

The aim of the thesis is to identify those German citizens, who were fighting in the Yugoslav wars, determine their background, actions on the ground and post-war trajectories, as well as suggest probable motivations for joining the combat in the way they did. The thesis raises the question, how these German war volunteers can be best described and if they are somehow specific within their subgroup of predominantly Western anti-Yugoslav foreign fighters. I argue that Nir Arielli, one of the few scholars dealing with the role of Westerners in the conflict, falls short by qualifying them merely as “meaning seekers” and thus overlooks the multitude of political connections and references, first and foremost among the Germans. I will offer a critique by pointing out differences and nuances, especially in origin-based motives, ideological underpinning and perspectives on the conflict. In doing so, I will raise the question of what we do know about the political situation in both Germany and Croatia in the early 1990s, and how each of that might have facilitated decisions to join combat abroad. In addition, I will classify their appearance both within the well-known theory of “new wars” as well as within the phenomenon of foreign war volunteering, arguing that there is not much reason why this group should be considered any different to other historical or contemporary foreign fighter groups.