Original research article UDK: 355.1-058.65(497.5):791.62 949.75"1991/1995"

Received: 15th December 2012

Conflicting Memories, Competing Narratives and Contested Histories in Croatia's Post-war Commemorative Practices

TAMARA BANJEGLAV*

Summary

This article analyses commemorations and commemorative practices relating to certain events from the 1991-1995 conflict in Croatia (Domovinski rat, or Homeland War) and their relation to the official narratives of the past. It begins with a theoretical framework about war commemorations introduced by Ashplant, Dawson and Roper (2000) and continues with an overview and analysis of the dominant, official narrative of the Homeland War, which organizes war memory and forms the framework of official commemorative practices. The hypothesis of the paper is that the official, state narrative on the 1990s war is being deconstructed and contested by oppositional, sectional narratives, which can be discerned from unofficial, counter-commemorations and celebrations of war events. The article, thus, looks at what role these 'counter' (oppositional) commemorative events, which do not follow the dominant pattern, play in the (de)construction of the official narrative about the Homeland War. Moreover, the paper is interested in the ways in which the official commemorative practices are interwoven with Croatian-Serbian bilateral relations and relations with the ICTY, and argues that these practices do not contribute to, but rather obstruct, reconciliation.

Keywords: commemoration, memory, narrative, operation 'Storm', Vukovar, Homeland War, the ICTY

1. Introduction

War commemorations are important rituals for a society to remember its victims and honour those who bravely fought and gave their lives for their country. However, these commemorations also serve as platforms for politicians to pursue their

^{*} Tamara Banjeglav, PhD candidate in Diversity Management and Governance at the University of Graz, Austria.

political goals and ensure that their narrative of the past becomes recorded and recognized as 'those events that actually happened'. Moreover, the content of commemorations can serve as an indicator of how a society remembers its past. However, this article attempts to show that, as Ashplant, Dawson and Roper argue, "the dominant national narrative is always contested, the focus of internal conflicts" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 16). Thus, the dominant narrative is often challenged by oppositional, counter narratives, which threaten to destabilize the dominant narrative. These oppositional narratives display what Wilde calls 'irruptions of memory'. 'Irruptions of memory' are public events which "receive extensive coverage in the media and involve the authority of public institutions and of the elites responsible for them. They involve a period of recent national history notably framed by conflicting political memories (...)" (Wilde, 1999: 475). During these irruptions, as Wilde shows through the example of Chile, there is "an arena of deeply divided public discourse, shot through with contending and mutually exclusive collective representations of the past" (ibid.). Although memory is likely to be controlled by political elites in power, especially in politically unstable times or times of crises, this does not imply that no other memories exist besides the official mnemonic discourse. However, it is argued that "the official national narrative promoted by the state agencies operates so as to 'frame' war memories articulated from below, in forms which serve the interests of that nation-state" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 53). Thus, all individual, sectional and oppositional narratives are created in relation to and communication with the official one and this paper aims to explore that relationship.

The paper is theoretically grounded in an analytical framework developed by Ashplant, Dawson and Roper (2000), which approaches the politics of war memory and commemorations as a "struggle of different groups to give public articulation to and, hence, gain recognition for, certain memories and the narratives within which they are structured" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 16). In their view, this struggle has three main aspects: *narratives*, *arenas* and *agencies*. Narratives are shared formulations through which memories are articulated and organized, and can range from individual, through locally shared, to hegemonic, official narratives. In relation to hegemonic narratives, certain memories shared by social groups can act as sectional or oppositional narratives. Those social actors seeking to promote and secure recognition for their war memories do so through various social agencies: official bodies of the nation-state, organizations and movements of civil society, 'fictive kinship' (Winter, 1999) or more localized face-to-face groupings. By employing different agencies, social actors advance claims for their narratives in different arenas. They can range from "networks of families or kinship groups, through those of communi-

¹ I understand 'narrative' to mean a universal form of human memory, in which both individual and collective memories are presented, and in which they can be understood.

ties of geography or interest, to the public sphere of nation-states and transnational power blocs" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 17). Ashplant, Dawson and Roper suggest that analysing specific instances of war memory and commemoration in these terms can help clarify its politics, by specifying which social groups, via what agencies, are the promoters of a particular narrative addressed to which arenas. Moreover, as Barry Schwartz argues, commemorations are important for our understanding of the narratives of the past, because they "lift from an ordinary historical sequence those extraordinary historical events which embody our deepest and most fundamental values. Commemoration (...) is, in this sense, a register of sacred history" (Schwartz, 1982: 377). Compared to previous mostly state-centred and elite-focused research, this approach aims to reveal more nuanced aspects and understandings of commemorative practices and their different forms.

2. Politics of Remembrance and Official Narratives of the 'Homeland War'

According to Paul Connerton, memory of a social group can be shaped by using the state apparatus "in a systematic way to deprive its citizens of their memory" (Connerton, 1989:14). Political structures in power in a society promote 'official memory', which claims to be collective, but is also inevitably selective, since it includes memory of only certain events which are convenient in a given historical moment (Jović, 2004). Those which are not convenient are excluded and 'forgotten'. For this reason, official politics of memory² are always followed by official politics of 'forgetting' (ibid.). Official social memory is a 'political process without an end' which needs the art of forgetting, as much as the art of remembering, in order to function successfully (Connerton, 1989).³

In the former Yugoslavia, in an attempt to re-introduce into public memory those aspects and events of history which were, up to that moment, officially 'forgotten', the new political elites aimed to deconstruct the old and construct new narratives of the past. What was previously forgotten by the old regime now became 'remembered' by new national elites. Thus, the collapse of the old 'official' narratives of the past in the former Yugoslavia created an opening for new interpretations of history. After the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) won the first multi-

² According to Barahona de Brito et al., "the politics of memory is two things. Narrowly conceived, it consists of policies of truth and justice in transition (*official or public memory*); more widely conceived, it is about how a society interprets and appropriates its past, in an ongoing attempt to mould its future (*social memory*)" (Barahona de Brito et al., 2001: 37).

³ However, as Paul Ricoeur argues, the past cannot be simply 'forgotten' and erased from memory, but is set aside (*oubli de réserve*) and used again when it is needed, i.e. when new political orders and elites try to re-introduce into social memory certain events that former regimes wanted to forget (Ricoeur, 2004).

party elections in Croatia and came to power in 1990, its president Franjo Tuđman tried to construct a new narrative of the past with the goal of achieving 'national reconciliation'. The main idea behind it was unification of the entire national body of the Croatian people. Thus, Tudman's aim was to construct a narrative based on the continuity of Croatian statehood and sovereignty through his national reconciliation policy which would have united Croats who had been on both the losing and winning sides of the Second World War. He viewed both sides as having the common goal of creating an independent Croatia. Such an attempt enabled some 'dark moments' from Croatia's history to enter the new official memory of the past. As a result, the memory of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), which was suppressed in the old official narrative on the Second World War in favour of the 'brotherhood and unity' narrative, was brought back from the margins of social memory, where it was cast during socialist Yugoslavia. However, in addition to introducing into the new narrative of the past those events which were officially forgotten, some other events and figures were erased from public remembrance, such as the Partisans and the antifascist resistance movement. This erasure included the destruction of Partisan monuments which were a testimony to Croatia's antifascist past. Monuments were used by the new government in order to demonstrate what and who should be remembered from the period of the Second World War. Through the destruction of monuments which commemorated the National Liberation Struggle (NOB), as the Second World War was known in socialist Yugoslavia, the public was shown that the joint past of the people of Yugoslavia was unwelcome in the new historical narrative, which was replaced by the past of the Croatian people.

The Homeland War (1991-1995), Croatia's war for independence, also played a key role in the official narrative of the newly established state. The narrative created around this war centred on the idea that Croatia was attacked by rebel Serbs and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), and that it defended its sovereignty and

⁴ The 'all-Croatian reconciliation' was the main idea of Tuđman and his party, HDZ, which was based on the unification of the entire Croatian nation in order to fulfil the 'centuries old' dream of forming an independent Croatian state.

⁵ The suppression of public memory of Ustasha crimes committed during the existence of NDH over (mostly) Serbs, represented "the policy of Titoist Yugoslavia to suppress reminders of that vicious interethnic conflict, in the interests of a multiethnic state" (Denich, 1994: 367). However, it should be said that not all memory of the Ustasha crimes was suppressed, which can be seen when one looks at the example of the old exhibition in Jasenovac camp memorial museum, in which Ustasha atrocities were actually emphasized.

⁶ According to incomplete data collected and published by the Croatian Association of Antifascists and Antifascist Fighters, "in the period between 1990 and 2000 in Croatia, 2.964 memorials have been demolished, damaged or removed, out of which 731 are monuments and other memorials of high artistic and cultural-historical value" (Hrženjak, 2002: xii).

achieved independence by winning the war. Based on this narrative, the governing elites built two versions of Croatia's identity: that of a heroic victim, which was attacked by rebel Serb forces and the JNA, and that of a victorious hero, which needed to defend itself and, in the end, won the war. Thus, in this narrative, the Croatian state is simultaneously an innocent victim of Serbian aggression as well as a victorious hero which managed to liberate its territory and restore peace and security. The heroic narrative about the war was officially articulated in the Declaration on the Homeland War, which the Croatian parliament adopted in 2000.⁷ The Declaration states that Croatia "led a just and legitimate, defensive and liberating, and not an aggressive and conquering war, (...) in which it defended its territory from greater-Serbian aggression within internationally recognized borders" (Narodne novine, 2000a). The Declaration is significant because it insists on a uniform and unambiguous interpretation of the recent past: the Parliamentary representatives, who adopted the Declaration, felt that "the fundamental values of the Homeland War are unambiguously accepted by the entire Croatian people and all Croatian citizens" (ibid., my italics). In this declaration, the Homeland War is presented as the 'fundamental value' from which stems today's Croatian state, and this shows us how deeply rooted war images are in society (Koren, 2011: 137).

The victim narrative usually centred on the image of Croatia's suffering which was put into a broader context and not only linked to the executions that happened at the end of the Second World War, but also compared to the Jewish suffering during the Holocaust. As Ashplant, Dawson and Roper argue, "after each new conflict, official memory is re-articulated with the aid of pre-existing war narratives, which provide a national repertoire of usable images, plots and figures" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 22). These 'pre-existing' memories (or templates) of former wars create a framework through which later conflicts can be understood and explained. Memory of an heroic victory or victimization from a previous war may be used as a template for explaining later conflicts. This certainly holds true for Croatia, where memories of the unresolved conflict during the Second World War were employed by the new political elites in the 1990s to explain and justify the new war. For example, in 1995 (on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the so-called Bleiburg massacres that took place at the end of the Second World War), the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament stated that during the Homeland War the Croatian Army had prevented

⁷ The Declaration was adopted as an attempt of the newly elected government to reconcile its cooperation with the ICTY, which was one of the prerequisites for Croatia's progress into Euro-Atlantic integration, with the dominant climate in the country influenced by the demands from war veterans' associations not to extradite Croatian Army generals to the ICTY. For an extensive analysis of Croatia's domestic politics and cooperation with the ICTY see Peskin and Boduszyński, 2003.

the Serbian-communist army from repeating another Bleiburg (*Vjesnik*, 1995: 3). Moreover, in 2005 during his visit to Yad Vashem, Prime Minister Ivo Sanader compared the Homeland War to the Holocaust, saying that "we should not forget the aggression that Croatia suffered, because we were also victims of horrible madness such as Nazism and fascism and we, Croatian citizens, know best what it means to suffer from an aggression" (*Vjesnik*, 2005a).

According to Aleida Assmann,

references to the Holocaust are increasingly being used to call attention to other traumas and atrocities. In this metaphoric extension, the Holocaust has become a free-floating signifier that is readily associated with all kinds of manifestations of moral evil, and which today can invariably be applied to any pain, destruction, trauma or disaster. (...) More often than not, it is used to legitimate one's own actions and to support one's own claims for moral authority, recognition and restitution. (Assmann, 2010: 114)

In Croatia, the Holocaust⁸ was used by political elites in order to reinforce, by drawing a parallel with the Homeland War, the victimization narrative and to show the (international) public the extent of the suffering of the Croatian people during this recent war.⁹

3. Narratives of the Past and Post-war Commemorative Events

3.1 Victimization Narrative: Remembering the Victims of Vukovar

The victimization narrative is, however, nowhere more present than around the commemorations of events that happened in and around the town of Vukovar. In the public memory of the 1990s war in Croatia, Vukovar symbolizes the suffering that the Croatian state endured in its fight for independence. Vukovar remains a symbol of the destruction of cultural monuments and ethnic cleansing of civilians by the JNA, which culminated in the massacre of more than 200 prisoners at the Ovčara farm in November 1991. Vukovar became a part of official national re-

⁸ For similar examples, as well as for examples of the use of Holocaust references by Serbian political elites for crimes committed by Croats against the Serbs during the Second World War, see MacDonald, 2002.

⁹ It is interesting to note that, after his visit to the Holocaust History Museum in Jerusalem in 2005, Prime Minister Sanader came up with an idea to open a Museum of the Homeland War. See *Vjesnik*, 2005b.

¹⁰ Ovčara is an agricultural property near the town of Vukovar where a war crime was committed by members of the JNA and Serbian paramilitary forces in the night between November 20 and 21, 1991. More than 200 civilians and soldiers were killed. The majority of them were patients at the Vukovar hospital from which they were taken and brought first to a camp and then

membrance and occupies one of the central places in the construction of Croatian national identity. State institutions played an important role in the way in which Vukovar would be collectively remembered in Croatia. The narrative around Vukovar was built through rituals of commemorations, which, as Anthony D. Smith argues, are important for the maintenance of national identity (Smith, 1991). In order to successfully integrate a group identity after the Croatian population started to return to Vukovar in 1998, following a peaceful re-integration of the town into Croatia's political and legal order, 11 the government tried to 'define' the past and legitimate its take on what happened in the past by creating a strong victim-hero identity of the town. The presentation and acknowledgement of this past was secured through commemorative practices which determined what should be remembered, but also when it should be remembered. At the very beginning of the war, Vukovar symbolized heroic resistance to the aggression, but soon after the town fell in November 1991, it became a symbol of mass suffering and of victimization. This was, for example, voiced during the 1999 commemoration of the anniversary of the fall of Vukovar by deputy Parliamentary Speaker Vladimir Šeks, who said that "the day of remembrance of Vukovar is not a day of remembering defeat, because there has been no defeat, but remembering the victim which opened the path to glorious freedom" (Vjesnik, 1999). This statement clearly shows that, as Ashplant, Dawson and Roper argue, "the commemorative rituals and patriotic rhetoric of the nation-state (or the nationalist movement) are involved precisely in making particular meanings about death in war: 'the noble sacrifice' of 'dying for their country" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 9). Emphasizing this kind of interpretation of the past strengthened the group identity of Croatian nationals in Vukovar, who are, in the official narrative of the war, seen as victims who suffered in order for Croatia to gain its freedom and independence. Painting a picture of Vukovar as a heroic town also created an image of the town which, through its resistance to the enemy army attacks and months-long defence during the siege, saved the rest of the country from undergoing a similar fate. In accordance with this victim-hero narrative, the commemorative events in Vukovar, on the anniversary of the fall of the town in 2010, were organized under the title "Vukovar – winner as a victim". Through the media and commemorative events, those who died in Vukovar were

later killed at Ovčara. It is considered to be the largest slaughter of individuals committed during the 1990s war in Croatia.

¹¹ Peaceful re-integration represents the process of return of Croatia's occupied territories (eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and western Syrmia) into the constitutional-legal order of the Republic of Croatia. The period of peaceful reintegration, for the implementation of which the U.N. Security Council set up a special Transitional Administration in eastern Slavonia, Baranja and western Syrmia (UNTAES), ended on January 15, 1998.

transformed into meaningful victims for Croatia's freedom and an important (central) event in Croatia's recent history. 12 This was also evident in 2006, when the annual program organized in Vukovar on the anniversary of the fall of the town was held under the title "Pilgrimage to Croatian freedom". The choice of the title under which the official, central, commemoration was held shows the impact that official narratives have on the shaping of local (individual) memories. What was officially remembered was not the individual sufferings of Vukovar's citizens, but their collective suffering for a greater cause – Croatia's freedom. This is also in line with Ashplant, Dawson and Roper's argument that "the official national narrative promoted by the state agencies operates so as to 'frame' war memories articulated from below, in forms which serve the interests of that nation-state" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 53). Thus, in the official narrative on what happened in Vukovar, what is being remembered are no longer people who suffered and who died in Vukovar, but the town as such ('hero-town'), which suffered from the attacks of the enemy and thus defended the rest of Croatia. In this way, the commemorative event in Vukovar seems to no longer be organized for Vukovar's citizens, but for other citizens of Croatia coming from all parts of the country. 13 As one of the commanders of the town's defence said on the twentieth anniversary of the town's fall, "remembering Vukovar has grown into a gathering of all Croats, which shows that we are united and that what happened here laid the foundations for Croatia's state and its freedom" (*Tportal*, 2011).

However, since this event enjoyed huge publicity in the Croatian public sphere, the commemoration was also used as a medium for commenting on Croatia's relations and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Thus, the 2007 commemoration program was titled 'To Vukovar for Truth and Justice', and the choice of this title was explained as "the most suitable words, due to the injustice coming from The Hague" (*Jutarnji list*, 2007). The title was alluding to the low prison sentences given to those most responsible for the destruction of the town and killings of its citizens. In September 2007, the ICTY

¹² The significance of this event for the collective Croatian memory of the war can also be seen from the fact that in 2010, on the eve of the anniversary of the fall of Vukovar, the daily newspaper *Jutarnji list* included a poster depicting graphically the last days of the battle for Vukovar, as "one of the crucial episodes in the Homeland War" (*Jutarnji list*, November 17, 2010).

¹³ Mateo Žanić notices that attendance at the annual commemoration in Vukovar has not decreased over the years, but has even increased, so that, according to *Vjesnik* daily reporters, some 7,000 people participated in the official program in 2003, some 15,000 in 2004 and 2005, while in 2006, on the fifteenth anniversary of the fall of Vukovar, around 25,000 people joined the 'memory walk' (Žanić, 2007). Moreover, it is estimated that in 2011, on the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the town, some 50,000 people from all over Croatia participated in the memory walk (*Slobodna Dalmacija*, 2011).

sentenced Mile Mrkšić, a former JNA officer, to a prison sentence of twenty years, and Veselin Šljivančanin, a JNA major, to five years in prison, while another JNA captain, Miroslav Radić, was acquitted of all charges. ¹⁴ In this way, the commemoration was also used as a medium to criticise the international institutions and call them responsible for the shamefully low sentences given to 'the Vukovar trio' (Šljivančanin, Mrkšić and Radić). Moreover, the annual commemoration was used in order to shape public opinion about the ICTY judgements and about its role in achieving justice. However, five years later, the same commemoration was used in order to praise the ICTY judgement acquitting Croatian Army generals (Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač), which shows that ICTY judgements are accepted by the Croatian public as just and correct only if they support the already existing official narrative about the war.

Vukovar, together with Knin, as will be shown later, occupies the central place in the founding myth of the Croatian state. This narrative was made official at the end of the 1990s, when the Croatian Parliament declared November 18 as the official memorial day or "Remembrance day for the victim of Vukovar 1991" (*Narodne novine*, 1999). As sociologist Kruno Kardov notices, the use of the singular in the name of this official memorial day ('victim of Vukovar') witnesses to the sacral understanding of Vukovar as a victim-town, which was victimized at the expense of something greater and more important, i.e. at the expense of creating the independent Croatian state and securing Croatia's freedom (Kardov, 2006).

Since 2000, the main event during the commemoration taking place on November 18 has become the 'memory walk' from the Vukovar hospital (from which patients were taken and later killed) to the cemetery of the Croatian Army soldiers, which is about 5.5 kilometres in length. Colloquially, this walk is also known as 'the way of the cross', which evokes the Biblical symbolism of suffering. The memory walk in Vukovar is attended every year by all high-ranking Croatian politicians (the president, prime minister, speaker of the Parliament, as well as many ministers and Parliamentary representatives). However, another important social agency involved in the Vukovar commemoration is the Catholic Church. A religious ceremony (mass) is usually part of the official, state-sponsored commemoration and

¹⁴ In the third non-appealable verdict reached in December 2010, the ICTY sentenced JNA major Veselin Šljivančanin to ten years in prison for helping and supporting the crime at Ovčara. He was granted an early release on July 5, 2011. Mile Mrkšić was sentenced in 2009 to twenty years in prison for "having aided and abetted the murder and torture of prisoners" (ICTY, 2007).

¹⁵ What also connects these two symbolic places is an event as part of which president Tuđman visited Vukovar, after its reintegration, by train along the rebuilt railway line, maintaining in this way the symbolism of his celebratory train ride to Knin after operation 'Storm' in 1995.

religious leaders are also usually given space in the protocol. Thus, for example, during the annual commemoration of the fall of Vukovar, the cardinal holds, every year, a holy mass at the central memorial cemetery of the victims of the Homeland War, which is attended by the prime minister, the Parliamentary speaker and all other high-ranking government officials. In this way, it is automatically assumed that victims and their families are (were) religious and that they belong to the dominant religious community in Croatia (Catholics).

However, memory-making around Vukovar is more complex than it seems on the surface, because it not only speaks of the past and the events that happened during the war, but also reflects the present state of the Serb minority issue in Croatia, as well as bilateral relations between Serbia and Croatia. Thus, for example, no representative of the Croatian Serbs attends the commemorative events. In November 2010, before the annual commemoration taking place later that month, the former president of Serbia, Boris Tadić, visited Vukovar and Ovčara and laid a wreath on the monument at Ovčara, expressing his regret for the crime committed there (Office of the President of Croatia, 2010). This act might have changed the pattern of (political) attendance at commemorative events in Vukovar. However, no politicians from the Croatian Serb parties attended the commemoration and 'memory walk' later that month. Croatian-Serbian relations were again called into question during the 2011 commemoration, because Serbia sent Croatia a list of indictments against Croatian citizens charging them with war crimes. During the commemoration that year, Vukovar's war-time commander Branko Borković commented that "unfortunately, indictments which change the positions of the victim and the perpetrator are arriving from Serbia and we still haven't built good neighbourly relations in the region" (*Tportal*, 2011).

In 2012, although he announced earlier that month he would attend the official commemoration in Vukovar, the Croatian Serbs' representative, Milorad Pupovac, did not, in the end, join the commemoration. This commemoration was held in a celebratory atmosphere following the release of the Croatian Army generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač who were acquitted by the ICTY for crimes committed against Croatian Serb civilians during and after Operation Storm (August

¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that another politician from a Croatian Serbs' party was present at the commemoration held on November 19, 2012 in Borovo naselje at the outskirts of Vukovar, but did not participate in the official wreath-laying protocol.

¹⁷ During the military Operation Storm, between August 4 and 8, 1995, all occupied Croatian territory was brought back under the Croatian legal order, except for Eastern Slavonia which was peacefully re-integrated later. Operation Storm, along with Operation Flash in May 1995, was the crucial military operation which led to the end of the war. During the military offensive, some 18.4 percent of Croatia's territory was liberated.

1995). 18 The judgement was received in Croatia as the final recognition of who was the aggressor and who the victim in this war. As president of the association of parents and families of detained and missing Croatian war veterans 'Mothers of Vukovar', Manda Patko stressed during her speech at the annual commemoration in Borovo naselje, "November 16 is the day when the world finally recognized our innocence". 19 Thus, the Croatian Serbs' representative said it was impossible for him to attend the commemoration in an atmosphere of celebration after the ICTY's recognition of the legitimacy of Operation Storm, which resulted in numerous deaths and massive expulsions of Serb civilians. Once more the (tense) relations between the two countries were reflected in commemorative events, which also served to re-affirm the official narrative on the war and its character.

In addition to political actors, other important social actors at commemorations in the Vukovar area are civil society organizations from Serbia, which attend commemorations for Croatian victims and invite Serbian political leaders to follow their example. In 2009, at the annual commemoration in Borovo naselje, attended by representatives of three organizations from Belgrade (Women in Black, Humanitarian Law Centre and Youth Initiative for Human Rights), director of the Humanitarian Law Centre, Nataša Kandić, said their attendance at the commemoration represented "opening of the path for political leaders from Serbia and those responsible to come to the sites of destruction, imprisonment and killings and to pay their respects and apologize to the town of Vukovar, but also to the families which are still looking for their missing members" (Jutarnji list, 2009). Moreover, the Humanitarian Law Centre and Women in Black activists visit every year the site of mass killings at Ovčara and attend the commemoration for killed Croatian civilians in the village of Lovas near Vukovar (on October 18), and the commemoration and memory walk in Borovo naselje (on November 19), and have even become part of the official protocol.²⁰

Just like their Serbian counterparts at commemorations for Croatian victims, no Croatian politicians participate in the 'counter-commemoration' for the killed Serb

¹⁸ On April 15, 2011, the ICTY brought a first degree verdict against generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač, who were sentenced to 24 and 18 years in prison respectively "for having knowingly failed to prevent or punish criminal acts or omissions of their subordinates" during the Operation Storm (ICTY Judgement Summary for Gotovina *et al.*, 2011). In the second, non-appealable verdict reached on November 16, 2012, both generals were cleared of all charges.

Manda Patko in a speech given at the annual commemoration in Borovo naselje, November 19, 2012. (The author attended the commemoration.)

²⁰ It should also be mentioned that one of the first apologies for crimes committed in Vukovar, which came from Serbia, was given by Women in Black. Members of the organization went to Vukovar in November 2006 to ask families of victims of crimes committed in Vukovar for forgiveness.

citizens organized on November 17, prior to the annual state commemoration. This commemoration is low-profile and is organized at a cemetery where only members of the JNA army are buried. Thus, the 'counter-memories' in Vukovar can be found in another commemorative arena, that of Vukovar's citizens of Serbian nationality, in which the dominant memory is that of Serb soldiers who fought on the side of the Yugoslav People's Army and died during the fight for the 'liberation of the town'²¹. What is missing in this narrative about the war in Vukovar are memories of Vukovar's Serb civilians, who remained in the town during the siege, together with their fellow Croats, and together with them endured the everyday suffering and threat of shelling and devastation. The official memory of Vukovar's Serb citizens was represented only through the Memorial park of fallen soldiers (Kardov, 2002). Thus, the dominant memory was the military one, because, in this memorial park, only Vukovar's Serbs who were killed in the battle for Vukovar fighting on the side of the JNA were buried (ibid.). Similarly to the Croatian narrative, what is dominant in this narrative is the symbol of victim, only here the victim is also a soldier. This was symbolized by way of the tombstones erected over the graves of soldiers buried in this memorial park. The tombstones were made in the shape of a *šajkača*, the military cap worn by Serbian army soldiers. During the peaceful reintegration of Vukovar, this memorial graveyard caused continued conflicts between local Serbs and Croats, and the tombstones were devastated several times. For this reason, local Serb political leaders decided to put in their place new tombstones, so that in 2002 each grave was re-designed in such a way that the military cap was removed from them. But in this way, the memory of the war's victims also changed. As sociologist Kruno Kardov notices, "the change of military gravestones to ordinary gravestones also represents an act of changing the meaning of victims: from victim-warrior to death devoid of any transformative (political) power" (Kardov, 2006: 76).

Counter-memories in the case of Vukovar emerged with the peaceful reintegration of the town and with the return of non-Serb citizens to Vukovar. What used to be the dominant memory of the war (the interpretation of the war as civil war in which local Serbs had to defend their lives from the Croatian state), now became a counter-memory and commemorations turned into counter-commemorations. Thus, until 1998, the local Serb citizens celebrated November 18 as 'the day of liberation' of the town, while after 1998, with peaceful re-integration, it was marked as 'the day when the conflict ended' (Žanić, 2007: 84). As Mateo Žanić also notices, the program of marking November 18, in the first years after 'liberation', was rich with cultural, political and sport events. However, it lost its significance over time, so

²¹ 'Liberation of the town' is the term usually used by Croatian Serbs from Vukovar and the surrounding area who viewed JNA's seizure of the town as liberation, which, for them, marked the end of the battle for Vukovar and the end of the war in that part of Croatia.

that, in the end, it merely came down to religious commemoration of the Serb victims of the war (Žanić, 2008). Although this celebration and marking of the event played a prominent and important role in the public memory of Serb citizens before 1998, the date lost its meaning and significance with the return of non-Serb citizens. Today, the social actors engaged in the remembrance of this event, as reported, are mostly relatives of the soldiers who were killed in Vukovar (Vjesnik, 2003). However, these 'counter-commemorations' do not attract much attention of the Croatian media and are not particularly important for the official narrative, as are, for example, 'counter-commemorations' related to Operation Storm which took place at the very end of the war in 1995, in and around the town of Knin. The narrative of victimization and heroism, which exists around Vukovar, is firmly anchored in the narrative of the Homeland War and the role of the Croatian state in this narrative is not called into question, as is the case with the narrative around Operation Storm. As the article later argues, counter-commemorations in the case of Operation Storm directly undermine the official narrative of the war and, for that reason, spark controversies and annually attract a lot more public attention.

3.2 Winner Narrative: Stormy Celebrations in (and around) Knin

A growing number of war events are commemorated in Croatia every year, and they are organized either by the state, local communities, or war veterans' associations. One of the most important commemorative events is the celebration held every year on August 5, the day when the military Operation Storm was initiated by Croatian Army forces in 1995. This day is also a public holiday and is celebrated as Homeland Thanksgiving Day, while since 2001, it is also known as The Day of Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving, and since 2008, also as Croatian War Veterans' Day (Koren, 2011). Celebration of this national holiday, which happens every year in the Dalmatian hinterland town of Knin (the main site of the events that happened during Operation Storm) provokes passionate reactions from, and has various meanings for, different segments of Croatian society. The official memory of Operation Storm is one-sided and mentions mostly the victory of the Croatian Army and its success in bringing back the occupied territories under Croatia's legal and political order. This narrative was given legitimacy through the "Declaration on Operation Storm", adopted in 2006, which defines it as a "decisive, glorious, and victorious battle" (Narodne novine, 2006). Memories of Serb civilians who were evicted from their homes and whose family members were killed by the Croatian Army at the very end of the war²² are not part of the official ceremony.

²² On the number and structure of victims killed during and in the aftermath of Operation Storm see Graovac, 2004.

In opposition (and relation) to the victimization narrative of the fall of Vukovar, Operation Storm became the keystone of the heroic narrative of the Homeland War. In political speeches held during the central celebration every year, it has often been stressed that Operation Storm marked the new beginning and re-birth of the Croatian nation. This can be discerned from the decision of president Franjo Tudman to take the oath for his second presidential mandate, in 1997, on the very date when Operation Storm is celebrated – August 5. The performative character of this event, such as taking the oath, laying a wreath and raising the national flag, have contributed to the promotion of Operation Storm as a founding myth of the Croatian state (Đerić, 2008). Although Tuđman chose St. Marko's Square in Zagreb, and not the fortress in Knin, for taking his oath, and although during his mandate as president anniversaries of Operation Storm were celebrated at the Altar of the Homeland in Zagreb, Knin remained a place carrying strong symbolism for Croatia's recent history.²³ Celebrations of Operation Storm and the annual commemoration moved to Knin with the change of government in 2000, when the only high-ranking state official participating in the celebration was Deputy Prime Minister Goran Granić. The reason for this was the Prime Minister's and government's fear of protests from Croatian war veterans, due to the new government's policy of cooperation with the ICTY (Narodne novine, 2000b).²⁴ The cooperation started following growing pressure from the international community and the ICTY on Croatia to investigate war crimes committed during and in the aftermath of Operation Storm and to extradite Croatian Army generals suspected of committing war crimes against Serb civilians during this period. However, many in Croatia thought it was impossible for Croatian Army members to have committed war crimes, since the nature of the Homeland War was perceived as defensive, just, and liberating. A radical understanding of the war's nature was given by a Supreme Court judge and former president of the Supreme Court, Milan Vuković, who said, in an interview, that no war crime could be committed in a defensive war.

Thus, the Prime Minister faced numerous criticisms from a large part of the Croatian public for his cooperation with the ICTY and for his agreement to extradite indicted Croatian Army generals to the tribunal in The Hague. For this reason, he avoided coming to the annual celebration in Knin in 2002 and 2003, fearing mass demonstrations from the public. Thus, the coalition government downplayed

²³ Knin used to be the seat of Croatian kings, and during the 1990s it was the capital of the secessionist Republic of Serbian Krajina.

²⁴ On April 14, 2000, the new government issued a declaration confirming Croatia's commitment to fully cooperate with the ICTY. Operations Flash and Storm were no longer declared to be under Croatia's jurisdiction, but the government recognized ICTY's right to investigate war crimes committed during and at the end of the Homeland War. See *Narodne novine*, 2000b.

the importance of the Operation Storm celebration, but things changed when the HDZ returned to power at the end of 2003. In August 2004, the anniversary of the Operation Storm in Knin was attended by all high-ranking state officials (the president, prime minister, and speaker of the Parliament), which emphasized the importance of this event and its place in the national consciousness and history.²⁵ However, the HDZ government, although criticising cooperation policy with the ICTY while in opposition, continued to cooperate with the tribunal once back in power. Cooperation with the ICTY proved to be especially problematic for the ruling party, because it needed to find a way to address and incorporate the issue of cooperation into the official celebration, but at the same time, not to allow the questioning of the official interpretation of the war. Because of the cooperation, the government was not spared severe criticism from war veterans' associations, former army generals, and that part of the Croatian public which believed that no Croatian Army members should have been extradited to the ICTY. Moreover, growing criticism of the government politics resulted from the high-ranking politicians' mentioning war crimes committed against Serb civilians in the speeches held during the official celebration in Knin. However, although Croatian leaders started acknowledging that crimes had been committed during and immediately after Operation Storm, which was virtually impossible during the Tudman regime, they stressed that under no circumstances could these crimes be associated with the operation's leadership and with the military achievement and importance of the operation for Croatia's independence. Thus, in 2005, Prime Minister Sanader said in Knin that "Operation Storm should be separated from the tragic events, criminal acts and injustice committed against Croatian citizens of Serb nationality before full implementation of the legal order" (Jutarnji list, 2005). What could be read from Sanader's statement is that these crimes were committed because the Croatian legal system was not yet implemented in these areas and that these events were out of reach and were not under the control of the Croatian police and that, therefore, the Croatian authorities were not responsible for these events.26 Moreover, by not naming the perpetrators, these crimes were obscured and presented as just another horrible consequence of war. In this way, the state was not liable to pay any reparations to victims, since individuals, and not the state, were to be held responsible for the crimes.

²⁵ This importance was made even clearer on the tenth anniversary of the Operation, in 2005, when a special state committee for marking the tenth anniversaries of Operations Flash and Storm was formed, headed by the president, prime minister and speaker of the Parliament. See Office of the President of Croatia, 2005.

²⁶ For similar statements given by President Stjepan Mesić during later celebrations in Knin see Horelt and Renner, 2008.

However, the tenth anniversary of Operation Storm in 2005 revealed that several contested narratives about the recent past existed. As Jay Winter argues, "public commemorations (...) have the potential for dominated groups to contest their subordinate status in public. However much political leaders or their agents try to choreograph commemorative activity, there is much space for subversion or creative interpretation of the official commemorative script" (Winter, 2008: 63). Retired Croatian Army generals and members of the far-right opposition, frustrated at the government's cooperation with the ICTY, organized their own (counter-)commemoration and celebration of Operation Storm. Their frustration culminated on the tenth anniversary of the offensive, mostly due to ICTY's continued pressure to extradite one of the most prominent figures and symbolic heroes of the Homeland War – general Ante Gotovina.²⁷ Gotovina was accused by the ICTY of tolerating and not punishing those who committed war crimes against Serb civilians during, and in the aftermath of, Operation Storm, so that an indictment against him was issued. After he went into hiding in 2001, the ICTY issued a warrant for his arrest.²⁸ However, former war veterans and retired army generals used the pressure from the ICTY in order to increase the symbolic meaning of Operation Storm and interpreted the arrest warrant for Gotovina as yet another sacrifice made for the homeland (Đerić, 2008). War veterans, in protest of the government's efforts to arrest Gotovina, did not want to participate in the official state-sponsored event and central celebration in Knin, so a parallel (counter-)celebration was organized in the nearby town of Čavoglave²⁹. The organizers of this 'counter-celebration', under the slogan "Let's rise for Croatia", displayed posters and banners, as well as wore T-shirts with the image of Ante Gotovina and issued a statement against the government sharply criticising its politics of cooperation with the ICTY (*Index*, 2005).

A similar counter-celebration was planned by another retired army general, Miljenko Crnjac, in the town of Karlovac, but this celebration was cancelled at the last moment. Had it happened, all former Croatian Army members and generals might have decided to join the celebration in Karlovac, which would mean a complete boycott of the official, state-sponsored celebration and would leave only government officials in attendance (*Nacional*, 2005). By organizing a counter-ce-

²⁷ For an extensive analysis of the 'hero' and 'martyr' symbolism of Ante Gotovina in the perception of the Croatian public see Pavlaković, 2010.

²⁸ Gotovina was arrested on the Canary Islands and extradited to the ICTY in December 2005.

²⁹ Čavoglave is a town near Knin and hometown of a controversial singer of nationalistic songs, Marko Perković Thompson, who sponsors the parallel counter-celebration. The celebration is attended mostly by retired army generals and members of right-wing political groups, while the media report every year that the number of people attending the Čavoglave celebration is much higher than that of attendees at the state-organized celebration.

lebration and expressing their frustration at the central, state-organized celebration in Knin, the opposing side (far-right parties, war veterans' associations and retired army generals) symbolically countered the official narrative of the war and contemporary Croatian politics. They challenged the official narrative by challenging the government's legitimacy and associated themselves with the 'real' heroes of the Homeland War – the indicted generals. ³⁰ In their narrative about what happened in the war, no Croatian Army generals could be held responsible for war crimes, since they were fighting a legitimate, defensive war for 'the centuries' old dream' of Croatia's freedom and independence. The 'counter-celebration' in Čavoglave reveals what Ashplant, Dawson and Roper call 'sectional memory', i.e. "those memories which, though they have achieved the level of open public articulation, have not yet secured recognition within the existing framework of official memory" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 20). This 'sectional memory' threatens to turn into oppositional memory, depending on the extent to which it can (or cannot) be accommodated within the hegemonic frame and the degree of socio-political mobilization it will be able to achieve (ibid.).

Another event related to Operation Storm, which undermines the official Croatian narrative about the war, its character and its consequences, is the commemoration organized every year in Serbia, in memory of Serb civilians killed during and in the aftermath of the operation. The commemoration was first attended and organized only by members of victims' associations and the Serbian Orthodox Church and no government officials participated in the commemoration, as opposed to the marking of the event in Croatia (Đerić, 2008).³¹ The commemoration is of a sacral character and is held in St. Marko's Church in Belgrade, where a mass is held for the civilian victims. State officials started to attend the commemoration only after public pressure, on the ninth anniversary of the operation. Subsequently, the commemoration was used as a ritual for sending political messages to the government in Zagreb, while the Croatian government, just as ritually, answered with their own version of the past. However, both sides remained silent about crimes committed by their own side, since, as Gordana Đerić argues, "what has been systemati-

³⁰ As Vjeran Pavlaković noted, "one of the generals, Ljubo Ćesić Rojs, had previously campaigned for president of Croatia with the slogan 'a vote for me is a vote for Gotovina'" (Pavlaković, 2010: 1723).

³¹ Gordana Derić argues that reasons for Serbian government's initial silence about Operation Storm and the crimes committed against Serb civilians are not clear. One of the possible reasons was the government's attempt to normalize its relations with neighbouring Croatia in order to establish regional stability, while another reason could be of an economic nature. The new government (which came to power after Milošević's fall in 2000) could not deal economically with the issue of refugees who in mass numbers escaped from Croatia to Serbia during Operation Storm (see Đerić, 2008).

cally eliminated, forgotten or silenced, in occasional speeches and official marking of Operation Storm, is of the utmost importance for the symbolical imaginaria of these states" (Đerić, 2008: 53).

Remembering Operation Storm in Croatia and Serbia creates, every year, tensions in Croatian-Serbian relations, and, just as the annual commemoration of the fall of Vukovar, reflects bilateral relations between the two countries. In 2006, for example, Serbia's Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica stated that Operation Storm was a big crime, i.e. slaughter of Serbs, which went unpunished (*Dnevnik*, 2006). As a reply, Croatian Prime Minister Sanader stressed that "Operation Storm was not a crime, but it defeated a crime" (Jutarnji list, 2006). In the following years, marking of the Operation Storm was also used as a political battlefield on which the Serbian and Croatian politicians fought about the operation's meaning and character. In 2008, relations between Serbia and Croatia became tense once again when, on the eve of the thirteenth anniversary of the operation, Serbian President Boris Tadić said that he "expected from Croatia an apology for crimes committed against members of the Serb nation" and that "this day is mourned by the Serb people as a day of great sorrow and tragedy, since some 1,600 Serbs were either killed or went missing" (Index, 2008). Moreover, that same year, Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić accused Croatia of the ethnic cleansing of some 250,000 Serbs after Operation Storm (*Dnevnik*, 2008). These counter-commemorations in Belgrade create a narrative which simplifies the events and neither provides historical facts about the war nor mentions any responsibility of the Serbian political leadership for the suffering of the people.

In 2011, the celebration in Knin again sparked controversies, due to Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor's speech in which she especially thanked and congratulated Croatian Army generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač, who were found guilty by the ICTY, in a first degree verdict earlier that year, for crimes committed during Operation Storm. Kosor said that "if it wasn't for Operation Storm and its army commanders, we wouldn't be here today and would have nothing to celebrate" (*Novi list*, 2011a). Her statement was criticised by Serbian President Boris Tadić and a representative of the Croatian Serbs, while the human rights organization Amnesty International expressed particular concern, stating that

such statements attacking the Tribunal, and glorifying 'Operation Storm' and persons allegedly responsible for crimes committed as part of the Operation, could send a political message which may undermine justice. It may discourage the justice system from investigation and prosecuting crimes committed as part of 'Operation Storm'. (*Amnesty International*, 2011)

However, the tribunal's decision was not accepted as 'justice' by the Croatian public, so that protests, mainly by war veterans and retired army generals, were or-

ganized against this judgement and in support of generals Gotovina and Markač. The indicted generals not only received support from war veterans and former army generals, but also found a place in people's prayers and were even mentioned during a holy mass for the homeland, which is also part of the annual celebration protocol and is attended by all political leaders. The mass is also used for commenting on current political issues in the country, so that, on August 5, 2011, the bishop serving the mass prayed for "the wisdom of politicians who decide on the destiny of the people", but also for setting free generals Gotovina and Markač (*Novi list*, 2011b). During the mass, a poster with the generals' images was brought into the church, reading: "Heroes – self-defence is not a war crime, set free those who had set us free" (ibid.). Support to the indicted generals was also expressed at the annual 'counter-celebration' in Čavoglave where on August 5, 2012, according to some sources, the highest number of participants gathered since this celebration was first organized (*Dnevnik*, 2012).³²

The perception of the ICTY and of its role in bringing justice suddenly changed in Croatia with the final, non-appealable judgement, reached in November 2012. With this judgement, generals Gotovina and Markač were cleared of all charges on all counts of the indictment and released from custody. Such a decision by the ICTY was perceived in the Croatian public as not only finally confirming the legitimacy of the action (although the ICTY never actually questioned its legitimacy), but was also seen as confirmation of the belief that no war crimes were or could have been committed by Croatian Army generals. This shows how the dominant public discourse in Croatia selectively accepted and rejected 'truths' about the war established by the ICTY, i.e. only accepted those ICTY judgements that confirmed the already existing, official, narrative of the war. Thus, it seems that, for the first time since Croatia started cooperating with the ICTY, it will not be problematic for the state authorities to include the ICTY's judgement, which goes in Croatia's favour, into next year's celebration of Operation Storm, as the judgement does not challenge or undermine the official narrative about the war. The judgement is seen by the wider Croatian public as the final confirmation of the definition given in the Declaration on the Homeland War: "just and legitimate, defensive and liberating, and not an aggressive and conquering war" (Narodne novine, 2000a).

What is still problematic in the narrative of the operation, however, are the conflicting memories of Croatian citizens of Serb nationality. This was also evident at the 2012 celebration when, for the very first time, a prominent politician from the Serb community, Veljko Džakula, participated in the official celebration of the operation. Croatian war veterans, however, viewed his participation as a provocation,

³² According to some media sources, 70.000 people gathered in Čavoglave on August 5, 2012 (see *Dnevnik*, 2012).

as Džakula himself was involved in the rebellion in the Western Slavonian town of Pakrac in 1991. Furthermore, he was also criticised by Serbs expelled from the Krajina region during Operation Storm, since they viewed his attendance as a confirmation of the legitimacy of the operation. How much was the invitation to a Croatian Serb representative to attend the annual celebration a sign of Croatia's readiness to open up the narrative of Operation Storm and to incorporate in it memories of victims that suffered during and after the operation will probably best be seen at the 2013 celebration. This celebration will be the first one after Gotovina and Markač's acquittal by the ICTY. But it will also be organized after Croatia joins the EU, which is envisaged to happen on July 1, 2013, when the government's decisions will no longer be viewed as mere fulfilling of the EU accession requirements, but as uninfluenced decisions made with the real intention of reconciliation and healing of past wounds.³³

4. Conclusion

Commemorations and celebrations of victories from the Homeland War in Croatia are used to construct the *dominant narrative* about the war, but, at the same time, they carry an added significance as they are usually associated with the foundation of the state. What they enact is a narrative on sacrifice, struggle, suffering, and, in the end, victory and heroism in the battle for independence of the Croatian state. In analysing two case studies of commemorative events, the article argues that what was officially remembered about the war in Croatia was not individual victims and individual sufferings of citizens, but their collective suffering and/or heroism, which served a greater cause – winning the Homeland War and securing Croatia's freedom.

However, the dominant narrative is contested by *oppositional*, *sectional* narratives, which challenge its legitimacy and the legitimacy of political elites. The *agencies* which promote these oppositional narratives are usually those groups excluded from the dominant narrative – certain civil society organizations, other associations which do not agree with the government's policies, families of (non-Croatian) victims, as well as individual victims themselves. Their memories are problematic since, as Paul Ricoeur observed, "what was glory for some was humiliation for others. Celebration on one side corresponds to execration on the other. In this way, symbolic wounds calling for healing are stored in the archives of the collective memory" (Ricoeur, 2004: 79). Conflicting memories about the past, which are

³³ A discussion on the role of the EU accession process and EU conditionality on transitional justice processes in Croatia falls outside the scope of this text. For an extensive analysis see Subotić, 2009; Batt and Obradović-Wochnik, 2009; and Rangelov, 2006.

not given equal public space and are not officially recognized as 'what happened', threaten to prevent post-war reconciliation³⁴, but also to slow down long-term stability in the region. Moreover, 'ethnization' of memory (Čorkalo et al., 2004), which is present during the annual celebration/commemoration of Operation Storm and the commemoration of the fall of Vukovar, is also a dangerous obstacle to reconciliation, because if people view the past through the prism of their and others' ethnicity, they are likely to view the present and future in the same way. This, in turn, helps to reinforce and strengthen ethnic divisions.

In addition to discussing state-centred commemorative practices, this article also examined more nuanced forms of commemorative events from the 1990s war in Croatia. In order to understand different aspects of war memory and commemorations, I suggest that different layers of remembering (and forgetting) have to be taken into account. In line with Ashplant, Dawson and Roper's argument, what is needed is a redefinition of the 'politics' of war memory and commemoration, which would take a bottom-up approach and would embrace the operations of civil society actors, as well as state-organized remembrance. In order to examine all aspects of remembering, further research on the topic could, thus, benefit from oral-history method and look into individual recollections of the past and individuals' relation to wider forms of remembrance. As argued by Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, the politics of war memory and commemoration lies precisely in "the struggle of different groups to give public articulation to, and hence gain recognition for, certain memories and the narratives within which they are structured. The history of war memory and commemoration involves tracing the outcomes of particular struggles, as represented by both those memories which are publicly articulated, and by those which have been privatized, fragmented or repressed" (Ashplant et al., 2000: 16).

REFERENCES

Amnesty International, 2011: Croatia: Praise for "Operation Storm" creates climate of impunity, www.amnesty.org, August 9.

Ashplant, T. G., Dawson, Graham, Roper, Michael, 2000: *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, Routledge, New York.

Assmann, Aleida, 2010: The Holocaust – a Global Memory? Extensions and Limits of a New Memory Community, in: Assmann, Aleida/Conrad, Sebastian (eds.),

³⁴ What is meant by reconciliation is a difficult and long process, involving various steps and stages which aim to prevent the use of the past as the seed of renewed conflict. "It consolidates peace, breaks the cycle of violence and strengthens newly established or reintroduced democratic institutions." See Bloomfield, Barnes, and Huyse, 2003.

- *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, Houndmills: 97-107.
- Barahona de Brito, Alexandra et al., 2001: *The Politics of Memory. Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Barahona de Brito, Alexandra, 2010: Transitional Justice and Memory: Exploring Perspectives, *South European Society and Politics* (15) 3: 359-376.
- Batt, Judy, Obradovic-Wochnik, Jelena (eds.), 2009: War Crimes, Conditionality and EU Integration in the Western Balkans, Chaillot Paper, no. 116, Institute for Security Studies, Paris.
- Bloomfield, David, Barnes, Teresa, Huyse, Luc (eds.), 2003: *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict a Handbook*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.
- Connerton, Paul, 1989: *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Čorkalo, Dinka et al., 2004: Neighbors Again? Intercommunity Relations after Ethnic Cleansing, in: Stover, E./Weinstein, H. M. (eds.), *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Denich, Bette, 1994: Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide, *American Ethnologist* (21) 2: 367-390.
- *Dnevnik*, 2006: Koštunica: 'Oluja' je velik i nekažnjen zločin [Koštunica: 'Storm' is a big, unpunished crime], www.dnevnik.hr, August 4.
- *Dnevnik*, 2008: Jeremić ponovno optužio Hrvatsku za etničko čišćenje [Jeremić again accuses Croatia of ethnic cleansing], www.dnevnik.hr, November 10.
- *Dnevnik*, 2012: U Čavoglavama se okupilo 70.000 ljudi [70.000 gathered in Čavoglave], www.dnevnik.hr, August 6.
- Đerić, Gordana, 2008: Nasilje u društvenom pamćenju. Intima hrvatske i srpske javnosti povodom akcije Oluja [Violence in Social Memory. Intimacy of the Croatian and Serbian Public on the Occasion of Operation Storm], *Filozofija i društvo* (19) 1: 43-68.
- Graovac, Igor, 2004: Civilne žrtve u sektoru *Jug* u *Oluji* i neposredno nakon *Oluje* (osnovni pokazatelji) [Civilian victims in sector *South* in the *Storm* and immediately after the *Storm* (basic indicators)], *Polemos* (7) 1-2: 129-145.
- Horelt, Michel-Andre, Renner, Judith, 2008: Denting a Heroic Picture. A Narrative Analysis of Collective Memory in Post-War Croatia, *Perspectives* (16) 2.
- Hrženjak, Juraj (ed.), 2002: *Rušenje anti-fašističkih spomenika u Hrvatskoj 1990.-2000*. [Destruction of Anti-Fascist Monuments in Croatia 1990-2000], Savez antifašističkih boraca i antifašista RH, Zagreb.

- *Index*, 2005: Umirovljeni generali i časnici organiziraju 'svoju' proslavu 'Oluje' [Retired generals and officers organize 'their own' celebration of the 'Storm'], www. index.hr, August 1.
- *Index*, 2008: Obilježavanje 'Oluje' opet izaziva hrvatsko-srpske političke trzavice [Marking of 'Storm' again provokes Croatian-Serbian political disputes], www. index.hr, August 4.
- International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, 2007: Summary of Judgement for Mile Mrkšić, Miroslav Radić and Veselin Šljivančanin, http://www.icty.org/, September 27.
- International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, 2011: Judgement Summary for Gotovina *et al.*, at http://www.icty.org/, April 15.
- Jović, Dejan, 2004: 'Official Memories' in Post-authoritarianism: An Analytical Framework, *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* (6) 2: 97-108.
- *Jutarnji list*, 2005: Mesić i Sanader: Oluju slaviti, kazniti zločine [Mesić and Sanader: Celebrate the 'Storm', but punish the crimes], August 6: 2.
- *Jutarnji list*, 2006: Sanader: Oluja je pobijedila zločin [Sanader: Storm defeated a crime], August 6: 2.
- *Jutarnji list*, 2007: Slogan: U Vukovar za istinu i pravdu [Slogan: To Vukovar for truth and justice], www.jutarnjilist.hr, November 6.
- *Jutarnji list*, 2009: Oni koji znaju gdje su naši najmiliji šute i nakon 18 godina [Those who know where our loved ones are, remain silent even after 18 years], www.jutarnji.hr, November 19.
- Jutarnji list, 2010: November 17.
- Kardov, Kruno, 2002: Od politike razlika do politike prostora: Posljedice rata na društveni život u Vukovaru [From Politics of Difference to Politics of Space: Consequences of the War on Social Life in Vukovar], *Polemos* (5) 1-2: 99-115.
- Kardov, Kruno, 2006: 'Zapamtite Vukovar': Sjećanje, mjesto i nacionalna tradicija u Hrvatskoj ['Remember Vukovar': Memory, place and national tradition in Croatia], in: Ramet, Sabrina P./Matić, Davorka (eds.), *Demokratska tranzicija u Hrvatskoj: transformacije vrijednosti, obrazovanje, mediji* [Democratic transition in Croatia: transformations of values, education and the media], Alinea, Zagreb.
- Koren, Snježana, 2011: 'Korisna prošlost?' Ratovi devedesetih u deklaracijama Hrvatskog sabora ['Useful Past?' The 1990s wars in the declarations of the Croatian Parliament], in: Tihomir Cipek (ed.), *Kultura sjećanja: 1991. Povijesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti* [Culture of Memory: 1991. Historical breaks and mastering the past], Disput, Zagreb.
- MacDonald, David Bruce, 2002: *Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian Victim-Centred Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York.

- Nacional, 2005: Generali [Generals], August 1: 507.
- Narodne novine [The Official Gazette], 1999: Odluka o proglašavanju dana sjećanja na žrtvu Vukovara 1991. [Decision on proclamation of the remembrance day for the victim of Vukovar 1991], www.nn.hr, no. 116.
- *Narodne novine*, 2000a: Deklaracija o Domovinskom ratu [Declaration on the Homeland War], www.nn.hr, no. 102.
- Narodne novine, 2000b: Deklaracija o suradnji s Međunarodnim kaznenim sudom u Den Hagu [Declaration on Cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague], www.nn.hr, no. 41/00, April 18.
- *Narodne novine*, 2006: Deklaracija o Oluji [Declaration on Operation Storm], www. nn.hr, no. 76/06, June 30.
- Novi list, 2011a: Premijerka slavi Gotovinu i Markača, Josipović žali zbog zločina nad Srbima [Prime Minister celebrates Gotovina and Markač, Josipović expresses regret over crimes against Serbs], August 6: 2.
- *Novi list*, 2011b: Na misi se molilo za generale [Prayer for the generals during the mass], August 6: 3.
- Office of the President of Croatia, 2005: Statement, www.predsjednik.hr, April 20.
- Office of the President of Croatia, 2010: Presidents Josipović and Tadić laid wreaths at Paulin Dvor, www.predsjednik.hr, November 4.
- Peskin, Victor, Boduszyński, Mieczysław P., 2003: Croatia's Moments of Truth: The Domestic Politics of State Cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, *Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Papers*.
- Pavlaković, Vjeran, 2008: Better Grave than a Slave: Croatia and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, in: Ramet, Sabrina P./Clewing, Konrad/Lukić, Reneo (eds.), *Croatia since independence. War, politics, society, foreign relations*, R. Oldenburg Verlag, Munchen: 447-477.
- Pavlaković, Vjeran, 2009: From Conflict to Commemoration: Serb-Croat Relations and the anniversaries of Operation Storm, in: Gavrilović, Darko (ed.), *Serbo-Croat Relations: Political Cooperation and National Minorities*, CHDR, Novi Sad.
- Pavlaković, Vjeran, 2010: Croatia, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and General Gotovina as a Political Symbol, *Europe-Asia Studies* (62) 10: 1707-1740.
- Rangelov, Iavor, 2006: EU Conditionality and Transitional Justice in the former Yugoslavia, *Croatian Yearbook of European Law and Policy* (2) 2: 365-375.
- Ricoeur, Paul, 2004: *Memory, History, Forgetting*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London.
- Schwartz, Barry, 1982: The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory, *Social Forces* (61) 2: 374-402.

Slobodna Dalmacija, 2011: Čak 50,000 ljudi u koloni sjećanja na žrtvu Vukovara [As many as 50.000 people in the memory walk for the victim of Vukovar] www.slobodnadalmacija.hr, November 18.

Smith, Anthony, 1991: National Identity, Penguin Books, London.

Subotić, Jelena, 2009: *Hijacked justice. Dealing with the past in the Balkans*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca/London.

Tportal, 2011: Sjećanje na Vukovar prerasta u okupljanje svih Hrvata [Remembering Vukovar has grown into a gathering of all Croats], www.tportal.hr, November 18.

Vjesnik, 1995: May 15: 3.

Vjesnik, 1999: November 19.

Vjesnik, 2003: November 19.

Vjesnik, 2005a: May 29.

Vjesnik, 2005b: June 29.

Wilde, Alexander, 1999: Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy, *Journal of Latin American Studies* (31) 2: 473-500.

Winter, Jay, 2008: Sites of Memory and the Shadows of War, in: Erll, Astrid/Nünning, Ansgar (eds.), *Cultural memory studies. An international and interdisciplinary handbook*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York.

Winter, Jay, Sivan, Emmanuel (eds.), 1999: *War Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Žanić, Mateo, 2007: Važnost rituala u poslijeratnom razdoblju: primjer Vukovara [The Importance of Rituals in a Post-War Period: The Example of Vukovar], *Polemos* (10) 1: 73-90.

Žanić, Mateo, 2008: Konstrukcija poslijeratnog prostora: Simbolička izgradnja Vukovara [Construction of Post-War Space: Symbolic Construction of Vukovar], *Polemos* (11) 2: 29-50.

Mailing Address: **Tamara Banjeglav**, Diversity Management and Governance, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Universitätsplatz 3, 8010 Graz, Austria. *E-mail*: tamara.banjeglav@zg.t-com.hr