Youth Rocks?
Youth Leisure and Engagement in Transcending and Reinforcing Urban Ethno-National Divides in Former Yugoslavia

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Introduction

- **Aim:** to explore the forms and levels of young people’s engagement in urban cultural and civic life in Former Yugoslavia after its dissolution.
- **Focus** on ethno-nationally (highly or lowly) contested urban spaces, affected by the Yugoslav wars, development of nationalism, economic crises and crises related to the post-socialist transition.
- **Main goal:** to observe the trends in youth’s activities, in schools but particularly in their free time, reinforcing, transcending, eventually opposing, the ethno-national divides boosted by migration, war, and post war.
- **Main cases studied:** Mostar and Mitrovica: different but comparable experiences in the war and post-war period regarding degrees of violence, involvement in war and interethnic relations.
- **Added comparison (control case):** Rijeka: example of former highly contested and ethno-nationally divided city between a Slavic and a non-Slavic community, developing a conspicuous number of national minorities variably affected by Post Yugoslav transition. Useful insights on Serbo-Croatian relations.

Materials and Sources

- youth studies, CSO/youth organization (YO) reports, demographic and socio-economic statistics, history, political science, sociology (focus on cases and esp. on youth).

Literature


Results

**Rijeka**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Croats</th>
<th>Serbs</th>
<th>Muslims/ Bosniaks</th>
<th>Italians</th>
<th>Slovenes</th>
<th>Yugoslavs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>167,964</td>
<td>69.76%</td>
<td>9.05%</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>17.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>128,674</td>
<td>82.52%</td>
<td>5.67%</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 20th century demographic changes due to big flows of population transfers and immigrations, as well as to mixed marriages and identity shifting across linguisitic boundaries. Youth as a force of change.
- Rock or other forms of youth leisure do not play any significant role in Reinforcing (R) or Transcending (T) the mental border between the Croatian majority and the other minorities, apart from new generations of football fans (R)

**Mitrovica**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Albanians</th>
<th>Bosniaks</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>75,865</td>
<td>79.63%</td>
<td>10.28%</td>
<td>5.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>105,797</td>
<td>76.48%</td>
<td>9.65%</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Completely divided city after the Kosovo war - with two separate municipalities (since 2013: Kosovo Albanian dominated Mitrovica South (‘Mitrovicë’/ Kosovska Mitrovica) and Kosovo Serb dominated Mitrovica North (Kosovska Mitrovica’/ Mitrovica e Veriut).
- 1998-2008: High levels of inter-ethnic violence. Many IDPs. Strong international presence (UNMIK, KFOR, OSCE).
- 2009-2016: Inter-ethnic situation improved. More circulation and contact. (EULEX)
- High socio-economic deprivation and poverty, unemployment rate around 60% - youth particularly affected with unemployment about 70% (est. 2014).
- Youth involvement in local episodes Reinforcing (R) Transcending (T) or Questioning (Q) the physical and mental ethnic border:
  - Fatal ethnic clashes between Albanians and Serbs in March 2004 and March 2008 R
  - Language barrier through segregated, monolinguol education R
  - CSO/youth organizations: Community Building Mitrovica (CBM, since 2003), Mitrovica Rock School (since 2008) and Diakonie Youth Center Mitrovica (since 2010) helped to ease inter-ethnic tensions among youth through leisure and educational activities – new contacts and friendships T/Q

Theory and Methods

- **Methods:** comparative case study approach, (non-)partisan observation, semi-structured narrative interviews, and informal talks. Literature review

Conclusions

- **Mostar:** Unified spirit not reached; Growing tendency to settle across the physical border (T); Growth of neighbourhood based civic actions and engagement (T)
- **Mitrovica:** City remains still deeply divided; Increasing mobility and contact between North and South youth (T); Increasing CSO and YO activities facilitated by de-escalation of inter-ethnic tensions (T)

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