

# Ethnic intolerance and ethnic conflict in the dissolution of Yugoslavia

Duško Sekulić, Garth Massey and Randy Hodson

## Abstract

The causal link between ethnic **intolerance** and **ethnic conflict** is tested using four highly comparable data sets from Croatia that span the time before and after the violent dissolution of **Yugoslavia**: 1984–5, 1989–90, 1996 and 2003. Though most approaches to ethnic conflict posit a social-psychological dimension critical to violent encounters, our analysis provides an unprecedented empirical examination that dispels the commonly held view that **ethnic hatred**, hostility, and intolerance are the cause of ethnic conflict. After explaining the events and the shifting social, political and economic landscape that precipitated the **war**, we examine demographic, social structural and attitudinal changes between 1985 and 2003 that are associated with variation in ethnic intolerance, giving special attention to the connection between **religiosity** and intolerance. Prior to the war people were slow to translate public tensions into personal animosities. We find strong support for concluding that the events of the war itself and especially **elite manipulation** of public images of these events, are strongly implicated in rising intolerance during the war, and that the war's residual effect has been slow to dissipate.

**Keywords:** Ethnic conflict; Yugoslavia; intolerance; war; elite manipulation; religiosity; ethnic hatred.

## The role of emotions in explanations of ethnic conflict

We are suspicious of emotions as explanations of conflict, at least at a first stage. (Lake and Rothchild 1998, p. 21)

While it is possible to establish explanatory or even predictive models that capture the structural parameters for ethnic conflict (e.g. Gurr 2000, ch. 3; Harff and Gurr 2004, ch. 5), the explanations often lack a clear indication of the social-psychological or motivational basis for widespread mobilization. As Kaufman (2001, p. 22) has shown, the

level of group hostility, the virulence of stereotypes of an adversarial other, the desire for retribution, the feelings of humiliation, alienation, and suspicion, the fear and insecurity, and the belligerence and sense of justification in acting violently against the other are more often assumed than established. No one doubts the existence of such feelings, but the role they play in explaining ethnic conflict is widely disputed.

To understand why this is the case, it is instructive to examine the social psychological dimensions of the three perspectives most often found in studies of ethnic conflict: the primordial, the instrumental and the constructionist (Young 1993, pp. 21–25). At the risk of oversimplifying, the primordial view tends to focus on ancient hatreds, the instrumental focuses on rational choices, and the constructionist explores the socially created meaning systems of participants. In the perspective of each, there is a tendency to attribute motivational factors prior to conflict, along with the recognition of a feedback loop or interactive process between the events and experiences of conflict and the personal motivations and emotional states of hostility, hatred and intolerance.

Though journalists and pundits are more likely than others to embrace the primordial perspective (e.g. Drew 1992; Economist 1992; Kaplan 1993), scholars like Walker Connor, David Horowitz, and Anthony Smith encourage serious consideration of the historical record of ethnic chauvinism and find a place for hatred and hostility as a causal variable. If hatred is posited as preceding the formation of ethno-nationalism or as supplying fertile soil for ethno-nationalist appeals to security, superiority, and destiny, it is more likely to be done by scholars who embrace or give respectful attention to the primordialist perspective. As Horowitz (1998, p. 352) asks, 'Why is it not plausible to consider that current atrocities are the result of a hatred engendered earlier, rather than the result of a deliberate strategy?'

Scholars rejecting primordialism may nonetheless give prominence to social-psychological factors without critically examining their viability as causal forces. In Kaufman's view, 'Hostile myths and attitudes are what make chauvinist politics possible, but symbolic appeals to those myths evoke emotions that make attitudes still more hostile' (Kaufman 2001, p. 36). This is similar to what he calls the 'soft rationalist' approach that assumes group norms and hostile attitudes to be important, but the approach provides little evidence for how this is so, thus failing to actually explain them (Kaufman 2001, p. 22). Constructionists like Crawford Young (1993), Joane Nagel (1994) and Stuart Kaufman (2001) draw on the symbolic interactionist tradition of sociology, one that is comfortable with the construction of all social reality through symbolic communication, and focus on both elite manipulation of communication and widely held definitions of

situations that provide a vocabulary of motives for political action, including ethnic conflict.

The instrumentalist perspective focuses on how political entrepreneurs perceive opportunities, cultivate fear, and pursue ethno-nationalist goals in order to advance their own political (and material) interests (e.g. Brass 1995, 1997). Ethnic groups, too, can act instrumentally, perceiving opportunities for seizing land and other assets, for eliminating competition for jobs, university admissions, and other values – and calculating the relative benefits to themselves of changing the status quo by violence or other means (Hardin, 1995b). In anticipating what an adversary will do, according to instrumentalist thinking, groups look to the past to predict the future, often configuring the historical record opportunistically. The fear of being victimized may guide a calculative decision to engage in violence, even though the decision may contradict material interests.

### **Hatred, hostility and intolerance, and theories of the dissolution of Yugoslavia**

The overwhelming problem of the thesis that ethnic hatred motivates the ethnic conflict we see is that, for most of the groups in conflict, relations have generally been good ... [I]t was the war that preceded whatever ethnic hatred there is now ... The hatred had to be mobilized. It took a year of war in Bosnia to produce expulsions and mass atrocities. (Hardin 1995a, pp. 148, 150, 160)

The break-up of Yugoslavia is an excellent case to test the thesis that hatreds, hostility and intolerance are causal factors in inter-ethnic wars. In no other situation can one find more allusions to ancient hatreds and more attributions to hostility as a central factor explaining the barbarity and inhumanity of the conflict – weekend warriors and paramilitaries, neighbours against neighbours, systematic slaughter of civilians and ethnic cleansing as state policy (e.g. Kaplan 1994; Judah 1997). It was indeed a bloody disintegration (Jović 2003; Ramet 2004).

The primordialist view found in the Yugoslav classics of Dvorniković (1939), Cvijić (1922, (1931)) and Andrić (1963) has been incorporated, knowingly or not, into popular variants of the ethnic hatred thesis, stressing cultural differences and ancient animosities in the dissolution of Yugoslavia and its accompanying violence. The Yugoslav case is understood as a combination of accumulated tensions and hatreds and the inclination to violence of the Balkan's people, a theme of the national character approach, which was well expressed as '... personality traits of the Slavic predatory herdsmen... whose power seeking traits have remained basically unchanged throughout

the centuries' (Tomasčić 1948, p.115). These aggressive tendencies are supposedly inherent among people who inhabit the mountainous regions and make their livelihood as herdsmen, the so-called Dinaric type. Tomasčić goes on to include the patriarchal structure of the Balkan family in his explanation for violence. The people in the Balkans have often been characterized in this way, with other authors ascribing the violent character to long-term cultural socialization – through literary products, the role of the church and culture in general (Anzulović 1999).<sup>1</sup>

Kaplan (1993, 1994) persuasively promoted the ethnic hatred thesis, explaining the explosion of killings by the fact that processes of history and memory were 'kept on hold' by forty-five years of communism, '... thereby creating a kind of multiplier effect for violence' (Kaplan 1993, p. 30). In his explanation, the dissolution of the communist state was the triggering mechanism that allowed the suppressed hatreds to explode. The theory of ethnic hatred was accepted and promulgated by many politicians, including then President Bill Clinton. His Vice President, Al Gore, characterized the situation as '... a tragedy that has been unfolding for a long time, some would say for 500 years' (Gore 1995). John Major, speaking in the House of Commons on 23 June 1993, explained the disintegration as the result of the lid on ancient hatreds being lifted after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Ramet 2004, pp. 740–41).

In this view, both the threat of foreign action at any hint of national disorder (thus upsetting the balance of power and spheres of influence in the Cold War), and the authoritarian nature of the Communist Party kept ethnic groups from pursuing their own destinies. The implication is that the absence of democratic self-determination and minority participation held in check longstanding aspirations. Once the socialist state was sufficiently weakened but before democracy could take hold, the ethnic grievances and inter-ethnic rivalries found an outlet. Fuelled by distrust, vengeance, and the prospect of new opportunities in a reconfigured social, economic and political landscape, the civil strife and military efforts to hold the country together quickly turned into war.

The problem with this explanation is that it lacks empirical support. No repressive state apparatus employed against the ethnic groups has been unearthed. There is no evidence of urban violence between ethnic groups, ethnic ghettoization, or interethnic village confrontations during Tito's years – events that the communists could not have held in absolute check in the face of longstanding ethnic hatreds. There was no need to dispatch police or military forces to prevent confrontations between ethnic groups. There was no indication of communal violence such as that characterizing Muslim-Hindu relations in India or Catholic-Protestant relations in Northern Ireland.

There was no outburst of fighting or hostility similar to the attacks on Chinese minorities in many Southeast Asian countries or even anti-immigrant outbursts (e.g., against Muslims in Croatia or Croats in Slovenia) similar to those in contemporary Western Europe. In spite of the deadly relations during World War II [WWII], relations were largely cooperative and peaceful in the following four decades.<sup>2</sup>

The absence of open suppression of ethnic hatred does not contradict the existence of collective memories as a potential source of mobilization. The memories of the Ustasha's massacres of WWII combined with President Tudjman's and other HDZ leaders' rhetoric were important factors in Serbian mobilization in Croatia. But collective memories are not the same thing as open conflict. In order to bring to the open these collective memories they must be activated and directed to ethnopolitical goals, in most cases by extremist leaders or chauvinist elites who use their power to mobilize the masses. These memories, having been created by cultural entrepreneurs, are in the form of myths that can be exploited. Paraphrasing Jack Snyder, Kaufman (2001, p. 30) observed that such myths are 'moulded and propagated by national governments as a way of gaining nationalist legitimacy.' That was indeed the case in Yugoslavia.

Nationalist ideology in Yugoslavia is often perceived as the basis for communal conflict. In the Tito years nationalism as an ideology always competed with the dominant socialist worldview. 'Bourgeois nationalism' was frequently the target of propaganda attacks by Communist Party ideologues. Again, however, the presence of a nationalist ideology should not be confused with hatred, intolerance, and hostility among ethnic groups.

As well, the presence of the 'constitutional question,' namely dissatisfaction of the Serbian political elite with the 1974 Constitution – expressed as early as 1977 in the 'Blue Book' (Jović 2003, pp. 256–65) – was an important element of concern throughout the country. The de facto confederation and the fact that the Republic of Serbia included two autonomous provinces regarded as direct constituent elements of the federation were constant nuisances for the Serbian elites, especially as the state weakened in the 1980s. The ethnic and political tension in Kosovo, combined with the perception of constitutional impediments to decisive intervention in the province, were important elements in the rise to power of Slobodan Milošević.

These phenomena: historical memories, nationalist ideology, and political resentment and dissatisfaction of Serbian elites, do not constitute repressed hatred and conflict. Rather, these things required an agent, a political elite, to employ them in the mobilization of people to action. In a weakened state these political entrepreneurs could find space to manoeuvre. As Steven Burg (in Sisk 1996, p. 39) concludes, '... interregional conflicts were precluded in [Yugoslavia]... by the

actions of determined secessionists, not by the presence of spontaneous hatreds at the mass level.'

Other explanations have been offered for the dissolution of Yugoslavia. One of these, advanced by Woodward (1995) and Sekulić (1997), focuses on geostrategic changes. The explanation starts from the proposition that, with the demise of the Cold War, the strategic importance of Yugoslavia declined. This allowed divisive and volatile internal processes to go unchecked and ultimately allowed the forces of destruction to prevail. Other similar explanations also draw on elite manipulation theory (Malcolm 1994; Zimmerman 1996) and the attribution of conflict to economic crises (Lees 1997; Chossudovsky 2000).

The research presented here cannot fully adjudicate among the array of theories about the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Rather, we focus on the question of ethnic hatred, hostility and intolerance as a major causal factor in sparking the war and the atrocities that followed, based on historical and other qualitative evidence, and the presentation of data measuring ethnic intolerance. The core proposition is tested by a simple contrast of ethnic intolerance before and after the violent conflict. If the ethnic hatred thesis is correct, a high level of intolerance must be present before the outbreak of open conflict, versus finding a high level of ethnic intolerance only at the conclusion of the war.

From studies of stereotypes we know that people change the perception of other groups as a consequence of conflict. Buchanan and Cantril (1953) conclude in their classic study of stereotypes – including the American stereotyping of Russians during WWII and after the beginning of the Cold War – that stereotypes, rather than preceding people's reaction to a certain group, ordinarily do not exist until objective events make intelligible their creation. More recent studies of national stereotypes by Hunyady (1998) similarly show how stereotyping of other nations parallels the position of the countries on the world stage and how, over time and changing circumstance, e.g. the collapse of the Soviet Union, stereotypes parallel or follow political events.

We hypothesize that, like stereotypes, intolerance increases as a result of the conflict, rather than precipitating it. Yugoslavs did not hate their neighbours when the first fears and opportunities arose. Rather, their hatred and intolerance increased along with the violence of war. If this hypothesis is correct, the onset of the war cannot be explained by intolerance, and the ethnic hatred thesis is met with perhaps a fatal refutation. Questions about the causes of the war, and especially the atrocities, will not be definitively answered here, but in failing to be supported by our analysis, one commonly held view becomes highly suspect.

## **Research design and measurement**

A test of the ethnic hatred thesis requires longitudinal data: before, during and after a situation of violent ethnic conflict. Our study design provides this by comparing ethnic intolerance of Croatians at four periods across two decades, a time when Yugoslavs experienced a war the aim of which was to create distinct ethnically homogenous nations.

The first survey was conducted in the fall and winter of 1984–85 by the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb. Using a disproportionate stratified random sample design, 3,619 actively employed persons in Croatia were interviewed, about 400 from each of nine major occupational groupings. Based on the 1985 Census, weights were applied to this sample to replicate the distribution of occupations in the active working population. Females constitute approximately one-third of the sample, concordant with the distribution of women in the paid labour force.

In the winter of 1989–90 a second survey of randomly selected households was carried out in all six of Yugoslavia's republics and the two autonomous provinces by the Consortium of Social Research Institutes in the former Yugoslavia. The sample was drawn using a multistage random cluster design: counties, municipalities, neighbourhoods, buildings and households. Because of its sampling procedure the survey includes unemployed persons, and the number of respondents over sixty years of age is greater. The sample used here of Croatian respondents is 2,510 cases.

In 1996 a survey of a stratified random sample of the population of Croatian eighteen years and older was conducted in 148 settlements. All twenty counties (*Županije*) were included in the sample; the other 128 settlements were randomly selected from the population list of Croatia's settlements. Quotas, on the basis of the 1991 Census figures for education, employment status, sex and age, were determined for each settlement according to the composition of the settlement in the county and the county's composition relative to the total population of Croatia. Districts and streets were randomly selected within each settlement. The sample consists of 2,202 individuals.

From November to January 2003–4 a fourth survey of a random sample of the Croatian population was carried out. Respondents were randomly selected in randomly selected counties in proportion to census figures – for rural/urban, gender, age, education and working status – in order to best match the population of Croatia. This was part of the larger series of surveys conducted in Yugoslavia's successor states and territories (minus Slovenia but including Albania).<sup>3</sup> A split-sample technique was used: the total sample of 2,500 respondents was divided into two subsamples of 1,250 with key questions asked in both subsamples but select questions asked in only one subsample. Though

the four surveys used different sampling techniques, each obtained a low sampling error, and the demographic characteristics of each survey are in close approximation to those of the national censuses.

Questions using a five-point Likert scale measured the dependent variable – national intolerance. Four identical questions were used in all four surveys (see Table 1) and a common set of five questions was used in the 1989–90, 1996 and 2003–4 surveys (see Table 2). In the three latter surveys, two additional questions measuring ethnic intolerance were included and one question was discarded in order to provide a scale with high reliability (see Table 2). We use these five common questions to create a standardized scale measuring intolerance among Croats in 1989, 1996 and 2003. The sample construction in 1985 differs from that of the later surveys: in 1985 the sample was of the economically active population rather than the total population represented in later years.<sup>4</sup>

All independent variables used in the analysis are listed in Table 3. These include three sets of independent variables: demographic (national identity, sex, age, mixed parentage and mixed marriage), socio-economic status (education, unemployment, occupation), and participation (activity in civic and political organizations, and religiosity).

### **Two decades – four historical periods**

The four surveys serve well our interest in understanding differences in intolerance across time and across the population. By 1984 Yugoslavia, still solidly under the Communist Party and worker-management system, was in economic crisis. Following Tito's death in 1980 there were several frustrated attempts to introduce economic and political changes to solve the problems. Living standards were eroding. From 1979 to 1984 real personal income fell 34 per cent and pensions fell 40 per cent as inflation increased: 30 per cent in 1980, 46 per cent in 1981, 53 per cent in 1984 (Bilandzić 1996, pp. 116, 118). During this period Yugoslavia sought IMF assistance, initiated policies that reduced public expenditures, moved towards convertibility of the currency, liberalized prices, and sought to control inflation. The economic crisis generated intense political debate between centralizers and decentralizers and often ended in stalemate among political elites objecting to implementation strategies.

In October 1984 the Serbian Communist Party issued a draft program advocating strong recentralization by strengthening the federal government and reducing the prerogatives of the autonomous provinces (both of which were in Serbia). This provoked a strong backlash by the Slovenian and Croatian parties that wanted more decentralization (Ramet 1992, pp. 217–20), but this did not evolve into

**Table 1.** *Changing Patterns of Intolerance: Croatia 1985, 1989, 1996, and 2003*

Intolerance Questions	Means				Standard Deviations			
	1985	1989	1996	2003	1985	1989	1996	2003
Average intolerance across four questions	2.86	2.78	3.45	3.11	.95	.95	.94	.83
Among nations it is possible to create cooperation, but not full trust	2.88	3.16	3.75	3.13	1.56	1.57	1.25	1.06
Men can feel completely safe only when the majority belong to his nation(ality)	2.18	2.13	3.44	2.82	1.46	1.51	1.41	1.15
Without leaders a nation is like a man without a head	4.20	4.04	4.00	3.76	1.22	1.42	1.27	1.04
Nationally mixed marriages must be more unstable than others	2.20	1.81	2.61	2.72	1.42	1.34	1.45	1.15
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>3,619</i>	<i>2,510</i>	<i>2,202</i>	<i>1250</i>				

**Note:** All questions were asked using five-point Likert scales. Higher values indicate stronger agreement.

**Table 2.** *Factor Analysis of Intolerance Measures: Croatia 1989, 1996 and 2003*

Intolerance questions	Means			Standard Deviations		
	1989	1996	2003	1989	1996	2003
Intolerance Scale Score	2.24	3.27	2.81	1.00	.95	.87
Among nations it is possible to create cooperation, but not full trust	3.16	3.75	3.13	1.57	1.25	1.06
Men can feel completely safe only when the majority belong to his nation(ality)	2.13	3.44	2.82	1.51	1.41	1.15
Every nation(ality) should have its own state	2.03	3.15	2.77	1.46	1.50	1.18
Nationally mixed marriages must be more unstable than others	1.81	2.61	2.72	1.34	1.45	1.19
Nationality is important in picking a marital partner	2.06	3.40	2.59	1.55	1.70	1.19
1 <sup>st</sup> Eigenvalue	2.30	2.16	2.97			
2 <sup>nd</sup> Eigenvalue	.85	.88	.78			
Cronbach's alpha	.70	.66	.82			
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>2,510</i>	<i>2,202</i>	<i>1,250</i>			

**Note:** All questions were asked using five-point Likert scales. High values indicate stronger agreement.

an open and intense nationalist confrontation. With the exception of Kosovo where ethnic tension erupted in 1981 (Bilandzić 1996, pp. 70–8), political debate at the top did not spill over into conflict among ordinary people, though from time to time there were isolated expressions of nationalist sentiments in Croatia.<sup>5</sup>

The 1989–90 survey was conducted in a completely different atmosphere. Yugoslavia and the Communist Party were in serious difficulty. The rise to power of Slobodan Milosević in 1987 created a definite turn towards open confrontation among the republics' communist party leadership. Tensions in Kosovo escalated with a 23 February workers' strike at the mining complex near Trepča to protest against the dismissal of Kosovo's popular Albanian communist leader, Azem Vlasi. Against the wishes of the assemblies of Kosovo and Vojvodina, the Serbian Republican Assembly amended its constitution to allow greater Serbian control over these provinces, setting off ethnic Albanian riots in Kosovo in March 1989. At least twenty-nine people were killed (Power 1993, pp. 1–2). On 27 September, the Slovenian Republican Assembly amended its constitution to describe Slovenia as 'an independent, sovereign and autonomous state,' provoking public protests organized by Milosević in Titograd and Novi Sad and calls for the military takeover of Slovenia. Slovenia banned a rally of an

**Table 3.** *Analysis Variables; Croatia 1989, 1996 and 2003*

Analysis Variables	Means		
	1989	1996	2003
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC</b>			
Croat	.741	.922	.906
Serb	.120	.031	.034
Minority nationality	.139	.047	.051
Age	43.189	46.155	46.461
Male	.490	.475	.433
Urbanism (1–6)	3.502	3.170	2.952
Mixed parentage	.107	.069	.138
Mixed marriage	.153	.063	.064
<b>STATUS</b>			
Education (1–8)	4.080	3.842	4.420
Not in labor force	.161	.357	.509
Unemployed	.040	.106	.079
Peasant	.152	.084	.028
Blue-collar	.268	.109	.428
White-collar	.244	.230	.159
Manager	.015	.032	.120
Professional	.120	.082	.060
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>			
Communist Party	.243	.126	.110
Religiosity	1.797	2.402	2.141
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>2,510</i>	<i>2,202</i>	<i>1,250</i>

**Notes:** Urbanism was asked using slightly different response categories in the three surveys, making comparison of mean levels of urbanism across the surveys potentially non-comparable.

expected hundred thousand Serbs in Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana, and closed its borders.

Simultaneously, the Croatian assembly voted to support Slovenia against Serbia as the first steps towards political pluralism were taking place in Croatia. As a response to the petition of twelve (at that moment semi-legal) opposition parties and movements, official recognition of opposition parties was given on 10 December 1989. The presidency of the League of Croatian Communists announced multiparty elections for the next spring (Bilandžić 1999, p. 767). At that point political messages with strong nationalist overtones began to dominate the public arena.

From the middle of 1989 demands for autonomy were being put forward by Serbs in Croatia. They contended, as did Milosević, that if Yugoslavia became a confederation Serbs would have the right to create an autonomous province in Croatia. The attempt in the summer

of 1989 to create a Serbian cultural society, *Zora*, led to the Croatian authorities banning the society and jailing the chief organizer, Jovan Opačić. The cause was taken up by the Serbia Writers Union that started a campaign for Serbian autonomy in Croatia.<sup>6</sup> Bilandžić (1999, p. 761) writes: 'From day to day among the mass of people the fear of Serbian aggression spread, and also the readiness to stand behind those politicians promising to withstand it.' Thus, the 1989 survey was conducted during a period of extreme political tensions, rapidly emerging political pluralism, and growing nationalist confrontation, culminating a year later in full-scale war.

The 1996 survey was conducted in the period immediately after the military operations during the summer of 1995 that retook Croatian territories controlled by the Serbian insurgents, producing euphoria among Croats and a mass exodus of Serbs from Croatia. Parts of the country had been ravaged by the war. Total war damage was estimated at 65,330,635 DM (Družić 2001, p. 37), with 10.2 per cent of all houses and apartments having been demolished. Whole parts of Croatia previously inhabited by Serbs were emptied. At the time of the survey parts of eastern Croatia, the Slavonian municipalities (*općine*) of Beli Manastir and Vukovar were under United Nations control to protect the remaining Serbian population living there, and Croatian refugees were prevented from returning to the area. The 1996 survey was not conducted in this area.

The fourth survey, in 2003–4, was carried out in the period of consolidated normalization, a situation having several dimensions. With the end of military operation and armed hostilities, there was waning influence of wartime experiences. The parts of Croatia under UN protection had been peacefully reintegrated, coming under the control of the Croatian government in January 1998. The 'discourse of war' was gradually replaced by the 'discourse of peace.' War and Croatian-Serbian relations, dominant in 1996, were no longer major issues in 2003. Rather, the standard of living and unemployment, along with widespread corruption that had eroded the legitimacy of the ruling Croatian National Party [HDZ], were major public concerns (Zakošek 2001, p. 102).

The second dimension of normalization involved internal political change. From the first open elections in 1990 until 2000, Croatian politics and society were dominated by one personality, Franjo Tuđman, and one political party, HDZ, dictating a political discourse of authoritarianism and xenophobic nationalism. Soon after the death of Tuđman the HDZ lost the 2000 elections, providing the first peacetime democratic transfer of power after the fall of communism. The ascent of the coalition of non-nationalist parties, led by the Social Democratic Party [SDP], was a clear indication that nationalism was being replaced by the public's concern about social issues.

The 2003–4 survey was done almost parallel with the January 2004 elections that returned HDZ to power as the core of the ruling coalition.<sup>7</sup> This was accomplished under the leadership of Ivo Sanader, his having eclipsed the former nationalist leaders in HDZ who then formed several parties that were not in the ruling coalition.<sup>8</sup> The return of the HDZ to power was the result of the failures of the coalition SDP government amid an economic downturn and rising unemployment. Nationalist issues were pushed into the background, and only occasionally did public discourse favour nationalists, e.g. the requests of the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague for extradition of some generals who many Croats view as heroes in a war of Croatian national liberation from Yugoslavia and Serbia.

### **Shifting feelings of ethnic intolerance**

Table 1 provides an overview of ethnic intolerance measured by the same four questions in the four surveys. The first and most important finding is the variation in intolerance across historical periods. The average score of the four survey questions was slightly lower (indicating greater tolerance) in the second period than in the first, it increased greatly by 1996, and declined, though not to pre-war levels, by 2003.

Between 1985 and 1989, the period of increasing inter-ethnic tensions, hostility and uncertainty – although not inter-ethnic violence – intolerance decreased slightly (though not by a statistically significant amount) from 2.86 to 2.78. There was a decline in intolerance as measured by three statements. Agreement with the statement, ‘Man can feel completely safe only when the majority belong to its nation(ality),’ showed a very slight and statistically insignificant decline (from 2.18 to 2.13), and ‘Nationally mixed marriages must be more unstable than others,’ declined more substantially (from 2.20 to 1.81). There was an increase in intolerance (from 2.88 to 3.16) for only one statement: ‘Among nations it is possible to create cooperation, but not full trust.’ This increase reflects the increased worries and uncertainty among Croats about the intention of Serbia in the observed period.

The second thing to note is the high agreement (in all four observed periods) with the statement that ‘Without leaders every nation(ality) is like a man without a head.’ Županov, Sekulić, and Šporer (1996) refer to this as the authoritarian syndrome, a willingness of people to follow national(istic) leaders. The figures indicate, however, a steady decline in the level of agreement with this statement – from 4.20 in 1985 to 3.76 in 2003.

From the observation of the attitudinal dynamics for the years between 1985 and 1989 we can conclude:

- a. The general level of ethnic tolerance stayed basically the same, with the aggregate tendency towards a slight decline.
- b. Croatians recognized and reacted to the general deterioration of political relationships in the Yugoslav federation – we can cooperate but not trust each other.
- c. The macro-political deterioration did not translate into increased intolerance on the personal level – there is no increased feeling that people can feel safe only when living among co-nationals and that nationally mixed marriages are unstable.
- d. The relatively high authoritarian beliefs that the nationality must have a strong leader did not increase, even as tensions and uncertainty grew. This probably reflects ambivalent feelings about newly emerging leaders of nationalist movements who began to adopt chauvinistic rhetoric.

Between the years 1989 and 1996 in which war broke out and a series of atrocities were committed, there was a significant increase in ethnic intolerance (with the average score increasing from 2.78 to 3.45). The intolerance increased on three measured items and remained essentially the same on the fourth, the ‘authoritarian’ item. Although people agree most intensely with the statement, ‘Without the leaders every nation(ality) is like a man without a head,’ the difference in responses between it and the other statements decreased considerably. Overall, this period shows a marked increase in intolerance.

In the post-war period (1996–2003) ethnic intolerance declined from 3.45 to 3.11, though it was higher than before the outbreak of hostilities (2.78). The highest agreement remains in response to the statement ‘Without leaders a nation is like a man without a head’ (3.76) but the decline in agreement with this statement continued. The second highest level of agreement is with the statement, ‘Among nations it is possible to create cooperation but not full trust’ (3.13) but this level represents only a return to the pre-war level of 1989 (3.16).

The longer-term consequences of the war appear most clearly in responses to the two other statements. Agreement with the statement, ‘Nationally mixed marriages must be more unstable than others,’ is higher than in 1996 (2.72 versus 2.61) and higher than before the war, probably reflecting the widely recognized suffering – directly and vicariously – of families with mixed marriages during the war years. There is considerable anecdotal evidence of how interethnic marriages were torn apart by the ethnic conflict, with families and friends pressuring partners in opposite directions.

Looking forward to Table 3, in 1989 15.3 per cent of all marriages were ‘mixed’; by 1996 the proportion is more than halved, to 6.3 per cent. Besides divorce there are other processes involved here.

Emigration of nationally mixed families and the 'passing' or adoption of Croatian self-identification of non-Croatian partners also increased during these years. There are also simple demographic forces acting here. The fact that Croatia became more ethnically homogeneous after the war decreased the likelihood of new inter-ethnic marriages.

Using the intolerance scale of five items asked in the 1989, 1996 and 2003 surveys, the general picture remains unchanged. Intolerance is much higher after the war, followed by a partial return to more tolerant attitudes in the period of normalization. The same inverted 'U' shaped pattern seen in Table 1 remains.<sup>9</sup>

These data are highly suggestive of the social emergence of hatred, hostility and intolerance in situations of ethnic conflict. Ethnic intolerance did not increase prior to the outburst of the war in Yugoslavia, but it increased dramatically during the conflict, thus providing negative findings for the ethnic hatred thesis. And as time passed following the war, intolerance declined, though not to its pre-war level.

### **Factors influencing changes in intolerance**

While war itself appears to be the primary force pushing levels of intolerance upward, it is important to look more closely at factors that are linked to attitudes of inter-ethnic hostility and intolerance that were themselves affected by the war and changes in peoples' lives as a consequence of the war. Here we look at three sets of factors: demographic factors and especially changes in ethnic demography, age structure, and ethnic mixing; changes in occupational structure and especially unemployment; and changes in participation, especially religiosity. In order to gauge the influence of these factors on intolerance, we used the set of independent variables presented in Table 3. The demographic variables include sex and age, as well as the ethnic identity of respondents and that of their spouses and parents.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Ethnic composition and intolerance*

Most arresting is the change in national composition of Croatia during the war years: Croats increased from 74.1 per cent to 92.2 per cent of the population between 1989 and 1996. And Serbs decreased from 12 per cent to 3.1 per cent. Other minorities declined from 14 per cent to 5 per cent of the Croatian population, in large part due to the rapid decline in persons identifying themselves as Yugoslavs (see Sekulić, Massey and Hodson 1994).<sup>11</sup>

This dramatic change in ethnic composition is the result of the war, especially in its final year. The territories where the Serbian minority

**Table 4.** *The Changing National Composition of Croatia*

Nationality	1980 Census	1985 Survey	1989 Survey	1993 Census	1996 Survey	2001 Census	2003 Survey
Croat	77.6%	72.7%	74.1%	81.2%	92.3%	89.6%	91.4%
Serb	11.8	12.5	12.0	12.6	3.1	4.5	3.5
Yugoslav	8.4	10.8	9.2	2.3	0.5	0.0	0.0
Hungarian	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.5
Slovenian	0.6	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.6
Muslim	0.5	1.7	1.5	0.9	1.1	0.5	0.6
Czech	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.1
Italian	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4
Montenegrin	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other minorities	0.7	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.7	3.9	3.0
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Notes:** Two census categories are excluded from the base population for the calculation of these percentages: Those who did not answer and those who expressed a regional identity.

was concentrated before the war were totally emptied. ‘From Karlovac in the north to Split in the south, the interior of Croatia was a charred wasteland-mile upon mile of burned-out houses and ruined churches. What had not been burned down by the Serbs in 1991 because it was Croatian had been burned down in 1995 because it was Serbian’ (Tanner 1997, p. 301). In August 1995 tens of thousands of Serbs left Croatia in the face of a major offensive of the Croatian army. ‘Serbs began to pour out of Croatia in a mass exodus through two gateways left open deliberately by the Croat army, at Srb in Lika and Dvor in Banija’ (Tanner 1997, p. 297). An estimated 120,000 Serbs fled their homes and went into permanent exile (Zuneć 1998, pp. 131,139), putting the total number of Serbs who emigrated from Croatia between 1991 and 1998 at around 280,000 (*Hrvatska vojska* 2000, p. 95) or 48.2 per cent of the Serbian population (Statistički Bilten 1992, p. 14).

The massive decrease in the Serb population of Croatia, however, was not only a consequence of the war. Petrović (1987) argues convincingly that a reduction in the Serb population of Croatia could be expected solely as a consequence of political developments, especially the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the creation of separate nations identified with a particular ethnic group. Secondly, the number of people identifying themselves as Croat could be expected to increase as individuals who previously declared their nationality as either Yugoslav, (104,728 in 1991 Census), nationally undeclared (76,166 in 1991) or even Serbs chose to ‘pass’ as members of the dominant ethnic group.

Large demographic change can produce significant shifts in the aggregate level of intolerance. As has been shown previously (Massey, Hodson, and Sekulić 1999, p. 688) levels of intolerance differ by ethnicity and enclave position. The average level of intolerance among Croats living in Croat-dominated areas was higher than was the level of intolerance of the Serbian minority living among them. On the other hand, Serbs living in Serb-dominated areas of Croatia (the Krajina) had less tolerance for other ethnic groups, and significantly less tolerance than Serbs living dispersed among Croats. The decline in the number of Serbs living throughout Croatia would cause, in itself, the average level of intolerance in the country to increase, net of the effect of outmigration of highly intolerant Serbs from the Krajina.

Ethnic demography reveals itself as an important explanation of changing levels of intolerance when the population is examined not only by ethnicity but in terms of rural/urban differences. Not only are Croats more intolerant than Serbs. Among Croats there is a clear tendency for rural Croats to be more intolerant than urban Croats. This difference is constant – around 0.20 points and declines slightly by 2003.

Among Serbs there is an interesting difference. Constant in all these years is the Serbs' lower level of intolerance, but the inverted-U shape of intolerance characterizing Croats across this period does not hold for Serbs. Their intolerance in 2003 remains on an upward path for both urban and rural Serbs, and in 2003 urban Serbs were more intolerant than rural Serbs. It appears that the 'normalization' process taking place among Croats did not occur among Serbs. Instead, the experience of the war, rather than being followed by a period of normalization, continued to be an irritant and source of resentment and distrust among Serbs, and especially those living in urban settings. Again, caution is warranted by the small number of Serbs in Croatia in 2003.

**Table 5.** *Intolerance among Croats and Serbs in Rural and Urban Croatia, 1989, 1996 and 2003*

Group	Means (N)					
	1989		1996		2003	
Urban Croats	2.31	(901)	3.24	(901)	2.76	(412)
Rural Croats	2.52	(952)	3.43	(1129)	2.91	(702)
Urban Serbs	1.66	(147)	2.12	(37)	2.40	(11)
Rural Serbs	1.88	(154)	2.15	(31)	2.19	(31)

*Other demographic factors*

Several demographic changes operate in the opposite direction. Persons with ethnically-mixed parentage and in ethnically-mixed marriages are more tolerant than others (Massey, Hodson and Sekulić 1999, pp. 684–5). Table 3 shows a dramatic decrease in the proportion of people with mixed parentage and in mixed marriages during the war years. The first category decreased from 10.7 per cent to 6.9 per cent, the second from 15.3 per cent to 6.3 per cent between 1989 and 1996. The continuation of lower numbers of mixed marriages in 2003 may well indicate a real decline or a decline in reporting, for reasons discussed earlier. Interestingly, and difficult to explain, is the shift upward in 2003 of reported mixed parentage (13.8 per cent). The low figures in 1996 most likely reflect under-reporting of mixed parentage in 1996 at a time of intense ethnic hostility.

*Occupational structure*

The most significant change in occupational distribution is one that appears to undermine tolerance: a dramatic increase in persons not in the labour force and persons unemployed. Equally dramatic, however, is the decline in the peasantry, reflecting the shift from small-scale agriculture to service employment. The government was able to curb inflation in the 1989–96 period, but the price paid was a decline of economic activity. In 1996 the number of unemployed (250,000) was 55 per cent higher than in 1990 (Sirotković 1996, pp. 166; 168–91).<sup>12</sup> Because the SDP coalition government was marginally successful in implementing new economic policies, unemployment declined – as reflected in our data – from 10.6 per cent to 7.9 per cent between 1996 and 2003, but it remained twice the 1989 figure. There was also an increase of 40 per cent in the retired population between 1990 and 1999 (Lokin 2000, p. 220), much of it being hidden unemployment. Because there is a strong positive relationship between unemployment status and ethnic intolerance (Massey, Hodson and Sekulić 1999, pp. 684–5), these changes in occupational status should be reflected as an increase in intolerance.

*Religiosity*

One of the most dramatic changes in the wartime and post-war periods is the upsurge in religiosity. The total proportion of declared believers in Croatia was 47 per cent in 1989 and jumped to 76 per cent in 1996, reflecting both demographic changes and increased religiosity among individuals. By 2003 religiosity had declined, but not to pre-1990 levels.

**Table 6.** *Factor Analysis of Religiosity Measures: Croatia 1989, 1996 and 2003*

Religiosity questions	Means			Standard Deviations		
	1989	1996	2003	1989	1996	2003
How deeply do you believe in religion? (1–3)	2.08	2.53	2.46	.62	.53	.55
Do you (1) believe, (2) have doubts about, or (3) don't believe in the existence of God?	2.05	2.68	2.62	.84	.63	.66
Do you (1) believe, (2) have doubts about, or (3) don't believe in life after death?	1.64	2.27	2.13	.79	.80	.85
Do you (1) believe, (2) have doubts about, or (3) don't believe that God created people?	1.86	2.49	2.08	.85	.74	.84
How often do you go to church? (1) monthly or less, (2) weekly, (3) daily?	1.36	2.04	1.46	.47	.79	.62
Average religiosity	1.80	2.40	2.14	.60	.55	.56
1 <sup>st</sup> Eigenvalue	3.51	3.17	3.07			
2 <sup>nd</sup> Eigenvalue	.54	.69	.70			
Cronbach's alpha	.88	.84	.83			
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>2,510</i>	<i>2,202</i>	<i>1,250</i>			

As Table 6 shows, every aspect of religiosity increased during the war, with church attendance and depth of belief increasing the most. This reflects both a turning away from communism (and its promotion of secular values) and a genuine turn towards the sacred, a normal response to war and its destruction and the erosion of a stable and safe social order (Stark 1996).<sup>13</sup> Because Croats were more religious than Serbs, demographic changes during this period also influenced the overall religiosity in Croatia. While 58 per cent of Croats identified themselves as believers before the war, only 12 per cent of Serbs and 9 per cent of Yugoslavs did so (Bahtijarević 1991, p. 143). A decrease in the number of Serbs should, net of other factors, increase the average religiosity of Croatia's population.

**Shifting population characteristics or the experience of war?**

In the light of demographic and structural changes in Croatia during the years of war, it is possible that these changes and not the experience of the war itself provide the explanation for changes in peoples' feelings of ethnic intolerance. Not only is the emotional state of hatred, hostility and intolerance not a driving force for ethnic

conflict, as we have shown. The measured increase in these emotions (in this case, intolerance) could be, in fact, a function of the altered structure and composition of the country following the war, especially where people are living, the work they are (and are not) doing, and their stronger embracement of religion. To answer this question it is necessary to measure the effect of each of these things, as well as other predictive factors, on individuals' attitudes of intolerance.

We can formulate a general explanatory hypothesis that the decrease in tolerance in the 1989–96 period is the result of demographic and structural changes resulting from war, increasing those characteristics and values that drive intolerance, and that intolerance itself, measured at the individual level, did not otherwise increase as a consequence of war. Because we believe that ethnic conflict does contribute significantly to ethnic hatred, hostility and intolerance, this is actually a null hypothesis.

In order to test this hypothesis, we measured the contribution of particular variables to variation in intolerance. Not only their relative weight in explaining intolerance, but more importantly the degree to which they explain the total variation in intolerance is critical. If their sum explanatory power declines in a period of rising intolerance, it is highly likely that other factors, including the experience of ethnic war itself, is responsible for greater ethnic intolerance, thus forcing us to reject our null hypothesis and strengthening the possibility that ethnic conflict drives ethnic intolerance. This interpretation is also directly supported by the pattern-of-intolerance effects for survey year in the combined model in Table 7. These effects form the familiar 'inverted U' pattern suggesting first rising intolerance and then a return toward lower levels.

### *Hypothesis test*

Table 7 presents regression coefficients on intolerance, standardized in order to allow comparisons of the relative effect of factors within any time period: 1989, 1996 and 2003.<sup>14</sup> The last column combines all years and tests the year effect. In the year factor of column four, it is clear that intolerance was significantly higher in 1996 than in 1989, and though intolerance declined in 2003 it remained higher than in 1989.

The most powerful positive influences on tolerance are mixed marriage and mixed parentage, in both 1989 and 1996. By 2003, however, mixed marriage had declined in its influence and mixed parentage ceased to be significant. After religiosity, to be discussed below, the strongest negative influence on tolerance is Croatian nationality. Croats are consistently more intolerant than minorities, and being a Croat is a stronger predictor in 1996 than in 1989. In 2003

**Table 7.** Regression of Intolerance on Explanatory Model: Croatia, 1989, 1996 and 2003

Independent Variables	1989	1996	2003	Combined
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC</b>				
Croat nationality	.117 <sup>a</sup>	.140 <sup>a</sup>	.082 <sup>c</sup>	.104 <sup>a</sup>
Serb nationality	.001	-.048 <sup>c</sup>	-.034	-.024
Minority nationality (baseline)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Age	.053 <sup>c</sup>	.049	.078 <sup>c</sup>	.050 <sup>a</sup>
Male	.105 <sup>a</sup>	.117 <sup>*</sup>	.062 <sup>c</sup>	.088 <sup>a</sup>
Urbanism	.005	-.022	-.002	-.011
Mixed parentage	-.045 <sup>c</sup>	-.073 <sup>a</sup>	-.044	-.044 <sup>a</sup>
Mixed marriage	-.070 <sup>a</sup>	-.101 <sup>a</sup>	-.068 <sup>c</sup>	-.076 <sup>a</sup>
<b>STATUS</b>				
Education	.031	-.067 <sup>c</sup>	-.081 <sup>c</sup>	-.025
Not in labor force	-.041	.033	.002	.007
Unemployed	.045 <sup>c</sup>	-.030	.027	.004
Peasant	-.011	-.011	.030	-.006
Blue-collar	.036	.025	.032	.032 <sup>c</sup>
White-collar (baseline)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Manager	-.021	.012	-.022	-.009
Professional	-.022	-.043	-.002	-.013
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>				
Communist Party	-.019	-.024	.021	-.019
Religiosity	.387	.266 <sup>a</sup>	.262 <sup>a</sup>	.315 <sup>a</sup>
<b>YEAR</b>				
1989 (baseline)				.000
1996				.276 <sup>a</sup>
2003				.111 <sup>a</sup>
R-Squared	.247 <sup>a</sup>	.211 <sup>a</sup>	.140 <sup>a</sup>	.351 <sup>a</sup>
<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>2,510</i>	<i>2,202</i>	<i>1,250</i>	<i>5,962</i>

**Notes:** The table reports standardized regression coefficients. Significance levels denoted by: a =  $p \leq .001$ , b =  $p \leq .01$ , c =  $p \leq .05$ .

the significance of being Croat is smaller relative to other factors and very close to that of age, a factor dwarfed by Croat nationality in previous years. Interestingly, being a Serb is a significant factor only in 1996 when this actually favoured tolerance, though at this time Serbian numbers in Croatia were quite small.

Two other demographic factors are also significant predictors of intolerance. Age, not significant in 1996, became somewhat significant by 2003 as a predictor of intolerance. Male gender was significant before the war; after the war it became even more influential of intolerant attitudes and remained significant but declined somewhat relative to other factors in 2003.

Two structural variables do not predict intolerance: urbanism and professional status. Living in a city and having a professional occupation, net of other factors, are not significantly related to intolerance. Higher educational attainment, however, reduced intolerance following the war and in 2003. By 2003 education is nearly equal to Croatian nationality as the second strongest predictor of intolerance (after religion), exceeding both mixed marriage and mixed parentage. Finally, Communist Party membership is not a significant predictor of intolerance. This reflects the fact that CP membership in Croatia was a poor indicator of deep ideological convictions and more an opportunistic decision connected with career advancement (see Massey, Hodson and Sekulić 1993).

### *The question of religion*

Religiosity has by far the greatest negative influence on tolerance at all three points in time.<sup>15</sup> None of the standardized coefficients matches that of religiosity. In 1989 it was 2.2 times higher than Croatian nationality, the second highest factor, remained nearly twice as strong in 1996, and was 3.2 times more influential than Croatian nationality in 2003.

We know that religiosity increased in Croatia during the war years. It could be that the demise of the communist regime provided an opportunity for individuals to become involved in and committed to religious practices and beliefs. We also know that the horrors and uncertainty of war make religious practices and beliefs more important for many people. We do not think, however, that increasing religiosity for either of these reasons has a direct effect on increasing intolerance in Croatia, any more than we think that religious people have an inherent propensity to be intolerant (Kunovich and Hodson 1999).

Rather, nationalists are less ethnically tolerant, and nationalists are more religious. Religiosity is an important element of the general nationalist ideology. Catholicism is a constituent element in the nationalist profile of Croats (Perica 2002, p. 62; Stančić 2002, 118–23), just as Serbian Orthodoxy is a constituent element of Serbian nationalism. We postulate, though it requires more research to verify, that people did not become more nationalistic because they became more religious, but that increasing nationalist sentiments made religious practices and beliefs more attractive and identity affirming during the years of war. At the same time that they were becoming more religious, their level of intolerance was increasing, thus providing the statistical link between religiosity and intolerance. In the light of the weaker factor loadings (1<sup>st</sup> Eigenvalue) on our religiosity scale in 2003, the tie between religiosity and nationalism appears to have become somewhat loosened in the years following the war. People

possessed a less clear-cut and possibly more personal attachment to religion. Along with this, the declining religiosity between 1996 and 2003 corresponds to a movement away from nationalist politics, including the election of the SDP, and the reduction in ethnic intolerance.

*Finding cause in unexplained variation*

Table 7 shows a steady decline in the R-square over the 1989–2003 time period. The demographic, status, and civic/political participation variables explain a declining proportion of the variance in intolerance, and this does not correlate with changes in the absolute levels of intolerance. We think this indicates a critical unmeasured variable influencing intolerance: the reality of ethnic war.

In the first period (1989–96) there may be a kind of ‘ceiling effect’ influencing the data. Because people are highly intolerant there is less variation to be explained in 1996 than there was in 1989. By 2003 intolerance had declined to a level approximately halfway between the 1989 and 1996 levels. At the same time, the amount of explained variation also declined precipitously, despite the lower level (and greater variation) of intolerance across the population of Croatia. Partially hidden in the relationship between religiosity and intolerance, and strongly suggested in the weaker R-squared statistics in 1996 and 2003, is the unmeasured factor of having lived through an ethnic war. The war itself is having a major influence on intolerance, as the explanatory power of our structural variables declines.<sup>16</sup>

Our analysis allows us to reject the null hypothesis that the experience of war did not increase ethnic intolerance. Although demographic and structural changes (e.g. higher unemployment and greater ethnic homogenization) occurred in Croatia as a consequence of war, and there were changes in the strength of the factors measured in our social surveys (e.g. education and Croatian national identity) that also influence intolerance, these provide only a partial explanation for changing levels of intolerance. In the light of these findings, we conclude that the declining power of measured structural variables to explain intolerance indicates that war itself is at the heart of ethnic hatred, hostility, and intolerance.

**War and ethnic intolerance**

... elite strategies of inciting ethnonationalism found a large and responsive audience among common people, which is a factor that needs to be explained not by resorting to ostensible ancient visceral hatreds but by examining ethnic and national self-images in modern

Yugoslavia and the policies that cultivated them. (Somers 2001, pp. 135–36)

Our conclusion that the war itself is the unmeasured force driving intolerance may appear to be a bold assertion. In conclusion, therefore, it is important to explain the process of heightened ethnic nationalism and intolerance as it occurred during the years of war in Croatia and Bosnia, the latter conflict creating tens of thousands of refugees who flooded into Croatia. To do this we look at the processes of elite- and mass-driven ethnic mobilization as well as the dynamics of ethnic and racial relations first developed by Herbert Blumer. Ethnographic and additional survey research in Croatia prior to and during the war help to establish an understanding of how war contributed to ethnic intolerance across the population.

The effect of war is much broader than individual experiences or even individual attitudinal changes.<sup>17</sup> Ethnic attitudes are, in Blumer's words, 'fundamentally a collective process' (Blumer 1988, p. 197). He continues, '[This process] operates chiefly through the public media in which individuals who are accepted as the spokesman of a racial group characterize publicly another racial group' (Blumer 1988, pp. 197–98). Oberschall (2000) analyses changes in ethnic attitudes using the concept of 'cognitive frame.' There are cognitive frames for peaceful times and cognitive frames for war.

Merton's (1949) 'timid bigotry' may have prevailed in the previous communist era and exerted pressure for, in Kuran's (1998) terms, 'downward falsification' to discourage people from acting openly on their ethnic prejudices. The new nationalist regime, in contrast, favoured 'upward falsification' and exerted pressure for people – liberal and moderately tolerant individuals as well – to think and act in an ethnically intolerant manner. Shifting public definitions, according to Blumer, are forged in periods of crucial events, such as war.

Often designated as elite-led and mass-led ethnic mobilization (Brown 2001, Kaufman 2001, pp. 36–43), there is actually an interactive process that goes on between political leaders, intellectuals, journalists, and other opinion makers and the public, a process that defies a one-directional characterization of mobilization, including the intensification of ethnic hostility. Political entrepreneurs and opinion leaders are limited in how far the definition of an ethnic other can be construed as a threat to personal and public safety, and even the degree of ambiguity they can introduce in order to generate fear of the other (de Figueiredo and Weingast 1999). But Oberschall and Blumer are correct in recognizing that mass propaganda is more successful when it is not based on direct personal experience. 'The collective image of the abstract group grows up not by generalizing from

experiences gained in close, first-hand contacts but through the transcending characterizations that are made of the groups as an entity' (Blumer 1998, p. 203).

Political tensions rose between 1985 and 1989, but the tensions in the public sphere did not translate into individual level hostility. Dugandzija's (1991) research during that period is revealing on this point. When asked to evaluate inter-ethnic relations in Yugoslavia, 43 per cent of respondents said that they are very bad. When asked to evaluate inter-ethnic relations where they were living, only 2.7 per cent evaluated them as very bad. People were aware of the worsening situation, but this did not intensify their own ethnic hostility or intolerance.

Opinion leaders were not simply manufacturing a definition of the situation out of whole cloth, nor were they passively reflecting public opinion. They were important in creating the new discourse, in order to 'define and redefine the subordinate racial group and the relations between them' (Blumer 1988, p. 202). They did this in terms of the war – often exaggerated and manipulated, but using the material available to them because of the war.

A telling example is provided by Županov (1995) in his analysis of the way personal relations and intolerance changed once the war began. People who lived peacefully together often turned against each other and began to redefine the friendly neighbouring relations (*komsiluk*) that had existed in villages and cities (Županov 1995, pp. 38–9; see also Gililand 1996). Initially in locales where war damage and death had occurred, doubts were created in peoples' minds, causing them to question their living together, asking if it had been based on a false pretence of friendliness.

Such an interpretation was taken by the refugees into the areas unaffected by war, especially into Croatian cities... [T]heir stories... were widely popularized by media (newspapers, radio, TV) and through this were brought to every Croatian family. That affected primary relations in unaffected areas, especially in cities... The people started to apply the refugees' definition to their neighbours in the apartment houses and to their colleagues at work who are of a different nationality. They asked themselves if this neighbour and colleague is the hidden enemy who waits for his chance to kill me, rob me and cleanse me. (Županov 1995, pp. 39–40)

The war facilitated this change in the perceptions of others and the redefinition of relationships towards the other as dangerous and untrustworthy.

This process is not as simple as social conformity; it depends on a redefinition of past and present situations. Somer describes this as a cascading process that changes behaviour and attitudes and, once begun, is very difficult to stop. 'Cascades' are:

... self-reinforcing processes that change the behaviour of a group of people through interpersonal dependencies ... Cascade models explain situations in which the individual's incentives for taking an action, holding a belief, or conforming to a norm depend significantly on the behaviour of others. (Somer 2001, p.129)

This is not without some calculation. In a time of war ethnic intolerance and hostility can enhance one's status in the community. '[T]he greater the rewards for making a public display of one's ethnicity and the larger the punishment for failing to do so, the stronger are the incentives to substitute ethnic behaviours for generic one' (Kuran 1998, p. 43). The central factor, however, remains the redefinition of the situation as one of fear and imminent danger and the appropriateness of hostility towards the ethnic other (Kaufman 2001, pp. 36–39). The individual discovers that the neighbours were always hidden enemies and now recognizes the importance of ethno-national identity, although until today he or she had friendly neighbouring relations, free of ethnicity as a crucial facet of interpersonal relations and self-definition.

The rise in intolerance does not result directly from mass manipulation of the public media by political elites (Županov, Sekulić, Šporer 1996, pp. 411–15). Elite manipulation, however, is a fundamental contributor to this process. Typical was President Tudjman's vitriolic statement that he was happy that his wife was neither Serbian nor Jewish (Zimmermann 1996, p. 73). He personally, and the HDZ more generally, were important contributors in influencing and changing the public discourse to redefine the 'subordinate racial group and the relations between them' (Blumer 1988, p. 202). Government control of the major media, the promotion of the idea that the war was being fought to protect Croats from Serbian aggression, and the other features of mass propaganda played a major role in how Croats thought about and reacted to ethnic others (Thompson 1994; Ugresić 1996)

Ethnic intolerance in Croatia is best explained in terms of a complex, collective interaction process, with political entrepreneurs packaging an image of the war and the enemy that coalesced with incidents of ethnic conflict, spreading across the population in a cascading fashion. This changed the situation as people understood it, including their understanding of the ethnic other. It was this that made

ethnic intolerance seem natural and reasonable, a frame of mind that has diminished but not disappeared today.

## Notes

1. The long-term roots of 'genocidal tendencies' of Croats are mirrored in theories developed by Serbian authors (e.g. Krestić 1997).
2. One area in the former Yugoslavia was an exception in this regard – Kosovo. There competing nationalist ideologies and competing claims for territory had direct implications for hostile inter-ethnic relations. Regardless of the extent to which the claims of persecution of Serbs by Albanians in the 1970s and in the first half of the 1980s are accepted or believed to be exaggerated, the fact that interethnic relations were tense is clear (Mertus 1999; Blagojević 2002). In Macedonia, although the tensions were less explicit, Macedonian-Albanian polarization and ethnic distance was also very visible (Brunnbauer 2004).
3. The South Eastern Europe Social Survey Program [SEESSP] was financed by the Norwegian Scientific Council under the coordination of Dr. Albert Simkus. The Puls Agency conducted the field work in Croatia.
4. Because of sample difference between the first and second surveys, a question may be raised about differences representing actual changes in opinions in the 1985–89 period. In general we expect that the economically non-active populations (retirees, housewives) included in the 1989 survey are more conservative and less tolerant than the economically active population. If this is the case, then the observed decline in intolerance as war approached may have been even greater.
5. For example, at the time of the first survey (September 1984), a group of young people from Duvno was arrested for singing songs praising the wartime pro-fascist Croatian leader Ante Pavelić; they all received prison terms.
6. Paradoxically, an effort to create an ethnic culture society by Albanians in Serbia had recently been blocked.
7. On the basis of this, Huntington's (1991, pp. 266–68) criteria of consolidated democracy – three successive power changes – appears to be satisfied.
8. The domination of social issue discourse is also confirmed by the election for the second term of the non-nationalist President, Stjepan Mesić, in January 2005.
9. The 1<sup>st</sup> eigenvalue and Cronbach's alpha measures reveal an interesting shift in degree to which attitudes coalesce around these questions. Both figures decline in the war years, but are highest in the final survey, indicating a fluctuation in the homogeneity of attitudes.
10. The apparent decrease of urbanism is probably the result of slightly different response categories in the three surveys rather than de-urbanization. The same holds for the dramatic increase of blue-collar workers in 2003 as a result of many white-collar employees being reclassified as blue-collar in 2003.
11. In the 1991 Croatian census 'Yugoslavs' represented only 2.2 per cent of the population (Statistički Bilten 1992), a result of the realization that Yugoslavia as a unified state would not survive, thus provoking a major identity re-examination.
12. Official data record more than a three-fold increase in unemployment during the 1990s (Lokin 2000, p. 220).
13. Religiosity became more widespread among the people in Croatia but also became more variable or imprecise in the process, as shown by the reduction of the 1<sup>st</sup> eigenvalue and Cronbach's alpha across this time period. Being religious took on a less absolute or coherent meaning, even as religiosity declined in the 1996–2003 period.
14. Standardization, however, makes it more difficult to compare the changing strength of any factor over time. To do this we compare the relative strength among factors in each of these time periods.

15. This corresponds to Siber's (1998, 2001) findings on religiosity in predicting voting preference.
16. Duncan's (1968) comparison of mobility factors for whites and African-Americans drew a similar conclusion. The weaker predictive model for the latter indicated that another, unmeasured and possibly unmeasurable factor was driving African-American mobility chances: discrimination.
17. In an earlier analysis of individual war experiences (e.g. loss of property, injury, death of a relative) no clear and significant correlations with intolerance were found (see Sekulić, Hodson and Massey 2002).

## References

- ANDRIĆ, IVO 1963 *Bosnian Chronicle*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- ANZULOVIC, BRANIMIR 1999 *Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide*, London: Hurst
- BAHTIJAREVIĆ, STEFICA 1991 'Religija i nacija u svakodnevnom životu', in *Polozaj Naroda i Medjunacionalni Odnosi u Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb: Institut za Društvena Istraživanja Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
- BILANDZIĆ, DUŠAN 1996 *Jugoslavija Poslije Tita*, Zagreb: Globus
- 1999 *Hrvatska Moderna Povijest*, Zagreb: Golden Marketing
- BLAGOJEVIĆ, MARINA. 2002 'Iseljavanje sa Kosova', in N. Popov (ed.), *Srpska Strana Rata. Trauma i Katarza u Istorijskom Pamćenju*, 2nd edn, Samizdat Freeb92
- BLUMER, HERBERT 1988 [1955] 'Race prejudice as a sense of group position', in S. F. Lyman and A. J. Vidich (eds), *Social Order and Public Philosophy. An Analysis and Interpretation of the Work of Herbert Blumer*, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press
- BRASS, PAUL 1995 *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications
- 1997 *Theft of an Idol. Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- BROWN MICHAEL, E. 2001 'The causes of internal conflict: An overview', in M. Brown, O. Cote, S. Lynn-Jones and S. Miller (eds), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 3–17
- BRUNNBAUER, ULF 2004 'Fertility, families an ethnic conflict: Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia', 1944–2002, *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 565–98
- BUCHANAN, WILLIAM and CANTRIL, HADLEY 1953 *How Nations See Each Other*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press
- CHOSSUDOVSKI, MICHAEL 2000 'Dismantling former Yugoslavia, recolonizing Bosnia', in M. Spencer (ed.), *The Lessons of Yugoslavia*, Amsterdam: JAI Press
- CVIJIĆ, JOVAN 1922 (1931) *Balkansko Poluostrvo i Juznoslavenske Zemlje. Osnove Antropogeografije*, Beograd: Državna Stamparija SHS (I), Geca Kon (II)
- DE FIGUEIREDO, RUI J. and WEINGAST, BARRY R. 1999 'Rationality of fear: Political opportunism and ethnic conflict', in B. Walter and J. Snyder (eds), *Civil Wars, Insecurity and Intervention*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 261–367
- DREW, ELIZABETH 1992 'Letter from Washington'. *New Yorker*, vol. 68 (July 6), pp. 70–5
- DRUŽIĆ, GORDAN 2001 *Kriza Hrvatskoga Gospodarstva i Ekonomska Politika*, Zagreb: Golden Marketing
- DUGANDZIJA, NIKOLA 1991 'Domet nacionalne zaokupljenosti', in *Polozaj Naroda i Medjunacionalni Odnosi i Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
- DUNCAN, OTIS DUDLEY 1968 'Inheritance of poverty or inheritance of race?', in D. P. Moynihan (ed.), *On Understanding Poverty*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 85–110
- DVORNIKOVIC, VLADIMIR 1939 *Karakterologija Jugosloven*, Beograd: Geca Kon
- ECONOMIST 1992. 'Tribalism Revisited', *The Economist* (December 21), pp. 44–6

- GORE, ALBERT 1995 *Larry King Live*, CNN, June 5
- GUILLILAND, MARY KAY 1996 'Nationalism and ethnogenesis in the former Yugoslavia', in L. Romanucci-Ross and G. A. DeVos (eds), *Ethnic Identity*, 3rd edn, Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, pp. 197–221
- GURR, TED ROBERT 2000 *People versus States. Minorities at Risk in the New Century*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press
- HARDIN, RUSSELL 1995a *One for All. The Logic of Group Conflict*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- 1995b 'Self-Interest, Group Identification', in J. Comaroff and P. Stern (eds), *Perspectives on Nationalism and War*, New York: Gordon and Beach Publishers, pp. 15–45
- HARFF, BARBARA and GURR, TED ROBERT 2004 *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, 2nd Edn, Boulder, CO: Westview Press
- HOROWITZ, DAVID L. 1998 'Structure and strategy in ethnic conflict: A few steps toward synthesis', in *Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics 1998*, Washington, DC: World Bank, pp. 345–69
- HRVATSKA VOJSKA 2000 1999 'Nacionalna sigurnost, oruzane snage i demokracija', Zagreb: Strata Istraživanja i Socijaldemokratska Partija Hrvatske
- HUNNINGTON, SAMUEL P. 1991 *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press
- HUNYADY, GYORGY 1998 *Stereotypes During the Decline and Fall of Communism*, London: Routledge
- JOVIĆ, DEJAN 2003 *Jugoslavija. Država koja je odumrla*, Zagreb: Prometej
- JUDAH, TIM 1997 *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavi*, New Haven, CN: Yale University Press
- KAPLAN, ROBERT D. 1994 *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*, London: Papermac
- 1993 'A reader's guide to the Balkans' *New York Times Book Review*, April 18, pp.1, 30–3
- KAUFMAN, STUART J. 2001 *Modern Hatreds. The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
- KRESTIĆ, VASILJIJE 1997 *History of the Serbs in Croatia and Slavonia 1848–1914*, BIGZ: Belgrade
- KURAN, TIMUR 1998 'Ethnic discrimination and its international diffusion', in D. Lake and D. Rothschild (eds), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 35–60
- KUNOVICH, ROBERT and HODSON, RANDY 1999 'Religious identity, conflict and ethnic tolerance in Croatia', *Social Forces*, vol. 78, no. 2, pp. 643–68
- LAKE, DAVID and ROTHCHILD, DONALD 1998 'Spreading fear: The genesis of transnational ethnic conflict', in D. Lake and D. Rothschild (eds), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 1–34
- LEES, LORRAINE 1997 *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia and the Cold War*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press
- LOKIN, BRANKO 2000 *Hrvatska 2015*, Zagreb: Golden Marketing
- MALCOLM, NOEL 1994 *Bosnia: A Short History*, New York: New York University Press
- MASSEY, GARTH, HODSON, RANDY and SEKULIĆ, DUŠKO 1993 'Political affiliation and social mobility in socialist Yugoslavia', in R. Althauser and M. Wallace (eds), *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, vol. 11, Greenwich, CN: JIA Press, pp. 223–58
- 1999 Ethnic enclaves and intolerance: The case of Yugoslavia, *Social Forces*, vol. 78, no. 2, pp. 669–91
- MERTON, ROBERT K. 1949 'Discrimination and the American creed', in R. M. McIver (ed.), *Discrimination and National Welfare*, New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies
- MERTUS, JULIE. A. 1999 *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- NAGEL, JOANE 1994 'Constructing ethnicity', *Social Forces*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 152–76

- OBERSCHALL, ANTHONY 2000 'The manipulation of ethnicity: From ethnic cooperation to violence and war in Yugoslavia', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 23, no. 6, pp. 982–1001
- PERICA, VJEKOSLAV 2002 *Balkan Idols. Religion and Nationalism in the Yugoslav States*, New York: Oxford University Press
- PETROVIĆ, RUŽA 1987 'Migracije u Jugoslaviji', Novi Beograd: Istraživacko Izdavacki Centar SSO Srbije.
- POWER, SAMANTHA 1993 *Breakdown in the Balkans. A Chronicle of Events January, 1989 to May, 1993*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment Special Publication
- RAMET, SABRINA P. 1992 *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia. 1962–1991*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press
- 2004 'For a charm of powerful trouble, like a hell-broth boil and bubble: Theories about the roots of the Yugoslav troubles', *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 731–63
- SEKULIĆ, DUŠKO 1997 'The creation and dissolution of the multinational state: The case of Yugoslavia', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 165–79
- SEKULIĆ, DUŠKO, MASSEY, GARTH and HODSON, RANDY 1994 'Who were the Yugoslavs? Failed sources of a common identity in the former Yugoslavia', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 59, no. 1, pp. 83–97
- SEKULIĆ, DUŠKO, HODSON, RANDY and MASSEY, GARTH 2002 'War and tolerance', *Revija za Sociologiju*, vol. 33, no. 1–2, pp. 33–58
- SIROTKOVIĆ, JAKOV 1996 *Hrvatsko Gospodarstvo*, Zagreb: HAZU i Golden Marketing
- SIBER, IVAN 1998 'Povijesni i Etnički Rascjepi u Hrvatskom Društvu', in M. Kasapovic, I. Siber and N. Zakosek (eds), *Birači i demokracija*, Zagreb: Alinea
- 2001 'Politicko ponašanje biraca u izborima 1990–2000', in M. Kasapovic (ed.), *Hrvatska politika 1990–2000*, Zagreb: Fakultet Političkih Znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
- SISK, TIMOTHY D. 1996. 'Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts', Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace.
- SOMER, MURAT 2001 'Cascades of ethnic polarization: Lessons from Yugoslavia', *Annals AAPs*, vol. 573, pp. 105–26
- STANI, NIKSA 2002 *Hrvatska Nacija I Nationalizam u 19 i 20 Stoljeću*, Zagreb: Barat
- STARK, RODNEY 1997 *The Rise of Christianity. A Sociologist Reconsiders History*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- STATISTIČKI BILTEN 1992 'Nacionalni sastav stanovništva po općinama', No.1934. Beograd: Savezni Zavod za Statistiku
- TANNER, MARCUS 1997 *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War*, New Haven, CN: Yale University Press
- THOMPSON, MARK 1994 'Forging war: The media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina', Article 19, Washington DC: International Centre Against Censorship
- TOMASIĆ, DINKO 1948 *Personality and Culture in Eastern European Politics*, New York: George Stewart Publishers
- UGRESIĆ, DUBRAVKA 1996 *The Culture of Lies*, London: Phoenix Books
- WOODWARD, SUSAN L. 1995 *Balkan Tragedy. Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute
- YOUNG, CRAWFORD (ed) 1993 *The Politics of Ethnic Pluralism*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press
- ZAKOSEK, NENAD 2001 'Struktura biračkog tijela i političke promjene u siječanjskim izborima 2000', in Mirjana Kasapovic (ed.), *Hrvatska politika 1990–2000*, Zagreb: Fakultet Političkih Znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
- ZIMMERMANN, WARREN 1996 *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers*, New York: Times Books
- ZUNEĆ, OZREN 1998 *Ogledi iz Sociologije Rata*, Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk i Sociolosko Društvo Hrvatske

ŽUPANOV, JOSIP, SEKULIĆ, DUŠKO and ŠPORER, ŽELJKA 1996 'A breakdown of the civil order: The Balkan bloodbath', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 401–22

ŽUPANOV, JOSIP 1995 *Poslije potopa*, Zagreb: Globus

**DUŠKO SEKULIĆ** is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Flinders University of South Australia.

ADDRESS: Department of Sociology, Flinders University of South Australia, GPO Box 2100, Adelaide, S. A. 5001, Australia. Email: <Dusko.Sekulic@Flinders.edu.au >

**GARTH MASSEY** is Professor of International Studies and Sociology at the University of Wyoming.

ADDRESS: International Studies Program, Ross Hall, Room 404, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY 82071, USA. Email: <gmmassey@uwyo.edu >

**RANDY HODSON** is Professor of Sociology at Ohio State University.

ADDRESS: Department of Sociology, Bricker Hall, Room 300, 190 North Oval Mall, Ohio State University, Columbus OH 43210, USA. Email: <Hodson.8@osu.edu >