

CONSTRUCTING TRADITIONAILITY OF THE EVENTS THE CASE-STUDY OF TWO BOSNIAN NATIONAL PARKS

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Abstract: The article presents an analysis of events in two contemporary Bosnian national parks, Kozara and Sutjeska, chief destinations of ideological tourism in the past, to illustrate how notions of tradition are constructed. The author primarily focuses on the selective usages of the past or on the culture of selective traditions. Yet tradition, similarly to heritage, authenticity, or sincerity, can be perceived as just another marketing label supposedly adding a special (economic) value to events, for example, in tourism. The research involved fieldwork as well as analysis of the periodical sources. The author exemplifies how so-called traditional events refer to the past and particular past events, with a special focus on the Yugoslav socialism and its values. She describes how the socialist past affects contemporary events in the parks and addresses the perception of their traditionality, specifically in the national parks of Kozara and Sutjeska, where the memorial architecture is still preserved. At the same time, she discusses the nationalistic reinterpretation of the common past and the role of the emancipatory Yugonostalgia.

Key words: events, festivals, national parks, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, (post)socialism

Introduction

The article analyses contemporary events in the two Bosnian national parks (NP), the Kozara National Park and of the Sutjeska National Park, focusing on the perception of the traditionality of their events. The research was conducted as part of the bilateral research project between Slovenia and

Bosnia and Hercegovina¹ and designed as an upgrading of the preliminary research of the traditionality of the events in the only Slovenian national park, Triglav National Park (TNP) (see Habinc, 2013 and 2014). While researching traditional events in the Triglav National Park, I was interested in how the organisers perceive the traditionality and how their perception has changed in time. On the other side, in Kozara and Sutjeska² I only focused on what the (co-)organizers of the events understand as traditional, to which historical period they link their notions and how they explain them. Most of the material for this article was collected during my fieldwork in August 2016, when I spent ten days in the tourist centres in the parks, in Mrakovica and Tjentište. I conducted five formal interviews with the authorities and park employees and three formal interviews with visitors of the parks. I also had random conversations with three employees and two visitors of the parks³. Besides that, I also searched for the media reports on the activities in the parks.

In addressing the perceptions of traditionality, I am therefore primarily interested in what Williams regarded as the culture of selective traditions (Williams, 1977, p. 117; cf. Williams, 1998, pp. 48-56). He defined it as the processes of the selective usages of the past (see Baskar, 2005, Jezernik, 2005, and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1995) which can further be related to perceiving tradition (and/or heritage) as a marketing strategy (e.g. Poljak Istenič, 2012; on the differences between tradition and heritage see e.g. Kockel & NicCraith, 2007 and Sims & Stephens, 2005). Having in mind that during the socialist years of Yugoslavia the national parks of Kozara and Sutjeska were destinations of ideological (political, memorial, shock etc.) tourism⁴ (see e.g. Burghardt &

¹ The research project War as a Turning Point in the Evaluation of Past and Present Experiences (BI-BA / 16-17-017). The project was financed by the Slovenian Research Agency between the 1st January 2016 and the 31st December 2017.

² The contemporary state of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed after the Dayton peace treaty in 1995. It consists of two partially independent entities which have their own governments as well as a central government – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska (Daytonski sporazum). There are nowadays three national parks in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the oldest and the largest one is Sutjeska, which was established in 1962, only a few years earlier than Kozara (Dizdarević & Hudović, 2012, p. 461). Sutjeska and Kozara are located on the today's territory of Republika Srpska (RS), while the National Park Una was established only in 2008 and extends on the territory of The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Nacionalni parkovi). It was not a part of my observation.

³ I recorded the official interviews with the representatives and three visitors of the parks and made notes on my impressions, observations and unofficial conversations. When listening to the recordings, I wrote down summaries of the interviews, and, where it seemed reasonable, I also extracted some interlocutors' quotes. Apart from one employee who did not agree with all the decisions of the park's management and thus wanted to remain anonymous, my interlocutors gave their consent to give their personal information.

⁴ As Yeomans emphasises, Yugoslav tourism played an essential role in the making and remaking of a socialist Yugoslav consciousness: "In the aftermath of the fratricidal conflict of the Second World War, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia aimed to make a new Yugoslav person with

Kirn, 2013, p. 84; Popovic, 2013, p. 311; Radovic, 2011; and Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2015, p. 214), I am interested if and how this is reflected in the parks' events today. Firstly, I analyse if contemporary events of the two parks are presented as traditional or not, and to which past events of the parks traditionality is linked. I also pay attention to the contemporary construction of the events' images. In this context I only superficially mention contemporary celebrations of the anniversaries of the Second World War battles, due to which the parks primarily became famous tourist destinations. Similarly, I bypass discussing contemporary memorial infrastructures related to the events taking place in both parks, which lately have gained attention of the media and researchers (e.g. Bergholz, 2007; Burghardt & Kirn, 2013; Dizdarević & Hudović, 2012; Exhibition *Življenja spomenikov*, Horvatinčić, 2014; Jauković, 2014; Karačić, 2012; Karge, 2009 and 2014; Kirn, 2011 and 2012; Mijić, 2012; Musabegović, [n. d.] and 2009; Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2015; Sokol, 2014; *Umetnost za skupnostno rabo* and Vidmar, 2017). Above all, I am interested in the timetable of events in both mentioned Bosnian national parks, in how they link contemporary events to the (socialist) past, and in what way they relate to representations of the past. Decades ago the two parks were predominantly destinations of massive ideological tourism, and most of their memorial architecture has been preserved. I will explore in what way this fact affects contemporary events taking place in both parks. I will also pay attention to the perception of their traditionality. However, the meaning ascribed to the traditional events by visitors or organizers is not in the foreground of my research (as it was, for example, in Radović's research in 2011 in Jajce). I understand spaces as agents and co-creators of their own history which can influence people's attitudes and behaviour by or due to their materiality (Stig Sørensen & Viejo-Rose, 2015, p. 7). Thus, I am primarily analysing what (traditional or not) events influence and how they contribute to the management of the parks (see Erdei, 2011, p. 179).

After 1995, the socialist and multinational past in Bosnia and Herzegovina is supposed to be doomed, destroyed or nationalistically adjusted. At the same time, the research indicates that three new (constitutive) national memories are being established (Sokol, 2014, p. 107; cf. Jauković, 2014; Karačić, 2012). However, when observing what once was common, we may not only be interested in the contemporary problems, dissonance and rivalry.⁵ We can explore

an unshakable socialist consciousness and imbued with a deep patriotic love for the Yugoslav homeland" (Yeomans, 2010, p. 101-102). Through travel to other parts of the country, the nations of Yugoslavia were supposed to learn to see each other as brothers and attain a Yugoslav identity, while at the same time they would have a glimpse of a good life. This was supposed to secure adherence to the new state and create contended consumers (ibid.).

⁵ For instance, when various communities differently understand different objects, for example memorials, and are also differently interested in them (Jauković, 2014, p. 81).

if and how the ideas which arose in the common past and were related to it have been transformed and transferred to the present times. We can indicate them by focusing on the material objects created in former Yugoslavia, which were considered common and which were built to establish, embody and nurture a shared Yugoslav identity or what was supposed to become its common value, such as brotherhood or unity (Jauković, 2014, p. 85).⁶ In that respect, I focus on the events taking place in the national parks of Kozara and Sutjeska, some of which are presented as traditional. I will use them to analyse the continuity of a common identity and its values. I will consider a question: is referring to the past nowadays a matter of nationalistic views only?

The Kozara National Park

The hilly landscape of Mrakovica near Prijedor⁷ was proclaimed a national park in 1967 (Dizdarević & Hudović, 2012, p. 461). In 1972 a memorial, dedicated to almost 35 000 victims of The Second World War from a wider area, was erected there. Two years later, a museum was opened as a part of the memorial complex. There is a memorial wall, close to the memorial and the museum, which includes 9864 inscribed names of partisans who died in the area (Karačić, 2012, pp. 35-37). Mrakovica was one of the venues where partisan resistance began in Yugoslavia during The Second World War. However, after 1945 the area was not that important in Yugoslavia.⁸ It was presented as one of the areas where freedom was won because local population collaborated with the partisan movement (Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2015, pp. 210-214). Soon after 1945 survivors of the Battle of Kozara began to spontaneously gather at Mrakovica and celebrate anniversaries of the break through the Nazis' ring. In the 1950s these assemblies became organized and formalised, while the central celebration coincided with Fighters' Day on July 4. Later it was shifted to another holiday, Day of the Uprising of the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina on July 27. Besides that, the largest and the most important annual

⁶ For example, the Museum of the 2nd Avnoj session in Jajce, which was reopened in 2007, is represented as the birthplace of the former Yugoslavia, but also as the birthplace of each of the former Yugoslav republics, now independent states, thereby emphasizing their common history (Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2012, p. 256).

⁷ Before the Second World War "there were inns, shops and a butcher and all the prominent people from Prijedor and Kozara area had their holiday cottages there" (M. Radić, personal communication, August 9, 2016). Most of the Mrakovica territory and properties were nationalized by state when this area became a national park, and people moved to the valley.

⁸ During the Second World War Yugoslav President Tito never fought at Kozara, he only visited Mrakovica when a monument was opened in 1972 (Karačić, 2012, p. 35).

meeting of Yugoslav writers has been organised on Mrakovica for decades (Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2015, pp. 210-214).

During the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina, between 1992 and 1995, Kozara did not witness the conflicts. The memorial complex was abandoned, but the monument on Mrakovica was not damaged. During the war the municipality of Prijedor was occupied by Serbs. In 1993 they erected a cross near the central parking and the entrance to the central memorial plateau, although they have no official authority over the area. The cross was blessed by Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church and dedicated to all victims of the Second World War. It still stands at the same spot, in the middle of the meadow, which in the past was encircled by 98 stone plaques exposing the names of the most important donors of various Yugoslav nationalities to the Mrakovica area (Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2015, pp. 213-214). Nowadays some plaques still delineate the meadow, while their inscriptions are barely seen, and their multi-ethnic meaning is left unexplained. An exhibition *Kozara during The National Liberation War* was opened in 1982, and it was partially reopened after the last war in 2003. In the same year a temporary (photo) exhibition on “the three genocides against Serbian population in the 20th Century” (Karačić, 2012, pp. 35-37; Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2015, pp. 215-223) was also displayed. In 2012 the National Park which was founded and financed by Republika Srpska was granted its own legislation dividing the park into three districts (N. Perić, personal communication, August 8, 2016; Zakon o Nacionalnom parku Kozara). Up to 2016 most of the tourist infrastructure of the park was privatized.

(Traditional) events in the Kozara National Park

Since 1997 the Association of Anti-Fascists and the National Liberation Army Fighters in BiH (SUBNOR) of Republika Srpska again celebrated the anniversary of the final battle at Kozara (on July 4), and since 2010 the prime minister of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, has frequently attended it (Karačić, 2012, pp. 50 and 66; cf. Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2016, p. 222). The event is mentioned at the park’s website together with other eight “manifestations” (Manifestacije): two marathons (hiking and bicycling), two art colonies, writers’ gathering, rally, touristic and sport event Winter Days⁹ and hiking gathering named Greetings to the Spring. Unlike anniversary of the Battle of Kozara, these are mostly sports events or events fostering (artistic) creativity which are supposed to expose the park’s (unspoiled) nature: “We promote nature. [...]”

⁹ The event connects representatives of municipalities and students of touristic secondary schools from the area. They first compete in sports and then in cooking (N. Pjerić, personal communication, August 8, 2016).

In the meanwhile, the trends have changed. Now, when people come to Mrakovica, they search for additional contents by themselves. They visit the memorial area, it takes them about half an hour to see the entire memorial infrastructure, and then they ask themselves: ‘Okay, what shall we do now?’ [...] Thus, for example, in the last ten years, we started to promote nature” (N. Pjerić, personal communication, August 8, 2016).¹⁰ When organizing the events, the management considers the national park’s main task as collaboration, since they organize independently only two art colonies and the mentioned writers’ gathering: “We are mainly good hosts, offering the territory and the infrastructure” (M. Radić, personal communication, August 9, 2016, cf. N. Pjerić, personal communication, August 8, 2016). However, the online presentation of the mentioned (nine) manifestations does not characterise them as traditional or non-traditional. Nevertheless, the anniversary of the battle as well as the writers’ gathering (which is nowadays perceived merely as a regional or a local event) have their origins in the former socialist state: “The 4th of July and the gathering of writers both date back to that period, both of them are traditional events” (N. Pjerić, personal communication, August 8, 2016; cf. M. Radić, personal communication, August 9, 2016). Apart from the celebration of the anniversary of the battle where thousands of people gather, and Winter Days which similarly attracts several thousand visitors, the rest of events are not massive (*ibid.*). Besides, many people still come to Mrakovica on the 1st of May, yet it is not even mentioned in the national park’s online timetable. Nevertheless, if only weather is good, local inhabitants celebrate Labour Day (*Neradni dani*), picnicking along the river of Sana as well as at Mrakovica, where many of them camp (N. Pjerić, personal communication, August 8, 2016). These gatherings were never accompanied by any official ceremony, not even by lighting bonfires.¹¹ Rather, they took form of “spontaneous socializing”: “It has always been spontaneous gathering. Even in the past. People have always been coming to Kozara, this has never been an organized event” (M. Radić, personal communication, August 9, 2016). Sometimes up to ten thousand people or more gather at Mrakovica, often causing traffic jam and logistical problems. The authorities of the park therefore designated the areas where

¹⁰ Among other things the management of the park arranged 300 km of footpaths, cycling and educational paths, and a jogging track; they also fixed many sightseeing points as well as picnic and recreation areas (N. Pjerić, personal communication, August 8, 2016).

¹¹ This does not apply to the Serbian settlement of Benkovac near Mrakovica (before the post-Second-World-War nationalization of the area there was also a Muslim part of Benkovac). There was “a sport and recreation centre for the youth of south-eastern Europe” built decades ago; and “bonfires, nightly gatherings and whatever else was also organized especially when there were brigades of young workers” (M. Radić, personal communication, August 9, 2016). Only a few demolished shacks and sport fields remained from this youth centre until today. However, the municipality of Prijedor plans to renovate it and dedicate it to youth tourism (Benkovac na Kozari and Na pomolu).

camping and picnics are allowed, depending on the protection and the districts of the park.¹² They also regularly organise traffic signalization and cleaning of the area (ibid.). In the last few years young people started organizing concerts for the 1st of May at a smaller ski resort behind the monument (N. Pjerić, personal communication, August 8, 2016). The entertainment and socializing were also stimulated by the “1st rock fest” *Kozara u srcu* held in July 2017; likewise, they were not on the web pages of the national park. The organizers presented the festival *Kozara u srcu* as “the biggest musical spectacle in the area and most likely also in the region”. Thousands of people came to Benkovac settlement near Mrakovica. The musician Goran Bregović, famous in the region, was also given a badge there; it should have reminded him of a similar badge that he received when he participated in a youth work brigade at Kozara in 1976 (*Kozara u srcu*, Održan and Bregi).

The Sutjeska National Park

The Battle of Sutjeska was the most famous inter-war battle in the former Yugoslavia. It involved participation of Yugoslav President Tito.¹³ In spite of that, the area around Tjentište, the centre of the future national park, was not supposed to become a historical monument only. At the end of the 19th century this territory was a hunting area. In 1962 it was declared a national park also due to its natural beauty and diversity of fauna and flora (Karge, 2014, pp. 141-142). Federal financing, management and construction of a memorial infrastructure (the ossuary, the monument, the Memorial House of the Battle of Sutjeska), the information centre and tourist facilities started already in the first post-war decades. Apart from the areas of high mountains, almost entire territory and properties of the Sutjeska National Park were nationalized, while most of population was relocated (Anonymous, personal communication, August 16, 2016). In time, the national park therefore became a touristic brand and the central and most prestigious place in the former Yugoslavia where the Second World War and one of its most important battles were commemorated (Karge, 2014, pp. 156-159). Young people from all over Yugoslavia participated in work brigades, constructing park infrastructure, such as a youth centre, a swimming pool and mountain routes. Since the 1960s Tjentište became one

¹² For example, they are prohibited in the vicinity of the monument.

¹³ The movie *Sutjeska* (1973) was one of the most expensive movies produced by Yugoslav (socialist) cinematography. In this movie, a famous British actor Richard Burton played Tito. After 1945 the park was one of Tito's hunting grounds: he had two hunting cottages there. During the war in 1992-1995 they were demolished, and the contemporary management of the park does not plan their reconstruction (Anonymous, personal communication, August 16, 2016).

of the obligatory (pilgrim) destinations for school excursions (Popovic, 2013, p. 296; Anonymous, personal communication, August 16, 2016). The Battle of Sutjeska was acted-out during the celebration of its 15th anniversary in 1958 as an important Yugoslav event. The battle took place in the first half of June in 1943 and until the end of the 1950s the local celebrations of the survivors were mostly organised on the 12th and 13th of June. However, since 1958 the anniversary was linked with the celebration of Fighters' Day on the 4th of July (Karge, 2014, pp. 122, 148). In the 1980s it was still one of the biggest commemorations in former Yugoslavia – for example, in 1983 about 150 000 people came to Tjentište (Karačić, 2012, p. 69).

Unlike the tourist and memorial infrastructure (e.g. the ossuary and the Memorial House of the Battle of Sutjeska), the central monument in Tjentište was not damaged during the war in 1992 – 1995. The park started to operate again in 1996. In 2008 it was declared a permanent national monument of culture of Bosnia and Hercegovina and it remained one of few areas from the former state which is still protected on the highest state level (Jauković, 2014, p. 93; cf. Anonymous, personal communication, August 16, 2016).

(Traditional) events in the Sutjeska National Park

Until 2011 the public company Sutjeska National Park was owned by Republika Srpska with the focus on forest management. When it was transformed to a public institution, its basic activity became tourism: “Before the war there was a massive historical tourism there. It was mainly concentrated here, in Tjentište, in this urban area. [...] You are right, today tourism is still massive. Yet, there is more emphasis on natural features which people are also more interested in¹⁴ even though the historical moment is not ignored. Visitors demand it and there is some interest also in this aspect of tourism” (V. Krslanović, personal communication, August 16, 2016). The first commemorations of the anniversary of the Battle of Sutjeska were organised again at the end of the 1990s. For example, in 1999 former soldiers gathered in Tjentište on the 15th of June (Hasić, 2013). However, after a couple of years the co-organizers of the commemorations came to disagreement (Karačić, 2012, pp. 69-71; cf. Hasić, 2013), which is why the anniversary is now celebrated twice: one celebration is organized by the Association of Anti-Fascists and the National Lib-

¹⁴ In 2013 70 km of footpaths and 80 km of cycling routes were fixed by the EU funds. Bicycles for the tourists were bought, 200 signs were set, mountain shelters and six tourist farms were equipped, three mountain lodges as well as five sightseeing points were built (Hasić, 2013). In comparison to massive ideological tourism from the past, at least some people still feel the area is “forgotten and cut off”: “You call it intact nature, we call it ‘vokojebina’ (a remote inaccessible place – author’s note)” (Prešeren, 2013).

eration Army Fighters in BiH (SUBNOR); and the other by the municipality of Foča and the Association of Anti-Fascists and the National Liberation Army Fighters in BiH (SUBNOR) of Republika Srpska. The last event is listed on the park's website (Tradicionalne manifestacije): "It is interesting that the federal SUBNOR celebrates the anniversary the day before or the day after the celebration organised by the SUBNOR of Republika Srpska. This is kind of political issues that last forever."¹⁵ The last time Republika Srpska and the federation celebrated the anniversary together was in 2005" (Anonymous, personal communication, August 16, 2016).

The online timetable mentions as traditional the events that have been taking place at least since 2008 (M. Radović, personal communication, August 16, 2016). It indicates that besides the anniversary of the battle, other events take place in the park as well. They extend from March to October. Some of them are co-organised by local hiking associations. The events include Day of Europarks, International Day of the Environment Protection, Mountaineering Ascent to Maglić Mountain on Day of St. Vid and Mountaineering Campaign on the Lakes of Zelengora.¹⁶ Most of them complies with the changed park's policy, highlighting its natural values (such as water, biodiversity, animals etc.).¹⁷ Together with Day of the Battle of Sutjeska, celebrated on the 13th of June, Parkovijada (in June) and Camp of Friendship (in July) they are presented as park's traditional events (Tradicionalne manifestacije). Parkovijada refers to sport games of employees of various national parks from Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Italy and from other countries, while Camp of Friendship is an "educational and sports event" co-organized with the Ferial Federation of Republika Srpska (ibid.). Its purpose is to "promote mobility of young people coming from different areas of the region". In addition, "one of the objectives of Camp of Friendship is to bring the youth and happenings back to once leading destination of youth tourism, to the Sutjeska National Park" (ibid.). Camp of Friendship includes the OK fest. It is a musical festival bringing together famous local and regional bands (O festivalu) and, at least according to the employees, it is nowadays the most massive event taking

¹⁵ Most of my random interlocutors knew about these separate celebrations which they commented as followed: "This is politics" (for example, A. Alejbegović, personal communication, August 11, 2016).

¹⁶ In 2016 the latter was organized together with Blueberry Days (M. Radović, personal communication, August 16, 2016).

¹⁷ Nevertheless, the park's website does not mention that, in 2016 the National Park of Sutjeska marked the 21st of March as Day of Forests as it was before; on the 22nd of March they celebrated Day of Water; Day of Earth was celebrated on the 22nd of April; the 21st and 22nd of May were dedicated to the Day of Cultural and Biodiversity, the 5th of June to International Day of Environment, the 16th of September to International Ozone Layer Day, and the 4th of October to Day of Animal Protection (M. Radović, personal communication, August 16, 2016).

place in the park. It started in 2013 when a student organization from Banja Luka followed example of work brigades in the former Yugoslavia and organised students' voluntary work to rebuild some parts of the park's infrastructure. In 2014 the event was renamed into Camp of Friendship. Since the next year the OK fest as a musical festival has been accompanied with numerous cultural, sporting and other events. Today they attract thousands of young people, which helps "the Sutjeska National Park to regain its old reputation" and "to revive it, bringing the youth from the whole region back to this fantastic natural environment." Half a century ago "it was dedicated primarily to the youth by its content and its offer, and it was built with the youth's extensive help"¹⁸ (O festivalu). "Camp definitely attracts thousands of people from the region, from the whole state and from the region. Many come from Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Serbia, of course, many come from Bosnia. [...] They do not only come here, they are active, they have active holidays" (M. Radović, personal communication, August 16, 2016). Besides the students' association from Banja Luka, the main co-organizer of the event is the Sutjeska National Park, offering not only sports and other activities, but also infrastructure. Unlike infrastructure of the Kozara National Park, the infrastructure of Tjentište is still not privatized: "What is the main problem of our park – its infrastructure" (V. Krslanović, personal communication, August 16, 2016). According to the head of the touristic sector of the Sutjeska NP, the problem is not only sustainment and renovation of its infrastructure, but more importantly, state ownership: "The economic time limit of the infrastructure ended up already a long time ago. There were no significant investments in the infrastructure. On the other hand, all those events taking part in the park, such as the OK fest for example, would not be as massive and as easily carried out if the infrastructure was not owned by the state. The prices we offer and the cooperation we offer... I do not believe any of the private hotels could support that. It simply would not be profitable for private owners or the prices would not be acceptable for visitors" (ibid.).

Besides the mentioned events, there were other happenings organized in the Sutjeska park. However, they are less exposed by the authorities and only marginally mentioned on the websites: Days of Oldtimers were organized in Tjentište at least in 2017 and (Second) Fair of Traditional Products was taking place as a part of them (News).¹⁹ On the 12th of August 2017 International Youth Day was celebrated for the second time by the event of Three Kettles of Foča. Participants competed in preparing either a goulash, a bean stew, or

¹⁸ Youth, friendship and love are nevertheless emphasized by this festival, and they are a common topic of various youth workshops and schools organised in natural settings (Anonymous, personal communication, August 16, 2016).

¹⁹ Cheese, wine, honey, brandy, prosciutto and other "typical products of the region" were sold there (Novosti).

a fish soup (Manifestacija Tri fočanska kotlića). Besides that, a three-day car rally between Kozara and Sutjeska (Reli Sutjeska) was organised in 2017.²⁰

From celebrating freedom and socialist ideas/ideals to celebrating nature, nation and capitalist ideals? (Un-)nationalistic appropriations of the past

If anything at all, the only thing related nowadays to pre-socialist times of the national parks of Kozara and Sutjeska could be a concern for (protection of) nature. Contemporary events which take place in the parks do not openly refer to hiking tourism, weekenders' cottages, or the way of living in the areas before their post-Second World War's. On the other hand, the events related to the Second World War or their post-war touristisation seem to be the kind of topics and time periods to which the events of both national parks relate even today.

(Un-)nationalistic appropriations of the past

According to Karačić, there are numerous politics of memorialisation of the Second World War in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina which mostly depend on the current position of political and non-governmental organizations in a particular area. However, in Republika Srpska the attitude towards the monuments of the Second World War and its commemoration has been centrally governed since 2011, with the partisan fight often portrayed as a national movement and equated with Serbian anti-fascist struggle (2012, pp. 45, 56, 67, 77). Therefore, the celebrations of the anniversaries of both important interwar battles in Kozara and Sutjeska are still politically the most exposed as well as massively visited. Today, a break with their socialist versions is made by nationalized reinterpretations of the joint multinational history (Jauković, 2014; Karge, 2014; Karačić, 2012; and Sahovic & Zulumovic, 2015) as well as by the new dates of central celebrations.²¹ But next to the most prominent, politicized and nationally (re)interpreted events, there are others, less exposed and seemingly

²⁰ Approximately a decade ago off-road jeep rides through mountains were also organised, however "a national park and a jeep race no longer go along". Similarly, there were hunting competitions on fast waters and wolf hunts (M. Radović, personal communication, August 16, 2016).

²¹ These new dates in fact are similar to the "old" ones, when in the first years after the Second World War the anniversaries were more spontaneously and informally celebrated and yet not so much tied to the ideological tourism.

apolitical, which reveal parallel, un-nationalistic attitudes towards the socialist past and the former state.

At least at first glance there is a big difference between such events taking place in the Kozara National Park and the Sutjeska National Park: in Kozara traditionality or at least continuity of the park's events is not even mentioned. A brief reference to the (socialist) past is made only by the anniversary of the Battle of Kozara, although meetings of eminent (contemporary) writers from the area also have their origin in that time. On the other hand, the management of the Sutjeska National Park pays considerable attention to the events which are represented and promoted as traditional, while they only briefly mention other events. The continuity of events is stressed, and the continuity of the (past) idea(l)s is not left aside. By organising the Camp of Friendship, schools in nature and various workshops the park is purposefully supposed to be recognized again as a youth tourism destination. It is linked to socialist Yugoslavia by youth work brigades and various socialising occasions which present popular culture originating in the former country and refer to the idea(l)s of brotherhood and unity, supposedly fostering integration, friendship and multiethnicity. The present is therefore intentionally linked with the socialist past; and past idea(l)s, values and popular culture are actualized (Jauković, 2014, p. 85; Gavrilović, 2012, pp. 51-53; cf. Kovačević, 2012, p. 18). My interlocutor pointed out that in the Sutjeska National Park "historical moment is not openly neglected" (V. Krslanović, personal communication, August 16, 2016). Recently the administration of the Kozara National Park started to support it as well, albeit not by means of its own events: around the 1st of May it allows spontaneous gatherings that "people organise for themselves" (Boissevain, 1992, p. 12)²², and the management supports plans for reconstructing (Serbian) settlement Benkovac, where the festival *Kozara u srcu* was first organised in 2017. The Kozara National Park therefore makes the same references to the same part of the common Yugoslav past and its socialist idea(l)s as the Sutjeska National Park.

Conclusion: Nationalistic alongside commercial attitudes towards the socialist past

Claiming that "there is no place for brotherhood and unity in the local communities' memorialisation" (Karge, 2009, p. 53) in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina thus seems insufficient. The events taking place in both parks prove the contrary and question the supremacy of the nationalized attitudes

²² It could be opposed to the events primarily organised for the visitors, tourists – as (official) events in both parks could also be understood (see Boissevain, 1992, p. 12).

towards the socialist past. Nevertheless, when observing what is presented as traditional and to which pasts the links are made, we can also think about a function of contemporary non-nationalised actualisations of the socialist past. Are they an expression of a passive nostalgia or do they have its emancipatory potential (see Velikonja, 2011)? If we accept that the authorities as well as the visitors developed an active relationship towards the parks²³ and try to understand how the coexistence of nationalistic and inclined attitudes towards the same past is possible, it seems crucial to acknowledge that different attitudes are formed towards different parts of the same past. Or to put it differently: at least in the Sutjeska National Park nowadays there are rival interpretations of the Battle of Sutjeska, which causes separate celebrations and disputes about its nationalisations.²⁴ Nevertheless, the multinational antifascist resistance, which in the past was celebrated at Kozara and Sutjeska, is today nationalistically appropriated by Republika Srpska and its politics (see, for example, Karačić, 2012, pp. 67 and 77). On the other hand, the events related to the contemporary youth tourism promote anti-nationalism and can be seen as containing emancipatory potential of Yugonostalgia. However, at least from the perspective of their (co-)organizers, these are primarily and above all strategic, economic decisions, which are – similarly as in the case of Jajce – territorially based on the possibility of the so-called authentic experience of the socialist Yugoslavia (Radović, 2011, p. 154).²⁵ In the national parks of Kozara and Sutjeska the emancipatory potential of Yugonostalgia therefore seems to be primarily recognized by their management and major financier, Republika Srpska, which systemically and structurally supports using “past times, events and personalities” as an economic inspiration and an opportunity “for a better future” (Velikonja, 2011, p. 143). Emancipation therefore seems to be primarily economically dependent and related to (re-)commercialization, while contemporary anti-nationalism, friendship and other socialist idea(l)s, reappearing through the events of the two Bosnian national parks, rather play a role of means to achieve it.

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²³ Of not only adapting to the new situations but also making some transformations (cf. Karge, 2009, p. 53).

²⁴ Velikonja as one of few authors therefore concludes that some emancipatory Yugonostalgia also exists regarding these celebrations (2011, p. 137).

²⁵ The old idea(l)s and slogans, of for example multiethnicity and equality can also be adapted to the new project funding governed by the EU.

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