Mi smo Braća svi: We Are All Brothers

Courtney Brynn Downing

College of William and Mary

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorstheses

Recommended Citation

Downing, Courtney Brynn, "Mi smo Braća svi: We Are All Brothers" (2010). Undergraduate Honors Theses. Paper 747.
https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorstheses/747

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.
Mi Smo Braća Svi: We Are All Brothers

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies from The College of William and Mary

by

Courtney Brynn Downing

Accepted for ________________________________
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)

________________________________________
Bruce Campbell, Director

________________________________________
Tuska Benes

________________________________________
Gregor Kranjc

________________________________________
Paula Pickering

Williamsburg, VA
May 4, 2010
When I first thought I’d write an honors thesis, I thought I knew what I was getting into. I was wrong. Along the way, I drank between 30-40 gallons of tea, slept much less than the recommended number of hours for my age group, and had the social life of a monk in solitary contemplation. I am indebted to those who helped me along the way, be it through academic, emotional or caffeinated support.

**Many Thanks To:**

Bruce Campbell: for guiding me academically, and doing his best to stem my procrastination

James Frusetta: for pointing me towards new sources of information, and for mocking my moaning.

Paula Pickering, Gregor Kranjc, and Tuska Benes: for your motivation, criticisms and support, both academic and personal.

The Daily Grind: for countless amounts of tea, baked goods, and distractions. Without you, I would have been force to work in the library.

Inter Library Loan: For somehow, not complaining about my 100+ requests for books, articles, films, and microfilm, even when they had to be shipped from Europe.

My friends: for accepting that my personal commitments came with an escape clause, and trying to convince me to enjoy senior year otherwise.

My family: for insisting that not only was I almost graduated, but that I would look upon these months with a sense of accomplishment, and even happiness.
Introduction

By the order of the Islamic fundamentalists from Sarajevo, healthy Serbian women from 17 to 40 years of age are being separated out and subject to special treatment. According to their sick plans going back many years, these women have to be impregnated by orthodox Islamic seeds in order to raise a generation of janissaries [Turkish military elites composed of Christian youth forced to convert to Islam in the middle ages] on the territories they surely consider to be theirs, the Islamic republic. In other words, a fourfold crime is to be committed against the Serbian woman: to remove her from her own family, to impregnate her by undesirable seeds, to make her bear a stranger and then to take even him away from her

-Major Milovan Milutinovic “Lying Violent hands on the Serbian Woman”

In an orgy of nationalism bathed in alcohol, athletic contests and Serbian songs, Serb soldiers threw Muslims off of cliffs and from hotel roofs into rivers, carved Orthodox crosses into their chests, hacked off the arms or legs of their victims, made women clean up the mess from such amputations, and then raped the women on top of the blood soaked rags...as the usually drunken, enraged soldiers beat them, the rapists screamed ‘Turkish whore’ or ‘Ustashe whore’ at their victims, triumphantly jeering after reaching orgasm that the woman was now carrying ‘Serb seed’ and would produce a ‘Serb baby’. In these assertions, what floods in is not some credible explanation for the prevalence of rape by the fundamental irrationality that defines the chief cultural fiction of the Balkans: the fiction of difference.

When it was revealed that rape and sexual assaults were being used against women and children by encroaching militaries during the breakup of former Yugoslavia, the international community was appalled at the violence inflicted on seemingly indistinct women. When these images and tales were beamed into television sets and radio reports around the Balkans, men and women were electrified- how dare they touch our women. All sides used tales of rape and sexual depravity to incite and rally their constituents, and each group blamed the next. While it is true that the primary

---

perpetrators of this sexual violence were Serbian men, and the victims Bosniak women and children, and Croatian women and children, all sides were involved in a cycle of victim and victimizer.

Paramilitaries, gangs of men, and nationalist leaders used sexual assaults and rape to terrorize local populations, and cleanse them from land that ‘wasn’t theirs’. These assaults had a threefold effect- not only did they intimidate men and women on all sides, shame and demoralize the victims, their family and community, they created thousands of ‘dirty’ women, who had been tainted by their (forced) contact with the enemy.

There has been much research on the causes and effects of these campaigns of sexual violence and intimidation, by feminists, historians and anthropologists. Most touch on the patriarchal nature of Balkan society, or the lasting trauma these acts inflicted on the communities of survivors, female and male. However, the majority of academic literature and public knowledge ends there. While it is important, necessary even, to study the repercussions of those violent years, there remains a dearth in the literature, a failure to look at men and masculinity. Men remain the dominant gender in the region, and are still largely in control of these separate states. While the nationalism of Croatia or Serbia is oft discussed, there has not been a discussion on the nature of masculinity and nationalism in former Yugoslavia, and how the two influence each other.

During my research I uncovered strong links between the nationalism of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and the culture of hyper masculinity there, stemming from a shared fear of losing one’s masculinity, and one’s nation. This leads to attempts to appear more masculine, and to champion one’s country, especially with comparison to

---

3 Bosniak is the Balkan term for Muslim Bosnians, as opposed to Bosnian Serbs who are Orthodox, or Bosnian Croats who are Roman Catholics.

4 “No was exempt from the punishment in these [rape] camps. Frequently, the Serbian captors told women that they trying to impregnate them. In so doing, they would create ‘Chetnik babies’ who would kill Muslims when they grew up. Furthermore, ‘they repeatedly said their President had ordered them to do this’.” p. 359 Salzman.

“The rape camps of the Bosnian war have been documented as a systematically planned Serb instrument of genocide designed not merely to encourage the evacuation of all non-Serbs but to destroy parent-child and spousal bonds and render large numbers of the society’s child-bearing women contaminated and thus unmarriageable.” p. 73 Boose
one’s neighbors. The two desires and their manifestations feed off each other, and reinforce broad stereotypes restricting the development of culture, and the ability of generations to forgive and to move on.

**Explanation of Terms**

Before I can detail my research and results, I must define my terms, as hard as they are to pin down. At its most basic, gender is the accepted difference between the two sexes- male and female- based on anatomy. However, within each separate culture there develop unique views on sexuality and the traits that define masculinity and femininity. Within Western culture, these differences have developed over the past few hundred years. As R.W. Connell states in *Masculinities*: “Women were certainly regarded as different from men, but different in the sense of being incomplete or inferior examples of the same character.”

With this in mind, definitions of masculinity and femininity are constantly shifting and redefined as culture changes. Furthermore, when one travels from one culture to another, she or he is exposed to a different set of standards of what is ‘appropriate’ in gender relations and identity. Within the states of former Yugoslavia, the definitions of gender are fairly standard across state lines, making it easier to view the nations of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia as part of a whole. Society is traditionally patriarchal, and as such, men are seen as the dominant gender. A culture of machismo permeates the region, consisting of shows of bravado, willingness to defend one’s family and community (by force if necessary), and the desire to command respect. Women are

---


6 Andrei Simic details the similarities between Latin American and Balkan perceptions of masculinity: “[the] male strives to be a living validation of the assumption that the male is stronger, more reliable and intelligent that the female. A man must maintain his public image of independence, self-reliance and honor. Weakness or pettiness in the male is scorned… [in addition] a man’s virility is proven through his ability to drink frequently.” Simic, Andrei. “Management of the Male Image in Yugoslavia”. *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (April, 1969). p. 90
expected to be submissive to first their fathers and then their husbands; while some respect is given to the mother-figure, she is always second to her sons and husband.\(^7\)

This pan-Yugoslav conception of gender is one reason that I have chosen to look at former-Yugoslavia with a broad lens, concentrating on Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition, these three were the main constituents of the wars that consumed the 1990s, and even now, remain closely linked. They share a common economic situation (albeit, Bosnia-Herzegovina is slightly worse off) and shared communities, as inter-marriage between national groups were encouraged under Tito’s reign, as he sought to create a ‘Yugoslav’ identity that would supersede the distinction of Bosnian Muslim, Bosnian Serb, Croatian Catholic, Serbian Orthodox, or any of the many varieties that exist through intermarriage and emigration. While each nation would vehemently argue for the distinction of their state from that of his neighbor, the existence of a language mutually intelligible between the three nations, their proximity to each other, and the large number of overlapping communities, regardless of state line, makes it possible to look at these three states as part of a common mindset and culture.

Nationalism has been defined and redefined over the course of history, emerging first in the nineteenth century as a response to Napoleon’s conquest of Europe. This development of a national consciousness was not limited to the countries of West and Central Europe, but spread throughout the world, becoming a philosophy for the marginalized and colonized to rally behind. As Ernest Renan declared in his treatise “What Is a Nation? [Que’est-ce Qu’une Nation?]”, these ties can be drawn according to language, religion or the tradition of one’s parents, without necessarily uniting in one distinct area of land, as given his example of Jews, Germans and Slavs, each of which were split between different and distinct kingdoms.

\(^7\) “Passed from father’s to husband’s household, they are restricted to the domestic sphere and to the production of male heirs for their husbands’ families”. p. 244 Denich, Bette S. “Sex and Power in the Balkans”, in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds. Women, Culture and Society, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1974.

\(^8\) ‘Les communautés sans patrie, maintenues par le lien religieux, comme sont celles des Israélites, des parsis… des parentes comme celles que la race, ou plutôt la langue, établit entre les différentes branches de Germains, les différentes branches de Slaves.” Renan, Ernest. «Qu’est-ce Qu’une Nation ? »
Feminist scholars have deconstructed nationalism as a gendered phenomenon, occurring as the real or imagined community of men. While nationalism in former Yugoslavia does bear this mark as well, it uniquely developed in the region according to religious practice. Serbs were defined as Eastern Orthodox, Croats as Roman Catholics and Bosnians as Muslims. Nationalism never fully disappeared during Tito’s drive of integration, and when Yugoslavia lost their leader in 1974, nationalist parties began to take political control. When the Yugoslav state began to dissolve in 1992 those nationalist parties committed themselves to not only the success of their state, but the repression of all others, so deep and intertwined is the history of conquest and loss in the region- all claim ties to the same portion of land. As one online commenter stated, “We Hrvati never agreed or voted for our towns to become a part of BiH (and many fought and died for Croatian unification and for the creation of Herceg-Bosna). To us, Anywhere [sic] a Hrvat lives, that is Croatia.”

The wars that accompanied the break up of Yugoslavia brought to a head the issues of nationalism and masculinity, but did not resolve them. They remain today, influencing one another, and society itself. With this in mind, I looked at representations

---


10 “While the attempt to construct a ‘Yugoslav’ identity through the rewriting of history and the merging of the rSerbian and Croatian languages were largely a failure, it did work in one respect- the creation of a Yugoslav identity within the country allowed individuals to adopt out of rooted ethno-national identities.”


While the presence of a Yugoslav identity offered an alternative to those of mixed marriages, or those reluctant to declare their ethnicity, that the ‘Yugoslav ethnicity’ was never broadly adopted by the population (as seen in census data), and its hard to argue that the term was seen as legitimate to the broad population.

11 A common abbreviation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

of masculinity and nationalism in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, using online forums, YouTube videos and responses to those videos, academic articles, newspapers and films from the region.

I believe my methodology is unique among current scholars, as I have chosen to focus on the discussion generated through the Internet and electronic media, and have analyzed them using more traditional scholarship. I understand that the opinions expressed online may not be representative of all the individuals living in former-Yugoslavia, however I argue that these views in fact say more than traditional scholarship. Due to the separation between person and statement that occurs when one is communicating online, a new form of freedom emerges. Individuals are empowered to make statements that they might otherwise repress, due to the controversy or base nature implicit in their words. Furthermore, Internet and electronic media allows for conversations to happen more quickly, and stretch further-creating a broader sample of voices, even as these voices encourage each other on, to become more or less extreme in their views. I recognize that this new media cannot be properly documented at times, through the use of traditional citation, but I have done my best to attribute proper credit when it is due.

I have found clear links between the presence of a common fear of losing one’s masculinity and nationalism, and the effect nationalism and masculinity have on each other, especially in their separate evocations. This plays out on a variety of stages, from the songs and sounds of music, to the acts and mannerisms of football hooligans, to the reception of LGBT individuals.
Music in general, and folk or popular music in particular, has traditionally been a major tool in the construction of such identities. The uniqueness of musical style was taken to represent the uniqueness of the cultural entity, of the community, and to express its specific way of experiencing the world. Musicians and music audiences, as members of the field of national identity, are inclined therefore to produce and to enjoy the music that expressed their unique identity. As the habitus of local identity is “incarnated” in them, they tend to make music that perpetuates their specific identity—be it a general national one, or a fraction within it,

from “Rock Aesthetics and Musics of the World”\(^1\).

Music has been with humanity for eons; before there was the written word, there were songs and chants to record history, forever linking music with the tale of its people: their struggles, their triumphs, and their redemption. Former-Yugoslavia is no different. Although under Tito equality between nationalities was the rule, various ethnicities could lay claim to musical instruments and musical forms, distinguishing themselves from their neighbors by the use of the *gusle* (a single string instrument common to several Slav cultures), or the singing of classical songs of heroics. Yet, during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, music was also used to terrorize and to hearten. Guerillas and armies marched into towns blaring their traditional music; in response, people under siege played their own songs back at the enemy, as means of asserting their own strength and faith in their culture. Among themselves, soldiers and guerillas played traditional music alongside pop to remind themselves of their reasons to continue fighting, and their duties as men. Mirijana Laušević tells the story of a Muslim refugee from Mostar, who “was so haunted

---

by the Croatian “patriotic” tune, “HVO te brani, HVO te hrani\(^2\)”, she found herself humming it, even though that same Croatian Military Defense had imprisoned her husband, stolen her livestock, and destroyed her house.\(^3\)

As Robert Hudson asserts in his article “Popular Music, Tradition and Serbian Nationalism”, the use of music as cultural weapon has existed for centuries, and the heightened ethnic tensions of the late 1980s allowed those weapons to be revealed:

> from the late 1980s, every political leader, every political program and every political battle in Serbia has made reference to folkloric texts... the main vehicle for carrying the imagery, values and antagonisms of these mythical tales has been the pesma, which may be translated as either ‘poem’ or ‘song’... in the 1990s the stimulation of nationalism by popular and traditional Serbian songs involved a process of ethnification- a cult of the folkloric- in which popular music contributed to the estrangement, alienation and distancing of the Other\(^4\).

Other historians and academics have outlined the ties between music and nationalism, and the use of music by nationalist groups to inspire fear and destruction. In this chapter, I am focusing on the ties between music and masculinity- how the cultural trends of Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina produce an image in which one must be both a patriot and an alpha male, as demonstrated by the influential members and stars of each music scene.

During the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, music and media was used to create a Yugoslav identity and discourage nationalism, especially in areas such as Bosnia

\(^2\) The Croatian Military Defense (HVO) defends you, the Croatian Military Defense feeds you.
\(^3\) Laušević, Mirjana. “Some Aspects of Music and Politics in Bosnia”, from Neighbors at War: Anthropological Perspectives on Yugoslav Ethnicity, Culture and History. Joel M. Halpern and David A. Kideckel, Ed.s. p. 290
Herzegovina, which was the only republic with a truly mixed ethnic population\(^5\). This led to the creation of new cultural symbols, and expanding traditional claims to existent symbols across ethnic lines\(^6\). After the breakup of Yugoslavia, there was a push for ethnic groups to reclaim these symbols, or to lay claim to symbols that had been designed as ‘Yugoslav’. The *kolo* is a prime example- designed as a Partisan dance that laid claim to an imagined tradition, the *kolo* still exists today, although Croatians, Serbians and Bosnians lay claim to this ‘traditional’ folk dance\(^7\).

While there are still aftershocks from the Yugoslav Wars, music has remained important to the construction of national and self-identities. Bands, such as Thompson, preach hate and intolerance, while taking pride in Croatia’s Ustaše past and preaching a violent, militarized masculinity; Serbian turbo folk musicians, on the hand, value a ‘gangster’-influenced masculinity that welcomes a criminal element. As Laušević says, “no other symbolic expression is more powerful when it comes to creating fear and defining otherness… Music has the power to subconsciously enter a mind against its will\(^8\)."

\(^5\) “What was not so apparent in viewing these public performances was that they were the result of a sophisticated process of negotiation of identities between the Yugoslav state and its constituent nations and national minorities… a folklore show that romanticized a primarily rural past was really the result of a complex discourse about symbolic national identity.” Maners, Lynn. “Clapping for Serbs: Nationalism and Performance in Bosnia and Herzegovina” from *Neighbors at War: Anthropological Perspectives on Yugoslav Ethnicity, Culture and History*. Joel M. Halpern and David A. Kideckel, Eds. p.311

\(^6\) “The transformation and recontextualization of folklore for national purposes were ideological in nature and ultimately based on Gorky’s maxim that folklore was the creative activity of the working class.” Maners, p. 305

\(^7\) Maners, p. 308

\(^8\) Laušević p. 290.
Rock And Roll

Music, especially rock and roll, has been used by multiple generations to break away from their elders and question their claims to legitimacy in power. The folk music revival of the 1960s had its roots in an attempt to recreate tradition, while using a ‘more authentic’ sound, to create ‘more truthful’ songs. British punks developed their hard, jagged sound to rebel against the oppression of English society, and to express sonically their rage and frustration. Czech dissidents flocked to the Plastic Peoples of the Universe, who used rock music to espouse political theory, taking their authenticity from the established, experimental sounds of Frank Zappa and the Velvet Underground. Music is very much a struggle for power and control, as there is always the need to try and create something new, to be more real, more truthful.

Yugoslavia was unique among the Eastern Bloc in that citizens were able to leave their nation to go to the West and work. Many took advantage of this, sending back money from abroad, before returning home. They did not bring just financial capital, but also exposure to the changing cultures of the West- including music. Although Yugoslavia denounced socialist realism, which encouraged the use of art to support and

---

9 “In the mid-1950s… Travel restrictions eased; Yugoslavs gained greater access to Western literature and ideas; artists abandoned "socialist realism" to experiment with abstraction and other styles…. But already in 1953 liberalization was an uneven, changeable phenomenon in Yugoslavia. A meeting of party leaders at the north Adriatic island of Brioni that year resolved to strengthen party discipline, amid growing concern that apathy had infected the rank and file since the Sixth Congress. Over the next several years, the party tightened democratic centralism; established basic party organizations in factories, universities, and other institutions; purged its rolls of inactive members; and took other measures to enhance discipline.”

foster socialism, individuals were still exposed to the concept through films, art and books. Yugoslavia was not alone among the eastern states in gathering traditional symbols and cultural capital, and recreating them as a sign of ‘pan-socialism’ or as internationalist symbols in an attempt to remove singular, ethnic claims.

In Croatia, rock music has been used as a portal to the past, in which one of the most popular Croatian singers in fact espouses a return to tradition and conformity to a rigid review of nationalism and masculinity. Music, rather than more traditional forms of high art, has become the preferred sphere to voice a specific idea of cultural hierarchy, and has appealed across society to a wide range of listeners. In Croatia (and across Former Yugoslavia), contrary to Regev’s view that “rock aesthetic [is used] for creating ‘new’ national, ethnic or other local identities”, rock music has become a means to reinforce traditional conceptions of masculinity and ethnicity.

Thompson, born as Marko Perković, is the frontman of a popular Croatian rock band (also called Thompson). Formed in 1991, during the early stages of the Croatian War of Independence, Perković was a soldier in this war. Initially, he released the single “Bonja Čavoglave” to help inspire his fellow fighters and Croatians in the protection of his birthplace, Čavoglave in Croatia, against Serbs. The songs begins with the cheer “Za dom- Spremi!”, which means, “for the homeland! Ready!”, but has roots in the Ustaše

10 Sergei Einstein’s film Battleship Potemkin is an excellent example of this, despite being filmed and released in 1925. For a Russian view on Socialist Realism, see John Berger’s Art + Revolution, which discussed Ernst Neizvestny and his influence on Russian art and counter culture.
11 This reinforces Motti Regev’s view that “rock [is] an important tool for strengthening their contemporary sense of local identity and autonomy. Anglo-American sub-styles of rock as they are, imitations that put local-language lyrics to the same styles, or hybrids that mix rock elements with local music traditions, proliferate around the world.” From “Rock Aesthetics and Musics of the World”, P. 125
12 P. 127 Regev.
government of the Second World War. The cheer is commonly accompanied by the Nazi salute, being the Croatian equivalent of the ‘Sieg Heil’.

Men and women attending Thompson concerts often dress in Ustaše uniforms or with T-Shirts adorned with Ustaše slogans. The Ustaše symbols appeal to a wishful desire to remember the strengths of the past, when Croatia allied with fascist Germany and Italy during World War II. Western journalists reporting on Thompson’s tours make particular mention that “the singer and songwriter is also said to glorify war and Croatia's Nazi past”, and comments inevitably descend into debates on the nature of his music, with supporters arguing, “the main themes of Thompson's songs are about God, family and the homeland. Thompson promotes dedication to the faith, family and patriotism. NOT nationalism. Patriotism”, and detractors insisting that his music is offensive to both Jewish and Serbian communities.

Beyond the songs’ messages, the presence of Ustaše symbols and uniforms at Thompson concerts promotes a specific form of masculinity- the strong soldier, who is willing to fight and die for his nation. One can draw links from this soldier ideal, to George Mosse’s assertion that nations imposed sexual control and restraint through militarization and promotion of a strong nation, free of moral or physical weakness.

---

15 “Nations began to be conscious of themselves and their ideals... they attempted to provide a force of integration in control in a time of rapid social and economic changes... Modern nationalism was concerned with sexual control and restraint from the start” Mosse, George. “Nationalism and Respectability: Normal and Abnormal Sexuality in
The continued emphasis of a soldier-warrior as the pinnacle of masculinity belies the [Croatian] nation’s fear of failure, of being losing the lands that have been so painfully gained. By utilizing the insignia of the Ustaše, which does not retain its prominent position in Croatian history because of its legacy of fascism, but instead because it was seen as a time in which Croats were “in charge”, stronger than their neighbors-creating present day cultural warfare, emphasizing Croatian dominance and control.

Without a doubt, Thompson relies heavily on images of homeland, God and family. Music videos call upon images of “traditional” Croat life (“Lijepa li si”), or of violence and soldier-loyalty (“Bojna Cavoglade”). Here are men, the videos seem to say, rugged in leather or army uniforms, and ready to defend their home and country against Serb invaders\(^1\), as generations of Croatian men have done. Thompson’s assertion of stereotypical masculine traits superimposed over military symbols- such as the bearing of arms, the order of uniforms, a pastoral tradition\(^2\) - to impose a perception of masculine control on his viewers, both Croat and non-Croat.

Thompson effectively strings masculinity to nationalism and history, promoting a traditionalist view of nationalism that sees Croats as the defenders of the true past. He is

\(^{1}\) For instance, Thompson’s first hit “Bojna Cavoglave” included lyrics such as “Stoji Hrvat do Hrvata, mi smo braća svi/ Nećete u Čavoglave” (From Croat to Croat, we are all brothers/As long as we live in Cavoglave) and “Slušajte sod poruko od Svetog Iije/ Nećete u Čavoglave, niste ni prije” (Listen to the message of Saint Elias: You will not be in Cavoglave, you were not before!

\(^{2}\) Which, while not blatantly masculine, alludes to the traditional Balkan practice of farming, where all power was passed on through the male line: “The Balkan region has been people for millennia by pastoralists and plow agriculturists who have left a continuous record of patricentric organization… these ancient patterns are replicated today wherever social structures follow patrilineal principles” Denich, p. 244.
not the only Croatian performer espousing these messages, but only one of the most popular. His collaboration with fellow Croatian singer Miroslav Škoro on two songs: “Reci, brate moj” (Listen, my brother) and “Sude moj” are immensely popular, with hundreds of videos online depicting the song both live and in the form of fan tributes. Videos of the two performing “Sude moj” in concert on Zagreb shows them singing in front of images of the Croatian flag and Roman Catholic imagery, rows of gravestones headed by the cross. “Sude moj” (We Judge) is dedicated to General Ante Gotovina, currently held by The Hague for trial on suspicion of war crimes and crimes against humanity by him and men under his command during ‘the Homeland War’. Gotovina is seen in divided terms by Croats- some argue that his extradition was necessary for Croatia to be accepted by members of the European Union, while others, including Škoro and Thompson, saw him as a champion for the Croatian people and an outlaw hero for his leadership during the Homeland War. As such, Gotovina represents a kind of masculinity idealized by these singers: Gotovina trained in the French Foreign Legion and after taking part in a series of bank robberies worked in South America training revolutionaries and guerillas; when war broke out in former-Yugoslavia Gotovina returned to his homeland. He led troops in the retaking of western Croatian territory including areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Gotovina is proclaimed in songs to be “harder than rock”, glorified as a hrvatina, or Super-Croatian as he’s “given his whole life for Croatia”, bringing glory as a warrior back upon his nation and people. He’s the embodiment of “rebel manhood”- one who has in essence, paid his dues for his people by defending them against Serbs and invaders, and who had reclaimed traditional lands in

---

the West. In their mind, Gotovina is one with ancestors of old, who fought and died for their nation against invading enemies.

Thompson ties into this sentiment with his song “Moj dida i ja” (My Grandfather and I). The song tells of a young man who has been fed stories of glorious by-gone days of Croatia (possibly of the reign under Ante Pavelic), and must now act as his grandfather did to defend his nation. The music video, wildly circulated online, depicts an old man walking across a barren Croatian plain, with the juxtaposition of his grown progeny following his footsteps—standing strong as his grandfather had. Through out the video there are images of the grandfather instructing his grandson in the ways of a true Croatian, leading the young man to later realize: “moj dida i ja, prijatelja dva/ drugo vrijeme, ista sudbina”, or “my grandfather and I, two friends/ a different time, the same fate”. The young, as in times of old, must willingly step up to their sacred duty and defend their homeland against all invaders. The grandfather is an authentic man— one who had been tested to defend his nation, and demonstrate his commitment to it, and now it is the duty of the young to also prove their manhood.

One must think of the images from the Yugoslav wars that showed fathers and sons fighting together, posing with rifles and wearing traditional insignia.

**Nationalist Control**

Mass media were manipulated by politicians and nationalists to tear apart the Titoist concept of

---

19 (translation by this writer)
“brotherhood and unity”, using television and radio stations to nurture and develop divisions between Bosnians, Serbians and Croatians. In Serbia, “turbo folk\textsuperscript{20} existed almost entirely within televisions, including state owned and state-tied television\textsuperscript{21}, including TV Pink, TV and Radio Košava, and TV Palma, each owned by the state or owned by individuals tied closely to the state\textsuperscript{22}. These media outlets were some of the most powerful mechanisms for spreading national and religious hatred, intolerance, violence, war and fear leading up to and during the Yugoslav Wars\textsuperscript{23}.

Laušević recounts the tale of a Bosnian Serb television station, which was forced to adopt the Serbian dialect in transmitting, in order to further distance itself from Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croatians. Only Serb musicians could be broadcast, but furthermore, their subject matter had to be appropriately nationalistic, or the producers risked bringing violence upon them\textsuperscript{24}. Croatian television consistently aired patriot and nationalist tunes, played on the tamburica, which was seen as the national instrument of Croatia. Radovan Karadžić solidified his status as the leader of the Bosnian Serbs with the broadcast of his performance, with a children’s choir conducted by an Orthodox priest, of ‘\textit{Tamo daleko}’ (Over there, far away). “A primordial sense of identity, linked

\textsuperscript{20} Turbo folk in its current inception is a popular form of pop music, distinguished by its vocal ululations. Turbo folk is rooted in the neo folk of the 1960s, but now bears the impact of traditional Roma music, electronic dance pop, and rock and roll.


\textsuperscript{22} As is the case with TV and Radio Košava, which were owned by Marija Milošević, the daughter of Slobodan Milosevic.

\textsuperscript{23} “The ‘carefree’ contents of TV Pink were, in fact, highly ideologically shaped, promoting the above mentioned new Serbian elite and its problematic values of war-profiteering, national-chauvinism, crime and violence, politics of robbery and oppression and pornographic sexuality” Kronja p. 105

\textsuperscript{24} Laušević, p. 291
with a sense of family and the nation is deeply embedded within this song, with father and son giving up their lives for the nation. The adoption of this song by a politician for stoking nationalist fires also reveals the promotion of a specific kind of man–one willing to abandon his family in order to die for his greater family, the Serbian (or Croatian, or Bosnian) people.

Turbo Folk

In Serbia, turbo-folk has taken hold of the national ear. Turbo folk, a means of blending modern pop music with folk traditions, has been played since its emergence during the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, but in recent years it has skyrocketed in popularity. As a hybrid of traditional and modern music, it appeals to a broad spectrum of listeners, appearing as authentically Serbian but maintaining modern sensibilities and drama. Traditional turbo folk, according to Mary Coote, features

*a division between the man’s sphere and the woman’s sphere that is fundamental to Yugoslav traditional society. In this opposition of male to female in the culture generally, prestige and authority normally accrue to the male. Heroic songs are no just men’s song; they are heroes’ songs, set apart among songs as heroes are among men. The high value placed on the songs and the authority accorded them reflects the high estimation of the hero in a society where manliness and military prowess has been cultivates as qualities essential to survival.*

The playing of traditional folk music presented an unchanging male standard–willing to fight and die for his nation, which took on the status of a woman in such songs–a donor of blood, and also the object of a heroic quest to secure her freedom. As established by Hudson, patriotic songs celebrate the sacred struggles of Serbia, presenting

25 Hudson. P. 163
27 Coote. P. 336
her and her songs as both victims and aggressors, who want and need to be avenged by the ultimate victory - the conquest of neighboring lands and the subjugation of those who would rule Serbs. One’s ethnic identity, and masculinity, must be solidified by the spilling of blood and claiming of soil.

The end of the Yugoslav Wars did not curtail the appeal of turbo-folk. Instead, it took on a gangster swagger, taking from the war the theme of violence and profiteering, while continuing to promote specific conceptions of masculinity and ethnic identity. One of the queens of turbo-folk pop is Svetlana Ražnatović. Better known as Ceca, she is the widow of Serbian paramilitary leader Arkan (Zeljko Ražnatović), who was assassinated in 2000 while awaiting trial for crimes against humanity. Ceca took leadership of the Serbian Unity Party (Stranka Srpskog Jedinstva, or SSJ) after her husband’s death, until its merge with the Serbian Radical Party. Arkan and Ceca remain two of the brightest starts of the Serbian music scene - Ceca as popular performer (nicknamed ‘Queen of the

28 “There are two seemingly contradictory themes in the Serbian self-representation of historical identity. One the one hand, Serbia is alone, hated and misunderstood by all non-Serbs; the Serbs are a victimized people, defeated in battle, often forced into exile and abandoned by God. On the other hand, the Serbs are a valiant, warrior folk who often fight alone (as in the ‘brave little Serbia’ imagery of the First World War) and, above all, in this context, are God’s ‘chosen people’”
Hudson. P. 158

29 “Patriotic songs celebrating the trials, tribulations and victories Serbia experienced in these wars have taken on an almost sacred aura. These songs embody Serbian heroism, pride, aggression, stubbornness, victimization and belief in ultimate victory”.
Hudson. p. 160.

According to the parameters established by Coote, this would mean that these masculine songs are espousing masculine ideals.

30 Identified by Kronja as a “system of values aimed to establish the cult of crime and violence, war-profiteering, national-chauvinism and provincialism, together with the abandonment of morals, education, legality, and other civic values. It had also encouraged the war-orientated, retrograde patriarch and the prostitution and comodification of women, while accepting the iconography of Western mass culture, the values of the ‘American dream’, body culture, culture of leisure and consumption”

p. 103
Balkans’), and Arkan as the subject of admiration and songs celebrating him as a folk hero and Serbian patriot and comparing him to the legendary Serb Prince Marko. As Hudson makes clear, the embedment of music and folklore into the Serbian cultural identity means that men and women are perceptive to links and affronts to Serbian nationalism, even if there are not consciously aware of its effect on them. By placing Arkan as equivalent terms of Prince Marko, Serbia has updated a key figure of her national identity, giving him the qualities expected of today’s man. And who is this man?

According to Kronja,

the man is supposed to leave an impression of a dangerous, robust male. He is a macho guy who drives an expensive fast car, has a mobile phone, and if necessary, can also carry a gun. He wears black and dark grey suits, black leather of the most expensive sportswear with a foreign trademark. His main preoccupation and his system of values are based on money, no matter how gained.31

Arkan symbolizes the mixing the worlds of war profiteering and business- despite his then-impending trial by the International Court of Human Rights, until his assassination Arkan appeared to be unable to do no wrong: beloved by his countrymen, connected to the government, and the owner of a successful local football club, he seemed posed to be the next leader of Serbia- officially or not. His flaunting of this successful criminal career, both as a bank robber and as a war profiteer who, with his Tigers, burned towns and stole the belongings of the terrorized, presents him as a modern day pirate and rogue. He appeals as one accepted by society, who yet remains a rebel. His marriage to Ceca turned her to an at times contradictory symbol of sexuality and the standard Serbian mother, as the wife of a renown-patriot and thus, the symbolic mother of

31 Kronja. P. 110
the nation \(^{32}\). Arkan’s own virility is lauded, as he openly fathered nine children with five different women. He appears as a “real man”- authentically flawed, and yet more powerful because of his shortcomings.

According to George Mosse, “in a society obsessed with chaos, normalcy and abnormalcy had to be clearly distinguished from each other, lock in place for the sake of order \(^{33}\)”. Serbia (and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatia by extension) faced extreme chaos during the Yugoslav Wars, as citizens fled their homes, watched the destruction of their country, joined armies, and faced peril, from sexual violence to death. Post war, Arkan remained a symbol that juxtaposes traditional masculinity (that of a Spartan or fighter) with a new conception of ‘man’- wealthy, above the law, virile and high status. Arkan appeared utterly in control- proud of his criminal background, for which he had never truly been prosecuted, the leader of a band of soldiers and mercenaries, women throwing themselves at him, and the reigns of nation nearly in his grasp. He stands firmly as symbol of conventional masculinity, presenting an ideal both modern and antiquated.

As stated by Regev, music and especially popular music, have traditionally been and continue to be an important tool in the shaping of identity, both as a community and as an individual. The music a man listens to impacts not only what others think of him, but also how he sees himself, and helps to formulate standards of behavior. A song espousing ‘macho’ masculinity or the territorial losses of history can formulate a sense of bravado, or a keen awareness of loss. While music was important to the culture of Yugoslavia, during the Yugoslav Wars it took on the characteristics of a cultural weapon, which it has not quite lost. Music was a means of identifying ones ethnicity, and of

\(^{32}\) Kronja, p. 108
\(^{33}\) Mosse. P. 223
establishing the proper role of a man in society during crisis. However, that music remains popular, and thus, retains its place in espousing a masculine concept still very much rooted in warfare: he must be strong, and willing to fight for himself and his community. This masculine model calls upon historical figures- warriors and leaders- as guides to proper behavior in an ongoing cultural war, that has lost little venom from the 1990s. Through his projection of masculinity, he presents the image of a strong nation.
Inside the stadium, once the game had started the Red Star ultras, massed in the north stand, began taunting the supporters of Partizan, denouncing them as ‘faggots, Turks, Muslims, blacks, communists’... abruptly, the chanting stopped. The crowd watched as a group of Serbian paramilitaries, dressed in full uniform... one by one held aloft road signs: ‘20 miles to Vukovar’; ‘10 miles to Vukovar’; ‘Welcome to Vukovar’. More road signs were brandished, each one bearing the name of a Croatian town that had fallen to the Serbian army... [the] supporters were no longer fractious, but united in hatred of a common enemy- the Croats.1

Zvonimir Boban is cherished by followers of Croatian football2- not only for captaining the 1998 Croatian football team, nor for taking A.C Milan to multiple championships or titles. He is remembered for a 1990 game he played as a member of Dinamo Zagreb; the match came soon after Croatia’s first multi-party selections in which support was overwhelmingly given to parties advocating Croatian independence. Tensions high from the start, the match descended into chaos as players and supporters of Dinamo and Red Star Belgrade brawled one another. When police officers moved to restrain an ‘ultra’ for Dinamo, Boban interfered and attacked the police officer. Boban became a legend, and to this day, is seen as supporting Croatian nationalism and pride: “Who cares if the policeman was a Bosnian, Swedish or Canadian. He was a part of the Serbian controlled Police [sic] force that totally ignored the violence caused by the Red

1 The demonstration of scarves and banners ripped from supporters of opposing teams is common at football matches, as they demonstrate the willingness to fight for one’s club. Here, the demonstration of street signs is akin to showing off the spoils of war, and the badges of the opposing hooligans. (no author listed). “Football, blood and war”, The Observer, 18 January 2004. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/osm/story/0,,1123137,00.html> 15 January 2010.
2 Football here refers specifically to the European concept of football, referred to in the United States as ‘soccer’.
Star fans and instead brutally attacked the supporters of Dinamo Zagreb," says one commenter on a clip of the incident put on YouTube. As national groups have solidified into nation-states, and the violence between groups has died down, football has retained its ability to pit men against each other in battles rife with symbolic meaning.

Hooliganism did not originate in former Yugoslavia, and while much attention has been given to English hooligans, it exists across Continental Europe, into South America and Asia. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term ‘hooligan’ dates back to 19th century England and referred to a member of a street gang. While not referred to yet as hooligans, gangs of football supporters, or ‘howling roughs’ have been active since the 1880s, when a friendly match between Preston North End and Aston Villa (both British teams) ended with supporters attacking opposing players. Hooliganism in Europe appears to have reached its peak with the 1985 Heysel Stadium disaster, when 39 people died and 600 injured. It remains tied to images of xenophobia and tribalism, despite efforts to curtail the violence. However, violence has continued to be associated with football in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**Historical Use of Football and Hooligans**

There was a time when football was the national sport of Yugoslavia; despite teams

---


5 One example is that of Chelsea, traditionally a working class club: “During the 1980s, the cub was the outfit most associated with English hooliganism. Its fans joined the xenophobic British National Party and merged with violent racist gangs like the notorious Combat 18…. When the Holocaust denier David Irving went on trial for libel in 2001, the hooligan group Chelsea Headhunters provided security for his rallies”. Foer, Franklin. “Soccer vs. McWorld”. Foreign Policy, No. 140 (Jan.- Feb. 2004), pp. 39
representing each city and municipality competing against one another, it helped hold Yugoslavia together. Yugoslavia was also considered a skilled competitor, winning the Olympic gold in 1960, and the silver in 1948, 1952, and 1956. In addition, they frequently participated in the World Cup, placing eight times. Yugoslavia hosted the 1976 UEFA European Football Championship, and placed in fourth during the games, giving Bosniaks and Serbs, Croats and Kosovars a shared passion and a sense of unity.

Football and the army could be counted on to unite the people, who were split among national republics (as decreed under the 1974 Constitution). National flags and signs, chants and songs began to proliferate in stadiums as tensions rose at the turn of the 1990s, betraying rising rival national pressures. Supporters of traditionally adversarial clubs joined together, demonstrating that as members of the same national group, their shared ethnic heritage was more important than individual teams. As football matches were canceled, and European football teams refused to play on Yugoslav soil for fear of violence, supporters could agree that Croatia, or Serbia, or Slovenia was to blame, and that they themselves had been unfairly wronged, both by history, and by their opponents.

---

6 In addition: “by beginning of the 1990s, the country’s national football team, which had also acted as a unifying force throughout the Communist period, had lost a significant proportion of Croat support, with this aspiring nation state fielding its own international side- unrecognized by both FIFA and UEFA”. Mills. p. 1190

7 These were constituent republics within a socialist federation, each with the possibility of using a “VOTE” to stop legislation deemed harmful to one’s republic. These republics were Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia. Hungarian and Albanian minorities were awarded autonomy in the Republic of Serbia.
When Yugoslavia began to break apart in the early 1990s, militias recruited former football fans that had been marked as notably violent or passionate. Hooligans who had formerly been ostracized by sports reporters for behaving “like beasts” were now valuable assets to those seeking to form armies\(^8\). Perhaps the best indicator of this is Arkan\(^9\) and his Tigers. Birth name Željko Ražnatović, Arkan had been a bank robber and mercenary active throughout Western Europe, but when he returned to his native Serbia, Slobodan Milošević asked him to train the Red Star fans (the *Delije*, or “Strong Ones”). From these men, Arkan culled the Tigers\(^10\), who referred to him as Father. Images of Arkan during the wars depict him astride tanks, or surrounded by his Tigers, a symbolic family growing stronger as they expanded their territorial gains. Figure One shows Arkan and his soldiers brandishing their guns, under the main gun of a tank that juts forward, above them, an obviously phallic image. They are preparing to continue into new territory, using their superior firepower and numbers to conquer peoples and land, while feeding a conception of dominant masculinity.

The traditional ties between politicians and football clubs appeared clearly during

---


\(^9\) He adopted the name ‘Arkan’ from one of his false passports. He escaped from prison twice, and each time the Yugoslav secret service was accused of orchestrating his escape.

\(^10\) “The Tigers, chanting the songs they had sung from the North Stand, marched to the front. They were there in Vukovar in 1991, when hundreds of Croat patients were herded from a hospital, packed into trucks and shot in a field, and they were there too... killing Muslims or chasing them from their homes at the onset of the conflict in Bosnia”. Wilson, Jonathan. *Behind the Curtain: Travels in Eastern European Football*. (Great Britain, Orion: 2006). P. 112
the attempts of politicians to mobilize and galvanize their supporters. Slobodan Milošević’s name was chanted at games:

We are the Warriors from proud Serbia  
Come onto the terraces, greet the Serbian race  
From Kosovo to Knin, Serbs stand shoulder to shoulder  
Serbian Slobo, Serbia is with you  
Who says, who lies, that Serbia is small?  
It’s not small, it’s not small, it has our Slobodan!11

Franjo Tudjman (who headed Partizan) spoke at games and used stadiums as centers for rallies, wherein he made statements such as “Thank God my wife is not a Jew or a Serb”12. Milošević and Tudjman’s desire to draw from the hyper-masculine hooligans demonstrates their desire to use masculinity as a political value13, by championing those who championed comradeship and violence. It’s a Darwinian concept, which the survival of one’s nation lays with the fittest, strongest men, those most willing to fight. Fans unwilling to fight are seen as weak, un-masculine and not worthy to cheer on their team14. Hooligans were known for their nationalist chants at games, and by supporting those who espoused nationalism and masculinity, Milosevic and Tudjman supported these values. Football provided an opportunity for fans to

11 From Red Star cheer, Red Star being a Serbian club- they would also shout out “Vuk Drašković supports us!”- their allegiance was not with a particular politician, but with whomever appeared to have the interests of the Serbian nation at heart. Čolović, Ivan. "Football, Hooligans and War." Ed. Nebojsa Popov. The Road to War in Serbia: Trauma and Catharsis. Central European UP, 1999. 373-96. P. 384
12 P. 109 Wilson.  
13 Hancock, Eleanor. “‘Only the Real, the True, the Masculine Held Its Value’: Ernst Rohm, Masculinity and Male Homosexuality”. Journal of the History of Sexuality. Vol. 8, No. 4 (Apr. 1998) P. 616
14 “We’re not just hooligans; we are ready for anything. For example, we showed those English homosexuals from Leister how to fight a few years ago... We think that in England you don’t realize how tough the Serbs are. We respect the English as the founders of hooliganism, but where are you now?” from “Football, blood and war”.

demonstrate the superiority of their own nationality. Politicians reinforced this view, as they championed football fans as the most loyal of their citizens, and used stadiums as podiums. The willingness of ultras to defend their stadiums and their team’s name against opposing fans was seen as a marketable skill, a group to maintain close ties with. This increased attention changed also how the hooligans saw themselves— they became more than a gang of ruffians, but a gang to be feared, soldiers in an army, fighting for a cause they were told was ‘good’.

Many hooligans (and nationalists) believe that they themselves fought the first battles of the Yugoslav Wars, including the Red Star-Dinamo game previously mentioned. These men (as hooligans were predominantly, if not exclusively, male supporters) supported politicians not on basis of individual likes and dislikes, but who appeared to be the most nationalistic. For example, the (several thousand) Bad Blue Boys (BBB) of Zagreb’s Dinamo club loudly supported Tudjman when he announced his candidacy for President of Croatia in 1991, as leader of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). The fans had been willing to tolerate Tudjman’s position as chairman of rival club Partizan, as long as he appeared to have Croatian national interests at heart, and recognized Dinamo’s position as “the most Croatian club in the Yugoslav federation”, as he wrote in 1994. This continues to be a point of pride for Dinamo’s fans, even years after the battles.

---

15 “…the important point is not so much whether the fans really did step outside the norm, but rather whether they imagined themselves to do so. Influenced by the press’ representations of themselves… the fans imagined themselves to be so.” A. King, p. 585
16 “In the eyes of Delije, it was they who fought the wars first battle, during a league game against Dinamo Zagreb”. p. 109 Wilson.
17 Their name was originally, and remains, in English.
later, as a 1999 article on the ties between nationalism and hooliganism suggests. When the war began, fans turned into soldiers:

"The Croatian National Guard didn't even have its own insignia then, and [they] put [their] Dinamo badges on and went off to fight... there is a monument to those who lost their lives in the war. The epitaph reads: "To all Dinamo fans for whom the war started at Maksimir stadium on 13 May 1990 and ended by them laying their lives on the altar of the Croatian homeland."{19}

Yet the Bad Blue Boys stopped supporting Tudjman, because of Tudjman’s heavy hand in football (he controlled the finances of the biggest Croatian clubs, selected players for the national team, and decided on the hiring of coaches), which included the changing of the name Dinamo, which is linked to Eastern European Communism, to Croatia Zagreb.{20}

**Mayhem and Nation Today**

Football hooligans did not disappear after the wars ended, but became an established facet of Southeastern European society. No longer restricted to football stadiums, the war enabling them to break free of their traditional spaces, hooligans have taken to the streets to counter-protest LGBT activists (as detailed in the following chapter), or support nationalist beliefs. Although they were not still part of an army, both real and imagined, hooligans were unwilling to give up this perceived power. Thus, they

---


{19} Krickovic, “Football is War”.

{20} It was common throughout the Communist East to name sports clubs after government institutions and economic programs, even in Yugoslavia. Due to the loud objections of its supporters, the name of the club was changed back to Dinamo in 2000.
fight to hold onto this recognition of being feared and respected.

By remaining a visible part of Balkan society, football hooligans demonstrate a masculine extreme- one that values violence and ultra-loyalty to one’s club, community and nation. While arguably an extreme part of the spectrum of Balkan masculinity and psyche, hooligans are nevertheless part of the spectrum and must be noted for their affect on life on the Balkan Peninsula. Parallels can be drawn between the beliefs of football hooligans (or ultras, as they are also called) and far-right politicians, who also espouse the ultimate loyalty to one’s nation above all other ties, and who too, continue to hold on to the legacy of the Yugoslav Wars.

As Richard Miles argues in “It All Ended In An Unsporting Way”, football played a provocative role in reviving and encouraging national feelings. After the Yugoslav Wars, those nationalist emotions did not dissipate but have continued to grow, as Balkan nations clamor for more recognition from the world, and better global standings, if only to prove their superiority over their neighbors. A 2009 incident in Široki Brijeg, Bosnia- Herzegovina encapsulates this ‘war by football’ well: after arriving in town for a

---

21 Specifically, he mentions a game between Hajduk Split (of Croatia) and Partizan (Serbia) in which the Hadjuk fans burnt the national flag, and later tried to attack the Partizan players.

match between FK Sarajevo and NK Široki Brijeg, Vedran Puljic, a fan and hooligan, was shot and killed. Sarajevo residents (who were mostly Bosniaks) accused Bosnian Croats and police in Široki Brijeg for beginning the violence. There was rioting between both groups of hooligans, with the police becoming involved to the point of being accused of perpetrating the violence. Discussion boards that formed to discuss the death of Vedran Puljic (who was in no way a key leader of his fellow hooligans) quickly descended into accusations of blame and violence. For example:

*But HZ should ask themselves what did they try to prove in little croatian city, they knew that police is in Mostar for derbi [sic], and most local ppl own guns from war and that police is not ready to deal with 500 HZ. Its like they came there for national reasons and riots destroying everything, cars, shops...Irony is that this guy by name and surname is probably croatian*.

Hooliganism provided surrogate homes for like-minded individuals, who might be otherwise marginalized by society. However, this creates families of exclusively men, who are thus motivated to ‘show up’ one another, by being more violent, more risky, more nationalistic that their brothers. Further more, these men are encouraged to pull apart the facilities of their own state, as seen in Figure 2, with the burning of a police car, or the riots that erupt between hooligans and the police. The hooligans are reclaiming power from those traditionally in control, who have the backing of the state. In doing so, they are asserting that their power is greater than that of state and society, putting them in a position to be feared and respected.

The pronouncement of the many videos on YouTube depicting hooligans fighting

---


23 “To be able and willing to fight was a central means by which fans were recognized as properly male [however, this means] you’re got to keep on proving yourself in that way”. A. King, p. 590
the police is that “ACAB”, or “All Cops Are Bastards”. This sentiment is not isolated to
the Balkans, as fellows post messages proclaiming their solidarity from the United States,
Germany and Hungary (among others). Yet these discussions disintegrate into discussion
on strength and power: “we will build our countries [sic] whenever we want and when
your pimp (usa) leave us alone,” states one commenter in response to another’s
accusations that the Balkans has failed to develop\(^\text{24}\). The video in question features news
footage concerning a riot between hooligans and police at the Belgrade football stadium-the
violence is not only limited to the police, but also sees the destruction of the stadium,
as fans set fires and rip seats from the ground to use as projectiles and shields. This
presents a paradox- the stadium is the hallowed ground of these hooligans- yet they’re
tearing it apart at the seams.

One explanation might be that their true purpose is simply to cause chaos, and they
merely use football as the means to that end. However, I think the true explanation is a bit
more cerebral- the stadium is indeed their sacred space, over which they preside- this is
why they attempt to evict opposing fans from their seats, to force them from their
domain. The attempts of the police and civil society to impose order and their rules on
this ground forces hooligans to react with violence, to attempt to preserve their hold on
power, and thus their masculinity. The presence of ‘law and order’ and ‘bastard cops’
profanes the stadium, and is a threat to the hooligans- by destroying what these invaders
have touched, they reclaim it and make it again theirs. The hooligans are reaffirming their
commitment to “Serbian Nationalism! For king, religion and Great Serbia! Against

\(^\text{24}\) Teloni7. 2009. Posted to Red Star Hools vs. Police & Civil Cops,
<http://www.youtube.com/comment servlet?all_comments&v=dpedFdfoDLo&fromurl=/
watch%3Fv%3DdpedFdfoDLo%26feature%3Dvideo_response> December 6, 2007.
Albanians [sic], Muslims and Croats\textsuperscript{25} and to their band of brothers. Furthermore, this pronouncement of “ACAB” clarifies the loss of faith the hooligans have developed in their state, and the ability of civil society to respond to their needs, but does not lessen the perceived strength of their national group. Stronger than the police in small numbers, if the nation would stand together, they might dominate their region.

Hooliganism is as much about violence as it is about the game on the pitch, as seen in a Hadjuk-Split 1990 game where hooligans invaded the field to attack the opposing team’s players\textsuperscript{26}. Riots before, during, and after games are common, and they do not stay in the stadium. Mêlées in city centers occur between hooligans and the police, and sometimes the army. These are seen as opportunities for ultras to demonstrate not only their loyalty to their club (risking beatings and possibly, death, by fighting supporters of other teams\textsuperscript{27}) but also as a means of undermining a society that they see as ostracizing them. Here there is an odd juxtaposition of nationalist loyalty, and subversion against the nation. As a hooligan, one has the opportunity to ‘fight the system’, which doesn’t

\textsuperscript{26} Miles, p. 1200
\textsuperscript{27} If one’s actions can ‘unman’ a supporter of an opposing team, all the better. There are reports of one hooligan leader kidnapping a supporter of Hajduk Split in the late 1980s, and raping him with a broom handle for two days. “Football, blood and war”.

In addition, the leader of the Partizan’s Grave Diggers (initially Grobari), Zare, boasts of having raped the leader of Hajduk’s Torcida leader, much to the appreciation of fellow hooligans.

respect them but punishes them for their devotion to the nation. Hooligans have been marginalized by the state, feminized by their lack of control, and these incidents of violence, of fighting in the street against police and army are a means to reassert them.

Violence against the opposing team’s fans is seen as a defense of one’s ground, the protection of one’s city, one’s home. If fans were to come and go into the stadium or the city without suffering some sort of abuse, they would, in effect, “take that ground”, unmanning the hooligans sworn to defend it. These acts of violence are not only to assert one’s masculinity among one’s peers, but also among one’s enemies, so that if they dare to come again into this ground, they will have respect and fear. The demonstration of the colors of a rival fan are as much tied to war as they are the proverbial father, bringing to his community proof of his conquests so that he might be admired and called ‘man’. These militarized families hold paramount the values of traditional masculinity, the soldierly virtues of courage, honor, honesty, obedience and comradeship.

‘Unmanning’ the opposition requires not just violence, but public humiliation. Chants and songs at sporting events are popular around the world, and at a variety of sports, and are used to champion one’s team while belittling the opposition. In football, they often ridicule the sexuality of their opposition, or make claims about their sexual

---

28 John King discusses these emotions in “Football Factory”, which recounts his experiences as a member of the Chelsea Headhunters: “The sergeant takes the worst of it… somehow he’s worse because he’s got a uniform and authority and we’ve been trained to respect uniforms and believe in the idea of justice. Blood spews out of his rose. His head snaps back and opens up on broken glass. He’s getting his reward and we’re so frenzied we couldn’t care less if he died.” King, John. “The Football Factory”. Grand Street. No, 59, Winter, 1997. p. 52

29 For male fans, football is a central ritual arena in the constitution of their manhood. Through the support of a football team, the male fan affirms his status as man (in the eyes of his peers and himself) and also articulates the nature of that manhood.” A. King, p. 385

30 Hancock p. 617
deviance, referring to them as ‘bastards’ or ‘faggots’. The claim is that those fans are not ‘real men’ as these fans are, and thus have no right to be in this stadium, this sacred ground of masculinity\textsuperscript{31}.

Hooligans are not unique to South Eastern Europe, nor to Europe. The violence of Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian hooligans is striking, but not when one considers them in the context of international hooliganism. What is distinctive about these firms is their history, the state’s recognition of their power and usefulness, and their continuation of this history. They fight one another not only because their teams rival each other, but because they might have fought one another five, ten, years ago with guns and in uniform because of their opposing ethnicities and religions. Those armies have not left the Balkans, but remain on, in the hearts and actions of football hooligans.

These armies construct a specific masculine identity, similar to a soldier. A hooligans must show no fear, must be willing to fight, and constantly on guard against a possible instance of ‘unmanning’. While unmanning can occur as a result of sexual violence, in which forced sodomy forces the victim into a feminine role of passivity, more commonly it revolves around the taking of perceived territory, or a skirmish in the stands. Masculine is identified as being active- looking for a fight, fighting, or preparing for a fight. He fights in a very public arena, and celebrates gaining the interest or earning the fear of the rest of society: attention is action, and an opportunity to demonstrates one’s superior masculinity.

\textsuperscript{31} See A. King, p. 585-6.
Chapter Five

“A Pink Curtain Divides Us”¹

“Two Serbs meet in Zagreb and greet each other. As they reach the third kiss [a Serb practice] one of them whispers, ‘We should keep going; it’s better they think we are homosexual than Serb.’”

He puts down his coffee down and sighs.

“If only that were true. It’s easier to be a Serb in Croatia than a gay man in Bosnia,” he says.²

The 2007 Zagreb Pride Parade was marked by beatings by counter-protestors, accusations that homosexuals were infidels and evil, and indifferent policemen who intervened only when absolutely necessary. “In the city center, close to the headquarters of fan group Bad Blue Boys of soccer club Dinamo Zagreb, few witnesses… noticed group of 50 to 70 fans who were drumming and singing ‘Kill faggots! Faggots into chains!’³” The event culminated in several arrests, including several charged with assault, and most ominously, some young men who were found with Molotov cocktails. They had been planning on bombing the parade.

Yet, one could argue that the 2007 Pride Parade was a success: ten, fifteen years ago, a gay pride parade would be unthinkable. Community organizers used the parade to protest for greater recognition of lesbian, gay, bisexual used it, and transgender (LGBT) rights, and induced many Western European LGBT organizations to speak out against the

actions in Zagreb. One of the men found with Molotov cocktails, Josip Situm, was charged with violating Article 174 of the revised Criminal Code for attempting to commit a hate crime based on sexual orientation. A member of the Bad Blue Boys, he was sentenced to 14 months in jail and psychiatric treatment, the first person to tried and punished under Article 174. In his defense, he stated that he was a Roman Catholic and did not approve of homosexuality. In a country roughly 90 percent Roman Catholic, he easily argues for his countrymen.

Those days in July in no way occurred within a vacuum. The inaugural Queer Festival in Sarajevo in 2008 was canceled after a spate of violence against attendees on the first day, after a month of protestors shouting “kill the gays” openly on the streets. It was later dubbed “Sarajevo’s Kristallnacht” by the press. Serbian skinheads, nationalists and football hooligans attacked gay and lesbian rights activists during the 2001 march in Belgrade, the first in the capitol, resulting in the injuries to at least five people, and fears of violence against activists led to the cancellation of the Pride parade this year. YouTube is flooded with videos (many of them clips from newsreels) of protestors beating up police and marchers, both men and women, during gay pride events, then chanting

---


5 Darby, Seward. “Pride, and Prejudice”.


8 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1415789.stm>

9 Zagreb Pride has its own YouTube channel, which is rife with videos documenting the abuses not only at the 2007 Parade, but at other incidents. They also post videos that
football slogans, or cheering, “Kill the faggots”. That these videos are available suggests two alternating motivations: groups such as Zagreb Pride post these videos to document the abuses faced by LGBT individuals, hoping to shock viewers into support; proponents of the violent hope to scare LGBT individuals back into the closet, while demonstrating their own masculinity. This antagonism towards homosexuality is not specifically Balkan in its dimensions, nor recent in its development.

**Historical Background**

In approximately one hundred years, homosexuality has become accepted in the West as an identity rather than a behavior. Homophobia still remains in the West, although it is widely condemned by public opinion and legislation, as more and more men and women feel it safe to leave the closet and embrace their sexual identity. However, this change springs from centuries of homophobia, where homosexuality was regarded as an abomination, rejected by the Christian faith as a mortal sin for its grave nature, and considered by many governments to be a capital offense, punishable by torture and death.

The suppression of homosexuality and the condemnation of non-conforming individuals was a uniting agent between the colonized and colonizers of the Middle East, document their other attempts at increasing the visibility of LGBT individuals in Croatia, neighboring countries.

See: <http://www.youtube.com/user/zagrebpride>

10 America is currently grappling with an openness so extreme that adolescents in middle school are coming out more and more, announcing their sexual identity at ten, twelve or fourteen.


Africa, Asia and South America\textsuperscript{12}. In areas where Islam had or held control, homosexuality was already vilified. The Arabic term for homosexuality is liwat, meaning “the doing of Lot’s people”\textsuperscript{13}, referring to the ancient destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah for lewd, public sexuality and clearly outlining the intrinsic anarchy and disruption the engagement of a homosexual act creates. The distinction of public is important here, because the emphasis is on the sexual act, without considering orientation\textsuperscript{14}. The passive and active roles in the act of homosexual consummation are clearly outlined through the very language describing the participants- making it abundantly clear that the passive partner should be shamed by being penetrated and rendered a “non-man”\textsuperscript{15}.

Uniquely situated between Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Islam, Former Yugoslavia is deeply engrained with religious culture, and the influence of the Church and the Mosque are not to be ignored. The traditional religious views of homosexuality\textsuperscript{16} as an abomination continue to influence modern views on homosexuality, and gay rights. While secularism was officially promoted during socialism, the Yugoslav Wars reasserted the importance of religion in construction of

\textsuperscript{12}To reassert control, the state promoted the idea of a nuclear family, repressing women’s rights, homosexuality and other subversive notions. This approach followed a parallel path in the rest of the world, where colonialism reinforced negative views of homosexuality and wiped out most positive views”. Ungar, Mark. “State Violence and LGBT Rights”. \textit{New Political Science}. Vol. 22, No. 1 P. 64
\textsuperscript{13} As defined by Mark Halstead, in his article “Should Homosexuality Be Taught as an Acceptable Alternative Lifestyle? A Muslim Perspective”. \textit{Cambridge Journal of Education}. Vol. 28, No. 1.
\textsuperscript{14} Halstead, p. 8
\textsuperscript{15} Halstead p. 8
\textsuperscript{16} In this instance, homosexuality should be taken to refer to male-male sexual desire. While lesbianism is no more accepted by the public and also subject to violence, it is male homosexuality and the threat of sodomy that is most protested.
identity. For many, homosexuality is considered a cultural imposition from a decadent West\textsuperscript{17}, unnatural not only to manhood but also to the national myth, a betrayal of race and citizenship.

In the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Maurice Halbwachs and Aby Warburg developed two different theories of ‘collective’ memory, both linking this concept not to a biological structure but instead a cultural one\textsuperscript{18}. This concept seems entirely apt in discussions of homosexuality in the Balkans, where the Turks are still vilified for the use of impalement to punish rebels and otherwise mutinous (remembered now as heroic) Slavs. In “Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement and Serb Cultural Memory” Lynda Boose recounts a scene\textsuperscript{19} by Yugoslav author Ivo Andrić (from a novel that was required reading for all children in Yugoslavia), in which a town is forced to watch the impalement of a local rebel:

*Within this agonizing description is a crucifixion image, but there is surely much more. For what the male population of Visegrad as well as Andrić’s readers have been compelled to witness is a four-hour rape scene in which the rebel against Turkish rule is literally skewed by the Turkish phallic emblem of power and then hoisted up in a feminized image of the penetrated body, the enormous Turkish phallus fixing in place the unforgettable picture of a grotesque and horrific sodomy.*\textsuperscript{20}

This image not only reinforces the Turkish practice of impalement, a gruesome act of sodomy, but also the symbolic subjection of Serbia to Turkish conquerors- women and men weak and brutalized under the Turkish oppressors, impotent and unable to

---

\textsuperscript{17} Ungar p. 61
\textsuperscript{19} Boose, Lynda E. “Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement and Serb Cultural Memory”. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Vol. 28, No. 1. P.
\textsuperscript{20} Boose, p. 85
defend themselves, and powerless under the (male) officials of the Ottoman Empire. These feelings of weakness and abuse are not unique to Serbia, but stretch also to Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and other nations that once writhed under the weight of “the Eternal State”. The current imposition of the West, through the European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and United Nations, on the Balkan Peninsula might not inflict the same brutal terror and repression, but citizens are still rendered small and weak in comparison to these Western institutions and individuals.

Nationalist groups have seized their success in defeating gay pride initiatives to advocate for support in movements to block Serbia’s accession into the European Union (EU). They claim that recognition of Kosovo will be a prerequisite, as will a commitment to join NATO. Furthermore, they argue that the EU will force Serbs to recognize more

---


and more minorities- not only Kosovans, but also people of Vojvodina, Roma and LGBT individuals.

While minorities were recognized under socialist rule, emphasis was placed on bringing different nations together, instead of sociological minorities, such as the disabled, dissidents, or sexual minorities\(^23\). Homosexuality and gay rights were not directly addressed by broad Yugoslav legislation, before and after Tito. Under the Yugoslav Communist system, certain minority rights were given in order to ease ethnic tension and prevent one ethnicity from ruling over the others. However

\begin{quote}
The emphasis was laid on socialist-characterized individual and collective self-management rights, as well as on social rights, while individual rights like freedom of expression or freedom of association were to be exercised only in line with the official policy.\(^24\)
\end{quote}

Homosexual acts were illegal in Serbia until the mid-1990s, and were not decriminalized in Bosnia-Herzegovina until 1998. Croatia was the exception, as homosexuality was legalized by 1977; however, this did not encourage the acceptance of LGBT individuals, or change perceptions of homosexuality. When Marko Karadzic, the State Secretary in Serbia’s Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, advocated for increased protection of minority rights in 2009, including that of homosexuals, the response included posters depicting him in homosexual orgies, cries of outrage from the religious community and death threats\(^25\).

\(^{23}\) P. 192 Schopflin.
Violence against homosexuals still continues to occur, with police still turning ignoring instances of persecution and hate crimes, despite slowly increasing protection for LGBT individuals. It’s not uncommon to see complaints about the behavior of police forces charged with protecting LGBT individuals- from laughing at victims, to detaining them in police stations, often in the same cells as their attackers\(^2\). News clips from local news shows and organizations depicting anti-gay violence show police forces intervening reluctantly, and often leading the victims away without reprimanding the attackers. Police watch as men dance and sing football cheers, celebrating their successful victimization of “infidels” and “Satanists”. The police are, arguably, in a hard place- if they were to protect these men and women, they might be branded as homosexual themselves, and targeted for abuse by either their fellow officers or by the hooligans and protesters.

The governments of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia often only give lip service to minority rights. The 2009 Belgrade Pride Parade was canceled this year, after the police force conceded that it could not successfully protect attendees, despite setting aside 5,000 members of its police force. Organizers were urged to shift the location of the parade to the outskirts of town, where it would be less visible. Instead, coordinators opted to cancel the parade. Rightfully so, as not only would attendees be in a more isolated

\[^2\]“According to the testimonies of the people who were guests of the Hrabro Srce gay club that night, the police department representatives were not acting in a professional manner, moreover, they were laughing at the terrified victims. Furthermore, instead of arresting the attackers, the FC Crvena Zvezda supporters, the police decided to take in custody the attacked woman N.A. She was imprisoned for 12 hours under public disorderly conduct charge.”

“Gay Straight Alliance in Serbia: Two worrying attacks on LGBT people in Belgrade” ILGA-Europe News. 20 August 2009.
<http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/serbia/gay_straight_alliance_in_serbia_two_worrying_attacks_on_lgbt_people_in_belgrade>
area, but also a less visible parade would garner less attention and fewer recordings of abuse and attacks. Despite claims to support the rights of the gay community, by admitting its failure to protect the gay community from threats of violence demonstrates the Serb government’s insincerity with to minority rights. Extremists had not been quiet about plans for violence, stating in television interviews:

*Everyone knows what will happen if they go ahead with that parade of shame, and the responsibility for that will be on those who organized it. They can’t expect to poke their finger in the eye of our nation and go unpunished.*

In the weeks leading up to the parade, football hooligans had attacked “gay” looking foreign tourists in Belgrade, and graffiti had plastered the city, warning possible-Pride attendees “Obraz Srbic Čekamo Bac”, or “Obraz’s Serbia Is Waiting For You”. When the parade was canceled, nationalists rejoiced that ‘Satanists’ and ‘infidels’ had been kept at bay from ‘normal’ Serbia. However, Western pressure remains on Southeastern Europe, demanding more and better-defended rights for minorities, including LGBT individuals.

**Between the West and A Hard Place**


---


28 Lazo, Tihomir. “Wounded Pride”.
Assembly heard a bill submitted on the behalf of the European Union seeking to
decriminalize homosexuality and homosexual behavior world wide, and the end to human
rights violations on basis of sexual orientation. The European Union’s Charter of
Fundamental Rights of the EC Charter also prohibits discrimination on basis of sexual
orientation\textsuperscript{29}, a standard member states agree to uphold. As Thomas Hammarburg argues,

\textit{It is sometimes said that the protection of the human rights of lesbians, gays,
bisexuals and transgender people (LGBT) amounts to introducing new rights. That is a misunderstanding. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the agreed treaties establish that human rights apply to everyone and that no one should be excluded}\textsuperscript{30}.

This has forced prospective EU-nations to amend their own policies in order to
bring them to the European Union standard. However, in former-Yugoslav nations, this
presents difficulties, from religious communities that still have a vested say in the
government, and from citizens themselves. This religious tradition is --- Not all of the
rights for which the EU demands protection are considered rights in these nations:
seventy percent of Serbians, for example, regard homosexuality as a disease\textsuperscript{31}. To state
that the rights of LGBT people are rights inherently equal to the rights of “normal” men
and women (i.e. heterosexuals) is both shocking and profoundly foreign in comparison to
what many men and women in the region believe. Believing homosexuality to be a

\textsuperscript{29} FRA Report: Forward, p. 3
\textsuperscript{30} “A survey of public perception of homosexuality and attitudes towards LGBT persons
was carried out in Serbia early in 2008 by the Gay-Straight Alliance/Centre for Free
Elections and Democracy. The survey indicates a far-reaching negative perception of
LGBT persons, with 70 percent of the sample interviewed considering homosexuality as
a sickness… only 38 percent of the persons considered homosexuals as “the same human
begins as we are”.
Report by the Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, on his visit to
Serbia (13-17 October 2008)
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1417013&Site=CommDH&BackColorInternet=FE
C65B&BackColorIntranet=FEC65B&BackColorLogged=FFC679&P405_71047>
\textsuperscript{31} Maksimovic, Jelena. “Discrimination Law on Trial”.

disease deems it to be something that can be fought, or overcome. Those who declare their homosexuality are not seen as brave, or individualistic, but instead as weak—especially for men, who are viewed as openly feminizing themselves.

Furthermore, “virility is an essential element of Balkan machismo… Yugoslavs brag openly of their real or imagined sexual exploits." Gay men are automatically excluded from this practice, as they cannot brag of their sexual conquest of women— and to detail sexual intimacy with other men would be seen as, at best, inappropriate. To admit their engaging in sex with other men would quickly ‘unman’ them, as it was render them passive and the conquest.

At best, government officials can promise openly gay men and women will only be mocked or harassed. Online newspapers and blogs in Croatia have taken to publishing maps of safe areas to go in Zagreb if one is a LGBT individual (see Figure 2). The recognition of LGBT individuals is there, but instead of the willingness to fight for the rights of these men and women, the emphasis is put on passing under the radar.

---

32 Simic. P. 98
When Serbian officials attempted to create a broad antidiscrimination law in 2009 in an effort to bring Serbian policies more inline with EU policies, religious leaders in the nation (including Jewish, Islamic and Christian denominations) joined together to protest against Article 21, which prohibited discrimination on basis of sexual orientation. Anti-discrimination legislation had existed before the 2009 creation of Article 21, but it was much more loosely defined to the meaning of “discrimination”; by making it more explicit, lawmakers made it less acceptable to religion leaders. By specifying homosexuality as a minority right, the government risks alienating its populace, which does not consider homosexuality as a right, or as an arguable minority, but a bane on society and a decadent, immoral Western import. It is only as exposure to the West increases, and men and women feel more secure in coming out, that there has been widespread acknowledgement of LGBT individuals. While homosexuals undoubtedly existed in the Balkans before, the sudden spate of men and women willing to expose themselves to society becomes tied to the increasing intrusion of the West, creating a panic that the West is corrupting culture.

Furthermore, many Croats, Serbs and Bosnians argue that the European Union holds applicant states to a higher standard than they themselves live up to. 2007 was declared by the EU as “European Year for Equal Opportunities For All”, leading to a Eurobarometer report from 2008 to evaluate the impact of this year. This report found

![Image 2: The areas in red are sites of attacks, with the dots being sites of particularly violent attacks, from Zagreb Pride](http://www.jutarnji.hr/)
that of the members of then-25 EU nations surveyed,

\[a \text{ higher proportion of Europeans consider discrimination to be widespread than to be rare: discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and especially ethnic origin are both seen as widespread by the majority of men and women surveyed.}\]^{33}

A report released in 2009 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights analyzed the 27 member states of the European Union to address concerns on the treatment of LGBT men and women. While these findings\(^{34}\) vary from country to country (Eastern Europe seems less tolerant than Western Europe, younger constituents more tolerant than older generations), it stands that although the men and women of former-Yugoslavia may be more vocal or violent on their objections to homosexuality, they are not alone in Europe\(^{35}\). However, this leaves their governments cemented firmly between East and West. The desire to be recognized as Western conflicts with the tendency to reject instances of Western Culture that are considered demeaning to the nationalist mythos:

\[\text{[The 2004 Bosnian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights annual report] describes Bosnia as a country where religious leaders call homosexuality an evil, where journalists describe it as a disease and as trash imported from the West, and where theologians lump terrorists and homosexuals together in televised}\]

\(^{33}\) p. 7 Eurobarometer Report

\(^{34}\) Derogatory language, insults, violent attacks, discrimination, harassment, bullying and the lack of full legal rights and benefits for partners in many nations were all within the findings.

\(^{35}\) “On average, only 32% of Europeans feel that homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children throughout Europe. In fact, in 14 of the 25 Member States less than a quarter of the public accepts adoption by homosexual couples (p. 31). A survey in Bulgaria by the Sociological Agency Skala found that “42 percent of respondents would not like to have a homosexual as friend or colleague and 47 percent would not accept it if their child was homosexual (p. 33) and a German study found that 32 per cent of respondents found the site of two homosexuals kissing, disgusting (p. 34).
The human-rights watchdog concludes that in such an atmosphere, judges are unlikely to have sufficient room for a sensitive approach to cases of discrimination and homophobic assaults. By attempting to create legislation more in line with European Union standards, politicians alienate their constituents who consider these rights ridiculous or morally wrong. The government then becomes seen as weak, and viewed as failing to have control over the destiny of the people, thus promoting a culture of ‘unmen’. If the most powerful in the nation cannot stand up to Western forces, where does that leave the lowly citizen? He is one of a weak nation, weak by default, and his nation, his race risks annihilation, especially when one considers the Balkan’s history of ethnic anarchy and violence. This Darwinian idea may not be within the consciousness of a Serbian, or Croatian, or Bosnian man, but after decades of fighting for the same piece of land, weathering alternating genocides and massacres, it is firmly tied to cultural memory.

Conception of Behavior

The acceptance of homosexuality as an identity rather than an act is arguably what allowed the gay rights movement to begin, as the public began to view LGBT individuals as persons with a divergent sexual taste, rather than simply deviants engaged in “wrong” behavior. By overlooking the behavior in favor of the individual, the abhorrent behavior no longer became the focus of the public eye; homosexuality became something one was given or burdened with, rather than something chosen.

As Mark Ungar argues:

<http:/www.tol.cz/look/TOL/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&NrIssue=115&NrSection=3&NrArticle=14029>
legal repression is part of the histories of nearly every world region. Defined as a medical condition in 1869, “homosexuality” first shifted from a behavior to a social identity in Western Europe during the industrial revolution and the advent of the modern state.\(^{37}\)

By aligning acceptance of homosexuality with the advent of the modern state, Ungar draws a parallel between the breaking of traditional family and social hierarchy and the acceptance of previously demonized behaviors, and insinuates that the loss of Church control also played a large part in the sanctioning of homosexuality. However, in former-Yugoslavia, religious affiliations are seen as means of promoting one’s ethnic identity\(^{38}\). To look at a Serb or Croat, one might not be able to distinguish him from a Bosnian. Only by inquiring about one’s religion do you begin to ascertain his ethnic identity, a practice dating back to the Ottoman millet system. Serb identity is tied up with Eastern Orthodoxy, just as Roman Catholicism is synonymous with the Croat identity. Furthermore, if Ungar is correct in that only when traditional society begins to break down and reform does homoerosexuality become seen as a behavior, rather than an act, he requires the destruction of traditional power roles. Few would be willing to give away their traditional hold on power and superiority.

---

\(^{37}\) Ungar, p. 64

\(^{38}\) “The simple answer is that crucifixes here represent much more than religious symbols. They are part of Croatian ethnic and national identity, or more specifically, they are part and parcel of a rather simplistic and still very popular right-wing version of that identity. To start with, Catholicism is the most obvious distinguishing element of that identity. It distinguishes Croats from the other Balkan groups that speak their language: the Muslim Bosniaks, the Orthodox Christian Montenegrins, and, most significantly, the far more numerous Orthodox Christian Serbs.”

Religious leaders still hold a good deal of power in state government, as evidenced by the backlash against President Stjepan Mesic when he attempted to enforce Croatian secularity by speaking out against religious symbols in public institutions\(^{39}\), or Eastern Orthodox leaders’ rejection of Serbia’s expansion of anti-discrimination bills to include sexual orientation. Thus, it is not only Muslim leaders who must accept ‘Western’ concepts of homosexuality and sexual orientation\(^{40}\).

Ungar goes on to argue that:

*anti-LGBT state violence reflects shifts in state–society relations and the declining power of the nation-state* [within an international environment increasingly concerned with the powers of communities of nations and economic unions, rather than individual states] *in a rapidly integrating and decreasingly ideological world. Amid disillusion with traditional political organizations and loosening allegiances to the nation, officials and societal leaders losing ground tap into popular stereotypes and frustrations*\(^{41}\).

One can see this in the post-Yugoslavia nations: opposition forces are branded as traitors to nation and ‘Turks’. The shifting of traditional power roles results in the desire of a new force to fill the impending vacuum, as long-established forces attempt to retain power, by any means necessary. For the average Serb, or Croat or Bosnian, this is not simply relinquishing a small amount of power, but another step in gradual breakdown of tradition and national heritage that has occurred since the breakup of Yugoslavia. First the loss of territory, then the threat to autonomy by Western forces, and now, competition for power within one’s state by individuals who are not seen as full people— not quite men, not quite women.

---

\(^{39}\) Loza. “Cross References”.

\(^{40}\) As theorized by Mark Halsteed in “Should Homosexuality Be Taught As An Acceptable Alternative Lifestyle? A Muslim Perspective”. p. 8

\(^{41}\) Ungar. P. 71
Yet when members of Zagreb Pride call for LGBT individuals to stand up for themselves because “our rights ignored and broken, our dignity stomped on, our freedom threatened” the call for men and women to come out of the closet runs into a catch-22: it isn’t safe for individuals to come out of the closet, and it won’t become more safe until more men and women are out of the closet. Reconciliation must occur, in which sexual acts are no longer entirely linked to sexual identity- LGBT individuals must be recognized as more than “terrorist” or “evil” sex acts, but human beings with rights, concerns and dignity.

However, there are gender roles intrinsic in sex, and for many in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, those roles are quite black and white. There are two participants, not partners, man and woman, with the man taking the dominant role and the woman as the submissive. Male-male sex acts throw this standard on its head, as suddenly the man is both the dominant and submissive partner. He gives up his traditional position of power, and instead becomes the individual acted upon, and penetrated.

This man is not only playing with traditional conceptions of sexuality, but also perceptions of masculinity. He is taking memories of cultural imposition and abuse to bed with him, whether or not he is conscious of this. His actions are not viewed within a vacuum, but are instead seen by his family, his neighbors as being the product of his heritage- nature, not nurture. Discussion of his sexual acts revolve not around the assertion of one’s self identity and sexual awareness, but memories of the Yugoslav Wars, stories of wrongs perpetrated by ‘the other’, and stories of victimization and impalement.

42 (translated from Croatian) “Zagreb Pride for an Open City: Participate! June 13, 2009”. Zagreb-Pride.net
Former Yugoslavia is rife with the imagery of victimization—Croats by Serbs, Serbs by Croats, Bosnians by Serbs, Muslims by Christians and Christians by Muslims. All have suffered, and consider their suffering worst of all. Their men have become de-sexed, impotent in the face of higher power, be it Ottoman Turks or the next village burning your home because you are the wrong ethnicity, the wrong nationality, the wrong religion. Masculinity was key to maintaining not only one’s well being, but also the continued survival of one’s community. Homosexuality unmans an individual, reconstructing him as a passive figure, weak and feminine. If a man loses his masculinity, he is no longer as asset to his community, and no longer able to help guarantee its survival. While there are fewer threats to the Croatian or Bosnian or Serbian people due to territorial disputes, established mindsets are hard to break. Masculinity, and its implied heterosexuality, is seen as tantamount to the survival of one’s nation.
Conclusions

I acknowledge the existence of a variety of detailed literature concerned with gender roles during the Yugoslav Wars. However, few have broadened their gaze to include the ramifications of the widespread sexual violence employed during those violent years. Literature that has looked at the consequences of sexual violence has inevitably done so through the gaze of feminism and women’s studies. While I do not refute the value of these inquiries, it leaves a large gap in the literature on post-Yugoslav, southeastern Europe.

When I began my research, I had not planned on looking at nationalism; I had initially hoped to look at the status of men in former Yugoslavia, after the renewed focus on women’s rights in lieu of the gendered violence of the Balkan Wars. What I found were pervasive links between masculinity and nationalism in the nations of former Yugoslavia. Symbols of hyper-masculinity have infiltrated pan-Yugoslav culture, appearing in music, the violence of football hooligans and protests against LGBT individuals.

Much of this hyper-masculinity appeared to emerge from a continued system of chaos and upset during the Yugoslav Wars, and their aftermath. Throughout all this turmoil, little could be counted on to remain static. One’s nation, and one’s sexual role were two of the few possibilities. The growing awareness of alternate constructions of sexuality, coupled with increased pressure from the West to minimize national identities, creates a struggle of power between the old and the new, accepted boundaries and what is being offered as a new possibility. On more than one instance, these changing
conceptions of masculinity and nationalism combine and mutate, creating an expectation of ‘über-masculinity’ that presents a norm foreign to many in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia, despite contributing to this conception of a ‘true man’.

These self-regulated boundaries constrict the growth of the region, and the ability of nationals to move past stereotypes developed during conflict. Furthermore, attempts to discuss these changing boundaries have led to hostility and friction. Western organizations, such as the European Union and NATO, are working to integrate these nations into greater European society. While there are the impositions of expectations, and admonitions for shortcomings, there has not been enough emphasis on the importance of free discussion. Debate on matters of nationalism and masculinity are too often stifled before they can become fruitful within the nations themselves, due to violence or fear. While the West is in no means an example of perfection, a key aspect of Western-style democracy is the belief that one has the same rights as his or her neighbor, regardless of masculinity or ethnicity. The West is in a position to help generate debates on what it means to be Serbian, or Croatian, or Bosnian, or a man, now. This does not mean merely rebukes and impositions, but instead the promotion of the talk that guides the push and pull of democracy.
Bibliography


Foer, Franklin. “Soccer vs. McWorld”. Foreign Policy, No. 140 (Jan.- Feb. 2004), pp. 39


Hancock, Eleanor. “‘Only the Real, the True, the Masculine Held Its Value’: Ernst Rohm, Masculinity and Male Homosexuality”. Journal of the History of Sexuality. Vol. 8, No. 4 (Apr. 1998) P. 616


<http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/croatia/report_on_the_incidents_during_zagreb_pride_2007_and_taken_actions>


<http://www.tol.cz/look/TOLrus/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&NrIssue=59&NrSection=3&NrArticle=11863>


Maners, Lynn. “Clapping for Serbs: Nationalism and Performance in Bosnia and Herzegovina” from *Neighbors at War: Anthropological Perspectives on Yugoslav Ethnicity, Culture and History*. Joel M. Halpern and David A. Kideckel, Eds. p.311


