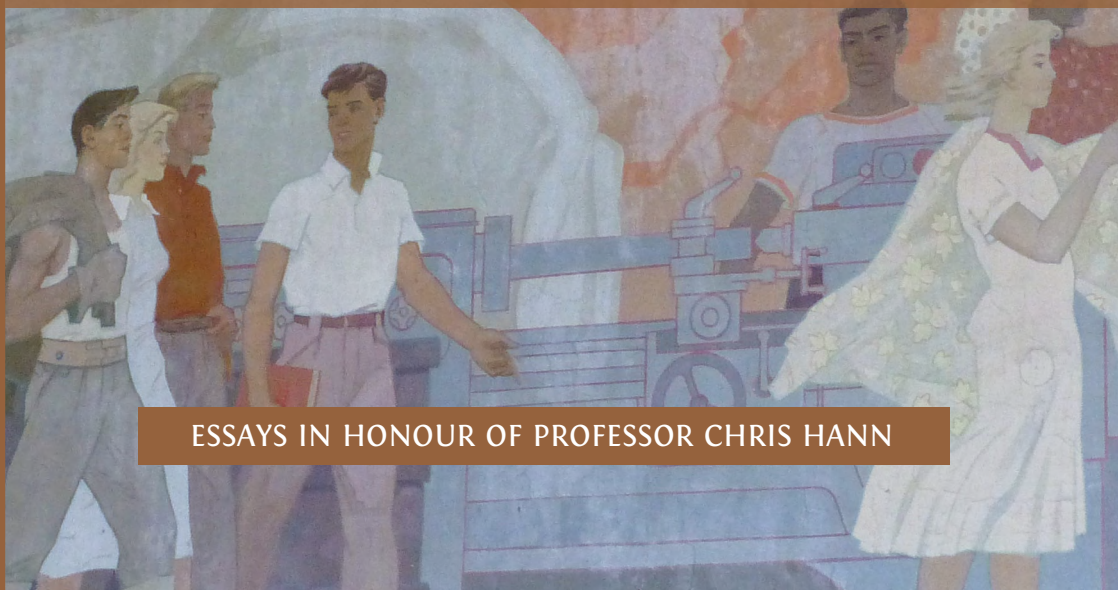




EDITED BY JURAJ BUZALKA AND AGNIESZKA PASIEKA

ANTHROPOLOGY OF TRANSFORMATION

From Europe to Asia and Back



ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR CHRIS HANN



<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

© 2022 Juraj Buzalka and Agnieszka Pasieka, editors. Copyright of individual chapters is maintained by the chapters' authors.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text; to adapt the text for non-commercial purposes of the text providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Juraj Buzalka and Agnieszka Pasieka (eds), *Anthropology of Transformation: From Europe to Asia and Back*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0282>

Further details about the CC BY-NC license are available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Updated digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0282#resources>

ISBN Paperback: 9781800643628

ISBN Hardback: 9781800643635

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781800643642

ISBN Digital ebook (EPUB): 9781800643659

ISBN Digital ebook (AZW3): 9781800643666

ISBN XML: 9781800643673

Digital ebook (HTML): 9781800649439

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0282

Cover image: Lenin mural, House of Culture, Temirtau, Kazakhstan (2014). Photo by Tommaso Trevisani. Cover design by Katy Saunders.

2. Property Relations and Ethnic Conflict in Post-war Croatia

Reflections on Conceptual Approaches and Research Findings

Carolin Leutloff-Grandits

Introduction

When conducting my fieldwork in a former war region of Croatia in the year 2000–2001, I was part of the “Property Relations” Focus Group at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, established under the guidance of Chris Hann. I wanted to look at the reconciliation and reestablishment of a local community after ethnic war in post-socialist Croatia from a property relations perspective, especially considering housing property. Within the region of Knin that I selected for fieldwork, almost all inhabitants had experienced (forced) migration during the war and the years after. They were either returnees to the place they had left due to the war, or they were new settlers who had come to the region on the promise that they would find a new home there—a home which they had either lost in war, or which they had not been able to finance during the precarious post-war times. In fact, in the Knin region, the local situation and the relations between people were very much based on housing relations, as houses had been destroyed during the war, and those still intact had been redistributed on the basis of mainly ethno-national criteria. As such, the violent war along ethno-national lines, which had occurred in Croatia from 1991–1995, was prolonged by other means.

With the proclamation of Croatia as an independent nation-state in 1991, the Serb inhabitants of Croatia, who made up a little over 12% of all citizens, suddenly became a national minority. This was soon followed by the military occupation of certain territories of Croatia, in which the Serb inhabitants built a majority, via the Serbian army, and the declaration of the never internationally recognised “Republic of Serbian Krajina” in 1992, of which Knin was the capital. In the aftermath, Serbian militia forcefully expelled the native Croatian inhabitants. For years to come, the situation remained relatively stable, until 1995, when the Croatian state managed to reintegrate the territory through two military actions—the smaller action *Bljesak* (Flash), which took place in May 1995, and the larger action *Oluja* (Storm), which took place in August 1995. During the latter, about 180,000 Serbs fled the region for the Serbian-held territories of Bosnia and Serbia, fearing Croatian revenge. These military actions were followed by the massive destruction of Serb-owned houses, as soldiers of the Croatian army used grenades to blow up the roofs of ten thousand Serb houses.

This was soon also followed by the return of (at least a part of) the native Croatian population, and also partly the settlement of Croats from Bosnia. Even years after the end of the war, the return of Serbs was obstructed through manifold ethno-national discrimination—especially in the housing sector, but also regarding pension payments—and meagre economic possibilities. As a result, Serbs accounted for only 4.54% of citizens in the 2001 census, and 4.36% in 2011. This means that only about one third of pre-war Serb inhabitants had returned to Croatia after the war (and the UNHCR found that only about 50% of those registered as having returned live permanently in Croatia), and that the number of Serbs in Croatia has been shrinking again in the new millenium. Those who returned were mainly elderly who eventually passed away some years after their return, while most young families stayed abroad. Knin thus remained a place of continuous ethnic engineering even after the war. The city had and has an important place in Croatian national historiography as well as a strategic and symbolic dimension for the territorial integrity of the Croatian state and therewith for the question of state borders and legitimate ownership. Thus, the return to one’s house and region held symbolic—as well as social and

economic—dimensions. Knin served as a home, and as a marker of ethno-nationality.

Within this chapter, I will link the question of property to the post-war transformation and the ongoing ethno-nationalism, to the post-socialist, neoliberal transformation, and to Croatia's accession into the EU. For this, I focus on housing property and its many dimensions. More concretely, I will outline what people mean when they speak about their housing property, what kind of relations they have in mind and what kind of social, economic—but also emotional and symbolic—values they attach to it. In doing so, I will also take a historically informed perspective and explore how housing property is embedded in forms of community and socialising which reach back to socialist and pre-socialist times, creating not only a roof over one's head, but an identity and belonging which are embedded in specific forms of livelihood and social security, and closely linked to the workplace. Such relations have been overlooked by international actors, who have followed and continue to follow a narrow, neoliberal conceptualisation of property as private ownership when analysing the situation on the ground. I will then broaden the perspective by analysing the erection of war memorials that convey a particular reading of history and serve as legitimisation for certain citizens'—often nationalistic—claims to be rightful inhabitants and legitimate home-owners of the region. This has created twists and unforeseen side-effects shaping not just the past and present, but also the future. In order to underline this, I will juxtapose the economic and symbolic dimensions of housing relations and link them not just to the ethno-nationalist and neoliberal policies prevalent partly until today, but also to the concepts of civility and social security.

I begin with a description of the concept of housing relations and provide a general overview of the transformation of housing conditions in post-socialist, post-war Croatia. I then turn to the perspective of Knin's inhabitants and their housing relations in post-socialist, post-war Croatia and the policies of the Croatian state and international actors, after which the housing conflict was considered resolved. In the last section, I focus on the symbolic dimensions of property relations that revived ethno-nationalism and the experience of being stuck on the periphery of the nation-state in the wake of EU accession.

The Concept of Housing Relations and Their Transformation in Post-socialist, Post-war Croatia

Property relations, as Chris Hann (1996; 2015) always highlighted, have manifold dimensions. Besides the juridical dimensions of property rights, which are often the concern of political actors on an international and national level and which may themselves be divided into ownership and use rights, there are also various social, economic and, not least, symbolic and material dimensions. The fact that property relations are social relations that are symbolically and emotionally imbued has been discussed at length—in addition to Chris Hann—by various scholars in the post-socialist context, such as Kideckel (1993), von Hirschhausen (1997), and Verdery (1996; 1998; 2003) in Romania, Creed (1998) and Kaneff (2004) in Bulgaria, Torsello (2003) in Slovakia, and Humphrey (1998) in Russia, amongst others. While these studies mainly focus on landed property, such as fields, meadows and forest, housing property has been largely neglected, although it also underwent a reconfiguration of social relations during the post-socialist transformation.

Houses may be owned by the state or may be held in private ownership. Ownership and usage rights may be passed down to the next generation, based on inheritance laws, which may include all children, or only one, or a few, depending on criteria such as male inheritance rules, primogeniture or similar. Ownership and use rights of houses may also be linked to a workplace or membership in a residential community. Housing property—including apartment houses—can look different from region to region, or between rural and urban areas, and may also express social organisation and notions of modernity and tradition. Housing property can also be inhabited differently—be it by nuclear or complex families, or by large or small households, or even various households. Embedded in family and community relations as well as social and economic relations, houses, and property more generally, may be concrete expressions of “living standards, work patterns, group relations, social inequalities, and collected notions of belonging to a community”, as Chris Hann (2003: 1) has outlined. Houses give not only shelter by providing a roof over one’s head, but they also receive economic, social, cultural and symbolic meanings through interactive processes between people, such as (re-)distribution, selling, exchange, and daily use. This is why the functions and meanings of houses do not

only differ from house to house, but also from person to person (see also Roth 1983: 64–65).

Forms of power over housing may also reach beyond the individual and family sphere and may include the real-estate market and the state. Housing projects in many countries are often financed by the state or local government, influenced by state ideologies, and designed by state planners. To whom housing rights are given when housing is planned and built or even confiscated by the state is also a political question and is based on values of social equality, deservingness, and social relations. In order to analyse housing relations, one can, according to Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann (1999: 20), differentiate four interrelated layers of social organisation: the cultural ideological notions, the legal regulations and institutional frameworks, the social property relationships and the practices. A house may, as Frances Pine (1996) has outlined, symbolise belonging to a certain kin group, but it may also symbolise belonging to an ethno-national group or other communities. Access to housing as well as ownership and property rights are regulated by state laws and administrative procedures as well as cultural practices. At the same time, housing is also integrated in social, economic and ecological relations. Housing may be regarded as a social entitlement and may be linked to other social entitlements, like state benefits or a work space or more generally the possibility to make one's living in the reach of the living space, but it may also be detached from such entitlements and norms of social security (Hann 2000; 2006). Housing can also be a simple market commodity that can be bought, sold, invested in, and resold. In socialist Yugoslavia, including socialist Croatia, houses, at least in rural areas, were largely built by families with the help of neighbours. Houses, as well as land, were largely held in private ownership and were often passed down according to male inheritance rights—at least in the countryside. The house and the land were important markers of kinship and belonging to a place. In the Knin region, and more generally in rural regions of the Balkans, houses were often clustered in a so-called *bratstvo*, a brotherhood, a settlement which often reached back centuries and whose organising principle was patrilineal inheritance, which was more or less equally divided among brothers, while women were largely excluded from heritage. In socialism, private housing property was built on privately held land, often with the help of relatives and neighbours, and on the basis of the

salaries earned in socially owned firms and factories, as well as on the basis of the agricultural products the inhabitants produced on their own land attached to the houses, which they either used for themselves or sold to the agricultural collective. In urban areas, where the Yugoslav state or, more precisely, firms in collective ownership (*društveno vlasništvo*) built apartment houses, these apartments were bound to the workplace and were distributed to workers according to a special key. Although formally they remained in collective ownership, these use rights could still be passed on to children. As such, ownership and use rights of housing property were also closely related to and embedded in other relations like workplace, agricultural, kinship, and community relations.

During the 1990s, the Croatian state privatised the collectively held housing property and tenants who held use rights were given the right to buy their dwelling for a subsidised price. The post-socialist transformation took place alongside an ethno-nationalist war in Croatia, and the ongoing privatisation of formerly socially owned housing property also had an ethno-national dimension. Within the areas occupied by Serbs, privatisation was postponed, and at the end of the war, when the regions were reintegrated into the Croatian state, Serbs who had fled Croatia and who wanted to return had difficulties in claiming their rights to their former homes, which were instead given to Croats and then privatised. Moreover, during the war along ethno-national lines, people who were regarded as belonging to the “wrong” ethno-national group were expelled from their houses and apartments, and their housing space was either destroyed or redistributed according to ethno-national criteria—not just within the direct warzone, but also in those regions not directly affected by the war. This was exacerbated by the crumbling economy, which was also affected by the war and the post-socialist transformation and which again made it difficult for many inhabitants to invest in housing, or even to pay their rents. In fact, housing became a scarce commodity even for those who were not directly affected by the war. In this situation, access and distribution of housing followed mainly ethno-nationalist criteria—a situation which continued even after the end of the war in 1995, when the Croatian state passed laws which legalised the occupation of houses which Serbs had abandoned during the war in order to create housing space for Croatian

families in need. At the same time, houses destroyed during the war were rebuilt at different speeds, by different actors. The Croatian state financed the rebuilding of houses owned by Croats, while houses owned by Serbs were rebuilt by international aid organisations—often slightly later owing to divergent criteria and budget considerations. Investments in the economy, however, continued to be side-lined by the Croatian state as well as international actors. Instead, they believed that the privatisation of firms would bring enough momentum to the crumbling economy—even if this soon proved to be an illusion. As has also been described by Stef Jansen (2006) with regard to post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the war-torn areas, housing was often cut off from its social base, as inhabitants no longer had any means by which to make a living.

The fact that conflicts and discrimination along ethno-national lines—which also affected access to and rebuilding of houses—continued well after the official end of the war, the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, was also a result of investment in war-related memorials and ritualised, collective performances. Such investment helped to sanctify the collective memory underlying ethno-national group identities and to support the differentiation and identification of individuals according to ethno-national markers. As such, these memorials also legitimised the occupation of houses, or more generally the distribution of property along ethno-national criteria. Memorials and rituals allow participants to transcend borders in both time and space, reaching back to former and forward to future generations—as if the story presented, the identity given, has been and always will be true. But abandoned houses can also be turned into or perceived as a monument. As long discussed in theories on material culture, houses and monuments are not dead objects, but carriers of social relations (Lévi-Strauss 1969) which link the past with the future and which have not only a spatial, but also a temporal dimension (see Dalakoglou 2009; Hurd, Donnan and Leutloff-Grandits 2017). Such bordered time-spaces are anchored in the material, as memorials envision a past time and make a claim for the future and buildings carry traces of the past and may invoke alternative (and transnational) histories and collectives.

Housing Relations as Social Relations in Post-war, Post-socialist Knin

When I arrived in the Knin region, finding a family who could host me was not easy, although the village I chose had a relatively large percentage of Serb returnees, a small number of local Croatian families who had returned and more than forty Croatian settler families who had settled in Serb-owned houses. As such, it was more alive than most other villages in the former war region of Croatia. In the process of finding a host and choosing a house to stay in, the relational character of housing property was immediately evident. It became clear to me that the choice of the house and family I stayed with would also affect my relations with the inhabitants and the local community. In the search for a host, it was clear to me that I did not want to stay with Croats who had occupied the houses of Serbs, as this would mean that I would be paying rent for a room which my landlords were using “for free”, and possibly at the expense of the true owners, who were prevented from returning to their home. I found it ethically problematic, even though I knew that these Croatian settlers had the express permission of the Croatian state, and most of them had nowhere else to go, having lost their own housing during the war or simply not having enough money to rent a house or flat in the more prosperous regions of Croatia. Most of the Serb returnees were however in their old age and lived in precarious conditions, and were unable to host me, owing either to the state of their health, or to the state of their houses, which were minimally equipped. Thanks to the help of the local mayor and a local employee at the UNHCR, I finally managed to find a willing elderly couple in a large but rather empty house, where I could inhabit a room on the first floor. Staying there initially meant I had a room and a bed but no door, as the couple had returned to a plundered and devastated house—like all houses that had been abandoned during the war. The couple, thanks to the intervention of their Croatian son-in-law, had managed to repossess their house, which was occupied by a Croatian family. With the passing of time and not least thanks to my rent, the couple slowly but surely managed to buy more furniture, not just for their own living room, but also for my room.

Sharing everyday life with this couple, I could grasp why my hosts—as well as many of the other elderly members of the community—had

returned. They felt very attached to their house and their land, for which they had saved and in which they had invested all their life, and they started to work hard on their vineyards again, in order to produce their own wine. Most received a small pension from the Croatian state that enabled them to live, if only at a very basic level. Many of them had also felt useless (and even burdensome) in the limited housing that they had shared with their children or other relatives after fleeing to Serbia, often to Belgrade. In their own property and using their own land resources around their houses in Croatia, on the other hand, they regained agency and could even be useful to their children, since by returning, they were also rescuing the property for their children (Leutloff-Grandits 2005).

It was however also noticeable that their house had lost value and meaning, not only because it was plundered, but also because many neighbours had not returned, and community life was only returning slowly, as the younger generation especially was missing. As such, houses were disconnected from the social relations for which they once stood. When I did my fieldwork in the years 2000/01, my landlady would tell me the stories of all those families whose houses were either destroyed, locked or occupied, and who had not returned yet. The houses served as a memorial for all those who had not returned, but their stories could only be gleaned from those who had experienced life before the war. In fact, the house of my landlady's first neighbour had been blown up, and the neighbouring house opposite hers was occupied by a Croatian couple from Bosnia with three children, whose youngsters had harassed them during the first years after their arrival.

Sharing the house with the elderly couple and sharing food and much more also meant that we grew together and established family-like relations. The daughter of my hosts lived at a considerable distance in Croatia's capital Zagreb and visited only a few times within the year. Because she was only a little older than myself and was also a scientist, I somehow took her place and became a kind of adopted daughter to my hosts. This meant that I was very well cared for, in both an emotional and mental sense, as I shared daily intimacies and sorrows with my landlady and was able to take her advice. Living with the elderly couple and trying to understand this community meant grasping their perspective and also relating to their pre-war time existence, while at the same time trying to talk to all people, including the newcomers who had settled in the region after the war, in order to obtain a cross-section

of perspectives. However, in the post-war scenario in which violence and suffering had been—and were partly still—based on ethno-national markers, socialising with Croats occupying the houses of Serbs felt like a betrayal of the Serb owners, as living in this local community also meant becoming enmeshed with its history, in which there was no “neutral” stance.

Those younger Serbs who had returned were mostly unmarried men, who had followed their elderly parents in order to support them, and who knew that they would ultimately inherit the property. Their days were mostly boring, as there was hardly any work besides some basic agriculture. Many spent their days in front of the local shop, often a bit drunk, either buying beer if there was money available, or bringing their own beverage—wine, *bewanda*, a mix of wine and water, or *raki* (schnapps), all made from self-grown grapes. Due to the missing income of the younger generation, who could hardly find permanent work, roles within the household were somewhat disrupted, as younger and middle-aged people also depended largely on the pensions of their elderly parents. Most had no means or possibilities to establish a family and remained unmarried, with years passing by. For them, returning to their homestead often meant entering a dead end, as most did not manage to develop their lives or establish their own family. The purposes of houses, often built in this region to house the family of the grown-up children and to be passed on from parents to the future generation, could thus not be fulfilled. Most of the younger, unmarried women or whole families with underage children—apart from a few isolated cases—visited only in summer for a limited time. They happily socialised with those who had returned, had barbecues and jointly recalled stories from their childhood or youth, when this region was full of social life, but they saw no future in it, even if their houses were neither occupied nor destroyed, as there were no jobs in the region and houses could not be eaten. While they clearly did not socialise with the Croats who had recently settled in the region, there were however some local Croats who joined these gatherings, as they had grown up as part of the community until the war had divided them.

In fact, as also explored by Jasna Čapo Žmegač (2007; 2010) in her study on Croats from Vojvodina who had exchanged houses with Serbs from Croatia in order to settle there at the end of the ethno-national war,

divisions within the local community run not necessarily along lines between Croats and Serbs, but rather between locals and settlers. Local people—returned Serbs and returned Croats alike—emphasised that they did not differ much in their habits and ways of securing or earning their livelihood. For Serb and Croat returnees, civility, understood in the terms of Chris Hann (2002) as grown forms of sociability linking the private and the public and as the underlying moral values on which a community is based, was an important basis of conviviality in the region, and was also reflected in property relations. Local inhabitants—Serbs and Croats alike—stressed that they respected private property, and regarded Croatian settlers who had occupied Serb property as suspicious and potentially uncivil. They argued among others that many unemployed Croatian settlers received social benefits from the Croatian state, which classified them as without property although they were legally occupying the housing property of others, while Serbs and Croats who lived in their own houses did not qualify for such social entitlements, even though their social situation was by no means better (Leutloff-Grandits 2002; 2006).

The Housing Conflict, the Croatian State and the International Neoliberalist Policy

At the time of my fieldwork, in 2000–2001, international aid organisations, many of which were active in the Knin region—such as OSCE, UNHCR, and German organisations like Arbeiter Samariter Bund—were very busy with the reconstruction of destroyed Serb houses. At the same time, they pressured the Croatian state to find solutions for returning occupied houses to their lawful (Serb) owners. However, there were various problems involved. First of all, many of the owners were still in Serbia and not in Croatia. Secondly, not all Serb homeowners had their ownership documents, which they needed as a proof in order to apply for the rebuilding or repossession of a property. In fact, during socialism, the practice of registering property in the cadastre was largely abandoned in order to circumvent state-imposed restrictions on the construction of private property. As the land on which the property was built was often registered under the name of already deceased relatives, who themselves had various children, the provisions for reclaiming

ownership rights could become very complicated. It meant contacting all possible heirs of the land who might be spread throughout the world, as this was a necessary step for homeowners to prove their property rights (Leutloff-Grandits 2003). Still, when the international community pressured the Croatian state to enable Serbs to gain repossession of their occupied houses, the Croatian settler families who had occupied the houses of Serbs also felt that pressure. Many of them had moved to the region with several children and lived in precarious conditions, having suffered from the difficult economic situation and often being jobless. Being war refugees themselves and/or without alternative housing, they had nowhere else to go. Croatian settlers then tended to vote for right-wing Croatian nationalist parties like the *Hrvatska Stranka Prava* (HSP), as they believed that they would fight hardest to secure their rights (Leutloff-Grandits 2008).

In order to solve the housing conflict and still enable Croats to stay in the region, the Croatian government tried to offer alternative housing for Croat families. To this end, the Croatian state financed the construction of new housing settlements in the region for Croatian families. Furthermore, a state agency for property transfers was founded and tasked with buying up the houses of Serb owners who had fled and redistributing them to Croat settlers who were forced to move out of the houses they had occupied. The agency mainly relied on houses which they bought from Serbs who did not plan to return. The Croatian state thus created an artificial market for houses which would likely have been unsaleable without state finances, as no one in the region had the money to buy housing property. Nor would they have dared to buy such a house in this region, as its economic prospects were meagre and foreseeing a future there was thus difficult. Nevertheless, the Croatian state, as well as international organisations, regarded the agency's efforts as a win-win situation, as it would ease the ethno-national conflict around housing.: Serbs received money from the selling of their houses—albeit at a relatively low price—and Croatian settlers received a permanent housing solution in the former war regions in Croatia. In some cases, the settlers did not even need to move out of the house they were occupying, as the absent owners could sell their houses, even when settlers inhabited them, for a relatively cheap price.

Simultaneously, however, this practice also cemented the ethno-national engineering of the war and immediate post-war period. In fact,

with this procedure, Serbs, who had no realistic possibility to return for good—as there were no working positions in the region for them—were encouraged to sell their houses. With the money they could buy property in Serbia (this was in fact possible even though the prices offered were very low by Croatian standards, as by Serbian standards they were decent), and thus permanently settle down there. It was also clear that the elderly returnees would die eventually, and that without younger people, without children, there was no future for Serbs in the region (see also Mesić and Bagić 2010; Djurić 2010). Croatian settlers, on the other hand, who up to this point had been insecure about their stay in the region—also because of the difficult economic conditions they encountered—gained a reason to stay as they received permanent housing property in the region (Leutloff-Grandits 2016).

In 2006, about 90% of privately owned houses were officially repossessed by their lawful owners and the Croatian state declared the housing question, which had been regarded as a priority for solving the ethno-national conflict, as solved and international actors complied with this view. Subsequently, the political—and international—attention to the region and to monitoring and supporting post-war reconciliation in the former war areas decreased. The solving of the housing question had however not necessarily contributed to a lasting return of Serbs. In the village in which I did fieldwork, of the forty houses which had been occupied by Croatian families from Bosnia in 2001, by 2008, all of them had been returned to their Serb owners. But this was only a reason to return for a very small number of Serb house owners, and many others simply sold their house to the agency. This had enabled seventeen Croatian settler families to remain in the village, as they had received housing property that Serbs had sold to the state agency for property transfer. The other Croatian settler families had moved out of the village, either to the neighbouring town of Knin or to a newly built settlement in another village municipality, where about 300 Croatian settler families had received housing.

Following a neoliberal logic, the focus of international organisations on the return of private property however also largely ignored formerly socially owned property, which had existed in the form of flats and which had been the main form of housing in urban areas during socialism. Outside the former war areas, such socially owned flats had been privatised in the early 1990s, and the tenants had been given the

possibility to buy them at a highly subsidised price—which most of them did. In the aftermath of the war in the Knin region, these flats had also been occupied by Croats, who replaced fleeing Serbs. But Serbs had also been living in such flats outside the former warzone, where economic possibilities were much more promising than in the region of Knin, and again, Serbs were prevented from repossessing the flats they had abandoned during the war. Only many years after the war did the international community revise its politics, pressuring the Croatian state to pay financial compensation to the former tenants of such flats—without however granting them the possibility of reclaiming possession rights. This policy again meant that the possible return of Serbs to urban centres had been postponed for years, effectively preventing the Serbs from returning to Croatia. More generally, international organisations largely disregarded the fact that a successful return—and more generally the possibility to build up a livelihood in the region—was not only based on the return of private property rights, but on an embedded notion of housing property, taking into account property forms which had been central during socialism, such as socially owned housing, as well as linking the value of housing property—and the sustainable return to one's house—to the possibility of making a living, and more generally to an economically and socially vital community. Following a narrow neoliberal ideology, international organisations believed that the restitution of private property rights would be a starting point for economic development, without realising that in the post-war, post-socialist Knin area, the entire former socialist economy had collapsed, and neither the repossession of private housing nor the privatisation of firms and other forms of property, including formerly socially owned flats, was sufficient to revitalise the community and substitute the lost workplaces (Leutloff-Grandits 2016; Jansen 2006).

In fact, alongside the repossession of private housing property by Serbs, there was a continual privatisation of firms by so called *tajkuni* (tycoons), powerful businessmen who bought former socialist firms, which had suffered during the war and the disintegration of the former Yugoslav market, often only to then dismantle them, and to destroy economic opportunities for the region's inhabitants. This led to high numbers of unemployed individuals dependent on the meagre social support of the state, and a general feeling that there was no future in this region. This feeling was present across ethno-national boundaries. While

this prevented younger Serbs from returning, it also affected Croatian families who had returned or settled in the region. In 2008, the former rail and steel factory TVIK, then renamed as DIV, which had been the main employer during socialism, was finally privatised. Happily, it was renovated and restarted operations. But unlike 1990, when more than 1000 people had worked there, only around 200 people were employed.

The Re-entry of Ethno-nationalism through Spiritual Property Relations

In 2000–2001, in the face of the difficult economic conditions, it was not the local state, but the Catholic Church that tried to improve the precarious living conditions in this region by opening a soup kitchen in order to feed “the hungry Croats” in Knin. As in other post-socialist countries (Hann 1998; Hann et al. 2006; Pina-Cabral and Pine 2008), religious institutions, and in this case the Catholic Church, provided an anchor of hope and a sense of security and social relation as Croats felt cared for by the Catholic Church and connected to the community of Croatian believers (while most Serbs followed the Orthodox faith and thus felt excluded). Next to opening a soup kitchen as a basic form of social security, Catholic Church representatives stressed that settlers would contribute to the future of the Croatian state and nation when they endured in this area—despite the difficult conditions they met here. Remaining in this region thus acquired a higher meaning sanctified by the Catholic Church, as it gave settlers spiritual support for enduring the hardships in life (Leutloff-Grandits 2009). In fact, as Keebet and Franz von Benda-Beckmann (1994) have stressed, the spiritual dimensions are an important layer when considering social security.

The Catholic Church invested simultaneously in the construction of a new church building in Knin and it was rumoured that a large part of the donations was used for the latter. In order to house the many Croats who had settled in Knin after the war, the new church building was planned to be a few times bigger than the existing church, which had been built at the end of the nineteenth century. The large church building however also served as a national marker, symbolising the legitimate presence of Croats in the region, who in fact held a majority over Serbs since the end of the war in 1995, while this region had had a strong

Serbian-Orthodox majority for decades and even centuries (Leutloff-Grandits 2009). The spiritual claim to the region was furthermore stressed with a new, huge cross on Dinara Mountain above Knin, which war veteran associations placed there and which was visible for all those travelling from Zagreb via Knin to the seaside. In Knin, and all over Croatia from the 1990s onwards, religion played an important role for claiming ethno-national belonging (Schäuble 2014) and the right to a certain place as well as property (see also Pina-Cabral and Pine 2008). It created, as Chris Hann (1998) highlighted in his case study of symbolic struggles between Greek Orthodox and Catholics in Przemyśl in south-eastern Poland as well as in other post-socialist contexts (Hann 2006: 9) “a sense of belonging to a nation”. In the years to come, other symbolic monuments were added all over Croatia, which dwelled on the war of the 1990s and outlined the history of suffering along ethno-national lines, thus perpetuating the two incommensurable stories (Pavlaković 2014; Schäuble 2014).

In Knin, most important in this regard was the erection of the memorial “*Oluja '95*”, commemorating the successful military operation *Oluja* by the Croatian army, which led—from the Croatian point of view—to the glorious liberation of the Serb-occupied territory of Croatia in the so-called Homeland War (*Domovinski Rat*). *Oluja* was equated with the rebirth of the territorial integrity of the Croatian state within its legitimate borders and the rebirth of the Croatian nation. The *Oluja* memorial consists of two main elements: an approximately nine-metre-high, abstract victory sign, symbolising the victory over Serb insurgents in 1995, and a black, monumental stone chapel about seventeen metres long and eight and a half metres high. The chapel houses an altar and a cross as well as information plates about the military action of the Croatian army, naming the fallen soldiers. In this reading of history, the Serbs appear only as “the evil Other” that the Croatian army managed to defeat. There was no mention of the fact that for Serbs, this military action forced them to flee from their homes, and caused the deaths of civilians who remained and the looting and destruction of their houses as well as an enduring suffering in the post-war period. The erection of the monument in Knin was again initiated by Croatian veteran organisations and then taken up by the local government of Knin and supported by the Croatian state. After an approximately three-year-long planning and construction phase, the monument was inaugurated on 5

August 2011, the anniversary of “Homeland Gratitude”, celebrating the day the Croatian army reached Knin in order to ‘liberate’ the Serb-held regions of Croatia. The festive anniversary of *Oluja* attracted masses to Knin and, in the speeches of state officials, the Croatian version of the war was revitalised, dividing Croats and Serbs into defenders and aggressors respectively. Local newspapers reported that the monument cost eight million Kuna, or more than one million Euros, and was financed in part by veterans’ associations as well as the national and local state authorities. The high costs were especially considerable as Knin was one of those towns with the highest number of socially dependent citizens in Croatia as well as the highest number of young people due to the Croatian families which had settled in the Knin region after the war, many of them unemployed and without a perspective. This means that the municipality urgently needed the money in question for economic or social projects, especially as the municipal budget was small due to limited tax income and high expenses. Obviously, however, those who decided on the use of the money privileged the erection of a memorial commemorating the Croatian version of the war, and focusing on spiritual dimensions of ethno-national belonging rather than material and social improvement which could have served the community beyond national affiliations.

It is thus no wonder that Serbs who had returned did not participate in the celebrations on this day (Leutloff-Grandits 2004), and instead built their own memorials commemorating their experiences of victimhood during the war. One of them, consisting of a cross and a memorial plate in Cyrillic letters that names the local Serbian civilians who had died in connection with *Oluja*, was erected only two months later, in October 2011, in front of the Orthodox church building in the village of Golubić near Knin. The village had about 1400 (mainly Serb) inhabitants before the war, of which about one third had returned by 2011, while a few hundred Croats from Bosnia had received new houses that were constructed by the Croatian state in the village after the war. In collaboration with local villagers, the Belgrade-based, Serb refugee association *Suza* (Tear), which deals with the search and identification of Serbs who went missing during the 1991–1995 war in Croatia, had planned and constructed the monument. However, Croatian hardliners soon demolished this monument, arguing that it was placed there illegally, as they regarded the involvement of associations based outside

Croatia as action by a foreign state representing the wrong version of history. Serb representatives again argued that the demolition of this monument showed that European values—and here especially the minority rights of Serbs and the right to remembrance—were not respected in Croatia. More generally, with the competing memorial culture, a struggle over the reading of history along ethno-national lines continued, and was used for the legitimation of settlement rights and belonging in the former warzones of Croatia. Other monuments, like partisan monuments erected by the (local) state during socialism and commemorating certain socialist ethics, like that of brotherhood and unity of the different national groups in former Yugoslavia, had been destroyed during the war along ethno-national lines of the 1990s and remained in ruins.

EU Accession and the Experience of Layered Time and Stagnation at the Margins of the Nation State

The international presence in Knin, which had been strong after the end of the war in 1995, fully ceased with the accession of Croatia to the EU in 2013. At the same time, various local NGOs, which had been heavily dependent on international funding, had closed down—thus supporting Chris Hann's (2002) finding that so-called civil organisations may not reflect the civil state of the community, but rather may be imported from outside. During my visit in 2010, Knin appeared to me a very provincial, sleepy place despite attempts to promote it as a tourist destination, advertising the natural beauty of the Dinara region with its limestone and springs and historical excavations of Croatia's mediaeval past. This was not in the least the case because a new highway to the popular Croatian tourist destinations on the coast circumvented Knin, thus marginalising it in a geographical sense, as most traffic now surpassed it. While in many Serb households, elderly, single people dominated, there were also fewer new-born children among Bosnian Croatian settler families than before.

In fact, in 2007/08 the Šibenik-Knin county had the largest decline in birth rate compared to other counties in the country. There was furthermore a growing number of three-generation households among Croatian settler families, which was an indicator of the diminishing

possibilities of Bosnian Croats in the Knin region. As opposed to the period directly after the war, when young families moved to the region in order to occupy property and establish their own household, now young couples, who often got married soon after school, could not get a house as easily. As renting a flat was rather expensive, many lived with their parents (-in-law). While young men worked in some rather low-paid jobs in Knin or the surroundings, young women mainly stayed at home to take care of the kids. This situation gave only little hope for savings, investments or the establishment of one's own household in the near future, and was, most of all, accompanied by feelings of disappointment and disillusionment. When settlers from Bosnia came to the region in 1995/96, they had imagined starting a new, good life; in 2000/01, they now feared losing their new-found rights. In the following years, the lives of Croatian settlers had been consolidated by the receipt of their own housing properties, but they also had a feeling of being marginalised, stuck and forgotten. This was the time the Catholic Church became an important pillar of strength and sense of community among Croats who had settled in the region. And although the Catholic Church remained important for Croatian settlers, many young people found their own town very boring and wanted to move out of the region as soon as possible, as they saw no future there. This was the case for Croats, and even more so for Serbs, who experienced ongoing discrimination in places in which Croats were the majority, as in Knin after the war (in 2011, Serbs comprised about 25% of the population of the Knin municipality, while Croats made up 75%, and with that, the pre-war ethnic distribution had been reversed). The negotiations for EU membership did not bring about much change for the better, at least locally, as the EU regarded the problems of Serbs in Croatia as largely solved. The fact that the Serbian SDSS (*Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka*, the Independent Democratic Serb Party) participated in the national *Sabor* (parliament) by supporting the reigning HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, the Croatian Democratic Union) from 2007 onwards served as another sign to the EU that Serbs had been reintegrated into political life and society in Croatia, and thus contributed to the commencement of negotiations for EU accession. This however did not stop clientelism and corruption, which went to the very top of the state, nor indeed the general marginalisation of the region, which affected

all local inhabitants, but especially Serbs, and which affected their self perception and their views to the future.

In 2000/01 Serb returnees had stressed that the war had set them back twenty years, but they still hoped that more young people would return soon and that the villages would be revitalised, even if they knew that it would take a long time to regain what they used to have, “maybe twenty years,” as they said. They somehow still believed in the linear progress of modernity, as Stef Jansen (2014) had stressed in regard to post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, and thought—or at least hoped—that the war had been an outlier, a crisis of modernity and civility, which could be overcome. By 2014, this hope had disappeared, as the long-awaited progress had failed to materialise. While the larger return movement of younger families had not taken place, an EU-supported elderly service became one of the main employees for local (Serbian) women in the region, helping those fragile elderly individuals left alone in their houses. Furthermore, an increasing number of Serb-owned houses was becoming empty again, as their elderly owners had died. Other Serbs who had returned soon left again on realising that the repossession of houses alone could not feed them. Their houses remained empty, locked, abandoned, and even fell into decay after the war. Some remote villages have never attracted returnees due to their remote location or a continued lack of electricity and running water. Again other houses remained destroyed, as the owners had never returned and thus had not cared or been able to reconstruct them. In fact, in this region, destroyed and abandoned houses were like ghosts of a time past, or, to use Foucault’s (1986) term, so called “heterotopias”. Forgotten and left to decay, the ruins and empty houses and villages, as well as the demolished monuments of the socialist past, became partly overgrown with trees and brushwood. Still, they remain ‘living’ memorials of the immediate socialist past, in which the inhabitants of this region lived a ‘normal’, lively and hopeful life, Serbs alongside Croats, but which is officially ignored and forgotten, as the glorious victory in the so-called homeland war and the victorious liberation of Knin are important tropes of Croatia’s past, directly alluding to an imagined medieval Croatian kingdom dating back to the tenth century, which again had its seat in Knin.

Simultaneously, the abandoned houses are also memorials of a missing future. They are symbols of decline and of a massive

depopulation in the Dalmatian hinterland after the demise of socialist Yugoslavia and with the war, and which is—after the heights of the state-organised settlement project of Croats in these regions in the direct aftermath of the war and the then partial return of Serbs which had been encouraged by international organisations—again continuing. The ongoing depopulation and economic marginalisation are the opposite of what Croatia—and in fact also the EU—claimed to achieve: a prospective, forward-looking future for its citizens. Being more or less isolated in the Knin region, without powerful social contacts in the region or even beyond, in Croatia, Serb returnees often have difficulties building up or even imagining a future for their children in Croatia, and instead rely on their networks abroad—either in Serbia, or other EU countries—to create a sense of social security and a future for their children. Croatian settlers, on the other hand, have established themselves as a permanent community in Knin thanks to the housing solution, but they also leave the region as soon as better options occur—migrating instead to more prosperous EU countries, as enabled by Croatia's accession to the EU.

In 2020, property conflicts had long been solved in the region, and generally, interethnic antagonisms in local, everyday life hardly occur. Instead, people often highlighted that they were on good terms with each other, and that there was an everyday conviviality in their local communities. Local Serbs were however also aware of the ongoing discrimination of Serbs and the marginalisation of largely Serb-inhabited regions in Croatia. However, for this they held state politics, and not their Croat neighbours, responsible. Furthermore, violent incidents against ethnic minorities still happen, and are often initiated by people coming into local communities from outside. What unites people locally is the fact that they feel powerless. They are convinced that the state is not caring enough, but that it is corrupt and clientelist. While neoliberalism, consumerism and privatisation have indeed ultimately entered the region, centralisation, clientelism, and nationalism have remained dominant concepts in politics, hindering the development of local communities, and impinging on agency and trust. Still, local people also have a certain power, and in their fight for *opstanak* (staying) in the region, for their economic and social survival, they are increasingly united.

On 5 August 2020, for the first time since the end of war in 1995, a Serbian member of parliament took part in the official celebrations

of the Croatian day of liberation by *Oluja* in Knin, while a Croatian official participated in the commemoration of Serbian victims of the same military action, celebrated a few days later in the village near Knin, next to the memorial for civil victims of the war established by Serbs. This mutual acknowledgement received a lot of attention both nationally and internationally. It was seen as a sign of interethnic tolerance and reconciliation, a victory for civil rights and interethnic respect. Some local Serbs, however, were rather indifferent to it. For them, another apology for war crimes or another symbolic gesture of mutual recognition was still only lip service, and not a move towards a better future for the local community, as these state officials returned to Zagreb the next day, while economic and social investments in the region are yet to materialise.

Conclusions

In the war along ethno-national lines, housing politics became a means of supporting ethno-national engineering, which in turn lasted long after the end of the war itself. The neoliberal politics put forward by the international community, which focused on the return of private property while ignoring the realities of housing in socialism, was only partly successful in undoing the war-related ethno-national reality. The fact that Serbs had regained the private property rights over their houses may have solved the housing conflict, but this did not necessarily enhance the return of Serbs, as houses were useless without an economic basis on which their inhabitants could live. In post-war, post-socialist, neoliberal Croatia, the entanglement of housing and labour—which had been a major principle in socialism—became dissolved, as neither the state nor the international community pushed forward economic investments in the region. In this situation, it was mainly the Catholic Church which cared for the inhabitants who found themselves in precarious economic situations by distributing food and giving spiritual support. Here, however, not necessarily civil values, but rather ethno-national values were at stake. In fact, after the end of war, the Catholic Church and other, so-called civic, but highly nationalist organisations like the veteran associations, invested in a symbolic landscape, claiming Croats' ethno-national ownership rights to the region, while the development

of local prosperity and conviviality faded into the background. As such, the investment in memory culture contributes to what has been going on in the last years: the silent but ongoing diminishing of the Serbian population in the Knin region. The houses of those who have not returned and those who have died, but who have no living offspring in the region, establish (unofficial) monuments of a time-space that is past, although or because they are neglected and left aside. The fact that in this climate, local Croats also leave, leads—maybe unexpectedly—to local forms of inter-ethnic solidarity, or to new forms of conviviality, as locals today jointly face what local Serbs term the “economic *Oluja*”. This time, it is not nationalism which makes the younger generation leave the region, but economic motives. These young people mainly seek greener pastures in more prosperous EU countries. The Croatian government—as well as the EU—seems rather indifferent to this state of affairs.

References

- Barić, Nikica. 2008. The Rise and Fall of the Republic of Serb Krajina (1990–1995). In: Sabrina P. Ramet, Konrad Clewing and Reneo Lukic (eds). 2008. *Croatia Since Independence: War, Politics, Society, Foreign Relations*. Munich: Oldenbourg, pp. 89–105.
- Benda-Beckmann, Franz and Keebet von. 1994. Coping with insecurity. In: Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann (eds). 1994. *Coping with Insecurity. An “Underall” Perspective on Social Security in the Third World*. Indonesia: Pustaka Pelajar & Focaal Edition, pp. 7–31.
- Benda-Beckmann, Franz and Keebet von. 1999. A functional analysis of property rights, with special reference to Indonesia. In: Toon van Meijl and Franz von Benda-Beckmann. 1999. *Property Rights and Economic Development. Land and Natural Resources in Southeast Asia and Oceania*. London and New York: Kegan Paul International, pp. 15–57.
- Čapo Žmegač, Jasna. 2007. *Strangers Either Way. The Lives of Croatian Refugees in Their New Home*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Čapo Žmegač, Jasna. 2010. Različiti pristupi povratnim migracijama: primjer Hrvatske. *Studia ethnologica Croatica*, 22, 11–38, <https://hrcaj.srce.hr/62238>.
- Creed, Grald. 1998. *Domesticating Revolution: From Socialist Reform to Ambivalent Transition in a Bulgarian Village*. Pennsylvania: Penn State Press.
- Croatian Bureau of Statistics. Population By Ethnicity—Detailed Classification, <https://dzs.gov.hr/en>.

- Dalakoglou, Dimitris. 2009. Building and Ordering Transnationalism: the 'Greek House' in Albania as a Material Process. In: Daniel Miller (ed.). 2009. *Anthropology and the Individual*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 51–68.
- Djuric, I. 2010. The post-war repatriation of Serb minority internally displaced persons and refugees in Croatia—Between discrimination and political settlement. *Europe-Asia Studies* 62 (10), 1639–1660, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2010.522423>.
- Foucault, Michel. 1986. Of Other Spaces. *Diacritics*, 16 (1), 22–27.
- Hann, Chris. 1998. Introduction. In: Chris Hann (ed.). 1998. *Property Relations. Renewing the Anthropological Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–47.
- Hann, Chris. 1998. Postsocialist Nationalism: Rediscovering the Past in Southeast Poland. *Slavic Review* 57 (4), 840–863.
- Hann, Chris. 2000. The tragedy of the privates? Postsocialist property relations in anthropological perspective. *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Paper*, 2, https://www.eth.mpg.de/cms/en/publications/working_papers/wp0002.
- Hann, Chris. 2002. Farewell to the socialist 'other'. In: Chris Hann (ed.). 2002. *Postsocialism. Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1–11.
- Hann, Chris. 2003. Introduction. Decollectivisation and the moral economy. In: Chris Hann et al. (eds). 2003. *The Postsocialist Agrarian Question. Property Relations and the Rural Condition*. Münster: Lit, pp. 1–46.
- Hann, Chris. 2006. Introduction: faith, power, and civility after socialism. In: Chris Hann et al. (eds). 2006. *The Postsocialist Religious Question: Faith and Power in Central Asia and East-Central Europe*. Münster: L, pp. 1–26.
- Hann, Chris. 2006. 'Not the Horse We Wanted!': Postsocialism, Neoliberalism, and Eurasia. Münster: Lit.
- Hann, Chris. 2015. Property: Anthropological Aspects. In: James D. Wright (ed.). 2015. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2:19, Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 153–159.
- Hirschhausen, Béatrice. 1997. *Les nouvelles campagnes roumaines. Paradoxes d'un retour paysan*. Paris: Mappemonde.
- Humphrey, Caroline. 1998. *Marx Went away—But Karl Stayed behind*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Hurd, Madeleine, Hastings Donnan and Carolin Leutloff-Grandits. 2017. Introduction: Crossing Borders, Changing Times. In: Hastings Donnan, Madeleine Hurd, Carolin Leutloff-Grandits (eds). 2017. *Migrating Borders and Moving Times. Temporality and the Crossing of Borders in Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 1–24.

- Jansen, Stef. 2006. The privatization of home and hope: Return, reforms and the foreign intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 30, 177–199, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-007-9005-x>.
- Jansen, Stef. 2014. On Not Moving Well Enough. Temporal Reasoning in Sarajevo Yearnings for “Normal Lives”. *Current Anthropology* 55, 74–84.
- Kaneff, Deema. 2004. *Who Owns the Past? The Politics of Time in a ‘Model’ Bulgarian Village*. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Kideckel, David, A. 1993. *The Solitude of Collectivism: Romanian Villagers to the Revolution and Beyond*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2002. Claiming Ownership in Post-War Croatia: The Emotional Dynamics of Possession and Repossession in Knin. *Focaal. European Journal of Anthropology. Special Issue on ‘Politics and Emotions in Post-Cold War Contexts’*, ed. by Maruska Svasek, pp. 73–92.
- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2003. Houses Without Owners? Historical Insights into Missing Ownership Documents of Houses in Rural Croatia in the 1990s. In: Hannes Grandits and Patrick Heady (eds). 2003. *Distinct Inheritances. Property, Family and Community in a Changing Europe*. Münster: Lit Verlag, pp. 371–388.
- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2004. Religious Celebrations and the (Re)Creation of Communities in Postwar Knin, Croatia. In: Frances Pine, Deema Kaneff and Haldis Haukanes (eds). 2004. *Memory, Politics and Religion. The Past Meets the Present in Europe*. Münster: Lit Verlag, pp. 229–254.
- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2005. Return as a Strategy of Social Security? Generational and Family based Approaches to Return of Serbian War-Refugees to Croatia. In: Haldis Haukanes and Frances Pine (eds). 2005. *Generations, Kinship and Care. Gendered Provisions of Social Security in Central Eastern Europe*. University of Bergen: Centre for Women’s and Gender Research, pp. 207–230.
- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2006. Claiming Ownership in Post-War Croatia. The Dynamics of Property Relations and Ethnic Conflict in the Knin Region. *Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia* 9, Münster: Lit Verlag.
- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2008. Contested Citizenship between National and Social Rights in Post War Knin, Croatia. *Sociologija* 4, 371–390, DOI:10.2298/SOC0804371L.
- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2008. Croatia’s Serbs Ten Years after the End of the War. In: Sabrina Ramet, Konrad Clewing and Reneo Lukic (eds). 2008. *Croatia since Independence*. Munich: Oldenbourg, pp. 141–169.
- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2009. ‘Fight against Hunger’. Ambiguities of a Charity Campaign in Post-War Croatia. In: Carolin Leutloff-Grandits, Anja Peleikis and Tatjana Thelen (eds). 2009. *Social Security in Religious Networks*. New York: Berghahn, pp. 43–61.

- Leutloff-Grandits, Carolin. 2016. Post-Dayton Ethnic Engineering in Croatia through the Lenses of Property Issues and Social Transformations. *Journal for Genocide Research* 18 (4), 485–502, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2016.1230299>.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1949. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Mesic, Milan and Dragan Bagic. 2010. Serb returnees in Croatia—The question of return sustainability. *International Migration* 48 (2), 133–160.
- Miller, Daniel. 2010. *Stuff*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- O’Loughlin, J. 2010. Inter-ethnic friendships in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sociodemographic and place influences. *Ethnicities* 10 (1), 26–53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796809354153>.
- Pavlaković, Vjeran. 2014. Fulfilling the thousand-year-old dream: Strategies of symbolic nation-building in Croatia. In: P. Kolstø (ed.) 2014. *Strategies of Symbolic Nation-building in South Eastern Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 19–50.
- Pina-Cabral de, João and Frances Pine. 2008. On the margins: an introduction. In: Frances Pine and João de Pina-Cabral (eds). 2008. *On the Margins of Religion*. Oxford: Berghahn, pp. 1–12.
- Pine, Frances. 1996. Naming the House and Naming the Land: Kinship and Social Groups in Highland Poland. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2 (3), 443–459, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3034897>.
- Roth, Klaus. 1983. Zum Umgang des Menschen mit seiner Wohnumwelt. I In: Konrad Köstlin (ed.) 1983. *Umgang mit Sachen. Zur Kulturgeschichte des Dingegebrauchs*. Regensburg: Hermann Bausinger, pp. 62–67.
- Schäuble, Michaela. 2014. *Narrating Victimhood: Gender, Religion and the Making of Place in post-war Croatia*. New York: Berghahn.
- Torsello, Davide. 2003. *Trust, Property and Social Change in a Southern Slovakian Village*. Münster: Lit Verlag.
- Verdery, Katherine. 1996. *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Verdery, Katherine. 2003. *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.