ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA
XXI
2021
2

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE

STUDIA TERRITORIALIA

XXI
2021
2

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
KAROLINUM PRESS
2022

Editor-in-Chief: PhDr. Jan Šír, Ph.D. (Charles University)

Executive Editor: PhDr. Lucie Filipová, Ph.D. (Charles University)

Editorial Board: Maria Alina Asavei, Ph.D. (Charles University), Ing. Mgr. Magdalena Fiřtová, Ph.D. (Charles University), doc. RNDr. Vincenc Kopeček, Ph.D. (University of Ostrava), PhDr. Ondřej Matějka, Ph.D. (Charles University), doc. PhDr. Tomáš Nigrin, Ph.D. (Charles University), prof. PhDr. Jiří Kocian, CSc. (Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences), doc. PhDr. Luboš Švec, CSc. (Charles University), doc. PhDr. Jiří Vykoukal, CSc. (Charles University)

International Advisory Board:
Prof. Marek Bankowicz (Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie), Prof. Dr. Christoph Boyer (Universität Salzburg), Prof. Alan Butt Philip (University of Bath), Prof. Iain McLean (Nuffield College, University of Oxford), Soňa Mikulová, Ph.D. (Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung, Berlin), Prof. Dr. Marek Nekula (Universität Regensburg), Prof. Dietmar Neutatz (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg), Prof. James F. Pontuso (Hampden-Sydney College), Prof. Jacques Rupnik (Sciences Po, Paris), Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels (Universität zu Köln)

Website: https://stuter.fsv.cuni.cz

© Charles University – Karolinum Press, 2022
ISSN 1213-4449 (Print)
ISSN 2336-3231 (Online)

CONTENTS

Editorial 7

Articles 9

Contested Memories in Contemporary France and Their Reflection in Rap Music 11
ALEXANDRA PREITSCHOPF

Imagine All the People: The Populist and Anti-Populist Discourses of Serbian and Croatian Protests (2017–2020) 35
EWA WRÓBLEWSKA-TROCHIMIUK

"A Clear Message?" Aesthetic Practices of Protest, On-Site and Online 61
TOBIAS GRALKE

Reports 83

Instructions for Authors 101

EDITORIAL

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are pleased to present to you the second issue of *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Studia Territorialia* for 2021, entitled "The Aesthetics of Protest Movements: The Politics and Culture of Discontent."

Protesters worldwide employ aesthetics, objects, and emotions to achieve their various goals. The aesthetic elements of protest movements are used to mobilize onlookers' imaginations as a major force for re-envisioning the past and present. The cultures of protest are diverse and multi-layered; they arise from the interaction of underlying social, political, and cultural factors. The political and social dimensions of protest movements have already received considerable attention from academia. However, the aesthetic dimension of protest is as yet largely unexplored. To help fill this gap, we have gathered three original articles for this special issue. They look into the visual, performative, and conceptual aspects of protest actions from various perspectives and through select case studies from different national contexts. They focus on the form, content, political practices, and communication strategies of protest actions.

The first article is a contribution to the study of remembrance culture in contemporary France. Issues such as the Algerian War and colonial crimes in Africa have slowly come to the fore in the French public consciousness after decades of silence. Alexandra Preitschopf explores how the memory of the French colonial past is expressed in contemporary rap music as a means of social protest, especially among descendants of immigrants from France's former colonies. The author analyzes the lyrics of select rap musicians, and identifies the main discourses developed by French rappers. She centers her analysis on the phenomenon of *concurrence victimaire* (a clash between the memory of colonialism and the memory of Holocaust) and the rappers' claimed solidarity with Palestine.

The second article is a study of the visual language used during public protests. It takes the reader to the contemporary Balkans, a region rich in populist movements of various kinds. It analyzes the communicational aspects of populism, primarily in terms of communication style. Employing a visual studies approach, Ewa Wróblewska-Trochimiuk tracks the different strategies used to visualize populist and anti-populist rhetoric and presents various themes that appear in the visual discourse of populism. She contrasts mass demonstrations against Serbia's authoritarian-leaning president, Aleksandar Vučić, with protests in Croatia against the former mayor of Zagreb, Ivan Bandić, which took place from 2017 to 2020.

Finally, the third article offers a theatre and cultural studies perspective on contemporary protest, which no longer takes place exclusively on-site but increasingly expands into the online domain as well. Tobias Gralke explores various tactics that protesters use to disseminate their messages. He is particularly interested in how protesters frame their events and control the narratives of their protests as they translate them from the on-site to the online domain. To that end, he synthesizes the findings of theatrical observations he made during three European protest events in London, Budapest, and Dresden in 2019.

Despite the restrictions caused by the on-going pandemic, *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Studia Territorialia* has continued to internationalize its scope. In late 2021 the journal was included in the major international abstract and citation database, SCOPUS. Indexing in SCOPUS is not only an acknowledgment of the progress we have made over the last years, but also an achievement that motivates us to keep working hard to maintain high editorial standards, further improve the quality of the content we publish, and attract an even broader scope of authors, reviewers, and readers.

Wishing you a thought-provoking read,

Lucie Filipová and Jan Šír
doi: 10.14712/23363231.2022.1

ARTICLES

2021 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 11–33
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

CONTESTED MEMORIES IN CONTEMPORARY FRANCE AND THEIR REFLECTION IN RAP MUSIC

ALEXANDRA PREITSCHOPF
UNIVERSITY OF KLAGENFURT

Abstract
France's colonial past and its aftermath remain an "open wound" to this day. After a long period of silence, painful issues such as the role of France in the transatlantic slave trade, colonial crimes in Africa, and the Algerian War have more and more become part of public consciousness in France. Interestingly, many French rap musicians who are the children or grandchildren of immigrants from former French colonies frequently use their songs to remind France of its colonial past. However, their messages sometimes compete with remembrance of the Holocaust. The singers' condemnation of French colonialism becomes wrapped up in the Middle East conflict and Israel is portrayed as a new "colonial power." By analyzing selected lyrics of recent French rap songs this article aims to explore the complex and sensitive intersection of post-colonial and Middle East politics and set the lyrics in the broader socio-political context of remembrance culture in France. The article argues that the musicians' approaches to France's troubled past are an important form of self-affirmation for their communities in the postcolonial context. By bringing up previously silenced topics, they contribute to a more diverse remembrance culture and contest narratives that have been predominant for a long time.
Keywords: France; rap music; remembrance; colonialism; Algerian War; Middle East conflict
DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2022.2

Dr. Alexandra Preitschopf is Postdoc-assistant of Contemporary History at Department of History, University of Klagenfurt. Address correspondence to Institut für Geschichte, Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt, Universitätsstraße 65-67, A-9020 Klagenfurt am Wörthersee. E-mail: Alexandra.Preitschopf@aau.at.

Introduction

In September 2020, a new debate about alleged anti-Semitic content in French rap music arose because of *La Menace Fantôme* [The Phantom Menace], the debut studio album of French-Senegalese rapper Freeze Corleone. Released (not by accident) on September 11, it turned out to be an immediate success in France. At the same time, it was quickly condemned as a work steeped in anti-Semitism, hatred of Israel, apologies for Hitler and the Third Reich, conspiracy theories, and Islamist rhetoric.[1] For instance, Corleone declares in his songs that he "arrives determined like Adolf in the 1930s," that he uses "the propaganda techniques of Goebbels," that he does not "give a damn about the Shoah," and that "like Swiss bankers, it will be all for the family" so his "children can live like Jewish rentiers." Furthermore, Corleone talks about "Zion Center" (Israel) and about the killing of "a life, a lord of war like Mullah Omar" (the former head of the Afghan Taliban and an anti-Semitic ideologue).[2]

It is therefore not surprising that shortly after the release of Corleone's album, the Paris prosecutor's office announced that it had opened an investigation of the rapper for "provocation of racial hatred." About 50 politicians, including many within President Emmanuel Macron's La République en Marche (LREM) Party, condemned the lyrics. Furthermore, Universal Music France announced that despite the album's commercial success, they were cutting all ties with the musician because "the release of the album has revealed and amplified unacceptable racist statements."[3]

In this context it must be emphasized that manifestations of anti-Semitism and Islamist rhetoric are a highly sensitive issue in contemporary France. Since the outbreak of the second Intifada in Israel in 2000, France has been particularly

---

1 The album quickly rose on the French music charts and sold more than 15,000 copies in three days, attracted more than five million listeners on the Spotify platform within 24 hours, and very quickly amassed several million views on YouTube. See Ben Cohen, "The Holocaust vs. the Rest: A New Threat," *The Jewish Star*, September 23, 2020, https://www.thejewishstar.com/stories/the-holocaust-vs-the-rest-a-new-threat,19772.

2 Agence France Presse, "French Rapper Who Compared Himself to Hitler Dropped by Label," *The Jakarta Post*, September 19, 2020, https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2020/09/19/french-rapper-who-compared-himself-to-hitler-dropped-by-label.html; and Idan Zonshine, "Wiesenthal Center Demands YouTube Remove Antisemitic French Rapper," *The Jerusalem Post*, September 22, 2020, https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/wiesenthal-center-demands-youtube-remove-antisemitic-french-rapper-643107.

3 AFP, "French Rapper."

affected by the problem of a rising "new" anti-Semitism.[4] The number of hate crimes, verbal insults, and physical attacks against Jews or Jewish institutions has remained high since then. They culminated in the assassinations of several French Jews. In 2006, young Ilan Halimi, a Frenchman of Moroccan Jewish ancestry, was kidnapped and later killed by the so-called Gang des Barbares. In 2012, an Islamist, Mohamed Merah, shot three children and a teacher to death in a Jewish school in Toulouse. In January 2015, another Islamist, Amedy Coulibaly, killed four clients of a Jewish supermarket in Paris in a murder connected to the fatal attack on the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. In 2017, a retired Jewish schoolteacher, Sarah Halimi, was murdered in her apartment in Paris by a neighbor, Kobili Traoré. One year later, a Holocaust survivor, Mireille Knoll, suffered a similar fate, killed by her neighbor Yacine Mihoub.

It is striking that in all these cases, the alleged murderers were young men with a Muslim immigrant background, although not every one of them seemed to have been close to Islamist movements. Still, Mohamed Merah and Amedy Coulibaly "justified" their murders of French Jews by arguing that they wanted to "avenge" the deaths of Palestinians at the hands of Israelis.[5] The Middle East conflict and (ostensible) solidarity with Palestine undoubtedly play a significant role in current anti-Semitic resentments and actions. In such cases, young Muslims, and others, often identify the Palestinians as their "brothers and sisters," whereas French Jews are collectively identified with Israel and therefore considered to be "enemies."[6]

---

4 See, for instance, Michel Wieviorka, *La tentation antisémite. Haine des Juifs dans la France d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2005); Didier Lapeyronnie, *Ghetto urbain. Ségrégation, violence, pauvreté en France aujourd'hui* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2008); Dominique Reynié, *L'antisémitisme dans l'opinion publique française. Nouveaux éclairages* (Paris: Fondation pour l'innovation politique, 2014); Alexandra Preitschopf, "'Umkämpfter Raum.' Solidarität mit Palästina, Antizionismus und Antisemitismus unter MuslimInnen im zeitgenössischen Frankreich" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Salzburg, 2016); Elodie Druez and Nonna Mayer, *Antisemitism and Immigration in Western Europe Today: Is There a Connection? The Case of France* (Berlin: Stiftung EVZ, 2018), https://www.pearsinstitute.bbk.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FINAL-REVISED-ENGLISH-FINAL-REPORT-Nov-2018.pdf; Günther Jikeli, "Explaining the Discrepancy of Antisemitic Acts and Attitudes in 21st Century France," *Contemporary Jewry* 37 (2017): 257–273; Michel Wieviorka, "A New Anti-Semitism," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 29, no. 3–4 (2018), 43–46; Alexandra Preitschopf, "Frankreich," in *Antisemitismus in Europa. Fallbeispiele eines globalen Phänomens im 21. Jahrhundert,* ed. Helga Embacher, Bernadette Edtmaier, and Alexandra Preitschopf (Vienna: Böhlau, 2019), 55–126.

5 See Preitschopf, "Frankreich," 79–83; Kimberly A. Arkin, "Talking about Antisemitism in France Before and After *Charlie Hebdo* and Hyper Cacher," *Jewish History* 32 (2018): 78–79; see further Ethan B. Katz, "Where Do the Hijab and the Kippah Belong? On Being Publicly Jewish or Muslim in Post-Hebdo France," *Jewish History* 32 (2018): 99–114.

6 Preitschopf, "Frankreich," 55–57. In this context, it should be mentioned that the French population today includes five to six million Muslims (8–10 percent of the population), mostly of

Returning to the debate sparked by Freeze Corleone, it is important to stress that controversial historical, and sometimes anti-Semitic allusions are nothing new in French rap music, although they are usually more moderate than his. Historic wrongs are frequently combined, as in one song by Corleone which commemorates Indians and Africans slaves as victims of colonialism[7] and vehemently criticizes France's colonial past. After a long history of denial, silence and repression, painful issues such as the role of France in the transatlantic slave trade, colonial crimes in Africa, and the Algerian War have more and more become part of public consciousness and discourse in France. Besides academics, journalists, and politicians, French rap musicians have also raised these issues. Many of them grew up in the socially deprived suburbs (banlieues) of large French cities, as did Freeze Corleone in Seine-Saint-Denis near Paris. They are often children of immigrants, mostly of North African Muslim or sub-Saharan African origin. They or their ancestors often came from former French colonies. Accordingly, they use their music as a medium to remind France of its colonial past as well as of current problems of integration in French society. Moreover, condemnation of France's colonial past sometimes goes hand in hand with allusions to the Middle East conflict, portrayals of Israel as a new "colonial power," and references to the Palestinians as "the new colonized" with whom they declare their solidarity, as will be shown below.

I aim to approach this complex situation by analyzing selected lyrics of recent French rap songs and by setting them in their broader socio-political context. This research draws on a qualitative source and discourse analysis conducted between 2012 and 2016 for my PhD thesis in contemporary history, which focused on pro-Palestinian solidarity, anti-Zionism, and anti-Semitism among Muslims in contemporary France.[8] Besides various other texts, the lyrics of around 60 rap songs, mostly released between 2000 and 2014, were included

---

Maghrebi or Sub-Saharan background from former French colonial territories, and about half a million Jews, many of whom also have origins in the Maghreb.

7 Maxime Delcourt, "*La menace fantôme* de Freeze Corleone est-il l'album que le rap français attendait?" *Canalplus*, September 11, 2020, https://jack.canalplus.com/articles/ecouter/la-menace-fantome-de-freeze-corleone-est-il-l-album-que-le-rap-francais-attendait.

8 Preitschopf, "'Umkämpfter Raum,'" see in particular the chapter on discourses in rap music, "Musikalische Diskurse: *History-re-telling*, Palästina-Solidarität, Antizionismus und Antisemitismus in den Texten französisch-muslimischer RapperInnen," 445–526. For the concept of critical discourse analysis as developed by Margarete and Siegfried Jäger, see especially Margarete Jäger and Siegfried Jäger, *Deutungskämpfe. Theorie und Praxis Kritischer Diskursanalyse* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007); Margarete Jäger and Siegfried Jäger, *Medienbild Israel. Zwischen Solidarität und Antisemitismus* (Münster: LIT, 2003); and Siegfried Jäger, *Kritische Diskursanalyse. Eine Einführung* (Duisburg: Unrast, 2001).

in the study. This corpus was primarily gathered with the assistance of the comprehensive "rap encyclopedia," *genius.com*, which archives the vast majority of existing song lyrics and allows searching for specific keywords among them.[9] Search terms and selection criteria for the songs were focused on the following topics: 1) French colonial history and/or the Middle East conflict, as well as Israel and Palestine, Islamophobia, racism, and conditions in the banlieues in contemporary France, as expressed by 2) French rap musicians with immigrant backgrounds in former French colonies (especially the Congo, Senegal, Algeria, Tunisia, and Guadeloupe).[10] In most cases these rappers also define themselves as Muslims and/or allude to Islam in their lyrics. 3) Another focus was on the social impact of the songs, primarily those produced by well-known mainstream rap musicians. Purely "underground rap" was not sampled.[11] In a next step, the selected song lyrics were analyzed with regard to recurrent images and patterns of argumentation, with the aim of determining which lines of argumentation were similar and reappeared in different songs by different musicians.

Of course, it should be noted that this analysis is by its nature selective and merely illustrative, due to its purely qualitative methodology. Furthermore, the selected musicians do not constitute a homogenous group, but are individual artists with different political views, attitudes, and approaches to religion. Finally, it is essential to keep in mind – regarding the linguistic level of the lyrics – the fact that provocations, exaggerations, insults and "dirty language,"[12] as well as the construction of "enemies," are stylistic devices that are common in rap music and should not be taken too seriously. In short, the limits of "sayability" are certainly more flexible in rap music than in other public spheres.

Bearing all that in mind, this study is nevertheless based on the assumption that rap songs, and the musicians behind them, can and should be considered

[9] Keywords such as colonial, colonialism, slave trade, Algerian war, commemoration, Maghreb, Africa, Palestine, Israel, Zionism, Islam, Islamophobia, racism, racist, banlieues, and discrimination were typed in the search engine and relevant results (lyrics) were flagged for further examination when more than two lines or the whole song dealt with one or more of the research topics.

[10] This concerns primarily the following 24 rappers or music groups: Abd al Malik, Alpha 5.20, Ärsenik, Bakar, Booba, Diam's, El Matador, IAM, Kenza Farah, Kery James, L'Algérino, Lefty, Lorenzo, MC Solaar, Médine, Monsieur R., Sefyu, Seth Gueko, Sniper, Sofiane, Soprano, Tunisiano, Youssoupha, Zebda. In terms of gender, the overwhelming majority of the lyrics were by male rappers. Only a very few examples of female rappers were found (Diam's and Kenza Farah).

[11] In this case the indicators were the number of albums sold, appearances in mainstream French media, and the number of clicks on the YouTube platform (for some songs this was up to 3-4 million views).

[12] See already Georges Lapassade and Philippe Rousselot, *Le rap ou la fureur de dire. Essai* (Paris: L. Talmart, 1990), 122–123.

a part of societal discourse and relevant "discourse carriers." They reflect widely held ideas and images, and at the same time consolidate and disseminate them, which gives them a degree of influence and discursive power. Including these new sources from the sphere of popular culture in research into contemporary history will provide a more complete perspective of the complex and multi-layered issue of public remembrance. This particularly applies to the connections between memory, identity construction, and perceptions of the Middle East conflict. Despite multiple existing studies of French rap music,[13] those connections have hardly been considered thus far.[14]

For that reason, this article aims to answer the following questions. How is remembrance culture in contemporary France related to the forms of social protest present in rap music? What discourses and counter-discourses are reflected in the selected lyrics? How do the lyrics express criticism and commemorate past and present victims? What do they imply about the identification and self-representation of the musicians, and the commercialization of their work?

To answer these questions, I will first talk about French rap as a means of expression of social protest. Second, I will outline important current developments in French remembrance policy and culture, especially with regard to France's colonial past. Finally, I will point out how those developments are

---

[13] Recent publications include Karim Hammou and Stéphanie Molinero, "Plus populaire que jamais? Réception et illégitimation culturelle du rap en France (1997–2008)," in *Les Publics des scènes musicales en France (XVIIIe–XXIe siècles)*, ed. Caroline Giron-Panel, Solveig Serre, and Jean-Claude Yon (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2020), 125–144; Stéphanie Molinero, "Rap Audiences in France: The Diversification and Heterogenization of the Appeal of Rap Music," in *Made in France: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Gérôme Guibert and Catherine Rudent (London: Routledge, 2018), 151–162; Christian Béthune, "Towards a Greater Appreciation of the Poetry of French Rap," in *Made in France*, 163–172; Steve Puig, "Redefining Frenchness Through Urban Music and Literature: The Case of Rapper-Writers Abd Al Malik and Disiz," in *Post-Migratory Cultures in Postcolonial France*, ed. Kathryn Kleppinger and Laura Reeck (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 131–146; Chong J. Bretillon, "'Double discours': Critiques of Racism and Islamophobia in French Rap," in *Post-Migratory Cultures*, 147–165; Karim Hammou, *Une histoire du rap en France* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012).

[14] Beyond the French context, there are several other studies of anti-Semitism in rap music. For Germany, see for instance recent publications by Jakob Baier: "Judenfeindschaft in Kollegahs *Apokalypse* (2016)," in *Rap – Text – Analyse. Deutschsprachiger Rap seit 2000. 20 Einzeltextanalysen*, ed. Dagobert Höllein, Nils Lehnert, and Felix Woitkowski (Bielefeld: transcript, 2020), 187–201; Jakob Baier, "Die Echo-Debatte: Antisemitismus im Rap," in *Antisemitismus seit 9/11. Ereignisse, Debatten, Kontroversen*, ed. Samuel Salzborn (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019), 109–132. For the Dutch context see Remco Ensel, "'The Jew' vs. 'the Young Male Moroccan'. Stereotypical Confrontations in the City," in *The Holocaust, Israel and "The Jew": Histories of Antisemitism in Postwar Dutch Society*, ed. Remco Ensel and Evelien Gans (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 378–413.

reflected in French rap music. This third part will be divided into two subsections: one with reflections on colonial history and the phenomenon of *concurrence victimaire* (competition between victims), and a second addressing solidarity with Palestine, anti-Zionism, and their connections with colonialism.

It should be noted that the rap lyrics which will be quoted in this article represent only a small sample of the corpus of data available for analysis. However, the chosen extracts and musicians are representative of important matters: the family backgrounds of the rappers in different former French colonies,[15] the experience of life in the banlieues, the musicians' experiences as popular figures in France and its rap scene, and therefore their influence on public opinion.

French Rap as a Means of Expression of Social Protest

Rap music has been performed in France since the early 1980s. After being dominated by U.S. musicians,[16] a specifically *French* rap has developed since the 1990s. Its development was to some extent even promoted by public cultural funding[17] in the context of the promotion of French music culture by the French state. For instance, an annual *Fête de la musique* was initiated in 1982, and music halls, stages and music studios for young amateur musicians were created.[18] Today, France is one of the largest producers and consumers of rap music in the world.[19] Rap culture has become relatively widely widespread in French media,

[15] The musician Médine has Algerian roots. Tunisiano, a member of the group Sniper, has Tunisian roots. Monsieur R. and Ärsenik are of Congolese, and Sefyu as well as Freeze Corleone are of Senegalese descent. Kery James is originally from Guadeloupe.

[16] Julien Barret, *Le rap ou l'artisanat de la rime* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 11.

[17] Dietmar Hüser, "Sex & crime & rap music – Amerika-Bilder und Französisch-Sein in einer globalen Weltordnung," in *Rap – more than words*, ed. Eva Kimminich (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), 67–96, 76; Dietmar Hüser and Linda Schüssler, "Klänge aus Algerien, Botschaften für Frankreich – Der Rai-*Beur* als Musik französischer Jugendlicher aus maghrebinischen Migrationskontexten," in *Frankreichs Empire schlägt zurück. Gesellschaftswandel, Kolonialdebatten und Migrationskulturen im frühen 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Dietmar Hüser (Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2010), 299–329, 318–319. See also Mary Breatnach and Eric Sterenfeld, "From Messiaen to MC Solaar: Music in France in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century," in *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*, ed. William Kidd and Siân Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2000), 244–256, 251; Pierre Mayol, "The Policy of the City and Cultural Action," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 27, no. 2–3 (2002), 221–229, 225–228.

[18] Hüser and Schüssler, "Klänge aus Algerien," 318–319.

[19] Susanne Stemmler, "Rap-Musik und Hip-Hop-Kulturen in romanischen Sprachwelten: Einleitung und Perspektiven der Forschung," in *Hip-Hop und Rap in romanischen Sprachwelten. Stationen*

not only on TV and radio but nowadays especially on the Internet.[20] Besides the commercial aspects of rap already mentioned, French rap has gained an influential role as the "carrier" of ideas, resentments, and in some cases, hate speech. However, rap is naturally an artistic expression of rebellion and social protest,[21] which allows musicians to vehemently express their disappointment with society as well as their expectations for a better future. Significantly, the American philologist Samira Hassa describes rap as "a sort of refuge in which a marginalized group or minority can express freely who they are, what they suffer from, and their dreams and hopes."[22]

This is especially important considering that in France, rap artists are very often the children or grandchildren of immigrants, mostly from former French colonies in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.[23] Many rappers have grown up in the poor banlieues of large cities like Paris, Marseille, Lyon and Strasbourg and are marked by their experiences in that environment. As a result of the great waves of immigration that peaked in the 1960s, big tenements filled with modest, cheap apartments were constructed on the outskirts of French cities to house as many immigrants as possible. Beside the "practical" aspects of this kind of urban planning, the creation of these so-called *cités* or *cités-HLM* has led to "ghettoization," urban violence, and from time to time, youth revolts. Since the 1980s, many French suburbs have gradually turned into sites of separation and exclusion accompanied by high unemployment, poverty, criminality, and frequently discrimination and racism against their migrant or Muslim populations.[24] According-

---

einer globalen Musikkultur, ed. Susanne Stemmler and Timo Skrandies (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), 13–31, 16; Samira Hassa, "*Kiff my zikmu*: Symbolic Dimensions of Arabic, English and Verlan in French Rap Texts," in *Languages of Global Hip-Hop*, ed. Marina Terkourafi (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 44–66, 44.

20 Stemmler, "Rap-Musik und Hip-Hop-Kulturen," 15; Puig, "Redefining Frenchness," 132.

21 Barbara Lebrun, *Protest Music in France: Production, Identity and Audiences* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 4; Dietmar Hüser, *RAPublikanische Synthese. Eine französische Zeitgeschichte populärer Musik und politischer Kultur* (Köln: Böhlau, 2004), 11.

22 Hassa, "*Kiff my zikmu*," 44.

23 Arno Scholz, "Kulturelle Hybridität und Strategien der Appropriation an Beispielen des romanischen Rap," in *Rap – More Than Words*, ed. Eva Kimminich (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), 45–65, 55.

24 Robert S. Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 44–47; Michel Wieviorka, *L'antisémitisme est-il de retour?* (Paris: Larousse, 2008), 81–82; Dietmar Hüser, "Plurales Frankreich in der unteilbaren Republik. Einwürfe und Auswüchse zwischen Vorstadt-Krawallen und Kolonial-Debatten," in *Frankreich Jahrbuch 2006. Politik und Kommunikation*, ed. Deutsch-Französisches Institut (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 9–28, 17. See furthermore Andreas Tijé-Dra, *Zwischen "Ghetto" und "Normalität": Deutungskämpfe um stigmatisierte Stadtteile in Frankreich* (Bielefeld: transcript,

ingly, many rappers denounce their experiences of exclusion in the banlieues as well as discrimination and Islamophobia, especially since 9/11.[25] As Chong J. Bretillon significantly notes, rap musicians "demonstrate how a revised image of the feared immigrant is emerging in media depictions of the young inhabitants of the banlieue. He is no longer simply the unemployed North African migrant, nor rioting youth, but, as we shall see, the Muslim, the international terrorist."[26] Generally speaking, French rap has gradually developed into an "oral, visual and artistic expression of the struggle and resistance of the immigrant youth of France."[27] At the same time, it is striking that many rap artists present themselves in their music as proud Muslim *banlieusards*, criticizing the social problems of the French suburbs but also giving a more positive image of their inhabitants. As the German historian Dietmar Hüser points out, the banlieue fulfils a dual function in French rap: on the one hand it gives rise to complaints and social criticism, while on the other hand it provides a basis for a counter-image to stereotypical ideas of a failed, violent, and "non-integrable" suburban youth.[28]

The strategies used by rap artists to cultivate their public images and for "self-promotion" should be taken into consideration in this context – especially the image of the politically conscious Muslim "banlieue rapper." As literary scholar Jules Barret argues, rappers criticize France less to change its society but more to make money out of it.[29] According to him, this is the result of a general

2018); Bettina Ghio, "Rap et récits 'banlieusards': enjeux de la représentation fictionnelle des espaces urbains périphériques," *Romance Studies* 36, no. 1–2 (2018): 32–45.

25 Hisham Aidi, "Let us be Moors: Islam, Race and Connected Histories," *Middle East Report* 229 (2003), 42–53, 47; Hassa, "*Kiff my zikmu*," 45. See also Jeanette S. Jouili, "Rapping the Republic: Utopia, Critique, and Muslim Role Models in Secular France," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 31, no. 2 (2013): 58–80; Eva Kimminich, "Rap: Vom Chanson enragée zum soziopolitischen Multimedium," in *Das französische Chanson im Spiegel seiner medialen (R)evolutionen*, ed. Fernand Hörner and Ursula Moser (Würzburg: Könighausen & Neumann, 2015), 239–258; Puig, "Redefining Frenchness," 142. Regarding Islamophobia in general, see for instance Dorian Bell, "Europe's 'New Jews': France, Islamophobia, and Antisemitism in the Era of Mass Migration," *Jewish History* 32 (2018): 65–76; Eva Kimminich, "Rassismus und RAPublikanismus – Islamismus oder Welt,bürger'tum? Geschichte, Wahrnehmung und Funktionsmechanismus des französischen Rap," in *Hip-Hop meets Academia. Globale Spuren eines lokalen Kulturphänomens*, ed. Karin Bock (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), 59–74, 66–67. In this context it is striking that many young people living in French banlieues have converted to Islam in the last years. This is due to the work of several Islamic welfare organizations which have increasingly gained influence in poor suburbs. See Eva Kimminich, "Ton-Macht-Musik – Populäre Rap-Lieder und die französische Gesellschaft," in *Frankreichs Empire schlägt zurück*, 342.

26 Bretillon, "'Double discours'," 149.

27 Hassa, "*Kiff my zikmu*," 46.

28 Hüser, "Sex & crime & rap music," 87.

29 Barret, *Le rap*, 25.

"commercialization" of the "banlieue image" per se. Young middle- and upper-class French people sometimes imitate the "banlieue style" of clothing and language, and listen to "banlieue music" in order to distinguish themselves from their bourgeois parents.[30] At the same time, rap seems to have to fulfill certain criteria to sell among the "banlieue youth." Remembrance and victimhood, in the historical as well as in the contemporary sense, are important *topoi* and identity markers not only for the musicians themselves but also for their audience.

Current Developments in French Remembrance Policy and Culture

Regarding representations of France's colonial past and their role in the construction of identities, the Romance philologist Eva Kimminich speaks of a so-called "re-telling of history" by French rappers. They question the official French historiography and demand belated recognition in it of their own ancestors, their history, and their suffering.[31] This demand is also directed at education and school curricula. However, as Steve Puig argues, no real effort is being made in France – despite the growing numbers of ethnic minorities – to teach those aspects of national history in school. Therefore, popular culture plays an important role in conveying the history of French colonialism. Rap songs and other means of cultural expression are a kind of counter-narrative that is contributing to a redefinition of France's collective identity in the twenty-first century.[32]

For deeper insight into the central historical issues to which rap musicians often allude in their songs, the following review is useful. As a former colonial power in Africa and the Caribbean Antilles, France was involved in the global slave trade from the middle of the seventeenth century, when the first French trading posts were established in Senegal, Réunion, Guadeloupe and Martinique.[33] In the eighteenth century, the Kingdom of France, along with England, the Netherlands, and Portugal, was a leader in the so-called Triangular Trade. One important part of that lucrative business was sale of people from France's African colonies to be slaves in its colonies in America.[34] Slavery in France itself was finally abolished in

---

[30] Ibid., 12.

[31] Kimminich, "Ton-Macht-Musik," 339.

[32] Puig, "Redefining Frenchness,", 142.

[33] Jean-Yves Camus, "The Commemoration of Slavery in France and the Emergence of a Black Political Consciousness," *The European Legacy* 11, no. 6 (2006): 647–655, 647.

[34] Ute Fendler and Susanne Greilich, "Afrika in deutschen und französischen Enzyklopädien des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 113–137, 116.

1848, when the French Empire was on its way to becoming the second largest colonial empire in the world. At its height its power extended to an area of 12 million square kilometers, covering large parts of West Africa and the Maghreb, and areas in Southeast Asia (Indochina) and the Indian Ocean.[35]

France retained its colonies in West Africa until the early 1960s. Indochina (today's Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) gained its independence in 1954, Tunisia and Morocco in 1956. The struggle for independence was particularly difficult in Algeria, where about one million European settlers (the so-called Pieds Noirs) lived. There were numerous bloody clashes between the French army and the Algerian independence movement, the Front de libération nationale (FLN), during the Algerian War (1954–1962). However, the conflict had already begun before that, at the end of the Second World War, when on May 8, 1945 the French army brutally suppressed a local uprising demanding the end of French colonial rule in Algeria in the town of Sétif. The death toll of the massacre is estimated at more than 15,000 persons. The Algerian War itself claimed about 30,000 victims on the French side and at least 500,000 on the Algerian side. About 8,000 Algerian villages were razed to the ground, almost one million Algerians were deported, and hundreds of thousands were taken prisoner.[36] The serious human rights violations committed by France under the pretext of combatting the FLN are particularly controversial. They included systematic torture using electric shocks and extralegal killings or "disappearances" of Algerian people.

The fate of the Harkis, Muslim Algerian auxiliary soldiers who fought at the side of the French army, is a particularly tragic story. They were abandoned by France to their fate in Algeria after the Treaty of Evian (which officially ended the war and granted Algeria its independence). Tens of thousands of them fell victim to brutal acts of revenge by FLN supporters. They were publicly humiliated, tortured, mutilated, and often murdered.[37] Some Harkis managed to escape with their families to France, but they found it difficult to be accepted into French society, and lived for years in reception camps, often faced racism and social

---

[35] Günther Haensch and Hans J. Tümmers, *Frankreich: Politik, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft* (München: C.H. Beck, 1998), 247.

[36] Günter Liehr, *Frankreich. Ein Länderporträt* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2013), 57. See also Benjamin Stora, "Der Algerienkrieg im Gedächtnis Frankreichs," in *Verbrechen erinnern. Die Auseinandersetzung mit Holocaust und Völkermord*, ed. Volkhard Knigge, Norbert Frei, and Anett Schweitzer (München: C.H. Beck, 2002), 75–89, 79.

[37] Phillip Chiviges Naylor, *France and Algeria. A History of Decolonization and Transformation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 45; Martin Evans, *Algeria. France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 326–327. See also Vincent Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011).

exclusion.[38] Until recently, the torture, killings, and the fate of the Harkis were hardly ever discussed in public in France.[39]

This history has to be seen in the wider context of the French state's remembrance policy, which is strongly marked by silence and then slow recognition of the "dolorous" aspects of the past. Similarly sensitive subjects include the Holocaust and its aftermath, especially the question of the responsibility of the French for the deportation and assassination of French Jews. As the historian Henry Rousso puts it, collective memory of the Holocaust in France was marked by a long *phase de silence* after 1945, in which public debate was largely avoided or repressed.[40] A gradual "reawakening of Jewish memory" began in the 1970s. It gained momentum in the late 1980s, and even more in the 1990s.[41] In July 1995, then-President Jacques Chirac formally recognized France's responsibility for the enactment of anti-Jewish legislation by the Vichy Regime and the deportation and subsequent gassing of 76,000 French Jews.[42] In general, and similarly to other Western European countries such as Germany and Austria, the memory of the Holocaust in France is nowadays "institutionalized" (in the form of commemorations, public memorials, museums, etc.). Moreover, it has become part of the collective consciousness of French culture via literature, films, and documentaries.[43]

---

[38] Christoph Gunkel, "Frankreichs algerische Hilfssoldaten. Gefoltert, ermordet, vergessen," *Spiegel Online*, July 7, 2012, http://einestages.spiegel.de/external/ShowTopicAlbumBackground/a25130/l1/l0. See also *Isabelle Clarke and Daniel Costelle, La blessure. La tragédie des harkis* (Paris: Acropole, 2010).

[39] Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie 1954–1962* (Paris: La Decouverte, 2004), 96–101. See also Christiane Kohser-Spohn and Frank Renken, *Trauma Algerienkrieg: Zur Geschichte und Aufarbeitung eines tabuisierten Konflikts* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006).

[40] Henry Rousso, *Le syndrome de Vichy (1944–1987)* (Paris: Seuil, 1987); Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, review of Le syndrome de Vichy (1944–1987), by Henry Rousso, *Politique étrangère* 53, no. 3 (1988): 784. More recently, see also Henry Rousso, *La dernière catastrophe. L'histoire, le présent, le contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), and Henry Rousso, "From a Foreign Country," in *Ego-histories of France and the Second World War. Writing Vichy*, ed. Manuel Bragança and Fransiska Louwagie (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 89–103.

[41] Jean-Marc Dreyfus, "Eine nie verheilende narzisstische Wunde? Die Kollaboration im französischen Gedächtnis," in *Grenzenlose Vorurteile. Antisemitismus, Nationalismus und ethnische Konflikte in verschiedenen Kulturen. Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Fritz-Bauer-Instituts* (Frankfurt am Main: Fritz-Bauer-Institut, 2002), 167–188, 176; Pieter Lagrou, *Mémoires patriotiques et Occupation nazie. Résistants, requis et déportés en Europe occidentale, 1945–1965* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2003), 240.

[42] Dreyfus, "Eine nie verheilende narzisstische Wunde?", 169.

[43] Andreas Schmoller, *Vergangenheit, die nicht vergeht. Das Gedächtnis der Shoah in Frankreich seit 1945 im Medium Film* (Vienna: Studien Verlag, 2010), 179; Patrick James Soulsby "'History Takes Its Time ...': Anti-Racist Temporalities and Historical Memory Cultures in France, c. 1980–1998," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 28, no. 4 (2021): 549–569, 561, doi: 10.1080/13507486.2021.1904839.

Other minority groups in France, above all people with Maghrebi/Algerian or sub-Saharan-African backgrounds, began to copy this trend in order to gain acceptance and integration of their suffering (or the suffering of their ancestors) into the French national narrative and memory culture.[44] This was reflected on the political level in the *Lois mémorielles* (Laws of Remembrance), beginning with the *Loi Gayssot* of 1990, which officially criminalized denial of the reality of the Holocaust. More than ten years later, in 2001, the *Loi Taubira* declared the slave trade a "crime against humanity."[45] It was not until June 1999 that the French National Assembly officially acknowledged that a *war* had taken place in Algeria. In 2012, President François Hollande officially acknowledged the "unjust" and "brutal" nature of France's occupation of Algeria for 132 years.[46] Before that, a law passed in February 2005 dealt with the "Algerian question" but caused considerable controversy. It expressed "grateful recognition" of the French Nation for the contributions of repatriated Algerian-French people and other former settlers in the French overseas colonies. In its controversial Article Four on school curricula and historical research, the law even envisaged highlighting the "positive role of the French presence on other continents," especially in North Africa.[47] After several petitions and protests, especially from French historians, Article Four of the law was repealed in February 2006. As the French academic Jean-Yves Camus put it, this "apology for colonialism has become a major subject of public debate because it is an open insult to both the French Muslim population and the blacks from Africa and the Caribbean who consider it to be a glossing over of France's actions before the abolition of slavery."[48]

---

[44] Schmoller, *Vergangenheit*, 179; Alice Ebert, "Frankreichs Umgang mit belasteter Vergangenheit – Die Debatten und Kontroversen um das 'Kolonialismusgesetz' von 2005," in *Frankreichs Empire schlägt zurück,* 189–216, 190. See further Sonja Dinter, *Die Macht der historischen Handlung. Sklaverei und Emanzipation in der britischen und französischen Erinnerungskultur seit Ende der 1990er Jahre* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2018).

[45] "Loi et mémoire," *La documentation française. La librairie du citoyen*, October 23, 2006, http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/dossiers/d000078-loi-et-memoire/introduction.

[46] Ebert, "Frankreichs Umgang mit belasteter Vergangenheit," 190; "François Hollande acknowledges Algerian suffering under French rule," *The Guardian*, December 20, 2012.

[47] Sonja Klinker, *Maghrebiner in Frankreich, Türken in Deutschland. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu Identität und Integration muslimischer Einwanderergruppen in europäische Mehrheitsgesellschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010), 107.

[48] Camus, "The Commemoration of Slavery," 651. It should be noted, however, that the legislation not only granted recognition to the so-called repatriates but to all "civilian and military victims of the events connected with the achievement of the independence of the former Départements and overseas territories" and condemned "any glorification of the crimes committed against the *Harkis*."

Remembrance in French Rap Music

Colonial History and Concurrence Victimaire

Given the highly emotional and politicized public debate on colonial crimes and especially on the Algerian War, it is not surprising that rap musicians have taken up the subject in recent years. One of the most popular and well-known examples of this is the French-Algerian rapper Médine. In 2008 he released the song “Fils du colonisé” together with the French-Congolese rap musician Monsieur R. In the first couplet of the song, Médine alludes to the torture that was meted out by the French Army during the Algerian War and to deaths of prisoners disguised as suicides. Moreover, he evokes a tragic incident on October 17, 1961 in Paris. On that day, following a call by the FLN, about 30,000 Algerians demonstrated peacefully against a curfew for Algerian people imposed by the Parisian police prefect Maurice Papon. During an operation against the demonstrators, the French police killed about 300 Algerian protesters and threw their bodies into the Seine. The incident was hushed up for years and was only examined at the end of the twentieth century.[49] Médine holds up a mirror to France, the former colonial power, accusing it of “false probity”:

> Général Massu déguise les crimes en suicides / Dans leurs cellules, électrocutés, jusqu’à l’homicide / Ainsi mon histoire, une si belle histoire / Et les donneurs de leçons sont placés faces à leur miroir / Leurs propres reflets reflètent leur fausse probité (…) / Pareillement au Tiers-Monde, j’ai le cancer du colon / Remplit nos poumons avec l’eau de la Seine / Nous jette depuis les ponts.
>
> General Massu disguises the crimes as suicides / They have been tortured in their cells by electrical shocks culminating in intentional killing / This is my history, such a beautiful history / And those who give lessons are confronted with their mirror / Their own mirror images reflect their false probity … / Like in the third world, the cancer of colonialism grows in me / fills our lungs with water of the Seine / throws us from the bridge.[50]

---

[49] See Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison and Nils Andersson, *Le 17 octobre 1961. Un crime d’État à Paris* (Paris: La Dispute, 2001).

[50] Médine and Monsieur R., “Fils du colonisé” (2008), https://genius.com/Medine-fils-de-colonise-lyrics. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted. The French general Jacques Massu admitted in 2001 in an interview with *Le Monde* that he had tortured Algerian soldiers during the

In 2012 (50 years after the end of the Algerian War), Médine released another song, "Alger pleure", which dealt even more explicitly with war crimes such as torture, collective reprisals, human rights violations, and the tendency to keep silent about them:

> Pensiez-vous qu'on oublierait la torture ? / (…) / On ne peut masquer sa gêne, au courant de la gégène / Électrocuter des hommes durant six ou sept heures / Des corps nus sur un sommier de fer branché sur le secteur / On n'oublie pas les djellabas de sang immaculées / La dignité masculine ôtée d'un homme émasculé / Les corvées de bois, creuser sa tombe avant d'y prendre emploi / On n'oublie pas les mutilés à plus de trente endroits / Les averses de coup, le supplice de la goutte / (…) On n'oublie pas les morsures du peloton cynophile / Et les sexes non circoncis dans les ventres de nos filles / On n'omet pas les lois par la loi de l'omerta / (…) Et les centres de regroupement pour personnes musulmanes / Des camps d'concentration au sortir de la seconde mondiale / On n'oublie pas ses ennemis / Les usines de la mort, la villa Sésini.
>
> Did you think we would forget all about the torture? / … We can't hide our shame from the shock of torture / To electrocute men for six or seven hours in a row / Naked bodies on an iron mattress connected to the mains / We can't forget the blood-stained djellabas / The removed masculine dignity of a castrated man / Wood-picking up chores, to dig one's grave before putting it to use / We can't forget those who were mutilated in more than thirty spots of their body / The hails of kicks, the Chinese water torture / … We can't forget the bites of the dog-squad / And the uncircumcised genitals in our daughters' bellies / You can't silence the laws with the law of silence /… / And the detention camps for Muslim people / Concentration camps at the end of the Second World War / We can't forget our enemies / The factories of death, the Sésini Villa.[51]

"Concentration camps" and "factories of death" for Muslim people at the end of the Second World War are probably an allusion to the massacre at Sétif,

Algerian War. See Henry Frank Carey, *Reaping What You Sow. A Comparative Examination of Torture Reform in the United States, France, Argentina, and Israel* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012), 146.

[51] Médine, "Alger pleure" (2012), https://lyricstranslate.com/en/alger-pleure-algiers-cries.htm. In the Villa Sésini in Algiers, (alleged) members of the FLN were imprisoned and systematically tortured during the Algerian War. See Raphaëlle Branche and Sylvie Thénault, "Justice et torture à Alger en 1957: apports et limites d'un document," in *Apprendre et enseigner la guerre d'Algérie et le Maghreb contemporain. Actes de l'université d'été organisée du 29 au 31 octobre 2001 à l'Institut du Monde Arabe,* ed. Dominique Borne, Jean-Louis Nembrini, and Jean-Pierre Rioux (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 2001), 44–57, here 54, https://media.eduscol.education.fr/file/Formation_continue_enseignants/48/9/algerie_acte_111489.pdf.

and inevitably recalls the Holocaust and Nazi extermination camps. Similar references can be found in several rap songs. They serve as a stylistic device for emphasizing the atrocities described. Interestingly, Médine includes the French perspective. He points out in "Alger pleure" that many French people wanted the same for Algeria as they wanted for France during the Second World War before it was liberated from occupation by Nazi Germany. He emphasizes that not everyone in France agreed with official French policy in Algeria or was part of the "war machine" and suggests that not only the fate of Arab people should be commemorated. On the contrary, he refers to crimes committed by the FLN and to the Harkis and Pieds Noirs who had only "the choice between a grave or a suitcase" as they were forced to leave their homes.[52]

Such a comparison with the past does not relieve the contemporary French state of the ultimate responsibility for the Algerian tragedy. Another example of this rap genre is the lyrics of "Lettre à la République." This song was released in 2012 by the well-known rapper Kery James, who was born in Guadeloupe. It is less of a "letter" than an angry indictment directed at the historical and the contemporary French Republic. James accuses France of hypocrisy, betrayal of its own values, discrimination, racism, Islamophobia, social inequality, and misery in the banlieues, to say nothing of its crimes in the colonies and their distortion and disguise in history. Accordingly, the lyrics express bitter disappointment with the lack of respect for the republican values of France and its ideal of the "one and indivisible" nation. At the same time, James emphasizes his identity as an immigrant and a Muslim, who has been "betrayed" by the Republic, but is still proud of his origin and religion:

> A tous ces racistes à la tolérance hypocrite / Qui ont bâti leur nation sur le sang / Maintenant s'érigent en donneurs de leçons / Pilleurs de richesses, tueurs d'africains / Colonisateurs, tortionnaires d'algériens / Ce passé colonial c'est le vôtre / C'est vous qui avez choisi de lier votre histoire à la nôtre / Maintenant vous devez assumer / L'odeur du sang vous poursuit même si vous vous parfumez / Nous les Arabes et les Noirs / On est pas là par hasard /Toute arrivée a son départ ! / Vous avez souhaité l'immigration / Grace à elle vous vous êtes gavés, jusqu'à l'indigestion / Je crois que la France n'a jamais fait la charité / Les immigrés ce n'est que la main d'œuvre bon marché / Gardez pour vous votre illusion républicaine / De la douce France bafouée par l'immigration africaine /Demandez aux tirailleurs sénégalais et aux harkis / Qui a profité d'qui ? / La République n'est innocente que dans vos songes.

[52] Médine, "Alger pleure."

> To all those racists with hypocritical tolerance / Who built their nation on blood / Now setting themselves up as sermonizers / Looters of wealth, murderers of Africans / Colonizers, torturers of the Algerians / This colonial past is yours / You are the ones who chose to tie your story to ours / Now you must take responsibility / The smell of blood is chasing you, even though you wear perfume / We, Arabs and Blacks / We are not here by accident / Each arrival has its own departure! / You wanted immigration / Thanks to it, you stuff yourself to indigestion / I think France never did charity / Immigrants were only cheap labor / Keep your republican illusions to yourselves / From the sweet France flouted by African immigrants /Ask the Senegalese infantrymen and Harkis / Who has taken advantage of whom / The republic is innocent only in your dreams.[53]

Even more vitriolic words about the French state can be found in the song "FranSSe," released in 2004 by the above-mentioned rapper Monsieur R. As the title suggests, Monsieur R compares France to Nazi Germany (in the form of the Nazi Schutzstaffel, or SS) and argues that Muslims in France are hated nowadays like the Jewish population was in the 1930s and 1940s. Generally, this idea is quite recent among some Muslims when it comes to modern Islamophobia in Europe. At the same time, Monsieur R. openly reflects his own hatred for France. However, he emphasizes that his song is not directed against the French people but rather against the historical and contemporary rulers of the state:

> La France est une garce / N'oublie pas de la baiser / Jusqu'à l'épuiser / Comme une salope / Faut la traiter, mec (...) / La France est une mère indigne / Qui a abandonné ses fils sur le trottoir (...) / Mes frères musulmans sont haïs / Comme mes frères juifs à l'époque du Reich (...) / Quand je parle de la France / Je parle pas du peuple français / Mais des dirigeants de l'Etat français.

> France is a beast / Don't forget to fuck her / Until exhaustion / You have to treat her / Like a bitch .../ France is an ignoble mother / Who has left her sons on the sidewalk ... / My Muslim brothers are hated / Like my Jewish brothers at the time of the Reich ... / When I speak of France / I don't speak of the French people / But of the rulers of the French state.[54]

---

53 Kery James, "Lettre à la République" (2013), https://genius.com/Kery-james-lettre-a-la-republique-lyrics.

54 Monsieur R., "FranSSe" (2004), https://genius.com/Monsieur-r-fransse-lyrics.

Whereas Monsieur R. speaks of his Jewish *brothers* and draws a parallel (albeit exaggerated) between anti-Semitism and contemporary Islamophobia, such comparisons can lead to a kind of competition with the memory of the Holocaust. The Holocaust holds an important place of respect in France's collective memory, more so than the crimes of the colonial period. Many rappers believe Jews are regarded as more "privileged" victims than people of their own ethnic group. This societal phenomenon is often referred to in French as *concurrence victimaire* (competition between victims).[55] For example, in 1998 the rap group Ärsenik (consisting of two brothers whose family originated in the Congo) protested in their song "Ils m'appellent," "I've been told to forget about slavery … / The Jews are not told to forget about Auschwitz."[56] Similarly, the rapper Booba criticized the school curricula in France in his 2002 song "Ma définition." He argues that students learn too little about the history of Africa and colonialism in comparison to the Holocaust. "I wanted to know why Africa is doing badly / from the first grade to the next to last they told me about the Mona Lisa and the Germans."[57] Another French rapper of Senegalese descent, Sefyu, calls on his listeners in his song "Césarienne" (2011): "In school, they'll tell you about history / About the Cro-Magnon, Julius Caesar, prehistory / From Cleopatra, the pyramids to Auschwitz / But don't forget to tell them about the original inhabitants [of Africa] and about slavery."[58]

---

[55] See Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, *Les Guerres de mémoires. La France et son histoire. Enjeux politiques, controverses historiques, stratégies médiatiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008); Geoffrey Grandjean and Jérôme Jamin, *La concurrence mémorielle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011); Esther Benbassa, "La concurrence des victimes," in *Culture post-coloniale, 1961–2006*, ed. Pascal Blanchard and Nicolas Bancel (Paris: Autrement, 2005), 102–112; Shmuel Trigano, "'Abus de mémoire' et 'concurrence des victimes': une dépolitisation des problèmes," *Controverses. Revue d'idées* 2 (2006): 39–44; Emmanuel Droit, "Die europäische Erinnerung an die Shoah im Zeitalter der Opferkonkurrenz," in *Die Shoah in Geschichte und Erinnerung. Perspektiven medialer Vermittlung in Italien und Deutschland* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), 127–138. See also the following statements by French historians in the French media: Henry Rousso, "Mémoires abusives," *Le Monde*, December 24, 2005; Esther Benbassa, "La guerre des mémoires," *Libération*, January 5, 2006; Michel Wieviorka, "Quand le récit national est fragmenté par la mémoire de l'esclavage," *Le Figaro*, May 10, 2006; Dominique Borne, "Éviter la concurrence des victimes," *Le Monde*, September 16, 2011.

[56] In the French original: "On m'a dit oublie l'esclavage (…) / On demande pas aux juifs d'oublier Auschwitz." See Ärsenik, "Ils m'appellent" (1998), https://genius.com/Arsenik-ils-mappellent-lyrics.

[57] In the French original: "J'voulais savoir pourquoi l'Afrique vit malement / Du CP à la seconde ils m'parlent d'la Joconde et des Allemands." Booba, "Ma definition" (2002), https://genius.com/Booba-ma-definition-lyrics.

[58] In the French original: "L'éducation nationale te parlera de l'histoire / Des hommes de Cro-Magnon, Jules César, la préhistoire / De Cléopâtre, aux pyramides à Auschwitz / Mais n'oublie pas

As mentioned above, Freeze Corleone, who claimed "not to give a damn about the Shoah," produced one of the latest examples of allusions to the Holocaust in French rap. Corleone is not the only rapper who draws his inspiration from Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, a controversial and well-known French comedian with Cameroonian roots who is widely considered to be vehemently anti-Semitic.[59] In 2012, Dieudonné released a song with the title "Shoahnanas," a play on words that combined the word Shoah and the French word for pineapple. The song title is pronounced in French like *chaud ananas* (hot pineapple). Characteristically for Dieudonné, who constantly relativizes and ridicules the Holocaust,[60] the song was meant to mock the remembrance of the Holocaust.[61] In his work generally, the comedian plays different minorities off against each other, above all pitting France's Jewish population against young people with Muslim and/or African backgrounds. He has even argued several times that "the Zionists" (ergo, "the Jews") were the main profiteers of the slave trade.[62] Although Dieudonné's rhetoric is no doubt extreme, it must be noted that he seems to be very aware of the concurrence victimaire in contemporary society and uses it in his controversial comedy routines – knowing the limits of what can be discussed in public and therefore be "marketed" as "counter-culture," especially among some young people living in and beyond the banlieues.

Solidarity with Palestine and the Demonization of Israel

Returning to rap music, the phenomenon of pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist rhetoric should be addressed. As already indicated above, several rappers not only commemorate the fate of their own ancestors as victims of French colonial crimes, but also recall the problems of their "Muslim brothers and sisters" in Palestine. In both contexts, the song lyrics are directed against nation-states – France and Israel – but not necessarily against their populations as such. The musicians criticize Israeli policies, such as the Jewish settlements in Palestinian

---

toi de leur parler des indigènes et de l'esclavagisme." Sefyu, "Césarienne" (2011), https://genius.com/search?q=C%C3%A9sarienne.

[59] Zonshine, "Wiesenthal Center Demands YouTube Remove."

[60] Marc Knobel, *Haine et violences antisémites. Une rétrospective: 2000–2013* (Paris: Berg International, 2013), 58; Camus, "The Commemoration of Slavery," 652; Michel Briganti, André Déchot, and Jean-Paul Gautier, *La Galaxie Dieudonné. Pour en finir avec les impostures* (Paris: Syllepse, 2011), 30–31.

[61] See Dieudonné M'Bala M'Bala, "Shoahnanas" (2012), https://genius.com/Dieudonne-shoahnanas-annotated.

[62] Briganti, Déchot, and Gautier, *La Galaxie Dieudonné,* 55–56.

areas and the death of innocent civilians during military operations in Gaza. At the same time, however, the image of Israel that recurs in their songs goes well beyond mere criticism. Israel is usually portrayed, and even demonized, as a hardline occupier, and above all as a new colonial power, a "heartless," "bloodthirsty" aggressor and "murderer" of innocent people. Moreover, in some songs the rappers reproach the "Western World," especially the United States and the Western media, for their alleged unconditional support for Israel and indifference to the fate of the Palestinians. Consequently, their rhetoric attributes the extremely complex and complicated conflict in the Middle East to a single cause that declares the State of Israel and its "accomplices" to be the only parties that bear responsibility.

These sentiments are clearly reflected in the song "Jeteur de pierres," released in 2003 by the French rap group Sniper. In a musical allusion to the second Intifada, Sniper directly addresses both Israel and the Palestinians:

> Voilà le résultat / D'une puissance colonisatrice / Aidés de l'Occident / Ils ont tué et chassé / (…) Laxiste, le monde laisse faire et se défile / Pendant que tu tues des civils / Et les appelle terroristes / (…) Jeteur de pierres / Le monde sait que ton pays est en guerre / Pas d'aide humanitaire / Vu que les colons te volent tes terres.
>
> This is the result / Of a colonist power / With the help of the West / They killed and chased people away / … The world is slack, it lets it happen and cops out / While you are killing civilians / And calling them terrorists / … Stone Thrower / The world knows that your country is at war / No humanitarian aid / Given that the colonists are stealing your land.[63]

The song accuses Israel of deliberately preventing and "poisoning" every chance for peace since its founding in 1948. According to Sniper, instead of admitting its "guilt," Israel presents itself as a permanent "victim" and "whitewashes" all its "crimes." It would be impossible, especially in France, to criticize France's ally Israel without being accused of anti-Semitism: "If you disagree with the Zionists, you'll be considered an anti-Semite within two seconds."[64] This statement inevitably begs the question of *whom* Sniper means by Zionists. In anti-Semitic discourse, the term "Zionists" is often used as a synonym for "Jews" in general, accompanied by the idea of a powerful "Zionist censorship." Nevertheless, Sniper concludes

63 Sniper, "Jeteur de pierres" (2003), https://genius.com/Sniper-jeteur-de-pierres-lyrics.
64 In the French original: "Contredis les sionistes et tu passes pour un antisémite en deux secondes." Ibid.

their song with disclaimer of any bias or anti-Semitism – anti-anti-Semitic rhetoric that can often be observed in pro-Palestinian discourse: "To say Inshallah, bonjour, shalom and salaam … / If in your eyes we take sides, you should understand / That we don't speak as Muslims, only as human beings."[65]

In contrast to their strident criticism of Israel, the rappers portray the Palestinians as oppressed and colonized, but at the same time faultless, upright, and admirable people who are (Muslim) martyrs. The problems of Palestinian terrorism and especially terrorist acts by Hamas are not mentioned at all, and if they are, are romanticized as brave resistance. In his song "Avec le coeur et la raison" (2009), the rapper Kery James, for instance, expresses all of his respect and affection for the Palestinian people and literally declares his love (in French and Arabic):

> Malgré tout ce qu'ils subissent / Les Palestiniens résistent, les Palestiniens existent / J'ai rarement vu un peuple si courageux / Sa fierté brille comme le soleil même par temps orageux (…) / Hozn fi Qalbi / Hozn fi Qalbi / 'Aandi hozn fi qalbi / Lemma ou fakar fi falastine / 'Aandi lorfa fi qalbi / Wa ana nhabekom / Wa ana nhabekom.
>
> Despite everything they have suffered / The Palestinians resist, the Palestinians exist / I've rarely seen such brave people before / Their pride beams like the sun even in stormy times … / There is such sadness in my heart / There is such sadness in my heart / When I think of Palestine / There is fear in my heart / And I love you / And I love you.[66]

Médine also pays his respects to the Palestinian people in his song "Gaza Soccer Beach," released shortly after the beginning of Israel's Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip in July of 2014. As the title suggests, the song alludes to the football World Cup (held in 2014 in Brazil) as well as to the death of four Palestinian children playing football on a beach in Gaza who were killed during the Israeli operation. Médine transfers the Israel-Gaza conflict into football and sports metaphors. He not only accuses Israel of killing innocent people in a "highly unfair match" but also, like Sniper, condemns the "world public" and the media for standing by as spectators. In contrast, the Palestinians are portrayed as brave players on a "soccer beach of martyrs," who have no chance

[65] In the French original: "Dire Inchallah, bonjour, shalom et salam (…) / Si à tes yeux on prend position, comprend bien / Qu'on parle pas en tant que musulman rien qu'en tant qu'être humain." Ibid.

[66] Kery James, "Avec le coeur et la raison" (2009), https://genius.com/search?q=Avec%20le%20coeur%20et%20la%20raison.

against Israeli superiority. This image is followed by a clearly political appeal at the end of the song to oppose Israeli settlements, the blockade of the Gaza Strip, Israeli military strikes, and finally, Zionism itself.[67] Although it is without a doubt legitimate to raise one's voice against the tragic death of innocent children, the last expression brings into question the very existence of the State of Israel.

The appearance of this kind of pro-Palestinian narrative is hardly surprising in the context of rap music. Neither is the lack of pro-Israeli statements or Israeli perspectives on the conflict. Like vehement condemnations of French colonialism, declarations of solidarity with Palestine and anti-Israeli positions seem to be *expected* from Muslim rappers. This is, again, closely related to the question of what "sells" in French rap and what statements must be avoided because they could harm a rapper's image rather than promote it. The images of Israel and Palestine depicted by the rappers are far from unique or specific to their music and their world. Rather, they are recurrent, common *topoi* which can be found on a global level in many anti-Zionist discourses.[68] Rap musicians refer to these ideas and spread them among their audience, and they certainly are aware that they are already widespread there. The question inevitably arises, to what extent rappers sing about Palestine for reasons of personal commitment and concern and to what extent their lyrics should be interpreted as a strategy for cultivating their public image.

Conclusion

It is striking that when it comes to the question of remembrance and victimhood in French rap, there seems to be a rather narrow set of *topoi* that recurs in their songs and that appears to be almost a "matter of duty" for the musicians: references to the slave trade, colonialism, and the Algerian War, as well as the drawing of parallels to the Palestinians' fate. Even though the rappers allude to Jewish suffering and the Holocaust in several songs, the lyrics serve, as in the case of Freeze Corleone, as a provocation or a (competing) comparison to the

[67] Médine, "Gaza Soccer Beach" (2014), https://genius.com/search?q=Gaza%20Soccer%20Beach.

[68] See, for instance, Armin Pfahl-Traughber, "Antizionistischer und israelfeindlicher Antisemitismus," *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, April 30, 2020, https://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/antisemitismus/307746/antizionistischer-und-israelfeindlicher-antisemitismus. See also Christian Heilbronn, Doron Rabinovici, and Natan Sznaider, *Neuer Antisemitismus? Fortsetzung einer globalen Debatte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2019).

rappers' own fates and history. In this context, it is highly probable that the way the rappers wish to represent themselves, create their public images, and pursue their sales strategies play a significant role in their motivations. The musicians present themselves as voices of oppressed peoples of the past and the present, and as vehement critics of the old and the alleged new colonial powers. They know how to provoke controversy, and they sometimes stimulate wide public debate and therefore find themselves at the center of attention.

Despite the commercial aspect of their work, the musicians' approaches to France's troubled past are certainly an important form of self-affirmation for their communities in the postcolonial context. By bringing up previously silenced topics, they contribute to a more diverse remembrance culture and contest narratives that have been predominant for a long time. They recall the inhuman and unjust treatment of people from the African continent and the dominance and enrichment France as a colonial power through illegal exploitation of others. They recall the victims of torture, war crimes, and expulsions. They highlight today's problems with integration and discrimination and show that having a (Muslim) background from "the banlieue" need not prevent one from feeling proud and self-confident. In that way, rap musicians offer their audience an important means of group identification and belonging. This enhances feelings of community, especially among young people with a migrant and/or Muslim background, who often feel excluded from or discriminated by the French majority and who can recognize themselves in the lyrics.

In any case, an analysis of rap music can serve as an indicator of the fault lines that underlie contemporary French society. Competing memory discourses, different processes of building collective identities, and the mutual demarcation of the boundaries of minority groups, sometimes mixed with anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic resentments, are a major challenge for the unity of French society. A significant effort to improve France's integration policy is therefore more important than ever.

2021 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 35–59
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE: THE POPULIST AND ANTI-POPULIST DISCOURSES OF SERBIAN AND CROATIAN PROTESTS (2017–2020)

EWA WRÓBLEWSKA-TROCHIMIUK
INSTITUTE OF SLAVIC STUDIES, POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Abstract
The aim of this article is to analyze the anti-populist and populist elements in the visual language of selected political manifestations. Protests in Serbia from 2017 to 2020 (mass demonstrations and one individual act of resistance) and in Croatia from 2018 to 2020 were chosen as examples. The article draws on visual materials from the demonstrations and their media coverage. The paper tracks different strategies for visualizing populist and anti-populist rhetoric. It presents various types of the visual discourse of populism: the discourse of the masses, the discourse of polarization, the discourse of vulnerability, and the discourse of the gallows.
Keywords: protest; populism; anti-populism; visual discourse analysis; Serbia; Croatia
DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2022.3

Introduction

The year 2000 in Croatia and Serbia stands as a political milestone in the history of the two countries. Their transformation, which began in 2000, increased the level of conflict in the public sphere and invested it with political significance.

This work was supported by a grant from the National Science Centre, Poland (decision no. 2018/31/D/HS2/03127).
Ewa Wróblewska-Trochimiuk, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences. Address correspondence to her at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Bartoszewicza 1b/17, 00-337 Warszawa, Poland. E-mail: ewa.wroblewska@ispan.waw.pl.

New social actors built their legitimacy on the organization of mass protests and collective acts of resistance to the *status quo*. The period since 2000 in both countries has been a true laboratory for the study of social movements, their political practices, and the language they use, including their visual language. It was a time when a hegemonic culture of new rulers was being formed. However, political struggle and resistance in the streets was directed against a hegemony that had yet to fully define itself.[1] The rise of resistance can be construed as the moment a society in the process of transformation is founded,[2] the moment when the *demos* speaks, reveals itself, and redefines a community. In Croatia and Serbia, creating a visual articulation of resistance was a kind of political and social *praxis*, and an actualization of the potential of Croatian and Serbian citizenship in the public square.

In 2017, right after presidential elections in Serbia, masses of disgruntled people took to the streets of Belgrade. One of their main slogans, written on placards and used on the internet as a hashtag, was *Počelo je* [It Has Started]. This short expression indicated that an important, irreversible process had just started before our eyes. In some circles, it was even called a revolution. The protests were compared to the so-called October Revolution of 2000 that led to the dismissal of Serbian president Slobodan Milošević. What started was not only a wave of public disagreement with government policy, but also the construction of a new political subject: the people. The process of bringing this new subject into existence raises the question whether it was in any way related to the phenomenon of populism, and whether populism influenced the politics of the people.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the populist and anti-populist elements of the visual language of political protest in Croatia and Serbia after 2000. One of the most important fields of revolutionary activity is the production and dissemination of images for use in the public sphere. This study analyzes the visual language of the protests and presents the images and slogans they used to visualize and express anti-populism. Moreover, it also considers whether anti-populist demonstrations (consciously or not) adopted populist visual rhetoric, images and slogans.

---

1 Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London and New York: Verso, 2001), 47–91.

2 T. V. Reed, *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Right Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xiii–xxiii.

Populism: A Mode of Articulation

Populism today is one of the most exploited areas of politics, both in theoretical and practical terms. Used in all kinds of phrases in all kinds of contexts, the term "populism" has become a keyword in the modern political lexicon, a weapon wielded by opposition movements, and a nightmare for the elites. In common usage, the original meaning of the term has become blurred, but it is mainly used in political discourse to discredit an opponent. The terms "populism" and "populist" have taken on an unequivocally negative connotation.

The first academic study of populism was entitled *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics*.[3] Its publication followed a conference at the London School of Economics, held in 1967 under the title "To Define Populism." Scholars representing various disciplines and different theoretical approaches found it difficult to agree on a definition of the concept. However, they identified a certain set of features that are characteristic of it that invoke the idea of the people and the will of the people in postulates and rhetoric. In a nutshell, these elements include the following: distrust of the authorities, who are perceived to be in a state of inertia, and recognizing the will of the people as morally superior to other political forces;[4] anti-establishment sentiment and a tendency to escalate tensions between the people and the elite;[5] constructing an identity founded on the idea of "the heartland," an idealized socio-cultural entity;[6] anti-intellectualism and an appeal to the collective wisdom of the people;[7] and strong, charismatic leadership and a mythical bond between the populist leader and the masses.[8] Populism is characterized by lack of ideological precision stemming from the absence of an ideological core[9] and an attendant chameleonic nature that lends itself to being freely adapted for various ideological projects. Populism therefore produces socio-political movements rather than structured political parties.[10] It appears in social

[3] Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, eds., *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969).

[4] Peter Wiles, "A Syndrome, Not A Doctrine: Some Elementary Theses on Populism," in *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, ed. Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 166.

[5] Margaret Canovan, *Populism* (London: Junction Books, 1981).

[6] Paul Taggart, *Populism* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000).

[7] Wiles, "A Syndrome, Not A Doctrine," 166.

[8] Ibid., 167.

[9] Ibid., 166–179.

[10] Kenneth Minogue, "Populism as a Political Movement," in *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, ed. Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 197–211.

groups that "have become aware of being peripheral to centers of power"[11] and that suffer from a crisis of representation.

The literature on populism has been constantly growing in the last decades. Each attempt to define the phenomenon proceeds from a different perspective. Although those perspectives may complement each other, none by itself offers a comprehensive description of populism. For example, Margaret Canovan has created a complex typology of populisms,[12] but her work was later questioned by Ernesto Laclau, who perceived it as only "a map of the linguistic dispersion that has governed the uses of the term 'populism.'"[13]

The analysis in this article makes use of all of the elements mentioned above. It is also propelled by Ernesto Laclau's observation that populism is a mode of articulation. According to him, "populism is an ontological and not an ontic category – i.e., its meaning is not to be found in any political or ideological content that describes the practices of any particular group, but in a particular mode of articulation of whatever social, political or ideological content."[14] In other words, populism is a political logic that is embedded in the functioning of every community. Its logic does not seem marginal or extreme to the community; moreover, it is an inherent feature of democratic systems. It can organize any social content, but it is not the content itself. Populism cannot be linked to one isolated phenomenon because it runs across many social phenomena. In his book-length study, *On Populist Reason*, Laclau defines populism as a discursive strategy that involves creating a political division of society into two camps and calls upon the "underdog" to mobilize against the "dominant group."[15] Thus, he does not consider populism to be an ideology, some particular programmatic content, or even a political project, but a way of doing politics.

In this study, I analyze the communicational aspects of populism. Populism is a kind of discourse: a set of linguistic and non-linguistic practices that constitute a structure of social relations.[16] So, in a sense, it is a form of Wittgenstein's concept of language games, which contain language exchange and simultaneous action. It is worth noting that discourse is not epiphenomenal in relation to ideas. Its function is not only to express social reality. It also has a performative

---

[11] Angus Stewart, "The Social Roots," in *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, ed. Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 181.
[12] Canovan, *Populism*, 4–13.
[13] Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005), 7.
[14] Ernesto Laclau, *Post-Marxism, Populism and Critique* (London Routledge, 2015), 153.
[15] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 87.
[16] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 105–114.

character: the power to disarm an elite and create a political movement. By adopting Laclau's broader view of populism, I consider populist rhetoric to be a "tactical device"[17] for attracting public support. In that way, I develop insights into populism as a political communication style used by different political actors.[18] As Jan Jagers and Stefaan Walgrave argue, "these political actors can be politicians and political parties, but also movement leaders, interest group representatives, and journalists" who promote a "communication frame that appeals to and identifies with the people, and pretends to speak in their name."[19] In my research, the focus is on visual political practices. This allows me to decode the populist rhetoric in images produced by the participants in many different manifestations and acts of disagreement. The micro-scale of populist rhetoric is at the center of this study. It is a tool for the temporary mobilization of the masses as well as a mode of visual articulation for people's political interests.

Protests as such naturally display populist features. The aim of populist rhetoric is to lead the masses into the streets, manifest an anti-establishment mood, and voice the masses' disagreement with the political forces in power. Protests stem from collective discontent and often produce collective emotions in a crowd. Protests are all to some extent a consequence and an extension of what Chantal Mouffe calls "the populist moment."[20] That moment arises when, under the pressure of political or socio-economic change, the dominant hegemony is destabilized by multiple demands that have not been satisfied. The social basis of the hegemonic formation crumbles and an opportunity arises for the construction of a new subject to take collective action – the people.

Examining Constellations

For the purposes of this article, I have chosen mass manifestations in Serbia (in 2017 and 2018–2020) and in Croatia (2018–2020). My key selection criteria were the place and time the protests took place: in the capital cities of both

[17] Jan Jagers and Stefaan Walgrave, "Populism as Political Communication Style: An Empirical Study of Political Parties Discourse in Belgium," *European Journal of Political Research* 46, no. 3 (2007): 319–345, doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00690.x; Benjamin Moffitt, *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

[18] Jagers and Walgrave, "Populism as Political Communication Style," 322.

[19] Ibid., 322.

[20] Chantal Mouffe, *For a Left Populism* (London: Verso, 2018), 12–18.

countries, Belgrade and Zagreb, between 2017 and 2020. In the middle of the 2010s, populist feelings erupted on the global political scene.[21] They also affected Croatian and Serbian culture. The protests in the second half of the 2010s provided research material for studying the phenomenon of populism, which appears at various levels of social communication.

In the case of Belgrade, the material I analyzed comes from demonstrations against President Aleksandar Vučić. In the case of Croatia, it comes from manifestations against the capital city Zagreb's mayor, Milan Bandić. In order to show the variety of expressions of anti-populist sentiment, I included one example from a media campaign in my analysis. Although it was an advertising campaign for a film, it does not much differ from the other materials because it had a political subtext.

My analysis is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to the Serbian case, and the second to the Croatian. Each part consists of two sections. In the first section, I present selected examples of anti-populist discourse. In the second, I analyze how the visual signs constructed a populist discourse. I do not duplicate any examples, as I wish to focus on the widest possible range of elements in populist discourse.

To investigate the visual discourses, I adapted the visual studies approach.[22] In the first step, I chose the most frequently reproduced images associated with each protest.[23] My sources were the popular Croatian and Serbian dailies: *Večernji list* [Evening Paper] and *Danas* [Today], respectively. *Večernji list* is a Croatian daily newspaper published in Zagreb since 1957. It is a non-tabloid newspaper with one of the highest circulations in Croatia, leaning toward a center-liberal viewpoint. *Danas* is a left-oriented daily newspaper published since 1997 in

---

[21] The most significant expansion of populism occurred in the mid-2010s, when many populists came to power in East Central Europe. Moreover, the elections of Donald Trump, India's Narendra Modi, Mexico's Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro put populists in power in some of the world's most populous countries. The Brexit referendum in 2016 as well as the popularity of Marine Le Pen's Front Nationale in France, Matteo Salvini's Northern League in Italy, Dutch far-right politician Geert Wilders's Party for Freedom, and the success of the neo-fascist Jobbik party in Hungary are also evidence of a rise in populist sentiment. See Ivan Krastev, "The Strange Death of the Liberal Consensus," *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 4 (2007): 53–63, doi: 10.1353/jod.2007.0072; James Dawson and Seán Hanley, "What's Wrong with East-Central Europe? The Fading Mirage of the 'Liberal Consensus,'" *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (2016): 20–34.

[22] Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[23] It is worth noting that in the media usually only two or three images are reproduced and circulated for each protest.

Belgrade, but with national circulation. Since the beginning, *Danas* has maintained a strong independent editorial policy with respect to the government. It is also one of the rare Serbian traditional newspapers that has escaped direct censorship and political control. The key criteria for choosing these two sources were their place of publication, circulation, range, and political orientation.

I analyzed all the issues of both newspapers printed during the period when the protests were under way. I then isolated images that illustrated the news about the protests and accompanied the media discourse about them. On the basis of this research, I compiled a list of images that met two criteria: they directly or indirectly indicated that society was divided into two political camps, the people vs. the elites, and illustrated anti-establishment sentiment.[24] With the aim of cross-checking the discourses constructed in the traditional media, I also looked at Twitter. I searched for materials on Twitter using hashtags that echoed the main slogans of the protests: #dostaje [#enough], #krivsi [#guilty], #1od5miliona [#1of5million], and #poceloje [#it has started]. The visual material published on Twitter – of which there was not much – largely coincided with the material published in the newspapers. In the next step, I examined the social media profiles of the protests (e.g., Facebook events created by organizers of the protests) and compared them with the discourse created by the participants in the protests and the media coverage of them, in terms of the visual narrative about the manifestations. That allowed me to conclude that the materials I found in the newspapers were representative of that discourse. The overlapping subjects of the photos, the setup of the main shots, among other things, proved that this was a discourse generated by the protests and multiplied by the media, and not vice-versa.

I then moved on to visual content analysis. First, I broke down the visual composition of the images into basic components, treating each component as an independent unit of visual communication.[25] Second, I decoded the imag-

---

[24] For the purpose of my research, I do not make a distinction between anti-establishment and anti-elite opinion. Marijana Grbeša and Berto Šalaj understand anti-establishment opinion as a milder version of anti-elite feeling, targeting political ideas that are or already have been in power. Anti-elitism criticizes all elites, and so it also challenges established political models. See Marijana Grbeša and Berto Šalaj, "Populism in Croatia: The Curious Case of the Bridge (Most)," *Anali* 14, no. 1 (2017): 21–23, doi: 10.20901/an.14.01. From this perspective, the anti-establishment discourse of the Serbian demonstrations is important, because the aim of those inherently people-centric protests was to overthrow an undemocratic regime. In Croatia, the protests were mostly against the corrupt, depraved elites in that country, so they had more of an anti-elitist character.

[25] Philip Bell, "Content Analysis of Visual Images," in *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, ed. Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 10–34.

ers and situated them into broader semantic systems, social conventions, and codes. Finally, I connected the decoded meanings with the main features of populism outlined above. The research questions I posed were: how is anti-populism expressed during mass demonstrations? What images are used to express anti-populism? What images of populism do anti-populist images reflect? Trying to answer these questions, I noticed an equally interesting phenomenon, which was that populist rhetoric was used by the anti-populist protesters (even if it was not explicit). The initial assumption, that populism opposes various other political phenomena, allowed me to decode expressions where anti-populism appeared. This forced me to pose other research questions: can anti-populist protests employ populist rhetoric themselves? Do the images that articulate opposition to demagogy also employ demagogic tricks? What discourses do such tricks produce? What images express populism, intentionally or not? After decoding the populist and anti-populist expressions transmitted by the protesters, I divided them into thematic groups and applied conceptual labels to them that described their populist nature. Because of formal and legal requirements, I present here only selected images that best illustrate, identify, and describe the visual discourses of populism.

My examination of the parallels between the protests in Croatia and Serbia requires additional clarification. I would like to emphasize that the similarity between the protests lies not so much in their confrontational nature as in their prominence in their respective societies. I perceive the two countries' cultures not as "counter-systems," but as mutually complementary systems of meanings. This approach makes it possible to identify the individual iconospheres of the protests, the parallel way in which they developed, and the extent to which they changed over time. The two countries' iconospheres existed in apparent symbiosis in the twentieth century because for much of it they were under the rule of a single state, Yugoslavia. Thus the frames of reference are similar. Despite significant differences in the experiences that have shaped the Serbian and Croatian societies after the year 2000, the differences between them, which were painfully apparent in the 1980s and 1990s, are being erased. Therefore, it is legitimate to examine the two cultures as complementary constellations.

For some time now, Croatia has been considered a relatively stable pluralistic democracy. The protests there had a local and temporary character. The nationwide, recurrent protests in Serbia took place at a time when the state and its political structures were gradually moving towards an illiberal politics. That still does not mean the two situations are not complementary. In terms of visual communication, they reflect each other. Moreover, populism is a global

phenomenon that has affected political communication in both countries in a similar way. The juxtaposition of the two cases shows how the visual discourses of populism have been instrumentalized in a broader way than just locally or nationally.

Anti-Populist Discourses in Serbia

In her book *Populism the Serbian Way*, Dubravka Stojanović traces the history of Serbian populism. She writes, somewhat ironically, "I have been getting ready to proclaim Serbia, and perhaps the entire Balkans, the vanguard of populism."[26] She lists the political sources and fathers of Serbian populism in one paragraph: Svetozar Marković, Nikola Pašić, and, after the fall of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević and Aleksandar Vučić. Vučić is viewed as the embodiment of populism in Serbia. A career politician, Vučić was prime minister from 2014 to 2017 and has been Serbia's president since 2017. His political roots are in the Srpska radikalna stranka [Serbian Radical Party], whose leader Vojislav Šešelj was convicted of war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. Under President Slobodan Milošević, Vučić was Serbia's minister of information. He co-authored regulations that introduced penalties for anti-government expressions by journalists and blocked citizens' access to foreign television. In 2008, he was among the founders of the Srpska napredna stranka [Serbian Progressive Party] and unexpectedly changed his ideology from the extreme, anti-European Union right to a progressive conservative and pro-EU stand. Political observers accuse him of an autocratic style of governing.[27] Although Serbia is a parliamentary democracy, almost all governmental decisions are made in the president's office. Vučić controls the state-owned media.[28] Each election since he took office has been accompanied by reports

---

[26] Dubravka Stojanović, *Populism the Serbian Way* (Beograd: Peščanik, 2017), 7.

[27] Aleks Eror, "How Aleksandar Vucic Became Europe's Favorite Autocrat," *Foreign Policy*, March 9, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/09/how-aleksandar-vucic-became-europes-favorite-autocrat/; "Džihić: Vučić's False Europeanism Has Been Leading Serbia to Autocracy for Years," *European Western Balkans*, August 28, 2020, https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2020/08/28/dzihic-vucics-false-europeanism-has-been-leading-serbia-to-autocracy-for-years/.

[28] In 2019, Reporters Without Borders stated that Serbia is "a place where practicing journalism is neither safe nor supported by the state." The number of attacks on the media in Serbia was on the rise, including "death threats and inflammatory rhetoric targeting journalists increasingly coming from the governing officials." See "Serbia," Reporters Without Borders, 2019, https://rsf.org/en/Serbia.

of serious irregularities from independent observers. Opposition circles accuse him of corruption and nepotism.[29] Although Vučić's rule cannot be described as authoritarian, in Serbia in recent years we have observed the growth of illiberal policies, i.e., "policies that are enacted (or proposed) by political parties in government with the aim to remain in power indefinitely while maintaining competitive elections. The resulting regimes maintain competitive multiparty elections but are neither democratic nor fully authoritarian."[30]

In 2017, a two-month-long protest under the slogan *Protiv diktature* [Against the Dictatorship] began immediately after Vučić won the presidential election in the first round. In 2018, following a violent assault against an opposition politician by "unknown perpetrators," Belgrade again became the scene of massive peaceful anti-government protests.[31] Called *Stop krvavim košuljama* [Stop the Bloody Shirts] or *1 od 5 miliona* [One of Five Million], the protests continued with varying intensity until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The protesters' main demand was the holding of free elections; their list also included freedom of the media, political pluralism, and reform of the electoral laws. The overall aim of the protesters was to show their disapproval of what they perceived as authoritarian populist rule by Aleksandar Vučić.

Although the Serbian protests differed slightly from each other in size and in the participants' social profiles (the first protest was mainly by students, the second one brought together a much wider range of social groups), for this analysis I consider them complementary. Their common denominator was their opposition to the president of Serbia. Similar accusations and demands for Vučić's resignation were articulated during both protests. Their objects were defined in an analogous way, and they employed similar visual rhetoric.

---

[29] Milenko Vasovic, "Vucic Surfs on Wave of Scandal That Should Drown Him," *Balkan Insight*, March 3, 2021, https://balkaninsight.com/2021/03/03/vucic-surfs-on-wave-of-scandal-that-should-drown-him/.

[30] Damir Kapidžić, "The Rise of Illiberal Politics in Southeast Europe," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 20, no. 1 (2020): 3, doi.10.1080/14683857.2020.1709701. A conceptually broader term applicable to the Serbian political situation is "competitive authoritarian regime." According to Florian Bieber, it captures a combination of two features: "institutional weakness that provides insufficient democratic safeguards, and authoritarian political actors who utilize these weaknesses to attain and retain power." See Florian Bieber, "Patterns of Competitive Authoritarianism in the Western Balkans," *East European Politics* 34, no. 3 (2018): 338, doi.10.1080/21599165.2018.1490272.

[31] The protests in Serbia were also triggered by the many scandals of ruling party members, such as sexual harassment at work, assaults on investigative journalists, plagiarism, and the arrest of a whistleblower who uncovered an arms trade deal in which a shipment allegedly ended up in the hands of ISIS fighters in Yemen, as well as a smear campaign and the unsolved murder of a Kosovo Serb opposition leader, Oliver Ivanović.

The protesters' anti-populist rhetoric was most apparent in the most frequent image displayed on their banners: *Stop Vučić*. Simple in form and content, it took the form of a prohibitory road sign: the silhouette of the president with characteristically folded hands, in a red circle crossed by a red bar (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. "Stop Vučić."
Source: *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_Serbian_protests#/media/File:2017_serbia_protest_symbol.svg.

Vučić's folded hands seem to be the most important element of the image. According to body language experts, there are many gestures that can signal a leader's devotion to populism.[32] One of them is folded hands, which are characteristic of people who want to demonstrate their superiority, highly developed leadership qualities and, possibly, authoritativeness.[33] Known as the "triangle of power," or

[32] Erik Page Bucy et al., "Performing Populism: Trump's Transgressive Debate Style and the Dynamics of Twitter Response," *New Media & Society* 22, no. 4 (2020): 634–658, doi: 10.1177/1461444819893984; Maria Elizabeth Grabe and Erik Page Bucy, *Image Bite Politics: News and the Visual Framing of Elections* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[33] Henry H. Calero, *The Power of Nonverbal Communication: How You Act is More Important Than What You Say* (Aberdeen: Silver Lake Publishing, 2005).

the "Merkel diamond" (because it was Angela Merkel's use of this non-verbal signal that made this interpretation popular), the gesture communicates power (the higher the hands, the greater the power). It is an element in the communication game that Vučić plays with his audience. The president is famous for his theatrical gestures, dramatic media appearances, and studied poses. His silhouette on the banner is slightly tilted to the right, which is a pose he takes to suggest that he is listening to his interlocutors. The protesters are criticizing the artificiality of the president's posture and body language, suggesting they are false.

Two other images promoted by the protesters are related to this one. The first is a caricature of the president holding his hands in a similar gesture but this time with his lips exaggerated in size and color (Fig. 2).[34] The exaggerated lips frequently appeared in the protests. The use of the lips to symbolize President Vučić not only mocked his actual facial features but can also be viewed as a reference to a person who talks a lot and makes a lot of promises. This is how populism is defined in the colloquial sense: paying lip service to social concerns and making unrealistic promises. Reducing Vučić to his lips identifies him with his "eloquence" and rhetorical ability, and with saying things which are often far from reality. In addition, the president wears a black balaclava, by which the protesters alluded to the criminal nature of his actions and indicate that he hides his true identity and intentions.

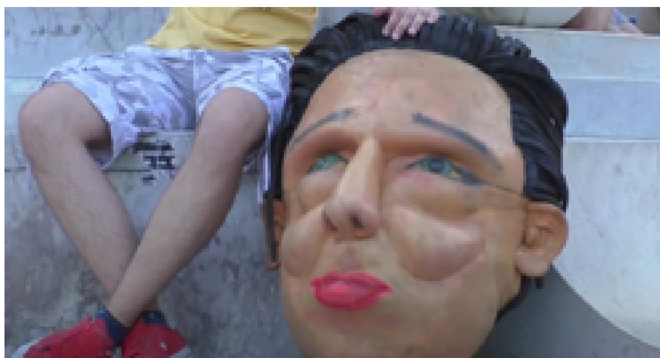

Figure 2. The doll with lips exaggerated in size and color illustrates president Vučić, Belgrade 2019. Photograph by the author.

[34] See the images in: Guy De Launey, "Serbia Protests: Anger, Eggs and Chanting at 'Anti-Dictatorship' Rallies," *BBC News*, April 10, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39556682.

A banner depicting President Vučić as Pinocchio[35] also alludes to his unfulfilled promises and political lies – the long nose is proof of his machinations. Unlike the two banners discussed above, this one makes use of the president's actual photo, thus abandoning the game of guessing who is the intended object of the protesters' criticism. The long nose over which the Pinocchio-Vučić has no control is proof of his lies. The consequences of his lies are not only as plain as the nose on his face, but are obvious to the protesters. Vučić's nose becomes a polygraph for detecting untruth.[36]

Populism is a way of doing politics and a style of political performance. Populist politicians use political mannerisms, recognizable gestures, and facial expressions in their public performances to move about smoothly on the field of power.[37] Theirs is a performative turn that goes beyond strictly textual data and takes into account the effects of a social actor's actions. Acts of public performance contribute to the power of populism.

Populist Discourse of Protest in Serbia

Among the photos most frequently reproduced in the media during the 2018 protests known as "One of Five Million" were some showing the massive scale of the gatherings. The aim of these rallies was to voice the protesters' dissatisfaction, but also to show how broadly their sentiments were shared. Demonstrations that fail to attract large crowds of people are usually considered ineffective. Their size, which is meant to prove that the organizers enjoy the support of the masses, is a topic of eternal debate between the protesters and the targets of the demonstrations. The media outlets that favor different political camps usually report different turnouts: they tend to exaggerate the numbers when they support the organizers' objectives and underestimate the numbers when they oppose them. If massive scale is coupled with an impression of spontaneity, i.e., with the image that demonstrations are organized at the grassroots level and express the will of the people, this impacts the perception of the strength and legitimacy of the

---

[35] See photo taken by Darko Vojinovic in Andrew MacDowall, "Serbia's Protests and the Growing Discontent with Western Priorities in the Balkans," *World Politics Review*, March 5, 2019, https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/27566/serbia-s-protests-and-the-growing-discontent-with-western-priorities-in-the-balkans.

[36] In 2018, similar images were used in Thailand during protests against Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha.

[37] Benjamin Moffitt, *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style and Representation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

protests. The visual discourse used in massive protests can be called a "discourse of the masses" (or discourse of quantity).

The Serbian protests in 2017–2020 were indeed the largest since 2000 in that country. Their organizers were well aware of this and eagerly referred to their size. After the first demonstrations, President Vučić declared that the protesters could rally as much as they liked, but that he would never concede to any of the protesters' demands – even if there were five million of them (Serbia's population is seven million).[38] The organizers of the protests immediately seized upon Vučić's words and turned "One of Five Million" into a slogan. It became the symbol of the protests (Fig. 3) and was used not only on placards and banners during street manifestations, but also as a hashtag or logo on social media.

Figure 3. "One of Five Million."
Source: *Wikipedia*, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1od5miliona.jpg.

However, what we are dealing with here is a shift in populist rhetoric. The stress is still on the individual, who is but one in a group of five million. An individual is part of the group, but his or her interests – even though they may converge with those of co-demonstrators – are as important as the interests of any other participant. They do not dissolve into the mass. The slogan "There Are Five Million of Us" would have a slightly different meaning. Although the slogan seems like only a rhetorical ploy, for populism, understood as a political logic, it is a key concept. The individual is part of the collective; he or she draws strength from its collective energy and shares collective emotions of the crowd with other members of the community.

Although the protests in Serbia were initiated by young people, press coverage of them often featured photos showing the enormous diversity of

[38] Beta, "Vučić o protestu: Nek vas se skupi pet miliona, nijedan zahtev neću da ispunim," *N1*, December 9, 2018, https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a442570-vucic-o-protestu-u-beogradu/.

the demonstrators in terms of their social group, class, and material wealth. Despite the fact that the protesters marched under one banner of opposition to Vučić's authoritarian government, they also articulated various demands specific to their own social groups, e.g., pensioners: *Pljačka penzionera nije reforma* [Robbery of Pensioners Is Not a Reform]; workers: *Nećemo da budemo jeftina radna snaga* [We Don't Want to Be a Cheap Labor Force]; and artists: *Kulturom protiv diktature* [Culture Against Dictatorship]. This diversity of interests gave rise to what Chantal Mouffe calls "a chain of equivalence." Such a chain is a set of diverse expectations from which a common will is constructed, but which still respects the specificity of diverse struggles.[39] Mouffe argues that this chain is a feature of left-wing populism, and is a discursive strategy for constructing a political frontier between "the people" and "the oligarchy." What should be emphasized here is the fact that from this perspective, "the people is not a homogeneous subject in which all the differences are somehow reduced to unity."[40] Rather, its strength derives from its heterogeneity and different but equal demands. Laclau emphasizes that "political identities are the result of the articulation (that is, tension) of the opposed logics of equivalence and difference, and the mere fact that the balance between these logics is broken by one of the two poles prevailing beyond a certain point over the other is enough to cause the 'people' as a political actor to disintegrate."[41] In other words, it ceases to be a chain of equivalent demands, but an undifferentiated mass. In left-wing populism, equivalent demands should be integrated under a common motto (or slogan or banner) which reflects the constant tension between the universality and the particularity of the people's demands.

Going beyond particularisms is perfectly expressed by the slogan *Svi kao jedan* [All as One] (Fig. 4), which is the mirror image of the slogan "One of Five Million." While the latter slogan accentuates the existence of particularisms within a large collectivity, the slogan "All as One" underlines a unity of particularisms, and the merging of individual political interests into one.

The large number of people attending the protests in Serbia was emphasized by slogans such as *Nas je ipak više* [But There Are More of Us]. The slogans not only stressed the numerical advantage of the demonstrators over the government and indicated that the protests were an expression of a collective will opposed to the establishment, they also conveyed the political division between

---

[39] Mouffe, *For a Left Populism*, 34.
[40] Ibid., 34.
[41] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 200.

Figure 4. "All as one," Belgrade 2019. Photograph by the author.

the governing and the governed and established a mythical, loosely defined "we". This discourse can be called a "discourse of polarization." It is based on images of social antagonisms, in which one social actor presents itself as a part of society that claims to represent the whole.[42]

This discourse of polarization is undoubtedly populist in nature. Moreover, it is based on collective emotions encouraged by the large number of participants and amplified by media reports on the events that were constantly excited about their number. This confirms the observation that "emotions are performed discursively as if produced by particular images."[43] The discourse of polarization also appears in a graphic reproduced on social media. It is a visual pun on the word "million" (spelled with one "l" in Serbian) – the word was divided into three parts: *mi* [we] – *ili* [or] – *on* [he] (Fig. 5). The "we" were the protesters, and the "he" was clearly Vučić.

---

[42] Ibid., 83.

[43] Rebecca Adler-Nissen, Katrine Emilie Andersen, and Lene Hansen, "Images, Emotions, and International Politics: the Death of Alan Kurdi," *Review of International Studies* 46, no. 1 (2020): 80, doi: 10.1017/S0260210519000317; Simon Koschut et al., "Discourse and Emotions in International Relations," *International Studies Review*, 19, no. 3 (2017): 501–505, doi: 10.1093/isr/vix033.

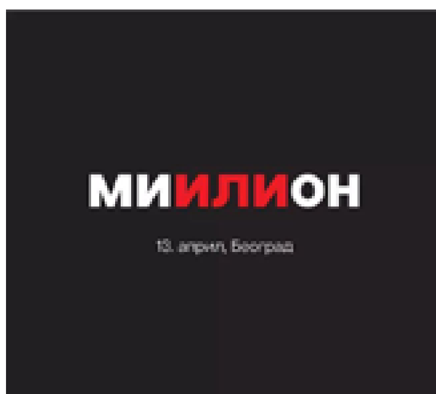

Figure 5. "weORhim, April 13, Belgrade."
Source: Twitter, https://twitter.com/ZezeljMare/status/1105919563638681600/photo/1.

We are dealing here with a simplification of the visual rhetoric of the political space, in which a complex system of difference and determination is replaced by a strong but vaguely defined element: *Mi* [We]. At the opposite pole stands *On* [He]. Other versions of this dichotomy remained undefined. In some cases, we can find personalized alternatives in the specific names (e.g., Vučić). Most often the dichotomy is "the people" versus "the oligarchy," or the "working class" versus "the exploiters," or some variant thereof.

Images that clearly identify the opponent, and thus reciprocally define the identity of the protesters, are literal in their messages. One frequently reproduced image from the protests in Belgrade was that of an older woman holding a full-color, handmade banner depicting a heavy boot. The boot symbolizes the authorities, trampling on human figures. The caption at the bottom clearly identifies the figures as the *narod*, which can be translated into English as either "the nation" or "the people." Although other descriptors of the boot's victims could be used here, such as "entrepreneurs," "humans," or "Serbs," the opposition to the "authorities" that is obviously represented by the boot is the narod/people/nation. This is a rhetorical device known as *totum pro parte*, which consists in replacing the name of a part with the name of the whole.

The populist idea is founded on the notion that political power is essentially an instrument for domination. It derives from the origins of participatory democracy and radical utopian visions of "the rule of the people," in which

political struggles are the struggle of "the people against those in power." Consequently, the main political goal of the populists is to overthrow "the rule of the elite" (oligarchic domination) and ensure the rule of "the people" and "the popular will." In the Serbian protests the protesters point out the sins of the elite quite precisely in such slogans as "Nobody Should Be Hungry and Homeless" and "We Don't Want to Be a Cheap Labor Force." These images talk about the basic needs that the state and its elite are not meeting. They also express the popular feeling of being used by the elite. In other words, they refer to capitalist exploitation.

It is worth drawing attention to one more type of visual material that appears as the articulation of a particular axiological or value system. It is the discourse of vulnerability. Images of this type are very popular all over the world and come in various forms, dependent on the local context. In Serbia, the images contrasted the protesters (or a protester) with law enforcement officers representing the authorities and the state. The most eagerly reproduced images were those in which the protesters were confronted by police in full riot gear. This type of image usually featured a woman standing or sitting in front of the police. In one such photograph from the Belgrade protests we can see a woman wearing the national flag draped over her shoulders, with her hand on her heart. The gesture of putting one's hand on one's heart is associated with a declaration of honesty, of pure intentions, and of meaning something from the bottom of one's heart. The patriotic mini-scene of the woman contrasts with the police officers in full riot gear standing in a line in the background, as if demonstrating supernatural strength. The presence of the police normally "is supposed to guarantee not only order but also a sense of security and trust."[44] Although the woman apparently is not in active conflict with the agents of law and order, the viewer of the photo can clearly see the gap between the two contradictory worlds they represent. One is the world of the heart – the nation –, the other is the world of force and ruling political power.

Another photograph from the One of Five Million protests depicts a woman sitting in front of fully equipped police officers (Fig. 6). Her posture (she sits with her back to the police, head bowed, smoking a cigarette) suggests helplessness, resignation and exhaustion.[45]

---

[44] Steven Balkin and Pauline Houlden, "Reducing Fear of Crime Through Occupational Presence," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 10, no. 1 (March 1983): 13–33, doi: 10.1177/0093854883010001002.

[45] Twitter sources describes the woman in the picture as the mother of a student arrested during the "One of Five Million" (@#1od5miliona) protest, Twitter, March 17, 2019, 7:37 p.m., https://twitter.com/_1od5miliona/status/1107350320315809792/photo/1.

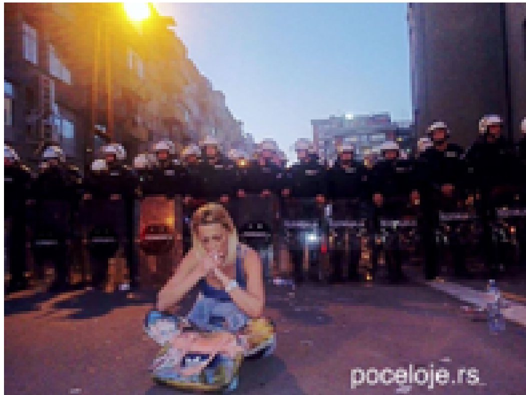

Figure 6. A woman sits in front of a riot police cordon after a standoff during a demonstration against Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić outside the presidential building in Belgrade, 2019. Source: Twitter, https://twitter.com/_1od5miliona/status/1107350320315809792/photo/1.

This photograph even gives the impression that it is a photomontage. The contrast between the unarmed, resigned woman and the armed police emphasizes her weakness and fragility. The discourse of vulnerability is related to the concept of the heartland, introduced to the research on populism by Paul Taggart. In Taggart's conception, the heartland is an ideal "territory of the imagination,"[46] in which the following virtues are present: moderation, diligence, ordinariness, straightforwardness, simplicity, clarity, common sense, and tradition.[47] The heartland takes its power from the heart, it is not necessarily rational or rationalized. The two photos express those values and the virtues associated with the heartland.

Anti-Populism in Croatia

Much like Aleksandar Vučić in Serbia, Milan Bandić was widely viewed in Croatia as the quintessential populist.[48] He was the longest-serving mayor of

---

[46] Taggart, *Populism*, 95.
[47] Ibid., 95–98.
[48] Marijana Grbeša and Berto Šalaj, *Dobar loš ili zao? Populizam u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: TIM Press, 2018); Marija Matić, "Ima li populizma u hrvatskoj politici? Analiza političkog djelovanja Milana Bandića i Željka Keruma," *Polemos: časopis za interdisciplinarna istraživanja rata i mira* 17, no. 33–34 (2014): 167–181.

Zagreb, from 2000 until his death in February 2021, with a stormy career that was marred by allegations of clientelism, nepotism and corruption. As mayor, he was often accused of a lack of transparency, and of running wasteful projects in the city (e.g., erecting various fountains and monuments). At the same time, Zagreb suffered from many infrastructure problems, such as inadequate waste management services. Bandić ruled the capital city of Croatia in a direct and highly centralized manner. He sought the support of ethnic minorities, marginalized groups, and the poor. He was investigated several times. He was detained by police in 2014 and was acquitted of graft in 2018. He was still on trial in a second case when he died in 2021, two months before the regular local elections.

Although Zagreb saw many demonstrations protesting his decisions concerning the city (e.g., protests against the redevelopment of the popular historic public square, Cvjetni trg [Flower Market] in Zagreb in 2009–2010), the most impressive act of resistance when it comes to populism was conducted by the Croatian film director Dario Juričan, who was highly critical of Bandić. In a campaign promoting his documentary about Bandić, he officially applied to change his name and surname from Dario Juričan to Milan Bandić – exactly the same as the mayor of Zagreb.[49] He then decided to run in the Croatian presidential election of 2019. Election posters with Juričan's image and his "populist" slogans appeared on the streets of the city. Examples are, "whatever they promised you, I offer twice as much!" (Fig. 7) and "corruption for all, not just for them."

Figure 7. "Whatever they promised you, I offer twice as much!"
Source: *Total Croatia News*, January 9, 2020, https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/40686-dario-jurican.

[49] "Dario Juričan promijenio ime u – Milan Bandić!," *net.hr*, May 31, 2019, https://net.hr/danas/hrvatska/jurican-promijenio-ime-u-milan-bandic-on-je-rjesenje-a-ne-problem-bilo-je-prirodno-da-se-tako-zovem-2ba4a608-b1c4-11eb-bad7-0242ac140011.

Juričan's posters were signed "Milan Bandić, President." Under the guise of promoting his film, Juričan (acting a bit like the notorious Borat) ridiculed Mayor Bandić and his populism by impersonating him and ironically exaggerating his populist promises.

Although Juričan's actions were more of a publicity stunt performed by a privileged artist than a mass protest, I recount them to show how he stole the images and slogans of populist vocabulary and aesthetics and co-opted its symbols. His anti-populist sabotage of populism was performed by exaggerating the mayor's content and creating a caricature of it. He subjected populism to severe criticism using keen satirical tools.

Populist Discourse of Protest in Croatia

As in Serbia, populist rhetoric was present in anti-populist demonstrations in Croatia. Images from a three-part protest against Bandić, held in 2019–2020, will serve here as examples.

It should be emphasized that Zagreb's protests against Bandić were much more modest than the anti-Vučić manifestations in Belgrade. Press sources claim that they attracted between 10,000 and 20,000 people. The protests were local in nature and therefore residents of other Croatian cities were not much interested in them. However, what they have in common with the Serbian protests analyzed earlier in this article is the fact that both Vučić in Serbia and Bandić in Zagreb were considered to be embodiments of populism. Therefore, we can consider the protests parallel research material reflecting both anti-populist and populist strategies.

Three separate anti-Bandić protests took place in 2019–2020, each time under a different slogan: *Odstupi!* [Resign!], *Kriv si!* [You Are Guilty!] and *Dosta je!* [Enough!]. The most obviously populist ideas could be found in the "You Are Guilty" demonstration, in which the protesters demanded that the political establishment be held to account for their actions. This discourse can be called "the discourse of the gallows."

As during the protests in Belgrade, the banners depicted a crossed-out face of their object, in this case the mayor. The protesters identified a very specific culprit and emphasized that the masses were against him. Therefore, we are dealing here with both the discourse of numbers and the discourse of polarization. The participants in the demonstration also carried placards with the slogan "You Are Guilty," which was the people's verdict on Bandić's alleged criminal acts.

Significantly, the judgment here was not passed by a court, but by the crowd. The repetition of this message in the space of protest meant that it was the collective will, the will of the people. It is the people who will judge and declare their enemies guilty. In a sense, this visual discourse brings to mind a biblical image, when the Jewish people were given the choice of whom to acquit and whom to condemn on the eve of Passover. In the case of this protest, the verdict was unambiguous. The "discourse of the gallows" worked to restore to the protesters the power and agency that had been taken away from them by the establishment.

Figure 8. "Let's recycle thieves in jail," Zagreb 2020. Photograph by the author.

In a photo from one of the protests against Bandić (Fig. 8) the discourse of the gallows is expressed by the slogan *Reciklirajmo lopove u zatvor* [Let's Recycle the Thieves in Jail], which conflates the positive lexicon of a progressive movement ("recycle") with an anti-establishment sentiment ("the thieves in jail"). Here again, a guilty verdict is implied, passed by the crowd, not a court, and in the absence of the defendant. Giving the people the right to make such judgments is a populist move.

The Enough! protest was organized by non-governmental organizations (Siget, Zelena Akcija [Green Action] and Pravo na grad [The Right to the City]). However, it was attended by people representing many different social profiles, whose common denominator was dissatisfaction with the way the city was being managed by its then-mayor. The images most often reproduced by the media evidenced the intersecting and overlapping social identities of the protesters: people of different ages and social and economic statuses. Photos of the protests

often show people looking tired, exhausted and powerless. We are dealing here with a variation on the theme of vulnerability that is based on a victim feeling threatened and helpless. This type of discourse creates legitimacy for a protest and shows that the dissatisfaction that caused the demonstration is not limited to a narrow social group. The participants in the Belgrade protests were also presented in a similar manner, which stressed their exhausting long-term struggle against a system that was oppressing the common man.

Right-wing populism is based on a belief that it will restore the sovereignty of the people and bring back democracy. It understands sovereignty in a "national" sense, reserved to those who are deemed to be true members of the "nation." By contrast, left-wing populism seeks to construct a "we, the people" who face a common enemy. This requires the establishment of a chain of equivalence between the demands of different social groups. Although left-wing populists and right-wing populists both construct a political frontier, the difference is that the left-wing frontier is not vertical but transversal. The formation of "the people" and their collective will results from the mobilization of shared emotions in defense of equality and social justice. In the left-wing populist strategy, says Chantal Mouffe, "the 'people' is not an empirical referent but a discursive political construction. It does not exist previously to its performative articulation and cannot be apprehended through sociological categories."[50] She adds that it is not a "mass" in the sense proposed by Gustav Le Bon, where all diversity is blurred. The continuous process of articulating heterogeneous demands, in which the internal diversity of the group is maintained, as well as designating an opponent and dividing society into "us" and "them," are crucial to the process of constructing the left-wing populist concept of "the people."

Conclusion

Manifestations of populism can be studied at two levels: that of politicians and/or political parties, and that of the voters. These two levels are interrelated and stimulate each other. The populism of politicians involves a dichotomous approach to reality, usually coupled with a strong emphasis on anti-elitism, conspiracy theories, and the creation of an enemy. It is often based on scapegoating. An inherent element of the populism of politicians is a promise to improve the people's current situation. They stress that without the support of the people,

[50] Mouffe, *For A Leftist Populism*, 34.

the changes they promise cannot happen. On the other hand, the populism of the voters involves three different attitudes: a critical attitude toward the political elite and the political system, political cynicism (the conviction that politics does not serve the common good but only particular interests), and political alienation, i.e., a feeling of powerlessness and alienation from the sphere of politics. All of these attitudes greatly enhance the susceptibility of "the people" to populism.[51]

This study has attempted to show that the rhetoric of anti-populist demonstrations tracks populist rhetoric very closely. The demonstrators employ it intelligently and decode it as they protest against the populist rhetoric of the politicians. Images that criticize the politicians' populist rhetoric most often capture it in one clear symbol, such as a politician's lips, a liar's nose, or contrived body language. The visual articulations of anti-populism are also artistic performances. Their message tends to be less straightforward than the slogans: they adopt codes and content, they paraphrase, they impersonate and use wordplay, and they even tweak hegemonic messages with culture jamming. Their greater complexity suggests that they are aimed at recipients with more advanced cultural skills.

However, anti-populist protests are not free from the elements of the populist repertoire. Excitement about "the people" and emotional resistance to elitism are also present, albeit differently motivated. When left-wing circles make use of the concept of "the people," they mean something quite different than right-wing populists who use the same phrase. A street protest is a stage on which many different actors appear. The spontaneity, unpredictability and polyphonic nature of street demonstrations mean that the overriding goal is expressed in many different ways, using various images. Populist images reflect the mass character of the demonstrators and strengthen their feelings of unity. At the same time they construct a clear dichotomy between "us" and "them," between "the dominated" and "the dominant." They also present the protest as expressing a collective will. The visual images that most frequently appear guide the collective emotions of a crowd. They stimulate a desire to hold those in power to account and often influence the further course of the demonstration.

Politicians perceive the so-called populist movement as an opportunity to prove their extraordinary competence and thus confirm their own status as saviors

[51] Krzysztof Jasiecki, "Polska u progu Unii Europejskiej: referendum akcesyjne a deficyt demokratyczny," in *Populizm a demokracja*, ed. Radosław Markowski (Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2004), 95–122.

of the people. A similar mechanism can be observed among the participants in a mass demonstration. The energy and dynamic intensification of the demonstration generates a wave of emotion with promises to overthrow the government, hold it to account and introduce a new order. Like their opponents among the establishment politicians, charismatic leaders of such protests naturally arise to take on the role of saviors. Images are helpful in that process.

2021 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 61–81
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

"A CLEAR MESSAGE?" AESTHETIC PRACTICES OF PROTEST, ON-SITE AND ONLINE

TOBIAS GRALKE
UNIVERSITY OF BONN/FILM UNIVERSITY OF BABELSBERG

Abstract
This paper explores how the performance and aesthetics of contemporary protest are shaped by social media networks and audiences from a theatre and cultural studies perspective. It analyzes the tactics used by protesters during and after on-site protests to disseminate their messages and to actively influence and control the interpretations of their protest that are distributed online by others. Based on observation of three European protest events in January and February of 2019 (in London, Budapest, and Dresden) this paper presents the characteristic tactics of protesters in light of specific dynamics between on-site and online protests. It discusses the aesthetics of protest in the context of the ambiguousness of on-site protests, which is reinforced by social media.
Keywords: aesthetics of protest; aesthetic practices; performance analysis; theatrical observation; digital media
DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2022.4

Introduction

When the Hungarian political activist Gábor Szabó was arrested by local police on the Széchenyi chain bridge in Budapest on January 19, 2019, no more than a few hundred people were present to witness his protest. The incident attracted more attention with several livestreams of the event posted

Tobias Gralke is a Ph.D. candidate at the Film University of Babelsberg where he is conducting a project on political climate communication. He was a research fellow at the University of Bonn at the time this article was submitted. Address correspondence to Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Institut für Sprach-, Medien- und Musikwissenschaft, Abteilung für Medienwissenschaft, Lennéstraße 1, D-53113 Bonn. E-mail: info@tobiasgralke.de.

on Facebook. While the situation on the bridge itself was little more than an exchange of provocations between the police and a dwindling crowd, its representations in social media and the reactions of online observers made it appear more spectacular than it was on-site. In the days immediately after, Szabó started calling the incident the "battle on the chain bridge" on Facebook. Leveraging the affective affordances of social media, Szabó constructed a narrative that would have been impossible without the attention that the original, yet slightly misleading livestreamed images evoked online.

In this article, I explore from a theatre and cultural studies perspective how the performance and aesthetics of contemporary on-site protests are shaped by social media networks and audiences. I show how protesters like Gábor Szabó use social media applications during and after on-site demonstrations not only to spread their message but to influence and control the interpretations of their protests by online audiences. Based on my *theatrical observation* of three European protest events in 2019 (in London, Budapest, and Dresden), I describe, analyze, and discuss significant interplay between on-site and online protests in the context of today's digitally mediatized protest culture.[1]

I focus on three particular scenes that spotlight the relevance of social media to protesters' actions and the value of applying a performance-studies approach to what I will conceptualize as the *aesthetics of protest*. Protests in general are characterized by a tension between the protesters' desire to articulate a clear message on the one hand and an aesthetic ambiguity on the other. The transferal of protest to digitally mediatized online stages increases the importance of protesters' efforts to manage the impression they make on others. In this hybrid, on-site and online setting, a performance-studies approach helps us understand how meaning is produced by protesters' self-presentation – in the sense of Erving Goffman[2] –, by on-site and online observers, and not least of all by researchers. What is the interplay between an on-site event and the form in which it is mediated online? How do protesters grab the attention of on-site and online observers? How do they present the on-site event in their online communications? What tactics do they use online to assert and strengthen their interpretations of the on-site event and the message of their protest? And how is the presence of the researchers observing them involved in producing and shaping such hybrid protest events?

[1] I speak of *mediatization* to refer to socio-cultural changes induced by media technologies and their use. Wherever I speak of *mediation*, I refer to the form and the distribution of something being conveyed through media.

[2] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin Books, 1959).

On-site and online protests intersect in several ways. On the one hand, an on-site event serves protesters as material for presenting online their personal interpretation and framing of what they experience. In the contentious dynamic between street protests and their simultaneous digital mediation by social networks, protesters use certain tactics to highlight particular aspects of their message, to frame or reframe the event, and to reinforce what they consider to be the essential message of their protest. At the same time, social-media communications affect on-site protests in various ways. They make the protesters aware that they are being observed. They allow interaction between people who are present on-site and those who are gathered online. Even the target of a protest can shift, in the sense that sometimes the online audience becomes more important than the one on-site.

I argue that the tactics I have observed are not classifiable as clearly "offline" or "online." They are part of a performative repertoire that is characteristic for aesthetic practices of today's digitally mediatized protest culture *between* on-site and online. In the digital age, new constellations of seeing and being seen multiply and dissolve the boundaries between subject and object in public situations. The analytical challenge lies in describing the dynamics of networked communication, which seems impossible to fully capture. By observing how an online protest corresponds with the protest on-site, however, the fundamental properties of contemporary protest can be better understood.

The Aesthetics of Protest

According to cultural theorist Thomas Balistier, "protest is a form of symbolic politics."[3] By symbolic politics, Balistier means a mostly non-verbal type of political communication that "does not primarily involve analyses, arguments, and facts, but rather feelings and attitudes, as well as contexts of meaning and value judgments."[4] According to Balistier, symbolic political communication is a quasi-necessary feature of protest when the complexity of society is increasing. Symbolic communication, he argues, is an instrument for the construction of "oppositional publics." That means that protest does not simply take place at a given time or a given space, but also constructs "special and biased meanings

3 Thomas Balistier, *Straßenprotest. Formen oppositioneller Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zwischen 1979 und 1989* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1996), 216.

4 Ibid., 224.

of space and time in relation to the usual, i.e. the dominant ones."[5] In that way, a protest constitutes a special form of public *presence*.[6]

My primary interest is not in the cultural and political dynamics of symbolic communication, which have already been conceptualized several times.[7] Rather, I explore the notion of presence discussed by Balistier. Presence, I argue, essentially has an *aesthetic* nature. Following the philosopher Gernot Böhme, I understand aesthetics in the sense of *aesthesis,* a special mode of perception where reality is formed by the "way in which things and environments present themselves."[8] According to Böhme, aesthesis has two sides: "on the one hand, the environment, which radiates a quality of mood; on the other hand, me, in that I participate in this mood in my state of mind and in that I realize that I am here now."[9] This means that the "aesthetic" is not the "beautiful" or the "nice," but is everything attracting the researcher's attention in a situation in which he or she is involved and which becomes an object of his aesthetic, self-referential perception.

This understanding differs from other approaches to the aesthetics of protest that have moved beyond popular and Kantian understandings of aesthetics but left the role of the spectator mostly unconsidered.[10] From a performance studies perspective, attention to spectatorship is essential in order to understand how protesters direct their actions towards both present and absent audiences. It is also essential to understand how the aesthetics of protest unfold and persist between protesters and observers. In this sense, the aesthetics of a protest is not something that can be determined or described simply and objectively. It is a fundamentally ambiguous, inter-subjective, situational experience.

---

[5] Ibid., 174.

[6] The terms presence and aesthetic perception in performance theory are explained below. At this point, I only refer to the terms as generally used in theatre theory. See Doris Kolesch, "Präsenz," in *Metzler Lexikon Theatertheorie*, ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte, Doris Kolesch, and Matthias Warstat, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2014), 251–253.

[7] See, for instance: Ulrich Sarcinelli, "Politische Inszenierung/Symbolische Politik," in *Handwörterbuch zur politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Martin Greiffenhagen, Sylvia Greiffenhagen, and Katja Neller (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2002), 370–379; Jeffrey C. Alexander and Jason L. Mast, "Introduction: Symbolic Action in Theory and Practice: The Cultural Pragmatics of Symbolic Action," in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–28.

[8] See Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphäre. Essays zu einer neuen Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2013), 96.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Aidan McGarry, Itir Erhart, Hande Eslen-Ziya, Olu Jenzen, and Umut Korkut, *The Aesthetics of Global Protest*: *Visual Culture and Communication* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019).

How can presence be conceptualized in a digitally mediatized public sphere? Are the aesthetics of a protest event expanded in space and time, complicated, or even destroyed by digital recording and dissemination? Understanding protest as symbolic political communication, as Balistier does, is plausible, but it requires more in-depth discussion in the digital age. Balistier developed his concept of symbolic political communication in the historical context of the 1980s in West Germany, which was a pre-digital protest culture. Accordingly, his theory is based exclusively on written sources.[11] This is a problem because he could only access protest events "based on second-hand experiences."[12] As a result, he was unable to analyze the situational materiality of protest. Even more importantly, applying his theory to today's protest culture requires a different notion of what constitutes action.

Protest is traditionally understood as action aimed at a "deliberate, purposeful change of a given state"[13] by a subject acting strategically. To understand protest as an *aesthetic practice,* however, one must use a different logic. According to Rolf Elberfeld and Stefan Krankenhagen, "fixed norms or rationally secured intentions [do not] determine aesthetic practices, but situational resonances and sensually evoked evidence lead the actors beyond their own frameworks."[14] This means that protesters are self-reflexive actors who participate in producing a situational atmosphere that affects their performance. At the same time, the extension of their protest onto online stages results in multiple representations of it in the course of and after the on-site event.

Qualitative research of protests and movements has explored today's protest culture, which is formed by the practices of everyday, protest, and event culture as well as identity politics and aestheticized life.[15] Researching the subject from several perspectives allows us to grasp the nuances in *what protesters do* in the course of protesting. The aesthetic, performative, and expressive facets and microforms of protest have been described and analyzed, including their

---

11 Balistier, *Straßenprotest*, 18.

12 Ibid., 20.

13 Klaus Schubert, "Handlung," in *Lexikon der Politikwissenschaft. Theorien, Methoden, Begriffe*, ed. Dieter Nohlen and Rainer-Olaf Schultze, 4th ed., vol. 1: *A–M* (München: C.H. Beck, 2010), 351. In this sense, social movements can be considered a phenomenon of modernity, because they assume the possibility of intervening in social realities. See Dieter Rucht, "Soziale Bewegungen," in *Lexikon der Politikwissenschaft. Theorien, Methoden, Begriffe*, 1st ed., ed. Dieter Nohlen and Rainer-Olaf Schultze, vol. 2: *N–Z* (München: C. H. Beck, 2002), 853–856.

14 Rolf Elberfeld and Stefan Krankenhagen, "Einleitung," in *Ästhetische Praxis als Gegenstand und Methode kulturwissenschaftlicher Forschung,* ed. Rolf Elberfeld and Stefan Krankenhagen (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2017), 15.

15 Ian R. Lamond and Karl Spracklen, eds., *Protests as Events: Politics, Activism and Leisure* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

linguistic aspects,[16] visual materials,[17] media practices and media ecologies,[18] film and video works,[19] digital strategies,[20] and anthropological[21] and theatrical qualities.[22] The latter two studies show what researchers have missed, however. While Stefan Donath focuses on the importance of presence, his detailed theatrical protest theory is built on street protests mediated online that he did not attend himself. On the other hand, Jeffrey Juris' analysis of "image events" in anti-globalization protests helps us understand how protesters stage their on-site actions to attract media attention, but he is more concerned with protesters' collective behavior than their individual actions. His analysis was also developed before the rise of social media networks and the consequent multiplication of protest-related image events and the acceleration of their circulation.[23] What is missing is a perspective that connects the situational, performed materiality of on-site protest with the dynamics of its mediation and distribution via social media networks. In the following, I will first outline some elements of such a perspective and then apply it to three selected cases.

A Performance-Studies Approach to the Aesthetics of Protest

Protest and movement studies usually speak of *presence* as the joint appearance of bodies in a shared time frame. In a shared presence, so the theory goes, a movement network materializes, actualizes, and condenses, so that it appears to itself and others as a united mass.[24] The collective identity of protesters is

---

16 Mark Dang-Anh, *Protest Twittern. Eine Medienlinguistische Untersuchung von Straßenprotesten* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2019).

17 Nicole Doerr, Alice Mattoni, and Simon Teune, "Toward a Visual Analysis of Social Movements, Conflict, and Political Mobilization," in *Advances in the Visual Analysis of Social Movements,* vol. 35 (Wagon Lane: Emerald Books, 2013), xi–xxvi.

18 Alice Mattoni, "A Situated Understanding of Digital Technologies in Social Movements: Media Ecology and Media Practice Approaches," *Social Movement Studies* 16, no. 4 (2017): 494–505, doi: 10.1080/14742837.2017.1311250.

19 Jens Eder and Chris Tedjasukmana, "Video Activism on the Social Web," in *Contemporary Radical Film Culture*, ed. Steve Presence, Mike Wayne, and Jack Newsinger (New York: Routledge, 2020), 41–52.

20 Fidèle A. Vlavo, *Performing Digital Activism: New Aesthetics and Discourses of Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

21 Jeffrey S. Juris, "Performing Politics: Image, Embodiment, and Affective Solidarity During Anti-Corporate Globalization Protests," *Ethnography* 9, no. 1 (2008): 61–97, doi: 10.1177/1466138108088949.

22 Doerr et al., "Towards a Visual Analysis," xi–xxvi.

23 Kerstin Schankweiler, *Bildproteste* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2019).

24 Dieter Rucht, "Lassen sich personale, soziale und kollektive Identität sinnvoll voneinander abgrenzen?" *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 24, no. 4 (2011): 28, doi: 10.1515/fjsb-2011-0405.

revealed and stabilized in a public appearance. Theories of protest and movements highlight the role of performative practices in the internal and external experience of building a movement identity. They "emphasize that shared ideas, culture, and goals alone ... are not sufficient, but must be put into practice in action."[25] Following the ideas of the sociologist Émile Durkheim, quasi-ritual actions in the physical presence of others are regarded as "generators of emotional energy and ultimately of collective identity."[26]

This perspective resembles performance theory. According to the theatre scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte, a performance (*Aufführung*) "takes place in and through the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators. It emerges from their encounter, confrontation, interaction."[27] A performance, according to theatre scholar Jens Roselt, is an "in-between event,"[28] and a social process. Performances materialize in and between bodies interacting with each other. They are jointly performed and are singular and unrepeatable events.[29] What's more, the bodily co-presence of protesters is a performative realization of their right to appear in public despite conditions of marginalization and precarity, as the philosopher Judith Butler has said.[30]

It is worth noting the similarities between performances and protest events (which can also be understood as *cultural performances*).[31] A performance-studies approach to protests makes it possible to understand how they produce meaning, as well as the researchers' role in the process. According to Fischer-Lichte, perception of a performance oscillates between two orders. One is the order of representation, in which the perceived performance is experienced in its semiotic sense. The other is the order of presence, which focuses on "the particular appearance of people, spaces, things and sounds," on "effects that have become

[25] Priska Daphi, "Soziale Bewegungen und kollektive Identität. Forschungsstand und Forschungslücken," *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 24, no. 4 (2011): 17, doi: 10.1515/fjsb-2011-0404.

[26] Ibid., 17.

[27] Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Die verwandelnde Kraft der Aufführung," in *Die Aufführung. Diskurs – Macht – Analyse*, ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte et al. (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2012), 11.

[28] Jens Roselt, *Phänomenologie des Theaters* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2008), 194.

[29] Ibid., 47–51.

[30] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[31] According to ethnographer Milton Singer, cultural performances are "characterized by a clearly defined period of time, a beginning and an end, an organized program of activities, a number of actors, an audience, a place and an occasion." See Doris Bachmann-Medick, "Performative Turn," in *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2006). The question of how these elements of cultural performance exist in the digital age, however, needs to be discussed in more detail.

conscious," and on the "observable … reactions of spectators."[32] According to Fischer-Lichte, both orders of perception constantly fade into each other during a performance. The experience takes in the supposed main event as well events that seem to be secondary. In the course of a performance, anything can become an object of perception and affect one or both orders of perception. Since the reactions of the participants can influence the perceptions and actions of observers, performances take place as "autopoietic processes that involve all participants, actors as well as spectators; accordingly, they are characterized by a high degree of contingency."[33]

Contingency means that the contents and forms articulated on banners and flags, in speeches, and in chants cannot provide information on their own about the concerns of a protest community, but that they must be read in the context in which they are used, perceived and received. Are they shouted offensively or spoken timidly? Does a controversial statement or action reap opposition or approval? Is police brutality arbitrary or a reaction to deliberate provocation? And above all, what effect do all these actions have on me as a spectator, participant, or a person otherwise involved, like a researcher? The "autopoietic … feedback loop"[34] creates co-responsibility of all participants for the performance, often in an eruptive dynamic from which all of them derive meaning.[35] As Fischer-Lichte puts it, "If it is to be assumed in performances that all participants are involved, as they co-determine the performance and at the same time allow themselves to be determined by it, the manipulation thesis, which is widespread in the social sciences, will hardly hold up."[36] Applied to protests, this means that the participants in Germany's "PEGIDA" marches, for example, agree much more with the radical and racist content voiced onstage than the bourgeois media may want to admit.[37]

Finally, performance theory explains the researcher's position. Researchers are necessarily selective in what they perceive as significant because they

---

[32] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theaterwissenschaft. Eine Einführung in die Grundlagen des Faches* (Tübingen: UTB, 2010), 81.

[33] Fischer-Lichte, "Die verwandelnde Kraft der Aufführung," 11.

[34] Fischer-Lichte, *Theaterwissenschaft*, 228.

[35] Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Performativität und Ereignis," in *Performativität und Ereignis* (München: Francke, 2003), 30.

[36] Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Einleitende Thesen zum Aufführungsbegriff," in *Kunst der Aufführung – Aufführung der Kunst* (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2004), 14.

[37] Tino Heim, ed., *Pegida als Spiegel und Projektionsfläche. Wechselwirkungen und Abgrenzungen zwischen Pegida, Politik, Medien, Zivilgesellschaft und Sozialwissenschaften* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2017), 11.

are "involved in the process they want to analyze but also in the subjectivity of their perception."[38] Awareness of one's position of observation is particularly necessary when dealing with contemporary protest phenomena, which causes problems for some of the researchers' established methods.[39] Analysis and interpretation should be based less on generalizations and statements by participants, but instead, as theatre scholar Matthias Warstat puts it, on "scenic ... constellations ... to understand the opening and refraction of signifiers more precisely ... [and to] enable further political differentiations at important points."[40]

Appearing Online Under Conditions of Connective Action

As we have seen from the performance perspective, on-site protest events are characterized by ambiguity and contingency. The processes of interaction and meaning-making are even more complex in digitally mediatized communication. Using social media, protesters can make their voices heard and gain visibility in different ways, in the form of their choice. Their presence on various platforms or stages simultaneously carries with it both opportunities and challenges. How can performance theory help us to understand these hybrid contemporary protests?

According to theatre scholar Ulf Otto, a performative appearance takes place when a performer draws attention to herself with certain techniques that let her "emerge as a subject from the interaction between performer and spectator."[41] According to Otto, a performative appearance results in "a process of figuration in which a character appears that is as unstable as the performance from which it emerges and that is equally dependent on the maintenance of attention."[42] Performative appearances can take place online. Otto says:

---

[38] Fischer-Lichte, *Theaterwissenschaft*, 73.

[39] In on-site interviews with protesters, for instance, the interpretative schemes applied by researchers and the conclusions they draw are sometimes distorted, which affect not only the political classification of a protest phenomenon, but also the behavior of the protesters. See Simon Teune and Peter Ullrich, "Demonstrationsbefragungen. Grenzen und Potentiale einer Forschungsmethode" (2015), https://depositonce.tu-berlin.de/bitstream/11303/5258/3/teune_ullrich.pdf.

[40] Matthias Warstat, *Soziale Theatralität. Die Inszenierung der Gesellschaft* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2018), 158–159.

[41] Ulf Otto, *Internetauftritte. Eine Theatergeschichte der neuen Medien* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), 37.

[42] Ibid., 37.

> Although … Internet appearances are subliminally influenced by algorithms and data abstractions … they can still be described … as something that generates attention through the distinction between actors and audience, that emerges from everyday life as an exceptional situation and social event, and that is institutionalized in a complex of interlocking practices of acting, organizing, and receiving. They produce a character that they elevate and bring face to face with a community. This elevation gives a character a pictorial or semiotic quality, authorizes it, and at the same time forms a community that attaches meaning to it.[43]

Similar to on-site performances and protests, a performative internet appearance is determined by the reciprocal dynamics of self-presentation and collective attention and reception. The collective attention-giving of social media users enables and authorizes an actor to perform or speak. An online community that gathers to comment and react to a protester's social media post *empowers* the protester to further perform and appear as a character before the community by signaling that the message is resonating and has relevance to the community.

Social media infrastructure and features like hashtags[44] enable protesters to stage internet appearances and engage in online discourse with barely more than a smartphone. A protest event and actions performed on-site can serve as material for an internet appearance, as has been shown by research on performative citizenship on Instagram.[45] However, the boundless communication offered by the social web opens protest images up to misinterpretation, contention, and hostile distortion. As online dissemination of protest images widens, "the resonance surfaces of today's protests are expanding significantly, creating a social potential of hitherto unknown proportions."[46] The price of wider dissemination is the decontextualization of protest images, which puts protesters under increased pressure to manage the impressions they make online.

The political scientists W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg have called the underlying dynamics of online protest *the logic of connective action*. They argue that the growing ability to participate in mass protests through personalized communications is leading to a pluralization of movement discourses:

---

43 Ibid., 46.

44 Andreas Bernard, *Theory of the Hashtag* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019).

45 Fatima Aziz, "Performing Citizenship: Freedom March Selfies by Pakistani Instagrammers," in *Selfie Citizenship* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 21–28.

46 Donath, *Protestchöre*, 27.

> Personal action frames allow people to specify their own connection to an issue rather than adopt more demanding models regarding how to think and act. People can share their engagement and contributions in forms easily adopted by others as personal action frames that do not narrowly specify identity and that thus travel more easily beyond identity boundaries (e.g., group, ideology, geography, culture) across social networks.[47]

Bennett and Segerberg are describing personalized, bottom-up participation in collective processes that have traditionally been organized top-down.[48] They point to the expansion of participation in existing organizational forms and to a potentially unmanageable multiplicity of interconnected interpretations and identities that assemble online around an event. The participants help to produce this multiplicity through their individual actions and interpretations.

We now turn to our three cases and explore and analyze how protesters use and deal with contemporary media conditions as part of their on-site protests.

Case Analyses

The three cases analyzed in the following section were observed in January and February of 2019. They represent three different European regions, political cultures, and protest contexts. They are part of a larger sample that included seven protest events in all. I selected the three cases in this section because they represent the greatest possible diversity of contexts, ideologies (pro-European, anti-government, broadly oppositional, and far-right), and forms of information mediation (pictures, livestreams, texts). Their observed dynamics are characteristic of a broad spectrum of protest practices under conditions of digitally mediatized, networked, online communication.

This is not to say that the relevance of the three cases was obvious from the beginning. Nor were they chosen on the basis of abstract parameters. The scenes described and analyzed below were selected after several hours of attending and observing the on-site events personally. I approached these events from a perspective of *theatrical observation*, a concept originated by theatre scholar

47 W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 197.

48 For a detailed and differentiated discussion of these processes see Kathrin Voss, ed., *Internet und Partizipation. Bottom-up oder Top-down? Politische Beteiligungsmöglichkeiten im Internet* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2014).

Frank Richarz. In theatrical observation, the researcher directs her attention to a social process and describes it as a complex of theatrical, embodied acts. The assumption is that the meaning of the protest event is produced jointly by all participants in an intersubjective, auto-poietic, performative process. According to Richarz, theatrical observation differs from distanced or even participant observation in that the "staging of a performance … is to be valued as an act of full engagement."[49]

Theatrical observation does not mean that the theatre metaphor should be stressed too much (for instance, by looking for directors, dramaturgs, backstages, etc.). It is more about understanding protests as aesthetic practices and processes of making meaning and presence. In my analysis I used memory protocols to reconstruct significant scenes of protest and find connections between the on-site event and its online mediations. Starting by identifying "distinctive moments"[50] in the reconstructed event, I searched for corresponding social media material online using event-related keywords and hashtags. I then compared the online content with my experiences at the on-site protests in order to describe specific dynamics between the on-site and online experiences. I present the three cases in chronological order.

London, UK, January 12, 2019

On the afternoon of January 12, 2019, a group of anti-Brexit protesters assembled at the edge of Highbury Fields, Islington in north London. About fifty people, most of them elderly, assembled in their winter clothes carrying EU flags and signs with messages such as "don't back a bad deal!"[51] In the front row, some held a banner reading "IslingtonInEurope." At a photographer's request, they rhythmically chanted: "People's Vote! People's Vote!" They were obviously confident about their message. But whom were they addressing? The busy main street of Islington was out of sight, and the residents of the surrounding houses were nowhere to be seen. The few pedestrians who walked by were unimpressed.

The "Islington Procession," as the protest was labeled, took two routes. One half of the group was to go through the southern part of the city, the other half

---

49 Frank Richarz, "Von der Aufführung zum Performativ. Die theatralogische Untersuchung machtmimetischer Prozesse," in *Die Aufführung. Diskurs – Macht – Analyse* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2012), 137.

50 For the concept of distinctive moments see further Roselt, *Phänomenologie des Theaters*, 9–22.

51 The quotes in all three of the cases in this article were recorded using each case's respective observation protocol, unless otherwise noted.

through the northern part. The two groups were to meet in central Highbury Park. The protesters' goal was to reach out to Labour voters in order to put pressure on Jeremy Corbyn and Emily Thornberry, the two Labour members of parliament for the area. The organizers of the northern march had two strategies for that. First, they asked the protesters to interact directly with pedestrians, hand them flyers, and start discussions. Second, they asked them to post photos of the event on social media using the hashtags #PeoplesVote and #IslingtonInEurope, and to tag them with Corbyn's and Thornberry's Instagram and Twitter accounts.

The on-site protest gained little attention, so the protesters used social media to reinterpret it. At 19:32 local time, almost six hours after the procession ended, the organizers sent out the following tweet:

> Did our elected representatives @jeremycorbyn @EmilyThornberry notice today's @IslingtonIn procession? 300+ people incl ALL main parties & none walked 4 miles from North to South distributing 10,000 window posters & getting a clear message on our Islingometers: a #PeoplesVote![52]

Four accompanying photos showed the protesters from different perspectives at the final rally in the park. The protesters looked into the camera, held up their signs ("I like voting," "Brexit: is it worth it?" "WE REJECT THIS BREXIT DEAL"), and waved EU flags. A banner they held in front read: "IslingtonInEurope." Nine other social initiatives, political parties, and organizations were tagged. The protesters thus drew attention online that they did not receive in the course of their procession, or even less during their final rally. The mediation of their protest involved creating a communicative presence on social media platforms and made their concern about Brexit highly visible there. In so doing, the community of protest appeared online to be far more united than it actually was most of the time. With the help of the #PeoplesVote hashtag, the protesters also inscribed themselves into the supra-regional context of the national day of action against Brexit on January 12. They situated their local protest in the broader anti-Brexit context and thereby charged it with referential meaning.

Social media communication expanded the reach of their on-site actions in a meaningful way and condensed the diffuse event on the ground into a symbolic online image. The two MPs, Thornberry and Corbyn, gained

[52] Islington In Europe (@IslingtonIn): "Tweet 1084156186637811712", Twitter, January 12, 2019, 7:32 p.m., https://twitter.com/IslingtonIn/status/1084156186637811712.

a presence – ironically, by being marked as absent. The protesters thus staged a contradiction: they appealed to Corbyn and Thornberry to represent them, but at the same time claimed that they themselves represented the popular will. With its paratextual framing, the scene became material for new agitation. The images were a visual means of making direct contact with the online audience and highlighting the lack of responsiveness by the two politicians to the wishes of their constituents. Although the protest received relatively little attention on the ground, Twitter offered the protesters an additional option for action and for drawing attention to their concerns. Online, they could define a self-chosen, unchallenged framework. Accordingly, they confidently promoted a strong interpretation of their actions: "a clear message."

Budapest, Hungary, January 19, 2019

When the above-mentioned "battle of the chain bridge" took place on January 19, 2019, I was standing on the arch of the bridge, both observing the crowd and exposing myself to it. More and more people had stopped in front of a police cordon and gathered around a group occupying the center of the bridge and refusing to leave. Behind the crowd, in the middle of the bridge as well, several police cars blocked traffic. The confrontation between the protesters and the police, however, could easily have been avoided. The police cordon only blocked the car lane in the middle of the bridge; the pedestrian paths on the left and right sides were narrow but freely accessible. Again and again, pedestrians made use of the walkways and continued unmolested towards the city center after briefly observing what was happening. Among those who stayed to watch, a recurring pattern developed. The events evolved into a back and forth between protesters and police. The loudspeaker of a police car repeatedly called on the protesters to leave the bridge. The crowd replied: "How many times are you going to say the same thing?" Several people filmed the incident from different angles. A young man right next to me streamed the events live on Facebook from his smartphone. His camera filmed the crowd from above and repeatedly zoomed in for detailed shots of individual scenes. At the same time, a count of up to 2000 online viewers was shown on the display, with thumbs-ups and other reactions swirling on the right edge of the screen. The important thing was that the possibility for the crowd to leave the bridge was not visible. It thus appeared to online observers that the people on the bridge were actually completely sealed off.

I noticed Gábor Szabó immediately because of his presence in the first row of the protesters and his use of a megaphone. He had already announced to his

6000 followers on Facebook that something special was going to happen.[53] His post had elicited a considerable number of reactions and comments, even though, or perhaps because, it was unclear what Szabó had in mind. Apparently, what we experienced on the bridge was part of his plan. Whether the others on the bridge knew about the plan was not something I was able to find out.

As the crowd got smaller and smaller, the situation suddenly escalated. Amidst protests, Szabó was arrested by several police officers and carried out of the crowd. Scuffles broke out among the bystanders. People with cameras rushed forward and filmed the scene from all sides. Shortly afterward, however, everything calmed down. Szabó appeared on the other side of the police cordon, spread his arms triumphantly, and waved to the other protesters. He then resumed negotiating with the police.

In the comments under Szabó's Facebook post of the previous day, various users repeatedly asked whether anyone had heard from him. It was not until the day after the protest that Szabó posted: "We got home from jail at midnight ... everything's all right with me, we accomplished what we set out to do:)."[54] A little later the same day, he posted a text that referred to the incident as the "battle on the chain bridge." As he does with his longer posts, he signed this one with an explicit request to share it widely. In his text, Szabó presented himself as a leader who would not back down, and an equal opponent for the state. In the end, he held out the prospect that there would be a "next time." Szabó's text did not make it clear what his original plan for the protest was, but it established a narrative dramaturgy into which he could insert the events on the chain bridge.

This narrative of the event was elaborated upon in the days following. On the bridge, Szabó had played with the situational dynamics of attracting attention and set up a situation that involved many pedestrians. He made use of the filmmakers and photographers who were present. At the same time, Szabó exposed himself to an unknown audience in various livestreams broadcast by onlookers. He had no control over which images were broadcast or what the images triggered in his viewers. He least of all had control over what would happen on-site. In the following days, Szabó continued to use the battle motif online and spun it further. On the one hand, he claimed to have planned everything exactly as it turned out. He reinterpreted the events in his favor and spoke explicitly about the image he wanted to create and the game he wanted to play. He also

[53] Szabó's Facebook profile can no longer be accessed but it was accessible when this analysis was first made in September 2019.

[54] The individual Facebook posts cannot be linked here and are therefore indicated below with their respective dates. This one is from January 20, 2019.

referred to a stage effect which he considered to make a stronger impression than a violent breach of the police cordon. In his online content, in this way, Szabó returned to the event again and again without explicitly using the images of it. Under the codeword "battle on the chain bridge," the incident found its way into Szabó's personalized narrative of resistance and became a quasi-historical event. It is impossible to say if all those participating in his social-media presentation experienced it that way or not, whether or not they were present on-site or vicariously through the livestream.

Dresden, Germany, February 11, 2019

On the evening of Monday, February 11, 2019, the anti-Islam group PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident) marched through Dresden's city center for the 171st time in a row. The evening was the prelude to a week of protests in Saxony's capital city: February 13, 2019 marked the 74th anniversary of the bombing of Dresden at the end of World War II. In the week surrounding that date, Dresden is traditionally the scene of commemoration events, propagandistic marches by far-right groups, and anti-fascist counter-protests.

Observing the PEGIDA demonstration posed hitherto unknown difficulties for me. For the first time, I was dealing with a demonstration whose aims and behavior I clearly reject and condemn. More than in previous observations, I had to position myself not only interpretatively but also physically in relation to what was happening. As the demonstration in Dresden began at the main train station, I approached the crowd hesitantly from behind, stood as far to its edge as possible, and tried to avoid any direct eye contact with participants. Most of that evening I spoke my notes into a dictaphone in such a way that it looked as if I was talking on my mobile phone. This left me with a view from the outside of the protest that I later contrasted with the images of a livestream recorded on PEGIDA's official Facebook page. Online, it became evident how Siegfried Däbritz, one of the most popular PEGIDA activists who had recorded the livestream, turned the on-site protest – in which I saw a crowd of people slowly walking with flags, and which seemed not too spectacular to me on-site – into a heroic event. Online, Däbritz created a threatening atmosphere that legitimized PEGIDA's radical positions and the narrative of resistance he constructed.

When Däbritz first appeared in the livestream, about 45 minutes after the protest had begun, the online participants were waiting for him. Lutz Bachmann, who had been in charge of the camera up to this point, handed it over to

Däbritz saying: “Siggi, the people are calling for you!” From then on, the online audience could only hear and not see Däbritz. Alternating between insistent anti-immigration messages and flippant comments, Däbritz presented himself both as an entertainer and a serious leader. Right from the beginning, he let his viewers know that he expected them “to do this [regular protest marches like in Dresden – author] elsewhere as well.” Again and again, Däbritz talked about himself and playfully promoted the mediality of the livestream. When he met another live-streamer, for instance, he filmed the other person’s smartphone display, joked about it as a “picture in picture,” and feigned surprise that the other stream had more viewers than his.

Däbritz also responded to viewers’ online comments, picking out individual contributions and explaining and interpreting the images of the on-site protest. At the same time, he actively manipulated the protest with his instructions to those filmed (“can you walk a bit faster?”), deliberate selection of the images to show (“I won’t show you the picture now, but ...”), and establishing the linguistic and dramaturgical framing of the visible images. When Däbritz spoke, for instance, about an obviously foreign onlooker as “a cultural enricher and his residence permit” (*Kulturbereicherer und seine Aufenthaltsgenehmigung*),[55] he didn’t have to show the person to whom he was referring. His words evoked a negative image and a feeling of illegitimacy and failure of state policy in his viewers’ minds. Several times Däbritz announced that he planned to give a “world-class speech” at the final rally of the protest. He created a link between the online audience and the protesters on-site, and a dramaturgy that transcended what was happening on-site and culminated with his speech. Through his choice of images and language, Däbritz established an atmosphere in which the online participants were supposed to feel constantly threatened, and also view Däbritz as a staunch resistance fighter against the threat. In so doing, Däbritz drew attention to certain elements of the protest he purposefully selected and interpreted for the online participants. The on-site protest was silent and shielded against outside observers, but Däbritz turned it into a powerful online appeal in the way he framed what was visible in the livestream and provoked his viewers’ emotions with typical buzzwords.[56] He constructed a scenario of threat that was meant to

[55] The term *Kulturbereicher* is used with cynical sarcasm by German far-right extremists to insult migrants. See Neue Deutsche Medienmacher*innen: “Kulturbereicherer,” https://glossar.neuemedienmacher.de/glossar/kulturbereicherer-2/.

[56] For a detailed analysis of the affective politics of the far-right see further Lars Koch and Torsten König, eds., *Zwischen Feindsetzung und Selbstviktimisierung: Gefühlspolitik und Ästhetik populistischer Kommunikation* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2020).

legitimize his and the other protesters' racist positions. Since this threat scenario was not grounded in reality, it had to be performed. For Däbritz, the online audience was a community that supported his self-presentation and provided him with material to perform on-site.

This was evident in Däbritz's closing speech, which I observed from outside the crowd and later rewatched in the recorded livestream. From the stage, Däbritz explicitly addressed his livestream viewers, asking: "When will your personal pain threshold be reached?" He said he could "no longer understand how you can be so jaded. … Where has your honor gone? Where is your fighting spirit? Don't you even remember anymore that you have the power and no one else?" In the course of his speech to the on-site audience, Däbritz repeatedly asserted that Germany was faced with an imminent, costly struggle: "You will have to bite the bullet and lose friends. But, seriously, isn't it much more liberating to walk upright than walk bent over with false friends?" He lamented that he got "moist in the eyes" when he thought about the "indifference" that had spread in society. To those who had not yet gone into "visible resistance," he said, "Shame on you," then paused. He looked again into the camera. "But it doesn't have to stay that way." The audience started shouting: "This is our land!"

Discussion

As the brief presentations of the above cases show, protesters while protesting on-site use social media applications in several ways to reinforce their messages, shape their online appearances, frame and reframe their protests, and connect online audiences with on-site protests. Further research will be needed to identify more tactics. Some things can however already be mentioned and compared:

(1) There are differences between mediated protests in terms of their ability to generate public attention. The protesters in London got relatively little attention and participation, whether on-site or on Twitter. Gabór Szabó, however, managed to stage a spontaneous event that drew a growing number of participants both on-site and online over a longer period of time. The PEGIDA livestream offered a glimpse into a parallel reality inhabited by protesters who exist in a non-stop, constructed state of threat. On-site, however, the PEGIDA protest attracted comparatively little attention, mainly because the organizers explicitly requested the protesters to behave "appropriately,"

but also because the dynamics between protesters, counter-protesters, and uninvolved citizens followed what had become a routine pattern.

(2) There are differences in the form in which protesters' messages are mediated and in the corresponding practices. While the London protesters had an easier time condensing their appearance *photographically*, Gábor Szabó and Siegfried Däbritz both dealt in *moving images* in live-streamed videos. Däbritz used the medium of live-stream video to play with the public image of the PEGIDA protest. Szabó, on the other hand, was largely deprived of control over his image, due to the many people filming and livestreaming him.

(3) There are differences between the protests in terms of their temporality. In all three cases, the life of the on-site protest event was extended in time by its mediation online. The organizers of the Islington protest sent their tweet several hours after the on-site protest ended, but it still can be accessed today. Szabó narrativized the quasi-historical event on the chain bridge in Budapest even a few days after it took place. The PEGIDA livestream was still available on YouTube in 2020. At the same time, particularly the case of PEGIDA shows how protesters can use livestreams to create a virtual presence between on-site and online. He only attempted to gain control of the communicative power of the live-streamed images *after* the incident.

(4) The three protests differed in terms of who was acting and who was involved in the process of subjectifying the protesters. While the London group sought to focus attention on the protest community, Szabó and Däbritz were concerned with the characters they represented. Däbritz led an imagined movement that materialized on-site, but which claims to have supra-regional significance. Szabó primarily focused on himself, but in so doing he repeatedly relied on a diffuse oppositional mass supporting his narrative. Accordingly, he gave a substantial role in his protest to others, while Däbritz retained full control over his online appearance.

(5) There were also differences in the online reactions to each protest action. Whether the protest was mediated in a photo, video clip, or livestream conditioned how it was received by the online public. The London tweet was disseminated and increased in its visibility primarily by retweets and favs, but it quickly disappeared from people's Twitter feeds, which are designed for brevity and real-time communication. Szabó repeatedly elicited strong reactions and many shares by repeatedly posting information about his protest on Facebook. On the other hand, Däbritz's live commentary served as his communicative material during the live-stream.

(6) Finally, there are differences in the platforms that enabled the hybrid protest actions. While Facebook is more focused on the individual with its picture gallery and personal information, Twitter is primarily meant to facilitate a rapid flow of information. While Facebook is still the most popular social media platform, Twitter is mostly regarded an elite medium. In Hungary it is hardly relevant. Youtube's public image fluctuates between its role as the most popular web-based video platform (resulting in a struggle for attention by video activists) and its image as a "machine for radicalization" whose algorithm supposedly gives preference to radical content.[57]

Based on the performance-studies approach outlined in previous chapters, the different tactics of the protesters constitute a performative repertoire that is characteristic of the aesthetic practices of today's digitally mediatized protest culture between on-site and online. My focus is not on the message protesters want to give (however "clear" they claim it to be), but on the process of making meaning and producing presence. Social media offers protesters new possibilities for appearing online, but also confronts them with a double challenge. They have to elicit reactions and gain affirmation from an imagined online audience that constitutes a virtual political community. The protesters also have to maintain or at least claim that they maintain control over their images and protest messages in a media that is personalized and polyphonic. This does not necessarily mean that every tweet, post, or video is fiercely contested by other users, but that the principal aesthetic ambiguity and contingency of protests on-site is *disambiguated* by protesters' interpretations. At the same time, ambiguity and contingency are *potentially reinforced* through the multiplication of online stages and audiences, through other mediations and remediations of the initial event and the numerous perspectives on it.

Conclusion

This article has shown some of the ways in which protesters engage with social media in the course of on-site protests. In the digital age, social media is more than a simple add-on to on-site protest. It is impossible to maintain

[57] Zeynep Tufekci, "YouTube, the Great Radicalizer," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2018. See also Jonas Kaiser and Adrian Rauchfleisch, "How the Right Takes Advantage of YouTube," *Encore: The Annual Magazine on Internet and Society Research* 2018, 34–45.

a distinction between on-site and online, or analogue and digital. As I have shown, contemporary protest takes place on many stages provided by various social media sites. This is even more the case in the time of the pandemic, where online protests changed the relation between on-site and online. Instead of mediated images of central street protests, the main event now often appeared in a single web video stream that integrated other videos and pictures or was screened in other locations. The iconography of protest thus shifted from crowd scenes to people participating from their living rooms. Mostly empty streets in turn were used to produce additional images for the online event.

Under rapidly changing media conditions, protesters must use a whole set of different tactics in order to assert themselves and their political message online by interpreting their on-site protest event and choosing the images to be distributed. There is ample room in the future to explore how these tactics and practices can be conceptualized and analyzed in more detail, as well as how protesters' chosen images are received by different online audiences and how their choices shape the framing of their appearance during and after an on-site event.[58]

This article has outlined a path forward for further research in order that the crucial dimensions of contemporary on-site and online protest culture can be better understood. Several practical questions merit further discussion, for instance, whether it is necessary for the researcher to be present on-site, and some ethical questions. The ability to participate in distant protest events challenges researchers to reflect on the question of where to direct their attention, and how to fit their theories and methodologies to a multiplicity of networked publics. A performance-studies approach, which focuses on the aesthetic practices of protest, is one important methodology for studying protests and movements. It can shed light on what protesters actually do when they are protesting, how they do it, and not least how they involve us as spectators and researchers.

[58] One way forward could be understanding these tactics and strategies as attempts to gain *communication power* under the media conditions of the social web. See Jo Reichertz, Kommunikationsmacht (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2010); Holger Herma and Laura Maleyka, "Subjektinszenierung und Kommunikationsmacht Digital," in *Das vergessene Subjekt. Subjektkonstitutionen in mediatisierten Alltagswelten*, ed. Peter Gentzel et al. (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2019), 229, doi: 10.1007/978-3-658-23936-7_11.

REPORTS

A Single Past and Multiple Memory Techniques: Remembering the Cold War Period in the Cultural Landscape of the Hungarian Part of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Cultural Landscape of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee Region in Hungary

The Fertő/Neusiedlersee lake region is a transboundary cultural landscape in Austria and Hungary. It has a long, rich history of diverse communities which have been separated not just by the Austrian/Hungarian state border but also, for four decades, by the Iron Curtain. The "reunification" of the area has been facilitated by diverse natural and cultural protection projects instituted on the local and international levels. These projects started with bilateral agreements in the 1970s, which were continued in the framework of the 1971 Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention), the European Union's Phare program, and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Phare was initially launched in 1989 to assist in the postcommunist restructuring of the economies of Poland and Hungary. The concept of a "cultural landscape" was introduced by UNESCO in 1992 to emphasize the value of the harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature in the classic agricultural lifestyle and other contexts. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee recognized the Fertő/Neusiedlersee area as a protected cultural landscape in 2001.[1]

The Lake Fertő/Neusiedler is a lowland saline lake located 114 meters above sea level. It has dried out many times in its history, and its current status as a lake is a diminished form of the sea which existed there earlier. The lake and its surroundings have significant environmental value due to their climate, soil, and reed vegetation, especially for migrating birds. Built elements of the region's heritage include vernacular architecture as well as noble palaces from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The region is rich in intangible cultural heritage elements as well, for instance, works by the famous composer Joseph Haydn that were commissioned there by Prince Esterházy and the knowledge and practice of the local people in the fields of animal husbandry and cottage industries.

The Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape is located on the track of the former Iron Curtain, which defined the local population's social and economic possibilities for almost half a century. On the Hungarian side, restrictions on the residents' movement were introduced. New technical equipment, such as watchtowers, mines, and soldiers were added to the border area in the mid-twentieth century. Interestingly, soldiers

[1] "Ramsar site of Neusiedlersee, Seewinkel & Hanság," Ramsar Sites Information Service, https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/271; "The PHARE Programme and the enlargement of the European Union," European Parliament, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/briefings/33a2_en.htm; UNESCO, Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Report of the 25th session of UNESCO World Heritage Committee, Helsinki, Finland, 11–16 December 2001), 41–42, https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2001/whc-01-conf208-24e.pdf.

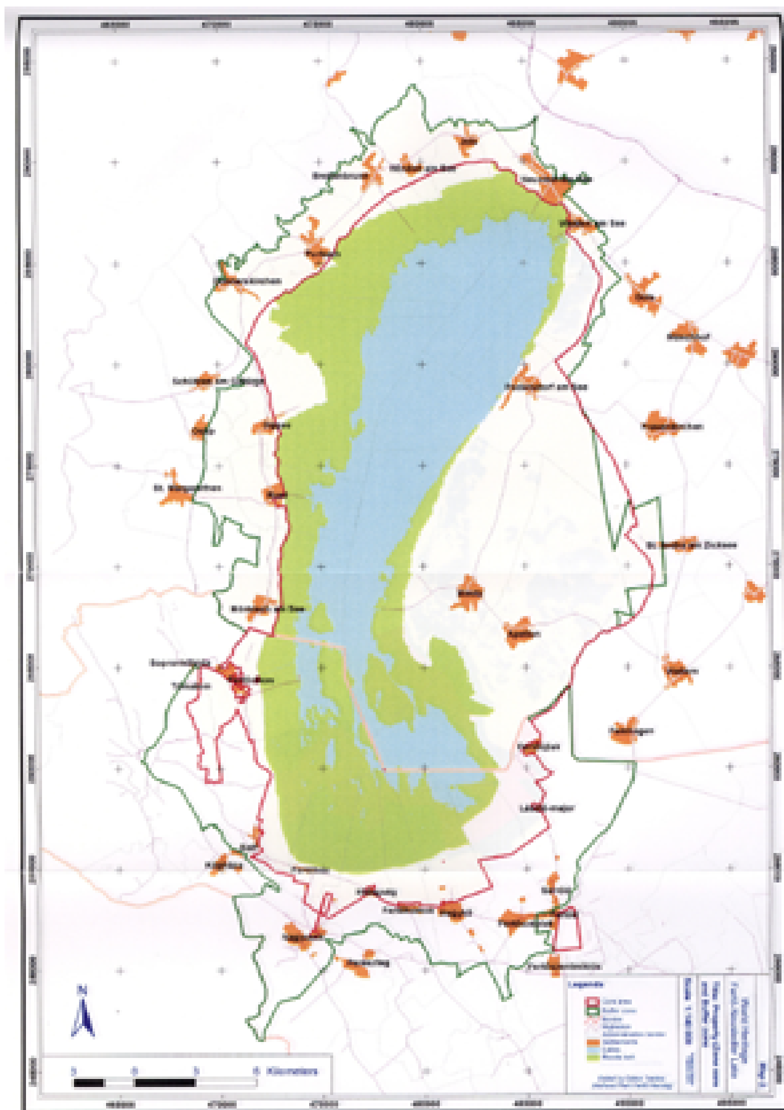

Figure 1. Map of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape. Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/772/multiple=1&unique_number=913.

assigned to the border region were mainly young men from other parts of Hungary. Especially after 1955, when Austria's independence was reestablished, Soviet soldiers were removed over the border and settled on the Hungarian side. Ironically, in certain cases they used the same bases as the Nazi German forces who had occupied Hungary during World War II. These units of foreign soldiers were not tasked with influencing local issues but with preparing for a possible attack from the West. Accordingly, they usually stayed on their bases, which made their activities mysterious to the local population.[2]

Border protection sometimes resulted in fatal shootings of local residents and economic damage from weed-killing chemicals that were used in the border zone, destroying the neighboring fruit gardens and vineyards.[3] These measures had long-term effects. What had been an important area for commerce became an economically and culturally neglected zone. Settlements around the lake were isolated by the border defenses and military reservations located in or nearby them.[4] Not just the land itself was neglected and negatively depicted in the Hungarian media. Local residents were accused of being spies or cross-border collaborators.[5] People who received government permission to visit Sopron, a major nearby city, were not allowed to visit the region that eventually became the Fertő/Neusiedlersee UNESCO World Heritage cultural landscape. It was all but impossible for anyone to get close to the lake or to neighboring settlements such as Fertőrákos. Running water was not introduced in many settlements until 1971, which indicates how neglected the region and its inhabitants were.[6]

The situation changed over the decades. Notably, in 1965 a new electronic signaling system for border protection was introduced. It provided sound and light signals on the spot of violations and notified border guard units when anybody or anything crossed the border. Even though this system was not designed to kill trespassers, it still defined the atmosphere of the region and the everyday life of the locals. By the 1980s, this "gentle Iron Curtain" proved to be both inefficient and outdated, because it frequently reacted to animals crossing the border. Moreover, it became increasingly unnecessary in the light of political changes in Hungary and internationally. These changes were heralded by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's address to the United Nations in 1988, in which he announced a drawdown of the Soviet military presence in Warsaw Pact countries. Other changes included the freer issuance of passports to Hungarians beginning the same year, which provided them with a limited possibility of travel to Western countries. The political leadership decided to dismantle the signaling system and increased the number

---

[2] György Molnár, "Megszállók homályban," *Beszélő* 1, No. 8 (1996): 36–46.

[3] Tibor Zsiga, *A "vasfüggöny" és kora / Der Eiserne Vorhang und seine Zeit* (Budapest: Hanns Seidel Alapítvány, 1999), 70–78.

[4] Miklós Zeidler, "Társadalom és gazdaság Trianon után," *Limes* 2 (2002): 5–24.

[5] Ferenc Jankó and Imre Tóth, "Az osztrák-magyar határtérség történelme és politikai földrajza," in *Ausztria a 20. században. Az "életképtelen" államtól a "boldogok szigetéig": Tanulmányok*, ed. István Németh and Róbert Fiziker (Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2011), 377–403.

[6] József Hárs, *Fertőrákos. Száz Magyar Falu Könyvesháza* (Budapest: Arcanum, 2000), 88.

of border crossing points.[7] Hungary's political changes in 1989, its accession to the European Union in 2004, and its inclusion into the Schengen area in 2007 motivated further cross-border cooperation with Austria.

The lake region became popular for tourism in the 1990s, but the economic and recreational boom that change brought did not last very long.[8] The western part of Hungary is considered more developed than its eastern part in the public consciousness.[9] However, research and interviews conducted in the region contradict that view. Settlements around the lake experienced economic disadvantages because many local residents found employment in neighboring Austria and hence did not contribute much to the local economy.[10] On the other hand, Austrians often bought empty houses in the region and used them as summer residences. Based on on-site interviews, that trend did little to energize the settlements' economic situation or their local community life.[11] Transportation was still problematic, and tourists had difficulty reaching the lake region into the mid-2010s.

The Austrian side of the lake began to develop as a tourist destination as early as in the late 1970s.[12] The Hungarian side was rather a destination for biologists and environmental specialists, because there the lake and its immediate surrounding was not as attractive for leisure.[13] Environmental tourism was the only viable development option in the region, but in Hungary that was not widely sought after or established until the late 2010s. Even in the mid-2010s and after, Hungary's national development plans encouraged municipalities to invest in water sport facilities, cultural tourism, and business travel and paid much less attention to environmental tourism. For example, 16 billion Hungarian forints were granted to support inner-city improvements in Sopron, including a conference center for 1200 people. Only about 8.5 billion forints were granted for things such as bicycle paths and spas.[14]

[7] János Sallai, *20 éves a határnyitás. A vasfüggöny léte és vége* (Budapest: Hanns Seidel Stiftung, 2009), 1–53.

[8] "Unemployment rate by age groups and gender between 1992 and 2016," Hungarian Central Statistics Office, https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_hosszu/h_qlf012a.html.

[9] Pál Belyó, "Magyarország 1989–2009: A változások tükrében" (Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2010), https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/mo/mo1989_2009.pdf.

[10] Mónika Freid and Gyula Holka, "A társadalmi-gazdasági változások néhány vonása az elmúlt 20 évben (1989–2009)," *Statisztikai Szemle* 89, No. 1 (2011): 20–49.

[11] Interviews conducted by the author at the open-air museum in Sarród in July 2015 and with local mayors of Fertőhomok in August 2018.

[12] Promotion of tourism at the Neusiedlersee can be exemplified by the slogan used in tourist posters, "The Sea of the Viennese." See Sándor Békési, "Fenséges pocsolya: A Fertő. Egy táj kultúr- és szemlélettörténetéről," *Soproni Szemle* 63, No. 2 (2009): 188–208, 202.

[13] Zoltán Rakonczay, *A természetvédelem története Magyarországon, 1872–2002* (Budapest: Mezőgazdasági Kiadó, 2009), 145–180.

[14] "1862/2016. (XII. 27.) Korm. határozat a Sopron-Fertő kiemelt turisztikai fejlesztési térség meghatározásáról és a térségben megvalósítandó egyes fejlesztések megvalósításához szükséges források biztosításáról," *Magyar Közlöny*, December 27, 2016, 84192, http://www.kozlonyok.hu/nkonline/MKPDF/hiteles/mk16217.pdf.

Based on observations at the time, the settlements in the region had numerous empty, deteriorating houses – many with former military functions – which gave the impression of a lonesome, deserted territory, just like the borderland was in the Cold War period. The situation of the formerly military buildings was usually complicated by their ill-defined, complex ownership status.[15] That made it impossible to quickly decide their fate. Prolonged negotiations contributed to their deterioration and the alienated impression they gave, even in the early 2000s. Legal issues usually had to be resolved at the highest level between local municipalities and central government institutions. Because most of the former military and border guard buildings and properties were owned by state, the Hungarian National Asset Management corporation has been the primary decision-making unit of the central government in this case.

Some new border-crossing points were established after 1989 with state and international financial support, such as the one at Sopronkövesd in 2005.[16] Cultural events were sponsored by neighboring foreign cities, like a photo exhibition about Eisenstadt, Austria that was held in Sopron in 2010.[17] Moreover, increasing traffic through the region and the various restrictions defined by diverse international cultural and environmental protection organizations prevented the region's residents' feelings of isolation. Despite all the challenges, the population in most of the settlements increased after the area received its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site. There was only one exception: Sarród, where the population decreased between 2001 and 2015. That suggests a lack of understanding of the territory at the local and national levels and disagreement about its present and future course as well. Even though positive changes can be identified in the recent past, like the construction of a new highway, the area is still not well-served by mass transport. Detailed analysis of the region's opportunities for development needs further research. Projects are ongoing at both the local and national levels.

The following report is based on field research in the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape conducted as a part of the author's PhD dissertation.[18] The research analyzed the introduction of the concept of "cultural heritage" in Hungary. It was intended to determine how the image of a specific region has changed as a result of "heritagization."

[15] Miklós Gosztonyi, "Parkolópályán az igényelt ingatlanok," *Kisalföld*, May 28, 2014.

[16] "Készül a határátkelő Sopronkövesden," *Kisalföld*, July 18, 2005.

[17] "Eisenstadti fotókból," *Kisalföld*, February 8, 2010.

[18] Melinda Harlov-Csortán, "The introduction of the notion of cultural heritage and heritagization in Hungary (1957–2015). Critical analysis of Hollókő and Fertő / Neusiedlersee through the lens of heritagization" (Doctoral Dissertation, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 2021). Other publications drawing on the research include Melinda Harlov-Csortán, "From Environmentalised Heritage to Heritagised Environment: The Case of the Reedland at Fertő / Neusiedlersee," in *Heritage and Environment, 5th Heritage Forum of Central Europe*, ed. Agata Wąsowska-Pawlik and Jacek Purchla (Krakow: International Cultural Centre, 2021), 139–154; Melinda Harlov-Csortán, "From the Borderland of the Iron Curtain to European and World Cultural Heritage," *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore* 70 (2017): 193–224, doi: 10.7592/FEJF2017.70.harlov_csortan; and Melinda Harlov-Csortán, "A cultural landscape on the border," in *Proceedings of TCL 2016 Conference. Tourism and Cultural Landscapes: Towards a Sustainable Approach*, ed. Lia Bassa and Ferenc Kiss (Budapest: INFOTA, 2016), 229–240.

Heritagization is a word coined to describe the complex process of achieving and maintaining heritage status. It refers to the identification, maintenance, safeguarding and popularization of any kind of heritage. This report provides information about diverse but still not totally effective memory techniques between 1989 and 2015 to preserve the memory of the traumatic Cold War past in the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape. It introduces a core narrative as well as a handful of examples of memorializing certain moments and aspects of the Cold War period in the region. It also identifies reasons why these efforts have been ineffective in memorializing the Cold War past.

Protecting a Transborder Site But Not its Cold War Past

The Fertő/Neusiedlersee UNESCO World Heritage cultural landscape is located on both sides of the former Iron Curtain. It is not unique as a protected territory straddling an international border. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has been dealing with such situations since 1988, when it organized the first workshop entitled Border Parks. Since then, transboundary protected areas have become the subject of a worldwide network of experts and specialists that works "to promote and encourage transboundary conservation for the conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values while promoting peace and co-operation among nations, through enhancing knowledge and capacity for effective planning and management of transboundary conservation areas."[19] The Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape has been recognized by the IUCN since 1991 as a Transboundary Protected Area. This designation means that it is a "clearly defined geographical space that includes protected areas that are ecologically connected across one or more international boundaries and involves some form of cooperation."[20]

The EUROPARC Federation, established in 1973, focuses its efforts on the cultural and natural heritage of Europe. It launched a program on transboundary parks in 2003 and named the Austrian and Hungarian national parks around Lake Fertő/Neusiedler as one of its first projects. This international organization arranges reviews of its member organizations regularly. The two national parks of the lake region, the Fertő-Hanság National Park and the Neusiedlersee Seewinkel National Park, were positively reviewed in 2010 and 2015.[21] Similarly, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee pays attention to transborder examples of World Heritage sites.[22] By 2015, thirty-three of the 1,031 UNESCO World Heritage sites

---

[19] IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group, "Terms of Reference. Strategic Directions 2009–2012," 2, https://www.tbpa.net/docs/1a_IUCN%20WPCA%20Transboundary%20Conservation%20Specialist%20Group%20TOR%20-%20Final%20-%20Oct%201%202009.pdf.

[20] "Typology of Transboundary Conservation Areas – 2011," Global Transboundary Conservation Network, http://www.tbpa.net/page.php?ndx=83#1.

[21] "Transboundary Network," EUROPARC Federation, https://www.europarc.org/about-us/network/transboundary-network/.

[22] Transnational UNESCO World Heritage sites have their own separate category in the UNESCO World Heritage inventory, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/&&transboundary=1&order=year.

were transboundary in nature. In 2001, the Fertő/Neusiedlersee UNESCO World Heritage cultural landscape was the seventh such transboundary heritage site recognized by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. The variety of territories protected by these supranational organizations and their designations show that transboundary protected territories are not unique to Austria and Hungary.

Despite their complexity, the events of the last century did not play an essential role in the nomination of the lake region for heritage status, or in the supplementary and evaluation documents submitted in support of it. The two advisory bodies of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), focused more on the prehistoric past of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape.[23] In the sixty pages of supporting documents, only two paragraphs speak of the region's twentieth century past. One reason for this may be that in general the important historical sites of the twentieth century are rather underrepresented on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Even though "socialist heritage" and "dissonant heritage" are recognized concepts in academic discourse, areas with such importance have rarely become UNESCO World Heritage sites.

ICOMOS started the discussion of the heritagization of sites of twentieth century importance in the 1980s in its publications, national committee workshops, and expert meetings, mainly in terms of the conservation of protected architecture.[24] It created an action plan, the Montreal Action Plan, in 2001.[25] It also established a designated expert group, the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage, in 2005 and conducted an analysis of gaps in the World Heritage List.[26] Since then, ICOMOS has paid special attention to examples of the heritage of the twentieth century. When the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape was included on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001, the heritagization of twentieth century sites had not yet fully developed on the international level. Even in 2020, there were only forty-one UNESCO World

---

[23] Bundesdenkmalamt and VÁTI, *Documentation for the nomination of the Cultural Landscape of Fertő-Neusiedlersee Lake* (Vienna and Budapest, 2000); VÁTI, *Supplementary documentation for the documentation for the nomination of the cultural landscape of Fertő-Neusiedler Lake* (Vienna and Budapest, 2001).

[24] Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna, ed., *Dangerous Liaisons: Preserving Post-War Modernism in City Centers* (Helsinki: ICOMOS Finnish National Committee, 2001). The German National Committee of ICOMOS organized a conference in 1996 in Leipzig on the conservation of modern architecture with the title Konservierung der Moderne? Conservation of Modern Architecture? Über den Umgang mit den Zeugnissen der Architekturgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. An example of an expert meeting on twentieth century tangible heritage is the ICOMOS Seminar on 20th Century Heritage on June 18–19, 1995 in Helsinki, Finland, http://www.international.icomos.org/20th_heritage/helsinki_1995.htm.

[25] "The Montreal Action Plan," International Council on Monuments and Sites, https://www.icomos.org/20th_heritage/montreal_plan.htm.

[26] "The World Heritage List. Filling the Gaps: An Action Plan for the Future," International Council on Monuments and Sites, https://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/image-menu-about-icomos/116-english-categories/resources/publications/258-monumentsasites-xii.

Heritage sites that were built in the twentieth century.[27] Even fewer sites have been recognized for their tragic historical significance, among them Auschwitz-Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination camp (1940–1945) (named to the list in 1979), the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) (named in 1996), and the Bikini Atoll Nuclear Test Site (from 2010). The small number of such sites suggests that the recent past was not considered to have much heritage value on the supranational level until the early 2000s. It was at that time that the UNESCO World Heritage Committee recognized Lake Fertő/Neusiedler as a cultural landscape.

On the national level in Hungary, there has been significant recent support for the cultural heritage value of the lake region. Unfortunately, it has been expressed in focused, top-down initiatives that did not recognize or manage the complexity of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape. In Hungary, targeted financial support has come mainly from the state and to a lesser extent from the European Union. In the first decade after Hungary's accession to the EU, funding was allocated for example to the Esterházy palace, a former noble estate in Fertőd, along with its connected buildings and its garden. This cultural site was transformed into a museum at the end of the Cold War period, but its significance began to increase immensely after its inclusion as part of the UNESCO World Heritage cultural landscape in 2001. The palace was designated by the Hungarian government as a historic memorial place in 2011, emphasizing that it "represent[s] important Hungarian historical moments."[28]

The case of the Esterházy palace is interesting from the perspective of the lack of memorialization of the Cold War period. Even though the last living member of the Esterházy family, Prince Antal, has been living there since 2014 as a representative of the latest period in the family history, most of the building serves as a museum of the eighteenth century past and as an event venue. The heritagization of the Esterházy palace, with its overall emphasis on its aesthetic value and the paucity of information presented about its history close to the Iron Curtain, illustrates how the Cold War has generally been ignored in the historical representation of the lake region.

Memorialization of Specific Events of the Cold War Period

The 1956 Revolution and the Fight for Freedom

The Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape has a very complex past and witnessed numerous moments and periods in the twentieth century that deserve to be memorialized. Major historical events include significant changes in the local population during and after

[27] "Built in the 20th century," World Heritage Site, https://www.worldheritagesite.org/connection/Built+in+the+20th+century.

[28] National Heritage Institute, http://nori.gov.hu/tortenelmi-emlekhelyek/Fertod/fertod-esterhazy-kastely/.

World War II. In the wake of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight, some 150,000 to 200,000 Hungarians escaped to the West through the territory.[29] This flow of people played an important part in Austrian history as well.[30] The hosting of escaped Hungarians is an important element in the self-image of the Austrian border state of Burgenland.[31]

Before the political changes of 1989, commemoration of certain historical events such as the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight, and in fact any critical analysis of the past, were challenging acts in Hungary.[32] After 1989, commemoration of the 1956 events often involved the inauguration of new physical memorials. These examples of public art can be found in almost every Hungarian settlement and have some common features and characteristics. The author's on-site research showed that memorials in the Hungarian part of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape share certain national features, but do not allude to any aspect of the specifically local past. Even the famous bridge at Andau, across which people left the country for Austria, can easily be reached only from the Austrian side of the border. A whole set of memorials and information boards reflect international and Austrian initiatives to commemorate the 1956 events. There is nothing similar on the Hungarian side of the Einser Canal along the border.[33] There have been some important scholarly initiatives in Hungary, such as an oral history project of the Open Society Archives that recorded the inhabitants' memories of the 1956 events in the region, but there is little or no sign of them on the ground.[34]

The Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape was conceived as a bridge for overcoming the separation between East and West, but its heritagization has been a slow process. To prevent its history from being forgotten, there have been a few attempts to develop a new type of tourism. Such tourism targets locations of importance to the relatively recent past in order to preserve and share the local memory of it. For instance, an Iron Curtain bike route has been established and promoted. This route is part of the EuroVelo13 bike path (the Iron Curtain Trail), which stretches 10,000 kilometers from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. In Hungary, it leads through less touristed but historically

---

29 János Sallai, *Egy idejét múlt korszak lenyomata A vasfüggöny története* (Budapest: Hanns Seidel Stiftung, 2012), 42.

30 Michael John, "Migration in Austria. An overview of the 1920s to 2000s," in *Understanding Multiculturalism. The Habsburg Central European Experience*, ed. Johannes Feichtinger and Gary B. Cohen (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 123–150.

31 Sándor Békési, *Verklärt und verachtet: Wahrnehmungsgeschichte einer Landschaft: Der Neusiedler See* (Wien: Peter Lang, 2007).

32 Attila Pók, *Remembering and Forgetting Communism in Hungary. Studies on Collective Memory and Memory Politics in Context* (Kőszeg: IASK, 2017), 208–215.

33 Regarding the still existing boundary between the two countries, see Gerhard Baumgartner, Éva Kovács, and András Vári, *Távoli szomszédok. Jánossomorja és Andau 1990–2000* (Budapest: Teleki Alapítvány, 2002).

34 "Transnational Memories – Hungarian Refugees in 1956," Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives at CEU, http://www.osaarchivum.org/podcast/episode1_transitional-memories_hungarian-refugees-in-1956.

relevant areas.[35] Whether such a project can capture the significance of this territory during the Cold War period is a subject for future research, which would look at the popularity of the bike path project, the complexity of the audience it targets, and its effect on the formation of a local identity.

The Pan-European Picnic of 1989

In 1989, the northern end of the border zone between Austria and Hungary played a significant role in the history of the two countries. The Pan-European Picnic, which was held on August 19, 1989, was organized in a meadow close to Lake Fertő/Neusiedler. Music, bonfires, and dancing took place directly next to the border to express a demand for the unification of Europe and the elimination of the Iron Curtain. Due to rumors that the border would be opened and the slogan for the event, "break it and take it!," which referred to the border fence, hundreds of people with East German origin came to the event. They believed the border would open and they could get to Austria and request West German resident permits. Even though the original plan did not in fact include the opening of the border, in the event the Hungarian border guards could not peacefully stop the mass of people from doing just that. The border guards decided not to employ violence and about 600 people passed through into Austria.[36] The Pan-European Picnic is memorialized in Hungarian public discourse as the first step, and a peaceful one, toward the fall of the Iron Curtain.[37]

That same year, the organizers of the event decided to establish a private foundation to protect the memory of the grassroots, peaceful event that contributed to the elimination of the Iron Curtain. They have organized yearly commemorations and guided tours of the Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park established at the site.[38] Since the park gained its cultural function, the number of public artworks displayed there has multiplied. The tangible signs of pre-1989 border control, such as a watchtower, became memorials that add to the experience of a visit and to understanding of the event. The new memorial artworks are mainly gifts from diverse communities that honor the original event. The monuments are of very different characters, sizes, materials, etc. Each one influences the interpretation of the others and of the memorial park itself. In 2019, a member of the foundation management spoke with the author about its growing international network of contacts with institutions and organizations that share a similar focus. For example, the Pan-European Picnic

---

[35] See the official website of the European Green Belt Association, http://www.europeangreenbelt.org/, and the website operated by the European Cyclists' Federation, http://www.eurovelo13.com/. See also Michael Cramer, *Iron Curtain Trail Part 3: Along the "Green Belt" from the German-Czech Border to the Black Sea* (Berlin: Esterbauer, 2010).

[36] András Oplatka, "The Pan-European Picnic – well-known facts and blind spots," in *Prelude to demolishing the Iron Curtain*, ed. György Gyarmati (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2012), 65–72.

[37] Gyula Kurucz, ed., *Az első határnyitás: Sopron, 1998. augusztus 19*. (Budapest: Kortárs Kiadó, 2000), 50–58.

[38] Interview conducted by the author with the president of the foundation, Dr. László Magas, in 2016.

Memorial Park is strongly connected to the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk, Poland. Both received the European Heritage Site label from the European Commission in 2014.[39] Interestingly, a visitor center with exhibition and information materials about the original event as well as a small refreshment area was only established as of the thirtieth anniversary of this historical event in 2019. Unfortunately, with the increasing number of new monuments at the site the authentic appearance of the place is threatened.[40]

The yearly commemorations, the individual visits by curious tourists, and the heritagization of this local event attest to the significance of the place of the Picnic. Although it memorializes only a part of the Cold War period – its ending – it nevertheless deserves to be included in the territory recognized by the UNESCO World Heritage Commission. Interestingly, neither the Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park, nor the events it commemorates, have become part of either the core or the buffer zone of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee UNESCO World Heritage cultural landscape. The historical event is however mentioned in the UNESCO nomination document and in the evaluation by ICOMOS with the same statement: "It was at Fertőrákos, 'the place where the first brick was knocked out of the Berlin wall,' that participants at a Pan-European Picnic tore down the barbed wire and re-opened the frontier which still crosses the Lake."[41] The Management Plan for the UNESCO site from 2003 recommended that the World Heritage site be expanded "up to the road leading to the Pan-European Picnic site" and identified the yearly commemoration of the Picnic as a major program in the region.[42]

The same can be said about the settlement of Andau, which played an important role after the revolution of 1956. However, Andau lies approximately ten kilometers from the edge of the UNESCO site's buffer zone; the Memorial Park is only one kilometer away. The fact that neither the local celebrations nor the tangible evidence of the Cold War period – at the Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park or at Andau – have officially undergone the heritagization process expresses a strong stand by the powers that be on their evaluation of that time in history.

Memorialization of the Cold War Period through Public and Private Initiatives

Diverse techniques are in use on the Hungarian side of Lake Fertő/Neusiedler to memorialize the Cold War period. Two small museums in Felsőcsatár and Fertőrákos

[39] "European Heritage Label sites," European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/culture/cultural-heritage/initiatives-and-success-stories/european-heritage-label-sites.

[40] On events held at the Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park, see the website operated by the municipality of Sopron city, http://www.paneuropaipiknik.hu/index.php?site=50.

[41] Bundesdenkmalamt and VÁTI, *Documentation for the nomination*, 30 and ICOMOS, Advisory body evaluation of Fertő / Neusiedlersee nomination (November 2001), 2, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/772/documents/.

[42] Stadtland and VÁTI, *Fertő-táj kulturtáj – világörökség kezelési terve*, 10, 118, http://www.fertotaj.hu/document/kezelesi_terv.pdf.

have been established and managed by former border guards.[43] These private museums describe the border protection system used at that time and the life of the border guards. The museums present the personal viewpoints of their owners and are based on the materials available to them. From on-site research and interviews with the owners it can be said that their museums have no connection with or acknowledgement from other museums or government cultural authorities. Due to their limited financial, human, and professional resources, they are unable to attract a significant number of visitors.[44] Despite all the challenges, the museums provide visitors with interesting personal narratives that enrich the broader local narrative about the recent past. Even if they only relay first-hand experiences, their contribution should not be underestimated.[45]

A technique similar to the public art dedicated to the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight has been used to memorialize the Iron Curtain in the village of Hegykő. This is an open-air memorial located next to the settlement, exactly where the actual fence line used to be. Remaining elements of the old border protection system are maintained together with information boards in Hungarian and English that were erected in 2008 by the local municipality. As of the mid-2010s, the site of the memorial seemed rather abandoned, not just because of its location in the midst of agricultural fields, but also because of a lack of signage or other information directing visitors to it from within the village of Hegykő.[46]

The difficulty in accessing the memorial site can be justified by the concept of *genius loci*, or the spirit of a place.[47] This concept has existed since the first studies of the built environment. The *genius loci* consists of the given location, the political, historical, and cultural surroundings, and a kind of value-laden, symbolic experience.[48] Accordingly, the *genius loci* can be understood as a tool for connecting intangible values and tangible

[43] "Iron Curtain Museum Felsőcsatár," https://vasfuggonymuzeum.hu/en/news and http://www.fertorakosikirandulas.hu/fertorakos/vasfuggony_muzeum.html.

[44] The author conducted interviews with both owners on numerous occasions between 2016 and 2018.

[45] Daniel L. Schacter, Scott A. Guerin, and Peggy L. St. Jacques, "Memory Distortion: An Adaptive Perspective," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 15, No. 10 (2011): 467–474, doi: 10.1016/j.tics.2011.08.004.

[46] András Keszei, *Emlékek formájában. Egyéni, társadalmi és kulturális hatások a múlt felidézésében* (Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2015), 10–18.

[47] The concept of *genius loci* has been adopted by diverse research perspectives. There are researchers who instrumentalize the concept when they emphasize locations. See Gordon Cullen, *The Consise Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1961), 9. Others use it when they give attention to the receiving/understanding process. See Claude Moulin, "On concepts of community cultural tourism," *Revue de Tourisme – The Tourist Review* 50, No. 4 (1995): 37. The analysis of *genius loci* can focus on the local population (see Tuan Yi-Fu, *Space and Place* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977)); visitors (see John A. Jakle, *The Visual Elements of Landscape* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 8); a group or community (see Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995)), or individual initiatives. All these aspects are interrelated and underline the plural and dynamic aspects of the concept.

[48] Heather Skinner, "In search of the genius loci: The essence of a place brand," *The Marketing Review* 11, No. 3. (2011): 281–292, doi: 10.1362/146934711X589471.

heritage elements. It was officially defined in 2008 in the Québec Declaration on the Preservation of the Spirit of Place, which identified it as "the tangible (buildings, sites, landscapes, routes, objects) and the intangible elements (memories, narratives, written documents, rituals, festivals, traditional knowledge, values, textures, colors, odors, etc.), that is to say the physical and the spiritual elements that give meaning, value, emotion and mystery to place."[49] The interconnectedness of the material and the social aspects of heritage exists despite the differentiation between examples of intangible and tangible heritage.[50] The memorial at Hegykő is located where the Iron Curtain used to be and is assumed to have significant meaning for visitors. The closeness of the border fence to the settlement, as well as its "disturbing" of the traditional agricultural activities that used to take place there, implicitly emphasizes the emotional understanding of the place.

Failure to deal with the recent past can have a multi-layered effect on people. On the one hand, by neglecting to memorialize certain aspects of the past, the memory of the Soviet period and the identity of the local population as Central or Eastern Europeans are undermined. Forgetfulness of the past is especially common among the younger generation, who do not have personal memories of those times.[51] On the other hand, by not dealing with the recent past change cannot be realized and local residents will continuously feel that they are living on the periphery of the country, just as they did when they lived in the shadow of the Iron Curtain. The variety of memorial techniques that address the previous political system enrich the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape because they describe and interpret almost half a century of history from multiple perspectives. One reason for the lack of public knowledge about the personal museums and the examples of material heritage in the area is their lack of connection and widely dispersed locations within the cultural landscape. Connecting them with a road or path similar to the Iron Curtain bike route might solve this problem. An umbrella organization and the cooperation of diverse actors, including private organizations and municipalities, would be necessary for success.

Conclusion

The circumstances, living standards, and restrictions on liberty imposed on Hungarians during the Cold War period, especially in the direct proximity of the Iron Curtain, cannot be forgotten or forgiven easily.[52] The violations of human rights are still within

---

[49] UNESCO, Québec Declaration on the Preservation of the Spirit of Place (Adopted at Québec, Canada, October 4, 2008), 2, https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-646-2.pdf.

[50] UNESCO, Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Adopted in Paris, France, October 17, 2003), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000132540.

[51] Justinian A. Jampol, "Smashing Lenin Won't Save Ukraine," *The New York Times*, March 3, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/04/opinion/smashinglenin-wont-save-ukraine.html.

[52] Katalin Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 85.

living memory because of the closeness of that time period to the present. They still have physical manifestations today, more than a quarter of a century later, in the form of the bombs and other weapons from World War II and the Cold War period that are still occasionally found in the lake and around it.[53] The consequences include the transformation of the natural environment as well; more precisely, in the increase of grasslands, marshes, fallow land, and woods after the border was closed. Yet despite the multilevel, long-lasting local influence of the Cold War on the area, its significance has not been recognized in the heritagized history of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape.

One possible reason that significance has been neglected is the timing of the UNESCO nomination and the fact that it was proposed by two State Parties with significantly different historical pasts on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain. After the political changes in Hungary in 1989 and especially in the drive to join the European Union in 2004, academic and political narratives insisted that Hungary always was and still is a fully European country. Accordingly, the Soviet period was viewed as an insignificant rupture in the flow of the country's entire history.[54] The almost two-year-long (January 1, 2000 to August 20, 2001) nation-wide celebration of the thousandth anniversary of Hungary's adoption of Christianity and the creation of the Hungarian state reflected that conviction.[55] The representatives of the two states, Austria and Hungary, that formulated the nomination documents for UNESCO world heritage site status (the Bundesdenkmalamt and VÁTI, respectively) preferred to highlight the thousand years of their common legacy rather than the approximately forty years that "interrupted" that continuum. Another concern of the nominating agencies was emphasizing (perhaps to an extreme) the Central European-ness of the territory. They cited typically Central European characteristics of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape such as the diverse nationalities of its inhabitants, its rich culture, and its social and economic structures.[56] This concern may have motivated them to downplay the Iron Curtain past of the region in the heritagization narrative they presented on the national and international levels.[57]

---

[53] Miklós Gosztonyi, "Repeszgránátot emeltek ki a Fertő tóból," *Kisalföld*, November 29, 2017.

[54] László Péter, "Central Europe and its reading into the past," *European Review of History* 6, No. 1 (1999): 101–111, doi: 10.1080/13507489908568224.

[55] The UNESCO World Heritage Committee held its annual event in Budapest at that time. The Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape was then added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

[56] The characteristics of Central European-ness are expressed by Miłobędzki as "the prevailing agricultural economy, the diverse development of urbanization [there are villages as well as free cities with the right to organize markets, Rust on the Austrian side of the lake], the domination of the Catholic faith [since as early as the thirteenth century, based on the monument church in Hidegség]." See Adam Miłobędzki, "Central-Eastern Europe: Its cultural landscape and architectural coverage," in *Heritage Landscape. Integrated Urban and Landscape preservation and restoration*, ed. Maria Bogdani-Czepita (Krakow: International Cultural Centre, 1993), 38. For the debate on Hungary as Central or Eastern European, see also Ignác Romsics, "Közép –és/vagy Kelet-Európa?" in *Közép-európai olvasókönyv*, ed. Péter Módos (Budapest: Osiris and Közép-európai Kulturális Intézet, 2005), 27–38.

[57] Jankó and Tóth, "Az osztrák-magyar határtérség," 377–403.

Dealing with the Cold War period has been a task for many Central and Eastern European countries since the fall of the Iron Curtain, especially as they prepared themselves to enter the European Union.[58] In most cases, they prefer to emphasize the historical periods before the second half of the twentieth century and represent them as golden ages. "Memorialization techniques" that recall the Iron Curtain period are sidelined in the process of heritagization and become secondary.[59] The periods before and after the Cold War are represented as one continuous historical past.[60] This is a conscious effort to justify the unification of the former communist countries with Western Europe.[61]

The silent spaces created around this traumatic period, for example in the missing memorial on the Hungarian side of the bridge at Andau, and the untold chapter in the history of the Esterházy palace in Fertőd, point up the painfulness of the memory of the Cold War. Nevertheless, there are some places in the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape, including the private museums and memorials that speak of it. Among others, the remains of the former Iron Curtain defenses near Hegykő and the empty meadow near Sopronkőhida have been transformed and gained new functions as cultural sites and, in the case of the latter, become real tourist attraction. These places have adopted diverse approaches to preserving and sharing the memory of historical events. They use different sources and methods and focus on different time periods in the Cold War. Some of them exhibit original, tangible objects and provide guided tours. Some focus on particular events, activities, and professions; others do not offer a specific narrative and hence are open to diverse interpretations by visitors.

In the private museums and at the Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park, the memory of specific events is preserved and communicated mostly by the same people who were participants in the history. They intend to convey the original experience and send a message to the greater public and more importantly, to future generations. They want to form the collective memory and contemporary group identity by sharing their personal memories and creating collective experiences for visitors. Elsewhere, the original actors are less directly involved. For instance, the municipality of Hegykő does not offer guided tours and the information panels provide quite general information. So do the various 1956 memorials in the settlements around the lake. In sum, those who have established and are managing the memorials to the Cold War time in the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape are employing a variety of memory techniques to achieve their aims.

---

[58] Nadia Kaneva and Delia Popescu, "National Identity Lite: Nation Branding in Post-Communist Romania and Bulgaria," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 14, No. 2 (2011): 191–207, doi: 10.1177%2F1367877910382181.

[59] Craig Young and Sylvia Kaczmarek, "The Socialist Past and Postsocialist Urban Identity in Central and Eastern Europe: The Case of Łódź, Poland," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 15, No. 1 (2008): 53–70, doi: 0.1177/0969776407081275.

[60] Verdery, "*The Political Lives of Dead Bodies.*"

[61] Duncan Light, "'Facing the future': tourism and identity-building in post-socialist Romania," *Political Geography* 20, No. 8 (2001): 1053–1074, doi: 10.1016/S0962-6298(01)00044-0.

In the course of its heritagization, the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape has experienced a kind of simplification and universalization of its cultural values. A shift from emphasizing the peculiarities of the region to a more generalized narrative for a greater international audience is ongoing. As Attila Pók pointed out: "The grand narratives of the past often conceal or blur the distinctive memories and understandings of history with regard to smaller regions, local communities and various social groups."[62] That is why the involvement of multiple actors, attention to a multiplicity of values, and diverse narratives are so necessary in the heritagization process of the Fertő/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape.

Melinda Harlov-Csortán
doi: 10.14712/23363231.2022.5

[62] Pók, "*Remembering and Forgetting*," 21.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

1. Manuscript Submission

The journal *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Studia Territorialia* publishes original scholarly works that have not been published anywhere else, are not currently awaiting publication in other journals, and are not simultaneously being considered for publication by another journal. Unless agreed otherwise, manuscripts are only accepted in English. American English is preferred, but British English is also acceptable as long as the spelling is consistent throughout. Authors should consult the Chicago Manual of Style or the Oxford Style Manual for grammar and style.

To receive consideration, manuscripts should be uploaded online through the *Studia Territorialia* journal management system. Alternatively, they can be sent to the editorial team via e-mail at stuter@fsv.cuni.cz. Submissions must be presented in a standard document format such as Word (.doc, .docx, .rtf, .or, .odt). All correspondence between authors and the editors will take place via e-mail.

By submitting their manuscripts, the authors agree that their submission may be screened for unoriginal content at any stage of the editing and production process using an automated similarity check system.

2. Peer Review

Following a successful initial editorial screening, submitted articles are subject to rigorous double-blind peer review. For each article, at least two independent external reviewers will be consulted who are established experts in the relevant field. Each review should provide comprehensive feedback to the authors as well as a recommendation to the editors as to what more needs to be done with the submission: whether it should be published as is; published after incorporation of minor revisions; substantially revised and resubmitted; or rejected. For resubmitted manuscripts, an additionally commissioned review will advise whether the issues raised by the reviewers have been sufficiently addressed and whether the revised submission is suitable for publication, but it will not propose any further substantial revisions. The editors are normally in a position to report back to the authors about the status of their submissions within four months.

The editors reserve the right to edit the article in accordance with the journal's editorial standards or to reject the submission with no obligation to provide a reason.

Manuscripts requiring excessive editing due to failure to respect the journal's editorial guidelines or due to poor presentation or language will be rejected and returned.

3. Author License Agreement

When the peer-review process is complete, the authors of accepted submissions must authorize the editors to sign a licensing agreement with the Charles University Karolinum Press for the print version of the journal. An electronic version of the journal will subsequently be published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International). This license allows others to share the work with an acknowledgement of its authorship and initial publication in this journal.

The journal is published thanks to the support of the Institute of International Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University and the Karolinum Press. The journal charges no fees in connection with the submission, review, or publication of a submitted work.

4. Editorial Guidelines

The journal *Studia Territorialia* publishes articles, book reviews, and reports.

An article should typically be between 6,000 and 9,000 words in length (excluding abstract, notes and appendices). A book review should strive for a limit of 2,000 words. Longer texts may also be considered if the subject matter warrants such treatment. All articles must contain an English-language abstract of no more than 150 words as well as four to six keywords.

A submitted manuscript must contain the following items: abstract, keywords, and main text, with appendices (if any) included separately. In a covering letter, the authors must provide their full names, institutional affiliations, ORCID (if registered), and their contact information, as well as acknowledgments, information on financial support received, and a disclosure statement on possible conflicts of interest. Submissions by more than one author must designate a single contact person as the corresponding author.

Words in a language using other than the Latin alphabet must be Romanized into the Latin alphabet. Bibliographic items in footnotes must be transliterated in accord with an accepted transliteration table such as the ALA-LC Romanization Tables. A simple phonetic transcription should be used for foreign terms and names in the main text.

It is the responsibility of the authors to make sure they have obtained all necessary permissions for possible reproduction of any third-parties' copyrighted material, such as graphics.

5. Reference Style

All articles must contain references. References should be in the form of footnotes formatted in accord with the Chicago Manual of Style for Notes. No separate bibliography or reference list at the end of the text is required.

Citations should always include a DOI (Digital Object Identifier), if the cited material has one.

Electronic sources should be cited including the date of last access, if appropriate.

6. Reference Examples

Books

One Author or Editor

Philipp Ther, *The Outsiders: Refugees in Europe since 1492* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 121–123.

Two Authors or Editors

Roy Allison and Christoph Bluth, eds., *Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998).

Three Authors or Editors

Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin, and Paul Whiteley, *Brexit: Why Britain voted to leave the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

More than Three Authors or Editors

Rupert N. Richardson et al., *Texas: The Lone Star State*, 11th ed. (Abingdon, Routledge: 2021).

Chapter or Other Part of a Book

Joyeeta Gupta, "Climate Change and the Future of International Order," in *The Rise and Decline of the Post-Cold War International Order*, ed. Hanns W. Maull (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 44–63, doi: 10.1093/oso/9780198828945.003.0001.

Introduction, Foreword, or Similar Part of a Book

Anatol Lieven, Preface to *An Endless War: The Russian-Chechen Conflict in Perspective*, by Emil Souleimanov (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007), 13–15.

Electronically-Published Books

Catherine Guicherd, *The Enlarged EU's Eastern Border: Integrating Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in the European Project*, SWP-Studien 2000/S 20 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2002), 31–32, http://swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=319.

Repeated Citation

Clarke, Goodwin, and Whiteley, *Brexit*, 80–84.

Gupta, "Climate Change," 45.

Consecutive Citation

Ibid., 45–48.

Journals

Article in a Print Journal

Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 2 (March/April 1994): 67–82, doi: 10.2307/20045920.

Article in an Online Journal

Farkhad Tolipov, "Uzbekistan and Russia: Alliance against a Mythic Threat?" *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* 7, no. 1 (January 11, 2006): 3–5, www.cacianalyst.org/files/20060111Analyst.pdf.

Item in an Online Database

Halford J. Mackinder, "Modern Geography, German and English," *The Geographical Journal* 6, no. 4 (1895): 367–379, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1773888.

Book Review

Cameron Ross, review of *Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed*, by Grigorii V. Golosov, *Slavic Review* 63, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 898–899.

Newspapers and Magazines

Svante Cornell, "The War That Russia Wants," *The Guardian*, August 8, 2008.

Markus Feldenkirchen and Horand Knaup, "Schulz Heads to Berlin. The Man Who Could Shake Up German Politics," *Der Spiegel*, November 25, 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/eu-parliament-president-schulz-could-shake-up-german-politics-a-1123130.html.

Theses and Doctoral Dissertations

Jeff Sahadeo, "Creating a Russian Colonial Community: City, Nation, Empire in Tashkent, 1865–1923" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois, 2000), 96–108, 116.

Presentations at Symposia, Meetings or Conferences

Jonathan Wheatley, "Democratization in Georgia since 2003: Revolution or Repackaging?" (Paper presented at the Third International Workshop for Young Scholars, Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan, July 5, 2006).

Archives and Manuscript Collections

Sh. Z. Eliava and G. I. Broido to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, V. I. Lenin, L. D. Trotsky and L. B. Krasin, telegram, Tashkent, December 27, 1919, file 588, fol. 13, container 4-39-43, Chicherin Papers, Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow.

Interviews

Published and Broadcast Interviews

Paris Hilton, Interview with Larry King, Larry King Live, *CNN*, June 28, 2007.

Unpublished Interview

Petr Šochman (EC Directorate General for Competition), interview with author, September 24, 2008.

Unattributed Interview

Interview with a Border Guard officer, August 28, 1998.

Websites and Social Media

"European Council decides on sanctions on Belarus," The Federal Chancellor, May 25, 2021, https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-en/news/europaeischer-rat-1917754.

Stephen Blank, "The Russian Balance Sheet at Hangzhou," *Atlantic Council* (blog), September 7, 2016, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-russian-balance-sheet-at-hangzhou.

Jens Stoltenberg (@jensstoltenberg), "NATO Allies were briefed on Russia's intelligence activities, which resulted in the Vrbetice explosion in 2014," Twitter, April 22, 2021, 11:16 a.m., https://twitter.com/jensstoltenberg/status/1385160507506704386.

Personal Communication

Hans-Uwe Stahlmann, e-mail message to author, December 29, 2017.

Adapted from *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017), 741–890.

Please consult our website https://stuter.fsv.cuni.cz for further details, including the Ethics and Malpractice Statement.

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE

STUDIA TERRITORIALIA

XXI

2021

2

Published by Charles University,
Karolinum Press, Ovocný trh 560/5, 116 36 Praha 1
Czech Republic
www.karolinum.cz
Typeset by Karolinum Press
Printed by Karolinum Press
MK ČR E 18588
ISSN 1213-4449 (Print)
ISSN 2336-3231 (Online)