

# From War to Tolerance? Bottom-up and Top-down Approaches to (Re)building Interethnic Ties in the Areas of the Former Yugoslavia

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*Source / Izvornik:* **Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci, 2014, 35, 455 - 483**

**Journal article, Published version**

**Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:118:848446>

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*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2025-01-03**

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## **“FROM WAR TO TOLERANCE? BOTTOM-UP AND TOP-DOWN APPROACHES TO (RE)BUILDING INTERETHNIC TIES IN THE AREAS OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA”**

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UDK: 323.1  
Ur.: 15. svibnja 2014.  
Pr.: 1. listopada 2014.  
Izvorni znanstveni rad

## **“OD RATA KA TOLERANCIJI? PRISTUPI ODOZGO I ODOZDO U PROCESIMA (RE)KONSTRUKCIJE MEĐUETNIČKIH VEZA U PODRUČJIMA BIVŠE JUGOSLAVIJE”**

### **Sažetak**

*U nedavnoj prošlosti Balkan je proživio razdoblja sukoba i nasilja, tipična za mnoge post-imperijalne nacije-države koje su se pokazale nesposobnima u uspostavljanju veza sa susjedima izvan imperijalnog modela centra i periferije. Takve su države imitirale povijesne obrasce imperijalnih osvajanja. U tom se smislu etnički sukobi, koji su eskalirali u ratove na područjima bivše Jugoslavije, predstavljaju primjere pogrešne transformacije postimperijalnih država u moderne nacije-države s demokratskim poretkom i mirnom koegzistencijom sa susjedima. Usprkos takvom razvoju situacije, pokazalo se da nije u svim višeetničkim sredinama došlo do eskalacije etničkog nasilja (npr. slučajevi „enklava mira“ u višeetničkim područjima Hrvatske, Bosne i Hercegovine i Kosova). U takvim primjerima, koji su ilustrirani podacima empirijskog istraživanja, pronalazi se potencijal za izgradnju tolerancije „odozdo“. S druge strane, u područjima u kojima je mir proizašao iz postkonfliktnih procesa lokalni potencijali za izgradnju etničke tolerancije su se pokazali puno slabijima. U radu su navedeni primjeri koji ukazuju na izrazite regionalne razlike u Hrvatskoj. Rad također pokazuje da se cjelokupan proces normalizacije međuetničkih odnosa u hrvatskom društvu odvija na proturječan način. Dijelovi nacionalnih elita često su skloni naglašavanju socijalne distance i antagonizma spram „drugih“. S druge strane, nakon ulaska Hrvatske u Eu-*

*ropsku uniju, nacionalistička retorika na političkoj razini značajno je smanjena. Postavlja se pitanje u kojoj je mjeri službena politika na nacionalnoj ili međunarodnoj razini, koja predstavlja pristup „odozgo“, presudna u oblikovanju međuetničkih odnosa. Zaključak rada je da uspostavljanje etničkog mira i tolerancije nije ostvarivo bez istodobnog odvijanja procesa na mikro razini odnosno "odozdo". U teorijskom smislu to odgovara suprotstavljanju "linearne politike" i "politike usklađivanja", odnosno političkog determinizma centra i kontingencijskih procesa koji se odvijaju njegovim periferijama.*

**Ključne riječi:** međuetnički odnosi, nacionalizam, etnički sukob, etnička tolerancija, Hrvatska, bivša Jugoslavija.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, we received two messages that have drawn our attention. One is data from Census in 2011 published by the end of 2012 by National Statistical Office in Croatia.<sup>1</sup> The data indicate, among other things, that Croatian population has significantly been recomposed demographically, including shares of Croats and Serbs, respectively, in the total population. Here we quote from a journalist report: "Nationally, Croatia with its ninety percent of Croats is still very homogenous country. In most European countries, with exemption of Poland where Poles make for unbelievable 98% of populations... Serbs are the largest minority in Croatia, but their number has significantly declined when compared with 2001 census data. Now, there is 7.4 % less Serbs than in 2001 and now they count for around 180,000. Does their reduction in number has to do with assimilation, their fear of declaring their nationality, their higher mortality rate, for Serbs now are relatively mature population, or it is all that in combination – one can only guess about this." (www.radio101.hr/podcast.php?id=162385). Some twenty years back Serbs made 12.6% of the total population of Croatia. Meanwhile, the number was drastically reduced mostly due to their exodus immediately before and following the Croatian military operation in August 1995. The population loss was clearly mirrored in the census of 2011, where the number of Serbs was about three times lower than in 1991 census in Croatia / former Yugoslavia, for example. Additionally, Serb returnees in Croatia are mostly elders. Still, although by the end of 2012 state relations between Croatia and Serbia were somewhat deteriorated,<sup>2</sup> the level of national tolerance of Croats

1 This paper is the result of the research project "Social integration and collective identity in multiethnic areas of Croatia" which has been carried out with the support of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia.

2 This is due to November 16, 2012 decision of the court of the International Crime Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to release convicted Croatian General Ante Gotovina, who was the overall operational commander of a military operation „Storm“. Immediately thereafter, representatives of the Serbian government stated that relations between Serbia and Croatia "have fallen on the lowest branch", and some already scheduled visits of Serbian high officials to Croatia have been cancelled (www.index.hr/vijesti/...srpske-vlade...nije.../647419.aspx).

toward Serbs, and vice versa, has probably remained pretty much the same as in the past decade, i.e. still higher than in the 1990s.

Another interesting message we have received recently from our colleague, who is sociologist in Sarajevo. He announced launching of a new research project on "(re)integration of society in Bosnia and Herzegovina", whereby he remarks that "today's (international) mechanism eagerly try to build the society from above, but they find, not unexpectedly, an empty balloon". Besides, he said, "the international community, using the ideology of 'liberal peace', attempts to integrate society in B&H, but this does not work". The latter message obviously implies that the B&H society must be built from below as well as from above. Yet, we wonder whether this is possible, since usually bottom-up tendencies in the B&H society are mostly disintegrative and conflicting: by and large people give their support to nationalistic political parties, while their support for trans-ethnic democratic parties is rather small (cf. Sokolović & Bieber, 2001). Present-day situation in Croatia is not significantly different from that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although local Serbs in Croatia are far from doing what their compatriots had done in the beginning of 1990s, i.e. seceding from the rest of Croatia. Also, attitudes of a number of Croats residing the city of Vukovar are spewed against further return of exiled Serbs to the city. Such negative attitude of local Croats has been provoked by recent publishing of census data in 2012 according to which the number of Serbs in Vukovar presently exceeds one third of the local population (which is an increase of the share of Serbs in Vukovar when compared with 2001 census data). Right because of this, i.e. the increase of the number of Serbs above one third, the Croatian constitution provides for the right to the minority, i.e. Serbs in this case, to use the Cyrillic alphabet in the public institutions and places, and put the Cyrillic signs in public places in parallel with the Latin alphabet used by Croats and other inhabitants ([www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/u-vukovaru...srba.../652998.aspx](http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/u-vukovaru...srba.../652998.aspx)).

## **2. DETERMINISM VS. CONTINGENCY: A CONFORMANT APPROACH**

In this paper, we argue that expanding tolerance and peace as well as reconciliation processes in general represent a case for a political strategy akin to *conformant planning*, which looks for meeting points between top-down (linear) and bottom-up (contingent) approaches to solving major issues in economic or social development. The meaning of the conformant processes is explained by Bonet as follows: "Conformant planning is used to refer to planning for unobservable problems...The term 'conformant' is automatically associated with both the unobservable planning model and with linear plans, mainly because the only possible solutions for unobservable problems are linear plans. Thus, there are substantial differences about linear plans for the case of unobservable or fully-observable problems, and for the case of partially-observable problems: while linear

plans for the former model must conform with properties in state space, linear plans for partially-observable problems must conform with properties in belief space. This differences surface when the problems are allowed to express epistemic goals and conditions using modal logic, and place the plan-existence decision problem in different complexity classes. Linear plans is one extreme point in a discrete spectrum of solution forms for planning problems. The other extreme point is contingent plans in which there is a branch point for every possible observation at each time step, and thus the number of branch points is not bounded a priori. In the middle of the spectrum, there are plans with a bounded number of branch points. Thus, linear plans are plans with zero branch points and contingent plans are plans with unbounded number of branch points..." (Bonet, 2010: 245).

In a similar vein, governmental/national and (some) local approaches to ethnic relations as a part of social (re)integration and reconciliation processes in Croatia may be described as top-down or linear (deterministic) and bottom-up or nonlinear (contingent) approaches, respectively. Governmental policies are mostly linear, while local reactions to the policy are mostly contingent. The following example illustrates the main difference between the two approaches. In our former studies, namely, on "peace enclaves" in the former Yugoslavia and in Croatia in particular (see: Katunarić and Banovac, 2003) we found that during recent wars of the former Yugoslavia two types of local mixed communities, resided by Croats and Serbs – peace areas and conflict areas – had different relations to the national government. Peace areas were mainly indifferent to policies of their respective national governments which were mainly antagonistic, nationalistic oriented. On the other hand, while the governments protruded nationalistic rhetoric with or without justifying it with the current circumstances in which Yugoslav People Army along with Serb paramilitary troops attacked a number of places in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, conflict areas, unlike peace areas, were consensual or even more extreme in their nationalistic rhetoric and policies. In any case, a lot of nationalistic propaganda was made – both by Serbs and their leaderships in Knin (Croatia) and in Belgrade (Serbia) and by Croats and their local and national leaderships of the time – to instigate separation and conflict between local ethnic groups. Nowadays, the relations are almost reversed. The governments on the both sides, i.e. Croatian and Serbian cherish some rhetoric of peace and tolerance, while in a number of formerly conflict and nowadays post-conflict areas, in "unobservable" or "semi-observable" ways (to use the terms of the analysis of conformant planning), actually obstruct the reconciliation process (cf. Katunarić, 2010).<sup>3</sup>

In the next section we will expound some historical antecedents to conflict and peace processes in Balkans and Croatia in particular. The historical processes will be explained in terms of a center-periphery model applied both to the international

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3 As a Danish researcher in Vukovar said in a private talk with us, immediately before the war Serbs did not want to communicate or cooperate with Croats, for they felt stronger and more secure. Today, however, local Croats are those who do not want, for analogous reasons, get closer to local Serbs.

and the intra-national relations, and will be illustrated by some findings in our earlier studies on conflict and peace areas in the former Yugoslavia and in Croatia in particular. In conclusion, we will reinterpret the transition from war to peace and ensuing reemergence of national tolerance and civic consensus as a case illustrating the logics of linear and contingent, on the one hand, and conformant approaches to ethnic relations, on the other hand.

### **3. THE IMPERIAL LEGACY – NEW CENTERS AND NEW PERIPHERIES**

The imperial legacy in Balkans, including Croatia, addresses incapability of post-imperial nation-states to establish cooperative connections without or outside imperial connections. A part of this inability may be ascribed to the fact that peripheral areas within (primarily the Ottoman) empire were already separated and hermetic (Kiossev, 2003).<sup>4</sup> Also, 'like their Western European counterparts, the Balkan states have, by the most part, become mono-ethnic parliamentary democracies' (Wachtel, 2008: 124). Moreover, greatest parts of states of the former Yugoslavia (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo) have become 'mono-ethnic democracies' mostly due to ethnic cleansings beforehand, i.e. in the wars of the former Yugoslavia. Thus, mono-ethnicity and disconnections of neighboring ties are rather typical of the peripheral nationalism, as the European 'zone 3' and "zone 4" in Ernest Gellner's terms (Gellner, 1998: 54-58).

The center-periphery model generated thus far disabled peripheral areas to establish peer-to-peer connections with other similar areas within (former) empires and also civic ties across ethnic or religious boundaries. In fact, having served to imperial cores, peripheries have obtained a mentality of dependence and subjugation.<sup>5</sup> A rather similar center-periphery model has been adopted by the new nation-states in Balkans, including former Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav nation-states. In the former Yugoslavia, northwestern republics, i.e. Slovenia and Croatia, were economically developed, whilst southeastern republics – a part of Serbia with Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro – were relatively underdeveloped.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Serbia – for a short time, actually from 1988 to 1989 – played a role of the all-Yugoslavian mediator with Slobodan Milosevic who was unofficially proclaimed as a "new Tito". Very soon, but, Serbia, backed by the

4 'It is well known that the Ottoman Empire, although a strong imperial state, allowed some cultural, religious, and administrative autonomy to its vassal communities. As a consequence, these local communities (especially in their predominant, rural variant) became hermetic, autarchic, self-reproducing, and isolated from one another. Non-intensive trade and bad infrastructure also contributed to that isolation.' (Kiossev, 2003: 7)

5 A traditional saying in Croatia reads: „Croats are good servants of bad masters“.

6 The North-South cleavage actually preceded the nationalistic cleavages in the former Yugoslavia, and probably represented the prime cause rather than a episodic circumstance in the dissolution of the Yugoslavian federation.

Yugoslav People's Army, took the role of the "superpower", i.e. mini-empire, under pretext of providing protection for Serbs in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. More specifically, the Serbian leadership was not interested in keeping Slovenia within the Yugoslavian federation as much preventing exit of Croatia from the rest of the unites of the Federation. The main stronghold in this strategy was Serb population in Croatia, who until then enjoyed the status of the "constitutive nation" in the former Socialist Republic of Croatia. This practically means that no secession of Croatia from the rest of Yugoslavia would constitutionally be approved without a plebiscitary support of the Serb population in Croatia. Of course, such support was impossible to afford by the new Croatian government elected in 1991 and it decided to change the constitutional provisions, thus relegating Serbs the status of minority next to other minorities.<sup>7</sup>

After the wars of the former Yugoslavia the post-Yugoslavian states have consolidated their independence in the manners typical of post-imperial states. They reduced to a minimum or cut-off their cooperation links with neighboring (post-Yugoslavian) states, formerly republics of Yugoslavia, and "transplanted" the center-periphery model into their own areas. Mainly, capitals of Slovenia (Ljubljana), Croatia (Zagreb), Montenegro (Podgorica, formerly Titograd), Macedonia (Skopje) – all of them have become the core areas with central political and administrative power and prerogatives which attracted significantly more capital investments and other economic resources than national provinces. For example, formerly developed industrial basin in the area of Maribor in Slovenia has been relinquished. Nowadays, it becomes the epicenter of a massive social protests in Slovenia. It is similar with formerly industrial areas in Croatia outside Zagreb, in Serbia outside Belgrade, etc. Newly established states are mono-centric (cf. Rokkan & Urwin, 1983). From the very beginning, the post-Yugoslavian political elites were anxious to establish control over their peripheries, proclaiming any dissent from the peripheries as subversion of national interests and undermining of political order.<sup>8</sup> The pressure toward peripheries additionally hampered communications with neighboring ex-Yugoslav countries, thus provoking suspicion, mistrust and tensions.<sup>9</sup> This was a clear example of linear policy of the centers on their own right.

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7 This fact did not provoke disloyalty among all Serbs in Croatia. Actually, most Croatian Serbs have continued to live in urban areas, unlike most rural Serbs who opted for rebellion and territorial separation against the new Croatian regime.

8 The best example is the negative attitude of the President Tuđman and its administration against regionalism in Istria.

9 A number of issues caused by the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia represent permanent obstacles in communication between the new established political centers in the area of the former Yugoslavia. Some issues concern territorial borders between the new states, other are issues of minorities, then unresolved financial issues (e.g. the case with Ljubljanska banka which saving accounts for non-Slovenian citizens have been closed due to the dissolution of the federal state), ownership rights of former citizens of Yugoslavia, who meanwhile became foreign citizens), and, last but not least, a number of cultural issues (e.g. Cyrillic letter in Croatia, bilingualism, ethnic segregation in schools, etc.).

It is different with the new peripheries. Basically, there are two types of peripheries, which correspond to Rokkan and Urwin's typology. These are external (*landward*) and *interface* peripheries (cf. Rokkan, 1980). The landward periphery represents a specific cultural enclave. It is spatially isolated and often out of the scope and influences of the political center. This situation yields social closure, cultural traditionalism and political conservatism. On the other hand, *interface* peripheries emerge in border areas, where state borders do not coincide with ethnic boundaries. Traditionally, local populations are exposed to the influence of different centers of political power. Very often, these areas are economically developed. Also, they are able to politically mobilize local people on the basis of their specific political goals.

In Croatia peripheries have had a variety of potentials for mobilization, while Zagreb, both in conflict and immediate post-conflict period, conducted mono-centric policy. In particular, situation in the neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina was favorable to the centralism of Zagreb. This was due to well-known political aspirations of Tujman's government toward Bosnia and Herzegovina. Beside this, among many Croats, especially in Herzegovina, Zagreb was taken as the capital of all Croats. In such policy design, ethnic mobilization and national homogenization were irrevocable. Alongside, impulses of re-traditionalizing and de-secularizing the society were injected into the model of national integration forwarded by the central power. Nevertheless, the imposition of this political style was opposed by some peripheral areas.<sup>10</sup> Especially, the central power favorably, in paternalistic manner, allocates resources to politically loyal peripheral regions (Slavonija, Lika), unlike other peripheries-regions (Istria, Gorski kotar) which received less amount of resources respectively.<sup>11</sup> A significant part of domestic as well as immigrant population opts for the "logic of rentier" (cf. Rogić, 2000). Accordingly, the differences in structuring relationships between the center and the peripheries determined different levels inter-ethnic conflicts and/or tolerance in the peripheral areas. Presumably, the differential structure and dynamics of the center-periphery relations and of conflict and peace processes, respectively, influences the pace of rebuilding of inter-ethnic and inter-state connections in the area of the former Yugoslavia.

Of course, this hypothesis opens many questions that cannot entirely be answered in this paper. For instance, how far had relations between the center and

10 Opposition in Istria was strongest and is mostly due to its regionalist movement.

11 To be sure, Lika and Slavonia have experienced largest destruction and casualties in the years of war in Croatia. Nevertheless, favorable changes in the local economy in Lika until 2007 were mostly caused by building of the highway between Zagreb and Split (and Zadar). Thanks to these changes total number of employed people had increased (14.038), and the rate of unemployment has decreased to an average of 3.492 in 2007, which is still relatively high rate of 19,9% (*Analitički bilten*, 2007: 5). Also, the county's GNP per capita has increased (in 2001 the GNP p.c. was 1,606 Euros, far behind the Croatian average; yet, four years later it has been four times bigger with 6, 356 Euros, which is near to the national average level. Lastly, significant modernization advances are registered in education and culture. (*Statistički izvještaj* 2007. Zagreb: Državni zavod za statistiku).



the peripheries been influenced by historical processes (in the peripheral areas) predating conflicts in 1990s? Especially, how far events from the Second World War (i.e. the genocidal policy of the Independent State of Croatia against Serbs in Croatia) as well as circumstances created by Ottoman and Habsburg empires (e.g. the "borderland mentality" /*krajiški mentalitet*/ both among Serbs and among Croats in the sense of guarding over frontiers against the Turkish-Muslim world, respectively), influenced conflicts in 1990s? Also, how far political differences and conflict processes in the peripheries have been influenced by different levels of modernization processes and development in these areas (e.g. Istria is more modernized and developed than Lika)?

#### **4. THE DYNAMICS OF TOLERANCE: REGIONAL DIFFERENCES**

The dynamics of national tolerance in the former Yugoslavia, and Croatia in particular, must not necessarily be conditioned by the economic upward or downward cycles, unless local or national political elites want this, i.e. to convert economic or social issues into the rhetoric of nationalism. Our aim is to demonstrate how the rhetoric of nationalism had some controversial impacts in multiethnic areas in Yugoslavia in 1990s, and why today's policy of reconciliation and tolerance (led by the new Croatian government elected in 2011) has also controversial effects in some multiethnic areas. In both cases, formerly and nowadays, a discrepancy exists between the linearity of top-down and contingency of bottom-up approaches to inter-ethnic relations, and there is a need for making a conformant policy aimed at expanding ethnic tolerance and cooperation on local levels. Basically, differences between center and its peripheries as well as between different peripheries have determined dynamics of (post)conflict processes and peace in multiethnic areas. These differences have been confirmed by empirical research that coauthors of this paper carried out in different places in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past ten or more years (Katunarić, Banovac, 2003).

Differences between particular Croatian peripheries have been analyzed with more scrutiny within the research project "Modernization and collective identifications in the Croatian peripheries"<sup>12</sup>. A comparative analysis of three peripheral areas in Croatia - Istra, Lika and Gorski kotar – indicates that a set of characteristics exists that fit the topic of this paper. It is important to know that the three regions were subject of uniform centralized policies of the former (Socialist) Yugoslavia, including the economic policy. Nevertheless, results of these policies along with the processes of modernization in the regions were significantly different. Istria, for example, has accrued characteristics of the *interface* periphery. This has

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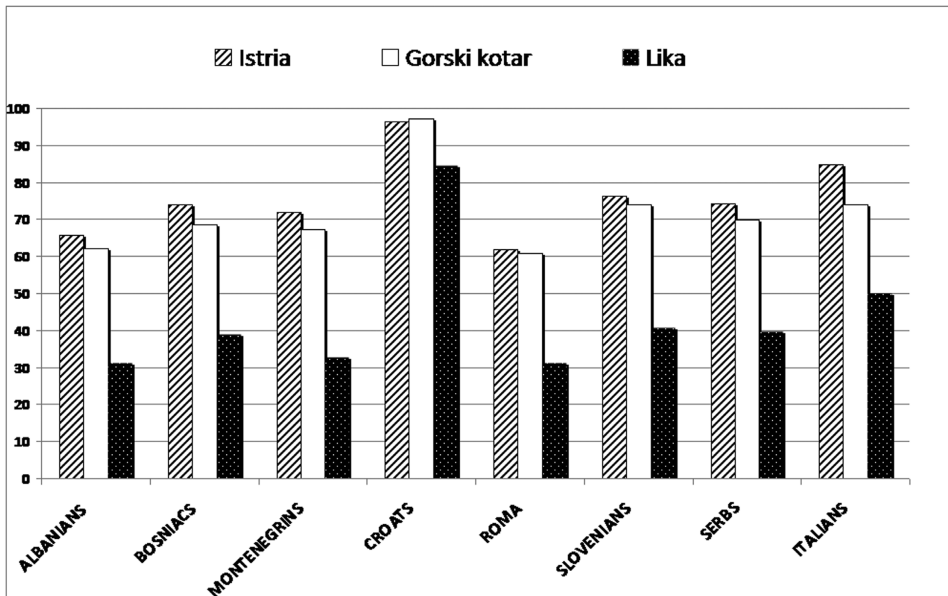
12 The research project is carried out within the Faculty of Law in the University of Rijeka and was funded by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia from 2002 to 2005.

resulted with reservations of the regional political elite towards political center(s) in Croatia, and also with high levels of internal cohesion and solidarity, that is reflected mostly in political mobilization in the terms of the Istrian regionalism. These characteristics are accompanied by relatively high level of the economic modernization, which has elicited a tendency toward regional autonomy (vis-à-vis the center, i.e. Zagreb). Also, multiculturalism and social openness of the Istrian space has become a specific instrumental value in the political strategy of the Istrian identity. Istria is both a brand for autonomy and a brand for the Croatian tourism. This is why the adjective "peripheral" for Istria is political rather than economic and cultural attribute (cf. Banovac, 1988). Accordingly, collective identities in Istria, including (Croatian) national identity, are more instrumental and utilitarian than primordial and emotionally driven.

The social space of Lika, on the other hand, is structured differently. For many centuries Lika was a borderland between different empires. This is one of the main cause of the persistence of traditional social and cultural patterns in the region. Besides, the processes of modernization of Lika during the Socialist Yugoslavia were relatively weak so that conflict between tradition and modernity was much stronger in Lika than other regions. In particular, the level of economic modernization was low. Such contexts are favorable for establishing close connections with the political center. Thus, Lika represents an example of the *landward* periphery (in Rokkan's terms), where economic underdevelopment and cultural conservatism prevail. Another important condition is that Lika was deeply involved into war in Croatia in 1990s. Additionally, nearness of the frontline and events of ethnic cleansing were sufficient as conditions for strengthening economical and political dependence of Lika on Zagreb and the politics of centralism. As a consequence of all such processes more exclusive collective identities with more primordial attachments characterize the population of Lika.

Finally, cultural characteristics of Gorski kotar are similar to those in Istria. This primarily concerns the cultural openness and interethnic tolerance. On the other hand, Gorski kotar, Lika alike, is a depopulated and economically underdeveloped area. Yet, with regard to the other two regions, Gorski kotar is specific in its political pluralism, since no political party, for longer time, has succeeded to assume a hegemonic position. Also, according to our surveys, most respondents from Gorski kotar stress out that the central government (in Zagreb) has abandoned the area and that it is the main cause of its economic backwardness.

Figure 1 illustrates differences between the three regions in terms of ethnic tolerance measured by social distance (among local respondents) toward other nationalities. Also, there are some obvious similarities between Istria and Gorski kotar as regards relatively small social/ethnic distance, unlike Lika which exhibits rather big social distance, i.e. amount of intolerance. Obviously, the level of economic modernization is not a predictor of tolerance, for Istria is developed and Gorski kotar an underdeveloped region.

**Figure 1:** Average acceptance of the others (in %)

Respondents in Istria are mostly willing to establish closer contacts with members of other nationalities. However, the openness of Istrians is biggest toward Italians, and smallest toward Roma. In Gorski kotar analogous differences exist when distance toward Italians and Serbs are concerned. Social distance is biggest in Lika so that the average acceptability of the others (e.g. Montenegrins) twice time lower than in other two regions. More specifically, no ethnic group is welcomed by most respondents (in Lika), except Italians and, of course, Croats (Banovac and Boneta, 2006: 38).

Significant differences between the conflict and peace areas have also been confirmed by results of survey obtained in late 2008 within the empirical research project "Social integration and collective identities in multiethnic areas of Croatia".<sup>13</sup> The foundations of interethnic tolerance were examined on the differences between the peace and conflict areas with regard to respondents' ethnic distance and their attitudes about the possibility of coexistence with members of other ethnic groups.

<sup>13</sup> The survey was conducted in six multiethnic communities in Croatia: Rovinj, Vrbovsko, Daruvar, Gospić, Plaški, Pakrac (N=807). The first three were defined as peace areas, and the later as conflict areas.

**Table 1:** Willingness to enter a marriage with a ethnic minority

| <b>Marriage – Italians</b>       |         |          |                               |         |          |
|----------------------------------|---------|----------|-------------------------------|---------|----------|
| <i>Peace Areas</i>               | $\beta$ | <i>p</i> | <i>Conflict Areas</i>         | $\beta$ | <i>p</i> |
| Ethnonational Identification     | -0.202  | 0.00     | Political Orientation         | -0.142  | 0.01     |
| $R^2$                            | 0.069   |          | Ethnonational identification  | -0.179  | 0.02     |
| $F = 3.552 \quad p < 0.00$       |         |          | $R^2$                         | 0,092   |          |
|                                  |         |          | $F = 4,828 \quad p < 0,00$    |         |          |
| <b>Marriage – Serbs</b>          |         |          |                               |         |          |
| <i>Peace Areas</i>               | $\beta$ | <i>p</i> | <i>Conflict Areas</i>         | $\beta$ | <i>p</i> |
| Socio-Territorial Identification | 0.121   | 0.02     | Political Orientation         | -0.254  | 0.00     |
| Ethnonational Identification     | -0.162  | 0.00     | Ethnonational Identification  | -0.234  | 0.00     |
| $R^2$                            | 0.091   |          | Euro-political Identification | -0.114  | 0.02     |
| $F = 4.828 \quad p < 0.00$       |         |          | $R^2$                         | 0,197   |          |
|                                  |         |          | $F = 11.700 \quad p < 0.00$   |         |          |
| <b>Marriage – Roma</b>           |         |          |                               |         |          |
| <i>Peace Areas</i>               | $\beta$ | <i>p</i> | <i>Conflict Areas</i>         | $\beta$ | <i>p</i> |
| Socio-Territorial Identification | 0.111   | 0.04     | Level of Education            | -0.128  | 0.01     |
| $R^2$                            | 0.045   |          | Political Orientation         | -0.162  | 0.00     |
| $F = 2.284 \quad p < 0.02$       |         |          | Ethnonational Identification  | -0.271  | 0.00     |
|                                  |         |          | $R^2$                         | 0.160   |          |
|                                  |         |          | $F = 9.045 \quad p < 0.00$    |         |          |

From Table 1 it is evident that there are significant differences between the peace and conflict areas regarding the willingness to enter into a marriage with national minorities. For example, in the conflict areas the willingness to enter into a marriage with the Italians, Serbs and Roma is linked with the political orientation of respondents. Respondents of the right political orientation are more reluctant to enter into a marriage with the specified minorities. At the same time, in the peace areas this issue is not significantly correlated with political orientation. On the other hand, results show that in the peace areas socio-territorial dimension of identification is positively correlated with the respondents' willingness to enter into the marriage with Serbs and Roma. Respondents, who emphasised socio-territorial dimension of identification as important in life, indicated a greater willingness to enter into a marriage with the stated minorities. Overall, the differences suggest that the willingness of respondents to enter into the marriage with national minorities in the peace and conflict areas are, at least to some extent, structured by disparate impacts of diversified socio-political discourses.

For example, while in the conflict areas the question of entering into a marriage with national minorities is important "political" issue, in the peace areas that is not

the case. On the other hand, respondents in the peace areas, who emphasised the socio-territorial dimension of identification as more important in their life, are more prone to enter into a marriage with members of national minorities. That is not the case in the conflict areas. These differences suggest that interethnic relations in the conflict areas have largely been structured by nationalist discourse, which in time of war has been spread both by Serbian and Croatian national political centres. At the same time, it can be concluded that in the peace areas "alternative" social discourse has been generated. It was related to respondents' socio-territorial identification, which has resisted nationalist exclusivity and managed to maintain interethnic relations. Consequently, it seems reasonable to suppose that the efforts of local elites in the creation and maintenance of a socio-political discourse, which defies the exclusivity of nationalism, are an important factor in the preservation of interethnic tolerance and preventing ethnic conflict. The reliability of the previous conclusion is also confirmed by the differences presented in the peace and conflict areas regarding the attitude toward possible coexistence of ethnic groups.

**Table 2:** *The attitude about possible coexistence of ethnic groups after the Croatian War of Independence*

| Areas of        | No |      | Yes, but not to the extent as before the War |      | Yes, completely |      | There was no coexistence |     |   |
|-----------------|----|------|--|------|-----------------|------|--------------------------|-----|---|
|                 | f  | %    | f  | %    | f               | %    | f                        | %   |   |
| <b>Peace</b>    | 13 | 3.1  | 194  | 46.3 | 210             | 50.1 | 2                        | 0.5 | $\chi^2=115.133$ ;<br>$p<0.00$ ;<br>Cramer's<br>$V=0.379$ |
| <b>Conflict</b> | 45 | 11.7 | 271  | 70.8 | 60              | 15.7 | 7                        | 1.8 |   |

The data from the Table 2 demonstrate that the differences between the areas, regarding the question of possible coexistence of ethnic groups, are statistically significant. For example, in the peace areas even 50.1% believe that coexistence can be entirely achieved, while in the conflict areas it considers only 15.7% of respondents. Just as well, in the conflict areas 11.7% believe that the coexistence is not possible, while only 3.1% of respondents in the peace areas do not agree with this thesis. According to the presented results, the openness of ethnic boundaries in the peace areas is significantly higher than in the conflict areas. This suggests that the prevailing socio-political discourse which forms the foundation of social solidarity in peace areas is significantly less burdened with the nationalist intolerance than one prevailing in the conflict areas.

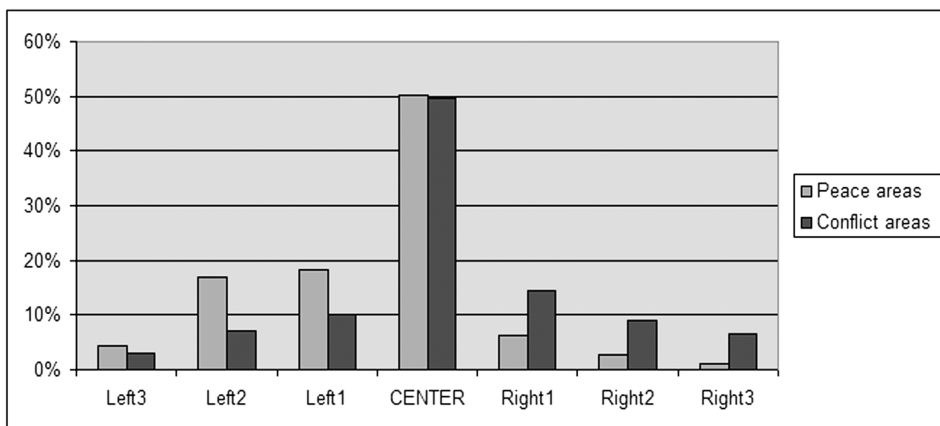
Two other variables also influence the levels of (in)tolerance and the relations between center and peripheries, respectively. First variable concerns political orientations (of respondents). In this case, people with right-wing political orientation show less tolerance than people with leftist political orientation. Another variable is religiosity. Religious people are less tolerant in this respect.

**Table 3:** Social factors affecting the political identification of respondents

| <i>Political Identification</i> |         |          |                        |         |          |
|---------------------------------|---------|----------|------------------------|---------|----------|
| <i>Peace Areas</i>              | $\beta$ | <i>p</i> | <i>Conflict Areas</i>  | $\beta$ | <i>p</i> |
| Religiosity                     | -0.272  | 0,00     | Religiosity            | -0.209  | 0.00     |
| Gender Conservatism             | 0.128   | 0,01     | National Exclusivism   | 0.178   | 0.00     |
| National Exclusivism            | 0.159   | 0,00     | $R^2$                  | 0.104   |          |
| $R^2$                           | 0.184   |          | $F=4.235 \quad p<0.00$ |         |          |
| $F=8.428 \quad p<0.00$          |         |          |                        |         |          |

The results presented in Table 3 show that political identification in both areas is significantly correlated with the degree of religiosity, as well as with the degree of national exclusiveness. Due to the fact that the smaller value on the scale of religiosity also represents a higher level of religiosity, it is obvious that more religious respondents are generally more identified with the right political orientation. It is necessary to point out that research findings also show the religiosity as an essential component of respondents' ethno-national identity. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that ethno-national dimension of identity has different importance to respondents of different political orientations. Another significant predictor in this regression model confirms the previous assumption. The respondents, who accept the views of national exclusivism, are also more inclined to identify with the right political orientation, and vice versa. That is to say, the respondents who do not support the views of national exclusivism are more prone to identifying themselves with the political left. Consequently, political orientation is an important determinant of the respondents' positioning towards ethnic "other".

**Figure 2:** Political orientation (in %)



The results shown in Figure 2 confirm previous conclusions. In other words, there are significant differences in the acceptance of political orientation in the peace and conflict areas. It can be clearly seen that the respondents in the peace

and conflict areas are grouped on the opposite sides of the scale. For example, in contrast to the conflict areas (20.2%), in the peace areas almost twice as many respondents (39.7%) are identified with the left political orientation. Meanwhile, in the conflict areas (30.2%) almost three times more respondents are identified with the right political orientation than in the peace areas (10.1%). Therefore, the respondents in the peace area, on average, are slightly more inclined to identify with the left political orientation, and those from the conflict areas with the right one (in the peace areas the overall average score was 3:49, while in the conflict area the score was 4:19). The result undoubtedly leads to the conclusion that rhetoric and discourse of Croatian left-wing political parties were proved more suitable for the construction of opened interethnic ties and tolerance than the rhetoric and discourse of right-wing political parties.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the whole dynamics of center-periphery relations also depends on changes that happen in the political center itself. In the time of strongest conflicts in the beginning of 1990s, and also in the post-conflict period, certain traits of political patronage of the ruling party (Croatian Democratic Union) over regional leadership (also members of the Union) appear in Lika. Entirely different attitude of the national leadership was exerted toward regional movement in Istria, which fought against nationalist exclusionism (of Zagreb) and fostered multiple rather than categorical or exclusive (macro)collective identities.<sup>14</sup> Such pressure from below elicited with specific portions of votes in the regional (county) elections (see Tables 5 and 6). Lika, for example, gives most permanent support to the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), while in Istria most support is constantly given to Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS).

*Table 5: Votes for the assembly of the Istra county (in %)*

| Year                              | 1993   | 1997   | 2001  | 2005   | 2009   |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| <b>IDS (HNS)*</b>                 | 74.17  | 46.35  | 51.79 | 41.93  | 43.72  |
| <b>HDZ (-HKDU-HSP-HPS-HČSP)**</b> | 15.52  | 16.70  | 9.15  | 11.59  | 10.62  |
| <b>HSLs (-HNS-LS-DZS-HSS)***</b>  | 6.22   | 7.86   | 4.63  | 7.56   | -      |
| <b>SDP (-SSH-SDH)****</b>         | 1.70   | 8.34   | 14.19 | 10.54  | 8.00   |
| <b>IDF</b>                        | -      | 12.88  | -     | 8.47   | 2.88   |
| <b>HSU (HSLs)*</b>                | -      | -      | -     | 9.24   | 7.81   |
| <b>Others</b>                     | 2.39   | 7.87   | 20.23 | 10.57  | 26.97  |
| <b>Total</b>                      | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.0 | 100.00 | 100.00 |

\* Coalitionin 2009. \*\*Coalitionin 2001. \*\*\*Coalitionin 2005. \*\*\*\*Coalitionin 1993.

Source: Arhiva tajništva IDS-a; www.izbori.hr

14 An activist of HDZ-a (priest Anto Baković) spoke on a pre-election meeting in Istria the following words: "People without its own state is like shit in raining weather". Subsequently, the future President Tudman, at that time the candidate of HDZ for the post of the Croatian President, uttered that those people who dislike the new government should leave the country (Benić, 1990).

**Table 6:** Votes for the assembly of Lika county (in %)

|                                | 1993   | 1997   | 2001   | 2005   | 2009   |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>HDZ (HSS-HSS-HSP-HSLS)*</b> | 71.6   | 57.52  | 39.46  | 49.48  | 66.27  |
| <b>HSLS</b>                    | 15.2   | 10.21  | 7.80   | 4.66   | -      |
| <b>HSS (-SDP-HNS)**</b>        | 9.2    | 17.51  | 14.00  | 19.57  | -      |
| <b>HNS-SDP(-HKDU)***</b>       | -      | 7.14   | 13.20  | -      | 17.97  |
| <b>HSP</b>                     | -      | 3.95   | 7.30   | 6.64   | -      |
| <b>SNS</b>                     | -      | -      | 10.15  | 5.56   | -      |
| <b>SDSS</b>                    | -      | -      | -      | 7.08   | 10.61  |
| <b>Others</b>                  | 4.0    | 10.81  | 8.09   | 7.01   | 5.14   |
| <b>Total</b>                   | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |

\*Coalitions in 2009; \*\* Coalitions in 2005; \*\*\*Coalitions in 1997. Sources: Banovac, Blažević, Boneta (2004:129); www.izbori.hr

Our central point is that center-periphery model is differential, i.e. two-sided. In the Croatian case, center conducts different policies toward different peripheries. Such way, against a consistent conformant policy of the center toward all peripheries, center is "conformant" almost exclusively to peripheries that express their loyalty to the center – as far as the politics of HDZ as a ruling party on national level was concerned. On the other hand, peripheries with more tolerance toward the others, i.e. Istria and Gorski kotar, were treated in non-conformant way. Thus, a linear approach is supplanted by the center to a periphery (Lika), while non-conformant approach is demonstrated in other two cases (Istria and Gorski kotar). In other words, approach in favor of national/ethnic tolerance on local level has remained contingent, more or less self-managed by local elites and local people, rather than deterministic, i.e. actively supported by the government.

As regards approach(es) by the newly elected government in Croatia (from 2011 a center-left coalition assumed the power), it demonstrates certain decisiveness in implementing the legislation so far, which guarantees equal treatment as well as provision of specific rights to minorities, Serbs in the first place (the issue of the usage of Cyrillic alphabet in the area of Vukovar, where Serbs are quantitatively the major nationality). Yet, the main task of the new government seems to be re-stabilization of the political relations between Croatia and Serbia (somewhat spoiled after nationalistic radicals have assumed power in Serbia), rather than soften the harsh political climate in Lika, for instance.



## **5. PARADOXES OF THE TOP-DOWN POLICIES OF NATIONALISM: "PEACE ENCLAVES"**

In spite of the fierce nationalistic propaganda and ensuing ethnic conflicts escalation into war in the beginning of 1990s in Croatia, from 1993 to 1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in 1999 in Serbia and Kosovo – some areas resided by Croats and Serbs, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, and Serbs and Albanians, respectively, were spared of internal conflicts of the major ethnic groups in those areas. These areas are named "peace enclaves"/"peace cradles" in our studies carried out under auspices of the Council of Europe from 2001 to 2003. Research has underlined the importance of bottom-up approaches in favor of prolonging traditional tolerance between different communities. Herein, we will present some highlights from the four studies in common, which have not been published. Aim of this presentation is to describe in more details different messages sent from bellow by peace enclaves in comparison with simultaneous messages sent from conflict areas.

Several cities in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia/Kosovo were selected as peace enclaves (PE) and conflict areas (CA), respectively. These are: Pula (PE) and Osijek (CA) in Croatia, Tuzla (PE) and Sarajevo (CA) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>15</sup> And indeed, in the PE there hardly were any clashes between local ethnic communities, while at the same time clashes and warfare predominated in the CA. In any case, PE did not fall apart eventually. More details about differences between the two types of areas are given in the next pages.

### ***Pula (PE) and Osijek (CA)***

This section has brought a narrative report which summarises the answers given by sixteen respondents in the interviews, eight of them in each city. The answers followed the questions about different topics of the interview. The interviews were carried out from June to October 2001. Some of the respondents have had important roles in the crises in 1991, such as being the members of the Crisis Management Headquarters (e.g., in Pula), and some occupied important positions in the community, without being immediately engaged in the crisis management or defence activities (e.g. an economist and a Catholic priest in Osijek). All respondents were selected as, conditionally speaking, "representatives" of different sectors in the community. We primarily analyze their accounts, as we presume that the ways they, or some of them, define the roots of peace and conflict outcomes, as well as the ways they describe or explain the consequences of these outcomes, might have contributed to the creation of the situation.

In ***Pula (PE)*** several reasons are listed by respondents which are considered to elicit peace in their community. Virtually all of them see the tradition of

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<sup>15</sup> Research has included Kosovska Kamenica (PE) and Kosovska Mitrovica (CA) in Kosovo and (at that time) Serbia, respectively, but for some technical reasons we cannot present here results of this part of research.

multiculturalism and tolerance in Pula, and in Istria in general, being the main cause of the peace. They consider this tradition as a long-lasting. One respondent explained this as a consequence of the pacification imposed by foreign domination in the past, namely that "policies of the foreign powers... made the local forms of aggressive nationalism being watered". Respondents are unison in their view that political situation and social-cultural context (practically devoid of expressing ethnic prejudices or readiness to fight the enemy, i.e., the Army in Pula) were opposite to what the political centre in Zagreb expected. This in turn caused political disagreements between the two parties as well as pressures from the centre on leaderships of Pula and Istria for not being "enough resolute and aggressive", and "because there was no conflict /with the Yugoslav Army/ at all". For example, one respondent, with an important political position in Pula at that time, said that when he and his collaborators visited a ministry in Zagreb in order to gather information and suggestions for what to do next, "we were asked why not a single bullet was shot /in Pula/"

In *Osijek (CA)* respondents were mostly polarised in their explanations of the roots of the war. Some of them, similarly to respondents in Pula, see the roots of the war in the actions of all political centres in Yugoslavia, albeit most guilty is ascribed to the Serb side. Other respondents see the war as the consequence of the privileged position of Serbs as well as their attempt at making a unitary Yugoslavia. All respondents say that the situation in Osijek was agreeable to the expectations of the political centre. Some, however, are disappointed with the amounts of relief Zagreb sent to Osijek at the time when Osijek mostly suffered from the war. Most of the interviewed have the impression that a policy was carried in Osijek by extremist individuals, groups and parties, who did everything that the official policy in Zagreb could not do due to the pressure and control imposed by the international community. "Zagreb had a diplomatic tactic", one respondent said. "As a matter of fact, there were some individuals and groups who radicalised the situation, while the other were moderate, prone to make compromises, but as a whole we were basically unified. Otherwise, who knows what might have happened with all of us".

### *Tuzla (PE) and Sarajevo (CA)*

In Tuzla local leaders perceived their relations to the political center in a way similar to the interviewed in Pula. Situation in Sarajevo, on the other hand, was more delicate with regard the fact that official Sarajevo was politically cross-pressured by official Zagreb and official Belgrade.

#### *Tuzla*

All interviewed see the tradition of multi-ethnic composition and tolerance as the main reason for the absence of ethnic conflict and violence in the period of 1992-5. They take a few examples from the history of Tuzla, primarily what different

political and religious leaders did in order to preserve peace and harmony in the midst of war and ethnic violence in its surroundings. In other words, the period of 1992-5 was not the first serious temptation in terms of peace and tolerance. Some of the interviewed mentioned that as much as 30 different nationalities used to live side by side in this area. Also, the composition of the most numerous social classes, i.e., working class, in this area was multi-ethnic as well (apart from Muslims, Croats and Serbs, there were Hungarians, Czechs, Jews, Germans, Italians, etc.). Likewise, all respondents point out that national centres both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the rest of the former Yugoslavia mostly disliked developments in Tuzla: "They did not like that what happened in Tuzla. *They wanted to destroy us from inside by all means*" (former imam). "In an issue of the newspaper *Ljiljan* from 1995, the authorities in Tuzla were labelled as Serbo-philic and the KOS-agents (Yugoslav secret police). It was a call for a lynching" (former secretary of MUP). "Sarajevo treated us as the 'nest of cowards' and 'red Tuzla'... Eventually, in B&H and in Tuzla a big robbery happened, of humanitarian relief, which was diverted to privileges. A thug got rich at the expense of somebody's suffering, and, of course, the former were protected by patrons. Here the West brought in corruption. In politics, nepotism reigns, in industry and health – neo-socialism. The principle of political loyalty overwhelmed national parties. The result is manifested in recent elections. Citizens are lethargic and they abstain more and more from voting" (director of the art gallery). The following words of the President of the Forum of Citizens of Tuzla succinctly express the meaning of the current situation in Tuzla, i.e., why the city cannot open a new window of opportunity: "*Tuzla is a punished city*".

### *Sarajevo*

The interviewed assert that ethnic conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was imported from outside, notably Belgrade and Zagreb. First Milosevic took the lead in dissolving Bosnia and then Tudjman accepted it as a deal in dividing the country into a Croatian and Serbian part. An interesting account is given by a former member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (a professor at the University of Sarajevo, where he taught and continues to teach), who describes the dissolution of B&H as a two-phased process, which corresponded to Milosevic's plans for managing the rest of Yugoslavia after the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. The first plan envisaged Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of a mangled Yugoslavia, i.e., without Slovenia and a part of Croatia, but with the parts of Croatia traditionally inhabited by Serbs. According to this account, Milosevic first offered Alija Izetbegovic the presidency of the new Yugoslavia, but Izetbegovic rejected this proposal. Milosevic then activated his alternative plan, which was performed more efficiently; namely, he offered Tudjman the deal of partitioning Bosnia and Herzegovina into Serbian and Croatian parts.<sup>16</sup> Another account, basically similar to

16 Of course, we could not check the validity of this allegation. We only remind that it was told by a person who was an eye-witness of the talk between Milosevic and Izetbegovic.

the former, is given by university professor, Bosniac by nationality. He contends that the conflict between Zagreb and Belgrade was central and motivated by their interest in seizing the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The territory is not being assumed as an economic resource, he said, but rather as a prerequisite for extending the spatial definition of their, i.e. Croatian and Serbian, nation-states.

In general, all respondents assert that ethnic conflict and violence was induced from outside or above, for there was no intolerance among (common) people. Although this may sound naive, this "private" theory fits well into the academic theory of instrumental ethnicity, which sees conflicts as a product of the top-down political influence.

In the research project "Social integration and collective identities in multiethnic areas of Croatia" particular attention has been paid to relationship between social and institutional aspects of conflict and post-conflict processes. As often emphasized (Schneckener, 2004; Wolf, 2004; Wolf, 2006; Tiryakian, 2004; Guelke, 2004; Olzak, 2006; Horowitz, 2001), the institutional aspects do not affect just the process of ethnic identification<sup>17</sup>, but also the processes of conflict prevention, ethnic mobilization, and post-conflict integration. A. Varshney in the study of ethnic violence in Indian cities shows that civic associations of members coming from different ethnic groups are more resistant to disintegration processes than Indian cities in which such associations do not exist. Even if a conflict occurs it does not necessarily have to be violent. As Varsney points out, "it can take an institutionalized form if ethnic demands for higher political representation, affirmative action, or personal laws are pursued in assemblies, elections, bureaucratic corridors, and nonviolent movements and protests" (Varshney 2002:25).

For these reasons, we expected that the results of empirical studies would point to significant differences in the perception of social institutions in the areas of ethnic conflict and ethnic peace.

Results confirm that the differences between the areas of peace areas and conflict areas were statistically significant. However, it was surprising that greater trust in institutions was reported in conflict areas. The analysis of responses concerning different types of institutions shows some interesting trends. First of all, the average trust in social institutions is very low in general (in conflict areas the overall average score was 2.22, and in peace enclaves 2.09, respectively). What we consider important in the analysis is not merely the absolute level of trust in individual institutions, but the relative differences between the areas of peace and conflict. If we do so, it becomes quite clear that in the background of the trust in institutions some significant differences operate as regards local people's values and political orientations. As shown in Table 6. the previous assumption is confirmed by the results of the multiple regression analysis.

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17 As M. Perkmann says, "they serve as criteria for action and non-action" and "as such they are an important factor in the constitution of identity" (Perkmann 1998).

**Table 6:** Determinants of trust in the institutions of the national political system

| <i>Trust In The Institutions Of The National Political System</i> |         |      |                            |         |      |
|---|---------|------|----------------------------|---------|------|
| <i>Peace Areas</i>  | $\beta$ | $p$  | <i>Conflict Areas</i>      | $\beta$ | $p$  |
| Level of Education  | 0.153   | 0.00 | Social Pessimism           | -0.237  | 0.00 |
| $R^2$   | 0.021   |      | Political Orientation      | 0.139   | 0.00 |
| $F = 8.123 \quad p < 0.04$  |         |      | Ethnic Segregacionism      | 0.120   | 0.02 |
|   |         |      | Europeism                  | 0.107   | 0.04 |
|   |         |      | $R^2$                      | 0.087   |      |
|   |         |      | $F = 8,925 \quad p < 0,02$ |         |      |

The results show significant differences in the area of social factors according to which respondents in peace and conflict areas base their trust in the institutions of the national political system (government, parliament, political parties). These differences are reflected in the number of statistically significant predictors, as well as in the relation of the amount of variance which was explained by those predictors. In the peace and conflict areas, trust in the stated institutions, at least considering the factors that are being tested in this model, is based on different symbolic and motivational foundations. However, the level of education in the peace areas is the only significant predictor. It explains about 2% of the variance which is related with respondents' trust in the institutions of the national political system. On the other hand, in the conflict areas trust in that kind of institutions is not significantly connected with the respondents' education. Four different predictors, in the conflict areas, interpret slightly less than 9% of the mentioned criterion variables variance. It is evident that the respondents who do not support the belief of social pessimism, who see themselves as the members of right-wing political orientation, who support the values of ethnic segregation and the Croatian entry into the EU show more confidence in the national political system institutions. The differences are meaningful because they show no significant correlation in the peace areas between the trust in the specified institutions, acceptance of the nationalist value system and the right political orientation, as is the case in the conflict areas. Accordingly, it should be concluded that in the conflict areas perception of the national political system and trust in its institutions was significantly shaped by the nationalist ideology, which was advocated by the elites from the national centres of political power during the war in Former Yugoslavia. Therewithal, the peace areas results show that the perception of the mentioned institutions is not significantly burdened with ethno-nationalist political discourse, as is the case in the conflict areas.

Altogether, the results in conflict and peace areas are noteworthy due to the fact that they demonstrate statistically significant differences regarding trust in institutions such as parliament, government, public administration, military, police, political parties and church (see: Mrakovčić, 2010). Accordingly, it should be concluded that institutions subordinated directly to the national government are more firmly rooted in the conflict areas simply because these areas were predominantly

marked with nationalist discourse. Further more, the low average estimates by respondents as regards trust in institutions indicate instability and contingency of the new established institutional order, which is particularly evident in the perception of corruption in Croatia in virtually all levels of the institutional system in the center as well as peripheries.<sup>18</sup> Another and yet paradoxical aspect of institutional trust is manifested in an extraordinary trust in "uniforms" (military, police, church). Although this trust is somewhat higher in conflict areas, we generally maintain that both in local levels and in center authoritarian values (indicating respect for hierarchies) are pretty strong. Nevertheless, in conditions of the war as well as political change in the 1990s, the institutional instability, paradoxically, opened the space for both instigating conflict and conflict appeasing with conciliatory solutions.

An example of what happened in Pula in early 90-ties may serve as an illustration of the latter. The interviewed told us that during the war the military orders from the center (in Zagreb) were communicated mainly through the phone, for avoiding official recordings of the communications. This way, as he explained, various interpretations of the commands were possible, for none wanted to take responsibility if something would have been going wrong in the local area. Thanks to such circumstances, the local Headquarter of the Croatian Army has simply abandoned the order that commanded a massive armed attack on airport in Pula, which was guarded by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) troops. The interviewed said that he and other members of the local Headquarters estimated that such an action against the JNA might elicit a catastrophe for the city. Eventually, they dismissed the local military troops and sent them home to sleep!

Paradoxically again, but now in the context of relatively peaceful development and in the processes of reintegration of local communities and their multiethnic composition, respectively, the behavior of the political center becomes contingent rather than linear. This happens primarily due to incomplete institutionalization process on the national level. The lack of clear institutional procedures opens the space for arbitrariness and corruptive activities. As a consequence, political and economic actions controlled by the political center become volatile, i.e. contingent. Basically, policies toward some delicate issues concerning minorities' rights are improvised, particularly due to political change (of the government) following elections. Actually, even when the official policy in Zagreb principally advocates inter-ethnic tolerance, which is in accordance with the Croatian constitution and laws protecting minority rights, instruments are proverbially lacking for the implementation of such policy. In contrast to the wartime, nowadays resistance against tolerance originates mainly from below, i.e. local communities.<sup>19</sup>

18 This conclusion is made on the basis of several studies in Croatia – see: Kregar J., Sekulić D., Šporer Ž. (2010) *Korupcija i povjerenje*. Zagreb, Centar za demokraciju i pravo Miko Tripalo.

19 This is exemplified by the case of the governmental attempt of legal introducing of Cyrillic alphabet in the public space in Vukovar. Actually, local Croats massively reject the legal action of the government and the national government is currently reluctant as regards

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

*"Reconciliation is a process not an end, and it's never too early to start"*  
(Cohen, 2012: 4)

Amounts of national intolerance toward Serbs in Croatia in general, on aggregate national level, are reduced today if compared with 1990s, with variations as regards different multiethnic areas (cf. Hećimović, Brajović, Ilin, 2010). Still, the level of intolerance is relatively high (when compared with some other countries in Europe, like Switzerland or Rumanian Transylvania, for example) and it can hardly be lowered this time without appropriate changes in interstate relation between Croatia and Serbia.

Currently, the interstate relations are marked with two events. One is already mentioned release of the Croatian generals by the Hague tribunal, and the other is the situation with introducing Cyrillic alphabet on public places and signs in Vukovar. It is interesting to note that reactions of representative of Serb organizations in Croatia as regards the former case were rather moderate and reconciliatory, unlike the reactions of the Serbian government.<sup>20</sup> In the latter case, differences between Serb representatives in Croatia and the Serbian government were rather small, i.e. more rhetorical than substantial (see: [www.balkans.aljazeera.net](http://www.balkans.aljazeera.net) › VIJESTI › Balkan). On the other hand, Croatian associations of the war veterans, mostly close to far right-political groups, state that they would be rather to see "Turkish, Chinese or Japanese" than Serb Cyrillic signs in Vukovar. ([www.24sata.hr/.../prosvjed-radi-cirilice-vukovar-nikada-nece-biti-by...](http://www.24sata.hr/.../prosvjed-radi-cirilice-vukovar-nikada-nece-biti-by...)). *This incidence provides a clear example of deterioration of interethnic relations in a Croatian multiethnic region. On the other hand, situation in other regions where Croats and Serbs live together is less dramatic, although some negative impacts of the "shockwave" from Vukovar cannot be ruled out.*

In sum, linearity of the policy making in the center is not a permanent process. It is interrupted from time to time with zigzagging. On both sides, Zagreb and Belgrade, changes of the political course vis-à-vis interstate relations and intrastate policies toward nationalities, Croats and Serbs, are immanent to changing governments. Nevertheless, more than contingent, the governmental policies are subject to international surveillance, mostly by the EU. It would be more correct then to denote Brussels as the carrier of the linear, i.e. deterministic, policy in the sense of advancing national tolerance among nations in the neighborhood, i.e. Croatia and Serbia in this case. On the other hand, linearity and contingency,

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the process of implementation. We cannot guess, of course, what will be result of the new contingency, and whether a "conformant" policy solution is possible to apply in this particular case. Most protesters demand a rather long postponement (for ten or more years) of the implementation of the right of Serbs to deal with Cyrillic alphabet in the area of Vukovar.

20 „The Hague Tribunal killed again all victims fallen during and after the Storm“ (Croatian military operation in 1995), says Dragan Marković, president of the party "United Serbia" that is a member of current ruling coalition in Serbia ([www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/reakcije-zr-bije...je.../647017.aspx](http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/reakcije-zr-bije...je.../647017.aspx)).

respectively, characterize different peripheral regions in Croatia. Lika is thus "linear" and less adaptive to the processes of reconciliation and tolerance between Croats and Serbs. It is similar with the Croatian war veterans. Most respondents in Lika alike, most veteran associations steadily evade rhetoric and policy of reconciliation and tolerance in favor of expressing their suspicion and intolerance toward Serbs.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Istria and Gorski kotar are more contingent to reconciliation process.

Most likely, top-down and bottom-up approaches to ethnic relations and reconciliation processes may – at least in the Croatian case – become conformant when political elites in a center and a periphery have similar positions, in this case favorable attitudes toward the reconciliation processes, that they believe that living with the others is possible and wishful at the same time. Nevertheless, the real politics is divided between different political actors on national and local levels. As a rule, a ruling party hardly cooperates with politically opponent parties on local or regional level. Hence their policies toward minorities are rarely conformant. Very often, this results with failures of reforms, such as decentralization processes in combination with devolution of prerogatives of center down to peripheries (cf. Katunarić, 2003). Some authors describe the incapacitation of peripheries in Croatia as a consequence of a long-term developmental inability which prevents them from acting as autonomous subjects of development (cf. Rogić and Lugiarić, 2005). However, the notion of "developmental inability" is easy to manipulate as a self-fulfilling prophecy of a political center. More specifically, in the policy of interethnic reconciliation and tolerance a regional "inability" might be the result of preventing of allotting of resources, primarily financial ones (e.g. for building of a multiethnic cultural center), to oppositional political group in a peripheral region. Alternatively, the reluctance toward closer cooperation with a politically opposed county, such as Lika is nowadays (traditionally ruled by HDZ), vis-à-vis the center, i.e. Zagreb, ruled by a center-leftist coalition of political parties, may simply be motivated by inertia or, much worse, the "spoils system" (ruling parties usually give rewards in terms of new administrative positions only to their loyal cadres).<sup>22</sup>

21 For instance, for them (veterans) as well as for a number of Croats in Vukovar the Cyrillic alphabet is a proxy for Serb aggression against Croatia (this statement is broadcasted as a prime-time news of the national Croatian TV-channel a month ago).

22 The spoils system can be identified within remits of the current government in Croatia as well. Yet, much before Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Croatian Democratic Union, the two major political parties in Croatia, have established a "historic compromise" in this regard. The compromise consists of a consensual practice of employing loyal people on each side independently. Tacitly, this implies that new people, employed by the current government, should be added to – i.e. they should not replace – individuals in the public administration employed by preceding government (of HDZ and SDP, respectively). Otherwise, when the deal is broken – and it happened once in 2001, when SDP started to replace HDZ cadres with its own cadres in public administration – then the opponent party alarms domestic and international political community that in Croatia an anti-democratic politics of "retaliation" (*revanšizam*) emerges. To our best recall, as a consequence of the HDZ political campaign, the center-left coalition terminated its campaign of replacing cadres loyal to HDZ. As a consequence, one party obstructs the other one on regional and local levels.



Eventually, the application of differential politics toward peripheries reminds to old imperial policies in the Balkans as well as Stalin's policies in the former Soviet Union (with punishing disloyal regions, such as removing Tatars from Crimea to distant lands). Of course, the current center-periphery policy in Croatia is far from being such drastic and antidemocratic. Actually, it is pretty much intertwined with the policy of Serbia. Both policies seem to tend to perpetuate the status quo, a kind of "Hobbes equilibrium", i.e. tolerance and peace defined as temporary absence of conflict-cum-violence. Thus, relations between Croats and Serbs, thanks to the political inertia, are easier to regress than moving forward to a more permanent peace. For to maintain the status quo political passivity and disinterest in making conformant approaches would be sufficient, but also risking. For to make for a durable peace and tolerance, respectively, conformant policies are needed, which involve a lot of political energy, good will, optimism and social and cultural creativity. However, it is questionable are there some example of good practice in the EU that may facilitate an advance in the process of reconciliation in Croatia and generally in areas taken by war(s) of the former Yugoslavia. It is difficult to estimate how far the present-day EU – with some arising crises in interethnic relations, such as in Belgium or in Spain with Catalonia – may provide a muster for tolerance and peace. Perhaps, some episodes of nearer past of the EU, when at least Belgium was an excellent example of interethnic tolerance and peace, may provide an impetus to optimism. Yet, that was time of the economic growth and rising expectations in Europe. For sometimes the second Yugoslavia was a society where different nationalities lived together apparently in a relative harmony and peace.

So, what is needed is back to future? Perhaps this may be true basically because both EU and Yugoslavia in the 1960s were welfare societies, i.e. Keynesian economies in their own right. In any case, to look for entirely new solutions for interethnic relations and other issues of development in a (utopian) future is futile. Good news is always a follow-up of some other good news from before.

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## Summary

### **“FROM WAR TO TOLERANCE? BOTTOM-UP AND TOP-DOWN APPROACHES TO (RE)BUILDING INTERETHNIC TIES IN THE AREAS OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA”**

In recent history the Balkans passed through periods of conflict and violence typical of many post-imperial nation-states that are unable to establish lateral links with their neighbors without or outside the central (imperial) connection. In a way, these states imitated historical path of imperial conquests. In this regard, ethnic conflicts that escalated into wars of the former Yugoslavia can be taken as examples of an erratic transformation of post-imperial into modern nation-states that are eager to build up democracy at home and develop peaceful coexistence with others in international environment. Nevertheless, not all multiethnic areas were caught up in violence (e.g. instances of “peace enclaves” in multiethnic areas in Croatia, Bosnia and Heregovina and in Kosovo). Through such examples, which will be illustrated with results of empirical research, we recognize potentials for building tolerance from below. On the other hand, in most other places peace was a follow up of post-conflict processes. In these cases, local potentials of ethnic tolerance were rather weak. The paper provides some examples illustrating regional differences in this regard within Croatia. Actually, the whole process of normalization of ethnic relations in peaceful terms is far from being linear and is hardly going smoothly. Some parts of national elites foster distance and antagonism against the “others”. On the other hand, especially following EU accession of Croatia, nationalistic rhetoric significantly receded on the level of the official politics. The question is then whether the impact of policies in institutional sphere, both national and international, i.e. top-down approach, is decisive in shaping inter-ethnic relations. The conclusion is that the institutional, top-down arrangements of peace and tolerance cannot be sustainable without concomitant bottom-up processes on micro level, which theoretically corresponds to a “conformant policy” against “linear policy” or determinism of the center and contingencies in the periphery.

**Key Words:** *Inter-Ethnic Relations, Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Tolerance, Croatia, former Yugoslavia.*

## Zusammenfassung

**„VOM KRIEG ZUM TOLERANZ? TOP-DOWN- UND  
BOTTOM-UP-ANSÄTZE IN PROZESSEN DES (WIEDER)  
AUFBAUS INTERETHNISCHER BINDUNGEN IN  
EHEMALIGEM JUGOSLAWIEN“**

Vor kurzem durchlebte Balkan Episoden von Konflikten und Gewalt, welche für viele post-imperiale Nationen-Staaten, unfähig zur Errichtung von Bindungen mit Nachbarn außerhalb des imperialen Modells von Zentrum und Peripherie, typisch sind. Solche Staaten ahmten historische Muster der imperialen Eroberungen nach. In diesem Sinne stellen die ethnischen Konflikte, welche in Gebieten des ehemaligen Jugoslawien zu Kriegen eskalierten, falsche Transformationen von post-imperialen Staaten in die durch die demokratische Ordnung und ruhige Koexistenz mit Nachbarn gekennzeichneten modernen Nationen-Staaten dar. Trotz solcher Situationsentwicklung stellte sich heraus, dass es nicht in allen polyethnischen Milieus zur Eskalation der ethnischen Gewalt kam (z.B. die Fälle von „Friedensklaven“ in polyethnischen Gebieten von Kroatien, Bosnien und Herzegowina und Kosovo). In solchen durch die empirische Forschung illustrierten Beispielen findet man das Potential, die Toleranz „von unten“ aufzubauen. Andererseits sind in den Gebieten, in welchen der Frieden aus Post-Konflikt-Prozessen ausgegangen ist, die Potentiale zum Aufbauen der ethnischen Toleranz viel schwächer. In der Arbeit werden die auf ausgeprägte regionale Unterschiede hinweisenden Beispiele angeführt. Ebenfalls wird in der Arbeit gezeigt, dass der ganze Prozess der Normalisierung von interethnischen Beziehungen in kroatischer Gesellschaft kontradiktorisch abläuft. Teile nationaler Eliten neigen oft dazu, die soziale Distanz und den Antagonismus gegenüber den „Anderen“ hervorzuheben. Andererseits wurde die nationalistische Rhetorik auf politischer Ebene nach dem Beitritt Kroatiens zur EU wesentlich gemildert. Es stellt sich die Frage, in welchem Ausmaß die offizielle Politik auf nationaler und internationaler Ebene, welche den Ansatz „von oben“ darstellt, für die Formierung von interethnischen Beziehungen ausschlaggebend ist. Abschließend wird betont, dass die Herstellung von Frieden und Toleranz ohne den gleichzeitigen Ablauf des Prozesses auf Mikroebene, beziehungsweise des Prozesses „von unten“, nicht möglich ist. Im theoretischen Sinne entspricht das der Entgegenstellung von „linearer Politik“ und „Angleichungspolitik“, beziehungsweise der Entgegenstellung des politischen Determinismus von Zentrum und der Kontingenzprozesse in Peripherien.

*Schlüsselwörter: interethnische Beziehungen, Nationalismus, ethnischer Konflikt, ethnische Toleranz, Kroatien, das ehemalige Jugoslawien.*

Riassunto

**“DALLA GUERRA ALLA TOLLERANZA? GLI APPROCCI  
DALL’ALTO E DAL BASSO NEI PROCESSI DI (RI)  
COSTRUZIONE DEI LEGAMI INTERETNICI NEI TERRITORI  
DELLA EX-JUGOSLAVIA”**

Nel passato recente i Balcani hanno vissuto periodi di conflitti e violenza, tipici di numerosi paesi-nazioni post-imperiali, che si dimostrarono incapaci di creare una connessione con i vicini al di fuori del modello imperiale impostato sul centro e le periferie. Siffatti paesi imitarono i modelli di assoggettamento imperialistici. In tale senso i conflitti etnici, degenerati poi in guerre nei territori dell'ex-Jugoslavia, rappresentano esempi dell'errata trasformazione dei paesi post-imperiali in nazioni-paesi dall'ordinamento democratico e dalla pacifica coesistenza con i vicini. Nonostante un tale sviluppo della situazione, s'è rilevato che non in tutte le realtà multietniche si sia giunti alla violenza etnica (ad es. i casi delle "enclave di pace" nei territori multietnici di Croazia, Bosnia ed Erzegovina e del Kosovo). In tali esempi, illustrati mediante dati ricavati da un'indagine empirica, s'individua il potenziale per la costruzione della tolleranza "dal basso". D'altra parte, nei territori dove la pace è il risultato dai processi post-conflitto i potenziali locali per la costruzione della tolleranza etnica si sono dimostrati più deboli. Nel lavoro sono indicati gli esempi che esprimono notevoli differenze regionali in Croazia. L'indagine dimostra altresì come l'intero processo di normalizzazione dei rapporti interetnici nella società croata stia avendo luogo in maniera contraddittoria. Parti dell'élite nazionale spesso tendono a sottolineare il distanziamento sociale e l'antagonismo rispetto agli „altri“. D'altra parte, dopo l'ingresso della Croazia nell'Unione europea, la retorica nazionalistica sul piano politico è notevolmente diminuita. Si pone il quesito della misura in cui la politica ufficiale sul piano nazionale ed internazionale, che rappresenta l'approccio "dall'alto" sia determinante nella formazione dei rapporti interetnici. Si giunge alla conclusione che la realizzazione della pace e della tolleranza etnica non è possibile senza il contemporaneo processo sul micro-piano "dal basso". Nel senso teorico ciò corrisponde alla contrapposizione della "politica lineare" e della "politica conformante", ossia della determinazione politica del centro e dei processi contingenti che si svolgono nei luoghi periferici.

***Parole chiave:** rapporti interetnici, nazionalismo, conflitto etnico, tolleranza etnica, Croazia, ex-Jugoslavia.*