From "Yugoslavism" to (Post-) Yugoslav Nationalisms: Understanding Yugoslav Identities

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Yugoslavia was a European state with a highly diverse and complex mix of ethnicities and cultures. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was a federation of six republics and two autonomous provinces. It housed five nations (Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians) and had at least three official languages (Slovenian, Serbian-Croatian, Macedonian). Serbian-Croatian had two names, two different alphabets (Latin and Cyrillic), three different dialects (Štokavian, Kajkavian, Čakavian) and two further variants (Ekavian and Jekavian). The religious population was divided into three different confessions—Roman-Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims. While it was officially led by a single party—the League of Communists of Yugoslavia—the political system of socialist Yugoslavia was far from simple. Unlike other socialist economies, SFYR was not a straightforward command or planned economy as in the USSR and other East and Central European states but a hybrid of market socialism with elements of direct democracy in the factories (i.e., autogestion, or workers' selfmanagement). The economic and political elites were controlled by the party. There were also several "social-political organizations" with different functions and multiple layers of administration: the League of Communists, the Socialist Alliance of Working People, the League of Socialist Youth, the Alliance of Trade Unions, and others.1

More than twenty years after the violent breakup of the SFRY, seven nation-states emerged on its former territory: Slovenia, Croatia,

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, and, as of 2008, Kosovo, whose status remains uncertain as its independence is not formally recognized by numerous EU member states and global powers such as Russia, China, India, and Brazil. Serbia still regards Kosovo as its own autonomous province, although recent EU-mediated negotiations have made headway in finding a workable status quo. Such problems aside, it now seems that the political fragmentation of the (post-)Yugoslav state has come to an end.

In spite of the complex and contrary ways in which the problem of identity can be analyzed in former Yugoslavia, this chapter will briefly focus upon the most relevant concepts and forms of identification, as they have (re)appeared in the course of Yugoslav history. Instead of thoroughly describing assumed "collective identities" of today's post-Yugoslav area, this text provides a short sketch of their historical development, focusing on different nationalisms (i.e., concepts of *nation* as ethnic community *and* nation-state) and, where possible, on the ways in which they were accepted or contested by the population over time.

The "Yugoslav Idea" in the "Age of Nationalisms": Yugoslavism versus Particular Nationalisms during the Nineteenth Century

Similar to other parts of Europe, the nineteenth century in Southeastern Europe was also marked by processes of socioeconomic modernization and nation-building. However, there were also important differences from other parts of Europe. Until the end of the century, this area was divided between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. Although different regions obtained certain forms of political autonomy within their respective imperial contexts, it was only after the Berlin Congress in 1878 that new national states were created in the region.² In general, the ideas of national unity were first articulated among the intellectual and political elites, invariably educated in Western European universities. Eventually these cultural and political ideas and sentiments about the nation spread throughout Southeastern Europe.

The first articulation of a national idea among the Southern Slavs was "Illyrianism," as proposed in the 1830s by the Croat Ljudevit Gaj. Gaj and his followers constructed a cultural, linguistic, and ethnic unity of all Southern Slavs (the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and even Bulgarians) to argue that the "Illyrians" lived dispersed under different imperial rule. In spite of their relatively circumscribed political relevance, Gaj and the early Yugoslavists agreed with the Serbian nationalist Vuk Stefanović Karadžić about the importance and significance of a common language

of the Southern Slavs.³ Parallel to the development of Yugoslavism among intellectuals in the Habsburg Monarchy—a broad acceptance of national ideas by large parts of the population was still to come— Serbian nationalism was taking shape, with Serbia becoming the first national state of Southern Slavs and, after 1878, becoming internationally recognized as a sovereign state. Interestingly, intellectual elites in both Serbia and Balkan regions of the empire developed alternative forms of Yugoslavism. While in Serbia it was understood as a concept that would unite all Serbs in one state, the ideas of Yugoslavism as developed in the second half of the nineteenth century in the Habsburg Monarchy included different political ambitions. Slovene intellectuals envisaged the national liberation of Southern Slavs remaining within the monarchy. They drew on the idea of Austro-Slavism and imagined that it would contribute to reforming the dualist order of Austria-Hungary, through the creation of a third (Slavic) part of the empire. Some other "Yugoslavs" thought the liberation of Southern Slavs should be looked for only in the context of close cooperation with the Serbian state. Others, including one of the most prominent Yugoslavists, the Catholic bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Croatia, were not directly questioning the imperial order. Instead, they supported the education and cultural interaction among Southern Slav intellectuals and focused on the common culture of the Southern Slav; they tried to establish "national" institutions, the most important of which was the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, founded in 1866.5

But Yugoslavism was not the only mode of national identity articulated among the Southern Slavs of the Habsburg Monarchy. In addition to Serbian nationalism, which was strongly influenced, but not entirely directed or determined by, the creation of the Serbian state, Slovenian and Croat nationalism entered the "competition of national ideas." The major difference between Yugoslavism and different particular nationalisms was the relative popularity of the former. Yugoslavism and the various particularist forms of nationalism were both initially represented by small groups of intellectuals (clergy, officials, artists, and students), wealthier merchants, and some members of the lower nobility,6 and the particularist concepts of nation gradually were taken up by members of other social strata, including workers and peasants. Nevertheless, the majority of the population, both under Habsburg and Ottoman rule, as well of the Serbian state, consisted of peasants, who still had to be persuaded that they should identify themselves as Serbs, Croats, or Slovenes. This proved difficult, particularly for the peasantry in the

"border regions." For centuries the Ottomans had deployed the millet system, which was based on religious belonging rather than ethnicity. The process "from peasant to Serb/Bulgarian/Macedonian" was to go on until the end of World War II.7 Generally, religions and confessional self-understandings of the population played quite an important role in the course of the nation-building process, although the confessional, ethnic, and religious matchups so familiar today—Serbs as Orthodox Christians, Croats and Slovenes as Catholics—were all but clear in this period. Invariably intellectuals, especially particularist nationalists, used the category of religion to define the Other: thus, for some Croatian nationalists, the Serbs represented only Croats of Christian Orthodox belief, while the Croats were considered to be "Catholic Serbs" by some Serb intellectuals. Both, however, considered the Muslims in Bosnia to be "Serbs" or "Croats" respectively, who during the Ottoman past converted to Islam. This was the case throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, but also, although to a lesser extent, in the first Yugoslav state, which was created on the ruins of the imperial order in Southeastern Europe after World War I.

State-Building and the Yugoslav "Identities" until the End of World War II (1918–1945)

The first Yugoslav state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, was proclaimed on December 1, 1918. In keeping with their nationalist sentiments and beliefs, its founders held that the kingdom represented a nation-state of one Southern Slavic nation speaking one language. However, both the name of the nation and the name of the language were disputed almost throughout the entire period of its existence. It was finally renamed as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. The Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were regarded as "tribes" of one and the same "three-named people" (troimeni narod). However, this hardly provided a definition that suited the country's population. Apart from the thorny question of whether Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes "really" constituted one nation, contested in different ways, the Bosnian Muslim population, Macedonians, and a variety of other non-Slavic nationalities (Germans, Hungarians, Albanians, Jews, Roma, etc.) were not mentioned, nor could they be encompassed under this notion of an integral Yugoslavism.8

One of the major tasks of the new state was to try to integrate all of these different forms of identity; the task eventually proved all but impossible. Due to all the differences in terms of economic and social structures, legal systems, but also forms of loyalty in these areas, the first Yugoslav state practically never managed to integrate. As we have already indicated, these differences had less to do with retroactive signifiers of the nation (Serb, Croat, Slovene, etc.) than with the very different histories of imperial incorporation and emancipation. While Serbia and Montenegro had already gained political autonomy within the Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the nineteenth century and could build up their own modern state institutions, Bosnia, which had also been under Ottoman rule for centuries, came under Austrian administration after 1878, while what would later become Macedonia and Kosovo were conquered—or "freed from Ottoman rule"—by the Serb and Montenegrin military in the course of the Balkan wars of 1912–1913.

In addition to the difficulties of uniting under one rule people who during World War I were fighting on opposite sides, different political and ideological concepts exacerbated conflicts and threw another problem into relief. Apart from the newly created Communist Party, which was regarded as a severe threat and which, after leading massive strikes and attacks on high officials, was banned in 1921, there were also serious political conflicts between different political parties over differences between unitary and federalist positions, which had little to do with national(ist) identifications. However, it was the case that large parts of the political and military elite in the first Yugoslavia were Serbs, who, while representing the largest ethnic group, were nevertheless only a relative majority of the population. The perceived or factual dominance of Serbs was not the only obstacle for Yugoslav state nationalism. Different collective self-identifications were (re)produced among other parts of the population and their elites. While some of the Montenegrins were fluctuating between belonging to the Serbs and being a nation on their own, elites of other groups (Macedonians, Bosnian Muslims) were also developing their own national ideas in this period. Whether the kingdom may have held together is a source of dispute, but the breakout of World War II would ultimately render the question irrelevant.

The Yugoslav ruling elite, having decided to support Nazi Germany in the beginning of 1941, sealed their own fate, as massive protests of citizens against the regime took place, forcing it to reject the coalition, thus providing a pretext for Hitler to attack Yugoslavia on April 6 of that year. Due to the economic and political crisis in Yugoslavia, the social and political conflicts among different groups, and the military weakness of the state, within weeks Yugoslavia was occupied and

divided among German, Italian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian military forces. Additionally, a new state, the so-called Independent State of Croatia, was formed only days after the first attack on Yugoslavia by what until then had been a rather marginal group of Croatian fascists—the *Ustaša*. In addition to setting up extermination camps and the mass slaughter of Yugoslav Jews, they turned upon Serbs, Roma, communists, and others. The war provided the context for competitive nationalists to achieve their own nationalist projects—thus the anti-German Serbian Četniks, who fought for a Greater Serbia. In contrast to the exclusivist nationalist project during the war, the partisan movement managed, upon its platform of antifascist struggle for national and social liberation, to integrate Serbs as well as Croats, Slovenians as well as Bosnian Muslims, workers as well as peasants, and men as well as women, and it grew constantly until the end of the war.

"Brotherhood and Unity": Yugoslavia under (Self-Management) Socialism

The fact that socialist Yugoslavia, proclaimed already during the war in 1943, was born out of the antifascist struggle of "all Yugoslav peoples" became over time one of the main pillars of legitimization of the new state, subsumed under the motto of "brotherhood and unity." For decades, however, the communist political elite faced different problems while trying to solve the "national question." 10 The Yugoslav federal state was based on the premise of equality among the different nations. However, this meant abandoning the very premise of an integrationist Yugoslavia, as it was built out of the formal distinction between peoples (narodi), or titular nations of each republic, and nationalities (narodnosti), or groups, which belonged to a nontitular Yugoslav nation. 11 One of the effects of this solution was the creation of the first Macedonian state, as well as the consolidation of the Bosnian Muslims as a nation in the 1960s. What apparently seemed a good compromise in dealing with the different national interests in Yugoslavia set the legal or formal basis for the later dissolution of the state. The increasing federalization of the country strengthened the republics (and autonomous provinces) and to a certain degree influenced the population's exclusive orientation to its "own" republic. Existing social and economic regional disparities grew again, especially after the adoption of the new Yugoslav constitution of 1974, and this created further grievances.

In spite of all these regional differences, the new Yugoslav state achieved an unprecedented level of modernization of the country, strengthening the economy, which until the 1960s experienced high and internationally competitive growth rates; creating new infrastructure; building up a modern health care system; implementing new education policies, granting the majority of the population access to primary, secondary, and even higher education; and providing a set of legal means that strengthened women's rights (including the right to abortion).

Besides antifascism, the second, no less important basis of legitimization of the Yugoslav state was its ideologically framed promise of social justice. After the political split with the Soviet Union in 1948, Yugoslavia was more or less forced to develop its own road to socialism. Departing from Marxist principles but promising to better implement them, Yugoslav chief ideologues such as Edvard Kardelj created, and until the end of the 1970s continued to develop, the concept of socialist self-management. It included the institutionalized participation of workers in decision-making processes as well as the new form of "social property." Following the idea of free association of workers, themselves owning the means of production, Yugoslav society, in keeping with Marxist doctrine, was expected eventually to overcome the Yugoslav state. In theory the leading role of the Communist Party was merely a provisional one. Is

The relative freedoms and living standards, which throughout the 1960s and 1970s were significantly higher than in other socialist states of Eastern Europe, provided the basis for a new set of identities for Yugoslavia in the interwar period. Although the category "Yugoslav" was first included in official population censuses in 1961, reserved for "nationally non-committed persons," the number of declared Yugoslavs grew, according to the census from 1971, since the end of the 1960s from 1.3 to 5.4 percent (1981) of the entire Yugoslav population. In some of the ethnically "mixed" republics or regions like Bosnia-Herzegovina or Vojvodina, and especially among younger people, the numbers were even higher. The majority of the population, however, kept declaring themselves in terms of particular ethnic categories.

"Reinventing Tradition" and the Breakup of Yugoslavia

After the death of the Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito, social and political developments within Yugoslavia were quite ambiguous. The symbolic vanishing of the high moral authority of Tito, the uncertainty in terms of expectations about the country's future, and the apparent unraveling of the monopoly of power set off, at least in some parts of the country and within certain segments of society, the articulation

of liberal ideas, including claims for more democracy, human rights, freedom of speech, etc. However, while various smaller groups in major cities, inspired by and closely cooperating with Western European initiatives, engaged with respect to peace, antinuclear, ecological, feminist, or gay and lesbian issues, nationalist voices from different republics were getting louder as well. This was most prominent among intellectuals in Serbia, who by the mid-1980s were, however, hardly criticized and sanctioned by the communist political elite. One of the main arguments was the inferior political and economic position of Serbia and the Serbs in Yugoslavia. While it was true that Serbia was fragmented into two autonomous provinces and thus confronted with rather administrative problems, claims about the victimization of the Serbs living in other republics and especially in the southern province of Kosovo were exaggerated. Nevertheless, the claim of a threat proved a powerful tool for Serbian nationalism during the 1990s.

However, nationalism in Serbia gained a solid platform and set the stage for the destruction of Yugoslavia only after the League of Communists of Serbia (led by Slobodan Milošević) took up the themes of "Serbs as victims" and "Serbia, consisting of three parts, should again become united." With the staging of the six hundredth anniversary of the Kosovo polje battle in 1989, this strategy of national reinvention was intensified as Milošević delivered a speech not only calling for the unity of the Serbs (and Yugoslavia) but also promising armed conflict if this unity were to be contested. However, during the 1990s turning to the past in order to legitimize present-day politics characterized not only the Milošević regime, but also all major oppositional parties in Serbia, as well as regimes in all other post-Yugoslav states. A very important role in the consolidation of nationalism was that of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Serbia, which engaged as the keeper of old Serbian values and, as a result of the gradual destruction or weakening of state institutions, it eventually became one of the strongest moral authorities of the Serbs. The increased public appearance of Church representatives in the media, the fact that most political parties sought to win it over as an ally, the inclusion of the Faculty of (Orthodox) Theology at (statefunded and secular) Belgrade University, and, even after the regime change in 2000, the introduction of religious education in primary schools (although as optional subjects), are only some manifestations of the growing influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Serbia. Parallel to this, an increased religiosity could be observed, as well as a repatriarchalization of society. According to the Serbian Orthodox

Church, the ideal order of society should follow the "divine triad"—God, ruler, paterfamilias—while women should obey their husbands. At the same time, a "good Serb" was—and for many nationalists still is—a patriot, religious, respectful of traditions and traditional values, and not least a "real man"—brave and strong.

But what was happening in Serbia with religion was not fundamentally different from what was going on in "Croatia" and among other ethnic categories during the 1990s, as each group symbolically reinvented itself and its past. Symbolic details became the central focus in each group's social imagination. What were previously minor matters took on a matter of national urgency and huge existential importance as each nation defined itself against the Other. Thus, for example, Serbian Orthodoxy was defined as being in opposition to the Catholicism of the Croats; and the Cyrillic alphabet, used by Serbs, in opposition to the Latin alphabet used by Croats. Although these differences were raised to the level of existential questions by nationalist elites during the 1990s, they were not the cause but a consequence of the destruction of Yugoslavia. Indeed, the sequence of cause and effect is easily lost in the mayhem and violence of the breakup of the Yugoslav state. What started as a conflict between reformist and conservative forces within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia¹⁶ was by no means a result of some sort of ancient hatred among the Yugoslav peoples (Croats, Serbs, etc.) but of the intentional use of nationalist violence by conservative parts of the communist elite—most importantly Slobodan Milošević in Serbia—aiming to demobilize their reformist political opponents.¹⁷ Nationalism could gain broad acceptance by the population only due to massive violence and a state of emergency—during the wars.

Parallel to the elites' project of reinvention of nationalism, the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in Yugoslavia was marked by a massive, all-encompassing crisis (economic, political, institutional, etc.), which at the same was the starting point for the process of political and economic transformation, as the majority of the political elite decided to abandon the Yugoslav model of self-management socialism. The introduction of the market economy and political pluralism not only failed to solve the economic crisis; as in most other Eastern European states, it led to increasing poverty, unemployment, corruption, etc. These developments further caused widespread feelings of insecurity among the population, which together with political propaganda in the media made the nationalist (demobilization) strategy of the political elite successful. What, however, was a conflagration of

minor crises throughout the rest of Eastern Europe was a dramatic full-scale catastrophe in Yugoslavia, as a series of wars broke out in Croatia (1991–1995), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992–1995), and Kosovo, or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1998–1999).

However, it takes more than an economic and political crisis to make people become nationalists overnight. The questions of how and why some parts of the population were willing to embrace the new nationalist frames and even most drastic behaviors, as experienced during the wars, as well as how and why they accepted becoming divided along national lines, are certainly very important and belong to most relevant topics of further empirical research. Drawing on some of the research on the post-Yugoslav wars, some possible explanations for the questions addressed above are proposed here.¹⁸

One of the early approaches, often used to explain so-called ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia, refers to the ethnic self-understandings of Yugoslavia's population at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, assuming that ethnic differences in Yugoslavia represented the ultimate condition for the outbreak of war. In fact, most sociological studies (for example, on "ethnic distance") showed that while locally (in the respective city or republic) interethnic relations were recognized as good or even very good throughout Yugoslavia, on a general level they were perceived as bad.¹⁹ The different polls' results or interpretations claiming that ethnic self-understandings of the population included conflicts as well as peaceful coexistence don't really help in answering the question. The same is true for assumptions about the "loss of orientation" of Yugoslav society due to the "ideological vacuum" created after the demise of the Marxist paradigm and the political crisis in this period, ²⁰ or the approaches tracing ethnic conflicts back to something that could be called "wealth egoism" of the economically stronger republics such as Slovenia or Croatia, implying that regional economic disparities influenced strong self-identification with the respective "national question" (even though the term "exploitation" was often used as an argument by nationalists).21

One argument, which should not be underestimated, is the fear among certain parts of the population that was generated by nationalists and, most importantly, reproduced by the (regime-controlled) media. It is the case that for years, certain stock terms and metaphors such as "fate," "soul," "martyrs," "exodus," and "genocide" were used as part of a self-serving victimization strategy first in Serbia, but later also in other republics. Such a linguistic stock contributed to a

discursive environment in which the political changes taking place in 1990 could be framed as an "existential threat." The victory of Franjo Tudman's nationalist Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ), which pursued Croatia's independence, was greeted with fear by many of the five hundred and eighty thousand Serbs living in Croatia. The fears ranged from future persecution as members of an ethnic minority to annihilation with Croatia's return of the Ustaša state. Tuđman's own nationalism and the provocative symbolism his party deployed, which conjured up memories of the *Ustaša*, did not alleviate their fears. The atmosphere of suspicion and fear hindered the discussion and solution of political—and in nationalist terms, cultural—differences, framing them as historically determined and raising them to the level of basic moral questions.²² With the beginning of the wars, the media propaganda was further increased, showing images of killed people, refugees, destroyed cities, etc. Referring to Serbia in this period, Gagnon notes, "The broadcasts were psychologically powerful. Anyone who watched these scenes, hearing a discourse of genocide night after night over a period of years, could easily become convinced that at a minimum the new nationalist government of Croatia was responsible for these horrible atrocities."23

The use of such images points to probably the most important factor for understanding the acceptance of nationalism by many people in Yugoslavia: the violence experienced during the wars. In Bosnia-Herzegovina alone, between 1992 and 1995 a total of one hundred thousand people were killed;²⁴ only within the first three months of war, about 2.2 million people were expelled. 25 One major feature of the post-Yugoslav wars was "ethnic cleansing," a term covering intimidation, discrimination, detention, deportation, torture, and even genocide.²⁶ The most prominent mass murder occurred in the city of Srebrenica in the summer of 1995, where around eight thousand people were systematically killed.²⁷ In the course of wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, thousands of men (mostly civilians), women, and children were detained under inhumane conditions in almost four hundred camps, prisons, abandoned schools, warehouses, etc., throughout the region, where they were torture, executed (often en masse), or raped.²⁸ During the operation Oluja ("Storm") led by Croatia's troops in what used to be called Republika Srpska Krajina in the summer of 1995, some one hundred fifty to two hundred thousand people were expelled from Croatia.²⁹ During the NATO bombings in Serbia, some eight hundred thousand refugees left Kosovo. 30 A total of four million people in former

Yugoslavia are estimated to have been displaced in the course of the 1990s.³¹ Between 1991 and 1993, in addition to the different national armies, some eighty-three paramilitary troops took part in the war in Bosnia.³² At the same time, there were at least as many draft evaders in all parts of Yugoslavia. By some estimates, over two hundred thousand fled to Western Europe, North America, or Australia. In Belgrade alone, 85 to 90 percent of drafted young men refused to serve.³³

Having in mind the extent of violence of the post-Yugoslav wars, it seems even harder to understand, as the German historian Holm Sundhaussen puts it,

[h]ow it could happen that "normal," peacefully acting people behaved in such "inhumane" ways? How was it possible that persons, who, irrespective of their ethnicity and religion, not only lived peacefully side by side for years, but who had made friends, married each other and lived as good neighbors, within such a short period of time, became sworn enemies and fought each other with incomprehensible brutality? Was peaceful coexistence possible only due to the repression of the communist system? Was coexistence only possible within urban milieus or was it altogether an illusion? [...] Was it thus a specific praxis of violence of the "Balkans," which exploded again in the 1990s after a phase of control by the socialist regime?³⁴

Discounting attempts to explain the war by reference to rural economic resentment and an "Illyrian social paradigm" or the patrilinear "Balkanic patriarchate" and so forth, Sundhaussen argues,

Violence does not simply break out; it does not "happen." [...] Violence is generated. There are good reasons why paramilitary militias and gangs of warlords as well as special units of the police play a prominent role in all accounts of the wars in the 1990s. It was not the stubborn, backward peasants, who attacked the urban population, but those initially small groups, which came from the cities who staged a kind of violence that—once initiated—developed its own dynamic. It was not about spontaneous reactions of marginalized groups, rather it was calculated violence organized by leaders.³⁵

This "dynamic of violence" is perhaps the key for understanding how nationalism worked in Yugoslavia. Taking into account that most people during the wars acted as bystanders, and differentiating between different types of perpetrators, ³⁶ Sundhaussen generally argues,

The procedure is relatively simple. After the first acts of violence, "normal" citizens are shocked and expect explanations. The "explanations"

offered by nationalists are meant to polarize and they put the normal citizens under pressure. Even those people who mistrust the "explanations" of their own nationalists see themselves excluded by the nationalists of the other side. A Serb represents per se a Četnik, every Croat is an *Ustaša*, every Muslim an Islamist. Everyone protesting against the equation gets even more under pressure by both sides. One is considered a (potential) traitor by one's own people, and lacking in credibility by the other side. Finally, one has to decide for one of the sides. *Tertium non datur*. This process leads eventually to the assumed ethno-national "solidarity" (often reluctantly), the exclusion of the other, aimed at by the [nationalist] agents [of violence]. Those who conclude that it is all about an eruption of ancient ethnic hatred fall into the trap of the nationalists.³⁷

Besides the casualties and the displaced and traumatized people, one of the main outcomes of the systematic violence of the Yugoslav wars was the installation of the "national question" as the central political one, and of nationalism as the main frame of interpretation for all political issues. Thus, as we have seen, while in the first half of the 1980s nationalism in Yugoslavia was the reserve of certain sections of the intellectual elite, during the 1990s it gained its dominant political role and wide acceptance by the Yugoslav population, in terms of a discursive normalization, but only through the violent "creation of facts"—the wars. 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 Srpska in today's Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The breakup of Yugoslavia led the newly created states to establish new social and political mythologies based on old forms of identity—language, ethnic/"national origin," "religion/confession," and the alleged common past.

With the exception of Slovenia, which was largely homogenous in terms of ethno-national identification even before the wars and which had a relatively successful political and economic transformation,³⁸ all other post-Yugoslav states were confronted with the "problem" of ethnic minorities. Slovenia, the first post-Yugoslav state to become a member of the EU in 2004,³⁹ stopped even collecting data on ethnicity or nationality in 2011. A census in 2002 had revealed that while in 1991 88.3 percent of the population declared themselves to be Slovenian, in 2002 the number doing so had fallen to 83 percent The largest "ethnic" minority included those people who ticked the "no answer" (2.47 percent) and "unknown" (6.43 percent) categories.⁴⁰ Similarly, on

questions of religion, nonbelievers (4.4 percent) and the respondents from the categories "no answer" (4.2 percent) and "unknown" (14.6 percent) represented the largest "minority"; the majority of the population declared themselves Catholics (57.8 percent), which showed a significant drop from 71.6 percent in 1991.⁴¹

In Croatia, in the course of the last weeks of the war, thousands of Serbs living in the region of Krajina were expelled. However, political rights have been extended to the remaining Serb minority. According to the census of 2011, out of the 4.3 million inhabitants, 90.4 percent declared themselves Croats, 4.35 percent Serbs, 0.73 percent Bosniaks, and 0.63 percent "regionals." Those who refused any declaration made up 0.62 percent. Most of them (46 percent) did not declare themselves as being religious, and 26 percent identified themselves as atheists. The majority of the population, however, declared themselves as belonging to some religion: over 86 percent said they were Roman Catholic, 4.4 percent (most of whom were Serbs) said they were Orthodox Christian, and 1.47 percent identified themselves as Muslim—44.4 percent of whom declared themselves Bosniaks, over 15 percent Albanians, 8 percent Roma, and over 10 percent equated their religion with their nationality. He is a series of the serie

Although the attempt to reshape the "Bosnian mosaic" was only partially successful, the results are still disastrous. The war created a more or less segregated society made up of three ethnically divided major groups—the Bosniaks⁴³ (Bosnian Muslims), the Croats (both living predominantly in the part called Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina), and the Serbs (living predominantly in the part called *Republika Srpska*).⁴⁴ Since the question of ethnicity is still regarded as highly sensitive, the latest statistical data are from the 1991 census (i.e., before the war), according to which Bosnia-Herzegovina's population⁴⁵ included Muslims⁴⁶ (43.5 percent), Croats (17.4 percent), Serbs (31.2 percent) and Yugoslavs (5.6 percent).

The Republic of Macedonia (whose state name is not recognized by Greece, whose language is not recognized by Bulgarian nationalists, and whose Church is not recognized by parts of the Serbian Orthodox Church) also has a large Albanian-speaking minority.⁴⁷ In 2001 Albanian nationalism caused a political crisis that brought the country to the brink of war, but the situation was neutralized due to a new legal framework ensuring equal rights for both Albanian- and Macedonian-speaking citizens of Macedonia. The country is currently going through an enhanced nationalist process of reinventing traditions, fostered by

the conservative nationalist government. The most prominent manifestation of the ruling elite's attempt to create the new Macedonian identity is the project of reshaping the capital city of Skopje, by building, at high cost, a whole range of different monuments in the city center to evoke the "glorious Macedonian past." ⁴⁸

One of the youngest post-Yugoslav states is Montenegro, where in 2006 a tight majority of the population, apparently preferring the Montenegrin identity over the Serbian one, finally succeeded in proclaiming an independent state. ⁴⁹ The transformation of the political positions in the course of only two decades is indeed fascinating: while during the 1990s Montenegro's political elites were framing the relationship of their republic to Serbia as "two eyes in one head," the present situation shows a new state calling itself multicultural, thus implying an inclusive approach, especially toward the country's Albanian-speaking minority. ⁵⁰

Perhaps the most complex case of the relationship between the "identity policies" of the political elites and their results is Serbia. Its southern autonomous province, Kosovo, declared its independence in 2008. Its northern autonomous province, the Vojvodina, is populated by a Serbian two-thirds majority, but also by over twenty other ethnic groups, the largest being the Hungarians, Croats, Roma, Slovaks, and Ruthenians. But even among the nominal Serb majority in Central Serbia (or, as it is sometimes called, "Serbia proper"), various forms of self-identification have emerged since the breakup of Yugoslavia. Some of Serbia's intellectuals have even argued that the country was and still is deeply divided between "two Serbias": the one nationalist, traditionalist, violent, primitive, etc., and the "other Serbia" (*druga Srbija*) being democratic, pro-European, civilized, cultivated, openminded, etc. In fact, like in all other post-Yugoslav states, this "other" society does not exist.

The political aim of nationalists (both within the regime and in the opposition) to create one Serbian collective identity during the 1990s required territorial expansion. Serbia's constitution still defines Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia, while the Republic of Kosova/Kosovo is progressively being internationally recognized. Paradoxically, the expansionist aspirations of Serbian nationalism have led to a diminution of Serbian state territory.

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 economic reforms—for example, the rapid privatization of state-owned companies, which led to serious social problems, 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), state-sponsored nationalism has been 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 farther away than ever.⁵² Because of this shift within the political and socioeconomic context, which is characterized by the new neoliberal mainstream, as well as the process of the normalization of nationalism, the post-Yugoslav "identities" also face changes: the less the political elites polarize along ethnic lines, the less important national self-identification becomes. The pro-European policies of most governments in the post-Yugoslav area during the last decade, which hardly offer any form of identification models similar to nationalism, combined with the consciousness with regard to personal economic decay, make some parts of the population relativize the importance of their "national identity."53 At the same time, new forms of identity and self-representation that were more or less (in)visible during the 1990s regain actual relevance. This is the case with different regional identities—like in Istria (Croatia) or Vojvodina (Serbia)—but also with the ongoing process of rediscovering "Furopeanness." While both were in some form present during the entire history of Yugoslavia, they seemingly reappear in situations of historical, radical change. During the rise of ethno-nationalism in the 1990s, both European and regionalist identities (Istrian, Vojvodinian, etc.) typified what is essentially the antinationalist position of a mostly urban population in the post-Yugoslav area.

Post-Yugoslav "Identities": An Outlook

After the violent breakup of the former Yugoslav state, nationalism and ethnicity still seem to be the dominant forms of identity by political elites,

institutions, and the broader population. The emergence of a "European" or a "regional" identity does not necessarily completely replace ethnic or national identities,⁵⁴ although a more general Yugoslav identity has also reappeared. Until 2002 some censuses in former Yugoslav republics still used the category of "Yugoslavs," although only a tiny minority identified themselves as such. Nevertheless, in the last decade a growing number of people throughout the region have started much more actively living what some might call "Yugo-nostalgia." This nostalgia can be seen in the revival of old socialist symbols, a newfound enthusiasm for Josip Broz Tito, private renovation of different monuments, reappropriation of old places of remembrance, collecting and exchanging souvenirs from everyday life in Yugoslavia, simply traveling throughout the area, and even the rewriting of Yugoslav history by younger scholars.⁵⁵ The establishing of "Cyber Yugoslavia" on the Internet⁵⁶ and the creation of a "fourth Yugoslavia" on a private ranch close to the city of Subotica in the north of Vojvodina are other such initiatives that show that the phenomenon of "Yugo-nostalgia" is more than simple "remembering good old times." Arguing that this turning to the past is much more a way to criticize the present, some scholars say that "Yugo-nostalgia" might even have a strong emancipative potential and could well influence social and political changes.⁵⁷ Whether and how these might take place remains to be seen; a recreation and further reinforcement of the post-Yugoslav area as a common "cultural space" or "space of communication" seems probable, not least because of the common market.58

One form of post-Yugoslav identity can already be traced among the hundreds of thousands of mostly well-educated people who have left Yugoslavia since the 1990s. New post-Yugoslav networks or communities have formed, sharing a transnational cultural intimacy⁵⁹ similar to the use of the former Serbian-Croatian language. Instead of applying the terms Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Montenegrin, or "BCS," as used in international institutions for basically the same language, many speakers simply call it *naš jezik* or *naški* ("our language").

In this chapter I have argued that in the former Yugoslavia, national identities have been constructed primarily by elites trying to shape a political and economic future, rather than any objective national identities existing as such. Even though since the end of World War II new national identifications (i.e., new ethnicities) as well as different political affiliations have been constructed, and as a consequence of the wars during the 1990s, nationalism was more or less discursively normalized, some traces of Yugoslav identity still remain.

Notes

- 1. For the political system of socialist Yugoslavia see, for example, Jim Seroka and Radoš Smiljković, *Political Organizations in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986).
- 2. For an excellent account on the history of nineteenth-century Serbia see Holm Sundhaussen, *Geschichte Serbiens*, 19–21. *Jahrhundert* (Wien: Böhlau, 2007).
- 3. Miodrag Popović, Gaj Ljudevit, i Vuk Karadžić in *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 3 (1), 1973, 93–110.
- 4. On various aspects of the idea of Yugoslavism, see more in Dejan Djokić, ed., *YugoslavismŪ Histories of a Failed Idea*, 1918–1992. (London: Hurst, 2003) and Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).
- 5. On Strossmayer's activities, see Mirjana Gross, "Croatian National-Integrational Ideologies from the End of Illyrism to the Creation of Yugoslavia," *Austrian History Yearbook* 15, 1979, 11.
- 6. According to the 1857 Austrian census, this group (including also people of German, Magyar, and Jewish ethnicity) made up less than 2 percent of the population of Croatia. See Dennison I. Rusinow, "The Yugoslav Idea before Yugoslavia," Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992.
- 7. See for example Hannes Grandits, Nathalie Clayer, and Robert Pichler, eds., "Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans" in *The Great Powers: The Ottoman Empire and Nation-Building*, (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011).
- 8. See for example Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias. State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2004,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
- 9. See Dejan Djokić, Elusive Compromise. A History of Interwar Yugoslavia, (London: Hurst & Company, 2007).
- 10. However, for the leftist movement of the nineteenth century, the "national question" was already a major problem that was revealing great contradictions within it. While some of the socialists considered "nationality" a bourgeois category, completely rejecting it, others claimed that national liberation was a condition for social emancipation of the people. See Tomić, Đorđe, and Krunoslav Stojaković, "Aus der Geschichte der jugoslawischen Linken. Von den Anfängen im 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Ausbruch des Zweiten Weltkrieges Desideratsskizze(n)" in *Südosteuropäische Hefte 1* (1), 2012, 84–113.
- 11. For a recent account on the history of socialist Yugoslavia see Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien und seine Nachfolgerstaaten 1943–2011: Eine ungewöhnliche Geschichte des Gewöhnlichen* (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, 2012).
- 12. See for example Saul Estrin, Self-Management: Economic Theory and Yugoslav Practice, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) and Ellen Turkish Comisso, Workers' Control under Plan and Market: Implications of Yugoslav Self-Management (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).
- 13. The idea of "overcoming of the state" was ironically used by Dejan Jović to frame the breakup of socialist Yugoslavia. See Dejan Jović, *Yugoslavia:* A State that Withered Away (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009).
- See Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, "Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia," American Sociological Review, 59 (1), 1994, 83–97.

- 15. See Jasna Dragović-Soso, Saviours of the Nation: Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).
- 16. Jović.
- 17. Valere P. Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).
- 18. On the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina see, for example, Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić, eds., *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991–1995*, (London/Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001) and Sabrina Ramet, Konrad Clewing, and Reneo Lukic, eds., *Croatia Since Independence: War, Politics, Society, Foreign Relations* (München: Oldenbourg (2008).
- 19. Gagnon, 34-46.
- 20. Marie-Janine Calic, Geschichte Jugoslawiens im 20. Jahrhundert (München: Beck, 2010), 295.
- 21. See, for example, Ljubomir Madžar, "Who Exploited Whom?" in Nebojša Popov, ed., The Road to War in Serbia: Trauma and Catharsis, (Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, 2000), 160–188. On the regional economic disparities in Yugoslavia, see Dijana Pleština, Regional Development in Communist Yugoslavia: Success, Failure, and Consequences (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).
- 22. Calic, 307.
- 23. Gagnon, 2.
- 24. Calic, 325. For figures of casualties of all post-Yugoslav wars, see also Ewa Tabeau, ed., Conflict in Numbers: Casualties of the 1990s Wars in the Former Yugoslavia (1991–1999): Major Reports by Demographic Experts of the Prosecution in the Trials before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2009).
- 25. Calic, 314.
- 26. On the term, see more in Sundhaussen (2007), 426.
- 27. See Isabelle Delpla, Xavier Bougarel, and Jean-Louis Fournel, eds., *Investigating Srebrenica: Institutions, Facts, Responsibilities* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).
- 28. Calic, 315.
- 29. Ibid., 324.
- 30. Ibid., 326.
- 31. Ibid., 327.
- 32. There were fifty-three Serbian troops with a total of twenty to forty thousand fighters, thirteen Croatian troops with twelve to twenty thousand fighters, and fourteen Bosniac troops with four to six thousand fighters. See Sundhaussen (2007), 425.
- 33. Gagnon, 2.
- 34. Sundhaussen (2007), 440, my translation.
- 35. Ibid., 441.
- 36. Ibid., 443-450.
- 37. Ibid., 442. See also Hannes Grandits and Carolin Leutloff, "Discourses, Actors, Violence: The Organisation of War-Escalation in the Krajina Region of Croatia 1990–91," in Jan Koehler and Christoph Zürcher, eds., *Potentials of Disorder: New Approaches to Conflict Analysis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 23–45.

- 38. For example, in 2012 the GDP per capita in Slovenia was 17,620 EUR or 24,528 USD; in Croatia in 2012 it was 10,203 EUR or 14,198 USD; in Serbia 3,955 EUR or 5,085 USD; in Bosnia-Herzegovina (in 2010) 3,340 EUR or 4,331 USD; in Montenegro (in 2011) 5,200 EUR or 6,737 USD; in Macedonia (in 2011) 3,435 EUR or 4,450 USD.
- However, the country today faces major political and economic problems, which resulted in recent massive protests as well as to the resignation of Prime Minister Janez Jansa in March 2013.
- 40. The other ethnic groups were as follows: Bosniaks (1.1 percent); Muslims (1.4 percent in 1991, 0.53 percent in 2002); Croats (2.7 percent in 1991, 1.8 percent in 2002); Serbs (2.48 percent in 1991, 1.98 percent in 2002); and Yugoslavs (0.63percent in 1991, 0.03 percent in 2002). See "Statistični urad Republike Slovenije (2002): Popis prebivalstva, gospodinjstev in stanovanj 2002. Prebivalstvo po narodni pripadnosti, Slovenija, popisi 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 in 2002," http://www.stat.si/popis2002/si/rezultati/rezultati_red. asp?ter=SLO&st=7 [accessed March 9, 2013].
- 41. In 2002 the census also registered 2.3 percent Orthodox Christians (2.4 percent in 1991) and 2.4 percent Muslims (1.5 in 1991). See "Statistični urad Republike Slovenije (2002): Popis prebivalstva, gospodinjstev in stanovanj 2002. 8. Prebivalstvo po veroizpovedi in tipu naselja, Slovenija, popisa 1991 in 2002," http://www.stat.si/popis2002/si/rezultati/rezultati_red. asp?ter=SLO&st=8 [accessed March 9, 2013].
- 42. "Državní zavod za statistiku Republike Hrvatske (2011): Popis 2011. Stanovništvo prema narodnosti i vjeri," http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/census2011/results/htm/H01_01_12/H01_01_12.html [accessed March 9, 2013].
- 43. Since the beginning of the 1990s the population of the southern region of Sandžak (Serbia) also declares itself as Bosniak.
- 44. On Bosnia see Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms, and Gerlachlus Duijzings, eds., *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society* (Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2007).
- 45. Today's estimates assume a total population of 3.8 million.
- 46. During the 1990s the Muslims renamed themselves Bosniaks.
- 47. According to the census of 2002, the ethnic structure of the population of two million included Macedonians (64.1 percent), Albanians (25.2 percent), Turks (3.8 percent), Roma (2.7 percent), Serbs (1.8 percent), Bosniaks (0.8 percent), and others (1 percent). In terms of religion, the population included Orthodox Christians (64.7 percent), Muslims (33.3 percent), Catholics (0.3 percent), and others or nonreligious persons (1.5 percent).
- 48. Jasna Koteska, "Troubles with History: Skopje 2014," *Art Margins Online* (2011), http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/2-articles/655-troubles-with-history-skopje-2014 [accessed March 2, 2013]; Anastas Vangeli, "Nation-building Ancient Macedonian Style: The Origins and the Effects of the So-called Antiquization in Macedonia, *Nationalities Papers*, 39 (1), 2011, 13–32; Andrew Graan, "Counterfeiting the Nation? Skopje 2014 and the Politics of Nation Branding in Macedonia," *Cultural Anthropology*, 28 (1), 2013, 161–179.
- 49. In 2011, the country's six hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants declared themselves as Montenegrins (45 percent), Serbs (29 percent), Bosniaks

- (9 percent), Albanians (5 percent), and Muslims (3 percent), while 5 percent refused to declare themselves with regard to ethnicity. Major religious affiliations registered were Orthodox Christian (72 percent), Muslim (19 percent), and Catholic (3 percent). Additionally, 1 percent declared as nonreligious, and 3 percent gave no answers at all.
- 50. On the role of ethnic minorities in the political life of the country and the debates on independence see, for example, Florian Bieber, "The Instrumentalization of Minorities in the Montenegrin Dispute over Independence," European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg (ECMI Brief, 8). On Montenegrin independence see Srdjan Darmanovic, "Montenegro: A Miracle in the Balkans?" in Journal of Democracy, 18 (2), 2007, 152–159.
- 51. Out of a total population of 7.5 million, the census of 2002 registered 82.9 percent Serbs, 3.9 percent Hungarians, 1.81 percent Bosniaks, 1.4 percent Roma, 1.08 percent Yugoslavs, and 0.94 percent Croats, as well as 0.15 percent "regionals" (of which 88.4 percent were in Vojvodina), while 1.4 percent refused to declare in terms of ethnicity. Out of a total population of 7.19 million, the census of 2011 registered 83.3 percent Serbs, 3.5 percent Hungarians, 2 percent Bosniaks, 2 percent Roma, 0.8 percent Croats, and with 0.4 percent, an increased number of "regionals" (97 percent in Vojvodina). 2.2 percent refused to declare themselves with regard to ethnicity or nationality. Interestingly, the Yugoslav still make up 0.3 percent of Serbia's population. Due to the fact that the census did not take into account Kosovo, which Serbia still regards as an own province, the Albanians represent only 0.08 percent of Serbia's population. With regard to religion, the population includes Orthodox Christians (84.6 percent), Catholics (4.97 percent), and Muslims (3.1 percent), as well as nonbelievers (1.1 percent), "not declared" persons (3 percent) and those falling into the census category of "unknown" (1.4 percent).
- 52. For the crisis of the political system in the post-Yugoslav region see, for example, Angela Wieser, Dieter Segert, and Vedran Džihić, "The Crisis of Representative Democracy in the Post-Yugoslav Region: Discrepancies of Elite Policies and Citizens' Expectations, *Southeastern Europe*, 36 (1), 2012, 87–110.
- 53. All post-Yugoslav states aim for accession to the European Union. Slovenia has been an EU member since 2004; Croatia is to join the EU in 2013; Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro have candidate status; Bosnia-Herzegovina signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU in 2008, and further steps are awaited; Kosovo's official foreign policy also focuses on a gradual Euro-Atlantic integration (EU and NATO).
- 54. See: Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Fo mer Yugoslavia," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24 (1), 2007, 21–38.
- 55. During the 1990s in most parts of former Yugoslavia, a process of historical revisionism took place, framing the present political order as part of a national (-ist) historical narrative, more or less rejecting Yugoslav history, and instead constructing continuities to the "purely national" past of the nineteenth century or even the Middle Ages.
- 56. See http://www.juga.com/. The homepage is not available anymore, but it can be accessed through the Internet Archive (http://www.archive.org/).

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- Other Web appearances evoking the Yugoslav past but located in the present of the Internet followed. See, for example, "Tito's Home Page," http://www.titoville.com/ [accessed March 4, 2013].
- 57. Mitja Velikonja, *Titostalgia: A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz* (Ljubljana: Peace Institute, 2008).
- 58. Catherine Baker illustrates this by examining transnational relations between the Yugoslav successor states from the point of view of popular music. Catherine Baker, *Sounds of the Borderland: Popular Music, War, and Nationalism in Croatia since 1991* (Farnham/Surrey/Burlington: Ashgate, 2010).
- 59. The term was used by Michael Herzfeld in his *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (New York: Routledge, 2005).