Connections: The Quarterly Journal
ISSN 1812-1098, e-ISSN 1812-2973

John E. Ashbrook, *Connections QJ* 22, no. 3 (2023): 45-60
https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.22.4.03

Research Article

Croatian Nationalism as a Reaction to Serbian Resistance in Dalmatia in the 1990s: Atrocity and Counter-Atrocity

John E. Ashbrook

Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, United States
https://msutexas.edu/

Abstract: This article explores how Croatian nationalists responded to the instability in Dalmatia during the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Homeland War in Croatia from 1990 to 1996. Drawing on Max Bergholz's research, it argues that ethnic violence in Dalmatia during the early 1990s, driven by the turmoil following Yugoslavia's dissolution, Croatia's independence, and the establishment of the Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK), led to a cycle of atrocities and reprisals. Both sides sought refuge within their own ethnic communities, contributing to this cycle. Such instances, in which mixed populations become radicalized, serve as a cautionary tale for international organizations seeking to prevent ethnic violence in the broader Balkan region.

Keywords: former Yugoslavia, identity politics, ethnonationalism, Croatia, Krajina, Balkans

Introduction

As a young Ph.D. candidate conducting dissertation research in the late 1990s, I explored how identity politics at the national and regional levels related to various forms of conflict in the newly independent Croatia. What interested me most was the dynamic of identity politics as it related to the political struggle between the nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), the ruling party of Croatia in

Creative Commons
BY-NC-SA 4.0

the 1990s and early 2000s, and the Istrian regionalist party, the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS), which controlled the country's westernmost peninsula.[1] As a naive researcher, I embarked on the task of understanding regionalism and Croatian nationalism contextually and situationally, particularly in the immediate aftermath of Yugoslavia's dissolution in the early 1990s. To explore this, I conducted a series of interviews with self-proclaimed regionalists and nationalists to better understand their motivations and sense of identity. During one such interview, I spoke with a self-identified Croatian nationalist in a small town north of Zagreb. He mentioned that if one really wanted to understand Croatian nationalists, one had to understand the "radical nationalists of Dalmatia who suffered so much during the Homeland War." Days later, I was on a bus to Split, Croatia, to find out what my interviewee meant. While somewhat peripheral to the issue of Istria, I found the research invaluable in deepening my understanding of the Croatian national movement – particularly how perceived threats to both the state and the nation shaped Croats' attitudes and behaviors during the turbulent 1990s.

This case study explores the political instability in hinterland Dalmatia during the 1990s and the Croatian nationalist reaction to it as Yugoslavia disintegrated and an independent state emerged from its ashes. For the Croatian experience, initial episodes of violence—much of it perpetrated for personal or political gains—exacerbated nationalistic attitudes and conflicts. The rise of the Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK) and the ethnic cleansing that occurred in and around its territory in northern and central Dalmatia shaped how the HDZ-controlled state responded to this major political and military challenge. The dissolution of Yugoslavia pushed Croats and Serbs into highly nationalistic camps, seeking protection from the "other" as localized episodes of ethnonational violence spread across Croatia. This article illustrates the situational nature of nationalistic action and reaction, in which both Croats and Serbs increasingly radicalized to the point where the level of coexistence experienced during much of Tito-era Yugoslavia became impossible to maintain.

Threats to the state and nation, both real and perceived, shaped Croatian reactions during the Serbian uprisings in the republic. As Max Bergholz argues in *Violence as a Generative Force: Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community*, it was not nationalism that led Croats and Serbs to perpetrate mass violence against each other during the Second World War, but rather the initial violence committed by a few individuals, which forced these groups to retreat into ethnonationalist camps for mutual protection.[2]

---

1 John Ashbrook, *Buying and Selling the Istrian Goat. Istrian Regionalism, Croatian Nationalism, and EU Enlargement*, Regionalism and Federalism Series (Bruxelles, Belgium: Peter Lang Verlag, 2008), https://www.peterlang.com/document/1104465.

2 Max Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force: Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016). Here I borrow the term "generative force" as it relates to nationalist violence. Bergholz argues that macro-level explanations, which assume that ethnonational struggles are both endemic and

Building on Bergholz's work, this article focuses primarily on the Croatian reaction to expressions of Serbian nationalism and the RSK's attempts to separate from the Croatian state. For many Croats, the HDZ provided a sense of security against the Serbian threat from the hinterland and justified reactive violence. It was this specific set of circumstances that fueled the Croatian nationalist movement in Dalmatia in the 1990s.[3]

Dalmatia and Ethnicity Before the 1990s

Historically, Dalmatia has always been a multicultural region, particularly through the lens of modern identity politics. In the medieval and early modern periods, the Venetian Empire, with its Italianate population, heavily influenced Dalmatia's coastal regions, while its hinterland was predominantly Catholic and Slavic. The demographic composition of the Dalmatian hinterland shifted when Orthodox South Slavic communities migrated into the region from Serbia and parts of Bosnia-Hercegovina, having been pushed by the Ottomans into what would later become the Habsburg military frontier, established in the mid-sixteenth century. The Habsburgs recruited Serbs to serve against Ottoman encroachment, and this tradition of a warrior culture was cultivated and later used by Serbian extremists to justify their actions in the 1980s and 1990s.[4] Problems between the Catholic and Orthodox communities did not emerge to any great extent until the anti-Serbian bias of Ante Starčević's brand of Croatian nationalism influenced younger Croatian activists in the late nineteenth century. This division was reflected in the Croatian and Serbian political parties that vied for influence in Dubrovnik's government from the 1880s into the first decade of the twentieth century. This division was eventually, though only temporarily, resolved in a 1905 agreement in which the groups worked together to create a political bloc in the Habsburg regional and imperial assemblies.

---

inevitable in the Balkans, are flawed. His research shows that the initial violence in his case study occurred either to settle old scores or as attempts to reshape existing regional power structures. Furthermore, nearly all episodes of ethnic violence were justified as preventive or defensive actions in the name of the nation. This situation is reminiscent of the events that led to the outbreak of mutual atrocities in northern and central Dalmatia during the 1990s.

3 In the late 1980s and early 1990s, tensions rooted in ethnonationalism, though present since the post-World War II period, escalated to deadly levels in response to the crisis triggered by the dissolution of the Yugoslav state. This led to the expulsion of Croats from large parts of the Dalmatian hinterland between 1990 and 1992, followed by the expulsion of Serbs from much of Croatia between 1995 and 1997. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive works in English on the wars of dissolution in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina is Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić, eds., *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina: 1991-1995* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

4 Ejub Štitkovac, "Croatia: The First War," in *Burn This House: The Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia*, ed. Jasminka Udovički and James Ridgeway (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2000), 170-171, note 12, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822380917-009.

Issues between the Croatian and Serbian populations flared once again with the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after the First World War. In this new state, Serbian and Croatian parties fought over Croatian autonomy in the kingdom. On one side was the pro-Serbian Radical Party and its allies, who advocated for a centralized state under the Serbian king. On the other was the main Croatian party, the Croatian Peasant Party, led by Stjepan Radić, a proponent of broad political and cultural autonomy, who consistently opposed centralization and Serbian dominance of the state. The country nearly descended into violent instability when a Serbian nationalist, Puniša Račić, assassinated Radić and two other deputies during a parliamentary session on June 20, 1928. In response, the king declared a personal dictatorship on January 6, 1929, in an attempt to suppress nationalist tensions and prevent further violence – an effort that ultimately bore little fruit.[5]

The Second World War and the Četnik and Ustaša atrocities against civilian populations provided historical "justification" for lasting animosities between the two nations.[6] In Tito's Yugoslavia, the leader forced Croats and Serbs to work together in an attempt to reduce the anger and mistrust between the groups. Because of this pressure, the populations lived together without much overt nationalist agitation throughout much of the post-World War II era. However, many hinterland areas remained rather segregated, with only larger settlements showing significant population mixing.

By 1990, large populations of Serbs resided in northern Dalmatia, especially around Knin, extending to within a few miles of Zadar. There was also a substantial number of Serbs in southern Herzegovina, less than ten miles from Dubrovnik and the rest of southern Dalmatia.[7] Most of these Serbian-majority areas were poor, with few opportunities, which only exacerbated tensions between the two not-so-mixed ethnic communities. By contrast, most coastal regions had Croatian majorities with relatively few Serbs living there, and they were relatively prosperous due to the tourism industry.

Ethnic tensions came to a head in the summer of 1989 when Serbs around Knin protested attacks on their co-nationals by extremist supporters of the HDZ,

---

5 For an in-depth study of Croatian and Yugoslavian politics during the interwar period, see Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984).

6 The Četniks were groups of Serbian nationalists who operated mainly in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, ostensibly as resistance fighters against the occupying German and Italian forces. The Ustaša were Croatian fascists whom the Germans allowed to rule Croatia during World War II. Both groups were responsible for mass murder and ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia until the Tito-led Partisans forced the Germans out at the end of the war.

7 See Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe: Revised and Expanded Edition (A History of East Central Europe (HECE))* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), 157.

Croatia's leading political party.[8] Radical Serbs responded harshly to the HDZ's 1990 electoral victory in Yugoslavia's first free elections, labeling the party as fascist and drawing parallels between it and the Ustaša regime, which had been responsible for atrocities against Croatia's and Bosnia's Serbian populations during World War II.[9] Encouraged by Slobodan Milošević, a centralist and leader of the Serbian Republic in the final days of Yugoslavia, Dalmatian Serbs erected roadblocks across northern Dalmatia in August 1990, cutting off central and southern Dalmatia from the rest of the republic, ultimately preventing government control of the region.[10] The growing tensions compelled increasing numbers of Croats and Serbs to support more militant ethnonationalist politicians who promised protection in the face of the "other's" aggression, while voices calling for tolerance and compromise between the two communities were increasingly muted. Essentially, many Krajina Serbs, fearful of a Croatian attack and seeking protection in numbers and organization, threw their support behind the establishment of the RSK, while most Croats supported the HDZ and the Croatian state for similar reasons.

The May 1991 referendum on Croatian independence exacerbated the situation. The vast majority of ethnic Croats voted for independence from Yugoslavia, while much of the Serbian population boycotted the vote. It also did not help that the HDZ actively hindered expressions of political heterogeneity, which some Serbs viewed as an anti-Serbian policy. For example, the HDZ "defined [Croatia] as a unitary and indivisible democratic and social state," [11] and any attempts—real or perceived—to divide the country were threatening to President Franjo Tuđman and his party.[12] Therefore, HDZ saw any challenge to central au-

---

8 John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 346.

9 "Inside an Ancient Quarrel," *The Economist* 319, no. 7708 (May 25, 1991): 53. Unfortunately, while the title of this article correctly analyzes how memories of the World War Two-era Ustaša "egged on" the fears of Serbs in Croatia, it also reflects lingering Western misconceptions of the region as a hotbed of ancient quarrels and retributions. The article does, however, acknowledge that "the behavior of Serbs in Krajina and Slavonia is turning their Croat [sic] neighbors against them." Another example of Western journalists misunderstanding the history and peoples of the region also comes from *The Economist*. This second article claims that the "Yugoslav tragedy" unfolded in three acts. The first—after some centuries of scriptwriting and setting the scene—occurred in Slovenia in 1991. This framing suggests that the bloody destruction of the state was inevitable and characteristic of the region and its peoples. "Bosnia: The Road to Ruin," *The Economist* 327, no. 7813 (May 29, 1993): 23.

10 Štitkovac, "Croatia: The First War," 161-162.

11 Z. Lučić, "On the Constitutional Organization of the Republic of Croatia," in *Legal System of the Republic of Croatia*, ed. D. Brunčić, Z. Lučić, V. Ljubanović, and I. Vrjkić (Osijek: University of Osijek, 1998), 15.

12 As Dejan Stjepanović argues, "in the post-Yugoslav space there [was] a limited toleration of substate polities that have civic criteria of membership. At the same time, ethnically legitimized substate political communities [we]re frowned upon by central states that in most cases themselves use ethnic criteria for membership." Dejan

thority in the newly independent state as a threat.[13] To this end, the HDZ gerrymandered Dalmatian counties into ahistorical subregions containing Croatian majorities to "offset Krajina Serb secessionist attempts and … regionalisms." [14] To the Serbs, this only confirmed that the nationalist Croats, ostensibly led by the HDZ, wanted to establish a state of, by, and for the Croats, where Serbs would be relegated to second-class citizens or even forced out altogether.

Threat Actors Real and Imagined: The RSK, the Serbian Democratic Party, and the HDZ

Perhaps one of the best examples of an event that heightened expressions of situational identity occurred immediately before Yugoslavia's dissolution with the formation of the RSK in Dalmatia.[15] While there are several histories—some good, some mediocre—of this broader process and its immediate consequences in English,[16] an in-depth monograph-length study of the RSK is unavailable for those who do not read Croatian or Serbian. This article cannot provide a detailed history of the RSK, yet, a brief narrative is necessary to explain why heightened

---

Stjepanović, "Territoriality and Citizenship: Membership and Sub-State Polities in Post-Yugoslav Space," *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 7 (September 2015): 1030-1055, 1031, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2015.1068743.

[13] Stjepanović recognizes this was "an obvious departure from the decentralized self-management of Yugoslav times towards more territorial centralization in independent states." See Stjepanović, "Territoriality and Citizenship: Membership and Sub-State Polities in Post-Yugoslav Space," 1035.

[14] Stjepanović, "Territoriality and Citizenship: Membership and Sub-State Polities in Post-Yugoslav Space," 1036.

[15] I base my understanding of situational identity on Frederick Barth's 1969 seminal work on identity, which was well articulated by Peter Wade. Wade explains that Barth "emphasized that ethnic groups exist *in relation* [his emphasis] to others; people establish boundaries on the basis of criteria that seem important to them. … [Such boundaries] may have a different character depending on what differences are being emphasized by the actors concerning a given situation." See Peter Wade, "Inequality and Situational Identity: The 1970s," in *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (Pluto Press, 2010), 61-84, 62, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183p73f.9. Thus, individuals can choose to emphasize aspects of their identity or ethnic group depending on whether they find it advantageous to do so. In times of crisis, particularly when the crisis is perceived as existential, individuals may intensify their ethnic identification as a means of protection from another group perceived as a threat or an enemy.

[16] See Sabrina P. Ramet, Konrad Clewing, and Reneo Lukić, eds., *Croatia since Independence: War, Politics, Society, Foreign Relations* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008) (particularly Chapters 1-4); Magaš and Žanić, eds., *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991-1995*, for the creation of and struggle against the RSK. See Laura Silber's and Allan Little's *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, revised edition (Penguin Books, 1997); and Misha Glenny's *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War*, 3rd revised edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1996) for skewed, but very readable narratives of the dissolution written by journalists. For a much better analysis see Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, 4th edition (Routledge, 2018).

expressions of Croatian nationalism emerged in response to this perceived existential threat.

Serbian unrest began in the Dalmatian Hinterland even before Croatia voted for independence. At its center was the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), founded in Knin on February 17, 1990. Over the next several months, the SDS encouraged Croatian Serbs not to accept the newly elected HDZ government and support the territorial secession of Serbian regions from the republic.[17] Many Serbs, particularly in and around Knin, fearing second-class citizenship or potential violence from the Croatian government, heeded the SDS's call. The situation escalated in late May 1990, when the SDS severed relations with Zagreb entirely and established the Union of Communes of Lika and Northern Dalmatia, made up of the six local constituencies the SDS had won in the April 1990 elections, and formed a regional parliament, the Serbian National Council, in Knin.[18]

However, radical voices within the SDS began to dominate those of its moderate leaders. The SDS's founder and leader, Jovan Rašković, eagerly stoked Serbian fears of Croatian nationalists, warning that if they had their way, a new Ustaša state would emerge, and massacres reminiscent of World War II would follow.[19] In response to Croatian calls for independence, for instance, Rašković told a group of supporters on July 2, 1990, that the Serbian people had the right to seek their own state, much as the Croats were doing.[20] The following day, Milan Babić, a more hardline Serbian nationalist, called for the creation of a Serbian *općina* (district) stretching from Knin to Beli Manastir in Eastern Slavonia, which, in his view, would grant the Serbs the same sovereignty that Croats would enjoy in an independent Croatia.[21]

Later that month, the SDS held a large rally in the small town of Srb (approximately 34 miles north of Knin, near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina). At the meeting, Rašković announced the "Declaration of Sovereignty and Autonomy of the Serbian People" to an audience of Serbian representatives from Benkovac, Knin, Obrovac, Vojnić, Glina, Vrginmost, Donji Lapac, Titova Korenica, and Vukovar – all of which had Serbian majorities. Rašković demanded a unified Greater Serbia to halt what he described as the rising "Ustaša movement." While claiming to be against an armed revolt, he stated he would defend the Serbian people against the Ustaša through violence if necessary.[22] More worrisome to local Croats, among the crowd of 70,000 to 120,000 were members of various

---

[17] Siniša Tatalović, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict," *Politička misao* 33, no 5 (1996): 166-190, 167, n3, https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/155702.

[18] Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 130.

[19] Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, 121.

[20] "Suverenitet bez Doziranja," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, July 3, 1990, 6.

[21] Srđan Radulović, "'Sabor' Srpskih Općine," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, July 4, 1990, 4.

[22] Davor Marić, "Rašković: Ovo je Ustanak bez Oružja," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, July 26, 1990, 7.

Četnik movements from Serbia itself,[23] who had called for ethnic cleansing as a preventative measure in defense of the Serbian nation.

Violence erupted on August 17, 1990, during a Serbian demonstration near Knin. Simultaneously, Serbian paramilitary forces erected barricades that cut off communications and traffic between central Croatia and northern Dalmatia.[24] The Milošević-controlled Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) moved in ostensibly to "maintain order," immediately denying Croatian police access to the wider region. The JNA also began arming Serbian militias for "self-defense."[25] By this time, the militias were enlarging with recruits as the hardliners continued to make claims of Croatian atrocities (some real, some imagined) and argued that the HDZ-controlled government was planning massacres of Serbs if the state declared independence from Yugoslavia.

Due to Zagreb's inability to respond, the Serbian National Council organized a snap Serbs-only referendum on September 2, 1990, calling for Serbian autonomy. After the successful referendum, an official militia of the Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina was established under the leadership of Milan Martić, the chief of police of Knin and a hardline Serbian nationalist.[26] Serbian militias immediately targeted tourist destinations in the Dalmatian interior to pressure the Croatian government into meeting their demands.[27] In response, Croatian nationalist hardliners used the uprising to fuel their own rhetoric, calling the actions "Četnik provocations" and a push for a Greater Serbia.[28]

The newly adopted Croatian constitution of December 1990 added fuel to the fire by stripping the Serbs of their status as a constituent nation, relegating them to a national minority. In response, the Serbs raided police stations in Knin, Dvor na Uni, Gračac, Benkovac, Glina, and Obrovac and began expelling non-Serbs from the region.[29] From December 1990 to mid-August 1991, three Serbian autonomous provinces broke away from Croatia. On December 22, the more radical leadership of the SDS under Babić announced the establishment of the Serbian Autonomous Oblast (SAO) of Krajina in Croatia, followed shortly by the SAO

---

[23] Marić puts the number at 70,000, while Tatalović claims it was 120,000. See Tatalović, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict."

[24] Vladimir-Đuro Degan, "The War in Croatia: Temporal Application of Conventional Rules Prohibiting International Crimes," *Politička misao* 30, no. 2 (1993): 5-18, 7, https://hrcak.srce.hr/111546. In what is referred to as the *Balvan Revolucija* or Log Revolution, Serbian militias cut roads and rail links to the rest of Dalmatia and Croatia, preventing Croatian governmental access to the region, ultimately separating Dalmatia from the rest of Croatia (Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, 130-31). This action also cut some of the potential escape routes of the very worried Croatian population.

[25] Degan, "The War in Croatia: Temporal Application of Conventional Rules Prohibiting International Crimes," 8.

[26] Degan, "The War in Croatia: Temporal Application of Conventional Rules Prohibiting International Crimes," 8.

[27] Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, 131 and 136.

[28] "Četnička provokacije," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, August 22, 1990, 6.

[29] Tatalović, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict," 178.

Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Srem on February 26, 1991, and by the SAO Western Slavonia on August 13, 1991. These provinces were later incorporated into the Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK) on February 26, 1992.[30] Once this entity was politically consolidated, much of Croatia's territory became vulnerable to Serbian rocket fire, a danger feared by much of the Croatian population.[31]

As the pattern of action and reaction continued, Serbs blockaded the Croatian village of Kijevo near Knin in August 1991, shortly after Croatia's successful independence referendum on June 25, 1991. In response, Croats held rallies decrying the violence, which increasingly became anti-Serbian in rhetoric. This, in turn, fueled the anti-Croatian sentiment among the Serbs.[32] On August 26, 1991, Serbian militias, aided by the JNA, took Kijevo, making it the first town in Croatia to experience complete ethnic cleansing. Following the seizure, a series of Serbian attacks raged across the Dalmatian hinterland. On September 16, 1991, Drniš fell, followed shortly after by Hrvatska Kostajnica on September 19 and Petrinja on September 21, with their Croatian populations forced to flee to Split and other coastal towns and cities. The JNA and Serbian militias approached Zadar, cutting the city off entirely for a time and throwing its primarily Croatian population into panic. Dubrovnik, Gospić, Šibenik, and other Dalmatian cities also suffered direct attacks.[33] The instability of the region, the dissolution of the federation, and the establishment of the Serbian Krajina triggered a wave of displaced persons, as hinterland Croats flooded into ill-prepared coastal cities and villages not under immediate Serbian threat.[34]

This mass of displaced and traumatized Croats brought firsthand accounts of Serbian atrocities to the places where they settled. Due to the Serbian conquest of parts of Dalmatia and nearby Bosnian and Herzegovinian land, many Dalmatian Croats rallied behind the political party that controlled the newly independent Croatian government and military. For many Croats, the HDZ was the only entity that could protect them from Serbian militias and potentially restore their lost property and livelihoods. Their regional experiences shaped their understanding of what it means to be Croatian, particularly in light of the Serbian rebellion, the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the corresponding existential threat posed by Serbs, Montenegrins, and the JNA. These actions also led many Croats to believe that the Serbs and Croats could no longer live together peacefully in the same state.[35]

---

30 Tatalović, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict," 167 n3.

31 "Think again, Tudjman," *The Economist* 334, no. 7904 (March 4, 1995), 15.

32 Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, 152.

33 Tatalović, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict," 180.

34 A Western source has estimated that up to 300,000 Croats fled from all parts of what would become the RSK. "Deadly Gamble: Croatia," *The Economist* 334, no. 7898 (January 21, 1995), 56.

35 "Croatia's Blitzkrieg: Croatia's President Franjo Tudjman Has Shattered the Dream of a Greater Serbia," *The Economist* 336, no. 7927 (August 12, 1995), 41. The author claims that by late summer 1995, many Croats who had once favored coexistence with

Although a ceasefire was agreed upon in December 1991, just weeks after the fall of Vukovar to Serbian forces, low-level regional skirmishes continued.[36] Despite the internationally brokered ceasefire, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman stressed that Croatia intended to recover "every square centimeter" of its territory,[37] and he acted on that promise, much to the relief of Dalmatian Croats. To the chagrin of the international community,[38] Croatia pushed the Serbs out of the immediate vicinity of Šibenik, Vodice, securing seven villages on the Miljevac plain on June 21, 1992. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 762 condemned this action and demanded Croatia's withdrawal, but Zagreb refused. This demonstration of strength only won the HDZ and the Croatian nationalists more legitimacy as the party took action against the RSK and stood up to pressure from the international community, viewed by many Croats as anti-Croatian.

On January 22, 1993, Operation Maslenica began, resulting in a partial Croatian victory on January 26.[39] However, the Serbs were not completely pushed out of the area and, thus, could still threaten Maslenica, Masleničko ždrilo (a vital strait linking Dalmatia and Croatia), Šibenik, Biograd, and Zadar. These gains illustrated to Dalmatian Croats that their tenuous position was not permanent; the Serbs could be beaten, and territory could be permanently recovered. Once

---

the Serbs now supported their removal due to the war and the attempt to establish Serbian territory independent of Croatia. My research for an upcoming article on Dalmatian identities also suggests the same conclusion.

[36] By this time, the Serbs controlled approximately one-fifth of Croatia's territory. "Push for Peace: Yugoslavia," *The Economist* 320, no. 7723 (September 7, 1991): 48. Furthermore, in early winter 1991, Yugoslavia blockaded the Dalmatian port cities and bombarded Split, further exacerbating the desperate situation of Croats attempting to flee even the coastal cities. "Into the Dark," *The Economist* 320, no. 7725 (September 21, 1991), 57.

[37] "Turning-point in Yugoslavia," *The Economist* 322, no. 7741 (January 11, 1992), 43.

[38] Even early on, the majority of the Croatian public, particularly those in Dalmatia, had no intention of allowing the Krajina to separate, and the war only hardened their stance toward Serbs in general. "The next Yugoslav War: Serbia and Croatia," *The Economist* 328, no. 7820 (July 17, 1993), 48-49. Tuđman made it clear that he and his government would not, under any circumstances, compromise on the Krajina issue. He was determined to reclaim it entirely, regardless of the opinions of the Western community. As late as the fall of 1993, the Krajina leadership also refused to allow any part of the RSK to revert to Croatian sovereignty. "Up Fjord, no Paddle yet: ex-Yugoslavia," *The Economist* 329, no. 7835 (October 30, 1995), 61.

[39] According to *The Economist*, this action "astonished" the world as Croatian troops "crossed UN ceasefire lines and pushed Serbs back" in this part of Krajina. However, the move was widely popular in Croatia, particularly since it resulted in gains and once again suggested that the Croatian government was challenging the international community's effort to broker a negotiated settlement with the Krajina's Serbian leadership. "How Many Little Wars Make a Big One?" *The Economist* 326, no. 7796 (January 30, 1993), 45.

again, the UN Security Council and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) condemned the action,[40] but the Croatian army refused to cede its gains. Between 27 and 28 January 1993, Zagreb initiated Action Peruča, reclaiming the Peruča dam and further demonstrating the systemic weakness of Krajina forces. On September 9, 1993, the Medučki džep action began near Gospić, resulting in several Serbian civilian casualties, again condemned by the UN Security Council and UNPROFOR as war crimes.[41] This international condemnation led to increased fear among the Serbian population that the Croatian military planned the elimination of Serbs in contested territory.[42]

The Croatian government's demand that the UN peacekeepers—who were supposed to keep the warring sides separated—leave the country in January 1995 further stoked Serbian unease.[43] Panic set in after the success of Operation Flash by Croatian forces in the Western Slavonian pocket of the RSK in May 1995, which led to the immediate emigration of 12,000 Serbs from the region.[44] As Spence Bakich and I have argued elsewhere, such fears contributed to the mass exodus of the Serbian population from hinterland Dalmatia following the overwhelming success of Operation Storm (*Oluja*) three months later.[45]

On August 4, 1995, the Croats began their final offensive against the RSK in Operation Storm. President Tuđman appeared on radio and television just before the attack, encouraging Serbs to stay inside and not resist, promising that most would receive amnesty. However, most Serbs did not trust his assurances. After only a single day of military action, Operation Storm achieved 80 % of its objectives. Knin fell on the second day of the operation, and by the fourth day, approximately 120,000 Serbs fled through purposely created escape routes into

---

[40] Tatalović, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict," 182. UNPROFOR was the first peacekeeping force sent to Croatia and Bosnia to keep the warring parties separate.

[41] Tatalović, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict," 183.

[42] Even with this fear, some Serbs in the Krajina remained defiant toward Zagreb and refused to consider the possibility of ever living with Croats or in Croatia again. Krajina officials also continued to push for the unification of their controlled region with Republika Srpska, the Serbian-controlled area of Bosnia-Herzegovina. "Laager louts," *The Economist* 332, no. 7878 (August 27, 1994), 45.

[43] "Deadly Gamble: Croatia," 56.

[44] "Soldiering on: ex-Yugoslavia," *The Economist* 335, no. 7914 (May 13, 1995), 54.

[45] John Ashbrook and Spencer D. Bakich, "Storming to Partition: Croatia, the United States, and Krajina in the Yugoslav War," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 21, no. 4 (2010): 537-560, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2010.518852.

Bosnia-Herzegovina.[46] The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that over 150,000 Serbs fled the Croatian military in less than a week.[47]

During and after the fighting, the Croatian military engaged in sporadic acts of looting, arson, and murder,[48] provoking condemnation from the international community and painting a picture of Croats as savage and barbarous. However, Operation Storm achieved one outcome seen as favorable by more nationalist Croats: it permanently reduced Croatia's Serbian population from a little over 12 % of the total population in 1991[49] to approximately 4.5 % by 2001.[50]

The short-lived RSK episode gave nationalist Croats the justification they needed to carry out reprisals against the Serbian population. To them, the Serbs represented an existential threat to the Croatian nation and state;[51] they were "outsiders" and "rebels" who had not hesitated to use violence and ethnic cleansing to advance a "Greater Serbian" agenda. This perceived threat to not only the Dalmatian hinterland but also the coastal regions pushed Croats into supporting the HDZ, which, to many, seemed the only defender of the land and people.

Conclusions for the International Community

As this study shows, situational expressions of identity, defined in relation to the perceived aggression of the "other," are one of the major issues in contemporary

---

[46] The Croatian military purposely left escape routes open for Serbian civilians during Operation Storm, drawing on the lesson learned earlier that year in Operation Flash. The failure of the Croatian military to cut off retreat into Bosnia in May allowed much of the Serbian population of Western Slavonia in the RSK to flee. This "solved" the ethnic problem for the Croats, and they applied this experience when planning Operation Storm, knowing that the Serbs feared retribution from the Croatian military in newly captured areas and would flee if possible. See Ashbrook and Bakich, "Storming to Partition."

[47] "The Flight of the Krajina Serbs," *The Economist* 336, no. 7927 (August 12, 1995), 42. The same article suggests that 400,000 people once lived in the Serbian-controlled area of northern Dalmatia and Lika. Of this number, about half were Croats who were ethnically cleansed in 1991 and early 1992. Some estimates place the number at approximately 200,000. See "Ethnic Cleansing: Blood and Earth," *The Economist* 336, no. 7933 (September 23, 1995), 16.

[48] Tatalović, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict," 186-187.

[49] Yugoslavian census 1991.

[50] "Croatian Census 2001." The idea of a population exchange or the removal of a minority was not new to the Croats. For example, Mario Nobilo, a former Croatian ambassador to the United Nations, "mus[ed] on the notion of a Bosnia divided between Croatia and Serbia" and "said he thought an 'exchange of populations' would go a long way to solving the region's problems." "Nations on the Move," *The Economist* 336, no. 7928 (August 19, 1995), 42. A journalist from *The Economist* also suggested that population transfers might help ease tensions and indirectly contribute to solving the ethnic jigsaw puzzle of the Balkans. "Ethnic Cleansing: Blood and earth," 16.

[51] See Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton University Press, 1994) for the necessary distinction between these two terms.

Balkan history. In this particular case, in response to regional instability, Croatian nationalists sought unity by emphasizing a belief in a common spirit or connectivity with all Croats—a national soul, if you will—while simultaneously highlighting more tangible similarities such as a common language, history, and religion, in this case, Catholicism. Geography, too, played an important role for Croatian nationalists, who equated the Croatian nation with Dalmatia as a central *Croatian* space. Both in written sources and in my interviews, Dalmatia is portrayed historically, culturally, and ethnically as a wholly *national* space, with nationalists sometimes claiming no room for those with differing opinions or ethnicities.[52]

One must also understand that recent history shaped or strengthened feelings of solidarity among Croats, no matter where they resided. Situationally, Dalmatia underwent an intense period of violence and instability in the first half of the 1990s. For the Croatian nationalists, the perceived threat of the Serbs and the state's loss of much of the northern and eastern hinterlands to the RSK were devastating. Thus, the emphasis on the Croatian nature of Dalmatia was a manifestation of their experiences and the fear of more or permanent losses. The dangers of the war and the RSK's proximity to most of Dalmatia's coastal cities forced many of the region's inhabitants to look to Zagreb and the ruling nationalist party for protection. They tended to view competing ideas of identity as threatening,[53] including those espousing a regional, hybrid, and multicultural Dalmatian identity.[54]

It is highly debatable whether such strong, unyielding ideas about Croatian national identity had always been prevalent in Dalmatia in the post-World War Two era. Based on my interviews and research in the area during the 1990s and early 2000s, it is clear that while tensions were evident before the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation, Serbian and Croatian populations were able to coexist. Some interviewees even suggested that relations among the local residents were

---

[52] Goran Vezić, "A Croatian Reichstag Trial: The Case of Dalmatian Action," *Uncaptive Minds* 7, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 1994): 17-24, 20. For example, one of my interviewees in the spring of 2001, a self-identified Croatian nationalist, went so far as to claim that all other nations were "guests or interlopers. Serbs cannot be Dalmatian any more than I can be Macedonian. They came in as invaders and remain invaders."

[53] Alex J. Bellamy, *The Formation of a Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-old Dream?* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, December 2003), 128, https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719065026.001.0001.

[54] Keith Brown, "Villains and Symbolic Pollution in the Narratives of Nations: The Case of Boris Sarafov," in *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory*, ed. Maria N. Todorova (New York University Press, 2004), 233-252. For a longer discussion of hybrid identities of the wider Adriatic region, see Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton University Press, 2002). In fact, the HDZ-controlled government of the time described regionalists and those expressing tolerance for other ethnonational groups as "anti-state elements" for not towing the nationalist line on identity or government policy. See "To Fill the Void: An Interview with Stojan Obradović and Goran Vezić," *Uncaptive Minds* 7, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 1994): 37-43, 39-40.

not so bad until a few outsiders and/or troublemakers stoked fears about the "other" before mass violence erupted.[55]

As this case study of Dalmatia shows, it was the fear of violence—followed by violence itself—initially encouraged and perpetrated by small groups of ethnonationalists in the region—that triggered a wider cycle of atrocity and counter-atrocity. While it is undeniable that nationalist tensions between the Serbian and Croatian communities never fully disappeared after World War Two, they tolerated one another for most of Tito's reign. However, when political opportunists, such as Babić and Martić, used nationalism to bolster their own careers by bringing the bloody past between Croats and Serbs back to the foreground, fear and instability readily drowned out calls for peace and continued cooperation.[56] It was only with the instability, in this case, generated by a combination of factors—uncertainty following Tito's death in 1980,[57] the fall of Eastern European communism between 1989 and 1991, and the collapse of the Yugoslav state in 1990 and 1991—that ethnonationalist tension drove significant numbers of the region's population into the arms of opportunistic nationalists, who manipulated situational identity to meet their desired goals. Local and regional politicians capitalized on this instability to carry out "preventative actions" to ensure the "safety" of their own national constituencies. Ultimately, this led to the permanent expulsion of most of the Serbian population from Croatia in the mid-to-late 1990s.

International organizations involved in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, whether in operations or policymaking, must develop a deeper understanding of the region's history to effectively carry out their missions, rather than assuming that sporadic periods of ethnonational violence define the "essence" of the people in the wider region. Unfortunately, lingering misconceptions about the re-

---

[55] This is reminiscent of the events described in Bergholz's book, which details the descent into ethnic violence in and around Kulen Vakuf, Bosnia, during the instability of World War Two. In this period, local discontents and external actors stoked fears of the other group, leading to episodes of violence and ethnic cleansing. Some conversations with the sample participants also anecdotally support his argument that it was instability and violence that precipitated new perceptions of ethnicity and nationalism, which triggered the interethnic violence in the 1990s.

[56] Some Yugoslavs viewed the events unfolding in the disintegrating state as the result of political leaders seeking to embolden and mobilize their constituencies. "Push for Peace: Yugoslavia," 48. In fact, Slobodan Milošević, the leader of Serbia, delivered a speech on July 6, 1991, urging Croatian Serbs "to be ready to defend themselves" against Croatian nationalists and separatists. See "Coming Apart, Coming Together," *The Economist* 320, no. 7715 (July 13, 1991), 51.

[57] Some Yugoslavs recognized that without the "Old Man" in charge, the country would likely fall apart in a civil war. See "Bosnia: The Road to Ruin," *The Economist* 327, no. 7813 (May 29, 1993), 23.

gion and its inhabitants continue to influence the opinions of Western administrators and policymakers.[58] Many of these opinions echo sentiments similar to those of Robert Kaplan in his popular book *Balkan Ghosts*, in which he lamented that Slavs, particularly those in the Balkans, were a primitive people, full of "ethnic resentments,"[59] thus explaining the historical atrocities in the Balkans as somehow an ingrained feature of the people living there.[60]

Such misconceptions are partly the result of sensationalist journalism, which, throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries,[61] reported on the Balkans only during times of unrest and war. Among Western audiences, such reports reinforced the idea that violence is "normal" for the region and its people. The Balkans are thus described as "dangerous, unstable, [and] a war zone,"[62] and these perceptions continue to influence how international organizations approach the region.

Considering the chronic ethnonational hostility in Kosovo, not to mention the war in Ukraine, it is imperative for foreign policymakers and members of international organizations to understand that lingering aspects of ethnonationalism and secessionism will continue to plague Eastern Europe and the Balkans for the foreseeable future, as they will in many other parts of the world. However, these problems are not endemic to Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Instead of making decisions based on superficial observations, it is crucial to avoid adopting a primordialist perspective that portrays the region as a perpetual hotspot of violence and ethnonational conflict. Like any other location globally, the region is shaped by events that influence local perceptions of identity, particularly when

---

[58] Western journalists too often show contempt for the people and leadership of the region in their reporting. For example, consider the biased remarks made by journalists from *The Economists* in August 1995, in which the reporter describes Tuđman as earning a place in "the—*not overcrowded*—pantheon of Croatian history" [my emphasis]. See "Croatia's Blitzkrieg: Croatia's President Franjo Tudjman Has Shattered the Dream of a Greater Serbia," 41.

[59] Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), xxiii.

[60] For more examples of scholars debunking these stereotypes of Eastern Europe and Balkan people, see the following books: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, November 1994); Larry Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs: The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, April 2002); and Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, updated edition (Oxford University Press, 2009).

[61] For more information on examples of how Western journalists and the British middle classes viewed the rural people of the Balkans, see Samuel Foster, *Yugoslavia in the British Imagination: Peace, War and Peasants before Tito* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023).

[62] Katherine E. Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 4 (October 2000): 1218-1233, 1226, https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/105.4.1218.

it appears that some identity or group is threatened by an allegedly alien presence. Similar situations and threats in other regions could potentially fuel the rise of ethnonationalist movements, triggering a chain reaction that leads to ethnic cleansing.

What is needed is a deeper understanding of the Balkans by international experts, who see periods of cooperation and compromise as the long-term norm and use this knowledge to quell the radicalization of identity well before opportunists distill their people's histories into narratives of atrocity and counter-atrocity.[63]

Disclaimer

The views expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent official views of the PfP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, participating organizations, or the Consortium's editors.

Acknowledgment

Connections: The Quarterly Journal, Vol. 22, 2023, is supported by the United States government.

About the Author

Dr. **John Ashbrook** received his Ph.D. in Modern Eastern European and Balkan History from the University of Florida in 2002. He is an Associate Professor of History and former chair of the Department of History at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. He has published a book and numerous articles on identity and politics in the states of the former Yugoslavia. His research and teaching interests include Eastern Europe and the Balkans in the 20th and 21st centuries, European military history, the Ottoman Empire and its legacy, and the European Union and Euroscepticism. *E-mail*: john.ashbrook@msutexas.edu
https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8974-2272

[63] I would like to thank Isabella Black, a history graduate student at Midwestern State University, for her invaluable suggestions in refining my argument and enhancing the clarity of my written expression in this article.

Bibliography

"Bosnia: The Road to Ruin," *The Economist* 327, no. 7813 (May 29, 1993): 23.

"Četnička provokacije," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, August 22, 1990, 6.

"Coming Apart, Coming Together," *The Economist* 320, no. 7715 (July 13, 1991): 51.

"Croatia's Blitzkrieg: Croatia's President Franjo Tudjman Has Shattered the Dream of a Greater Serbia," *The Economist* 336, no. 7927 (August 12, 1995): 41.

"Deadly Gamble: Croatia," *The Economist* 334, no. 7898 (January 21, 1995): 56.

"Ethnic Cleansing: Blood and Earth," *The Economist* 336, no. 7933 (September 23, 1995): 16.

"How Many Little Wars Make a Big One?" *The Economist* 326, no. 7796 (January 30, 1993): 45.

"Inside an Ancient Quarrel," *The Economist* 319, no. 7708 (May 25, 1991): 53.

"Into the Dark," *The Economist* 320, no. 7725 (September 21, 1991): 57.

"Laager louts," *The Economist* 332, no. 7878 (August 27, 1994): 45.

"Nations on the Move," *The Economist* 336, no. 7928 (August 19, 1995): 42.

"Push for Peace: Yugoslavia," *The Economist* 320, no. 7723 (September 7, 1991): 48.

"Soldiering on: ex-Yugoslavia," *The Economist* 335, no. 7914 (May 13, 1995): 54.

"Suverenitet bez Doziranja," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, July 3, 1990, 6.

"The Flight of the Krajina Serbs," *The Economist* 336, no. 7927 (August 12, 1995): 42.

"The next Yugoslav War: Serbia and Croatia," *The Economist* 328, no. 7820 (July 17, 1993): 48-49.

"Think again, Tudjman," *The Economist* 334, no. 7904 (March 4, 1995): 15.

"To Fill the Void: An Interview with Stojan Obradović and Goran Vezić," *Uncaptive Minds* 7, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 1994): 37-43.

"Turning-point in Yugoslavia," *The Economist* 322, no. 7741 (January 11, 1992): 43.

"Up Fjord, no Paddle yet: ex-Yugoslavia," *The Economist* 329, no. 7835 (October 30, 1995): 61.

Ashbrook, John, and Spencer D. Bakich, "Storming to Partition: Croatia, the United States, and Krajina in the Yugoslav War," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 21, no. 4 (2010): 537-560, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2010.518852.

Ashbrook, John, *Buying and Selling the Istrian Goat. Istrian Regionalism, Croatian Nationalism, and EU Enlargement* (Bruxelles, Belgium: Peter Lang Verlag, 2008), https://www.peterlang.com/document/1104465.

Ballinger, Pamela, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton University Press, 2002).

Banac, Ivo, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984).

Bellamy, Alex J., *The Formation of a Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-old Dream?* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, December 2003), 128, https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719065026.001.0001.

Bennett, Christopher, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences* (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

Bergholz, Max, *Violence as a Generative Force: Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

Brown, Keith, "Villains and Symbolic Pollution in the Narratives of Nations: The Case of Boris Sarafov," in *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory*, ed. Maria N. Todorova (New York University Press, 2004), 233-252.

Connor, Walker, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton University Press, 1994).

Degan, Vladimir-Đuro, "The War in Croatia: Temporal Application of Conventional Rules Prohibiting International Crimes," *Politička misao* 30, no. 2 (1993): 5-18, https://hrcak.srce.hr/111546.

Fleming, Katherine E., "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 4 (October 2000): 1218-1233, https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/105.4.1218.

Foster, Samuel, *Yugoslavia in the British Imagination: Peace, War and Peasants before Tito* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023).

Glenny, Misha, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War*, 3rd revised edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1996).

Kaplan, Robert D., *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

Lampe, John R., *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Lučić, Z., "On the Constitutional Organization of the Republic of Croatia," in *Legal System of the Republic of Croatia*, ed. D. Brunčić, Z. Lučić, V. Ljubanović, and I. Vrjkić (Osijek: University of Osijek, 1998), 15.

Magaš, Branka, and Ivo Žanić, eds., *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina: 1991-1995* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

Magocsi, Paul Robert, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe: Revised and Expanded Edition (A History of East Central Europe (HECE))* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002).

Marić, Davor, "Rašković: Ovo je Ustanak bez Oružja," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, July 26, 1990, 7.

Radulović, Srđan, "'Sabor' Srpskih Općine," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, July 4, 1990, 4.

Ramet, Sabrina P., *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, 4th edition (Routledge, 2018).

Ramet, Sabrina P., Konrad Clewing, and Reneo Lukić, eds., *Croatia since Independence: War, Politics, Society, Foreign Relations* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008).

Silber, Laura, and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, revised edition (Penguin Books, 1997).

Štitkovac, Ejub, "Croatia: The First War," in *Burn This House: The Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia*, ed. Jasminka Udovički and James Ridgeway (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 154-174, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822380917-009.

Stjepanović, Dejan, "Territoriality and Citizenship: Membership and Sub-State Polities in Post-Yugoslav Space," *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 7 (September 2015): 1030-1055, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2015.1068743.

Tatalović, Siniša, "Military and Political Aspects of the Croato-Serbian Conflict," *Politička misao* 33, no 5 (1996): 166-190, https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/155702.

Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans*, updated edition (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Vezić, Goran, "A Croatian Reichstag Trial: The Case of Dalmatian Action," *Uncaptive Minds* 7, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 1994): 17-24.

Wade, Peter, "Inequality and Situational Identity: The 1970s," in *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (Pluto Press, 2010), 61-84, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183p73f.9.

Wolff, Larry, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, November 1994).

Wolff, Larry, *Venice and the Slavs: The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, April 2002).