3 – Croatian fascists who at that time were in exile in Italy – accepted the offer made by the Nazi elite to create an Axis satellite: the Independent State of Croatia (ISC), which included what is now Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as parts of Serbia (Zemun). As independence was a popular idea in Croatia, the new state and its leader (poglavnik)4 Ante Pavelić were greeted with jubilation. As one Catholic priest noted, Pavelić was at that moment “the hero of the day, avenger of the martyrical past, almost a mythical creature, the greatest Croat of all time” (op. cit.: TANNER 2001: 145). Many in the ISC saluted this “liberation” from Serbian domination (MACDONALD 2002: 134), and news of the Yugoslav (seen as Serbian) army’s collapse and the arrival of the Germans were greeted with an explosion of exultation (TANNER 2001: 141). Later on, support and positive attitudes toward the Ustasha dwindled (PAVLAKOVIĆ 2008).

While the ISC was never really independent, this German-Italian condominium existed from April 10, 1941 and May 8, 1945, and had its own currency, police, and education system (BARTULIN 2014: 144).

In comparison with other Axis satellites that needed some time to adjust their policies to their new political identity, from its very creation the ISC was prepared to cleanse “unwanted elements,” with the regime ushering in a campaign of systematic mass killings of Serbs, Jews, Roma, and Croatian “misfits” (GREBLE BALIĆ 2009: 117). The Ustasha were also directly engaged in concentration camp administration, atypical for such ad hoc created states (MACDONALD 2002: 134). Racial legislation was swiftly passed5 and a system of concentration camps was set up. Although a number of concentration camps were set up within the ISC, none could be compared to Jasenovac – here, the sheer brutality of Ustasha crimes reached such proportions

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3 The Ustasha movement was founded in Italy in 1929 by Ante Pavelić as a paramilitary resistance organization, after the king’s dictatorship was declared in Yugoslavia. It was a radical nationalist movement, the main goal of which was the creation of an independent Croatian state. It was characterized by anti-Serbism, anti-communism, and the cult of the state (BIONDICH 2005: 77). In Pavelić’s view the key enemies of the Ustasha in Yugoslavia were the Serbian government, free masons, the Jews, and communism (BARTULIN 2014: 130).

4 “Poglavnik” means something like leader or chief, and was seldom used before the Ustasha movement.

5 Views differ on whether a developed racial ideology of the Ustasha existed.
that even an observer from the German army claimed that he had never seen anything so brutal (BELLAMY 2003: 52).

An important element of the Ustasha state was its relationship towards the Serbs, who comprised at least one third of the total population. Mile Budak, Minister of Education and Religion in ISC, advocated a policy through which 1/3 of the Serbs would be exterminated, 1/3 would be forced to convert to Catholicism, and 1/3 would be sent into exile. Though Ustasha policies evolved during this period, some authors estimate that during the time of the ISC between 300,000 and 350,000 Serbs, 30,000 and 35,000 Jews (around 75% of the total Jewish population), and 15,000 and 27,000 Roma were killed, with some 200,000 Serbs forcibly converted to Catholicism (BIONDICH 2005: 72). In May 1945, the majority of the Ustasha leaders managed to escape to the West, while tens of thousands of people, many of whom had ties with the Ustasha regime, were killed by the Partisans during the post-war march. This massacre would later be named after the Austrian town of Bleiburg.

Many debates concerning the ISC still remain open. One of them concerns the actions and involvement (or lack thereof) of the Catholic Church in Croatia. Some criticize the Church, by asserting that the “‘marriage’ between the Church and the Ustasha state was consummated during World War II,” as the Catholic prelates were more inclined towards an independent state than towards Yugoslavia (BIONDICH 2005: 81). Authors also point to the letter written by Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije (Aloysius) Stepinac as proof of his enthusiasm towards the new Croatian state. From this very moment on, the Catholic Church expressed its agreement with the ISC, with the personal participation of some of the clergy members in the crimes of the regime serving as additional evidence (BELLAMY 2003: 52). While other sources argue that the church was divided between Ustasha and Partisan supporters (KUNOVICH/HODSON 1999: 649), the church did little to condemn and prevent Ustasha crimes from taking place (PARTOS 1997, quoted after: ibid.). With this assumption, the Catholic Church’s behavior could be described by the expression Hannah Arendt used when writing on Pope Pius XII: Guilty by silence (ARENDT 2003). During Cardinal Josip Bozanić’s recent visit to Jasenovac he emphasized his feeling of grief for all the people murdered by the ISC, and especially for those killed by members of the Catholic Church. However, he also noted that “the Catholic Church never participated in that and similar crimes, nor did it support them. Even more, although some [people] want to ascribe the omission of ‘inaction’ to the Church, there are a number of examples which show how the Church and her be-

6 The Ustasha ideology perceived Croatia as a nation of two religions – Roman Catholicism and Islam – while Orthodox Christianity was seen as the agent of Serbian ideology. Orthodox Christians were met with conversion or murder. The anti-Serbian agenda came early to the fore: By April 1941 Cyrillic script had been banned and the bureaucracy and industry were cleansed of Serbs.

7 The so-called Stepinac controversy in Post-Yugoslav historiography and media discourse.

8 See Biondich 1995 for more detail.
lievers opposed this inhuman ideology in a number of ways during these hard times” (BOZANIĆ 2009).

The most hotly debated point today is the actual number of victims of the ISC, a number with great political ramifications. As would be expected, the Serbian side tends to inflate the number of Jasenovac victims, while Croatian emigrants have constructed a Bleiburg myth, inflating the numbers of people killed in this counter-attack. World War II-related discussions of these numbers and the appropriate guilt continue to be important (BELLAMY 2003: 54). The war of the 1990s resurrected and reactivated the old images of friends and foes, while the nationalists on both sides manipulated the numbers of war victims (RADONIĆ 2010: 14 ff). Discussions on this subject were constrained during the reign of Josip Broz Tito, and communist authorities claimed that in Jasenovac alone some 600,000 people lost their lives. Contemporary Croatian historians estimate the numbers of people killed in all of ISC’s concentration camps at 120,000; in Jasenovac alone some 85,000 people were believed to have been murdered, made up of 50,000 Serbs, 13,000 Jews, 12,000 Croats, and 10,000 Roma (RADONIĆ 2010: 95).9 Estimates of the number of victims of the Bleiburg massacre also differs, but is probably around 30,000 (RADONIĆ 2010: 100).

When, on April 10, 1941 Slavko Kvaternik – Pavelić’s deputy and commander of the ISC’s armed forces – proclaimed the Independent State of Croatia on Radio Zagreb, one could hear: “I appeal to all Croats, wherever they are, but especially to all the officers and the armed forces in Zagreb, that they and the entire armed forces should swear allegiance to the Independent State of Croatia and its leader. God and Croats – For home(land) – ready! (Bog i Hrvati – Za Dom – Spremni)” (op. cit.: TANNER 2001: 157). Several days later, at dawn of April 15, Ante Pavelić, the poglavnik of the ISC, came to Zagreb. His speech was short: “Ustasha! We have won. We won because we had faith. We won because we held out. We won because we fought. Ustasha! We have won. We won because we were always ready for home(land) (za Dom Spremnii)” (op. cit.: TANNER 2001: 159). On November 15, 1941 Hrvatski branik,10 the newspaper that served as the mouthpiece of Ustasha propaganda, published an article addressing Ustasha youth under the title “Interpretation of the Ustasha salute for Ustasha heroes.” This article stated: “Dear Ustasha heroes! Every day, before every lesson in school, before and after every meeting, on streets and at home, we salute one another with our beautiful Ustasha salute: for home(land) –

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9 Žeravica and Kočović estimate the number of the war victims, including the Serbian Chetniks, at 500,000 Serbs, of which 322,000 were killed in ISC territory. They also estimate that 20,000 Jews, 255,000 Croats, and 16,000 Roma lost their lives in the ISC (Radonić 2010: 113).

10 “Croatian Bulwark.”
ready (za dom spremni).”11 This clear historical meaning makes the continuing use of this salute unacceptable.

The Independent State of Croatia as a “legitimate expression of Croats”

At the Croatian Democratic Community (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica; HDZ) party congress held in the Croatian capital’s Vatroslav Lisinski concert hall on February 24, 1990, Franjo Tuđman uttered a sentence that could be regarded as a turning point in the official Croatian discourse on the Second World War: “The ISC was not only a criminal creation (zločinačka tvorevina), but also an expression of the historical aspirations of the Croatian people for an independent state.” It could only be imagined how difficult it might have been during the war and early post-war years in the 1990s to speak about Vergangenheitsbewältigung,12 when the very issue Croatian society was faced with was seen as not only the legitimate fulfillment of its historical aspirations, but also the foundation of the statehood to come. During these years, independence was an end that justified the means, with historical manifestation or events viewed through this lens. Todor Kuljić, a Serbian sociologist, evaluated the above Tuđman quotation as words that “make memory into a common currency of war” (2006: 227).

Rehabilitation of the Ustasha movement, the entire ISC, and its actors within the historical narrative included several elements. Franjo Tuđman wanted to implement national reconciliation, a program which would bring about reconciliation of all the Croats – both the Ustasha and the Partisans – and bridge the gap between Croats at home and abroad. The Serbs have served this cause well as the common enemy. Within this discourse, their “otherness” is depicted as being manifold (BELLAMY 2003: 67), with Serbia belonging to the wild Balkans while Croatia represents civilized Europe – returning where it already belonged by defending the West from the East (cf. BAKIĆ-HAYDEN 1995).

Within the public discourse, and under a strong influence of repatriated emigrants, the ISC has been depicted not only as fulfillment of Croatian statehood aspirations, but also as a reaction against Serbian “genocidal ambitions,” and as a defense against communism (PAVLAKOVIĆ 2010: 1727). The voices from the diaspora portrayed Pavelić as the leader of a national, revolutionary, liberation movement (BELLAMY 2003: 135 ff). In the 1990s portraits of the poglavnik Pavelić were exhibited in Zagreb’s restaurants and public swimming pools, and Ustasha iconography and rhetoric came back into the public sphere. Flirting with

11 This article and the entire archive of Hrvatski branik are available at the municipal library and reading room in Vinkovci, Croatia: www.gkvk.hr/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=99 (accessed on: September 10, 2014).
12 “Dealing with the past.”
Ustashaism was more than acceptable, and Ustasha nostalgia was openly expressed within “a particular hatred culture” directed against the Serbs (GOLDŠTAJN 2010: 262). Bellamy assessed that “the reintegration of the émigré Croats therefore proved to be one of the most controversial issues in Croatian politics in the 1990s,” adding that one should not forget that émigré Croats were also financially quite useful during that period (2003: 69).

Of course, as was the case with Serbian estimates of the number of Jasenovac victims13, Croatian estimates were also incorrect, and in the opposite direction. The Croatian state committee for the identification of the war and post-war victims, founded by Tuđman, estimated in its report that 2238 people were killed in Jasenovac, and that 331 Jews, 6 Muslims, 18,410 Serbs, and 79,318 Croats lost their lives under ISC rule. For Ljiljana Radonić this report represents the most striking evidence of the institutional revisionism conducted during the Tuđman era (2010: 160). This effort to demonstrate that Jasenovac had little significance was of manifold importance, minimizing Croatian culpability and implicitly accusing the Serbs of creating negative propaganda against the Croats. Bleiburg emerged as a counterbalance to Jasenovac, and was depicted as the Croatian Golgotha, a genocide against the Croats, the greatest tragedy ever to befall the Croats – even the Croatian holocaust (RADONIĆ 2010). Equating these two tragedies allowed Croatian guilt to be washed away and to establish equivalence between the victims.14

Aleida Assmann lists five strategies employed in German historical remembrance to avoid an “inconvenient subject”15 (2011: 217–233). Most of these strategies are evident within the postwar societies of the former Yugoslavia. Insisting on one’s own role of victim and cultivating a martyrdom myth were done by both Croatian and Serbian nationalists in the 1990s, to which they later added a cultivation of the chosen people myth. Focusing on such suffering can play a cohesive role for a nation, and small Yugoslav states often felt that, to win the support of the great powers, they needed to portray themselves as faultless victims.

Tuđman even went as far as to proposing mixing the bones at the Jasenovac memorial center with the victims of both the Bleiburg and Jasenovac tragedy. This idea required exhumation of the remains of the Bleiburg victims and transportation to Jasenovac, and, due to extremely negative reactions both at home and abroad, the

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13 This ranged between 700,000 and one million Serbs.
14 An important role was played by Franjo Tuđman’s 1989 historiographical work, Bespuča povijesne zbiljnosti.
15 These five strategies are (1) establishment of equivalence, within which the perpetrator “escapes into the memory of the victim” and in which one guilt is framed in terms of another’s guilt, thus mathematically annulling the perpetrator’s guilt; (2) erasing, which entails creating a memory framework with conspicuous “blind-spots”; (3) forgery, which enables a “convenient memory” to be reached; this usually takes place under “pressure of the new memory framework, by turning the compromised family members into moral light-houses.” The last two strategies are (4) silence and (5) externalization of the guilt.
The year 1989 marked the return of nationalism and religion. In Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, this renewal was often embodied in a symbiosis of national and religious symbols used for political mobilization. Srđan Vrcan, a Croatian sociologist, concluded that at the beginning of the 1990s in these countries, religious communities acted as a source of political legitimacy, rendering the “dominant nationalist strategies [as] practically acting under a certain ‘holy shroud’” (2003). Tudman frequently emphasized the importance of the Catholic Church for Croatian society by claiming that his party was supported by the Church. Lower clergy members have often openly supported the HDZ, and those at the higher levels of the Church hierarchy have, as Ivo Goldštajn remarked, also directly or indirectly supported Tudman’s party for years (GOLDŠTAJN 2010: 267). Of course, it goes without saying that such support could not be unanimous.

Writing on the transformation of the collective memory in the countries of the Western Balkans, Kuljić lists three tools used to transform the past: Inventing a new history and new holidays, renaming streets, and rewriting autobiographies (and we would add biographies, as well; KULJIĆ 2006: 220). All of these elements were present in 1990s Croatia. Many streets were renamed, the best known of which was the Trg žrtava fašizma (Square of the Victims of Fascism),16 which became the Trg hrvatskih velikana (roughly, Square of the Great Sons of Croatia). This square’s original name was restored in 1999. As the government of Ivo Sanader (HDZ) in 2004 put forward an initiative to rename the streets named after Mile Budak, 17 streets in Croatia had already been named after ISC’s minister of education (RADONIĆ 2010: 319). In 1994, the official currency was named the kuna, the currency that had been used by the ISC. Schools and institutions were renamed, and the terminology using in state documents was changed. Dictionaries were published, as had been done in the 1940s, with the goal of demonstrating how extensive the differences between the Serbian and Croatian languages were (BELLAMY 2003: 138). During this period a total of 2964 monuments and commemorative markings dedicated to the fallen Partisans, or to the victims of Ustasha or Nazi or fascist ideologies were destroyed, vandalized, or removed (GOLDŠTAJN 2010: 251). The anti-fascist movement was denigrated in both the press and in school textbooks, where in the 1990s the story of Jasenovac was replaced by the Bleiburg narrative (BHONDICH 2004: 71). The appearances of former Ustasha members in the media were not rare occurrences, during which they openly have spoken about their political preferences. Some, like the daughter of Ante Pavelić, claimed that the Ustasha regime had never persecuted the Jews at all, but only communists (GOLDŠTAJN 2010: 250).

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16 HDZ has its central office on this square.
Rehabilitation of the Ustasha ideology was conducted through two distinctive channels: the first, its open propagation, and the other – which was much more frequent – a negation of its true character and of the crimes committed within the ISC. At times, this even went so far as to claim that Ustasha ideology did not entail any elements of fascism. Tuđman’s policies of flirting with Ustashism nevertheless seemed contradictory. He was aware of the possible damage that promoting Ustashism could inflict on Croatia’s international image, and of the fact that the Croatian constitution explicitly emphasized Croatia’s anti-fascist foundations.

The official holiday The Day of the Anti-Fascist struggle was therefore retained, and the authorities made efforts to distinguish between the independence aspirations embodied in the ISC and being a Nazi (BELLAMY 2003: 138). This duplicity of Tuđman’s policies manifested in having one face in Croatia and another abroad (TOMIČIĆ 2014), and Tuđman later distanced himself from Ustasha and Nazi ideologies. The Croatian historian Ivo Goldstein wrote that the underlying problem was that the Croatian president never made an effort to dissociate himself from the aspiration “to design Croatian state’s identity in the spirit of his statement” (cf. Tuđman’s speech at the party congress of the Croatian Democratic Community, GOLDSTEIN 2010: 251). In 1993 the Croatian parliament (Sabor) amended the law on pension and disability insurance to entitle former members of the ISC’s armed forces to credit for two years of service for every year they spent with the “Croatian homeland army between 1941 and 1945.” In 2013, the Republic of Croatia also allocated around 47 million Euro for the pensions of former members of “Domobrani, Ustasha and Oružništvo”17 groups (ZEBiĆ 2013).

During the early 1990s several right-wing political parties adopted the “For home(land) – ready!” Ustasha salute. In 1990 the Croatian Party of Rights (Hrvatska stranka prava; HSP) was founded. The HSP appropriated the ISC’s arsenal of symbols: They idolized Pavlić, its members wore black uniforms, they saluted “For home(land) – ready!”, and they greeted one another by raising their outstretched right arm. They also celebrated the founding of the ISC every April 10, and cast the contemporary Croatian state as a continuation of the ISC (PAVLAKOVIĆ 2008: 129). The Croatian Liberation Movement (Hrvatski oslobodilački pokret) was the most influential political party of the Croatian émigré movement. It was founded by the exiled Ante Pavlić in Argentina, who established its Zagreb branch in 1991. This party openly propagated the Ustasha ideology and goals of its founder. They also claimed that the Jews were better treated within the ISC than in any other European country (ibid.). In 1991 the leaders and members of the Croatian Party of Rights created a paramilitary wing of their organization – the Croatian Defense Forces (Hrvatske odbrambene snage; HOS). The volunteers of this unit took part in

17 Domobran (pl. Domobrani) – the Croatian Home Guard represented one branch of the ISC’s forces, which in 1944 integrated with the Ustasha militia. Oružništvo (formation member – Oružnik) represented ISC’s police branch within the armed forces, which was created mostly from the infrastructure of the former Yugoslav gendarmerie.
the Homeland War (Domovinski rat)\textsuperscript{18}, wore black uniforms, openly called themselves Ustasha, and used the “For home(land) – ready!” salute and other pieces of Ustasha iconography. One of the HOS units – the 9th battalion of the 114th brigade – was named after the Ustasha colonel and commander of the Ustasha formation “The Black Legion” (Crna legija), Rafael Boban, and its soldiers conducted their ceremonies under Ante Pavelić’s portrait (TOMIČIĆ 2014).

The newer period of Croatian history can be divided into two episodes: Tuđman and the HDZ phase during his term in office (1990–1999), and the post-Tuđman era. The most recent phase of dealing with the past began in 2000 (RADONIĆ 2010: 267) when the political leadership of the country visited Jasenovac and labeled ISC “black totalitarianism” (Ivo Sanader) and a Croatian variant of fascism (Stjepan Mesić), a conceptualization which was adopted by the mainstream media.\textsuperscript{19} Ustasha symbolism, however, remains visible at public gatherings, concerts, and sport manifestations. Having sketched the main discourses and their actors, we now return to our guiding question: What does it mean in today’s Croatia to salute “For home(land) – ready”?

“Being Ready for the Homeland” in Public Life

On November 19, 2013, after the Croatian national football team won its playoff match against Iceland and qualified for the World Cup in Brazil (2014), the Australian-born defender Josip Šimunić took the microphone and cried “Za dom!” The audience in the stands responded “Spremni!” Šimunić repeated his greeting four times, and each time thousands of Croats responded “Spremni!” It should be noted that the call and response phrases “Za dom – Spremni” and “U boj, u boj – za narod svoj” are chanted by the audience in the stands during almost every sports match of the Croatian national teams. However, the center-left leadership of the state condemned Šimunić’s gesture and the Social-democratic (SDP) president Ivo Josipović labeled it as inappropriate; education minister Željko Jovanović denounced Šimunić’s behavior and even personally filed a suit with the Croatian Olympic Federation. As a result, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) fined Šimunić, and – a penalty that was bitterly resented by a significant part of the Croatian public – gave him a 10 game suspension, which barred him from playing at the World Cup finals in Brazil 2014. When FIFA first made this announcement publicly, and then confirmed its decision, their Facebook page was showered with abusive messages from Croatia signed “za dom – spremini.” Several public officials were dismissed for publicly supporting Šimunić by repeating the salute in question.

\textsuperscript{18} The official Croatian term for the conflict with the Yugoslav People’s Army and Serbian forces in Croatia between 1991 and 1995.

\textsuperscript{19} For more on the Croatian government’s actions after 2000 and its relationship towards the ISC, see Radonić 2010.
Negative criticism from both Croatia and abroad abounded. While the Croatian Football Federation (*Hrvatski nogometni savez; HNS*) agreed that Šimunić’s behavior had been inappropriate, they saw the entire situation as a personal attack against their national team. The national team coach, Niko Kovač never publicly distanced himself from the Šimunić incident, and fierce support was expressed by commentators on Internet forums and in public surveys. A Facebook page supporting Šimunić attracted 160,000 members in three weeks,

20 a petition in Šimunić’s defense gathered 280,000 supporters, and an Internet site serving the Croatian diaspora collected contributions towards the fine Šimunić had to pay (*ŠNIDARIĆ 2013*). Šimunić claimed that his salute did not have anything to do with the Ustasha, as it represented a patriotic gesture and an old Croatian salute (see introduction). He stated that he “always wanted to do this before” and that people should “read and educate themselves more about history.”

In interviews the following year, Šimunić claimed that he only repeated what he “had already heard hundreds of times from the stadium stands,” and that he only wanted to express his love for his homeland (op. cit. MAGAŠ 2014: 25). Inappropriate Ustasha chanting and iconography, including the salute, are not rare at football matches, and FIFA had already punished the Croatian Football Federation for Ustasha chants and outbursts of racism (*TANJUG 2013; ĆUBEL 2014*).

Another example of the complex relationship to Ustasha in Croatia today are the commemorations of Europe Day and the Day of Victory over Fascism, which take place on May 9. On this day in 2014, a monument to the fallen of the strongly Ustasha HOS 9th battalion “Rafael vitez Boban” was unveiled (DEŽULOVIć, 2014). Former unit members wore black uniforms and Dobrosav Paraga – founder and commander of the unit, and former president of the HSP – gave a speech criticizing the EU, concluding that one must not silently observe both the gay pride march taking place and the destruction of the Croatian national identity. Split’s Mayor Ivo Baldasar (SDP), also attended the event and mistakenly congratulated participants for taking part in the Day of Victory over Antifascism. The nationalistic rock singer Marko Perković Thompson,

22 was also present at the ceremony, and a catholic priest, Tomislav Ćubelić, blessed the monument (BRAJEVIć/DADIć 2014; BUDIMIR 2014), provoking disparate reactions within Croatia. These events surrounding the commemoration of Europe Day in Split (the first since Croatian accession to the EU) and issues related to the Homeland War make it clear that two incompatible narratives of World War II still exist. The extent to which the position of

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20 This page Josip Šimunić was still active at the time of writing: https://www.facebook.com/josip.simunic.officialfanpage?fref=nf (accessed on: July 30, 2015).


22 Thompson is the lead vocalist of the eponymous rock band. His first single “Bojna Čavoglave” includes the salute “Za dom – Spremni” at the beginning of the song, and concert-goers regularly wear black uniforms.
the extreme right in Croatia is historically unsustainable was clear in Marko Skejo’s (a war-time commander of the HOS’s battalion “Rafael vitez Boban”) greeting during the unveiling of the monument. Marko Skejo welcomed those present with the “for home(land) – ready!” salute, and then stated that members of the unit represent a “new generation of the anti-fascists, who fought the chetnik fascists” (IVANČIĆ 2014). In 1995, this same man delivered a speech under a portrait of Ante Pavelić, in which he said:

Sons of the Ustasha, for home(land) ready! I congratulate you 10th April, the birth of the ISC and four years of existence of the 9th battalion of the 114th brigade [...]. We are the real and only heirs to the legendary Black Legion. Those who love us, love Croatia as well. Our blackness is feared by some today and let them fear [...]. As the Black Legion commenced, so will the 9th battalion complete what it has to [...]. We have to and want to create the ISC the offspring of the Zrinski and the Frankopan, the martyrs of Starčević and Kvaternik, we, the successors of Francetić, Boban and poglavnik Ante Pavelić. The Serbs shall not have peace [...] for as long as we exist [...]. The sons of Ustasha, if you are gone, the independent state of Croatia will not be created. God and Croats. For home(land) – ready!23

Clearly, certain actors, such as Skejo, who is not alone in his views, still consider Ustashism to be devoid of fascist elements. The successor to Paraga as leader of HSP, Anto Đapić, stated that he is neither fascist nor Nazi, but Ustasha. In 2005 he visited the Yad Vashem Memorial Center to mourn the atrocities committed against the Jews (MATIJEVIĆ 2009); at the same time, he ended the last speech he gave in his capacity as party leader with the “for home(land) – ready!” salute. Another party, The Pure Croatian Party of Rights (Hrvatska čista stranka prava; HČSP), created in 1992 as an HSP splinter party, features the motto “for home(land) – ready” on its official party flag and commemorates the establishment of the ISC, which it describes as the expression of the collective will of the Croatian people, “which sensed the historical moment to liberate itself from the greater-Serbian yoke, without asking for anybody’s permission” (LOZO 2010). While these parties represent a marginal force in Croatian politics, the HČSP was a major force in opposing the gay pride parade in Zagreb in 2009 and 2010. Pavlaković believes that the political arena was purged of manifest Ustashism when political elites became aware it could jeopardize Croatian EU accession (2008). Only one of the parties with this ideology has a parliamentary representative, although one, Croatian Conservative party, currently has a member of the European Parliament (TANJUG, 2014). The member of Croatian Conservative party (Hrvatska konzervativna stranka) Ruža Tomašić belongs to the Canadian diaspora and is well known for her nationalistic and anti-Serb statements.

All the parties mentioned, which are still active, supported the incumbent president of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, in the 2015 presidential run-off. After a relatively calm period, the number of right-wing incidents has been on the rise since Croatia became an EU member state (PAVELIĆ, 2013). It remains to be seen whether this trend will continue after the 2015 election of the center-right candidate and HDZ member Kolinda Grabar Kitarović.

Outside of the political parties discussed in the preceding paragraph, the salute “For home(land) – ready!” could recently been heard at patriotic celebrations, such as the one in Čavoglave, where tens of thousands attend Croatia Day celebrations, at which souvenirs featuring ISC symbols are sold.

Similar expressions and iconography can be observed at Bleiburg gatherings, political rallies, concerts, and matches, as well as on the walls of monuments, private homes, and even Orthodox churches. The salute is a part of the patriotic repertoire of participants of the Homeland War, Croatian leaders who were facing trial at the International War Crimes Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague. At protests against Ante Gotovina’s arrest in 2004 and 2005, Ustasha songs were sung and Ustasha flags flown, while the masses chanted “for home(land) – ready.” In the rural Dalmatian town of Sinj a massive billboard depicted Ante Gotovina with the “for home(land) – ready” salute, although it should be noted that Gotovina never expressed any connection with the Ustasha movement (PAVLAKOVIĆ 2010: 1727). Gotovina billboards are quite common along the entire Dalmatian coast. In another such example, after serving his sentence for the crimes committed against the Bosniak civilians, Dario Kordić was ceremonially greeted at the Zagreb airport in June 2014 by over two hundred people who chanted “for home(land) – ready” (ČURIĆ 2014). The bishop of the Catholic Church from Sisak, Vlado Košić, praised Kordić as a man of moral greatness who took a burden of non-existent guilt upon himself (MAČAŠEVIĆ 2014). Statements made by individual members of the Catholic clergy have motivated a number of prominent Croatian intellectuals to address the Croatian conference of bishops, expressing their concern for the future of their Croatian homeland: “A country with a significant number of Catholic believers among its citizens, and within which some of the highest dignitaries of the Catholic church glorify and compare with Jesus Christ the convicted war criminal, Dario Kordić, has serious grounds to be concerned for its future” (“Otvoreno pismo Hrvatskoj biskupskoj konferenciji zbog veličanja ratnog zločinca”, 2014).

Information regarding current political positions, symbols, and declarations was taken from the official Internet representations of the parties mentioned. Cf. e.g. http://www.hsp.hr/od-osnutka-do-obnove/; http://hcsop.hr/znakovlje; http://hrvatskioslobodilackipokret.blogspot.com/ (accessed on: September 10, 2014).

E.g., Bishop Vlado Košić, president of the “Justitia et Pax” Commission of the Croatian conference of bishops and president of the Ecumenical council, as well as Bishops Valentin Pozaić and Juraj Jezerinac.
Kordić’s welcome was of course accompanied by music from Marko Perković Thompson, whose concerts Ivo Goldštajn perceives as, within the media, the strongest promotion of right-wing ideas in 21st century Croatia (2010: 327), making Thompson a “propagator of Ustasha ideology” (2010: 326). In already mentioned Thompson's first song “Čavoglave Battalion – For home(land) ready” the central verses are

A step forward, rifle ready, everybody is singing/ For home(land) brothers, for the freedom, we are fighting/ Hear us Serbian volunteers, you chetnik gang/ Our hand shall reach you in Serbia as well/ The justice of God shall reach you, everyone already knows that/ You will be tried by the fighters of Čavoglave.

[Korak naprijed, puška gotov’s, siju pjesmu svi,/ Za dom bračo, za slobodu, borimo se mi/ Čujte srpski dobrovoljci, bando četnici/ Stićeće vas naša ruka i u Srbiji!/ Stićeće vas Božja pravda to već svatko zna/ Sudit će vam bojovnici iz Čavoglava.]27

Another song, written for his subsequent 1995 album, was entitled “A Bitter Herb at the Bitter Wound” (“Ljutu travu na ljutu ranu”), in which the singer asks his wife to give him the same shirt that both he and his grandfather wore for their son. The title is a reference to Ante Pavelić’s recipe on how to treat the Serbs (op. cit.: KRIZMAN 1978). Baker noted that the most obvious match between popular music and politics in the post-Tuđman era took place in the popular patriotic music that featuring the experience of war veterans, and that glorifies faith, God, and family; this music is personified by Thompson, Miroslav Škoro, and Niko Bete, with Thompson being the best known and most controversial of them all (BAKER 2010: 1747). The “Čavoglave Battalion” has remained part of Thompson’s repertoire and is usually the opening song at his concerts. In addition to this extremely popular song, his albums are the best sold within the country, and his audience is often very young (i.e., secondary and elementary school students; MILETIĆ 2008; GRUBIŠIĆ 2012; JOVANOVIĆ 2014). Ustasha iconography is often seen at his concerts among the audience. In several European countries he has been banned from performing, and after one concert the Simon Wiesenthal Center issued a press release in which it expressed “its sense of outrage and disgust in the wake of a massive show of fascist salutes, symbols and uniforms.” (SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER, 2007). This press release described the concert as a massive fascist demonstration where tens of

26 One of the greatest scandals occurred when footage surfaced of Thompson singing “Jasenovac and Gradiška Stara.” This song glorifies Ante Pavelić, ISC’s concentration camps, and the river Neretva, which carried away the corpses of slain Serbs. Thompson stated that he had never sung this song at a concert, but added that he would be a hypocrite if he did not say that he occasionally sings this song with his friends (Ivljev 2009).

thousands cried the infamous Ustasha salute “for home(land) – ready!” (2007). Marko Perković Thompson claimed that he is against Nazism and that his world view represents his love for God, family, and the Croatian homeland (ARBUTINA 2008; MATIĆ 2009).

Thompson’s connections with individuals from the Catholic Church are quite close, and Bishop Don Anto Ivas from Šibenik was an author of several of his songs. Some church prelates even recite his verses while celebrating mass, as was the case with Don Vinko Puljić from Sarajevo, who called Thompson’s poetry a “hymn to the Glory of God” (“himna u Božiju slavu”; op. cit. MILIČIĆ 2008). At the Statehood Day mass, the bishop for the military, Juraj Jezerinac, recited the song “White Doves” (Bijeli golubovi), within which “for home(land) – ready” is also mentioned (VOJKOVIĆ 2008). During the celebration of the 24th anniversary of the HDZ, Rev. Jakov Begonja spoke of Tuđman, stating that “Franjo was for home(land), I am always for home(land) ready and […] in that salute one expresses only the love for the homeland and no hatred towards anyone.” Although it would be incorrect to draw conclusions on the Catholic Church’s positions based on the views of individual priests, it would also be wrong to overlook the importance of denying the crimes committed within the ISC, glorifying the participants of the Homeland War who stand accused of war crimes, celebrating masses for Ante Pavelić, reciting Thompson’s lyrics from the pulpit, and defending the “for home(land), ready!” salute.

28 First pray, then move on / on this place the white doves have fallen/ here they’ve met the fires of hell/ the broken wings are what remained/ and they were for home(land) ready [Pomoli se, onda dalje kreni /na ovom su mjestu pali golubovi bijeli /s ognjem pakla tu su se sreli /ostala su polomljena krila /a bili su za dom spremni].


30 Recently in Zagreb, a book written by Mladen Ivezjić, Tito’s Jasenovac (Titov Jasenovac) was presented in the grand hall of the residence of the Society of Jesus (27.7.14); although this book was rejected by the broader public and media mainstream, the journalists of the daily newspapers in Croatia were scandalized that an interview with Mladen Ivezjić was published in the “Glas Koncila” (Detelj 2014; Vurušičić 2014; Lucić 2014), a weekly newspaper of the Archdiocesan Cathedra of Zagreb. In this interview the author claimed, among other things, that only around 1000 people died in ISC’s concentration camps – mostly due to sickness – and that the Jadovno and Stara Gradiška concentration camps did not even exist. He also stated that “the Jasenovac myth was motivation and justification of the crimes committed against the clergy and the faithful of Croatia”. Finally, he said that genocide against the Croats, committed by Tito, actually took place in Jasenovac (Vuković 2014). “Glas Koncila” had already published a 22-part feuilleton on Jasenovac from March 17 to December 15, 2013, which argued that the Jasenovac camp was only a prison colony and labor camp. This series also argued that Jasenovac served the precautionary function of preventing opponents – mostly ethnic Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks – from taking action against the state and public order. It further reported that there were hardly any Serbian inmates, and that the total number of inmates was several thousand. Purportedly, Serbs ended up in Jasenovac for ideological reasons only, and nobody was sent to the camp for being “a Serb or an Orthodox”, but only for being chetnik or partisan. It was further claimed that the children at the camp were taken care of by the ISC authorities, and
The Crisis of the good Croat: Constructing the good Croat by saluting “for home(land) – ready”

The salute “for home(land) – ready!” is generally seen negatively in the official state policy and societal mainstream of contemporary Croatia. In the past, it has been most frequently used together with other elements of ISC iconography. Even if one were to overlook the fact that its current form was the most broadly used and, so to say, popularized by the Ustasha movement and that it was omnipresent within the ISC’s public sphere, the argument that it represents a slogan from an ancient opera could hardly be taken seriously. Despite this fact, certain groups continue to try to dissociate it from Ustasha ideology and to interpret it as simple love for the homeland. After the incident in the stadium, Josip Šimunić reported that he received support from all of those who did not feel ashamed of their Croatian name (MAGAŠ 2014: 26). This kind of argumentation is hardly surprising, and illuminates one of the problems of the post-Yugoslav states; here, this type of patriotic discourse is presented as the only correct one, with those who do not support its values and ideas labeled as not loving their country, or worse, as being communists, chetniks, or traitors. Daphnie Winland noted that within the public media discussion on identity, as well as within religious and political discourses, the question of what it means to be a “good Croat” is being posed. Affirmative indicators such as patriotism and religious faith are emphasized, with this affirmative identity being used to disqualify those who disagree or who are different from being “good Croats.” Winland emphasizes that the “Croatians who were not solidly behind efforts to reimagine the new Croatian state in ways that valorize the Croatian past and present have been variously referred to as unpatriotic, un-Croatian, ‘Yugonostalgic,’ ‘Yugo-zombies’ or even as enemies of the state” (2002: 697). This tendency can also be seen in Thompson’s song “No One Should Touch my Little Universe” (Neka ni’ko ne dira u moj mali dio svemira), in which he sings that “patriotism is gilded as fascism in order to defend communism.” Although this aggressive and exclusionary way of defining what it means to be a good Croat this characterization was more common in the 1990s, the evidence presented within our paper makes it clear that it is still quite viable.31 “Good Croats” cultivate the unquestioned version of their country’s history that those who died in the camp were victims of illness or reprisals for the Partisans’ actions (Vukić, 2013). During the last days of December 2014, a mass for Ante Pavelić was celebrated in Zagreb, sparking protests by a group of citizens. (Benašić 2014; Lisjak 2014).

31 This is evidenced by the following examples: When the municipal authorities of Pula did not allow Thompson to perform in their city, during Thompson’s concert in Križevci he stated that he would come to Pula’s Arena nevertheless and “kill communism” (cf. Thompson: Doći ću u Istru ubiti komunizam; IDS i SDP: Ostavi se komunizma i kreni na liječenje: http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/Hrvatska/tabid/66/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/21340/Default.aspx). After Bishop Ante Ivas came under attack for certain illegal construction works within the cathedral, his colleague, Don Vinko Puljić, together with German Catholics of Croa-
– not only of the most recent history, but also of the events that took place 70 years ago. They cultivate a conviction of Croatian citizens’ infallibility, they share the values encompassed by this patriotic discourse, and they seemingly manage to combine a love for both Ustasha and anti-fascism, giving the salute “for home(land), ready” while proclaiming their abhorrence for fascist values.

In Croatia today there remain unresolved debates concerning World War II, which have intertwined with debates on the Homeland War. Biondich believes that the influence of Bleiburg and defensive nature of the war against Serbian forces was so strong that few within Croatia are capable of admitting that any members of the Croatian army between 1991 and 1995 committed any crime at all (2004: 72). Within this discourse, war veterans are perceived as national heroes; as a result, any discussion on crimes that may have potentially been committed by the individuals or any questioning of patriotic values is a priori rejected. As Fišer emphasized, insisting that Croatia’s role was that of a victim of war could be largely true for the battle against the Serbs in 1991 and 1992, but could hardly be the case in classifying their relationship with Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1993 and 1994, nor operations Oluja and Grom of 1995 (1006: 74). Apart from insisting on this new patriotic discourse, young people can express their feelings by supporting Šimunić, attending Thompson’s concerts, signing social media posts with “za dom spremni” or with a capital “U” (denoting “Ustasha”) on countless Internet forums, and through the salute and other symbols. One journalist working for the Jutarnji List classified such actions as a “subversive gesture towards the state apparatus” (TOMIČIĆ, 2014). Further, there is a rising trend of the extreme right throughout Europe, along with a search for alternative narratives related to globalization. High unemployment rates in Croatia, post-war up-bringings, and the existence of nationalist and right-wing groups all come together to propagate revisionist versions of the past. The continuing use of World War II fascist symbols, especially among young people, in post-

32 Also, polls suggested that in the 2015 Croatian elections around 60% of voters aged 18 to 29 voted for the conservative candidate and eventual president, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović (Belak Krile 2015), whose victory was celebrated with Thompson’s songs in her campaign headquarters (Pšenko 2015).
Yugoslav societies reveals that the strenuous process of dealing with the past is still to be completed.

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Sexual Othering and Democracy in post-Yugoslav Societies: A Comparison of Dveri and U ime obitelji

DRAGAN ŠLJIVIĆ and MARTIN MLINARIĆ

Branimir Nešić (Dveri, Serbia): We think that the gay parade should be canceled tomorrow, because it is not just about their rights. On the contrary, it is about a complete ideology, which is, in this particular moment of economic collapse and collapse of the family and morality in which Serbia finds itself right now, going to continue with demolishing further what has to a great extent already been demolished (B92 2010a).

Ladislav Ilčić (GROZD, Croatia): It seems to be a clear intention of the ministry [of education: D.Š./ M.M.] to forcibly impose homosexual propaganda on our children (NOVA TV 2012).

Samuel HUNTINGTON (1996: 70ff) argued that Western Catholic societies had developed a fundamentally different perception of human rights than their Orthodox counterparts, and although this claim has been criticized within the academic community, this mindset is still present in contemporary media and political discourse. However, within the part of the public sphere shaped by pro-life Christian organizations, a number of similarities can be observed in comparing two prominent Christian-inspired movements from Serbia and Croatia. In the present paper we will compare the Serbian civic Orthodox movement Dveri – Pokret za život Srbije¹ with the Croatian neoconservative initiative U ime obitelji². Both organizations have garnered significant media attention, in part through their engagement against the “propaganda” and “ideology” of sexual difference in public and institutional spheres. Since 2009, Dveri has organized “family marches”³ against the annual gay pride parade in Belgrade, while U ime obitelji successfully opposed the new comprehensive sex education proposed in 2012; in 2013, they also initiated a referendum to define marriage in the Croatian constitution as a union between a woman and a man.

¹ English: “Gates – Movement for the life of Serbia.” This patriotic conservative movement was founded in 1999, and considers Svetosavic nationalism to be its ideology.
² English: “In The Name of the Family.” The initiative was founded Spring 2013.
³ Serbian: Porodična šetnja, lit. “(pro)family walk”; due to its protest character, translated here as the “family march.”
man. By comparing a selection of their official publications, bulletins, and media appearances, we aim to compare these two groups’ de-secularization processes and anti-government protests related to human rights issues. Our main thesis is that, regardless of the apparent differences between Catholic and Orthodox denominations – which are some of the main grounds for the perceived civilizational differences between Croatia and Serbia – in both cases, traditional morality is being translated into modern secular terminology in a rather similar fashion. To best of our knowledge, these two movements have not been compared to date. Within this paper we will present how sexual minorities have been marked as others, and how, especially during times of economic crisis, they have functioned as perfect scapegoats and targets of anger.

Although our paper does not include detailed economic considerations, one should bear in mind that Southeastern Europe (SEE), and Serbia and Croatia in particular, were strongly hit by the global financial crisis in 2007/2008. Since then, youth unemployment rates have been continuously rising; in 2013 this rate was almost identical in both countries (Croatia: 50.0 percent; Serbia: 49.4 percent). Although Croatia has a higher per capita GDP and higher living standards than Serbia (PARASKEWOPOULOS 2014: 402f), until 2013 both were members of CEFTA; this made them strongly dependent on foreign direct investment (FDI), which disabled regional markets and led to the accumulation of private and public debts (cf. ZIVKOVIĆ 2015: 50–63; PARASKEWOPOULOS 2014: 386–390). In the current recession, the peripheral markets of the Western Balkans are “caught between the Scylla of EU dependency and the Charybdis of the narrowness of the national market,” whereby both Serbia and Croatia are “locked into a process of peripheralisation” (ZIVKOVIĆ 2015: 63).

According to John D’EMILIO (1983: 468–474), the development of the capitalist market is strongly connected to processes of the inclusion and exclusion of homosexuality, as well as with issues of family. The economic process of peripheralisation in the post-Yugoslav “desert of post-socialism” (HORVAT/ŠTIKS 2015) should serve as a frame to understand why anti-government protests such as Dveri or U ime obitelji have gained popularity and media attention, as well as why they contrast family against the rights of sexual minorities.

4 For Serbia we gained access to the media archive Ebart. Official Homepage: http://www.arhiv.rs/. For Croatia we researched online portals of Croatian newspapers, TV stations, and youtube.
6 Central European Free Trade Agreement.
Context: Sexual Difference and Political Culture in Serbia and Croatia

In 2006 the European Parliament (EP) passed Resolution (EP 2006), which demanded that all of Europe fight against homophobia. The post-socialist and largely Slavic-speaking area was considered to be highly homophobic and hostile towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (LGBT). According to the Eurobarometer (2006) and the FRA LGBT Survey (2012), there is a split between Western and Eastern European, Balkan or Mediterranean societies in terms of the social inclusion of LGBT people, the acceptance of same-sex marriage, and the condemnation of homosexuality (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2006: 42f.; FRA 2013).

The latest European Values Survey (2008) showed that the majority of Serbians and Croatians does not want homosexual neighbors; further, the vast majority reject adoption by same-sex couples and condemn homosexual behavior. Although both countries were part of Yugoslavia, Serbia has had a politically and socio-economically more complicated transition than Croatia. One possible explanation that has been proposed is that Serbia has a “Cultural divergence-identity” (cf. SUBOTIĆ 2011: 310) towards Europe, while Croatia perceives itself as part of Central Europe, and is thus marked by a “cultural convergence-identity” regarding Europe (cf. SUBOTIĆ 2011: 310–315). Similarities in the attitudes of the general populations of the two countries have been attributed to existential insecurity and wars, which supported the dominance of materialistic and traditional values (cf. INGLEHART/WELZEL 2005: 128; ŠTULHOFER/RIMAC 2009) in both societies. Since 1990, traditional values have been a state-sponsored ideology in both Serbia (PAPIĆ 1994; 1999) and Croatia (RAMET 2011: 812f).

The persistence of materialistic, religious, and traditional morality tend to correlate with negative attitudes towards homosexuality (cf. SZALMA/TAKÁCS 2013), and more education does not necessarily influence attitudes towards family values and sexuality in general. For example, in a study on Serbian university students, self-identification with the church (cf. M. BLAGOJEVIĆ 2013) was highly correlated with condemnation of homosexual behavior (52 percent) and with rejection of adoption (62 percent) by same-sex couples (BAJOVIĆ 2013: 232f). These students were found to have either materialistic or “mixed type” world-views, while only a minority support “post-materialistic” values and tend to be more permissive (BAJOVIĆ 2013: 228–234). In another study, 45.5 percent of high-school graduates

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7 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.
8 SPSS data obtained by the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences.
9 These attitudes are comparable to other post-Yugoslav societies, although northern areas (e.g., Slovenia, Croatia) tend to be a little bit more permissive, while former southern republics and provinces of Yugoslavia (e.g., Montenegro, Kosovo) are more restrictive. Traditionally, Orthodox societies tend to be – regardless of their degree of economic modernization – less permissive of sexual difference than either Catholic or Protestant societies (cf. Štulhofer/Rimac 2009; Szalma/Takács 2013).
in Croatia affirmed that homosexuality is “some kind of disease” (BAGIĆ 2011: 61).

With these data in mind, it comes as no surprise that Serbia and Croatia belong to the part of Europe that is being labeled as more homophobic than western parts of the Continent on ILGA-Europe’s Rainbow-Europe Map. Violent protests against the pride parades in Belgrade (2010) and Split (2011) emphasize these attitudes. At the same time, a simplistic notion of cultural division positing the superiority of Occidental, liberal-secular Western Societies with regard to the acceptance of sexual difference is highly problematic; this area has been well researched by contemporary Queer theorists, and cannot be explored in the present article (cf. PUAR 2007; KULPA/MIZIELINSKA 2011; ENGEL 2013).

After the passage of Resolution EP 2006, each country was encouraged to pass and implement legislation consistent with the European Values of tolerance, liberty, equality, rule of law, democracy, human rights, and minority rights. Within this context of Europeanization, post-Yugoslav countries had to – at least on paper – redefine their attitudes towards sexual difference through the implementation of anti-discrimination laws (Croatia: 2008; Serbia: 2009); these laws encountered opposition not only from conservative, patriotic, clerical, and counter-secular groups, but also from more moderate circles and milieus. The debates on the 2012 reform of sexual education in public schools in Croatia that were promoted by the center-left government (which has been in power since December 2011), were also related to the introduction of civil same-sex unions, the necessary legal framework for which was put into place Summer 2014. These debates became a field of ideological struggles on sexual difference, and mirrored much deeper social “cleavages” (cf. LIPSET/ROKKAN 1976) between state and church, as well as between the liberal-secularist and conservative-traditionalist elites in Croatia (MLINARIĆ 2013: 41ff).

The acceptance or rejection of LGBT rights in the context of the Belgrade pride parade also clearly demonstrates the apparent split between “two different Serbias” (cf. MIKUŠ 2011): traditionalists (i.e., First Serbia/Serbs) and modernists (i.e., Second or the Other Serbia/Euro-Serbs); cf. ANTONIĆ 2007). This divide can be seen in conflicts between adherents of different ideological camps, who have almost completely opposing views regarding tradition, history, and what Serbia’s priorities should be. The rift between the two Serbias has led ANTONIĆ (2007: 43) to conclude that members of the two camps cherish different political cultures. Croatia has a similar cleft between Catholic traditionalists and secular modernists (ZAKOŠEK/MARŠIĆ 2010: 813ff), although political analyst Nino Raspuđić cautions that Croatian political culture should not be analyzed as a simple opposition between right- and left-wingers, but rather as a fluid and inconsistent three-dimen-

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10 International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA).
11 Cf. ILGA-EUROPE 2013.
sional triangulation of the categories of nation, values, and economics.\textsuperscript{12} Being a patriotic Croat, from Raspudić’s perspective, does not necessarily mean that one is intolerant towards homosexuality or in favor of liberal capitalism.

After the \textit{democratic revolution} of 2000, Serbian center-left or liberal state actors, human-rights focused NGOs, and LGBT activists advocated for the politics of the \textit{second (other) Serbia}, which mainly mirrors the “modern European” values of progressiveness and inclusion of sexual minorities. The \textit{second Serbia}, as well as the center-left NGO scene in Croatia, represents a world view that perceives nationalism as one of the core causes of the break-up of Yugoslavia, and that strives towards a radical restructuring of the political culture, with the goal of making it more compatible with the perceived European values of equality and tolerance. In cosmopolitan post-Yugoslav film-making, homophobia has become an important subject of social criticism, as in Dalibor Matanić’s \textit{Fine mrtve devojke}\textsuperscript{13} (Croatia, 2002), Ahmed Imamović’s \textit{Go West} (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2005), and Srdan Dragojević’s \textit{Parada} (Serbia, 2011). These movies all problematize homosexuality as something strongly correlated with “social death” (cf. SIMIĆ 2008) in the Western Balkans, and “as a metaphor for political dissidence” (MOSS 2007: 261).

For some advocates of the \textit{first Serbia}, and in radical right-wing circles, such as \textit{Obraz} or \textit{SNP 1389}, LGBT appears “as a metonymy for the West and Europe as EU, in opposition to which Serbia defines itself” (CANAKIS 2013: 315). The provincial Serbian outsider mentality, described by Radomir KONSTANTINOVIC in \textit{Filozofija Palanke} (1969), builds up a wall, denying LGBT human rights to “mark the other, re-mark the marginalization of those who are already marginal, point to the ‘other’ as to the possible danger for the infantile world of the provincial” (J. BLAGOJEVIĆ 2011: 33). The key argument of parochial counter-movements, such as the civil Orthodox movement \textit{Dveri}, is that a radical, fundamental, perverse secularist minority is forcing an anti-Christian value system onto the God-fearing majoritarian morality. Similar arguments, combined with anti-communist rhetoric, are also used by Catholic civil society, and feature in the Croatian version of Tea-Party conservatism, which in 2013 initiated a referendum for the constitutional protection of heterosexual marriage.

In the following section we will examine some brief historical and theoretical considerations on the post-Yugoslav roles of religion, family, and traditional values, which are fundamental to understanding the genesis and societal position of both \textit{Dveri} and \textit{U ime obitelji}.

\textsuperscript{13} English: Fine dead girls.
Historical and Theoretical Considerations: Fragmented Secularity

A “secular age” (TAYLOR 2009) does not imply a “subtraction-story” (ibid.: 53) whereby religion disappears, but rather an environment in which religious engagement is optional, and in which there are many possible choices. This renders the religious position, due to the strength of “exclusive humanism,” more and more uncomfortable (ibid.: 14–53). In the post-Yugoslav context, one could argue that religiosity is strongly present, and functions as a guardian of national identity (cf. ŠTULHOFER/SANDFORT 2005; PETROVIĆ 2012). Sociologist Peter L. BERGER (1999) believes that religious and counter-secular movements are spreading all over the world, meaning that “counter-secularization is at least as important phenomenon in the contemporary world as secularization” (ibid.: 6). We wish to note, however, that we do not consider *Dveri* and *U ime obitelji* to be purely counter-secular. Rather, they embody the consequences of fragmented and ambiguous secularity steaming from partial modernization, the religionization of politics, selective religiosity, demographic challenges, and the cooperative separation of church and state.

Serbian sociologist Mirko BLAGOJEVIĆ (cf. 2013: 17ff) believes that, in the case of Serbia, secularization took place during the four-and-a-half decades of the Yugoslav socialist project, although this process may be traced to the period before WWII (cf. TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2009). In Tito’s Yugoslavia, traditional norms, partly grounded in religious morality, gradually gave way to rationalistic and progressive argumentation, typical of the socialist countries. Debates within Yugoslav criminal law and criminology in the 1970s supported the decriminalization of homosexuality, regarding this as being part of individual’s rights to freedom and privacy, which Yugoslav socialism was willing to guarantee, at least to some extent (cf. STOJANOVIĆ 1974). Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina decriminalized homosexuality in 1977, but the communist modernization drive, visible in the normative sphere, did not reflect the actual social reality. Paradoxically, socialist modernization in Yugoslavia has, within the broader public sphere, conserved some of the traditional patriarchal culture, resulting in a kind of “rurbanization” of urban culture. Extended family relationships have remained important, although contact among family members has been reduced. Socialist modernization strengthened the private sphere of the atomized individual in new urban areas without changing cultural preferences, which were still more inclined towards a rural, traditional set of values (cf. TIMOTIJEVIĆ 2012).

The bloody breakdown of socialist Yugoslavia meant the “rescue of God” and a release from the “secularist ideology” of communism (BUDEN 2009: 107–111). The ideological vacuum left by communism was easily be filled by tradition and “authentic” national culture, which included religion. In contemporary Croatia, the Catholic church remains one of the most economically powerful organizations, with wealth and influence comparable to that of the leading corporations of the country.
Sexual Othering and Democracy in post-Yugoslav Societies

and the 2013 referendum on marriage would not have been possible without the Church’s logistic and infrastructural support. The socialist modernization project of secularization was, at the latest, after 1991 translated into the – as Vedran Horvat puts it – “politicization of religion and religionization of politics” (op. cit. ALEKSOV 2008: 375), whereby specific moral issues are publically legitimized by religious argumentation, despite the fact that people only selectively follow the guidelines proposed by the church. According to the Serbian LGBT NGO Gay-Straight Alliance, 64 percent of the Serbian adult population supports the position of the Serbian Orthodox church (SOC) when it comes to homosexuality, and around 38 percent believe that homosexuality is a “Western fabrication which basically tends to destroy the family and our tradition” (GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCE 2010: 8), a view similar to that of Dveri.

However, for most Serbian Orthodox believers, their faith is more a matter of identity and formalistic “fulfillment of the obligation” (NIKOLIĆ/JOVIĆ-LAZIĆ 2011: 116) than actual belief. According to the self-reported attitudes of the respondents of one study, only 27.2 percent of Serbian citizens are “convinced believers who accept everything their religion teaches,” while selective (17.1 percent) and traditional14 (36.9 percent) believers together represent the clear majority among the citizens of Serbia (M. BLAGOJEVIĆ 2011: 53). Given this breakdown, it seems logical that some proportion of Serbian Orthodox Christians with negative attitudes towards homosexuality selectively use religious argumentation to legitimize their already existing secular homophobic views.

The Yugoslav wars of the 1990s promoted a particular kind of macho “warrior-masculinity,” which accompanied traditional, sacral, and patriarchal redefinitions of family and motherliness (cf. Croatia: PAVLOVIĆ 1999; Serbia: PAPIĆ 1999). During the war in Croatia, ethnic and sexual degradation were very frequent, with labels such “homosexual Serbs” given to outsider enemies or “lesbian witches” to national collaborators (PAVLOVIĆ 1999: 134–139). Slobodan Milošević and his bureaucratic “masculine state-nationalism” (cf. PAPIĆ 1994) was – even though he had certain problems with the SOC – quite strongly linked to pro-life discourses, which advocated an increased birth rate to win a “demographic battle” against the Albanian “enemies” in Kosovo (PAPIĆ 1999: 160ff). Sanja ĐURIN (see Chapter in this volume) describes similar processes in Croatia during the 1990s, which further increased pressure on already discriminated-against “fruitless” sexual minorities. Although homosexuality was decriminalized in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1994, as the country was striving towards the Council of Europe membership, public perception of homosexuality probably did not reflect this legislative change.

The reaffirmation of religiously based national traditions was widely promoted in Serbia, even by self-declared atheists. Although Zoran Đindić (2001) was a declared atheist, he and his government decided to restore the SOC as one of the key

14 In the sense of ritual, superficial, customary.
national institutions within the public sphere. A model of “cooperative separation” (ĐURIĆ 2013: 46) was gradually introduced, with state and church cooperating in areas such as religious education, which was reintroduced in public schools in 2001. The SOC also returned to the army barracks, hospitals, and public institutions in general, and the government cultivated a benevolent relationship toward the SOC (cf. ALEKSOV 2008: 356-362) through actions such as supplying state funding for the Sveti-Sava cathedral, creating theology chairs at the university of Belgrade, and financing SOC clergy members in Kosovo. The SOC also became a well networked player by enhancing its approval among the general population and building good relationships with foreign foundations. It also managed to gain some favorable concessions in the 2002 broadcasting law (ibid.).

At the same time, the de-secularization processes taking place in Serbia and Croatia, while coupled with the overemphasis on national identity (cf. PETROVIĆ 2012) that filled the vacuum left by the collapse of both communist Titoism and Yugoslav ideals, were not straightforward returns into the embrace of the church. People who at that time hardly read the Bible were putting icons back onto the walls of their houses and asking the saints for blessing and protection en masse (cf. Serbia: RADIĆ/VUKOMANOVIĆ 2014: 180ff.; 197ff). The SOC resembled more a parent who was being asked for his or her blessing after decisions had been made and less a national guiding force, the ambition of some SOC hierarchs. From this perspective, the Serbian history of overall secular politics was not broken (cf. PETROVIĆ 2012: 73). This continuity might explain why religion remained a part of personal ethics, as opposed to a force that could bring in a decisive number of votes, supporting organizations that promote programs compatible with the SOC’s agenda.

As in Serbia, declared believers in Croatia do not represent a homogenous group. Although a majority (80 percent) condemn same-sex relationships and reject same-sex marriage (79 percent), 40 percent do “not support everything the church teaches”; as evidenced by the fact that the majority approve of premarital sex (63.8 percent), divorce (54.8 percent), and the usage of contraceptives (68.1 percent) (MARINOVIC JEROLIMOV/ANČIĆ 2014: 119). At the same time, tensions remain between liberal-permissive actors and conservative institutions and unions, especially with regard to sexual issues (ŠTULHOFER 2004: 277). Further, according to ŠTULHOFER and SANDFORT (2005: 6–10), after 1989, two major pillars of sexual regulation gradually changed in Eastern Europe and Croatia. As a result, the church gained influence as a moral authority and the family was deeply eroded, which was beneficial for both right-wing and pro-life rhetoric (ibid.).

Looking at this more detailed portrait of religious adherents in Serbia and Croatia, we therefore argue that pro-life movements such as Dveri or U ime obitelji can only partially use religious argumentation, as these two societies are characterized by selective believers and fragmented secularity. Traditional morality therefore has to be updated and translated into more neutral terms and concepts such as family.
The case of *Dveri*: “Serbian families under attack”

Despite the “return of the sacred” (BELL 1978) in Serbia’s public sphere, the country remains politically secular, which can be seen through both the political manifestos of its leading political parties and in the wide-spread view that religion is more a matter of personal ethics than grounds for political activism (cf. BAJOVIĆ 2013). This might be the reason why leading *Dveri* members tend to use generally secular arguments when explaining positions that undeniably have a clear religious background. A good example of this is the semi-profane and semi-sacred concept of family that they have used to oppose homosexuality since 2009 in their “family marches,” which stands in clear contrast to the explicitly religious arguments of sin employed by the SOC. *Dveri* also accepts certain traits of the country’s secular heritage, such as the autonomy of the individual in his or her private sphere (“u četiri zida”[15]). For this reason, *Dveri* (cf. NEŠIĆ 2012a) differentiates between “homosexual orientation” – which is not acceptable, but which is tolerated as a more or less personal matter – and “homosexualism as a totalitarian ideology,”[16] which should, according to *Dveri*, be constrained or forbidden from the public sphere for reasons of public morality, as guaranteed in their interpretation of the Serbian constitution.

In October 2010, on the evening news of the national network RTS, a young father held his daughter in his arms and explained his support for the “family march”:

I’m against it [gay pride parade: D.Š./M.M.], because I believe that the family, the healthy family, between a husband and a wife, is the foundation of this society and this society should be based upon it (RTS 2010a).

For *Dveri* and their supporters, LGBT has become a substitute for the “rotten West” (cf. TOMIĆ 2013: 102), which humiliates the majoritarian value system through the “radical” homosexual minority, which is supported by the current Serbian political regime. *Dveri*’s cry that the Serbian nation is humiliated not only refers to EU accession and the forced acceptance of Kosovo’s independence, but also to publicly visible sexual dissidence, which one may find in their anthology “Global GAYing: Totalitarian ideology of homosexualism”[17] (cf. NEŠIĆ 2012a). This volume links discourses of demographic disaster, anti-Westernism, the renewal of morality, and human dignity. In this volume, a radical, fundamentalist sexual minority and “aggressive homosexuals” (NEŠIĆ 2012b: 6) are – in contrast to those homosexuals who either confine their sexuality to the private sphere or who seek to be cured of their orientation – undermining Serbian religious heritage and “natural families” (ibid.: 5). “Homosexualism” is presented as a totalitarian ideology, similar to communism, whereby minority opinions are forced by a corrupted elite onto the other-

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15 Within one’s four walls.
17 Serbian: Globalno zaGAYavanje: totalitarna ideologija homoseksualizma.
wise moral majority. In this special case the minority opinion would be that homosexuality is something to be treated as normal (ibid.: 6). Minors especially, have to be protected from the “gay march through Serbian institutions” (ibid.: 11). Modern democracies should not allow for the “terror of a minority over the majority” (ibid.), which Dveri argues discriminates against public morality and their support for natural families. They argue that an “aggressive” local LGBT community is being supported by international and global centers of power, which are trying – within the frame of the “New World Order” – to align peripheral cultures and identities with the Anglo-Saxon model and lifestyle (GLIŠIĆ 2012: 14f). From this conspiracy perspective, the New World Order seeks to eliminate regional resistance and weaken family structures in order to form the ideal consumer – one without any cultural, national, or religious distinctiveness (BUCHENAU 2006: 219). For Dveri and those who share their anti-Occidental bias, LGBT activists and NATO forces are allies in the elimination of the spiritual Serb (ibid.: 16ff).

Similar ideas were presented in Ratibor-Rajko Đurđević’s 1997 book Pederska Brigada18, which was published and supported by the Orthodox press. In this book, homosexuals are no longer just “sick”, but are internal enemies of Serbia and agents of the American (i.e., Jewish) world order (BJELIĆ/COLE 2002: 297f). The bloody 2001 gay pride parade took place only two days after Slobodan Milošević extradition to the ICTY19, making LGBT minority appear as almost perfect anti-Serbian traitors, and as messengers of unwanted change in Serbia. Even the in Serbia widely accepted sociologist Slobodan ANTONIĆ (2014) argues, in his latest book on the gay movement, that local Serbian LGBT activism and attempts to arrange the gay pride parade were not only part of a struggle to claim legal recognition, but were also in line with the imperialist agendas of the United States and the EU. Such activists are seen as not only demolishing traditions such as marriage and family, but also as trying to destabilize the Serbian government and pressure it into changing attitudes towards the recognition of Kosovo’s independence (cf. ibid.: 206–220). It is therefore not surprising that articles written by Dveri members and Slobodan Antonić appear frequently in the scientific journal Nova srpska politička misao (NSPM)20, which openly advocates a “patriotic engagement.”21 Even articles by Vladan Glisić and Boško Obradović from the previously discussed 2012 Dveri anthology have appeared in NSPM (although, it should be noted, articles openly criticizing Dveri have also appeared in NSPM).22 According to Dveri, the “ideology of homosexualism” became a state-sponsored project and a method to “humiliate the Serbian people” (DVERI 2014) when the Serbian Autonomous Province of Vojvodina introduced an experimental sexual education program in public schools that

18 English: Faggot Brigade.
19 The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.
20 English: New Serbian Political Thought.
22 Cf. VELJKOVIĆ 2010.
promoted homosexuality as a “normal and positive variety of human sexuality.” As a pro-family movement, Dveri offered the most visible opposition in the mass media to holding the gay pride parade in Belgrade, which was banned three years in a row between 2011 and 2013. Since 2009, the day before the announced parade, Dveri has organized their “family marches” through the center of Belgrade, with the stated goals of protecting family values and opposing the “humiliation of Serbian people” (OBRADOVIĆ 2012: 141). They argue that traditional, religious, and public morality is badly injured by this “parade of shame,” which they see as working against patriotic, sacred, or moral institutions and alliances (ibid.: 142f). All this ends in a “minority dictatorship” (ibid.: 144) and a “pogrom against the differently minded” (ibid.), which in their view is not compatible with the democratic foundations of the state.23

In its Family Charter (cf. DVERI 2013) Dveri advocate the creation of a “new culture of marriage,” in opposition to those who call marriage “the institution that has died out.” They support increasing birthrates, as well as finding ways to “return mothers, fathers, and children to their homes”, opposing those imagined others who want to separate children from their parents. All of this is to be achieved through a “truly domestic economy” (ibid.), as global capitalism represents the major threat to Serbian families. Their main goal is to make family policy the dominant policy in Serbia, by defending family morality and creating a “family model of society” (ibid.). They want to defend life, family, and freedom of religion. They understand family as the “basic cell of the society” (ibid.: 1). The “natural family” represents the “ideal and the unchanging form of the marital community, inherent to human nature,” and it is the only “real sexual community which creates possibilities for natural and responsible creation of new life” (ibid.: 3–4). In their opinion, both men and women are equal in their dignity and inherent human rights, but have different functions, which culture, law, and policies should consider (ibid.: 7).

As they believe that economic development of Serbia depends on families, Dveri advocates for the private ownership of land, housing, and capital, the sources of independence and guarantors of democracy. The tax system should help to

23 On the other hand, high-ranking church-leaders, such as Amfilohije Radović (Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral), were also accused of calling for a pogrom of the LGBT minority. In 2009 Amfilohije condemned lesbians and gay men through pointed use of a metaphor, saying that “a tree which bears no fruits needs to be cut and thrown into the fire”. A year later, discussing the gay pride parade in Belgrade (2010), he said how “stench has poisoned the Capital”, which was “much more evil-smelling” than the uranium that NATO forces left in 1999 during the bombardment of Yugoslavia (B92 2010b; op. cit. STAKIČ 2011: 39). Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović comes from the circle of Serbian theologians who were educated to be critical of the anthropocentric West, which has lost the balance between God and men (MAKRIDES 2008: 124f). From this perspective, LGBT human rights are a further step and sign of human aberration. For Dveri “homosexualizing Serbia” under the cover of progressiveness means the elimination of the traditional value system, as well as strengthening the alliance with the decadent Western cultures that never treated Serbia respectfully.
strengthen the autonomy of the families (ibid.: 9). Serbia’s economic problems come from the “destruction of family, moral downfall, wholesale of the social and natural resources, as well as individualistic-consumerist culture” (ibid: 10). Through this charter Dveri has finally formulated both its secular argumentation and its vision of human rights, democracy, and society.

To sum up the Serbian case study, Dveri’s agenda has three main traits: stabilizing birth rates, anti-Occidentalism, and critiquing the concept of human rights; it also seeks to make international connections around these core issues.

Stabilizing birth rates: Although birth is usually regarded as a private matter, it can become perceived as a security issue for any group that finds itself under pressure from a demographically more dynamic competitor. In the Serbian case, the perceived threat mainly comes from the neighboring Albanian (from Kosovo) and Bosniak Muslims (from southwestern Serbia). The drop in Serbian birth rates is being compared to a wide-spread disease in Serbian society, and has been labeled the “white plague” (bela kuga) in Serbian public discourse. Boško Obradović, Dveri’s spokesperson, connects this to the gay pride parade:

The gay parade is against the traditional will of the Serbian citizens and against all traditional religious communities in Serbia. And in this moment, when the Serbian state should support families, it cannot give priority to the gay parade as well as in the moment, when Serbs suffer in northern Kosovo [...]. Serbia is annually losing 300,000 inhabitants. We have below one child per married couple and the oldest population in the World. The white plague is a political issue [...] (PINK 2011).

24 Serbian historian and politician Ćedomir Antić (2006: 68) claims that “[a]ccording to the scientifically sound estimates by the demographers, the population of Serbia north of Kosovo and Metohija will by 2050 fall to around three and a half million. By that time, the population of Kosovo and Metohija would reach around the same number. The Serbian politicians of today would probably live to see a creation of a new nation-State on the same territory which would not be a Serbian state” (ibid.). By mid-21st century both, Albanians and Serbs, will have populations of a similar size, with one important difference: The Albanians in Kosovo are going to live in a society of young people, while the Serbs will be living in a society of pensioners. Cast as an issue of national security, sexuality, in the view of Serbian nationalists, ceases to be a strictly private matter. Traditional gender roles and family patterns need to be upheld, as they were the only ones that had a record of providing birth rates which might guarantee the survival of the nation.
Anti-Occidentalism25 in Serbia (cf. MAKRIDES/UFFELMANN 2003; BRÜNING 2012) is in part religiously motivated, and has changed over the years with partial adaptations of anti-Americanism, as well as critiques of communism, globalism, capitalism, liberalism, and multiculturalism (MAKRIDES 2008: 119). From a Dveri point of view, further integration into the generally anti-Serbian Western civilization may require abandoning the very last thing that Serbdom should abandon: its faith. The West is perceived as hostile due to the influence of the Vatican, issues related to Serbian traditions, support for Kosovo Albanians, and due to the fact that it tends to simplistically perceive the Serbs as a sub-category of the Slavic Orthodox Russians. In addition to their enemies within, the Serbs also have enemies in the outside world. Conceding to outside pressures may render the Serbs unable to respond to the existential and economic challenges they are facing, both now and in the not-so-distant future. These pressures are of an ideological nature, and LGBT rights are part of the “dictate from the Brussels bureaucracy” that wants Serbian compliance with the globalist aims of the liberal-secular – and thus assumed to be anti-Christian – transnational, consumerist upper-middle-class elite (cf. ANTONIĆ 2014: 206-220).

However, one should be careful about making sweeping generalizations about the ideology underpinning this anti-Occidentalism, as there are instances when not everything in the West was considered wrong or rejected. The SOC had good relationships with the Anglican Church, mostly thanks to St. Nikolaj (Velimirović) of Ohrid. In recent years, the patriarch of the SOC (His Holiness) Irinej stated that if the EU respects the traditional values of the Serbian people, one should not have anything against Serbia becoming a member state (RTS 2010b). This is one issue on which Dveri and the patriarch’s position are visibly different. The SOC does not openly advocate a political alliance with Russia and has a relatively cautious stance towards the social teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church. Skepticism towards the EU represents a strong component of Dveri’s anti-Occidentalism, especially on issues of sexuality. Russia is perceived as a country that, both geopolitically and in terms of values, can protect Serbia from Western malevolence. Getting closer to Russia also includes emulating its policies on birth rates and sexuality in general, such as its 100-year ban on gay manifestations on Russian soil. It comes as no surprise that Dveri maintains strong connections with like-minded Russian organizations; this could be observed during their campaigns against LGBT rights. In a Russ-
sian-like way Dveri claim to oppose “the [Serbian] state project” of “promoting the ideology of homosexuality” (DVERI 2014). Alexey Komov, the representative of the Foundation of St. Basil the Great and the executive secretary of the Patriarchal Commission on the Family of the Russian Orthodox Church, voiced his support for Dveri in 2013 during the World Congress of Families held in Belgrade.

In a TV debate (RTS 2012), spokesperson Obradović complained that “in Serbia one only speaks about the West” (ibid.), while in Orthodox countries such as Ukraine and Russia “propaganda of homosexuality” towards minors is prohibited by criminal law, supported by the majority of the parliament (ibid.). He also warned of the alleged “Spanish scenario”:

You know what the problem in Spain is? ‘Mummy’ and ‘Daddy’ are disposed. Now you have to call them ‘First Parent’ and ‘Second Parent’. You may not say ‘Mum’ and ‘Dad’ anymore because you are insulting homosexuals (ibid.).

Making international connections around these core issues: To connect with other countries with similar complaints, Dveri has formed alliances with Russian, French, and Anglo-Saxon pro-life movements to support their bid for an increased birthrate and the promotion of specific children rights. Even though a specific form of religious, rigid anti-Occidental nationalism is their ideology, Dveri decided to integrate themselves into the World Congress of Families, a broader, global organization.26 In this way they can draw on contacts and resources from other similar movements in the West and East, mostly from North America and Russia. In the words of Obradović, Dveri represents “the first political family movement in the World.” Dveri frequently rejects being labeled as a political party, but chooses the label movement instead. On September 26, 2013, a day before their “family week” started (which, apart from “family marches” against the gay pride parade, included a series of round tables, organized in Belgrade) Dveri became a partner organization of the World Congress of Families. The Communications Director of the “World Congress of Families,” the US-American Don Feder, supported Dveri in their crusade and explained at their press conference that the “demographic winter, the decline of birthrates is the result of disastrous ideas, attitudes and policies circulating in the Western world since the end of the first world war”27. To reach their objectives, Dveri cooperates with Christian and anti-liberal Western movements and forces. In their communiqués, member organizations of the World Congress of Families like The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society hailed Dveri for their “heroic efforts” to pressure the authorities not to allow the announced gay pride parade to

26 Cf. DVERI Press Conference 20.09.2013: Dveri su prvi politički porodični pokret u svetu [Dveri are the first political family movement in the world]. See: www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWSvVeI5lIk (07.10.2014).

Three traits of Croatian Tea-Party Conservatism: *U ime obitelji*

Inspired by the French protests against François Hollande’s *marriage pour tous*, Croatia had its “conservative revolution” (ČURIĆ; 20f) against the ruling mistrusted political elite in 2013, which was marked by an initiated referendum on marriage. The referendum asked: “Do you support that within the constitution of the Republic of Croatia marriage should be exclusively defined as a union of a woman and a man?”

In Spring 2013, a few weeks before entering the EU, the conservative citizens’ initiative *U ime obitelji* (*In the Name of the Family*) collected approximately 750,000 signatures (20 percent of the Croatian electorate), and in December of the same year 65 percent voted for an exclusionary heterosexual definition of marriage within the constitution of the Republic of Croatia. The referendum had been triggered by previous disputes between state institutions and Catholic civil society on sex education in public schools, as well as by the center-left government’s announcement of the introduction of a legal framework for same-sex couples similar to that of Germany (2001). The Croatian government and the ministry of education, under the guidance of the social democrat Željko Jovanović, argued in favor of the contested fourth module of Health Education, which was thematically related to “sex/gender equality and responsible sexual behavior.” The module was compliant with the “United Nations declaration on sexual orientation and gender identity” (2008) and human rights discourses, and promoted tolerance towards sexual difference, with homosexuality presented as one variety of human sexuality (BIJELIĆ/HODŽIĆ: 55).

The anti-government coalition of *U ime obitelji* garnered logistical support from the Catholic Church, as they were allowed to collect signatures in front of churches during times when many people were attending church services. Both the church and Catholic civil society, opposed “unscientific homosexual propaganda” and “gender ideology” of the “secularists” in schools and within family law. The Croatian Cardinal Josip Bozanić and the Croatian Episcopal Conference argued that sex education that distinguishes between sex and gender is “destroying humanity” (ibid.: 53–57; HRT 1 2012). The main actors of the Catholic subculture and civil society are GROZD29, who advocate a sexual education program based on sexual abstinence.

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Their chairpersons, Ladislav Ilčić and Željka Markić, who were also chairs of a small a patriotic, Christian democratic pro-life party called HRAST\(^{30}\) became the central co-founders of U ime obitelji. According to the political program of HRAST, one of their main aims is to fight the demographic disaster and to protect life, marriage, family, and children.\(^{31}\) One could assume that GROZD and U ime obitelji represent an attempt to increase the political impact of HRAST within Croatian public and civil society. Their goal is to initiate a referendum grounded on the motto “marriage = women + man. Anything else is something different.” This goal was explained by Željka Markić in Glas Koncila, as well as in an open debate organized by the Croatian newspaper Večernji list:

> The best place to have and educate children is marriage. I don’t want children being adopted by same sex couples in Croatia. This is not consistent with my values, my culture, and identity (op. cit. STANIĆ 2013: 6).

As in Obradović’s Spanish scenario is brought up:

> It concerns all of us whether I’m ‘First Parent’ or ‘Second Parent’ and if children could be adopted by two men or two women […]. A redefinition of marriage carries far-reaching consequences for the whole society. Politicians or lobby groups should not decide about this. We are for democracy (op. cit. ROMIĆ/KNEŽEVIĆ 2013).

Actually, adoption by homosexual couples was never mentioned by the Croatian government, for which it was criticized by LGBT organizations such as Kontra. Regardless, children were an important issue throughout U ime obitelji’s pro-family campaign, which was already under way in January 2013, as Judith Reisman travelled through Croatia in her crusade against “communist sex education” (op. cit. JOVANOVIĆ 2013: 125). Such sex education, in Reisman’s view, abuses children and promotes pedophilia. Reisman was invited to Croatia because the TV show of Karolina Vidović Kršto was taken off the air by the Croatian national broadcaster HRT after it aired “The Kinsey Syndrome” on December 29, 2012, a documentary on Alfred Kinsey’s work that accuses the famous American sexologist of pedophilia. In January and February 2013 Reisman and Kršto attended public tribunes, including one on the premises of the Archdiocese of Split, where Reisman stated that “it would be false to teach children that homosexuality is normal” (op. cit. VUKOVIĆ 2013). Judith Reisman also contributed as an expert in a published interview on “sexual sabotage” and on the normalization of homosexuality in the previously discussed Dveri (2012) anthology, as well as on Dveri’s official web-

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30 Hrvatski Rast - Pokret za uspješnu Hrvatsku. English: “Croatian Growth – Movement for a successful Croatia.”

In Croatia she also engaged in a public debate with sociologist Aleksandar Štulhofer, a co-author of the sex education program promoted by the government (cf. NOVA TV 2013); the same day, Reisman also received an audience in the Croatian parliament – Sabor. In her lecture she warned Croatia about the dangers of promoting promiscuity. Her lecture was attended and welcomed by the opposition representatives only, mostly right-wing conservative parties such as European People’s Party members: HDZ, HDSSB, and HSP (ibid.).

The appearance of the American publicist’s appearances, which were critical of the “liberal,” “anti-scientific,” and “ideological” sexual education introduced by the center-left government, had been organized by Vigilare, an NGO led by the Australian-Croatian sociologist Dr. John Vice Batarelo. Vigilare – which in Latin means “to be awake” – claims “to include the silent majority into democratic processes” and aims to protect traditional values such as marriage and family. During her journey through Croatia, Reisman was criticized and even insulted by Croatian students, as well as by much of the media and academic community, including the Dean of the Faculty of Political Science of Zagreb University, Nenad Zakošek, who questioned her scientific qualifications at one of her public lectures in Zagreb.

An organization that is closely connected to Vigilare – in fact, sharing the same floor in Grahorova Street in Zagreb – is the Center for Cultural Renewal. The Center’s chairperson is the American-Croatian Dr. Stjepo Bartulica, who promotes a market economy and a kind of limited-governance Tea-Party conservatism as a means to escape Croatia’s current moral and economic crisis. Both Anglo-American inspired organizations, Vigilare and the Center for Cultural Renewal, organize conferences and festivals on modern conservatism and pro-life manifestations; one such event is Kulfest, where American anti-abortion activists, such as Lila Rose, hold lectures on children’s or fetal rights.

All of the organizations discussed in this section, from GROZD and Vigilare to the Center for Cultural Renewal, participated in U ime obitelji and were central organizers and supporters of the referendum on marriage. The logic of Croatian neo-conservatives is quite similar to that of Dveri, i.e., that secularist elites are enforcing an unscientific world view with regard to homosexuality. With the introduction of registered same-sex civil unions in Summer 2014, Vigilare claimed that “lies on the

34 Cf. VIGILARE’s official homepage “Who we are”: http://www.vigilare.org/hr/content/tko-smo (25.02.2015).
nature of humanity” were being spread, as homosexual relations cannot be stable, loyal, or procreative (GLAS KONCILA 2014a: 8). The new legal framework for same-sex couples, which was not called “same-sex marriage” and which did not include the legal possibility of adoption, was still considered by Vigilare to be deeply “ideological,” because it discriminated against the collective value system of the majority, which had previously been demonstrated through the referendum on marriage (ibid.). By introducing same-sex unions, parliament had “raised their hands for the death of the Croatian people” (GLAS KONCILA 2014b: 2). During the debates on sex education in schools (2012/2013), GROZD also claimed that unscientific elements, “gender ideology,” and “homosexual propaganda” were being introduced to schools; they argued that such content ran counter to scientific knowledge, as well as to parents’ rights to educate their children in accordance with certain moral codes. Ladislav Ilčić stated in Autumn 2012 in a HRT TV news that:

When we talk about sexuality there exist very strong and radical homosexual and feminist lobbies who try to enforce their ideology and propaganda through schools […] (HRT 1 2012).

To summarize the Croatian example, U ime obitelji offers a kind of US-American-inspired, limited-governance Tea-Party conservatism whose policy on sexuality focuses on the ideas that strong and healthy families are necessary to get out of the economic, demographic and political crisis; that the moral majority should be defended by democratic means; and that equality for homosexuals is not supported by scientific knowledge. The second and third points underline their purely rational-secular method, which combines scientific legitimation with modern democratic means and professional PR management.

Conclusion: Family as A Semi-Secular Argument

It is not surprising that in times of economic crisis the family serves as a symbol of security, making it an object worthy of defense. In both Serbia and Croatia today, conservative groups claim that economic development and the security of society depend on “healthy families.” The main findings of our comparison of Dveri and U ime obitelji is that “sexual othering” can be promoted from either an anti-occidental (in the case of Serbia) or “middle European” (in the case of Croatia) standpoint, using fundamentally secular or religious modes, without changing the fundamental arguments. Religious morality is, in the case of both countries, basically substituted with majoritarian democratic “values” that are perceived as being under attack by liberal-secularist, sexual, and gender-minority ideologies. Dveri are basically left-wing nationalists with an emphasis on anti-Occidentalism, anti-globalism, and anti-capitalism, as their family charter (cf. DVERI 2013) and emphasis on a “truly domestic economy” show. U ime obitelji brings together moderate middle-class conservatives, participants of the Western democratic project who are in favor of a lib-
eral market economy. The members of both groups see the renewal of traditional values as the way out of the current social, demographic, and economic decline. While their methods are similar in many areas of civil society engagement (e.g., demonstrations, info booths), their public appearance, words, and body language differ greatly: Dveri promotes a radically patriarchal sexual nationalism and a local economy, with explicit homophobia, as evidenced by their use of the pejorative term peder⁵⁷ and by their labeling of the gay pride parade as pederbal⁵⁸. In contrast, U ime obitelji employs more female spokespersons, such as Željka Markić, and is bourgeois and moderate. In general, this group’s homophobia tends to be more implicit that explicit, in keeping with their Croatian version of Tea-Party conservatism.

However, despite their differences, both groups other homosexuals as a threat to the “normal family” by using morbid worse-case scenarios like the ‘First Parent’ ‘Second Parent’ “dictatorship.” Sexual minorities are marked as others, and, especially in this time of economic crisis, they function as perfect scapegoats. On the international level, while both movements are deeply integrated into global pro-family networks – with Judith Reisman’s activities in both countries serving as a good example – they never make reference to each other in their public appearances.

It seems that their pro-life agenda apparently should not lose its nationalistic legitimation. Looking at the examples discussed in the present paper, HUNTINGTON’s (1996) claim that Western Catholic societies have developed a fundamentally different perception of human rights than their Orthodox counterparts does not fully reflect reality. While Dveri tend to publicly cooperate more than U ime obitelji with Russian Orthodox movements, and Željka Markić supported the Catholic-inspired referendum of the Alliance for the Family in Slovakia⁶⁹ (2015), both movements cultivate strong links with American pro-life movements and anti-gay activists, from whom they gain important contacts and access to resources. Although presented differently, their arguments, examples, and disaster scenarios are almost identical.

In terms of de-secularization, neither Serbia nor Croatia are becoming religiously fundamentalist states, nor has religion fully disappeared from the public sphere. Both Dveri and U ime obitelji respect – in classic bourgeoisie fashion – the division between public and private spheres when addressing the issue of homosexuality. Traditional morality is translated into modern democratic terminology and verified in terms of its effect on children. While individual freedom to be homosexual is granted, the entrance of individuals as homosexuals into the public sphere remains too much of a challenge for their “permission-concept” (FORST 2000: 124f) of tolerance. Within this fragmented secularity, some patterns of traditional patriarchal culture have been conserved in both predominantly Catholic and Orthodox societies. Neither represent purely counter-secular movements (BERGER 1999) like the Is-

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⁵⁷ English: “Pederast” or “Faggot.”
⁵⁸ English: Faggot ball.
Islamic State, as they apply purely rational-secular scientific or semi-secular (i.e., family-based) argumentation.

They are clearly anti-government movements, a viable strategy within societies that, according to the latest European Values Survey, exhibit huge mistrust in political leaders and government institutions (Serbia: 85.5 percent; Croatia: 86.2 percent). The political significance of these two groups is a matter of debate. Despite the 65 percent support for their goal, 

**HRAST** did not become a major political force after the referendum, and **Dveri** did not manage to reach the 5 percent threshold on the previous two parliamentary elections, and were forced to forge political alliances with the like-minded parties (DSS) in order to gain a greater chance of obtaining parliamentary representation. Their impact was more visible locally, as they managed to win a significant number of seats in several local councils, with 15 percent in Čačak being their best result. Further, their capacity to raise issues and force major political players to respond to their challenges may make them far more influential than their election results might indicate. Their success should come as no surprise, as, in an atmosphere of widespread social fragmentation, they are the only group with a clear pro-family agenda: in the post-Yugoslav “desert of post-socialism,” the eroded position of the family is clearly a real and powerful social problem (HORVAT/ŠTIKS 2015).

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Spray-Canned Discourses
Reimagining Gender, Sexuality, and Citizenship
Through Linguistic Landscapes in the Balkans

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Introduction

As linguistic beings, people occupy space producing language, endowing it with a distinctive character referred to by many as identity (cf. BRUBAKER/COOPER 2000). Public and commercial signage, mottos, slogans, graffiti, and advertised commodities are typical ingredients of the linguistic landscape (cf. LANDRY/BOURHIS 1997; SPOLSKY/COO PER 1991; CURTIN 2009). Drawing on recent research in sociolinguistics and anthropology, the present paper focuses on the areas of Gazi/Kerameikos and Stadiou Street, in central Athens, as well as the Stari Grad area, in Belgrade, with the aim of investigating the role of language in the symbolic and ideological construction of space. Our goal is to show that linguistic landscapes are formed by, among other things, discourses currently circulating in and about certain spaces – spaces turned into places via human agency and subjectivity; places which are embodied and may well be inscribed, gendered or sexed, and, of course, contested (cf. LEFEBVRE 1991 and especially LOW/LAWRENCE-ZÚÑIGA 2003); indeed, places contested on gendered and sexual grounds.

As people occupy space and turn it into place, aspects of the discourses they produce find their way onto city walls in the form of written messages (e.g., graffitied slogans). These messages, as any other form of language in use, are written utterances, and therefore perform a variety of speech acts (AUSTIN 1962; SEARLE 1979). Moreover, such utterances eventually come to stand in an indexical relation (cf. JAKOBSON 1990; SILVERSTEIN 1976; OCHS 1992; DURANTI 1997, 2003) to the places in which they were created, and to the place that they had an active role in constructing at a certain historical moment. Although research on linguistic landscapes has long had an interest in issues of bilingualism and multilingualism in public spaces, with a special focus on linguistic diversity and vitality (cf. e.g., LANDRY/BOURHIS 1997; CENOZ/GORTER 2006; contributions in SHOHAMY/GORTER 2009; GRBAVAC 2013), there is growing interest in more experimental approaches dealing with the symbolic meaning of written messages in relation to
discourses on the social order, local hierarchies, and hegemonies (cf. SHOHAMY/WAKSMAN 2009 and contributions in SHOHAMY/BEN-RAFAEL/BARNI 2010).

However, to our knowledge, to date there has been no examination of the speech-act dimension of graffitied public discourse, despite the fact these written messages demonstrably perform speech acts. These speech acts have a number of characteristics that set them apart, precisely because they are written:

1. They are less fleeting, but this does not mean that they are un-utterance like: they are at least theoretically repeatable (or immanent), and the time when they are encountered, as well as the wider context, is a crucial aspect of the message they convey.

2. Every time we encounter the same written message it produces a new speech act through its author (GOFFMAN 1981), although

3. the author typically addresses a collectivity. This collectivity may be one with which she or he identifies (i.e., a we; cf. PAVLIDOU 2014), or one in which she or he takes no part (i.e., a you) rather than a single interlocutor.

In other words, what is atypical about graffitied messages is not their utterance status, but the medium in which they are cast (cf. LYONS 1995: 34ff).²

At the same time, as linguistic landscape research is coming of age, there is also manifest interest in largely monolingual urban spaces (cf. CANAKIS 2012, 2014; PAPEN 2012; GRBAVAC 2013), in an effort to show the usefulness of linguistic landscapes in investigating aspects of public discourse, social beliefs, and cultural beliefs on current issues. According to GRBAVAC (2013: 501), “linguistic landscape research can lead to various conclusions about speech community and its social and political implications, about prevailing cultural beliefs; it mirrors different social issues.” The innovative aspects of the present study are a) that it sets out to investigate aspects of the linguistic landscape in urban spaces, which are not generally thought of as multilingual, and b) that is does so with a focus on citizenship, and on its intricate interplay with dominant discourses on sexuality, ethnicity, and nationhood (cf. e.g., LAMBEVSKI 1999; BLAGOJEVIĆ 2011; KAHLINA 2011; MIKUŠ 2011; JOHNSON 2012). This paper envisages a dialogue between the latest developments in sociolinguistic linguistic landscape research and social scientific anthropological work on gender, sexuality, and citizenship in the Balkans.

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¹ Note that GOFFMAN (1981: 144–145) famously holds that the term speaker conflates at least three roles: author, animator, and principal. Here we choose author as the person “who has selected the sentiments that are expressed and the words in which they are encoded,” and we follow MCCAWLEY (1999: 595) in using these terms not in an absolute manner, but dependent on frames, in an attempt to approach the speech act produced.

² LYONS (1995: 34) reminds us that “language must not be confused with speech. Indeed, one of the most striking properties of natural languages is their relative independence of the medium in which they are realized.”
ingly, we assume an explicitly interdisciplinary perspective, which allows for an intersectional approach to precarious citizenship, illustrating the interplay of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion.

Just as with nationality, ethnicity, and other social classifications and categorizations, gender, sex and sexuality are prone to be instrumentalized for hegemonic interpretations. The *writings on the wall* described below are part of what could be called the gendered, sexed and sexual linguistic landscapes of the two Balkan capitals examined here, Athens and Belgrade. Graffiti (with the exception of toilet graffiti, which has been extensively explored by BRUNER/KELSO 1980; ARLUKE et al. 1987; MOONWOMON 1995; GREEN 2003 and many others) has not been significant for research in gender linguistics, and nor has gender/sexuality been central to research on linguistic landscapes to date (cf. MILANI 2014b). In this respect, this paper comes to fill a research gap. Looking into this public use of language provides an indication of the discursive relevance of gendered/sexed messages in linguistic landscapes. This emerges especially vividly in times of crisis, when othering and (verbal) social exclusion is instrumentalized as a means of restoring “normalcy” in different national, gender/sex, and class contexts (cf. KIMMEL 2013; ERŐS 2014).

SHOHAMY/WAKSMAN (2009: 316) argue that “the broad repertoire of LL [linguistic landscape] text types as situated in the public space can be conceptualized within the discourses of existing human culture. As such they are part of meaning construction that serves various social functions and is subject to various discourse forces.” The linguistic landscape of areas in central Athens and Belgrade will be the “ecological arena” (cf. SHOHAMY/WAKSMAN 2009) in which we will investigate issues of language and citizenship as they appear in dominant discourses and counter-discourses. The relevant data (which are largely monolingual in Greek and Serbian) have been collected at various intervals between 2009 and 2014 in Athens and Belgrade. The time span of the data collection is crucial, as it covers periods such as the NATO summit in Belgrade and recent developments in post-crisis Athens (i.e., since 2010).

The data consist mostly of photographs of the linguistic landscape; these are referred to as *signs*, which are understood as “any piece of written text within a spatially defined frame” (BACKHAUS 2007: 66). The variables to be examined may include, among other things, the date on which the sign was photographed, the area surveyed, whether it is a government or a private sign, the type of establishment where it appears, the type of sign and the type of discourse in urban space, the number of languages on the sign and their order of appearance, the font and size of the text, the visibility of the sign and mobility of the text carrier, and the number of scripts and their relative order of appearance (cf. GRBAVAC 2013: 506). Such details will be shown to be of interest in the appropriation of public space by linguistic landscape agents.

In the following section, we will briefly outline our two linguistic landscapes and the issues we will be investigating.
Setting the scene and theoretical grounding

By the late 1990s, Gazi, located at the edge of central Athens, had become gentri-
ified, and was emerging as a center of Athenian nightlife for younger crowds. Sig-
ificantly for our purposes, it has gradually developed into an alternative neighbor-
hood, becoming the Athenian gay neighborhood par excellence (cf. YANNAKOPOULOS 2010). Over the past five years or so, the area around Kerameikos metro station – the neighborhood’s center – has become more associated with mainstream youth culture, while more “alternative” lifestyles are moving to the periphery, extending southwards to the still largely undeveloped industrial area of Rouf, so as “to avoid the hot breath of Gazi,” as a local puts it. All of these developments, crucially indexed by the various semiotic means composing the linguistic landscape of the area (cf. SHOHAMY/WAKSMAN 2009), have taken place in just over a decade, and have left indelible linguistic marks.

A variety of written messages–often signed by activist groups such as ΔΣΤΩ (“city”) in Figure 1 – specifically contribute to the construction of the area not only as an alternative space but more specifically as LGBTQ space; a space where different views on (homo-)sexuality and identity are launched and contested in an attempt to claim and appropriate space (cf. CURTIN 2009). The assertions in Figures 1–2 and 3–4 do just that:

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3 Including a marked immigrant presence, going at least as far back as the developments that led to the Arab Spring, and often much further in the past.

4 Here, the local refers to the largely commodified, mainstream nightlife strip that Gazi ended up being; cf. PAPEN (2012) for a similar development in Berlin’s Prenzlauer Berg.
(1) Η ΕΤΕΡΟΦΥΛΟΦΙΛΙΑ ΔΕΝ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΦΥΣΙΚΗ, ΕΙΝΑΙ ΝΟΡΜΑ (i eτerofilofilia δεν iне фисики, iне норма). ‘Heterosexuality is not natural, it is the norm’.

(2) ΣΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟ ΤΩΝ ΚΑΝΟΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΙΜΑΣΤΕ ΟΛΕΣ ΞΕΝΟΙ (ston kόsmo ton kanonikón ímaste óles kséni). ‘In the world of the normal all of us are foreigners’; note that gender agreement is “queered” as óles nf (‘all’: feminine) does not agree with kséni mn (‘foreigners’: masculine).5

(3) ΣΚΑΤΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΟΜΟΚΑΝΟΝΙΚΟΣΤΗΤΑ (skatá sti̯n omokanonikó̯tita). ‘Shit on homonormativity’.6

(4) ΕΞΩΦΥΛΕΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΩΤΕΣ (kseftíles patriôtes). ‘Disgraced patriots’.

Meanwhile, changes in the social fabric are also marked by the language produced in public space. As Gazi is changing and the mainstream gay scene gradually moves further north, so do the slogans in the main square begin to be replaced (e.g., by hip-hop graffiti), leaving less prominent space to messages with gendered and sexual

5 The subscripts fn/m here and elsewhere stand for feminine and masculine grammatical gender. The phrase óles kséni queers gender agreement, as it combines a feminine adjective with a masculine noun.

6 The term homonormativity was originally used to describe the practices of gay men and lesbians who act like heterosexuals, thereby reaping the benefits of heteronormativity (cf. DUGGAN 2002). However, more recent work (MOTSCHENBACHER/STEGU 2013; CANAKIS 2015) suggests that homonormativity aims at regulating and valorizing certain forms of homosexuality as the norm. The rebuke of homonormativity is important in this context as it directly points to enhanced LGBTQ visibility in this area.
relevance. Immigrant presence in the area is also manifested in the linguistic landscape both directly (Figure 4) and indirectly (Figure 2), a fact which underscores the dynamic character of the linguistic landscape and lends support for its investigation as a key component of contemporary sociolinguistic inquiry.

Some 2km away, Stadiou Street, one of three main routes connecting Omonoia and Syntagma Squares, and among the leafiest thoroughfares until 2010, tells a starkly different urban story, one of de-gentrification, in contrast to the re-gentrification of Gazi/Kerameikos: While the forbiddingly expensive jewelry and clothing stores, as well a couple of top hotels are still there, Stadiou maintains this character only for some 50 meters, beyond which it has been radically de-gentrified, and appropriated by the others of Greek society (cf. Yannakopoulos/Giannitsiotis 2010). The people typically occupying Exarcheia Square—the undisputed anarchist quarter of the center—and the spray-canned messages on Stadiou’s prized national monuments and exclusive shops testify to just that:

7 Which is not true, however, of the visibility of the immigrant population, with which erstwhile LGBTQ frequenters and inhabitants were largely affiliated.
From Piraeus to Pangrati: With Swastikas or not homophobia, racism, and transphobia are going strong.’

8 KELPNO, the Center for Control and Prevention of Diseases, became notorious for pillorying HIV-positive female sex-workers, under the auspices of the then-Minister of Health, Andreas Loverdos.
hegemonic discourses in Serbia since the most recent wars. To support our argument that linguistic landscapes are formed by discourses circulating in and around certain places at given points in time – i.e., the argument that discourse is a historical construct – we examine these areas of Stari Grad. We will show that once aspects of such discourses find their way onto city walls, they eventually come to stand in an indexical relation to the very places in which they were created.

Trg Republike, the hub of sociopolitical life in the Serbian capital, is rife with messages of all kinds. Along with highly diverse graffiti, these messages offer snapshots of current discourses and counter-discourses on a variety of topics as diverse as national sovereignty and pride, Cyrillic vs. Latin script in Serbia (cf. BUGARSKI 1997, 2001, 2012; R. D. GREENBERG 2008), solidarity with neighboring countries (cf. Figures 34, 35), economic sustainability, and the future of local youth (cf. J. GREENBERG 2014); these topics also extend to gendered and sexed subjectivities vis-à-vis national sovereignty, ethnicity, religion, and citizenship (cf. J. GREENBERG 2006; MIKUŠ 2011; BLAGOJEVIĆ 2011; JOHNSON 2012; CANAKIS 2013), the focus of the present paper.

Of particular interest in the present paper – as in the previous discussion of Athens – are messages dealing with ethnosexual issues – notably, LGBTQ issues. These issues are almost impossible to tease apart from discourses of citizenship, incorporating national sovereignty and pride, EU integration, and the insecurities intensified by the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008 in present-day Serbia (cf. J. GREENBERG 2006; BLAGOJEVIĆ 2011; CANAKIS 2013). Moreover, while time-honored intolerant stances and discourses by extremist right-wing groups such as Obraz and 1389 inform many messages on Stari Grad walls, there are also clear attempts at inscribing non-normative, alternative human experiences, in a process of claiming visibility by symbolically appropriating public space (cf. esp. JOHNSON 2012), in this case, public space as visible as Trg Republike and Terazije.

Dorčol, which is jokingly referred to as Silikonska dolina (‘Silicon Valley’, whence also Dorčolska dolina, ‘Dorcol Valley’) is located just northwest of Trg Republike and neighboring Kalemegdan fortress. This has been a preeminently urban, middle class, and multicultural area of the city for centuries, a place where you find the only mosque and one of the older synagogues in the city. Dorčol, spreading downhill towards the Danube, is the local Silicon Valley in the Beogradan imaginary, offering a posh lifestyle for the emergent post-war elite, who can afford (silicone) breast implants and dinner in the neighborhood’s upmarket restaurants. Dorčol’s proximity to the university also makes it a major hub of student life, with the attendant concerns – intellectual and otherwise. Football, politics, and football politics loom large on Dorčol walls, as do alternative lifestyles. Here, Beograni of all walks of life meet in the most profusely inscribed parts of town –

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9 Its very name comes from the Turkish dört yol “four roads,” alluding to the crossing of main thoroughfares.
extreme right-wing and Obraz enthusiasts and fans of the football clubs Crvena Zvezda (Red Star) and Partizan meet local anarchists and LGBTQ activists, engaging in often heated intertextual graffitied debates on citizenship in present-day Serbia (cf. Figure 28). Here, citizenship has, demonstrably, as much to do with recognizing or refusing to recognize the Bosnian-Serb military leader Ratko Mladić as a national hero as it has with insisting on or challenging designations of the Serb national subject. These definitions hold great power, potentially excluding, for example, non-Christian Orthodox, non-heterosexual, or pro-choice individuals from Srpstvo (“Serbdom”), the national body.

Looking at gendered and sexed citizenship in Athens and Belgrade through the linguistic landscape has to do with public literacy practices and, more specifically, counter-literacies (PENNYCOOK 2009, 2010). Graffiti, as politically significant scribbled speech in public space, often goes against the grain of local conceptions of national propriety and respectability; this is especially true when it addresses issues of gendered and sexual normalcy (cf. MOSSE 1982, 1985a, 1985b; PRYKE 1998) or masculinity (cf. NAGEL 1998), which is indexically related to active, agentive sexuality in the wider geopolitical area under investigation. This area includes other ex-Republics of Yugoslavia (cf. e.g., LAMBEVSKI (1999) on Macedonia and KAHLINA (2011) on Croatia), and far beyond (cf. KULPA/MIZIELINSKA 2011).

Our data can also be considered in the light of similar developments in Eastern Europe after 1989; if so, Athens and Belgrade should then be understood as examples, and are not intended to invoke or support stereotypes. This is especially relevant for Belgrade, where local extremist nationalist groups were allowed to represent the city as a center of masculinist intolerance towards sexual otherness (cf. WATSON 1993; GSA 2010; CANAKIS 2013) and Serbian nationalist ideals, ideals that include

Figure 9 Figure 10
exhortations for exclusive use of the Cyrillic alphabet, (Figures 9 and 10; cf. BUGARSKI 1997) and rebukes aimed at the many locals who spend their vacation in Croatia (Figure 11).

Figure 11 presents a kaleidoscope of contemporary conservative Serbian discourses: The sticker in the upper-left corner reads BOG, NACIJA, RAD “God, nation, work”; there are two anti-EU/anti-NATO posters (upper- and lower-right side, respectively). One of these posters (ibid.) supports a Serbian–Russian union, while a poster that was ubiquitous in Summer 2011 depicts emaciated children from concentration camps, presumably Jasenovac; this poster instructs locals to vacation in Croatia if they “are suffering from amnesia.”

Figure 11

Rather than dwelling on messages of intolerance, however, we examine them along with counter-discourses of appropriation of public space, i.e., discourses consciously competing with intolerant rhetoric for access to public opinion.

Language, gender, and sexuality research

Research on gender/sex, sexuality, and language has come a long way in the last decades since the first studies on sexolects, androcentricity in grammatical traits, and linguistic manifestations of a gendered/sexed society were published, mostly by critical and feminist researchers. Coming from what is often a highly essentialized way of looking at the impact of gender/sex on language use and the language system to an exceedingly diversified and multifaceted field of research with a strong deconstructivist base, research in this field has been marked by various amendments and adjustments. Gender linguistics, in its forty-year course, has been operative in our understanding of gender/sex and sexuality, both in grammar and communication.
Overall, looking at the historical coming into being of gender linguistics, we can easily acknowledge the truth in HELLINGER and PAUWELS’S simple but central observation: “In research on gender and language, the central concept is, of course, gender” (2007: 656), a fact which has contributed to challenges from within the broader field of linguistics.

Research on gender/sex, sexuality, and language can be roughly subdivided into at least four branches: feminist, gay/lavender, queer, and gender linguistics. Feminist considerations can be seen as the founding incentives and the major force behind the entire field of inquiry (cf. BUCHOLTZ 2014). Lavender linguistics and research on sexual identities led primarily to the integration of non-normative categories and realities into the field (cf. LEAP 2013; QUEEN 2014). Queer linguistics helped question gender/sex categories, categorizations, and identities altogether, deepening and strengthening the deconstructive and comprehensively norm-critical aims of the field (cf. MOTSCHENBACHER 2011, 2012; MILANI 2014a, 2014b; KERSTEN-PEJANIĆ 2015), while also raising questions regarding the viability of the particulars of the endeavor (cf. HALL 2013; CANAKIS 2015). Gender linguistics, as the more general name of any research on gender/sex and language, can refer to either one of its sub disciplines or can be used as an umbrella term. As linguists, we are painfully aware that all such ascriptions need to be considered very carefully, making it important to stress that neither the boundaries nor the common ground of these four branches are clear cut. At the same time, it is an important feature of this discipline that it contains very different approaches and foci. Even more important than the different ontological approaches in gender linguistics are the epistemological developments and differences in research on gender/sex and sexuality. The most important development in this respect is undoubtedly the “performative turn” (cf. EHRLICH/MEYERHOFF 2014: 5) initiated by Judith BUTLER (1990). This turn was crucial in further de-essentializing notions of gender (cf. also HORNSCHEIDT 2012) and in highlighting the predominantly discursive construction of gender/sex and sexuality advocated by queer linguistics.

Discourses and counter-discourses of gender and sexuality have been at the core of social scientific studies on citizenship (e.g., BERSANI 1987; BIJELIĆ/COLE 2002; ARSIĆ 2002; BRACEWELL 2000; LUKIĆ 2000; JANSEN 2001; ŽARKOV 2001, 2007; NIKOLIĆ 2005; BUTLER/SPIVAK 2007; ATHANASIOU 2010; YANNAKOPOULOS 2010), although notably less so in linguistics (but see HALL 1997; BARRETT 1995; MORRISH/LEAP 2007; CANAKIS 2013) until very recently (e.g., MILANI 2013; VITERI 2014). On the other hand, linguistic landscape research has been dynamically under way for a decade, and has presented new opportunities for the study of language and citizenship in public space (cf. e.g., CENOZ/GORTER 2006; SHOHAMY/WAKSMAN 2009; JÄRLEHED 2012; GRBAVAC 2013), allowing for considerations of gender/sex and sexuality in a new light. Linguistic landscape research has consistently shown that public space is rife with social meaning, which current sociolinguistic theory (cf. ECKERT 2012 mentioned in LEVON 2014: 560) understands as an emergent property of language.
In the following section we will attempt to bring linguistic landscape and gender linguistic research together in investigating conceptions of citizenship in the Balkans.

Linguistic landscapes: Athens and Belgrade

Differing from the so-called “banal sexed signs” (MILANI 2014b: 203) that clarify how normalizations of gender/sex and sexuality are part of a conventionalized everyday ideology, the graffitied data analyzed here constitute outspoken and specifically done utterances addressing both the in-groups and the out-groups of the writing subjects. Although they are not to be perceived as banal, incidental, or unobtrusive, such graffiti are still part of specific ideologies and national narratives, as well as recently coined counter-narratives, of which these public signs on city walls are but one instantiation. In attempting to synthesis all of the content presented earlier in this paper, our goal is to elucidate how gendered/sexually relevant language in the linguistic landscapes of Athens and Belgrade becomes instrumental – not only in excluding the other, but also in aggressively claiming space and inclusion in a nation that many of its subjects are working to redefine so as to include those who have been systematically othered (cf. Figures 20–22) as “anti-national elements.”

Analysis of the linguistic landscape in Belgrade

The walls of the Serbian capital offer clear statements of a very tense public climate for people categorized as deviant by hegemonic, nationalist, and traditionalist discourses. Judging by their quantity, graffiti containing hate speech against non-heterosexuals seems to play a significant role, especially in graffiti made between 2009 and 2012 (cf. MRŠEVIĆ 2013a: 119). Figures 20–22 show some typical examples of extremist public discourses on the walls of central Belgrade.

Serbia, along with many other European countries, has been hit very hard by the economic and financial crisis that began in 2008, and which added to the already high insecurity of this post-socialist and post-war society, with its specific historical burdens and configurations of power (cf. BLAGOJEVIĆ 2011: 28). What Kimmel (2013) calls “angry white men”, in the Western European and American context, seem none too remote from the Serbian experience in the last decades, indelibly marked as it has been by a deep and multi-layered crisis (cf. J. GREENBERG 2014). The main other in this situation is often located in “Western” hegemonic, political, and ideological claims, as well as literally in the West – of which, incidentally, Serbia forms an integral part. Anti-EU as well as anti-NATO signs and slogans, as depicted in Figures 11 and 25, are a mainstay of political graffiti in Belgrade, as these institutions aptly symbolize the hegemonic financial, economic, ideological, and military self-entitlement of the West.
Long-standing homophobia in the Western Balkans (pre-dating the fall of Yugoslavia), secretive homosexuality, and a post-socialist return to a religious definition of nationhood and citizenship easily explain the banning of Gay Pride parades in Serbia. However, although the Serbs seem to have relied on “respectable” homophobia to some extent, the 47 years of Serbian existence within the SFRJ (Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) cannot possibly be described as marked by religiously inspired homophobia, or ignored in problematizing the aftermath. Indeed, the reawakening of Orthodox self-identification and determination came significantly later in Serbia than it did for the predominantly Catholic populations of Slovenia or Croatia, which, according to LAMPE (1996) and RAMET (1996) remained more religious throughout Tito’s Yugoslavia. Despite this fact, Serbs today – mostly through the ethno-religious excesses of certain collectivities – are widely considered to be, quite disturbingly, the religious fanatics of the region par excellence. Moreover, religion has been a powerful tool in dealing with Serbia in the postwar era, as well as the crux of internal tensions between political elites and equal-rights Serb activists, who are routinely vilified as treasonous strani plačenici (‘foreign mercenaries’, cf. BUGARSKI 1997).

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that Pride parades in Belgrade – first successfully organized only in October 2014 – are frequently attacked, echoing the attack of the local Pride parade in Split, Croatia, in June 2011. MIKUŠ’S (2011) and CANAKIS’S (2013) accounts of Pride parades in Belgrade between 2001 and 2012 summarize some of the main points to be considered. Moreover, CANAKIS’S fieldwork in the summer of the 2011 (July 20–August 20), right after the NATO summit scheduled for June 2011, as well as JOHNSON’S (2012) work on graffitied counter-discourses, demonstrate the rapid emergence of significant local resistance. This resistance not only has international ties and perspectives, but also ties within ex-Yugoslavia—especially Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where counterpart activist groups are engaged in a similar version of the same anti-ethnosexual and anti-clericalist struggle (cf. e.g., KAHLINA 2011 for nuances specific to Croatia).

The urban linguistic landscape in Belgrade has become richer after the fall of SFRJ; indeed, Belgrade is currently considered a significant center of street art and graffitied slogans; this status most likely originated after the 1999 NATO air raids, when such immortal lines as sidite dole gace če du bole (‘come down here and your asses will hurt’) – currently featured on internationally treasured postcards – appeared. While extreme right-wing organizations such as Obraz and 1389 have appropriated most of the available wall space, well-known graffitied challenges to the LGBTQ community, such as čekamo vas! (‘We’re waiting for you!’), have also

10 Featuring time-honored pick-up spots like Hotel Moskva, Karadordeva Park, and Ušće in the Serbian capital.
inspired the much more recent tongue-in-cheek comebacks, such as *nas čekate?* (‘Are you waiting for us?’).

In such graffiti, cartoon figures teasingly answer these threats intertextually, often side by side with the original message, as in Figure 12. This type of intertextuality is also implicitly relevant in other cases (cf. Figures 13, 14, and 16).

In Figure 14, the well-worn threat *čekamo vas!* is exploited in issuing the friendly invitation *čekamo vas na prajdu!* (‘We are waiting for you at [Belgrade] Pride’).

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Posters have even appeared featuring dugo smo čekali – čekamo vas ponovo! (‘We’ve waited for you [too] long – we’re waiting for you again!’), turning the commissive act of threatening to an ironic intertextual assertion expressing boredom. Figure 16, shot in 2011, alludes to the ubiquitous neće proći 20.09 ‘[Belgrade Gay Pride on] 20.09 won’t pass’ to make the point that fascism won’t pass. With this graffiti, rather than living in a constant state of terror, local LBGTQ persons have fought against their representation as easy, emasculated prey for the self-styled wholesome supporters of post-Yugoslav notions of exclusively Orthodox and heterosexual srpstvo. What is more, these LGBTQ activists do not shy away from openly challenging the church and its role in consciously cultivating heteronormative intolerance. Figure 15, which reads alo ovde sind, skidaj s dnevnog reda (‘Hello, Synod here, take [the subject] off the agenda’) alludes to pressures against official deliberation on LGBTQ issues.

Closely linked with the concept of the other as perceived and personalized in the West is another fact understood as a threat to inner-Serbian completeness, i.e., the independence of the former province of Kosovo in 2008. The role of the Orthodox Church in forming the nationalist public assertion and directives that found their ways onto the walls of Stari Grad has become obvious, as in Figure 17 (stop secesiji Srbije – Živela pravoslavna Srbija!!! (‘Stop the secession of Serbia – Long live orthodox Serbia!!!’) with Obraz appearing as the author of the graffiti). The specific role of leading religious communities in the creation of dogmatic, intolerant, and conservative attitudes seems to be a shared characteristic of post-communist religious discourses, uniting Catholic and Orthodox authorities (cf. RAMET 1996, 2014: 15). While the way that such discourses touch on sexual matters as a prerequi-
site for non-precarious citizenship (cf. BUTLER 2009) is less obvious, this is a point connecting Serbia with the rest of the Balkans and the post-socialist world.

Serbian Orthodox feelings regarding the Kosovo conflict are reflected in Figure 18’s assertion that nema predaje! kosmet je srbija (‘There’s no surrender! Kosmet is Serbia’) as well as in Figure 19’s Ne damo Kosovo (‘We’re not giving Kosovo’).

The Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) has become not only a religious and societal factor, but also a political one in the last decades (cf. PETROVIĆ 2008: 148). To quote JOVANOVIĆ (2013): “After the demise of socialism, Churches returned ‘with a vengeance’ and re-entered the public space with vocal demands for restoring traditional morality and practices” (ibid.: 84). If the political and moral vacuum that came with the transformation helped strengthen support for the SOC, then the ensuing political and financial crisis has made Serbia one of many places that have seen an increase not only in religious belief and in the role of the church, but also in “religiously motivated” intolerance (CANAKIS 2013: 313).

In the face of both external (i.e., EU, NATO, the West) and semi-external (i.e., Kosovo) threat to the economic, territorial, and historic integrity of the Serbian nation – as imagined by traditional forces – the other comes from inside the nation-state, and has the face of the people who are openly calling for civil rights while pointing to existing discriminatory practices. Orthodox authorities and commentators have also made a conceptual link between the events in Kosovo and the 2011 Pride Parade, portraying it as another betrayal of the nation. From this perspective, LGBTQ rights are not only negligible but “obscure” and “[are] drawing public attention away from the alarming situation in […] Kosovo” (JOVANOVIĆ 2013: 87).

14 Kosmet is short for Kosovo i Metohija, the official name of Kosovo in SFRJ and Serbia.
LGBTQ rights are thought of as “obscure” precisely because local hegemonic rhetoric presupposes their foreignness, as well as because it is the treasonous *strani plaćenici* (‘foreign mercenaries’) who push for them. The particulars of Pride Parades in Belgrade – from being threatened and cancelled in 2009, to being greeted with violence in 2010 (cf. MRŠEVIĆ 2013b: 65ff), to being cancelled again until 2014, when the Parade finally had moderate success, provide an initial understanding of the problematic handling of LGBTQ matters in Serbia (cf. STAKIĆ 2011: 52). The opponents of Pride Parades and the authors of much of the recent graffiti in Belgrade come from the same ideological background, and they can be assured of consensus with and steady support from Orthodox authorities and opinion makers:

What further solidifies the Serbian traditionalist opposition to the “spectres” of (post)modernity is a portion of intense nationalism in the part of the Church. The resulting discourse constructs homosexuals as “constitutive outside” of the nation, as the nation’s Other”. […] Therefore, one can expect the Church to remain the strongest pillar of heteronormativity in Serbian society (JOVANOVIĆ 2013: 91).

Graffiti on the walls of Serbian cities (cf. Figures 20–25), according to MRŠEVIĆ (2013a: 115), features content with a nationalist, conservative, intolerant, and homophobic political orientation. The directive *Stop pederskoj agresiji* (‘Stop faggot aggression’) in Figure 22 verbalizes what is typically left unsaid: that the very fact that LGBTQ people – let alone radicalized groups like *Queer Beograd* – are claiming rights in Serbia is understood as a *de facto* act of aggression. That *Srpska Akcija* (‘Serbian Action’) is the author of this directive not only allows an interpretation of homosexuality as “an act of aggression against the nation” but, given the *God-nation-Work* ethic proclaimed by the same group in Figure 11, seems to beg it.

![Figure 20](image1.png) ![Figure 21](image2.png) ![Figure 22](image3.png)

It is probably the same group of people who are calling (Figure 20) for *smrt pederima* (‘death to faggots’) or who rally (Figure 21) *protiv pedera* (‘against faggots’), who consider Ratko Mladić a hero (Figure 23), who insist (Figure 24) on *Srbija Srbima* (‘Serbia for the Serbs’), and who are suggesting distance from EU, as
well as an alternative orientation towards a Christian Orthodox alliance with Russia (Figure 25).

A lot of the anti-LGBTQ hate graffiti has been painted over since 2009, especially in central locations, and anti-hegemonic graffiti is currently just about as visible and common. The expressive assertion in the widely graffitied stencil _u 2009...želim da ne želim da odem odavde_ (‘in 2009...I wish to not wish to go away from here’; Figure 26) movingly – and combatively – evokes a more positive variation on the earlier widespread stencil _želim da odem odavde_ (‘I wish to go away from here’; Figure 27). In the face of these changes, Figure 28 exemplifies the major tension in Serbia today: Supposing that the EU can stand as a metonymy for the world out there – and thus, among other things, for otherness – how does one respond to it? _Da molim_ (‘yes please’) or _ne hvala_ (‘no thanks’)?

For some, _yes_ seems the only reasonable answer; for many others – encompassing not only many local LGBTQ persons, but also Mladić supporters – the answer is _no_. This seeming paradox is the crux of the matter connecting Belgrade to Athens: Although homophobia is indexically related to nationalist, religious, and anti-Western discourses, the latter seem to carry the most weight in Greek and Serbian society; as
a result, anti-Western feelings are also sometimes expressed by local anti-nationalist and LGBTQ activists.

**Analysis of the linguistic landscape in Athens**

The “decidedly European” outlook of Greece ever since accession to the EU in 1980 and the Eurozone in 2001 was, obviously, not enough to avert the relapse to the time-honored “underdog” narrative (cf. DIAMANDOUROS 1993) in the wake of the 2010 financial collapse. If the superficial prosperity of the 1990s did not leave much space to the isolationist discourses that have been the trademark of most local church leaders and extreme right-wing politicians, the sharp decline in standards of living by late 2010 saw an unprecedented recourse to values erroneously considered all but extinguished. The gradual yet rapid rise of Χρυσή Αυγή (Χρυσή Αυγή; ‘Golden Dawn’) from an object of ridicule and the butt of political jokes to a political party that, despite its characterization as a “criminal organization” by the highest court in the country, obtained 9.4% of the vote, combined with a wide-spread distrust of both immigrants and West qua oppressive lenders, led to a deterioration of the status of LGBTQ citizens as early as 2011. As elsewhere, the LGBTQ population along with immigrants was charged, as a metonymy for otherness, with a variety of evils, among them “dehellenizing” Greece. In light of all this, it is clear that, although the debt crisis in Greece is only fairly recent and, as a crisis, hardly compares to the events that culminated in the latest Yugoslav wars, it has had far-reaching effects.

On the other hand, there has been a long history of LGBT activism, with the first ever gay Pride Parade being organized in the city in 1985 and two LGBT magazines circulating since 1978. This movement arguably reached its peak during the 1990s, making for a different self- and other-representation of Greek LGBTQ-identified people, both locally and internationally. Gender- and sexual-advocacy groups in Greece benefited from more advantageous legislation (or, often, the absence of it), while Yugoslavia was being ravaged by war and clung to its particular ethnosexual narratives. These differences become relevant when looking at the linguistic landscapes of Athens and Belgrade: In Belgrade, graffitied counter-discourses function intertextually, primarily as responses to preexisting homophobic

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15 As documented by the rise of parties such as Δ.Ο.Σ. (Δ.Ο.Σ. – Λαϊκός Ορθόδοξος Σιναγερμός: ‘People’s Orthodox Alert’); this party, when expressly miss-stressed, rhymes with λαός (‘nation/people’) and Ανεξάρτητοι Έλληνες (Ανεξάρτητοι Έλληνες: ‘Independent Greeks’).
16 Dehellenization in this context means challenging a conceptualization of Greece as the homogeneous, all-Greek, Christian Orthodox, and heterosexual state the leaders of the aforementioned political formations imagine it to be.
19 When Athens acquired its own recognizable gay district in Gazi.
graffitied slogans. In Athens, counter-discourses are not competing with homophobic slogans issuing threats on city walls, but instead respond to a reinvigorated homophobic national narrative, a rhetoric informing aspects of public life and contributing to the precarious position of LGBTQ persons. Moreover, in Athens, counter-discourses often explicitly target “patriots,” “the nation,” and “national unity” (cf. Figures 4, 29, and 30), presumably corresponding with nationalism and fascism; in contrast, in Belgrade resistance seems to assume a more subtle and ironic tone. These differences are indicative of the different trajectories of LGBTQ awareness, activism, and visibility in the two cities, a point strongly corroborated by the demeaning reference to homonormativity (in Figure 3) in Athens, scribbled outside a gay-bar strip in Gazi. Homonormativity explicitly refers to homosexual norms; but homosexual norms presuppose enhanced visibility. If it makes sense to encounter such a slogan in an area of commodified gay sociability such as Gazi in Athens, such a slogan would still feel out of place in Belgrade, as it would presuppose a degree of visibility and a set of established norms that local LGBT people seem to be still struggling for.

Despite the more established nature of the LGBTQ community in Greece, this is still a country where on the 21st November, a religious holiday celebrating the Presentation of the Virgin Mary, national TV reminded viewers that “we are celebrating our armed forces, we are celebrating Greece”. This comes as no surprise to the author of the present paper who served in the Greek army in 1998, and who owns the manual describing the bearing required of a soldier serving in communications. In the section tellingly entitled “Discipline-Appearance” (KEDV 1986: 8–9) one reads:\[20\] to βίοθημα και το παράσημο σου να είναι εξήντικο (to váðizma ke to parástimá su na ëné levéndiko; ‘your gait and stature should be manly’); the manual goes on to explain that this behavior ensures both that people will feel confident of their armed forces and that they will not begrudge the sacrifices they make for their nation. Levéndiko(s), a hardly translatable term imbued with cultural meaning, encompasses the posture, manliness, pride, and valor befitting a strapping young man: a levéndis or “stud.”

All of the above, testifies to the fundamentally similar ethnosexual narratives of Serbia and Greece, both founded on what KONSTANTINOVIĆ (1969/2008) has aptly termed filozofija palanke: the xenophobic parochial mentality which seeks to erect impenetrable walls around itself in hopes of preserving its identity and making itself immune to external influences. This infantile view of the world is based on the nuclear family, and is an eligible forerunner of ANDERSON’S (1991) imagined communities. Greece’s longstanding tolerance of same-sex relations – as long as they are kept secret, often between people otherwise involved in committed straight relationships (typically marriage), and as long as obviously out individuals do not raise any claims to full citizenship; a religious definition of national citizenship; and

\[20\] Given the particularity of the diction and style, we consider it necessary to present the original Greek text, along with an attempt at an idiomatic English translation.
the local ethnosexual assumption that men may play the active role with another man at one point in their lives – but never the passive role, as this would make them gay – has given rise to the well-known Molotov cocktail of nationhood, religion, and sexuality (cf. MOSSE 1982, 1985a, 1985b; NAGEL 1998): one that only takes a spark – like the experience of post-crisis Athens – to ignite. This spark has been identified as the other or “the West,” and has been used in Athens, as in Belgrade, as a means of securing established structures of power (cf. BLAGOJEVIĆ 2011). On the other hand, the othering of Serbia and Greece in “Western” discourses has provided the necessary feedback for the development of comparable “anti-Western” discourses in Serbia and Greece. That the Greek and Serb LGBTQ communities have often sought and received support from the “West” in furthering their respective causes has further complicated this strenuous relationship.

Unprovoked bullying and other attacks on gay and trans people in central Athens have inspired several rallies over the past four years, including one on September 5, 2014. These rallies have been linked with the public debate on same-sex cohabitation and civil marriage, with Greece remaining the only EU country in which cohabitation agreement exists solely for the benefit of heterosexual couples. Such rallies have intensified since April 2010, when Greece was taken “under the aegis” of the Troika (or the institutions). Such rallies have customarily also been supported by non-LGBTQ people who are indignant with the local brand of “austerity,” which has transcended the financial realm. In this sense, rallies motivated by LGBTQ concerns in contemporary Athens often take the form of wider protest against a government that is seen as “serving the interests of international capitalism.” The graffiti in Figures 5–8 is indicative of the re-radicalization of the local LGBTQ community, which has appropriated Stadiou St. and symbolic spaces such as the building of the Old Parliament (where, incidentally, the 1893 Greek crash was negotiated) and Plateia Kalfthmonos (literally ‘Weeping Square’). Moreover, the co-articulation of gendered/sexual and wider political concerns, such as state authoritarianism, as in Figures 5 and 29–31, testifies to a conceptualization of LGBTQ matters in Greece as being on a par with other human rights. Frequent references to immigrant rights on the very spots where graffiti with gendered and sexual relevance appears is indicative of a different situation than that of Belgrade.
“Every sexist and homophobe deserves a dive from Lycabettus Hill. Lesbians, faggots, priestesses of disgrace, we are proudly the shame of the nation.”

“Degenerate hatred, macho patriots, [we will be] always traitors to national unity.”

21 The term ἐκφίλο ‘degenerate’ is a pun on ἐμφίλο ‘gendered.’ The form προδότ(ρ)ες ‘traitors’ is meant to combine the masculine and feminine variants of this noun.
These expressive speech acts, in both stenciled and free-style graffiti, take on a distinctly combative tone as they touch on a variety of issues. Note, for example, the emotionally charged assertion on the bottom of Figure 29, a taunt that explicitly appropriates conservative local notions of homosexuality – notions which, crucially, involve conceptualizations of the nation and make reference to pride. That such notions are also held by the church is alluded to in Figure 31, which makes parenthetical reference to the notoriously homophobic Metropolitan Anthimos of Thessaloniki. Finally, Figure 32 makes an intertextual claim to privacy, indirectly responding to charges of secrecy against LGBTQ people in Greece. Maintaining that one can be proud and discreet is a rebuke of othering from within LGBTQ activism.

The fact that Stadiou St. – which was until very recently one of the leafiest streets in Athens – has progressively become a graffiti paradise is itself significant. Today, Stadiou features some of the most radical LBGTQ and leftist/anarchist graffiti in town, against the background of expensive hotels and boutiques. Although there are many similarities with Belgrade, there are also stark differences, especially Greek rebukes against the nation and homonormativity.

22 Direct reference to the slur used by Greek conservative deputy Nikos Nikolopoulos to refer to the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Xavier Bettel.
At the same time, the two cities share a flux of ideas and people, who make reference to “Greek anarchists” in Belgrade (Figure 33), a call for “solidarity with Greek workers and the people of Egypt” (Figure 34), and an understanding of what is happening as a wider Balkan problem: Balkan se budi! (‘Wake up Balkans!’; Figure 35).

Concluding remarks

Our data show that the linguistic landscapes of Belgrade and Athens have become arenas for the discursive public negotiation of gendered and sexed predicates and meanings, as well as for the discursive construction of social categories. The linguistic landscape surfaces as a radically globalized “canvassing” arena, which is being transformed – through mass media, social media, and, crucially, an unprecedented degree of contact among local advocacy groups.23

23 For example, the contacts between Queer Beograd and Athenian LGBTQ activist groups and the repeated visits of the former in Athens, during which all parties involved emphasized their opposition to established narratives of Greek–Serbian friendship, on religious grounds.
Political crisis – a crisis of institutions – in Greece and Serbia has been marked by soaring youth unemployment, the rise of extremist nationalist groups, and intolerance towards minority groups, including the LGBTQ population. Despite the different trajectories of the crisis in Greece and Serbia, local nationalisms found intelligible scapegoats in LGBTQ people, as members of this group have had an international outlook and have often appealed to “Europe” and the “West” for enhanced visibility and rights in their respective local communities. If calling on “European values” seems to make a good case in Croatian LGBTQ activism, for instance, at least when addressed to Croatian political elites (cf. BUTTERFIELD 2013: 14 and CANAKIS 2013: 13), the very same strategy serves as a counter-argument in today’s Serbia (cf. CANAKIS 2013: 11), and to a certain extent, in Greece.

On the other hand, the differences between the situations in Serbia and Greece are also significant. Serbian nationalist discourses cannot be dissociated from the role attributed to the “West” in the break-up of former Yugoslavia; by contrast, in Greece, nationalist “anti-Western” discourses came following a period of perceived prosperity within the European Union and the Euro zone, during which the Greek LGBTQ population arguably enjoyed enhanced visibility and consciously used the position of Greece in the EU as leverage against the conservative political arena.

As a result of these different national histories, homophobia in Athens has not found its way onto city walls in the form of graffitied rebukes or threats, as it has in Belgrade. At the same time, LGBTQ counter-discourses in Athens often explicitly target patriotism, the nation, and national unity as dangerous values in a way that is not registered in the linguistic landscape of Belgrade: While LGBTQ activism in Greece addresses the nation explicitly as an oppressive mechanism, Serbian activism produces more indirect and ironic intertextual messages. The disparaging reference to homonormativity as a form of conformism in Athens is also illuminating in this respect.

What is clear from the writings on the wall of contemporary Belgrade and Athens is that intersectionality, a pivotal aspect of feminist and queer research on gender and sexuality, is a central feature in the material analyzed here, with nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, national sovereignty, and international standing emerging as important markers of the in-group; members of this in-group, however, are also clearly challenged by economic, capitalist, selectionist, and hegemonic Western discrimination processes. For the idea of a closed world targeted by filozofija palanke is not, of course, a Balkan novelty.  

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References


On the Politics of Sexuality in Croatia during the 1990s, the Discourses that Shaped it and its Current Symptoms

SANJA ĐURIN

Introduction: Sexual Freedom and Sex Education in Croatia

From 1991 – the year that Croatia declared independence – to the present, the process of Croatian emancipation has been guided by a vision of a free and democratic country. It appears, though, that in some areas Croatian society lags behind in fulfilling certain prerequisites for democracy. One of the more painful and traumatic issues to address on the way to a more liberal-democratic society is the issue of sexuality, and Croatian society is still sharply divided in terms of the issues of sexual freedom and citizens’ rights.1

Over the last fifteen years, numerous interventions of the Croatian government, nongovernmental organizations, media, and international organizations have demonstrated a desire to find comprehensive solutions to include gender minorities more broadly and effectively in society, as well as to increase the reproductive rights of citizens and ensure the health education of young people, particularly regarding responsible sexual behavior (cf. ŠKOKIĆ 2011). This desire is indicated by the growing number of organizations representing the rights of gender minorities, by improvements in the outlook of the media towards members of gender minorities, by the amendment of certain laws addressing gender minorities, and by the numerous documents with which the Croatian government has pledged to address youth health education, including education about sexual and reproductive health (cf. VULETIĆ 2008: 306–310).2 However, despite the documents with which the government,

1 Parts of this article were published under the title “O politici seksualnosti u Hrvatskoj devetdesetih, o diskursima koji su je oblikovali i o njenim simptomima danas” (Eng. “On the Politics of Sexuality in Croatia in 1990s, on Discourses that Formed it and on its Symptoms at the Present”) in the journal Narodna umjetnost, Vol. 49 (2) 2012 (published by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb). This work has been supported in part by the Croatian Science Foundation under the project 2350 – “City-making: space, culture and identity”.

2 Some of these documents, published by Government of the Republic of Croatia, are the National Youth Action Program 2003–2007 (Nacionalni program djelovanja za mlade), the National Activity Plan for the Welfare, Rights and Interests of Children 2006–2012 (Nacionalni plan aktivnosti za dobrobit, prava i interese djece), the Croatian National Program for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS 2005–2010 (Hrvatski nacionalni program za prevenciju HIV/AIDS-a), and international documents such as the European Parliament Resolution on Sexual and Repro-
nongovernmental sector, and citizenry visibly support the ideas of sex education, as well as youth education on reproductive rights and protection from sexually transmitted diseases, Croatian society is still sharply divided.

This division is evident in the continuing failure to implement the Program of Health Education\(^3\), a program that would bring sex education into both elementary and high schools. The public debate on this program has been ongoing since 2004. One side is mostly made up of citizens represented by the organization GROZD\(^4\) and the Catholic Church; on the other side are mainly center-left NGOs, of which the most significant is the Forum for Freedom in Education. “Despite the tumultuous public discussion and negative reactions to GROZD’s proposal by domestic and foreign experts, the ombudsman for children, the ombudsman for gender equality and the political public” (KEKEZ 2009: 20f), the decision was made in 2006 to experimentally introduce health education to elementary and high schools, as proposed by GROZD\(^5\); this contested program of health education was thereby provisionally introduced in several schools from March to September of 2008.

However, the final evaluation report on the program stated that tests of youths’ knowledge in the area of health education showed “no significant differences between students who participated in the program and the control group of students, and it is concluded that the educational benefits of the program of health education are absent” (ibid.). A subsequent attempt in 2012 to introduce health education also failed. After that, the Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency drafted a new curriculum for health education against which the Catholic Church reacted by appealing to children, parents, and teachers to boycott it. In December 2013, the Catholic “moral majority” (cf. SALECL 1994: 20–38) reacted by initiating a motion for a referendum on marriage that would constitutionally define marriage as the union between a woman and a man, further marginalizing gender minorities in Croatia, and prompting additional ire towards the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community.

This article will try to explain why Croatia is currently experiencing such a fierce debate with regard to sexuality, sexual freedom, and sex education (see ŠLJIVIĆ and MLINARIĆ in this Volume). To answer this, the author used discourse theory,

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3 I refer to this program as “sex education”. Although sex education is not the only topic of this program, it is precisely this part, which covers teaching children about sexuality, that brought about the opposing reactions of citizens.


5 GROZD (2007) asserts that health education related to human sexuality has to be based on transversal values. “The term transversal values implies the values without which human sexuality is not and cannot be genuinely human, i.e., is not able to affirm what is specifically human in a human being as a person. Transversal values of human sexuality are love, restraint and faithfulness” (ibid.: 9).
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On the Politics of Sexuality in Croatia

as elaborated by Ernesto LACLAU and Chantal MOUFFE at the University of Essex (LACLAU 2000: xi), and later developed by David Howarth. Discourse theory was inspired by the work of Roland Barthes, Jaques Derrida, Jaques Lacan, and Michel Foucault, and posits that all the phenomena of social reality are constructed by specific discourses, which are shaped by media, art, science, education, religion, public policies, speeches, and debates. Accordingly, discourse theory is not concerned with the chronological, but rather with the discursive formation of certain social phenomena. Discourse theory uses different textual forms and other materials and analyzes them to discover how that particular discourse obtained domination and the power to construct social reality at a certain moment of history. Discourse theory does not try to give a chronological overview of particular social phenomena, but chooses one moment in the time when some problem occurred and tries to explain why it occurred, and what circumstances contributed to it. In this paper the author used government documents, laws, political speeches, textbooks, and newspapers from 1990 to 2000, as well as some historical primary sources, to explain the current negative attitude of citizens in Croatia toward sexual education and gender minorities.

A discourse analysis of the official national policy on sexuality reveals that current problems related to sex education and sexual freedoms in Croatia have their origins in the politics of the creation of Croatian national identity in the 1990s. These politics drew on various discourses of the past—such as scientific discourses of the 19th century, eugenics, and the Catholic tradition—and the causes of antagonisms regarding sexuality can be identified in these earlier periods, confirming Stuart HALL’s (1996) assertion that discourses that shape social reality in the present correspond to the past, and continue to be shaped by past discourses.

The politics of sexuality in the 1990s influenced the construction of political identities on the basis of gender, nationality, class, and religion; national identity was thereby expressed through pure roles, such as “a true Croatian woman is a mother” and “every Croat is Catholic.” As such, the politics of sexuality are conducted through “hegemonic power relations” (cf. LACLAU/MOUFFE 1985: 93–149), and are part of the struggle for the construction of a particular reality. This creates new positions for both the identification of subjects (HALL 1996: 5f) and the “Other,” a marginal undesirable subject in the newly constructed reality.

At the time of the creation of the Croatian nation-state, the politics of sexuality fostered a patriarchal society that strictly and clearly defined and delineated masculine and feminine roles, ostensibly to prevent the “extinction” of the nation; as a result, all aberrations of these prescribed roles were condemned, with homosexuals,

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6 On page 11 of the National Program of Demographic Development, enacted in the Croatian Parliament on January 18, 1996, a quote by Franjo Tudman is given about the demographic condition of the Republic of Croatia: “It is such that the Croatian people would be threatened with extinction if we do not take some resolute steps. For the shift from such a state of extinction of Croatia, we need a well-thought and thoroughly though-out demographic politics.”
singles, and women who did not wish to have children being stigmatized (cf. PAVLOVIĆ 1999). Today, homophobia, hatred towards gender minorities, and social divisiveness regarding how to present sex education to schoolchildren are the symptoms of this political past.

The Creation of Croatian National Identity in the 1990s

In her analysis of the eruptions of nationalism in East European countries, Renata SALECL (1994) explains that “the present outbursts of nationalism in East European post-socialist countries are a reaction to the fact that long years of (Communist) Party rule, by destroying the traditional fabric of society, have dismantled most of the traditional points of social identification” (ibid.: 20); as a result, the only point of identification that remained after the downfall of the old regime was national identity. When Croatia gained independence in the 1990s, society was guided by a strong logic of equivalence (LACLAU/MOUFFE 1985), while all the other points of identification – such as class and age differentiation – were subordinated to national identity. The community was also identified on the basis of nationality. In his speech on May 30, 1990, after the first multi-party election in which the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ: Hrvatska demokratska zajednica) won, the president of the party and future president of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, expressed this conceptualization of identity as follows:

We fulfilled the unity of the homeland Croatia and Croatia in diaspora, we fulfilled the unity of all Croatian classes and generations. We have resurrected the oppressed and disparaged national consciousness[...].

A problematic point in the shaping of national identity in the 1990s was the reliance on the discourses of the 19th century, which conceptualized the nation as a living being or as a community of people related through blood. The birthrate in Croatia was declining even before 1990, and Croatia’s early days as a nation-state were marked by an aggressive war (1991–1995) and an added decline in population; as a result, this essentialist vision of nationhood produced a panic about Croatian extinction. This panic produced politics of sexuality that prompted citizens to increase their reproduction, lest the Croatian nation become “extinct.” In his public speeches, president Tuđman emphasized that “the Croatian national being (is) endangered, not only by the dissipation of the Croatian folk to all continents, but also by the worrisome decrease of its natural growth” and that therefore “the democratic revival is one of the essential tasks for the future of the Croatian people.”

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According to the Croatian News Agency HINA, on June 9, 1995, Jure Radić, Minister of Development and Reconstruction, presented the National Demographic Development Program (NDDP) to the public, noting that demographic development is “one of the most important tasks of the Republic of Croatia today because, what are the creation of an independent and free Croatia and all the lives sacrificed for it worth, what are its rebuilding and renewal for, if there will be no Croats tomorrow.” Later in the same speech Jure Radić said:

If we don’t count immigration and emigration and if in the following 25 years women in Croatia would keep giving births as in these years, the Croatian population is going to decrease to 4,452,500 people, i.e., by 335,000 or seven percent.9

Similarly, in 1996, the Government’s National Demographic Development Program emphasized:

We are at the beginning, for the Croatian state and Croatian people, of the most important, in fact, decisive task. [...] However, the fact that it is a long-term task should not discourage us, because, if we do not start it, the number of Croats and citizens of Croatia will begin to fall drastically in the following decades [...] mass immigration to Croatia of citizens from the demographically stronger nations would begin, which will mean that by the end of the 21st century Croats would become a minority in Croatia.10

Avtar BRAH (1996) notes that identities can be shaped by the intertwining of discourses of race, gender, ethnicity, class, and religion. This can be seen in the example of Croatia, in which, at the beginning of the creation of the Croatian state, national identity was articulated through religious identity, and being Croat meant being a practicing Catholic.11 This heightened importance of Catholicism was evident in the beginning of the 1990s, when churches suddenly became too small for all of the people who would gather for Sunday mass. The Catholic Church has a long tradition of raising national consciousness and preserving the national identity of Croats, and was therefore indispensable in the creation of the new national identity.

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11 Although religious practice was pushed into the private sphere during the 45 years of the communist regime (1945–1990) and the Church was not allowed to intervene into the areas of common social or political activity, at the level of the imagined community, as interpreted by Benedict ANDERSON (1983), the Catholic church served, among Croats, as an imaginary space for the preservation of Croatian national identity. Anderson also points to the similarity of the nationalist mentality with the religious: up to the 18th century, religions gave people the solace of immortality; with the emergence of the idea of the nation, solace takes a worldly form: individuals die, but the nation remains.
at that time (cf. PRLENDÁ 2004). The Catholic Church preserved national awareness during the time of communist atheism. Franjo Tuđman – who was not yet president of Croatia when he was interviewed by the Catholic newspaper Glas koncila\(^\text{12}\) in 1990 – also pointed to the importance of the Catholic Church for Croatian national identity during the almost half-century of socialism:

> The Church played such an important positive role for almost half a century of totalitarianism – and five more years should be added for the time before the communist one-party system – in the life of the Croatian people, in the preservation, I would almost say, both of the national consciousness and life of the Croatian national being.\(^\text{13}\)

In addition to this, Catholicism was a part of Croatian religious practices, but not of the religious practice of all Yugoslav peoples\(^\text{14}\) (in particular, not for Serbs, who were at that time aggressors in Croatia); when there was a need to make a distinction between the different Yugoslav peoples in order to affirm new national identities, Catholicism was perfectly suited as the criterion for differentiation between the Croats and the Others. In the end, the values for which the Catholic Church stood and which it strongly propagated at the time of the creation of the nation-state – i.e., loud advocacy of the institution of marriage and bearing more children, while disapproving of abortions, solitary life, and homosexuality – also helped Croatian nation-building politics during a time of demographic decline; as a result, sexuality was moralized and entrusted to a high degree to the care and governance of the Church.\(^\text{15}\)

\(\text{12}\) In English, “Voice of the council.”

\(\text{13}\) Glas Koncila 1990, No. 831: 6–7.

\(\text{14}\) Three religions were present in the territory of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia: Catholic, Christian Orthodox, and Islam. Croats mostly expressed themselves as Catholics, and Serbs mostly as Orthodox.

\(\text{15}\) We can see this also in the quote from the welcoming address of Franjo Tuđman to Pope John Paul the Second during his first visit to Croatia (Zagreb, Sept 10, 1994): “In its struggle for the establishment of a free and democratic sovereign state, Croatian people, with God’s help – at this time of riddance from the communist hell – have attained a deep national-political revival. The task ahead of us is to go after the completion of a spiritual and economic revival, on principles of Christian civilization. By establishing democratic rule, the Croatian state government has exerted and is still exerting conscious efforts to remove all remainders of communist heritage, with an especial wish to settle relationships with the Church and Holy See in the best possible way, in the interest of the state, Church and citizen-believers. You did, Holy Father, proclaim this year the Year of the Family. Family is the foundation of a human, and also, folk life and existence. The problem of family and right to life is of special importance for the Croatian folk. Namely, because of the very adverse political and economic circumstances, Croatian people had to go out into the world and Croatian families were separated, not having the possibility for a normal life and development, while the Croatian national being was endangered, not only because of the dissipation of the Croatian folk to all continents, but also because of the worrisome decrease of natural growth. Therefore, this Croatian government pays full attention to your teaching about the importance of family, about the right to life and education for responsible parenthood.” (http://free-zg.t-com.hr/zdeslav-milas/FT/ft-11.htm).
As a result of these factors, the Catholic Church and the Croatian Government worked together to implement certain policies on sexuality in 1990s. On December 18, 1996, the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Holy See signed the Agreement on Cooperation in the Area of Education and Culture, which introduced Catholic religious teachings as an elective course in kindergartens and schools.\(^\text{16}\) The religious textbooks for this course were later published by the largest publisher of Catholic literature in Croatia, Kršćanska sadašnjost.\(^\text{17}\)

In the following sections, we will describe how the major actors mobilized key myths to define gender roles and identities through textbooks, how textbooks corresponded to nationalistic discourses of the 19th century, and how these discourses on sexuality influenced the shaping of the current Croatian social reality. We will focus on textbooks on the Croatian language and of Knowing Nature and Society for the early grades of elementary school,\(^\text{18}\) which were approved by the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports, as well as textbooks on religion\(^\text{19}\) published by Kršćanska sadašnjost. We will also explore how gender roles were described, how discourses on sexuality were mobilized, whether discrimination was present, and on what basis identities were constructed through the discourse of sexuality.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{16}\) Although never officially obligatory for children, Catholic religious instruction was included in children’s daily schedule, and there was not usually an alternative activity for the children who did not want to attend religious instruction. This meant that children really had two options: either to participate in religious instruction or to sit at the front of the classroom doing nothing and waiting for the religious instruction to finish. Under such circumstances, most parents allowed their children to attend religious instruction. Furthermore, schools never offered religious instruction for members of the other religions.

\(^{17}\) In English, “Contemporary Christianity.”


\(^{20}\) It is worth mentioning that the textbooks which were written in the mid-1990s greatly formed the attitudes and thinking of children who are today grown-up citizens.
Myths on Motherhood…

We agree here with Benedict ANDERSON’s (1983) description of the nation as a constructed and imagined community. In the 19th century, at the time of the creation of the European nation-states, the myths of motherhood and of family were crucial in the construction of social reality (cf. MOSSE 2005) and in the idea of the nation. With the rise of eugenics and its strong influence at the time when nation-states were being created, nationality was mostly understood in an essentialist and naturalistic way, as something that is transferred to offspring through blood. In the same vein, sexuality, reproduction, and care for the body became political domains, as they were seen as responsible for the future of the nation (ibid.: 20).

The creation of the identity of the mother and the institutionalization of the family through myths became the foundation of the national politics of sexuality in many European countries. In other words, the politics of sexuality gave sex and the body political meaning, putting a burden of responsibility onto them and connecting bodies and sexuality into relationships of power (FOUCAULT 1994: 82). The identity of a woman was equated to that of a mother. When analyzing the myth of the mother, Kathryn WOODWARD (2007: 250) noted that the myth transmits something natural, biologically given, and fixed to the identity of a woman — and in the same breath, unnatural, or, as in the case of Virgin Mary, supernatural. The more that motherhood was constituted through myths, the more it became more natural and an inevitable part of female identity.

Later, the nuclear family, which developed with the beginning of the 18th century as a new form of family life, brought with it new values (GIDDENS 2000; MOSSE 2005). Still founded on patriarchal norms, the new family presupposes emotional relationships between its members (ibid.). Such a family is a cozy place, with each member of the family having a clearly defined role within it: mothers give birth to children and feed them, while fathers are firm-handed disciplinarians and providers. According to George L. MOSSE (2005), this role of the father is in harmony with the new image of manhood and masculinity fed by nationalism. In this nationalist image, the man maintains order in his family and in society; his body is firm, his spirit strong; he cultivates feelings of loyalty towards his homeland and possesses the strength to resist base drives. As a result, Mosse asserts, homosexuality, especially gay identity, becomes absolutely socially unacceptable. Family is now the place in which children’s sexuality is shaped, and is therefore important for the existence of the nation-state (ibid.: 33): Parents are meant to take note of their children’s masturbation, homosexual attitudes, or improper sexuality at an early age, and react to these deviations with proper educational measures.

Although these new values and new way of life appeared first in Germany and England, they also spread to other European countries, and, with the national revivals of the first half of the 19th century, they arrived to Croatia. During the nationalist revival in Croatia in the first half of the 19th century, sexuality was under the perma-
The politics of sexuality in Croatia

In 1918, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the Ministry of Public Health was established under the guidance of Andrija Štampar. The Ministry’s Department of Racial, Public, and Social Hygiene, which Štampar headed, was motivated by eugenics ideas, and organized numerous lectures on psychology, hygiene, sexual hygiene, and ethics in elementary and high schools all over the Kingdom (DUGAC 2005: 33). The students were taught appropriate sexuality. In 1920, Umberto Girometta advised male students in his book on sexual hygiene, *Youth in a Struggle for Life*, to strengthen their moral and spiritual nature to maintain control over their sexual nature:

> It is not strange, therefore, that every ordinary man, already in his young years, experiences the power of his sexual nature, at which begins the struggle between it and spiritual freedom. The struggle is the most difficult in youths, and, if you are not well armed, dear man, you will fall in that struggle quite quickly [...].

After the Independent State of Croatia was established in 1941, President Ante Pavelić started the campaign called “Week of the Croatian Mother and Child,” during which he would visit or invite young mothers from across Croatia to visit him, to honor them and their sacred role: “[...] as the mother is sacred to her own child, so she shall be sacred in the eyes of every man, every Croat, so that she shall be sacred in the eyes of the whole nation[...]”;

> “the folk that does not have an abundance of children does not have a future, and such folk have to die out, have to become the prey and victim of others.”

During the time of the Independent State of Croatia, the idea of the survival of the nation was promoted by the physician Nikola Sučić, within the framework of an extreme racism. In reviewing this history, it is clear that the naturalistic understanding of nationhood has a tradition lasting longer than a century in the territory of Croatia – small wonder, therefore, that these regressive...
discourses informed politics during the creation of Croatian national identity in the 1990s.

With the creation of a new nation-state in 1990, these myths were revived again, bringing in the identities of women and men and the institution of the family in connection with the past. As Véronique MOTTIER (2005: 271) notes, the scientific narratives of the 19th century, such as medicine and biology, served to legitimize the eugenics discourse and its institutionalization and propagation to new generations through the educational system. The National Demographic Development Program (NDDP) of 1996, one of the fundamental documents of national policy on sexuality, was implemented and put into use quickly; the politicizing of the human body could be seen in elementary school textbooks, and even in the picture books of pre-school children:

Picture books for children and textbooks of elementary schools have to be enriched with the themes of marriage, family, education, mother and father. Positive attitudes towards a woman, sexuality and new human life should be intertwined in textbooks[...]. The attitude of the person who teaches the topic is crucial at this age.

As can be seen from this quotation, the above mentioned program comprises an ideological template according to which the new conception of family should be made. While the textbooks for the Croatian language published between 1990 and 1996 show, for example, families with one child, parents, and perhaps grandparents, two years later, the textbooks were harmonized with the NDDP to depict what had become the desirable family, with three or more children.

In textbooks for the Croatian language and for Knowing Nature and Society, the identity of a woman is equated with motherhood (a woman is a mother and a wife), and a man is presented as a fatherly figure (or as a husband); in textbooks on religious education, these identities are also given moral values in harmony with the Catholic tradition. In this way, as in the textbook of Knowing Nature and Society for the second year of elementary school, children are taught that a man and a woman enter into wedlock and create a family, with this family expressed as a mathematical formula: “Man and woman are being wed. Woman marries and becomes wife. Man marries and becomes husband. This is because they love to live together and have children. This is how the family arises. A basic family = parents + children.”


At the beginning of the lesson associated with this passage, children are asked “How do you feel in your family?” and “What is nicest in your family?” These questions are designed to make children conscious of the emotional dimension of family life and to attach positive connotations to the way of life of a family. A little later in the same textbook comes the lesson “My mother Gave me Birth” in which exercises at the beginning of the lesson are designed to make children even more aware of the emotional connectedness and positive emotions that they feel towards their mothers. With questions like “What is your mother’s name?,” “Ask your mother where she gave you birth,” and “Ask her to tell you how she fed you at first,” children are prompted to think about their particular connectedness with their mother:

Mothers give birth to children. You grew in your mother’s body around nine months. Your mother gave you birth then. She breast-fed you with her milk first, she bathed you and changed your clothes. After your birth you grew fast and learned a lot. During your childhood your mother took the most care of you.29

Motherhood is frequently given an aura of sanctity (CHARKRAVARTY 2004: 13; WOODWARD 2007), which is particularly emphasized in textbooks of religious education in which mothers feature prominently. Motherhood is likened to the form of Mary, Jesus’s mother, and is often given the qualities of Mary; for example, the textbook for the first year includes one lesson entitled “Mary – the model of our mothers” (JAKŠIĆ 2007: 83).

**Politicization of the Body**

This Discourse analysis could be criticized for ignoring the biological givenness of the body – in this case, the ability of a female body to become pregnant – or for ignoring certain emotions that do develop between children and their mothers or fathers. This analysis does not ignore, however, that motherhood is, for a large percentage of women, a special experience, and one that they associated the fondest feelings to; further, many men and women do associate these positive feelings to their families in general.

This analysis does not wish to contend that these realities do not exist, but rather to highlight the strong emphasis on family life and, especially, motherhood that characterized the social reality of Croatia, both in the 1990s and earlier in the past, when the Croatian nation-state was being created. In these cases, the body became the locus of political power, with the institutions of power (here, the Croatian state, with its National Demographic Development Program) intervening into the private

sphere of citizens to govern the population and to shape the identities tied to the body. At such moments, sex becomes a political category (BUTLER 1994). Michel Foucault called this kind of politics, which rules human life or the human population in general, biopolitics or biopower. Sexuality is one of the areas which, since the creation of the nation-state, has been used to govern the population (MOSSE 2005), to encompass life in its entirety, “to raise its price, to multiply it, to control it in a completely defined way and regulate it in entirety” (FOUCAULT 1994: 94). In this sense, the politicization of the body consists of different discursive practices, which use the body and sexuality in the construction of social reality. These discursive practices do so by defining gender, gender roles, and gender standardization to create identities, thereby governing the population. The politicization of the body produces a system of social relationships and practices that is, in its essence, political. It creates antagonisms, i.e., political borders between acceptable positions – those of insiders – and unacceptable positions – those of outsiders. In other words, the politics of sexuality as a product of an institution possesses the power of inclusion and exclusion, and of structuring the relationships between different social agents (cf. HOWARTH/STAVRAKAKIS 2000: 4) and their articulation (LA CLAU/MOUFFE 1985: 105).

Examples of this politicization can be found in the discourses that accompany the enactment of the same sex life-partnership act and medically assisted insemination act in Croatia, issues about which Tea ŠKOKIĆ (2011) has also written. Further, it is precisely this politicization of the body and sexuality that can be found in textbooks of religious education for the later years of elementary schools. In their early years, children are indoctrinated with a certain image of a mother; in the later years, the myth of motherhood becomes politicized. Kathryn WOODWARD (2007: 242) asserts that motherhood is a political identity because it presupposes the norms and regulation of the behavior of a mother with the purpose of managing the population. The seventh grade of elementary school is the year that most children enter puberty and encounter their own sexuality; this is then the earliest time that they might be exposed to the hazardous consequences of sexual activity, such as unwanted pregnancy or venereal diseases. In the religious textbooks, “According to Christian doctrine human sexuality is lived in married love and in faithfulness of two spouses. It is in the service of love and of giving birth to children”30; this is why the author of the textbook addresses the students as potential parents. The role of the mother is discussed under the chapter on the Fifth Commandment,31 “You shall not murder!” Although abortion is legal in Croatia until the tenth week of pregnancy, the author of the textbook describes it in this way:

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31 The Ten Commandments are the ten foundational moral principles by which Christians must live to please God and earn eternal life.
Abortion is the direct murder of an unborn child and the direst betrayal of motherhood. The mother, a symbol of security and love, is being transformed, with an abortion, into a murderer of a most innocent being.\(^32\)

In other words, the author equates abortion and murder, labeling the women who “commit” abortion as murderers. The author appeals to the figure of the mother as it was molded in the consciousness of children in earlier stages of their education – “mother, a symbol of security and love” – a figure to which children are emotionally connected, to make the effect of the accusation as intense as possible. Abortion is equated in the textbook with euthanasia, suicide, war, the arms race, abduction, torture, medical experiments on humans, and addictions. The effects of such politicization of the body are inclusion and exclusion or marginalization. From the perspective of these politics of sexuality, the marginalized and traumatized part of the society consists of children who live with one parent, children from socially problematic families, children who never felt motherly love, abused or abandoned children, men and women who cannot or do not want to be parents, individuals who practice sexualities different from the norm (i.e., the LGBTIQ population), individuals who do not practice sexuality, or people who live alone. For example, when asked whether the 1990s brought anything good to women, one woman, who was interviewed for the purposes of an international research project, expressed her feeling of marginalization in the following words:

To be honest, I think they put a woman-mother on a pedestal. It’s not that it disturbs me now, but I’m telling you, we who are without children, unwed, divorced – as if we are worth less. To tell you honestly, I’d tell this also to Franjo Tuđman.\(^33\)

When \textit{woman} is defined through the role of mother, \textit{man} has to be her antipode. On the web page of the Family Center of the Diocese of Varaždin in northern Croatia, a genuine man is described in this way:

A boy, and later a man, has to avoid anything that could have any tone of being womanly, weak and fragile. He can attain his male identity only in distancing himself clearly from the other sex[...].\(^34\)

This quote makes it clear that it is important for a boy to be distinctly different from a girl, the opposite of the female in every way. This is reminiscent of the naturalistic discourse of the 19th century which depicted women as representatives of the cate-


\(^33\) The interview was led in 1998 for the purposes of international research project “Women’s Memories: Searching for Identity within Socialism”; published in Dijanić, 2004: 119.

category of sex par excellence, the embodiment of everything natural, weak, and gentle, as opposed to men, who are firm, resolute, and guided by reason.

In addition to the marginalization experienced by people who do not correspond to the expressions of identity that society dictates for them, a whole group of people is stigmatized by such standardization and politicization of sexuality. When a society is guided by the idea of reproduction, all forms of sexuality that do not lead to the desired goal of an increased population become stigmatized: lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and transgender, as well as intersex, queer, and asexual individuals. By building reality on a strictly binary division between male and female, and defining the male–female relationship through reproduction, individuals who belong to gender minorities are stigmatized – this is particularly true in Croatia with regard to gay and lesbians.³⁵

In textbooks of religious education for the seventh and eighth grades of elementary school, homosexuality is interpreted as opposing nature and natural laws, as an ailment and sin. In the seventh grade textbook, it is described as a sin in the chapter under the title “You shall not commit adultery!,” one of the Ten Commandments. Prostitution, masturbation, pedophilia, and rape are counted as that same sin. The author says:

The person cannot be faulted for having a homosexual attitude and therefore should not be condemned, but accepted with respect and compassion. However, he/she must refrain from homosexual practice and live the life of sexual purity.³⁶

In the eighth grade textbook, homosexuality is described within the framework of the scientific, medical, and psychological discourse as pathological:

We are aware of the fact, though, that some people feel an attraction to persons of the same sex. Medicine and psychology are finding various causes, not fully researched yet, of such a human condition.³⁷

Conclusion: Homophobia as Outcome of Sexual Politics

Issues of sexuality have sparked great interest in the Croatian public and strong antagonisms among its citizens for 25 years, whether the topic is the introduction of sex education in schools or public advocacy of the rights of gender minorities. For that reason, the present paper sought to learn more about why sexuality, sexual freedom, and sex education are topics of such fierce debate in Croatia today.

³⁵ While textbooks do not differentiate between gay and lesbian sexuality, gays encounter a lot stronger condemnation in the society than lesbians.
³⁶ Periš, Josip (dir.), 2005a, Zajedno u ljubavi, Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost: 37f.
This analysis points to the conclusion that the Croatian national discourse of sexuality during the 1990s originated in the politics of Croatian national identity of the same period. At that time, the politics of sexuality promoted the construction of a patriarchal society, where strictly and clearly defined and delineated masculine and feminine roles were intended to prevent the “extinction” of the nation. Further, at the time of the creation of the Croatian nation-state in the 1990s, the majority of Croatian citizens expressed themselves as Christian Catholics, further strengthening the patriarchal and conservative gender roles and moral values in the new nation-state. National identity was tied firmly to and articulated through religious identity, so that being Croat meant being Catholic and living in harmony with Catholic morality. Those who did not identify with the dominant narrative, such as sexual or gender minorities, singles, and women who did not desire children, were excluded and marginalized.

In the present paper, the politics of sexuality were found to, at times, mobilize other forms of social differentiation, as well as other discourses (e.g., scientific, cultural, and ideological) to attain its goal. Medical and eugenics discourses of the 19th century and a strict affiliation with the Catholic tradition, in combination with new governing technologies that developed in the 19th century (i.e., biopolitics) influenced structures of power in Croatia and the politics that they were building. In the 1990s, when the creation of the young nation-state demanded the creation of a new national identity, these old discourses were revived in the contemporary concepts of sexuality. They were also introduced in different primary school textbooks; as a result, at the end of the 20th century, elementary school textbooks can be seen to offer definitions of the roles of women and men, motherhood, fatherhood, reproduction, family, and nationhood reminiscent of the ideas from Europe’s 19th century national movements and the Independent Croatian State (1941–1945).

The outcomes of the revival of these old discourses are strong antagonisms and social divisiveness regarding issues related to sexuality materialize in Croatia today through homophobia, and through an inability to successfully implement sex education in schools. Since the school children of the 1990s are the young adults of today, the conservative and homophobic attitude of the younger generations in Croatia can be seen, at least in part, as the result of the politics of sexuality from the 1990s.

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38 This is how demographic decline was interpreted in the National Plan of the Demographic Development from 1996.
References


Big Brother's Big Bang: 
Debates and Developments on LGBT Issues in Albania 
since 1990

HENRY LUDWIG

On 24 June 2014, the General Affairs Council of the European Union granted Albania candidate country status. However, the opening of accession negotiations was linked to meeting all key criteria defined by the European Union (EU). One of these criteria is the protection of minorities. Although Albania has made some legislative progress in this area, many more steps are necessary. The status of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons is problematic in all countries of South Eastern Europe (as well as in some Western European countries); this translates into widespread homophobia, including in Albania. Although same-sex relationships have been legal in this country since 1995, real changes in the daily lives of LGBT people only began during recent years.

This article will present the significant political and social developments affecting LGBT persons that have taken place in the country since the end of communism, with a focus on political decisions, public debates, and social commitment with regard to LGBT issues. The main goal is to provide a comprehensive picture of the current situation for LGBT people in Albania. The underlying thesis is that the media (e.g., TV, radio, internet, newspapers) is the force with the biggest impact on this social issue: They have the power to reach large parts of the population, control the contents of the broadcasts and articles that fuel the public dialogue, and provide platforms for LGBT people and organizations to gain visibility, network, and organize themselves.

The incident described in the following section provides a clear example of this social dialogue, and of how changes in how the public views LGBT persons can be triggered by sensational journalism.

“The Klodi Phenomenon”

In early 2010 something incredible happened in Albania, which led to a “national shock.” The private television broadcasting station Top Channel TV was airing the third season of the reality TV show Big Brother Albania. The reality TV format in which strangers move into a special apartment that records their lives 24 hours a day
was familiar to Albanian viewers; however, an incident that occurred during that season had deep and lasting effects on Albanian society. One of the participants was Klodian Çela; nicknamed “Klodi,” he had been born in Lezha, in Northern Albania, and before the show had been living in Milan. In an open letter to his mother he read out during the show, the 35-year-old housemate came out as gay, and openly asked his mother and the general public for understanding about his sexual orientation (cf. INFO ARKIVA 2010).

Klodi’s public announcement led to several protests in Klodi’s hometown of Lezha “for the protection of the honor and the reputation of the town,” which up to 400 people – primarily young people – took part in.1 In numerous newspaper articles journalists echoed protesters’ view, arguing against Albania’s entry into the EU if one of the conditions for entry would be “legalized homosexuality”: These protesters swore that they would rather preserve the “pride of the Albanian nation.” Opponents of Klodi’s actions threatened to expand their demonstrations to other towns, including the capital city of Tirana if Klodi was not expelled from the Big Brother house (cf. KOKAJ 2010; LUBONJA 2010; HODGSON 2010; MEDIA PLUS TELEVIZION 2010; AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT 2010: 3f). Others took the law into their own hands by threatening Klodi’s family; even after Klodi’s family was forced to flee Lezha, there was no response from the state or the public. In flagrant disregard for Albania’s clearly stated anti-discrimination legislation, the Albanian police dismissed any concerns, reporting that Klodi’s family had not been seriously threatened (cf. ANONYMOUS 2010b; TOP CANNEL TV 2010). The wild controversy that followed this event (referred to in the media as “The Klodi Phenomenon”) soon developed into a heated national and an international debate.

National and International Reactions to Klodi’s Public Coming-Out

Shortly after the protests in Lezha began, the US ambassador to Albania, John Withers, addressed Klodi during a live TV show, offering him support and empathy. On a visit to Lezha, Withers and the German ambassador, Bernd Borchardt, affirmed Withers’s earlier statement and emphasized their loyalty to Klodi and his family (cf. ANONYMOUS 2010a; TOP CANNEL TV 2010; NEWS24 2010). Further support for Klodi came from US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In her speech on 22 June

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1 Onlookers could hear battle cries and slogans like “Lezha is clean, there are no homosexuals,” “Disappear, disappear Klodi!,” “Klodi has blotted the citizens of Lezha and the Albanian nation,” “Lezha does not deserve the badge of shame of homosexuality,” “We do not want this phenomenon to lead to an epidemic,” “The citizens of Lezha have excelled as intellectuals and they are known all over the world for their history, tradition and culture, and not for homosexuality,” “Klodi is no citizen of Lezha,” “Klodi may enter neither Lezha nor Albania ever again, but has to go where he has made this experience, to Italy because we don’t want this phenomenon to influence our children,” etc. (cf. AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT 2010: 3; LOLOÇI 2010: 16).
Debates and Developments on LGBT Issues in Albania

2010 in Washington DC during LGBT Pride Month – an initiative of US president Barack Obama – she brought up the case of Klodi as an example of minorities and their impact on society.

The Dutch ambassador, Henk van den Dool, addressed Albanian society by means of an open letter in which he reported being impressed by Klodi’s decision to go public with his sexual orientation. He emphasized the fact that to date there had not been anyone who had publicly declared themselves to be gay in Albania, nor had anyone initiated such an open debate. Van den Dool made clear that the Albanian people lacked knowledge about homosexuality and stressed that education is the key to more openness and tolerance; legislation alone is not sufficient (cf. VAN DER DOOL 2010).

Albanian intellectuals, journalists, and LGBT activists reacted to Klodi’s public coming out, to the protests directed against him, and to these statements by high-profile international actors with actions such as giving TV interviews and writing open statements to leading newspapers. Fatos Lubonja, for example – a well-known author, intellectual, and dissident – saw in these violent, homophobic protests a sign “of deep frustrations” within the Albanian society, a symptom of strongly undesirable developments:

Those people point with their reaction to how isolated Albania has remained from the civilized world, what educational level our youth have, and not only that, but also what work has been performed by the adults to bring a culture of respect for human rights into this, our society, 20 years after escaping from the regime of injury of these rights ‘par excellence’ (LUBONJA 2010).

One of the reasons for these widespread homophobic attitudes in Albania, Lubonja argued, stems from the aftermath of the communist totalitarian regime, along with Albania’s long period of isolationation and the deeply rooted homophobia that spread during that time. The protests taking place in Lezha were to be seen, above all, as an illustration of “the barbarity and the dramatic illiteracy” of Albanian society, which at that time lacked proper schools, civil society, religious facilities, and political services. In response to such an event, the duty of a society is to react in moral terms, while the liberal-democratic state – being responsible for rule of law – has to respond by means of laws. Lubonja also cited a need to invest in schools and education (cf. ibid.). In the name of individual freedom, Lubonja made a call to proclaim loudly: “I am homosexual” as an opposition to the “barbarian wave” that was overrunning the country during that time. Numerous people joined in this outcry by posting “I am homosexual” as their Facebook status; this led to further debates and discussions on the Internet, expanding the social dialogue initiated by the negative reaction against Klodi (cf. ibid.; MICHELS 2010).

Kristi Pinderi, a well-known Albanian LGBT activist and founder of the organization Pro LGBT, criticized the way Albanian intellectuals and political circles had been reacting to Klodi’s coming-out. Most of the intellectuals who appeared publicly were, in Pinderi’s opinion, characterized by fear and conflicted goals. They
spoke neither about the importance of respect for the rights of LGBT persons as an expression of their human rights nor about the individual right of Klodi to be “what he is.” Instead, they criticized the media as being “excessive” and an “uncontrollable bugbear.” Pinderi remarked that these intellectuals believed that the Albanian media was abusing the topic and the hype surrounding Klodi’s coming out, arguing that the media was “insincere.” He also accused Albanian intellectuals, as well as the Albanian public, of being homophobic (cf. PINDERI 2010: 3f).

Pinderi also criticized the role of the Albanian political parties during this time. According to the activist, the conservative Prime Minister Sali Berisha (PD, Democratic Party) had once used homophobia for political ends when he proposed introducing same-sex marriage in Albania the year before Klodi’s public statement. Pinderi also claimed that the Socialist Party (PS) had failed to include human rights in the party’s political program, and that this party in fact encouraged homophobia. This criticism also applied to the coalition of the Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI) and the PD. Klodi’s public coming-out and the events that followed forced Albanian politicians to act, as regulations governing crimes motivated by hatred, homophobia, or transphobia did not exist at that time (cf. ibid.).

Meanwhile, the controversial journalist and analyst Kastriot Myftaraj made Hillary Clinton a target, as a symbol of the US’s destructive goals. Referencing Jonah Goldberg’s New York Times bestseller Liberal fascism: The secret history of the American left from Mussolini to the politics of meaning (GOLDBERG 2007), Myftaraj called Clinton the “fulfillment of American fascism,” which differed from European fascism in that it lacked politeness and respect:

> Liberal fascism looks at homosexuals as an instrument; the more the society is fragmented, the easier it will be to control society by a soft-fascistic élite. In that regard Mrs. Clinton has taken advantage of Klodi from Big Brother. Klodi from Big Brother is more the victim of Hillary Clinton than of those young people from Lezha (MYFTARAJ 2010).

From this perspective, Myftaraj defines homosexuality as a functionalized instrument of liberal-fascistic forces designed to break down and destabilize societies, accomplishing “the complete social manipulation in the country using all available resources, from politics to the media, courts, schools, television, cinema and the NGOs” (ibid.). Set in a global context, Myftaraj’s perception matches those in other countries in which homophobic attitudes dominate. From this perspective, homosexuality is spread by the decadent, immoral West to the rest of the world; these other societies are victims, as homosexuality does not naturally exist within them (cf. GÜNAY 2003: 136; DIETERICH 2010).
Patriarchal Society, Gender Relations, and Homosexuality in Albania

The incidents after Klodian Çela’s coming-out and the predominantly homophobic expressions of opinion from the Albanian population represent the thinking of a wide range of Albanian society. Patriarchal social structures and sexual prudishness have had a longstanding tradition, and were hardened by historical and cultural conditions as well as by political legislation. Although modernization processes (particularly after the fall of communism) have broken down many of these structures, many pre-communist traditions were revived after 1990/91. Among other factors, traditions of gender relations are at the core of LGBT issues. During the communist era, gender equality and the inclusion of woman into working life allowed close co-operations between boys and girls or men and women in everyday life (cf. TOWER 2002: 230 ff; SCHUBERT 2012: 51). This clashed with the patriarchal conception that – due to the patrilineal line of descent – a higher value was ascribed to men than to women, making gender the core criterion in the hierarchical principle that divided men from women (cf. KASER 1995: 344ff).

The greater importance of men led not only to discrimination against women, but also shaped the specific social role models to which men and women had to conform. An honor- and shame-oriented cultural code placed men in a heroic position from which they were supposed to act as a protector and defender of their family and clan. While men operated publicly and outwardly, women were supposed to take care of the household and the education of the children: in public a virgin-like and demure appearance was demanded of them (cf. SCHUBERT 2012: 49). During the communist era these intellectual and behavioral patterns were not banished entirely, but appeared to be partially hidden from the public sphere. In the post-communist chaos and under the ruling élite, issues such as growing corruption, poverty among the civil population, and rapidly expanding organized crime were rampant. Local and religious traditions offered the Albanian people security, help, and the possibility of survival by encouraging self-organization (cf. KOHL 2001).

Even beyond the borders of Albania, the patriarchal law of Kanun is well known. For centuries, this law has regulated social communities in different Albanian regions in various forms (cf. ELSIE 2001). Particularly in the rural areas that remained largely unaffected by communist era changes, the old rules were brought up again, leading to a strict segregation of men and women. Such strict gender roles were reinforced during the 1990s due to the widespread kidnapping and international sex-trafficking of girls and young women. In prevent this from happening, in many areas women and girls had to remain inside, where they were under strong male control (cf. Tower 2002: 231f).

Another factor is that women were and are more affected by Albania’s high unemployment rate (cf. Hofmann 2014: 27f). Religious habits imprinted via patriarchal

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2 Gesemann’s in-depth piece on Balkan patriarchy discusses the heroic code of honor of *humanitas heroica* (cf. GESEMANN 1943: 208).
mental patterns that were suppressed during the communist era reappeared openly in Albanian society at that time. New religious infrastructures were created by huge investments from abroad – in particular, from Saudi Arabia and Iran, for Muslims; from Greece and the US for Orthodox Christians; and from Italy, for Catholics (cf. Hofmann 2012: 121, Schmitt 2014: 259). Active proselytization and charitable initiatives of these religious communities led to a revival of religiousness, with a redoubled importance of their respective values.

All of these social changes fueled the Albanian patriarchy, and traditionalism and religiousness discouraged social acceptance of sexual minorities. Cultural, social, and religious orders and taboos tend to protect existing community values. If these norms are called into question, the affected community interprets that as an attack against their moral standards. The nonobservance or violation of social roles may then prompt sanctions from that community. As LGBT persons become more socially visible and claim their rights, they often violate these rules regarding expected behavior for men and women. From the point of view of the communities whose values are threatened, these people represent a force that “requires” both legal and social opposition.

Social moral values in Albania, however, have not always been so marked by homophobia: In the 19th century and during Ottoman times, foreign authors and travelers noted that same-sex relationships were considered natural in some parts of Albania, with descriptions of boy-love common in Northern and Middle Albania. These sexual relationships between boys and men were widely accepted, although they appeared to be strictly regulated by social behavior patterns developed in Greek antiquity (cf. COHEN 1994: 171 ff; REINSBERG 1993: 163 ff; 126; HAHN 1853: 166). In Southern Albania numerous reports portrayed homosexuality in military units as a common behavioral pattern among soldiers (cf. ELSIE 2002: 93f).

Another phenomenon that touches on issues of social and sexual role behavior is preserved today in the form of so-called “sworn virgins” (burmëshë or virgjëreshë e betuara). In an act unique to Albanian society, natural-born women take part in an open ceremony where they declare themselves men. With this declaration, they swear to remain virgins their whole life. They are not allowed to marry and are obliged to dress and behave like men; however, if they do this, they are allowed to enjoy almost all the advantages given to Albanian men (cf. Elsie 2001: 27; ELSIE 2002: 142 ff., YOUNG 2000: 69 ff., YOUNG/ TWIGG 2009: 122f.). This institutionalized form of gender changing within a traditional society is unique in

3 Burmëshë is derived from burër (“man”).
4 There are many reasons why a woman might take such a step. For example, if a family has no male descendents, nobody is entitled to inherit, with the exception of a burmëshë. If a woman refuses to marry a man to whom she has been promised, only by becoming a burmëshë may she preserve the honor of her prospective husband’s family and so avert a blood vengeance against her own family (CF. Elsie 2001: 27; ELSIE 2002: 142f., YOUNG 2000: 57, YOUNG/ TWIGG 2009: 121ff).
Europe and is reflected in Albanian customary law (cf. Elsie 2001: 27; ELSIE 2002: 142, YOUNG/TWIGG 2009: 118). Studies have indicated that, in the past, lesbian and female-to-male transgender women saw becoming a *burrneshë* as “the only honorable or pragmatic alternative to a forced marriage, suppression and sexual abuse” (ELSIE 2002: 143). Today, calling someone a *burrneshë* is a compliment and communicates respect (cf. ibid.; YOUNG 2000: 57ff, 111ff). The Albanian LGBT activist Xheni Karaj comments on this:

> Look this ingenious mechanism for keeping a woman on the reins: If she owns an unquestionable authority, one gives her a man’s name and calls her Burrnesha because they cannot oppose her authority; i.e., authority is exclusively a sign of a man – if a woman owns it and one cannot disguise it, then we give her at least a qualification as a man. And thus, in my opinion, this explains the globally unique phenomenon of Burrnesha: If we cannot hold them within the heteronormativity, we can at least “convert” them and make them men! Because when one stands at the top of the hierarchy of values in a certain system, one must follow of course the rules of the system. And the system is “masculine” … at the top there is no place for women! If they want to become a part of the system, they must become men! (DAFG 2013: 19f)

However, the same social recoding cannot be applied to self-identified transgender persons, because they retain their sexuality:

> If a real masculine transgender person (a natural-born woman who identifies as a man) would stand before the Albanian world to explain his physical, psychological, or emotional situation, this would not be accepted because it would automatically entail sexual aspects. In case of the Burrnesha this information is simply solved by the fact that one eliminates it. The Burrneshas are also virgins (ibid.: 20).

The Perception of LGBT People and their Current Situation

Since LGBT people are almost solely defined by their sexuality, for deeply conservative Albanian society – with its taboos surrounding sexuality and interpersonal relationships – the otherness of LGBT persons is difficult to understand, let alone accept. A 2003 survey of heterosexual Albanians indicated that homosexuality is overwhelmingly seen as an illness (90 percent) and an immoral act (80 percent), as well as a snobbish behavior (40 percent). Almost all people interviewed (80 percent) said that they would cut off and shun a homosexual child or relative (cf. GSHDNI 2003: 91f). In interviews with LGBT persons from the same time, 100 percent reported being pessimistic concerning their acceptance by society: 95 percent had

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5 Total sample size was 100.
kept their identity a secret, nearly 60 percent had had problems with the police, and about 30 percent had experienced verbal or physical insults and threats. Only about 15 percent had any hope that someday LGBT people might live a normal life, and 90 percent were pessimistic about their future in Albania (cf. ibid.: 89ff).6

A similar survey of LGBT Albanians from 2006 indicated that 91 percent of the interviewees had not come out to any members of their families, and almost 90 percent had not come out to any of their friends. In Albanian, coming out is seen as extremely difficult, especially in revealing this information to one’s father. People who do come out tend to be highly educated, and presumably with higher self-confidence and self-esteem. Trust that state institutions will protect the civil rights of LGBT members – as is the case in most other countries in the region – is generally low among Albanians. Only 9 percent believe that the court will protect them, 9 percent have faith in criminal proceeding organs, 4 percent trust the police, and 17 percent think an ombudsperson would be helpful. This corresponds with the fact that none of the interviewees of this 2006 report reported ever filing an official complaint with a state institution. Thirty-four percent were unsatisfied with the existing legislation concerning LGBT rights, 82 percent of those people who wish to be public about their sexuality plan to leave Albanian, and only 12 percent saw their future in Albania (cf. GISH 2006b; ANONYMOUS 2010b: 5).7

Since 2009 LGBT organizations have increasingly appeared in public and in the media. Informational events, discussion groups, and activities concerning LGBT topics and human rights have since led to a previously unknown level of visibility for sexual minorities in Albania. Through active political participation and the support of foreign countries – primarily the US, the Netherlands, and Germany – structures and a lobby have begun to develop, which is working to change the perception of LGBT persons in Albania. A survey of everyday Albanians conducted in 2013 showed that 35.5 percent partially or completely supported same-sex marriage – a finding that would have been unbelievable even a few years ago. Further, 54.1 percent were partially or completely open towards the idea of an LGBT representative being elected to parliament (cf. NOA 2013b).

These encouraging improvements, however, cannot disguise the fact that everyday life in Albania is still characterized by patriarchal structures and intolerance towards LGBT persons. While tolerance may be slowly increasing in urban areas, in rural areas there is a downward trend in the rights and protections of LGBT persons and other minorities.

6 Total sample size was 50.
7 Total sample size was 87, of which only three were women. According to GISH it was extremely difficult to find and contact lesbian women.
Legislation: Public Controversies on Anti-Discrimination and Gay Marriage

It is therefore all the more important to have a legal frame that defines the scope of laws that protect LGBT persons, and to argue for the rights of all LGBT persons and organizations. In post-communist Albania this process was initiated in 1995; prior to this point, same-sex relationships were punishable by law. In the criminal law of 1928 the penalty for homosexual acts with underage persons for first-time offenders was between three months and two years of imprisonment, as well as a fine of up to 500 gold francs. Article 289 of the criminal law of 1952 contains a chapter called “Crime against the social morality.” This chapter dictates sentences of up to ten years imprisonment for same-sex activities; these sentences could even be as long as 15 years if there had been violence or sexual activities with underage persons. In Article 137 of the 1977 criminal law this sentence was the same, although without mention of underage persons. In 1995 a new criminal code was finally put into place by the Albanian parliament. In this code, homosexuality is no longer a legal offence and is governed by the same laws as heterosexual behavior: Articles 100–108 of the Criminal Code (27 January 1995) concern, for example, both same-sex and opposite-sex trafficking with under-age persons, by use of violence, coercion, misrepresentation, etc. (cf. STOPPEL 2003: 87–89; GSHDNJ 2003: 12 ff., INFO ARKIVA n.d., VEUR/CHECKOWAY 2001: 10).

Unfortunately, this new penal legislation did not automatically lead to changed attitudes on the part of state organs. Public discrimination against LGBT persons, repressive measures, and mistreatment while in police custody remain normal and are often documented by national and international organizations. In February 2010 Law No. 10221 “About the Protection from Discrimination” was passed by parliament. This law established equal protection for all citizens, regardless of their gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation (cf. KUVENDI I SHQIPËRISË 2010; LOLOÇI 2010: 5). This anti-discrimination bill was a condition for joining the EU. Prior to this legislation, on 18 December 2008, 67 UN member states, including Albania, signed a declaration by the United Nations that protects human rights pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity (cf. UN 2008a; UN 2008b: 30 ff.; UN 2008c; UN 2008d: 1f). The first public debates on human rights in Albania took place at this time, and equality of sexual minorities was one of three major topics discussed (cf. BISHA 2009).

However, despite these legal advances, true equality has not been obtained for sexual minorities in Albania. Marriage is defined by family law as a union between man and a woman, and the right to have children via adoption or medical techniques such as in vitro fertilization is not guaranteed to same-sex couples (cf. KUVENDI I SHQIPËRISË 2003; LOLOÇI 2010: 3). Concerns that are of vital interest to LGBT persons are given inadequate consideration in the Albanian legislation, if they receive any consideration at all. These concerns include workplace discrimination due
to sexual orientation or gender identity, the legal status of intersex people, how to meet the needs of refugees with diverse sexual orientations or gender identities, homophobic hate speech, and whether the public health system should cover the costs of gender-reassignment surgery (cf. LOLOÇI 2010: 3). In a press release in 2015 representatives from Albanian LGBT organizations asked the government to correct or remove discriminatory and prejudice-loaded formulations in the criminal law. Examples of language that they insist should be changed is the assumption that only women could be victims of sexual violence, and that offenders could only be men (Article 102). Further, in the current law, same-sex sexual violence is only punishable when it involves two men, as opposed to two women (Article 102/a; cf. AMBASADA PINK/ LGBT PRO SHQIPËRI 2015).

Although same-sex marriage is still illegal, it has been the subject of heavy political debate. In July 2009 Prime Minister Berisha unexpectedly publicly announced that he would introduce legislation to legalize same-sex marriage, and that a draft of the written law had already been given to the parliament (cf. BALKAN INSIGHT 2009a, 2009b). Although the Albanian Helsinki committee pointed out that such a plan was not realizable without making fundamental changes to Albanian family law, this announcement made headlines worldwide – had it passed, Albania would have been only the fourth country in Europe to legalize same-sex marriage (cf. NOA 2009b, 2009d). The reactions of the Albanian parliamentarians reached from mockery and laughter to outrage, with an overwhelming majority commenting negatively on the draft (cf. NOA 2009e). After an emergency meeting, leading representatives of the countries’ largest religious communities protested strongly to the press (cf. NOA 2009a, 2009c), and the draft law – as expected – found no majority support in parliament.

In October 2013 public outrage again erupted when ombudsman Igli Totozani made an appeal to discuss the legalization of same-sex marriage in Albania (cf. NOA 2013b). As in 2009, politicians, as well as representatives from the Muslim community, Orthodox Christian, and Catholic churches declared that the family would be badly damaged if same-sex marriage was allowed (cf. EKSPRES 2013). Tritan Shehu, former chairperson of the Democratic Party and loud opponent of LGBT rights, stated that protecting the concept of the true family is not discrimination. Muslim representatives argued that nobody has the right to re-define marriage, or to force a family without a father or mother upon children. These representatives called upon the faithful in Albania to unite against this “abnormal initiative” (cf. SHEKULLI 2013; NOA 2013b). The PLL (Party Movement for Legality) proclaimed Totozani as constantly ready “to commit attempts against the social morality and the most moral Albanian traditions,” and held that one cannot allow “the

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institution of the ombudsman to change into the lawyer of the devil” (ibid.). LGBT representatives criticized “the aggressive mind of the representative” as having nothing to do with the “civilized spirit of Europe.” According to pro-LGBT factions, the question is not about religious or divine concepts but about legal ones, and at the very least these ideas should be openly debated. Moreover, they noted that the Albanian socialist party officially recognizes all forms of partnership as families (cf. SHQIPTARJA 2013; NOA 2013b).

In spite of this ongoing controversy, in December 2014 the general manager for social politics in the Ministry of Social Prosperity and Youth, Merita Xhafaj, explained that she had agreed with the Ministry of Justice to make changes to Articles 163 and 164 of the family law. It is expected that the new version of this law will recognize partnerships of same-sex couples (cf. KOHA JONË 2014).

Civil Society: LGBT Organizations and Initiatives

The fact that Albania finally agreed to engage in public debates and to make legal initiatives to advance LGBT rights can be ascribed to four factors: First, to the end of communism and the formal introduction of a democratic system; second, to the courage and the will of a small group of activists to publicly take on Albania’s highly patriarchal society and to campaign against the core values of the majority to secure their own rights; third, to the unconditional will of the Albanian government to become an EU member state as quickly as possible and at any cost; and fourth, to the influence of Western states on Albania’s democratic development through political pressure, economic support, and of the activities of culturally Western NGOs. Besides, the last-named factor is to be considered as essential. However, none of these changes would be possible without a functioning civil society, which began to develop only very slowly after the fall of communism in Albania (cf. KRASNIQI 2004): As of the 1990s, such a civil society was non-existent. Causes for this lack of a civil society can be found in the historical and political developments of the Albanian state since its formation in 1912. The lack of a democratic period between the first and second world wars separated Albania from the experience of most other European countries. Furthermore, under Albanian communism, labor unions were forbidden, and the concept of privacy was effectively abolished by the state (cf. KRASNIQI 2014: 1 f):

More than two generations of citizens grew up with the idea of the party state, of the political enemy, no public critic, the fear of the state, the law of the political background and other elements which developed into the main obstacle for quick processes in post-communist Albania (ibid.: 2).

Social and political crisis exacerbated this situation. Religious communities which were prohibited during Albanian socialism, took over “the function of the saving and cultivation of ideas and democratic values” (ibid.). The number of NGOs registered
in the country increased from 20 (1992) to 1,620 (2008), of which 5 (1992) and 365 (2008) were considered active. Although this growth is impressive, the absolute number is relatively low in contrast to other countries in the region (cf. ibid.: 3).

Civil-social engagement concerning LGBT rights had its beginnings in 1994; after some initial successes, it was predominantly marked by individual initiatives, setbacks, and stagnancy for the next ten years. The first organization created in Albania to lobby for LGBT rights was the Shoqata of Gay Albania (SGA; also known as the Gay Society of Albania). After being founded on March 29, 1994 it played a decisive role in the abolition of Article 137 of the criminal code, and thus in the decriminalization of LGBT lifestyles (cf. VAN DER VEUR/CHECKOWAY 2001: 19). In 1997 the founder and president of the SGA, Genc Xhelaj, received the Felipa de Souza Award9 for her LGBT activism with the SGA (cf. IGLHRC n.d.). When Xhelaj left for the US the SGA suffered a setback, with a continuation of its activities possible only under complicated conditions. Since the registration of a new LGBT NGO (GLAI; Gays and Lesbians Albania International – which would have allowed the organization to have a fresh start – was not approved by the court, work continued under the SGA’s old name and constraining statutes (cf. VAN DER VEUR/CHECKOWAY 2001: 19). In 1999, former SGA activists were finally successful in establishing a new NGO, ALGA (Albanian Lesbian and Gay Association). Today, ALGA, as a member of ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), and as an organization that protects and lobbies for LGBT persons in Albania, works together with both the national health ministry and national and international organizations (cf. ibid.: 20 f.; ANONYMOUS 2010b: 7).

In early 2004 nine men and women formed the Grupi për Integrim Shoqëror (GISH; Group for Social Integration). Though the group did not last long, it was supported by the most important Dutch organization for LGBT rights, COC (Dutch Union for the Integration of Homosexuals). In addition to its aim of creating connections within Europe, in particular with its Southeast-European neighbors, this organization aimed to strengthen the LGBT community through regular meetings and cultural events. A 2006 survey carried out by GISH provided important information about the LGBT community in Albania.10

Albania’s first specifically lesbian alliance was founded in 2009, starting as a Facebook Group Aleanca Kundër Diskriminimit të LGBT (Alliance Against LGBT Discrimination). The co-founder and leading member of the organization is activist Xheni Karaj, who is often present in the media and engaged in discussions on LGBT-related issues. One of this organization’s first activities took place on the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO), in cooperation with the Dutch and American embassies, as well as other local human rights organizations.

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9 “The Felipa de Souza Award recognizes the courage and activism of grassroots groups and individuals working for the fundamental human rights of all people” (IGLHRC 2013).

10 This study published about the status and experience of LGBT persons in Albania (CF. GISH 2006a, 2006b; DAFG 2013: 21).
According to Karaj, political activity on LGBT-related issues began with Berisha’s public proposal to legalize same-sex marriage; Aleanca LGBT’s press statement in response to the violent and negative public reaction to this proposal flung this then tiny and unknown organization into the spotlight (cf. INFO ARKIVA 2009; BALKAN INSIGHT 2009a, 2009b; DAFG 2013: 21; KARAJ n.d.). Aleanca LGBT has a mission to create social events, promote regional networking, support LGBT persons and their families, and protect and lobby for the interests of LGBT persons. They also organize talks to lift the taboo about discussing LGBT topics, are active in the media, and produce informational material (cf. ALEANCA LGBT n.d.).

The organization Të bashkuar PRO kauzës LGBT në Shqipëri (Pro LGBT; United for the Fair Thing of LGBT in Albania) was founded by Kristi Pinderi, the second-most well-known face on the Albanian LGBT scene. Like Karaj, Pinderi is active in the media, and is well known for his aggressive and confrontational style. Pro LGBT aims to increase the visibility and strength of the LGBT community, and engages in national and international lobby work for LGBT rights (cf. PRO LGBT n.d.). Pro LGBT has collaborated with Aleanca LGBT on numerous projects.

The organization Ambasada Pink LGBT Pro Shqipëri (Pink Embassy/LGBT Pro Albania) was founded in 2008, and is also very active. With support of the foreign ministry of the Netherlands, in cooperation with COC Holland, they founded the program “Pink Embassy – The creation of the possibilities and the encouragement of the LGBT community in Albania” on 17 May 2010. The intention behind this program is to publicize the concerns of LGBT persons in Albania, to move public institutions and human rights organizations to participation and engagement, and to “guarantee social, creative, and free space for the LGBT community” (AMBASADA PINK/ LGBT PRO SHQIPËRI n.d.). As with the other pro-LGBT organizations discussed in this section, changing discriminatory laws and social practices are some of the main goals of this organization. LGBT Pro Albania is a member of international LGBT networks like ILGA, IGLYO, and BABELNOR.

The organization Open Mind Spectrum Albania (OMSA) lobbies for the interests of a range of minority groups: Roma, LGBT people, people with disabilities, women, children, people who use drugs, and people with AIDS. The co-founder and head of the organization, Arbër Kodra, is a well-known activist in Albania, and is well-networked throughout South-Eastern Europe. In addition to numerous activities on human rights issues, OMSA offers a training program for LGBT families, especially for mothers. The organization reports its core goal as being "to raise awareness of the LGBT community and the problems it faces. It aims for acceptance from the family members taking part and hopes that this will also change the views of all Albanians in the long run."

Central topics for all of the existing, active organizations – Aleanca LGBT, Pro LGBT, Pink Embassy/LGBT Pro Albania, and OMSA – are homophobia, discrimi-

11 OMSA (2013).
The visibility and presence of LGBT activists and subjects in public debates have increased significantly. Actions and programs promoted by these groups regularly lead to controversial debates in politics, in the media, and among the population. On 2012 the first public “Festival of Diversity,” which was to take place on the main square of the capital of Tirana, provoked a storm of indignation. A bicycle cavalcade and a party were planned, but no parade. This fact was completely ignored by the media and the politicians, who preferred to promote the sensational image of a debauched parade of half-naked men and women, as opposed to the less threatening reality of a simple party. Despite the fact that Prime Minister Berisha had publicly stressed that, in Albania, freedom and rights are also valid for sexual minorities (cf. VIZIONPLUSALBANIA 2012), the Minister of Defense and a chairperson of the PLL, Ekrem Spahiu, publicly stated that: “My only comment to this Gay parade is, we should beat them up with a truncheon” (TEMA 2012). A complaint lodged by Aleanca LGBT and Pro LGBT to the commissioner for anti-discrimination, as well as a complaint to the public prosecutor’s office in Tirana for incitement to violence and disturbing the public peace, had no consequences for Spahiu (cf. ILGA EUROPE 2013: 6f). While Berisha and the EU condemned Spahiu’s statement immediately (cf. NOA 2012a), there was also a lot of support for Spahiu. The press presented LGBT people as the real problem in this situation. They reported that many opponents of homosexuality are even more aggressive than Spahiu, and that people have the right to feel angry. They also reported that there has not been a single case of hate-motivated violence against an LGBT person in Albania. Finally, the media rejected the pro-LGBT argument that this “phenomenon” should be accepted as a normal component of Albanian society: “But no, homosexuality is not a nuclear component of our society, and that’s why it is natural that the people should also feel like revolting” (LUMANI 2012). The chairperson of the Muslim forum announced that they wanted to enter the EU with values, not with homosexuals (cf. PANORAMA 2012). Spahiu pressed forward with his statements, appealing in the name of his party and calling for the Dutch ambassador Henk van de Dool to be declared a persona non-grata and removed from Albania following his criticism of Albanian politics as they concerned LGBT questions (cf. NOA 2012b). Van the Dool apologized, stating that “I was sorry and I am still sorry that I have offended Spahiu, when I spoke of ‘European values’” (TOP CHANNEL TV 2012).

However, despite ongoing hate speech from a number of politicians, the public presence of LGBT activists is increasing, with real progress in legal decriminalization and protection, as well as the promotion of pro-LGBT events. An annual bicycle ride against homophobia on May 17th honors those who have rendered outstanding services to the fight against discrimination or who have supported LGBT interests.

12 Other Organizations in Albania, some of which also deal with LGBT issues, are STOP AIDS, Aksion Plus (which offers HIV/AIDS/drug prevention and adolescent sexual and reproductive health education) and CRCA/DCI Shqipëri (Children’s Human Rights Centre of Albania).
Every year, Aleanca LGBT and Pro LGBT award up to 12 people the title of “Allies of the year,” and Pink Embassy annually recognizes 30 people – including politicians, media creatives, and activists – for their contributions to the pro-LGBT agenda.

In 2013, *SkaNdal*, the first documentary of the LGBT movement in Albania, was released. In this film produced by Aleanca LGBT and Pro LGBT, 30 LGBT persons openly show their faces and speak about their experiences. In 2014, both organizations produced another important project, whose supporters included the Minister for Social and Youth, the British and the American ambassadors, and USAID Albania. This project was a refuge for LGBT persons who have become homeless, whose homes are unsafe to them, or who have been victims of violence on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The center, named Streha (*shelter, refuge*), offers lodging, psychosocial care, and supportive programs to offer residents a new beginning (cf. EXPRESS 2014).

**Summary: 2010 as a turning point in Albania**

Looking back, the years 2009 and 2010 can be seen as a time of important changes for LGBT persons in Albania. While the founding of several LGBT organizations, Berisha’s introduction of a bill to legalize same-sex marriage, the passage of the anti-discrimination law, and the start of Pink Embassy all fall within this period, Klodi’s public coming-out on Big Brother seemed to be the decisive factor that roused most of the people in Albania. In the wake of this incident and its international reaction, Albanian society was forced to deeply discuss homosexuality, gender identity, and homophobia. Given Albania’s history of a patriarchal social system, these debates led to profound questions about how visible otherness could be accepted in a society where traditional role concepts are connected to honor as one of the ruling criteria of daily life. During this discourse the LGBT community gained prominence: high media presence, public habitation to openly LGBT persons, and a lot of awareness training has lessened – but not completely removed – homophobia in many areas. The pressure for Albania to change its views on LGBT persons has been fueled enormously by national transformation, the EU integration process, and globalization. European political elites expect Albania to transform quickly, despite the fact that this country’s geographic inaccessibility, historical limitations, and political isolation have previously delayed changes. Although public and economic sector structures may be changed through legal reforms within a relatively short period of time, this is not the case for long-standing social norms and

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13 The film’s title has a double entendre of “skandal” (*scandal*) and “S’ka ndal” (“There is no stopping.”). See SKA NDAL (www.skandalmovie.com).
14 See also STREHA (http://strehalgbt.al).
local ways of living: At least one or two generations are needed to accept as normal what parents and grandparents still currently reject.

The media in Albania has played a major role in this process, as both a positive liberating force and a negative humiliating. Television, radio, and Internet are both sources of information and shapers of opinions. Driven by economic interests, they can be informative and progressive, or convey stereotypes and falsehoods about the “other.” The media offers space for discussion through venues such as TV shows, newspaper debates, and Internet forums; they also offer possibilities for minorities to express themselves to a large audience and to become visible, and enable LGBT organizations to network and conduct PR activities. While communist Albania was isolated from the world, today the media are essential for the development of a pluralistic society that is learning to see different identities and life paths as non-threatening. So, even if the producers of Big Brother used Klodi’s coming-out as a provocative spectacle to boost ratings, this event ultimately had an overwhelmingly positive impact on Albania’s social development.

References


Debates and Developments on LGBT Issues in Albania


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Debates and Developments on LGBT Issues in Albania


Right-Wing Extremism in Romania

SEBASTIAN GOLL

Introduction

Not much scholarly content has been written about right-wing extremism in Romania since the early 2000s, when the right-wing extremist Partidul România Mare (PRM; Greater Romania Party) was at the peak of its popularity. The author will argue in this article that Romania is an important case in studying right-wing extremism. The fact that the right-wing extremist scene in Romania is relatively marginal seems to contradict mainstream theories of the social sciences, which often seek to explain right-wing extremism on the macro level of a society using versions of modernization theories. According to these theories, structural conflicts produced by major changes in modernizing societies produce anomic conditions, which lead to growing extremist tendencies; accordingly, Romania would be expected to have a much more high profile right-wing extremist scene, since the transformation process after 1989 produced a great deal of hardship.

The author will argue that macro-level theories (LEGGEWIE 1998) like modernization theories are important to explain extremist attitudes in a society. However, to analyze right-wing extremism and its influence as a whole on a society, the social sciences have to pay more attention to meso-level situations (e.g. organizational-level). Extremist attitudes do not necessarily lead to right-wing extremist behavior; Romania is an excellent example of a case where widespread right-wing extremist attitudes are not associated with successful mobilization to accomplish associated goals. In the present paper, social movement theories are used to explain under what conditions right-wing extremist attitudes do or do not lead to behavior. First, theories of resource mobilization (KLANDERMANS 1998) are used to explain the success of social movements depending on their access to resources like money. Second, theories regarding framing concepts (GESSENHARTER 1998) stress how important it is that a social movement is able to address social problems through their own conceptualization of key elements. Third, approaches of collective identity are used to argue that the members of a social movement have to develop a feeling of belonging together by using cultural codes, via areas such as music or fashion. Lastly, analyses of the opportunity structure work from the perspective of
the entire political system to determine the possibility that a social movement can address a certain problem.\(^1\)

In the present paper, the origin of the Romanian right-wing extremist ideology and organizational structure will be traced back to the fascist movement of the interwar period, while the use of national ideology will be traced back to socialist times, parallel to major social changes. After that, two sections will describe the two phases of the development of right wing extremism. Finally, the conclusion will present the contribution of this case study to research in right-wing extremism.

Fundaments of Right-Wing Extremism: The Legion of Archangel Michael and authoritarian Rule in Romania until 1989

For EISENSTADT (1998), fundamentalist movements are a modern phenomenon against modernity. They are modern insofar as they incorporate the jacobinic idea that a society can be made or constructed by the pure will of its members. On the other hand, they are anti-modern, as they articulate anti-universalist ideas. Most prominent is the conflict between differing concepts of rationality and reason, as social groups who propagate fundamentalist ideas or who are receptive for these ideas are excluded from the cultural or economic centers of a society (ibid.: 122). Fascist movements can also be considered to be fundamentalist since their radical ideas, principles, and beliefs about their ideal society are not open to compromise, and therefore need to be enforced in a militant manner. Taking up a social-structural point of view, one can argue that fundamentalism derives from distortions generated during transformations of, for example, agrarian nations into industrial ones.

Romania had to undergo profound changes in its social structure after it proclaimed itself to be an independent kingdom in 1881, as well as after its enlargement following the 1921 Treaty of Trianon, which was followed by an attempt to modernize. The constitution of 1923 remained, at its core, the same as before, a parliamentarian monarchy with a powerful king. It was an agrarian state with widespread rural poverty and a population made up of approximately 30 percent national minorities\(^2\). Moreover, Romania had no industrial sector to speak of, removing an easy platform for communist or social democratic workforce movements. Since its formation Romania, has had to struggle with its peripheral position within the world economic system, exporting staple foods and natural resources and importing industrial goods. In its attempt to modernize, the Romanian state massively developed the educational system during the interwar period. The numbers of students increased enormously, and, given the lack of private companies, most of them saw their future

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\(^1\) An in-depth discussion and comparison of these concepts is outside the scope of the present paper. However, it seems that in recent years approaches using multiple theories in a complementary manner are becoming more popular (cf. GOODWIN/JAMES 2009).

\(^2\) The largest minority groups were Germans, Roma, and Jews (VÖKL 1995: 222).
in the state bureaucracy or in medicine. At these universities, the Romanian students met Jewish students, who had been granted access to universities by the 1923 constitution. Unfortunately, terrible living conditions for the students and a state bureaucracy that could not offer enough jobs to employ them fueled the spread of anti-Semitism through the universities of Romania, where Jews were increasingly seen as “the other” (HEINEN 1986: 118f). Anti-Semitic organizations developed at Romanian universities, from which the fascistic Legiunea Arhanghelul Mihail (Legion of the Archangel Michael) arose in 1927. The difference between this and former anti-Semitic organizations was a decisive political program, which was, among other things, anti-parliamentarian. The Legion rallied for the education of “a new Romanian man” (HAYNES 2008) who should incorporate völkische and Christian Orthodox ideals. Its charismatic leader was a student, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. This development fits perfectly with EISENSTADT’s (1998: 124) claim that modern fundamentalist groups are basically organized by modern educated elites from universities. However, the sphere of influence of fundamentalist movements depends on the impact these groups have on the broader society, which again depends on their resources and on how widespread feelings of exclusion are among the population.

This feeling of exclusion spread throughout Romanian society as the process of democratization proved disappointing. The Romanian political system of the interwar period was elitist and the bureaucracy was inefficient. The parties consisted of an often corrupt privileged few who had little contact with the broader population, and failed to improve living conditions, especially for the rural population (HEINEN1986: 151pp.). The exclusion of the rural population from the political system was used by the Legion to rally for seats in the parliament in the early 1940s. Since the group had only limited resources, they campaigned in the rural areas of six counties, winning one seat in 1931 (CLARK 2012: 210ff). In 1933 the legion was banned for a number of years; to bypass this ban, the party Totul pentru Țară (Everything for the Fatherland) was founded as the parliamentarian wing of the movement in 1935.3

An important part of the mobilization and recruiting strategy of the Legion was volunteering in work camps. Members of the organization often went into rural areas and renovated churches or improved key infrastructure such as the water supply or transportation (HAYNES 2008: 948ff and 954ff; HEINEN1986: 317ff). In these work camps, the Legion sought to demonstrate what the new man should look like. The activities carried out in these work camps also provided a counterexample to the cosmopolitan life in the cities and the behavior of what were seen to be that of decadent democratic politicians.

However, despite the wholesome and constructive activities of the work camps, the Legion was not at all a peaceful idealistic organization; indeed, violence was one

3 The party was founded on the 10th of December, the anniversary of prior anti-Semitic student riots (HEINEN 1986: 197).
of its core characteristic. In 1930 the *Garda de Fier* (Iron Guard) was founded as the Legion’s militia4 (HEINEN ibid: 198ff). While the victims of the Legion’s frequent street fights were predominantly Jews, they were in fact not the most important enemies of the Legion supported by a pseudo-biological theory similar to that employed in Nazi Germany. Jews were instead the representatives of a capitalist and democratic modernity tolerant of religious and ethnic difference, which the Legion rejected. Accordingly, politicians and journalists were also targets, since they also represented the hated system (RADU 2013: 86).

The popularity and size of the Legion reached its peak in late 1937. HEINEN (1986: 27) estimated that there were 270,000 members in 1937, a year when the Legion won approximately 16 percent (ibid.: 355) of the votes in parliamentary elections, becoming a mass movement. This threat from the right was the opportunity for King Carol II to break with democratic elements, prohibiting all parties and political organizations. Although the Legion was from 1940 to 1941 briefly the state party in the government under Marshal Antonescu, 1938 marked the demise of the Legion, with the murder of its charismatic leader Codreanu.

Under the militaristic regime of Antonescu, who unseated Carol II in 1940, widespread anti-Semitism in Romanian society led to numerous pogroms. When the Romanian army entered World War II in 1941, and pushed forward together with the German military in the direction of Bessarabia, thousands of Roma and Jews were killed (HEINEN 2007). The region of Bessarabia that had been gained by Romania in 1918 was lost to Soviet annexation under Antonescu in 1940; in the same year Romania also lost northern Transylvania to Hungary due to German and Italian political pressure. Although Romania regained northern Transylvania in 1945, these territorial losses were traumatic to Romanian national identity; the loss of Bessarabia, especially, was never forgotten. The status of these areas is still debated today. The distinct ideology of the Legion – especially its clericalism – should become a feature of Romanian right-wing extremism in the future. Also its charismatic leader Codreanu should become a martyr for neo-fascists in Europe. However, it was not only Codreanu’s charisma that made the movement successful; the Legion’s effective recruitment and mobilization strategy in a rapidly changing society also contributed to its growth.

To understand right-wing extremism in Romania today it is also important to touch on some specifics of the ideology and practice of Romanian communism. After World War II Romania had to withdraw from territories in Bessarabia; it also lost a part of the Dobrudsha and the Bukovina, but kept northern Transylvania. Although the percentage of minorities in Romania shrank, they remained a considerable presence. Their status got much worse after 1963, when the country began to develop a more independent foreign policy from the Soviet Union. Although national-

4 The Iron Guard should have a function comparable to that of the *Stahlhelm* in Germany and the *Milizia volontaria* in Italy.
Right-Wing Extremism in Romania

ism in communist theory, it was a de facto source of legitimacy under Ceauşescu. It went so far that some intellectuals supported by the regime argued that it was no longer the proletariat that was the historical agent of emancipation, but rather the nation (KEIL 2006: 326). The most prominent example of this sort of nationalism in socialism was a theory called Protochronism, which gained more and more importance. This theory implied that the Romanian nation was a descendant of the Dacian population who inhabited the area of the Carpathians prior to the Roman invasion in 106 CE. This theory had a direct political implication, as its underlying message was that the Romanians had inhabited this territory prior to any other ethnic group (DAHMEN 2003: 236ff). This theory was especially provocative for the Hungarians, who argued that the Romanians immigrated from the south after the Huns – the ancestors of the Hungarians – had already inhabited the area. Advocates of this theory included Corneliu Vadim Tudor, who was close to Ceauşescu, and divided society in Romanians on one side, and everyone who came from outside Romania on the other side (VERDERY 1995: 209ff).

But it was not only on the theoretical level that a strong nationalism showed its influence on socialist Romania. Occasionally the socialist regime used former Legion members to directly strengthen its nationalistic arguments. STERBLING (2012: 61ff) describes how the Romanian secret service Securitate (Security) promoted the publishing of a book by a former member of the Legion, who lived, like many others, in exile in Spain. This book underlined the Romanian claim on Transylvania and aimed to spread this point of view in other countries. CHIROT (1994: 239) recounts a conversation with a university professor and former member of the Legion who was responsible for propaganda and who regained his post as a professor in socialist times after being imprisoned. This professor confessed:

I used to write things praising ‘The Captain’ [Comeliu Codreanu S.G.] and now I write pretty much the same thing, but praising Ceausescu. I’m not a Marxist, you understand, but I have to admit that I like what he is doing (CHIROT 1994: 239; op. cit. SHAFIR 2000: 250).

The antagonism between the Hungarian minority and the Romanian elite reached its peak in 1988 when Ceauşescu proclaimed his plans for a “systematization” of the countryside. The aim of this project was a modernization of the agrarian industry

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5 It should be kept in mind that the communist elite was challenged until the late 1950s by a partisan movement, and that the uprising in Hungary in 1956, which was ended by Soviet troops, also led to unrest in Romania. While, for example, POPA (2006) comes to the conclusion that, being confronted with the Hungarian uprising and the Prague Spring, harsher interior restrictions in Romania were reactions to secure independence from the Soviet Union, KOLAR (1997: 279) argues that discrimination against minorities was fueled by rigid nationalism within the Romanian communist elite.

6 Nicolae Ceauşescu was General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party from 1965 until 1989, when he was sentenced to death. He was also the country’s head of state from 1967 to 1989.
through a total reorganization of farmland. Whole villages were to be destroyed to provide more land for cultivation, with the displaced inhabitants moving to new agrarian-industrial towns (KOLAR 1997: 325ff). The Hungarian minority in Romania felt particularly affected by this plan, leading to further deterioration of an already poor relationship with Hungary.

This megaproject of systematization is only one example of a policy that ignored traditional social ties. The Romanian society under Ceaușescu became an atomized one, and the forced heavy industrialization of the country – which was the goal of the socialist elite until 1989 – fundamentally changed the living conditions for the population. Additionally, the Securitate was highly effective, giving another reason for the lack of any noteworthy opposition to the communist regime in Romania (DELETANT 2006). When the people stood up against the governing elite in 1989, this represented more of a spontaneous revolt without an elaborated political program. Finally the second guard of the nomenclature took the lead in the regime change since there were no other functioning networks (GABANYI 2004: 555; KEIL 2006: 378).

Right-Wing Extremism and Nationalism between 1989 and 1999

The breakdown of socialist regimes in Europe provided fertile new ground for right-wing extremism. Regimes that were by doctrine anti-fascist were replaced by political systems that then had to enact major transformations upon their politics, economy, and culture. Within modernization theories, the modernization process can also be understood as a process in which elite groups can lose their influence on the political center (EISENSTADT 1998). On the micro level of everyday life, citizens gain more autonomy to choose things such as their careers and lifestyles. However, such an increasingly complex society also brings the possibility of personal failure (RUCHT 1994), with the resulting insecurity being an explanatory factor for the rise of extremism. Right-wing extremism seeks to reverse the changes of modernization to an idealized past in which the nation is a bulwark against social differentiation, and provides defined social roles (MINKENBERG 2002: 337), making it unnecessary to bear the uncertainties of individualization processes. As in western Europe, the move towards modernization among former socialist countries fueled the mobilization potential of right-wing extremism, within an short period of time (ibid.: 334).

What did the first decade of transformation mean for the Romanians? The mega projects mentioned earlier in this section, such as investment in heavy industries, gave rise to an economy that could not compete on the global market. The economic reform process was not shock therapy; rather, it had a “stop and go” character. This rocky economy, combined with an already low GDP, led Romania to have a slower catch-up process as compared to other former socialist countries (DULLECK 2008: 642). However, the GDP gives only a rough insight in the living conditions of the population. Another important parameter is the unemployment rate, which rose
during this decade. While unemployment was reduced to some degree by the redistribution of land that had previously been collectivized, the redistributed land was too small and fragmentized to allow for anything more than a subsistence economy, which fueled poverty (Ioanăș 2008: 603; Magdolina/Vită 2008: 696). Overall, from 1990 to 2003, Romania had the worst living conditions of any country in Central and Eastern Europe, with a quarter of the Romanian population living in poverty (although the unemployment rate was lower than in many other countries; ibid.).

If growing insecurity amid these transformation processes leads to a growth in right-wing extremism, Romania should have been heavily affected by this mechanism. Indeed, after the fall of Ceaușescu, new right-wing populist or right-wing extremist political parties were established, some of which even became members of the government. A special feature of these parties was that their members also came from former communist circles. This apparent paradox was made possible by the fact that communist ideology in Romania was also strongly nationalistic. The two most important parties were the PRM and the Partidul Unității Națiunii Române (PURNR, The National Romanian Unity Party). The leader of the former was the already mentioned Corneliu Vadim Tudor and from 1992 to 1997 the leader of the latter was George Funar. The program of both parties can be described as anti-Hungarian; the PRM also had a strong anti-Semitic and anti-Roma ideology, and agitated against sexual minorities. In the parliamentary elections of 1992 the PURNR obtained roughly 8 percent of the votes for both chambers and became a coalition partner (with two ministries) of the ruling FDSR (Andrecsù 2003: 30); like the PRM, the FDSR obtained roughly 4 percent of the votes in both chambers in 1992.

Behind the PURNR stood a “cultural” organization by the name of Vatra Românească (VR; Romanian Hearth), which originated from networks of former members of the Communist Party and Securitate members (ibid.: 29; Totor 2014: 34); this organization also incorporated a strong anti-Hungarian ideology. Eye witnesses report (although Helsinki Watch was not able to confirm their claims) that this organization played an important mobilizing role (Helsinki Watch 1990: 4) during violent clashes in March of 1990 between Hungarians and Romanians in

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7 Following the closure of many urban enterprises and the redistribution of land, Romania’s population moved back to the countryside.
8 Keil (2006: 399) estimated the number of Jews in Romania as being between roughly 10,000 and 20,000.
9 The PURNR and the PRM were not always official coalition partners. Since the FDSR wanted to avoid negative publicity in the West, the PURNR was not a formal partner until 1994, and an official agreement with the PRM was not made until 1995 (Roper 2000: 76).
10 The author translates “vatra” here with “hearth”; while in Romania this would be, rather, an open chimney over which one could cook, “hearth” best captures the emotional connotation of the term.
Târgu Mureș, in which five people died and more than 300 were injured (ibid.: 1).

Although some right-wing extremist parties were founded after 1989, the VR was the only grass-roots right-wing organization, with the ability to mobilize several thousand ethnic Romanians, especially in Harghita and Covasna, two regions with sizable Hungarian populations. Within some months the VR became an influential organization, and even the government in Bucharest courted this organization to improve its reputation in Transylvania (GALLAGHER 1992). As a result, after 1989 the PUNR became the most important ultranationalist party in Romania. In 1992 Gheorge Funar became mayor of the multi-ethnic city of Cluj, and on the national level the party obtained around 8 percent of votes in both the parliamentary and senate elections (ANDREESCU 2003: 30). In the 1996 elections the PUNR only obtained roughly 4 percent of the votes; after that point the party followed the VR and became increasingly unpopular. Eventually, Gheorge Funar changed the party and became a member of the PRM, which went on to play an important role in the years to come.

However, although the PUNR did fall from prominence, it was not the transitional processes towards a democratic political culture that cost it votes. On the contrary, autocratic tendencies among the electorate seemed to grow during this time. A survey conducted in 1993 found that 27 percent of Romanians would have supported “an authoritarian iron hand leadership.” Another survey in 1996 showed that 33 percent supported an “iron hand government, even if this means limiting democracy” (SHAFIR 2000: 265). However, as a coalition member, the PUNR was generally seen as responsible for the failure to reform the economy.

Another party (founded in 1993 according their own statement) that tried to gain public support through making extremist statements was the Partidul pentru Patrie (PPP; The party for the Fatherland). This party referred directly to the political arm of the Legion and tried to ensure its legacy by openly using the symbols and appearance of this organization. Although its leaders were given exposure by the mass media, the party had no significant success in parliamentary elections. The main difference between the PUNR and PRM, on one side, and the PPP, on the other, is that the latter consisted of former members of the Legion, and (to the best of this author’s knowledge) had no important members who had held politically important posts during socialism.

What is most interesting in all this is that, unlike so many other countries in Southeastern Europe, Romania did not develop a right-wing extremist subculture during this period, and none of the neo-Nazi networks active in other countries in the region (for example, Blood and Honor) were developed in Romania. Why is that so? One reason was the “atomization” of Romanian society, which not only hindered

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11 In the aftermath of these clashes predominantly Roma people were condemned (HELSINKI WATCH 1990: 3), despite the fact that they were the smallest group involved.

12 For a comparison of the right-wing extremist subculture of this period with that of other countries in the region see cf.: MUDDE 2005 and RAMNET 1999.
the broader development of a democratic civil society as opposition to the networks of the old elite, but also hindered the ability of extremist and ultranationalist groups to organize outside of existing structures – despite the fact that, as the election results implied, there would have been a sufficient reservoir of supportive attitudes within that society.

Another explanatory factor is the distribution within Romania of the resources needed for mobilization. Extremist parties and organizations like the PUNR, the PRM, and the VR all developed around magazines and newspapers. Media output was an important method of mobilization. These magazines and newspapers had their origins in the socialist-era press, and were privatized by and for members of the former communist elite (TOTOK 2014).

Another reason why extra-parliamentary right-wing movements did not flourish was the lack of a favorable opportunity structure, as nearly all parties showed a tendency to engage in nationalist discourses. The historical state-building process and the path to sovereignty of the Romanian state had always been uncertain, with the region under the influence of three empires until the beginning of the 20th century; the rise of smaller states in the 19th century also created new players who competed for land in Southeastern Europe. During socialist times, Romania saw in the cases of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) what could happen when a country follows a strictly independent course, and the impact of these cautionary tales on Romanian political culture is hard to underestimate. During the socialist period nationalist politicians and writers also kept the memory of Romania’s humiliating loss of territories and the ill treatment of their population by occupiers alive. The political elite, who had been deeply affected by socialism and who had shaped the first decade after Ceaușescu’s death, utilized a nationalistic discourse that made it hard for extremist parties to develop a distinctive image.

Just prior to the election in 2000 the economy of Romania underwent another crisis: Between 1997 and 1999 the GDP shrunk by 4 percent per year (GARDÓ 2008: 656), heavily contributing to 1999’s all-time peak national poverty rate (MAGDOLNA/VITOS 2008: 697). According to modernizing theory, such a situation clearly favors extremist tendencies.

Right-Wing Extremism in Romania from 2000 to today

After ten years of transformation, the new millennium began on a gloomy note in Romania. Although the economy was starting to recover, the population was exhausted. Although in the years to come Romania experienced excellent annual GDP growth, with a peak of roughly 10 percent in 2008, poverty declined slowly and with backslides. In 2013 more than 40 percent of the population were “at risk of

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poverty or social exclusion,” second only to Bulgaria (48 percent) within the EU. One explanation for this high poverty rate was the 2007 global financial crisis, which struck Romania particularly hard and triggered another increase in poverty. However, a more important factor is probably the unequal distribution of income, which grew continuously along with the economy. In both Romania and Bulgaria the richest 20 percent of the population possess 6.6 times the income of the poorest 20 percent of the population, the highest income discrepancy in the EU. According to the theoretical approach chosen here, this should have led to widespread right-wing extremist attitudes, as poverty and inequality increase uncertainty and frustration in the lives of individuals.

The year 2000 should become the year of the PRM. From a political standpoint, in 1996 the PRM had obtained slightly more votes than the PUNR (ANDREESCU 2003: 32), which ANDREESCU (ibid.: 31) attributes to the PRM’s broader program. In addition to the ideological directions mentioned above, the PRM addressed topics such as poverty and corruption. As their name implies, the PRM advocates for a re-establishment of the Romanian borders from the period between the World Wars.14 In Tudor’s 2000 presidential campaign his rhetoric concentrated on very aggressive anti-Roma hate speech; by the second round of the presidential elections he won 33 percent of the total votes (HENKEL 2001: 45f). In the same year his party garnered around 21 percent of the votes for the senate and around 19.5 percent of the votes for the parliament. ANDREESCU points out that even Tudor’s opponent for the second round of the presidential election, Ion Iliescu, “made little effort” (ibid.:33) to condemn Tudor’s hate speech – on the contrary, he also mobilized anti-Roma sentiments. However, after this peak level of popularity the support for the PRM at the ballot box dropped steadily, and in the 2008 elections the PRM was not able to win any seats in either the parliament or senate (GABANYI 2009: 72). The last even moderate success of Tudor was when the PRM gained roughly 9 percent of the votes during the 2009 European parliamentary elections.15

This secured Tudor a seat until 2014, when the PRM was not able to repeat their success. Since that time Tudor has been seen from time to time on television, where his rather populist statements are seen to have a certain entertaining character. CINOPEȘ (2013: 185) explains this downfall through internal quarrels, massive defection, and Tudor’s sudden change in opinion regarding Jews, changing from anti-Semitic to philo-Semitic just before the 2004 presidential elections (TOTOK

14 Within its statutes (http://prm-central.ro/statut/; accessed 19th April 2015) the party considers itself to be center-left wing. This derives from the fact that during the Ceaușescu regime harsh nationalism was integrated into the communist party doctrine. However, the party could be considered to be right-wing extremist, since its attitude toward democratic processes – at least until 2000 – were more than ignorant, especially during the Mineriads of 1999 (ANDREESCU 2003: 33).

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However, another important factor seems to be – just as in the preceding decade – the lack of a favorable opportunity structure for extremist parties in Romania. Although CINOPES\Ş does not discuss this fact in connection with the downfall of the PRM, he diagnoses a political culture in which anti-Semitic, anti-Roma, anti-Hungarian, and homophobic statements are a feature of the general public discourse (ibid.: 183), making it difficult for extremist parties to develop a unique character.

A party that has tried to fill the gap that opened up since the PRM fell from popularity is the Partidul România Unită (PRU; Party of unified Romania).\textsuperscript{16} This party is led by Bogdan Diaconu, a former member of the Social Democrat Party. The party statute is nationalistic, professing to have democratic principles and positioning itself against violence and the promotion of racial hatred. However, it remains to be seen how these principles are interpreted by the party members: One of the first initiatives of the PRU was to rally for the reintroduction of the term “gypsy” in the official language, an initiative that Diaconu justifies with the explanation that the word “Romanian” is often confused with “Roma” by residents of other countries, leading to an unjustified negative image of the Romanians. In another article on his blog he argues that Romanians are under attack by Roma and Hungarian minorities. The national Romanian advisory board for combating discrimination is, from his point of view, an advisory board for combating Romanians.\textsuperscript{17}

One party that could not benefit from the weakness of the PRM is the PPP. Although this party did not achieve any victory at the ballot boxes, in 2012 it did celebrate a judicial triumph, after it was awarded the right to use the previously forbidden name of Totul pentru Țară (TPȚ), which allowed them to refer more directly to the fascist movement of the interwar era. However, this conquest was short-lived: In 2015, the party was banned following formal violations of the political party regulations.

Since about 2000 a right-wing subculture in Romania has begun to develop, albeit on a small scale. Romania never had, for example, a right-wing skinhead or music scene comparable to that of Serbia or Hungary (see TOMIĆ or KARL in the present volume). Romania’s most important right-wing organization is the Noua Dreaptă (ND; New Right), founded in 2000 considering itself as movement. This organization has also tried to tie itself into the legacy of the Legion, although it uses its symbols in a more subtle way. Further, while it also uses the equilateral Celtic cross to ally itself with the entire European extreme right, but lays more weight on its religious roots, as opposed to, for example, extreme right organizations in Germany. The Romanian nation is, from this organization’s point of view, inseparable from the orthodox faith. A major political demand of the ND is to reestablish the

\textsuperscript{16} Homepage of the PRU can be accessed at: http://www.partidulromaniaunita.org (accessed: 4th June 2015).

\textsuperscript{17} Bogdan Diaconu’s blog can be accessed at: http://www.bogdandiaconu.ro/organizatiile-tiganesti-si-maghiare-nu-au-loc-de-romani/ (accessed: 7th June 2015).
Romanian borders that existed during the interwar period, and the orthodoxy nationalist of the ND is mixed with anti-Semitism, anti-Romaism, anti-Hungariarism, glorification of the Iron Guard, and homophobia. However, since Romania’s passage of the EU-wide anti-discrimination law of the EU, acts of hate-speech are punishable, meaning that these more hateful elements can often only be inferred indirectly. In 2006, for example, members of the ND had to face fines for publishing articles discriminating against Roma, leading the ND to be more careful in its statements. Nevertheless, anti-Romaism is still a major part of the ideology of the ND. This is observable, for example, at ND’s annual march “against the real estate mafia” in Timișoara. Although the title of this march is rather neutral, it is aimed against a group of Roma families who bought – apparently illegal methods – a group of houses in the city center. This grievance was and is used as an excuse to proclaim racist slogans against the Roma minority in general at these manifestations. Other major demonstrations of the ND are a commemoration march on the anniversary of Codreanu’s death, as well as an annual demonstration against the Romanian LGBT Pride Parade in Bucharest. Another important anniversary is December 1, a national holiday celebrating Romania’s acquisition of Transylvania in 1918. Members of the ND celebrate this day in Sfântu Gheorge, a Transylvanian city that is a cultural center of the Hungarian minority. From the viewpoint of the ND the request for more self-government in this region from the Hungarian minority is dangerous, perceiving this as a first step towards a reintegration of Transylvania into Hungarian territory. Like the Iron Guard, the ND also organizes work camps, which have come to include environmental measures, like the planting of trees: Concern over environmental protection has increased greatly in Romania in recent years, and the ND has tried to capitalize on this development.

Although the ND can rarely mobilize more than 150 members per district to attend these demonstrations, since its foundation it has constantly been the largest Romanian right-wing organization. While what used to be one of the biggest demonstrations, the protest against the Pride Parade in Bucharest, has been losing participants since 2007, the ND seems to have branches in every district, as well as a partner organization in the Republic of Moldova. It is also important to note, that if the ND uses partially guidelines provided by Codreanu’s book to recruit new members, it is not easy to become and stay one, since Codreanu’s aim was to build a new man who sticks to certain moral principles and behavior. Apart from a brief cooperation with the VR (COTIDIANUL.RO: 2010; ZIARE.COM: 2010), which became more and more irrelevant after failing to attract new young members, the ND only cooperates rarely with other groups to broaden its influence.

For some years the ND demonstrated in Timișoara together with a new type of right-wing extremist group in Romania: the Naționaliști Autonomi (NA; the Auton-
Right-Wing Extremism in Romania

This group refers directly to a kind of right-wing organizational form and ideology that developed in Germany after 1990 (SCHINDLER/HÄUSLER 2011) and since about 2000 has emulated the appearance and types of political actions of European anarchistic left-wing organizations (which are practically non-existent in Romania). The NA states on its webpage that it was founded in 2007 in Timișoara. Its ideology is more national-socialist than the ND; it is anti-capitalistic, it makes no references to religion, and its racism is justified with biological arguments (as opposed to the ND’s religiously influenced racism). The NA chose two symbols, the gear wheel, which refers to fascist/national-socialist symbols of worker organizations, and the Odal-Rune, a symbol that was used by a unit of the Waffen SS made up of ethnic Germans from the Banat region. This unit was well known for its outstanding cruelty, a radical and uncompromising example for the NA. The NA’s Internet presence features many openly racist statements and demands a national revolution. This seems to be possible due to the fact that NA members usually hide their identity: There are no pictures of members on the homepage, and at demonstrations most of the members are masked. Despite this secrecy, in 2013 the leader of the NA, Timișoara, was convicted for racist statements after he offered 70 Euros to any Roma women who would agree to be sterilized (HOTNEWS.RO: 2013). The NA also uses more youth culture elements like music and graffiti. This kind of right-wing extremism not only exist in Timișoara; the total number of activists is probably fewer than 100 in all of Romania, and since 2010 there has been no more visible cooperation between the ND and the NA.

Cooperation between right-wing extremists in Romania is generally scarce, which (aside from the un-advantageous opportunity structure discussed earlier in the present paper) is another reason why extremist parties and organizations in Romania are more marginal than in Bulgaria or Serbia. ANDREESCU counted (2003: 14) 28 extremist organizations in Romania. Even though some may only be active online and others are so small that they come and go unnoticed, it is striking to see that even informal cooperation is rare.

In other countries there are close links between right-wing extremists and soccer hooligans and/or ultras groups. While there are not many soccer hooligans in Romania, the ultras have grown larger within the last few years. Although the author could observe some soccer fans attending demonstrations of the ND, there seems to be no broad-scale cooperation. It would not be surprising if the cooperation would

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20 One reason for this is the ongoing divide resulting from different interpretations of the past of the Iron Guard: While some right-wing extremists blame Horia Sima, the final leader of the Iron Guard, for the downfall of the movement, others consider his “propaganda of the deed” more effective than Codreanu’s more theoretical approach.
21 Soccer ultras are sworn communities with considerable numbers, and their influence on political protests in recent years should not be underestimated: They played an important role in the Euromaidan Protests in 2013/14 (Ukraine), Taksim Square in 2013 (Turkey), and Tahrir Square 2011/12 (Egypt).
be closer since clubs in Romania have to pay fines for engaging in racist chants frequently. One ultra group on which further research seems fruitful is a small group of Dinamo Bucharest; this group uses the Celtic cross as a symbol and on their homepage, which was edited until 2014 and was linked to the ND. Their most recent Facebook activity was linked to the protest against the Pride Parade in Bucharest in May 2015, which was organized by the ND, and some of their banners at soccer games praised Marshal Antonescu. Although the ultra scene does not seem to be supported by right-wing extremists on a broad scale to date, it seems to be appropriate to keep track of developments in that area, especially as antagonisms between the Hungarian minority and ethnic Romanians tend to crystallize during sporting events: Nearly every popular sport event between Hungarians and Romanians can led to escalation, also ice-hockey, which is considered the national sport of the Hungarian minority.

Ongoing heated discussions regarding minority rights and disputed borders in the region are an opportunity for extremists to connect to mainstream politics and other organized groups. Within the community of ethnic Romanians the dream of “Greater Romania” has become more prominent within the last few years. In addition to the parties and organizations already mentioned, Acțiunea 2012\textsuperscript{22} (Action 2012) is another active organization that campaigns for this goal. Acțiunea 2012 considers itself to be an umbrella for NGOs that advocate for a reunification of the Republic of Moldova with Romania. Manifestations organized by this organization reached their peak prior to the presidential elections in October 2014, comprising approximately 10,000 participants (BARBUȚA 2014a) in Bucharest. In its statutes, the organization pledges itself to democratic principles but invites members of any parties to join the movement; as a result, nearly half of the local speakers for this organization in Romanian districts show open sympathies to extremist organizations (most frequent the ND and TPT) or extremist media sites via Facebook\textsuperscript{23}. This organization’s stated goal of a reunification between the Republic of Moldovan and Romania could fuel international uncertainty in the current Ukrainian crisis, which started with the Maidan-protests. Acțiunea 2012 organizers and participants view ethnicity as the core force uniting a politically democratic community, shouting slogans such as “the same blood, the same country, we all were once Romanians” (“același sânge, aceeași țara cu toții am fost Români odinioară”; BARBUȚA 2014b) at demonstrations. KRAUS (2000) pointed out correctly that excluding civic nationalism in favor of ethnic criteria during waves of mobilization may pose a serious threat to a democracy, particularly one undergoing transformation processes. The fact that sympathizers of right-wing extremist organizations have captured leading roles in this organization makes their rallying cry even more ominous.

\textsuperscript{23} Research conducted by the author in December 2014.
Another border-related conflict centers on Transylvania, as the growth of nationalism in Hungary has influenced developments in Romania. It seems, for example, that the Hungarian group Hatvannegy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom (HVIM; Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement) is also trying to increase its number of members in Romania. This right-wing extremist organization (see KARL and TOMI in the present volume) considers Transylvania to be a part of Hungary that needs to be regained. It has members in Romania, and members from Hungary support manifestations within Romania (I.C. 2014; participant observation by the author in 2013), which increases tensions in this region. Very clear statements have also been made by Jobbik (also see KARL in this volume), which is trying to increase its influence in Transylvania. In 2013, for example, at a summer camp organized for Hungarian youths, Gábor Vona, the president of Jobbik stated that he is ready to accept “a conflict with Romania [….] to enforce the autonomy of the Hungarian minority. Good relations between the two neighboring countries were not a priority, but the protection of ‘our race’ and defending the rights of Transylvanian Hungarians” (op. cit. TOTOK 2013). The ND has reacted to these developments not only with similar harsh statements at demonstrations, but also with closer links to European right-wing extremists, who also rally against Hungarian attempts to reestablish the boarders that existed prior to the Treaty of Trianon in 1921. These are for example Slovakian nationalists. In 2015 the leader of the ND met with the right-wing extremist Marian Kotleba, the regional president of the district Banská Bystrica. In the Banat region there also exists cooperation between the ND and the Serbian organization Srpska Akcija (Serbian Action) which support each other during demonstrations.

Aside from meetings among organizations that see potential Hungarian territorial claims as a threat, right-wing extremists in Europe and the United States often connect against globalization, which they see it as a threat to ethnically and culturally pure nations. Through such international meetings, experiences about successful agenda setting and mobilizing strategies are exchanged. The ND can provide a good example of this process: The most important international meeting for Romanian right-wing extremists is the anniversary of Codreanu’s death, a martyr for the European right-wing extremist scene. As a result, right-wing extremists from countries such as Denmark (Danskernes Parti), Sweden (Svenskarnes Parti), Spain (Alianza Nacional), Germany (NPD), and Italy (Casa Pound and Forza Nuova) attend this ceremony. Members of ND also attended demonstrations of the Chrisy Avgi (Golden Dawn; see Fielitz in the present volume) in Greece.24 However, a detailed evaluation of the outcome of these international meetings is outside the scope of the present article and requires further research.

24 Research done by the author between 2012 and 2015 via Internet and participant observation.
Conclusion:
Why broad and long lasting right-wing mobilization has failed

The case of Romania confirms the assumption of modernizing theories that fundamental societal changes via transformation processes produce racist and minority-hostile tendencies, as large swatches of the population strata suffer social deprivations. These tendencies can be expressed through opinions and thought patterns that can be harnessed by right-wing extremists. In Romania this is especially the case since chauvinistic discourses can be linked to the history of one of the biggest fascist movements of the interwar period, as well as to ideologies of the socialist regime.

Although attitudes such as racist and autocratic opinions are widespread within Romanian society, right-wing extremists have not been successful in using them to fuel long-term mobilization. Right-wing extremists have not been very successful in giving current political problems a nationalistic frame; for example, the problems relating to the growing environmental movement in Romania could not be redefined in nationalistic terms on a broad scale so far. However, this topic will stay on the agenda for the future, and extremists will keep trying to connect their anti-globalism ideology with these concerns. The same is true for the movement for the reunification of Romania and the Republic of Moldova, although extremist tendencies already pay a larger role here.

To date, right-wing extremist parties in Romania have not been able to connect themselves to extra-parliamentary forces to create a stable basis. This is due to the facts that the party system is generally restricted to an elite, combined with the fact that right-wing extremist movement sector is relatively small in Romania. Like parties of all orientations in Romania, those representing the right-wing sector have failed to take roots in broader societal layers. Furthermore, right-wing extremists in Romania do not have a vivid subculture (e.g., fashion or music) that attracts young people; the extra-parliamentary face of the biggest right-wing extremist group, the ND, is outdated, and certainly does not attract many people with their old-school fascist appearance. It seems that the same problem that faces democratic civil society is also the problem of the right-wing extremists: In Romania, the impulse to become involved in voluntary engagement is, overall, low.

The only functioning networks that could mobilize right-wing extremist opinions on a broader scale for their own goals were the elites from socialist times, who have since lost their influence on the political center. However, these elites still have some resources derived from their influence during socialist times, which could still be put to use. Further, as STERBLING (2001: 73) pointed out, elites in southeastern Europe for whom Western democratic and economic standards are a desirable outcome are under the constant pressure of anti-Western discourses, which fundamentally question the course of liberal-democratic universalism. This leads to entanglements of the political discourse in which right-wing extremist statements become mainstream. While this does deny right-wing extremist parties a good opportunity
structure for being distinctive, this also results in racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and nostalgia for autocratic regimes becoming an accepted part of mainstream political culture.

References


Network Analysis of Right-Wing Extremism in Hungary

PHILIPP KARL

Introduction

The right wing is trending in Hungary. The right-wing party Fidesz (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége – Magyar Polgári Szövetség) has a two-thirds majority in parliament, and a nationalist, conservative discourse represents the political mainstream in contemporary Hungary. Despite the fact that in some European countries, Fidesz might even be considered right-wing extremist, not only is Fidesz prospering, but parties, organizations and groups that are consensually regarded as right-wing extremist are also thriving in Hungary. An excellent example of this trend is the emergence and establishment of the right-wing extremist party Jobbik (Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség: Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom).

In political science the electoral success of a party is traditionally explained using factors on either the demand or supply side. The present article, in contrast, will examine factors outside of the traditional realm of party politics, since the emergence of Jobbik is embedded in the development of a radical right-wing social movement, which created a subcultural network around Jobbik. The goal of this article is to show and examine parts of this network, focusing on the subcultural surroundings of Jobbik, and highlighting the role of the internet in maintaining the movement and its supporters.

This article first gives an overview of the right-wing extremist scene and its development after 2006, underscoring the ideology and the specific Hungarian elements in the subculture. In a second chapter, network analysis is introduced as a scientific tool, and the results of a number of overlapping exploratory studies on networks such as websites in general, Facebook, and Twitter are presented and jux-

1 Alliance of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Alliance.
2 Especially after Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s speech about illiberal democracy from July 26th in 2014, more commentators tend in this direction. But the argument if Fidesz is just nationalist-conservative or at least radical right is not new (see MUDDE 2007: 32, 55).
3 See for example PAKSA 2012, BUZOGÁNY (2011) and Biró NAGY et al. (2012).
4 Right-wing youth association: Movement for a Better Hungary. The word Jobb in Hungarian has two meanings, the adjective for “better” and the direction “right”; the comparative Jobbik therefore means both “the better” and “more to the right”.
5 For an extensive overview see MUDDE (2007: 201–277).
ta posed with what was witnessed first-hand during extreme right-wing events in the first half of 2012. A third chapter presents the development of online support for Jobbik through social media in comparison to the French extreme right party Front National, the German extreme right party NPD and as Hungarian example the left opposition party MSZP. A comparative analysis of Facebook and Twitter is made to show the stand-out character of Jobbik online. A brief discussion concludes the article.

Right-Wing Extremism in Hungary – an Overview

Since 2006, right-wing extremist actors in Hungary have gained popularity and have been quite successful in different areas. The political scene was in turmoil in 2006. A confidential speech of then-Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány to his party colleagues from the socialist MSZP in May 2006 in Balatonőszöd was leaked to the press and became public. In that speech he reported that he and his government had knowingly lied to the public concerning the economic situation in Hungary. Knowledge of this speech led to violent street protests during which the building of the state-owned television broadcaster Magyar Televízió was attacked. These protests are essential to understanding the formation of the new right-wing extremists in Hungary. Many publications show explicit, violent images of militant right-wing extremists bleeding from wounds they received from aggressive encounters with the police. Right-wing extremists such as György Budaházy became symbolic figures for some nationalists. Budaházy was charged with committing terrorist acts after he and his accomplices attacked the houses of politicians and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) meetings. Stickers and pins with Budaházy’s face in front of the Árpád flag with the slogans “Freedom for Budaházy” and “Freedom for the politically persecuted” were popular among extremists at the time of the trial.

In the aftermath of these protests, many paramilitary groups were established or became more popular. In particular, the Magyar Gárda – which was banned in 2008 – became famous because of its martial appearance. Other organizations were established afterwards. A number of these successor organizations have a lot in common with Jobbik. Particularly, the Új Magyar Garda is a direct successor of the Hungarian Guard, as well as the Magyar Nemzeti Gárda. To avoid being banned

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6 Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands – German national-democratic party.
7 Magyar Szocialista Párt – Hungarian socialist party.
8 Labeled as such by the Prosecution Service that investigated in 2010 violent attacks on politicians and LGBT meeting places between 2007 and 2009 carried out by the members of the “Hunnia Movement” which was established by Budaházy in 2007.
9 A white-red striped flag, which became notorious during the rule of the fascist Arrow Crosses.
10 Hungarian Guard.
11 New Hungarian Guard.
12 Hungarian National Guard.
again, both groups try to avoid an overtly militaristic appearance. In addition to those two organizations, there are other militia groups that are predominantly active in places home to a large Roma population, mostly in eastern and northeastern Hungary. The east Hungarian town of Gyöngyös páta, for example, became notorious following the evacuation of the local Roma population before a scheduled march by extreme right-wing groups such as Véderő\textsuperscript{13} and Szobb Jövőért\textsuperscript{14}. This march was widely perceived as very hostile and aggressive, and therefore dangerous for local Roma. In addition to being anti-Semitic, homophobic, and authoritarian, these paramilitary organizations are extremely hostile towards minorities, and see Greater Hungary as the “true” Hungary.

From the point of view of the author of the present article, the most popular military-inspired publicly visible organizations are HVIM\textsuperscript{15} and Betyárséreg\textsuperscript{16}. This assessment is based on their professional web presence, their large number of Facebook followers, their offline visibility, their frequent high profile marches, and their popularity in right-wing extremist media channels and news sites. The organization HVIM is comparatively old, having been established in 2001. As indicate the authors sources and data it seems to be the most transnational Hungarian right-wing extremist organization, fostering ties to various right-wing extremist groups all over Europe and participating and regularly organizing nationalist meetings and gatherings. Particularly in the neighboring countries, which once belonged – at least in part – to Greater Hungary, HVIM is very active.\textsuperscript{17} Betyárséreg is younger (founded in 2008), but recently has become increasingly popular. This group sells a romanticized image of violence and of right-wing counterculture. Both groups are very active on the internet and have sophisticated websites and Facebook presences\textsuperscript{18}. Directly linked to Betyárséreg are martial arts fighters and biker gangs such as the Nemzeti Érzelmi Motorosok\textsuperscript{19}, which gained international notoriety in 2013: On April 21, when an annual march commemorating the victims of the Holocaust is traditionally held, this group planned a counter-event with the motto “Step on the gas.” However, Fidesz prohibited this event.

Violence against the Roma minority has also not been limited to the above-mentioned events of Gyöngyös páta. Between 2008 and 2009 eight Roma were killed and several more were wounded in a series of racially motivated attacks in small villages, mostly in eastern Hungary. In all cases, the culprits were right-wing ex-

\textsuperscript{13} Defensive force.
\textsuperscript{14} For a better future.
\textsuperscript{15} Hatvannegy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom – Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement.
\textsuperscript{16} Bandits army.
\textsuperscript{17} In Zagreb the 13th of April 2012, there has been a meeting of European right-wing extremist were HVIM was present as well.
\textsuperscript{18} The Facebook presence of Betyárséreg has been turned off in December 2014 after the writing of the first version of the present paper. At that time the organization had more than 30,000 Likes.
\textsuperscript{19} National minded motorcyclists.
tremists who were charged for murder in 2013. For the period between 2009 and 2012, the watchdog organization the Athena Institute tabulated 121 hate crime-related incidents that were either racist, anti-Semitic, antiziganist, or homophobic. Between 2010 and 2012, 80 percent of those cases “did not cause personal injury” and half of them were motivated by racism.

In the political sphere, Jobbik has represented the extreme right in parliament since the 2010 parliamentary elections. In modern Hungary after 1989, only two extreme right-wing parties have managed to enter Parliament. Before Jobbik it was MIÉP, a spin-off of the conservative MDF. MIÉP was founded in 1993 by the anti-Semitic writer István Csurka. This anti-Semitic, revisionist, irredentist, and ultra-nationalist party has only once managed to send representatives to the Országygyűlés, and their relative electoral success in 1998, when they received 5.47 percent of the vote, remains an exception. Currently, this party has fallen by the wayside as Jobbik has taken the reins.

Jobbik was initially founded in 2002 by students, including the current party leader Gábor Vona, as a purely student-based movement from the history department of the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. The students involved were all close to right-wing or extreme right-wing parties such as MIÉP. Since 2010, Jobbik has managed to unite right-wing extremist and ultra-nationalist voters. On Sunday, April 25, 2010 Jobbik gained access to parliament for the first time in their short history, and instantly became the third-biggest parliamentary party. In the following year the governmental coalition of Fidesz and KDNP composed and implemented a new constitution that fulfilled demands of Jobbik’s election manifesto, a strategy designed, at least in part, to thwart Jobbik. However this strategy was not successful at all, and in the most recent 2014 parliamentary elections, Jobbik became the second-most represented party.

Given the increasing importance of extreme right-wing political groups in Hungary, it is surprising that little research has been carried out on this subject. No books entirely dedicated to this topic have been published in German, French, or English, and the few Hungarian monographs are either written from a historical perspective or do not deal exclusively with Hungary.

With regard to ideology, the radical right in Hungary uses a mixture of nationalism, irredentism, paganism, authoritarianism, militarism, and xenophobia. Despite this fact, Jobbik’s electoral manifestos from 2010 and 2014, and some bands con-
Connected to Jobbik, such as Kárpátia, tend not to openly express hostile views towards minorities; rather, their focus is more nationalist and nativist. Based on this information, the author assumes that Jobbik and some of its subcultural partners are predominantly trying to construct and promote a worldview in which anti-Semitism and xenophobia are more implicit than explicit.

The on- and off-line subculture that has formed around Jobbik comprises networks of media firms, clothing lines, bands (e.g., Szkítia), festivals, and other actors, all seeking to satisfy the demand for Hungarian nationalist products and services. For example, accessories such as whips and leather bags harkening back to Hungary’s idealized nomadic and pagan pre-Christian past can be seen regularly at Jobbik events. Together, these actors promote specific codes and habits.

Another branch of the Hungarian extreme right is more interested in typical skinhead subculture. They are represented musically, for example, by the band Romantikus Erőszak; this band regularly takes part in Jobbik events, and is linked online to other extreme-right vendors such as the clothing brand Magyar Harcos. This brand has a prominent and well-trafficked website, as well and several shops in Budapest, which promote Hungarian skinhead clothing and accessories.

In light of this considerable extreme-right presence, the 2006 street protests represent a constituting event that stresses the right-wing narrative that “the real Hungarian people have to fight on the streets against the evil elite”, connecting these protests to the street protests in 1956.

Network Analysis

One purpose of this article is to shed light on the subcultural networks that exist around Jobbik. One can argue that networks surround us, embed us, form us, and guide us. Depending on how network is defined, each person in modern societies is more or less part of local, regional, national, and trans-national networks, which can be either virtual or real, and can relate to groups such as family, friends, work, clubs, companies, and associations. It is therefore logical to speak of a “self-constructed network society based on perpetual connectivity” (CASTELLS 2012: 231). A few years ago, social movement researchers like Donatella DELLA PORTA (2009) started to research online networks for the radical right in Western countries. This research first looked at the United States, Italy, and Germany (CAIANI et al. 2012). Since then, Manuela Caiani has broadened this empirical work in cooperation with Linda Parenti; they first looked at Spain (CAIANI/PARENTI 2011), and then compared these findings to France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States (CAIANI/PARENTI 2013).

27 Romantic violence.
28 Hungarian Fighter.
With the help of network analysis, different kinds of networks can be examined. A network can be a group of people who know each other and who are connected; it can consist of membership in an organization, and can reflect connections in the real or virtual (i.e., online) world. In social movement research, network analysis has become more and more important (see TARROW 2011 and DELLA PORTA/DIANI 2006). Online network analysis in the social sciences first looked at terrorism and other extremism – most notably with the works of Luca TATEO (2005). Since then, network analysis has spread widely across the social sciences (CAIANI/PARENTI 2013, CONWAY et al. 2012).

The first objective of this article is to provide an overview of the main actors. Accordingly, as a first step, exploratory hyperlink analyses were carried out manually with different starting points. Jobbik’s website[^29], Magyar Harcos’s website[^30], and the extremist right-wing news website kuruc.info[^31] – one of the most popular websites in Hungary – were used as starting points: jobbik.com was chosen due to the network structure around Jobbik; magyarharcos.hu was chosen due to its visibility in street events and its key role in clothing one extreme right subgroup; and kuruc.info was chosen for its importance to the extreme right-wing scene in general. The hyperlinks and advertisements on those websites were counted, listed, and verified, and connected pages were checked using the same procedure. Since this method leads to complex and highly developed networks that are difficult to visualize and that require huge resources of time and computer power, the author had to focus only on the three websites listed above. It was therefore not possible to recreate the whole radical-right online network, as had been done by CAIANI et al. (2013). Further, due to the exploratory nature of this hyperlink analysis, a complete image was not the goal; rather, the aim was to identify key actors in the subcultural network around Jobbik and to identify their ties. This hyperlink analysis was carried out between September 2012 and January 2013.

After the hyperlink analysis, videos and photographs of protest events were examined to cross-check the validity of the online ties. The author attended several events hosted by Jobbik and other Hungarian extreme right-wing organizations between January 2012 and July 2012, where he took video and photographs. Furthermore the author realized that social media might have become essential to understanding the use of the virtual world by the extreme right. Social media is a powerful tool that includes more interactive ways of communication and other forms of connecting ideas compared to the “old” internet. The author therefore explored Jobbik’s Facebook and Twitter activities and followers, and the development of Jobbik’s use of Twitter was integrated into the research.

In the present study, the first part of Sidney TARROW’s (2011) theory, which he established in Power in Movement will be assumed as given. This theory posits that,

[^31]: http://www.kuruc.info.
political opportunity structures are a necessary precondition for the rise of a new political actor. For this present article it is assumed that in Hungary such political opportunity structures are and were existent, and have given the radical right the opportunity to establish itself. The second part of Tarrow’s theory will form the base of the theoretical framework, stating that the success of an emerging political actor depends on the density and effectiveness of its network, working communication, and fitting ideological frames (TARROW 2011: 16). Guided by this theory, Jobbik’s networks and means of communication (especially online communication) are examined. Online communication is revealed as a new and powerful tool, enabling more effective recruitment, and social media promotes social movements through stronger, faster, less controllable, and less hierarchical networking (CASTELLS 2012). In the present article the main focus is on online networks and the means of online communication. Naturally, an analysis using only this method will not necessarily provide a complete and accurate picture of real-world behavior.

**Hyperlink Analysis**

The hyperlink analysis was carried in early 2013. This analysis found out that Jobbik’s official website had no links to any other extreme right website that legally related to Jobbik, meaning official websites from individuals, groups, associations etc that are formally tied to Jobbik. In other words Jobbik tries to avoid any direct connection to other extreme right groups via its website. In total, 32 websites were examined. Of the websites that were not legally bound to Jobbik, 18.8 percent belonged to bands, 15.6 percent to news and media sites, 21.9 percent to clothing brands, 12.5 percent to organizations and groups, and 6.2 percent to festivals.

This network analysis gave the impression that the extreme right-wing online network is densely connected. With the exception of Jobbik, each major website – whether it was a news site (such as kuruc.info), a clothing label (such as Magyar Harcos), a band (such as Kárpátia), or a paramilitary group (such as HVIM) – had many links to other extreme right websites. Although Jobbik itself was not connected to any other such organizations, some of Jobbik’s sub-organizations were connected to other websites in the extreme right sphere. Jobbik’s conspicuous lack of superficial connections with the extreme right makes it clear that this organization wishes to cultivate a good appearance. At the same time, there is clearly a vast network of extreme-right online activity, all of it apparently centered on Jobbik. This picture becomes a bit clearer when analyzing Jobbik’s Facebook connections.

**Network Analysis of Jobbik’s Facebook Presence**

An ego-centric network analysis based on Jobbik’s official Facebook page was carried out by examining all Facebook “likes” (i.e., a virtual expression of support for a person, issue, group, association, etc.) that Facebook pages officially associated
with Jobbik\textsuperscript{32} gave to other Facebook pages. This network is considered ego-centric because it is centered on Jobbik, moving out into all of the Facebook pages that it supports. The resulting graph looks like a star, with ties moving from the center to the periphery.

![Figure 1: Facebook likes from Jobbik (and sites legally associated with Jobbik) to other Facebook pages in percentage.](image)

As with its website, Jobbik is only officially connected via Facebook to a few other organizations. However, the official Facebook page of Jobbik’s youth organization, Jobbik Ifűjsági Tágozat\textsuperscript{33} (Jobbik IT), is not that cautious. Jobbik IT’s Facebook page is connected to most of the major paramilitary groups that have Facebook presences (for example HVIM), as well as to many of the extreme right bands (for example Kárpátia), clothing brands (for example Magyar Harcos), festivals, foreign political parties and organizations, and media sites discussed in the preceding section on the hyperlink network. Jobbik and Jobbik IT regularly work together closely on the same events. The slogan of the youth section “Miénk a jövő” (“Ours is the future”) is used at official Jobbik events as a slogan behind which everybody can

\textsuperscript{32} Each political party has a multitude of Facebook sites representing specific parts of the party, local subgroups, thematic subgroups etc. For this study only the official sites with nation-wide importance were examined such as the leaders Gabor Vona site, the official party site and the site of the youth organization JobbikIT.

\textsuperscript{33} Jobbik’s Youth Section.
and does march\textsuperscript{34}. Therefore it stands to reason to assume that both mostly share similar sympathies for other actors of the Hungarian extreme right.

The Facebook analysis was conducted in March 2013. Figure 1 presents 77 likes to other Facebook pages. Of these likes, 4.2 percent represent bands, 5.2 percent festivals, 5.2 percent cultural sites, 9.7 percent militarist organizations and groups, 6.5 percent clothing brands, 13 percent news and media sites, and 26 percent extreme right parties or individuals from other countries, such as the All Polish Youth. The rest of the likes do not pertain to official organizations, but rather to groups that bring together individuals that hold the same beliefs on particular topics, such as free trade (Nem as ACTA-ra Magyarországon\textsuperscript{35}), Roma bashing (Egymillióan a cigánybűnözős ellen\textsuperscript{36}), abortion (Tágy az abortus ellen\textsuperscript{37}), and the Hungarian past (Árpád vezér\textsuperscript{38}).

**Network Analysis of Twitter**

The analysis of Twitter was fundamentally different from that of Facebook, since Twitter shows those who follow Jobbik; i.e., potential Jobbik supporters. The complete followership of Jobbik (roughly 4000\textsuperscript{39} Twitter users) was gathered using the software simplymeasured in October 2013. This data contains the Twitter user’s name, the individual’s real name (as given to Twitter), as well as users’ personal descriptions, reported location, time zone, number of tweets, and list of followers. More specific data is also available, such as follower–following ratio, scores, and rankings.

Twitter is much less important in Hungary than Facebook, and almost none of the major extreme right organizations in Hungary have Twitter accounts. Neverthe-

\textsuperscript{34} Such a rally was witnessed and filmed by the author in Budapest the 12th of May 2012. Not only Jobbik and Jobbik IT were officially on board, but the New Hungarian Guard, the Hungarian National Guard and other paramilitary groups as well.

\textsuperscript{35} No to ACTA in Hungary. ACTA stands for Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement and is a multinational treaty for the purpose of establishing international standards for intellectual property rights enforcement. At first, it was signed by several industrial countries in 2011, the European Union and other European countries joined in 2012. It was highly criticized in several European countries by right- and left-wing groups and parties.

\textsuperscript{36} One million against gypsy crime. This is a reference to the Hungarian Facebook group One million for freedom of expression. The term cigánybűnözős was labeled by Jobbik to racialize crimes committed by members of the Roma minority. Their use popularized the term. On the website kuruc.info one of the categories is coined with that term – other categories are zsido-bűnözős (Jew crime), politikusokbűnözős (Politician crime) and antimagyarizmus (anti-Magyarism). When the website was visited the last time (the 14th of February 2015) time a banner advertising Mein Kampf from Adolf Hitler was visible. On the website it is possible to buy Mein Kampf. Next to this advert was a banner advertising Jobbik’s leader Gabor Vóna and another from Magyar Harcos.

\textsuperscript{37} Group against abortion.

\textsuperscript{38} Leader Árpád. Árpád was the presumed leader of the Hungarian tribes and is said to have led the Hungarian tribes in Carpathian basin at the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries.

\textsuperscript{39} At the time of the analysis in November 2014.
less, the analysis of Twitter followers showed – even more drastically than the Facebook analysis – the international interconnection of the extreme right. The first analysis in November 2013 revealed that parties, organizations, and party representatives from at least 13 countries (including Germany, France, Italy, and Turkey) follow Jobbik on Twitter. A second analysis in August 2014 showed an increase of the overall number of those parties, organizations, and party representatives, with users from at least six additional countries (e.g., the US and Australia) following Jobbik on Twitter. In Germany, representatives from diverse groups follow Jobbik; these groups include, for example, the Hamburgian spin-off of the extreme right NPD party, the Autonome Nationalisten Kreis Groß-Gerau (Autonomous Nationalists from Groß Gerau), and the Freie Wähler Teltow-Fläming (a regional subgroup of an independent party).

Jobbik’s Use of Facebook and Twitter: A Comparative Perspective

This section compares Jobbik’s use of Facebook and Twitter to that of three other parties: the other major Hungarian opposition party, the socialist MSZP; the German extreme right party, NPD; and the French extreme right party, Front National. By the help of examining this subset of parties the success of Jobbik’s online communication is pointed out even though the selection does not provide a complete image. However, especially due to the fact that Hungary has much less inhabitants than Germany and France the comparison becomes even more striking when looking at the results. Hungary has 9.9 million inhabitants, while Germany and France have 80.78 and 65.82 million, respectively, meaning that both France and Germany are more than six times the size of Hungary. Thereby it is expectable to see significantly higher absolute figures of online support for the Front National than for Jobbik – in the last nationwide elections the Front National had 4.7 million votes whereas Jobbik had one million. But, those voters neither have to be online supporters nor even internet users.

Manuela Caiani and Linda developed a tool for measuring the degree of internet openness of a given country which they labelled as “Technological opportunity”. In this regard they looked up the Internet penetration in the six countries they examined (France, Italy, Germany, United States, United Kingdom, Spain) using the website http://www.internetworldstats.com for the years 2008 till 2010 (CAIANI/PARENTI 2013: 32). The present author checked the most recent figures concerning the number of internet users, internet penetration and the number of Facebook users and the Facebook penetration in those three countries. The figures for Hungary are from December 31, 2011 (Internet) and from December 31, 2012 (Facebook). The figures

40 The European elections 2014 and the Hungarian parliamentary elections 2014.
for Germany and France are from June 30, 2012 (Internet) and from December 31, 2012 (Facebook):

*Table 1: Internet and Facebook penetration in Hungary, Germany, and France*\(^{41}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>France</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet users</td>
<td>6,516,627</td>
<td>67,483,869</td>
<td>52,228,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penetration in percent</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook subscribers</td>
<td>4,265,960</td>
<td>25,332,440</td>
<td>25,624,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fb penetration in percent</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the overall internet penetration rate in Germany and France is much higher than in Hungary. While the Facebook penetration rate was the highest in Hungary, the absolute number of Facebook subscribers is five times higher in Germany and France than in Hungary. Thus, the technological opportunity in Hungary can be estimated to be much lower than in Germany and France. This means that a Hungarian party has a higher degree of difficulty and needs more resources to achieve a significant number of online support.

*Figure 2: Number of Facebook likes for Jobbik, MSZP, Front National, and NPD between May 2013 and August 2014*

Data gathered by the author between May 2013 and August 2014.

\(^{41}\) Sources: http://www.internetworldstats.com and http://www.visualizing.info/ct/facebook/users/#m=9&c=0&cr=13369344&cx=52224&cr=2&l=0. Both accessed August 15, 2014; the data from the second page are originally from the social media analysis website www.socialbakers.com.
Apparently – as shown on figure 2 – Jobbik seems to have such resources and is overwhelmingly successful compared to the NPD and the Front National. Given that the number of internet users for these three countries differs that, the relative increases in the number of Facebook likes is even more striking. In May 2013, the Front National had slightly more followers than Jobbik; after May this trend totally changed, and Jobbik became far more popular on Facebook than the Front National (as well as more popular than MSZP and NPD). Since May 2014, the growth rate of Jobbik Facebook followers has stagnated and Front National has made up some ground. This may be due to the fact that the last parliamentary elections in Hungary were in April 2014; this could explain the rise in MSZP and Jobbik followers, as well as the abrupt bend in this growth curve in May 2014. In France on the other hand, only regional elections occurred on March 22nd 2015, but the Front National was quite successful during the elections for the European parliament at the end of May 2014, garnering almost one quarter of the French votes and becoming the number-one French party. The key take-away of this analysis is that Jobbik has not only been more successful than the other Hungarian parties (with MSZP being only an example) but also highly successful in comparison to other European extreme right parties (taking into account the differences in technological opportunity and population size).

On Twitter, however, the situation is not that obvious. It has to be stated once again that the number of internet users in Hungary eight times lower than in France and Germany. Furthermore, the internet penetration rate is low as well. And despite the fact that the Facebook penetration rate is higher in Hungary than in France, it can be expected that such is not the case for Twitter. In 2011, the US State Department reported that in Hungary:

> Microblogging on sites including Twitter is less widespread with only around 3000 Hungarian accounts currently. Those who are using Twitter however, are believed to be highly qualified young professionals between the ages of 25 and 29 years. The popularity of Twitter and other microblogging services is expected to grow in the next couple of years according to media experts.\footnote{42 http://publicintelligence.net/ufouo-u-s-state-department-social-media-landscape-hungary/ Accessed the 20th of August 2014.}

Nevertheles, this expectation that the number of Twitter users in this country should grow, Twitter is still not as important in Hungary as Facebook. The website http://www.businessinhungary.com notes that “In Hungary Twitter only has 110,000 registered users and almost half of them are inactive.”\footnote{43 http://www.businessinhungary.com/studies/socialnetworkinhungary Accessed the 20th of August 2014.} However, this website does not provide any sources; in fact, there are currently no viable sources that show the precise importance or unimportance of Twitter in Hungary in comparison to Facebook. However, the research conducted by the author, in accordance with the two
above-mentioned online sources, indicates that Twitter is not used in Hungary as much as Facebook. For example, apart from Jobbik, none of the other most relevant extreme right-wing organizations such as HVIM or Betyársereg use Twitter; in contrast, every active far-right party utilizes Facebook. Hungarian parties from other areas of the political spectrum also appear not be using Twitter much, either. For example the governing party did not send any messages from Twitter in 2014. However, examining how Jobbik uses Twitter is helpful in the present paper, because this microblogging site offers different variables than does Facebook – and it shows as well the exceptional online performance of Jobbik on social media sites. Moreover, although Twitter is not as popular in Hungary, it attracts a very different segment of internet users. Thus, an analysis of Twitter helps to demonstrate how Jobbik uses social media in general.

Jobbik’s use of Twitter is relatively sophisticated: Jobbik tweets daily and their tweets often link to their homepage, Facebook page, and YouTube channel. Jobbik’s tweets are not exclusively focused on party politics, but also celebrate other members of the far-right sphere, such as the far-right band Ismerős Arcók.

A wide array of variables can be measured using data from Twitter. The research was conducted between October 2013 and August 2014. The first measured variable is the number of tweets. Jobbik posted more tweets than MSZP or Front National, but all three organizations have approximately the same growth rate and number of tweets per day. In comparison, the NPD tweets far more often than all three of these parties, and the difference of the number of tweets tends to increase. In conducting a comparative analysis, it is notable that NPD puts all of their new messages from their website on Twitter. They are therefore not using Twitter in an interactive or cross-media way, but rather as a simple public relations tool.

The second variable – the number of followed accounts – says more about the degree to which a user is interactive on Twitter: When User A follows User B, User B is likely to reciprocate, resulting in a constant stream of shared content between Users A and B. Thus, the more one follows other users, the more likely that user is to be retweeted, promoting more interaction on Twitter. The number of followed accounts indicate that NPD – which follows only 14 other users – is not interested in interacting with or following others at all. In contrast, Jobbik is highly attuned to their followers, following over 2000 other users. In stark contrast the NPD follows only 14 accounts. The number of MSZP and Front National is around 300–400. From this one can deduce that NPD uses Twitter in an exclusively top-down way, while Jobbik takes a bottom-up approach in comparison to the other parties.

The third variable, the number of accounts that follow the party accounts helps to the partly difference that can be estimated due to the uneven numbers of internet and

44 On YouTube the party has more clicks than Front National, NPD and MSZP. The video platform is not that widespread as a means of communication among European parties. For example, as of the 20th of December neither the CDU, FDP or Bündnis90/Die Grünen had a YouTube channel.
Twitter users: at the end of research period the Front National has ten times more follower than Jobbik – a figure which can be expected. However Jobbik has more followers than the NPD, a fact that might not highlight Jobbiks success but the NPDs failure in gaining online support. Furthermore the results attached to this third variable show that Front National is rapidly increasing its followership on Twitter, having doubled their number of followers in less than a year. In contrast, the number of Twitter followers for the other three parties has remained stable. NPD had the lowest number of followers. Given that Twitter is much more commonly used in Germany than in Hungary, NPD’s low number of followers is even more striking. Hypothetically, this can be explained by their non-interactive on Twitter.

Reviewing the presented data and analyses, Jobbik clearly uses social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook highly effectively, in modern interactive ways. This savvy behavior may account for their relatively large audiences on both platforms – not only by Hungarian standards, but even by European standards. Based on these findings, Jobbik may be arguably the most successful extreme-right party in Europe in terms of Facebook usage. By Hungarian standards, and as compared to NPD, Jobbik is also very successful on Twitter. Jobbik uses both platforms in a sophisticated way, which helps to explain this party’s predominance among young people.

Conclusion

First the present article has provided an overview of the extreme right in Hungary. Particularly key events and key actors since 2006 have been presented. In the second part interconnections of those actors – emphasizing linkages of Jobbik – where examined with the help of network analysis. As a first step an exploratory hyperlink analysis was conducted. The results where cross-checked by using photos and videos of Jobbik events. A second step consisted of examining ties on the social networking sites Twitter and Facebook. In the third chapter the effective usage of those social networking sites has been pointed out comparatively. It has been argued that Jobbik is very successful in using the web 2.0. All in all, the importance of the internet in understanding the success of Jobbik needs to be taken into account. Moreover, the interaction and interconnectedness of Jobbik with the extreme right social movement in Hungary appears to be driven by the new means of online communication such as Twitter and Facebook. However, more research is necessary to take full advantage of the wealth of data available in this area. One suggestion would be to interview extreme right sympathizers to obtain an individual-level perspective of how they perceive Facebook, Twitter, and the internet, as well as how they use these tools for their purposes.

The case of the Islamic State – a group of Islamist extremists who became known to a larger audience due to their proclamation of a Caliphate in 2014, and who operate in and control large parts of Iraq and Syria – shows how extremist
groups can use the internet and social media to spread their message and to attract followers. These followers do not stop at clicking on a button on Twitter, YouTube, or Facebook, but often enact the message of these groups on the ground, becoming warriors for the cause. Social media demonstrates the accelerating pace with which propaganda and dangerous ideologies are being spread across space and time.

Spreading their message is clearly one main reason for the sophisticated way in which Jobbik operates its online presences. They spread it nationally and appear to so internationally as well for example through their Twitter and Facebook networks. However, more analysis needs to be done regarding the international ties of extreme-right parties. In the case of Hungary, the large Hungarian diaspora, as well as the millions of ethnic Hungarians living in Serbia, Romania, Ukraine, Austria, and Slovakia are targeted by Hungarian extreme-right propaganda, with the ultimate goal of reuniting ethnic Hungarians in the Carpathian basin to rebuild Greater Hungary. International ties are furthermore a precondition for a transfer of knowledge between extreme right actors from different countries. This article has shown that this precondition appears to be established.

References


Introduction

More than a quarter of a century after the destruction of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), the newly created states and their societies seem to have at least partially overcome the disastrous consequences of the subsequent political and socioeconomic transformations. From a macro-perspective most of the post-Yugoslav area seems at least to “be on a good way” of democratic consolidation, accession to the European Union – following Slovenia and Croatia – and implementing reforms that should stabilize the region’s economy, in spite of the world’s financial and economic crisis of the last years. After years of wars and problematic relations between the post-Yugoslav states, there is practically no threat that something similar to the conflicts of the 1990s could re-appear soon, even though the dealing with this past remains an important task for most post-Yugoslav societies.

But if we look more closely to certain aspects of the political development during the last years, the general picture becomes heavily disturbed by many problems, ranging from the re-establishment of old political elites (as in Serbia), a specific “revival” of state-sponsored nationalism (as in Macedonia) to the constantly growing unemployment in most parts of the region. Changes of the political and socio-economical context, which certainly do take place, hardly imply the solving of old problems from the 1990s. Instead, they mostly represent a shift from one set of problems to another, sometimes revealing certain issues in the first place. Thus, the weak, but in some post-Yugoslav states obvious tendency of governments’ “neutralizing” the meanwhile discursively normalized nationalism – which is one major consequence of the Yugoslav wars – shows some of the contradictions of the political system as well as of the ideological legacies of the last decades.

One illustration for such an ambivalent picture of the political and social situation in the post-Yugoslav societies was the 2010 Gay Pride Parade – a procession of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons in Belgrade, the capital of the former
Yugoslavia and of today’s Serbia. On the one hand, a demonstration by gays and lesbians in Serbia was for the first time heavily protected by the police, showing the willingness of the state to take serious responsibility for minority issues. On the other hand, around 6000 well-organized radical right activists used violence to try to break up the parade. However, due to the presence of over 5000 police officers, “only” a hundred-plus people were injured. Heavy fighting between the police and the radical right activists, which resulted in the destruction of several buildings in the city center, indicates not only the strength of different radical right groups in Serbia, but also a new development in the region’s political situation. The radical right in the post-Yugoslav area was generally on the “right side” during the 1990s, but now faces political marginalization and even prosecution by state authorities. This article outlines some important aspects of this development, tracing them from the end of the 1980s and focusing on the political context and on the ideology and organizational structure of the various radical right protagonists.

Post-Yugoslavia: Political and Economical Context

At the beginning of the 1990s, Yugoslavia was marked by a massive political and economic transformation, as were all Eastern European states. The social consequences of these developments – increasing poverty, unemployment, corruption, etc. – were even more dramatic in the former Yugoslavia, since several wars were waged there (Croatia, 1991–95; Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992–95; Kosovo/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 1998–99). One of the main outcomes of these wars was the installation of the “national question” as the central political one, and of nationalism as the main interpretation frame of all political issues. In the first half of the 1980s, nationalism in Yugoslavia was the reserve of certain sections of the intellectual elite. It gained its dominant political role and wide acceptance by the Yugoslav population only through the violent “creation of facts” – the wars.

The breakup of Yugoslavia started at the end of the 1980s as a conflict between reformist and conservative forces within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The breakup was a result not of some sort of ancient hatred among the Yugoslav peoples (Croats, Serbs, etc.), but of the intentional use of nationalist violence by conservative communists – most importantly Slobodan Milošević in Serbia – who wanted to demobilize their reformist political opponents (cf. GAGNON 2004). Combined with widespread feelings of insecurity among the population, caused by an all-encompassing crisis (economic, political, institutional, etc.), as well as with regime media propaganda, this demobilization strategy was successful. The use of violence eventually partially homogenized the post-Yugoslav societies, the most striking example being the creation of ethnically cleansed territories, like the Republika Sprska in today’s Bosnia-Herzegovina. Somewhat as a substitute for the former system, nationalism has also been discursively normalized in all other post-Yugoslav societies during the last twenty years.
Right-wing extremism or neo-fascism was able to emerge during the 1990s without drawing much public attention, because nationalism was a state-sponsored and state-guided project, fostered through the media, public demonstrations, etc., and accepted and reinforced by clerical circles, which gained strong influence in this period. Even the appearance of some new subcultural groups (e.g. neo-Nazi skinheads) was not really noticed. In the war setting of the early 1990s, few could tell the difference between mercenaries, volunteers, and urban football hooligan-like youngsters, and sometimes the same persons belonged to several of these groups. In the beginning, however, it was the intellectual and political elite who prepared the battleground for solving the national question in Yugoslavia.

The National Question and the Radical Right

The nationalisms (Serb, Croat, Macedonian, etc.), set by political elites as an official narrative in all post-Yugoslav states during the 1990s, became the ideological ground on which radical right groups could develop their own political ideas and actions. The differences among the various radical right groups in the region concerning their organizational structure, their relationship toward the political elites, and the political system itself, as well as the respective ideology and tradition (clerical/secular; national/international, etc.) they draw on, depend not only on the self-positioning of these groups on the political field, but also on the interpretation and definition of the notion of “right wing” used by the intellectual elite in these countries. Especially scholars of social science and humanities have different opinions on which ideas or interpretational frames should be named in a respective manner. Thus, the question of the terminology used to describe contemporary radical right-wing groups or movements remains unsolved also for the post-Yugoslav area. The term “extremism” – which implies a certain political center that tries to balance as is the case in Germany, left extremism with right-wing extremism – does not really fit the radical right groups in the post-Yugoslav area, especially because there is neither a strong left movement nor a firm political center in any state in this region. At the same time, the fact that many of the groups dealt with in this article draw on a certain fascist tradition from the period of the Second World War, almost invites us to call a spade a spade and speak of neo-fascism. However, even a broadly accepted definition (in Western social science) of fascism as “a revolutionary form of nationalism which assumes unique ideological, cultural, political, and organizational expression according to the circumstances and national context where it takes shape” (GRIFFIN 2012: 14) can only partially prove as helpful for the post-Yugoslav context, especially in the light of the post-socialist political and economic transformation and the Yugoslav wars. The difficulties in defining the post-Yugoslav far right are caused not only by the political context of the 1990s. Perhaps even more problematic are the various organizational forms, the different forms of political action, and the ideological differences between the protagonists of the post-Yugo-
The far right includes populist radical right parties (cf. MUDDE 2007) and various "groupuscules" (GRIFFIN/FELDMAN 2008: 195) (e.g. neo-Nazis), as well as groups of intellectuals with their "metapolitical fascism" (op. cit.: 198). This explains why previous research on some of these groups (especially political parties) in the post-Yugoslav area was unable to provide a single, clear definition. Sabrina P. Ramet’s definition of the radical right in Central and Eastern Europe as “organized intolerance” (RAMET 1999) is one of only a few convincing attempts in this respect. However, this concept was hardly accepted even by the other authors in the same volume. Most contributions spoke of the “radical right”, sometimes using the term interchangeably with “fascism”, while also trying to include “nationalists, anti-Semites, racist, xenophobic populists, and authoritarians of all types” (WILLIAMS 1999: 45). Although the term “radical right” is far from the “perfect solution”, and a theoretical reflection on and further analysis of all the various concepts in the post-Yugoslav context is still needed, the “radical right” is used here as a common term for the various groups mentioned.

However, it was not only Western social scientists who faced difficulties in their search for definitions of the post-socialist radical right. Post-Yugoslav social scientists were concerned with similar questions, even though they hardly took part in the discussions in the West, and social science there underwent a specific transformation. Because in the 1990s the institutional landscape in this field of research—even if we let aside the national academies of science—was dominated by rather national–conservative scholars, their views on what should be “right” or “left”, despite all the contradictions, are not really surprising. For Miša Đurković, a Belgrade social scientist, radical right groups encompass mostly “non-party groups”, while he regards most of the radical right-wing parties, some of which are openly fascist in their programs and activities, as belonging to a “moderate right”. Moreover, Đurković explains the growing presence of neo-fascist groups in Serbia since 2000 by completely inverting the cause and the consequence, and blaming the “leftist” policies of the new post-Milošević regime:

The reasons for their growing and stronger presence in the media after 2000 are multiple. They are to be found in the first place within the nature of the [post-Milošević] administration and the huge variety of problems, which the Serbian society faces. In the first place, after October 5th [2000], as official ideology, the ideology of denazification, of facing the past, and of giving up everything that has to do with the Serbian nation, tradition […] was imposed in culture, education and the media. Such radical leftist options provoked the usually radical rightist answers; hence, the huge majority of the newly established organizations were formed on such a basis (ĐURKOVIĆ 2004: 138f).

Although, somewhat needless to say, the coalition of numerous parties that came to power in Serbia after the end of Slobodan Milošević’s regime in 2000 could hardly be interpreted as “leftist”, the view of Đurković and other like-thinking social scientists illustrates very well in which direction the political coordinative system moved
in the course of only a decade. The process of historical revisionism in most post-Yugoslav states in this period left behind “an intellectual and cultural wasteland” (SUNDHAUSSEN 2008: 45), in which various neo-fascist groups continued to grow. One of the reasons for this was that the reinterpreting of the past in the former Yugoslavia took place in the form of inverting history: Former (socialist Yugoslav) heroes became traitors, while former traitors became heroes. The new cycle of an alternating history of the told and history of the concealed again omitted to deal critically with the past, and had many political and legal consequences. In Serbia, for example, parts of the intellectual and political elite succeeded in equating the Yugoslav partisans with the Četnik movement, underlining that both these groups fought against the Nazi occupation during the Second World War, thus suggesting the anti-fascist character of the Četniks and nationalizing the resistance movement. In fact, during most of the Second World War, these two groups were fighting on opposite sides. Still, this equation was adopted as law by the Serbian parliament in 2004, when state’s pensions were granted to Četnik “resistance fighters” as well as to former Yugoslav partisans.

Similar attempts to reach a sort of social reconciliation also took place in Croatia, under the regime of Franjo Tuđman. Hoping to create an ethnically and politically homogenized Croatia (and electoral body), he tried to overcome potential political conflicts, bringing together two traditions: that of the Ustaša – Croatian fascists who led the Hitler-allied Independent State of Croatia and were responsible for the murder of the majority of Croatia’s Jews, and the murder of Serbs, Roma, communists, etc. – and that of the Croat partisan resistance (cf. RADONIC 2010). The most recent development in reshaping the past and its remembrance (cf. KULJIĆ 2010; SAMARDŽIĆ/BEŠLIN/MILOŠEVIĆ 2013) is the ongoing process of the rehabilitation of Draža Mihailović, the leader of the Četniks, which is being disputed before the High Tribunal in Belgrade ([TANJUG] 23.03.2012; [Politika] 23.03.2012; CVETKOVIĆ 2012; RADANOVIĆ 2012). A sentence, expected on May 11, 2012, was postponed. Now that Mihailović has been officially declared deceased, the rehabilitation trial is expected to go on.

This “wasteland”, as Holm Sundhaussen calls the political context since 2000, provided a very fertile ground for the growth of radical right groups. This process however started with a rather small group of intellectuals in Serbia, who first re-launched the national question in Yugoslavia already in the mid-1980s. During the 1980s and especially the 1990s, they constantly tried to develop a notion – a very diffuse and often contradictory one – of Yugoslavia’s economic and political order. The source of inspiration for these circles was provided by the publications and activities of various protagonists of the historical fascism in Serbia: Priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church, who are famous for their strong anti-Semitic views (e.g. Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, Atanasije Jevtić, and Justin Popović), and nationalist heroes from the Second World War, for example the fascists Dimitrije Ljotić and Milan Nedić, and the Četnik leader Draža Mihailović. In the course of the 1990s, a whole range of magazines emerged, featuring the new right-wing intellectual elite:
Obraz [Honor], Dveri srpske [Serbian Heavenly Gates], Srpske organske studije [Serbian Organic Studies], Geopolitika [Geopolitics], Pogledi [Perspectives], Nova iskra [New Spark], (SUNDHAUSSEN 2008: 47) Zbilja [Reality], Srpska slobodarska misao [Serbian Liberal Thought], and Ogledalo [Mirror] (ĐURKOVIĆ 2004: 142f). At the same time, books reproducing the same discourse were published by several publishing companies, for example, Slobodna knjiga [Free Book] and Ihtus [Fish] (Christian symbol)] in Belgrade (Ibid.). The normalization of nationalism was slowly accomplished, and in 2004 a new journal was established: Nova srpska politička misao [New Serbian Political Thought]. This political science journal best illustrates the process of embedding radical right ideas into the scientific mainstream. On the one hand, it tries to be an open journal for social science and invites contributors who do not present right-wing opinions, while on the other hand it advocates strong nationalist policies. Whether – and if so, in which way – this and other publications will eventually change, remains an open question. However, the influence of radical right and patriotic intellectuals should not be underestimated.

Before looking more closely at the protagonists, it is useful to outline the main common features of the post-Yugoslav radical right ideologies. All radical right groups in the region articulate a strong anti-Yugoslavism in their political views. They all consider Yugoslavia an “historical mistake”, arguing – similar to some Western scholars during the 1990s, by the way – that the common state of the Southern Slavs hindered the development of the respective nations (Croats, Serbs, etc.), and represented some kind of unnatural, prison-like political construction. Mostly, however, the anti-Yugoslavism is connected to the strong anti-communist attitude, thus focusing on the second (i.e., socialist) Yugoslavia.

Like other European nationalisms, the post-Yugoslav new right also constructs “its” respective nation as an ethnically pure community. This purity should be achieved by excluding the “other” from society. The “other” can, depending on the specific profile of each right-wing group, encompass the “bastards” from mixed marriages, as well as other groups like gay and lesbian persons, Roma, and anybody with contrary political opinions. The nation is regarded as the highest political and individual priority. Seeing the nation as a “natural or organic” community, the common feeling of ethno-national belonging is, in the view of the new right, the only correct, or at least the most important, form of collective identification. Above all, the nation is seen as an unquestionable fact.

In terms of “othering” within the process of defining the own nation, radical right groups in the region stay within the framework of the former Yugoslav ethnic groups, rejecting any cultural, historical, or political relationship between them, or, in the best case, claiming that all “others” actually derive from “us”, arguing for the alleged autochthonous character of the own nation. At the same time, the “others” are depicted as negative, often in the form of the binary figure Good vs. Evil, by using historical arguments, that is, different strategies of delegitimizing the “other” (at the same time, legitimizing the opposite “us”). One of the strategic figures used is the eternal threat: All post-Yugoslav right-wing groups preach a constant threat
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from the neighboring nations. This concerns not only the question of territoriality in the nationalist construction, but also the threat to “our national values”. Another figure is the alternately, and sometimes even simultaneously, used interpretation of “our nation” as a victim and/or a hero under the condition of neglecting the victimhood of other national groups. The self-victimization and the heroic self-representation were both used as a legitimizing discursive strategy for mobilization in all post-Yugoslav nationalisms during the 1990s, and are still present in the radical right argumentation.

One key element of many radical right groups is some kind of religious narrative. The respective religion is not merely framed as some national historical heritage that has to be protected: A whole value system, derived from some religious views, is adopted and proposed in terms of a political program, based on religious morals and ethics. One prominent example of such use of religion is the installation or reinstallation of patriarchal structures of society throughout the post-Yugoslav area. As the nation is seen as a living organism, gender roles change completely: Women are regarded only in their reproductive function – they should give birth to new Serbs/Croats/Macedonians/etc. (cf. LER SOFRONIĆ 2008). In view of the new right, the structure of power in society should follow the divine triad of God–king–pater familias (SUNDHAUSSEN 2008: 48; KULJIĆ 1999: 430). Thus, as good wives, women should obey their husbands. Homosexuality, for example, is seen as unnatural, or in clerical terms, as a sin. The homophobic message, which often comes directly from clerical elites, further legitimizes the verbal violence, and even the physical violence, committed against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

Drawing on pseudo-religious arguments, the overall worldview of most groups of the radical right includes the rejection of the Enlightenment, secularization, democracy, and free market economy – the major characteristics of the decadent “rotten West” – and a strong anti-Semitism. At the same time, all of these groups advocate some sort of traditional and/or religious value. The new right in Serbia, for example, sees itself as the defender of Christian Orthodoxy, the harmony between church and the state, the nation, portrayed as a servant of God, patriarchalism, corporativism, etc. (SUNDHAUSSEN 2008: 49). In most cases, these ideals are combined with an anti-capitalist, anti-globalization, or anti-liberal criticism.

Organizational Structures of the Post-Yugoslav Radical Right

In the post-Yugoslav area, many (very different) parties programmatically and practically used nationalism as their main interpretational frame, which makes it quite hard to say which parties belong to extreme right-wing organizations, and which to moderate ones. In addition to the question of different criteria of definition, another important issue makes it hard to refer to certain parties as belonging to the “right”. As Michael Ehrke stresses, all parties in Southeastern Europe show a high grade of
“flexibility”, becoming some sort of “modern hybrid” organization that can be described only in terms of its ruling ambitions (EHRKE 2009). When socialist/social democratic parties implemented neoliberal economic reforms, the liberals advocate social justice, and the nationalist parties plead for a pro-European policy, an analysis of the programmatic documents of these parties or the respective ideology does not prove to be really helpful. Therefore, the definition of “radical right” parties has to take into account their entire development since the beginning of the 1990s, including both their programmatic views and their political actions.

One of the radical right parties in the region is the Srpska radikalna stranka [SRS; Serbian Radical Party]. Its leader, Vojislav Šešelj, is (2015) before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, for several crimes committed by his personal militia in the 1990s (cf. BISERKO 2009). The SRS was founded in 1991 and advocates the creation of Greater Serbia. During the post-Yugoslav wars, its members formed paramilitary units and recruited volunteers to carry out military actions in Croatia (BISERKO 2007: 821). In 1991 and 1992, members of the party also supported the ethnic cleansing of several villages with predominantly Croatian populations in Serbia’s northern province of Vojvodina (JOVANOVIĆ 1992). Although during the last twenty years the party has changed its ultra-nationalist program several times, it has maintained its aim of creating Greater Serbia as an ethnically pure state of the Serbian nation. In their public appearances, party members continue to threaten especially ethnic minorities. The main features of the party are a “strongly expressed authoritarian character, a general rejection of changes, an affirmative position towards centralization and mistrust towards other nationalities” (GOATI 2006: 40f). With regard to foreign policy, the party advocates closer cooperation with Russia and rejects the pro-EU political course of all post-Milošević governments. One of the major topics on its agenda is the return of Serbia’s southern province, Kosovo, to Serbia’s authority. The party has undergone various developments during the last twenty years and its political influence has fluctuated. During the 1990s, what had once been a small opposition party became Milošević’s coalition partner (MILOŠEVIĆ 2000: 52). After the collapse of the regime in 2000, it slowly regained popularity and became the strongest opposition party, and almost won several national elections. In 2008, the party fell apart, due to the decision by one part of its leaders to support the government’s EU accession policy. This group formed the Srpska napredna stranka [SNS, Serbian Progressive Party], whose leader (Tomislav Nikolić) is the president of Serbia, and his “right hand”, Aleksandar Vučić became prime minister in 2014.

In Croatia in the 1990s, the Hrvatska stranka prava [HSP; Croatian Party of Rights] was probably the most visible radical right party (cf. MUDDE 2007: 43f.; GRDEŠIĆ 1999). In the course of the 1990s and 2000s, a whole range of similar parties emerged, for example, the Hrvatska čista stranka prava [HČSP; Croatian Pure Party of Rights] and the Hrvatska stranka prava dr. Ante Starčević [Croatian Party of Rights dr. Ante Starčević], and the less influential Autohtona hrvatska

A sort of general right-wing ideology, as described above, is also shared by some of the membership of other right-wing parties like the Demokratska stranka Srbije [DSS; Democratic Party of Serbia], whose leader Vojislav Koštunica was prime minister of Serbia until 2008; the Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata [SNSD; Party of Independent Social Democrats] in the Republika Srpska, the part of Bosnia-Herzegovina with a Serb majority; the Hrvatska demokratska zajednica [HDZ; Croatian Democratic Community HDZ] in Croatia, which for a decade was the ruling party of the former president of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman; and the Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija – Demokratska partija za makedonsko nacionalno edinstvo [VMRO DPMNE; Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity], which significantly fostered the nationalist-traditionalistic “turn” of the last years in Macedonia. In general, however, these parties are considered moderate conservatives by their counterparts in Western Europe, even though some of the most prominent activists of radical right groups are members of these parties (PETAKOV 2009: 48; ANTIFA BGD 2012: 11). At the same time, the constant transformation and adaption of most political parties in the post-Yugoslav region stand in sharp contrast to radical right non-party organizations. While political parties try to adapt to the changing political context, and to transform themselves into moderate political organizations in order to escape political marginalization, radical right non-party groups usually do not think of such compromises. They openly express their fascism, racism, anti-Semitism, etc. while acting outside state institutions, and often use violence as their main method of political action. With the retreat of formerly strong radical ultra-nationalist parties, these groups have become increasingly visible and deserve a closer look.

Non-Party Neo-Fascist and Neo-Nazi Organizations

The beginnings of non-party neo-fascist organizations in the former Yugoslavia are usually traced back to the early skinhead groups in the second half of the 1980s. Neo-Nazi skinheads emerged in larger Yugoslav cities in various ways. In some cities, the right-wing skinheads were only a small fraction, left over after the political break-up within the scene, the majority of whom formed SHARP groups (PETAKOV 2009: 42). In other parts of Yugoslavia, the formation of the first neo-Nazi skinhead groups did not follow a long-lasting internal political struggle among the skinheads. Here, all skinheads were soon identified with neo-Nazis, although the majority of young men identifying themselves with the skinhead culture could be described as politically undifferentiated. In these cities, it was only in the course of the 1990s that smaller SHARP groups were formed, distancing themselves from the right-wing skinheads.
Large parts of a sizeable underground scene centered on various musical genres and bands, adopted radical right ideas. They represent one smaller source of recruiting radical right activists in former Yugoslavia. Whether this was also a result of certain international trends influencing the scenes remains unclear. The first contacts between the Yugoslav skinheads and the transnational networks of neo-Nazis go back to the first half of the 1990s. However, these were exceptions, and mostly at an individual level.

The first Yugoslav neo-fascists or neo-Nazis were recruited among football fans, perhaps even more than among the fans of underground music. Fans of the Belgrade club Rad, who call themselves the “United Force”, were one of the early right-wing politicized fan groups (ibid.). The potential for recruitment of neo-fascist activists among football hooligans in most post-Yugoslav states remains strong. During the last twenty years, the scene changed in such a way that all major football clubs now have neo-fascist fan groups in their stadiums. These groups openly use racist, anti-Semitic, or just old-school Nazi slogans and symbols (Celtic crosses and swastikas, and combinations of numerical symbols, like 18). Most often, however, the slogans draw on a local nationalist context. Today, fascist hooligans can be found among the fans of the Belgrade-based clubs Crvena zvezda [Red Star], Partizan, OFK Beograd (especially the firm-like group called the Blue Union Belgrade), FK Voždovac (with the radical right group Invalidi [The Handicapped]), as well as among the fans of smaller clubs in Serbia like FK Zemun, FK Sloboda (Užice), and FK Borac (Čacak).

In Croatia, the situation is quite similar: Here, too, fascism has penetrated the fan groups of all the major clubs, like Dinamo (Zagreb), Hajduk (Split), Rijeka, etc. In Bosnia-Hercegovina, the clubs, which are notorious for their Neo-Nazi fans, are FK Borac (Banja Luka) and Zrinjski (Mostar), as well as the smaller club NK Široki Brijeg, whose fan group Škripari has a bad reputation that extends far beyond the reputation of the football club itself (RASCHKE 2012; RASCHKE 2013). The widespread use of physical violence before, during, and after football matches – as also occurs in other countries, perpetrated by groups ranging from the English “firms” to the Italian Ultras – in combination with the fascist ideology, is a common phenomenon in the post-Yugoslav area. It was only in the last couple of years that special laws prohibiting and sanctioning this kind of violence were adopted in several countries in the region. However, these laws usually underestimate the political dimension of it and turn against a very abstract “hooliganism”; reducing fascism in the fan scene to a simple “cult of violence” (cf. DORIĆ 2010).

Among the first neo-Nazi organizations formed in the former Yugoslavia were divisions of the international militant network Blood & Honour. The Serbian Division was founded in the Republic of Serbia during the first half of the 1990s, although the group itself celebrates June 25, 1995, as the organization’s official “birthday”. Later, other divisions were initiated in the two biggest cities in Slovenia, Ljubljana and Maribor. In Croatia, Blood & Honour was established in 2004, including divisions in Pula, Rijeka, and Zagreb, and a mysterious group called Crusader division, each counting around a dozen members. Today, in Serbia there are

The early actions of Blood & Honour in this area mostly comprised the organization of concerts for a variety of both local and international bands. The groups are still publishing various books and fanzines, and the magazine Krv i čast [Blood & Honour]. Apart from attempts to organize and perform several protest marches, the public presence of these groups is usually restricted to brutal attacks on anti-fascist activists, Roma, and other minorities. Together with other right-wing groups, they have participated in some larger demonstrations in Belgrade, as well as in Novi Sad and Niš. Their ideology – which is shared by the organization’s post-Yugoslav activists – is based on white supremacy as it is known throughout Europe. While basically secular, in Serbia the local Blood & Honour groups showed some indications that it is getting ideologically closer to the Serbian Christian Orthodoxy (op.cit.: 45). How this alliance could look like remains to be seen. At the moment, Blood & Honour groups are concentrating on maintaining good relations with neo-Nazi groups in England, Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, etc. (op. cit.: 43). While the Blood & Honour network is more or less present in all parts of the former Yugoslavia, in Serbia there is a much larger variety of neo-fascist groups. An interesting feature of these groups is that they include both transnational organized radical right networks and autochthonous groups.

A small group called Rasni nacionalisti – Rasonalisti [racial nationalists] which has similar views as Blood & Honour, emerged in Belgrade, Serbia, between 2000 and 2005. It has only a few members and basically propagates racism, embedding it in an obscure quasi-medieval iconography, while remaining strictly pagan. Its political influence even within the right-wing circles is rather marginal (op. cit.: 46).

Of much stronger influence was the forming of Nacionalni stroj [National Order] in Serbia. This militant neo-Nazi group was established in February 2005 as a result of a conflict within the neo-Nazi community in Serbia. The group that was to become Nacionalni stroj accused the rest of being too soft, and started to spray anti-Semitic and racist graffiti in Belgrade. On 9th November 2005, members of Nacionalni stroj attacked a public debate on “Today’s neo-fascist threat” at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. The police intervention and the official statements issued by the organizers eventually led to more public attention being paid to this group, as well as to the prosecution of its members. Following his conviction, the leader of the group, Goran Davidović (who calls himself “Führer”), fled to Italy in September 2008. In June 2009, he moved to Germany. He was finally arrested in February 2010 in the Bavarian city of Traunstein ([AFP] 03.02.2010). This episode illustrates the obviously good connections between Serbian neo-Nazis and their friends in Western Europe, especially considering the visa regulations that were in force in this period, as they made it rather hard for Serbian citizens to travel, even as tourists, to Western European states.

The planned “March for the unity of Serbia”, which was organized at the end of 2007 by Nacionalni stroj together with Blood & Honour, was a failure, as a result of
the strong resistance mounted by citizens, who had been mobilized by anti-fascist activists and various political parties (AFA NOVI SAD 2012: 41). However, the group managed to register a formal party called the Novi srpski program [NSP; New Serbian Program], although it never gained any notable political influence. Since Nacionalni stroj had recently been prohibited, its members started using Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Hercegovina as a new area for their actions, as did other clerical fascist organizations from Serbia (ANTIFA BIH 2012: 22). Whether – and if so, how – they will manage to organize themselves there remains to be seen. Following the developments and strategies of their German colleagues, the neo-Nazis gathered around this group. They also changed their forms of action and their appearance, using a more discrete symbol, with the aim of remaining unnoticed as fascists and of normalizing their own “patriotism” (ANTIFAŠISTIČKA AKCIJA NOVOG SADA 2010).

The Serbian Patriotic Movements

Although in all parts of the post-Yugoslav area, neo-fascist groups associate themselves with fascist groups and symbols from the Second World War period (like the Ustaša in Croatia), a new type of autochthonous radical right group appeared in Serbia in the 1990s: the clerical fascist group. Despite common actions and mutual sympathy between the transnationally organized neo-Nazi groups and clerical fascists, the latter should be mentioned separately. They emerged from the aforementioned local radical right intellectual circles in Serbia, who have propagated nationalism since the mid-1980s and advocate a specific form of aggressive clerical nationalism.

The group with the largest and most active membership is the Srpski otačestveni pokret Obraz [Serbian Patriotic Movement Obraz]. On 12 June 2012 Obraz was officially banned by the Constitutional Court of Serbia. Obraz was founded in 2001 by radical right intellectuals and students at Belgrade University. In this period, another organization that was close to Obraz, Sv. Justin filozof [Saint Justin the Philosopher], was founded at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. This group was intended to be the student sub-organization of Obraz, but this idea was dropped, and the organization did not really gain any serious political influence, except among some of the students of the Faculty of Philosophy (PETAKOV 2009: 51). The intellectuals who founded Obraz had been collaborating with the magazine of the same name since the mid-1990s. One of the prominent contributors was Vojislav Koštunica (Gligorov 2009), who in 2000 became president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and later prime minister of Serbia.

The first public appearance of Obraz in March 2001 was the publication of a declaration against the “enemies of Serbs”. The declaration openly attacked Jews, Ustaša, Turks, Shiptars [Albanians], democrats, “false peace-makers” (i.e., NGOs), sects, drug addicts and homosexuals. The later actions of Obraz mostly comprised
public discussions that were held all over Serbia on various “historical” topics. The basic idea was to rehabilitate recent war criminals or to propagate the views of right-wing protagonists from Serbia’s past, ranging from politicians of Serbia’s collaborating fascist government during the Second World War, to the openly anti-Semitic Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, who was canonized a saint by the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC). In the course of the Serbian government’s educational reform policies, Obraz also undertook actions propagating ultra-nationalist contents. The group mobilized for the Cyrillic alphabet, stating that it is crucial for the Serbs to maintain their own alphabet. They also mobilized on the topic of Kosovo, urging the stronger involvement of the army in this issue. Last but not least, they organized actions in favor of Bosnian Serb wartime president, Radovan Karadžić, who was indicted for genocide during the Bosnia war and arrested in 2008 (PETAKOV 2009: 49).

Due to the emergence of another clerical fascist group (1389), in 2006 and 2007 Obraz was forced to change its strategy. It radicalized, participating with Blood & Honour in violent marches, like the mentioned one in 2007 in Novi Sad. It also joined in the demonstrations against Kosovo’s declaration of independence and against the arrest of Radovan Karadžić in 2008. In terms of international allies, Obraz has close contact with the Russkii Obraz organization in Russia, and is well connected to various organizations of the new right in Romania, Slovakia, Poland, France, and Italy (Ibid.).

Like Obraz, the group Dveri srpske: Srpski sabor Dveri. Nacionalna organizacija slobodnih ljudi [Serbian Gates: Serbian Union Dveri. National organization of free people] underwent a similar development. The organization emerged around the Dveri srpske magazine and was founded in January 1999. Besides publishing the magazine and books with clerical and nationalist content, the organization organized several public debates in various parts of Serbia. Recent actions include a sort of pro-life campaign with several so-called “family walks”, arguing that the Serbian people are dying out. The organization also tries to mobilize nationalist Serbs abroad. It is close to the SOC and serves as a forum for nationalist intellectuals. Dveri eventually succeeded in registering itself as a political party. It won over 4 percent of the votes in the parliamentary elections in Serbia in 2012 (REPUBLIČKA IZBORNA KOMISIJA 2012; CESID 2012) and although it did not gain any seats, it exhibited quite a strong mobilizing potential, bearing in mind the short life of the party. Better results were achieved in the local parliaments as in the second largest city of Serbia, Novi Sad, where it is responsible for cultural policy. How the further development of the party will look like, remains to be seen. However, due to the results of the parliamentary elections of 2014 it may appear clear that we cannot clearly discard it as a short-lived “protest party”. In spite of the overwhelming majority of votes (over 48 percent) won by the right-wing Serbian Progressive Party, Dveri managed to persuade some 3.6 percent of voters in Serbia. While it once again could not enter the Parliament it left much older and previously more relevant opposition parties behind, as for example Jovanović’s liberals (3.4 percent), the United Regions of Serbia – its leader is the former minister of finance Mlađan Dinkić – (3
percent), but also Vojislav Šešelj’s meanwhile completely failed Serbian Radical Party (2 percent) (REPUBLIKA SRBIJA – REPUBLIČKI ZAVOD ZA STATISTIKU 2014: 9).

Two newcomers on the clerical fascist scene in Serbia are the groups Srpski Narodni Pokret 1389 [Serbian National Movement 1389] and Srpski narodni pokret Naši [Serbian National Movement Naši]. Both groups were founded and registered as NGOs in Belgrade in 2006 and 2007, but they became more visible to the broader public only after uniting in 2010 and acting under the name SNP 1389 Naši. Internal conflicts apparently split the alliance (AFA NOVI SAD 2012: 37), although there are no details about it to be found on their homepages. Still, both organizations have developed a network of activists in several cities in Serbia, and both mainly try to mobilize young people. Both groups are based on the idea of clericalism and ultranationalism. While SNP 1389 (whose name alludes to Serbia’s past and the Kosovo myth) focuses on Serbia’s internal politics, SNP Naši promotes an international “Euro-Asian perspective” for Serbia, rejecting any cooperation with the European Union and hoping for better relations with Russia. Both organizations are well connected to various radical right organizations abroad, especially in Russia.

The breakup of SNP 1389 Naši seems to have led to different forms of action. The early activities of both groups were restricted to propagandistic actions like distributing posters, flyers, etc. It was only after Radovan Karadžić was arrested that they started violent demonstrations, which they organized together with Obraz and other neo-fascist organizations. While SNP Naši continues its violent actions, SNP 1389 is trying to become a political party. Whether this attempt will be successful, has to be seen. However, the rather self-confident presentation on the group’s homepage points to the perhaps central problem of politics in Serbia, namely the lack of a political alternative. Therefore, SNP 1389 claims that it “is the only real alternative to the actual regime, but also to the opposition parties” (SNP 1389). Unfortunately, there are not many arguments to refute this statement, although the opposition from the point in time of this statement came into power, and the former government became the opposition itself. In terms of political influence, this organization remains marginal. How strong it may grow remains to be seen, but its ability to cooperate with other political organizations, as well as its growing infrastructure, could make it a serious new protagonist on the Serbian neo-fascist scene. For the time being, Dveri seems to be filling the gap left by the absence of a strong clerical fascist party in Serbia.

Cross-Border Activism

Despite the political focus of the autochthonous clerical fascist groups on Serbia and its internal politics, these groups also try to act transnationally. Like most other neo-fascist groups, all clerical fascist groups have attractive websites, even though this combination of tradition and modern means of communication may seem paradoxi-
cal. All these groups also use various online forums and, recently, also Facebook groups for communication, also in order to attract new sympathizers. Moreover, some of these groups actively participate in actions and campaigns in neighboring countries (mostly in the Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina) that are organized by the local neo-fascist groups, like the neo-Četnik organization Srpski ravnogorski pokret [Serbian Ravna Gora Movement], and supported by the government and the Serbian Orthodox Church (ANTIFA BIH 2012: 21).

This form of cross-border activism is far from unusual in this region. Ever since it emerged in 2001, the Hungarian neo-fascist organization Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom [Sixty-four Counties Youth Movement] has had supporters among the Hungarian population of Vojvodina, especially the younger ones. The group is fighting for the restoration both of Hungary’s pre-First World War borders and of “Greater Hungary”, to which also Vojvodina should belong. This group is active in Serbia, as well as in Slovakia and Romania.¹ Facing a relatively low level of acceptance by the Hungarians in Serbia, the group tries to mobilize young people by organizing cultural events in villages and smaller cities that have a Hungarian majority population. Several concert performances by openly neo-fascist bands from Hungary have already been organized, some of them with public funds provided by the autonomous province of Vojvodina. By supporting cultural events of ethnic minorities, the provincial government at least once (in 2010) approved an application for financial support, submitted by a cultural organization of Hungarian youth, to organize “workshops of traditional handcraft”. Instead, the event turned out to be a gathering of Hungarian fascist punk and heavy metal bands (ANTI-FASCHISTISCHE LINKE BERLIN 2010). It was only after a local antifascist group discovered the deception that the police reacted and prevented at least some of the bands from performing, by stopping them at the state border. Since then, the activities of Sixty four Counties and its allies have been reduced to a minimum, but it can be expected that new Hungarian fascist initiatives will emerge. A first reorganization of Sixty four Counties is in sight: A new organization called Magyar remeny mozgalom [Hungarian Hope Movement] seems to be slowly replacing the old organization (AFA NOVI SAD 2012: 39).

Prospects

Since the political changes in 2000, which are regarded as an important break in the most recent history of the post-Yugoslav area, there have been further transformations of the political context. The pro-European course of most governments in the region was accompanied by a series of drastic economic reforms, for example the rapid privatization of state-owned companies, which led to serious social conse-

¹ For more information on this group see also KARL and GOLL in this volume.
quences, including a growing unemployment rate (over 30 percent in Macedonia, almost 30 percent in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and over 20 percent in Serbia) and even extreme poverty in some of the post-Yugoslav states. Nationalism as a means of legitimizing the state, and of demobilizing political opponents, is slowly losing its strength. In some states, like Croatia and Serbia (but not yet in Bosnia-Herzegovina or Macedonia), the state-sponsored nationalism was replaced by a new legitimizing interpretational frame: a “European” future, based upon rules of capitalist market economy. Competition, profit, personal success measured in financial terms, etc. became new values, proposed by the political elite. At the same time, the majority of the post-Yugoslav population is not able to identify itself with these prospects. For many people in this region, the promised “better future” – or even just “normal life” – now perhaps seems even further away than ever. Because of this shift within the political and socio-economic context, which is characterized by the new neoliberal mainstream, as well as the process of the normalization of nationalism, neo-fascist groups in the post-Yugoslav area face a new situation.

During the 1990s, radical right groups were ideologically and literally on the right side. Due to the mentioned political changes, radical right groups are left on their own; they are still controlled by state authorities, but they are politically marginalized. At the same time, however, these groups are able to reorganize themselves and further radicalize.

Although various smaller anti-fascist, leftist, or other groups engage in political action, there is no real operative and visible political alternative to the neo-liberal reform policies in the former Yugoslavia, and therefore radical right and especially neo-fascist actions and ideology might even become the alternative.

Of course, as long as these groups are under some form of state control, no major challenges to the political system should arise. For various minorities in society, however, the strengthening of radical right groups represents a real and very serious threat. The fact that the state provided protection for the Gay Pride Parade in Belgrade in 2010, for example, does not make lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons feel safe from attacks by the radical right. At the same time being against the Gay Pride is widely considered to be a legitimate political position although it violates constitutional rights. Hence, the only chance for these societies is the establishment of a real political alternative that is based on a strong civil society. However, this civil society is not to be mistakenly confused with a whole range of NGOs founded during the last decades that form a specific “project management bourgeoisie”, i.e. mostly young, well-educated people that “articulate civil society initiatives” by professionally responding to calls for applications of the major foundations from Western Europe and the US, most of which promote “democratization” and “liberal values” in terms of market economy. Instead, a new civil society is needed: in terms of broad networks of social movements based on mutual solidarity, struggling for social justice as well as against any form of discrimination. Only by a growing practice of critical dealing with major political and especially social and economic
problems of post-Yugoslav societies, we can – although only in the long run – expect substantial changes in this region.

References


Post-Yugoslavia’s “Political Wasteland” and the Radical Right


Beyond the Fringe: Unfolding the Dynamics of Golden Dawn’s rise

MAIK FIELITZ

Introduction

For the second time in a row, Golden Dawn¹ (GD) acquired the position of the third-strongest political force in crisis-ridden Greece during the January 2015 election.² Although eight of GD’s 18 elected MPs were held in pre-trial detention at the time of voting, while even more had been released on bail, the party managed to maintain its electorate. Accused of running or participating in criminal organizations, 69 party members have been charged with various crimes, including homicide, illegal weapon possession, trafficking, money laundering, and intimidation. Besides the judicial investigations, the Greek parliament decided to retain state funding for the party, eventually affecting GD’s infrastructure and diminishing its public appearance. After years of tolerance towards the activities of GD, a series of crucial and controversial trials lie ahead, with the aim of banning GD.

However, the recent criminalization of GD by both the state apparatus and the stigmatizing discourse of mainstream media – characterizing GD as a violent neo-Nazi organization – cannot hide the fact that GD settled into the political establishment after passing the “threshold of relevance” (CARTER 2005; ELLINAS 2007), following its electoral breakthrough at the local elections in Athens in 2010, and at the national elections in 2012 (DINAS et al. 2013). This recognition of GD’s public support indicates a need for a closer examination of the strategies that transformed GD from a marginal neo-Nazi militia into a major political actor. Golden Dawn’s success also raises questions on how flexibly extreme right parties can handle repression and adapt to a changing political environment, while sustaining both voter sympathy and their own distinctiveness. Under the premise that the rise and persistence of GD cannot be understood exclusively by their parliamentary representation, the present paper applies insights from social movement studies to more accurately capture the relational dynamics of organization, ideology, and action.

Most of the research on GD has been directed towards the economic crisis nexus, historical continuities inside the Greek extreme right (ELLINAS 2013), socio-de-

¹ Χρυσή Αυγή (Chrysi Avgi), ΧΑ – Golden Dawn (GD).
² Considering the European elections in May 2014.
mographic characteristics (GEORGIADOU 2013), the political culture of Greece (CHRISTOPoulos 2014a), and GD’s entanglement with either the state apparatus (PSARRAS 2012) or with neo-liberal agendas (DALAKOGLOU 2013). The rise of GD is thus considered to be best explained through the demand side, through opening opportunity structures and failing state mechanisms (KALLIS 2013) that paved the way to the parliamentary arena.

These approaches are very reasonable, especially in times of economic distress and political instability. However – and this will be my starting point – they ascribe GD a largely passive role in the political process (cf. DINAS et al. 2013, as an exception). Hence, little attention has been given to mobilization strategies, altering repertoires, or motivational frames. These shortcomings in the research on GD harken back to a more or less exclusive focus on institutional outcomes, and to classifying GD using static categories of extreme right parties, neglecting GD’s multi-level organizational structures and different means for resource mobilization.

In public debates, the amplification of extreme right support is all too often reduced to protest voters. Analysts have estimated, however, that instead there is a gradual process whereby voters’ anger against the political system is transformed into identification with GD.3 This voter behavior, in turn, causes problems for GD’s integrity, which is torn between idealism and expansionism, and calls into question the ability of GD to control the situation in the face of external repression and internal factional quarrels. Assuming that the party applies multiple standards for mobilization, my research is directed towards meso-level dynamics that take relational processes into account.

I will begin by tracing the milestones of GD’s rise, as well as its entanglement with othering discourses and practices in media and politics, taking opportunity contexts into account. I will then discuss the dynamics of GD’s mobilization by examining organizational and ideological contingencies, escalating action repertoires, and frame alignment strategies. On the basis of secondary literature, newspaper articles and, above all, the analysis of documents (especially online documents) published by GD, I aim to broaden the perspective on contemporary extreme right movements like GD.

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Extreme Right Rising in a Polarized Environment

To explain the increased voter attraction to GD, one cannot deny the consequences of the economic crisis that has manifested in Greece, especially since the installation of the “troika” in 2010: Unemployment rates, wage cuts, homelessness, drug addiction, prostitution, and emigration rates have risen in tandem with GD’s share in the polls. However, a simple causal relationship would not do justice to the complex social conflicts and processes that were partially triggered by austerity measures, but that were also already ongoing before this time: corruption, repeated violations of human rights, immigrant scapegoating, authoritarian styles of governing, de-politicization, and the brutal repression of protests are just some of the factors that contributed to the polarized climate that GD was able to build upon.

The installation of a technocratic “coalition of national unity” in 2011 aggravated this constellation by bureaucratizing political rule. Along with the mainstream parties PASOK and ND, the government, under the leadership of the former ECB Vice President Loucas Papademos, involved the far-right LAOS, which espouses xenophobic and nationalist policies, as well as conspiracy theories and anti-Semitism (cf. ELLINAS 2010: 136ff). The politicization of governmental directives eventually caused the de-legitimization of the whole political class, which resulted in a loss of trust in political institutions and personal efficacy – and to growing legitimacy for GD (cf. EATWELL 2003: 69). Not only did the reigning two-party system collapse, but the leading far-right party LAOS also failed to maintain its electorate after supporting a government that was denounced as “traitors of the nation” in far-right circles. Golden Dawn stepped into this gap, insisting that it was the sole representation of the nationalist electorate that LAOS supposedly betrayed (BISTIS 2013).

Discursive opportunity structures (cf. KOOPMANS/STATHAM 1999; KOOPMANS/OLZAK 2004) also contributed to a better circulation of GD’s radical positions. Immigration emerged in the media as a threatening topic associated with criminality and violence (SWARTS/KARAKATSANIS 2013). Soon, GD representatives were invited to appear on TV shows as experts on immigration issues, using this stage to disseminate their racist positions, disguised as common sense. Othering processes by politics and mass media, which stressed values like national unity, turned ethnic and sexual minorities into scapegoats for deteriorating health condi-

4 The “Troika” consisted of the European Central Bank, the European Union Commission, and the International Monetary Fund, and formulated structural reform programs that the Greek government was supposed to implement.
5 Πανελλήνιο Σοσιαλιστικό Κίνημα (Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima), ΠΑΣΟΚ – Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK).
6 Νέα Δημοκρατία (Nea Dimokratia), ΝΔ – New Democracy (ND).
7 European Central Bank.
8 Λαϊκός Ορθόδοξος Συναγερμός (Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos), ΛΑΟΣ – Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS).
tions and the collapse of social services, giving the impression of a failing cordon sanitaire between mainstream and extreme right (KALLIS 2013).

The Genesis of GD’s Activity in the Face of the Authorities’ Response

Examining the genesis of GD under such conditions of political and economic crisis, one can identify four different phases that are marked by turning points, each of which demanded an occasional realignment of tactics. In response to changing election results, popularity ratings, and government responses, GD applied different tactics in each phase, which I classify (See Table 1) by their characteristic processes.

Table 1: Periodization of GD genesis

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<tr>
<td>Election results</td>
<td>5.3% (Local)</td>
<td>6.9% (National)</td>
<td>6.3% (National)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic Processes</td>
<td>Subverting vigilante groups in local strongholds</td>
<td>Expanding space domination by violence and welfare</td>
<td>Consolidating power by consent and direct action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Points</td>
<td>Entry to Athens city council</td>
<td>Entry to Greek parliament</td>
<td>Murder of Fyssas and GD leadership imprisonment</td>
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<td>Government’s response</td>
<td>Neglecting</td>
<td>Excluding</td>
<td>Co-opting</td>
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Phase 1. Initially, GD intervened in local discontent against immigrant residents and shopkeepers in central districts of Athens. Subverting “vigilante groups”, GD established strongholds in the area of Agios Panteleimonas and Kypseli, where its members organized patrols to exert spatial dominance (VRADIS/DALAKOGLOU 2011). In this vein, the local establishment of GD, which combined overt violence against perceived outsiders with community organizing for ethnic Greeks (KORONAIOU/SAKELLARIOU 2013), was a key way to gain visibility and ownership on immigration issues. By engaging in confrontational action and framing its actions as righteous, GD ethnicized social conflicts under the central slogan of
“cleaning the area”, and entered the Athens city council, threatening pogroms (PAPANTOLEON 2014).

Phase 2. In May 2011, this warning of pogroms became reality after a Greek citizen fell victim to a robbery in the city center of Athens. Local residents and far-right groups occupied a street corner and instigated a pogrom against alleged immigrants under the direction of central figures of GD, killing at least one person and injuring more than 100. Simultaneously, GD set up propaganda welfare programs like food distributions and job services for the Greek population. In the wake of a wave of racist attacks, GD entered the Greek parliament in June 2012 with the support of 440,000 votes, along with tremendous electoral support by Greek police forces (ibid.).

Phase 3. A period of enhanced mobilization followed, with some of the largest demonstrations and disruptive appearances. Parallel to the launch of a large sweeping operation against undocumented migrants by the government – which was accompanied by overt racist profiling, abuse, and torture (HRW 2013) – GD’s MPs intensified their spreading of racial contention, protected by parliamentary immunity. The violent escalation of the migration issue did not diminish GD’s popularity in the polls – instead, GD received its highest rates of approval in September 2013, when representatives of the conservative party discussed the possibility of a coalition with a “tamed GD”, as well as establishing constant communication channels to coordinate voting behavior. However, the murder of the antifascist musician Pavlos Fyssas on September 18, 2013 by a GD member, and the subsequent antifascist mobilization, changed the course of the government and isolated GD increasingly from the political mainstream.

Phase 4. Facing external pressure and internal quarrels, GD endeavored to prove its unity after central party leaders were put behind bars just 11 days following the
murder, and two MPs dissociated themselves from the party. Under the threat of prohibition, and in order to regain the trust of moderate supporters, GD attempted to become more mainstream, suppressing violent acts and neo-Nazi references. Ultimately, it was the fatal shooting of two GD members on November 1, 2013 that enabled a victimizing discourse, and which brought GD back into business. Keeping its electorate quite stable, GD was elected as the third force to the European Parliament (EP), and kept 16 MPs in parliament after the January 2015 elections.

**Between Sect, Movement, and Party – A Structural and Ideological Assessment**

Until 2010, GD was of little relevance in the political arena. However, it is neither a new, crisis-related phenomenon, nor a pure continuation of Greek far-right politics. Key figures of the organization have long been deeply involved in Greek neo-Nazi subculture and football hooliganism (TIPALDOU 2012; PSARRAS 2012: 140–152), active as mercenaries in the Yugoslav Wars on the side of Serbia (KOSOUMVRIS 2004; MICHAS 2002), and interconnected with international fascist parties and neo-Nazi platforms worldwide (PSARRAS 2012: 72–79; FIELITZ 2013).

Extreme right parties apply different strategies to disguise their ideological cores, adapting different rhetoric repertoires to fit different audiences (MUDDE 2000: 20f; FELDMAN/JACKSON 2014). Multi-level entanglement and identification are also used; these strategies are more common to political movements, and are approached accordingly by the party elite. Since GD’s constituencies are more heterogeneous than its ideological foundation might suggest, different rhetorical strategies are required. The following section will explore the nexus between the intricate structure, political agitation, and hidden agendas of GD in dealing with different audiences. It will illustrate how GD’s rise rests upon several dynamics, which transformed the party’s political shape without changing the ideological core.

**From “Groupuscule” to Party Politics**

At its very beginning, GD’s behavior precisely fit that of Roger GRIFFIN’s (2003) *groupuscules*:

> […] small political (frequently meta-political, but never primarily party-political) entities formed to pursue palingenetic\(^{13}\) (i.e. revolutionary) ideological, organizational or activist ends with an ultimate goal of overcoming the decadence of the existing liberal democratic system (ibid.: 30).

\(^{13}\) In his attempt to define fascism as a generic ideology, Roger GRIFFIN (1993; 1995) identifies the core of all fascist parties and movements as the attempt to regenerate a nation in decay, what he termed “the palingenetic myth” of a nation’s rebirth.
In accordance with this definition, GD was more interested in attracting ideological purity and internal discipline than in appealing to the masses. Founded as a discussion circle for national-socialist ideas in the early 1980s (PSARRAS 2012: 36ff), the group soon started to publish its eponymous journal, Chrysi Avgi, which served as a forum for neo-Nazi ideas in Greece. However, the thematic orientation was not restricted to the revival of Nazism. Influenced by the modernity-hostile and cultural approaches of the “Conservative Revolution”14 from the interwar period, as well as by the French “Nouvelle Droite”15, GD combined neo-Nazism with a racist understanding of Hellenism into a meta-political ideology that turned, according to national-revolutionary third-position approaches, against both capitalism and communism.

Not surprisingly, the decision of party leader Michaloliakos to participate in the European elections in 1994 opened the floor for inner quarrels, which led to a split of the party elite and which deterred radicals from GD’s new turn to mass politics. This change of track was followed by rising popularity amid a nationalist wave that was sweeping Greece. This nationalist wave emerged during the naming dispute with the Republic of Macedonia, and was reinforced under conditions of enhanced popular mobilization and a radicalizing political mainstream. The party’s structural expansion and gradual institutionalization must, thus, be understood as an interplay of internal processes and external opportunities.

On Inner and Outer Circles
Initially, the party founders established an inner hierarchy, which remains unchanged to this day. Taking the shape of a pyramid, with the permanent leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos at its peak, the structure of the “circle of GD”16 is divided into three subclasses. The first is the Golden Stoa, whose task is the inauguration of new members to the inner circle and which consists of the founding members and long-term members. The inner circle also includes the movement for the study of the European civilization Golden Dawn17; these elite members (the second subclass) are, among other things, responsible for the ideological education of its members. In the mid-1980s, the leadership established the People’s Association (the third subclass).

14 A general term for describing a number of anti-liberal and anti-emancipatory movements during the interwar period, which agitated against society’s modernization, and opposed an alleged vanishing of national characteristics.

15 A school of thought found by the French philosopher Alain de Benoist, characterized by a strong opposition to egalitarianism; the Nouvelle Droite advocates for counter-hegemonic strategies as a cultural foundation to politically transform society.

16 The following analysis is extracted from discoveries made during house searches of leading figures of GD, which were published in, among other places, the newspaper Efimerida ton Syntakton (11.04.2014); New discoveries from the “circle of Golden Dawn”. Available online at http://www.efsyn.gr/?p=188879 (18.10. 2014).

17 The influence of the French new right think tank GRECE (Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne) is obvious at this point.
This is the political arm that is generally understood as GD by the public today. The executive body of GD, the central committee, connects all three subclasses and takes decisions about all matters of concern according to a fixed hierarchy. Internal members acquire military ranks and need to prove – both ideologically and practically – their conviction to serve the hierarchy of GD. This proof takes the form of long-standing participation in events and discussions, as well as in demonstrations. In contrast, members of the People’s Association rely on local branches and do not necessarily need to adopt the national-socialist ideas of the GD leadership. There are, however, similar hierarchical structures at work in every local “cell”. Their chairpersons, among other tasks, coordinate the infamous militia troops (called “security battalions”) – the paramilitary arm of the organization. These formations are deployed for demonstrations, raids, and protection services. Besides that, each member is obliged to spend his or her spare time contributing to the success of GD by engaging in charitable work like neighborhood assistance. Parents are also encouraged to send their children to ideological lessons conducted by GD officials.

To move from the People’s Association to the “secret school” of the inner circle, various sacrifices and long probationary periods are demanded. If successful, this ultimately climaxes in a sectarian-like procedure: one takes the oath of allegiance to the leader and the party hierarchy, swearing to fight as a revolutionary against the “true enemy of our race, which is none other than the eternal Jew.”

A Nationalist Movement? Mobilization beyond its own Structures

Most of these procedures are invisible to the majority of their followers, who come from different backgrounds and who engage mainly in local mobilizations. In the local arena, GD presents itself as the political arm of a broader nationalist movement that struggles against the troika-imposed memorandum and that works towards the national independence of Greece.

Golden Dawn has gradually absorbed several patriotic and nationalist groupings that sympathize with its revisionist territorial claims, with positive references to the regime of the Colonels (1967–74) and to the interwar dictator Ioannis Metaxas (1936–41), as well as GD’s radical anti-communism. However, a broad spectrum of organizations with quite different – and sometimes even contradictory – ambitions are affiliated to GD, without necessarily subordinating themselves to GD’s structures. Among these groups are Christian-fundamentalist groups, military organiza-

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20 This is what Giorgos Germanis, MP of GD, calls the ideological division. Jail Golden Dawn (24.08.2014).
21 Ibid.
Beyond the Fringe: Dynamics of Golden Dawn’s rise

Beyond the Fringe: Dynamics of Golden Dawn’s rise

Golden Dawn’s expanding influence on this milieu is also evidenced by the multiplication of its community channels, especially online. As SMYRNAIOS (2013) observed by analyzing online network structures of the far-right in Greece, GD is not necessarily connected to various groups. However, the rise of GD “accelerates the development of a vast part of the Greek [far-right] blogosphere.” The amplification of online activism applies to many extra-parliamentary groups as well that insist on their independence, but attach themselves to GD to gain visibility and credibility in the broader milieu. This distant affiliation with GD is well accepted by GD, as its leadership avoids mass membership and prefers to act as spokespersons for the Greek people. As long as affiliated groups do not rebel against the hegemonic position of GD in the far-right milieu, the GD leadership appreciates a diversified movement-like appearance with diverse communication channels. At least five national newspapers reproduce unfiltered information provided by GD, positioning themselves on the threshold between conservative and far-right circles. Hence, the unified appearance inside the nationalist milieu might be understood as a concentric organized movement (cf. RUCHT 1994) that applies different strategies of mobilization and compliance according to a given participant’s level of involvement in heterogeneously constituted political contexts.

Summarizing, GD’s mobilization structures are distinct in two ways: It differentiates not only between its ideological core (which consists of only about 80 members) and its grassroots membership (which was estimated by GD representatives at 2000 in 201322), but also between organized Golden Dawners and a sphere of sympathetic groups and subcultures.

“So much more than a Political Party” – On GD’s Ideology

In contrast to many far-right parties, GD drafted, alongside its electoral program, both an ideological statement of principles and an identity guideline stipulating what it means to be a Golden Dawner and how one has to behave.23 Seeing itself as a political movement, it is devoted to the ideology of “popular nationalism” (GOLDEN DAWN 2012a). This nationalism comprises commitment to the ancient Greek race and culture, the establishment of a popular state and an autarkic economy, and an emergence of the “people’s community” constituted by “the mystic voice of blood” (GOLDEN DAWN 2012c). This völkisch body would constitute the de facto ruler and would reign “through its leader” (ibid.). The GD-ideology denies

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23 Those documents are available, but are not the same as the inner circle ideology. Thus, the insights from these documents are a communicated compromise compatible with the different ideological fragments that influence the orientation of the inner GD circles.
the division of power through political parties and openly favors a racist dictatorship that resembles interwar fascist movements, especially the German NSDAP.24

Based on the information presented in this section, it is not difficult to classify GD as an extreme right party. Central characteristics have already been touched upon: biological racism, authoritarianism, anti-Semitism and xenophobic nationalism. Further party statements call for “national regeneration” and spread – characteristic for fascist movements – the notion of political decadence that needs to be overthrown (GOLDEN DAWN 2012a). Through its name alone, “the golden dawn of Hellenism” (ibid.) epitomizes what Griffin (1993: 2) terms a “palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism.” Golden Dawn traces its “mythic core” (ibid.) back to ancient roots and claims to “help the Hellene Man rise, to wake up his consciousness, to lead him to his destiny” (GOLDEN DAWN 2012b). This indeterminate meta-political approach is finally translated into an action request for its members, and triggers various action repertoires, leaving actors a wide scope for broader interpretation: Depending on the specific context or individual affiliation of GD agitators, this “destiny” might be articulated according to, for example, Christian-orthodox or white supremacist frames.

Escalating Repertoires

Social movement scholars divide ideal types of action repertoires into three categories: conventional, confrontational, and violent (TARROW 1989). According to this scheme, conventional means are articulated within the legal framework, confrontational behavior is articulated in disruptive interactions, and violent offending refers to direct actions that cause personal or material damage. Each of these repertoires can embrace different aims and audiences, adapting to a flexible use of resources.

Determining the action repertoires of GD is, however, more complicated than applying this simple scheme, since its members appear effectively in the public arena by disregarding conventional forms of claim-making, propagating instead a permanent state of exception, or the heading into “a new kind of civil war.”25 According to this understanding, GD conducts direct actions alongside its self-reasoned normative obligations, fueled by interactions with political opponents and security forces. Thus, GD’s collective action provokes tensions that can easily turn conventional forms of claim-making, such as rallies or press conferences, into violent law-breaking clashes.

24 GD’s ideology is strongly influenced by – in addition to a range of German NS theorists – the Romanian Iron Guard (see Goll in this volume) and the Spanish Falange Movement, and by the ideological leanings of their leaders, Corneliu Codreanu and José Antonio Primo de Rivera, respectively.

Violence is a strongly visible feature in GD’s acting. Although violence is rightfully understood as the very essence of GD’s core (PSARRAS 2012), GD supplies broader repertoires for the mobilization of potential supporters in specific contexts. Contextualizing collective violence in a broader repertoire of contentious politics (TILLY 2003), I will therefore draw attention to the diverse forms of interventions in public space and the different nature of claims that are made. This is not to downplay GD’s violent appearances and militant tactics, but rather to go beyond a one-dimensional focus on political violence.

**Local Propaganda Actions**

Some of GD’s most conventional methods of agitation are regular ideological speeches and discussions conducted by local branches of GD, as well as mass distributions of party materials in public squares and popular markets. These events are flanked by expeditions to monuments of nationalist figures in Greek history, as well as by occasional banner drops or graffiti paintings. Meetings are also scheduled to enhance networking with local actors, such as the church, other nationalist groups, or welfare organizations.

Through these actions, GD eagerly strives to both anchor itself locally and spread its appearance nationwide. Although there is a stronger concentration of GD support in the major Greek cities, local branches which have opened on islands and in small towns have diverse thematic focuses, often catering to individual preferences and regional backgrounds. According to GD’s website, 63 cells are active in Greece and in three additional international centers of the Greek diaspora: New York, Melbourne, and Montreal. However, this number of cells can be misleading, as some of these branches closed down after the strong antifascist mobilization in September 2013 following the killing of Pavlos Fyssas, and most cells are not operating on a regular basis. Increased mobilization efforts among the Greek diaspora has mainly taken the form of fundraising and food donations, which are sent back to Greece as economic and material support and are handed out at local food distributions (cf. FIELITZ 2013).

**Food Distributions and Hospital Searches**

Propagandistic food distribution in the central squares of Greece’s major cities has become a trademark of the gradual expansion of GD’s activities. These events were launched within the framework of the election campaign in 2012 alongside similar social actions such as job services, blood banks, and childcare – all of which are emphatically offered “only for Greeks.” Golden Dawn has befriended farmers and entrepreneurs, who donate basic essentials to be distributed at GD events. Some of these events distribute goods to more than 1000 locals, who receive a bag containing basic groceries after a check of their ID to confirm that they are Greek. Scheduled

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mostly around national holidays such as Christmas or Easter, these populist actions aim to provide a parallel structure to state welfare and to attract new supporters, especially those affected by the economic crisis. Through such direct action, GD also presents itself as a caretaking movement, presenting itself in favorable contrast to “sheer debating” political parties.

In a similar vein to these food distributions, after it entered parliament, GD launched searches in hospitals and other public buildings looking for “illegally engaged” employees. Under the rhetoric of “Greek workers first”, GD aggressively intimidated employers to hire ethnic Greeks. This propagated a zero-tolerance policy on “illegal immigration,” which is also manifested through identity checks of immigrants who are selling commodities at popular markets.

**Ritual Mass Performances**

Rituals and performances are key tools for nationalist mobilizations, triggering emotions that boost identification with the nation on behalf of the organizing party or movement (cf. TSANG/WOODS 2014). To make use of these strategies, GD established fixed commemorative dates throughout the year; these dates celebrate Greek culture and history, and foster ongoing mobilization. Those events celebrate anniversaries of modern and ancient Greek historical events, such as the fall of Constantinople (May 25th). Other events commemorate Alexander the Great’s actions in Thessaloniki, combined with the revisionist claim of the unification of Macedonia (Mid-June), or Thermopylae’s remembrance ceremonies in Sparta (End of July). Additional dates have been scheduled to commemorate figures identified with the GD movement; these dates include the fatal shooting of party affiliates in front of a GD branch (November 1st) and the killing of a fascist Greek student during street fights in Rome (February 28th) – events already commemorated on the transnational scale in neo-Nazi circles. These commemorative events offer speeches by leading party figures, rehearsed ritual ceremonies, and repeatedly singing the national and party anthems. From a visual standpoint, a mass of Greek flags and the use of pyrotechnics create a feeling of an adventurous unity and facilitate, especially for young sympathizers, entry into the extreme right, by combining politics with excitement (GLASER 2007).

Beyond these primarily internal mobilizations, GD tries to take ownership of far-right, nationalist commemoration ceremonies, such as the victory over the communist units in the civil war in the Epirus region in 1949 (End of August), or the historically controversial clashes between communists and collaborators in Meligalas (Peloponnesian) during the Nazi occupation in 1944 (Mid-September). Golden Dawn has turned violently against moderate nationalist forces who would not recognize its leadership; one such event took place in September 2013, at the Meligalas rally, when the leader of the more conservative nationalists of the Patriotic Greek
Association\textsuperscript{27} was hospitalized following an attack by GD MPs. In its goal to absorb all nationalist power and support – forcefully, if need be – and to acquire a hegemonic position, GD attempts to take ownership at all such nationalist events.

The greatest mobilization of nationalist sentiment takes place annually, around January 30th, with the \textit{Imia March} commemorating the loss of three Greek soldiers under unclear circumstances on the eponymous islet at the Turkish border. In 2013, GD mobilized around 5000 participants for this event, constituting one of the largest extreme right demonstrations in Europe. Organized with military discipline, this event has a fixed schedule, with a torchlight procession through the city center of Athens, accompanied by occasional attacks on political opponents.

The Imia March also attracts supporters from abroad, who send regularly delegations and who support GD financially. This transnational dimension of GD’s rise is also illustrated by a diffusion of strategies, symbols, and discourses, and their appropriation into European extreme right contexts (FIELITZ 2013). Building on a dense international network, GD promotes its agenda and acts as a role model for extreme right activism, resonating strongly among Europe-wide fascist parties, national-revolutionary movements, and neo-Nazi subculture (see Karl and Goll in this volume). Referring to GD unites different approaches to extreme right politics, and contributes to the Europeanization of extreme right discourse and practice.

\textbf{Diverse Forms of Violence: Random and Targeted, Open and Secret}

Golden Dawn has made international headlines as one of the most violent and openly racist neo-Nazi groups across the continent, and the link between the rising popularity of GD and the increase in racist attacks is striking. Since 2012, a coalition of Greek NGOs has monitored racist and homophobic hate crimes, which appear to concentrate mainly in several hotspots of Greek city centers.\textsuperscript{28} Most perpetrators’ support of GD can be proven by the notorious GD shirts they were wearing or by the explicit proclamation that they will purge the area in the name of GD (cf. HRW 2012). Recorded violent incidents surged in June 2012 when GD entered the parliament, although – or perhaps because – expectations were high that the party would be assimilated by institutional structures and norms. It demonstrates that the party is able to control violent means according to their level of ambition. In this way, the rational application of targeted attacks contributes to the strategy of escalating or de-escalating political conflict.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Πατριωτικός Ελληνικός Σύνδεσμος (Patriotikos Ellinikos Syndesmos).
  \item \textsuperscript{28} For a mapping of racist violence in Athens, see http://map.crisis-scape.net/ (30.09.2014).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Figure 1: Violent racist attacks against immigrants and the LGBT community.
Source: GREEK OMBUDSMAN (2013).

Looking at the recorded incidents of racist and homophobic hate crimes, two patterns of violence can be extracted: first, there is “a public violence that comprises intimidation, insulting, and threats,” executed via contentious interventions against undesirable theatre plays (TSIMITAKIS 2013), or by violently expelling immigrants from public squares or popular markets. Filming and publishing their violent destruction, GD MPs proudly present their way of handling immigration. The second pattern of violence is a secret, coursing violence especially by night against the weakest social groups such as immigrants and identified members of the LGBT community. These attacks share similar procedures: A squad of three to seven GD supporters, usually male, approach a supposed immigrant, asking where he or she is from; they then start beating the victim (cf. HRW 2012). Most of these perpetrators wear GD shirts, neither trying to hide their backgrounds nor their intention of creating ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods. Thus, the violence of the GD rank-and-file membership is consistent with the articulation of an aggressive anti-immigrant rhetoric by the party leadership.

For a long time, immigrants were not the principal targets of violent attacks by members of GD. Tracing some key incidents over the course of the last 30 years, political opponents and leftists were evidently GD’s main enemies. To this day, GD attacks on squatters, leftist parties, and trade union activists are characterized by a high degree of organization, in contrast to spontaneous attacks on immigrants. The murder of Pavlos Fyssas, which was planned well in advance, was a turning point in GD’s history, after which point the party publicly denounced violence and began to conduct coordinated attacks in even more clandestine ways.

30 The raids on the popular markets in Rafina and Mesolongi by the GD MPs Germanis, Iliopoulos and Barabaroussis in September were organized simultaneously and implemented in an identical pattern.
Aligning Motivational Frames and Symbols

Golden Dawn is a much more complex phenomenon than the news coverage might suggest. Defining the party as neo-Nazi due to its history and inner party structure does not shed much light on its penetration into distant voter circles, or on the social appropriation of radical rhetoric, symbols, and verbal or physical expressions. In this final section, to realign some basic mobilization frames and symbols (Snow et al. 1986), I will look at examples of processes initiated by GD’s party leadership. These examples showcase strategies that help party leaders to balance focusing on the inner circle and extending their reach; these examples should provide readers with a better understanding of GD’s dual discursive mobilization patterns.

One of GD’s major strengths has been its ability to adopt a number of images and slogans from the neo-Nazi scene, redefining their meaning to the public. The Celtic cross, for instance, is internationally recognized as a symbol of the supremacy of the “white race”; this symbol is omnipresent in GD offices and demonstrations. However, to avoid stigmatization as a neo-Nazi organization, GD connects the Celtic cross with the Greek letter Θ (thita), which has a similar appearance. They use the same strategy for the former symbol of the party’s newspaper – the wolf-hook, comparing it to the Greek letter Ω (xi) (Psarras 2012: 326); for the swastika, which they connect to ancient Greek history; and for the fascist salute, which they explain as mimic gestures from the authoritarian interwar regime of Ioannis Metaxas. Although such explanations are far from convincing, they offer plausible deniability for the use of these neo-Nazi symbols. Such explanations enable a double discourse that is central to GD’s whole appearance: For the inner circle, these symbols are central to identity formation, adhering to the roots of GD, whereas, for the broader audience, who might not be comfortable with such a straightforward neo-Nazi identity, these symbols are explained as images promoting Greek nationalism and culture.

GD’s central slogan – “Blood, Honour, Golden Dawn” – derives from the Nazi Youth (Hitlerjugend) maxim, which was perpetuated internationally by the neo-Nazi Blood and Honour network. Given its undeniable source, this slogan can hardly be whitewashed and nationalized like the aforementioned symbols. In an attempt to evade neo-Nazi accusations and expand its audience, the party transformed its trademark slogan into “Fatherland, Honor, Golden Dawn.” Promoting inner coherence and loyalty after facing repressive measures, this slogan sometimes appears in its original version on special occasions: In general, GD leaves it up to each participant to use whichever version he or she prefers.

For years, GD’s central motivational frame for collective action was based on a system-hostile sentiment, combined with an antagonistic identity formation: the central paradigm of “Against all” was directed against any compromise with the political system, stressing GD’s pariah status and the inconsistency of other far-right contenders. This motivational frame stems from GD’s early militant years and pro-
motes offensive acting in the form of directly confronting opponents, demanding revolutionary practice and ideological penetration. Slogans like this were integral for inner-party cohesion, but also forced less committed followers to think carefully about their relationship to the existing political system. In the wake of repression, GD re-formulated its relationship to the political system, gradually transforming itself from a contentious adversary to a victim of state power. Recently, it has appealed to its rights as a legal political party, turning to the European Human Rights Court for enforcement. While until very recently GD mocked the state and its institutions for their inability to halt its rise, the party leadership nowadays presents itself as victims of an anti-democratic campaign, or even of a conspiracy. Although tactically denouncing its revolutionary character to gain legal protection, inner members can extract the original, militant meaning of the categorical distinction between “the system” and “us.” This two-fold application ultimately evolves into different cognitions taking place under the same motivational frame.

Relying on these double standards of mobilization, the party evokes doublespeak tactics that enforce ideological coherence for the inner circle, while espousing alignment with the mainstream political environment when addressing the public. The ambivalent use of symbols, slogans, and discourses allows GD to balance the different needs of consistency and expansion.

Conclusion

Golden Dawn is an anomaly in the contemporary world of the extreme right; its rise contradicts various key assertions of research conducted in this area during the last decades and questions central variables in explaining the success or failure of extreme right parties. For years, scholars have stressed that “old” parties tendencies towards a fixed ideology, an extremist past, and violent actions are outdated, and that parties that use these tactics are doomed to exist at the margins of society (cf. IGNAZI 2003). However, the political context has since changed dramatically, and new opportunities have evolved for extreme right parties. These changes have made radical responses attractive for more mainstream voters; GD’s ability to use flexible means and frames to simultaneously maintain its inner core and recruit new potential sympathizers has also contributed to its performance.

Ellinas addressed this point, concluding that “the party will have to choose between pragmatism and moderation on the one hand and idealism and radicalism on the other” (ELLINAS 2013: 19). As I have attempted to show in the present paper, GD has managed to overcome this dilemma by adapting varied repertoires of action and structural duality, as well as by aligning its motivational frames to a contingent mobilization pattern that oscillates between militancy and mainstream. This Janus-faced character makes it difficult to give general statements on GD’s actions, which are also affected by changing responses of state institutions and counter-mobilizations of antifascist groups and civil society.
Studying the ambivalence of the framing strategies and repertoires of rising extreme right parties is of central relevance in assessing their trajectories. This scholarly direction should broaden the understanding of extreme right mobilization strategies, especially regarding these parties’ capacity to take an active role in the political process. This capacity has been enhanced due to a lack of effective resistance from democratic civil society and state institutions, as well as due to increased sympathies from both mainstream actors and police and military units.

In conclusion, the study of GD to date has been too narrowly focused on GD’s neo-Nazi character; this overly narrow focus has prevented a true grasp the versatility of the GD phenomenon and its diverse support among the population. Although it is undeniable that GD has, since its very beginning, followed an adamant hierarchical structure based on national-socialists ideas, culture, and symbols, this simple perspective does not explain its success in transforming social boundary mechanisms.  

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The Extreme Right Wing in Bulgaria

ANTONY TODOROV

The extreme right wing in Bulgaria is represented by a number of parties and organizations of various statuses and origins. Its most visible arm is the Attack Party (Партия Атака)¹, which has existed since 2005. However the party went through several successive splits, which gave rise to new parties such as GORD², headed by the former MEP of the Attack Party, Slavi Binev, and the National Democratic Party³, headed by Kapka Georgieva, former wife of Volen Siderov, the leader of the Attack Party. In 2011, following a new split within the Attack Party the “National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria” appeared. The most recent extreme right-wing party, the Nationalist Party of Bulgaria⁴, was formed in 2013 as a reaction to the arrival of Syrian refugees in Bulgaria. However, the Court refused to register the party in the wake of a massive campaign organized by a number of human rights organizations.

However, long before such parties there have been a number of circles, such as those around the Monitor daily and the patriotic New Dawn weekly, as well as parties and unions, such as the “Bulgarian National-Radical Party” (BNRP), the “New Dawn Party”, the “Bulgarian National Union” (NBU), the “Guard Union”, and the “Union of Bulgarian National Legions” (UBNL). There have also been numerous organizations such as the Bulgarian Horde, Hearth, and the Great Bulgaria People’s Society of the Students; there have also been many Tangrist groups – referring to the proto-Bulgarian pagan deity Tangra – such as the Dulo Society, Warriors of Tangra, the Bulgarian National Front, and many others. Although these are relatively small and separate organizations and circles, together and as a whole they represent a significant and active social stratum that has become more visible with the rise of the Internet.

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² An acronym of its name in Bulgarian, which means the Civic Association for Real Democracy; in Bulgarian, this acronym forms the word meaning “proud”: http://www.gord.bg/en/.
The Post-Communist Far Right: Old and New

The post-communist far right in Bulgaria is a new phenomenon built on deep memories of fascist, Nazi, and similar movements that existed in the country before 1944; there is no central far-right organization, but rather many different groups that are often in competition.

Bulgarian political history has generated extreme right-wing parties that use both elitist and populist models. In terms of impact, however, both fail to exceed the limits of a relatively restricted circle of like-minded supporters. For this reason, a mass fascist-type party never developed in Bulgaria before World War II, despite the strong influence of the Nazis in Germany and the Fascists in Italy (Poppetrov 2008).

The development of the extreme right after 1989 in Bulgaria, much like such developments in other post-communist countries, arose from a blend of revived and newly emerged social structural conflicts. The main political structural conflict in European former communist states was between the former communists and the anti-communists, a conflict which has been observed in all post-communist states.

This central opposition, which deeply structured Bulgarian political life at the beginning of the transition from communism to post-communism, has been described as a conflict between the victims and the executioners, between the dictatorship and the people, between the communists and the rest of the population. The problem is, however, that the boundaries between the two poles of the opposition has not always been so solid – not infrequently, it turned out that former communists had been victims of the regime, while victims of communist reprisals included people who were not necessarily democrats. At the same time, the opposition between former communists and anti-communists in most of the Eastern European countries rapidly faded out. Twenty-five years after 1989, the opposition between communists and anti-communists no longer structures the political landscape of post-Soviet Europe. In fact, it is precisely this fading of this opposition between communists and democrats that has created the right conditions for a boom of extreme right-wing activity.

The origin of extreme right-wing organizations in Bulgaria is twofold. The first element of their lineage is connected with the very beginning of the transition period, which was marked by the December 1989 decision of the then-governing communist party to restore the names of the Bulgarian ethnic Turks who had been forcibly renamed five years earlier. This step towards restoring justice elicited an excessively negative response, with immediate meetings against this decision. This opposition to the restoration of Turkish names emerged in certain circles within the

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6 However, this does not mean that the influence of communism is completely gone. For example, in Bulgaria, former members of extreme right-wing and nationalist pro-fascist groups, or their successor organizations, can be found among today’s democrats.
The communist party itself, mainly among proponents of the repressive name-changing campaign. The first extreme nationalist parties emerged from these circles. They were mostly anti-Turkish and extremely conservative, and were often connected with the Stalinist segments that had remained from the former communist party. The National Committee for the Protection of National Interests – better known by its Bulgarian abbreviation, OKZNI\(^7\) – was founded at this time, and several former dissidents (such as Roumen Vodenicharov\(^8\)) motivated by the same nationalist considerations joined the new organization. Other nationalist parties such as the Fatherland Labor Party and “Era 3” instead gravitated towards the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP).

The second element of their lineage took place after 1990, when, together with the restoration of many of the old democratic parties, there was an ongoing process of restoring and establishing several extreme right-wing organizations and parties, such as the Bulgarian Democratic Forum (BDF)\(^9\), which proclaimed itself to be the successor of the Bulgarian National Legions\(^10\) of the 1940s and which was accepted as one of the 16 members of the big anti-communist coalition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF).\(^11\) Other such far-right organizations remained outside the UDF, despite their close association with this organization; they included the Bulgarian Radical-National Party (headed by Dr. Ivan Georgiev) and the Christian Democratic Party (headed by a priest, Gelemenov). These two party leaders were activists, who at the time of communism were subject to persecution for their nationalist beliefs and attempts to set up nationalist organizations.

On the whole, however, these “left-wing” and “right-wing” ultranationalists remained in a rather marginal position and were strongly dependent on the frameworks imposed on them by, on the left, the BSP\(^12\) (the party that succeeded the former communist party) and, on the right, by the UDF. These parties rarely ran elections with independent candidates of their own and enjoyed an almost negligible political impact.

However, as the conflict between former communists and anti-communists died down, a broad opportunity opened for both populist centrist parties and populist

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8 Although Vodenicharov was one of the main anticommunist dissidents in the 1980s, he moved more towards the left nationalists within the BSP: [http://www.omda.bg/public/arhiv/dokumenti_politicheski/protokol_18121989.html](http://www.omda.bg/public/arhiv/dokumenti_politicheski/protokol_18121989.html).
10 Bulgarian National Legions were established following Hitler’s model, and during the 1940s even threatened the power of the monarchy.
11 The composite anti-communist coalition of the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) was formed in early 1990 and won the elections in 1991 and 1997. However, it has since split many times, producing a large range of political organizations with conservative, Christian democratic, center-right, or liberal centrist identities.
radical\textsuperscript{13} (most frequently extreme right-wing) parties. At the very end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the first examples of today’s variety of ultranationalist extreme right-wing parties began to emerge. At this time, the major phase of privatizing the huge property of the communist state was almost completed, and the economic wealth had already been redistributed. This gave rise to a new conflict, one between the winners and losers of the transition to a market economy. It did not matter so much whether the losers had actually lost anything, but rather whether they saw themselves as “losers”. In this novel environment, new populist parties, among them extreme right-wing parties, found a fertile terrain to develop.

Post-communism conflicts have also spread to a division between national and international. This conflict becomes a structural one, which generates a new cleavage.\textsuperscript{14} In countries such as Bulgaria, which are both post-communist and peripheral, this conflict enhances prejudices against the global economy, with fears of losing one’s national identity and of being smelted in the vast cauldron of globalization. These fears feed the arguments of extreme nationalists and populists, who – especially after the collapse of the historical enemy of capitalism, Soviet communism – now can also add anti-capitalist rhetoric to their repertoire.

Various Bulgarian extreme nationalists held several joint actions in 2001–2002; examples included protests against Bulgarian National Television providing news broadcasts in the Turkish language, against the non-payment of electricity bills by the Roma population, and against the closure of the \textit{Kozloduy} nuclear power plant. In 2002, these groups made their first attempt to unify (Yordanov 2002); however, following a public outcry, the unification project was abandoned. One of the most spectacular manifestations of the extreme right-wing circles in Bulgaria is the annual Lukov march\textsuperscript{15}, which commemorates the assassination of General Lukov by a communist commando in 1943\textsuperscript{16}. This march was first organized in 2003 in Sofia by a set of nationalist organizations and Internet groups, and took place every year in February in the center of Sofia. In 2014 – for the first time, and under the pressure of many human rights organizations – the Mayor of Sofia did not allow the march in

\textsuperscript{13} The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies (FREEDEN [et.al.] 2013: 494) lays out three main types of populism – agrarian, socio-economic, and xenophobic. Many researchers in Bulgaria define two types of historical Bulgarian populism: agrarian and political (MALINOV 2007): The Bulgarian political scientist Anna KRASTEVA notes three key figures in Bulgarian populism today: Simeon of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (Prime Minister 2001–2005), Boyko Borisov (Prime Minister 2009–2013, since 2014) and Volen Siderov (leader of the Attack Party). She also distinguishes between two main types of populism: soft and hard. Hard populism “is nationalist, extremist, and xenophobic, with an accent on Othering” (KRASTEVA 2013). In the present paper, I use two categories: centrist (i.e., soft) and radical (i.e., hard).

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. for more information on this cleavage see SEILER (2011: 92–99).

\textsuperscript{15} The official homepage of the Lukov march: http://lukovmarch.info/.

\textsuperscript{16} General Lukov was the founding father of the pro-Nazi youth organization Union of the Bulgarian National Legions, established in 1932.
the city center; the event has since been limited to the area surrounding the last home of General Lukov.17

Of all the Bulgarian far-right organizations, the Attack Party seems to be the most organized. Its leader, the journalist Volen Siderov, was former Editor-in-Chief of the popular UDF daily, Democrazia. Volen Siderov worked on the journalistic team of the Monitor daily from 1998 to 1999, where he immediately gained wide popularity with his ultranationalist and often deliberately racist articles. Shortly after, he launched his personal ultranationalist broadcast under the title of “Attack” on the national cable TV network SKAT. At the beginning of the new millennium, Volen Siderov published a series of books18 about the “global conspiracy” of the “Jewish Masons”: this well-worn thesis was tailored to Bulgarian history and society. Volen Siderov’s role as a major extreme nationalist spokesperson inspired him to run for Sofia City Mayor (although he received fewer than 2000 votes).

On the eve of the 2005 general election, Volen Siderov became leader of the election coalition of five right- and left-wing nationalist organizations. This coalition was registered under the name of the “Attack Coalition,” and comprised the following political entities:

− National Movement for the Salvation of the Fatherland (NMSF), headed by Illya Kirov, a left-wing nationalist;
− Bulgarian National-Patriotic Party (BNPP), headed by Peter Manolov, a poet and former anti-communist dissident;
− The Attack Party, headed by Volen Siderov;
− New Dawn Party, headed by Mincho Minchev, a former ally of the BSP;
− Union of Patriotic Forces, headed by Yordan Velichkov, a left-wing nationalist. One member of this group was Peter Beron, an emblematic figure from the first years of the country’s transition and a former UDF Chairman (1990–1991).

Soon after the 2005 general election, at which time the Attack Party Coalition entered the Parliament, the first split occurred within this new organization. Peter Beron and a number of the left-wing nationalists began to gradually distance themselves from Volen Siderov, not least because of his anti-Semitic and racist speeches.

The right-wing nationalists who remained outside the Attack Coalition also set up a number of small and very active parties, such as the Bulgarian National Union19 (BNU), the successor of the Right-Wing Democratic Movement, which had been previously connected with Ivan Georgiev’s Bulgarian National Radical Party. The leader of the BNU – Boyan Rassate – set up this new organization in 2000, became

17 Cf. homepage of the Newspaper Dnevnik: http://www.dnevnik.bg/bulgaria/2015/02/12/2470849_vlastite_pak_ne_razreshiha_lukovmarsh.
19 Official homepage of BNU party (Български национален съюз): http://bngs.net/.
close to the Attack Coalition in 2003–2006, then parted from Volen Siderov to estab-

lish the now-defunct extreme-right organization, “Guard”.

In 2012, the Attack Party went through a new internal conflict, which brought
about a yet another split. As a result, two new smaller organizations emerged: one
led by Kapka Georgieva, the ex-wife of Volen Siderov and former Editor-in-Chief
of the Attack daily, and the other led by the former Attack Party MEP, Slavi Binev.
A year later new conflict between Volen Siderov and his former colleagues from
SKAT TV led to a new political party – the National Front for the Salvation of Bul-
garia (NFSB)\textsuperscript{20} – which in 2014 formed an alliance with the traditional nationalist
party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization: The Bulgarian National
Movement (IMRO-BNM).\textsuperscript{21}

Ideological Profile: Xenophobia, racism, and social demagogy

They are against the European Union in the way it looks today, and together
with Jean-Marie Le Pen and Jorg Haider they are pleading for Europe of the
nations. They are fighting against Bulgaria’s accession to NATO and are
qualifying the Pact as an ‘organization of bandits.’ They use an aggressive
rhetoric with respect to minorities. They believe in the Zionist conspiracy, i.e.
that the Jews rule the world through the banks, the International Monetary
Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, NATO, the Club of
Rome, the Bilderbergs, and – of course – Jewish bankers. According to
Volen Siderov, the Jews and the Masons founded the USA, accomplished the
Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the October Revolution, the advent of
Hitler (Yordanov 2002).

The ideological underpinnings of the extreme right in Bulgaria are a synthesis of
many common right-wing conspiracies, which is not unique.

The Attack Party seems to be the most representative of the extreme right-wing
in Bulgaria, and it has been the subject of several studies.\textsuperscript{22} Volen Siderov’s writings
contain an amalgam of all of the ideas typical for the extreme right wing. His latest
book, connected with the 2011 presidential election, is entitled “Foundations of
Bulgarian Nationalism.” Spanning 112 pages, and filled with photographs, maps, and diagrams,
the book develops the major ideas of Bulgarian nationalism: an ethical defense of
nationalism; an insistence on the ancient origins of the Bulgarians, who are one of
the oldest autochthonic peoples and civilizations in Europe; and a dismissal of so-

\textsuperscript{20} Its political program for 2014 can be found at the official homepage of the party:

\textsuperscript{21} This party – VMRO-BNM – was formed in 1990 as a reconstruction of the historical party of the
early 20th century. It is considered to be “moderate nationalist party”: (http://www.vmro.bg/).

\textsuperscript{22} Cf. CAPELLE-POGACEAN/RAGARU (2007), ZHECHEVA (2007), and POPOVA (without
year).
cialist, liberal, and any other globalist doctrines as being anti-national. In the rest of this section, the main elements of Bulgarian nationalism in its extreme rightist form are presented:

In the Bulgarian case, minorities – ethnic, cultural, or sexual – are accused of being “eternally guilty” by extreme right parties. The main target of these accusations is the Jews. A quote from an article published in Theme magazine contains the following statement by Illia Illiev, a journalist from the Monitor daily circle:

“Ever since Loukanov’s government came to office, the Jews in Bulgaria have been taking possession of key posts in Bulgaria’s governance at an increasing rate. Five ministers from the incumbent Cabinet have Jewish roots. Two of the Chairpersons of the parliamentary represented parties are also of Jewish descent. Not a single thoroughbred Bulgarian for at least two generations back can be shown to the people! It is a similar situation with the collective leaderships of these parties as well (Yordanov 2002).”

Alongside the Jews, the Turkish and Roma people have also been dismissed by the extreme right wing. The Turks are seen mostly from the standpoint of the “500 years of Turkish Yoke,” while the Roma population is the target of racism. Over and over again, Volen Siderov has emphasized how “Gypsy proliferation” is a threat for Bulgaria. In an interview for the Attack daily newspaper, Volen Siderov said:

“Exactly 10 years ago I wrote an article for the Monitor daily entitled ‘Is the Gypsy Proliferation Overtaking Bulgaria?’ I do not think that there is anything offensive in the phrase ‘Gypsy proliferation’, because what we mean here is the growing numbers of this population which refuses to integrate within Bulgarian society and lives quite encapsulated instead.”

While the Bulgarian National Union (BNU) reports total disregard for this issue, they do so in an inherently racist fashion: “We are not interested in the Gypsies. For us they cannot be Bulgarians, because by God’s will they were born Gypsies, not Bulgarians.” This is not disregard, but rather a total dismissal: the Roma people are “absolutely alien” not only do they “refuse to integrate”, but are so “alien” that they are of “no consequence for us.”

Harsh statements are directed towards other minorities as well, such as the homosexual community. In 2005, Volen Siderov provoked a disturbance with his very first parliamentary speech, where he declared: “At long last, the Bulgarians will

24 The last communist-led government, in 1990.
25 The Ottoman rule in Bulgaria from 1389 to 1878.
27 Cf. the homepage of the BNU: http://www.bg.bgns.net/content/view/18/62/.
receive their genuine representation at the National Assembly. In Parliament now there will not be only homosexuals, Gypsies, Turks, foreigners, Jews, and whatever others; here there will be nothing else but Bulgarians!”

The extreme nationalists are consistent in their homophobia; for instance, activists of the Guard organization and supporters of the VMRO Party (which is considered to be far more moderate), regularly attack participants in gay-pride parades organized in the capital city of Sofia.

Extreme right-wingers traditionally assign special meaning to the unity of the nation, as well as to “national pride.” In Volen Siderov’s opinion, the fundamental national pride of Bulgarians is their “ancient origins”; however, more mundane things like the Kozloduy nuclear power plant also come into “national pride,” and are “sacred things” that should be safeguarded. He understands the nation as a “natural community” (SIDEROV 2011: 6) where each person has a place exactly designated for him or her – themes that have been well known since the time of Mussolini.

In its credo, the BNU describes itself:

The Bulgarian National Union is not an ordinary organization. The BNU is an Order, in which – upon joining it – every member pledges to be faithful to the Motherland, irreconcilable to the enemies of Bulgaria, maintaining at the same time good comradeship relations with his/her brothers-in-arms.

This text is similar to older versions from as far back as the 1930s, and could be interpreted as a heterosexual love between the male heroic warrior and the female motherland.

The unity of the people – and because it is the people that make up the nation, the two notions of personal and national unity are synonymous – is the paramount consideration, and all who divide it are enemies of the people. This rhetoric goes

30 Built in 1974 during the communist regime, it produces some 40% of the electricity in Bulgaria. During the EU accession talks the EU Commission and many European governments pressed Bulgaria to close four of the six reactors due to the possible risks posed by their outdated technology. Most Bulgarian nationalists were against this decision, considering it as contrary to national interests.
together with the demand for a hierarchy-based order, strong leadership, and submission to authority. The Bulgarian National Legions is quite explicit in this respect:

Not only under the authoritarian, but also under the democratic system, society needs leaders. This is a psychological need for man. Hitler, Mussolini, Kemal Atatürk, Lenin, etc., became aware of this human specificity and turned it into a principle. Even when two people get together, one of them leads, and the other follows and obeys.32

The most important element in the foreign political identity of Bulgarian extreme right-wing nationalists is Turkey. In the rhetoric of the extreme right, one of the frequent arguments against Turkey’s EU membership is that Turkey is not a European country. The reason for this opposition is, as Stefan Solakov wrote in 2007 in the Attack daily “Turkey’s incapacity to become a tenant in the well-arranged Christian home on the Old Continent” (SALOKOV 2007).

The argument that Turkey is not a European country is based not so much on geography – despite the fact that only 10 percent of its territory is in Europe, the rest is in Asia – but rather on the perceived incompatibility between “Europe’s Christian roots” and the prevailing Muslim religion in Turkey. Dimiter Stoyanov, who was an MEP elected on the party slate of the Attack Party, declared before participants in an anti-Turkish demonstration in Brussels in October 2007 that it was unnatural for a society built upon Christian values to unite with a Muslim state, which, on top of that, is located outside the boundaries of Europe (SHKODROVA 2005). This anti-Turkish sentiment remains a core element of the extreme right-wing in Bulgaria to the present day.

Electoral Impact: Expansion, decline, and stabilization

After its initial emergence in 2005, the Attack Party significantly increased the number of its voters until 2009, at which time the GERB Party began to pull away a considerable number of Attack Party supporters.

A review of all of the national elections in which the Attack Party has run candidates – general, presidential (including run-offs), local, and EU parliamentary – reveals an initial strong mobilization (2005–2006), connected with the novelty of the party and the high expectations it had raised, followed by a reversal to the initial electoral result obtained during the MEP election in 2007. There was then a new mobilization (2007–2009), when the Attack Party opposed the tri-partite coalition of the BSP33, NMSII34, and MRF35; this stance greatly increased the number of votes

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32 In: http://bg-legioner-grigorov.narod.ru/index/0-7. This is the homepage of the Union of Bulgarian National Legions.

33 The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) was formed in 1990, grounded in the former ruling Communist Party. (Българска социалистическа партия: http://www.bsp.bg/).
for the Attack Party, but it still remained well below its electoral achievement at the 2006 presidential election. After 2009, the decision to lend its full support to the GERB government seems to have diminished the Attack Party’s status and damaged its image; this led to little support for Volen Siderov in the 2011 presidential election, and to an electoral catastrophe in the 2014 European elections.

Figure 1: Percentage of votes cast for the Attack party in general (L), in presidential (P) elections, and in European (E) elections (2005–2014)

When, in 2005, the Attack Party entered the Parliament and formed a parliamentary faction of its own, observers began to speak about an extreme right-wing wave, prompting researchers to wonder where these new voters were coming from. The number of these voters was found to have increased as a result of two trends: the crisis and the restructuring of the UDF coalition, as well as division among NMSII voters, a very dissimilar group with variable self-identification with this party. This division was also fueled by the December 2007 split within the NMSII.

However, this alone was not enough to explain the newly-established Attack Party’s attainment of almost 300,000 votes: A sizeable proportion not only of voters

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34 The National Movement Simeon II (NMSII) was formed in 2001 by the former King Simeon II, who reigned from 1943 to 1947. This movement won the election in 2001 and Simeon of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (Симеон Саксокобургготский) became prime minister in a coalition with the MRF. The name of the party is now the National Movement for Stability and Progress (Национално движение за стабилност и възход: http://www.ndsv.bg/).

35 The Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) represents the Turkish and Muslim minority in Bulgaria. (Движение за права и свободи: http://www.dps.bg/).
(8.14 percent), but also of the national electorate (4.42 percent). While there are likely a number of reasons for the rapid growth of such an anti-systemic party, the most significant of these factors in 2005 were the following:

- The disappointment of individuals from broad social strata with the economic and social results of Bulgaria’s transition to a market economy, which did not fulfill the people’s social expectations. Most Attack Party voters considered themselves to be the big losers from the transition, in part due to the much higher expectations they had cherished about its promised outcome.

- The marginalization of the Roma people and the significant rise of the crime rate within their community, which gave rise to an anti-Roma discourse and attitudes among certain parts of society.

- A crisis of confidence in the political parties at large. This was evidenced by the increasing suspicions of the public that parties were no longer citizens’ associations set up to uphold a given social and political agenda, but rather private groups that primarily pursued business ends benefitting members.

Some of these voters might have come from among the ranks of the disillusioned BSP and UDF voters. Discontent within this segment of the population had begun as early as 1991–1994, prompting these voters to refuse to vote altogether, and fueling discontent with the transition. In 1990, the distinction between these two groups of disillusioned “red” and “blue” voters was centered on the different culprits that they identified as responsible for their discontent. The Attack Party offered a third, equally acceptable culprit: The new oligarchs, who could have come either from the ranks of the red nomenclature elite or the newly-rich blue activists. Some of these voters might have originated from among the electorate of the UDF who were bitterly disappointed after 1997. What they expected was a decisive “break with communism”; they were instead disappointed with the new capitalist reality, which proved incapable of giving all members of the populace a fair chance. Some of these voters might also have been more recently disappointed people who felt disillusioned with the NMSII, which in 2005 had 1.2 million fewer voters than in 2001; these disappointed people had decided to radically shift their political loyalty after assessing their life achievements as more or less a failure. All of these people had voted and been disappointed; disappointments and even embitterment were piling up

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36 It is difficult to produce criminal statistics based on the ethnic origins of the perpetrators; cf. BEZLOV (2007).
and fueling the desire for revenge, bringing about a determination “to punish all the culprits”37 (TODOROV 2010: 420–421).

An empirical study conducted in 2007 on the Attack Party electorate by the Political Science Department of the New Bulgaria University, under the supervision of Evgenia Ivanova, indicates that this electorate encompasses three main categories of voters, which the researchers have dubbed a) **biographical communists** (who feel hatred for today’s socialists on account of “their treachery”), b) **biographical nationalists**, and c) **ordinary middle-class people** (IVANOVA 2007: 9–12).

The July 2009 general elections revealed a somewhat unexpected re-politicization of Bulgarian society. The high level of voter mobilization benefited mostly the winners from the GERB Party.38 This party succeeded in attracting protest votes against the coalition government of BSP, NMSS, and MRF, which was suspected of being corrupt. Political mobilization also manifested itself in high levels of nationalist mobilization – namely, in the almost mirror-like increase of the electorates of both the Attack Party and the MRF. The same kind of re-mobilization also occurred in the 2001 general election, which was won by MNSII. It is therefore possible for us to compare the “tsarist” party (The MNSII) and the “General’s” party (The Attack Party), with some observers regarding them as twin manifestations of modern political populism (MALINOV 2007: 81, KARASIMEONOV 2008: 9–10, SMILOV 2008: 27, KRASTEVA 2013). Clearly, post-2000 remobilization was connected with the emergence of new parties, which tended also to be seen as populist parties. Electoral mobilization in favor of the Attack Party is of the same kind, as part of the large-scale populist wave observed in the post-2000 period. This mobilization in turn provoked fears among the Turkish minority, mobilizing the electorate supporting the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), a party representing Bulgarian Turks and Muslims.

The full support lent to the new GERB government by the Attack Party in 2009, which basically lasted until 2011, triggered internal division among extreme right-wing nationalists. Some of them chose to differentiate themselves from Volen Siderov, and formed new parties. This weakened the electoral support for the Attack Party, as GERB and its leader, Boyko Borisov, had taken over many of Volen Siderov’s core issues, presenting them in a much more acceptable way to Bulgaria’s European partners at the same time. Voter withdrawal from the Attack Party became substantial after the party’s internal split following Volen Siderov’s total failure in the 2011 presidential election. However, an even more impactful split in the Attack

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38 GERB is a Bulgarian acronym for Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria. This party was formed in the 2007 Sophia local elections by the former policemen, general, and mayor of Sofia (2005–2009), Boyko Borisov, who became later prime minister (2009–2013).
The Extreme Right Wing in Bulgaria

Party occurred in 2013 with the formation of the NFSB by former members of the party. Since electoral support for these two extreme right-wing parties remained about the same, total votes for the individual parties fell dramatically.

Figure 2: Votes cast for the Attack Party and NFSB during general elections (2005–2014)

In the first elections for Members of the European Parliament in 2007, the Attack Party received 275,237 votes (14.2 percent of all ballots cast), indicating a substantial level of mobilization given the very low overall voter turn-out. This MEP electoral outcome made it possible for the Attack Party to send three MEPs to the European Parliament, who joined with a now-defunct faction of extreme right-wing supporters of national sovereignty. The first MEP elections held in the former socialist countries, in 2004, were mostly won by Euro-skeptic and populist parties (although this Euro-skepticism is of a varied nature, and we cannot make such a blanket statement without appropriate reservations with respect to each individual party).

Two years later, in the regular MEP election of 2009, the Attack Party continued to progress, although this time it won only two MEP seats. One of these MEPs – Dimitar Stoyanov, step-son of Volen Siderov – became notorious in 2006 in his

39 This is the case even though, in terms of percentage of voters, of the two parties seemed to increase, with a combined total of 9.4 percent of votes in 2009 and 11 percent in 2013.
capacity of an election observer, when he made an outrageous comment about Hungarian MEP Livia Jaroka’s Roma origin.40

The electoral decline of the Attack Party is visible in the 2014 European elections results, considered by many observers to be catastrophic for Attack. The extreme right wing was divided between the Attack Party and NFSB, and both received much fewer votes than in 2009, with no far-right MEPs from Bulgaria elected. However two MEPs were elected from the newly formed conservative populist party Bulgaria Without Censorship,41 with one of these MEPS being an important politician from IMRO-BNM. Evidently, it is too early to predict the end of the extreme right wing in Bulgaria.

Figure 3: Votes cast for the Attack Party and NFSB in European elections

The significance of the Attack Party as a new factor in the political life of Bulgaria was obvious during the 2006 presidential election. In the first leg of the election, Volen Siderov – the candidate of the Attack Party – unexpectedly won second place. He received 597,175 votes (21.5 percent of total votes) after only 44 percent of the electorate went to the polls. It should be added, too, that during this first round of the presidential election, 40,000 ballots were also cast for the presidential running mates Peter Beron and Grigor Velev, nationalist candidates who were both previously related to the Attack Party. Thus, the overall number of nationalist votes for this presidential election amounted to about 640,000, or almost 10 percent of the total

electorate; this is a remarkable result, especially bearing in mind that those who vote for nationalist presidential candidates are usually relatively easy to mobilize. During the run-off election, Volen Siderov received 649,387 votes, which indicates that he managed to mobilize the maximum threshold of the ultra-nationalist vote in Bulgaria at that time, which comprised 24 percent of the entire voter turn-out).

One has to look a bit closer to prove the continuity of the far right wing in Bulgaria in 2011: At this time, Volen Siderov withdrew his two-year long support for the GERB government and ran for president as a competitor of the governing majority. However, in the first round of the election he received only 122,466 votes (3.6 percent of votes cast), ranking fourth out of a total of 21 presidential candidates. To his result, however, we can add another 92,286 votes cast for Pavel Chernev and Stefan Solakov, who had been closely connected with the Attack Party, plus 33,236 votes cast for Krassimir Karakachano, the presidential candidate put forward by the IMRO-BNM, a right-wing nationalist party. Thus, extreme right-wing nationalists mustered the support of 220–260 thousand voters in 2011. While the decline in comparison to 2005 is obvious – with the GERB Party attracting a portion of these voters – the overall presence of extreme nationalism in this country remains significant.

Conclusion: Limited, but not inoffensive

There do exist extreme right-wing parties in modern Bulgaria, some of which have been in existence for almost twenty years, and which are quite similar to such parties in other European countries. All of these organizations and circles share common ideas about society: They are culturally conservative and attached to authoritarianism and family values. They reject liberal values, are nationalist and xenophobic, and put an emphasis on Othering. Some are more extreme than others. Most of these parties could use rightist or leftist rhetoric equally well, and are usually demagogic.

Even though these organizations and circles are quite numerous and mobilize some support, they are often in competition and are not successful in uniting together. Although they are ostensibly isolated by other political parties, this isolation is often superficial – for example, the Attack Party supported the first GERB government in the parliament for the most of its time in power (2009–2013). Additionally, during the short government of the BSP and MRF (2013–2014), the Attack Party enabled a parliamentary quorum, and therefore the functioning of the government. In the present governmental majority, the NFSB – the “twin brother” of the Attack Party – is an unofficial member of the governmental coalition led by GERB. However, none of these organizations have directly taken part in the government itself, mostly because of the expected reaction of the EU.

42 Although it has consistently been distancing itself from the Attack Party.
The main reasons for the existence of such extreme right-wing political actors, however, continue to exist in Bulgarian society. Even though today the Attack Party has seemingly disappeared from the political landscape, its successors and “close friends” have swiftly re-occupied the territory of its supporters. In electoral terms, this base occupies an important part of the national electorate, some 8–10 percent of the total number of voters in Bulgaria. These organizations draw stable support from a number of different circles – for example, among football hooligans, who are well organized in different fan clubs.43

Extreme right-wing parties in Bulgaria are not currently explicitly supported by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. However, the Attack party recently expressed a deep commitment to the Russian president Vladimir Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church. This produced a comic situation during a commemoration of the end of World War II, when the Attack Party made a statement stressing the role of the Red Army in attaining victory over the Nazis.44

Most of the extreme right-wing parties in Bulgaria have not established explicit international cooperation – as nationalists, they find it difficult to establish common ground with nationalists representing other countries. The Attack party has been represented by an MEP since 2007,45 who has tried to establish relations with some similar parties in Europe: For example, during the 2009 European elections, the former leader of the French National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen, visited Sofia to support the Attack Party’s campaign. However, these relations remained limited, with no established cooperation or even coordination with similar parties in Central-Eastern Europe. At the same time, during the most recent Lukov marches in Sofia, observers noted the presence of several extreme right-wing groups from other European countries.

In conclusion, even though the extreme right-wing sector in Bulgaria could be considered limited, it continues to be supported by different circles and remains organized through several active organizations. The Bulgarian extreme right-wing sector should not be seen as inoffensive, because, given the right set of circumstances, a significant portion of the population could accept one of these parties and leaders as a real political alternative. Therefore, vigilance continues to be needed to prevent any possible electoral success of such a political project.

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43 The leader of one of these fan clubs has, for example, the nickname of “Duce” (http://tinyurl.com/qhbrwmk).

44 Cf. the article on the homepage of Dnevnik: http://www.dnevnik.bg/bulgaria/2015/04/29/2522791_ataka_iska_parlamentut_da_osudi_otkaz_a_na_plevneliev/.

45 In the 2014 European elections neither the Attack Party nor the NFSB won any MEPs.
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