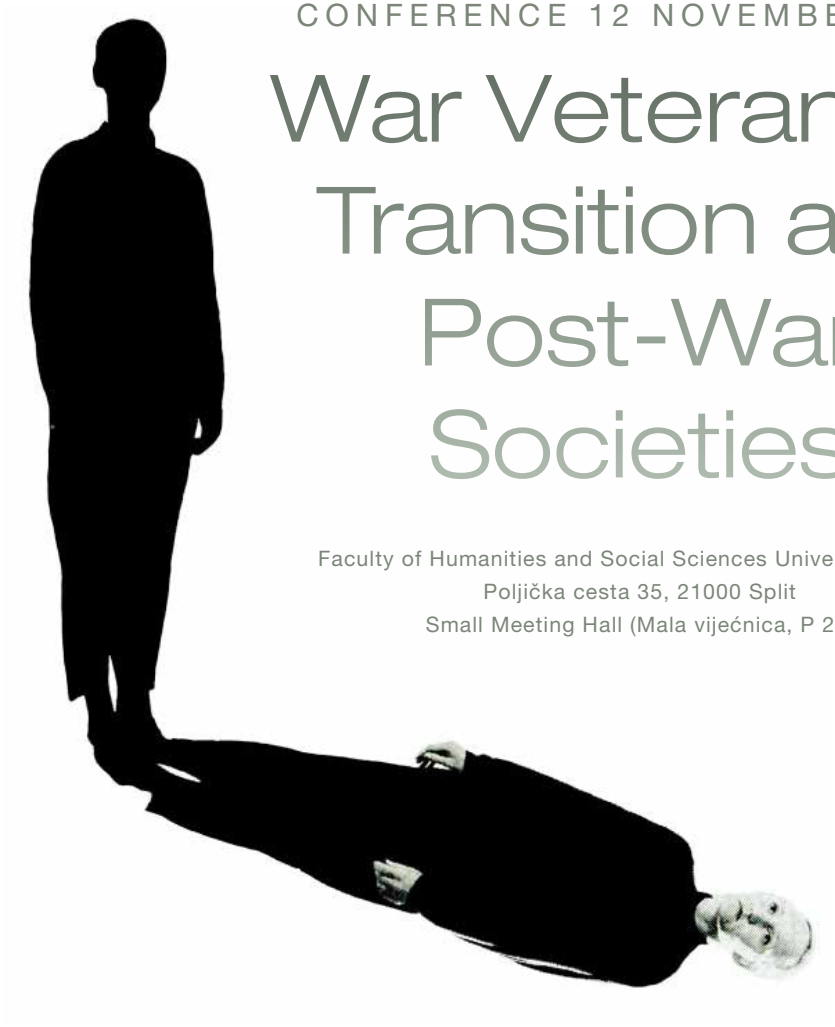
CONFERENCE 12 NOVEMBER 2026

War Veterans in Transition and Post-War Societies

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Split
Poljička cesta 35, 21000 Split
Small Meeting Hall (Mala vijećnica, P 29)



PROGRAM

09:00 – 09:15	**Participant Registration**
09:15 – 09:35	**OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE**
09:35 – 09:55	**INTRODUCTIORY PRESENTATION:** **Aleksandar Jakir, Andrijana Perković-Paloš** Transition of Croatian War Veterans: Challenges to Successful Reintegration
09:55 – 10:10	**Julija Barunčić Pletikosić, Ivan Radoš** Veterans' Associations in the Process of Post-War Transition: An Analysis of Oral Histories
10:10 – 10:25	**Tomislav Šulj** Why Is It Stressful for War Veterans to Talk About Post-War Life?
10:25 – 10:40	**Margareta Mučić** War Trauma as a Subject of Research and Its Role in Recent Historiography of the Croatian War of Independence
10:40 – 11:00	**DISCUSSION**
11:00 – 11:30	**COFFEE BREAK**
11:30 – 11:45	**Jeoffrey van Woensel** Veterans, Tell Us Your Stories! Recognition and Appreciation Through Sharing Veterans' Stories
11:45 – 12:00	**Valdona Gashi, Ljubica Jelušič** Social Influence of War Veterans in Post-War Societies: Comparative Analysis of Veterans in Slovenia and Kosovo
12:00 – 12:15	**Charles O. Warner III** Righteous Battles in Post-War Perpetuities: The Dueling Dualities of Veteran Integration and Transitional Justice in Southeast Europe
12:15 – 12:30	**Ethem Çeku, Pleurat Kabashi** From Combatant to Veteran: The Transition and Reintegration of Former KLA Members in Post-War Kosovo, 1999–2008

12:30 – 12:50	**DISCUSSION**
12:50 – 13:50	**LUNCH BREAK**
13:50 – 14:05	**Annabel de Ruijter** From Family Memory to Public Memory: Remembering World War II in the Netherlands
14:05 – 14:20	**Tihomir Cipek** Homeland War and Dialogic Memory
14:20 – 14:35	**Bálint Jurászik** From Perpetrator to Victim? Moral Injury and Historical Memory in Peppermint Candy
14:35 – 14:50	**Sven Milekić** “No, Defenders Mustn’t Be Trusted”: Alternative Narratives, Resentment, Resignation and Resistance Among Croatian Veterans
14:50 – 15:10	**DISCUSSION**
15:10 – 15:30	**CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE**

Transition of Croatian War Veterans: Challenges to Successful Reintegration

Abstract

Croatia was among the European countries that had to face the challenges of transitioning and adapting veterans from wartime to peacetime conditions at the end of the 20th century, in parallel with significant human losses and material destruction during the War of Independence. Croatian war veterans represented an important social group that played a crucial role in defending and restoring an independent and sovereign Croatian state. This presentation presents the first results of the project "From War to Peace: Croatian Veterans in Transition (CRO VETERANS)", focusing on the main challenges and obstacles veterans faced during their transition to civilian life and reintegration into post-war society. The presentation is based on our qualitative study of 22 structured interviews conducted with veterans from 2024 onwards. The study employs thematic content analysis within a microhistorical approach, examining individual experiences in the broader context of post-war Croatia.

Aleksandar Jakir

Aleksandar Jakir completed his B.A. and M.A. study program in history at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (Germany), where he also received his Ph.D. in 1997. From 1997 to 1999 he worked as a research associate at the Historical Institute at Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Germany, followed by a position as Assistant professor at the Department for East European History at Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany, from 1999 to 2006. He was a guest professor for Southeast European History at University of Basel (Switzerland) in 1998-99 and 2006-2007. Since 2007, he has been a Professor for Croatian History and Contemporary and Modern History at the Department of History of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Split (Croatia). He currently heads the scientific research project of the Croatian Science Foundation "From War to Peace. Croatian Veterans in Transition" (2023-2027).

Andrijana Perković-Paloš

Andrijana Perković- Paloš (Split, 1988.) holds a PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities (History) from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split, where she is an external associate. Her research focuses on the Croatian War of Independence and controversial and sensitive issues in recent Croatian history. She is the author of the book Vlada demokratskog jedinstva (2020), as well as several research articles and book chapters, and has participated in several national and international research projects.

Veterans' Associations in the Process of Post-War Transition: An Analysis of Oral Histories

Abstract

This paper examines the process of post-war transition in Croatia through the perspectives of veterans who have been or currently are active in veterans' associations. It is based on oral history interviews conducted with association presidents and prominent members, aiming to explore how individuals with relevant experience in veterans' organizations view issues related to the transition from war to peace and the status of veterans in post-war Croatian society. The interviews cover wartime experiences and the transition to civilian life, as well as attitudes toward veterans' associations, state institutions, and public perception of veterans. Other topics include collective action and veterans' protests, commemorative practices and the preservation of the memory of the Homeland War, the role of media and education, the relationship between veterans and the broader community, and the current status and future of the veteran population. Through the analysis of testimonies and interpretations, the paper seeks to contribute to an understanding of the social consequences of the transition from war to peace and the evolving status of Croatian veterans in post-war society. It also highlights the value of oral history in researching veterans' own interpretations of the transition process.

Julija Barunčić Pletikosić

Dr. Julija Barunčić Pletikosić was born in 1980. Graduated Croatian Language and Literature and History from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, University of Zagreb. Acquired Ph.D in history at the doctoral study at the Croatian Studies of the University of Zagreb (2014) with the thesis Catholic Church in Croatia and Homeland War 1991 – 1995: attitudes, activities and sufferings. She works at the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War as the Head of the Department for scientific research of the Homeland War. Since 2014 she has been teaching at the Department of History at the Catholic University in Zagreb at the elective course Catholic Church and Homeland War 1991 - 1998 as assistant professor. She has published an author book and several scientific papers in scientific and professional journals related to the Homeland War. She has written several book chapters on Croatian and English and attended scientific conferences in Croatia and abroad. She edited a large number of books on the subject of the Homeland War.

Ivan Radoš

Ivan Radoš, a historian and archivist, is employed at the Croatian Memorial-Documentation Center of the Homeland War. He was born in 1978 in Zagreb, where he completed his primary and secondary education. He graduated in History and Latin from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb in 2005. Since 2006, he has worked at the Croatian Memorial-Documentation Centre of the Homeland War, currently serving as a senior archivist in the Department for Scientific Research on the Homeland War. He is the author and co-author of scholarly and professional papers on the Homeland War, the co-author of a book, and the editor of several HMDCDR publications. He defended his doctoral dissertation, *Military Organization and Activities of Rebel Serbs in the Northern Dalmatia Region (1991–1995)*, in 2018 at the Centre for Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb.

Why Is It Stressful for War Veterans to Talk About Post-War Life?

Abstract

The Department of History within the Faculty of Philosophy in Split, is collaborating with the Croatian Memorial and Documentation Centre of the Homeland War on a project called “From War to Peace. Croatian Veterans in Transition”. Our teams conduct research in archives and written sources as well as interviews with veterans, which will enable a deeper understanding of the research questions posed. Although the goal of the project is clear; to present aspects of the transition of veterans from war to peace, their adaptation in the extremely complex period after the end of the war, we encounter obstacles on that path. One of the unexpected obstacle is the fact that it is actually more difficult for war veterans to talk about life after the war than to remember and talk about the war days. The topic of this presentation is to analyze why talking about the post-war transition causes stress for veterans, what are the ways to make the interview easier for them and what are their expectations from this project.

Tomislav Šulj

Tomislav Šulj was born on February 1, 1976 in Zagreb. He completed his graduate studies in history in 2011, at the Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, where he is completing his postgraduate doctoral studies in contemporary history with thesis „Operation ‘Maslenica’“. Since 2018, he has been employed at the Croatian Memorial and Documentation Center of the Homeland War, and from 2022 as a senior archivist. He has participated in several international projects and conferences. A significant part of his work is dedicated to the application and possibilities of the Oral History methodology. He is the author and co-author of four books on the Homeland War.

War Trauma as a Subject of Research and Its Role in Recent Historiography of the Croatian War of Independence: Case Study

Abstract

This paper examines the place of war trauma in recent historiography of the Croatian War of Independence and considers the extent to which interdisciplinary research can contribute to a historical understanding of Croatian veterans' wartime and post-war experiences.

The paper brings historiographical scholarship into dialogue with findings from psychiatric, psychological, and other interdisciplinary research, as well as with legislative and institutional sources and oral testimony. Particular attention is devoted to the long-term psychological consequences of wartime experience, the development of institutional care, the return to professional and family life, and the social circumstances of post-war reintegration. Clinical samples, war veterans with disabilities, former prisoners of war, and members of veterans' associations document important forms of the long-term consequences of war, but they do not provide a basis for drawing conclusions about the veteran population as a whole. The heterogeneity of both research samples and post-war life trajectories demonstrates that there is no single pattern of the traumatised veteran and that reintegration cannot be reduced to the presence or absence of a PTSD diagnosis. Its course was also shaped by employment, material circumstances, family relations, social acceptance, and access to institutional support.

This perspective is further developed through a case study of Winton Afrić, based on an authorised interview conducted in 2024 and his autobiographical book Rat u meni. His testimony makes it possible to trace the relationship between wartime experience and the pre-war and post-war dimensions of an individual biography. Enduring wartime memories, continued attachment to former comrades, the persistence of wartime preparedness, and the later attribution of meaning to particular events coexist with professional work, family life, and social functioning. The case therefore demonstrates the value of oral history for examining forms of experience that medical, statistical, and administrative sources cannot fully capture.

Margareta Mučić

Margareta Mučić studied History and Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split. Her academic interests include contemporary Croatian history, the Croatian War of Independence, veterans' history, war trauma, oral history, and memory studies. Her interdisciplinary background includes earlier education in physiotherapy as well as international educational experience through the Erasmus+ programme. During her university studies, she also served as a student representative on the Council of the Department of Philosophy. Her current interests focus particularly on veterans' post-war experiences, the long-term consequences of war, and personal testimony as a historical source.

Veterans, Tell Us Your Stories! Recognition and Appreciation Through Sharing Veterans' Stories

Abstract

The Netherlands Veterans Institute implements Dutch veterans policy on behalf of the Ministry of Defense. The Netherlands Veterans Institute is dedicated to providing care for, and ensuring recognition and appreciation of, Dutch veterans and their families. It does this, among other things, by collecting and making available veterans' stories. One of the ways we do this is through oral history. We document their life stories and offer others the opportunity to listen to their stories online or use them for research and reuse.

We want to hear from veterans about their experiences as service members and how those experiences have influenced the rest of their lives. We also want to know whether they feel recognized and appreciated by society. We use their stories for our own research, for articles on our website, for our veterans' magazine, for books on Dutch military history, and for podcasts.

In this lecture, I will discuss the importance of veterans sharing their stories: for themselves, for academia, and for society. I will explain what is most important to us when collecting these stories and what motivates veterans to participate in our interview project. I will also discuss how telling and sharing these stories can contribute to the recognition and appreciation of veterans in Dutch society.

Jeoffrey van Woensel

Jeoffrey van Woensel (1968) studied history at Radboud University Nijmegen. After graduating, he fulfilled his military service as a reserve officer in the Royal Netherlands Army from 1992 to 1994. In 2001, he joined the Ministry of Defense as a military historian and worked as a researcher for the Netherlands Institute for Military History. Since 2015, he has been seconded by the Ministry of Defense to the Center of Expertise at the Netherlands Veterans Institute. He is the project leader of the Dutch Veterans Interview Collection. He is the author and co-author of several publications in the field of military and veterans' history. He is currently working on a publication about combat experiences based on interviews with Dutch veterans.

Social Influence of War Veterans in Post-War Societies: Comparative Analysis of Veterans in Slovenia and Kosovo

Abstract

The paper deals with questions of social influence of war veterans, who in general expect that the government and the public would support their rights to have some benefits and social position due to their veteran status, and that they deserve some kind of social respect. The theoretical approach, used to define the social influence of veterans, was based on a combination of theories of Kelmann (1958), Honneth (1995), and Fraser (1995). The empirical survey was carried out among the war veterans from the Slovenian War for Independence in 1991 and war veterans of the KLA in Kosovo War in 1998-1999. The authors will present the methodological challenges in surveying war veterans, the state policies about the veteran benefits and theirs realization in practice, and the perception of veterans of their social influence regarding the war memories and historical facts.

Valdona Gashi

Valdona Gashi is young researcher at Defense Research Center of the Faculty of Social Sciencies, University of Ljubljana. She is Ph.D. candidate in the third study year at the Doctoral Study Program Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. Her research interest is in human security.

Ljubica Jelušič

Ljubica Jelušič is researcher at Defense Research Center and full professor at the Defense Studies Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. She teaches courses on polemology, military sociology, security in South East Europe. Her research interests are military sociology, peacekeeping operations, international and regional security.

Righteous Battles in Post-War Perpetuities: The Dueling Dualities of Veteran Integration and Transitional Justice in Southeast Europe

Abstract

How do collisions of post-war veteran veneration and war crime investigation influence the presumed fundamentals of veteran societal re-integration? How do long-term processes of transnational transitional justice continually render the concept "integrated" as untenable? Alternately, are researchers framing "re/integration" correctly? With default emphases on veterans as opposed to seeking the sociopolitical responsibilities of a "new" post-war society to re-imagine rather than reintegrate. These questions remain central (yet frequently neglected until seized by controversy) to both a veteran's and a society's post-war sociopolitical responsibilities. And with the recent conviction of Hashim Thaci – wartime commander with the Kosovo Liberation Army in the 1990s and former president of Kosovo – of war crimes, the death of Ratko Mladic as he served a life sentence for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, and the on-going veneration/rehabilitation of convicted war criminals and fascist narratives in Croatia today, these questions remain contemporary and fundamental to comparative study or methodological innovation vis-à-vis veterans in societies across Southeast Europe. Therefore, by positioning protracted transitional justice protocols as a pointof- departure for the study of veteran "integration," this contribution seeks to disrupt performative or normative timelines of veteran transitions while addressing how researchers frame our discussions.

Charles O. Warner III

Charles O. Warner III is a combat veteran of the U.S. Air Force (Bomb Squad), a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer. He holds a PhD in cultural anthropology and the political sciences with emphases on peace, conflict, military, and security studies. His ethnographic fieldwork, qualitative data development, and quantitative data analyses examine intersectional elements of post-conflict societies - to include war veteran (trans)national relations, democratic governance, memory activism, peacebuilding, and strategies of solidarity and security. He has trained to 1) develop fundamental data and strategic insights as well as translate insights into anticipated outcomes, needs assessments, and stakeholder engagement, 2) act independently toward research objectives yet collaborate with team members / stakeholders to deliver on project milestones, and 3) convert data into scalable, actionable, and adaptable content. He has six years of experience in research project management while investigating socio-economic-political developments in Eastern Europe and the North Atlantic region, engaging cross-cultural communication to pursue research into societal challenges and public policy.

From Combatant to Veteran: The Transition and Reintegration of Former KLA Members in Post-War Kosovo, 1999–2008

Abstract

The end of the war in Kosovo in June 1999 marked the beginning of a profound political, social, and institutional transition. An important dimension of this transition was the passage of former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) from wartime mobilization to civilian life. This process unfolded in a society confronted with the consequences of war, high unemployment, nascent domestic institutions, and extensive international administration.

This paper examines the social, economic, and institutional dimensions of the transition from combatant to veteran during the period 1999–2008. It focuses on the demobilization and transformation of the KLA, the establishment of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), the reintegration of former combatants into civilian life and nascent institutions, as well as the challenges of employment, economic security, social status, and institutional recognition.

Drawing on domestic and international institutional documentation, reports produced by organizations involved in post-war transition and reintegration, and relevant scholarly literature, the study examines the case of Kosovo from the perspective of social history, while employing disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) as an analytical framework.

The analysis shows that the transition from combatant to veteran was not merely a technical process of demobilization, but rather a broader redefinition of social position, institutional role, and economic security. While some former KLA members joined the KPC, the police service, public administration, and political institutions, others faced unemployment, economic insecurity, and limited opportunities for sustainable reintegration. Central to the analysis is the tension between the symbolic capital acquired through participation in the war and the socio-economic position of veterans in peacetime. Kosovo thus constitutes a distinctive case in Southeast Europe for examining veterans' reintegration and the broader social dynamics of post-war transition.

Ethem Çeku

Ethem Çeku is a historian specializing in modern and contemporary Albanian history, with research focused on the Albanian National Movement, the political and diplomatic history of Kosovo and Albania, Albanians in the Ottoman Empire, Albanian–Serbian and Albanian–Yugoslav relations, the Balkan Wars, Balkan diplomacy, and Great Power policies toward the Albanian question. His work is grounded extensively in domestic and international archival sources.

Pleurat Kabashi

Pleurat Kabashi is an archaeologist and university lecturer with research focused on Roman Dardania, Late Antiquity, epigraphy, archaeological fieldwork, and cultural heritage. Since 2016, director of the archaeological excavation and conservation project at the Castle of Korisha (Prizren).

From Family Memory to Public Memory: Remembering World War II in the Netherlands

Abstract

This presentation explores how memories of Dutch veterans of the Second World War continue to shape the second and third generations, and how these family memories relate to Dutch remembrance culture. It draws on oral history interviews with five families of Second World War veterans.

The interviews show that memories are not simply passed from one generation to the next. They change over time as children and grandchildren give their own meaning to the experiences of their parents and grandparents. Some stories are repeated, while others are forgotten, changed or left unspoken.

The presentation also looks at the connection between family memories and the wider Dutch culture of remembrance. How do commemorations, public stories and ideas about the Second World War influence the way later generations understand their family history? And how do family stories, in turn, add to or challenge these wider narratives?

By looking at both family memories and public remembrance, this presentation shows how the experiences of veterans continue to have meaning long after the war itself. It argues that intergenerational memory is an ongoing process in which memories are continually given new meaning.

Annabel de Ruijter

Annabel de Ruijter (1991) holds a BA in History and an MA in Public History from the University of Amsterdam. Since 2022, she has been working as a researcher at the Netherlands Veterans Institute. Her work focuses on veterans' oral histories, military history, collective memory, and the intergenerational transmission of memories and narratives. Drawing on her background in Public History, she is particularly interested in how veterans' experiences and military-historical themes can be researched, interpreted, and made accessible to wider audiences. Her recent research examines collective memory and the intergenerational transmission of Second World War narratives within veterans' families.

Homeland War and Dialogic Memory

Abstract

The presentation will use the comparative-historical method, and based on Aleida Assmann's theory of memory, to examine the possibility of establishing a dialogic memory of the Homeland War. This will be attempted using two examples. The Homeland War Monument in Krapina, which seeks to connect partisan fighters from World War II with fighters of the Homeland War. The monument itself, its aesthetic and political characteristics, and the politics of symbols that were supposed to enable political legitimation will be analyzed. What are the political messages of the monument? Who accepted them and who rejected them? What political decision was behind it? The second example is the Homeland War Monument in Koprivnica. An analysis of the process of erecting the monument will point to several different positions that emerged. Based on historical sources that point to different approaches to the phenomenon of the monument by Homeland War associations, the artistic committee composed of prominent experts and scientists, and the artists themselves, their dialogue will be reconstructed. It will highlight the aesthetic, political and symbolic values that united them, but also those that separated them. Both examples point to the values that are present in shaping the memory of the Homeland War and the challenges we face in establishing a culture of remembrance, but also to the possibilities of overcoming them and establishing a dialogical memory.

Tihomir Cipek

Tihomir Cipek, Ph.D., a political scientist, is a full-time professor in tenure at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb. He won twice the Croatian National Award for Science. He served as the president of the Croatian Political Science Association. He was a visiting professor and researcher at the universities in Austria, Brazil, Germany, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well at IWM institute in Vienna. He was a member of the International Editorial Board of The International Encyclopaedia of Political Science published by APSA. The subject of his research interests are political ideologies, comparative politics and European studies.

From Perpetrator to Victim? Moral Injury and Historical Memory in Peppermint Candy

Abstract

Lee Chang-dong's Peppermint Candy (1999) has become one of the most influential cinematic representations of South Korea's authoritarian past and the legacy of the Gwangju Uprising. Unlike many historical narratives that centre on the victims of state violence, the film follows Yong-ho, a former soldier and police officer whose life is gradually revealed in reverse chronological order. In doing so, Peppermint Candy invites viewers to confront a more uncomfortable historical question: how should we understand the long-term psychological and moral consequences experienced by those who participated in state violence?

This paper analyses Peppermint Candy through the concepts of historical memory and moral injury. Rather than interpreting Yong-ho as a victim equivalent to those who suffered under military repression, I argue that the film explores the enduring psychological burden of perpetration and the inability to escape responsibility for political violence. The reverse narrative structure reconstructs the gradual transformation of an ordinary young man into an agent of authoritarian repression, illustrating how institutions of military service, policing, and dictatorship shaped individual identities during South Korea's developmental state.

Drawing on film analysis, memory studies, and scholarship on South Korean democratization, the paper examines how Peppermint Candy represents guilt, silence, trauma, and responsibility without absolving the perpetrator of moral accountability. Particular attention is devoted to the Gwangju Uprising as the decisive rupture in Yong-ho's biography and to the film's challenge to conventional binaries separating perpetrators and victims. Instead of collapsing these categories, the film exposes the complex relationship between personal trauma, institutional violence, and historical responsibility.

The paper also situates Peppermint Candy within South Korea's broader politics of memory during the democratic era. Produced nearly two decades after the Gwangju Uprising, the film contributed to public discussions about how societies remember authoritarian violence and whether reconciliation requires confronting not only the suffering of victims but also the experiences of those who committed violence under state authority.

By bringing together film studies, memory studies, and contemporary debates on moral injury, this paper argues that Peppermint Candy demonstrates how cinema can illuminate the ethical ambiguities of historical violence without relativising responsibility. The film reveals that authoritarian systems produce lasting psychological consequences for perpetrators while simultaneously reaffirming the centrality of accountability in democratic memory culture.

Bálint Jurászik

Bálint Jurászik is an MA candidate in History at Kodolányi János University (Hungary) and works as a Government Policy Officer. His research focuses on South Korean democratization, memory politics, and the cultural representation of the Gwangju Uprising, with particular interest in film, historical memory, and the legacy of authoritarian violence in contemporary South Korea.

“No, Defenders Mustn’t Be Trusted”: Alternative Narratives, Resentment, Resignation and Resistance Among Croatian Veterans

Abstract

As part of the violent dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, Croatia’s Homeland War serves as pivotal historical event for contemporary, fully independent and internationally recognised Croatia. As such, the Homeland War is enshrined in the Constitution as the birthday of contemporary Croatia, a defensive war against “the Greater-Serbian aggression” in which freedom and independence were won. As it serves as the foundational event for Croatia, war veterans, represented by numerous associations, play a pivotal role in shaping and preserving the collective memory of the war. These numerous associations, enjoying different levels of local, regional, and national support, have access to media, politics, and institutions, and act as influential actors in Croatian society. In their mnemonic activities, associations promote the dominant narrative about the war and their role in what they refer as the “greatest part of their lives”.

However, examining Croatian veterans at the micro level reveals that different counter-narratives about the 1990s war and its legacy remain alive and are even gaining strength. Beyond reproducing popular tropes promoted by associations, many veterans, in semi-structured interviews and focus groups, conveyed ideas that subvert the dominant narrative and subsequent hegemonic discourse about contemporary Croatia. Even when unprompted by the researcher, these counter-narratives of Croatia’s war crimes, ultra-nationalism, Croatia’s problematic role in the Bosnian War and general condemnation of political leadership often took an important place in the discussions or interviews. Combined with veterans’ dissatisfaction with corruption, clientelism, and the fraudulent transformation of public ownership and de-industrialisation, these counter-narratives paint a different picture of Croatia and play an essential role in their post-war (re)construction of identity. Aside from reproducing alternative narratives, veterans expressed resentment with both the war itself, how it is publicly (mis)remembered and (mis)used, and the role veterans’ associations, often seen as political proxy organisations, play in society. For some, this resentment leads to resignation, political paralysis, and withdrawal from the public sphere. For others, it serves as an important building block of their identity and ideological position that they express in the public.

Sven Milekić

Sven Milekić is a senior teaching and research assistant at the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies, University of Rijeka. As a postdoctoral researcher at the CEU Democracy Institute, he researched veterans of the post-Yugoslav wars as part of the international scientific project "The Aggressor: Self-Perception and External Perception of an Actor Between Nations". Funded by the Irish Research Council, he earned his PhD in history at Maynooth University in Ireland. His dissertation focuses on the creation and development of veterans' associations in Croatia and the way they shaped the dominant narrative about the war in the 1990s.