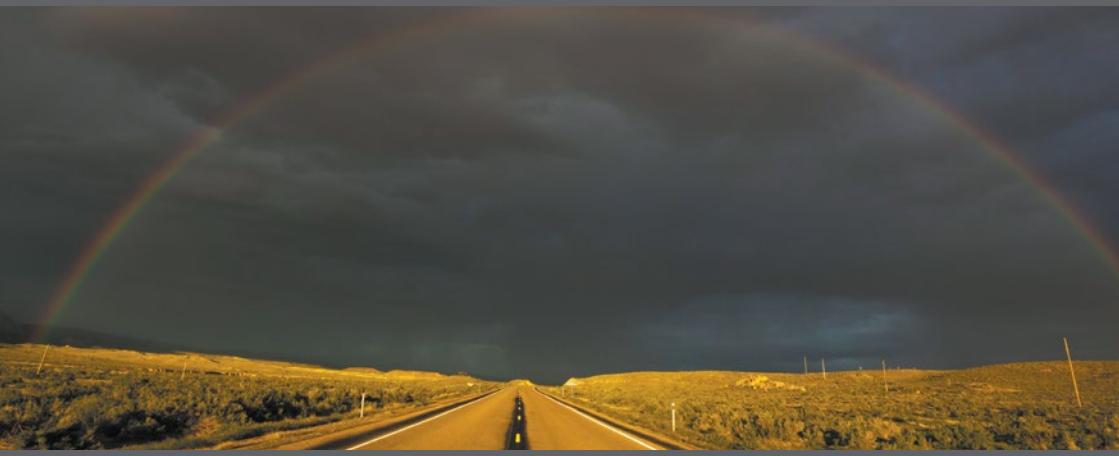
Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology

LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space

On the Rainbow Way to Europe



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LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space

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Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology
ISBN 978-1-137-57260-8 ISBN 978-1-137-57261-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016946049

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

Acknowledgements

This volume is a collaborative effort of a group of friends. That is probably why it was so smooth and pleasant in making. We first met in September 2014 at the University of Bologna Residential Centre of Bertinoro, in the beautiful Romagna hills, for a 1-day workshop on Europeanisation and LGBT activism in the post-Yugoslav space. More friends and colleagues then joined us at the Central European University in Budapest in March 2015 where our book project took its final shape. I would like to thank the authors of this volume for their patience, commitment, and willingness to repeatedly revise their contributions. I am also grateful to Eric Gordy, Gert Hekma, Stefano Bianchini, Maura De Bernart, Judit Takács, Éva Fodor, Elissa Helms, Sébastien Chauvin, and our Palgrave editors Harriet Barker and Amelia Derkatsch for their support and encouragement. This cooperation would not have been possible had it not been for the generous financial assistance of the European Research Agency and its Marie Curie Fellowship programme.

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Europeanisation, LGBT Activism, and Non-Heteronormativity in the Post-Yugoslav Space: An Introduction

Bojan Bilić

In the late summer of 2014, two Montenegrin friends of mine, Čarna and Danijel, who are also among the authors of this volume, invited me to join them for the second Montenegro Pride march which was taking place in Podgorica in November of that year. An activist (Danijel) and an anthropologist (Čarna), curious about what they could learn from each other in their common struggle for a non-heterosexual emancipation, the two of them embody both the potential and the challenges of a kind of cooperation, a form of professional-emotional symbiosis, that has inspired my interest in the politics of activism in the post-Yugoslav space. In spite of the affinity and the respect that I feel for their engagement and regardless of an urge for support that almost instinctively arises from our communication, the invitation which I received from them provoked in me probably more dilemmas than they could have imagined.

As a citizen of Serbia, a country which has been, over the last three decades, exposed to what seems to be an endless series of social and

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_1

state transformations, I have had an opportunity to be enveloped in that mesmerising spirit of change that guides activist undertakings. I have learned and felt how politically and emotionally significant it can be to come together in a public space in an effort to resist resignation and generate hope which is by far the most precious activist resource. As a sociologist of social movements, I am all too well acquainted with tensions, contradictions, and conflicts which inevitably weave the tissue of any collective enterprise that is based on and aspires to freedom (Bilić, 2012). I have witnessed how intransigent and intolerant some activists can be and how more often than not even those who declaratively (and sometimes loudly) struggle for a progressive cause may perpetuate the mechanisms of exclusion which they are supposed to destabilise. As a gay man, I am painfully aware of how suffocated one can feel within the constraints of the patriarchal regime and how dangerous it can be—but also how necessary—to try to interrupt the symbolic order that has been constructed to sustain it.[1]

In this regard, I have closely followed the turbulent, and at certain points, overtly violent attempts to organise pride marches in the post-Yugoslav region. While despising and being shocked by the ignorance, hatred, and malice that in certain instances accompanied them, I have repeatedly found myself admiring the activists' courage, but also disagreeing with some of their strategies and motivations. My political doubts and maybe also my fears, those stemming from the deepest layers of patriarchal socialisation, at times reached the extent that made me question the very purpose of insisting on such an event as a Pride march at all. However, after receiving Čarna and Danijel's invitation, I realised that my experience with these events in the post-Yugoslav space was rather vicarious and although I was far from being devoid of apprehension, I thought that, as a friend, sociologist, and gay, I should go.

Thus, in early November 2014 I landed in Montenegro for the first time after the former Yugoslav republic announced independence in 2006. As I was approaching Podgorica in a taxi and talking to the driver

[1] Lewin and Leap (2002, p. 12) claim that "conducting lesbian/gay research is tantamount to coming out—whether one is actually lesbian/gay or not. Although doing research in New Guinea, for example, does not lead to the assumption that one must be a native of that region, studying lesbian/gay topics is imagined as only possible for a 'native'".

who eventually, not without a slight bewilderment and discomfort which I thought also had a tinge of disappointment, realised that I was there to take part in the march, I learned how frustrated he was by the decision of the Montenegrin government to demonstrate its commitment to (its aspiring membership of) the European Union (EU) by imposing sanctions on Russia. In the breaks of our talk, full of quick political judgments that were neatly positioned within a binary reference system which I was not sure how to handle, I was looking through the window and feeling that uncanny familiarity with the stereotypical "greyness" (Harboe Knudsen & Frederiksen, 2015) of a post-socialist concrete-dominated landscape that has been left on its own to decay through decades of neglect, corruption, impoverishment, and a general social involution witnessed by the region as a whole.

On the evening before the Pride march I was walking around the streets of Podgorica and crossing the bridges on the beautiful Morača River thinking about how hard it must be and how much audacity and determination it must require to start inscribing elements of non-heteronormativity in that patriarchal topography that teems with heroes and saints and celebrates masculinity and warfare. I was wondering about the most adequate—the least intrusive—strategy that would make my taxi driver, that man exhausted by years of insecurity, pause for a moment to acknowledge the incredible richness of sexual urges, intimacies, pains, and pleasures without feeling disgusted or threatened by them. I was asking myself how is one to broaden the rigid frontiers of patriarchal sexuality, make them more porous, and allow the exuberance of rainbow colours to, at least for a moment, disrupt—without negating—that grey "aesthetic regime" (Fehérváry, 2013, p. 8) of poverty, precarity, and disillusionment. How is one to supply discursive instruments for articulating the ambiguities of desire that are rooted in local practices and experiences without having to wait for all of the "more important issues" to be successfully resolved first? What is the most effective way to convince that taxi driver that the march happening on the following day might also have to do with him and the future of his children and that it is not—*or not only*—yet another requirement that his country needs to fulfil before it is formally allowed to join the EU? How can it be explained that gays, lesbians, and other non-heterosexuals are not merely European "imports",

harbingers of the "decadent West," or symbols of infertile luxury, but that they are also his co-nationals, colleagues, relatives, and friends? What are the most persuasive means for unmasking the hypocritical face of tolerance and closing the gap that has opened up between legal measures resulting from EU conditionality, on the one hand, and the everyday instances of humiliation, rejection, and exclusion, on the other? How are we as activists, researchers, and activist-researchers (Bevington & Dixon, 2005; Chouldry, 2009) to harness the affective force of anxiety, perplexity, and uneasiness that is released into the fissures of public life as the notion of citizenship (Bell & Binnie, 2002; Plummer, 2001; Richardson, 2000) dilates to include a variety of sexual preferences that are also at the heart of who we are?

"Europeanising" Post-Yugoslav Space Through LGBT Activisms

The authors of this volume interrogate the multiple forms and implications of the increasingly potent symbolic nexus that has developed between non-heterosexual sexualities, LGBT activism(s), and Europeanisation(s) in all of the post-Yugoslav states (Bilić, 2014). The gradual but variegated and uneven efforts to include certain members of "sexual minorities"[2] into the national polities of the EU hail from a variety of 1960s Western liberation movements. These initiatives, combined with capitalist consumerism, (neo)liberal policies and the ever stronger conceptualisations of democracy through a liberal human rights paradigm (Stychin, 2004), started to gain global impact, in large part sustained by advances in information and communications technology (Kahlina, 2014). Although emancipatory ideas regarding non-heteronormative sexual identifications were present in public space as the European Community/Union consolidated its legal structure, sexual orientation was not explicitly mentioned in the 1993 Copenhagen criteria for membership. It appeared almost a decade later

[2] Even though the LGBT population is often referred to as a "minority", I put this term in quotation marks to invite the reader to consider this practice as an expression of identity politics that essentialises sexual identifications.

in the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* as well as in the Employment Equality Framework Directive 2000/78/EC. While legal arrangements that pertain to family, civil partnership, and marriage remained at the discretion of individual nation-states, eradicating discrimination—at least formally or formalistically—on the basis of sexual orientation started figuring quite highly within the EU accession process.

Given that EU membership is actively pursued as the "first foreign policy priority" (Grabbe, 2006, p. 96) in all Central and Eastern European states, the Union has been for long enveloped in a *Denkverbot* which, in its poorer regions, practically leaves it without any historically valid alternative (Maljković, 2014). As "LGBT rights have become a powerful symbol of Europe, featuring centrally in debates ranging from foreign relations to economic trade" (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014, p. 3), "gay tolerance" appears as an ever more prominent condition on a long list of those that need to be fulfilled by (prospective) candidate countries and is regularly included in European Commission Progress Reports, key documents based on wider consultations, which explicitly calibrate progress made.

Our book problematises the widespread trope of "Europeanisation" as a linear process through which the EU policy procedures are smoothly incorporated into the logic of domestic political structures (Radaelli, 2003). Héritier (2005) claims that Europeanisation can be defined

> in terms of the influence of EU policies and values on "the rest of the world", i.e. non-member states. It encompasses a broad variety of processes featuring direct and indirect influence of EU policies and economic, social and cultural activities on political, economic, social and cultural processes well beyond Western Europe (p. 200). (…) A further difference between Europeanisation West and Europeanisation East is that Europeanisation West is a two-way street when it comes to shaping EU policy measures, whereas Europeanisation East, at this state, seems to be more of a one-way street (p. 207).[3]

[3] The other two definitions offered by Héritier (2005) are the following: "Europeanisation is used as an equivalent of European integration. As such, it denotes the pooling of national competences in different policy areas at the supernational level in order to engage in joint policymaking (p. 199). (…) Under the second notion, Europeanisation is defined in a more restrictive sense, conceived of as the impact of clearly definite, individual EU policy measures on the existing policies, political and administrative processes and structures of member states" (p. 200).

Rather than see it as a "one-way street", we approach Europeanisation in the post-Yugoslav space as a complex, dynamic and troubled "translation" process (Clarke, Bainton, Lendvai, & Stubbs, 2015) whereby "ways of governing and being governed through language, practices and techniques" are constantly contested and renegotiated (Lendvai, 2007, p. 26). We examine the challenges that identitarian activist politics based on "non-normative" sexualities and often articulated by supranational political and professional activist bodies encounter in the current social circumstances characterised by the legacy of armed conflicts that has, along with the ensuing neoliberal transformation, impoverished and deindustrialised the region. By zooming in on LGBT activist initiatives in the context of EU accession, this volume underscores the relevance of the post-Yugoslav space, in its current configuration, for furthering the field of European studies. In this regard, Gilbert et al. (2008, p. 11) claim that

> post-Yugoslav societies are an excellent place to interrogate the concepts of European and Western modernity. [I]t [is] an important strategy to resist studying or analysing the Balkans against a set of supposed "European" norms. […] the gap between such "norms" and what is happening on the ground [is] a fruitful place to begin to theorise socially productive forms of practice that are otherwise glossed as failure, apathy, anti-politics and corruption. If we understand that the contradictions and tensions embedded within contemporary European imaginaries are being worked out at Europe's Balkan margins, the study of post-Yugoslav societies may have something to teach us about democratic, capitalist and nationalist forms *as such*, and not just about their "Balkan" versions.

The post-Yugoslav states, which share a long period of common institution and state-building embedded in a profoundly authoritarian political culture, find themselves at this moment in different positions regarding their integration into the EU: there are member states (Slovenia joined in 2004 and Croatia in 2013), candidate states (Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro), and prospective candidates (Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo). Such an arrangement of divergent, conflicting, and overlapping temporalities reflects, refracts, and reproduces the long-lasting asymmetries and power differentials which existed within the highly complex system of the Yugoslav socialist federation. This gives us a privileged vantage

point for gaining a better, comparative, insight into the linkage formed between Europeanisation and EU enlargement, on the one hand, and the operation of national and transnational movements for LGBT emancipation, on the other.

For example, in her chapter on the Ljubljana lesbian and gay film festival established in 1984, Sanja Kajinić analyses how the discourse of Europeanness is ambiguously engaged by the event organisers to both distance the supposedly more advanced Slovenia from the former Yugoslav space while simultaneously questioning the hegemony of the Europeanising project by locating the roots of this festival in the European/Yugoslav socialist past. Sanja's contribution shows how in the sphere of gay politics, Europeanisation, as a multi-actor and multi-scalar set of institutions and discourses, reproduces asymmetrical power relations that equate Europeanness with "progress" and "civilisation" while, consequentially, framing intolerance to gays as a form of non-European primitivist Other. These new discursive arenas can, as she shows, set up boundaries that separate modernity from (re-)traditionalisation which then become re-inscribed not only *between* the EU and the post-Yugoslav space, but, as in the case of Slovenia, also *within* the post-Yugoslav region itself.

Moreover, the "crowded playground" (Arandarenko & Golicin, 2007) of the post-Yugoslav space has again and again been treated as a kind of imperialist "laboratory" for contemporary social, economic, and political engineering and in that sense it offers us an important, but understudied, perspective for exploring both the affinities and the tensions between "new" social movements and EU accession. Paul Stubbs and I (Bilić & Stubbs, 2015) have already noted the conspicuous marginalisation of this space in the theoretical literature on activist organising as well as in the scholarship on social movements in the post-communist transition context of Central and Eastern Europe, more generally. Mainstream (post-) Yugoslav scholarship has, for at least two decades, focused almost exclusively on the primacy of ethnic divisions, which has pushed it out of post-socialist analytical frames that can perhaps better capture the dynamics between enduring, structural configurations and present-day processes (Gilbert et al., 2008). This pervasive scholarly insistence on the instrumentalised and politically manipulated nationalist sentiments has diminished scholars' sensitivity towards intense and heterogeneous

civic engagements that both preceded and accompanied the wars of the Yugoslav succession (Bilić, 2012; Bilić & Janković, 2012). As this volume engages with in reflexive practice that folds together activism and research, we are, as authors interested in rescuing activism from academic neglect as well as rejecting simplistic and false binary oppositions of which there is no shortage in that pile of books that could, for better or worse, fill up a library of post-Yugoslav studies.

In other words, we are here concerned with the possibility that some of the epistemological and methodological dimensions of the scholarship on the Yugoslav wars and the post-war period conflate together to effectively deny the agency of local activist actors. Stubbs (2007, p. 228) has claimed that "whilst room for manoeuvre [is] limited […] the trajectories of diverse activists in NGOs cannot be reduced to notions of *selling out* or being rendered *ineffective*". Thus, we believe that the practice of detecting and being repeatedly surprised by instances of profound and often institutionalised homophobia, of which there are already numerous accounts[4] revolving around the inescapable "heterosexual matrix" (Butler, 1990, p. 206),[5] is becoming increasingly unproductive. Instead, we put activist responses to homophobia under the magnifying glass of our various analytical approaches and embrace Donna Haraway's (1988, p. 584) statement that the "standpoints of the subjugated are not innocent positions". With this in mind, we explore how activism, as a set of collective, but heterogeneous, divergent, and conflicting struggles for social change, operates within the crevice that opens up between patriarchy and ethno-nationalism, on the one hand, and discourses of human rights, Europeanisation, modernisation, and democratisation, on the other.

It is clear that the relative economic advantage and international power of its "core" members as well as a declarative orientation towards peace, cooperation, and human rights render the EU such an attractive political entity. However, we believe that it is nowadays ever less frequently evoked that West European prosperity is deeply rooted in the history of global

[4] See, for example, Johnson (2012); Kuhar and Švab (2013); Mršević (2013); Stakić (2011); Vuletić (2013).

[5] In our case, this heterosexual matrix is an amalgam of heterosexuality, masculinity, and revived presence of religious institutions in public and political life. See, for example, Kuhar (2015) and Sremac and Ruard Ganzevoort (2015).

imperial pursuits and long-term exploitation fed by racism. Taking this into account, I could not help but think that it was not accidental that the 2014 Podgorica Pride march was financed by the Embassies of the UK and the Netherlands (Đurašković, 2014), and that the representatives of these two former colonial empires, with still insufficiently acknowledged legacies of suffering and destruction, addressed the Pride crowd. Indeed, Böröcz and Sarkar (2005, p. 162) note that

> the states that constituted the EU at the beginning of the 21st century are the same states that had exercised imperial rule over nearly half of the inhabitable surface of the globe outside Europe just two to three generations ago. […] their colonial possessions amounted to nearly three-quarters of all the foreign territorial holdings in the world.

The same authors posit that "practically all current borderlines in Central and Eastern Europe have been drafted by West European imperial powers as part of the dissolution and reorganisation of various local empires" (p. 163).

With this in mind, as authors of this volume, we assume that European (Union) sexual politics, in the way in which it is articulated, disseminated, and implemented, is unlikely to be untouched by the colonial legacy of the major European powers. Power differentials embedded in centuries of colonial rule "equalise" Western Europe/Anglo-Saxon West with the whole continent and produce axes of distinction and division that, while glossing over a plethora of political systems and social experiences, render Eastern Europe as constantly and consistently trailing behind the more progressive Western part.[6] In the wake of empires, slavery, and overt armed conflicts, this propelling of Europe which is still not—and indeed can never be—"sufficiently" present in all of the territories that are normally subsumed under its name is nowadays also associated with the idea that LGBT rights "increasingly belong at the core of European values in the imagination of many actors" (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014, p. 2).

[6] In the sphere of global LGBT politics, it is becoming increasingly relevant to consider not only the East-West, but also the South-North division if one is to account for recent LGBT rights-related advances in, for example, Spain, South Africa, Portugal, Iceland or Argentina. See, for example, Pichardo Galán (2013).

The concept of *homonationalism*, coined by Puar in 2007 (and the related concept of *sexual nationalism*), captures the interweaving of national belonging and sexual orientation which "operates as a regulatory script not only of normative gayness, queerness, or homosexuality, but also of the racial and national norms that reinforce these sexual subjects" (p. 2). This notion has proven to be particularly productive in grasping how "tolerance" towards "sexual minorities" positions some of the central Western/EU countries supposedly at the peak of the "civilisational slope" (that is also an East-West slope, Melegh, 2006) and marks them as progressive and modern in contrast to their homophobic immigrant and mostly Muslim *others*.

However, homonationalism has a nation-state point of reference which is not directly relevant to the relationship between the EU and the acceding, in this case, post-Yugoslav countries. There are more recent attempts to broaden the homonationalism debate by "(re)introducing CEE into the dyad West-Islam" (Kulpa, 2014, p. 431) as yet another European homophobic Other (see also Brković, 2014). Such efforts are in our volume strengthened by Piro Rexhepi's contribution on queers, Islam, and Europeanisation in Kosovo. Piro explores how Kosovar queer groups are incorporated into the Europeanisation discourse and shows that Orientalist representations of Kosovo as a space of ambiguity located in neither the East nor the West depoliticise queer identities and construct non-heterosexuals as "victims" that need to be taken care of and liberated by Europe. Thus, in still highly homophobic and politically volatile environments with a painful legacy of war violence that (re)produces numerous and overlapping axes of division and exclusion, gays, lesbians, and other non-heterosexuals are constructed as embodying "Europeanness" while, in the process, being denied multiple, complex identities and subjectivities. In turn, as they become devoid of direct agency outside of being "gays in need of EU protection" they become objectified as a kind of measuring stick of progress and the degree of "national maturity" and democracy.

Moreover, Kulpa (2014, p. 432) proposes the notion of *leveraged pedagogy* to capture a hegemonic didactical relation that has developed between the EU and Eastern Europe which "works as a 'whip and carrot': a condemnation, and also a promise of redemption, because of the geographical location and proximity to the self-proclaimed universality of

West/Europe". In other words, Central and Eastern Europe, a space fixed in its "post-communist", transitional, and homophobic stage, is being taken care of "through a hegemonic deployment of the Western EUropean liberal model of rights as the universal one (as in 'universal human rights')" (p. 432). Thus, in my contribution on the turbulent history of the Belgrade Pride march, I claim that pairing Europeanisation and "gay struggle" in the Serbian socio-political circumstances indeed destabilises the patriarchal gender regime, but it also alienates the struggle for non-heteronormative emancipation from the domestic political context and creates a sphere of privileged voices in which Western Embassies and their representatives play particularly important roles, in partnership with domestic liberal intellectuals and activists who become empowered to act as key translators and intermediaries.

Nevertheless, this unpacking of the hegemonic linkage between Europeanisation and gay emancipation in the EU accession countries should not negate harsh everyday realities—silences, fears, exclusions—that the majority of the LGBT-identified population faces in the post-Yugoslav (and, more generally, Eastern European) space. In his text on the 2011 Split Pride, Moss (2014, p. 213) argues that

> refusal to allow local LGBT citizens to identify as they choose is […] problematic. In fact the critics of homonationalism erase local CEE queer experience and ignore CEE in their analysis, which focuses instead on (Western) Europe and its colonial/Oriental other.

Our volume tries to account for this gap and does not have so much to do with empirically capturing (or even less—deliberately erasing) the daily experiences of those with a non-heterosexual identification and their strategies for dealing with homophobia and incorporating it into their own lives—on which, we contend, more research is surely needed. Tapping into the relationship between Europeanisation and gay struggle in the EU accession context means examining the geometry of unequally distributed power within which conflicting, overlapping, and continuously shifting discursive articulations (re-)introduce axes of distinction and create a particularised non-heterosexual subject detached from her/his immediate political, economic, and social environment.

In this regard, our objective with this book is to destabilise the self-colonising recognition of "foreign cultural supremacy" through which the "(semi-)periphery" "voluntarily absorbs the basic values and categories of colonial Europe" only to succumb to what Kiossev (2011, online) aptly calls "hegemony without domination". Although we do not wish to blow more wind into the sails of conservative critics of "Europhilia", we remain troubled by forms of "self-Balkanisation" where repeated and rather uncritical invocations of "Europe" are perceived as a panacea for the region's multiple ills. Against this background, we believe that there is a risk for the initiatives aiming at the recognition and wider social acceptance of non-heteronormative sexualities to emulate uncritically Western models while ignoring, misinterpreting, or effectively remaining disengaged from local grievances.

For example, Danijel Kalezić and Čarna Brković construct their chapter around an ethnographic description of the life of a gay couple in Podgorica and explore the pervasive sense of separation from LGBT activism which many of their interviewees expressed over the last 3 years and which became particularly evident in the 2014 Pride march that was attended by very few local LGBT people. Carefully avoiding the temptation to pathologise the non-heterosexual population and charge it with a lack of courage, Danijel and Čarna argue that the alienation from activist initiatives, and from human rights discourses and practices, is tightly associated with the way in which "civil society", as a form of humanitarian intervention, was introduced in the Yugoslav space immediately before and during the wars of the Yugoslav succession (Bilić, 2011; Stubbs, 1996, 2012). This normative idea often disregarded the transformative potential of existing forms of sociality and solidarity and treated the former Yugoslav space as a *tabula rasa* upon which the international community and the EU, in cooperation with local actors, started inscribing procedures, techniques, and vocabularies that have had a hard time reflecting local needs (Brković, 2014). The effects of the "civil society" framework are visible in a variety of tensions that exist both between activist organisations as well as in their relations with their imagined constituencies (in our case, the LGBT population), state institutions, and the broader public all of which have been reluctant to recognise them as legitimate representatives of the discriminated groups.

Moreover, by positing a tight symbolic link between Europeanisation and homosexuality that has been developing in the post-Yugoslav region—which constitutes both the EU "periphery" and its immediate neighbourhood—we do not mean to imply that non-heterosexual sexualities have been fully integrated into the social life of either older or more recent EU member-states. As Kahlina (2014, p. 75) argues, "the tendency to pinpoint the issue of discrimination on the grounds of sexuality in the region of Eastern Europe had the effect of making the same issue relatively invisible in other parts of Europe". While the status of LGBT rights varies across the EU in which there are still instances of serious homophobia and a structural heteronormativity, we are here concerned with the general perception that strong conditionality policies do not necessarily translate into wider social acceptance of "non-normative" sexual orientations, or at least not in the linear fashion in which they seem to be expected to operate.

For example, some new member states, including Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania, witnessed a serious homophobic backlash in the post-accession period. While LGBT issues might not have figured so prominently on the EU agenda in the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, homophobic mobilisation occurred also in Croatia which was subjected to stricter LGBT rights-related conditionalities prior to joining the EU. Although Croatian NGOs were also more closely involved in the membership negotiations, a radical conservative group known as *In the Name of the Family* (U ime obitelji), managed to gather more than 700,000 signatures in May 2013 demanding a constitutional referendum on the definition of marriage. Only 4 months after the accession (1 July 2013), Croatia amended its Constitution to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman and thus effectively prohibited same-sex marriage.[7]

In her analysis of the last 15 years of LGBT activism in Croatia, Nicole Butterfield follows the way in which the activists struggled to capitalise upon the pressure exerted by the EU on the Croatian government throughout the pre-accession stage which ended in 2013. She shows how

[7] However, Croatia recognises life partnerships for same-sex couples on the basis of the Life Partnership Act which was passed in July 2014. This law makes same-sex couples equal to married couples without allowing adoption.

the negotiation period was paralleled by long-term processes of activist professionalisation that resulted in hierarchical differentiations between "serious"/professional NGO work, mostly oriented towards legislative change and lobbying, and supposedly less serious, grassroots activism. While it is clear that professionalised forms of activist engagement which have insisted on reforming institutions through project-based initiatives have led to important legal advances, Nicole claims that they might have also foreclosed dialogue about alternative types of activism that would be oriented towards the larger LGBT community and potentially induce a more profound social transformation. Such concerns become particularly relevant in the context of the increasingly visible right-wing mobilisation that has appeared as an immediate reaction to legal changes and the attempts at destabilising the "traditional family model" sustained by the Catholic Church. This aggressive reaction against LGBT emancipation draws upon the rhetoric that can be encountered in the advanced European states (e.g. France, see Dota, 2014; Vuletić, 2013). Although this campaign is articulated on a transnational conservative platform, it remains firmly grounded in the nation-state.

Similarly, in one of the rare accounts of the development of LGBT initiatives in Macedonia, Ana Miškovska Kajevska points to the leverage power of the EU accession, but also discusses ambiguities involved in this process. Trapped in a protracted political dispute over the use of the name Macedonia and burdened by long-term political instability, this former Yugoslav republic has recently become increasingly conservative, undemocratic, and homophobic in its political common sense. Drawing upon a wealth of primary sources, Ana offers a detailed chronology of LGBT rights-related activist efforts that demonstrates how, ever since the decriminalisation of male homosexuality which took place in 1996 (relatively late in comparison to other republics), the Macedonian government has up to date never really had a progressive political agenda. Instead, it has been looking for ways in which to make the smallest possible concessions under the pressure exerted by the EU and a few (mostly professionalised) LGBT activist groups which are not funded by the state. The government's decision not to include sexual orientation in the 2010 Law on Prevention and Protection against

Discrimination (but to incorporate it in the Law on Army Service and the Law on Patients' Rights) shows how LGBT legal matters are constantly realigned and rearticulated in the interaction, if not confrontation, between domestic politics and the EU standards and expectations (see also Lambevski, 2009).

While this volume makes a case for diverting the academic and policy focus away from the resilient nationalism paradigm, we believe that contexts are not simply backgrounds for social movements, but they themselves create spatial and scalar imaginaries of what different activist initiatives are and how they possibly impact on each other (Clarke et al., 2015). As in the case of Macedonia, Adelita Selmić shows that Bosnia and Herzegovina has been for long fixed in a political deadlock which does not allow it to proceed beyond the status of the "permanently potential" EU candidate. Such circumstances render EU integration processes a potent instrument in negotiations pertaining to the status of LGBT rights, but they also encourage professionalisation that avoids communication with wider publics. As it becomes clear that ethnic belonging cannot be a sustainable basis for a functional and democratic state, Adelita argues that locally rooted LGBT initiatives—exactly because of their often trans-ethnic nature—should constitute an integral part (or even be a departure point) of a political platform for a new, more equal, and accepting polity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Queeroslav (Be)longing, Care, and Hope

Even though some of the chapters of this book show that professionalised forms of activism tend to create rather strained relationships between the LGBT population and activist enterprises that are supposed to represent them, instances of trans-regional activist solidarity have been present ever since the beginning of the wars of the Yugoslav succession (Bilić, 2012; Mlađenović, 2012). Thus, along with diplomatic representatives of the UK and the Netherlands, the 2014 Montenegro Pride march was attended by a group of activists from other post-Yugoslav countries and

this is a practice that applies to all such manifestations in the region. Although co-operations of this kind in all likelihood follow the lines of particularistic ideological and biographical affinities, we—as a community of authors and friends—would like this volume to contribute to recent efforts which aim at rediscovering and strengthening the multitude of political, economic, linguistic, cultural, and also deeply personal ties that have resisted the force of exclusion both during and after Yugoslavia's dissolution. By producing an intentionally "post-Yugoslav" piece of research, we do not want to negate the authoritarian dimensions of the Yugoslav socialist project which was not favourable to dissent nor welcoming to those with a non-heterosexual identification. While saddened by perennial territorial and sovereignty disputes that are part and parcel of conflicting nationalist logics, we evoke Yugoslavia not necessarily as a state formation, but rather as a metaphor of universalism and potentiality, an alternative to the devastating social, political, and economic situation in which many of us, our families, friends, and co-citizens are living today.

As we still cannot rely on the reconciliatory intentions of the regional political leaders, the friendship and academic collaboration that have been forged during our meetings and that have created this volume represent a micro-location which cherishes an unambiguous act of resistance to nationalism. It also constitutes a reaction against the widespread attempts of political elites across the region to revise and cancel the progressive legacies of Yugoslav socialism (see Petrović, 2012, 2014). For our friend and colleague Irene Dioli (2009, p. 2), *Queeroslavia* embodies a "post-Yugoslav longing for queer transnational citizenship". Combining "processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202), *Queeroslavia* is a simultaneously nostalgic and utopian invention: on the one hand, it brings to mind the times of relative prosperity and, on the other, reimagines Yugoslavia as a space open to sexual diversity, freedom, and non-heteronormativity.

We are, however, aware of the risk that attachment to the object of one's loss may interfere with the desire to recover from it and live free and unburdened in the present (Brown, 1999). In that sense, ours is more of a "reflective nostalgia" (Boym, 2011, online), that kind of nostalgia which

> does not follow a single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones. […it] present[s] an ethical and creative challenge [and] cherishes shattered fragments of memory. It reveals that longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another, just as affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgment, or critical reflection.[8]

As we try to separate the wheat of visionary policies from the chaff of corruption, clientelism, hypocrisy, and conservative moralism, the Yugoslav political project—in the current circumstances which are marked by poverty, precarity, excessive patriotism, high unemployment, illegal privatisations, destruction of the (both material and immaterial) commons, and a general lack of prospects—becomes perhaps (re-) legitimised by those who were for decades excluded from it or, at best, ridiculed and marginalised (Ekman & Linde, 2005). That is how, in the words of Svetlana Boym (2011, online) "the fantasies of the past determined by the needs of the present have a direct impact on the realities of the future".

Each and every chapter of this volume—in a more or less explicit fashion—starts with and speaks about our own yearnings, frustrated expectations, and disappointments with the course that the exhausting and courageous pursuits of equality tend to take in the region of our interest. As the contributions to this book begin to unravel the complexities of national and transnational activist currents intertwined with a plethora of political tensions as well as ideological and biographical divergences, they do not only supply ideas that could perhaps take activist enterprises in new directions, but they also demonstrate the capacity of research and academic cooperation to embody the politics of solidarity and care that we need in our struggle for emancipation which we desire for ourselves, our societies, and for those coming after us. "In this project, the key experience we have access to is our own. We must work outward from our own biographies and troubles into those institutional sites where others,

[8] I am grateful to my friend and colleague Paul Stubbs for pointing my attention to Boym's differentiation between restorative and reflective nostalgia.

sharing our troubles, come together" (Denzin, 1990, p. 109). We would like this book to constitute one small step forward in revitalising progressive activism's potential to repeatedly allow the horizon of hope to emerge in the face of innumerable political failures that we have witnessed over the last decades. The ensuing chapters testify to our efforts to keep imagining, constructing, and broadening communities that celebrate the variety of human sexual expression and understand how multiple forms of intimacy that can enter and be recognised in public life lie at the heart of human dignity, freedom, and justice.

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2

Discontents of Professionalisation: Sexual Politics and Activism in Croatia in the Context of EU Accession

Nicole Butterfield

The International Lesbian and Gay Association-Europe (ILGA-Europe) annually publishes the "Rainbow Europe" report, which ranks European countries based on their "achievement of LGBTI human rights".[1] At a conference held in May 2015, Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović referred to the 2015 report highlighting how Croatia's rank as 5th puts it among the leading countries in the EU for the "protection of gay people". While arguing that these legal protections are a means to attracting investment and proudly displaying Croatia's leading position, LGBTQ activists continue to criticise the very same government for not doing more to support and protect LGBTQ people. The activists' criticisms highlight the limitations of legal-based activism by exposing the discrepancy that exists between the current legal situation in Croatia and the everyday

[1] For more information see their website: http://www.rainbow-europe.org.

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_2

experiences of LGBTQ people. Yet, professionalised LGBTQ activists also continue to engage in discursive strategies that signify legal mechanisms as a dominant means for achieving social change and equality.

This chapter examines the complex political and social terrain in which LGBTQ activists in Croatia have negotiated their struggles for sexual equality over the last 15 years. Since 2000, many LGBTQ activists have spent substantial amounts of resources and energy engaging in legal and political battles against discrimination directed towards LGBTQ individuals. Drawing upon discourses of human rights and European integration, activists strove to use the pressure imposed by European Union institutions on the Croatian government throughout the pre-accession that lasted until 2013. However, aside from the specific circumstances of becoming an EU member, the focus on legislative change and lobbying at least partly derives from processes of professionalisation. These entail hierarchical differentiations between what constitutes a "serious"/professional NGO work vs. "less serious activism", the important role of international and transnational networks in which professionalised NGOs have taken part, changing financial support mechanisms that organisations began to use during this period, and the dominance of hierarchical organisational structures.

Although professionalised activism has provided activists with the resources and legitimacy for engaging in lobbying and advocacy, it may have also foreclosed dialogue with the larger LGBTQ community and alternative types of activism. As feminist scholars have claimed regarding the consequences of professionalisation in women activists' struggles (Alvarez, 1999, 2000; Bagić, 2002; Ghodsee, 2004; Lang, 1997), the professionalisation of LGBTQ activist organisations has meant that activists have increasingly focused on reforming institutions through project-based initiatives and legal changes at the expense of grassroots activism aimed at strengthening communities, building coalitions and potentially achieving large-scale social transformation. The 2013 referendum that resulted in a constitutional definition of marriage as limited to heterosexual couples shows that there may be a need for reflection and reconsideration of these professionalised practices.

In this chapter, I first trace the emergence of professionalised activism in Croatia from the 1990s to today. This is followed by a discus-

sion of how professionalisation and transnational collaboration have (re)shaped and transformed the way in which activists approach their struggle. Finally, I examine how these processes have gradually worsened the activists relationship with other members of the LGBTQ community and draw attention to the increasingly visible dissent and debate that has arisen due to these changes, arguing that more space needs to be given to contestation and alternative approaches to activism.

Professionalisation and NGOs

Many LGBT/Queer organisations and activist initiatives have emerged in the past 15 years in Croatia. From the present perspective, the most visible sphere of mainstream LGBTQ activism consists of the five major Zagreb-based NGOs: Iskorak, the Lesbian Group Kontra, LORI, Queer Zagreb, and Zagreb Pride. In addition to these organisations, many other human rights and women's organisations have either occasionally or continually supported and/or collaborated in specific events or activists' campaigns on LGBTQ issues, including Ženska Soba, B.a.B.e., the Center for Peace Studies, CESI and the Human Rights House Croatia to name only a few. For the most part, my discussion focuses on four out of the five major organisations, i.e. Lesbian Group Kontra and Iskorak in their collaborations including their early work together on the Pride march as well as the Team for Legal Changes of Iskorak and Kontra, LORI and Zagreb Pride as they are relevant for understanding the process of professionalisation and, in particular, Zagreb Pride as I closely observed its transformation over several years.[2]

Professionalisation within LGBTQ activism in Croatia in the 2000s is associated with the proliferation of professionalised activist organisations within Europe. Early forms of lesbian and gay activism that began during the 1980s in Yugoslavia and later during the early 1990s in the inde-

[2] The fifth group, Queer Zagreb was initiated by an activist who, working within a mainstream theater festival in Zagreb, decided to develop a separate cultural festival that would focus on Queer cultural production (Ivo, personal communication, 2009). Although their foundations varied to some degree, all of these organisations except for Queer Zagreb began as initiatives started by small informal groups.

pendent Croatia are part of larger new social movements/countercultures that consisted of informal groups and consciousness-raising meetings of limited visibility. Gay and lesbian activism that emerged in the late 1990s and later self-proclaimed LGBTIQ[3] organisations that appeared throughout the 2000s, however, have been shaped by contact with widespread professionalised activism and a larger network of NGOs in Europe and internationally (Bagić, 2002; Kollman & Waites, 2009). Like the social movements that appeared earlier, these new organisations have also struggled to both expose and oppose the marginalisation and discrimination of particular social groups. However, as professionalisation has become a more dominant mode of activism, it is important to understand how these processes have impacted activists' work and strategies.

Professionalisation of activism has been the focus of feminist work which examines changes within women's and feminist movements whereby NGOs become more visible in the struggle against sexual inequality. Drawing on the works of Sabine Lang (1997) and Sonia Alvarez (1999), Aida Bagić uses the term NGO-isation to capture the processes through which Croatian women's organisations during the 1990s transformed from "social movements into professionalized organizations" (Bagić, 2002, p. 17). Describing the shift from activism to professionalisation, Bagić writes that "[I]n terms of strategies and programs, NGO-ization leads to issue-specific interventions and pragmatic strategies with strong employment focus instead of establishment of new democratic counterculture" (Bagić, 2002, p. 17). Instead of continuing what she considers earlier Yugoslav feminist activism's "complex agenda of emancipation and equality", the emerging women's NGOs tend to focus on single issues and applying pressure on the state as well as cooperating with it (Bagić, 2002, p. 17).

Although transformations within activist struggles took place on a larger scale, it is important to recognise the specificity of the political situation of the 1990s in Croatia, in which war that accompanied the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia entailed patriarchal militarisation and the strengthening of anti-feminist nationalist discourses which were hostile to feminist activism. These political changes

[3] I adjust my use of the acronym to reflect the different ways it is used by various actors as well as to reflect the historical changes and the types of activism that are present at different times.

and military operations not only meant the impossibility for (post-) Yugoslav feminist activists to collaborate across the newly established borders (Bilić, 2012), but also created a more hostile environment for political actions that seemed to threaten the institutions engaged in the establishment of an independent Croatian state. Moreover, the transition to more issue-specific, human rights interventions, such as providing services to women refugees and internally displaced persons (Bilić, 2012), was a change some may have viewed as necessitated by war and the failures of the state to do so rather than a need to professionalise.

Following the period of military conflict and the establishment of the Republic of Croatia as a new European state, women activists were increasingly positioned as "experts" to be consulted by institutions for developing policy and providing services rather than facilitators of a more politically contentious critical civic engagement with the state (Bilić, 2012). These professional activists increasingly framed their work through the human rights paradigm, which has played a central role in the discourses used by the five major LGBTQ organisations since their establishment in the 2000s.[4] Either having engaged in these particular activities since its establishment (the Team for Legal Changes of Iskorak and Kontra) or by developing a newer orientation towards these activities to receive project funding (Center for LGBT Equality,[5] i.e. Zagreb Pride, Queer Zagreb and LORI), these small, professionalised LGBTQ NGOs consider it imperative to take part, at least to some extent, in lobbying and legal rights-based activism. As a result, organisations have increasingly dedicated their capacities towards influencing state institutions as opposed to strengthening communities or increasing larger community involvement. Just as with feminist activism, LGBTQ activists may have chosen this approach as a result of the perceived threat of institutionalised homophobia and lack

[4] Iskorak and the Lesbian Group Kontra, which founded the Team for Legal Changes of Iskorak and Kontra, and Zagreb Pride, Queer Zagreb (officially Domino) and LORI, which have all collaborated under the organisation the Center for LGBT Equality.

[5] According to their website, the center "is an activist alliance that works to achieve equality for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender individuals in the Republic of Croatia. It was created by activists from Zagreb and Rijeka due to the need to combat discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ individuals. Some of us were also exposed to violence and discrimination, so we believe we can sympathize with your situation and show solidarity to you". (Center for LGBT Equality, n.d., online).

of widespread support within Croatian society. However, as I will argue, restricting the scope of activism to reform through legislation has its limitations in terms of wider social support and solidarity.

More specific organisational structural changes that took place within the broader sphere of women's activism in Croatia are also reflected in the emergent LGBTQ NGOs' structures. Echoing Lang's discussion of NGO-isation, Bagić (2002, p. 17) writes that:

> […] professionalized (and decentralized) small-scale organizations, with more hierarchical structures, become dominant, and replace over-arching movements focusing on politicization and mobilization of [the] feminist public; feminist organizations building and institutionalization replace movement activism.

Functioning as places of employment with hierarchical structures, LGBTQ activism has also undergone many of the same transformations. Each organisation maintains a few paid staff positions, often no more than one to three individuals who are full time managers, spokespersons and responsible for the implementation of projects and use of funds. Stubbs (2007, pp. 169–171) also stresses how the new class of professionals, "young professionals" who "speak English" and who often act as "intermediaries" between constituencies and external actors, engage with "certain discourses lacking national or local credibility", but "can become favoured because of their amplification internationally". Alvarez (2000, pp. 49–50) makes a similar observation about the framing of women's issues within women's rights advocacy strategies that developed in Latin America in the 90s, which focused on policy changes and were formulated by trained professionals in a way that was more "palatable" and would "resonate" with governmental and international institutions and were often more "'instrumental' than principled". The EU accession processes that focused more broadly on the protection of human rights and required the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation as part of larger legislative reforms provided the institutional context in which the choice to advocate and lobby the Croatian government to adopt and implement such laws would appear to be pragmatic and resonate with a more widespread practice used by umbrella LGBT organisa-

tions such as ILGA-Europe. This focus toward institutions, however, has also effected LGBTQ activists' relationships with diverse and fragmented constituencies.

The location of the five NGOs is relevant for understanding these organisations' relationships with LGBTQ individuals who are part of diverse communities or groups throughout Croatia. Referring to the larger NGO sector in Croatia in the past two decades, Stubbs (2007, p. 171) observes how "[p]atterns of NGO development are geographically uneven, with a concentration in urban areas". This has been the case with these LGBTQ organisations as they are all located in urban centres and most are in the capital Zagreb, although more recently established organisations in other parts of Croatia are now becoming more visible. The tendency to be located in the capital creates obstacles for activists' to reach to individuals in rural areas—where social exclusion based on poverty, high unemployment, and poor education is substantially greater (Ofak, Starc, & Šelo Šabić, 2006)—and, therefore, creates a potential to marginalise these constituencies' concerns that may intersect with other initiatives focused on poverty, unemployment and other social/economic-based inequalities. Reflecting on a recent activist intervention in an annual sport event in Dalmatia, activist Željko Blaće (as cited in Van Balen, 2014, online) highlighted the need for an alternative to "professional NGO activism" stating, "Most LGBTIQ advocacy is within the Croatian capital of Zagreb and hugely normalized via the "marriage equality" focus—highly diverted from the harsh LGBTQ realities on other levels and in rest of Croatia where more grass-root activism is much needed".

The Division of Labour in the LGBT NGO "Scene"

The most important public manifestation of LGBTQ activism in which members from all five major organisations have taken part has been Zagreb Pride. The connection between the Zagreb Pride march and the struggle for legal rights through discourses of human rights has existed since the first *Gay Pride* in 2002. The authors of the "short guide" or

political platform for the first event in 2002 relied heavily on the discourse of human rights as a strategy for legitimising their claims. The authors write, "The Pride parades of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and transgender individuals (LGBTT)[6] are important because they alert the public to the violation of human rights" (Iskorak & Kontra, 2002, p. 1). They go on to emphasise again that "the rights of LGBTT individuals are human rights" and underscore the fact that "the demand for LGBTT rights is not a demand for privileges but rather for equal opportunities and equal treatment" and "full access to civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights" (Iskorak & Kontra, 2002, p. 1). The authors specify a series of rights that they believe are withheld from "lesbians and gays", such as the right to individual freedom and security, the right to freely decide regarding one's own body and sexuality, the right to personal and family life and the freedom to decide to have children, right to work and education, the right to medical and social benefits and the freedom of expression and association. This list covers a wide scope of political and civil as well as social and economic rights and is broader than struggling for workplace anti-discrimination law or the right to marriage, which have set the agenda in more recent times. In support of their demands, the Pride organisers then list a slew of international declarations, resolutions, and directives that contain provisions about the need to protect human rights and combat discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation. This list of documents includes international documents such the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Beijing Declaration on Women's Rights and the European

[6] The following year the second "T" was dropped from this acronym and LGBT or LGBTIQ would become the more commonly used acronym for referring to the organisations' constituencies of non-normative sexualities. According to one former member of several of the Zagreb Pride organising committees, there was a debate as to whether to use one "T" or two. This activist was particularly disturbed by this debate because, according to him, there was not only much confusion about the acronym itself, but also a lack of genuine concern for the issues and problems that transgender individuals were facing then. Referring to the reason for including T and the surrounding debate, this activist stated that "they also don't want to present themselves as being backwards in some way. There's solidarity with the rest of the movement and if that's where the movement is at, we'll do it too in a way […] Ok, we'll do it. There's never any, there isn't ever situation where these people acknowledge the issue, like very rarely do they acknowledge, they're like LGBT and their talking about gays and that's the end" (Maja, personal communication, 2009).

Convention on Human Rights. Although Croatia was not a member of the EU at the time and was not given candidate status for EU accession until 2004, the authors still find it important to emphasise the state's duty to align its legislation with the EU's legal framework. It was only with the leftist Social Democratic Party-led ruling coalition that took power in 2000 that Croatia "made fast and determined advances towards EU integration" (Dolenec, 2008, p. 39). The Pride activists used this political orientation as an opportunity to draw the government's attention to the existing EU Charter for Human Rights including Article 21, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and European Parliament Resolutions against discrimination based on sexual orientation and homophobia (Iskorak & Kontra, 2002).[7] Political support from the then ruling coalition and its EU-orientation provided an important space for activists to publicly make claims for rights and recognition. The ruling coalition's support was a stark contrast to the previous government's open hostility and homophobia. For Tea, member of the Lesbian Group Kontra, this was a window of opportunity:

> In the year 2002, well, in the year 2000 there had been great political changes with regards to the coalition government and for the first time we could openly advocate for changes and also because Croatia was a candidate country to join the European Union, this also brought possibilities because all the law were going through changes and that included the family act, the labor act, all the other important laws for the LGBT community and basically we decided to organize a small team between two organisations, Iskorak who a newly founded organisation and Lesbian Group Kontra from 1997 (Tea, personal communication, 2008).

However, this was not the only reason that lobbying and advocacy seemed to be the best strategy according to either of the then main members of the Team for Legal Changes. When addressing the importance of

[7] It is relevant to note that at this point the EU Directive (European Commission, 2000) was passed. However, it is also important to point out the limitation of this Directive as it only addresses discrimination in the workplace. As I pointed out, Iskorak and Kontra's demands in the 2002 Gay Pride platform called for a larger scope of rights or more comprehensive equality in the sense that they also mention social and economic rights.

legal changes,[8] several activists construct a hierarchy of activism, elevating the importance of lobbying and advocacy in comparison to cultural activities. From this perspective, lobbying and advocacy become part of the processes of professionalisation, increasing the value of the work of NGOs that engage in this type of activism. When asked about Iskorak's choice to take the political route as opposed to focusing on cultural activism or activism on AIDS/HIV and sexual health, former Iskorak member Dražen stated:

> Well, it was pragmatic. Because you know, you can be an activist, you can do demonstrations and protest and whatever on the street, it's ok. You can do what we did with this HIV and AIDS, visiting people who we know have HIV and AIDS and having sex, giving them condoms. It's all nice, but if you want real change, it must be on legislative grounds, on that level (Dražen, personal communication, 2010, emphasis added).

The year 2003 was pivotal in terms of the adoption of new legislation. In their 2003 report, the Team for Legal Changes wrote, "Compared to the previous year, in 2003, the position of sexual and gender minorities in the Republic of Croatia improved considerably. The greatest improvement concerning the protection of sexual and gender minority rights was made in legislation" (Juras & Manzin, 2003, p. 1). That year alone, clauses that required protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation were included in the *Labor Act* (*Zakon o radu*, *NN 114/03*), the *Gender Equality Act* (*Zakon o ravnopravnosti spolova*, *NN 116/03*), the *Act on Scientific Work and Higher Education* (*Zakon o znanstvenoj djelatnosti i visokom školstvu*, *NN 123/03*), and the *Penal Code* (*Kazneni Zakon*, *NN 111/03*). This emphasis on lobbying and anti-discrimination laws echoes the priorities of the international organisation ILGA-Europe (2002) during this time as well, which associates lobbying for legal changes as evidence of professionalism and "seriousness".[9] During an interview with

[8] I conducted 26 interviews with Croatian activists as well as with various representatives from organisations that collaborated with Croatian activists at that time.

[9] In their Activity Report for 2001/2001, ILGA-Europe writes that it will "include lobbying skills of the highest order" and states "[b]y demonstrating our professionalism in these ways we will convince all of our contacts, and the wider public, of the seriousness of our cause" (ILGA-Europe, 2002, p. 3). In terms of describing their work in Southeastern Europe, they write that they intend

Darko (personal communication, 2009), another founding member of Iskorak, he strongly supported the professionalisation of activists' work in the sense that they should be politically serious and also employ serious intellectuals with high political awareness, who would not centralise political power and make decisions by themselves, but would carry out the collectively created strategies of the group. When asked about the tendency for disagreements between organisations and activists regarding what constitutes "serious" political goals, he did express his regret that so much *personal disagreement* has come between creating a more unified community based on solidarity. Darko (personal communication, 2009) observed that organisations tend to fight a lot and are, therefore, negatively perceived as being the work of one individual who maintains their position indefinitely. However, although he disagreed with what he saw as problematic distribution of power within and between NGOs, he reasserted that there still needs to be a purely political goal behind activism. The solution, in his opinion, to this problem is the creation of structured, professionalised, and democratic NGOs, in which persons do not maintain a leadership position indefinitely.

Regarding the issue of leadership, the Lesbian Group Kontra, Iskorak, LORI, and Queer Zagreb all have individuals in leadership positions who have been there since the establishment of the organisation, most receiving salaries, albeit quite low for some.[10] The hierarchy between political and cultural activism is also reflected in some of the Team for Legal Change's "Annual Reports on the Status of Human Rights of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Croatia", which are intended to inform the Croatian public, government instit2utions as well as international LGBTQ organisations and donors. The authors attempt to create a hierarchy of different

to provide "support and technical advice to assist in the development of LGBT human rights organisations in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, in such areas as lobbying skills, funding, organisational development, combating discrimination and mobilizing international pressure in respect of particular human rights violations" (ILGA-Europe, 2002, p. 20).

[10] In theory, several of the organisations (LORI, Iskorak, and the Lesbian Group Kontra) have structures that are given the responsibility to elect individuals to fill the various positions. In practice these elections result in reestablishing particular individuals as leaders, and there seems to be no limited period in which one person can serve in a particular position. Queer Zagreb seems to be an exception in that the organisation was founded by one individual, who is the permanent artistic director.

types of activism and delimit the boundaries of proper political activism. The imperative to have a "serious political message" has been used by the Team for Legal Changes in their criticism of the organisation of Zagreb Pride, the only large scale LGBTQ public event that takes place annually. In three consecutive annual reports from 2007 to 2009, the Team for Legal Changes describes the Zagreb Pride event as not having a "*clear* political message" (Juras & Grđan, 2007, p. 69). Specifically referring to the theme of the 2007 Zagreb Pride, they write again without further explanation, "[…] while the theme of visibility itself indicates one of the ways of advocacy, which in itself in Croatia is not significant in a political context" (Juras & Grđan, 2007, p. 69). The implication here might be that visibility alone is no longer an important political objective and that activism must move beyond this agenda and include more serious professional activities such as lobbying. In the following two reports in 2008 and 2009, the Team for Legal Changes again claims that Zagreb Pride events were lacking "any" political message (Juras & Bosanac, 2009, p. 48; Juras & Grđan, 2008, p. 44).[11] Taking into consideration the messages of the early Pride marches in which Iskorak and the Lesbian Group Kontra led the organisation of the event, which relied on the discourse of rights, it would also seem that "a real political message" is rights-based or should include demands for specific rights.

Years later in 2011, when the Lesbian Group Kontra and Iskorak decided together with a local feminist group Domine in Split to organise the first Pride event outside of the capital Zagreb, the slogan for the parade was "Different Families, Same Rights", echoing the long-term priorities of the Zagreb based organisations that were involved in the organisation and title of ILGA-Europe's 2007 report on LGBT families and international human rights law (Hodson, 2007) and reflecting their continued commitment to rights-based advocacy.[12] The need to emphasise that "real", "serious" activism is lobbying for legal mechanisms has at times created political disagreements and even entrenched divides

[11] Note that Gordan Bosanac, who is a member of Queer Zagreb only contributed the parts relevant to the Queer Zagreb Festival. The main author of the report is Sanja Juras of the Lesbian Group Kontra.

[12] It is relevant to note that the Zagreb Pride organisation and the organisers of Split Pride did not cooperate in this initiative.

between individuals and organisations within the larger LGBTQ activist community.[13] Much long-term resentment and animosity between individuals and organisations resulted from disputes about priorities and political strategies. These differences in approaches to activism do not only lead to personal grudges, but also hinder the development of networks of solidarity that struggle for larger social/cultural transformations that combat other systems of oppression based on class, ethnicity or gender, which also impact the diverse constituencies that make up LGBTQ communities. The resulting lack of future solidarity also stems from the fact that many of the individuals on the committee were or would be members (leaders) of specific organisations and tend to maintain their positions within the organisations.

Collaboration Shapes Strategies

Conflicts between activists and organisations in the LGBTQ community are not only a reflection of the different approaches and the way in which professionalised, legal activism has been prioritised as the most important type of political engagement, but they also serve as a lens for discussing the role of actors and influences outside of the local activist community. It is all the more important as my sources (Alvarez, 1999, 2000; Bagić, 2002; Lang, 1997) seem to highlight this factor, although mostly in the context of women's NGOs. Feminists have criticised the ways in which international and even state support of NGOs has contributed to project-based activism, which impedes not only an organisation's ability to focus on long-term goals but also the development of community

[13] During the organisation of the 2006 Zagreb Pride event, there were disagreements between individuals and organisations involved in the organising committee. Besides debating on whether the committee should be made up of official organisations or individual citizens—a dispute that again highlights the overvaluing of professionalised activism—there were also debates about the theme of the Pride that year. According to Davor, a member of the Zagreb Pride organising committee, some organisations and individuals were lobbying for the theme to address the legalisation of same-sex partnerships. (Davor, personal communication, 2009) disagreed with this theme and the emphasis on same-sex partnership and argued that there were more pressing problems facing the community, for example, violence, (institutional) discrimination, and identity formation. Eventually the differences between committee members would lead to the expulsion of the participant who was pushing for the agenda prioritising a same-sex union law.

empowerment and solidarity between activists and the larger community. Donors' expectations about organisational structures and criteria for funding can constrain the types of strategies that activists consider using to achieve their objectives and reinforce differentiations between so-called serious professional activism vs. amateur informal activists.

Referring to the work of Marina Blagojević on women's organisations in Serbia, Bagić also notes that some donor's emphasis on issues such as regional networking has, in fact, created positive change in terms of facilitating cooperation. However, assessing some particular changes that occurred amongst women's organisation s in Croatia, she writes:

> [surviving] from one project to another, and the criteria in designing the projects often seem to be set up mostly according to the external and not the internal, local, needs assessments […] and competition over the resources has led to the decrease of solidarity on the local level and to difficulties in relationships among the local women's organisations (Bagić, 2002, p. 11).

Her point about increasing competition or a decrease in solidarity across organisations is relevant for understanding some of the developments and problems that have arisen between and within organisations within the LGBTQ activist scene. In order to further contextualise activists' collaborative work with other transnational organisations, I spoke with representatives from these transnational organisations.

One of the most active transnational LGBT organisations in Croatia has been COC Netherlands, a federation of 21 Dutch organisations and groups that advocate for the rights of LGBT individuals in the Netherlands and abroad (COC Netherlands, n.d.). During my interviews with representatives of COC Netherlands (COC), I found out more about how COC Netherlands cooperated with and perceived their work with local organisations such as Iskorak, the Lesbian Group Kontra, and Queer Zagreb and about their expectations as a donor/partner. During an interview conducted after a networking meeting in 2008 that COC had arranged as the concluding or wrap-up activity for a project that it had been facilitating in the region for the previous 5 years, I asked the COC representatives about the importance of official registration as an

NGO rather than just an informal activist group and professionalism as requirements for receiving support as it was discussed during the meeting. Gert, an international project manager at COC Netherlands, pointed out the importance of observing formalities as a matter of accountability and trust:

> […] if you look at potential funds, as far as funding comes from governmental bodies or development organisations funded by governments or international organisations, there is just, there is a set of requirements that you just really need to observe. One, I think, is registration. A second one is clear management structure, accountability, sustainability. Bureaucratic institutions that have formal, a formalist approach to funding schemes, to grant applications and the people judging those applications are not people who are aware of content, they're bureaucrats. […] I'm not saying you can't be an anarchists or someone wearing baggy trousers when you go to a meeting, with your hair done up. That's not the point. But, it can't be sort of a collective of people that has no legal base when it comes to themselves, but supplying 15,000 Euros of funding to do project x, y, and z. Because, as there is no knowledge of the local area and the content, this base of trust can only be established through observing these formalities (Gert, personal communication, 2008).

Gert, to some extent, shifts responsibility for the formal requirement when he points out that COC as a distributor of funds which they receive from other "back donors" is simply required to enforce formal criteria established by larger, more distant donors. According to him, these institutions are not so much interested in particular content or outcomes as to ensuring that potential receivers are legally obligated to their agreement regarding the use of funds. From the perspective of financial management, there appears to be a general disinterest in working together with any particular organisation on any particular struggle. It seems as if they were looking for the organisation that is most qualified in terms of their professional criteria of accountability. From Gert's perspective, "accountability" does not entail the organisations' responsibility to the communities that they work for, but rather the organisations from which they receive funding. Framing this arrangement as a matter of "trust" is also questionable considering that the relationship is one of contract

or legal obligation, which is different from one based on mutual trust. Choudry and Shragge (2011, p. 508) describe Gert's understanding of formal requirements as part of the "prevailing approaches to formal NGO development [that] tend to require a legal framework for organisation rather than informal or traditional forms. A textual orientation insists that practice is not real unless it can be documented in writing"). In terms of solidarity or trust, this representative's response to my inquiry about whether COC may lose out on potential partnerships or innovative strategies based on these criteria is also revealing. He states that from:

> […] a Western perspective, donors do not lose out on possibilities. It's grassroots organisations that lose out on a funding possibility […]. [A] potential donor will not see anything as a missed opportunity because [they] are oversubscribed—if it's not you it's someone else (Gert, personal communication, 2008).

This framing sets up a hierarchical differentiation between Western donors and non-Western receivers. By emphasising the formality of the relationship, the lack of interests in content, and the ephemeral, arbitrary nature of these collaborations, one could hardly describe this support as based on solidarity. Rather, these transactions are presented more as basic, standardised practice of professionalised advocacy. Choudry and Shragge (2011, p. 508) argue that "[t]here is a deeply colonial and (re)colonizing aspect to this process" in that it valorises certain types of "Western" knowledge and practice. They argue that by emphasising the upward accountability to donor organisations and the "managerialist organizational governance structures and practices" (Choudry & Shragge, 2011, p. 508) that accompany donor expectations this process of professionalization "discipline[s] and undermine[s] the political space for radical organizing […]" (p. 508).

The Global Fund for Women, an important donor for many informal feminist and LGBTQ organisations, seems to have taken a different approach to the local activists and organisations. Apart from using local advisors, rather than periodically sending representatives, the Global Fund for Women also reached out on a larger scale to LGBTQ activists in the region. For example, local activists organised a meeting for LGBTQ

activists from the region to discuss the particular ways that the donor organisations can assist. The Global Fund for Woman, the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice,[14] and Mama Cash[15] participated in a meeting on 30 September 2006, hosted by the SEEQ (Network the Southeastern European Queer Network[16]) in which they "focused [on] sharing knowledge and experience" as well as on how the donor community can best collaborate with local activists in the national contexts (SEEQ Network, 2006, p. 1). Participants from Zagreb Pride, Queer Zagreb, the Lesbian Group Kontra, LORI, and Iskorak were present. During this meeting, both activists and donors made recommendations regarding practices in four major fields of activity including capacity building, community outreach and networking, monitoring and advocacy, and art/culture and visibility (SEEQ Network, 2006).

In the report produced after this meeting, the donor organisations had a more collaborative approach to working with local activists to develop activist strategies, including professionalised lobbying and advocacy for human rights. The donors, for instance, suggest that activists "create a platform which includes [a] human rights based approach and use[s]

[14] The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice is an American-based donor that describes themselves as "the only philanthropic organisation working exclusively to advance LGBTQI human rights around the globe" (Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, n.d., online). The organisation's overall aim is to "work for racial, economic, social, and gender justice" globally and their mission "is based on an enduring commitment to feminism, progressive social change and an end to all forms of exploitation and discrimination" (Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, n.d., online).

[15] Mama Cash describes themselves as the "the oldest international women's fund—established in the Netherlands in 1983" (Mama Cash, n.d., online). Mama Cash supports women's initiatives around the world that "strive against poverty, violence and discrimination […] equal rights, economic justice and a safe environment for themselves and their communities" (Mama Cash, n.d., online).

[16] According to their platform which is no longer available online as their website has since been shut down, the SEEQ network is a regional network of queer activists and organisations dealing with promotion and protection of human rights of LGBTIQ persons, as well as preventing discrimination and violence based on sex, gender, sexual or gender identity, gender expression, (inter) sexual characteristics and sexual orientation. In September 2003, the Network was founded by members from BiH, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro. Information about the network can now be found at the following link: http://www.queer.ba/en/seeqnetwork (retrieved September 28, 2014). From 2003 to 2007, the Network held several meetings a year. According to one Croatian activist, Maja, who was involved in the network's founding, the network was important as united regional body that could have more of an impact within the larger international organisation ILGA-Europe, as well as creating a unified approach to organisations that work within the region such as COC Netherlands (Maja, personal communication, 2009).

definitions which […] correspond […] with people and their needs" and implied the necessity of doing more community outreach (SEEQ Network, 2006, p. 14). One of the activists' recommendations that follows up on the donors' observation calls for additional information and funding for "innovative and 'hard to measure' outreach activities" and projects that address "progressive human rights (such as education, health)" (SEEQ Network, 2006, p. 14). This commitment to "progressive rights" is also mentioned in the SEEQ Network's platform where they stated that "human rights are universal, inalienable, undivided and *mutually dependent and connected*" (emphasis added), and they stress that human rights:

> include social, political, economical (sic), cultural, sexual and reproductive rights, freedoms as well as obligations and responsibilities, regardless of a particular state or society, sex/gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, age, marital or family status, political opinion or/and some other physical, social, economical or health reason (SEEQ Network, 2006, p. 14).

Although there appeared to be an agreement about the need for human rights advocacy that goes beyond the more hegemonic struggles for civil and political rights, the activists' response in the document that they put together after the meeting in fall 2006 to the donors' suggestion may also indicate a feeling that there is a lack of support for such initiatives (SEEQ Network, 2006), as opposed to perhaps advocacy for anti-discrimination laws or same-sex marriage that has dominated identity-based LGBTQ activism.

This meeting opened a dialogue between regional activists and several donor organisations and served as an example of a more transparent and communicative approach of these feminist organisations to their work in Croatia and the region and, therefore, a potential alternative understanding of professional activism. In terms of providing support to separate organisations, the Global Fund for Women, the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, and Mama Cash financially supported the work of the Lesbian Group Kontra, LORI, and Zagreb Pride; all organisations that include women in leadership positions, address feminist concerns in their platforms, and according to some activists have an explicit politi-

cal message. This support is especially significant considering the lack of support received by these organisations from the Croatian government, which I will discuss in the following section.

These feminist organisations' attempts at more transparent communication, although not without challenges, contain the potential for developing more mutual respect and trust within these collaborations with local activists as well as space for dissent and debate. Such an approach, informed by critical feminist understanding of global inequalities in transnational collaboration, and the conditions under which these organisations provide financial support as a means of showing solidarity to local activists' causes stands in contrast with COC's approach to providing capacity-building support for developing professional organisations and activities. COC seems to approach the local activists as less knowledgeable, less capable, and, therefore, less trustworthy. This implies that the Dutch activists view their collaboration from a "superior" and more "advanced" position, reproducing racist/nationalist discourses about the region and foreclosing the possibility that local activists might have something to offer in terms of methods for combating sexual injustice. COC's approach also reveals how professionalisation can take on a specific form that reinforces particular ideologically invested modes of development and activist engagement.

Funding that Shapes Activists' Initiatives

The capacity to fundraise is viewed as an integral part of professionalised activism as it makes organisational activities sustainable and provides income for those who work full time for the organisations. However, whether or not an organisation is successful at soliciting funding for salaries, office space and other materials greatly depends on the ideological orientation or objectives of potential donors. As the criteria of professionalisation set by donors such as COC Netherlands show, this potential constraint shapes the types of activities that activists might undertake. As far as the state/national level is concerned, states can choose to cooperate with one NGO rather than another for specific political reasons, as is the case with Queer Zagreb or Iskorak which, in the period between 2004 and

2012, received much more from the Croatian government in comparison with other organisations such as the Lesbian Group Kontra and LORI.

Since the political changes within Croatia after 2000, Croatian government institutions have become an important source of funding and support for most of the LGBTQ organisations. However, some have received substantially more support than others. Information about government funding of the activities of registered NGOs is provided by the Government Office of Cooperation with NGOs on their website dating back apparently to 2004 and is current up to the year 2012 (Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, 2015, online). The conservative HDZ government, which was much less supportive of sexual rights than, for example, the SDP-led left coalition that was in power from 2000 to 2003, led the government from 2004 to 2011. A comparison between the amounts of financial support that different government agencies provided to the different LGBTQ organisations in the given period reveals a large gap (Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, 2015, online). The Queer Zagreb organisation, officially registered as Domino, for example, received almost 2.6 million Kuna (approximately 356,000 Euros) between 2004 and 2011. Half of this funding came from the Ministry of Culture as support for the Queer Zagreb Festival as well as other culture projects. According to some activists, this has been because of government's perception that these activities, such as film screenings and theatre performances, are cultural and, therefore, apolitical or at least less threatening (Bojan, personal communication, 2009; Ivo, personal communication, 2009). The other organisation to receive a significant amount of financial support is the group Iskorak, which from 2005 to 2011 received a little over 2 million Kuna (approximately 274,000 Euros). Much of this funding came from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and was allotted for service projects focusing on AIDS/HIV prevention programs targeting the MSM[17] a population. The two lesbian feminist groups, LORI and the Lesbian Group Kontra, received significantly less during this period—a little more than 300,000 Kuna (approximately 41,000 Euros) for the Lesbian Group Kontra and less than 200,000 Kuna (approximately 27,400 Euros) for LORI. Zagreb Pride

[17] Men who have sex with men but do not necessarily identify as gay or bisexual.

received the smallest amount of financial assistance from the government institutions such as the City of Zagreb and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development at around 70,000 Kuna (approximately 9600 Euros) (Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, 2015, online).

Reasons for this funding discrepancy across the major organisations are multiple. Zagreb Pride may have received such little funding because they have only been an officially registered organisation since 2008. However, considering that the other four organisations had existed for approximately the same amount of time and consist of roughly the same amount of participants, but can be differentiated based on their memberships' predominate gender makeup, other reasons must exist for the noticeable gap in funding. One explanation could be the nature of the activities to which the government bodies choose to contribute. Activities that are perceived to be more political or critical of the government, even if professional, may also suffer from a lack of funding. For example, Tea from the Lesbian Group Kontra claimed:

> Well, we don't get almost any money from the state, we get a little bit of money and we were not approved our, the Governmental Office of Gender Equality did not approve our financial report, which was for $1,000[18] approximately because we criticized very heavily the national gender equality law. It was clear (Tea, personal communication, 2008).

The Lesbian Group Kontra has been particularly outspoken through its public statements and the reports that it publishes in its collaborative work in the Team for Legal Changes, in which it often criticises government institutions and individual members of Parliament (Sabor) for homophobic hate speech or unwillingness to support LGBTQ rights and initiatives. In terms of political orientation, it is also important to point out that the Lesbian Group Kontra, LORI, and Zagreb Pride, which have all received less funding, included clear references to feminist struggles and women's rights as part of their political agendas (Lesbian Group Kontra, n.d.; LORI n.d.; Zagreb Pride, n.d.).

[18] At that time, this amount would have been about 5500 Kuna. Martina discussed how LORI decided to approach the NGO SMART (http://www.smart.hr) to set up educational workshops and seminars about funding raising (Martina, personal communication, 2010).

Criteria for external donors may somewhat differ. LORI, which is located outside of Zagreb, believes that they face particular difficulties with obtaining funding from not only because of their location but also because of their specific focus on health, education, and work with media outlets:

> […] lots of donors give funds for lobbying, and that is not our priority, it is of course in terms of human rights, laws and all that stuff, but we are situated here […] We have education, health, work with media and that's our priorities and community empowerment. So we have problems but also now Croatia, [we] have that process of joining the EU. And lots of donors, that started two years ago, lots of donors don't give funds in Croatia anymore (Martina, personal communication, 2010).

Martina's concerns not only reiterate the fear that donors are leaving or have left Croatia which was expressed by other activists, but also the tendency of prioritising advocacy and lobbying for particular human rights, seemingly marginalising LORI's work that addresses the social needs of LGBTQ individuals.

Although there may have been a tendency for donors to pull away from funding Croatian organisations, significant support is provided by European transnational donors, including COC and EU member state embassies, for political activism and advocacy. However, embassies of EU member countries and EU institutions that have supported certain activist initiatives use discourses that establish hierarchies, elevating European identity as a marker of progress and development (Butterfield, 2013). The involvement of embassies as donors for LGBTQ activism has facilitated the prerogatives of different governments' party politics and quite possibly their interest in facilitating or impeding the EU accession process for other countries. Discussing the need to justify COC's use of funds in the Southeastern European region, Henk, one of its representatives, stated:

> [W]e also have to justify to our members why we work in certain regions. These countries we can verify very easy because you know, Croatia will join the European Union, all of the countries that we've been working in like Romania or Bulgaria already joined the European Union […] it means you're going to have a very homophobic governments in place probably, or

> they can do things which we don't want to take place in the European Union, especially not because you know more and more things are commonly planned in Eur…in Brussels, so […] the least progressive countries basically, the more progressive you get them, the least risk it's going to be for our rights back home as well. So it's quite a strategy behind it (Henk, personal communication, 2008).

Although he refers to the need to justify their work to their Dutch members, this sentiment echoes the initiatives of several Western European embassies. The Norwegian, Danish, and Dutch Embassies have all contributed to various Zagreb Pride at different points (Zagreb Pride, n.d.), for example, the Dutch and Danish Embassies expressed their support for the Split Pride in 2011 and 2012 (Embassy of Denmark in Croatia, 2012; Embassy of Kingdom of the Netherlands in Croatia, 2011). In June 2012, after the Split Pride that year, the Croatian newspaper *Večernji list* reported the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nicolai Wammen, statement that "There is no doubt that the EU supports the right to hold a gay parade in Split. It is part of the European values on which there is no and cannot be a compromise" (Krasnec, 2012, online). Through financial support and public statements, these external government bodies and their various degrees of access to money and power also participate in these lobbying efforts and contribute as well as ideological invested discourses of European identity. Activists have used such statements to strengthen their claims.

Whether or not the amount of funding the government distributes has changed since Croatia became a candidate country for EU membership in 2004 is difficult to assess as the government office only provides information online about their funding activities since 2004 (Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, 2015, online).

The perception that there has been a loss of some funders and that the government has failed to "step in" has, in any case, meant that organisations are more frequently turning to EU funds. Applying for EU project funding requires a somewhat different approach and skill set than, for example, those needed for collaborating with donors such as Global Fund for Women which allow for more personal, informal, and open communication. Organisations such as LORI have turned to other NGOs

to obtain the proper skills for applying to these funds.[19] Moreover, when applying for EU funding, the project must contribute to goals and aims that have already been established by EU institutions. Since its structural changes and participation in the Center for LGBT Equality in 2009, Zagreb Pride and the other two organisations involved have applied to EU funds and secured several additional sources of funding. In 2011, Zagreb Pride received almost 40,000 Euros of funding from the European Union's PROGRESS programme and the Ministry for Economy, Work and Business (Zagreb Pride). Again in 2012, they received almost 70,000 Euros of funding for a joint, 2-year project developed with the Center of LGBT Equality called "Another Society is Possible—United for LGBT Rights", which in total was given approximately 105,000 Euros as well as funding from the European Union's PROGRESS program for the project "Creating Society to Tackle Discrimination" (Zagreb Pride, n.d.). Not only has Zagreb Pride's funding based expanded substantially from 2008 having four sources of funding to having a dozen different sources in 2011, but their income increased from around 100,000 Kuna to over 400,000 Kuna. Moreover, based on the projects for which they have received funding, it is clear that Zagreb Pride as well as the partner organisations of the Center for LGBT Equality are all now participating more in rights-based and lobbying activities, partly supported by European Union project funding.

Referring to how EU project funding has changed their work, one activist from Zagreb Pride stated that he thought that "European projects kill grassroots activism" (Luka, personal communication, 2014). On the other hand, he also believes that EU-funding has enabled organisations to pursue certain initiatives that without such funding they could not do, for example, external evaluations of their work and providing funding for legal services that are necessary for pursuing relevant court cases. Another Zagreb Pride activist, who is now less actively involved in the organisational activities, also believes that the processes of professionalisation has provided financial and material resources and full-time

[19] During a conference on Europeanization and LGBT activism in the post-Yugoslav space held in Bertinoro, Italy, in September 2014, a Zagreb Pride activists who was present also claimed that the 2014 Osijek Pride was an initiative developed by existing Zagreb Pride members in Zagreb.

employment for some individuals, opening more space for activists to discuss feminist principles, social and economic rights and wider solidarities (Davor, personal communication, 2014).

Community and Solidarity

One important aspect of professionalised activism is the way in which participants understand dissent or critique of their strategies and agenda. Focus on lobbying and advocacy has substantially impacted on how activists view their relationship to the larger community of individuals who identify as LGBTQ. The thoughts of one Zagreb Pride member, Davor, about community collaboration, in fact, address the importance of organisational structure and its relation to understanding its representative capacity. In Davor's opinion, Zagreb Pride is able to reflect on community needs and concerns possibly better than the other organisations.

> You asked me something else about where's the community here. It's difficult because the community is, I think, more present if you have more people in a group because everyone knows someone. I think and this is maybe presumptuous to say but if we have 15 or 20 people in Zagreb Pride group as this year is the situation as this year is the occasion, then at least 200 members of the community are in a way present in Zagreb Pride meetings because every one of us knows 10 other gays or lesbians or transgender persons and they talk to them every day with coffee or their boyfriends, girlfriends and so on, friends (Davor, personal communication, 2009).

To the extent that the organisation has a larger, more diverse body of members, Davor believes this diversity implies that more community interests are represented. Zagreb Pride's principle of recruiting new members and volunteers every year is evidence of their efforts to reach out to those in the community who want to participate and contribute. This process of rotation and more inclusion may have also been facilitated by the fact that no members of the group had received a salary.

However, this structure was gradually changed starting in 2008 after Zagreb Pride became an official organisation and began receiving project-based funding from the government and EU institutions, which have provided for paid positions.

The choice to have more permanent paid positions does not immediately foreclose the possibility of community involvement or impede the potential for inclusion or transformation. However, how the established leaders choose to approach the community, facilitate dialogue, and implement suggestions or demands from the community does shape the resulting strategies. A debate on how Zagreb Pride's leadership attends to diverse points of view, for example, was made public recently in the news portal LIBELA—a news portal on gender, sex and democracy—in which one former member of the Zagreb Pride organising committee expressed her disappointment about being denied membership to the committee in which she had previously been a part. Pointing out that her situation is not unique, she writes that other former members, predominantly women, of the committee have also been expelled or more indirectly pushed out through pressure on the basis of their "character traits" that seemingly prevented them from cooperating with the existing committee members (Brakus, 2015). Similar observations about the gendered and generational power distribution in the organisation were expressed by another former female member of the committee in 2014:

> I left the organisation because of the hierarchical and patriarchal structure that for women and young people create a 'glass ceiling' above which they cannot go. Of course, there is always the possibility to enter into a power struggle and try to fight for your place. It's hard to explain, these power structures and how they are strong, and somehow in the end (as everywhere) it just so happens that women leave and men remain, that the programs that women work on are treated as "those workshops and some meetings" and the programs that men work on as "saving the world and are high politics" (Marušić, 2014, online).

It is clear that several key figures in leadership positions have maintained their status over a longer period of time in spite of these concerns, which calls into question the possibility of dissent.

Hierarchies do not only exist within organisational structures but are also constructed in the language used to differentiate different types of activism and the importance of community participation. Nada, a member of the Lesbian Group Kontra, reflected on the relationship between strategies and community involvement in an interview:

> For the LGBT community, well, there's a lot of kinds of activism, so there are some activities just for LGBT community, some activities which they can take part in, to have some spaces for them[selves]. And some activities are for some upper level [like] I don't know […] lobbying for laws and something like that (Nada, personal communication, 2009).

Davor (personal communication, 2009) a member of Zagreb Pride, also created a hierarchy of activisms and perceived that community involvement is unnecessary in professional lobbying activities.

> If you are closed in your office and just reading papers and doing lobbying and just going to meetings with politicians, lawyers, journalists, international activists, yeah [then] the community is less present. But if you're a lobbyist, just trying…we know what we need […], we need […] let's say good domestic partnership or registered partnership law, so you really don't need the community if you're doing just that. You're a lobbyist, you know what has been done in Spain or in Germany so you don't […] it's just a law.

Both of these activists differentiate lobbying work from community-based activism. By doing so, they imply that the community may not have an interest in determining which laws are priority or the content of the laws. In fact, as Davor (personal communication, 2009) states, activists can easily see what has been done in other countries and base their lobbying activities on that. As part of the European Union accession process, Croatia has had to do precisely that while aligning its laws to the EU *acquis*. This approach not only contributes to the already existing "catching up" framework that many Eastern European and most non-Western countries have experienced in relation to Western hegemony, but it also disregards the specificity of the local context in which certain rights and

mechanisms may not be well-suited or may not be a priority. In an article about an event held on the International Day of Coming Out in which young people from outside the capital Zagreb where brought there to discuss their concerns as LGBTIQ persons living in other parts of Croatia, the author writes referring to the organiser's view:

> What is common to all young people, regardless of whether they are part of the LGBTIQ population or not, is fear of the future. […] everyday [you can] see the disappointment of young people regarding securing their existence, ability to find a job and to become independent (Crol.hr, 2014, online).

This observation could potentially call into question existing priorities developed by Zagreb-based organisations and how they might be taken up in different context as well as to what extent these organisations should take the leading role elsewhere in the country. The example of Split Pride 2011, which was co-organised by the Zagreb-based Lesbian Group Kontra and Iskorak as well as the Split based women's group Domine, also raises questions about to what extent LGBTQ organisations from Zagreb are knowledgeable about and able to represent the needs of those local LGBTQ constituencies that they claim to represent. There were no existing LGBTQ groups with which these Zagreb organisations could consult and the theme of the 2011 Split Pride "different families, same rights" seems to stem from their own long-term priorities as well as those of the transnational network with which they work rather than the concerns expressed by those who took part in the 2014 International Day of Coming Out that included LGBTIQ individuals from Split.

Part of the reason why activists may not feel the need to reach out to the community may stem from the fact that from many activists' perspectives, the many non-activists have been hostile to their work. Ines, one activist who is no longer involved directly with any particular organisation, has a rather critical perspective of the community:

> At first the problem is LGBT community, they always have problem with activists because they are either too aggressive or presenting them in a way they don't want to be presented, because they are so few […] But the biggest problem with the community [is that] they don't want to be recognised (Ines, personal communication, 2010).

Bojan, another activist who is also no longer a full-time participant in any particular activist group, echoes this pessimistic view.

> For me that's one side, where people try to get, when they do activism like politics, political work and they're trying to fight for some rights. Basically that means that you're trying to organise. And if you cannot reach absolutely any level of structure or organisation, that's one side. And the other side is this support from the community because nobody wants to give support because they actually don't want to be associated with gay things (Bojan, personal communication, 2009).

Although some activists seem to explain the community's lack of support as being caused by internalised homophobia, some community members more simply disapprove of the work of the organisations. For example, in the 2006 report published by the Lesbian Group Kontra, the authors discuss the reasons that individuals cited for not reporting their experience of violence to the Team for Legal Changes. One of these reasons included "mistrust and repulsion towards the work of Iskorak and Kontra" (Pikić & Jugović, 2006, 38). Although it may be true that certain criticisms are fuelled by homophobia or fear, there is also the possibility that dissatisfaction also stems from the approach activists have when interacting with the community as some recent more public debates suggest.

Voices of Dissent and the Changing Context of LGBTQ Activism

In more recent years, there has been an increasing amount of dialogue among activists and the LGBTQ community, particularly in online social media but also in larger public spaces, about the need for diverse initiatives and more grassroots activism, especially outside of Zagreb, and how the internal structures of organisations affect participation.[20]

[20] Articles in online portals have become spaces in which important issues such as the centralisation of activism in Zagreb, whether or not the same-sex marriage struggle should be the highest priority of LGBTIQ activism in Croatia and how leadership affects participation. See also http://www.cenzura.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1078%3Adecentralizacija-lgbtiq-aktivizma-realizacija-mladih-u-splitu-i-rijeci&catid=74%3Asuzbijanje-diskriminacije&Itemid=210, http://www.bilten.org/?p=1041.

For some activists, the debate has become even more urgent considering the increasing impact that anti-LGBTQ rights campaigns are having within Croatia (Hodžić & Bijelić, 2014). The successful mobilisation of citizens for gathering over 400,000 signatures that were required to petition the government to hold a referendum on the definition of marriage, which was orchestrated by the association *U ime obitelji* (In the name of Family), has led some activists to reflect on the strategies and tactics used by LGBTQ activists thus far, which have focused on influencing political institutions rather than garnering larger public support. Others, have called for increased professionalisation to oppose what appears to be the well-organised, highly professionalised campaign of these increasing visible and powerful anti-LGBTQ actors.[21]

In December Broz, 2014, feminist activist Tajana Broz spoke about the threat of conservative social movements for feminists and LGBT activism in Croatia at BeFem, a festival of feminist culture and activism held in Belgrade, Serbia.[22] Broz was not only a participant in the campaign to defeat the referendum to define marriage as a right only to heterosexual couples, called "Citizens vote Against",[23] but is also a coordinating member of CESI, one of the feminist organisations that has been active in the struggle for sexual rights in Croatia, including more specific rights pertaining to LGBTQ individuals. In her talk, Broz outlines several key conclusions that she believes can be made after the setback that activists faced with the success of the marriage referendum. Highlighting the professionalised nature of the *U ime obitelji* initiative

[21] In her book titled How the Religious Right shaped Lesbian and Gay Activism, Tina Fetner (2008) argues that faced with the threat of a growing and increasingly organised religious-based opposition from the right throughout the past few decades, American lesbian and gay activism did just that, professionalised more. As she argues, some of these changes were beneficial for lesbian and gay activists, such as generating larger public awareness and increased mobilisation for resources for lesbian and gay activists. However, her conclusions also raise some concerns about other potential effects, such as how the religious right opposition increasingly shaped lesbian and gay activists' agenda and priorities by determining the issues in which activists invested their energy and resources as well as where and in what contexts these political struggles took place, essentially diverting their attention from other internally determined goals and setting the terms of the debate.

[22] More information about the festival can be found here: http://www.befem.org/sr/festival-2014/program.html.http://www.befem.org/sr/festival-2014/program.html.

[23] For more information see, http://glasajprotiv.com/o-nama/podrzavatelji/.http://glasajprotiv.com/o-nama/podrzavatelji/.http://glasajprotiv.com/o-nama/podrzavatelji/.

and the possible naivety of the shock felt by NGOs and LGBTQ activists in response to the oppositional campaign's use of the very same professional tactics that NGOs had been employing to combat discrimination, marginalisation and human rights violations,[24] Broz argues for reflection and consideration of different strategies from those used by professionalised, project-based NGO activists for moving forward. Besides calling for more investment in understanding the "theory and practice" of the powerful conservative initiatives in Croatia, Broz argues that organisations should focus on building larger coalitions and solidarity between similarly oriented social movements and working directly with Croatian citizens, which would also require them, for example, to adjust their language from NGO "project speak" to language that reaches diverse populations of Croatian citizens, including those outside of metropolitan centres. This approach underscores the need for struggles for larger "political-institutional transformations" within both the state and the extra-institutional sector and "broadening the movement's social base of support (strengthening the 'critical mass') as well as generating alliances with other spaces, movements, and agendas for transformation" (Alvarez & Barrig, 1999, as cited in Alvarez, 2000, p. 56).

Creating alliances with other social actors in Croatia, such as labour unions or other alternative social and economic activists struggles, would seem appropriate considering Croatia's economic situation in which concerns about unemployment and poverty may create backlash or dissent towards those championing narrow conceptions of sexual human rights. The Croatian Parliament's adoption of the new *Labor Act* in 2014 (*Zakon o radu*, *NN 93/14*), for example, illustrates the somewhat contradictory moves that states have made in terms of protecting workers from discrimination based on grounds of gender, race, and sexual orientation, while also aligning labour legislation to EU standards as a means of creating "labour market flexibility". Achieving this flexibility includes lifting restrictions that prevent employers from terminating employment contracts, giving employers more power to create irregular work schedules according to the employers' work needs, and increasing the duration in

[24] See, for example, the report titled "Neo-Conservative Threats to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union" (Hodžić & Bijelić, 2014), based on research conducted by CESI and Zagreb Pride.

which workers can be employed with temporary work contracts through employment agencies, all of which are done for the sake of attracting potential investors rather than protecting workers' rights.[25]

Silence on social and economic issues which affect many LGBTQ individuals and the general population appears as complicity with larger socio-economic structural changes. Highlighting the limitations of mainstream reformist legal-based LGBT activism, queer activist and scholar Alan Sears (as cited in Sernatinger & Echeverria, 2013, online) also points out that the movements biggest gains have been those that are "most compatible with capitalism" making it appear as supportive of rather than subversive to processes of neo-liberalisation. Contributing to larger social/economic struggles within the current context would not only show solidarity with other marginalised social groups but also contribute to greater social justice for working class and LGBTQ individuals living in poverty. Broz argues, moreover, that there needs to be a discussion about funding, in particular in relation to those donations that come from entrepreneurs who may be motivated by potentially conflicting economic interests. These discussions could also include open debate about how governmental and international funding is shaping professionalised activists practices and strategies and either enabling or hindering activism aimed towards social transformations.

Although I have presented a critique of a mode of professionalisation that has dominated LGBTQ activism in Croatia in more recent times—one that focuses on legal change and lobbying political institutions, creates a hierarchy between different types of activism and dismisses the importance of dissent and the needs of a diverse community—I have also shown that there are alternative approaches to professionalisation and solidarity-building that rely on a foundation of dialogue, dissent, and do not take for granted the homogeneity of the group of subjects involved (activists and constituencies). As one activist noted, there may be potential even for professionalisation to provide the space for more inclusion and dialogue. Unfortunately, in professionalised NGOs that have such

[25] More information about the specific changes brought about by the Croatian Labor Act of 2014 can be found here: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles/working-conditions-industrial-relations-law-and-regulation/croatia-the-new-labour-act

hierarchical structures and little or no rotation of leadership, this potential depends on the personalities of the individual leaders, who may or may not prioritise inclusion and debate above their activist careers.

Finally, professionalisation as a process has emerged as part and parcel of Europeanisation. EU member states and EU institutions and their consistent production of European identity discourses have been essential to many LGBTQ activists for applying pressure to the state to reform institutions and adopt legislation. However, the funding and donors' expectations that have been bundled with this support has shaped many LGBTQ NGOs' structures and strategies in a way that has impeded grassroots initiatives. These changes along with neo-liberalisation of markets, labour laws, and other austerity measures that the EU advocates for as a result of increasing state debts create a complex socio-economic context with which activism for sexual human rights and equality must contend, especially if activists intend to mobilise more widespread social support.

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3

The First European Festival of Lesbian and Gay Film Was Yugoslav: Dismantling the Geotemporality of Europeanisation in Slovenia

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The oldest European lesbian and gay film festival started in 1984 in Yugoslav Slovenia. At first glance, it would seem nowadays that the initial ten (to twenty) years of the Festival of Gay and Lesbian Film in Ljubljana hide half-erased under the push of Europeanisation that builds an image of Slovenia as European and tolerant only after its entry into the EU. Moreover, there are tangible tensions within organisational practices of Slovenian cultural LGBT activism in terms of how "Europeanness" is used to ground the legitimacy of minoritarian organisations, but also to question the assumptions implicit in such claims to belonging. The activists simultaneously strive to legitimise their festival and their movement by mobilising a Europeanising discourse and to distance their activism from it by promoting more progressive identity politics.

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_3

To analyse these practices, I draw on my fieldwork at the Festival of Gay and Lesbian Film in Ljubljana in 2010.[1] The narratives around this festival demonstrate this complex strategy used by its organisers, and provide a theoretically relevant approach to questioning the geotemporality of Europeanisation. The focus is, for the most part, on the analysis of 10 years of festival editorials/catalogues and posters, but also on the nine interviews I conducted at the 2010 festival: four were with the festival organisers, two with participating artists, and three interviews with members of the audience (one of whom was occasionally active as an activist/volunteer).

The Ljubljana festival positions itself, in the *Impressum* of each catalogue, as the oldest gay and lesbian film festival in Europe, given its beginnings in 1984. This strategy locates the Festival as belonging to the very "heart of Europe", paradoxically disclosing this Europeanness as originating from the socialist past. However, it is contrasted by actual programming choices that give prominence to retrospectives or programme segments devoted to new films from the (post-)Yugoslav region. The organisers' use of the discourse of Europeanness as signifying legitimate belonging is paralleled by their activist choices of loyalty to the identity politics model of lesbian and gay movement to which they contribute since the mid-1980s.

Slovenia was the first successor state to former Yugoslavia to join the EU in 2004, and the first post-communist country to enter the Eurozone in 2007. Fink-Hafner (2010, p. 235) sees the reasons for Slovenia's "idiosyncratic success" at economic and political stability leading to accomplished Europeanisation and presidency of the EU in 2008 in, among other factors, "relatively open borders to the West during the socialist regime including strong economic ties with West European countries", as well as "the relatively homogeneous ethnic structure; and no substantial

[1] Since the winter of 2010, there have already been four other editions of the Ljubljana FGLF. Moreover, there is a new lesbian multimedia festival in Ljubljana since 2012—"Lesbian neighbourhood/Lezbična četrt" (see http://www.ljudmila.org/lesbo/lezbicnacetrt/programfestivala.html). For my PhD research, I did fieldwork at the Ljubljana festival, and one Zagreb festival—Queer Zagreb. Yet, I ended up focusing on the Zagreb festival, and used the insights about the Ljubljana festival only to analyse the complex network of post-Yugoslav queer festivals. This chapter is my attempt to discuss the practices and views of the Ljubljana festival community, at least in part.

damage from the war in the Balkans in the 1990s". The discourse of Europeanness is used in similarly ambivalent ways in Slovenian LGBT activism as in official Slovenian politics: for political and institutional legitimisation that also performs a distancing from the post-Yugoslav region. This discursive distancing serves to hide the constant processes of negotiation of belonging within the EU as well as ongoing practical cooperation and communication within the region. In what follows, attention to such strategic tensions opens up a possibility of formulating a critique of the discourse that posits Europeanisation as the only possible future for the region and Europe as an imagined space of tolerance for minorities.

Europeanising the Second (World) Europe: Some Problems

Europeanisation in regard to minority rights can be discussed from different theoretical view-points. One approach, Europeanisation theory, has been criticised as overly simplistic when applied to LGBT rights. According to O'Dwyer (2012), the Europeanisation theory accounts adequately for the positive influence of the EU accession on ethnic minorities, but cannot be easily applied to the situation of sexual minorities. He analyses Europeanisation as a political opportunity structure that advanced the LGBT activism mostly through unexpected mobilising after the backlash. The EU accession has brought improvement to the LGBT movements in Eastern Europe "more through the unintended consequences of backlash than through the mechanisms of conditionality and social learning" (O'Dwyer, 2012, p. 334).

Here Europeanisation is approached as a discourse (and not merely as a set of rules, norms, and practices regulated through EU policies and taken up in various ways by the accession countries) in order to explore its implicit content and its effects on the strategies available to organisers of one Slovenian LG festival. While Slovenia was the first to join the EU, followed much later on by Croatia in 2013, for all of the other successor states to former Yugoslavia the EU still constitutes a horizon of political and economic utopia as they inch forward in the accession

process. Europeanisation as a discourse is steeped in promises of social advancement and democratic development, especially enticing for the post-Yugoslav societies facing off the recent war and current transitional challenges. One important aspect to note at work in the discourse of Europeanisation is the paradox of "Europeanising" through EU integration states which geographically already belong to Europe. Another related aspect, which constitutes the very basis of the discourse of Europeanisation, is the relegation of the Balkans to the backward Other of the advanced (Western) Europe.

Through the discursive and political processes, conceptualised as Balkanism and Orientalism by Todorova (2009) and Said (1977), respectively, successor states to the former Yugoslavia are imaged as turbulent, transitional territory.[2] Failure of multiculturalism in this region is posited in opposition to the alleged peacefulness and tolerant co-existence in the EU. In contrast, Braidotti (1994, p. 9) treats Europeanness as always multiple, "fraught with contradictions", and inextricably bound to "cultural mixed-upness and intercultural conflicts".

Similarly, Chakrabarty (1992) searches for a possibility of theoretical resistance to uncritically understanding Europe as the central subject of all theoretical endeavours. The hegemony of Europe as a historical subject marginalises all other locations. This Europe, according to him, is "nothing but a piece of fiction told to the colonised by the coloniser in the very process of fabricating colonial domination" (Chakrabarty, 1992, p. 8). To counter this, Chakrabarty comes up with a strategy of "provincialising Europe". To provincialise Europe would mean to discontinue this production of "Europe" as a morally superior space. This strategy would need to question, I would add, uncritical assumptions around the discourse of Europeanisation. Indeed, other Europeanisation scholars such as Petrović (2014, p. 12) build on Chakrabarty's insights, but call for a "de-provincialisation" of (Western) Europe, instead. Through this concept, Petrović (2014, p. 13) reminds us that "formation of ideas of European modernity was not an exclusive property of Western Europe, but a process characterised by simultaneous occurrence in different parts of the continent, by mutual influence, inspiration and dialogue".

[2] Of course, Balkanism pertains to a space that extends beyond the post-Yugoslav region.

Re-imagining Europe at a Slovenian GL festival is crucially tied to re-thinking political and cultural belonging through the time-space of the festival event. Evans (2007) sees the European festivals as spaces of cultural *border exchanges* between Hollywood and other national cinematographies of the rest of the world, while Halberstam (2005) theorises *queer space* as spatial-making practices of alternative communities that are not based on exclusion of otherness and *queer time* as the temporal category which exits traditional family and work linear progression. What concerns me here is how the organisers of the Festival of Lesbian and Gay Film in Ljubljana position their festival as European, but program a strong regional film segment, without necessarily and explicitly discussing these two "borders" as conflictual. Even though the organisers would not necessarily claim the project of queering the time and space through their Festival, the history and practices of the Ljubljana festival community do seem to engage in destabilising the hegemonic geotemporality of Europeanisation through sexual non-normativity. This is no easy task, and the organisers' take at it is ambiguous. Similar tension is detectable in theory as well. In general, the period of communism is regarded as an overwhelmingly negative "political opportunity structure that generated the heritage of distrust of civic engagement". This may be true of the situation in some of the countries of the former Soviet bloc. However, it does not apply to the entire region of Eastern Europe.

Before 1989, Slovenia had not only personal ads in newspapers, gay and lesbian magazines (VIKS in 1984; *Gayzine* since 1985; *Lesbozine* since 1988; articles in *Mladina* and *Delo*; publication on AIDS in 1985), underground club scene, but also strong activism, and a public gay festival. Furthermore, the first Slovenian gay and lesbian organisations, as well as the Ljubljana festival, were formed as "sections" of the existent youth organisations,[3] and thus obtained use of space as well as institutional protection within youth organisational structures such as the ŠKUC (Student Cultural Centre)—the affiliation which they have kept until this day.

[3] Vlasta Jalušić (1999, p. 113) explains that the first feminist groups started "simultaneously with the so-called new social movement groups that were active under the umbrella of the Socialist Youth Organisation". The first LG groups started in the same way within the ŠKUC as the umbrella organisation: the gay group Magnus in 1984, and the LL as the lesbian group within the feminist group Lilit (within ŠKUC) in 1987, becoming an independent "section" in 1988—today's ŠKUC-LL.

While the Europeanisation process has been adequately discussed as both supporting and discouraging activism, the same nuanced consideration is not given to understanding the opportunities present in the pre-1989 period. I suggest that the case of the Ljubljana festival calls for a re-evaluation of both Yugoslav socialism and of post-Yugoslav EU accession process as periods of great, if ambiguous, mobilising potential.

The Oldest European Gay and Lesbian Film Festival Is in Ljubljana

There is a multitude of post-Yugoslav LGBT festival time-spaces, all in Europe. Dioli (2009, p. 2) analysed the creation of "Queeroslavia" around the Queer Belgrade Festival as the utopian, nostalgic, and transnational project of a "post-Yugoslav longing for queer transnational citizenship". That around the Queer Zagreb Festival was imagined and programmed as the time-space of post-socialist or of Balkan queerness. In Ljubljana, the symbolic geography of Queeroslavia or of regional queerness seems to be subtly rejected through the insistence of the Festival of Gay and Lesbian Film organisers on belonging to "Europe". Moreover, the organisers and members of the audience share a feeling of accomplishment around the Festival's origins. As Tatjana Greif (personal communication, November 2010), an activist and audience member almost from its early beginnings, says: "We can be very proud that we have the oldest festival of that kind in Europe. Not only that—it is also the oldest international festival in Slovenia! All the others have started very late".[4] Parallel to this, however, the programming choices and film preferences of the organisers and viewers remain in constant dialogue with what I call *regional queerness*—the practices of communication and networking among LGBT communities in the post-Yugoslav space.

Drawing on the history of the Festival, based on the existing documents and my fieldwork at the 2010 Festival, on the analysis of its representational strategies, discursive and to some extent visual, through looking at the Festival posters and catalogues, I argue that the Festival organisers

[4] Unless otherwise indicated, the translation of interviews and catalogues is mine.

simultaneously link onto the discourses of Europeanisation and distance themselves from them. A similar kind of strategic tension and decentring has been used by the 1968 student protests in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Ljubljana (for transnational strategies of the student protests in Yugoslavia from 1966 until 1974, see Kanzleiter, 2008), and by other new social movements in the 1980s (for the international-local strategies of the (post-)Yugoslav feminist movement(s), see Mitrović, 2014).

The first Ljubljana festival from its beginning was part of this atmosphere of contestation and possibility. The very first gay and lesbian festival in Slovenia was organised in 1984 as the Magnus Festival—the event that turned into the present-day Festival of Gay and Lesbian Film. The Magnus Festival was "banned" in 1987 by the "Council for Social Security and Health at SZDL[5] and the Ljubljana inspection office" (Siqrd, 2014, p. 1). It was held again in 1988 and renamed the Week of Gay Film Festival. In 1988, there was a Week of Lesbian Films[6] within the Festival, while the Festival itself added the "lesbian(s)" in its name (and politics) since 1993.

Since 1988, the Festival takes place during 1 week at the beginning of December. It is organised under the auspices of the ŠKUC student organisation. Most of the organisers have a long activist experience in the Slovenian LGBT movement, and this clearly influences the Festival politics and visuality. The Slovenian LGBT movement has had strong overlaps with other social movements since the 1980s in Slovenia, such as the peace movement, the punk subculture, and to some extent, with

[5] The Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SZDL in Slovenian) was the largest organisation in Yugoslavia, with nearly all of the country's workers as its members (see Ramet, 2006). The Slovenian SZDL transformed into the Socialist party of Slovenia in 1990, and into the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, with three other parties, in 1994 (see http://arsq.gov.si/Query/detail.aspx?ID=23769).

[6] The first mention of a desire for a lesbian festival in former Yugoslavia dates back to the very first meeting of Yugoslav feminists in 1987 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. In a one-page "manifesto", the women gathered at this meeting formulated eight crucial political requests, one of which concerns lesbians directly: "Lesbians must become visible in the public, and we will organise a first Yugoslav lesbian festival. For that purpose, we support all lesbians in starting groups all around Yugoslavia" (Dobnikar & Pamuković, 2009, p. 18). However, the demand for a "lesbian festival" materialised only with the current wave of post-Yugoslav queer festivals: in Croatia, with the Lesbian festival since 2011; in Serbia, with the L'art pour l'action lesbian festival since 2007; and in Slovenia, with the Lesbian Neighbourhood festival since 2012.

the (post-)Yugoslav feminist movement. Activist and political allegiances to feminist principles employed in the struggle for gay and lesbian liberation, as it was formulated in the 1980s, have become translated into the organisers' politics of visibility and visuality of equality.

My fieldwork in 2010 led me to imagine the Ljubljana festival as the film society[7] of the Slovenian lesbian and gay movement.[8] My interviewees spoke of the predominantly social function of the festival in strengthening the community ties through shared love of viewing LGBT films in public.[9] The time-space of a public but membership-based film society kept coming up as I tried to understand the paradoxes I observed at the Ljubljana festival. On the one hand, the Festival is clearly important for its community[10]; devoted to the egalitarian LG and feminist politics; and an important social actor for the Slovenian LG scene. On the other hand, it is organised by a small group of volunteers who tend not to change over the years and cross-act as activists in other LG initiatives; the "editorials" and other texts in the catalogues are only in Slovenian while only short film descriptions are in both Slovenian and English.[11] Also, there is an apparent lack of cooperation and exchange of films and experiences with other regional festivals, which I found atypical for post-Yugoslav queer festivals.[12]

[7] A cine club or a film society is a gathering of film enthusiasts who watch together films that are not to be found in mainstream cinemas, and is in itself considered a part of the Film Society Movement starting in the 1930s (see Rao, 2001).

[8] This is not to say that the Ljubljana festival is not as much a political playground as other post-Yugoslav queer festivals or that other festivals do not possess an equally strong social aspect. Moreover, the film society as a subversive time-space constellation recalls the history of lesbian and feminist literary and social salons (see Weiss, 1995).

[9] Indeed, the documentary film about one of the groups to which the organisers belong, made in 2013, is entitled "Relations. 25 Years of the Lesbian Group ŠKUC-LL". The film by Marina Gržinić, Aina Šmid and Zvonka T. Simčić, made in 2012, is available online at http://grzinic-smid.si.

[10] Even those who criticise the organisers' LG politics as traditionalist, such as Maja Pan (personal communication, 2010)—an activist from Ljubljana whom I interviewed as a constant audience member of the Festival—who jokingly envisions the Festival as a "dinosaur" ("of a certain calibre: not a tyrannosaurus but a t-rex or something even smaller (laughter)"), fully appreciate the significance of this event for queers in Slovenia: "When I see a big poster in the city announcing the Festival: (I feel) pride! (...) This old dinosaur, it provokes that pure feeling of pride".

[11] In contrast, other post-Yugoslav festivals invest in bilingual transparency also of their politics (their editorials and entire catalogues) not just their programme.

[12] However, they do cooperate with other local feminist/queer festivals such as the City of Women and Rdeče Zore (Red Dawns), both in Ljubljana.

The festival's history is available online only as a brief historical overview of the first "20 festival years" (Velikonja, 2003). In fact, the 2003 festival ends this 20-year phase in which the available festival documents consist of festival programmes, but not of editorials that appear in the last 10 years. I focus on the 10-year period between 2003 and 2012 to analyse both editorials/catalogues and festival posters.[13] The 2004 editorial sees the role of the Ljubljana festival as creating an "imaginary space" for free circulation of non-normative representations in an atmosphere of repression, while the festival's origins are traced to the alternative culture movement in Ljubljana in the 1980s (Španjol, 2004, p. 1).

For Španjol (2004, p. 2), the Ljubljana festival is (one of) the most successful "child(ren) of the alternative movement"—both in its tenaciously long existence, and in its subversive organisational strategies. The Festival is imagined as a social meeting-place and as a space of cinematic, cultural inspiration. It is both an "ongoing social event" and an "oasis of artistic representation" that reverses the marginalisation felt by gays and lesbians in everyday life in Slovenia (Španjol, 2004, p. 2). The thematic focus of films, for instance on institutional violence at the 2006 Festival, constitutes the Festival's political dimension, and testifies to the consistent organisational efforts to create direct links between the contemporary LGBT cinema and the political struggle of the Slovenian lesbian and gay movement (Tratnik, 2006).

Each post-Yugoslav queer festival of the past decade may be analysed in terms of its differential appropriation of particular venues as an act of symbolic translation of the mainstream "places" into a festival time-space. The Ljubljana festival, in accordance with their self-perception as the oldest European LG film festival, has taken place in centrally located cinema halls of the Slovenian capital—Kinoteka and Kinodvor or previously at the ŠKUC Gallery and the Cankarjev Dom.[14] Equally established are the Ljubljana clubs where the entertainment part of the Ljubljana festival takes

[13] The archive of the ŠKUC-LL organisation contains extensive archival material for the whole period of the Festival's existence. For the 10-year period of my focus, I have relied on the festival website and on catalogues. The posters and other visuals are available online only since 1996.

[14] In its first year, beside the Cankarjev Dom and the ŠKUC Gallery, the Festival also took place at the CIDM (Centre for Developing Leisure Activities for Young People) and the Faculty of Philosophy (Siqrd, 2014, p. 1).

place: the K4 club which has been hosting GL nights since 1984 (as Roza disco since 1989), the gay club Tiffany, and the lesbian club Monokel. The centrality of the Ljubljana festival venues can be argued to be an outcome of the cultural success of almost 30 years of Slovenian lesbian and gay activism.[15] Moreover, it is since 2004 that the films have stopped being exclusively screened in the capital, and moved also to the smaller city of Celje. The representative of the Metropolis cinema in Celje, for instance, reported that the viewers who come to the gay and lesbian films are their usual loyal viewers, and that the most "popular" screening was of the Slovenian gay film "Dečki" (Boys), made with local actors, when the cinema was filled up with some 200 viewers, and ended with a "lively discussion with the actors and (…) pleasant atmosphere" (Festival, 2012, p. 1).

The reception of the Festival is crucially related to its visual strategies. The strategy explicitly formulated by the organisers of the Ljubljana festival is that of equal representation of lesbian and gay images on the posters (recently with some transgender images) as well as of equality in naming practices. Concretely, the festival organisers and designers take care that the festival name and the poster scene change each year, alternating lesbian and gay as words in the festival name,[16] and as images. This complex and deliberately political mechanism has been discussed since the beginnings of the Ljubljana festival and used since 1993; Tatjana Greif (personal communication, November 2010) has a feeling that "it has been like this all this time". In 2010, for instance, the festival was called the Festival of Gay and Lesbian Film and the poster featured a gay scene—a film still of Rock Hudson, in this case. Strategically, this means that some previous festivals as well as some subsequent ones were called Festival of Lesbian and Gay Film and their posters featured lesbian or trans images.[17] This strategy of representational equality is not shared by any of the other post-Yugoslav queer festivals.

[15] This may also, however, be due to a certain openness of those cultural institutions and the people active in them.

[16] This strategy is reported by my interlocutors and is also visible in catalogues. However, for example, one of the rare historical texts "History of the Gay and Lesbian movement in Slovenia" (Siqrd, 2014) does not reflect this strategic heritage and lists the Festival only as the Festival of Gay and Lesbian Film.

[17] Although they do not alternate name each year, still in the period between 2003 and 2012, there were five Festivals of **L**esbian and Gay Film, and five of **G**ay and Lesbian Film.

Diametrically opposite to the Ljubljana organisers' approach to organising would be the cultural-professional approach at the Queer Zagreb Festival. In comparison to the Zagreb festival, the Ljubljana festival has a much smaller budget and is not structured around the extended mobility of some contemporary arts festivals. The organisers do not travel in order to see movies; they screen and select them in Ljubljana among the samples that arrive as a response to their call-for-films every year. Since it is a small, "specialised" film festival, it might not be well-known among the filmmakers internationally, until the moment arrives to "niche-market" their "gay" film. However, despite some similarities, the Ljubljana festival's strategies also differ considerably from the d-i-y queer politics of a festival such as Queer Belgrade and the anarcho-queer vision of Red Dawns in Ljubljana. The Ljubljana festival remains unique in its commitment to feminist and LG identity politics in the current wave of queer festivals. It also remains the only insistently "European" LGBT festival in post-Yugoslav space.

Belonging to Europe as Legitimisation

It could be argued that the Europeanisation process has provided the vocabulary for all of the participants in the post-socialist social transformation (see Kalezić & Brković, this volume). The Ljubljana festival would seem to be engaging the same project through the claim to the status of the Festival as the oldest European LG festival. While this discursive move is not explicitly discussed in the editorials, its prominent place in the catalogues testifies to the importance of this strategic positioning of the Festival in the heart of "Europeanness" for the organisers and the festival community.

Moreover, this chronological claim does not go undisputed. I have detected competitive histories between the Festival of Gay and Lesbian Film in Ljubljana and the Torino GLBT Film Festival. Both festivals claim their exceptional status as "the oldest" in Europe. The Torino festival started 2 years after the Ljubljana event in 1986. This does not prevent it from at times positioning itself as the "oldest European festival" of GLBT films and "third in the world coming only after the legendary

Frameline in San Francisco and the Outfest in Los Angeles" (Torino, 2010, p. 1). It bears reminding that the Ljubljana festival is incomparably smaller than the Torino event[18] and that it was interrupted in 1987.

Although the European status of the Ljubljana festival was not discussed explicitly by the organisers in the interviews, it becomes clearly readable as a strategy of the moment when it gets disputed. In the Torino festival's claim to being the "oldest European festival", the focus is on its status as the "oldest" LG festival, bringing the prestige of originality and subversiveness. On the other hand, for the Ljubljana festival, the claim functions by stressing both its status as the "oldest" and as "European". While the Torino festival organisers seem to "forget" the Europeanness of their neighbouring festival, they find it important to position themselves second only to the prestigious USA festivals, starting in 1976 and 1982, respectively. The claim to the "oldest" Europeanness of the Ljubljana festival, at one level, performs the forgetting of its Yugoslav-ness and the distancing from the post-Yugoslav region. On the other hand, it also provincialises the official geotemporality of Europeanisation by locating the beginnings of the cultural struggle for LGBT rights at the beginning of 1980s in a socialist European country.

Šarić (2010, p. 56), among others, analyses how the discourses of Balkanism and Europeanisation, used to create a new sense of Slovenian national identity since the 1980s on, were "ultimately aimed at foreign audiences, which proved crucial in securing Slovenian independence". She shows how discursive positioning of Slovenia as (Central) European served to establish a contrast between its "self-image as a democratic, ordered and stable society" and "the Balkans as a region characterized by authoritarianism, disorder, instability and violence" (p. 56). The claim to the status of the Ljubljana festival as the oldest European LG festival is apparently similar to Slovenian official politics' distancing from

[18] There are no official estimates of the size of post-Yugoslav festival audiences. The Festival of Gay and Lesbian Film in Ljubljana had screened 11 films in its first year in 1984. In 2003, the number of films was 13. It grew to 22 films in 2004, and then to some 35 films—which remained the constant approximate number of films. If one takes into account that the cinema and theatre halls at the Ljubljana festival are of a small to medium size, it seems clear that this festival does not reach the festival turnout of around 150 films and some 35,000 viewers that the Torino GLBT Film Festival was proudly claiming in 2012 (Torino, 2012, p. 1).

the former shared political space and belonging to the same region as the rest of the post-Yugoslav countries. However, this strategic move enacts a paradoxical strategy of making a former socialist lesbian and gay film festival into an arch-European film festival.

Previously, I argued that the post-Yugoslav queer festival communities engage in imagining shared regional belonging. However, the relative lack of communication between the Ljubljana festival and other queer festivals, as well as occasional comments in interviews, hint at an undercurrent of festival rivalry as well as divergent developments of LGBT movements that can go toward explaining the ambiguity underlining Ljubljana festival organisers' strategies of legitimisation. The most explicit statement of that kind was given by Brane Mozetič (personal communication, November 2010), a longstanding Ljubljana festival organiser, writer, and gay activist:

> My opinion about the history of gay and lesbian movement and Yugoslavia is very negative toward other parts of Yugoslavia. Because it started in Ljubljana in 1984, then it was repeated every year. That was a possibility or an opportunity also for others, for other parts of Yugoslavia, to start something. They would have had support from Slovenia, from Europe, and so on. But they have done nothing! They haven't done anything either in Zagreb or in Belgrade! They have started when it was already too late! They have not started when it was the moment to start—when there was still chance to start it without problems. They have started when there was no chance to start it without problems.

Understanding this perception of perpetual belatedness of the (orientalised) Other resonates with what Todorova (2005) has conceptualised as "chronic allochronism" and as "nesting colonialism" for Petrović (2010).[19] This fated (post-)Yugoslav temporality of always failing to catch up with, in this case, Slovenia, is significant since it does not reflect only one organiser's views. It echoes frequent perceptions of post-communist queer festivals and LGBT movements more generally, as seen from the more "advanced" West. If we accept Mizielińska and Kulpa (2011)

[19] Based on Bakic-Hayden's (1995) concept of "nesting orientalism".

provisional splitting of geotemporality into eastern and western versions, then Brane's irritation with the "backward" (post-)Yugoslav gays and lesbians, places Slovenian lesbian and gay movement decidedly into the central position of belonging within (Western) Europe.

However, it is important to note that widely divergent readings of (post-) Yugoslav queer geotemporalities exist even among local LGBT activists themselves. One instance is Tatjana Greif's critique of the downsides of the Europeanisation process. She claims that the Slovenian lesbian activists have a strong sense of connection with lesbian groups from the post-Yugoslav region. They feel "immediately on the same line (sic)", which she attributes also to similarities in social context dominated by the same patriarchal patterns (in Gržinić, Šmid, & Simčić, 2012, p. 36). Opposed to this activist solidarity, the influence of the EU and cooperation with transnational Europe-based organisations such as *ILGA-Europe* is experienced as centred on externally formulated demands and priorities. According to Greif, "Europe is characterised by European bureaucratic touch", and moreover, as influencing the move of activism toward the mainstream since it encourages assimilation at every cost (in Gržinić et al., 2012, p. 36).

The strategy of claiming Europeanness to legitimise the festival is felt as necessary for the organisers because of the precarious position of the festival on the Slovenian cultural scene. The organisers repeatedly reflect on the lack of acceptance of the festival by the Slovenian mainstream. This small, identity-based festival relies on volunteer work and suffers from financial difficulties. The strategy of establishing their festival as the original European (gay and lesbian) film festival negotiates the borderlines both with the European festivals and within the Slovenian cultural space. In this case, the Europeanness as legitimisation is helping the Festival out both with the funders and with their general public image on the local level.

The organisers' use of Europeanness as a strategy is also to be traced in the Festival programmes and editorials. The 2009 editorial discusses the importance of the heritage of the 1968 student protests for the Slovenian LGBT movement in the 1980s as well as for the contemporary Slovenian queers, directly relating the Ljubljana festival community to the European revolutionary heritage (Velikonja, 2009). The 2004 editorial articulates

an outrage at restrictive cultural politics that turn the Ljubljana festival into a marginal cultural event for the "homo scene" only, while on the other hand, this very marginality functions as an explanation of the festival's significance as a cultural and social meeting-place, away from the "alienating gaze" (Velikonja, 2004, p. 1). The text expresses a noticeable tension between profiling the festival as an LGBT community event, while imagining it as an event that would be of vital interest for everyone in an ideal Slovenia. As Velikonja (2004, p. 1) puts it: "As if Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* were not of interest to the workers. As if *Aimee and Jaguar*, a film based on Erika Fischer's novel, were not of interest for the middle-class. And still, this is an eternal commonplace consensus". A struggle against this "consensus" on gay and lesbian invisibility in cultural production remains a constant focus for the organisers.

The 2005 editorial, "Documents of Oppression", discussing the Festival's struggles on the Slovenian cultural scene, begins with a sentence: "A difficult year is behind us" (Španjol, 2005, p. 1). The festival is in its 21st year—old enough to experience changes of generations; Španjol (2005, p. 1) recounts that "the people who have understood and supported us are dead" while the new persons in charge "would like to treat us and register us". This is the social context that explains the political and cultural need for the Festival: "These are the circumstances which time and again make us resort to the films that help understand identities, reflect social positioning, and at least temporarily move us to different, not necessarily more beautiful worlds" (p. 1).

Velikonja's 2008 editorial discusses the impact of the Festival on her life and on its audience. She compares the Festival to an "unmistakable and precious encyclopaedia of analytical tools for understanding filmic representations of gays and lesbians, of the immeasurable diversity of homosexual codes, their forms and above all, their changes through time" (p. 1). For her, the 2008 Festival brings about the same scope of artistic and analytical richness: "Twenty four years of cinematic alphabetization—tens, hundreds of movies, cinematic stories, directors' approaches; 24 years of careful nurturing and public encounter with art that had sharpened (my) analytic perception extremely well" (p. 1). Velikonja was also one of my Ljubljana interviewees; both as an organiser and a passionate viewer, she talked of complexities of those different

but interconnected roles (Nataša Velikonja, personal communication, November 2010). However, she and other organisers feel a need to affirm that the Ljubljana festival is also for "straight" people which reflects the perception of the Ljubljana festival in the Slovenian public as some kind of lesbian and gay "ghetto". Velikonja (2008, p. 1) writes of the tiredness that the organisers feel when faced with yet another predictable phobic reaction to the Festival that "repeats the eternal mantras about 'ghettoisation'".

The 2010 editorial gives a brief history of "discriminatory practices" against the festival, and so, provides a valuable insight into the ways in which the organisers construct a narrative of resistance to homophobic mainstream in Slovenia. The text lists "the media and political hunt against the Magnus festival" in 1987, which was the only year when it was banned (Festival, 2010b, p. 1). It discusses the problems in 1991 with city politicians who made it impossible for any "'homo' activity" to get public finances, and similar events in 1996 when the festival was criticised for showing films not translated in Slovenian (p. 1). Similarly in 2010, the expert committee of the Film Fund has only reluctantly given its support to the Festival. The text cites the Fund's criticism that the Festival "maybe lacks some 'stronger' film titles in this field and more attractive guests who could attract wider audience" (p. 1). It is clear to the organisers that the only films worthy of financial and cultural support for the mainstream Slovenians are the "blockbusters featuring some gay or lesbian character (in a very-well-known-to-us 'side' role)", and those addressing the "straight audience" (p. 1).

This is the social context in which the Ljubljana organisers create their festival, and the editorial makes clear that this is a motivation behind the programming choices that aim for "bringing down all cinematic veils, talking about the silenced, the forgotten, and the unseen in the history of the cinema" (p. 1). The editorial presents the opposition to the "phobic majority population" of Slovenia as one of the ground motivations for the existence of the Festival that is then translated into programming choices. It is against the local lack of support and appreciation that the organisers invoke the Europeanness of their Festival in order to keep alive the space for LGBT culture which they have created in the midst of an indifferent cultural milieu.

Does Regional Time-Space Need Europeanisation?

However, strategic distancing from the former common country is never a completed gesture. This becomes visible in organisers' programming strategies since they consistently program for and give prominence to the films from post-Yugoslav countries. The ambiguity between claiming Europeanness and programming regional queer films as an important segment of the Festival constitutes an instance of re-imagining Europe which renders regional geotemporality to a certain extent resistant to Europeanisation.

While it is important for the organisers to claim Europeanness of their Festival in order to safeguard its legitimacy from the lack of local support and accusations of identitarian "segregation", the analysis of Festival programmes tells a somewhat different story. Namely, programming is not focused on European films or on Europeanness as a theme. On the contrary, if programming is not defined by the film genre (documentary, short films) or the medium (video), it tends to be thematically more oriented toward the international or regional films. For instance, the 2005 Festival programmed four segments: one was dedicated to international feature-films; the second to the documentary films on global LGBT movement and to the "awareness that we are not alone" (Španjol, 2005, p. 1). The third segment featured the films from the post-Yugoslav region, reflecting a tendency to showcase regional LGBT films that characterises the organisers' strategies throughout the festival's existence. In 2005, the three new Serbian LGBT films and a retrospective screening of a previously banned film classic "Virdžina" all speak to the "sad stereotype that repression encourages creativity", claims Španjol (p. 1). The fourth segment was for short films.

In general, organisers are careful to balance programming of the USA and (Western) European films with the regional and international films, such as in 2007 when the Festival was devoted to "non-Western" films. The 2007 editorial presents the many differences in cultural context, "production conditions", and in ways of telling a story in these "non-Western" films as a strength testifying to "creative surpluses" instead of as "incompleteness" (Španjol, 2007, p. 1). The 2007 festival, Španjol claims,

as "the festival of gay and lesbian films with the longest European tradition", is proud to "help promote polycentric and multicultural image of the world without regard to any stereotypes" (p. 1).

The 2008 editorial demands the Festival audience, "gays and lesbians who each year support the Festival", to become "attentive again to the social contexts of their love" (Velikonja, 2008, p. 1). Velikonja uses an example from the region to strengthen her case for engaged viewing as a privilege. In 2008, the first Queer Sarajevo Festival was closed down on its second day because of homophobic attacks. So one of the "social contexts" that Velikonja is asking the Festival audience to have in mind is the regional context. In the same year that the Ljubljana festival is taking place with no problems, she warns that: "a couple of 100 kilometres away from Ljubljana (…), the whole team of the organisers of the first Sarajevo Queer Festival had to go underground due to death threats and violence" (Velikonja, 2008, p. 1). Such editorial statements, as well as programming practices, allow me to argue that although it would seem that the organisers nominally reject the regional queerness by invoking European identity as legitimisation, their organisational practices reveal the ongoing communication with regional LGBT communities through films and activist exchanges.

Conclusion

Activist and artistic negotiations of normativity in post-Yugoslav countries are reframing the terms of what is possible in the arena of the visual and the political. This regional and transnational work can be seen as one possible form of re-imagining of Europe. At the Ljubljana festival, this project remains visible in the importance of the shared (movement) history and of practices of programming and audiencing regional films that are still vital for the festival community.

The advances in LGBT rights and movements in Eastern Europe can be argued to have been extensively influenced by the EU accession process. When it comes to Slovenian LG activism, as Tatjana Greif (personal communication, November 2010) clarifies, the "force of the global and European events" has brought Slovenian LGBT persons to a kind of formal equality in legislature; however, lobbying and legal-based activism are not enough. This is so because the "social climate is not changed

through laws" but through culture, art and community's influences on deeper social changes, which is where she sees the importance of cultural projects such as the Ljubljana festival. Here, I have argued that the *Festival of Lesbian and Gay Film* in Ljubljana holds an ambivalent relationship with the discourse and practices of Europeanisation. The organisers, in particular, position their Festival as belonging to Europe and the EU, and furthermore, present it even as the predecessor of all European gay and lesbian film festivals.

This legitimising strategy is important in terms of the festival's symbolic geography which provides organisers with significant, if disputed, prestige within the local cultural scene. However, analysis of the festival catalogues reveals that local and regional as well as international programming choices are more influential in film programming choices than is the theme of Europeanness and the space accorded to European films. The "European" positioning is more strategic in terms of the symbolic capital of the festival than financially or programmatically important.

The Festival's legitimisation through Europeanness coincides with a general strategy in Slovenian society and politics of acquiring distance from the former Yugoslav space, and thus represents a strong assimilationist tendency. Nevertheless, this process simultaneously creates ruptures in the geotemporality of the hegemonic Europeanising project and exposes the progressive tolerant Europeanness of the 1980s Yugoslav/socialist time and space as one possible source of contemporary European multiculturalism. The tension of simultaneous claims can be seen across a spectrum of resistance, as similar strategies had been used also by other (post-) Yugoslav social movements to claim Europeanness as legitimising their struggles, but negotiate its specific terms and regional significance. In this specific case, cultural strategies of Slovenian LG organising render visible the complexity of the process of creating a more inclusive public sphere.

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4

Growing Oppression, Growing Resistance: LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in Macedonia

Ana Miškovska Kajevska

This chapter is the very first effort to write an overview of the development of LGBT activism in Macedonia. Although the analysis covers the period between 1991 and mid-2015, the discussion of Macedonian LGBT activism starts with 2002, when the first LGBT organisation was actually set up. For the purpose of this text, I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with eight Macedonian LGBT activists in March 2015, and I looked into media items and organisational documents. Due to the time and space limitations, the hardly existent and accessible archives, and the absence of previous relevant socio-historical explorations, I cannot offer here an exhaustive depiction of the analysed LGBT non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the issues which they have encountered in their work. Therefore, given that LGBT activism is close to my heart, I, both as a scholar and a citizen, hope that the events and topics which I focus on, just like those which I have left (largely) unaddressed, will provide inspiration and direction for future and more in-depth research endeavours.

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_4

The lack of an existing chronological overview I could build upon has prompted me to present the events in their order of appearance, to the extent that such a structure was possible. After addressing the beginning years, I examine the NGOs' engagement with the antidiscrimination law. I then proceed with exploring the growth of visible LGBT activism and its connection to the increase in anti-LGBT violence, after which I turn my attention to the activists' efforts to counter the state-endorsed homophobia and prevent its further—constitutionally sanctioned—reproduction. Lastly, I look into the recent[1] ways in which the LGBT struggle has been combined with the general antigovernmental unrests in the country.

Initial Developments

A singular, but highly important, event marks the public LGBT history in Macedonia in the 1990s: the decriminalisation of male homosexuality in July 1996. The new Criminal Code replaced that which was in use since June 1977, that is also during the first 5 years of Macedonia's existence as an independent state. Male homosexuality was decriminalised by a mere deletion of the article stating that "the persons of male sex who commit unnatural debauchery will be incarcerated for up to 1 year".[2] No such interventions were needed regarding female homosexual acts, given that the Code did not mention them.

The welcome legislative change did not result, however, from public debates or the coming to power of political parties with progressive agendas regarding (homo)sexuality. Instead it was silently introduced, as part of the obligations which Macedonia had to meet after its ratification of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the admission to the Council of Europe in November 1995 (Helsinški komitet & Centar za čovekovi prava, 2002; Ž.Ǵ., 2005). That the removal of the infamous article was not a consequence of a more liberal political and/or public climate is clear from the fact that the state did

[1] The text was finalised in July 2015.

[2] Article 101.2. Krivičen zakonik na Socijalistička Republika Makedonija (Služben vesnik, 25/1977).

not organise any media campaign to inform the general public about this weighty change (Helsinški komitet & Centar za čovekovi prava, 2002). In fact, the Macedonian government "did not undertake any positive steps in the fight against homophobia and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation" (Helsinški komitet & Centar za čovekovi prava, 2002, p. 3).[3]

Six more years were needed before another development regarding the rights of LGBT people would take place: the founding in February 2002 of the first Macedonian NGO which questioned heteronormativity (Centar za graǵanski i čovekovi prava, n.d.a; N. Mladenoviḱ, personal communication, March 14, 2015).[4] The name of the organisation in question did not contain the terms "(homo)sexuality" or "LGBT"—a decision which might have been partially influenced by the fact that the NGO was established in a fragile post-war context, that is only half a year after the end of the 8-month war in Macedonia between the Macedonian security forces and the ethnic Albanian paramilitaries. The organisation was named rather generally "Centre for Civil and Human Rights (CCHR)", even though it did not conceal its struggle for the freedom of sexual expression. Its first leaflet stated already that CCHR fought "against all forms of discrimination and violence" and advocated the free expression of one's "sexual choice, as part of the body of fundamental human and civil rights" (Centar za graǵanski i čovekovi prava, n.d.a). Ninoslav Mladenoviḱ, CCHR's initiator, suggested the name inspired by the Center for Civil and Human Rights at the University of Notre Dame in the USA, where he had earned his master's degree shortly before. Nonetheless, such a name with a broad scope was applicable to Macedonia, too:

> In Macedonia at that time, the topic was not that overt yet and we wanted to be all inclusive, not too ghettoised, not to look as if we would demand special rights for the gay community, but to aim at an inclusive society …. I am against exceptionalism (N. Mladenoviḱ, personal communication, March 14, 2015).

[3] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Macedonian are mine.

[4] The report *Granici* (Helsinški komitet & Centar za čovekovi prava, 2002) mistakenly states March 2001 and March 2002 as temporal indicators of the establishment of the organisation.

Soon after its establishment, CCHR conducted a survey on the acceptance of homosexuality in Macedonia (Helsinški komitet & Centar za čovekovi prava, 2002, see also Jankovski, 2002). The research, a first of its kind, was jointly carried out with the Macedonian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution. The study revealed strong homophobic attitudes in the population. For example, 62.4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that homosexuality was something normal, 53.4% said not to feel comfortable in the company of homosexuals, and 65.1% said that they would not accept and support the homosexuality of their child. Next to presenting the research findings, the authors advocated the treatment of the rights of sexual minorities as human rights, and the introduction of sexual and human rights education in the school curricula. Furthermore, they stated that the promotion of tolerance *vis-à-vis* sexual minorities and the fight against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation were some of the requirements which Macedonia would have to satisfy as a member of the Council of Europe and an aspiring member of the European Union (Helsinški komitet & Centar za čovekovi prava, 2002).

The idea of "Europe" as a location where the rights of the LGBT people were respected was prominent also in the title of a conference which CCHR organised in Skopje in November 2003: "Homosexuality in the Republic of Macedonia—Between Prejudices and Europeanisation: Social Status of Homosexuals and Legislation on Homosexuality". The organiser announced this conference as "the first national conference on the rights of homosexuals in the Republic of Macedonia" (Centar za graǵanski i čovekovi prava, 2004). While the explicit mention of the term "homosexuality" in the title was a brave step, the name proved to be somewhat overambitious.

With the exception of few local activists and experts, the vast majority of the participants came from abroad and did not refer in their talks to the situation in Macedonia. There were LGBT activists from the post-Yugoslav region (this conference served also as a gathering of the recently established SEE Q Network),[5] members of LGBT organisations from Albania,

[5] The now dissolved SEE Q Network (Southeastern European Queer Network) was established in September 2003. It gathered queer activists and NGOs from the post-Yugoslav region which worked on the promotion and protection of the human rights of LGBTIQ people. See www.queer.ba/seeq

Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, and Sweden, representatives of Amnesty International, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, and the Skopje offices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Centar za graǵanski i čovekovi prava, 2004). Despite the limited presence of local participants, the conference contributed to the awareness of the existence of LGBT people in the country and the problems they faced. This was due to the neutral to positive media coverage, and the presence of the term "homosexuality" in its title (Centar za graǵanski i čovekovi prava, n.d.b; *Dnevnik*, 2004; Jankovski, 2003c, December 3; M.K., 2003; N. Mladenoviḱ, personal communication, March 14, 2015).

Such media reporting also accompanied the first LGBT campaign in Macedonia: "Face the Difference: Campaign for the Promotion of the Rights of Sexual Minorities". In the summer of 2003, CCHR rented billboard space in Skopje and several other towns in Macedonia to exhibit a poster featuring same-sex couples in tender embraces.[6] The white colour which dominated the poster and the resemblance of one of the photographed men to Jesus gave the image a somewhat religious undertone. Besides the full title of the campaign, the poster stated CCHR's name and contact details, as well as the logos of the funders: the Embassy of the United States to Macedonia and the Olof Palme International Center.

Not much happened until Kerri Houston, a conservative policy analyst from the USA, visited Macedonia. Her subsequent article strongly criticised the Ambassador Lawrence Butler for using "U.S. taxpayer dollars to erect billboards promoting the homosexual agenda" and insinuated that the religious connotation was offensive to the local population (Houston, 2004). To support her argument, Houston quoted the then Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski: "U.S. taxpayer funds should not be used to promote alternative lifestyles in my country … We have many more pressing issues that the money could be used for" (Houston, 2004).

In a press release CCHR accused Trajkovski of spreading homophobia, offending the homosexuals and considering the whole country as his private property. In addition, the at that time major Macedonian

[6] The poster showed a slightly altered version of a photograph from the exhibition "Ecce Homo" of the Swedish photographer Elisabeth Ohlson Wallin.

daily *Dnevnik* openly asked Trajkovski when he would finally face the differences and the reality of the lives of homosexuals in Macedonia. The activists could not, however, press Trajkovski further and demand rectification, as he died in a plane crash a month after. The billboards remained in place until the end of the campaign, whereas the American Embassy changed its policy on the public display of its logo. Even though the billboards displayed CCHR's address, the activists did not experience any damage to their premises or threats (D.J., 2003; *Dnevnik*, 2004; Jankovski, 2003a, 2003b, August 5, August 6; Jankovski, 2004; Kuka, 2003; Pocevska, 2003; *Utrinski vesnik*, 2004).

In spite of the increased public visibility of LGBT issues, thanks to the work of CCHR, some (future) LGBT activists thought that the organisation did not go far enough in challenging heteronormativity and advocating LGBT rights. This dissatisfaction led to the constitution of the Macedonian Association for Free Sexual Orientation (MASSO) in September 2004. MASSO was not, however, the second, but the third Macedonian NGO which worked in this field. The second organisation, Equality for Gays and Lesbians (EGAL),[7] came into existence in November 2003, but it was officially registered only in February 2004. Contrary to its name, from very early on, EGAL concentrated on the sexual health of gay men and men who have sex with men and maintained that focus up to the present time. Its activities include direct distribution of safer sex supplies and information to its target groups, and collaboration with various state institutions in charge of the public health. Due to their goal of reaching out to very invisible and vulnerable populations, EGAL's activists shun the exposure beyond their immediate work environments. They also seem to have preferred a more implicit action plan for the advancement of the position of LGBT people. In the words of Zoran Jordanov, EGAL's programme coordinator:

> If I want to sensibilise you for LGBT, I will not poke you in the eyes with "LGBT! LGBT!", but I will first subtly and indirectly educate you what sexuality is, that there are various sexual identities and that the right to

[7] http://egal.org.mk/default.aspx?pArtID=1

> choice of sexual identity is a basic human right. Instead of telling you that it is good to be gay. That [approach] is not right (personal communication, March 12, 2015).

Thus, one could speak of a somewhat paradoxical situation: while EGAL had, and still has, the most explicit name of all LGBT organisations in the country, it has never been very visible among the general public nor has it ever aspired to that. It seems that MASSO was established not that much in reaction to EGAL, as in reaction to CCHR. More precisely, the activists(-in-becoming) who wanted more explicit LGBT advocacy and presence in the public space appear to have found EGAL's work far too different and remote to be considered as competition in the struggle for legitimacy and resources. That has not changed even after EGAL had replaced CCHR as the organiser of Rainbow—the semi-public festival of LGBT films[8] in Skopje (Čilimanov, 2005; Dimitrov & Kolozova, 2012 [2010]; MIA, 2015).

Kočo Andonovski, the former key person of MASSO, explained the main difference between MASSO and CCHR as follows:

> Their [CCHR's] strategy was … "We are not gay, but we work for [the benefit of] gay people". MASSO disagreed. MASSO's first [aim] in all strategic documents was visibility … If you are not visible, you do not exist. If you do not exist, you do not have rights (personal communication, March 9, 2015).

Already in its first year of existence, MASSO managed to draw large media and public attention. That was primarily a result of Andonovski's public coming out in April 2005, which was the first such declaration of one's non-heterosexual orientation in Macedonia. In a prerecorded talk with the host of a popular weekly debate show on *A1*, the then largest Macedonian private TV station, Andonovski said he was gay and

[8] Although this festival, whose first edition was in October 2004, takes place at a public venue and is open to everybody, its target audience is LGBT people and their supporters. No special security measures are taken, but the organisers aim at creating safe space by employing a very limited advertising policy.

spoke about what his life as a gay person looked like. The talk, which had been extensively announced throughout the preceding week, was widely watched and, just like the other shows of *A1*, afterwards made available online on its website.

Fearing violent reactions, especially after the succeeding week's live edition in which he was in the guest panel on homosexuality, Andonovski created a survival plan for himself. That plan included friends bringing food to his home, should it be too dangerous for him to go out. Fortunately and, as he told me, quite surprisingly to him, those precautions turned out to be unnecessary. He was admired by many for his courage to make such a risky step into an uncharted territory, while his calm and friendly elaboration of his life empowered many gay men and expanded the understanding among straight people. At the same time, though, other gay men were not all that happy with what he did. They felt betrayed and accused him that his spotlighting of homosexuality and the cruising areas made them visible and put them in danger (Andonovski, 2015; Dimeska, 2014).

Earlier in the day when Andonovski's coming out would be aired, MASSO and the Macedonian Helsinki Committee held a press conference in which they presented the findings of their survey on identifying the size of the LGBT population in Macedonia (Helsinški komitet & Makedonska asocijacija, 2005; K. Andonovski, personal communication, March 9, 2015; Lj.B., 2005). The figure which attracted the most attention was that 9.6% of the respondents said to have regular sexual intercourse with persons of the same sex. The authors of the study extrapolated this finding to the whole population and came with the number of 200,000 people (or 144,000 adults) in Macedonia who practised homosexual sex. This research was later rightly criticised for the inadequacy of its methodological approach for making such extrapolations (Vrangalova, 2006), but at that moment, the publicising of that figure, together with the televised visual portrayal of a gay man, considerably enlarged the public awareness of the existence of non-heterosexual people in the country. In fact, as Andonovski explained, they had deliberately chosen to have these two events on the same day in order to send a powerful message that homosexuality was not a Western import—as the critics regularly claimed—but that there were LGBT people in Macedonia who deserved to have their human rights acknowledged and respected.

The research report made a clear case for the importance of creating antidiscrimination legislation which would include discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. Similarly to the report on the acceptance of homosexuality (Helsinški komitet & Centar za čovekovi prava, 2002), the authors of this report (Helsinški komitet & Makedonska asocijacija, 2005) reminded the public that such a legislative change was needed also because of Macedonia's EU aspirations. This was a timely reminder, given that in March 2005, just 1 month before the publication of the latter report, Macedonia had officially applied for EU membership:

> As a state which openly declares its orientation towards the European Union and declares [its] acceptance of the standards which have been built within the framework of this structure, the Republic of Macedonia should face at the earliest date the need for changes which would be in accordance with these standards (Helsinški komitet & Makedonska asocijacija, 2005, p. 5).

Engagement with Legislation

Throughout the years, Macedonia's legislators manifested a "confusing" (Helsinški komitet—LGBTI Centar, 2014, p. 8) and contradictory behaviour regarding the legal treatment of sexual orientation. After the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1996, the next relevant legislative change concerned the Law on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Macedonia which was promulgated in July 2002. In May 2004, CCHR sent a request to the Macedonian Constitutional Court demanding a deletion of the article which regarded homosexuality as a breach of military discipline. CCHR objected the placement of homosexuality in the same rank as sexual abuse, and pointed that since this provision could lead to employment discrimination, it was not in accordance with the EU equal opportunities legislation.

The Court decided not to act upon this request and justified its decision by the importance of disciplining homosexuality in such an almost exclusively men-only and hierarchical setting in order to prevent potential power abuse. In reaction to this ruling, CCHR and MASSO announced that they would take this matter to the European Human Rights Court

in Strasbourg. The impact of their statement and the possible diplomatic pressure remain unknown, but the changes which were made to this law in December 2005 included the removal of the discriminatory clause in question (Centar za graǵanski i čovekovi prava, n.d.b; D.J., 2005; Mančevska, 2004; N.S., 2005; Služben vesnik, 62/2002, 112/2005; Ustaven sud, 2004).

Apart from the Criminal Code and the Law on Service in the Armed Forces, which were improved by deletion of discriminatory provisions, eight other laws were advanced by an explicit mention of sexual orientation as one of the grounds a person should not be discriminated upon. These laws are (in chronological order): Labour Relations Law,[9] Law on Establishment of the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility, Law on Higher Education, Family Law,[10] Law on Protection of Patients' Rights, Law on Public Health, Code of Ethics for Civil Servants, and Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.

Having in mind the homophobic utterances and practices of the ethnic Macedonian party VMRO–DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) which has been the major party in power[11] since 2006, it might seem at first glance paradoxical that even seven of these laws were passed in this time period and only one before, in 2005, when the main ruling party, the ethnic Macedonian SDSM (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia), did not spread homophobia. This discrepancy can be explained by the intensified requirement for adjusting Macedonia's legislation after the country was granted an EU candidate status in December 2005.

[9] This is the only law which does not talk of "sexual orientation", but of "sexual inclination" (Služben vesnik, 62/2005). The latter term is objected by the LGBT activists because it is seen as only referring to the sexual act and not to the other aspects of one's sexuality (Dimitrov & Kolozova, 2012 [2010]; Helsinški komitet—LGBTI Centar, 2014).

[10] In this law, the sexual orientation is mentioned only in the context of adoption of children victims of human trafficking. The relevant clause ensures state assistance regardless of the child's sexual orientation (Služben vesnik, 157/2008).

[11] The lion's share of political power in Macedonia belongs to its two largest ethnic communities: the ethnic Macedonian (which is, generally speaking, the numerically and politically dominant one) and the ethnic Albanian. This division of power results from Macedonia's ethnic composition, the formation of political parties predominantly along ethnic lines, and the proportional electoral model. Consequently, each Macedonian government since 1991 has been a coalition of the winning ethnic Macedonian party and the winning ethnic Albanian party.

The new development both increased the number of laws which needed to be altered or prepared and influenced their contents. In reaction to the EU demands, as well as the need to reconcile its professed EU aspirations with its political ideology, VMRO–DPMNE appears to have decided to allow the inclusion of sexual orientation in some (less vital) laws, while simultaneously trying to impose heteronormativity through, *inter alia*, a defective antidiscrimination law and constitutional changes (cf. Helsinški komitet—LGBTI Centar, 2014). Due to this absence of a genuine interest in a state with a progressive agenda regarding the human rights and freedoms of its citizens, the LGBT activists rely in their work on the pressure from the EU. Asked about the importance of the EU accession process for the LGBT rights advocacy in Macedonia, Kočo Andonovski replied:

> [T]hat process is crucial …. I think that if it was not for that process, that there would be no political will here to do *anything*. We see how horrible it is when it is [only] pretended to go towards the EU, let alone if they [the authorities] did not have to act … in such a manner. How cruel would they become and what would our society look like (personal communication, March 9, 2015, emphasis in the original)?

Nonetheless, the activists do not glorify these dynamics. They remain critical of the EU—for example its politics on immigration and economic development—and are aware of the downside of the imposition of regulations by an outside agent, as opposed to the creation and enforcement of progressive legislation and procedures by the domestic political actors. Bekim Asani had a particularly strong opinion on this:

> I do not think that we should get rights only because of the EU. We can get them on paper, but will they be respected in reality? I do not want to get rights because of the EU. I want my state, to which I pay taxes, whose air I breathe and whose documents I hold, where I was born, to provide me those basic [rights] (personal communication, March 24, 2015).

The importance of having a law which would address discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation was advocated already by the first two LGBT organisations in Macedonia, CCHR and MASSO, in cooperation with the Macedonian Helsinki Committee. At the end of 2007, the

Macedonian government finally announced that the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy would start working, together with representatives of NGOs, on antidiscrimination legislation. To this end, a union of diverse human rights and humanitarian NGOs was established in March 2008. Macedonia without Discrimination included representatives of MASSO, but not of CCHR—probably because the latter organisation became largely dormant by that time. After MASSO ceased to exist in the second half of 2008, its representatives remained in Macedonia without Discrimination as representatives of the organisations in which they found new engagement: the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution, and Healthy Options Project Skopje.

In the final version of the draft law which Macedonia without Discrimination submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, sexual orientation was listed as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination. Nonetheless, although no governmental official had objected to the inclusion of sexual orientation in this context, it turned out that this term was conspicuously missing from the version which the Government sent to the Parliament in January 2010 (*BBC Macedonian*, 2010; Centar za istražuvanje & Centar za ekonomski razvoj, 2012; Koalicija, 2011; Makedonska asocijacija, 2008; Makedonski centar, 2009; MIA, 2009).

The weeks which preceded the adoption of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in April 2010 abounded with fierce debates in the Parliament and the media. Xhelal Bajrami, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, gave contradictory justifications for the deletion. He stated both that the discrimination based on sexual orientation fell under the general category "any other ground of discrimination" and that the inclusion of sexual orientation was "not in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Macedonia" (*BBC Macedonian*, 2010). The latter statement was, however, a misrepresentation of the reality since at that moment there were five laws (the sixth would be passed only 2 weeks later) which explicitly mentioned sexual orientation.

The double agenda of VMRO–DPMNE and its ethnic Albanian coalition partner DUI (Democratic Union for Integration) was visible also in, on the one hand, these parties' untrue claims that the law was in

accordance with the European standards and did not exclude anybody, and, on the other hand, the openly homophobic and deceitful proclamations that homosexuality was an illness, whereas the attempts to reinstate sexual orientation in the law were a covert way to bring about the detrimental legalisation not only of same-sex marriages and adoption of children by same-sex couples, but also of incest, paedophilia, polygamy, and zoophilia.

In order to prevent the promulgation of a law which, instead of benefiting the visibility and protection of a highly discriminated population, would reproduce its invisibility and marginalised status, some (LGBT) human rights activists urged their international contacts to put pressure on the Macedonian legislators. European Parliamentarians, human rights organisations, and the EU Delegation to Macedonia underlined the need to protect the LGBT population and have a law which would be in line with the EU acquis—whose adoption is required for becoming an EU member state—as well as with the conventions and declarations which Macedonia had ratified. All these endeavours notwithstanding, the Government did not back down. In protest of the exclusion of sexual orientation, the parliamentarians of the oppositional SDSM left the Parliament before the voting, but even this act did not thwart the adoption of the law (Čomovski, 2010; Dimitrov & Kolozova, 2012 [2010]; European Commission, 2014; Helsinški komitet—LGBTI Centar, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2010; Koalicija, 2011; Lambevski, 2011; Milevska, 2010; Stojančevska, 2010).

Irena Cvetkoviḱ, the executive director of the coalition "Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities" (see below) asserted that this episode revealed for the first time "ruling party's most homophobic face" (personal communication, March 12, 2015), while also disclosing the lack of solidarity within Macedonia without Discrimination. Some of its members, including those from the interest groups whose grounds of discrimination were recognised by the proposed law, did not think it was necessary to insist on the inclusion of sexual orientation:

> When the Ministry proposed the draft [law] with a deleted "sexual orientation", some members of the working group rebelled and asked that the working group publicly stated: "We show solidarity with this group [LGBT

> people] and we do not accept the law in this form". That did not happen and we realised that the [LGBT] community stood alone. That its only spokespersons were the representatives of the organisations which worked with these marginalised communities … The cooperation and solidarity between the logical partners [among the NGOs] was at a very low level then (I. Cvetkovik, personal communication, March 12, 2015).

The bitter experience of absence of solidarity at such a crucial moment—after which Healthy Options Project Skopje and the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution exited Macedonia without Discrimination (I. Cvetkovik, personal communication, July 27, 2015)—had one positive outcome, though. It motivated the activists of the up to then informal Coalition for Protection and Promotion of the Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities to formalise its status and thereby expand the visibility, legitimacy, and impact of their work. The organisation was registered in early 2011 as the coalition "Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities".[12] It continued to advocate the human rights and monitor the status (including the discrimination) of the same communities it engaged with from its beginnings in June 2007: men who have sex with men, LGBT people, sex workers, people who use drugs, people who live with HIV, and women.

Proliferation of LGBT Activism and Anti-LGBT Violence

After CCHR had become inactive and MASSO had ceased to exist, the Coalition and the Macedonian Helsinki Committee were up to May 2012 the only two prominently visible NGOs which explicitly addressed LGBT rights. Besides these two organisations and EGAL, at that time there was one other formally existing LGBT organisation. Women's Alliance[13] has kept, however, a low profile, given priority to self-help grassroots activities and

[12] http://coalition.org.mk/za-nas/

[13] http://www.womensalliance.mk/mk/za-nas

not aimed at reaching out to a wider audience. According to its president Gordana Trpčevska:

> Women's Alliance works on empowering the community and leaving the closet. Between our four walls we can have workshops and everything else, but we live in the outside world. We need to encourage ourselves and show up anywhere. Not necessarily on TV … At a concert, exhibition, theatre performance (personal communication, March 16, 2015).

Despite its focus on the rights of lesbian and other non-heterosexual women, Women's Alliance has carried out some broader projects, too, such as a campaign against homophobia in sport and a still ongoing production of the online queer magazine *Sakam.info*[14] with news from Macedonia and abroad. Thus, even though it was established already in October 2007, at the beginning of MASSO's dissolution (its initiators used to work in MASSO), Women's Alliance, just like EGAL, was not involved in the activities regarding the antidiscrimination law. In fact, Women's Alliance has more often than not refrained from collaborating with the other Macedonian LGBT organisations (Arsovska & Trpčevska, 2008).

When LGBT United[15] was founded in May 2012, it brought certain refreshment in the LGBT landscape on the Internet: Its members regularly photographed themselves (albeit with their faces covered) on central urban locations, while holding the rainbow flag. Several other characteristics, though, make this NGO notably different from the other LGBT organisations in Macedonia. The seat of LGBT United is not in the capital Skopje, but in Tetovo (a town which has an ethnic Albanian majority and is considered to be "the capital" of the ethnic Albanian population in Macedonia), its press releases and social media posts are written in Albanian and Macedonian alike, and its leader is an ethnic Albanian.

LGBT United advocates LGBT rights and their treatment as human rights, as well as works on the empowerment of LGBT people and—in cooperation with EGAL—the improvement of their sexual health. In light of the separated realms which the ethnic communities in

[14] http://www.sakam.info/

[15] http://lgbtunited.org/en/lgbt-united/

Macedonia usually inhabit, LGBT United has a much greater access to the non-heterosexual Albanians than the other LGBT NGOs. While the geographical displacement from the capital is important because of the decentralisation potential and the empowerment of even more marginalised communities, working in Tetovo, a smaller and more conservative setting than Skopje, means that there is a marked difference in the level of exposure which the activists in each town can afford—as the organisation's head, Bekim Asani pointed out:

> The risk is significantly higher here [in Tetovo], [as well as] the stress. In Skopje you can be an activist in the city centre and live in another neighbourhood. Here you cannot .... Everybody knows everybody here …. One's movements are different here. Each time I am in Skopje, I feel freer (personal communication, March 24, 2015).

The year 2012 saw the setting up of one more LGBT organisation. The LGBTI programme of the Macedonian Helsinki Committee was upgraded to its subsidiary, named "LGBTI Support Centre"[16] and run by MASSO's former leader Andonovski. The Centre was envisioned as an organisation which would advocate LGBTI rights, offer psychosocial and legal counselling to LGBTI people and strengthen their self-organising capacities, as well as provide assistance to other human rights NGOs. At its opening in October 2012, the Dutch ambassador to Macedonia, in her role as the Centre's funder, sent a clear message to the Macedonian authorities by underlining that the democratic societies were obliged to prevent the discrimination against non-heterosexual people and ensure that everybody's human rights were respected. In spite of the festive and hopeful atmosphere that evening, the Centre's premises were attacked the very same night. The attack "inaugurated" a chain of ten additional episodes of anti-LGBT violence which would, all but two, remain unprosecuted by the state[17] (Amnesty International, 2013, 2014;

[16] http://lgbti.mk/AboutUs/AboutTheCentre

[17] These episodes are: attack on activists just before the March of tolerance in November 2012, attacks on the LGBTI Centre in December 2012, March 2013, June 2013 (during the Pride Week), and July 2013, attack on activists during the LGBT rights campaign of the Coalition and LGBT United in Bitola in April 2013 (the only attack outside Skopje), attacks on the house of an actor in June and July 2013 after his coming out, attack on a crowded pub during the second

Helsinški komitet, 2013; Helsinški komitet—LGBTI Centar, 2014; Nacionalna mreža, 2015b, April 28; Schuurman, 2012).

The growth of anti-LGBT violence was not coincidental. It represented the downside of the increased number and visibility of LGBT organisations and (at least partially) LGBT-related activities in the capital. To begin with, two new initiatives came into existence in 2013. Subversive Front[18] was established in June that year by former members of LGBT United, following the—apparently not ethnically motivated—internal disagreements over operational matters. In addition to advocacy, as well as provision of psychosocial assistance to LGBT people, Subversive Front aims at developing critical research and educational activities on gender and sexuality. The still informal LezFem,[19] whose first action was on March 8, 2013, was launched as a support group within the LGBTI Centre. It focuses on (lesbian) women and next to being a support and advocacy group, it strives to bring a greater awareness in the LGBT (activist) community and the larger society about women's rights, feminism, and the realities and rights of non-heterosexual women (Antevski, 2013).

Each November since 2009, a March of tolerance takes place. The March, which is a collaborative undertaking of various human rights NGOs, is not a strictly LGBT event, but it, nevertheless, regularly features rainbow flags and messages related to the rights of LGBT people and the discrimination against them. Furthermore, in February and September 2012, the Coalition hosted two international travelling exhibitions: one featuring (his)stories of unstraight people, the other on the Nazi terror against homosexuals. Both exhibitions, but the first one in particular, attracted large audiences. In addition, starting from 2013, a Pride Week is organised. The first such week of LGBT-related discussions and cultural events—which does not include a Pride march—was organised by the Coalition and LGBT United, whereas the two later ones were put together by the National Network against Homophobia and Transphobia which was established in December 2013–January 2014.

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anniversary party of the LGBTI Centre in October 2014, and attack on an LGBT activist in April 2015.

[18] http://www.s-front.org/10471072-108510721089.html

[19] http://lgbti.mk/Community/Lesbian

The National Network unites all LGBT NGOs in Macedonia (with the exception of Women's Alliance), individual LGBT activists, and supporters. It aims to provide a more powerful response to the escalation of homophobia and transphobia in the public space. Next to being the politically right move, Antonio Mihajlov, the president of Subversive Front, believes that the creation of such a joint entity had a more mundane side too:

> Today we have … [several LGBTI] organisations which have [different] strong sides …. These organisations have an equal access to funds which support LGBTI issues. Now, when the donor sees that there are … [more] organisations which work in an area where the LGBTI community is not that large and where the awareness about LGBTI activism is not that high, neither among the general population nor among the civil activists, the question is to whom to give the money and … expect an effect from that support (personal communication, March 11, 2015)?

The Network's first large activity was the January–May 2014 campaign against homophobia and transphobia. This campaign, which was the only time when Women's Alliance participated in the Network, featured photos of Macedonian celebrities in combination with the statement "SAY NO to homophobia and transphobia". The photos were put on billboards in Skopje, on posters and flyers which were distributed in and outside Skopje, as well as on social media posts and LGBT-friendly websites (*A1on*, 2014; *BBC Macedonian*, 2009; Bogoeva, 2012; *Fokus* 2015; Koalicija, 2012a, August 29; Koalicija, 2013, 2015a; Mihajlov, 2014; *Radio MOF*, 2014; Stojančov, 2014).

The campaign "SAY NO" was the second one, after that of CCHR in 2003, wherein billboards showed both pro-LGBT messages and photographs of humans (the campaign of the Coalition and LGBT United in the spring of 2013 only displayed pro-LGBT messages). Unlike the people on the CCHR's poster, though, who were not part of the local population, the faces on the Network's photos were not only Macedonian citizens, but well-known ones, too, who, moreover, participated in the campaign eagerly.

This difference between 2003 and 2014 is indicative of the certain progress which has been achieved in Macedonia with regard to LGBT issues. Considering the virtually complete silence, invisibility, and lack of knowledge on LGBT issues at the turn of the century, it is very unlikely that it would have been possible at that time to use the format of the 2014 campaign. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that this progress was only partial. The messages in the 2013 campaign were much more explicit than those in 2003 and 2014: for example "Gay. Lesbians. Bi. Trans. Queer", "It is easy to hate. It is brave to love", and "I love you. I love you, too. Good night, Kate [female name]. Good night, Bojana [female name]". These billboards—placed in Bitola, Skopje, and Tetovo—did not "survive" even 24 hours, whereas the billboards in the other two campaigns have remained intact.

Activist Response to the State-Endorsed Homophobia

The visibility of LGBT activism was not the single cause of the increased anti-LGBT violence since 2012. This phenomenon was also a result of the intensified homophobic campaign of the ruling VMRO–DPMNE and the media under its control (read: almost all paper and electronic media in the country). The utterances during the preparation of the anti-discrimination law are case in point. Other examples include the resolute claims in October 2012 against same-sex marriages and child adoptions by same-sex couples; the proclamation in June 2013 of the Minister of Health, Nikola Todorov, that he would not debate the proposed restrictions of the abortion law with groups which advocated LGBT rights; the hate-inciting portrayals of the Pride Week in 2013 and the March of tolerance in 2009, 2013, and 2014 as covert Gay parades; and the statements from the second half of 2013 and the second half of 2014 regarding changes of the Macedonian Constitution.

When the pronouncements on the same-sex partnerships and adoptions were expressed in October 2012, there were no campaigns or other advocacy activities for legalisation. The only remotely related develop-

ment was the unsuccessful request of the Helsinki Committee for a review of the Family Law. In the document sent to the Constitutional Court in May 2012, the Committee elaborated that same-sex couples should be included in this law's definition of "close personal relations", so that the provisions regarding protection from domestic violence could apply to these couples too. However, opponents of same-sex marriages did not mention this initiative at all, but acted as if there was an initiative for the legalisation of such marriages.

Particularly notorious—and not only *vis-à-vis* LGBT people—was the statement of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy Spiro Ristovski. He asserted that there would be no gay marriages in Macedonia nor child adoptions by same-sex couples as long as VMRO–DPMNE was in power, given that the only way for a child to develop normally was to be raised by its biological parents. When the Coalition issued a press release in which it criticised Ristovski's allegations, he threatened with a law suit. In a similar vein, Gordana Jankulovska, the Minister of Internal Affairs, spoke of heterosexual marriages as being based on natural principles, and of the adoptions by same-sex couples as not leading to the nation's prosperity. It became clear later that those utterances had served to prepare the ground for VMRO–DPMNE's proposal for a constitutional definition of marriage as a union solely between a man and a woman. Regrettably, also, the major opposition party SDSM said to be against same-sex marriages, without giving any further explanation (*A1on*, 2012; E.Š., 2012; *E-Vesti*, 2012; Helsinški komitet, 2012, 2013; Helsinški komitet—LGBTI Centar, 2014; Koalicija, 2012b, October 12; *Makfaks*, 2009; *Press24*, 2014; *Zdravstvo24*, 2013).

The attack on a pub in October 2014 turned to be the last drop that spilled the cup. It provoked a strong reaction from several representatives of the diplomatic corps in the country. A few days after the attack, the Head of the EU Delegation to Macedonia, the ambassadors of several EU member states, and a representative of the US Embassy made an unprecedented visit to the LGBTI Centre to express their support to the activists and remind the Macedonian authorities that all citizens should enjoy equal rights and protection. The diplomats also demanded productive state efforts—instead of the continuous practice of inaction and

silence—in locating and putting on trial the perpetrators of not only that attack but of the past ones, too.

In addition, this act of violence mobilised the National Network to set up a series of more radical actions, including body bag protests, in front of the Office of Public Prosecutor. Each time, the activists briefly blocked the entrance to the building and requested an end to the impunity of the perpetrators of anti-LGBT violence. Unfortunately, even these actions did not bear fruit. The last such protest was staged in January 2015. Due to the lack of effectiveness and in light of the disclosure of massive state-organised wiretapping and other types of unlawful state control,[20] the Network decided to discontinue for the time being its separate protests and participate more actively in the growing antigovernmental revolt in the country (*A1on*, 2015; LGBTI Centar, 2014; Koalicija, 2015b, January 23; Nacionalna mreža, 2015a, March; Stojanovski, 2014; Vaseva, 2014). I will elaborate more on these recent developments in the last part of the text.

In September 2013, VMRO–DPMNE introduced for the first time the proposal for a constitutional definition of marriage and cohabitation as exclusively consisting of a man and a woman. Although in the already existing Family Law marriage is defined in exactly that way, and only the cohabitation of a man and a woman could qualify, under certain conditions, as marriage, the ruling party felt the need to inscribe these stipulations in the Constitution too. The explicitly communicated justification entailed that since fewer parliamentarians were needed to change a law than to change the Constitution, it would be much easier for SDSM, should this party come to power, to legalise homosexual unions and adoptions by same-sex couples. In order to prevent such a "societal danger", VMRO–DPMNE reasoned that the institutes of marriage and

[20] In February 2015, the leader of SDSM, Zoran Zaev, started a series of public presentations, so-called bombs, of the illegally made recordings of telephone conversations of politicians, journalists, NGO activists, and foreign diplomats. These recordings, which were made by the state intelligence service and given to SDSM by an unrevealed source, disclosed a large-scale power abuse and anti-democratic practices by the ruling parties, VMRO–DPMNE in particular: for example forgery and sabotage of the electoral process, blackmailing, corruption and rackets, use of physical force against political opponents, and extensive control of the judiciary and the media. The June 2015 report of the expert group which was appointed by the European Commission to look into these malpractices can be retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/news/news-files/20150619_recommendations_of_the_senior_experts_group.pdf.

cohabitation needed to be included in the Constitution. The initiative of the Helsinki Committee from May 2012 was again falsely portrayed as being about the legalisation of homosexual marriages.

In the eyes of the proponents of this change, the danger was coming not only from SDSM and its supporters from the NGOs, such as the Helsinki Committee, which received financial support from the Open Society Foundation (i.e. the US billionaire George Soros),[21] but also from the EU and its, presumably existing, strong gay lobby. After an intense debate in which some opposition deputies criticised both the proposed intervention and the discriminatory discourse of its advocates, and despite the rhetoric of moral panic which the latter employed, the required number of affirmative votes was not, fortunately, obtained (Grupa pratenici, 2013; Helsinški komitet—LGBTI Centar, 2014; Sobranie, 2013a, 2013b, September 23, September 24; Vlada, 2013).

Less than a year after this failed attempt, in June 2014, during the Pride Week, the Government announced that the proposal for a constitutional definition of marriage and cohabitation would be back on the agenda of the Parliament. This time, however, the proposal was not an initiative submitted by the deputies of VMRO–DPMNE, but it was packed in a set of diverse constitutional changes, which were put forward by the Government and presented as bringing new quality and higher standards to the country (Sobranie, 2015; Vlada, 2014b, June 28). That was not the only thing which made June 2014 different from September 2013. The SDSM-led opposition boycotted the Parliament, meaning that the legislative body worked with hardly any dissonant voices. On a positive note, though, the LGBT activism was considerably strengthened, thanks to the foundation of the Network.

In mid-July 2014, the Parliament approved the commencement of the procedure for making constitutional changes. The relevant part of the document which the Parliament voted on only stipulated the need for a constitutional definition of marriage. Following this vote, the Government was given 10 days to formulate the draft amendments and submit them

[21] The Macedonian example of delegitimisation of critical voices is not unique. As Stubbs (2013) notes, the authorities in Croatia and Serbia in the 1990s have similarly portrayed the recipients of grants from the Open Society Foundation as foreign-funded traitors and spies, that is enemies of the respective state.

to the Parliament. However, in late August, when the Parliament discussed the draft package of constitutional changes, it turned out that the Government had supplemented in the meantime the amendment on marriage with one more article. The inserted article, which had not been previously discussed in the Parliament, defined "registered cohabitation, or any other registered form of life partnership", too, as a "union solely between one [sic] woman and one [sic] man" (Ministerstvo, 2014, p. 2). It was for that draft package that in early August 2014 the Minister of Justice Adnan Jashari requested the opinion of the Venice Commission.[22] Later that month, even before the Venice Commission would deliver its opinion, the Parliament passed the draft amendments, including the one on marriage and registered partnership, after which they were subjected to a 30-day open public debate. The Government and the Parliament alike blatantly breached, thus, the official legislative procedure, all the while claiming to work on improving the state administration.

This intervention caused further furore among the (LGBT) human rights activists. In their analyses and addresses to local and foreign media, the diplomatic corps in Macedonia, and their (international) networks, the activists stressed—just like the Venice Commission would state in its opinion from October 2014—that it was not necessary to constitutionally define marriage because the Family Law already contained the same stipulation, whereas the added second article collided with the rulings of the European Human Rights Court. To give a greater visibility to this problem and point to the different manifestations of the same homophobic politics of VMRO–DPMNE, the National Network linked the factual physical anti-LGBT violence to the alleged symbolic imperilment of heterosexual marriage in the powerful question "What is here in danger? Your marriage or our lives?" and used it as the motto of its protest in front of the Office of Public Prosecutor on January 22, 2015.

[22] The Venice Commission, that is The European Commission for Democracy through Law, is an advisory body on constitutional matters of the Council of Europe. Its role is "to ***provide legal advice*** to its member states and, in particular, to help states wishing to bring their legal and institutional structures into line with European standards and international experience in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law" (emphasis in the original). Retrieved from http://www.venice.coe.int/WebForms/pages/?p=01_Presentation.

It is unclear to which extent the advocacy efforts of the (LGBT) human rights activists have contributed to the deletion of the second article. The Minister of Justice implied its removal only after the Venice Commission had delivered its opinion. He justified the action by the Government's wish to respect the Commission's view and did not refer in any way to the public debate and the human rights NGOs. When the second draft package was submitted to the Parliament in December 2014, the constitutional amendment on marriage did not contain the article in question.

Rather unexpectedly and quite luckily, the proposed constitutional changes have not become a reality in Macedonia. When the final voting on the whole package of amendments was supposed to take place in the Parliament at the end of January 2015, there were fewer deputies present at the session than the number which was required for making such a substantial legal change. As a result of the internal power struggle in DUI and disagreement regarding which constitutional changes were needed,[23] four of its deputies decided to disrespect the coalition agreement between their party leader Ali Ahmeti and the leader of VMRO–DPMNE Nikola Gruevski and abstain from voting on the package of amendments. The session was interrupted and has not been resumed since (Duvnjak, 2014; Fondacija et al., 2014; Koalicija, 2015a; Nacionalna mreža, n.d., 2015a, March; *NOVA*, 2015a, January 18; S.K.D., 2015; Sobranie, 2015; Venice Commission, 2014; Vlada, 2014a, 2014c, 2014d, June, July, December).

Changing Forms of the Recent Struggle for LGBT Rights

The anti-LGBT attacks, but especially the one on the pub in October 2014, contributed to the increased number and visibility of the supporters of LGBT people and their rights. More precisely, many public figures and non-LGBT activists, who had not up to then publicly expressed empathy with their LGBT fellow citizens, started changing their atti-

[23] The only constitutional changes which the dissenting voices in DUI deemed necessary were those regarding the presidential elections, so that the ethnic Albanian vote received more weight in deciding the outcome (Dodevska, 2015; Unkovska, 2015).

tude, foremostly by participating in the LGBT-related protests of the National Network—a move which was highly welcomed and appreciated by the relatively small LGBT activist community. Still, it seems that the latter was, especially at the beginning, more aware of the connection between the LGBT struggle and the other societal struggles. This made the LGBT activists more open for cooperation with the other interest groups than vice versa, as Slavčo Dimitrov, the programme coordinator of the Coalition, explained:

> What is the key, and a good, opportunity at this moment is that finally it is possible to get out of the narrow identity frame and create alliances of resistance with the other movements. That is exceptionally important and there is already a shift in the other movements …. The key problem, however … [is that] they are not aware of these [LGBT] issues yet, just like they are blind for the gender issues. But recently, a certain opportunity has started developing. That will be an important point to tackle in the future, too (personal communication, March 17, 2015).

The decision of the National Network, made somewhere in early 2015, to temporarily give less priority to its specific demands for the improvement of the position of LGBT people emerged from the increasingly prevailing understanding among its activists that no other change could be made before the change of political power. Thus, instead of organising separate protests, the focus was shifted to the general call for resignation of the un- and antidemocratic government, as well as prosecution of those involved in the illicit activities which the leaked recordings have disclosed. Thereby, the Network's activists more often than not did not fly the rainbow flag or carried banners and placards with pro-LGBT messages.

This move brought a sort of Pyrrhic victory. On the one hand, the joining of forces led to better protest strategies and a larger visibility of the general dissatisfaction, given that many activists of the Network were experienced protestors and actively participated in the discussions about the next actions. On the other hand, though, the focus on the demands for resignation and prosecution pushed somewhat aside the LGBT issues and the specific problems which this part of the population faced in

Macedonia. Further disturbing was the often occurring choice of the otherwise LGBT-friendly journalists, editors, and activists not to explicitly mention the LGBT people when listing the diverse interest groups which were involved in the antigovernmental protests.

The developments from May and June 2015 indicate that the National Network has modified its strategy in the meantime. It mainstreams the LGBT issues in the general citizens' protests, while also organising distinct actions on issues which specifically concern the LGBT population. At the thus far largest antigovernmental protest on May 17, 2015, some activists carried rainbow flags and later that day set up an information stand with rainbow flags and the visibly displayed text "International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia—May 17". At the protest camp which was built in front of the building of the Government that evening and lasted up to July 16 (following Nikola Gruevski's concession to the establishment of a transitional government with a mandate to organise fair elections in April 2016), one of the tents was jointly populated by LGBT and other activists and decorated with a rainbow flag too. This overt use of rainbow flags has significantly contributed to the visibility of the LGBT activists and issues. Many photos and news reports of May 17 showed these flags and the leader of SDSM Zoran Zaev spoke in a TV interview approvingly of the participation of the LGBT community. By praising the protest, which was co-organised by his party, as providing an example which was superior to the EU average, Zaev also implied that SDSM and its allies were EU's true political partners in Macedonia:

> As far as diversity is concerned, many associations, NGOs, intellectuals etc. were involved. Even in Europe it is not common to organise a protest in which Roma people, but also the LGBT community, will jointly participate with their flags, all together. We sent a very forceful message and are particularly proud of that (*Infomax.mk*, 2015).

The Pride Week in June 2015 was announced as a separate event, set outside of the protest camp and walks. That was also where some of its activities were held, such as the Lesbian picnic in the main city park and the three lectures in a mobile gallery. At the same time, the Week also took place at locations which are closely connected to the general antigovern-

mental protests: in front of the Government, the Public Broadcast, and the Office of Public Prosecutor. In these actions, which received a good coverage by the opposition media, the activists declared a moratorium to these institutions and symbolically buried them because of their abuse of power against, *inter alia*, LGBT people (Geroska, 2015; *Lokalno.mk.*, 2015; *NOVA*, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d, June 25, July 15, July 16; Popovska-Pavlovska, 2015; *Sloboden pečat*, 2015). Whether the National Network will maintain the same two-track politics of simultaneous proximity and distance in the future does not depend only on their effects, but also on the at this moment hard to predict larger political dynamics in the country.

Conclusion

Much has changed since the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Macedonia in 1996 and the country's beginning steps on the path to European integration. In the 13 years following the foundation of the first Macedonian LGBT organisation in 2002, there has been an increase in the number of LGBT NGOs and activities. Some of these activities were jointly conducted with other human rights organisations—the Macedonian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in particular. There are at present six active formally existing organisations and one informal initiative. Most of them are united in the National Network against Homophobia and Transphobia, but also function as separate entities. Not much diversification has taken place, however, in terms of the geographical location of the NGOs. All but one are situated in the capital.

An important, albeit, generally speaking, quite unfortunate, impetus for the proliferation of LGBT organisations and activities has been the growing state-endorsed homophobia starting from 2008. The homophobic rhetoric and attitudes of the ruling parties were clearly manifested in, for example, the promulgation of antidiscrimination legislation which did not recognise sexual orientation as a ground of discrimination, the unwillingness to prosecute the spreading instances of hate speech and other forms of anti-LGBT violence—let alone work on their prevention—and the two (failed) attempts to constitutionally define

marriage as a union solely between a woman and a man. Because of this political climate, the LGBT activists regularly have to invoke the support of various international NGOs and (supra)national bodies, including the EU ones, as well as remind the Macedonian authorities of the requirements which Macedonia has to fulfil as an EU candidate country.

The expansion of LGBT activism has not been the only positive outcome of the political developments in the past 7 years. Another favourable result was the gradual rise of awareness among public figures and non-LGBT activists regarding the importance of an openly expressed support to the LGBT people and their human rights. The subsequent increased visibility of LGBT issues directly opposed the authorities' efforts to silence the LGBT activists and dismiss their concerns as ungrounded or detrimental to the society at large.

Between February and July 2015, Macedonia witnessed an unprecedented upsurge of general antigovernmental revolt. The disclosure of illegal state-organised wiretapping and various other forms of power abuse brought large masses of people to the streets. Faced with the absolute necessity for a change in political power, many LGBT activists chose to vigorously participate not only in the protests but also in their organisation. Initially, the LGBT issues were hardly articulated. This choice was afterwards considerably corrected, also by the organisation of the Pride Week 2015 which took place both inside and outside of the locations of the general protests. In view of the current political turbulence, it remains to be seen which role the LGBT issues will play and how the LGBT activists will position themselves in the struggle for the establishment of the rule of law in Macedonia, as well as its democratisation and Europeanisation.

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5

Europe ♥ Gays? Europeanisation and Pride Parades in Serbia

Bojan Bilić

This chapter demonstrates the increasingly relevant and ever stronger symbolic link that has been developing between Europeanisation and EU accession, the paramount political process in contemporary Serbia, on the one hand, and various forms and strategies for the liberation of non-heteronormative sexualities in this still highly patriarchal country, on the other. I approach this hegemonic relationship between Europeanisation and LGBT[1] activism primarily through the history of

[1] Binnie and Klesse (2012, p. 445) claim that "the term LGBTQ (…) is controversial because it insinuates a quasi-natural confluence of interests around certain gender and/or sexual subjectivities". Although I am aware of the fact that in our context the use of this term might mask power hierarchies that lead to sustained practices of exclusion and discrimination within non-heterosexual activist initiatives themselves, I use the acronym LGBT for pragmatic reasons. For more information on bisexual and trans activism in Serbia and Croatia, see Bilić and Kajinić (2016).

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_5

Belgrade pride marches/parades.[2] While my aim is to destabilise the notorious democracy "litmus test" function of this event (Bilić, 2016; Bilić & Stubbs, 2015), one would be hard pressed to find an alternative instance in which the private and the public intersect in such a potentially explosive manner.[3] By amalgamating a variety of social practices, forces, and interests that revolve around poorly known and deeply stereotyped sexual behaviours together with the discourses of European integration and the multifaceted narratives of national belonging (and exclusion), Pride parades constitute a matrix which weaves together sexual, political, legal, and religious dimensions and in annual cycles sharpens and exposes the complexities of LGBT-related politics and activisms.

2001: "Massacre Pride"

On 5 October 2000, thousands of people stormed the Yugoslav Parliament in Belgrade to oust Slobodan Milošević and put an end to a long decade of destruction, death, impoverishment, and humiliation that his regime, in "antithetical solidarity" with other nationalist leaders of the former common country (Veljak, 2005), brought upon the region (Gordy, 1999, 2013; Spoerri, 2014). After this event Serbia embarked on—what would quite soon turn out to be—a rather disappointing period of enthusiastic revival characterised by the efforts of the new, democratic, but ideologically heterogeneous and often quite conservative, leadership[4] to re-establish the country's deeply wounded connections with the outside world and allow it to take its place in the European community of nations.

In the atmosphere of hope which made some believe that the overthrow of an authoritarian president also meant unsettling profound patriarchal

[2] This chapter examines the relevance of European integrations/Europeanisations on LGBT activist strategies and does not address in particular detail the complex "internal" dynamics and fragmentations of the Serbian LGBT activist "scene". For an analysis in that direction, see Bilić (2016).

[3] For Judith Butler (1993, p. 233), marches and street walking, along with cross-dressing, drag balls, butch femme spectacles, and other forms of "theatricalization of political rage", "disrupt[ed] the closeting distinction between public and private space" and thus enabled a proliferation of "sites of politicisation […] throughout the public realm".

[4] The Democratic Opposition of Serbia, commonly known as DOS, was a wide coalition of 18 political parties that defeated Milošević in the 2000 general elections and won a majority of seats in the National Parliament. It dissolved in November 2003.

patterns, activists of *Labris*, a lesbian organisation founded in 1995, along with their colleagues from *Gayten* (founded in 2001), thought that the time was ripe for a Pride March which would finally render visible the country's discriminated LG(BT) population.[5] For this event they chose Belgrade's central Republic Square, the site of protests and contestations that marked the turbulent history of the Serbian and Yugoslav 1990s. Thus, on 30 June 2001, hardly 9 months after the 5 October "revolution", the march ended practically before it even started, as activists, who could not count on a lot of police protection, were brutally attacked and beaten by a group of right-wing extremists. The circumstances for staging such a manifestation were particularly unfavourable in that period because Slobodan Milošević, who was arrested a few months before, was extradited to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague, the Netherlands, on 28 June 2001.[6] In her testimonial of the Pride, Jasmina Tešanović (2001, online) stated:

> Two days ago, when the former President was suddenly transported to The Hague, his supporters organised in this same square a meek demonstration, kept well under control by the police. Not today, though, when a lively, colourful and happy group of 30–50 gays and lesbians was supposed to sing and dance there. Afterwards, a public forum was going to be held at the Students' Cultural Center, a traditional free alternative space for politics and culture. […] Milošević is in The Hague, the thugs are frustrated; instead of beating their wives and children, they are beating everybody that doesn't resemble their idea of a patriot.

The first Pride march, which led to 40 seriously injured people,[7] remained a particularly traumatic event in the Serbian and regional LGBT history

[5] (Male) homosexuality was decriminalised in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in 1977 and in the rest of Serbia (including Kosovo) in 1994. Lesbian sexuality never appeared in the criminal code. The very first forms of lesbian and gay activism in Serbia took place in the early 1990s mostly in Belgrade private apartments. The first activists organisation Group for the Affirmation of Lesbian and Gay Human Rights—Arkadija—was established in January 1991, but it could not be officially registered until homosexuality was decriminalised in 1994 as a matter of a routine revision of the Criminal Code. The founders of Arkadija were Dejan Nebrigić and Lepa Mlađenović, both of whom would subsequently be active in anti-war and anti-nationalist initiatives (Bilić, 2012; Gočanin, 2014; Mlađenović, 2012).

[6] Milošević died in March 2006, a few months before the verdict was due.

[7] One of the most severely injured activists Igor Dobričić later stated: "My personal opinion is that I will rather commit suicide than live and hide if I need to sacrifice to fear my human dignity and

(Bilić, 2014). It showed the extent to which homophobia was interweaved into the social tissue of the post-war Serbia. Sanja Kajinić (2003, p. 4), an activist and gender scholar, who attended the march, wrote:

> This single day influenced many lives. I was both at the Square when it all started and later with the lesbian women, first in the office of a women's group, then at one woman's apartment that turned into emergency headquarters where women came for support. We phoned around incessantly, talked over fresh news, watched all the TV programs and commented together, and tried to help each other through the first shock. For many of the participants, Belgrade Pride violence was the most extreme head-on collision with the homophobia that they had ever experienced. The atmosphere was that of panic, fear, but also of extreme mutual support and caring made visible by this crisis.

The 2001 Pride revealed the major problems that would accompany this manifestation for the decade to come: violence, poor activist coordination, absence of a well-articulated political programme, insufficient and unreliable state support, and a relatively invisible and frightened wider LGBT "community"[8] that would remain, for the most part, distant from those claiming to represent it.

The 2001 Pride also pointed to the tensions that arise from attempts to uncritically "transfer" what has in the meantime become a commodified (transnational) activist instrument that has lost a lot of its political charge even in the environments in which it was originally conceived as the most potent means of LGBT emancipation (Kates & Belk, 2001).[9] This is

my right to be who I am" (N. N., 2001, online).

[8] "LGBT community" is a problematic and heuristic notion which tends to be widely used even though it is not conclusively clear what it means. According to Maljković (2014, p. 366) LGBT community is "often a synonym for the so-called gay scene i.e. gay public which is manifested in activism, clubbing… but where is that community at all visible as a political subject which demonstrates a relevant degree of unity?"

[9] For example, the activists of the New York-based Lesbian Herstory Archives said in a recent statement (Petrelis, 2015, online): "Let's get real about what LGBT Pride marches and celebrations in San Francisco, New York and a few other cities, have become. Parties certainly, vehicles for corporations to tap into the gay market and wallet, opportunities for straight and LGBT politicians to softly seek votes and donations, and political agendas that extend only from joining the military, marriage rights and ignore social justice concerns. Due to the shift away from contingent-based groupings, the increased commercialisation of the LGBT Pride March, and the diminishing inter-

especially relevant in the context of visual globalisation which renders the images of "older" and nowadays all too cheerful prides (e.g. New York, Amsterdam, Berlin, etc.) easily available online and thus makes it increasingly difficult to present such a protest in the Serbian/post-Yugoslav space as an expression of local grievances (Bilić, 2014). In a short interview which a BK Television journalist made with one of the right-wing extremists during the 2001 Belgrade Pride, the interviewee, probably in his early twenties, said: "This is not Berlin or Paris. This is Serbia. This kind of things does not happen here… these faggots, homosexuals and all that is going on against the Serbian people" (BKTV, 2001). Such a reference to some of the major European capitals that are supposedly decadent and full of gays points to the significance of contextual/temporal differences or, in the words of Mizielińska and Kulpa (2011), *queer asynchrony* created through the removal of the Pride from its original Western/Anglo-Saxon milieu, where it was a central element of the reaction of a *structurally disadvantaged* population to a homophobic legal system that even banned homosexual acts in private settings (as, for instance, in the USA).

In this regard, it was not only the hooligans who evoked the West when arguing against a Pride march taking place in Belgrade. Thus, in his account of the Pride written a month later, Milan Đurić (2001, online), one of the main organisers, stated that: "Without being overly dramatic, I realised that we were living a very important historical moment, that nothing would be the same any more, that this was our Stonewall". The commemoration of the Stonewall riots would accompany all subsequent Pride organisations, testifying, in an asynchronic[10] and anachronic

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est of members of our communities in this event as reflected in fewer marchers each year behind the banner, the Lesbian Herstory Archives has decided not to officially participate in the Sunday June 28th Lesbian and Gay Pride March".

[10] A particularly striking example of the "Eastern time of coincidence" ("'everything at once'…a constant 'knotting' and 'looping' of time(s) after 1989", Mizielińska & Kulpa, 2011, p. 15) is visible in the proposal of Queeria/Kvirija—centre for the promotion of culture of nonviolence and equality which was operating within the Socialdemocratic Youth (a youth section of the Socialdemocratic Union, a minor parliamentary political party formed in 1996). Namely, in the spring of 2001 this organisation suggested that the Serbian Parliament should pass a law on same-sex unions. After this proposal became public, even the president of the party Žarko Korać had to say that it was not part of the Union's official policy and that its youth section was free to act on its own (Grujić, 2003). This initiative ended after a group of hooligans invaded the headquarters of the Socialdemocratic Union and beat some of the Socialdemocratic Youth members (Gočanin, 2014; Petrović, 2003).

fashion, to the incredible resilience and huge "inspiring potential" of this event (Bilić, 2016) which imbues activists with a sense of "mission" (Antonić, 2003) and distances them from the particularities of the local legal, political, and social environment.[11] This brings us back to Kulpa and Mizielińska (2011, p. 2) who ask:

> If, in a Western context, "queer" is to somehow relate to (and presumably reject) identitarian politics of the "Stonewall era", […] what is left of "queer" in the CEE context, where Stonewall never happened; where it stands as an empty signifier, a meaningless figure, and yet is still a pervasive and monumental reference.

Moreover, in the wake of the June Pride, the organisers themselves, rather than trying to root their strategies in the local socio-political context, issued a statement in which they said:

> We remind the public that lesbian and gay rights are human rights guaranteed by international legal documents to which our country also subscribes. Human rights are a political issue and that is why we expect that the state bodies and political parties should publicly say where they stand in relation to lesbian and gay rights. These kinds of events (i.e. violence) are not tolerated in any other civilised country. If the authorities want to take Serbia to the European Union, they are on the wrong track (authors' addition in brackets) (Labris & Gayten-LGBT, 2001, online).[12]

By making an explicit reference to the EU, the activists claim that Serbia needs "to be taken" to this organisation and imply that before it can be eligible to join, it should be transformed and become mature and *European*. According to Petrović (2012), the metaphor of a *road* (*way*, *trail*, *travelling*), based on the idea that we have to *move* to meet a certain objective, is—along with the concepts of *fortress*, *family*, and *future*—the most frequent discursive strategy in representing candidate-states' accession to the

[11] On 27 June 1969, the police raided the Stonewall Inn in New York, but—unlike on previous occasions—encountered resistance of drag queens, transsexuals, lesbians, and gay men. A month later, around 500 people walked in a first Pride march to the Stonewall Inn, marking the beginning of the contemporary movement for LGBT rights (Kates & Belk, 2001).

[12] If not otherwise indicated, all translations from the Serbian are mine.

Union. This metaphor's specificity lies in the fact that the presumed aim, namely joining the Union, cannot be guaranteed or foreseen, but is postponed and burdened by multiple obstacles and additional conditions, giving an impression that the objective constantly moves further away in the future. By doing so, it produces the feeling that the candidate country is forever entrapped in the EU's "immediate outside" (Jansen, 2009).

A few days after the march, *Forum pisaca* (2001, online), a non-governmental organisation that gathers writers and other intellectuals, published a statement in which they said:

> Primitive orgies of the right-wing, nationalist, clericalist and pro-fascist elements in the streets of Belgrade on Saturday 30 June as well as public expressions of extreme homophobia and the lynching of Gay Pride Parade participants and those who supported them are the most serious warning that Serbia finds itself at a crossroads. Along with the European road towards reforms and democracy, there is also the other way, the one leading to the rule of violence and street terror. Forces of populism, militarism and Nazism have not been weakened, but, on the contrary, they have become stronger, encouraged by both open and hidden messages arriving from the politicians of the opposition or from those in power.

Similarly, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, one of the most prominent (if occasionally controversial[13]) human rights oriented non-governmental organisations active since the early 1990s, stated the following:

> The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights repeats that it is necessary to urgently pass amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which would guarantee the right to a different sexual orientation and its expression and which would also ensure police and legal protection of sexual minorities. This step needs to be taken as soon as possible given that retrograde institutions, spearheaded by the Serbian Orthodox Church, ever more frequently call for lynchings of homosexuals. In the contemporary world, the way in which a society treats homosexuals reflects the degree of its civility (Stanojlović, 2001, online).

[13] See the most recent interview that the leader of this organisation Sonja Biserko gave to the Croatian magazine *Vijenac* (Tunjić, 2015).

Both of these statements which appeared so early on in the history of Belgrade Prides are illustrative of the "fissure" that started to separate LGBT activists and non-heteronormative sexuality from an "insufficiently civilised" environment which they had to confront. Thus already in some of the very first Pride-related activist reactions, a symbolic link was established between homosexuality and European integration processes whereby "tolerance" towards gays and lesbians was constructed as a sign of civilisation and modernity that are distant in both space and time. This happened at the expense of a closer engagement with the everyday realities of both the LGBT and the general population. Such a "civilisation discourse" did not escape either the then Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić (B92, 2001, online)[14] who was seen by many as a harbinger of the better future:

> I think it is too early for a country that has been isolated for so long and under a patriarchal repressive culture to stand this test of tolerance. I am, of course, a supporter of tolerance in every sense and everyone has the right to express their difference as long as they do not harm someone else and they certainly do not harm anyone by having different sexual affinities. That is the highest degree of tolerance and I am afraid we will need some time to reach it.

Interestingly enough, on the day before the Pride march took place in Belgrade, Đinđić was at the EU headquarters in Brussels managing to obtain 1.25 billion dollars in aid for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and promising the group of 15 European countries, the USA, Canada, and Japan that human rights would be respected. However, immediately after the march, when it was obvious that the state did not make an effort to protect its participants, ILGA-Europe[15] announced that

[14] Vojislav Koštunica, the then president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and a conservative politician critical of the European Union, did not condemn the attacks on Pride participants (Simo, 2001).

[15] ILGA-Europe is an international non-governmental umbrella organisation operating within the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA, created in 1978) and

it would protest with the European Union, saying that the European aid to Yugoslavia should be conditional on respect for human rights (Simo, 2001). This widespread and sometimes rather uncritical insistence on the human rights paradigm, which would become the staple discursive instrument for articulating and justifying the purpose of pride marches, presents it as supposedly universalistic in ambitions and applicability (Stychin, 2004). In a highly volatile and economically devastated setting, the human rights paradigm often obscures the class component of identitarian struggles which are inherently multiclass phenomena. It also essentialises sexual orientation and perpetuates the notion of gay difference which, in turn, distances the public from the LGBT movement as a universally oriented political undertaking.

After this traumatic experience with the first March, which is nowadays remembered as a "Massacre Pride", there were no other attempts to organise this manifestation in the following 3 years. The "community", shocked by hatred and violence, found itself in tatters, questioning the purposefulness of this event. One of the most visible lesbian activists and the co-organiser of the first Pride, Lepa Mlađenović (as cited in Kajinić, 2003, p. 30) stated:

> I have a feeling that a lot of them [lesbian Pride participants] somehow activated some of their old fears there and that they now took hold together with some facts which justify their being afraid. And that this pretty much prevented them in the whole development of their lesbian existence, which was really difficult for me to accept. Because then (…) of course that it would have been better that nothing happened instead of this happening since the whole movement in Belgrade was thrown back. In fact, the women and men activists were thrown in some situation that is much more difficult than it used to be. And the whole thing was supposed to encourage us, to improve things for us. And we are ten times worse than before that

bringing together 422 organisations from 45 European countries. ILGA-Europe was established as a separate region of ILGA and an independent legal entity in 1996.

> day. (…) And on the other hand, this was of course a huge amount of information about the society we live in. So we got completely sobered up then, and not only we![16]

2004: Towards Legal Change

The LGBT "community" consolidated in late 2003 and early 2004 when the Association for the Promotion of Human Rights of the Sexually Different "Pride" (Udruženje za promociju ljudskih prava seksualno različitih "Pride"), led by the journalist Boris Milićević,[17] announced that it planned to organise the second Pride march in Belgrade on 17 July 2004. Explaining the choice of the date, Milićević (as cited in Popović, 2004, 28) stated:

> The Pride Day is two days before Vidovdan[18] and we do not want to irritate the public. The first day of July is reserved for Exit festival when a lot of people will be in Novi Sad, so that is why we decided to stage our event on 17 July. […] Parade is a political event here. We want to show that we exist and to strengthen the movement in our country. We do not want to be beaten, thrown out of our homes or fired because we are sexually different.

[16] The first Belgrade Pride march was an important precedent for the first Zagreb Pride that took place in 2002. Kajinić (2003, p. 16), one of the organisers of the 2002 Zagreb Pride and a participant in the 2001 Belgrade Pride, writes: "Importantly, the interviewed women in talking about their concern for the safety of the Pride participants constantly refer to the events of the Belgrade Pride which also sheds light on the extent to which the relative success of the Zagreb Pride was constructed around the lessons learnt from the Belgrade Pride experiences".

[17] From 2004 Milićević is the owner of the brand Loud & Queer which has been organising gay parties in Belgrade and Novi Sad.

[18] Vidovdan (St Vitus Day) is an important national and religious holiday in Serbia. It is a memorial day to Saint Prince Lazar and the Serbian holy martyrs who died during the Kosovo Battle on 28 June 1389. Moreover, on 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nephew of Emperor Franz Josef and heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was shot in Sarajevo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. This event is seen by many as an act of anti-imperial liberation. Also, Slobodan Milošević was extradited to the Hague Tribunal on 28 June 2001, attributing additional nationalist charge to this day.

While assuming this reconciliatory attitude, the organisers remembered that the 2001 Pride participants could not count on police support and planned to hire 400–450 private bodyguards (Stanimirović, 2004). They were also trying to involve representatives of other LGBT organisations, but Labris and Gayten, the organisers of the 2001 march, said that they would not take part in the event. Also, a delegation travelled around Austria and Germany in January and February 2004 garnering support for the Belgrade Pride. Anja Arnautović (as cited in Popović, 2004, p. 28), one member of this delegation, stated:

> It was difficult for the people to accept the fact that participants are getting beaten at Pride marches, because that is something that in the countries of Western Europe has since a lot of time gone beyond sexual minorities. The scenes of people getting beaten in the streets of Belgrade have left a particularly strong impression and because of this we were told that—as a sign of solidarity—there would be a massive turn up of people from the places which we visited.

However, the political situation in the country was progressively worsening as unrests broke out in Kosovo in March 2004. In what the then Serbian prime minister Vojislav Koštunica called "an attempted pogrom", a few thousands Serbs were forced to leave Kosovo while 28 were killed (BBC, 2004). As a reaction to this, violent protests took place in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Niš, after which the Association "Pride" decided to cancel the march. In a statement, published on 8 April 2004, the organisers stated:

> The main reason for this decision is a very high risk and the inability to guarantee safety for all of the participants as well as the lack of strong support of the democratic public. After repeated violence caused by right-wing extremists in the streets of Belgrade who set mosques on fire, it became obvious that not only is Serbia dominated by extremist nationalist and conservative forces which do not accept difference of any sort, but also that the governing bodies do not have any intention to stop violence and construct a democratic society where there would be space for difference. […] Pride Parade did not get the support of the civic, pro-European parties or of the non-governmental sector which it expected. The LGBT movement in Serbia is still weak and it is not capable of publicly struggling for

> its rights. Next Pride parade in Belgrade will take place when the whole democratic public is ready for it and until then "Pride" will continue working on other projects that could contribute to the improvement of the status of minority groups in Serbia (Udruženje za promociju ljudskih prava seksualno različitih "Pride", 2004, online).

After it became clear that organising a Pride march would not be possible, some LGBT organisations decided to concentrate their efforts on legislative change. Thus, already in 2003, activists pointed out that there was no legal regulation which would mention protection of sexual minorities and asked for an article to be added to the Criminal Code which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (e.g. Gayecho, 2004). Even though the LGBT organisations "retreated" in the face of violence, a far-right group known as Obraz[19] continued to threaten non-heterosexual people with a campaign in which they distributed posters that said "Prevention is better than cure" (Bolje sprečiti nego lečiti). After this aggressive initiative that took place in politically volatile circumstances, representatives of the Serbian LGBT activist organisations wrote a letter (Mlađenović et al., 2004, p. 8) to the government evoking the EU and referring to the Anti-Discrimination Law:

> Given that you are in favour of Serbia's integration into the European Union, we expect that you will condemn homophobia, particularly taking into consideration that it is forbidden by the key documents of this community and it will soon be forbidden also by the new Anti-Discrimination Law of the Republic of Serbia.

2009: "It's Time for Equality"

However, the passing of the Anti-Discrimination Law only took place 5 years later and there were no Pride marches in Belgrade in the meantime. However, even in 2009, this legislative change did not go without controversy. The government decided to withdraw the original draft

[19] This far-right (Orthodox clero-fascist) organisation was banned by the decision of the Serbian Constitutional Court on 12 June 2012.

under the pressure of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other "traditional churches" which protested against the articles regulating free expression of faith as well as sexual orientation and gender identity (B92, 2009). This move was strongly criticised by political parties, the non-governmental sector, as well as numerous international organisations. Thus, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission[20] and ILGA-Europe (Johnson & Meirleir, 2004, online) sent a joint letter to the Serbian government in which they stated that they were

> deeply concerned that a comprehensive draft law to combat discrimination was withdrawn from parliamentary consideration […] despite support from human rights and other civil society groups […] We understand that the opposition to the draft law relates to the clauses prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and religion. We urge you to adopt the law without eliminating these clauses. […] With legal protection, public authorities will treat them [LGBT people] equally, no longer question their rights to free expression or assembly, and recognise their dignity. Society at large will eventually follow the state's leadership and Serbia will be among the growing number of countries that respect the human rights of LGBT people.

Three weeks later, on 26 March 2009, the National Assembly passed the Anti-Discrimination Law with slight modifications.[21] The government issued a statement saying that by passing this law, it submitted to the Parliament all the law drafts necessary for Serbia's entry to what is called the "White Schengen List" that would allow Serbian citizens to travel to the Schengen Area countries without visas (R. D, 2009). Such a formalistic orientation of the government which perceived the

[20] The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) is an international non-governmental organisation devoted to the protection of human rights of non-heterosexual people. It is principally based in New York City where it holds consultative status with the United Nations.

[21] Serbian gender studies scholar Jelisaveta Blagojević (2011, p. 28) argued in a widely cited volume *De-Centring Western Sexualities* that "Serbia is one of the last countries in Europe to adopt general anti-discrimination laws". This sentence is followed by a rather unusual footnote intervention of the Polish volume editors Kulpa and Mizielińska (2011, p. 28) which says: "Although the author seems to be rather critical about this advancement of Serbia as 'late', it has to be noted that such laws are not yet standard, and in fact some of the supposedly 'more advanced' countries of the EU (such as Poland) still do not have them, which actually puts Serbia at the forefront of change".

law, not so much as a legal instrument for protecting minorities, but rather as an instrument in the European integration process, was not favourably received by all the members of the LGBT "community". One commentator on the internet forum Gay Serbia stated: "Step by step and we get these formal rights…but we will change our reality in a more risky way" (Calypso, 2009, online).

With the Anti-Discrimination Law, the LGBT activist organisations finally acquired a full legal basis for staging a Pride march and in the spring of 2009 Labris and Gay Straight Alliance,[22] gathered under the slogan "It's Time for Equality", intensified their efforts in this direction.[23] Legislative changes also strengthened the Europeanisation discourse as a context in which LGBT rights-related activities are positioned and the plans to organise a new Pride were supported by many diplomatic missions of the EU countries and EU representatives.[24] For example, Jelko Kacin (Belgrade Pride Blog, 2009c, online), a member of the European Parliament, sent a letter to the Pride organisers saying:

> I would like to send you my strong support regarding the Pride march that you are organising and preparing for 20 September 2009 in Belgrade. One of the basic European values on which rests the whole big family of the European Union people is protection from any form of discrimination. That is why I firmly believe that on its way to full membership of the European Union, Serbia needs to pass a big test of democracy by creating the conditions that would allow such an event to take place without provocations or incidents.

As mentioned above, Petrović (2012) shows that, along with *way* or *road*, *family* is one of the most frequent metaphors for representing the EU in

[22] Gay Straight Alliance is a Belgrade-based non-governmental organisation devoted to lobbying for the rights and conducting research on the status of LGBT persons in Serbia. It was founded in 2005 by Boris Milićević.

[23] After the Law was passed, the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, at that moment chaired by Sweden, issued a statement saying that it saluted the intention of the Government of Serbia to protect the 2009 Belgrade Pride (Belgrade Pride Blog, 2009a).

[24] In a letter of support of the 2009 Pride march, the Embassy of the Netherlands in Serbia stated (Belgrade Pride Blog, 2009b): "Respect for sexual orientation and gender equality is not promotion of a particular lifestyle, but respect for the elementary human rights. It is the very essence of European values".

Western European political discourses. By conceptualising EU accession as a return to the family nest, this metaphor "enables hierarchisations and paternalism of some countries towards others and on multiple levels" (p. 45). According to this understanding, Serbia is still far away from *joining the family*—it has "to qualify and prove its maturity" (p. 46) in this case by successfully organising a Pride march for which it might need monitoring, control, and education.

However, when it became obvious that nationalist/right-wing resistance to the 2009 March was still so strong to be able to put it in question, the organisers published a statement saying (Belgrade Pride Blog, 2009d, online) that:

> It is clear that the issue of Pride parade has over the last few days gone beyond the issue of LGBT rights. The government of Serbia and all state bodies have to understand that the eyes of the international community are upon Belgrade and that potential violence or ban of our gathering would have serious consequences for the current efforts regarding European integrations, especially with the view to Serbia's aims to fulfil all the remaining requests that are awaiting it on its way towards the visa-free regime for the Schengen Area.

Even though the link between the march and EU integrations was pointed to from many sources, practically 1 day before the event the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs decided not to issue a permission for the Pride to take place in the centre of Belgrade. They offered an alternative location (further away from the centre) where, as they said, participants' security could be guaranteed (Beta, 2009), but the organisers did not accept this proposal. By practically not allowing the march to happen as planned, the Serbian state failed to comply with its own Anti-Discrimination Law that had been passed a couple of months before.[25] In response to this, the European Commission Delegation, the OSCE

[25] The Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, a non-governmental organisation, filed a complaint with the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia which 2 years later, in December 2011, ruled that the authorities violated the Constitution by not allowing the Pride march to happen as planned. The same organisation filed another complaint with the same Court after the explicit ban of the 2011 Pride march. That complaint was also adopted by the Court (Živanović, 2011).

Mission in Serbia, and the Council of Europe Office issued a statement (OSCE, 2009, online) in which they said:

> The three institutions stress that everyone has the fundamental right to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression as well as protection from discrimination of any kind. The state authorities have a direct responsibility to guarantee the effective exercise of these human rights. Unfortunately, this weekend threats, intimidation and intolerance dominated over dignity, tolerance and pride.

However, two protest marches (March against violence and Citizens' response to violence) were organised in the wake of the 2009 Pride cancellation as a reaction to the increase of violence in the streets of Belgrade and a widespread impression that (in case of Pride) the state withdrew in front of extremists' threats. These marches were similar in form to a Pride parade, but they did not have an explicitly LGBT-related content. Azdejković (2009) claims that they were actually orchestrated by the ruling parties because their youth sections were involved in their organisation. He (Azdejković, 2009, online) then asks:

> will these marches against violence and banning of the [extremist] groups contribute to the disappearance of violence from the Serbian society, will they be sufficient to enable a Pride march in Serbia or has all of this been just a performance for the eyes of the European Union?

Even though the march did not happen in 2009, Gay Straight Alliance (2011, p. 10; see also Knežević, 2014) published a report saying that "the issue of the Parade taking place is actualised in the institutions of the European Union and has aroused great interest of the international community". Due to constant internal tensions, this organisation, although included in the preparations for the March, did not join the efforts to draft a Platform for the human rights of LGBT people which was announced in the wake of the Pride cancellation (Azdejković, 2009; Kožul, 2009).[26]

[26] In the wake of the 2009 march cancellation, a new activist group—LGBT Forum Serbia—appeared on the Serbian activist scene. It announced that it would organise the 2010 and in its statements heavily drew upon the Orientalising discourse of European values: "Six months after the failed attempt to stage a Pride march in Belgrade, the LGBT community of this country concludes

2010: "State Pride"

The only Pride March which actually took place after a decade of attempts marked by serious activist tensions and misunderstandings was the one organised in October 2010 by Gay-Straight Alliance (Gej strejt alijansa), Kvirija Centre, and the Novi Sad-based Group for Support of Gay Men (Knežević, 2014). The organisers initiated a wide media campaign and closely cooperated with state institutions (Ministry of Justice, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, police, National Assembly), managing also to obtain declarative support of the then president of Serbia Boris Tadić. Also, on 7 October 2010, six members of the European Parliament gathered in the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights[27] sent an open letter to Serbian officials stating that:

> It has been nine years since lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Serbian citizens decided to take to the streets, leading to great violence and the absence of protection from police forces. The time has now come to reaffirm Serbia's commitment to freedom of expression and assembly for all its minorities. This important event […] will send a strong signal that the city of Belgrade and Serbia share European values […] Marije Cornelissen, member of the European Parliament from the Netherlands, will officially attend the pride march and looks forward to taking part in this important public event.

Moreover, the British Ambassador to Serbia, Stephen Wordsworth, who soon after the cancellation of the 2009 March said that it would be good to give it another try "within a couple of weeks" (Škrnjić, 2009, online), issued a statement in which he expressed solidarity with LGBT population and praised the efforts of the Serbian government for supporting Pride

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that the time is ripe for a change. The time is ripe for the marginalised and discriminated people across Serbia to take the struggle for democratic rights and European values in their own hands and to clearly react against primitivism and homophobia of this society. There is no alternative to equality" (Belgrade Pride Blog, 2009e, online). This short-lived group was characterised as a "phantom organisation" by some of the "mainstream" Belgrade-based LGBT activist groups (Fonet, 2010).

[27] The Intergroup on LGBTI Rights is an informal forum for Members of the European Parliament dedicated to the advancement of LGBT rights lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people. With more than 150 members it is the largest of the European Parliament's intergroups.

organisation and protecting LGBT rights (Knežević, 2014; Marković, 2010). This wide mobilisation of both local politicians and foreign representatives is, according to Knežević (2014), related to Serbia's attempt to accelerate its EU accession process as it was expecting the European Commission questionnaire that surveys candidate country's performance in preparation for membership (Miller, 2010).

On 10 October, around a 1000 Pride participants marched in the centre of Belgrade under the protection of 6000 policemen. In spite of such heavy police forces, the material damage caused by the protests of right-wing extremists amounted to 1 million euros, while 142 policemen were injured and 249 persons arrested (Savić, 2011). The Pride was opened by the Chief of the European Union Delegation in Serbia Vincent Degert and the majority of Pride participants consisted of the European Union, Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe officials and employees, NGO sector professionals, and a few local LGBT people and supporters. Marek Mikuš (2011, p. 836), an anthropologist who attended the event, wrote:

> In their rather predictable and formal speeches in English, the foreign guests repeatedly referred to the EU, whose flag could be seen in the crowd, along with rainbow flags, a purple Union Jack, but no Serbian flag. Surrounded by the globalised iconography of the LGBT movement and cheesy Western pop, I could not help feeling that almost the only local thing about the Parade were the militarised, violent conditions under which it was happening. If the speakers mentioned Serbia, they mostly denoted it negatively, as a site of deviation from the European norms of respect for human rights that the Parade begins to rectify.

Although Pride became "successful" after so many years of activist efforts to make it happen, it was tainted by what many activists perceived as an overly tight political alliance of some segments of the "civil sector" with the state ("State Pride", Mikuš, 2011) through which the "linkage" with some of the subversive elements of Serbia/post-Yugoslav activist engagement was lost (Bilić, 2012). Thus, in one of the activist discus-

sions that took place in the wake of the manifestation, one long-term feminist activist said:

> It seems to me that the Socialist Party of Serbia and the Serbian Progressive Party are planning to hijack our forms, render them meaningless, empty them from their political content… and then simply throw them away… the sole purpose of all of this is meeting "the standards" [European Union conditions]… this has nothing to do with our needs, but it is something which is asked from them… they are asked for Kosovo and they are asked for this (Pride)...[28]

In this regard, in the wake of the 2010 Pride march, many local institutions and politicians started distancing themselves again from LGBT organisations. This was particularly evident in the way in which the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, led by Svetozar Čiplić who addressed the March participants in person, excluded LGBT organisations from its activities in the post-March period (Knežević, 2014; Savić, 2011). As Knežević (2014, p. 354) argues, this kind of treatment makes one wonder whether the 2010 Pride was not much more than an instance of "one-time, pragmatic pink-washing[29] in the interest of a formal fulfilment of the requirements and the criteria of the EU".[30] Such concerns are even more plausible in the light of the fact that at the end of 2010, Boris

[28] I am grateful to Miloš Urošević, an activist of Women in Black, who provided me with a transcript of the discussion organised by this group in October 2010.

[29] Pinkwashing is a term used to describe a strategy where LGBT-friendliness is promoted as a way of masking other less socially acceptable practices.

[30] Some Croatian LGBT activists expressed similar concerns about Zagreb Pride parades. Thus, Simić (2011, online) argues: "The last three Prides have been somewhat 'uneventful' (with more police protection, less violence, less scandals)—but they are particularly interesting for the employment of pro-EU rhetoric in activists' struggle for rights and recognition. At the 2008 Pride, the organizers stated that "every attack on an LGBTIQ person is an attack on civilized and European, democratic and free Croatian society". Also, on several occasions activists have also called on international organizations to write to Croatian government officials in order to apply pressure, and it seems that many activists have found the EU accession process and the lobbying efforts of international organizations to be powerful and useful in their struggles. The other side of the coin, however, is the doubt about the potential of these strategies to produce long term change as it is not unlikely that after entering the EU Croatia might become another Poland. It is possible that after becoming a member, there will no longer be pressure on the Croatian government or the political will to enforce its already existing legislation or to create other sexual rights that have not already been granted in Croatia or even in the European Union".

Milićević, one of the founders of Gay Straight Alliance (the main 2010 Pride organiser), joined the Board of the Socialist Party of Serbia which by accepting an open gay man and an LGBT activist tried to present itself as a modern pro-European and leftist political party. Given the past of the Socialist Party of Serbia, led by Slobodan Milošević throughout the 1990s, Milićević's entry into some of its highest structures, was not met with approval of the LGBT activist "community".[31]

2011–2013: Sequence of Bans

Fearing further outpourings of violence and not wanting to frustrate voters with this "provocative" issue, the authorities banned the parade in the following 3 years, always a day or two before the event was supposed to take place. However, media campaigns, activist tensions, and mutual accusations continued unabated. Also, over the 3-year period, the European Union kept insisting on this manifestation, regularly including information on Pride parades in its annual accession reports and strengthening the link between EU accession and Pride march.[32] Thus, after the

[31] In 2013, Gay Straight Alliance established an award "Duga" (rainbow) with which it recognises contributions to the fight against homophobia and transphobia and the protection and promotion of human rights of LGBT people in Serbia. Even though the original idea was that the award would be given on the basis of a wide consensus of various organisations, institutions, and individuals, the award became rather controversial after it was given to the representatives of the state three consecutive times: first to the Department for Community Policing of the Ministry of the Interior (2012/2013), then to Tanja Miščević, Head of Negotiating Team for Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU (2013/2014), and finally to Jadranka Joksimović, Minister without Portfolio in the Government of Serbia (2014/2015). This sequence created frustration among some segments of the LGBT "community" which accused Gay Straight Alliance of homonationalism (Maljković, 2014; see also, Gligorijević, 2015).

[32] Similarly, in the context of the first Pride March that took place in 2011 in Split, Croatia, the Dutch Ambassador to Croatia, commenting the violence in the context of Croatia's accession to the European Union, said: "This event in Split definitely went out of its frame. In the Netherlands such events pass almost unnoticed. The fundamental human rights are part of the 23rd chapter (of the *acquis communautaire*) whose closure is still not complete. But even once it has been closed, there should be controls that will follow what Croatia does in the field of human rights. The event in Split showed that such a monitoring is really necessary. In all normal democracies, people have the right to demonstrate for their rights and no one should throw stones, glasses or bottles on them" (Večernji, 2011, online).

2011 ban, Ulrike Lunacek (Intergroup, 2012, online), a member of the European Parliament stated:

> I deeply regret that Serbian citizens will not be able to march for tolerance, acceptance and equality on Sunday. Serbian authorities have a duty to care for everyone's safety, but it is profoundly disturbing that the leadership of a country seeking EU candidate status and membership—supported by a majority in the European Parliament—feel incapable of providing such safety for all citizens.

Similarly, after the 2012 ban,[33] there were many criticisms expressed by officials of the European institutions.[34] Thus, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland stated that he was "surprised and disappointed that the Belgrade Pride event has been banned again. […] Serbia should be in a position to safeguard such an event, which is commonplace in modern democracies" (DC101, 2012, online).[35] Marije Cornelissen and Keith Taylor (Intergroup, 2012, online) two members of the European Parliament, said that

> homophobes won by threatening large-scale unrest and violence. Why does Serbia continue to allow high-risk football matches, providing police protection from hooligans but not homophobes? A decision like this should weigh heavily against Serbia in a decision on the opening of EU negotiations.

[33] In 2011–2013, the ban referred only to Pride marches, whereas other cultural activities organised within the so-called Pride Week unfolded as planned. Thus, in 2012, the organisers decided to incorporate in the Pride Week programme an exhibition of the Swedish photographer Elisabeth Ohlson Wallin entitled "Ecce Homo" where one photograph depicts a transgender or cross-dressing Jesus surrounded by LGBT apostles. This particularly controversial decision of the Pride organisers further enraged some segments of the Serbian public and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Those who attended the opening of the exhibition were protected by 2000 policemen (Anderson-Minshall, 2012).

[34] The 2012 March was supported also by the European Gay Police Association (Naslovi, 2012).

[35] However, this EU campaign was not unanimous. For example, in a statement given to Reuters (Morgan, 2012, online), Stefan Füle, the then EU enlargement commissioner, said that he also regretted the extremists' threats and added that although equal rights are one of the "core foundations of the European projects, it is just one element and there are more important issues to be discussed".

After the 2013 Pride ban,[36] the President of the European Parliament Martin Schultz wrote on his Twitter account that he "regret(s) that the gay parade has been banned in Serbia for the third time" (Voice of Serbia, 2013, online). At a press conference of the 2013 Belgrade Pride Parade organising committee, Head of the EU Mission to Serbia Michel Davenport said that the country missed an opportunity to show respect for all human rights (B92, 2013), whereas the Swedish EU Minister Birgitta Ohlsson, one of the planned Pride march speakers, said that the Serbian government did not show that "they believe in basic human rights as they get closer towards EU membership negotiations" (Sveriges Radio, 2013, online). Particularly active in following and supporting the attempts to organise the Pride march as well as in condemning the decisions of the Serbian government to ban it was the European Parliament Rapporteur for Serbia Jelko Kacin. Thus, after the 2013 ban, Kacin stated:

> The Pride parade ban is a devastating decision of the Serbian government. It is the wrong decision at the wrong time in the wrong place. We are preparing a report in which we must condemn this decision. Invoking intelligence services (in the context of security threats) is not the practice of any democratic country in the European Union. Pride is one of the key tests for the Serbian institutions and security threats can no longer be used as an excuse.

This "European pressure" was accumulating to such an extent that even one of the Belgrade-based LGBT organisations, Gay-Lesbian Info Centre, issued a statement urging the EU to stop using the Serbian LGBT population as a bargaining chip in the European integration process. They said

[36] Commenting the prediction that the 2013 Belgrade Pride would be banned, Svetlana Lukić, one of the editors of the online portal *Peščanik*, wrote: "It is already 13 years that we cannot adopt the most elementary thing—Pride Parade. The Voyager has already left for interstellar space, Macedonia will have solved its name issue and Turkey will have entered the EU before Serbia manages to organise its Pride Parade" (Lukić, 2013, online). Critiques of Serbia's alleged "backwardness", which sometimes end up being rather indiscriminate and "self-Balkansing" (see Kiossev, 2011), are a frequent manifestation of an urban "habitus" associated with the so-called *Other Serbia* (Druga Srbija) (Bilić, 2012; Bilić & Stubbs, 2015). Such reasoning is reminiscent of Kideckel's (1996, online) notion of "categorical Orientalism": "In categorical Orientalism subjects retain their voice, though those voices that devalue their own lives, or at least those aspects of them organized by the state, have the greatest credence".

that such support actually stigmatised the LGBT population as a culprit for Serbia's failure to join the EU and that this turned the heterosexual population even more against their homosexual co-citizens. They (GLIC, 2013, online) said:

> Gay Lesbian Info Centre demands that the LGBT population is no longer used to condition Serbia's accession to the European Union, because such a practice not only does not yield any results, but actually contributes to the increase of homophobia and animosity against the LGBT population in Serbia. […] We believe that it is inappropriate to expose the LGBT population even more to the negative emotions of Serbian citizens and that is exactly what Jelko Kacin's statements do. Because of such statements, the LGBT population is singled out as a culprit for the fact that Serbia's is not entering the European Union. We ask Kacin and other EU officials to think better about the consequences of their statements next time—if the EU does not help us to improve the status of LGBT people in Serbia, at least it should not make our job more difficult. The LGBT population in Serbia is frustrated by the fact that it is constantly positioned between the right-wings and the left-wings, between the European Union and Serbia, between human rights activists and hooligans and that it is the only one to end up harmed in this "game". This population is particularly frustrated by the fact that those who are declaratively in favour of LGBT rights do not at all consider what their actions do to the LGBT community itself.

In the context of Europeanisation tensions in Serbia and the wider post-Yugoslav space, it is not irrelevant that Jelko Kacin is a Slovenian official. Petrović (2012) argues that while Slovenia has been trying to distance itself from its Yugoslav legacy and obscure its belonging to the former federation, its officials often present it as a country that is profoundly familiar with the region and can help it on its way to the EU. In this regard, one can see how the paternalistic approach of the Union towards the post-Yugoslav space generally becomes reflected within that space itself along the lines of Bakić-Hayden's (1995) concept of "nesting orientalisms".[37]

[37] Nesting orientalisms is a concept that captures the gradation of supposed backwardness and primitiveness as one moves from the West to the East (in this case, within the post-Yugoslav space). See, in this regard, Kajinić's chapter in this volume as well as Melegh (2006).

Moreover, GLIC's statement pointed to the frustration felt by the general LGBT population in Serbia with the effects of the insistence on and the repeated failures of Pride marches. For example, in an online discussion on the webpage of the daily *Politika* (2013, online) one commentator addressed Goran Miletić, a long-term Pride organiser[38] and stated:

> Up to now, we lived more or less normally with our problems. We got used to them. Well, who does not have this or that kind of problem in this country because of their features or difference? The point is that up to a couple of years ago, we had both friends and support, but now each and every one of us needs to give justifications for this Parade of yours, we have to say that we do not need it and people start despising us more and more […] Up to now nothing unpleasant happened to me in Serbia, but I am afraid that you might change that with your aggressive politics.

A couple of months after the 2013 March ban, the Belgrade-based Centre for Queer Studies conducted a 4-month long research on the attitudes of the LGBT population in Serbia (Stojaković, 2014). It found that after 15 years of intense activism, violence, and fear of it as well as a profound feeling of elementary security marked LGBT people's lives. More specifically, 36% of the respondents believe that Pride brings more damage than benefits, whereas 42% agree that "pride parade contributes to the increase of fear and hatred towards LGBT people" (Stojčić, 2014, p. 147). This study also found an ambivalent attitude towards LGBT organisations. On the one hand, they play an important role in the empowerment, education, and informing of LGBT people, and for a considerable number they stand for a kind of safe space and acceptance. On the other hand, they are often seen as disunited, non-transparent, not open enough for the inclusion of LGBT people and lacking media presence (except during the period when Pride is organised).

On the other hand, when asked whether he would take part in the parade if it was not banned for the third consecutive time, the then

[38] As a reaction to the third consecutive ban, the activists relied on SMS to organise a gathering in front of the National Assembly (the so-called Night Pride) 20 September 2013 late in the evening. Around 200 people participated in this event which took place without incidents (Blic, 2013).

Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior as well as the president of the Socialist Party of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, noted that holding a Pride would be:

> good for Serbia because the European Union asked for it… let's not say later on that it did not ask for it, it did… and if it were to happen, we would surely get the date for the initiation of the accession negotiations in January… but, on the other hand, an even greater pity would be if the violence that happened during the parade held in 2010 were to repeat… I know that it is everybody's constitutional right to express their diversity, but it is my right not to go there. We should not go to the other extreme and ingratiate ourselves with everybody… why would we ingratiate ourselves with anyone? What am I supposed to do now, become gay, so that everything's pro-European (B92, 2013, online)?

This statement shows a deeply homophobic attitude of a politician who is formalistically committed to the "European values" because of being stretched between his conservative voters, on the one hand, and a pressure to avoid international isolation of a poor country fundamentally dependent on EU funding, on the other.

2014: Another "State Pride"?

After the 2014 parliamentary elections, the Serbian Progressive Party formed a coalition with the Socialist Party of Serbia and Aleksandar Vučić became a new prime minister, determined to position Serbia firmly on the European Union track. In the context of these efforts, he referred to the preparations for the 2014 Pride march solely in terms of security and respect for legal norms:

> I respect the constitutional obligations of the state and it is my job to guarantee safety and security to everyone. It is my democratic right not to attend this parade nor am I even considering such a possibility (ne pada mi na pamet). I could not march, I have better things to do… but even if I had nothing better to do, I still would not march. That is my choice (as cited in S. Č., 2014, online).

The 2014 Pride march took place on 28 September with 7000 policemen, armoured vehicles and police helicopters protecting around a 1000 participants. The event was also attended by Michael Davenport, the EU ambassador to Serbia, Heinz Wilhem, the ambassador of Germany, as well as by Michael Kirby, the US ambassador (Beta, 2014). Addressing the Pride, Davenport stated that it was "very good that this parade took place. It sends a strong message to everyone, especially the LGBT community, but also a message to those who use hate speech that such a behaviour in Serbia is not acceptable" (Birn, 2014, online). This strong association between the EU and the Pride march was also discussed by one of the organisers Goran Miletić (as cited in Petrović, 2014, online):

> The fact that there were five to six policemen per one Pride participant is not a reason for satisfaction. That was absolutely a kind of ghetto and we cannot be satisfied with something like that. [The state] found its own interest in organising the Pride and protecting its participants. They recognised that the state can very much benefit if the Pride passes normally, exactly as it has passed today. Of course that at the end of the day there is some kind of link with the European Union, but that question has been there also in the previous years and still the Pride was banned.

Although this 2014 March was widely praised in the EU circles, it still did not quite correspond to the needs and expectations of the local LGBT community. In the words of one member of the Belgrade LGBT activist group IDAHO[39] (Marinković, 2015, online; see also Marks21, 2014):

> Without going deeply into the problematic of the Belgrade Pride March itself, of the organizer's shady politics, pointless political demands, their absence during the whole year, seasonal opportunism and the organiser's complete detachment from the LGBT community and the everyday reality of LGBT people in Serbia, we can conclude that Belgrade Pride March 2014 didn't bring ANY positive social change at all. It's obvious it was all fake. Furthermore, Serbia's example of Belgrade Pride Parade was used in the OSCE/ODIHR conference on freedom of assembly as an example of

[39] IDAHO is a Belgrade-based group of artists and activists dedicated to the increase of LGBT visibility through art and culture. The group was founded in 2013 and operates as an alternative to the "mainstream" activist organisations involved in planning Belgrade Pride marches.

> good practice, disregarding the overall status of LGBT people and freedom of assembly in Serbia, which are both deteriorating. Fake in a sense that it was just organised to show that Serbia, as a country, is capable of obeying demands of patrons such as the European Union or any other international body, the deity our country is so eager to become a part of. Wishful thinking, dear folks.

2015: Lesbian March, Trans Pride, Belgrade Pride

After the 2014 March, the organisation Belgrade Pride became a member of the European Pride Organisers Association[40] and announced that the 2015 Pride Week would take place between 20 and 28 September. While it can be expected the EU institutions and representatives will send again a signal to the Serbian government that allowing and supporting the march would be good for the country's "European future", divisions within the LGBT activist "community", and probably also within the LGBT population itself, are still rather deep. They are, for example, evident from the fact that on 19 April 2015 there was a Lesbian March organised by a group of independent activists with the support of a few local and international NGOs. This manifestation stimulated a lot of controversy within the LGBT activist groups and the wider LGBT population because the organisers insisted that the march was meant exclusively for women. Ana Pandej (as cited in Naslovi, 2015, online), one of the organisers, stated:

> We organised a lesbian march because we think that lesbians are generally exposed to multiple invisibilities in our society. We are here, taking part in protests, workers' protests, women protests, Pride… but still we are not there... There are no lesbians, it is always some other group that is put in the foreground. That is for me the most important reason why we wanted

[40] The European Pride Organisers Association, a network of activist organisations, was founded 1991 in London with the view of promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Pride on a European level as well as empowering local and national pride organisations. About professionalisation of activism and the consequences of this process for activist enterprises, see Butterfield's chapter in this volume.

> a lesbian march. It is crucial that women generally and above all lesbians, but then also all other women comrades who are heterosexual, bisexual, queer, claim public space for themselves.

Moreover, in August 2015, 1 month before the Pride March, it was announced that a Trans Pride[41] would take place separately from the Belgrade Pride, but also on 20 September 2015. Commenting this decision, a gay activist and politician Boris Milićević (GayEcho, 2015, online) stated:

> The Serbian LGBT community has been for years a hostage of a civic association that likes to present itself as the only representative of that community. It could freely be said that by using the fact that the public and the media perceive Pride marches as the only important issues for the LGBT community, the association "Belgrade Pride" intentionally disables the development of activism as well as all stymies all other capacities of this marginalised group. Up to this year, the LGBT community has been patiently silent towards all of the misdeeds, political illiteracy and monopolistic behaviour of this small illegitimate group called "Belgrade Pride". […] Simply put, no one wants anymore to hopelessly drown in the dead sea that the Serbian LGBT activism has been turned into by "Belgrade Pride" and a few of their NGO satellites. That is why the support that the Trans Pride will get in the future is not only the support for despised and trans* people, but also the support for healthy LGBT activism in Serbia.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the turbulent history of the Belgrade Pride march has been, ever since its beginnings in the early 2000s, intricately intertwined with the process of Serbia's accession to the EU. The advancement and recent "acceleration" in the relevance of the EU LGBT-related policies (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014; Kahlina, 2014) has considerably paralleled the EU accession of Eastern European countries. It has also

[41] This event is organised by the civic association Egal and Gay Lesbian Info Centre, Belgrade.

coincided with the end of the wars of the Yugoslav succession, making the post-Yugoslav states eager to join the EU, a kind of platform on which these policies are tested and often applied in a way that is more strict in comparison with the provisions that the LGBT population is granted in some older EU states. While EU conditionality-based strategies to make its candidate countries "catch up" with the "civilised" rest of the continent are important in the sense of giving activists a leverage instrument with which to exert pressure on occasionally disobedient governments, they have an imperialist dimension (Böröcz & Sarkar, 2005; Kulpa, 2014) that disregards the particularities of the local context and ends up producing effects opposite to those desired.

Pride marches have been adopted in the Serbian socio-political context, characterised by a legacy of war violence and profound impoverishment, in their Western form. This reflects the "globalisation of gay identity", but also belies serious and long-term political difficulties of the Serbian LGBT activist "community" to produce strategies that would go beyond mere insistence on respect of human rights and the right to assembly and protest. This rights-based "mantra" is not only formalistic and pragmatic but is often unappreciative of the intersectional nature of oppression that many LGBT people are exposed to. More than a decade of painful and sometimes overtly violent efforts to organise Pride march resulted in two Prides that actually took place which shows that something might be wrong not only with the still deeply homophobic state and its (un) willingness to contain violence, but also with Pride as an instrument of gay emancipation in the circumstances in which it is organised or contested by a range of competing and highly professionalised LGBT activist organisations.

Given that Serbian LGBT initiatives emerged in the early 1990s in the context in which NGOs had been "always already" there, the amalgamation of NGO-isation and Europeanisation has made it difficult to articulate and even more difficult to sustain a kind of activist engagement that would operate outside of the NGO frame. This has, on the one hand, dislocated the activist struggle away from the everyday grievances of the local LGBT population (particularly of its segments that are not in the major urban centres, but around the country) and seriously limited activist claims to representational legitimacy (Bilić & Stubbs, 2015).

It has also created an "intermestic public sphere" populated by EU officials, Western representatives, and local professionals and mediators, more or less distant from the state apparatus, that supply the discursive means (Lendvai, 2007) for talking about non-heteronormativity and further alienate activism both from its "base" and the wider public.

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6

Queering as Europeanisation, Europeanisation as Queering: Challenging Homophobia in Everyday Life in Montenegro

Danijel Kalezić and Čarna Brković

Reinforcing a symbolic bind between acceptance of homosexuality and European belonging, or making "homosexuality" appear inseparable from "Europe", is potentially problematic: it positions non-heterosexual practices and people as not quite legitimate parts of the Montenegrin polity. We argue that the real challenge for improving the position of Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is to destabilise this conceptual link and to make homosexuality a legitimately Montenegrin political issue. As long as public officials and state institutions engage with LGBT concerns because the EU requests it of them and because it is presumably a European "thing to do"—rather than because of people who live in Montenegro and experience various forms of oppression on the basis of their sexuality and gender—non-heterosexual sexual practices will not be perceived as constitutive of the political and social life of Montenegro.

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_6

In order to make this point, we first discuss a sense of separation from LGBT activism which various LGBT people expressed during a number of informal conversations and semi-structured interviews we conducted in Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, over the last 3 years. After that, we offer an account of LGBT activism in the country, explaining its "upside-down" roots. We want to emphasise that our story is told from the perspective of some of its main actors and that other actors of the same story—the state officials, EU representatives, and other activists—may tell it in a different way. Yet, we contend that in whatever way the story is told, it will illuminate the intersections of LGBT activism with the process of "Europeanisation" as it has been enacted during the EU accession negotiations. Finally, we briefly discuss possible directions of LGBT activism which could challenge the conceptual link between "Europe" and "homosexuality".

Accommodating Homophobia and a Sense of Separation from LGBT Activism

Petar and Goran (pseudonyms) are a gay couple in their early thirties, living in Podgorica. Goran works at a local store, while Petar undertakes various poorly paid tasks that leave him enough time to dedicate himself to his cartoon drawing. Their relationship seems to be very loving, tender, and monogamous. They are open about their relationship only towards their closest friends, mostly heterosexual women, with whom they regularly watch movies, take day trips across Montenegro, and discuss everyday trivia.

Just like many other gay men in Montenegro, they express aversion towards the local "scene", claiming it is a "meat market" where any meaningful human relationship is destroyed before it could even take place, in favour of short and possibly passionate but often impersonal sexual encounters. Taking into account the fact that Podgorica has approximately 180,000 residents and that heteronormativity is pervasive, it should not come as a surprise that there are no LGBT clubs, cafes, cinemas, or town quarters. The "gay scene" in Montenegrin towns usually revolves around and within online spaces, a few public parks, one well-known public beach, and infrequent LGBT parties organised by the local NGOs. LGBT people also gather at the Counselling Centre opened by

the NGO Juventas in 2011 and in the LGBT Social Centre opened by the LGBT Forum Progress in 2013. In Petar and Goran's account, people from the "scene" do not welcome any glimpse of vulnerability or emotion, because it is "all focused on one thing—sex". Petar and Goran claim this is why they deleted their Gay Romeo accounts once they were sure their relationship was "the real deal". They do not attend the LGBT parties and they do not usually hang out with other LGBT people. Instead, they spend a lot of time alone at Goran's rented apartment or with Petar's family, at their place on the outskirts of the town.

Within his family, Petar is in a "transparent closet", an experience which impedes his full expression of his sexual identity (Kuhar, 2007; Švab & Kuhar, 2014). Several years back, Petar's parents discovered their son's online gay chat profile, which led to a fight lasting several days. Afterwards, the issues of marriage, love, and homosexuality were rarely mentioned. When Petar started bringing Goran home in the first few months of their relationship, his parents did not oppose it, but neither did they acknowledge its nature. Although all involved were probably aware that this was an intimate emotional and sexual relationship, it was renamed as a friendship within Petar's family. As time passed, Goran became something between a friend and a family member for Petar's parents. He is at their place on a daily basis, he cooks with Petar's mother, he helps Petar's father with house repairs, they talk on the phone with certain regularity, and Goran and Petar often sleep in the same room at their house. Petar's mother sometimes even calls Goran "my" or "mine", thus clearly conveying closeness and tenderness. However, the fact that Petar and Goran are in a loving relationship that involves sex is almost never mentioned openly.

Petar and Goran did not speak about the Pride Processions and LGBT activism as something that concerned them too much—for them, these were things organised by someone else for someone else. They said that LGBT activists in Montenegro were very brave, but they did not feel connected to the activism, or that Pride had a lot to do with them and their everyday lives.

A similar sentiment was shared by Matej, a stylish gay man in his mid-thirties. Matej, a precarious salesman in a clothing shop, was even annoyed by the Pride Processions as he saw no need for them. He wondered: if he had managed to organise his intimate life so far by using dark

alleys and the Internet, why could others not do the same? He has said more than once: "Why on earth would anyone want to walk the streets of the town clearly marked as a gay person? Why would anyone want to be seen and recognised as such?"

Just like many other gay men, Matej, Petar, and Goran have found a way to accommodate homophobia in their everyday lives: in order to continue being a son, a brother, a worker, *and* to meet some of their needs for love and sex, these men have found a way to work around pervasive homophobia as well as to integrate some of it into their everyday routines. Matej's words reflect internalised homophobia, or a combination of negative affect, thoughts, and behaviours that a gay person has towards homosexual practices of other people and oneself, including same-sex desire, affectionate feelings, and relationships (see Frost & Meyer, 2009).

Broadly speaking, many LGBT people in Montenegro who are not activists expressed a similar sense of separation from LGBT activism and the Pride Processions of the last few years. They frequently reacted to LGBT activism and the Pride event with reluctant acceptance at best or outright criticism at worst. One way—with which we do not agree—to understand this sense of separation of LGBT people from LGBT activism would be to assume that these people do not know what is good for them. We could assume that they are frightened and auto-homophobic to the point that it makes them incapable of understanding what would make their own lives better and easier. They are so afraid of being recognised as gay that they cannot grasp what might help them in the long run. Homophobia was indeed pervasive: public opinion surveys from 2010 (Uljarević et al., 2011) to 2012 (Laković-Drašković et al. 2015) show that high levels of homophobia (in the broadest sense of the word) can be traced across Montenegro. More specifically, 68.5 % of the population in 2010 and 59.9 % in 2012 believed that homosexuality is a disease. Similarly, 61.3 % in 2010 believed that homosexuals do not have the right to freely express their sexuality in public, while 45 % of people interviewed had this opinion in 2012. Surveys have measured a certain decrease in public support of violence towards LGBT people, but 11 % of the general population justified violent behaviour directed towards LGBTIQ people in 2012.

However, we do not think that such an interpretation of a sense of separation from activism is appropriate, because it pathologises a large

portion of LGBT people in Montenegro. The problem is not so much that some people, like Matej, Petar, Goran, or many other women, men, and trans people lacked personal, civic bravery to show up at the Pride Processions, or that they were unable to see what was good and what was bad for them. We want to suggest, instead, that this sense of separation from human rights discourses and practices is closely associated with the history of "civil society" as a concept and as a practice in Montenegro and other former Yugoslav states (Stubbs, 1996).

Namely, a particular normative idea of what civil society is and how it should operate was introduced in Montenegro in the early 1990s, during and after the fall of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, as something that had yet to be built, rather than something that should be developed from existing forms of sociality (Stubbs, 2012). Both local and foreign actors often ignored social practices which had a transformative potential usually implied by the notion of "civil society" (Stubbs, 2007). In other words, there were local forms of solidarity and associational and communal life that the international community and foreign donors did not necessarily always recognise as a basis for organising "civil society" (Bilić, 2012; Bilić & Janković, 2012; Jansen, 2005). Instead, former Yugoslavia was seen as a more or less blank space in which "civil society", "feminism", and many other presumably progressive concepts had to be introduced externally (Brković, 2010; Helms, 2013; Potkonjak et al., 2008).

As a result of this local history of the concept, many Montenegrin citizens rarely perceive "civil society" as a framework in which their ideas, needs, and grievances can be framed (cf. Hann & Dunn, 1996). They see "civil society" more as a framework which responds to the will, ideas, and needs of international funders, the EU, and the Montenegrin government. As some kind of a "utopian imaginary", the concept of "civil society" has had a significant impact on political life in Eastern Europe. However, it does not account for "gaps, slippages, and difference" (Gal & Kligman, 2000, p. 93) between the daily practices of politics and the normative idea of where politics is and how it should be practised.

Therefore, we want to suggest that contemporary LGBT activism in Montenegro brings not only a new *topic*—the visibility and protection of people who practise non-heteronormative forms of sexuality. LGBT

activism as a type of human rights activism also introduces new *procedures* and *techniques* for making things political. The language and practices of human rights NGOs include "target groups", "project implementation", "strategies and action plans", "project evaluation", "fundraising", and so forth. These are relatively new concepts, which are not quite comprehensible to many people living in Montenegro. Besides pervasive heteronormativity and homophobia, this is one of the many reasons why the legitimacy of LGBT issues is contested—perceived as external and imposed, rather than as stemming from oppressive relations over certain members of a political community.

LGBT Activism and "Europeanisation"

The start of the EU accession process and EU member state building in Montenegro is the point from which we can track the emergence of organised LGBT activism. One of us (Danijel) often says that the roots of LGBT activism in Montenegro were turned "upside-down" when compared with other former Yugoslav or Eastern European states. For instance, since the early 1990s in Croatia or Serbia there were LGBT groups and initiatives often closely linked with women's organisations (Juričić 2012; Mlađenović, 2005; Savić, 2011; Vasić, 2012). Visible LGBT activists worked alone or in small groups towards improving their human rights. When homosexuality was decriminalised and a critical mass of activists was already present, the LGBT organisations were registered and larger and more serious projects initiated.[1]

In Montenegro, things took a somewhat different course. First, the mainstream Montenegrin NGOs created a coalition, through which they initiated a public discussion about LGBT human rights and started cooperating with state institutions. The mainstream NGOs organised various forms of education and capacity building and created the conditions for LGBT people to come out and register their own organisations. At least

[1] The grassroots origins of LGBT activism are also clearly visible in Slovenia, where, as Kajinić (this volume) emphasises, the first European festival of lesbian and gay film was organised in the mid-1980s, during the SFRY. See also Kuhar (2012).

partly, this "upside-down" dynamic was the result of a very high degree of homophobia and transphobia, and very strong patriarchal traditions. The end result is that Montenegro is currently making the fastest progress in the domain of LGBT human rights in the region from the perspective of various donors. Despite the fact that public officials and the state institutions often did not work as well as they should have (and despite the impression which we cannot escape—that the state institutions and officials, conditioned by the EU accession process, have often worked on LGBT issues more for the EU than for their citizens), LGBT activism has made many actors in Montenegro aware that LGBT people exist.

LGBT activism has been a constitutive part of the local and international efforts to "Europeanise" Montenegro. Vice versa, organised attempts to improve the life of non-heterosexual Montenegrin citizens have been inseparable from the EU integration process and member state building. The queering and the "Europeanisation" of Montenegro were thus not just parallel but also deeply intertwined processes, which have influenced and shaped the dynamic of one another. Let us take a closer look at how the dynamic between queering and the "Europeanisation" of Montenegro has been played out.

From the Decriminalisation of Homosexuality to Montenegrin Independence, 1970–2006

Interventions in the federal legislature of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia led to the decriminalisation of male homosexual relations between 1976 and 1977 in the Yugoslav federative republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, as well as in the autonomous province of Vojvodina.[2] The decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1977 suggests that the Yugoslav state had made the first important step in the struggle for the rights of the LGBT people—although there was likely no underlying intention to

[2] The interventions included legislative reforms, decentralisation of a portion of governmental responsibilities from the federative Yugoslav level to the governments of the Yugoslav republics and provinces, and the first discussions about decriminalisation of the so-called protivprirodni blud (unnatural fornication). Similarly to other Yugoslav republics, earlier Montenegrin legislature did not refer to "female sexual relations".

work on equality for LGBT people (see Dota, 2015; Tomović, 2014). In the course of the following 26 years, public and political discussions did not touch upon LGBT issues and Montenegro. An unexpected break of this silence occurred on 1 May 2003: the Montenegrin government has ratified the Law on Media, whose Article 23 (Broadcasting Agency, 2002, online) states the following:

> It is forbidden to publicise information and opinions that instigate discrimination, hatred or violence against persons or group of persons based on their belonging or not belonging to a certain race, religion, nation, ethnic group, sex or *sexual orientation* (emphasis added).

The lack of organised activist work on this issue in 2003 suggests that Article 23 was probably copied, more or less by accident, from a similar legislature of an EU or an ex-YU country (such as Slovenia or Croatia), without the explicit intention of providing protection from discrimination against LGBT people in Montenegro.

Later that same year, an NGO called Free Rainbow (*Slobodna duga*) was registered as the first organisation in Montenegro working on the promotion and protection of rights of people practising non-straight sexualities.[3] Free Rainbow received financial support from the Swedish Helsinki Committee and from the programme of the Youth Cultural Centre Juventas (Omladinski kulturni centar Juventas, now Juventas) for building capacities for minority rights protection. In July 2005, this organisation initiated a project NGO Solidarity regarding the Promotion of Human Rights, which had a potential to create a good basis for future activities on the improvement of human rights of LGBT people in this

[3] In November 2004, Free Rainbow hosted Atila Kovač, an editor of the first gay magazine in Serbia and Montenegro, *Dečko* (The Boy). When Kovač appeared in a TV show on the Montenegrin national television, fans of the sports club "Budućnost", in Podgorica, gathered in front of the TV broadcasting company and threw stones at the building right after the TV show ended. In early December 2004, NGO Human Rights Action from Podgorica requested information from the public prosecutor about the criminal prosecution of persons who organised the attack. However, the prosecutor did not provide any response until the end of that year. Furthermore, although the police arrested three persons related to this attack, Kovač received no information from the relevant Montenegrin authorities about any legal case being led against his attackers. Additionally, newspaper titles from that period regularly represented homosexuality as inseparable from paedophilia and sexual abuse: for example, D. St. (2005) and Tanjug (2004).

country. The organisation itself had a good image among LGBT people and started gathering a number of supporters/sympathisers interested in activism. However, the enthusiasm did not last more than a few months: the organisation was closed in September 2005. According to a story frequently retold amongst human right activists in Montenegro, the director of the organisation left the country after stealing the money which the donors had paid to her organisation for project implementation (Lazarević, 2009).

EU Integration

The 2005 Progress Report of the European Commission for Serbia and Montenegro (European Commission, 2005) explicitly mentions sexual orientation and states that:

> According to human rights organisations, discrimination based on sexual orientation is a problem. In general terms, it appears that the level of protection against discrimination in Serbia and Montenegro is still far from the EU standards requiring the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and the establishment of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Although this report offered an opportunity to initiate a discussion of LGBT issues with the state institutions, the commitments of public officials were directed elsewhere: the referendum about Montenegrin independence was fast approaching. After Montenegro regained its independence in May 2006, both the process of EU integration and discussions concerning LGBT issues intensified.[4]

[4] Despite many problems, the issues set in motion could hardly be stopped, and certain changes had happened in 2006, 2007, and 2008. For instance, in 2006 Juventas continued Free Rainbow's activities on "capacity building", particularly through a programme on sexual health and rights of men who have sex with men. The programme is still ongoing and provides strong support to LGBT initiatives in Montenegro, and it has served as a core for creating the organisation Queer Montenegro and Montenegro Pride.

2007–2010: Human Rights NGOs and NGO Coalition

After the independence of Montenegro, the EU integration process and organised work on LGBT issues had a very similar dynamic. For instance, Montenegro signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Communities and their Member States on 15 October 2007, while several NGOs started working on LGBT issues in 2008 (including *Akcija za ljudska prava*, *Inicijativa mladih za ljudska prava*, *Centar za građansko obrazovanje*, *Centar za žensko i mirovno obrazovanje Anima*, and *Juventas*). Furthermore, Montenegro submitted an official request to join the EU on 15 December 2008,[5] while in 2009, human rights NGOs initiated a public discussion about the human rights of LGBT people and started cooperating more closely with the international and EU institutions on the protection of the human rights of LGBT people.

In March 2009, NGO Juventas opened the first online portal for LGBT people in Montenegro.[6] The portal included a forum which served as a place to meet new people online, learn new information, and exchange opinions. The forum discussions were lively and had led the forum participants to collectively meet in person after a few months. In the course of the following year, some of the forum participants created an informal activist group called Queer Brigade (November 2010). Later on they registered the NGO Queer Montenegro.[7]

In 2009, a historically important event occurred: a trans man came out in a Montenegrin newspaper and, under his full name and his picture, spoke about violence and the problems he encountered in everyday

[5] The 2008 European Commission Progress Report on Montenegro states that: "In the area of anti-discrimination policies, adoption of the draft law on the prohibition of discrimination is pending. LGBT people are marginalised and discriminated against in Montenegrin society due to homophobic attitudes and lack of legal and practical protection by the authorities. In addition to increasing legislative efforts, comprehensive anti-discrimination measures covering sexual orientation and gender identity are needed" (European Commission, 2008, online).

[6] Available at www.montenegro-gay.me.

[7] The first public promotion of human rights of LGBT people in Montenegro was organised on 17 May 2009, the International Day Against Homophobia. In Podgorica's city centre, Juventas' activists distributed questionnaires on attitudes towards homosexuality, as well as promotional material from the first campaign directed to decreasing homophobia in Montenegro, "So different, yet equal". The event passed without incidents.

life, which led him to decide to leave the country (Pavićević, 2009).[8] Although this interview attracted a lot of interest among Montenegrin citizens and provoked a lot of transphobic and homophobic commentary, another event had initiated discussion between the Government and the EU institutions about the human rights of the LGBT people. Namely, in a popular TV show the former Minister of Human and Minority rights, Ferhat Dinoša (Television Vijesti, 2009), stated:

> I am not sure how much of *that* is present in Montenegro, but I have to say, this is not good news for this milieu. To be honest, I myself am not very happy if *that* [homosexuality] exists in Montenegro. However, as a person who is doing the job that I am doing, and as a person beyond this job, I am ready to admit that this happens, this exists, and such cases need a lot of space to breathe—we do not have to create this space, but we should not suffocate it.

Montenegrin NGOs publicly requested Dinoša's resignation after the TV show and asked the Government to assert that the Minister's words did not reflect its official position.[9] This event led the EU institutions to start reacting to LGBT issues in the country and emphasising what public officials may or may not say.[10] The Minister attracted further attention from EU representatives and the international community after he failed to show up as an announced panellist at a 2009 conference "Justice in the Balkans: Equality for Sexual Minorities", which was financially co-sponsored by his Ministry, organised by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), supported by several European and US universities, and organised by Juventas.

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[8] For a longer account of this case, see also Zeković (n.d.).

[9] Fourteen NGOs made a request to Prime Minister Milo Đukanović to suggest the Parliament to release Dinoša from his governmental duties, but Đukanović did not respond to this public request. Instead, Đukanović has stated for the media that Dinoša had expressed his private attitude, rather than the opinion of the Montenegrin Government.

[10] The director of the neuropsychiatric clinic, Željko Golubović, also made homophobic statements publicly. Namely, in the TV show "Replika", at the Montenegrin national television, Golubović stated that "According to the international classification of diseases (ICD 10), widely accepted throughout the world, homosexuality is as a diagnostic category—whether we consider it to be a disease, or not". The Medical Chamber of Montenegro did not react or sanction Golubović in any way. Juventas had been trying to schedule a meeting with the Medical Chamber of Montenegro for a year, without success.

Dinoša had an opportunity to meet a gay person on 18 November 2009 (one of the authors of this text who was an activist in the NGO Juventas at that time). On that day, a round table on human rights in Montenegro was organised, with the support of the European Commission. Dinoša repeatedly made homophobic statements.[11] Danijel asked Dinoša to explain why he was not happy about the existence of the LGBT people in Montenegro, what could possibly make him unhappy about this, and to apologise for his statements. Dinoša never apologised or responded directly to the questions. However, this event—the first coming out of a gay man in front of a Montenegrin public official—had effects. Only a day later, the newly elected Montenegrin Ombudsman gave a public statement promising to look into Dinoša's statements about LGBT issues and the Ombudsman institution became one of the leading partners of the NGOs concerning the human rights of LGBT people.[12]

In May 2010, the NGO Juventas initiated a coalition Together for LGBT Rights, supported by the EU Delegation in Montenegro.[13] The Coalition consisted of twenty NGOs, ten state institutions, and four media companies. Juventas also initiated a number of trainings and seminars for LGBT people to strengthen their capacities for activism, and for medical workers, the police, the judiciary, and journalists.[14] On 27 July 2010, with an overwhelming majority, the Montenegrin Parliament adopted the *Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination* which explicitly forbids discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender.

[11] During the round table, whose participants included the highest officials from the EU Delegation to Montenegro, Dinoša said that "Adam is not Adam without Eve. If someone understands life differently, that is his [sic!] right".

[12] Due to a great pressure from the international actors, largely from the EU institutions, representatives of the diplomatic core, and NGOs, Dinoša's function in the Ministry for Human Rights ended. Dinoša became Ambassador of Montenegro in Albania, although his homophobic statements were not listed as the reasons for the reassignment.

[13] In January 2010, Juventas conducted an interview-based study with LGBT people about, among other things, their problems and the ways of resolving those problems. The results of the study were used as a basis for formulating Action Plan Against Homophobia, which later became an officially adopted policy of the government for fighting homophobia and transphobia, "Strategy for Improving Life Quality among LGBT persons".

[14] In June 2010, within the scope of the same project supported by the EU Delegation in Montenegro, Juventas organised a study visit to the LGBT human rights organisations in Serbia. Participants of the visit included representatives of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, the Institution of the Protector of human rights and freedoms, the Centre for Social Work Podgorica, and the Employment Institute of Montenegro.

The exact legal formulation was reached during a public discussion through the significant influence of members of LGBT human rights NGOs and of EU institutions who requested the harmonisation of the Montenegrin with the EU anti-discriminatory legislature.[15] Later that same year, on 17 December 2010, Montenegro became an official candidate country for EU membership.

2011–2015: LGBT Organisations and Pride Processions

On 24 January 2011, a new organisation called LGBT Forum Progress was registered in Montenegro. Soon after that, Zdravko Cimbaljević, its director, became the first gay man to publicly come out. The LGBT Forum Progress announced preparations for the first Pride Parade in Podgorica, only to cancel it after a few months, due to a lack of political will from the Montenegrin government (Klisić, 2011). In February, the NGO Juventas opened a drop-in centre for LGBT people in Podgorica, as a communal centre offering education, healthcare services, cultural events, and opportunities for socialisation. It also initiated phone and online counselling, an online service for reporting homophobic violence, and continued its work on training the police, medical workers, and the judiciary about LGBT issues.

Led by Juventas, the Coalition "Together for LGBT Rights" prepared a Draft of the Action Plan for Fighting Homophobia and directed it to the Government. The Government avoided dealing with the document. Instead of responding to the Draft, the Government together with Dr. Jovan Kojičić, as the advisor to the Prime Minister, organised a conference Towards Europe, Towards Equality, to which none of the organisations

[15] On 11 October 2010, Biljana Babović, a psychology teacher in Podgorica's grammar school, stated in a TV show "Glamour Noir" (Atlas Television, 2010) that homosexuality is a disease and a disorder, that she has successfully cured four persons of homosexuality, that World Health Organisation is actively working on bringing back homosexuality to its list of diseases, and that homosexuals are the prime carriers of the HIV infection. The Coalition "Together for LGBT rights" and the members of the National coordinating body against HIV and AIDS reacted forcefully, while a gay man activist from Juventas submitted to the Montenegrin Ombudsman the first charge against discrimination on the basis of sexuality in Montenegro. Babović had to pay a monetary fine and Agency for Electronic Media of Montenegro published an analysis of the TV show, alongside a set of recommendations to all media regarding reporting on problems and human rights issues of LGBT people.

working on LGBT rights in Montenegro were invited as participants, but only as audience members. This led twenty-six domestic and twenty-seven foreign organisations to refuse to participate in the conference and to a temporary interruption of cooperation between Montenegrin NGOs and the Government.[16] After several months of lobbying and pressure from the NGOs and the international community, a Draft of the Action Plan was adopted. In November 2012, a group of Juventas activists who were also members of the Queer Brigade registered the Montenegrin LGBT association Queer Montenegro and soon one gay identified person and one lesbian identified person publicly came out. This was also the year when the accession negotiations with the EU were initiated.

The end of 2012 and 2013 was a very dynamic period with a number of unexpected events. The LGBT Forum Progress announced the first Montenegrin Pride Parade to be organised in 2013. The Report of the European Commission positively evaluated progress regarding LGBT issues in Montenegro. The Government adopted a document called the *Strategy for Improving the Quality of Life of LGBT persons*, with an Action Plan of implementation for 2014. After the Strategy was adopted, Zdravko Cimbaljević announced that his organisation, the LGBT Forum Progress, would not organise the Parade and would instead focus on the implementation of the Strategy. On 2 July 2013, Queer Montenegro announced the organisation of a Pride Procession of LGBT people, Montenegro Pride for 20 October 2013. A few days later, the LGBT Forum Progress announced the organisation of a Pride Parade in the Montenegrin coastal town of Budva on 24 July 2013, called The Sea Pride. The Sea Pride was held in Budva on the said date, under heavy police protection and with violence.

On 20 October 2013, Queer Montenegro organised Montenegro Pride with a lot of support and participants from domestic, regional, and international organisations, diplomacy, and the EU Delegation in Montenegro. There were around 200 participants in the procession, protected by 1900 police officers, while groups of hooligans clashed with

[16] Most domestic NGOs interpreted this as an attempt of to create a false impression that Montenegrin Government cooperated with human rights organisations. The cooperation was re-established after government representatives accepted several terms posed by the human rights organisations (Government of Montenegro, 2011).

the police in several locations and made about 20,000 euros worth of damage. Tens of hooligans were arrested, although the prosecution did not charge a single person.

The organisation of the Pride Processions in 2013 and 2014 would not have been possible without EU pressure on public institutions and officials in Montenegro. The fact that, during its accession negotiations with the EU in 2013, Montenegro opened Chapter 23 (judiciary and fundamental rights) and Chapter 24 (justice, freedom, and security) was important for organising Pride. Montenegrin state officials reasoned that they had to do everything possible to ensure LGBT people had the right to freely gather in public, since failing to respect this human right would have led to a poorer evaluation of the success of Montenegro's EU integrations. Soon after the Pride event, government representatives informed Queer Montenegro activists that they did not support the idea of organising a Montenegro Pride the following year. This indicates that the EU integration process was the primary motive of state institutions in responding affirmatively to the requests of the human rights organisations.

The campaign for the 2014 Pride was initially met with sharp criticism from state institutions, especially expressed in the public announcements of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights. With the support of EU institutions, after several months of struggle, the organisers of Montenegro Pride managed to gather support from state institutions.[17] The result of this partnership between domestic and foreign organisations was a peaceful second Montenegro Pride with no incidents, during which Pride participants were guarded by 1800 police officers.

Inscribing the "Local" and the "Traditional" into LGBT Activism

The activists were not ignorant of a sense of separation of LGBT people from the LGBT activism which we have briefly described above. Since they knew that people in Montenegro often associate LGBT activism with

[17] Together with the EU and other international representatives, Queer Montenegro has initiated a discussion about the public prosecution of hate crimes, resulting in two criminal charges related to the second Montenegro Pride in 2014.

progress, modernity, and the West, they tried to inscribe "local" and "traditional" symbols into their public representations. For instance, Queer Montenegro activists decided that the event in Montenegro should be called *Povorka ponosa* (Pride Procession) rather than *Parada ponosa* (Pride Parade). The activists chose the term *povorka* because they thought it would be less antagonising in the Montenegrin context than the term *parade*. "To parade" (*paradirati*) refers not only to a public procession but also to "standing out", "sticking a finger in the eye", "pompously bragging", usually about having a lot of money. Taking into account that human rights activism and NGO institutional forms are often seen in Montenegro (and in the wider post-Yugoslav space) as a way of improving one's own livelihood (Greenberg, 2014; Stubbs, 2007), the activists wanted to move away from this link between "parading" and wealth and luxury, which posited homosexuality as a Western decadence. *Povorka*, on the other hand, resonates more with religious meanings and even with meanings of death and mortality. It is commonly used to refer to a funeral procession (*pogrebna povorka*), although it is also sometimes used to refer to a wedding procession (*svadbena povorka*). Queer Montenegro activists thought the Montenegrin Pride should be a serious walk rather than a parade of colours, body, and sex, which they saw as a currently dominant concept behind Pride Parades in Western Europe. Activists claimed they loved the "Western Prides", which some of them attended with a certain regularity. However, they reasoned that Montenegro needed something else—a solemn procession, rather than a flamboyant Pride (see also Johnson, 2012).

Furthermore, the activists tried to integrate symbols of local heritage and traditional patriarchal masculinity and femininity into the visual politics of Pride. The logo of the first 2013 Pride Procession in Podgorica represented a moustache (Image 6.1), which is seen as a symbol of traditional masculinity, a sign of a "proper man", in Montenegro as well as in other former Yugoslav states (see Škokić, 2011). Activists decided to inscribe this symbol of traditional masculinity into the visual politics of Pride in order to disturb local ideas that a "true man" cannot be gay. Continuing with this concept, the slogan of the 2014 Pride Procession was "Traditionally Proud", while the logo represented a traditional Montenegrin woman with a scarf around her head in rainbow colours and with a moustache (Image 6.2). Queer Montenegro activists

Image. 6.1 2013 Montenegro Pride Logo

unofficially amongst themselves call the second logo Ljeposava: here, an old Montenegrin name for a woman which accentuates the link between the rural and the traditional. Ljeposava appropriated symbols of traditional, old-style, supposedly rural femininity (such as a head scarf, red cheeks, facial hair), thus challenging the opposition between Europe, progress, and homosexuality, on the one hand, and the Balkans, rural tradition, and heterosexuality, on the other.

The first logo provoked a lot attention in the media. The newspapers even reported that an elderly man living in the north of the country shaved off his moustache for the first time in 57 years, after Queer Montenegro appropriated this symbol of masculinity for their Pride logo.[18] Ljeposava did not seem to be as upsetting. We could speculate that the second logo was less visibly antagonising because it represented a woman. Perhaps women's desire and sexuality are perceived as less of a threat because they are not taken seriously in the first place: many lesbians and bisexual women in Montenegro claim their sexual desires are often either disregarded as immature and juvenile or appropriated into a patriarchal fantasy where they serve to titillate a male observer. In order to be understood as a threat, women's non-heteronormative

[18] See Radio and Television of Montenegro (2013).

Image. 6.2 2014 Montenegro Pride Logo

desires would first have to be perceived as autonomous. On the other hand, perhaps the second logo provoked less attention simply because it was a *second* logo. In any case, appropriation of "tradition" and "rurality" into Montenegro Pride was not an accident. Danijel explained the choice of logo in a media interview (Savić, 2014, online):

> The very use of a moustache last year was a queer intervention in a visual sense and in a sense of the message which Queer Montenegro and Montenegro Pride send to the general population. The moustaches and this year's slogan (…) aim to question who has the right to wear a moustache, to directly speak to tradition, to identity based and nationalised norms. (…) Our questioning of tradition this year has gone a step further. (...) Instead of a picture of a traditional Montenegrin woman with a black scarf whose place is in the kitchen, in the bed, and often in maternity wards, and who is invisible and quiet, this year her face was the logo of the Pride, with a rainbow scarf and moustache. Queer plays with many social

> issues and questions them in different ways—and this is precisely what Montenegro Pride engaged in this and last year. Queer can and should question the past, tradition and traditional roles of a man and a woman, and this is what the identity of the Prides this and last year managed to do.

Such choices—the term *povorka* rather than *parada*, the logos, and the slogans—indicate that the activists were fully aware of the local context in which they operated. They tried to make a symbolic link with Montenegrin heritage and to present LGBT Pride as something that legitimately belongs to Montenegro, with all of its complex funeral traditions, processions, scarves, and moustaches. They did not want the Montenegrin publics to see Pride Processions as something imposed from outside, but as something grounded in local practices and relations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have presented the chronology and dynamic of LGBT activism in Montenegro, suggesting that it has been firmly intertwined with the "Europeanisation" of the country or, more precisely, with the process of negotiating EU accession. In complex intersections between sexuality and geopolitics, LGBT rights are often used as an indicator of the "Europeanness" of a particular country. Pride Parades are taken to be a particularly potent sign of "civilisational progress" and "European values" (Davydova, 2012; Mikuš, 2011). However, understanding homophobia in post-socialist contexts as an "anti-European" reaction effectually erases LGBT people from view, by transforming them into "symbolic representatives of other tensions, national or transnational" (Renkin, 2009, p. 33). It also obscures "the 'West's' homophobia, directing attention from hegemonic intolerance there" (Renkin, 2009, p. 25).

Approaching LGBT people in Montenegro "as agents, as active negotiators" (Renkin, 2009, p. 33), allows seeing how the activists navigated the interests of international actors and the Montenegrin government, to target widespread homophobia and secure a living as visible non-straight persons in Montenegro. During these negotiations, the activists attempted

to forge a link between homosexuality and "tradition", thus challenging the conventional intersections between sexuality and geopolitics. By claiming to be "Traditionally Proud" and appropriating symbols of conventional patriarchal masculinity and femininity into Pride Processions, the activists attempted to relate LGBT activism to the local socio-cultural context. However, visual and narrative representations of Pride in the media alone could not cut the symbolic link between "Europe" and "homosexuality", because the dynamic of the LGBT activism itself largely depends on the EU accession process. The discursive frameworks of the EU induce the willingness of state officials to nominally support LGBT activism and to consider sexuality as a political topic. Thus, LGBT activists in Montenegro used the EU accession process strategically to push forward their agenda, and in doing so the link between "Europe" and "homosexuality" was reproduced.

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7

From Orientalism to Homonationalism: Queer Politics, Islamophobia, and Europeanisation in Kosovo

Piro Rexhepi

Queer[1] political formations in Eastern Europe have increasingly become another discursive space where EU multicultural citizenship is negotiated, often at a junction of simple opposites: secular/religious, modern/traditional, patriarchy/gender equality, and east/west. In the last decade, European and American queer and feminist scholarship has challenged these binaries by examining the ways in which queer communities are normalised, depoliticised, and co-opted into hegemonic neoliberal structures through the exclusion of other identitarian dimensions, such as class, race, and religion. Puar's (2007, p. 39) work on how sexual rights become complicit with the US hegemony by a "discursive tactic that disaggregates US national gays and queers from racial and sexual others" or *homonationalism*, is one of the most pertinent examples of this critique.

[1] For the purpose of this chapter, I am using the term queer as an umbrella to include all non-heterosexual and gender-variant people.

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_7

Schulman's (*New York Times*, November 22, 2011) employment of the concept of *pinkwashing* to capture Israel's "deliberate strategy to conceal the continuing violations of Palestinians" rights through promoting LGBT emancipation, and Scott's (2011) work on *sexularism*, or the notion that only secularism is compatible with sexual rights, constitute other examples of disruptions in the unsuspecting discourse on sexual rights and citizenship.

More recently, this body of scholarship has been applied to explore the EU enlargement as a gendered and sexualised process of creating multicultural citizenship by isolating the struggles of sexual rights communities from the struggles of other marginalised groups. Kulpa (2014, p. 431), for instance, calls this process *leveraged pedagogy*, a "hegemonic didactical relation where the CEE [Central and Eastern Europe] figures as an object of the West/European 'pedagogy,' and is framed as permanently 'post-communist,' 'in transition' (i.e., not liberal, not yet, not enough), and homophobic". In the last decade, as the European Union has come to recognise and inscribe certain homosexual lifestyles and identities into EU citizenship,[2] queer communities tend to be singled out by the EU as sexualised vulnerable "others", as victims in need of protection and the intervention of the EU to gain political agency and citizenship. This representation of queer communities depicts them in need of paternalistic guidance before they acquire full political agency, meanwhile allowing the EU to position itself as the container of progress and modernity to be aspired by all, particularly those populations identified as potential members of the EU. Attacks on queer communities in Eastern Europe are then contextualised in the discourse of post-conflict populist politics and post-socialist religious revivalism, where long transitions characterised by unemployment, corruption, and poverty have produced a nationalist and religious-right populism that endangers the freedoms of queer citizens. The successful "transition" from post-socialist and post-conflict societies, in addition to subsequent accession and assimilation into the European Union, is the teleology through which the EU, in cooperation with local political elites, structures the new politics of belonging.

[2] See, for instance, the latest guidelines issued by the Council of the European Union (2013).

Queer rights discourse thus becomes one of the most significant spaces where anxieties around Europeanisation take place.

The tendency in most of the scholarship on the Europeanisation of queer rights in Eastern Europe has been to adjust complex post-socialist realities and frequently group all experiences together under a broader critique of post-socialist "transition" and "Europeanisation" studies. While there are many similarities in how queer rights discourses have been incorporated into the overall European Union eastern enlargement processes, decolonising queer critique in Europe requires not only merging the post-colonial with the post-socialist critique of Europeanisation,[3] but also exposing how Islamophobia figures in mainstream queer rights debates in the "centre" as well as in the "periphery" of Europe. Islamophobia in the queer rights discourses inside Europe is now well documented.[4] In *'Gays who cannot properly be gay': Queer Muslims in the neoliberal European city,* El-Tayeb (2012, p. 80) for instance notes how "Othering of Muslims, including queers, is a European phenomenon, that in fact the Europeanisation of the continent's nation-states is in no small part manifest in a shared Islamophobia and a framing of immigration as the main threat to the continental union".

In exposing the convergence of Islamophobia and queer rights discourses in Europe along migrant and Muslim communities, however, these studies often overlook how Muslims in the "periphery" of Europe become targets of Islamophobia through queer rights discourses embedded in EU enlargement politics. Similarly, studies of how queer rights projects have been incorporated in the EU enlargement discourse in post-socialist Eastern Europe, such as Ayoub and Paternotte's (2014) *LGBT activism and the making of Europe: A rainbow Europe?,* while examining how the EU instrumentalises queer rights in the service of EU enlargement, neglect the differences of how these discourses figure in Muslim majority countries in Eastern Europe. Moreover, studies of how Islamophobia figures in gender and sexual rights in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, such as Massad's (2004) critique of the Gay International

[3] For more on this, see Rexhepi (forthcoming).

[4] See, for instance, El-Tayeb (2011); Haritaworn (2010), and Buruma (2006).

and its implications in neocolonial formations,[5] also discount the experiences of Muslim communities in Eastern Europe. This disregard may be in part due to dominant spatial and temporal configurations of Muslims in Eastern Europe as being outside colonial histories and Middle Eastern geographies. Seeking to extend these analyses, I look at how Islamophobia figures in queer rights discourses in Kosovo in the larger EU enlargement processes.

The case of Kosovo, where the continued presence of an EU supervisory mission (EULEX) with executive powers, combined with the precarious nature of Kosovo's sovereignty,[6] provides a glaring example of European homonationalism. While Kosovo recognises gay marriage[7] and includes provisions against discrimination based on sexual orientation in its constitution,[8] it consistently rates as one of the most homophobic societies in Europe. What accounts for this stark contrast between the desire of the Kosovo governing structures and EU-oriented elites and the pervasive homophobia in the population at large?

This chapter examines how certain queer political formations in Kosovo are incorporated in the Europeanisation discourse and singled out to be brought under EU protection as a vulnerable sexual minority. I argue that through Orientalist representations of the Balkans as the space of "ambiguous particularity" (Todorova, 1997), neither East nor West, queer identities in Kosovo are depoliticised and constructed as vulnerable victims of the "transition" that can only be liberated either by moving to Europe or bringing Europe home. In both instances, they are represented as outsiders to their immediate geographies; their representation, as victims under siege by the very communities they live in, renders them already modern and European, in contrast to the rest of their communities, which are depicted as traditional, backward, and religious. Queers in Kosovo then come to emblematise a Europe under siege that must be liberated. The attempt of the EU to save queers in Kosovo is a self-referential mission to

[5] For more on this, see Massad (2004) and Éwanjé-Épée and Magliani-Belkacem (2013).

[6] For an extensive discussion on the nature of Kosovo's sovereignty, see Bolton and Visoka (2010).

[7] See, for instance, Fowler (2014).

[8] For a detailed account of these issues, see Zuin and Apostolidis (2008). Protection against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation was also incorporated into Kosovo's anti-discrimination law. For more, see Fauchier (2013).

save itself from its own homophobic past while maintaining the binaries of tradition vs. progress in the process of enlargement that allow the EU to stand for progress and modernity. These "hegemonic conceptions of progress", Butler (2008, p. 1) argues, "define themselves over and against a pre-modern temporality that they produce for the purposes of their own self-legitimation". I argue that EU conceptions of progress operate through various NGOs that validate the multiplication of European sexualities in the enlargement process by articulating them against local "repressed" sexualities and backward Muslim cultures. Examining this multiplication of sexualities by European NGOs in Romania and Albania for instance, Woodcock (2004, p. 11) argues that these sexualities are "privileged as primary and political forms of identification … in the form of the heterosexual/homosexual binary" and can "damage existing, more subtle, networks of communication of sexualities and identities".

The goal of this chapter is not to question the rights of queer individuals and communities to identify with the EU-sponsored gay rights politics, but to examine how some of these projects become complicit in various forms of Islamophobia and how suggestions that queer rights are only compatible with European values may undermine and/or silence alternative sexualities, subjectivities, and living-in-difference strategies. I do not intend to speculate about alternatives that could replace the current situation, but rather to take apart, as Halberstam (2013, p. 6)) suggests, "the structure that, right now, limits our ability to find each other, to see beyond it and to access the places that we know lie outside its walls" so that we can "reshape desire, reorient hope, reimagine possibility and do so separate from the fantasies nestled into rights and respectability" (p. 12). In other words, critique of queer rights compliance with hegemonic formations does not require the interpellation of alternative or non-normative sexualities as this "incitement to discourse," as Foucault reminds us (Foucault, 1999), may want to contain, catalogue, or co-opt alternative sexualities and subjectivities in the registry of already existing epistemologies on sexuality and rights. Inviting-in, disidentifications, imperceptibility, and invisibility may be just some of the living strategies queers are utilising to confront the normative liberal politics of coming-out and visibility to avoid being absorbed into neoliberal governmental technologies.

I begin by discussing how Kosovo queer narratives are incorporated into the "return to Europe" paradigm, considering how the EU singles out queer communities from other marginalised groups, particularly Muslim communities as the archetypical European "Other". I then examine how the organisation *Kosovo 2.0* utilises Orientalising and homonationalist strategies as a measure of Kosovo's belonging in or outside of Europe, by locating queer subjects in the European enlargement discourse and separating them from those deemed anti-European. I call this process EU-washing. Subsequently, I examine how the queer rights discourse becomes a disciplining measure through which Muslim communities are policed in the production of a homogenised representational mandate for Islam in Kosovo. Finally, I argue that the dominant political discourse on European integration in Kosovo is represented as the only way to rescue this society from their religious and poor others and fully recover them as Europeans from their non-European, be it socialist or Ottoman, past.

Kosovar Queers Under Siege

> …Kosovar gays are forced to live in the world that they can see and hear just across the way in Western Europe. They can look across at what people in other European societies have been able to achieve, but it is solace and torment in equal parts. They have the unpleasant choice of staying locked up in their dark houses staring across the divide, or they can make a run for it, across the dangerous bridges, dodging the snipers that exist all around them (Ambrose, 2009, online).

EU civilisational discourse works selectively through the inclusion of those groups that are deemed compatible with "European" values and the exclusion and Othering of those groups that are deemed "non-European" or "anti-European".[9] As a result, accession of countries into the European Union can only occur once the main antagonistic actors are fully neutralised into the broader discourse of unification with Europe, particularly it seems,

[9] See Tekin (2005); Kuus (2004) and Kovacevic (2008).

those countries with a majority Muslim population.[10] These measures, be it explicit or implicit directives coming from various EU offices, are undertaken as pre-emptive action to compensate for any potential security deficit that may result from bringing majority Muslim countries into the European Union. Islamic practices come to be seen as barriers to the development of a modern European citizenship, particularly in Kosovo where homophobic religious outbursts are often equated with potential threats to national security, and Europeanisation in debates that frame religious communities as traditional and backward elements that endanger the secular and EU-future of Kosovo—in the process ignoring the existence of intersectional subjectivities such as queer Muslims. What makes queer subjects more absorbable in the Europeanisation process in a way that Muslims are not?

Similarly, local elite platforms of European multi-ethnic and multicultural nations informed by European demands have been shaped in the "return to Europe" or "reunification with Europe" pattern. This discourse suggests that the history of Kosovo was not a constitutive part of European history; rather, it was subjected to a "non-European" authority (i.e., the Ottoman Empire or socialism are both assumed incompatible with European values) and therefore this historical experience is rendered void, or a burden that must be addressed as a prerequisite for "reuniting with Europe". Proving *Europeanness* then becomes the *sine qua non* of not only EU integration processes, but constitutes a disciplinary measure that allows the EU to intervene in the internal affairs of Kosovo to help it reach "European standards".[11] Moreover, when anti-discrimination measures are adopted, political elites justify such stipulations by invoking EU regulations and mandatory legal harmonisation as the main reason and impetus behind these changes. By so doing, these moderate liberal discourses have been directly feeding into the increasing resistance towards sexual rights being read locally as another external imposition of the European Union into the internal affairs of Kosovo.

[10] For instance, in 2009, the Young Federalist European Movement accused the EU of creating Muslim ghettos with its visa policies when the EU approved new visa regimes that allow Macedonian, Montenegrin, and Serbian citizens to travel into the EU but not Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Albania, and Turkey—all majority Muslim countries. For a detailed account, see Birca (2009).

[11] For a detailed discussion on EU conditions for Kosovo, see Ker-Lindsay and Economides (2012).

As the European liberal order reproduces itself along with its contradictions, it has frequently reduced local sites of European Union enlargement in the Balkans as depoliticised spaces. This is particularly the case in instances where EU enlargement coincides with liberal peace-building missions, such as Kosovo, where the local is almost always viewed as peripheral, subaltern, and pre-modern.[12] The search for the local in European enlargement projects is generally constructed under initiatives that seek to strengthen local "civil society" or create one that conforms to the model desired by the EU. A recent EU project in Kosovo, "Challenging homophobia: Building support systems for LGBT people in Kosovo", which provided €140 422.00, is one such example. The project is designed to "strengthen the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in particular by supporting the interests of LGBT people, their representation in public life and their political participation" (*Kosovoprojects.eu*, September 28, 2014).

These projects are always shaped in a "problem–solution" imperative, decontextualised and depoliticised, removed from any other factor of marginalisation. The EU presence in Kosovo is thus centred on coming-out politics and the construction of a specific queer subject, one that corresponds to the EU queer rights narrative. This approach, as Manalansan (2003, p. 478) argues, produces same-sex practices that do not fall into the Western category of liberation through coming out, homophobic or pre-modern. Moreover, Manalansan also points to the spatial and temporal configurations of the gay liberation narrative and its universalising claim centred around the idea that pre-modern homosexual practices can only discover political agency and modern subjectivity through a developmental narrative, where "gay gains meaning according to a developmental model that begins with an unliberated, 'prepolitical' homosexual practice and that culminates in a liberated, 'out', politicized 'modern', 'gay' subjectivity" (p. 478). Similarly, by singling out "gays" who can be liberated through "coming out", the EU not only engages in distancing same-sex and trans communities from the context of their own societies, but also makes intersectional issues such as class, ethnicity, and religion invisible, and fails to account for the various complexities of overlapping subjectivities.

[12] See, for instance, Richmond (2009a, 2009b, 2011).

Furthermore, by positioning itself as the key ally of the queers in Kosovo, the EU incorporates the local queer communities into what Papantonopoulou calls the "cycle of debt" (Papantonopoulou, 2014). Utilising the concept of the economies of gratitude, where material capital is exchanged for affective/moral capital, in her study of transgendered subjects, pinkwashing and Israel, Papantonopoulou notes that in "the Zionist economy of gratitude, the transgender subject is perpetually indebted to capitalism and the West for allowing her to exist" (p. 281). The EU develops a similar cycle of debt through the financing of projects, as those mentioned above, that proliferate the idea that queers in Kosovo are indebted to the EU for protecting them from and allowing them to exist in their own communities. In the cases of Kosovo, the economy of gratitude paradigm takes on an additional feature whereby the government also capitalises on the "cycle of debt" incurred by the queer communities towards EU integration.

The support for the LGBT community by the government in Kosovo is employed both as a measure of defence and as proof of Europeanisation. The modality of defence here is deployed to distance the Kosovars from their already perceived non-Europeanness—by virtue of their religion and socialist past—and to reaffirm their Europeanness by embracing queer rights as loyalty and conformity to the European project. Moreover, local NGOs are also engaged in reaffirming their European belonging through the promotion of queer rights. In Kosovo, the aim of the *Kosovo 2.0*, a non-governmental organisation funded mainly by European and American sponsors and run by Kosovar Besa Luci and Dutchman Joan de Boer, is to "breach ethnic and moral taboos and boundaries" and change "the worldwide image of Kosovo" (Free Press Unlimited, December 14, 2011). Thus, unlike *Kosovo 1.0*, which may stand for a traditional, post-socialist, and post-conflict conceptualisation of Kosovo, *Kosovo 2.0* seeks to rescue Kosovo from its own past by producing a new, updated Kosovo, one that is synchronous to developments in Europe. The organisation's promotion of their Sex Magazine came under attack in 2012 by "fundamentalist religious people".[13] The debate that followed the attacks centred around queer rights and the secular–religious divide. Responding to

[13] See, for instance, Heiland, Comet, and Reintke (2013).

the attacks, one Kosovar reporter wrote: "Taliban Albanians are a disease in our society. If left untreated and you intervene late, just like cancer, it is unlikely there will be a cure for it. Such militants aim to slaughter reason" (Quinones, 2013).

Similarly, debates around queer rights are frequently framed in the context of "us and them"; in other words, the educated modern and the uneducated, uninformed, patriarchal Muslims who refuse to be part of Europe. Thus, local queer narratives are employed to police "extremists" as a patriotic duty of the nation in the "return to Europe" narrative. This discourse then allows for the EU to engage in a *homocolonialist* project, rendering "resistant populations inferior in relation to superior Western values rather than simply being populations that are 'lagging behind' Western development" (Rahman, 2014, p. 274). Homocolonialism, however, is not simply deployed to produce the EU as an exceptional space of progress and modernity, but also to free Europe from its own association with violence, extremism, and homophobia by dislocating them outside the imaginary borders of Europe. As Kosovo is conjoined in the geographical imagination of Europe, its struggle with violence and extremist Islam is externalised further east. Thus, it is argued that Islamic extremism comes from the Middle East through Islamic organisations that infiltrated Kosovo after the conflict. For example, in the *Kosovo 2.0* Magazine issue on Religion, Robelli argues that "in Kosovo, Islamic organisations became active during the chaos that ensued after the war ended in 1999, mainly under a humanitarian disguise" creating a conflict between local "tolerant Islam practices for centuries and the new religious guardians that were indoctrinated in foreign countries" (Robelli, 2012, p. 44).

By suggesting that the extremist and violent forms of Islam have nothing to do with traditional Islam in Kosovo, "traditional" Islam in Kosovo is separated from the other more violent movements of Islam that come from somewhere else. This claim not only reduces Kosovar Muslims to being merely observers of larger changes in the Muslim world and not a constitutive part of them, but it also locates Kosovo outside of the Muslim world while not incorporating it fully in the European one, a space supposedly free of violence and extremism. This *in-betweenness* of

Muslims in the Balkans, which Todorova calls *particular ambiguity*, calls for full secularisation of Muslims and produces secularism as a universal phenomenon, fully separate from its Christian and European roots. The defence of secularism is then also equated with the defence of queer subjects. Muslim communities are then called to prove their Europeanness by articulating a discourse on Islam in Kosovo that does not pose a threat to Europe, one that is "tolerant" and "European". Political formations guided by Islamic principles, such as the "Levizja Bashkohu" in Kosovo, come under continuous attacks for fear of them wanting to challenge the secular nature of the state by questioning the rights of queer communities. In an interview, an editor of *Kosovo 2.0* notes:

> Levizja Bashkohu has openly come out for the protection of certain traditional moral values and we fear that these religious movements in general, who are against the minimalist Islam of our traditional practice, can be more active in their reaction to secularism, against the rights of the LGBT community (Rudaku, 2012, online).

By invoking "minimalist" and "moderate" Islam as "traditional" to Kosovo, queer communities engage in defining the type of Islam that is acceptable and "traditional", dismissing other forms of Islam as external and foreign. This attempt to externalise "bad" Islam outside the geographic imaginaries of Europe is not exclusive to Kosovo. There has been a Europe-wide attempt to construct "good European Muslims", particularly among second- and third-generation Muslim migrants, against the newly arrived Muslims who infiltrate their communities and radicalise otherwise peaceful European Muslims. In The Netherlands, for instance, there has been an ongoing debate on training local imams instead of importing them to prevent radicalisation under the assumption that foreign imams are not inoculated in Dutch culture and are homophobic. In these processes, queer rights discourse "offer[s] a language for the critique of Islam and multiculturalism – an idiom that underscores an Orientalist discourse that projects Muslim citizens knowable and produces them as objects of critique" (Mapschen, Duyvendak, & Tonkes, 2010, p. 970). These configurations serve the purpose of "saving" local Islam by purging

it from the new foreign intrusions. In an article titled "The Enemy Within: Kosovo's Moral Crusaders," published in *Kosovo 2.0*, Marku (2014, online) writes:

> The war is over and another one has begun. Except this time the enemy is more insidious, more difficult to contain and eliminate. This is a war of values, and it will determine the shape that our country takes. If the lesson of history teaches us anything, it's that nothing can be taken for granted. The freedoms that we have, the ones that we fought and waited for, can all be blown away like leaves in the wind unless we draw a line that cannot be crossed. I would like to raise my children in a Kosovo where they can be what they are and say what they believe without fear of intimidation and punishment by those who disagree with them. I hope you do, too.

As the Islamophobic language circulating within the EU is appropriated to discipline local Muslims by creating a "line that can't be crossed", the symbolic line not only segregates queers from other marginalised groups within Kosovo, but seeks to move Kosovo from its *in-betweenness* fully within the boundaries of Europe. By locating the threat of extremist Islam outside the Islamic traditions of Kosovo, Kosovo is freed from being perceived as the internal other within the EU. Islam, then, becomes the marker that binds Kosovo to its non-European past; only by removing and assimilating this mark can then Kosovo recover as a European nation free from its Islamic past. The protection and promotion of queer rights serves as an appropriate tool to then "contain and eliminate" the new enemy as a necessary measure if Kosovo wants to fully integrate into the EU. A Kosovar journalist noted:

> Kosovo, already challenged by a bad image in the world, because of crime and corruption, now has to deal with an additional mark, radical Islam. While this problem is considered present in many other parts of Europe, in the case of Kosovo, which is in the process of integration, it can potentially block the [EU] integration process (Xharra, 2014, online).[14]

[14] Original in Albanian. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

These fears reflect local appropriations of EU anxieties over the integration of Kosovar Muslims into the EU. While religion is often debated in the case of Turkey's accession to the EU, in the case of Kosovo it is usually made invisible or replaced by debates around post-conflict democratisation, multi-ethnic coexistence, and not necessarily the secular–religious divide. This framing also allows Kosovo to remain under direct EU "rule of law" missions until such time that the EU decides Kosovo has become European enough to join the EU.[15] It is not surprising, then, that in 2005, the International Commission for the Balkans argued:

> The real choice the EU is facing in the Balkans is: Enlargement or Empire. The signs of such a debilitating future are already visible in the quasi-protectorates of Kosovo and Bosnia. With no real stake in these territories, international representatives insist on quick results to complex problems; they dabble in social engineering but are not held accountable when their policies go wrong. If Europe's neo-colonial rule becomes further entrenched, it will encourage economic discontent; it will become a political embarrassment for the European project (Amato, 2005, p. 11).

The neocolonial rule in the EU has become further entrenched in the quasi-protectorates of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, particularly as the initial post-conflict reconstruction legitimacy has begun to wane; through failed economic and peace-building strategies, legitimacy for the continued presence has now shifted to the protection of new minorities. The incorporation of queer rights, in the assemblages of justification for Kosovo's direct supervision by the EU, is a new legitimising feature that sustains the presence of EULEX. Rahman suggests that the characteristics of such homocolonialist projects are "directed at 'traditional' Muslim cultures as homophobic non-Western 'others' that need to be civilised or modernised but also constructing 'home' Western normative queer identities" (Rahman, 2014, p. 279). Kosovo is probably the most deliberate attempt at this triangulation of promotion of queer rights under a civilising mission in the periphery while constructing the normative

[15] For further information see www.eulex-kosovo.eu and http://www.euforbih.org.

EU-wide queer identity. The mission to save the queers of Kosovo, then, also becomes the mission to save and define the EU. In this context, Kosovo and Kosovars are converted into an EU laboratory that experiments with the construction of a desired EU-wide multicultural citizenship under assemblages of post-conflict and post-socialist peacekeeping, and Europeanising missions (see Bilić's introduction to this volume). Critical theory in international relations has challenged the foundational narratives of similar international interventions on humanitarian and peacekeeping grounds as being deeply embedded in the neoliberal order that ignores larger structural problems of conflict, but chooses to deal with conflict "in the periphery" through a problem–solution imperative (e.g., Pugh, 2004; Schellhaas & Seegers, 2009). Little attention has been given to examining these missions as gendered or sexualised processes. Particularly, the process by which local political agency is employed by humanitarian missions, to save gendered and sexualised subjects from their own communities, has been under-analysed.

During the NATO Summit in 2012 in Chicago, Amnesty International undertook a public campaign, called "Human Rights for Women and Girls in Afghanistan", and "NATO: Keep the Progress Going!" (Chamseddine, 2013). The campaign came at a time when support for NATO's presence in Afghanistan started to wane even among those who had initially shown support for it. The deployment of "human rights for women and girls in Afghanistan" to invoke a continued presence of NATO in Afghanistan is a striking example of imperialism in the name of "gender equality" by what Puar calls the "human rights industrial complex" (Puar, 2013, p. 338). While women and children were being portrayed as the victims in Afghanistan, in the post-Yugoslav humanitarian interventions, this became a more difficult marketing tool as post-socialist spaces, in the eyes of the interventionists, faced less the problem of women and children and more the challenge of other minorities. If, in the early aftermath of the conflict, these victims were essentialised through their ethnicity and sometimes gender, in the post-conflict "stabilisation and association" with Europe,[16] the new minorities increasingly

[16] The Stabilization and Association Agreement and Process can be retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/saa_en.htm.

became the sexual ones. Atanasoski, for instance, notes how post-socialist imperialism operates through humanitarian ethics rooted in ideological and cultural differences, which then makes post-socialist and Islamic nations targets of disciplining violence or *humanitarian violence* (Atanasoski, 2013). Thus, the hierarchy of victims changes along with the geography of the interventions. In "Rethinking Homonationalism", Puar (2013, p. 338) notes that the "gay and lesbian human rights industry continues to proliferate Euro-American constructs of identity (not to mention the notion of a sexual identity itself) that privilege identity politics, 'coming out', public visibility, and legislative measures as the dominant barometers of social progress". Yet very few studies examine how these identities are proliferated and to what political end, at both the targeted populations as well as at home. Are they simply utilised to legitimise humanitarian intervention, reforms, and regime-change of a targeted country or population? Or, do they also serve the purpose of dealing with queer anxieties at home and with reassuring the EU of its own exceptional progress and modernity?

Kosovo 2.0: The "Sex" Incident

On December 14, 2012, a group of about 100 protestors attacked the launching of the media outlet *Kosovo 2.0*'s magazine issue on "Sex", shouting "Out faggots", "They have no place here", and "God is Great" (Luçi, 2013). The previous magazine issue had covered "Religion", where Robelli, a regular contributor, wrote:

> Foes of the Albanian Muslim tradition and Wahhabi militants seek to incite conflict between different layers of Kosovo's society, and the demand to allow the wearing of the headscarf in schools is just the beginning. If Wahhabis—or Salafis, as some prefer to be called—succeed in making the state of Kosovo succumb to their demands regarding headscarves, then other demands will follow... maybe even more radical demands about the covering up of females, or even demands to ban the use of perfume and listening of music, to stone women in cases of adultery, which are all well-known phenomena in Saudi Arabia (Robelli, 2013, online).

Explanations for the attacks in the media, and official declarations, have mainly focused on Islamophobic language characterising Islam as "patriarchal", "backward", and "religious fundamentalist". The "Sex" issue of the *Kosovo 2.0* magazine contained an article on homophobia in Kosovo, where American journalist Seyward Darby writes: "Kosovar society, which thrives on conservative values rooted in history, culture and tenets of Islam (Kosovo's majority religion), is also largely intolerant of LGBT individuals" (Seyward, 2013, online). The direct correlation that the readings of the incident provide between Islam, as traditional, conservative, and militant phenomena and the perceived danger that this poses not only to the queer community, but the secular Kosovar society at large, are employed as a tool to reinforce binary opposites between the European-oriented secular majority and the backward, religious Muslim minority. Moreover, as already mentioned, these opposites ignore intersectional subjectivities of queer Muslims who identify with both Islam and queerness or fail to acknowledge the overall complexity of queerness as a space beyond normalised, theorised, and codified identity.

What these explanations conceal are also larger structural issues at play, particularly those related to poverty, unemployment, racism, exclusion, and institutionalised discrimination, but also how the Europeanisation of queer rights produces and fuels homophobia in Muslim communities by inscribing certain rights into the EU enlargement project and discounting others, and by utilising queer rights narratives as a "language for the critique of Islam" (Mapschen et al., 2010, p. 970). Shows of support for queer communities by European and US ambassadors around the Balkans have become a hallmark of this policy. Following the attack on *Kosovo 2.0*, the US Embassy in Kosovo issued a statement condemning the attacks perpetrated by:

> a mob of extremists at the launch of the *Kosovo 2.0* magazine on December 14. Violence and threats have no place in a modern democratic state, and the United States will always safeguard and protect citizens' freedom of expression and freedom of the press (Embassy of the United States, 2012).

The assemblages of modernity and democracy as "violence free spaces" positions the modern democratic state as the ideal template of civilisation

that should be emulated, as well as safeguarded under the protection of the USA as its contemporary guardian. Queer political formations are subsequently enrolled in the legitimising process of liberal democratic order and the formation of European multicultural politics of representation "in the periphery".

After the attacks, the European Union financed a public relations campaign, launching a video called *Stigma* (2014) where one of the most noted Kosovar journalists, Jeta Xharra hoped that Kosovo "will reach a stage of European civilisation where it won't be homosexuals who hide themselves from public but those who use hate speech and attack them" (Zeqiri, 2014). European civilisation here, equated with sexual rights and read as the final goal of post-socialist and post-conflict transition, provides a desired future destination that produces the illusion of Europe as a space free of hate speech and violence. EU-financed projects of visibility of violence directed at the queer communities conjure transitioning societies as plagued by violence and in need of assistance from the EU. This further serves the purpose of justifying EU involvement in the internal affairs of Kosovo. The involvement of the EULEX Mission in the local judicial process in prosecuting the attacks is one such example. While the mandate of the EULEX is constricted to war crimes and corruption, the organisation nevertheless intervened in the prosecution of the attacks on *Kosovo 2.0* (EULEX, 2014a, 2014b). The process of selective defence of the queer community over others not only prevents queer communities from building alliances with other marginalised communities, but also demarcates them as more worthy of the protection of the EU under what Puar calls a "parallel process of demarcation from populations targeted for segregation" (Puar, 2007, p. xii). This separation also serves the purpose of creating and strengthening a local liberal European-oriented elite, which then acts as local interlocutors that, in advocating Europeanisation as the solution to violence directed towards queer communities, become vehicles of EU expansionism. In this context, there is a dual process at hand: while the EULEX operates on the ground with executive and judicial powers, the local elite serves as a legitimising agent of the mission. Exploring these dynamics of the international presence in Kosovo, Visoka (2011, p. 100) notes:

> Delivering development aid and building a neo-liberal economy enables international actors to benefit from trade, loans and other investments. Changing regimes and building democracy creates new partnerships, security communities and loyalties, and space for unlimited exploitation. Deploying military troops also serves the purpose of training troops in dangerous terrains, and practicing modern military technology and doctrines. Establishing the rule of law prevents terrorism, organized crime, trafficking and asylum claims.

As neoliberal globalisation has sexualised culture, politics, and markets, it has produced new methods of controlling the periphery inside and outside EU borders. Attention constantly shifts from one group to another in legitimising liberal multiculturalism. Haritaworn (2012, p. 138) observes how "the sign of diversity, in this discussion, moves from the racialised body (who becomes the 'migrant homophobe') to the sexualised one (who becomes the 'injured homosexual' in need of protection from the 'migrant homophobe')". In this new reality, queer subjects are allowed to seek asylum in the EU and the USA, while former detainees of Guantanamo are sent to live in Albania (Golden, 2007). Whereas the "injured homosexual" is invited under the protection of the EU, the migrant other is perceived as a threat. One report by the Force Migration Review notes how most Kosovars—believing that if they apply as a sexual minority, their claims for asylum status increase—claim to be queer (Fauchier, 2013). In the meantime, over 600 non-queer Kosovars are held in detention centres in Hungary, having been denied asylum in Europe.[17]

Pursuing the attacks on *Kosovo 2.0*, the EULEX and the Kosovo state prosecutor charged three people for inciting hatred, "violating the equal status of the citizens of Kosovo, for preventing a public rally and for damaging properties" (EULEX, March 3, EULEX, 2014a, 2014b). The charges for "slight body injuries" were dropped due to lack of evidence. The attack established the queer community, along with *Kosovo 2.0,* as vulnerable victims of their society, and painted the Muslim community as homophobic, extremist, fundamentalists, and a barrier to Europeanisation. The perception of the queer community as vulnerable victims allows for further EU

[17] See, for instance, Global Detention Project (2014).

intervention in Kosovo, rooted in the heteronormative familial-care scenario, where the child is in need of paternal care before it can gain full political agency and subjectivity (Butler, 2008). This teleological process of the Europeanisation discourse, where the EU comes to represent and protect the queer as a victim of violence, sustains the "cycle of debt", where queers are invited to promote EU integration and discipline those subjects who could endanger this process. How hegemonic powers employ vulnerable sexualised bodies to facilitate neocolonialism at the expense of some "other" is now well established.[18] The choice to single out and co-opt women or queer rights narratives in the process allows for a "moral essentialism" whereby their cooperation with the civilising mission is undertaken in "order to constitute themselves as good people" (Mindry, 2001, p. 1202). Queer political formations, then, come to embrace Europeanisation and legitimise its neocolonial presence in Kosovo, while positioning themselves as outsiders in their own societies. Unlike the rest of the Kosovars, who are still perceived as ambiguous subjects in the Europeanisation process, queers are presented as already European. Queer rights become the "line" at the frontier where "identity cannot be negotiated" and where "cohesion is brought within at the price of exclusion of those without" (Hudson, 2008, p.38). Those "without", in the case of Kosovo, are extremist Muslims who pose a threat to the vulnerable queer subjects, and therefore must be disciplined. Building on Žižek's *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, Wessels (2011, p. 7) argues that "extremism" is:

> a category suggesting excess and improperly disciplined subjectivity. The label of 'extremism' indicates an expression of enjoyment that has veered off of the course of legitimate citizenship. The extremist enjoys too much, takes things too far, but retains the potential of returning back into the boundaries of national belonging.[19]

The Othering of Muslims in Kosovo, however, is not a new phenomenon; it has been a consistent part of the construction of modern nation states where Muslims are continuously produced as being incompatible with

[18] See Rao (2012).

[19] See also Žižek (2008).

European modernity and European secularism. The nested Orientalist anxieties and Islamophobia of local elites and their EU counterparts cause them to ascertain that when Kosovo joins the EU, its Muslim subjects will be multiculturalised; that is, they must be assimilated to fit a designated identitarian representational mandate compatible with EU multicultural politics.

As integration with the EU is presented as a historical inevitability, so is the assimilation of Muslims. The queer rights narrative here is employed to both articulate "Europeanness" inside Europe and to legitimise the EU rule of law and police mission in Kosovo, as a Europeanisation process necessary for joining the EU. The politics of European Enlargement and its engagement with queer rights are rooted in a hierarchy of time, the already existing members of EU, having arrived at a time of progress towards queer rights, are now engaging in framing the queer rights discourse in a temporal teleology that positions them as the experts of this progress, teaching the less developed applicant countries on how to arrive there too. Butler (2008, p. 1) argues that "the way in which debates within sexual politics are framed are already imbued with the problem of time, of progress in particular, and in certain notions of what it means to unfold a future of freedom in time". Moreover, she claims that "hegemonic conceptions of progress define themselves over and against a premodern temporality that they produce for the purposes of their own self-legitimation" (p. 2). In this context, queer Kosovars, having arrived at this, are deployed as foot soldiers, not only in guiding the rest of their societies towards progress, but in legitimising and reassuring the EU of its own achievements in sexual rights.

Conclusion

The case of the attack on *Kosovo 2.0* exemplifies the ways in which liberal "civil society", the local government in Kosovo, and the European Union queers pit Muslims in Kosovo as fundamentally against each other. The incident is used as a tool to represent queers in Kosovo as under siege, as victims in need of rescue. It also operates to discipline and ostracise Muslim communities in Eastern Europe as intolerant, backward,

traditional, and irrational, while the EU is naturalised as tolerant, progressive, modern, and rational. The EU does not really seem to be concerned about the rights of the LBQT communities (or Muslims for that matter) in Kosovo; rather, it is concerned about policing the symbolic borders of the space of the EU, and utilising its power (i.e., its rhetoric on democracy and rule of law) to construct and maintain an image of Europe as multicultural, tolerant, and secular. This form of pinkwashing, or what I call "EU-washing", constitutes a new mode of Orientalist and Islamophobic discourse from a transnational-securitised neocolonial European order: a EUrope 2.0. The real threat—the real siege—that queer communities in Kosovo are under is the loss of political agency to an international coalition of powers (i.e., EULEX, UN) that renders them victims to a supposed pre-modern, irrational, patriarchal, homophobic, fundamentalist Islam. The attempt of the EU to save queers in Kosovo is a self-referential mission to save the EU from its own homophobic past, while maintaining the binaries of tradition vs. progress in the process of enlargement that allows the EU to stand for progress and modernity. In addition, the EU not only cleanses its own homophobic relationships to queer communities within the union, both present and past, but it also erases the history of socialism and the Ottoman empire from memory as well. Within its territorial limits, Europe maintains a fiction of itself as purified and uncontaminated by—that is, dominant over—the history of socialism and Islam.

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8

On the Other Side of an Ethnocratic State? LGBT Activism in Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina

Adelita Selmić

Twenty years after the so-called Dayton Agreement[1] which brought peace to the war-torn Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the country still finds itself in a profound political deadlock which can hardly secure it anything more than the status of "permanently potential" EU candidate. Even within such volatile circumstances in which ethnic divisions are still salient and easily instrumentalised by political elites, activism that promotes recognition of non-heteronormative sexualities manages—slowly but steadily—to plod its way into the public space. LGBT[2] activist initiatives in BiH are located in the fissure between the dysfunctional and

[1] The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as the Dayton Agreement or Dayton Accords) was reached in November 1995 and formally signed in Paris in December 1995.

[2] LGBT as any acronym is used further in the text and even though it stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, we do not exclude other forms of sexual and gender identity, such as queer for instance. It is used as the most common acronym in the literature and within European Union human rights institutions, such as European Agency for Fundamental Rights.

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_8

impoverished state burdened by the legacy of ethnically motivated violence, on the one hand, and the Western European narratives of LGBT rights, liberation, and democracy, on the other.

This chapter draws upon a range of primary sources including the material obtained through a series of semi-structured interviews with the most prominent activists, to argue that, for the time being, the LGBT movement in BiH lacks either governmental or societal support. However, I believe that the points of non-heteronormative resistance which are currently scattered around the country could converge into a

> movement of revolt against a particular form of symbolic violence [which while] bringing into existence new objects of analysis, very profoundly calls into question the prevailing symbolic order and poses in an entirely radical way the question of the foundations of that order and the conditions for a successful mobilisation with a view of subverting it (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 118).

In the light of this, the LGBT/non-heteronormative activist cause could potentially appear as a departure point for creating an intersectionality-sensitive political platform from which to struggle for civic equality and the accountability of institutions. This could constitute an important element in improving not only LGBT persons' lives, but also, more ambitiously, in constructing a progressive and just social environment that would primarily rely on the civic engagement of its own citizens.

The first section of the chapter explores the position of non-heterosexual sexualities within the general political and social landscape of BiH. This is followed by an overview of the country's LGBT activist initiatives, their dynamics and development. I also explore the uneasy relationship between the European Union and BiH and discuss how the protracted and troubled Europeanisation process impacts on LGBT rights and activist strategies for achieving them. The last section of the chapter examines the coalitional potential of various civic actors that have LGBT emancipation on their agenda. While of course recognising the multifarious nature of activist enterprises and their ideological backgrounds, this chapter generally calls for a kind of civic participation that would be based on solidarity and alliances formed among the currently independent or even conflicting activist groups.

Non-Heterosexual Sexualities in the BiH Socio-Political Context

LGBT activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina has intensified since the beginning of the 2000s—a period in which the country is still recovering from severe human and material war losses, while simultaneously passing through what seems to be a never-ending economic and political "transition" that keeps creating a lot of social hardship. For citizens of BiH, who are captured between nationalist political agendas of the local parties and the ambiguous supervision of the "international community's" representatives, which sometimes has clearly neocolonial overtones, perspectives for a better future, including the EU accession, are enveloped in scepticism. In the analysis of the public opinion on the relations between BiH and EU, Turčilo (2012, p. 1) finds that "after the rise of Europhilia in the first phase of accession, the popular support to EU accession and related reforms is declining in Bosnia and Herzegovina". She concludes "that this is not due to classical Euro-scepticism, but rather a consequence of the general idea that the problems of BiH are so immense that not even EU accession could help solving them".

Nevertheless, the European integration process, however tenuous, discredited, and poorly convincing, still provides an important outlook on the more positive and stable times which will eventually come. Research shows that citizens still see EU accession as a response to the country's numerous problems, an instrument for preserving peace and stability, and bringing along a substantial improvement of the quality of life. An important indicator of the rather positive public stance towards the EU is that, regardless of the strong ethnic identity, people also manifest a sense of European belonging which can co-exist with their more specific ethnic identifications (Turčilo, 2012).

Within the institutions and the legal system of BiH, protection of sexual and gender "minorities" is incorporated into the Anti-Discrimination Law,[3] adopted in 2009 and The Law on Gender Equality in 2003.

[3] The first meeting of the working group, led by the BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, for drafting the proposal of changes and amendments to the BiH Law on Prohibition of Discrimination was held on September 3, 2014. As reported by the Sarajevo Open Centre, one

However, the overall situation is still rather discouraging. In this regard, Pilegaard and Džumhur (2015, online) argue that:

> although the difficult economic situation in BiH affects the country as a whole, it has a more severe impact on vulnerable groups such as minority returnees, the Roma and female-headed households. The lack of sustainable solutions for IDPs (internally displaced persons) and returnees continues, as does widespread discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, gender and political affiliation. Furthermore, post-war reforms of governance instruments and national legislation have been undertaken with little or no public and expert consultation and without sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable groups, including IDPs. Laws have often been pushed through without sufficient budgetary planning, with the result that rights are de jure prescribed but not able to be realised in practice. There is concern that many of the measures undertaken have actually resulted in an increase in poverty and slower economic development, which again will have more serious consequences for the most vulnerable groups.

More specifically, in its 2013 review, the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) confirmed that "experiences of homophobia and transphobia remain very common in Bosnia and Herzegovina with limited or no action taken by authorities to address such discrimination, harassment or violence. In fact, several cases show how government officials also contributed to perpetuating homophobia" (ILGA, 2014, p. 1).[4] The same report shows that the combined lack of trust towards institutions and the lack of knowledge and training of law enforcement officials result in an environment that cannot enable an efficient implementation of the law. Apart from these laws, there have been no other legislative

of the organisations that participates in this process, the Anti-discrimination Law should be considerably amended in order to remove all impediments for effective law preparation and to be aligned with the EU acquis. Regarding the protection of LGBT persons, the proposed changes include the adoption of "sexual orientation and gender identity and expression as the basis on which discrimination is prohibited, since the currently used terms 'sexual expression' or 'orientation' are not terminologically correct and are not used in comparative legal praxis" (Hadžić et al., 2015, p. 5).

[4] Samir Kaplan, the Minister of Culture and Sports of the Federation of BiH, stated in August 2013 in a magazine that pride parades in BiH are "a demonstration of someone's internal needs on the streets that has no sense; they are unnecessary and only cause more troubles because they provoke reactions such as criminal offenses. They are the oppression of the majority by the minority".

changes. Sanctioning hate crime has still not been harmonised between the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska (RS).[5] While RS has included hate crime in its criminal code, attempts to do so in the Federation were thwarted in the House of Peoples in September 2013.

An Alternative Progress Report, issued by the Initiative for Monitoring of European Union Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina[6] demonstrates that the EU integration process remains in deadlock, whereas the efforts to combat discrimination and secure protection of vulnerable groups seem to be left without adequate legal and political instruments.

> Judicial reform has been stopped and the Structured Dialogue on Justice between BiH and EU does not show any progress. Not a single significant case of corruption has been processed. Minority and vulnerable groups still live in difficult conditions. Discrimination and violence are all-present, and the law on prohibition of discrimination did not yield the expected results, having in mind that only a few final judgements were passed in the six years after the enactment of the law. Comprehensive anti-discrimination policies for social integration do not exist (Initiative for Monitoring of European Union Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2015, p. 4).[7]

Regarding the public opinion on sexual minorities, a recent survey conducted by Popov-Momčinović (Popov-Momčinović, 2013a, 2013b) demonstrates that citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina show high levels of social distance towards non-heterosexual persons and are also rather unacquainted with the terms related to non-heterosexual sexualities.

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[5] Touquet (2012) claims that although the main cleavages in the country run along ethnic lines, there are civic groups and organisations which try to mobilise in a way that would go beyond ethnic division. According to her, the majority of these initiatives are located in the Federation entity of BiH and not in the RS to which she refers as a "strong nationalising state".

[6] The Initiative is a cluster of non-governmental organisations whose members are: Centre for Political Studies, Foundation CURE, Human Rights Centre of the University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo Open Centre, ACIPS, Organisation Why Not, Green Council, Helsinki Committee of Citizens of Banja Luka, Green Neretva, Centre for Socio Ecological Development, Perpetuum Mobile, Youth Centre Kvart, External Politics Initiative of BiH, and the European Research Centre.

[7] Moreover, Pilegaard and Džumhur (2015, online) claim that "The division of responsibilities among different levels of government (state, entity, canton and municipality) in the area of economic and social rights obstructs access to those rights, with a lack of clarity as to where responsibility lies. The consequence is that progress in the protection of human rights, in establishing rule of law and in improving governance and economic development has remained static in BiH".

For instance, 42.2 % of the examinees find it unacceptable to have a homosexual person for a neighbour, colleague, or boss. Moreover, 56 % of respondents think that homosexuality should be cured and 74 % consider it unacceptable to see two men kissing on the street. Popov-Momčinović shows that these attitudes are highly dependent on demographic dimensions, such as age, gender, educational level, and geographical location (urban or rural area of residence), while they have relatively little to do with religious affiliations.

Moreover, regardless of the human rights discourse, widespread within the post-war burgeoning civic "scene", local political parties and the international organisations representatives, including the EU, do not seem to be overly concerned with LGBT rights. The absence of support of political parties to the LGBT population is particularly striking given that, for the time being, only Our Party (Naša Stranka) has explicitly included the promotion of the rights of people of non-heterosexual sexualities in its political programme (Sarajevo Open Centre, 2013).[8] In this regard, the monitoring and analysis of the 2014 General Election show that LGBT population was mainly irrelevant within the rhetoric and objectives of the candidate parties. "The parties, as expected, devoted the maximum attention to the growing economic and social issues, which is justified, but, on the other hand, human rights were mentioned only superficially, without clear objectives or as an issue almost exclusively related to the conditions for European integration" (Pandurević et al., 2015, p. 8). This points to a rather "hollow" human rights discourse which seems to be an overused and rather elastic strategy with which the elites try to mask the lack of concrete political measures.

However, the tensions between the collective/ethnic rights paradigm, the main pillar of the ethnocratic state, on the one hand, and the individual political/sexual subjectivity, on the other, have led to a noteworthy outcome. Namely, LGBT individuals are increasingly becoming *trans-ethnic citizens*, positioned beyond the suffocating insistence on ethnic belonging and the supposedly omnipresent political desire for living in

[8] Touquet (2011) analyses Naša stranka as an example of integrative political mobilisation that goes counter to the centripetal nature of various BiH nationalisms that dominate the political scene. She claims that such actors face problems that go beyond the tendency of the BiH constitutional structure to prioritise ethnic differences.

a nation state. In this regard, research that encompassed 545 persons ranging from 15 to 54 years of age, conducted by the Sarajevo Open Centre (2013, p. 28), demonstrates that 73 % of LGBT examinees do not declare themselves according to ethnicity. Therefore, in perhaps symbolic, but still no less *political*, manner, LGBT persons start constituting the "Other" to all three main ethnic groups.[9] The idea of multiple others and trans-ethnic identities becomes politically relevant because of the potential it holds for understanding equality in terms of individual needs, rights, and obligations instead of inevitably associating it with ethnic belonging. This begs the question of whether LGBT activist engagement could open up a space for solidarity and support which would occur among BiH citizens irrespective of their ethnic or any other affiliation. While ethnic rights protection remains the major task for the state, regarding the Constitutional reform and other issues, LGBT voices could perhaps contribute to civic efforts that highlight the general social, legal, and political inequality and deprivation deepened by dysfunctional institutions and sometimes insufficiently thought through actions and reactions of the "international community". On the other hand, the risk remains for this kind of activism to be seen as imperialistic—yet another external, "European" or international "product" imported in BiH to make it "catch up" with the rest of the "civilised" world (see Kahlina, 2014).

LGBT Activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Legal provisions related to male same-sex relationships began to change in 1996, when homosexual male act was decriminalised within the territory of the Federation of BiH. The same penal code that remained as the legal tradition of BiH Criminal Law from 1977 was abolished in RS in 1998 and in Brčko District in 2003. The position of LGBT population in recent BiH history was similar to the situation in the neighbouring countries, meaning that the main driver of inequality was their public

[9] Ethnic minorities (the others) cannot run for membership of the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the basis of the provisions of Sections IV and V of the Constitution, which provide that in these state authorities, only members of the Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian people may be nominated.

invisibility. "Additional pressure on members of the LGBT population was present due to existence of violations of public peace and order and public morals. The entire legal and social context of the time probably resulted in a strong stigma, especially towards gay men" (Spahić & Gavrić, 2011, p. 111).[10] The war in BiH and the political solutions devised to end it seem to have cemented ethnic and religious divisions allowing "both ethnonational and ethnoreligious elites to pursue an aggressive policy of so-called re-traditionalisation of gender roles" (Spahić-Šiljak, 2013, p. 121), which negatively affects primarily women and those with a non-heterosexual sexual orientation.

The first attempt at formal gathering of LGBT population in BiH occurred in Sarajevo in 2001, when the group of enthusiasts wrote the outline of the Declaration of BiH Gay and Lesbian Association, naming the historical, economic, and political reasons which prevented LGB persons from organising themselves within the legal framework of the state. "For LGB persons, 1997 and 1998 were the embodiment of the collapse of their social movements, throwing out openly gay men from the army, closing bar which was known as a gathering place of the LGB persons, and unreasonable controls carried out by the government on our organising" (Đurković, 2007, p. 22). Even though this association was never officially registered as an NGO, it is important to emphasise the motivation and willingness of individuals to articulate the issue of LGBT rights and visibility in BiH. According to the then valid law, an association should have collected at least 30 signatures in order to be registered and they managed to gather only 20. During the same year, a gay bar was opened in Sarajevo, but as the media made this fact public, it had to close after only several weeks.

In September 2002, another initiative for advocacy on LGBT human rights occurred, named Bosnia 14th September. During the same year, this organisation gathered only two members, Svetlana Đurković and Istok Bratić, while in the following period, as the membership grew, the first LGBT platform was emerging in BiH. After collecting information, outlining objectives, making contacts with potential members, donors, and organisations from the region, in 2004, the first LGBT organisa-

[10] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are ours.

tion, named Organisation Q, was officially registered. During his visit to BiH in 2007, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, stated the importance of the recognition and support towards the first organisation dealing with the rights of non-heterosexual people in BiH. After meeting with the outspoken leader of the organisation, Svetlana Đurković, in his report from 2008, Hammarberg wrote the following: "they and their work—and the work of other LGBT organisations in BiH—deserve further support from Bosnian authorities" (Hammarberg as cited in Council of Europe, 2008, p. 23).

Organisation Q worked extensively on activities involving LGBT persons: workshops, parties, legal aid, HIV prevention, as well as political advocacy towards the state institutions and "international community" representatives. Members of Q carried out a lot of research related to the position of LGBTIQ population in BiH and worked intensively on the visibility of LGBT persons in the media. "During their first years, Svetlana Đurkovic was a guest in a variety of TV shows in almost all of BiH media outlets. Eventually she became the front of the LGBT community and also the first queer person who *came out* and was known to the general public" (Spahić & Gavrić, 2011, p. 113).

Unlike the majority of regional organisations at the time, Q had the unified human rights approach, involving all sexual and gender minority groups. The organisation developed cooperation with the regional LGBT groups and was a part of the Queer Network of the South East Europe (SEE Q network), which was active from 2003 until 2009. In 2005, an organisation called the International Initiative for Visibility of Queer Muslims was founded by a former member of Q, Vanja Hamzić. The organisation was renamed to *Logos* in 2006, but soon ceased to exist. At the time, LGBT persons were using a variety of Internet networks as a means of communication and socialisation, which resulted in many formal and informal activities and gatherings.

The turning point of BiH's LGBT activism was the Queer Sarajevo Festival (QSF) in 2008, when the attempt of Organisation Q to organise an art festival led to an escalation of violence against festival participants. This first large-scale public event related to LGBT population in BiH took place at the Sarajevo Academy of Fine Arts on September 24, 2008 and was attended by around 300 people. Through a series of performances,

exhibitions, films, and discussions, the organisers wanted to "challenge and question heteronormative and patriarchal values, particularly those centred around the issues of identity, sexuality and human rights" (Queer Sarajevo Festival, 2008). However, prior to the opening of the festival, a wide "coalition" of media, political parties, and religious leaders started articulating a narrative of the *provocative*, *dangerous*, *and insulting queer intrusion* into the celebration of the Ramadan.

> In the run-up to the festival, some politicians and certain parts of the media in BiH created an atmosphere of hostility that legitimated attacks against the organisers and participants of the festival. A number of websites have called for the organisers of the festival to be lynched, stoned, doused with petrol or expelled from the country (Amnesty International, as cited in Grew, 2008, online).

The violent groups surrounding the venue of the festival consisted of football fans and religious extremist Salafis, whose attacks on festival guests continued during the night and ended with eight people injured and the cancellation of the event. Behlulović (2011, p. 54) claims that

> Q was undoubtedly at the forefront. Regularly alone. This was particularly evident during the QSF. Many sources deem, in fact, that one of the biggest mistakes the organisers made was that they did not secure themselves with the support both from the LGBTIQ population and from numerous human rights organisations in the country.

The festival-related violence had important consequences for the BiH LGBT community. Even though Organisation Q was still active until 2009, Svetlana Đurković soon immigrated to USA.[11] This left BiH without any relevant LGBT public actor for a certain period of time and affected the development of LGBT activism in the years to come. Although violence frequently occurs during LGBT public events, what makes the QSF rather traumatic for the LGBT community in BiH is

[11] The connection between traumatic circumstances regarding QSF and Đurković emigrating to the USA is somewhat difficult to establish, since Đurković had planned to return to the US years prior to the QSF.

the inadequate reaction of the state: many political leaders' attempts to legitimise hate speech by manipulating national and religious feelings were accompanied by the absence of support from the state institutions, including the reluctance to prosecute and properly punish the attackers. It was not before September 2014, 6 years after the appeal was filed, that the Constitutional Court of BiH partially granted the appeal of the Organisation Q for promotion and protection of culture, identity, and human rights of queer persons. The Court adopted the decision on admissibility and merits and partially the appeal of Organisation Q related to violation of the right under Article II/3 of the Constitution of BiH and the Article 11 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Federation Government thus received a fine amounting to 3000 BAM to be paid to the Organisation Q for violation of constitutional law and non-pecuniary damage. The Government of Canton Sarajevo also received a fine of 3000 BAM. Both governments must notify the Constitutional Court on the execution of the decisions. This is the first verdict of this kind in BiH, which confirms the right of LGBT persons to public assembly, but also the first time the authorities were urged to pay compensation for non-pecuniary damage caused to an LGBT organisation.

Moreover, in 2009, a group named Equilibrium was founded in Banja Luka, aiming at community building, but their work remained barely visible and at this moment, the organisation does not officially exist. Sarajevo Open Centre (SOC) is an organisation that was originally associated with QSF but has left the project and started its activities on LGBT issues in 2010. What was problematic at the time, according to the director Saša Gavrić, is the fact that after the QSF, activists had to start from the beginning.

> When we started to work, I was confronted with the problem that many things had to be done all over again, as if after 2002 nothing had happened. For example, the organisation of parties requires the existence of the community, contacts, mailing lists etc. Working with institutions also requires knowledge of laws, structures and people. There was no any transfer of knowledge and I do not blame anyone for that, but that is the fact (Saša Gavrić, personal communication, July 2013).

SOC continued to conduct research on legal and social position of LGBT community in BiH and provide more space for socialising through different community activities. In 2013, the organisation developed a multimedia online platform *www.lgbt.ba*, and currently implements projects devoted to education of the state officials and the media on LGBT rights. During 2014 and 2015, together with few other organisations, SOC organised education for thousands of police officers, teachers, and other public officials, as well as media campaigns and other activities, in the scope of the first large-scale project funded by the EU, Enhancing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Trans Rights in BiH in Line with EU Standards.

In recent years, the LGBT population is becoming increasingly visible through a range of organisations including Sarajevo-based Okvir (founded in 2011 to offer psychological support and strengthen the LGBT individuals and community), the foundation *CURE*, the Queer Sport Sarajevo, as well as the Banja Luka Association of Queer Activists, Liberta Mo in Mostar, and TANKA in Tuzla. Increased visibility of sexual minorities is also related with the more frequent media reporting, which doubled from 2012 until 2013. In 2014, ILGA's report noted that "while media reporting has increased and improved drastically in quality and content, manifestations of homophobia through hate speech (i.e. death and violence threats) and sensationalist reporting are still present, especially in online media" (ILGA, 2014, p. 4). The return to public life also resulted in several violent attacks on LGBT persons and related events in Sarajevo during 2013 and 2014, while the office of the organisation in Banja Luka was assaulted on the eve of the celebration of The International Transgender Day of Visibility, which was cancelled in order to protect the participants.

Yet, steps that have been taken have found little or no resonance within state institutions and the legal system. As reported recently by SOC:

> BiH lags behind almost all other countries in the region in that it lacks an action plan for its anti-discrimination legislation; without such a plan, institutions cannot be consistently held accountable by civil society organisations and citizens. An anti-discrimination law was adopted in 2009, but local laws have not been harmonised to it, rendering it completely meaningless (Sarajevo Open Centre, 2014, p. 1).

However, some recent events can be considered significant in creating a supportive political climate in the future. Namely, the key moment in the May activities dedicated to LGBT rights in 2015 was a thematic session of a joint commission for Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH on the rights of LGBT people, which is a precedent in the current work of the legislative institutions in BiH on issues of importance to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Moreover, specific LGBT-related issues have been publicly addressed by LGBT activists for the first time in BiH, such as same-sex partnerships and more specific advocacy and engagement concerning transgender persons.

European Integration and LGBT Rights in BiH

BiH was recognised as a potential EU candidate in 2000 after the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) was proposed for five countries of the region. As a political document, SAP aimed at stabilisation and the establishment of cooperation among countries of the region, all of which became "potential candidate countries". The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) was signed in 2008 and ratified in 2010, meaning that the country is accepting the EU conditions for membership. In 2010, citizens of BiH were granted the right to travel to the Schengen Area without a visa. In March 2011, the EU agreed on a new strategy for the country, set out in the Council Conclusions. The EU Council has set four conditions to be met prior to the application for membership. BiH has completed only two of them (adoption of the State Aid Law and the Law on Census of Population, Household, and Dwellings), while the other two (the implementation of the Sejdić-Finci ruling[12] and

[12] The Sejdić-Finci case relates to a 2009 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights. The case was brought by Dervo Sejdić, a prominent Bosnian Roma activist, and Jakob Finci, who is a well-known Bosnian Jew and a former Bosnia and Herzegovina's Ambassador to Switzerland. They argued that the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Constitution, which was negotiated as a part of the Dayton peace accords that ended the Bosnian war in 1995, was discriminatory because certain electoral posts, for example membership in the tripartite presidency, can only be held by Serbs, Croats, or Bosniaks. The court agreed with the arguments of the plaintiffs. Bosnia's leaders, in turn, agreed to implement the ruling, but they have still not found a satisfactory way of doing this in practice.

the establishment of coordination mechanisms for EU-related affairs) have not been met as yet. The weak progress towards the integration has resulted in a partial suspension of pre-accession funds, worth around €45 million. In December 2014, EU agreed on a new approach towards BiH, to be developed and implemented in consultation with NGOs, concerning reforms under the Copenhagen criteria and with priority given to economic and social matters. In March 2015, the Council noted that the necessary conditions contained therein have been met and agreed to proceed with the conclusion and entry into force of SAA.

As it has been already mentioned, the first legal mechanism regarding the protection of the sexual minorities' rights was introduced in 2003, when the Gender Equality Law was adopted, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. However, the influence of the international community and EU requirements was most effective in pushing through the Anti-Discrimination Law in 2009, which was actually a condition for a visa-free regime for BiH citizens within the EU countries. The Law recognises discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. However, the effect of the EU Delegation's mission in BiH mainly remains in introducing the anti-discrimination policies and providing the declarative and financial support to LGBT organisations while a more popular acceptance of these measures is still missing.

An important step that the human-rights-oriented NGO sector initiated in 2013 is the formation of The Initiative for the Monitoring of European Union Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina (The Initiative), which includes 13 organisations committed to monitoring reforms and overseeing the application of EU policies, laws, and standards. The focus is placed on the areas of human rights, the functioning of the state, the judiciary, corruption, and transitional justice, mainly the political criteria for the EU integration. Members of the Initiative highlight that the country is not moving forward in this process, but decreases its chances of ever becoming a member state. Likewise, activists from the organisation Okvir emphasise the idea that EU-related affairs do not have significant impact on lives of LGBT people. "Various EU funds and EU policies are generally more supportive towards the domain of advocacy rather than providing direct support to the LGBT people. Also, the reality is that even if BiH joins the EU, this will nei-

ther be fast or relevant enough to influence the concrete improvements in existence of LGBT people" (Okvir activist, personal communication, July 2015).

Even though the international organisations present in the country, including the EU Delegation, are generally supportive towards the improvement of the position of LGBT persons in the society, their assistance in this process, such as with many other issues, depends upon the realm of the domestic politics. According to the recent interview with the Deputy Head of EU Delegation, Renzo Daviddi, published in the news magazine *Dani*, it is evident that the EU politics towards BiH will not change in the future. "The politics of citizens of this country has to change, not the politics of international community. I assure you that the methodology for BiH will not change. The same methodology is applied to all countries aiming towards the EU since 1956" (Daviddi, as cited in Dani Magazine, 2014, online).

The vicious circle between the EU and the political elites of BiH leaves the LGBT rights advocacy in the position where any meaningful political support or a guarantee that rights will be improved is missing. This observation can be generalised for many other areas that are tackled in the relation between the EU and BiH. Yet, unlike for instance, the matter of civil and political rights of citizens regarding the Sejdić-Finci ruling, which is a particular concern of BiH as a *sui generis* state—however brought from international factors—LGBT advocacy is often seen as something coming *from the West*. Moreover, in the social climate, which is to a large extent overwhelmed by human rights discourse and various external requirements, there is, even among activists, a somewhat cynical impression regarding the "international community" support for LGBT rights. "It is becoming a priority from a financial point of view. Perhaps I am wrong, but my impression is that this is because many other issues have failed, so now they work on LGBT rights" (Saša Gavrić, personal communication, July 2013).

It remains to be seen how (and if) further Europeanisation developments will take into account grievances and aspirations manifested through protests and direct democracy[13] initiatives during 2014, which

[13] For an analysis of an earlier protest around a non-ethnic issue, see Touquet (2015).

pointed to the need for a system "restart" and the switch from the paradigm of the past towards the paradigm of the future.[14] In the words of Eric Gordy (2015, online):

> Time/space can expand. What keeps the institutions closed now is the presence of the vested interest from the past within them. And they are not always going to be there. But a movement that is independent, that is more or less autonomous, has a couple of advantages. One of them is the ability to bypass institutions, to operate beside them independently. And the other is the ability to get attention, which is something the non-institutional movements on the far right know very well. That a few dramatic public performances can change discourse really fundamentally, and is it something the cognate movements on the left are very hesitant to do.

Having in mind that the vast majority of the population in both entities is generally supportive of the EU integrations, promoting "identification with Europe as a supranational community can in Bosnia and Herzegovina become a way to overcome the identity frictions that exist among the country's ethnic groups" (Brljavac, 2012)—and open the public discourse on what this identification stands for and how it can be developed and strengthened together with local practices and traditions.

Coalitional Potential of the BiH LGBT Initiatives

Creating alternatives within a political system in which institutions remain reluctant to provide support to LGBT population is a necessary, but difficult task. However, omnipresent inequality in BiH may turn the struggle for LGBT rights into a broader political intervention aiming

[14] Arsenijević (2014a, online) claims that: "The recent protests have created, for the first time, an opportunity to move from melancholia to mourning, to face the losses and start counting the gains from the war. Ours is a life that has survived war and genocide, but has been brutalised by the corrupt privatisation of public companies; a life that now only dreams of fleeing the country to avoid dying in solitude and hunger. This is the life we have to reclaim. We have to create more humane ties, and a society that offers our young people a future. I am part of this life and every day I remind myself to get up and go to the streets to protest because this is our only hope". See also Arsenijević (2014b) and Živković (2014).

at a more functional state. An activist and supporter of the LGBT community in BiH, Valentina Pellizzer (personal communication, July 2013) states that "LGBT activism operates against the patriarchal societal foundations and can change a lot. It could be, in fact, the largest earthquake to hit the country". While ethnocratic practices of separation and ethnic and religious aggregation function as a *modus operandi* of preserving the patriarchal structures exemplified by the link between "patriotism and morality", there is a certain "analogy between being an LGBT person and being a feminist, even though these two subjects are not exclusive" (Popov-Momčinović, 2013a, 2013b, p. 159). More specifically, "while the BiH society is conditionally (or more precisely – more than conditionally) 'tolerant' towards LGBT issues while they are hidden from eyes of the public and reduced to an individual thing kept between the walls, it is similar with the feminist identity". This indicates the presence of "double, patriarchal morality that contaminates all spheres of BiH society" (Popov-Momčinović, 2013a, 2013b, p. 159). However, as LGBT activism remains marginal, perhaps the hidden *other side of an ethnocratic state*, its emersion into the public sphere could trigger the questioning of this double morality and in a broader sense, the relation of a state towards its citizens, particularly its multiple vulnerable groups.

In this regard, popular—mostly Western strategies—for equality and visibility of LGBT persons, such as gay pride parades and the legal recognition of same-sex partnerships, have only recently become publicly articulated within the LGBT scene. Discussions pertaining to the organisation of gay pride marches cannot escape recalling the violence witnessed at the 2008 QSF. Potential organisers see this manifestation as a step that would require a lot of preparation on various levels, among which the crucial ones are political will and the security issues regarding state institutions and the visibility, strength, and capacity of the LGBT organisations and "community" to hold the risk of potentially violent and destructive circumstances. The "community" itself is divided as according to one study, 52 % of LGBT population thinks that a pride march should be held in BiH (Čaušević, 2013, p. 50). Concerning the public opinion, 32.7 % of BiH citizens are supportive towards the pride parade and do not see it as a provocation. The equal number of examinees perceives

pride strictly as an unnecessary provocation, while others are neutral on this topic (Popov-Momčinović, 2013a, 2013b, p. 19).

However, if so far BiH LGBT activism has been mainly addressing the issues of basic functionality of the state and the basic human rights—the right to life and protection from violence and discrimination—it shares a lot of common ground with many other disadvantaged groups in BiH society. In this regard, Nina Đikić, an activist from Sarajevo, wrote an article published on the online magazine *Bilten*, where she states the following:

> Diversity, be it sexual, gender, racial, class, ethnic or other, which is, in the given socio-political conditions, used as the basis of segregation and repression, as well as ideological and political practice of silence and deletion, can become a motive of uniting all marginalised groups in joint combat against the system. Inter sectoral perspective of the struggle for human rights opens up a space for a dialogue and unification within the Left, and strengthening networks of human rights groups and individuals in joint advocacy and appearance towards the institutions of government.

What is more, Azra (Čaušević, 2013) from the organisation Okvir says: "Pride in the context of the BiH society can only be a social uprising against repression and oppression, continuous depredation of public goods and silencing of all of us". The wider, intersectional approach emerges from the basic needs of BiH citizens within the internal structures combined with rather passive state apparatus, where reliance on external solutions and international politics, such as the EU integration process, has shown almost immaterial results. Dražen Crnomat, an activist from Banja Luka, emphasises that "this is the struggle that LGBT community can hardly carry out without the other associates and allies. The significance of the parade can be achieved if problems of LGBT persons are highlighted in the context of systematic problems, where emancipation can hardly be achieved through the identity politics, without the request for the wider equality" (Crnomat, as cited in Isovic, 2015, online). Moreover, particularities of BiH political setting, intertwined with different social, economic, religious, and historical burdens can hardly allow the approach in which any of these issues could be tackled separately. As Mouffe (as citied in Popov-Momčinović, 2013a,

2013b, p. 129) argues, "political agent is never a unitary subject, but the articulation of an ensemble of subject positions, constructed within specific discourses and always precariously and temporarily sutured at the intersection of those subject positions".

The concept of intersectionality, which implies that "different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands" (Brah & Phoenix, 2004, p. 3), was also tackled in the context of the European integration process, where the conditionality approach that assumes a certain "linear order" has not so far led to a lot of success when it comes to BiH. Namely, during her recent visit to BiH, a member of the European Parliament, Terry Reintke (2014, online) stated that, in the context of Europeanisation, LGBT rights advocacy should not be separated from struggle for human rights of other groups. "It is important that there is no separate struggle of LGBT people to respect their human rights, and that they are joined by other groups and work together to fight for their rights". Furthermore, she points out that the politics does not end when the particular legislation is adopted by the Parliament. "We need a more dynamic approach. It takes more interactions, including those between the civil society and politicians from the EU to show why this is important for BiH citizens" (Reintke, as cited in FENA-Federalna novinska agencija, 2014, online).

Even though activists declaratively agree that cooperation is necessary and there is a good level of collaboration among certain organisations and LGBT groups, Gavrić (personal communication, July 2013) says that "There actually is a resistance to cooperation… it is related to the conservative attitudes of most of the old activists, people who cannot see that the general human rights organisations must also advocate for the rights of LGBT persons". A former activist from Organisation Q, Slobodanka Dekić (personal communication, July Slootmaeckers & Touquet, 2013a, 2013b) states that the context in which non-governmental organisations operate from one project to another is not a fruitful environment for establishing any kind of essential cooperation and understanding. "Cooperation exists on a strictly individual level, when two people understand each other, and after they leave their organisations, it all falls apart".

Regarding the cooperation between larger organisations and the grass roots initiatives inside the LGBT scene, Leila Šeper from an informal

initiative Queer Sport Sarajevo states that this is a very complex issue and that a certain level of disappointment in project-based activities and organisations surely exists among individuals outside the NGO sector. "A significant amount of energy is spent on bureaucracy, while people and their endeavours and needs become secondary" (Leila Šeper, personal communication, July 2015). Furthermore, she claims that project-based activities dictate not only the *needs* of, in this case, LGBT population, but also the power relations between different forms of activism and political engagement. In other words, "there is a certain amount of power inside the larger, established organisations and unwillingness to share that power with others".

Activists from the recently formed initiative TANKA, the only LGBT group in the Tuzla Canton, state that they have established a good cooperation with all the LGBT associations in the country. The group is mainly gathered around art, culture, and different forms of street activism. Yet, they emphasise the issue of the somewhat fragmented LGBT "community" in their own city. "The community in Tuzla is not united, and we believe that this is one of the biggest problems. By that we mean that not everyone is interested in activities that we offer, and it is even more difficult to get the support for their implementation. The fact that the community is scattered supports the general belief that it does not even exist in our society" (TANKA activist, personal communication, July 2015).

However, cooperation between different associations and initiatives within the LGBT and feminist activist scene remains a challenging task, particularly in the light of the way in which various political, social, and economic issues are intertwined.[15] In an interview from 2015, Svetlana Đurković (Ivanov, 2015, online) summarises the potential and perhaps, the future of LGBT activism in BiH: "LGBTIQ issue is not separate from other issues. It is not separate from the situation in relation to women, minorities, the Roma population, the economic crisis, corruption, animals, the environment, procedural discrimination and exclusion.

[15] The various civic associations and NGOs, are often evaluated as "externally dependent, fragmented on ethnic lines, and unable to establish closer contacts with ordinary citizens, what at the end extremely has weakened its capacity to significantly influence the policy-making" (Brljavac, 2010, p. 79).

What should happen with the LGBT movement is that besides creating a safe space and working on their own agenda, LGBTIQ activists engage more on these and other problematic issues". If LGBT activist initiatives do not manage to branch out towards other discriminated groups and incorporate a class dimension in their political platforms, they could very easily run the risk of being perceived as yet another *non-governmental and international business* that has been imported in the BiH socio-political context in order to satisfy the EU norms and "illuminate" the "backward Balkan mentality". If we acknowledge that "the post-war civil society appeared as result of the encompassing capacity building operation and it is an important construct of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina", where "it is the specific Western social knowledge that has been assumed as universal and culturally neutral, and as such, imposed as a set of skills necessary for the transition to democracy" (Šavija-Valha, 2012, p. 248), there is a necessity and a challenge to articulate the issue of non-heterosexual sexualities as a legitimately local political and social matter that goes way beyond specific sexual practices and actually touches upon some of the most fundamental issues involved in constructing a democratic and sustainable political community.

Conclusion

Operating inside the complex state apparatus that has been constructed in a way which perpetuates the relevance of ethnic divisions, LGBT activism in BiH has to face the relatively uninformed and homophobic public, on the one hand, and the poorly coordinated state institutions that are often not accountable to the citizens whom they are supposed to represent and protect, on the other. As in other countries of the former Yugoslavia that were involved in the 1990s armed conflicts, sexual matters in the still highly patriarchal BiH socio-political context struggle to find a way out of religious doctrines and nationalist agendas. As the country's political deadlock regarding its integration into the EU provides little hope for a meaningful improvement of the current state of political and economic affairs, LGBT advocacy could hold a certain creative potential to, in cooperation with other progressive forces, imagine a

different—non-ethnocratic—kind of BiH polity. Even if often perceived as a "Western import" that inevitably accompanies transition to neoliberal capitalism, non-heterosexual sexualities in the current circumstances point to the need for a fair and equal treatment of all citizens.

Given that (national) identity politics in the context of BiH mainly functions as a justification that a cluster of political and business elites offer for various forms of social deprivation, corruption, and devastation of public goods (Belloni & Strazzari, 2014), the increasing frequency of recent protests shows that the time is ripe for a set of more comprehensive and long-term solutions that would tackle different social and political areas of life, including women and non-heterosexual emancipation. It is clear that the status of LGBT population, both legally and socially, can hardly be separated from that of other discriminated groups, but it remains to be seen to what extent various strands of the BiH LGBT activist organising will manage to present themselves as a reliable ally in these efforts. This is also a matter of their capacity to establish regional and international links of activist solidarity.

> Global trends are present and can hardly be stopped … In addition to the conservatism, and despite everything, BiH society has elements of modernism. It is more than necessary to define and promote tolerance towards LGBT population as a part of the general attitude of the right to be different" (Prohić, as cited in Dani Magazin, 2013, online).

BiH LGBT groups are increasingly cognizant of the need to consider the particularities of their own social context and respond to multiple grievances that it generates. They also share the responsibility for finding a way of gathering together various threads of their creative energy, which is especially precious in such straitened circumstances that force many young people to consider that they could live much better lives somewhere else. Even though the history of LGBT organising worldwide teaches us that coming together on a progressive platform has often been a challenging and painful task, one should not underestimate the potential of LGBT initiatives to offer discursive elements that could join a wider coalition and help to subvert the stalemate in which BiH finds

itself as both a state and a society. This is in accordance with Bourdieu's (2002, p. 124) argument that

> (…) it may be that the only way for such a movement [gay and lesbian movement] to escape a mutually reinforcing ghettoisation and sectarianism is for it to place the specific capacities that it owes to the relatively improbable combination of a strong subversive disposition, linked to a stigmatised status, and strong cultural capital at the service of the social movement as a whole; or – to think in utopian terms for a moment – to place itself at the avant-garde, at least as regards theoretical work and symbolic action (in which some homosexual groups are pastmasters), of the subversive political and scientific movements, thus applying, in the service of the universal, the particular advantages which distinguish homosexuals from other stigmatised groups.

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9

Beyond EUtopian Promises and Disillusions: A Conclusion

Bojan Bilić and Paul Stubbs

As we are starting to work on this chapter in late August 2015, tens of thousands of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries involved in protracted armed conflicts in Northern Africa and Western Asia are crossing Macedonia and Serbia, hoping to reach some of the Northern EU member states. From rare interviews that they are willing to give on their long and exhausting journey, those lucky enough to escape death only to be sprayed with teargas, dispersed, injured, robbed, and catalogued, but also helped and taken care of mainly by a mobilisation of ordinary people, make it clear that they expect Europe and the EU to offer them normalcy, security, and peace. While the ills and fears of the life left behind are strong enough to propel them forward in spite of numerous difficulties, many of them are already beginning to encounter the other, much less appealing and not always immediately visible European

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B. Bilić (ed.), *LGBT Activism and Europeanisation in the Post-Yugoslav Space*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57261-5_9

face: the one of racism, colonial rule, indifference, and exclusion. Its first contours can be discerned not so far away from Belgrade, along the border between Serbia and Hungary where a wall is now, as we are writing, being erected to prevent refugees from entering Hungarian territory, the current beginning of that "promised EU land".

As a train arrives commemorating a "journey to freedom" by Hungarian citizens escaping from communism exactly 25 years earlier, refugees forced to sit outside Budapest's Keleti station for days in the sweltering heat are finally allowed to board a different train to begin a journey, not to the promised destinations of Western Europe but, instead, to a hastily designed and overcrowded camp. In Brussels, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán speaks openly of defending European Christianity against a Muslim influx, claiming that Europe is "in the grip of madness" (as cited in Traynor, 2015, online). The EU institutions struggle to develop any kind of strategy, much less to channel adequate financial support to respond to this humanitarian crisis whose end is still not in sight, in the process yet again reproducing a supposedly essential binary between the "hostile" response from the periphery and the more "humane" and "tolerant" response of the core. At the same time, it seems that a group of non-Europeans—in a dialectical reversal—is reinventing the "European values" of democracy, anti-fascism, tolerance, and co-existence, by relying on them and giving the Europeans a chance to put them into practice, to re-invoke a "European dream" of the EU as a "beacon of light in a troubled world … (which) beckons us to a new age of inclusivity, diversity, quality of life, sustainability, universal human rights, the rights of nature, and peace on earth" (Rifkin, 2004, p. 385).

This EUtopia, as all utopias, is, of course, "the imagining of a reconstituted society, society imagined otherwise" (Levitas, 2013, p. 84), as a multiplication of possibilities deriving from an adherence to "an inessential view of the EU" (Walters & Haahr, 2005, p. 138). What may be dismissed as idealistic "wishful thinking" can, perhaps, be transformed into a sociology of emergences, a sociology of the "not-yet" (De Sousa Santos, 2004, p. 24), which aims "to identify and enlarge the signs of possible future experiences, under the guise of tendencies and latencies, that are actively ignored by hegemonic rationality and knowledge" (De Sousa Santos, 2006, p. 29). Such "optimism of the will" must be tempered by a "pessimism of the intellect", however, recognising the dangerous radical

restructuring of the EU in this period of "crisis", resulting in a "fiscal" and "austerity" disciplinary reanimation of the transnational space and an expansion and reformulation of a neocolonialist project within the EU itself (Stubbs & Lendvai, 2015), alongside a resurgence of nationalism, chauvinism, and the continued rise of the radical right.

All of the chapters in this volume have examined the ways in which this peculiar ambivalence of Europe and the complex relationship that the EU has with those who remain outside of its shifting frontiers is enacted in the sphere of LGBT activist politics. The contributions to this book have shown that in the post-Yugoslav space there is practically no other political reference that could bear comparison with that heterogeneous and distinctly polysemous *Europe*. Various overlapping actors related to LGBT activist politics—including European Union officials, state authorities, activist groups, the LGBT population itself, activist-researchers, as well as the general public—repeatedly demonstrate the relevance that the EU and processes of European integration have for the way in which non-heteronormative sexualities in the post-Yugoslav countries are articulated and configured. While we, of course, understand that the EU still "shines like a light in the dark" (Hekma, 2007, p. 8) for many people, including some of the authors of this volume, we have shown how this supranational entity uses the long and troubled accession process to disseminate discursive tools employed in LGBT activist struggles for human rights and equality. This creates a linkage between "Europeanness" and "gay emancipation", which elevates certain forms of gay activist engagement and, perhaps also non-heterosexuality, more generally, to a measure of democracy, progress, and modernity. At the same time, it relegates practices of intolerance to gays to the status of non-European primitivist Other, who is inevitably positioned in the turbulent past that should be left behind. Such a link has an important and, as we have argued, frequently negative, influence on the way in which the "European project", originally based on the ideals of peace, trust, and cooperation, can be applied as a leverage tool for improving the status of LGBT-related rights and deepening social acceptance of non-heteronormativity in the post-Yugoslav space.

In other words, our volume has interrogated a plethora of political, social, and cultural implications of the increasingly relevant symbolic nexus that has been developing between Europeanisation, LGBT

activisms and rights, and non-heteronormativity. In the wake of an aggressive ethno-nationalism that is (at least for the time being and at least in some places) no longer so openly belligerent as it used to be two decades ago, this conceptual amalgam generates multiple distinction lines not only between the post-Yugoslav countries and the EU, but also within the post-Yugoslav space and the regional activist "scene(s)" embedded in different "EU temporalities" and positions. More specifically, pairing Europeanisation and the accompanying ideologically loaded notions of European modernity, liberty, and democracy with "gay struggle" leads to rather ambivalent effects. On the one hand, this coupling deals a heavy blow to the oppressive regime of gender relations by pulling "non-normative" sexual identifications out of the exclusively private space. However, it also has potentially problematic consequences: through detaching the increasingly NGO-ised and professionalised activist community from its "constituency", it destabilises the grassroots ownership of activist initiatives and alienates the endeavours striving towards non-heteronormative emancipation from the domestic political arena. Thus, it creates a "disciplinary gay subject able to perform Europeanness" where the EU still has not fully arrived (Colpani & Habed, 2014, p. 87) and it produces a new "intermestic public sphere" of privileged voices in which Western Embassies and their representatives start promoting a particular LGBT-rights-related political agenda that does not correspond to or reflect local grievances or, in any case, does not necessarily do so in a linear fashion in which it might be expected to operate. As such, non-domestic actors, often associated with former colonial empires, play important roles in "Europeanising" accession and pre-accession countries. This is done in partnership with domestic/regional "liberal intellectuals and activists" who become the new cadres of "intermestic modernisation", emphasising both the "backwardness" of the region in relation to an imagined "West" while also asserting that only domestic elites can translate the universal values of modernity into locally workable schemes (Stubbs, 2013, p. 136). Inevitably perhaps, some of the practices of this elite border on "elitism", a shorthand term for an assemblage of dispositions, discourses, and performativities which serve to marginalise, undermine, and sometimes silence other voices, eschewing a reflexive commitment to humility,

heteroglossia, active listening, solidarity, non-hierarchy, collaboration, and mutual care.[1] At times, members of this elite articulate, in elaborated codes, that which cannot be easily articulated, turning the embodied experience of "repression" into a disembodied parole of "rights".

Europeanising Post-Yugoslav Intimate Citizenship(s)

Taking stock of a wealth of empirical information and analytical insights of the preceding contributions, in this concluding chapter we would like to take a closer—albeit inductive—look at some of the reasons for which a non-heteronormative disruption of the private/public binary in the post-Yugoslav space, that has been traditionally underpinned by patriarchal assumptions, has proved so painful and sometimes overtly violent. These "teething problems" that we as citizens and activist-researchers might have with "the rights to choose what we do with our bodies, our feelings, our identities, our relationships, our genders, our eroticisms and our representations", which is one of the early definitions of intimate citizenship (Plummer, 1995, p. 17), reflect Buden's (2010) perceptive concerns with the sweeping and repressive *infantilisation* of the post-communist Central and Eastern European societies. The "post-communist condition" has been configured in the Western political imaginary as a maturation process, a phase of transition and transformation to capitalism and democracy, during which Eastern Europeans have to learn how to use their newly won freedom. To this end, those who "taught the world a history lesson in courage, political autonomy and historical maturity" (Buden, 2010, online) by toppling authoritarian regimes towards the end of the 1980s, have been exposed to innumerable educational programmes, professional seminars, campaigns, and influences that should equip them for life in Western-like liberal democracies. Thus, "children of postcommunism", as Buden calls them/us, have been expected to enter in a relationship of

[1] In a recently published book co-authored by one of us, four of these—humility, listening, collaboration, and heteroglossia—form "an ethical repertoire for a praxis of translation" (Clarke, Bainton, Lendvai, & Stubbs, 2015, p. 206).

hegemonic domination by their Western European guardians in which their freedom becomes temporarily suspended or postponed and in which their past, or at least some of its important segments, should disappear in front of the all too promising future.

Even if we do not necessarily agree with all the elements of this paediatric diagnosis that might not sufficiently appreciate the distinct *salto mortale* with which the Yugoslav republics, of course in their own geopolitical contexts, catapulted themselves back in time throughout the 1990s, who could doubt that "children of (post)communism" are not particularly conversant with intricacies of sexual pleasures, especially those "reserved" for the "decadent" West. Innumerable intellectualist invocations of *democracy* in the disintegrating Yugoslavia of the 1980s, as well as in the wider Central and Eastern Europe at the time, were almost always associated with politico-institutional dimensions at the expense of sexual liberation (Takács, 2013), although in the sphere of art and culture, the decade was renowned for its "sweet decadence", experimentation and testing of the limits of repressive tolerance (Kostelnik & Vukić, 2015). It is perhaps not surprising that the intersection between the supposed post-communist sexual immaturity and the EU efforts to quickly remedy it by incorporating its Eastern members and (prospective) candidates into the unilinear narration of liberalism and multiculturalism—in which Pride parades figure quite prominently—finds its expression in Kulpa's (2014, p. 432) notion of *leveraged pedagogy*. According to this idea, Eastern Europe is "not yet Western", but is both "European" and geographically proximate "enough" "to be taken care of".[2]

> [In the case of Central and Eastern Europe] homophobia is more like a curable malady, slowing down (rather than threatening) the West/European self-proclaimed advancement and Modernity. In the *leveraged pedagogical* gesture of the one who knows better, West/EUrope reprimands CEE first, but then also promises to help in erasing 'the issue'. But the help comes as a strongly conditioned, and an undisputable process that has little respect or interest in the local circumstances of why 'the issue' has arisen in the first place (or indeed, how the very notion of the 'issue' is framed).

[2] See in this regard how Buden (2010, online) shows that some "transitologists" claim that "geography is indeed the single reason to hope that Eastern European countries will follow the path of democracy and prosperity".

After aggressive post-Yugoslav ethno-nationalisms that shocked the continent, homophobia has provided fertile ground for the survival, even reinvigoration, of a Western/EUropean orientalist approach to the region, keeping the long-term and asymmetrical power geometry intact (Haritaworn, 2009; Kulpa, 2014). Given that East European countries are so physically close to the West, which defines, embodies, and disseminates "universal human rights", it could not have helped distributing its discursive instruments for articulating sexual freedoms, very often with the aim of pre-emptively "protecting" its own advances in the realm of sexual citizenship.

Gayle Rubin (1984, p. 267) taught us that "disputes over sexual behaviour often become the vehicles for displacing social anxieties and discharging their emotional intensity" and that "sexuality should be treated with special respect in times of great social stress". Soon after the highly stressful Yugoslav 1990s, when we saw how sexuality and the body became instruments of politics that produced material damage and inflicted pain on millions of people, we have been confronted with and expected to adopt, in a fast-forward move, a "European model" of intimate citizenship, which on rather inflexible identitarian premises emerged at different times and different socio-cultural circumstances in the "core" EU countries (Takács, 2013).[3] As some of the contributions to this volume have shown, this model brought with itself a whole lexicon (e.g., gay, Pride, Pride parade, Pride Week, queer, IDAHO…) for talking about[4] and cre-

[3] Buden (2010, online) also writes: "While the children of communism are virtually encouraged by their educators to liberate themselves sexually and to come out, as loudly as possible, with their hitherto suppressed sexual identities, to embrace unconditionally all secular values, and to become (instead of good subject of the totalitarian state) self-conscious, free acting members of a democratic civil society, their liberated intellect seems to have no business being in the realm of the political".

[4] It is in this regard not irrelevant that our volume, with a distinctly regional, post-Yugoslav focus is originally written in English. One should not remain unaware of how the practice of producing scholarship for the English-speaking world might in itself count on the existing asymmetries of power through which Western academia supplies conceptual means that are then—sometimes rather uncritically—applied in European "peripheries" and across the globe (Blagojević & Yair, 2010). However, writing in English gives us an opportunity to reach the academic mainstream and policy makers that work on Eastern European and post-Yugoslav issues (Picardo Galán, 2013), but it also—potentially—"dislocates the no longer privileged language, cracks and displaces the normative 'centre'" (Mizielińska & Kulpa, 2013, p. 110). We do contend that sociological analysis should always feed back into the community which it explores and addresses.

ating a form of sexual citizenship that has had quite a hard time connecting with contexts, practices, and traditions in the region, without the risk of losing meaning in translation.[5] Given that a great deal of effort has to be invested in producing anti-discriminatory legislation, "guaranteeing security" of the participants and handling frustration, anger, and rage that often accompany Pride parades as once-per-year fleeting interruptions of non-heterosexual visibility in public space, relatively little energy remains for discussing and disseminating information about sexual varieties and "means of moving away *from* identity *towards* identification" (Stychin, 2001, p. 299).

> […] these processes may result in a kind of colonisation of sexuality by legal and political discourse. The expansion of the EU will make this of some importance in the future, as it raises the possibility of a movement towards a European-wide consensus around the *meaning* of sexuality, not only as warranting anti-discrimination protection, but also more fundamentally as a politicised identity. […] European integration raises the role of identity politics across the EU, as it may well come to be superimposed on national contexts in which it has little by way of 'tradition' (Stychin, 2001, p. 295).

In this regard, we have tapped the multi-scalar relationship between European homonationalist politics, transnational/regional activist tensions and cooperations and the nation state as the principal policy and activist framework reflected also by the structure of this volume. It appears as if the Europeanising sexual discourse operates in rather similar *leveraged pedagogical* fashion in the ethnically more homogenous post-Yugoslav states. However, its relative failure to have a stronger impact in the distinctly multi-ethnic states of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina—as shown by the contributions to this book—is indicative of the resilience of the nation state, the importance of patriarchal heteronormative masculinities within assemblages of nationalism, and the

[5] Any strict binary opposition between "external" and "internal" lexicons is, itself, impossible to maintain; however, the complex historical sociology of the uneven translation processes and impossible to maintain. However, a complex and contested transnational geometries of struggles against heteronormativity are, beyond the scope of this chapter.

issues that Europe has in "managing" multi-ethnic communities.[6] The EU normative vision of sexuality indeed reflects efforts to inscribe gay acceptance in the national identity of the core EU countries (e.g., the Netherlands, the UK, Germany) without necessarily producing a radical disruption of the heteronormative bases of nationalist projects or the gender, sexual, racial, and other power differentials on which they rest. Commenting on the results of decades of Western LGBT activist organising, the Canadian queer activist and scholar Alan Sears (as cited in Sernatinger & Echeverria, 2013, online) stated that: "It seems like we've won a lot, and then you realize that what we've won is the relatively easy stuff that fits with this system. In fact, it risks dividing ourselves much more and potentially limits what we can gain".

While frictions between the stable, homonationalist EU countries and (supposedly) homophobic European peripheries turn *Europe* into a space of sexual exceptionalism (Colpani & Habed, 2014) and make it become a discursive disciplinary instrument, the rights granted by sexual citizenship to "sexual dissidents" cannot be dissociated from the accompanying responsibilities (Bell & Binnie, 2000). There is a price to be paid for entering the body of the nation, a practice that might be particularly suspicious in the post-Yugoslav context.[7] In other words, the normalising function of citizenship carries the potential to discipline lesbian and gay legal subjects and circumscribe the limits of their resistance (Conaghan & Grabham, 2007). "Neoliberal politics of inclusion" often reinforces the norm of heterosexuality by reflecting social governance techniques that insist on individual rights and self-surveillance (Richardson, 2005). This leads to a "normal lesbian/gay" that is associated with identity-based consumption

[6] See in this regard, how Dejan Jović claims that "it is sad to see that the EU considers Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, two countries that are most ethnically diverse, as the most problematic states of the Balkans" (Bukvić, 2015, online).

[7] One possible way of undermining the dominance of the nation state as a frame of activist enterprises in the post-Yugoslav space would be to consider organising regional Pride marches that would take place every year in a different former republic. While regional activist undertakings, reflecting mainstream power dynamics, have always been full of tensions (Bilić, 2012), such a manifestation would have a few distinct advantages: first of all, it would strengthen regional solidarities by supporting activists in poorer or more homophobic environments; it would be cheap and decrease the pressure on activist groups to look for financial resources that would allow them to organise their own/national Pride march on an annual basis; and, finally, it would be less exhausting and give activists an opportunity to also focus on other forms of homophobic struggle in the meantime. The experience of the Baltic Pride, taking place every year in a different Baltic country, could be useful in this regard.

practices and particular forms of professionalised activism which give priority to "marriage-like" rights and remain in the sphere of the private by amalgamating romance with social and economic rights and obligations (Conaghan & Grabham, 2007; Cooper, 2001; Richardson, 2005). The discourse on sexuality as "rights" and "responsibilities" eschews any reference to embodied sexual acts, much less to the spectre of polymorphous sexuality and a wide array of sexual and sexualised practices. It invokes, too, a historical amnesia regarding earlier assemblages of sexuality largely erased by colonialist practices and the construction of hierarchies of acceptable "queer bodies" in the context of racialised Others (Haritaworn, 2015, p. 3). In the contemporary "import/export" model of LGBT rights, non-Western communities, and particularly Muslim communities, face "pinktesting" as another arrow in the armoury of Orientalism and Islamophobia, which effectively closes down any discussion of "pluralism, gender equality, and diversity" (Rahman, 2014, p. 8), except for "inviting the subaltern to a dialogue in which his [sic] position was secondary from the very beginning" (Chakrabarty, 2002, p. 33).

The Post-Yugoslav Left and Non-Heteronormativity

As authors of this volume we believe that if people with non-heterosexual identifications in the post-Yugoslav space are to be reintegrated into the community of citizens and not merely "tolerated" or used as a bargaining chip in political equations, the techniques encouraged by the EU need to be redefined in the direction of attenuating or cutting the conceptual link between homosexuality/non-heterosexuality and Europe, and grounding sexual diversity in the local socio-political practices and historical contexts (Brković, 2014).[8] Concurrently, Europe should become more aware of the extent to which its supposed core, that highly securitised fortress which constantly perceives itself as under threat, is inextricably related to

[8] Böröcz (2001, p. 14) argued that "the specific histories of colonialism and empire, with their deeply coded and set patterns of inequality, hierarchy, exclusion and power—and especially their techniques pertaining to the projection of that power to the outside world—are reflected in a deep and systematic form in the socio-cultural pattern of the governmentality of the EU".

its peripheries and those that remain outside of its own heavily policed frontiers. The post-Yugoslav space, for its geographical location, recent history, and hopes for the future, is particularly relevant in this regard:

> The fate of European identity as a whole is being played out in Yugoslavia and more generally in the Balkans (even if this is not the only site of its trial). Either Europe will recognize in the Balkan situation not a monstrosity grafted to its breast, a pathological "after-effect" of under-development or of communism, but rather an image and effect of its own history and will undertake to confront it and resolve it and thus to put itself into question and transform itself. Only then will Europe probably begin to become *possible* again. Or else it will refuse to come face-to-face with itself and will continue to treat the problem as an exterior obstacle to be overcome through exterior means, including colonisation (Balibar, 2004, p. 6).[9]

Struggles for social justice in the post-Yugoslav space, including LGBT liberation, need a clearer, more inclusive and locally rooted political platform that would go beyond the mere insistence on the respect of individual human rights. Such efforts prove particularly taxing—but necessary—in times of destructive neoliberal policies that generate extreme social inequality and fragment civic engagement. Major advances in the sphere of the application of LGBT rights and social acceptance of non-heterosexual sexualities as well as the recognition that they are often accompanied by other forms of exclusion are hardly possible without a heightened sense of activist *representational responsibility* which can be forged through politicising activism, paying attention to the class dimension of exclusionary patterns and entry into a more intense contact with LGBT people themselves and with other oppressed groups (Bilić, 2016).

The basic tenet of our call for *representational responsibility* is associated with the ever-present danger that "to speak for others is to first silence those in whose name we speak" (Callon, 1986, p. 216). Inevitably, of course, activists on behalf of any oppressed group or community tend to present themselves as a courageous, consciousness-raised, and concerned van-

[9] This quote comes from a lecture that Étienne Balibar gave in Thessaloniki in October 1999 in the wake of the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia here refers to a federation established in 1992 by Serbia and Montenegro.

guard. At the same time, the question "who exactly do you represent?" is often used by opponents to, somehow, rob such movements of their legitimacy, and the "responsibility", which, supposedly, must go hand-in-hand with any campaign for "rights" is itself a leitmotif of third-way liberalised "tolerance". Our attempt at a radicalising reinvigoration of *representational responsibility* suggests that it is necessary to narrow the gap between LGBT activism and individuals who are, more or less, struggling with their own sexualities, if we are to avoid the reproduction of a dangerous, and neoliberal, binary between self-actualised, self-sufficient, mature, LGBT activists and elements of their constituency who are supposedly locked in "false consciousness", "internalised shame", remaining excluded from a new mythical norm of able-bodied, white middle-class cosmopolitanism (see Haritaworn, 2015).

This brings us to the rather conflictual, but vital, relationship between LGBT activist engagement, on the one hand, and the revival of leftist ideology in the post-Yugoslav states, on the other. Practically all Pride march organisers in the region insist, at least declaratively, that their manifestation should be inclusive and open to all of those who need protection from discrimination (including workers, Roma, people with disabilities). In this regard, the 2014 Zagreb Pride featured a campaign against outsourcing, and Belgrade Pride supported students who were protesting because of the increase of tuition fees in 2011. However, broadening the Pride paradigm by considering intersecting oppressions seems to be a very challenging task in the period in which the policies of social welfare and workers' rights are being systematically dismantled. In the case of the Belgrade Pride, Maljković (2014, p. 367) states that:

> The absence of "class consciousness" is evident in the lack of any kind of reflection about class question as, for example, in the requests that Pride makes 2012 or in the attitude that Pride organisers have towards the needs of raspberry producers and military reservists, that is to say mostly lumpen-proletariat/precariat that gets excluded from the Pride paradigm or is suspiciously perceived as a potential usurper of the Pride itself […] there is no attempt to bring protests together […] but instead, there is an insistence on a particularisation of protest on the basis of identity politics which fails to see the relationship between the class status and minority sexuality.

On the other hand, as we follow the way in which nascent leftist voices slowly recover from the reactionary backlash of the 1990s, we observe that they are often sceptical about LGBT-related struggles. Dota (2014), for example, claims that the LGBT movement in Croatia has been criticised by the academic and the non-parliamentary (radical) Left for its professionalisation/NGO-isation, the dominance of identity-based politics oriented towards human rights at the expense of social and economic rights as well as for the tendency to neglect local grievances and cooperate with neoliberal political actors. Dimitrijević (as cited in Konjikušić, 2015) argues that some of the emerging leftist initiatives in Serbia easily disregard the "LGBT question" as a legacy of liberalism, but there are also those that are interested in incorporating it in their political agenda. Commenting on the fact that the 2013 Pride Week started in a luxurious hotel in Belgrade, Matija Medenica (as cited in Morača, 2013, online), a member of the group Marks21[10] stated:

> That is taking place within narrow NGO currents and in a certain sense strengthens the mistaken perception that LGBT people have been imported from the West to create problems for us here… nevertheless, I think that there are people interested in the Pride who do not support EU officials and we will try to find people with whom to create alternative politics.

Even though the criticisms offered by the leftists probably apply to the majority of "mainstream" activist groups throughout the region, we are concerned about their masculinist and patriarchal features as well as the readiness with which some of them occasionally downplay the relevance of gender and sexuality in the class-based political paradigm that they are trying to reinsert into the political field. In the "commatization" (O'Brien, 1984) of oppressions, class tends to be written first while sexuality appears several commas later, without really affecting the primacy of an economistic class analysis. While impressive legal advances in the area of LGBT rights, taking place on the global scale over the last couple of decades, have closely paralleled the expansion of neoliberal capitalism which attends to consumerist lifestyles and stimulates professionalisation, this

[10] See also Marks21 (2014).

should not obscure a distinctly leftist dimension of LGBT-related activist mobilisation ever since the 1950s (D'Emilio, 2008).[11] Nevertheless, this volume has also shown that it might be somewhat naïve to perceive activism solely as a (self-)empowering practice aiming at strictly humane interventions. Such an approach would fail to capture how supposedly de-hierarchised forms of civic engagement and very often even those that attempt to subvert inequality can be intimately bound with power accumulation that reflects wider power asymmetries and social trajectories of the political environment in which they operate, most notably those related to gender and sexuality.[12]

Conclusions: For a Reflexive Intersectionality

As we have reached the end of this particular collective journey that has multiplied our interactions and opened us towards other future projects, we are as authors of this volume even more aware of how our research, but also our private and professional lives are caught in a nexus of multidirectional relations based on the legacies of war, devastating neoliberal privatisation, humanitarian crises, authoritarian populism, pronounced urban–rural tensions, contested sovereignties, and European integration processes, all of which, especially in such a combination, fertilise the ground for various modes of exclusion, but also provide incentives for support and cooperation. With this in mind, we understand that only bits and pieces of that complex world have managed to enter our ethnographies and our analytical accounts. A commitment to reflexive activist-research, above and beyond an elitist iteration of "research on activism", has been a central principle of collective events and gatherings

[11] D'Emilio (2008) shows that the Mattachine Society, which launched queer organising in the USA, was founded by a group of men who were closely associated with the Communist Party. Moreover, Edward Carpenter, Magnus Hirschfeld, André Gide, Richard Linsert, Harry Hay, Jim Kepner, the pioneers of modern sexual liberation as well as the British and American Gay Liberation Front, the Italian Fuori!, the French FHAR, the German Rotzschwule, and the Dutch Red Faggots were all inspired by socialist ideology (Hekma, Oosterhuis, & Steakley, 1995).

[12] As some of the contributions to this book have shown, such asymmetries are visible in the position of lesbian, bisexual, and trans-sexual initiatives within the sphere of LGBT activism. See Bilić and Kajinić (2016).

which have culminated in this, and a related, volume (Bilić & Kajinić, 2016). Indeed, our coming together has been one possible way of confronting our inability to deal with "pains and pleasures, hopes and horrors (…) losses and redemptions (…) angels and demons, things that slip and slide, or appear and disappear, change shape or don't have much form at all" (Law, 2004, p. 2). We know that there hardly is a "royal road" for articulating an intersectionality-sensitive response (Taylor, Hines, & Casey, 2010) to oppression which would effectively counter the woes of authoritarian traditions hybridised with neoliberal capitalism, and we have never sought to assert a single line of deterministic thinking across the diversity of perspectives elaborated in this book. At the very least, however, this scholarly endeavour brought us together in believing that such a response should begin with solidarity, friendship, and care.

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