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**German Foreign Fighters in the Yugoslav
Wars**

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Abstract

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 that 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.

Keywords

Yugoslav Wars; Foreign Fighters; War Volunteering; Transnationalism; New Wars; Paramilitaries; Diaspora; Neo-Nazism; Germany

Abstrakt

Cílem práce je identifikovat německé občany, kteří bojovali ve válce v Jugoslávii, popsat jejich původ a zázemí, válečné aktivity a poválečné osudy, stejně jako naznačit jejich možné motivace pro zapojení se do bojů a způsoby, které si k tomu zvolili. Práce tak především vznáší otázku, jak německé válečné dobrovolníky nejlépe charakterizovat a zdá se, že v rámci podskupiny převážně západních protijugoslávsky orientovaných bojovníků něčím specifictví. Zastávám názor, že Nir Arieli, který je jedním z mála učenců zabývajících se rolí západních aktérů v jugoslávském konfliktu, předkládá zjednodušující pohled na problém, když příslušníky této skupiny označuje výhradně za „meaningseekers“, tj. jakési „hledáče významu“, a přehlíží tak množství politických vazeb a odkazů, které byly přítomné především mezi Němci. Ve své práci předkládám kritiku této představy tím, že poukazuji na různé rozdíly a nuance, zejména na motivy vycházející z původu, ideologická východiska a perspektivy konfliktu. Kladu si přitom otázku, co konkrétně víme o Německu počátku devadesátých let 20. století, jakož i o politické situaci v Chorvatsku, a jak obojí mohlo usnadnit rozhodnutí německých válečných dobrovolníků zapojit se do boje zahraničím. Kromě toho se zaměřuji na jejich klasifikaci prostřednictvím teorie "nových válek" a fenoménu dobrovolnictví v zahraničních konfliktech. Docházím přitom k závěru, že neexistuje důvod, proč by tato skupina měla být považována za odlišnou ve vztahu k bývalým nebo současným skupinám zahraničních bojovníků.

Klíčová slova

Války v Jugoslávii; Zahraniční bojovníci; Válečné dobrovolnictví; Transnacionalismus; Nové války; Paramilitantní Jednotek; Diaspora; Neonacismus; Německo

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Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, 19th of May 2016

Table of Content

1.	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	6
1.2.	STRUCTURE	7
1.3.	HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF FOREIGN WAR VOLUNTEERING	8
2.	PROBLEMS FOR RESEARCH ON FOREIGN FIGHTING	11
2.1.	SCHOLARLY WORKS ON FOREIGN FIGHTING	12
2.2.	SOURCES ON GERMAN FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN THE YUGOSLAV WARS	14
3.	TERMS AND CONCEPTS	17
3.1.	FOREIGN FIGHTERS	18
3.2.	MERCENARIES	19
3.3.	WORKING DEFINITION	21
4.	TYPIFICATION OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS	22
4.1.	BACKGROUNDS AS FACILITATORS OF FOREIGN FIGHTING	22
4.2.	SOME THOUGHTS ON MOTIVATION	23
4.3.	RECRUITMENT AND MESSAGING	25
4.4.	PULL FACTOR - THE MODERN SHERWOOD FOREST	26
4.5.	ROLE OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN CONFLICTS	27
4.6.	FOREIGN FIGHTERS AFTER CONFLICTS	30
5.	THE CONFLICTS IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	32
5.1.	NEW WARS	32
5.2.	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONFLICTS IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	35
5.3.	TRANSNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	38
6.	THE ANALYSIS	46
6.1.	PRELIMINARY REMARKS: CROATIA IN THE EARLY 1990S	46
6.2.	PRELIMINARY REMARKS: GERMANY IN THE EARLY 1990S	47
6.3.	NUMBERS	49

6.4.	BACKGROUNDS.....	50
6.5.	RECRUITMENT STRUCTURES	51
6.6.	MOTIVES.....	55
6.7.	STATUS AND ROLE ON THE GROUND	61
6.8.	DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS.....	72
7.	CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	77
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	80

List of important acronyms

ANS/NA	<i>Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten / Nationale Aktivisten</i> (Action Front of National Socialists / National Activists)
ARBiH	<i>Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine</i> (Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina)
DM	<i>Deutsche Mark</i> (German Mark)
GDR	<i>German Democratic Republic</i>
HDZ	<i>Hrvatska demokratska zajednica</i> (Croatian Democratic Union)
HOS	<i>Hrvatske obrambene snage</i> (Croatian Defence Forces)
HSP	<i>Hrvatska stranka prava</i> (Croatian Party of Rights)
HVO	<i>Hrvatsko vijeće obrane</i> (Croatian Defense Council)
ICTY	<i>International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia</i>
KLA	<i>Kosovo Liberation Army</i>
NPD	<i>Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> (National Democratic Party of Germany)
NVA	<i>Nationale Volksarmee</i> (National People's Army; the army of the former German Democratic Republic)
SDA	<i>Stranka demokratske akcije</i> (Party of Democratic Action; main Bosniak party in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
USDDR	<i>Udruga Stranih Dragovoljaca Domovinskog Rata</i> (Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Homeland War)
VRS	<i>Vojska Republike Srpske</i> (Army of Republika Srpska)

1. Introduction

The Ukrainian parliament legalizing the service of foreign fighters in their army¹, a young Marxist-Leninist from Southern Germany joining the Kurdish People's Protection Unit (YPG)², a Briton of Greek descent, citing Lord Byron and Sophie Scholl, on his campaign against the so-called Islamic State³, soldiers from South Africa and the former Soviet Union joining the struggle of Nigerian forces against Boko Haram⁴: Countless newsworthy examples from all over the world can be given of voluntary combatants joining military forces, with which they bear no kin relations. Foreign war volunteers repeatedly hit the headlines, all the more when it comes to the current fate of Western Muslims and converts fighting for global jihad.⁵ However, comparable trends have already occurred in the early 1990s, when the political and public attention was not only focused on the transformation in Eastern Central Europe, the unification of Germany, the unclear future of the Soviet Union, but famously also on the violent breakup of Yugoslavia. At the same time, the influx of violence-prone foreigners into the region received relatively sparse coverage.

But yet, in October 1991, already half a year after the first war-related casualties⁶, British newspapers mentioned the rise of so-called “black legions”⁷, which included several volunteers from all over Europe. Then, already in early 1992 voices arose

¹ Krasnikov, Denys. „Rada lets foreigners serve in Ukrainian army.“ *Kyiv Post*, 06 Oct 2015. Among the diverse foreigners fighting in Ukraine on both sides are Serb pan-Slavists, a Swedish sniper with far-right views and an Indian communist, see: Jackson, Patrick. „Ukraine war pulls in foreign fighters.“ *BBC News*, 1 Sep 2014. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28951324> (This and all the following URLs last accessed 18 May 2016).

See also: Walker, Shaun. „We are preventing a third world war': the foreigners fighting with Ukrainian rebels.“ *The Guardian*, 24 Sep 2015.

² Lanktree, Graham. „Young German fighting with Kurds against Isis dies in battle in Syria.“ *International Business Times*, 13 Jul 2015. URL: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/young-german-fighting-kurds-against-isis-dies-battle-syria-1510624>.

³ Spencer, Richard. “Who are the foreign fighters taking on the Islamic State?” *The Telegraph*, 04 Mar 2015.

⁴ Copley, Ed; Lewis, David. „Nigeria drafts in foreign mercenaries to take on Boko Haram.“ *Reuters*, 12 Mar 2015. URL: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-violence-mercenaries-idUSKBN0M81CN20150312c>.

⁵ Masi, Alessandria. “ISIS Recruiting Westerners: How The 'Islamic State' Goes After Non-Muslims And Recent Converts In The West.” *International Business Times*, 09 Aug 14. URL: <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-recruiting-westerners-how-islamic-state-goes-after-non-muslims-recent-converts-west-1680076>

⁶ Sudetic, Chuck. „Deadly Clash in a Yugoslav Republic.“ *New York Times*, 1 Apr 1991.

⁷ Malet, David. “Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions.” *Foreign Fighters, Sovereignty, and Counter-Terrorism: Selected Essays*, ed. Michael P. Noonan. (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2010), 7-24. Note that the „Black Legions“ were originally a Croat paramilitary groups during Second World War.

claiming that the Yugoslav civil war has “more foreign fighters involved than any conflict since the Spanish Civil War.”⁸ Eugen Kammerer, himself a former war volunteer, claimed in an interview with the German news magazine *Focus* in 1995 that there were “more than one thousand foreigners, primarily Germans.”⁹ According to David François, military historian at the University of Bourgogne, the conflict has seen at least 2000 foreign fighters of different background and affiliation.¹⁰ Out of this number approximately 500 foreigners sided with the Croatian armed forces, of which some rose to relative fame, such as the Frenchmen Jean-Michel Nicollier, who became a (Croatian) martyr of the battle of Vukovar¹¹, today’s Finnish star architect Marco Casagrande¹², or Eduardo “Chico” Rózsa-Flores, a Bolivian-Hungarian, who took up arms as the first commander of an international unit and who later became the protagonist of his own biopic.¹³

A common but simplifying logic suggests that these volunteers joined the Croat forces because they were Catholic, anti-Communist and/or “pro-Western”, while Orthodox pan-Slavists sided with the Serbs and Muslims supported the government in Sarajevo. This image, however, cries out for differentiations; and this can equally be said about questions related to the volunteer’s motives. In the view of François it was “lovesickness, boredom, problems with the law, so many reasons that have nothing to do with the causes of the Yugoslav conflict [for these] young men, singles in their twenties or thirties, to leave everything and take the train to Zagreb.”¹⁴ In this thesis I argue that this view, which is also commonly stated in scholarly works and media outputs published on the topic, underestimates underlying ideological dimensions for

⁸ Cited in: Malet, David. *Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civil Conflicts*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 216.

⁹ Desselberger, Alex. „Rechtsextremisten. Üben für den Terror.“ *Focus*, 25 Feb 1995. (This and all following quotes from German, French or Serbo-Croatian sources are – if not stated otherwise – translations done by the author).

¹⁰ François, David. “Internationalistes en Yougoslavie: les volontaires étrangers en Croatie, 1991-1995.” *L'autre côté de la colline*, 5 Sep 2013. URL: <http://lautrecoatedelacolline.blogspot.cz/2013/09/internationalistes-en-yougoslavie-les.html>. Malet speaks on the other hand of 5.000-20.000 “mercenaries”, but includes those with diaspora background. See: Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 234.

¹¹ Where today a bridge bears his name., see the programs of French and Croatian television: Besson, Gasson. “Envoyés spécial - Qui a tué le «Français de Vukovar» ?(In French) by Julien Tridat”. *YouTube* video, 39:00. Posted [March 2013]. <https://youtu.be/izUoMIAIxE4>; Markuš, Antonio. „Jean Michel Nicollier 12.5.2016 studio 4.” *YouTube* video, 08:23. Posted [12.05.2016]. https://youtu.be/N037J_ii1BQ.

¹² Johnnyantora. “Casagrande, Marco: The Mostar Road Hitchhiker.” *johnnyantora. Dispatches from War and Culture* (blog), 11 Jul 2007. URL: <http://johnnyantora.com/2013/11/07/marco-casagrande-the-mostar-road-hitchhiker/>

¹³ Guinness, Selina. “The universal soldier.” *The Dublin Review* 36 (Autumn 2009).

¹⁴ François, *Internationalistes*.

the foreigners to join combat, as well as existing networks that were based on diaspora and transnational political activism.

In fact, engaging with the existing literature and sources shows that relatively little is known about the foreign fighter's numbers, motivations and backgrounds. This is even more true when zooming into particular battlefields and attempting case studies of distinct national groups. One of these national sub-groups, German citizens without any kin relation to the conflict's parties, will be the subject of this thesis.

1.1. Research Questions

The aim of the thesis is to identify those German citizens, who were fighting alongside a party to the conflict, determine their background, actions on the ground and post-war trajectories, as well as suggest probable motivations for joining the combat the way they did. The paper raises the question, how these German war volunteers can be best described and if they are somehow specific within their own subgroup, in this case predominantly western anti-Yugoslav foreign fighters. I argue that Nir Arielli, one of the few scholars dealing with the role of westerners in the conflict¹⁵, falls short by qualifying this group merely as “meaning seekers” and thus overlooks the multitude of political connections and references, first and foremost among the Germans. I will build upon Arielli's description of the subgroup, but 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 their country of origin, namely Germany in the early 1990s, as well as the political situation in the Balkans, Croatia in particular, and how each of them might have facilitated decisions to join combat abroad. In addition, I will classify their appearance both within theories on modern warfare, exemplified by 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 and contemporary foreign fighter groups, including contemporary jihadists.

¹⁵ Arielli, Nir. “In Search of Meaning: Foreign Volunteers in the Croatian Armed Forces, 1991–95.” *Contemporary European History* 21 (Feb 2012): 1-17.

The reasons for choosing the Germans as a “sample” are manifold. First, it narrows down the group of foreign fighters that was subject to investigations. Secondly, it facilitates to illuminate transnational connections that might have played a role in the reasoning. Further, by choosing a subgroup that is defined geographically, it is possible to scrutinize a specific political, socioeconomic and historical situation in more detail. Moreover, unlike for instance volunteers from Spain or Scandinavia, foreign fighters from Germany might be influenced by a long history of intense German involvement in the area, in one way or the other. Ultimately, the powerful Croatian diaspora in Germany and existing linkages, also between anti-Yugoslav and right-wing structures, might have facilitated recruitment more than in other countries.

As one of the few, the thesis aims at testing the assumptions that scholars brought up about foreign fighters in the former Yugoslavia and abroad. This is even more important, since their presence was (and most probably still is) used as propaganda tool, exemplified by certain Serbian media reports about “German ex-Nazis emerging from hideouts in South America to settle scores with their old Serbian foes.”¹⁶

1.2. Structure

The structure of the thesis is as following: After the introduction I provide an overview of the historical role and persistence of the phenomenon of foreign war volunteering as well as about the relevant literature that was published on the topic. Furthermore, I sketch out the general approach, present the main sources used in the thesis and briefly depict additional sources that were useful for examining the topic. In a second step, definitional, terminological and typological issues will be settled, including a brief outline of the current scholarly knowledge about origin, motivation and role of foreign fighters. Subsequently, the character of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia as “new wars” will be critically discussed, with a special focus on those aspects relevant for the topic, such as the role of irregular combatants, transnational elements and foreign war volunteering. In order to provide the reader also with a historical groundwork for my argument, the situation in Germany and Croatia at the beginning of the 1990s will be outlined.

¹⁶ Cited in: Malet, David. *Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civil Conflicts*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 225.

The main part of the thesis consists of the analysis and interpretation of information available in various sources about German citizens that were active combatants in the conflicts in today's territory of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, as we will see to a much lesser degree, Kosovo. The four aspects I wish to illuminate here are, firstly, the background and origin of the foreign fighters, on which only sparse information is available; secondly, their motivation, about which direct and indirect accounts are available, albeit to varying degrees; thirdly, their documented role on the ground; and lastly, their post-war trajectories and, in some respects, persistence.

One basis question was whether or not to include the war in Kosovo in the analysis and if so, how. With its somewhat different background and cause, lesser scope¹⁷ of the conflict and especially its lower number of foreign fighters it clearly has not the same relevance for the this and thus should be set aside without being withhold totally. Accordingly, I will exclude the skirmishes in Slovenia in 1991 and North-Western Macedonia in 2001, due their low conflict intensity, their distinct character and the, to the author's knowledge, absence of (German) foreign fighters. Moreover, the strong nexus between the Croatian and the Bosnian case, worked out and best described by Woodward¹⁸, deemed it reasonable to consider the two conflicts jointly.

1.3. Historical Examples of Foreign War Volunteering

Generally speaking, the thesis wishes to explore the role that individuals can play in warfare, both on historically and contemporary battlegrounds. To paraphrase David François, studying foreign fighters will help to understand a military phenomenon, both original but very present in all conflicts, volunteering.¹⁹ As stated above, general interest in the topic of foreign fighting is increasing, with jihadism being the main focus of attention. However, as suggested above, a glance at history proves that "Islamism is neither necessary nor sufficient to explain foreign fighters."²⁰ As shown by David Malet, in more than 20 percent of all civil conflicts over the last 200 years, foreign

¹⁷ With regard to the duration of the war and the number of casualties.

¹⁸ Including the "reciprocal networks among political parties", the "refugees who poured over the border" and the "formation of military and partisan military links" between the two. See: Woodward, Susan L. *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1995), 353.

¹⁹ François. *Internationalistes*.

²⁰ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 3.

fighters were present, with a probable even higher number if outright mercenaries would be included.²¹

These latter-mentioned professional combat participations did not start with the famous *Landsknechts* in the Thirty Years' War or the *Hessians* in the American War of Independence, and did neither end with foreign legionaries' role in the (First) Indochina War²² nor with the appearance of such infamous figures such as "Kongo-Müller"²³, to name just a few examples from modern times. On the other side, the spectrum of forms of primarily ideologically motivated war volunteering, reaches from the struggle of Lord Byron in Greece, international volunteers in the American Civil War and Pancho Villa's *División del Norte* in the Mexican revolution, over non-German and non-British conscripts in the *Waffen-SS* and the *RAF*, respectively²⁴, right up to the contemporary wave of (Western) Europeans joining different warring groups in Syria and Iraq.²⁵ Additionally, as Petersohn has demonstrated, the appearance of foreign nationals on battlefields abroad, whether paid or not, was neither a phenomena of the Cold War, nor can its highest prevalence be found in Africa, although both views were and are dominant.²⁶

If we go one layer deeper and consider only the military history of openly right-wing transnational activism, we can clearly see a continuity also there: Among others there was a right-wing volunteers' involvement and support for Franco in the Spanish Civil War²⁷, for Christian militias in the Lebanese Civil War, for the Karen rebellion in Burma, for UNITA in Angola, and even single supporters for the Afghan Mujahideen

²¹ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 10.

²² See for example the number of non-French foreigners in the Battle of *Dien Bien Phu*.

²³ A former *Wehrmacht* soldier, who became involved as leading mercenary in Congo and was subject of an East German documentary "Der lachende Mann".

²⁴ In the *Waffen-SS* the biggest groups of volunteers were of Dutch, Hungarian or Baltic origin, while in the British armed forces it were mostly Polish or Czechoslovak soldiers. However, it is important to note that under the conditions of the Second World War, especially in the case of countries occupied by Nazi Germany, the decision to become a volunteer was by no means always based on ideological conviction.

²⁵ Neuhof, Florian. „Anti-Isis foreign legion: Ex-skinheads and angry white men swell ranks of Christian militia fighting Islamic State.“ *International Business Time*, 13 Jul 2015. URL: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/anti-isis-foreign-legion-ex-skinheads-angry-white-men-swell-ranks-christian-militia-fighting-1510550>.

²⁶ Peterson, Ulrich. „The Impact of Mercenaries and Private Military and Security Companies on Civil War Severity between 1946 and 2002.“ *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations* 40 (2014): 191-215.

²⁷ Judith Keene mentions among others Irish *Blueshirts*, *Action Française* activists, White émigré Russians, and Romanian *Iron Guard* members. See: Keene, Judith. „Fighting for God, for Franco and (most of all) for Themselves: Right-Wing Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War.“ In *War Volunteering in Modern Times. From the French Revolution to the Second World War*, ed. Christine G. Krüger et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), 211-230.

against the Soviets.²⁸ Considering these relatively little-known examples, it seems that in form and persistence they show more similarities to today's jihadism than commonly believed, only the scope is a different one.

In this context it is also worth to point at the preoccupation of public attention with Islamist terrorism and Muslim foreign fighters.²⁹ Ever since the September 11 attacks, homecoming transnational jihadists are seen ever-increasingly as a security risk for their countries of origin. But it is often forgotten that already during the Yugoslav wars there were battle-hardened "war tourists" that returned home. Those were in total not only far more numerous than today's Muslim foreign fighters of Western origin³⁰, but many of them also returned heavily armed.³¹

Thus, both in the perspective of a *longue durée* as well as compared to rather recent conflicts, it can be questioned if the current movement of foreign fighters into the Middle East "has been unprecedented in both its scope and speed", as some scholars have claimed.³² All in all it can be agreed that historians and other scholars have been "relatively indifferent" to the phenomenon of war volunteering, regardless of whether we can perceive it as "quintessentially modern" or not.³³

²⁸ François, Internationalistes.

²⁹ While, for instance, in 2013 out of 152 terrorist attacks in the EU only two were motivated by religious convictions. See: Europol. EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT 2014), 28 May 2014.

URL:

[://www.europol.europa.eu/content/te-sat-2014-european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2014](http://www.europol.europa.eu/content/te-sat-2014-european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2014)

³⁰ While it is impossible to determine the total number of Germans (including those of Yugoslav descent), which were fighting in the Balkans, it can be assumed that their number was bigger than the (currently) more than 720 foreign fighters (with German citizenship) in Iraq and Syria. See: Van Ginkel, Bibi et al., ed. "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies." *ICCT Research Paper 7* (Apr 2016), 33. URL: <http://icct.nl/publication/report-the-foreign-fighters-phenomenon-in-the-eu-profiles-threats-policies/>

³¹ Wetz, Andreas. „Österreich und seine Kriegstouristen.“ *Die Presse*, 03 Apr 2015.

³² De Roy van Zuijdewijn, Jeanine. "The Foreign Fighter's Threat: What History Can (not) tell us." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5 (October 2014): 59-73.

³³ Krüger, Christine G. „Introduction: Volunteers, War, and the Nation since the French Revolution.“ *In War Volunteering in Modern Times*, 1.

2. Problems for Research on Foreign Fighting

As claimed by many authors dealing with the role of foreign fighters in conflicts, a high hurdle that needs to be overcome is the lack of reliable sets of data.³⁴ In most cases scholars deal virtually with the tip of the iceberg, with access to information being restricted due to the containment of intelligence data as well as the silence of the veterans. That is all the more true if we consider a specific national sub-group, which makes the source field slimmer and – due to possible language barriers – more exclusive.

Barak and Cohen concluded that “circumstances that facilitate the activities of [violent trans border nonstate actors], their motives and considerations, and the ideologies they espouse – as well as the complex interplay between these factors – remain, by and large, understudied.”³⁵ Added to this, the academia has for the most part also ignored pro-active transnational recruitment and only few have stressed the importance to take a closer look at transnational activist networks.³⁶

Apart from that, it is evident that any kind of account, both autobiographic and journalistic, potentially deals with methodological shortcomings. As Arielli already pointed out correctly, “post-war experience often affect the portrayal of the past [...] events could have been forgotten, repressed or omitted.”³⁷ In addition, there existed considerable differences in terms of onset, termination, place of action, and length of stay in the Balkans, which makes the retrospections of the former volunteers even more subjective.

Not least, when it comes to the wars in Yugoslavia, plenty of research and reporting has been focused on places like Sarajevo, Prijedor or Srebrenica, however, not much about other regions, such as Posavina, Dalmatia or Herzegovina, which in the same time were actually the main battlegrounds for foreign fighters.

³⁴ Miodownik, Dan; Barak, Oren. „Introduction.“ In *Nonstate Actors in Intrastate Conflicts*, ed. Dan Miodownik et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 7.

³⁵ Barak, Oren; Cohen, Chanan. “The ‘Modern Sherwood Forest’: Theoretical and Practical Challenges.” In *Nonstate Actors in Intrastate Conflicts*, ed. Dan Miodownik et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 16.

³⁶ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 15.

³⁷ Arielli, *Search for Meaning*, 3.

2.1. Scholarly Works on Foreign Fighting

The only academic paper dealing with the involvement of war volunteers from the Western world in the struggles between the various forces in the Balkans is the above-quoted “In Search of Meaning: Foreign Volunteers in the Croatian Armed Forces, 1991-95”, written by Nir Arielli. While his concise work is undoubtedly a useful contribution to research on the topic, it focuses solely on the Croatian armed forces and seems to uncritically adopt the perspectives of the interviewed members of the *Udruga Stranik Dragovoljaca Domovinskog Rata* (USDDR, *Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Croatian Homeland War*), a formally non-political veteran organization that consist of around 500 former foreign fighters. Overall, his conclusions are not nuanced enough and, regardless of that, hardly fit the German subgroup, as I will show in the following chapters. When it comes to case studies about distinguishable sub-groups among western foreign fighters, other national groups were not subject of any kind of scholarly output, while the like was done for the Afghanistan-originated Mujahideen³⁸, and – to a much lesser degree – for Russians and Greeks fighting alongside the Serbs.³⁹

Arielli further co-edited a volume⁴⁰ that provides a good overview about the various forms of war volunteering, enlistments and recruitments since the 18th century. Its many examples⁴¹, however, refer mostly to foreign volunteers in regular armed forces of other states. A similar approach of illuminating the geographical and contextual variety of individual cross-border violence, was chosen by an earlier volume by Krüger and Levsen.⁴² It comprises studies spanning for instance from Polish Volunteers siding with Napoleon to the *Blue Division* of the officially neutral Spain fighting in the Second World War. The value of this volume for the thesis at hand, however, lies rather in some of the contribution’s emphasis on ideologically motivated foreign fighters, “men who volunteered to serve not just in foreign, but in extremely nationalistic and even racist forces, such as the Boer commandos, as well as Franco’s

³⁸Mustapha, Jennifer. “The Mujahideen in Bosnia: the foreign fighter as cosmopolitan citizen and/or terrorist.” *Citizenship Studies* 17 (2013): 742-755.

³⁹ Koknar, Ali M. “The Kontraktniki. Russian mercenaries at war in the Balkans.” *Bosnian Institute News and Analysis*, 14 Jul 2003. URL: <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/958701/posts>

⁴⁰ Arielli, Nir; Collins, Bruce, ed. *Transnational Soldiers. Foreign Military Enlistment in the Modern Era*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013).

⁴¹Including recruitment efforts in colonies, among POWs, and for conflicts such as the Lithuanian–Soviet War or the various armed struggles in the tri-state-area Angola/Zambia/Democratic Republic of the Congo.

⁴² Krüger et al., *War Volunteering*.

forces in the Spanish Civil War [...] or Germany's *Waffen-SS* in World War Two."⁴³ Another noteworthy volume is *Nonstate Actors in Intrastate Conflicts*, edited by Dan Miodownik and Oren Barak, which takes a multidisciplinary approach and examines the role of transnational recruitment, diasporas and foreign insurgents on the basis of different contemporary conflicts in the Greater Middle East.

The most insightful study on the historical roots, the motivational background and the recruitment of citizens fighting for a foreign cause remains *Foreign Fighters. Transnational Identity in Civil Conflicts* by David Malet. The book, which is the result of several years of research on the topic and the résumé of earlier works and articles⁴⁴, includes several case studies, a typology and a comprehensive list of conflicts from the last 200 years, in which foreign combatants appeared. Nonetheless, he omitted several groups of foreign fighters in the Yugoslav wars alone, including the pro-Croat westerners this very thesis wants to approach. At the same time, the only reference to the conflict in former Yugoslavia regards jihadists in Bosnia, even though Malet heavily criticizes the constricted focus of scholars on post-1979 Muslim foreign fighting. Another contested point is that he does not differentiate between distinct groups on the same battlegrounds and categorizes them all together under the label "insurgency".⁴⁵ Regardless of all these objections against the typology of Malet, it serves as rich pool of historical examples. To quote from another review, it goes "beyond the nearsighted focus on contemporary Muslim foreign fighters [and] reaches back in history to highlight the pervasiveness of militant transnational volunteerism around globe and across ethnic, religious, and ethnic divides."⁴⁶

Also the works of Barak Mendelsohn, Thomas Hegghamer, Kristin Bakke and others⁴⁷, although mostly pre-occupied with jihadism, are essential for the study of foreign fighters in general, providing ample food for thought and offering many

⁴³ Frykman, Niklas. Review of: Krüger, Christine G.; Levsen, Sonja, ed. *War Volunteering in Modern Times. From the French Revolution to the Second World War*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011). *H-Soz-Kult*, 05 Jul 2012. <http://www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-16137>

⁴⁴ Malet, David. "The More Irregular the Service': Transnational Identity Communities and the Foreign Fighter." Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, Aug 2007.

⁴⁵ This critique was also voiced by Barak Mendelsohn. See: Mendelsohn, Barak. "Why Do Armed Nonstate Groups Recruit Foreign Fighters?: The Case of the Islamic State." Paper delivered at the International Studies Association 57th Annual Convention, Atlanta, 16-19 Mar 2016, 7.

⁴⁶ Review by Mohammed Hafez on the board of: Malet, David, *Transnational Identity*.

⁴⁷ Mendelsohn, Barak; Hegghamer, Thomas. "The recruiter's dilemma. Signaling and rebel recruitment tactics." *Journal of Peace Research* 50 (2013): 3-16; Bakke, Kristin M. "Help Wanted? The Mixed Record of Foreign Fighters in Domestic Insurgencies." *International Security* 38 (Spring 2014):

comparative perspectives. Further, in terms of a theoretical approach, the works by Burmester, Kutz and Joachim are worth reading⁴⁸ and helped to delineate and delimitate terms and concepts. Lastly, for gaining insights in the topic's further scope, general publications about the theory of warfare⁴⁹, the conflict in the former Yugoslavia⁵⁰ and transnational factors⁵¹ were used.

2.2. Sources on German Foreign Fighters in the Yugoslav Wars

Due to a lack of academic sources on the overall topic of war volunteering in the former Yugoslavia, it was necessary to largely draw on contemporary journalistic works. As the former "soldier of fortune" Rob Krott notes with an eye of an especially farcical journalist, "the topic of 'mercenaries' always makes for cheap and easy sensationalistic copy".⁵² Nonetheless, several journalists and correspondents from all over the world did a good job in creating, sometimes profound, investigative articles on the phenomenon and painting some insightful portraits.⁵³ Generally speaking, newspapers were probably the only kind of source where a distinct depiction of Germans in the conflict(s) was

150-187; Byman, Daniel. „The Homecomings. What Happens When Arab Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria Return?“ *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 8 (2015): 581-602.

⁴⁸ Burmester. „The Recruitment and Use of Mercenaries in Armed Conflicts.“ *American Journal of International Law* 72 (Jan 1978): 37-56; Kutz, Christopher. „The Difference Uniforms Make: Collective Violence in Criminal Law and War.“ *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33 (Spring 2005): 148-180; Joachim, Laurent. *Der Einsatz von "Private Military Companies" im modernen Konflikt*. (Berlin: LIT, 2010).

⁴⁹ Kaldor, Mary. *New and Old Wars. Organized Violence in a Global Era*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002); Münkler, Herfried. *Die neuen Kriege*. (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 2011); Mueller, John. „The Banality of Ethnic War.“ *International Security* 25 (Summer 2000): 42-70; Kalyvas, Stathis. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Collier, Paul; Hoeffler, Anke. „Greed and Grievance in Civil War.“ *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (2004): 563-595.

⁵⁰ Hoare, Marko Attila. *How Bosnia Armed*. (London: Saqi Books, 2004); Kalyvas, Stathis N.; Sambanis, Nicholas. „Bosnia's Civil War. Origins and Violence Dynamics.“ In *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, ed. Paul Collier et al. (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005), 191-230; Höpken, Wolfgang. „Performing Violence: Soldiers, Paramilitaries and Civilians in the Twentieth-Century Balkan Wars.“ In *No Man's Land of Violence. Extreme Wars in the 20th Century*, ed. Alf Lüdtke et al. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 211-250.

⁵¹ Salehyan, Idean. *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Checkel, Jeffrey T. *Transnational dynamics of civil war*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Skrede Gleditsch, Kristian. „Transnational Dimensions of Civil War.“ *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (May 2007): 293-309; Hockenos, Paul. *Homeland Calling: Exile, Patriotism, and the Balkan Wars*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003); Ragazzi, Francesco. „The Invention of the Croatian Diaspora: Unpacking the Politics of "Diaspora" During the War in Yugoslavia.“ *Global Migration and Transnational Politics Working Paper* 10 (Nov 2009). URL: https://www.gmu.edu/centers/globalstudies/publications/gmtpwp/gmtp_wp_10.pdf

⁵² Krott, Rob. *Save the Last Bullet for Yourself: A Soldier of Fortune in the Balkans and Somalia*. (Drexel Hill: Casemate, 2008), 192.

⁵³ „Mit dem Tod spielen.“ *Der Spiegel*, 16 Aug 1993; Hoeges, Clemens. Tanner, Marcus. „British fighters' fatal attraction for the thrill of battle.“ *Independent*, 10 Feb 1993; „Mercenaries in Bosnia have varying motives but the fighting attracts them all“. *Baltimore Sun*, 06 Jun 1993.

undertaken.⁵⁴ Also, there exists a number of documentaries and TV reports on the topic, which can be mostly found online.⁵⁵ When it comes to the depiction of Germans, especially the reports of *Spiegel TV* are worth mentioning.⁵⁶

Not to the same extent informative, but at times nevertheless telling, are the – often self-stylizing – video clips created or compiled by former foreign fighters⁵⁷ as well as their social media accounts. These turned out to be rich sources of information, including for instance many anecdotes and photos.⁵⁸ Closely connected with that are more official publications and online presences of the veteran association USDDR. A *Facebook* group, for instance, provides information about the connections between the former war volunteers, the political stance of their members and their motives to join the combat.⁵⁹ This can be supplemented by contemporary written accounts of the activities in the trenches and hotel bars in the Balkans. Although none of these books were written by Germans, they repeatedly made their appearance as often colorful comrades of the respective authors. Among those containing sections about German war volunteers, are texts written in English⁶⁰ French⁶¹ and German⁶².

A similar case is the publication *Mostar Road Hitchhiker* by today's architect Marco Casagrande⁶³, which includes depictions of a number of “soldiers of fortune”⁶⁴ and many atrocious anecdotes about German and other volunteers, especially from the

⁵⁴Geiger, Eric. “Neo-Nazis help Croatians in Bosnia.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 May 1994; “Und morgen schon tot.” *Der Spiegel*, 21 Sep 1992.

⁵⁵Karmakar, Romuald. *Warheads*. Documentary. (Berlin: Max Film, 1992); Lambert, Stephen. *Inside Story. Dogs of War*. BBC documentary (London: BBC, 1992); Sweeney, John. *Travels With My Camera: Dying for the Truth*. Documentary. (London: Hardcash Productions, 1994); Cadilli, Erion. *Sono stato dio in Bosnia*. Documentary. (Rome: Overlook Production, 2010); ŽupanjkaD. “Internacionalna 108 HVO brigada - Doku film HR”. *YouTube* video, 22:32. Posted [May 2011]. <https://youtu.be/AB9OlcPuDRc>.

⁵⁶ See: BiHDoku. „Europäische Neo-Nazis kämpfen auf kroatischer Seite“. Filmed [Fall 1992]. *YouTube* video, 10:38. Posted [Dec 2013]. https://youtu.be/-VghHABmD_c

⁵⁷ See e.g.: *YouTube* account of Gaston Besson. URL: [youtube.com/user/NastyGasty/videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/NastyGasty/videos)

⁵⁸ *Facebook* group „Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Croatian Homeland War 1991-1995” URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/52899198685/>; *Facebook* group “Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima”. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/874106455981393/>

⁵⁹ Zubrinic, Darko. “481 foreign volunteers from 35 countries defended Croatia in 1991-1995.” *Croatia.org (Blog)*, 24 Jul 2010. URL: <http://www.croatia.org/crown/articles/9991/1/481-foreign-volunteers-from-35-countries-defended-Croatia-in-1991-1995.html>

⁶⁰Hutt, Simon. *Paint – A boy Soldier's Journey*. (Coventry: Panic Press, 2010); Krott, Soldier of Fortune.

⁶¹ Charuel, Marc. *Putain de Guerre: Gaston Besson, volontaire français contre les Serbes*. (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 1993) ; Hatzfeld, Jean. *L'air de la guerre: sur les routes de Croatie et de Bosnie-Herzégovine*. (Paris: Éditions de l'Olivier, 1999).

⁶²Santner, Christoph; Niederreiter, Wolfgang. *Ich geh jetzt Rambo spielen. Müllkind, Neonazi, Söldner in Bosnien, Bekehrung - und ein Mordprozess*. (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1995).

⁶³ Written under the pen name Luca Moconesi. See: Moconesi, Luca. *Mostarin tien liftarit. Suomalainen palkkasoturi Bosnian sodassa* [“Mostar road hitchhikers – Finnish mercenary in the Bosnian war”]. (Helsinki: Wsoy, 1997).

⁶⁴ Famously, that is also the title of a magazine covering conflicts all over the world, including many reports on warfare in Bosnia and Croatia.

war in Herzegovina. Although solely written in Finnish, several segments were translated on a blog, whose author, apparently also a former volunteer, aimed to shed light on Casagrande's violent past and who describes the book as “two hundred pages of badass talk, war bigotry, gun-porn, vague claims about ‘honor’[...]”⁶⁵ According to him, “the book does serve as another testimonial of what sort of foreign individuals gravitated towards the Balkan wars.”⁶⁶ It is important to note that he considers them “misfits, psychos and losers”, another reason why for scholars a critical engagement with this and similar sources and an awareness of its shortcomings is absolutely necessary.

Among all these autobiographies and portrayals, some were written by dropouts from neo-Nazi structures⁶⁷, which likewise – together with investigative press articles – serve as main sources for the fighter's origin and their life after the war. In this context it is noteworthy that during my research I also came across several rather questionable sources from neo-Nazi as well as *Antifa* websites, blogs and online forums that only after cross-checking could be verified and were used with caution. Last but not least, it was essential to consider documents of the ICTY (*International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia*), UN reports, parliamentary fact-finding commissions and publications of German *Verfassungsschutzämter* (German intelligence services) in order to include further perspectives and broaden the area of concentration.

One problem was to find traces and clearly identify those Germans that were active as foreign fighters in the 1990s. Some of them used a *nom de guerre*, were in the Balkans only for some weeks and/or later never spoke about their experiences, at least not publicly. However, with the help of several cross-checks and extensive research many open questions concerning their identity could be answered and the overall picture became less and less blurred, which helped to assess their cases and bring them into line with what is known about the logics and mechanisms of war volunteering in the Balkans and beyond.

⁶⁵ Johnnyantora, Casagrande. In terms of academic publications, Casagrande was already a subject of a research paper, see: Hagelstam, Petra. “Soldiers of fortune in Bosnia: the Casagrande incident.” *The Finnish yearbook of international law* 8 (1997): 259-284.

⁶⁶ Johnnyantora, Casagrande.

⁶⁷Hasselbach, Ingo; Reiss, Tom. *Führer-Ex. Memoirs of a Former Neo-Nazi*. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1996) ;

Hasselbach, Ingo; Bonengel, Winfried. *Die Abrechnung. Ein Neonazi steigt aus*. (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2001); Niederreiter, Rambo.

3. Terms and Concepts

As many authors have observed, conflicts in the modern age feature – at an increasing rate – a transnational character, not only due to coalitions of different armies and intelligence units, but also due to the influx of foreigners into conflicts. One main problem in approaching the last-mentioned subject is that amongst scholars there is a lack of consensus about how to define and delimitate most concepts related to them.⁶⁸ This begins already with the most frequently used terms – “mercenary” and “foreign fighter” – that brings us right to the dichotomy of *greed versus grievance*⁶⁹, which lies at the core of the question of motivation for combat abroad. In reality, however, as case of white South Africans getting involved in civil wars in other parts of the continent has shown, “the line between mercenary and foreign fighter [often] gets fuzzy”⁷⁰.

Apart from foreign fighters and mercenaries, scholars scrutinize the actions of “corporate warriors”, “foreign (war) volunteers”, “transnational insurgents”, “violent transborder nonstate actors”, or “non-territorialized combatants”. It is this large number of terms, differently understood and/or used, that poses many difficulties for researchers.⁷¹ As Malet puts it, “although transnational insurgencies have existed for centuries, the fact that political scientists have not perceived them as a singular phenomenon is evident from the lack of even a term in the discipline to describe the concept.”⁷² Miodownik and Barak came to a similar conclusion, stating that „little has been done to improve conceptualization and operationalization of these [...] categories, which is necessary to assess their full impact empirically and theoretically.”⁷³

This is, of course, not restricted to academia. While for instance some foreign veterans of the Yugoslav wars apply the term “mercenary”⁷⁴ as self designation, and even use the term indiscriminately and interchangeably with others, the majority of

⁶⁸ Let alone that they are often politically, legally or in practice hardly differentiable.

⁶⁹ Hoeffler and Collier, *Greedy and Grievance*, 16.

⁷⁰ Vowles, Erica. „What history teaches us about foreign fighters.“ *ABC Radio National*, 31 Jul 2015. URL: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/what-we-can-learn-from-history-about-foreign-fighters/6662712>

⁷¹ But – if we go further – also “militiamen”, “paramilitary” or “terrorist”. The whole process is not becoming easier if we consider these terms in other languages, something that is not only helpful for gathering information in general, but even essential for the thesis at hand.

⁷² Malet, *Why Foreign Fighters*, 16.

⁷³ Barak and Miodownik, *Introduction*, 11.

⁷⁴ Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*.

them seems to denounce it.⁷⁵ Likewise, the frequent blend of foreign fighting and Islamist terrorism – in public as in academic discourse – deserves criticism. As Malet points out, for most English-speakers the term “foreign fighters” is often understood as a synonym of Islamist combatant.⁷⁶ So how should we understand this and other relevant concepts?

3.1. Foreign Fighters

If we leave aside a clear monetary element for a second, it quickly becomes clear that in today’s research “foreign fighter” is the most conceptualized term of interest for our topic. Malet has shown how the term developed and rose in fame in the international media reports from the 1980s onwards.⁷⁷ According to him, foreign fighters are „noncitizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflicts“⁷⁸; a definition short and crisp that nonetheless includes two elements, which might eventually straiten his view. First of all he stresses the defining role of insurgencies: this is generally problematic, not only since insurgencies are mostly associated with guerilla warfare or even terrorism, but even because questions evolving around the qualification as insurgents are highly contested, particularly in conflicts resulting from state disintegration.⁷⁹ Furthermore, when stressing the citizenship of the foreign fighters, he clearly does *not* exclude diaspora groups from his concept, which might be likewise misleading when considering certain conflicts, as I will demonstrate further on.

Hegghammer, who mostly works on Islamists, mentions four characteristics of foreign fighters: a lack of affiliation to the official military; the absence of financial incentives; non-citizenship with regard to the parties of the conflict; and the nonexistence of kinship.⁸⁰ In terms of definition, the absence of not only citizenship, but also any form of kin seems to be widely accepted, since it “creates preexisting stakes in

⁷⁵ “Our aim is to [...] get rid of the myth of foreign volunteers as “mercenaries”. See: Zubrinic, 481 foreign volunteers.

⁷⁶ Malet, *The more irregular*, 6. See also: Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 215-217.

⁷⁷ For a similar overview of the history of the term “war volunteering” see: Krüger, *Introduction*, 9-17.

⁷⁸ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 9.

⁷⁹ Apart from that, shouldn’t for instance the Republican *International Brigades* of the Spanish Civil War be considered the ones joining the battle *against* an insurgency?

⁸⁰ Hegghamer, *Muslim Foreign Fighters*, 57 et seqq.

a conflict that are conducive to mobilization.”⁸¹ Only a few authors question this assumption fundamentally.⁸² Cerwyn Moore has called these foreigners on the battlefields even “non-indigenous, non-territorialized combatants” and has stressed their status as “non-neighbors”⁸³.

But if we proceed on this assumption, then there must be something else that takes effect, either an ideological identification, some idealistic push, or the chance to derive otherwise benefit from the conflict. Joachim, for example, differentiates between combatants with, firstly, family links; secondly, idealistic or “philanthropic” motives; furthermore, those who are part of unofficial military formations; and finally and most originally, “false volunteers” with only a separate interest in the combat.⁸⁴

In what follows I briefly outline the concept “mercenary” and related terminology for further explaining my decision as well as for the sake of terminological clarity.

3.2. Mercenaries

When it comes to International Law (and *Law of Wars* in general), the definition of mercenaries is quite precise and narrow. In article 47 of *Protocol Additional GC 1977*, a mercenary is defined as a combatant who is

“specially recruited locally or abroad in order to fight in an armed conflict, [...] is neither a national of a Party to the conflict nor a resident of territory controlled by a Party to the conflict [and] is motivated to take part in the hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain and, in fact, is promised, by or on behalf of a Party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar ranks and functions in the armed forces of that Party.”⁸⁵

⁸¹Hegghammer, Thomas. „The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters. Islam and the Globalization of Jihad.“ *International Security* 35 (Winter 2010/11): 58. See also: Salehyan, Idean. *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009). Interestingly, Cerwyn Moore stresses the role of “religion, kinship and/or ideology” in the mobilization of foreign fighters, defines the concept broadly and speaks of “fictive” kin, which is, however, not tantamount to “fictional” kin. See: Moore, *Foreign Bodies*, 398.

⁸² See for example: Mendelsohn, *Why recruit*, 3.

⁸³ Moore, *Foreign Bodies*, 396.

⁸⁴ Joachim, “Private Military Companies”, 49-57.

⁸⁵ For further points of the definition see: International Committee of the Red Cross. *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)*. 8 Jun 1977.

In reality, however, the issue of rewarding is not entirely clear, especially if obtaining looted property and smuggling constitutes a real possibility for those being part of loosely associated or completely irregular troops. In any case, for Christopher Kutz these classical mercenaries saw a gradual transformation towards what he called “corporate warrior” [...] who provide outsourced logistical and ‘tactical’ (read: ‘lethal’) support to everyone from the U.S. Army to the U.N. in Sierra Leone to the petroleum industry”.⁸⁶ Yet, it is necessary to ask, if even these *Private Security Companies* (PSC) or *Private Military Companies* (PMCs) are a qualitatively new chapter in the history of warfare, or if we are rather facing a resurgence of historically well-known mercenary armies.

Clearly, PSCs have their precursors, for instance the *condottieri* in Renaissance Italy⁸⁷, the already-mentioned *Landsknechts*, or the private armies of the great trading companies of the 17th and 18th century.⁸⁸ Furthermore, as Klaas Voos has shown, today’s use of contractors as an instrument of North American foreign policy in Iraq and Afghanistan did not emerge in a vacuum, but was the logical development of a phenomenon rooted in covert warfare of the 1960s and later.⁸⁹ Helpful for dealing with these topics is further the typology of Kevin A. O’Brien, who differentiates between (individual) mercenaries, private armies in the form of militias and warlords, security companies and, lastly, private military companies.⁹⁰

All in all, even though some authors have stressed that money is not the only, or even primary motivation for mercenaries⁹¹, and some scholars used the term notwithstanding⁹², it seems advisable not to use it given its generally negative connotation and the wrong image it transports.

⁸⁶ Kutz, Uniforms.

⁸⁷ Although they were lacking a transnational business dimension.

⁸⁸ Such as the „English East India Company“ or the „Dutch East India Company“.

⁸⁹ Most notably in Latin America and Africa. „With a maximum mercenary presence of 1500 (Rhodesia 1975–1979), 1000 (Congo 1964/65), 250 (Angola 1975/76), and 200 (Nicaragua/El Salvador 1983–1987)”. See: Voß, Klaas. „Plausibly deniable: mercenaries in US covert interventions during the Cold War, 1964 - 1987.“ *Cold war history* 16 (2016): 42.

⁹⁰ Kevin A. O’Brien. “PMCs, Myths and Mercenaries: The Debate on Private Military Companies” *RUSI Journal* 145 (2002): 61.

⁹¹ “Mercenaries, we think, can only be defined by reference to what they do, and not by reference to why they do it”, from the Diplock Report in the UK, cited in: Burmester, Mercenaries, 37-38.

⁹² Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 488.

3.3. Working Definition

While this thesis generally follows Malet's definition and hence favors the term "foreign fighters", I will, nevertheless, narrow the term further down to its core, and exclude those volunteers with existing kinship vis-à-vis the respective seat of war. To approach it not in this manner would result in a lack of clarity and an abundance of cases, especially when considering the multitude of German citizens of Croatian descent. Apart from that, I will use other, likewise appropriate terms such as "foreign (war) volunteer" or "(transnational) combatants" interchangeably, if only for avoiding repetitiveness. Besides, it is noteworthy that in the thesis the term "Western" is occasionally used for combatants fighting alongside the Croatian forces, even though some of these protagonists were hailed from other parts of the world, such as Latin America, Eastern Europe or Asia.⁹³ This is done to differentiate them roughly from those foreign volunteers siding with pro-Serb forces⁹⁴ and with the official Bosnian Army.⁹⁵

I won't adopt the term "insurgency" or "insurgent" myself, since arguably it is misleading when considering the conflicts in former Yugoslavia. The situation on the ground was interwoven and blurred, and the status as "insurgents" and "central power" was, and still is, a highly politicized issue.⁹⁶ As implied above, I will further refrain completely from using the term "mercenary", albeit it might be appropriate in single cases. As I aim to show, the term "foreign fighters" functions better in the context of the paper, for the simple reason that most foreign war volunteers were paid at most an irregular and low salary.

⁹³ Except for the already mentioned "Chico", examples can be found in many different sources, including Turks, Jamaicans and Japanese. The USDDR e.g. mentions Argentineans, Bulgarians, Ukrainians Russians, one Gambian etc. See: Zubrinic, 481 foreign volunteers.

⁹⁴ Mostly from Orthodox countries such as Russia, Greece and Romania.

⁹⁵ By far not exclusively, but most famously from predominantly Muslim countries.

⁹⁶ Such as the question if Serbs were insurgents within Croatia, or rather Croats were insurgents within Yugoslavia.

4. Typification of Foreign Fighters

Which assumptions can we make about notional foreign fighter archetypes? What does research tell us about their background in the home countries, their motivation to join combat abroad and their roles in and for the conflicts? Historical case studies and analysis give us an idea of the various forms of volunteering, enlistment and recruitment from which general derivations are possible. As stressed by several authors, there is a good deal to learn from these individually unique instances, since “there are themes, strategies, and tactics that are endemic to each.”⁹⁷

4.1. Backgrounds as Facilitators of Foreign Fighting

Research shows us that the prerequisites that facilitate foreign fighting are multifaceted and range from political, socioeconomic to familial ones. First of all, foreign fighters, usually late adolescent males, tend to be “marginalized within their broader polities, often because they are part of some minority group”, as Malet claims.⁹⁸ Additionally, a history of immigration and non-intact families are common themes in the accounts.⁹⁹ In many case there are diverse forms of socioeconomic pressures at home, such as unemployment or low-income jobs, which can serve as important push-factor. As M.W. Jackson concluded with regard to the Spanish Civil War, “volunteers were marginal men produced by economic and political upheaval of the time.”¹⁰⁰

This can be complemented by political pressures that exist especially when it comes to oppositional or anti-state groups that cling to violence. To mention just some of the most famous cases, communists from all over Europe were often subject to prosecution when they decided to leave for Spain in the late 1930s; and similar things

⁹⁷ Ciluffo, Frank; Ranstorp, Magnus; Cozzens, Jeffrey B. “Foreign Fighters. Trends, Trajectories and Conflict Zones.” HSPI report. George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute, 1 Oct 2010, 7. URL: https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/HSPI_Report_16.pdf

⁹⁸ Malet, Transnational Identity, 5.

⁹⁹ In an interview with the show “rear vision” in Australian radio on the topic of “tackling foreign fighters” David Malet explains that transnational identity groups are so important for weakly assimilated foreign fighting-prone individuals, because they serve them as surrogate families. See: Vowles, Erica. „What history teaches us about foreign fighters.“ *ABC Radio National*, 31 Jul 2015. URL: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/what-we-can-learn-from-history-about-foreign-fighters/6662712>

¹⁰⁰ Arielli, Nir. „Getting There: Enlistment Considerations and the Recruitment Networks of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War.“ In *Transnational Soldiers*, 220.

can be said for radical Islamists from the Arabic Peninsula before they waged jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Moreover, several left-wing terrorist from Western countries joined the struggle of anti-imperialist Marxist Palestinian groups, after they were searched in their home countries by warrants. In some cases at least, this was certainly an escape from their repressive home countries. Thus, under certain circumstances, political alienation can be a predictor for participation in combat, even if they are originated abroad.¹⁰¹

4.2. Some Thoughts on Motivation

Every study that addresses the question of combatants' motivations must start with the famous dichotomy of *greed versus grievance*.¹⁰² If we proceed on the assumption that it were in the fewest cases monetary or material incentives, that brought German citizens to the frontlines of the Balkans, we have to pose the question what the very nature of that grievance was. According to Malet, foreign fighters internalize a certain narrative that is rooted in their convictions and echoed by recruitment attempts.¹⁰³ But what do these narratives look like?

In his database of civil wars and insurgencies, which included foreign fighters, Malet lists 70 conflicts and differentiates in his typology between four archetypes.¹⁰⁴ These are "Diasporans"¹⁰⁵, "Liberationists"¹⁰⁶, "Encroachers"¹⁰⁷ and "True Believers"¹⁰⁸. This typology, as already indicated above, is problematic for several reasons. First of all, it often blends ethnic and ideological causes of the conflicts¹⁰⁹ and, as a direct consequence, blends also different motivations to join voluntarily. Also, some groups are missing from the typology, including supporters of the Croatian and Bosnian (Croat) forces without diaspora background from the Western hemisphere that this thesis is dealing with. Further, he places the Islamists that supported Bosnia in 1992-95 within the group of "Liberationists", but does not include the hundreds of other

¹⁰¹ See: Humphreys, Macartan; Weinstein, Jeremy M. „Who fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War.“ *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (Apr 2008): 436-455.

¹⁰² See also Malet's take on the issue: Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 16.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 219 et seqq.

¹⁰⁵ That "join with nationalist rebels to preserve shared nationalist goals".

¹⁰⁶ That "defend anti-colonial rebels to preserve perceived shared ideological goals".

¹⁰⁷ That "join with secessionist rebels in adjacent state to expand political control to neighboring territory".

¹⁰⁸ That "join ideological rebels to preserve institutions of shared identity".

foreign fighters supporting other parties. Likewise, he mentions the diaspora Croats and *Homeland Calling* KLA recruits of Albanian descent, but is silent about other émigré groups. Finally he classified the war in Bosnia offhandedly as ethnic conflict, despite its countless political, economic and geostrategic dimensions.¹¹⁰

Despite these objections, the typology serves as rich and useful pool of historical cases that invites some typological reflections. If for example from the list would be excluded all the violent struggles that saw foreign fighters with either a diaspora background or which (merely) hailed from neighboring states, only around a dozen conflicts would remain.¹¹¹ I argue that it makes sense to consider these cases separately, since the motivation is most likely to be higher, the appeal stronger or the existing networks more developed if people do not only fight for a foreign cause, but also travel to more distant battlefields. Thus, these cases could at best serve as a basis for comparison with the non-kindred Western foreign volunteers in the Balkans.¹¹² Besides, a voluntary military support of insurgencies abroad is, according to David Malet, “more likely if universal values, such as ideology and religion, are at stake.”¹¹³ As a much-quoted 200 year old sentence of the French politician and writer François-René de Chateaubriand goes: “Men don't allow themselves to be killed for their interests; they allow themselves to be killed for their passions.”¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ As for instance given in the Kurdish-Turkish, Angolan-Portuguese or the Serbian-Croatian conflict.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of these see: Ramet, Sabrina P. *Thinking About Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates About The Yugoslav Breakup And The Wars In Bosnia And Kosovo*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005);

Calic, Marie-Janine. *Geschichte Jugoslawiens im 20. Jahrhundert*. (München: Beck, 2010); *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies. A Scholars' Initiative*, ed. Ingraio, Charles et al. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2012).

¹¹¹ Including e.g. the campaigns of Garibaldi and his followers in South America, the international units in the Russian, Spanish and Greek civil wars; further, the mostly leftist foreign volunteers in Cuba, Angola or Nicaragua, and, of course, Islamists in wars such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Chechnya, or Bosnia.

¹¹² For a distinction between “regional” and “global” foreign volunteers, see: Hegghammer, Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters, 59.

¹¹³ Malet, Transnational Identity, 11.

¹¹⁴ Cited in: Malet, David. “Framing to Win: The Transnational Recruitment of Foreign Insurgents.” In *Nonstate Actors in Intrastate Conflicts*, 43.

4.3. Recruitment and Messaging

As a hinge between individual motivation and proactive recruitment, Salehyan et al. stress that groups, which have a transnational appeal, such as anti-colonialism, anti-apartheid, socialism or Islamism, are more likely to obtain sympathy and support abroad than groups with a less universal agenda.¹¹⁵ When it comes to appealing to potential foreign fighters, often some kind of advertising strategy is adopted by the conflicting parties, for depicting the conflict vis-à-vis different target groups. This kind of “framing” serves the purpose of internationalizing the conflict and to address as many potential foreign fighters as possible.¹¹⁶ Thus, recruitment messaging targets primarily non-state groups with whom the rebels have ties in terms of ethnicity, religion, or ideology.¹¹⁷

Themes regularly evoked include self-defense, or “defensive mobilization”, and the readiness to make sacrifices for preserving threatened values.¹¹⁸ Recruiters conveyed the impression of a danger for the transnational identity group that in turns creates an imperative of support. It is implied that their intervention is essential for the well-being of “their” people and, eventually, themselves. In an interview with *National Public Radio* David Malet put the relation between potential combatant and recruitment messaging in a nutshell:

“We don't know exactly why every individual goes. Some of them are honestly just adventure seekers. Most of them don't seem to be in it for the money. What recruiters do offer them is the imperative of defending some transnational identity group. They tell them to forget their citizenship, and they often come from marginalized ethnic or socioeconomic groups, so it's easy for them to do. And they're told your real people are in trouble in this distant conflict which is an existential threat to all of us, and it's also in your self-interest because if we lose over here, they'll come for you where you live.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Salehyan; Gleditsch; Cunningham, Explaining Support, 719.

¹¹⁶ Malet, Transnational Identity, 27. Nota bene: Hegghammer claimed, based on his research on Muslim foreign fighters, that insurgents often do not recruit combatants directly, but normally rather opt to appeal for other forms of international support. See: Hegghammer, Muslim Foreign Fighters, 64-65.

¹¹⁷ Malet, Transnational Identity, 5; Moore, Foreign Bodies, 398.

¹¹⁸ Malet, Transnational Identity, 5; 25 et seqq.

¹¹⁹ Sieger, Robert. Malet, David; (Interview). “Foreign Fighters A Fixture of Conflict Throughout Modern History.” *National Public Radio*, 21 Oct 2014. URL: <http://www.npr.org/2014/10/21/357859451/foreign-fighters-a-fixture-of-conflict-throughout-modern-history>

Nonetheless, it is important to note that recruitment approaches can differ considerably in detail. While for instance Islamists, in Afghanistan and beyond, called for overcoming “narrow nationalism” based on “borders drawn by non-believers”¹²⁰, the European Right engaged in previous transnational conflicts virtually for maintaining the *Europe of National Fatherlands*¹²¹, a somewhat paradoxical transnationalism for the sake of nationalism.

The recruitment of foreign volunteers first requires the existence of functioning transnational networks, whether they are communist parties and clubs or transnational Islamist networks such as those caused by the forced emigration of the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt and elsewhere to other parts of the Muslim world, Saudi Arabia primarily.¹²² However, the importance of such face-to-face networks is expected to decrease in the future, because the “interested parties” will be able to spread and find messages directly via the internet.¹²³

4.4. Pull Factor - The Modern Sherwood Forest

Apart from a specific social origin, political predispositions and direct recruitment strategies, there is yet another potential factor, namely the institutional weakness of failed – or, in the case of Yugoslavia, disintegrating – states that tends to encourage insurgency networks and warlords, and ultimately also large numbers of transnational combatants.¹²⁴ As Barak and Cohen put it, “‘ungoverned territories’ help to sustain and sometimes intensify violent transborder nonstate action.”¹²⁵

As great connecting link between these external and earlier-mentioned internal triggers for foreign fighting serves their theory of the “modern Sherwood forest”. It represents probably the catchiest metaphor with regard to the preconditions for the emergence of foreign volunteers, while aiming at a comprehensive and pellucid explanatory approach. The term “Modern Sherwood Forest” describes a status quo, in which so-called “violent transborder nonstate actors” (representing self-proclaimed Robin Hoods), equipped with

¹²⁰ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 6.

¹²¹ The term, used originally by Charles de Gaulle, was reinterpreted by right-wing parties across Europe.

¹²² Hegghammer, *Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters*, 79-85.

¹²³ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 209.

¹²⁴ Miodownik; Barak, 4.

¹²⁵ Barak, Oren; Cohen, Chanan. “The ‘Modern Sherwood Forest’: Theoretical and Practical Challenges.” In *Nonstate Actors in Intrastate Conflicts*, ed. Dan Miodownik et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 13.

a universal ideology (a worthy cause that provides the struggle with supranational meaning), coincide with a zone of statelessness (the eponymic ‘forest’).¹²⁶ By using this well-known imagery the authors wanted not only to stress the timelessness of the phenomenon, but also the high regard that is often paid to these groups regardless of the respective cultural background.

But once these “violent transborder nonstate actors”, or simply foreign fighters, are present in the war theatre, what does research tell us about the concrete military and security-related role they play on the spot?

4.5. Role of Foreign Fighters in Conflicts

It is a widespread view that the appearance of foreign fighters in domestic insurgencies, or – as it was the case in Croatia and Bosnia – (from scratch) developing troops, strengthen these armed groups by changing the de-facto balance of power¹²⁷ or, rather indirectly, by consolidating their identity and organizational structure.¹²⁸ In his study of military supporters of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Arielle argues that armed groups can profit from an enlistment of foreign fighters in three ways: either as “some kind of propaganda value; a solution to manpower shortages; [or] some form of qualitative edge over the enemy.”¹²⁹ While the propaganda value of foreign fighters, for instance, was huge in the Spanish Civil War and manpower shortages were overcome in the Finnish Winter War¹³⁰, it was exclusively a qualitative advantage over the enemy that was achieved owing to foreign volunteers in Israel’s armed forces in 1948.¹³¹ And indeed, as David Malet managed to show with the aid of historical-empirical data, insurgencies that were efficient in recruiting foreign fighters are disproportionately successful as compared to other armed groups.¹³²

However, it was not only the success rate that he highlighted, but also the fact that “transnational recruits are responsible for higher level of violence than are local

¹²⁶ Ibid, 14 et seqq.

¹²⁷ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 18.

¹²⁸ For example by inter-organizational competition. See: Mendelsohn, *Why recruit*, 2.

¹²⁹ Arielli, Nir. “When are foreign volunteers useful? Israel’s transnational soldiers in the war of 1948 re-examined.” *Journal of Military History* 78 (2014): 715.

¹³⁰ By anti-Communist volunteers from the Baltic States, Scandinavia and Hungary.

¹³¹ Arielli, *When are foreign volunteers useful*, 715-720. With regard to the propaganda value Mendelsohn wrote “As asymmetric conflicts are also a contestation over a narrative in which weaker actors use image shaping to overcome material disadvantage, the roles of the volunteers in supporting group’s media efforts are significant.” See: Mendelsohn, *Why recruit*, 4-5.

insurgents.”¹³³ Likewise these were the findings of Petersohn’s research on “mercenaries.”¹³⁴ In a study on their impact on civil wars, he found that they were active in about 38 percent of all intrastate wars between 1946 and 2002, independently of the conflict type. At the same time, their presence correlated with conflict severity and “with a dramatic increase in the average number of casualties”¹³⁵. It is commonly held among conflict researchers that small but ideologically armed and fanatic-enough group can initiate and maintain conflicts by terrorizing civilians, and multiplying fear and security needs. Not only in that sense can foreign fighters often – just like other “outsiders” – make a major contribution to conflict escalation and the spiral of violence. Kilcullen for instance described how foreigners may exploit local grievances, stir up resentments and thus create “accidental guerillas” among the locals that were initially little motivated by ideology or politics.¹³⁶

Miodownik and Barak support the afore-mentioned arguments, suggesting that there are at least three ways, in which foreign volunteers can negatively affect intrastate conflicts: Firstly, by forming alliances with other domestic groups and thus aggravating centripetal tendencies; secondly, by establishing connections with other transnational actors, for instance in their home country; and third, by widening the scope of the conflict.¹³⁷

Kristin Bakke lays her focus on slightly different aspects. In her article “Help Wanted? The Mixed Record of Foreign Fighters in Domestic Insurgencies” she lists a number of reasons why we should be concerned about foreigners in conflicts: First, because they often ideologize conflicts, which complicates efforts to end a war¹³⁸; next, because – through their deeds – polities afflicted by violence can be transformed into failed states; and finally, because of the security implications that war-skilled returnees

¹³² Malet, *Why Foreign Fighters*, 97.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ He uses that term, although he vaguely defined it and further included groups that could be better described as foreign war volunteers. See: Peterson, *Impact of Mercenaries*.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹³⁶ Kilcullen, David. *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 34 et seq., 222. Kilcullen, making use of the medical terms “infection” (for the influx of extremists into an unstable area) and “contagion” (the spread of extremist actions), claimed that “accidental guerilla” were motivated to join armed struggle “in reaction to the casualties inflicted [...] upon ethnic, national, ideological or religious groups with whom they identify.” See also: Arielli, Nir. „Conclusions: Jihadists, Diasporas and Professional Contractors — The Resurgence of Non-state Recruitment since the 1980s.“ In *Transnational Soldiers*, 250.

¹³⁷ Miodownik; Barak, 6.

¹³⁸ Prime example are the jihadis in Bosnia, see: Mitchell, Jeni. „The contradictory effects of ideology on Jihadist War-fighting: The Bosnia Precedent.“ *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31 (2008): 808-828.

with a decreased inhibition threshold represent for the home countries.¹³⁹ Besides that, their frequent association with organized crime and particularly the smuggle of weapons, both into and out of the war zone, deserves some further attention.¹⁴⁰

Another facet Bakke raises is that war volunteers from abroad may weaken an armed group by creating divisions among them “based on different ideas on the conflicts causes and goals, and thus alienate potential supporters”.¹⁴¹ In fact, there is evidence to suggest that sometimes it is exactly the presence of foreign fighters that deems responsible for the failure of a cause by provoking harsher responses and resistance¹⁴², or by an overworking of their capacities. Likewise, the integration of strangers in established armed groups can result in numerous problems. As for example Jeni Mitchell has shown, the jihadists’ sense of Islam was alien to the European Bosnian Muslims.¹⁴³ According to Mendelsohn, it is often “poor language skills, unfamiliarity with the terrain, and ignorance of local culture [that] can turn the foreigners from potential multipliers to a liability.”¹⁴⁴ Further, as Krüger and Levsen have put it, “among combatant parties for which nationalism was a core ideology, [...] the acceptance and integration of foreign volunteers could prove difficult.”¹⁴⁵

Thus, in terms of acceptance on the ground transnational fighters were often received with mistrust and even misused as “cannon fodder”, as Malet has demonstrated with examples of volunteers in Afghanistan or Texas.¹⁴⁶ Especially telling in this context is Arielli’s anecdote of a young British Jew, who in 1948 asked for voluntary enlistment in the Israeli forces, but was made abundantly clear that the army had enough of his kind with the words “Look, we don’t need cannon-fodder, we have enough cannon-fodder.”¹⁴⁷ Apart from that, foreign fighters tend to show a greater readiness to make sacrifices. For example only nine of the 189 men, who died in the hopeless defense of Fort Alamo against a Mexican superiority, were actually Texans.¹⁴⁸

¹³⁹ Bakke, *Help Wanted*, 151.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Bakke, *Help Wanted*, 156.

¹⁴² Examples include the fate of the Taliban and the Chechen’s insurgency, see: Mendelsohn, *Why recruit*, 1-8.

¹⁴³ Mitchell, *effects of ideology*.

¹⁴⁴ In some cases, he continues, the locals end up “babysitting inept volunteers.” Mendelsohn, *Why recruit*, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Krüger, *Introduction*, 9.

¹⁴⁶ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 84 et seqq.; 176.

¹⁴⁷ Cited in: Arielli, *When are foreign volunteers useful*, 718.

¹⁴⁸ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 86.

4.6. Foreign Fighters after Conflicts

After the conflict foreign fighters embody a handful of already-insinuated security concerns. What Daniel Byman states with regard to Muslim “homecomers” can be assumed also for other groups of foreign fighters. Byman writes that they return “as hardened veterans, steady in the face of danger and skilled in the use of weapons and explosives. [...] While in the conflict zone, they will form networks with other radicals, [...] and establish ties [...] around the world, making them prone to further radicalization.”¹⁴⁹ Barak and Cohen furthermore stress that they can contribute to a “spillover of violence into neighboring states and the emergence of global terrorist networks that threaten international security.”¹⁵⁰

Examples of felonious and terrorist acts can be found among former Balkan foreign fighters as well. They include the Swedish neo-Nazi, bank robber and murderer Jackie Arklöv¹⁵¹, John Fawzan, a Canadian who bombed the police station in Rijeka in October 1995¹⁵² or Eduardo Flores, who attempted to assassinate Evo Morales.¹⁵³

Unlike the majority of historical groups of foreign fighters, some, like contemporary jihadists, are subjects to prosecution in their countries of origin, often exactly because of their combat abroad, and therefore decide to stay and consecrate themselves to their cause in other conflicts.¹⁵⁴ As a consequence they become, as Malet said in an interview with the Abu Dhabi-based magazine *The National*, „perpetual insurgents, wandering from one war zone to the next“¹⁵⁵, from the Balkans, over the Caucasus to Iraq and elsewhere. However, this persistence is rather an exception than the rule and there is hardly a single aspect of foreign fighting, in which contemporary jihadists seem to be as distinct and uncoupled from all its historical precedents, than this one.

¹⁴⁹ Byman, Homecomings, 582.

¹⁵⁰ Barak and Cohen, Sherwood Forest, 15 et seqq.

¹⁵¹ Klamberg, Mark. „International Criminal Law in Swedish Courts: The Principle of Legality in the Arklöv Case.“ *International Criminal Law Review* 9 (2009): 395–409.

¹⁵² Evan F. Kohmann. *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network*. (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 152-53.

¹⁵³ Fitsanakis, Joseph. „Mysterious mercenary cell uncovered in Bolivia.“ *Foreign Policy Journal*, 21 Apr 2009. URL: <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2009/04/21/mysterious-international-mercenary-cell-uncovered-in-bolivia/>

¹⁵⁴ Malet, David. “Foreign Fighter Mobilization and Persistence in a Global Context.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27 (2015): 454-473.

¹⁵⁵ Malet, David. “Returning foreign fighters must be rehabilitated.” *The National*, 09 May 2016.

Last but not least, once the war has ended, foreign combatants can have continuing impact on the equilibrium on the ground. Ulrich Schneckener has demonstrated that conflicts can only successfully be managed on a permanent basis if the high numbers of non-state violent actors are included in peace processes.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Which in German publications he calls “Störenfriede” (troublemaker), and which includes first and foremost other (non-foreign) irregulars. Schneckener, Ulrich. “Dealing with Armed Non-State Actors in Peace- and State-Building, Types and Strategies.” In *Transnational Terrorism, Organized Crime and Peace-Building - Human Security in the Western Balkans*, ed. Wolfgang Benedek et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2010), 229-248.

5. The Conflicts in Former Yugoslavia

5.1. New Wars

When having recourse to the concept of „new wars“ I won't break new ground, but rather range over a territory that is well marked and much contested. According to the theory's main advocate, Mary Kaldor, it was “during the last decades of the twentieth century, [that] a new type of organized violence developed”¹⁵⁷, a quasi post-modern conflict that follows „changing logics, practices, and geographies of violence.“¹⁵⁸ But what are the most important characteristics of these “new wars”, most importantly with regard to the topic of foreign fighters? “New” wars, unlike “old” ones, are, firstly, fought by numerous non-state groups within states; they are driven primarily by exclusive forms of identity politics; they furthermore target civilians as their main victims; and, finally, they are financed mostly by looting, illegal trade, diasporas, or international networks linked to the conflict.¹⁵⁹

Moreover, the economization of violence is increasingly progressing in modern wars, as not only Kaldor¹⁶⁰, but for instance also Wolfgang Höpken has asserted with reference to the clashes in the former Yugoslavia.¹⁶¹ In this sense, the concept of “markets of violence”, coined by the German sociologist Georg Elwert with a reference to civil war situations in Africa, found its correspondence also in other modern conflicts.¹⁶² Elwert defines “markets of violence” as “a conflict, in the form of a civil war, a warlord system or marauding, which – below the surface of ideological and power political battle commitments – is dominated by the economic motive of material profit.”

¹⁵⁷ Kaldor, *New Wars*, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Shaw, Ian. „New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era.“ *Understanding Empire* (blog), 31 May 2013. URL: <https://understandingempire.wordpress.com/2013/05/31/new-and-old-wars-organized-violence-in-a-global-era/>

¹⁵⁹ For more on the distinction between old and new wars, including a decent overview, see: Ebelshäuser, Mirko. „Old, and ‘New, Wars: Futile Distinctions?“ *Shabka* (blog), 15 Jul 2013. URL: <http://www.shabka.org/2013/07/15/old-and-new-wars-senseless-distinctions/>

¹⁶⁰ For more on the „shadow“ war economies see: Kaldor, *New Wars*, 10.

¹⁶¹ Höpken, *Performing Violence*, 239.

¹⁶² See: Elwert Georg. „Gewaltmärkte.“ In *Soziologie der Gewalt*, ed. Trutz von Trotha (Wiesbaden: Opladen: 1997), 86–101.

According to Herfried Münkler, who developed the theory further and adopted the term, these “new wars” are characterized by at least three developments, namely that they are more privatized, asymmetrical and transnational than in previous times. Also, he argues that, due to a tendency towards intrastate conflicts and the non-distinction between civilians and combatants, contemporary conflicts are “more bloody than any other kind of war since 1945.”¹⁶³

But why does this well-known theory¹⁶⁴ serve as a good template for the case study at hand? First of all, many of the theory’s main attributions, with which contemporary modes of warfare are described, namely transnationalism, globalization, organized crime or identity politics are crucial points for the understanding of foreign fighting in general, and the individual cases I will illuminate, in particular. Famously, for Kaldor it is one of the Yugoslav conflicts, namely the war in Bosnia, which was the „archetypical example, the paradigm of the new post-Cold War type of warfare.”¹⁶⁵

It is important to note that these new ways of war, especially their privatization and transnationalization, were in no way old, but rather have “deep historical roots”¹⁶⁶. For some observers the war in Yugoslavia had even more in common with the Thirty Years' War than with most inter-state wars from the 18-20th century.¹⁶⁷ And even though Europe experienced a nationalization of military service after the French revolution, “private expressions of violence” persisted throughout the centuries, even if rarely acknowledged by scholars.¹⁶⁸

Also other authors became critics of the concept, most notably Stathis Kalyvas, who argues that “the end of the cold war has led to an exaggeration of the criminal aspects of recent civil wars and concomitant neglect of their manifold political aspects.”¹⁶⁹ In other publications he stresses the political dimension of contemporary warfare, in his words “a process of privatization of political violence rather than the [...] politicization of private life.”¹⁷⁰ A last point – based on this “political” argument – is that “local cleavages are a central rather than peripheral aspect of civil wars.” This can

¹⁶³ Münkler, *Neue Kriege*, 15. See also: <http://www.shabka.org/2013/07/15/old-and-new-wars-senseless-distinctions/>

¹⁶⁴ Or better: “these theories”.

¹⁶⁵ Kaldor, 32.

¹⁶⁶ Arielli, *Conclusions*, 250.

¹⁶⁷ Münkler, *Neue Kriege*, 10. However, to quote another historical comparison, on some trench-dominated frontlines the tactics were “more like 1914 than 1993. See: Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*, 147.

¹⁶⁸ Arielli, *Introduction*, 4.

¹⁶⁹ Kalyvas, Stathis. “‘New’ and ‘Old’ Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?” *World Politics* 54 (2001): 99-118.

¹⁷⁰ Kalyvas, Stathis. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

be verified not only with regard to the manifold fragmentations during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia¹⁷¹, but also to the politicized members of the self-proclaimed international brigades, as will be shown in the coming chapter. Furthermore, Ebelshäuser claims in an article for the Vienna-based *Shabka* network, based on evidence from past conflicts and different studies, that the distinction can hardly be upheld, since modern conflicts have neither seen an increase in casualties, nor in its economization, nor in the presence of foreigners.¹⁷² Finally, Jürgen Gantzel even questions the hypothesis that intrastate warfare is on the rise since the end of the Cold War, showing that traditional wars accounted for only 16 percent of all warfare already since 1944.¹⁷³ To all these critiques Kaldor replied repeatedly and over the years she partly revoked her arguments, but stressed that these conflicts were “of course” not literally “new” in their essence. The main elements that are indeed „new“ are instead closely tied to globalisation and technology, namely the „destructiveness and accuracy of all forms of military technology“, „new forms of communications“, and the „changing role of the state in relation to organised violence“.¹⁷⁴

How have all these points been unfolded in the wars in the former Yugoslavia and why have these – along with recent conflicts in Africa and the Caucasus¹⁷⁵ – been considered as main illustration for post-modern conflicts?

¹⁷¹ See for example the Croat-Bosnian “war within the war”, the role of the PL, the struggles between HOS and HVO as well as Šešelj and Milosevic, or the secessionist Bosniaks in Bihac against the central government. See also: How Bosnia Armed, 81-83.

¹⁷² Ebelshäuser, Old and New Wars.

¹⁷³ Gantzel, Klaus Juergen. „Über die Kriege nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Tendenzen, ursächliche Hintergründe, Perspektiven.“ In: *Wie Kriege entstehen*, ed. Wegner, Bernd. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2003), 306.

¹⁷⁴ Kaldor, Mary. „In Defence of New Wars.“ *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2 (2013): 1-16.

¹⁷⁵ Höpken, Performing Violence, 215.

5.2. Characteristics of the Conflicts in Former Yugoslavia

A thorough discussion of the faces of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia could fill many books. A long-lasting debate evolved for example only around the role of the Republic of Serbia, namely whether it exerted just an indirect military influence by supporting Serb militias in Croatia and Bosnia, or it was a separate party to the conflict; in short, whether these conflicts should be considered rather civil wars or outright wars of aggression. These and other issues, apart from their political implications, are not always simple to approach when it comes to the details of concrete cases. The situation on the ground was often blurred and could differ in this regard from frontline to frontline. Regardless of frequently politicized questions like this, it was a comprehensive conflict that transformed landscapes in Eastern Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo into spaces of violence.¹⁷⁶ Kaldor has described the war in former Yugoslavia as “a war of exclusivist nationalists against a secular multicultural pluralistic society.”¹⁷⁷ While it is much disputed to what extent nationalism was a cause of the conflict, less is questioned that identity politics was a major catalyst of violence.¹⁷⁸

Kaldor identifies three groups that were operating next to the regular forces in the “new wars”: police and armed civilians; paramilitary groups; and foreign mercenaries.¹⁷⁹ These forces interacted and cooperated from time to time and constellation to constellation in the Yugoslav civil wars, resulting in (or at least contributing to) the “chequered military map”, as one UN official has put it.¹⁸⁰ The reasons thereof were again different depending on the concrete situation on the ground. As Hoare for example states – with regard to the situation in Central Bosnia and Herzegovina – it was “the inadequacy of the Bosnian government’s defence preparations [that] left the initiative for defense in the hands of local Croat leader”.¹⁸¹ In her book *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* Woodward quotes the US-colonel Bob Stewart saying that

¹⁷⁶ Here I refer to the concept “Gewalträume” by Jörg Barbarowski. It describes situations that open up spaces in which violence experiences zero limitation, see: Barbarowski, Jörg. *Räume der Gewalt*. (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 2015).

¹⁷⁷ Kaldor, *New Wars*, 45.

¹⁷⁸ Calic, *Geschichte Jugoslawiens*.

¹⁷⁹ Kaldor, *New Wars*, 48.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, 52.

“Bosnia is certainly complex beyond anyone’s dreams. There are far more than three side – Serb, Croat, and Muslim – we hear about in the media. There are factions within groups, and groups within factions. [...] A civilian one is a soldier in the next [, with the conflict is] mainly being fought by civilians.”¹⁸²

An UN report found that in 1994 there were a total of 83 paramilitary groups operating on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, most of which encompassed thousands of combatants, including many foreigners that joined their ranks and “roamed the territory”¹⁸³. These groups were spread all over the Western Balkans. However, Vivod counts 55 groups in total fighting mainly for the cause of nationalists in Belgrade, 14 for the like in Sarajevo and 13 for Zagreb.¹⁸⁴ Among the latter one, which I wish to single out for reasons stated above, was the *Hrvatska Obrana Snaga* (HOS, Croatian Defense Forces), the military arm of the right-wing party *Hrvatska stranka prava* (HSP, Croatian Party of Rights), which initially fought in conjunction with the *Hrvatsko vijeće obrane* (HVO, Croatian Defense Council) in Bosnia, but later was dissolved.¹⁸⁵

When it comes to the main non-Serb forces, Bosnia alone faced in the first months of the war the simultaneity of at least the paramilitary *Patriotska liga*, the armed forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the *Teritorijalna odbrana*¹⁸⁶, the *Green Berets* militia of the SDA¹⁸⁷, as well as the already-mentioned HVO and HOS.¹⁸⁸ And even the “official” HVO units were, in the judgment of Rob Krott, “little more than mobs or gangs raised from young men living in a certain municipality.”¹⁸⁹ Many of the members of paramilitary groups were volunteers, “often unemployed young man in search of a living, cause or an adventure”, as Kaldor stresses.¹⁹⁰ Mueller has described two of the most notorious groups, Vojislav Seselj's Chetniks (“Šešeljevci”) and the *Srpska dobrovoljačka garda* (“Arkan's Tigers”), as „organizations already heavily composed of criminals, adventurers, mercenary opportunists, and, in the case of the Tigers, soccer

¹⁸¹ Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 65.

¹⁸² Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 485.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹⁸⁴ Vivod, Maria. “In the Shadow of the Serbian Paramilitary Units: Narrative Patterns about the Role of Paramilitary Units in Former Yugoslav Conflict.” *Advances in Anthropology* 3 (2013): 26.

¹⁸⁵ 1992 in Croatia, and 1993 in Bosnia. See Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 254.

¹⁸⁶ „Territorial Defense” from Yugoslav times, inspired by partisan warfare.

¹⁸⁷ Stranka demokratske akcije [Party of Democratic Action], until today the main Bosniak political party.

¹⁸⁸ Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 52.

¹⁸⁹ Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*, 182. This was supported by the fact that the Yugoslav society was rather geared up for battle, as Woodward quotes a TANJUG report suggesting that more than half a million people wore arms in the early 1990s. See: Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 489.

¹⁹⁰ Kaldor, *New Wars*, 97.

hooligans [, which] seem to have functioned essentially as mercenaries.”¹⁹¹ Other famous examples for warlords and paramilitary groups include the “wolves” led by Jusuf Prazina in Sarajevo, the Dragonovci of the “most colourful”¹⁹² “Captain Dragan” Vasiljković, or the Croat Mladen Naletilić Tuta whose name, as Mueller stresses, could “cause an entire village to panic”.¹⁹³

According to the former mercenary Rob Krott, also a “Rambo syndrome” was prevalent throughout the Balkans.¹⁹⁴ After fighting alongside HVO units in Herzegovina he asserted that “any were more concerned with styling the latest fashions, MTV haircuts, and new earrings than learning to soldier.”¹⁹⁵ The journalist Ed Vulliamy gives a similar account of the „black-shirted HOS“. In his words, they „championed the ‚Death or Glory‘ cult imported from American videos and blended it with Ustasha legend. Their recruiting posters showed [...] men and girls wearing trendy Ray-shades and black leather jackets, and clutching guns with fingers protruding from leather fingerless gloves.“¹⁹⁶ Krott concluded: “It seems like every yahoo in the country was issued a uniform and a Kalashnikov.”¹⁹⁷

It were exactly these gangs, which for many observers were the main responsible for “the manufacturing of fear and hate”¹⁹⁸, the escalation of the conflict and the conduct of ethnic cleansing. “The violence that erupted in Yugoslavia”, stats Mueller, “principally derived not from a frenzy of nationalism – whether ancient or newly inspired – but rather from the actions of recently empowered and unpoliced thugs.”¹⁹⁹ Münkler argues that war-related violence and organized crime became indistinguishable, and irregular armed forces, equipped with “toxic testosterone”, used sexual barbarity as their usual weapon.²⁰⁰ Also Susann Woodward concludes that the

¹⁹¹ He further quotes a Bosnian Serb politician saying that Arkan “is very expensive, but also very efficient“. See: Mueller, *Banality*, 50.

¹⁹² Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 254.

¹⁹³ Cited in: Mueller, *Banality*, 51. Although the Balkans were often cited as main examples and culmination of this militia-dominated warfare, there were similar developments in Rwanda/DRC, South Africa and Georgia at the time. See: Kaldor, *New Wars*, 97. For a thorough treatise of the nature of militias see the publications of Corinna Jentsch, including: Jentsch C., Kalyvas S. N.; Schubiger, L.I. „Militias in civil wars.“ *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59 (2015): 755-769.

¹⁹⁴ Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*, 42.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁹⁶ Wilmer, Franke. *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 194.

¹⁹⁷ Cited in: Sapone, Montgomery. “Have Rifle with Scope. Will Travel: The Global Economy of Mercenary Violence” *California Western International Law Journal* 30 (Fall 1999): 16..

¹⁹⁸ Kaldor, *New Wars*, 58.

¹⁹⁹ Mueller, *Banality*, 47.

²⁰⁰ Münkler, 39.

“primary source of tension [...] was not the armies [...] but paramilitary groups formed by political parties.”²⁰¹

Even though this view is somewhat established among most scholars, it is important to note that others, such as Wolfgang Höpken, argues that paramilitaries were militarily not decisive actors and less autonomous than often assumed. As he put it, “they were not acting in a vacuum of a disintegrated state, but rather usually in a division of labor with military and political institutions.”²⁰² Additionally, Kalyvas and Sambanis give nuances by preferring to depict the armed forces of the warring parties rather in a continuum of discipline, regularity and brutality.²⁰³ Notwithstanding, it is not hard to see why the bloodshed in former Yugoslavia was a main impulse for Kaldor and other scholars to develop new theories about the conduct of war. These conflicts, as she wrote, “were impinged on global consciousness more than any other war in the last decade of the twentieth century.”²⁰⁴ While there is certainly much truth in it, one has to once again reiterate that many of its features, including the appearance of foreign fighters, played a role in warfare way before 1989 / 1991. Southeast Europe alone is a region with sufficient historical precedents to support this argument, as Wolfgang Höpken, who compares the conflicts of the 1990s with the Balkan Wars of the early 20th century, has successfully illustrated.²⁰⁵

After the paramilitary-dominated character of the “new wars” in the former Yugoslavia was outlined, I wish to turn now on the transnational elements of the conflict.

5.3. Transnational Involvement in the Former Yugoslavia

Although phenomena and practices of violence manifest and concentrate themselves locally, they also always display transnational references. Idean Salehyan demonstrates – via a quantitative analysis of civil conflicts from 1951-2000 – how external conditions

²⁰¹ Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 254. See also: Ilic, Marina. „Patriotism with Benefits: Paramilitary Groups, Weekend Warriors and Volunteers in Yugoslav Wars.“ Paper delivered at the 17th Annual ASN World Convention *The Wages of Nationhood: Conflicts, Compromises, and Costs*, Columbia University, New York, 2012. URL: https://www.academia.edu/2450843/Patriotism_with_Benefits_Paramilitary_groups_weekend_warriors_and_volunteers_in_Yugoslav_wars

²⁰² Höpken, *Performing Violence*, 238.

²⁰³ Kalyvas and Sambanis, *Bosnia’s Civil War*, 212.

²⁰⁴ Kaldor, *New Wars*, 32

²⁰⁵ Höpken, *Performing Violence*.

can affect a conflict, for example how rebel groups organize transnationally and use external mobilization within the diaspora. Additionally, he shows that civil wars were rarely internal issues, with more than half of all rebel groups active in the above-mentioned time frame having transnational connections.²⁰⁶ As Jeffrey T. Checkel explains in a similar manner:

“Indeed, civil wars nearly always create opportunities and incentives for outside actors to intervene; these actors may be other states, rebel groups, transnational civil society, or the international community [...] Moreover, such wars are often fueled by cross-border flows of goods, including material (weapons), money (diaspora financing) and human (new recruits for rebel groups). Finally, civil wars can spur social mobilization across borders – by strengthening senses of community among ethnic co-brethren, say. So, the transnational clearly matters, with scholars documenting a strong correlation between various transnational factors and actors and changes in civil war dynamics.”²⁰⁷

As we have seen already in the previous chapter, transnationalism is an increasingly important phenomenon in modern warfare²⁰⁸ and has several mutually dependent faces that I aim to illuminate in the following sub-chapter given the example of the wars in Yugoslavia: Firstly, there were, evidently, political, military and bilateral coalitions on a state level, which I do not want to focus on since the thesis’ topic centers predominantly around non-state actors. Secondly, there are networks of non-state organizations with common goals and convictions. Prime examples would be NGOs or political organizations supporting a certain fraction or group in a conflict; an issue I will touch upon later. A special case is represented by diaspora groups that were crucial in supporting the warring parties in Yugoslavia. This will be demonstrated more thoroughly. Ultimately, the military involvement of foreign individuals in the war will be addressed. By working through this, the main focus will remain on everything related to Croatia, whose armed forces were the main destination for German foreign fighters in the conflict.

²⁰⁶ However, he focused mainly on the characteristics of neighboring states. See: Salehyan, Idean. “Transnational Rebels: Neighboring States as Sanctuary for Rebel Groups.” *World Politics* 59 (2007): 217-242. For the numbers see also: Salehyan, *Rebels Without Borders*, 5.

²⁰⁷ Checkel, *Transnational dynamics*, 3.

²⁰⁸ See additionally: Gleditsch, *Transnational Dimensions*.

5.3.1. Diaspora

The nexus of émigré communities and violence in their homelands was much studied and remains complex.²⁰⁹ Adamson for instance asserts that these groups „epitomize the complexities of disentangling processes and actors in the study of transnationalism and civil war.“²¹⁰ The Yugoslav wars can serve as illustration, bearing in mind a Croatian diaspora that exceeds 100,000 in Germany, Austria, Chile, Argentina, Australia, Canada and the US each.²¹¹ Kaldor paid tribute to the specific nature of the Croatian homeland-diaspora relation, asserting that “if Milosevic perfected the media technique, it was Tudjman who developed the horizontal transnational form of organization.”²¹² After becoming decisive in the HDZ’s (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, Croatian Democratic Union) electoral victories during the war, the “well-heeled militants”²¹³ turned out to be “highly significant source of funds and election techniques and, subsequently, arms and mercenaries.”²¹⁴

Speaking only about individuals who returned in the wake of the war, the importance of the role they played becomes apparent. The most well-known case is the one of Gojko Šušak, Croatian defense minister from 1991 to 1998, who returned to Croatia from his 22 years in Canadian exile to perform, “the most important for the [...] Croatian government, during the most difficult period of creating our country and during the homeland war”, as Tudjman himself claimed.²¹⁵ Another famous example was the foreign legionary and temporary French citizen Ante Gotovina, who belonged to the most important generals in the war, was commanding the infamous operation *Oluja* (storm) and later was accused of war crimes.²¹⁶ A last noteworthy individual is Zeljko "Nick" Glasnovic, grown up in Edmonton, who would later lead the *King*

²⁰⁹ Kalyvas and Sambanis, *Bosnia’s Civil War*, 209.

²¹⁰ Adamson, Fiona B. „Mechanisms of diaspora mobilization and the transnationalization of civil war“. In *Transnational dynamics of civil war*, ed. Jeffrey T. Checkel. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 63.

²¹¹ Similar numbers for other national groups from former Yugoslavia.

²¹² Kaldor, *New Wars*, 41.

²¹³ Mueller, *Banalities*, 45.

²¹⁴ Kaldor, *New Wars*, 41.

²¹⁵ Hockenos, *Homeland Calling*, 18; Kalyvas and Sambanis, *Bosnia’s Civil War*, 211.

²¹⁶ Of which he was acquitted in November 2012.

Tomislav Brigade in Herzegovina, in which international volunteers with or without Croatian roots were fighting against *VRS* and *ARBiH* troops, respectively.²¹⁷

But it is not only the role of individuals that illustrates the diaspora's impact. Much more far-reaching were financial contributions, logistical support and lobbying. This impact was also shown in a study of civil wars from 1960-1999 by Hoeffler and Collier, where it was found that diasporas impede reconciliation processes and even "substantially increase the risk of conflict renewal."²¹⁸ Moreover, their long-distance nationalism produced "odd dyslexia" between reality in the country and their vision of the homeland.²¹⁹ Skrbis showed that – in the case of Croats living in Australia – their vision is around fifty year out-of-date.²²⁰ Not least because of that, Bennett attested Croat expatriate communities an "especially insidious influence" on the unstable situation in Southeast Europe.²²¹ However, it is important to stress that these mechanisms were not restricted to one party in the conflict. For example, in an interview with the magazine *Spiegel* Siniša Vučinić, leader of the militia *Srpski Sokoli* [Serb Falcons], claimed that the group is exclusively financed by Serb émigrés.²²²

But again, it is salient that most theories focus solely on the diasporas' direct exertion of influence, instead of how – and on which political course – this unfolds indirectly through networks.²²³ I argue that existing links between anti-socialist and anti-Yugoslav Croatian émigré circles and Western – and particularly German – right-wing organizations turned out as similarly insidious when it comes to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Already since the 1960s existed, apart from the hundreds of thousands of *Gastarbeiter*, a small Croat exile community in West Germany. It

²¹⁷ One émigré fighting alongside the rebel forces of the *Republika Srpska Krajina* in today's Croatia was the already-mentioned "Captain Dragan", spending years in the Australian armed forces and later working as instructor in Africa before heading to the Balkans to support the Serbian cause. Another famous example for this kind of „homeland calling“ phenomenon is (Kosovo) Albania diaspora from Germany and Switzerland, which filled the KLA training camps in Albania's North during the Kosovo War and went on fighting against the Serb/Yugoslav troops. For the last point see: Janjić, Dusan; Lalaj, Anna; Pula, Besnik. „Kosovo under the Milošević Regime“. In *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies. A Scholars' Initiative*, ed. Ingraio, Charles et al. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2012), 292-295.

²¹⁸ Collier and Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance.

²¹⁹ Tarrow, Sidney. „Rooted Cosmopolitans and Transnational Activists.“ In *The New transnational Activism*, ed. Sidney Tarrow. (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 2005), 35-58.

²²⁰ Skrbis, Zlatko. *Long Distance Nationalism: Diasporas, Homelands and Identities*. (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999). This would mean that at the beginning of the war their image referred more to the year 1941, tellingly the year the First Yugoslavia was broken to pieces and the Fascist *Independent State of Croatia* was established.

²²¹ Bennett, Christopher. *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*. (London: Hurst, 1995), 165.

²²² „Wir hacken ihnen die Hand ab.“ *Der Spiegel*, 5 Oct 1992.

consisted to a great extent of anti-Yugoslav political migrants, including former members *of* or collaborators *with* the Ustaša regime that managed to escape the approaching partisans of Tito or the Red Army, respectively. Little-known is the long history of Anti-Yugoslav activism of the Croatian diaspora in Germany, including assassinations and bomb attacks.²²⁴ For example, a *Spiegel* article from May 1963 describes violent attacks on Yugoslav representations in West Germany and further states that the German authorities were “impressed by the fanatical anticommunism of the refugees, and, although observing the excesses, grant the followers of the emigrant organizations financial and moral support.”²²⁵

During the Cold War these communities existed also elsewhere. One noteworthy example is the case of Australian citizens of Croatian descent that were training to commit terror attacks in the 1970s in Yugoslavia.²²⁶ Years later, in many German cities and beyond, Croatian cultural associations, just like their Serb counterparts and Bosniak *Merhamet* clubs, played an important role in lobbying for their respective causes, smuggling arms and equipment, as well as collecting among their local communities „taxes“ for the war “at home”.²²⁷ Famously, the lobby work of Croat émigré circles pushed the German state in their resolution to recognize Croatia as independent state, which many consider one reason for conflict escalation in 1991/1992, while the Serb side abused these facts for war propaganda.²²⁸

It is apparent that it was not only in the fields of financial support and weapon supply that the “malign role”²²⁹ of the Croatian diaspora came into effect. Also there is evidence to suggest that through individual connections with and between Croatian émigré circles the war was supported not least through the recruitment of volunteers, including foreign fighters. Worth-mentioning in this context are Nikola Štedul, a famous émigré and leader of the anti-Yugoslav *Hrvatski državotvorni pokret* (HDP, “Croatian Nationhood Movement”), and especially Mladen Naletilić Tuta, who lived in

²²³ Kalyvas and Sambanis, *Bosnia’s Civil War*, 194.

²²⁴ This was addressed in Hockenos’ study of diaspora politics. See: Hockenos, *Homeland Calling*, 60-65.

²²⁵ „Kroaten: Bombe und Kreuz“. *Spiegel*, 01 May 1963.

²²⁶ This was referred to by David Malet in: Vowles, Erica. „What history teaches us about foreign fighters.“ *ABC Radio National*, 31 Jul 2015. URL:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/what-we-can-learn-from-history-about-foreign-fighters/6662712>.

²²⁷ Desselberger, *Üben für den Terror*.

²²⁸ For a discussion of the policy of Germany, and subsequent standpoints and judgments about it, see: Libal, Michael. *Limits of Persuasion*. (Westport: Praeger, 1997), 118 et seqq. See also: Ragazzi, *The Invention of the Croatian Diaspora*.

West Germany since the early 1970s and later arranged and led the voluntary battalion *Kažnjenička bojna*.²³⁰ Another example was given by a former combatant, who implied a strong connection between neo-Nazis groups in the Bavarian town of Ingolstadt and “Muslim Handscha Divisia [sic!]”.²³¹

Notably, also groups and organizations without diaspora links had a stake in the conflict and the future of the area, and those included frequently radical and extremists: For example, in the summer of 1991, *Front National* leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, and the far-right German member of the European parliament Harald Neubauer, made a trip to Zagreb for talks with senior advisers to the Croatian leader Franjo Tudjman.²³² This radicalization and quest for allies among dubious circles wasn't reserved for the Croat side of the conflict either: Noteworthy is the example of Elfatih Hassanein, who according to the *Washington Post* was “the chief broker of black-market weapons deals by Bosnia's Muslim-led government and the agent of money and influence in Bosnia for Islamic movements and governments around the world.”²³³ Finally, the role of *Military Professional Resources Incorporated* (MPRI) in the war should not remain unmentioned. As private military contractor with close ties to the Pentagon it was training the Croatian armed forces in the last years of the conflict.²³⁴

5.3.2. Foreign War Volunteering in the Yugoslav Wars

If we examine the role and motivation of a certain national group as foreign fighters it is crucial to properly place them within their umbrella group, in as much as the presence of voluntary combatants, including foreign ones, was an omnipresent phenomenon all around the 1990s in the Balkans. Not only let mass draft-dodging and poor discipline

²²⁹ Anderson, Benedict. *Long-Distance Nationalism: World Capitalism and the Rise of Identity Politics*. (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Centre for Asian Studies, 1992).

²³⁰ Furthermore, several doubtful radical left-wing magazines mention the organizations *Deutsch-Kroatische Gesellschaft* and *Kroatischer Nationalrat*, the right-wing magazine *Europa vorn*, the pro-Croat journalist Hans-Peter Rullmann and the *Schiller Institut* as being crucial for anti-Yugoslav lobbyism. See for example: <http://radikal.squat.net/balkan/pag14a1.htm> or “Germany's Secret Balkan Plan” *Searchlight* 205 (July 1992).

²³¹ Originally a Muslim mountain infantry division of the *Waffen-SS*, whose name was revived in the Bosnian army, according to pro-Serb US-historian Carl Savich. See: Savich, Carl. „Flash Back: How Bosnian Muslims Reformed Nazi SS Division.” *Serbianna*, 22 Aug 2010. URL: <http://serbianna.com/analysis/archives/669>

²³² Joachim, “Private Military Companies”, 57.

²³³ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/bosvote/front.htm>

Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo count on the effectiveness of non-regular forces²³⁵, but also were foreign fighters recruited eagerly “on all sides of the barricades.”²³⁶ These included “British soldiers made redundant in the post-Cold War cuts took up positions training both Bosnian and Croatian forces”²³⁷ but also French former Legionnaires, who “receive serious money to train Croat forces.”²³⁸ Rob Krott even asserted that “most of the so-called special operations units in the Croat army were organized by foreigners or by Croat veterans of the French Foreign Legion.”²³⁹ Considering the figures of the USDDR, it seems that English and French citizens constituted the biggest national groups among the Western foreign fighters in the Balkans.²⁴⁰

According to a security official, in the years of the war each weekend there were around 50,000 commuters from the direction of Austria alone, of which certainly not all were visiting their relatives, but rather represented war volunteers from Austria and Germany of which a considerable share could have had a rather ideological motivation.²⁴¹ But this was by no means the only point of the compass from which foreign fighters hailed from. Rob Krott, for instance, reported how he, stationed in Tomislavgrad, received intelligence reports that high numbers of Russians, among them allegedly *Spetsnaz*, were stationed in Donji Vakuf in Central Bosnia. “The overriding motivation for the Russian volunteers”, according to Krott, “besides closely linked with the Serbs culturally and historically, was economic. You’ve got to figure that things couldn’t be any worse in Bosnia for an unemployed Russian soldier than they were in Mother Russia in 1993.”²⁴² In an interview with the LA times one of these *Kontraktniki* was quoted saying, “I’m a professional soldier. I do what I am told and leave the politics to the politicians. [...] I came here because there is work to do, whereas in Russia the army is finished.”²⁴³

²³⁴ See: Isenberg, David. “MPRI Couldn’t Read Minds: Let’s Sue Them.” *Huffington Post*, 19 Aug 2010. URL: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-isenberg/mpri-couldnt-read-minds-l_b_688000.html

²³⁵ Mueller, Remnants, 88 et seqq.

²³⁶ Toronto Star, in Malet, Transnational Identity, 216.

²³⁷ Kaldor, New Wars, 52.

²³⁸ Tanner, in Malet, Transnational Identity, 216.

²³⁹ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 17. This all despite the fact that in the later years of the war foreign fighters were increasingly renounced by the official authorities. As Mendelsohn argues, foreigners will always be turned down if their presence results in considerable international resistance. See: Why recruit, 14.

²⁴⁰ Zubrinic, 481 foreign volunteers.

²⁴¹ Wetz, Österreich und seine Kriegstouristen.

²⁴² Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 178. <http://www.ridus.ru/news/157030>

²⁴³ Basta, Bajina. „Cold Cash fuels Russian Fighting Spirits in Bosnia. Mercenaries: Some battling along rebel Serbs are ex-soldiers. But many simply needed a job.“ *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Apr 1993.

The presumably higher number of mercenaries among Serbian armed forces was hardly surprising, given the fact that, as Vivod expounds, among many Serbian militias the financial compensation was often high enough to be an extra inducement to join these kinds of units.²⁴⁴ Russians were supposedly the largest group among the pro-Serb armed forces and militias, followed by Greeks and Romanians.²⁴⁵ The government in Sarajevo on the other hand was supported by a great variety of foreign fighters, among them many from Muslim countries, most famously the approximately 400 mujahideen from Afghanistan.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Vivod, *Shadow of Serbian Paramilitary*, 27 et seqq. See also: Ilic, Marina. „Patriotism with Benefits: Paramilitary Groups, Weekend Warriors and Volunteers in Yugoslav Wars.“ Paper delivered at the 17th Annual ASN World Convention *The Wages of Nationhood: Conflicts, Compromises, and Costs*, Columbia University, New York, 2012. URL: https://www.academia.edu/2450843/Patriotism_with_Benefits_Paramilitary_groups_weekend_warriors_and_volunteers_in_Yugoslav_wars

²⁴⁵ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 234; Koknar, *Kontraktniki*. See also: Smith, Helene. “Greece faces shame of role in Serb massacre.” *The Guardian*, 5 Jan 2003.

²⁴⁶ Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 131-135; Hegghamer, *Muslim Foreign Fighters*; Schindler, *Unholy Terror*; Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 234.

6. The Analysis

6.1. Preliminary Remarks: Croatia in the early 1990s

The whole influx of right-wing Westerners was certainly no coincidence. One clear reason for the attractiveness can be found in the fact that the political elites in Croatia of the time made visible steps in direction of a new approach towards the past, a new *Geschichtspolitik*, characterized by heroism, victimization, and grotesque blame games with Serbia about who suffered more during Second World War. The picture of Ante Pavelić was present in Zagreb and elsewhere in the early 90s²⁴⁷ and Franjo Tudman himself published the book “Wastelands – Historical Truth”, in which he contested the numbers of Holocaust victims and whitewashed Croatia’s role in the Second World War. These and other developments of Croatian *Geschichtspolitik* – whether active or reactive²⁴⁸ – caused some attention abroad and in times also some serious uproar.²⁴⁹

But these repercussions were not solely negative. According to McDonald the “vindication of wartime Croatia and a denial of Ustasa atrocities were integral to external support for the war effort.”²⁵⁰ Ironically, by doing this the leadership in Zagreb did not only attract nationalist and pro-fascist volunteers from all over the – almost exclusively Western – world but at the same time confirmed the image of a country on the verge of open “re-fascization”, quasi in the sense of a self-fulfilling prophecy. As McDonald has put it:

“The recent revisions of history from both sides suggest uneasiness about the legacies of the past [...] each side could rightly claim victims who were killed in the style of the Cetniks or Ustasa but each side was also guilty of having adopted the symbols and trapping of this earlier period [...] proving for many that the war was very much cast as a continuation of an earlier conflict”²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Macdonald, David Bruce. *Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian victim centred propaganda and the war in Yugoslavia*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

²⁴⁸ MacDonal argues that – even though almost identical – the arguments of Serb and Croatian historians were goading each other.

²⁴⁹ Schemo, Diana Jean. „Anger Greets Croatian's Invitation To Holocaust Museum Dedication.“ *New York Times*, 22 April 1993.

²⁵⁰ MacDonal, *Balkan Holocaust*, 138.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

In that sense a condition was created, in which it was easy for many of the German volunteers to “view themselves as being on a mission of solidarity with Croats, who formed the Nazi puppet government during World War II.”²⁵² For some this was even a certain continuation of family history. Michael Homeister, for example, stated: “My grandfather fought in the Second World War as an SS officer and also he fought in Yugoslavia. He is proud of me.”²⁵³

All this was further multiplied when it comes to HSP and HOS and their widespread seize on Ustaša symbols, Nazi salutes etc. by which many of the Germans were attracted. Simon Hutt describes an episode in which an HOS unit was watching Hitler speeches on VHS tape, while drinking and singing. To his surprise and disgust the three Germans were joining.²⁵⁴ Notably, this was also stressed by the insider Ingo Hasselbach, who alleged that the Tudjman government was “reviving the tradition of the Ustashe”. Continuing describing the situation in the early 1990s he claimed that “units of the Croatian Army were flying swastika flags, and many more were flying the old Croatian Fascist symbol. Croatia had become the first European government since World War II to openly embrace these symbols. [...] It was a neo-Nazi dream come true.”²⁵⁵

6.2. Preliminary Remarks: Germany in the early 1990s

As written above, state pressure coupled with societal hostility can be a largely overlooked push factor for people willing to fight for a cause abroad. An examination of the socio-economic, but also the political context, from which the volunteers emerge, is necessary and insightful.²⁵⁶ When it comes to Germany, a myriad of fundamental changes of circumstances occurred. Post-Cold War cuts also affected Germany, but were supplemented even more by the process of unification. Rapid economic liberalization in the East and “Kohlonization”²⁵⁷ from the West led to mass un-

²⁵² “Mercenaries in Bosnia have varying motives but the fighting attracts them all”. Baltimore Sun, 06 Jun 1993.

²⁵³ Koponen, Kalle. Michael Homeister; (Interview). “Kill them all and have a beer.” Helsingin Sanomat, 6 May 1993. Translation in English by Casagrande, Marco, available at: http://thirdgenerationcity.pbworks.com/w/file/22199685/Homes_HS.doc

²⁵⁴ Hutt, Paint, 106; 123.

²⁵⁵ Hasselbach, Fuehrer Ex. 207-9.

²⁵⁶ Arielli, Transnational Soldiers, 220:

²⁵⁷ A term referring to Helmut Kohl that describes mostly the takeover of posts, especially in public administration, education and economy, by West Germans. See also: Hertog, Frank den. Minderheit im

employment and caused even more social stress that was ridiculed by the slogan of “Blühende Landschaften”²⁵⁸. Further, we can assume a widely spread orientation and identity crisis in a society ruffled and torn by migration, both within, to Western parts of the country, and by refugees from outside.²⁵⁹

Additionally, the roughly 11 months of a relative power vacuum between the fall of the wall and the official re-unification, later coined as “summer of anarchy” and “no-man’s-year”²⁶⁰, opened up new possibilities for criminals and political radicals. In a conversations with Rob Krott, one of the German foreign fighters, Michael “Homes” Homeister from Lower Saxony, gave an insightful account of the opportunities in that time:

“Homes had amusing stories to tell about plundering East German Army munitions depots after the Berlin Wall came down. It seems that the German far right wing acquired a sizeable supply of plastique explosives as well as other goodies. They also had lots of disgruntled, unemployed military veterans from both sides of the wall that know how to use the stuff.”²⁶¹

According to the left-wing newspaper *Neues Deutschland*, the all-German neo-Nazis knew how to seize the day and “under the impression of the fall of the Berlin Wall the evolving comradeship scene focused, especially in Eastern Germany, on mass militancy and the infiltration of social structures rather than on small group work in the underground.”²⁶² Xenophobic riots with dozens or even hundreds of violent neo-Nazis and sympathizers took place in Hoyerswerda, Mannheim-Schoenau, Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Greifswald, Quedlinburg, Cottbus and Güstrow, to name just the biggest ones with more than 100 participants²⁶³; not to mention the countless of medium- and small-size assaults and arson attacks on foreigners or refugee shelters all over Germany in the years 1991-1993. The *New York Times* observed that

eigenen Land? Zur gesellschaftlichen Position der Ostdeutschen in der gesamtdeutschen Realität. (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2004).

²⁵⁸ „Glowing landscapes” that were promises by Chancellor Helmut Kohl in a speech held in TV 1990.

²⁵⁹ In 1992 the most common countries of origin of the 438.000 asylum seekers were Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Vietnam. See: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge. *Migration und Asyl in Zahlen*. (Berlin: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2004), 47.

²⁶⁰ Borrowed from a radio feature of Thilo Schmidt about the the time. See: Website of the radio journalist Thilo Schmidt. URL: <http://www.thiloschmidt.de/index.php?page=1&subpage=37>

²⁶¹ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 156.

²⁶² Hübner, Carsten. Neonazis als Söldner im Jugoslawien-Krieg. *Neues Deutschland*, 28 Dec 2011.

²⁶³ Begrich, David. “Rechtsextremismus in der DDR. Ursachen und Kontinuitäten.” Lecture for the conference Umstrittene Kontinuität – Rechtsextremismus vor und nach der Wende in Ostdeutschland, Halle (Saale), 16 Nov 2009. URL: <http://www.kulturbuero-sachsen.de/index.php/dokumente/erklarungen-vortraege-etc.html?download=14:2009fachvortragneonazismus-ddr-und-heute>

“for a time in the early 1990's, the world's worst fears about Germany seemed to be becoming real. Gangs of neo-Nazi thugs roamed streets throughout the country, attacking foreigners, burning homes where refugees lived and proclaiming their determination to re-create the regime that committed some of history's most heinous crimes.”²⁶⁴

This “sewer of third reich waste water”, as it was once put by the dropout Ingo Hasselbach²⁶⁵ was crucial in breeding a violent, openly racist “Generation Hoyerswerda” that shaped the movement’s image in the “brown decade” up until the new millennium.²⁶⁶ I argue we have to consider this more carefully than previously done to draw an adequate picture of the overall background and motivations of the individuals that joined the militias and armies in the Balkans.

6.3. Numbers

The figures that are in circulation regarding the actual numbers of the German foreign fighters in the Balkans are varying. The *Verfassungsschutz* (State Office for the Protection of the Constitution) in Hamburg estimated that overall around several hundred Germans fought in the Balkans,²⁶⁷ while another source spoke of 30 German citizens working as advisers in the Croatian Army.²⁶⁸ According to probably overestimating information from *antifa* sources, there were 25 foreign fighters from the federal state of Lower Saxony alone.²⁶⁹ The young Croatian historian Tomislav Šulj, who seem to be well-connected with many of the former volunteers, instead mentions the number of 80 Germans fighting on ground between 1991 and 1995.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁴ Kinzer, Stephen. „The Blonde Beast.“ New York Times, 04 Feb 1996. URL:

²⁶⁵ Hasselbach, Führer-Ex, xii.

²⁶⁶ All the terms used in: Begrich, David. “‘Wir sind das Pack’. Von Hoyerswerda nach Heidenau.” *Blätter* 10 (2015): 9-12.

²⁶⁷ Quoted in: Thread: „Deutsche Söldner im Kosovo.“ 22 Jul 2010. URL: <http://www.balkanforum.info/f9/deutsche-soeldner-kosovo-3977/>.

²⁶⁸ The generally rather dubious publication further quotes the German Interior Ministry, which confirmed the existence of an unit under the command of a former East German officer. See: “Germany's Secret Balkan Plan” *Searchlight* 205 (July 1992).

²⁶⁹ Budler, Kai. „Naziterror in Südniedersachsen.“ *der rechte Rand* 138 (Sep/Oct 2012), 13. URL: http://www.der-rechte-rand.de/wp-content/uploads/drr_138.pdf.

²⁷⁰ Jadrijević, Saša Tomas. „140 Engleza i 73 Francuza borilo se u Domovinskom ratu: Nismo bili plaćenici, priznajte naša stradanja!“ *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 19 Feb 2013. URL: <http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/novosti/hrvatska/clanak/id/194181/140-engleza-i-73-francuza-borilo-se-u-domovinskom-ratu-nismo-bili-placenici-priznajte-nasa-stradanja>.

While the topic found an interested audience through German TV and print media, it finally received considerable political attention only in June 2001 when the oppositional parties in the German Bundestag handed in an interpellation about the topic and urged the back-then government to make efforts to research criminal acts and possible enduring dangers emanating from this circle of people. The governments answer, although full of evasiveness, reads “approximately 100 German mercenaries.”²⁷¹

Of this assumed number I was able to identify around 50 German foreign fighters. I am able to give reliable, source-based information of approximately half of them. So what do we know about their social background, ideological underpinning, role on the ground and life after the combat?

6.4. Backgrounds

The Croatian sociologist and former army officer Ozren Zunec, who was interviewed by Nir Arielli for his paper, stressed that the social background of the foreign volunteers that were coming to Croatia in the wake of the war was lower than average.²⁷² Looking at the German subgroup we can rather confirm this view. Among them we can find for instance roofer, a butcher, and two bouncers.²⁷³ Moreover, a criminal background was not uncommon. Michael Homeister, for example, was in jail “for some minor misunderstanding with some Turkish gentlemen”, as Rob Krott put it.²⁷⁴ All the identified German foreign fighters were young²⁷⁵, no one of them seem to have been married, and thus they neither had commitments nor perspectives; a group that is generally more risk-prone and venturesome, as asserted by general research.

Although many of the war volunteers were originated from the former East Germany, they generally hailed from all parts of the country, including for instance Berlin, Erlangen, Hamburg, Bielefeld, Mannheim or small towns like Celle and Witten.

²⁷¹ Deutscher Bundestag – 14. Wahlperiode. Deutsche Söldner in bewaffneten Konflikten. Drucksache 14/6413. 21 Jun 2001. URL: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/14/064/1406413.pdf>. See also: Deutscher Bundestag – 18. Wahlperiode. Strafrechtliche Konsequenzen für deutsche Söldner in den Jugoslawienkriegen. Drucksache 18/818. 14 Mar 2014. URL: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/008/1800818.pdf>.

²⁷² Arielli, Search for Meaning, 4.

²⁷³ Johnnyantora, Marco Casagrande. Funke, Hajo. „Alexander Neidlein (NPD) – Söldner/V-Mann (?), Bankräuber – jetzt NPD-Vorsitzender.“ *Hajo Funke* (blog), 4 May 2014. URL: <https://hajofunke.wordpress.com/2014/05/04/alexander-neidlein-npd-soldnerv-mann-bankrauber-jetzt-mpd-vorsitzender/>

²⁷⁴ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 155.

²⁷⁵ The oldest I came across was 40.

Besides that, traces of non-intact families could be found in the otherwise in this respect sparse sources. As Michael Homeister told in an interview: “My father is a staff officer in the Bundeswehr and he has got some problems because of me. I haven’t heard anything of my mother in five years. [...] I have nothing in Germany.”²⁷⁶

What Arielli concluded with regard to “almost all the Dutch volunteers, and many of the British and French”²⁷⁷, namely that they had previous military experience cannot be verified for the German subgroup. Nonetheless, among them were cases of a considerable military qualification. Worth-mentioning are for instance the former paratrooper Thomas Otto R. Linder, or Michael Homeister, who served as an army engineer in the *Bundeswehr* for three years.²⁷⁸ Another one, Jürgen Schmidt, was even a former officer in the same army.²⁷⁹ Additionally, the mercenary Roland Bartetzko was a paratrooper in the *Bundeswehr* between 1988 and 1991, but was dishonorably discharged and subsequently went to the Balkans.²⁸⁰

Similarly, there are sources suggesting some NVA affiliation that go beyond the compulsory basic military service. Examples include Ralf Mrachacz, Heinz Wiesenack or a certain „Heiko” from Leipzig.²⁸¹ Moreover, a few of the foreign fighters served in the French Foreign Legion before their combat in Bosnia, such as Hans Strassburger and the already mentioned Jürgen Schmidt.²⁸² Besides that, an interesting case is a certain “Stef”²⁸³, who apparently has a history of ideological-based foreign fighting and who, by his own account, joined the Lithuanian National Guard against the Soviets in the year 1991.²⁸⁴

6.5. Recruitment Structures

As noted elsewhere, in the Balkans of the 1990s there were no recruitment structures like in Spain in 1936 or how it was done by Mahal in the context of the 1948 Arab–

²⁷⁶ Koponen, Kill them all and have a beer.

²⁷⁷ Arielli, Search for Meaning; 6.

²⁷⁸ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 155 et seqq.

²⁷⁹ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 148.

²⁸⁰ „Handschrift eines Profis.“ *Spiegel*, 30 Apr 2001.

²⁸¹ „Mit dem Tod spielen“. *Spiegel*, 16 Aug 1993.; Krott, Soldier of Fortune.

²⁸² Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 148.

²⁸³ Whose identity is not quite certain. The name is an assumption based on a scene from a Spiegel TV report. See: BiHDoku. „Europäische Neo-Nazis kämpfen auf kroatischer Seite“. Filmed [Fall 1992]. YouTube video, 10:38. Posted [Dec 2013]. https://youtu.be/-VghHABmD_c.

²⁸⁴ Bonengel, Winfried. *Beruf Neonazi*. Documentary. (Potsdam: Ost-Film Hoffmann & Loeser, 1993). Available at:

Israeli War.²⁸⁵ Yet, many different journals, most of which have a clear neo-Nazi orientation, such as *The New Order* of the US neo-Nazi Gary Lauck, who was described as leg man for the German neo-Nazi movement”, called for volunteer combat alongside HSP and HOS. Similar things can be said about German right-wing publications, for instance the pamphlet *Index of Nationale Liste*, or the magazine *Der Freiwillige – Organ der Hilfgemeinschaft auf Gegenseitigkeit der Waffen-SS*, which spoke highly of the neo-Nazi war business.²⁸⁶ Likewise, in the magazine *NS-Kampfruf* advertisements for mercenary missions in Croatia and Bosnia were to be found.²⁸⁷ A repeated appeal and narrative in these sources was to “help out Croatian comrades in defense of the white race.”²⁸⁸

According to a 1992 article of the English left-wing magazine *Searchlight* “a 50 strong elite troop of German and Austrian nazi volunteers was due to depart”²⁸⁹ towards the front in Slavonia. The same magazine further speaks about the recruitment structures and names the above-mentioned Christian Worch of the *Nationale Liste* in Hamburg, Manfred Eichner of the *Nationaler Block* in Munich and Ewald Althans as persons in charge.²⁹⁰ The latter-mentioned Althans has been described as the right hand of the influential Canadian neo-Nazi Ernst Zündel in Germany, but also organized paramilitary sport camps, or congresses of international Nazi celebrities, including David Irving. Moreover, he apparently was crucial in his “role of fund raiser [...] and to help publicize the neo nazi involvement in Croatia.”²⁹¹ Notably, this was also addressed in the documentary *Beruf Neonazi* that depicted him and his views.²⁹²

Another insider’s view from these recruitment structures was provided by Ingo Hasselbach, a neo-Nazi dropout former high-ranking member of *Nationale Alternative* in Berlin, who remembered the process in the following way:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ho0219WAig&nohtml5=False>

²⁸⁵ François, Internationalistes.

²⁸⁶ All this information found in the thread: „Deutsche Söldner im Kosovo.“ *Balkanforum*. 22 Jul 2010. URL: <http://www.balkanforum.info/f9/deutsche-soeldner-kosovo-3977/>.

²⁸⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, Deutsche Söldner in bewaffneten Konflikten.

²⁸⁸ Geiger, Eric. “Neo-Nazis help Croatians in Bosnia.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 May 1994.

²⁸⁹ Germany’s Secret Balkan Plan.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. This prima facie fragmentation shouldn’t create the image of a lack of cohesion among the German neo-Nazis. It rather reflects the strategy of the movement in the early 1990s to establish federal parties instead of one organization on a state level that could have been easily prohibited.

²⁹¹ Germany’s Secret Balkan’s Plan.

²⁹² Bonengel, Beruf Neonazi.

„The way it worked was first through a word-of-mouth network. We had to be careful about doing any advertising because hiring mercenaries was strictly illegal in the Federal Republic. It was simply known in the scene that you could go to Croatia, if fighting was your trip, and that in Berlin I was one of the contacts. [...] Once we'd checked out recruits to make sure they weren't spies, we took them to a paramilitary camp to get tested and trained. We were mainly interested in whether they were physically fit to go down there. Mental fitness didn't interest us much.“ [...] So I organized paramilitary camps and helped provide training, tested the recruits with the help of a few sympathetic people from the Bundeswehr. [...] Recruits learned how to use firearms and how to dismantle, clean, and reassemble them. There was explosives training and practice in throwing grenades and using bazookas. We modeled our course on Bundeswehr training exercises and what we could piece together about the old Waffen SS training with the help of training manuals and the memories of our retired SS supporters. But the basic source for our training was the West German Federal Army. The effort to organize young German neo-Nazis and send them to Croatia [...] was organized largely by the Movement representatives in Hesse, Bavaria, and – for logistical reasons, as it was directly on the border with Yugoslavia – Austria. [We] organized transport and took care that everyone got uniforms and weapons.”²⁹³

Also the so-called *Nationale Offensive*, founded in the summer of 1990 and mostly active in Saxony and around Berlin, was demonstrably active in recruiting for Croatian paramilitary forces. Most of its leading figures, such as Michael Swierczek were imports from the West.²⁹⁴ Notwithstanding these facts and accounts, recruitment structures remain somewhat obscure, albeit undoubtedly included a variety of organizations and individuals, of which the two neo-Nazis Christian Sennlaub and Andre Krieger, both accused of recruiting foreign fighters in the West German Ruhr region, are two exemplary pieces of the puzzle.²⁹⁵ That is one of the reasons why rumors were spreading so easily, both back in the days and later on.²⁹⁶

Despite the fact, that the real extent of the net of recruiters will remain opaque, its results were clearly visible to anyone who researched the topic. Their prominence and appeal probably reached a peak, when a *Spiegel* television report depicted young neo-

²⁹³ Hasselbach, *Fuehrer Ex*, 207 et seqq.

²⁹⁴ Even if they wouldn't have liked the label “kohlonizers” See: Madloch, Norbert. „Rechtsextremismus in Deutschland nach dem Ende des Hitlerfaschismus.“ In *Rechtsextremismus und Antifaschismus. Historische und aktuelle Dimension*, ed. Klaus Kinner et al. (Berlin: Karl Dietz Verlag, 2000), 57–215, 89–93.

²⁹⁵ „Neonazismus in Witten.“ *Lotta Magazin* (Sommer 2006), 26. URL: <https://www.lotta-magazin.de/damals/pdf/23/witten.pdf>

²⁹⁶ For instance the reports about neo-Nazis from the Dresden area, which are said to have formed a unit of European volunteers was conducted by a former officer of the NVA. <http://www.balkanforum.info/f9/deutsche-soeldner-kosovo-3977/>

Nazis from Western Europe gathering in the small Croatian fishermen's town Klek between Split and Dubrovnik. The unit of "*Faschingssoldaten*" (carnival soldiers), as the report goes, was arranged by an international neo-Nazi recruitment network led by Corsican neo-Nazi Michel²⁹⁷, and showed themselves with swastika flags, SS uniforms and steel helmets on the recently renamed "Rudolf-Heß-Platz", speaking about their unemployment at home and their goal to "overrun Bosnia".²⁹⁸

One German foreign fighter that gets the chance to speak is "Stef", who lies bleeding in a hospital bed and speaks about a maneuver in Herzegovina. Notably, he also appears in the above-mentioned documentary *Beruf Neonazi* during an event of the *Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten / Nationale Aktivisten* in Munich, where he and Ewald Althans give an account of the young neo-Nazis' fight, solicit contributions and, even if not openly, attempt to attract recruits. Significantly, contacts between HOS in Croatia and ANS/NA in Germany are also implied in the very same interview. Althans further claimed that more than 20,000 European volunteers were fighting in Croatia and that those who went as idealists came back as men. An existential experience and an earnest struggle, he continues, and "in the end we all are also in this struggle to death."²⁹⁹

Notwithstanding the above, most German foreign fighters seem to have travelled individually or independently in small groups towards Southeast Europe, albeit an existing infrastructure of supporters seemingly facilitated the process. Rob Krott described how he and Uwe Honecker, a German "merc", traveled from Germany to Croatia and then, with the aid of contacts in the parliament and "a loose network of Croats and Croat émigrés helping the war effort", managed rather easily to continue their journey to the frontline in Tomislavgrad (Herzegovina).³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ Hasselbach, Ingo; Bonengel, Winfried. *Die Abrechnung. Ein Neonazi steigt aus.* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2001), 53.

²⁹⁸ BiHDoku, Europäische Neo-Nazis kämpfen auf kroatischer Seite.

²⁹⁹ Bonengel, Beruf Neonazi.

³⁰⁰ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 144 et seqq.

6.6. Motives

Soldatenromantik

It is a not uncommon phenomenon among the German foreign fighters to paint a romanticized picture of life as soldiers. Many of them had a strong interest in weapons and military history, such as Andreas Kolb, who, according to Rob Krott, “had a penchant for World War II history”³⁰¹. Another report of the German magazine *Spiegel* portrayed the Franco-German Nicolas, when he took a walk around the *Invalidenfriedhof* in Berlin³⁰², and was finally standing in front of the soldier’s graves, speaking with the dead: “Which way is there to get closer to you? In today’s boring world I have no place in.”³⁰³ According to “Stef” it is definitively a predisposition for adventure that is the basis for the decision to become a foreign fighter. He speaks about how war is a “decisive point in the life of a human” and refers to the countries he “traveled”, as if he was on holiday.³⁰⁴ That image is in a similar way also substantiated in a report of the *Independent* that states that “the thrill of killing 'Checks', as they nicknamed the Serbs, and a curious fascination with Croatia's drama-filled history is often what pulls foreign fighters in and keeps them there.”³⁰⁵

The prevalence of Nazi sentiments

Coupled with this predisposition for war romance, the prevalence of right-wing sentiments among the transnational combatants of German origin is striking. As the *Baltimore Sun* stated, “the conflict has attracted hundreds of these mercenaries – some hardened professionals, others less well-trained. Some are simply looking for wars they can’t find in their own countries. But the Germans, many of them neo-Nazis, see the war as a fight waged against communism.”³⁰⁶ An indeed, many hold views that were also no exception among other national groups, such as that HOS leader Dobroslav

³⁰¹ Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*, 155 et seqq.

³⁰² Which is not only a graveyard but also a memorial to German victims of the Napoleonic Wars.

³⁰³ Hoeges, *Und morgen schon tot*.

³⁰⁴ Bonengel, *Beruf Neonazi*. For another account of such an adventurous spirit see: Nordhausen, Frank. “Ein Berliner, ein Dresdener und ein Däne erzählen wie sie als Freiwillige zu den albanischen Rebellen der UCK kamen.” *Berliner Zeitung*, 12 Jul 1999.

³⁰⁵ Tanner, *British fighters' fatal attraction*.

³⁰⁶ “Mercenaries in Bosnia have varying motives but the fighting attracts them all.” *Baltimore Sun*, 06 Jun 1993.

Paraga was the “reincarnation of Hitler” or that “Croatia could become the first national socialist country since Germany”.³⁰⁷

Some of the Germans had Ku Klux Klan symbols and a white power tattoos³⁰⁸, and, even though black soldiers were hardly present at the front of the Balkans³⁰⁹, Michael Homeister apparently felt compelled to stress that he does not like “niggers” in an interview with a Finnish newspaper. He continues by saying that he is in the Balkans to “free Europe against the last communists”, but also that this might be “the last time when you get to a war in Europe.”³¹⁰ Likewise, he stated towards Rob Krott that he came “to help the Croats against Serb aggression and to kill some ‘commies’”.³¹¹ This narrative was present also in other reports. The above-mentioned *Baltimore Sun* article depicted a German “with a swastika on his sleeve, [who] limped into the hotel, dropped into a chair and pulled up his trouser leg to show off shrapnel wound. He said he came to Bosnia so that he could ‘kill Communists legally.’”³¹² Others were rather motivated by the perspective of “a bit of graduate training.”³¹³

Furthermore, the symbolic of the Nazis was in use among many of the German volunteers. When a certain Andreas Buehner was killed in action his comrades were reminiscent of him on his funeral in a special manner: “Tonight the HOS gang would remember their fallen hero with Morphine and Rakija, with maybe a few ‘Seig Heils’ [sic!] in Andreas’ honor. Tomorrow he’d be history”, remembers the British foreign fighter Simon Hutt.³¹⁴ This was not a singularity, as showed elsewhere.³¹⁵ In the *Facebook* group of the USDDR one can find a photography of Andreas Kolb doing a Hitler salute, with graffiti on the wall reading “*Widerstand, jetzt erst recht*” (Resistance, now more than ever), a common slogan in right-wing circles.³¹⁶ National Socialism was a reference point also for other German volunteers like Uwe Herr-

³⁰⁷ This was voiced by an Englishmen, see: <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13682359.html>

³⁰⁸ johnnyantora

³⁰⁹ Except maybe for UN troops and two foreign fighters from Jamaica, and Gambia, respectively. See: docu and USDDR.

³¹⁰ Koponen, Kill them all and have a beer

³¹¹ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 155.

³¹² “Mercenaries in Bosnia have varying motives but the fighting attracts them all.”

³¹³ The words of a “German skinhead”, quoted in: Banality, 50.

³¹⁴ Simon Hutt. Paint – A boy Soldier’s Journey, 133.

³¹⁵ “Ruprecht extends his hand in an accustomed manner; ‘Sieg Heil – Za Dom Spremni!’” See: johnnyantora, Casagrande.

³¹⁶ Malic, Kris John. Facebook post “My brothers in arms” in the group “Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima”. 14 Mar 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/874106455981393/permalink/1023488161043221/> “Bismark” was his nickname as it became clear while reading other sources.

Herker, according to Rob Krott a “skinhead and avowed national socialist”, who invited him later to Germany for Hitler’s birthday celebration.³¹⁷

In contrast to anti-Serb or anti-Yugoslav sentiments³¹⁸, Islam was not considered an enemy to the same extent, yet it still existed. Noteworthy is again a statement from Michael Homeister:

”You know that the fundamentalist Muslims are not friends of the West. I find it hard to understand, why the international community is helping them, because they are the ones who started this war. The Muslims burned four villages and killed the women and children. The press gives people wrong impressions, but they should be told the truth.”³¹⁹

Also a certain Alexander Neidlein was primarily motivated by anti-Islamic convictions. In an interview with a neo-Nazi online TV program he said that he fought as volunteer against the “Mussulmans” to prevent a Muslim state in Bosnia and Herzegovina.³²⁰

Many of the German foreign fighters were part of neo-Nazi organizations before their arrival in Croatia or Bosnia, including Homeister, who, according to Rob Krott, was a card-carrying member of the right-wing FAP (*Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiter Partei*, Free German Workers' Party).³²¹ The same can be said about Thomas Hainke, who in an interview with *Spiegel* stressed that in Croatia to “whole white race is at stake”. The combat he joined follows the logic of “Aryans against *Untermenschen*.”³²² In the Balkans he also learned that the Croats like the Germans, “Hitler and Genscher (...) in particular.”³²³ Neo-Nazi “Stef” instead underlines that he would welcome it if, at some point in the future, the people that he met in the trenches assume political power, since Croatia would then become a country worth emulating.³²⁴

To conclude, either before or after the combat, most of the former foreign fighters seem to have had a right-wing stance, in the sense of either an only unclear anti-Communist or anti-Muslim attitude, or a concrete ideological reference to Christian-conservatism, the German *New Right* or outright neo-Nazism. Even Arielli, who

³¹⁷ Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*, 211

³¹⁸ In a *Facebook* photo album of the former foreign fighter “Thorsten Marx”, one can clearly see how the group, including Thomas Linder, burns the Yugoslav flag in the destroyed town of Pakrac.

³¹⁹ Koponen, Kill them all and have a beer.

³²⁰ Für die Heimat bereit.

³²¹ Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*, 155.

³²² Hoeges, Und morgen schon tot.

³²³ Ibid. See also: Schäfer, Peter Maria. „Bosnien Herzegowina - Foto Daten Bank.“ Institut für Kultur und Medien, 18 Aug 1992. URL: <http://www.ifkm.de/DATBANK/dattemp/Inhalte/S010.htm>

³²⁴ Bonengel, Beruf Neonazi.

generally votes for the image of the disoriented meaning seeker, stated that “while it certainly did not encompass all the volunteers, an anti-Communist approach was fairly prevalent.”³²⁵ The former foreign fighter Eugen Kammerer summarized in an interview with the magazine *Focus* that the Germans all had “Fascist sayings in their repertory and one thing they all want: to shoot and to kill”.³²⁶

On the other hand, unlike Arielli who made references to cases of French Anarchists, Marxists and English Labor Party activists, the author has not come across many war volunteers from Germany that can be associated with any kind of left-wing views. A single exception are the two squatters from Dresden and Berlin that were fighting alongside the KLA in Kosovo.³²⁷ Instead, most rather had a personal score to settle with “the Left”. A certain Maik Dudek from Eastern Germany told a news team from Spiegel TV in an interview that he is in Croatia to fight communists, just to add he lived „long enough under Socialism” and that “Socialism and Fascism is one and the same thing.” According to Ingo Hasselbach, he was tortured in prison by East German state police and for that reason he searched for retaliation.³²⁸

The irrationality of the association of Serb soldiers with communism³²⁹, is best illustrated with examples of positive references of some of their representatives towards right-wing extremism in the past and today. In a Spiegel interview the leader of the paramilitary group *Srpski Sokoli* (Serbian Falcons) justified his choice for a badge with the abbreviation “SS”, saying that, after dying the uniforms of killed Muslims or Croats black, he now wants to “consciously awake associations with the SS” since he also supports “the neo-Nazis who chase away Muslims and Romanians from Rostock”³³⁰.

It is important to mention that the preliminary cease-fire in Croatia in 1992 represented a turning point for some of the foreign fighters, and not only because of their partly demobilization. The erupted war in Bosnia was in many respects more different and definitively more complex, which could have been contrary to the motives of some of the volunteers, and which also was reflected by the varied decisions to go there or not.³³¹ Some didn't continue fighting in Bosnia, others, like the aforementioned, joined only after 1993, often since their motivation was primarily anti-Muslim. This

³²⁵ Arielli, *Search for Meaning*, 4.

³²⁶ Desselberger, *Üben für den Terror*.

³²⁷ Nordhausen, *Ein Berliner, ein Dresdener*.

³²⁸ Hasselbach, *Fuehrer Ex*, 207 et seqq.

³²⁹ Note that Serbo-Communist was a common denomination already under the Ustaša.

³³⁰ Of course, a reference to the earlier-mentioned riot in the town in August 1992. See: „Wir hacken ihnen die Hand ab.“ *Spiegel*, 5 Oct 1992.

situation was complicated even further, when fighting broke out on a large scale between Croat forces and ARBiH in early 1993.³³²

Other Motives

However, not all of the participants seem to have been ideologized from the very beginning and instead had a different path to the Balkans. Andreas “Bismark” Kolb, for instance, arrived in Croatia in spring 1992 as a journalist and photographer, and joined the “Viking” squad of mercenaries only later on.³³³ Another young German, the 27-year old “Chris” from Munich, who is depicted in a TV report, came with a humanitarian organization before he decided to take up arms and align himself with the Bosnian armed forces.³³⁴

Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that the main motivation for others might have been to escape from law enforcement authorities. Marco Casagrande describes a certain Otto, most probably a *nom de guerre*, a “fanatic East German [and] able fighter with nerves of steel, who has lasted in Bosnia already for a long time”. Subsequently, he parenthetically states that “Otto is also wanted as a suspect for some Jew’s murder, so he is in no hurry to leave Bosnia.”³³⁵ Moreover, Uwe Herrer-Herker was searched by the German police for bombing a Communist bookstore³³⁶ and also Bendix Wendt aimed to evade prosecution by joining an unit in Bosnia, after being made responsible for a series of mail bombs.³³⁷

Others went because no one did something to save civilians: “I just thought it was not okay what the Serbs did”, told one foreign fighter from Berlin a newspaper after experiencing the tide of refugees at home.³³⁸ The same can be said about a certain Peter Braunreuther from Lower Franconia, who was subject of an article in a Croatian news magazine.³³⁹ Importantly, he was also married to a Croatian wife, which was not a

³³¹ Arielli, Search for Meaning; Francois, Internationalistes.

³³² The so-called „war within the war“.

³³³ Krott, Soldier of Fortune.

³³⁴ ŽupanjkaD, Internacionalna 108 HVO brigada.

³³⁵ Jonnyantora, Marco Casagrande.

³³⁶ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 156.

³³⁷ Deutscher Bundestag – 13. Wahlperiode. „Entwicklung der militanten Neonazi-Strukturen.“ Drucksache 13/650. 28 Feb 1995. URL: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/13/006/1300650.pdf>.

³³⁸ Nordhausen,. Ein Berliner, ein Dresdener.

³³⁹ Zivkovic, Peter. Facebook post in the group “Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima”. 19 May 2015.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/874106455981393/permalink/876615319063840/>

See also: Bali, Ante. Facebook post in the group “Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima”. 07 May 2015.

single incident among the foreign fighters.³⁴⁰ This said, the available sources clearly suggest that these rather altruistic motives were not as prevalent as commonly believed. However, even though the prevalence of ideology is striking, it seems not expedient to come up with generalization about the volunteer's motivation, let alone that there are always combinations of incentives that take effect. Gaston Besson, a French foreign fighter and commander in 108th brigade in Brčko, which encompassed many Germans, gave an idea of the diversity of the international units in a TV interview, when claiming that they were hard to command, because of the many different reasons for joining the war, and the great number of individualists and egoists among the foreigners.³⁴¹

Money

What can be said about a possible pecuniary incentive for joining the battle? Regardless of the fact that the definition of mercenary – and especially the determination of an amount that would serve as an incentive strong enough to join combat – is hard to establish, not least since it differs from case to case, it can be clearly asserted that outright mercenaries were not the rule; probably not among any volunteer's group in the Balkan war theatre, certainly not among pro-Croat foreign fighters, and definitely not among the group of Germans. Exceptions, however, existed and included Roland Bartetzko³⁴² and a certain Frank³⁴³ in Kosovo and probably Ralf Mrachacz, who received 500 Deutsch mark per month in Bosnia.³⁴⁴ According to Hasselbach the German foreign fighters “kept track of how many Serbs they killed and tried to collect per-body pay from the Croatians, but they actually got hardly anything, apart from invaluable experience.”³⁴⁵

Again, this statement can easily be verified. Even though most foreign fighters got a monthly salary it was hardly regular and too low to be a single incentive to fight and to qualify them as mercenaries. Homeister rather stressed the fact that food and

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=840343012719858&set=g.874106455981393&type=1&theater>

³⁴⁰ Zivkovic, Peter. *Facebook* post in the group “Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima”. 19 May 2015.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/874106455981393/permalink/879315608793811/>.

³⁴¹ ŽupanjkaD. “Internacionalna 108 HVO brigada - Doku film HR”. *YouTube* video, 22:32. Posted [May 2011]. <https://youtu.be/AB9OlcPuDRc>.

³⁴² „Kosovo: Söldner vor Gericht.“ *Spiegel*, 26 Nov 2001.

³⁴³ CapoeraZ. „Deutsche Scharfschützen im Kosovo Krieg“. 4:50. Posted [Jul 2013].

https://youtu.be/I1FdZP_pTcM.

³⁴⁴ Report on the question of the use of mercenaries.

³⁴⁵ Hasselbach, Fuehrer Ex, 207 et seqq.

cigarettes were for free, while the little money one could “spend in a whore-house and in bars.”³⁴⁶ That said, it could be imaginable that foreign fighters were attracted by the promise of serious money, but stayed nevertheless for other reason when they realized that these illusions won’t be fulfilled. This shows the case of Maik Dudek, who complained in an interview that he was promised 9.000 DM per month before coming to Croatia.³⁴⁷ Other sources speak of a amount of monthly 300 DM³⁴⁸, but one volunteer even affirmed that he hasn’t received any payment at all, except for 5 DM after several months of fighting.³⁴⁹ Rob Kross put it correctly in a nutshell when he concluded that „no one actually expected to get rich serving as a foreign volunteer in the Balkans save for a few naive dreamers and individuals of a criminal bent.”³⁵⁰

6.7. Status and role on the ground

Where and how did they fight?

German foreign fighters could be found on diverse spots all over the Western Balkans. The front lines, where they were present³⁵¹ belonged to the most fiercely fought-for regions of the whole war theatre. They were dispersed among many different units, in which foreigners often were not more than a small minority. To give some examples, Jürgen Schmidt fought in the *134 Brigade* in Zadar as well as the *Eugen Kvaternik Brigade* in Bugojno, while Heinz „Hans“ Wiesenack supported the *108. Brigade* in the area around Brčko and Thomas Otto R. Linder aligned with the *Zrinski battalion* in Dalmatia.³⁵² Another note-worthy example is the King Tomislav Brigade that was full

³⁴⁶ Koponen, Kill them all and have a beer.

³⁴⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ho0219WAig&nohtml5=False>

³⁴⁸ Desselberger, Üben für den Terror. In another interview from 1993 the French volunteer Gaston Besson, spoke of a similar monthly payment of 1200 Franc, which would represent around 182 Euro today, an amount that was later exposed to devaluation. See: Mari, Jean-Paul. “Moi, Gaston Besson, mercenaire français.” *Grand Reporters*, 18 Apr 2007. URL: <http://www.grands-reporters.com/Moi-Gaston-Besson-mercenaire.html>.

³⁴⁹ ŽupanjkaD, Internacionalna 108 HVO brigada.

³⁵⁰ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 178.

³⁵¹ Including Dalmatia (Gospic, Klek, Zadar) Slavonia (Vinkovci, Vukovar, Osijek, Gradiska, Bosanski Brod), Northern Bosnia (Brcko, Srebrenik), Central Bosnia (Kupres, Novi Travnik, Gornji Vakuf, Bugojno), Herzegovina (Tomislavgrad, Siroki Brijeg, Mostar, Jablanica) and Kosovo.

³⁵² Further, a German sniper was portrait in duty side-by-side with UCK fighters by German television. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1FdZP_pTcM Other examples include a certain Ludvig Olaf, fighting alongside the *101 brigade HVO* in Bosanski Brod, Hans Strassburger, siding first with the *106th Brigade of HVO* around Orašje, then in the *4th Guards Brigade of HVO* in Dalmatia, or Uwe Herr-

of foreigners and included at least six Germans that were depicted by Rob Krott. Some sources also mention an alleged *Brigade Condor*³⁵³ in Vinkovci full of foreign fighters including many Germans.³⁵⁴

According to Ingo Hasselbach, who spoke with returned fighters, „they fought against Serbs but also against Bosnian Muslims, even though the Muslims had been in the SS during World War II. They simply fought against whomever they could get an excuse to kill.”³⁵⁵ Bearing this in mind it is no big wonder that many foreign volunteers became involved in the struggle between HVO and HOS that broke out in fall November 1991.³⁵⁶ In the memoirs of Simon Hutt, one episode from the northern Bosnian village of Domaljevac 1992 is described, where a group of foreigners, among them three Germans decided to leave the “Gangster HOS” in order to defect to HVO and subsequently were threatened and almost killed.³⁵⁷

A good insight in the situation on the front line in 1991 further provides a short documentary³⁵⁸ shown in French television, which depicted the 108th international brigade that was fighting alongside the Bosnian army close to Brčko. In this unit, which included at least three Germans³⁵⁹, 28 of 30 soldiers were foreigners, with almost no one being older than 25. They represented an assault detachment of the regular Bosnian troops, a “vanguard” that was officially complimented by the Bosnian authorities for their courage. This and other troops were nonetheless inferior in most regions, including the regions of Slavonia, Posavina and Brčko, where Serbs armed forces were supported by tanks. The German magazine Spiegel for example depicted the service of Thomas Hainke, 24 from Bielefeld, who, after crushing “a few Chetnik positions”, was sitting most of his combat time in basements of houses, which were blown away by heavy artillery.³⁶⁰

While stating that „most foreign volunteers were treated as cannon fodder”³⁶¹, Rob Krott describes the group of Germans he was serving with as eager and

Herker, who was to be found in the *1st GB Ante Bruno* Bušić in Herzegovina, before joining the King Tomislav Brigade.

³⁵³ name derived from pro-Franco German voluntary unit in the Spanish Civil War)

³⁵⁴ Internationalistes; The Falanges of Black Disorder

³⁵⁵ Hasselbach, Fuehrer Ex. 207-9., cited in:

http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=481_1325596183#t923SsVhQg1BmxCL.99

³⁵⁶ Arielli, Search for Meaning, 8.

³⁵⁷ Hutt, 165-179.

³⁵⁸ ŽupanjkaD, Internacionalna 108 HVO brigada.

³⁵⁹ Harlan von Besinger, „Chris“, Heinz Wiesenack.

³⁶⁰ Spiegel, Und morgen schon tot.

³⁶¹ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 17.

adventurous. Three of them³⁶² voluntarily went on patrol behind enemy lines, where they ambushed a Serb position and killed two enemy combatants.³⁶³ This episode may reflect not only a certain degree of audacity or recklessness of the fighters, but also the incautiousness of some of them. Words of a British Foreign Office spokesman come to mind, who said that the war “has attracted a very large idiot element.”³⁶⁴ In the words of Rob Krott: “The average age of a combat soldier in Vietnam was 19. In Bosnia that’s their IQ.”³⁶⁵ The anarchic element of the warfare in the former Yugoslavia became obvious when one of the Germans, Maik Dudek, claimed proudly that, after serving some time as normal soldier, he soon became tank driver without much experience.³⁶⁶

War Crimes

The other aspect of the influx of foreign fighters is the concomitant brutalization and attack on civilians. Illustrated is this best by an anecdote cited in the book “The Mostar Road Hitchhiker”, whose author, according to the blogger “jonnyantora”, is Michael Homeister:

“And that was when we were taking Latina [village in Central Bosnia]. That grandma, we call her Superbitch. What a fucking bitch, she just wouldn’t die. I had shot into the room with a PKM (a russian light machinegun), a hand grenade had been thrown in there and when we stormed in, the bitch was still alive. Well, Kurt shot it in the neck with a pistol. What a fucking bitch.” The others around the table laugh at the story and mumble that Slatina was a tough place.³⁶⁷

That is by far not the only account of criminal acts. Another German, a certain Ruprecht was quoted telling that he raped five girls and that this is “a soldier’s right – if not a duty”³⁶⁸, and also Heiko K., a neo-Nazi from Leipzig, allegedly raped and killed a Muslim woman.³⁶⁹ Cruelty and blunting were seemingly infinite and strikingly often were the German volunteers in the first row. According to Rob Krott, some of his

³⁶² Including Michael Homeister.

³⁶³ Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*, 168 et seqq.

³⁶⁴ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/britons-flock-to-fight-in-bosnia-thousands-of-ex-soldiers-and-untrained-idiots-and-psychopaths-said-1471991.html>

³⁶⁵ Krott, 160. Also quote-worthy: “I realized later that real professional soldiers would be a rarity in the Balkans War. Instead there was an abundance of Joes, Werners, and Kevins.” See: *Ibid.*, 58

³⁶⁶ Bonengel. *Beruf Neonazi*.

³⁶⁷ Jonnyantora, Marco Casagrande.

³⁶⁸ Jonnyantora

³⁶⁹ Krott, 156.

German fellow soldiers collected ears of Serbs as trophies.³⁷⁰ Some accounts even include cannibalistic fantasies that were circling around among the units.³⁷¹ In another episode from Mostar, told by the Austrian dropout Wolfgang Niederreiter in his biography, a German volunteer, fighting for the HVO troops of the above-mentioned Mladen Naletilić Tuta, gives a six-year old Muslim boy a hand grenade with a pulled pin, just to observe and rejoice when the child is blown up.³⁷²

While such kind of violence and felonies were by no means exceptional in civil wars in the Balkans or elsewhere, and certainly not reserved to German foreign fighters, there were some voices stressing the special role and the perception of these nationals. As late as April 1994 the San Francisco Chronicle was quoting an Austrian neo-Nazi asserting that „[...]the swaggering German-speaking mercenaries generally have an image among the Bosnian Croats as exceptionally tough and merciless – ‘a sort of new German SS’ - and for that reason are often given dirty, dangerous assignments.”³⁷³ How these dirty assignments could have looked like is described in the very same article by the Austrian, stating that the foreigners were repeatedly taking part in ethnic cleansing operations. "Our job actually is quite simple", he continues, "after regular Croat militiamen capture a village, they earmark houses of Serbs for us so we can loot and destroy them."³⁷⁴ Falk Simang and Ralf Mrachacz, who were serving as members of the Croatian-Bosnian paramilitary group "Kaznjenicka Bojna", even are officially confirmed to have participated in ethnic cleansing operations in the Doljani valley close to Jablanica.³⁷⁵ Maik Dudek instead, claims to have killed around 30 people, and only the fact that he hasn't received any money for that, seems to upset him. In his own words, "if a Serb stands in front of me, I will not even say 'hello'."³⁷⁶

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 180

³⁷¹ "Otto is a butcher by civilian profession, and we have often profited from the German's expertise when preparing food from calves or lambs that we have slaughtered. We have also toyed around with the idea of eating a Muslim soldier. What an experience it would be to cut up a deceased and arrange the platoon a feast of a different kind." See: Jonnyantora, Casagrande.

³⁷² Für die Heimat bereit.

³⁷³ Geiger. Neo-Nazis help Croatians.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ UN Commission on Human Rights. *Report on the question of the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination*. Report nr. A/51/392, 23 Sep 1996. URL:

http://psm.du.edu/media/documents/international_regulation/united_nations/human_rights_council_and_ga/special_rapporteur/special_rapporteur_a-51-392.pdf.

³⁷⁶ Beruf, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ho0219WAig&nohtml5=False>

Casualties

Due to frequent risky assignments, their above-mentioned role as cannon fodder and the lack of military experiences, there were – among the approximately 72 volunteers that were killed in action – many German war volunteers who lost their lives in Croatia and Bosnia.³⁷⁷ A memorial stone, which was installed in Karlovac lists 455 “volunteers, who came to defend Croatia.” Of this number 55 were German, and 15 were killed in action.³⁷⁸ Some German combatants died in one of the many minefields of the conflicts³⁷⁹, or were killed by snipers.³⁸⁰ Two Germans were allegedly captured after the fall of Vukovar, later tortured and executed in and around Ovčara by Serb forces.³⁸¹ To avoid getting arrested and experience similar things at least one foreign volunteer committed suicide.³⁸²

Also, incidences of vigilantism occurred: Two Germans were shot by their compatriots for an alleged betrayal or money issues.³⁸³ Another famous example is that of Jürgen Schmidt, who may have been killed through the hands of own comrades. They feared Schmidt was associated with German Intelligence and knew too much about black market connections for cars and weapons, as implied by Rob Krott.³⁸⁴ Speaking of this, another interesting case is Michael Baatz from Mannheim, who is said to have been an informer for the German *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (Federal Intelligence Service) after he returned in fall 1994 from the fronts of the Balkans. According to some sources, he later was crucial in preventing the assassinations of *Generalstaatsanwalt* (Solicitor General) Heiko Klein and Ignatz Bubitz, president of the *Central Council of Jews in Germany*.³⁸⁵

³⁷⁷ Note: The USDDR speaks of a 30% casualty rate, while actually it is 13%. See: USDDR

³⁷⁸ In the USSDR guestbook a certain Heindrich is mentioned, who supposedly died by a sniper shoot in the Mostar area. Also, Hasselbach asserts that Maik Dudek was killed at some point in the war. Hasselbach, Fuehrer Ex. 207-9. <http://users4.smartgb.com/g/g.php?a=s&i=g44-37659-fc&m=10&p=5>
For an overview, see the appendix.

³⁷⁹ Such as Andreas Bühner, Hans Strassburger and Bremer Gunnar. See:

³⁸⁰ Andreas Kolb and Thomas Otto R. Linder. See: Hutt, Soldier of Fortune. Šulj, Tomislav. Facebook post in the group “Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima”. 22 Jan 2016.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/874106455981393/permalink/993212674070770/>

³⁸¹ Like Harlan (or Arnold) “von Besinger” and a certain „Gio“. See: Zubrinic, 481 foreign volunteers. See also: Alimpić, Miroslav. “The Vukovar Hospital case from the perspective of a national investigative judge.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 890 (June 2013): 267-286.

³⁸² Neklyudov, Dmitry. „История рассудит, кто интернационалисты, а кто –наёмники“. 08 Aug 2009. URL: <http://www.srpska.ru/article.php?nid=12173>.

³⁸³ Report on the question of the use of mercenaries.

³⁸⁴ Krott, Soldier of Fortune, 149.

³⁸⁵ „Dressed to kill? Neonazis als Söldner.“ *Antifaschistisches Infoblatt*, 10 Sep 2013. URL: <https://www.antifainfoblatt.de/artikel/dressed-kill>. See also: Markovčić, Robert. Facebook post „VOD

Many of the German foreign fighters, who survived their time in the Balkans, became seriously wounded during combat. Some for example got their shoulders destroyed³⁸⁶, suffered abdominal wounds³⁸⁷, lost one eye³⁸⁸ or even both legs³⁸⁹. Not surprisingly, some of the survivors suffered from depression and resorted to heavy drinking. Heinz “Hans” Wiesenack, who was portrayed in a *Spiegel* article, is the prime example. Shaken and disillusioned by his wartime experience he shot himself in the head after getting drunk in a bar in the northern Bosnian town of Srebrenik in 1993.³⁹⁰ It is hard to determine what the average length of the mercenaries stay in the Balkans was. Many went back to their home countries, i.e. Germany, already after several months (or even weeks) and hardly anyone was on spot in the last year of the war, 1995.³⁹¹

Crime at home

Some of the former foreign fighter can be associated with criminal activities after their combat in the former Yugoslavia, as implied by scholarly work on the topic. The decreased inhibition threshold of one of the former militiamen, Jens Lange, manifested itself even in several brutal murders.³⁹² Apart from that extreme case, existed supply routes for weapons already during the conflict, and led to considerable smuggling, even after the conflict, to the benefit especially of radical right-wing circles. Revealingly, Michael Homeister was arrested already during a "furlough" from the frontline at the German border with false papers and weapons in the trunk of his car. As a customs officer later remembered, "the number of passengers was so large that we could – in addition to suspicious or searched-for vehicles – only make random samples."³⁹³

STRANACA-INTERNATIONAL GROUP 1994". 5 Jun 2009.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1045698516289&set=a.1045696876248.6833.1640451577&type=3&theater>

³⁸⁶ Norbert. See: Hutt, Paint.

³⁸⁷ Alexander Neidlein. See: Teidelbaum, Lucius. „Für die Heimat bereit“. *Kontext Wochenzeitung* 131, 02 Okt 2013. URL: <http://www.kontextwochenzeitung.de/ueberm-kesselrand/131/fuer-die-heimat-bereit-1763.html>.

³⁸⁸ Maik Dudek, see: Hasselbach, Fuehrer Ex. 207-9.

³⁸⁹ Gustav. See: Hutt, Paint.

³⁹⁰ Note that the *Spiegel* article speaks of “Srebrenica” which is an apparent mistake.

³⁹¹ An exceptions is Hans Strassburger, who hit a mine in September 1995, only 10 weeks before the end of the war. See: Vucica, freshpress + Facebook) Balchin, Nigs P. *Facebook* post in the group „Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Croatian Homeland War 1991-1995”. 20 Nov 2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/52899198685/permalink/10153692652723686/>. See also: Vucica, freshpress

³⁹² „Strafjustiz: Zuflucht bei den Nazis.“ *Spiegel*, 24 Mar 1997.

³⁹³ Wetz, Österreich und seine Kriegstouristen.

According to a fact-finding commission of the parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia there were two specific practices in the neo-Nazi scene of the 1990s to attain weapons and explosives. First, by acquire it from the withdrawing Soviet, and later Russian, troops, and second, through contacts established during the war in the former Yugoslavia.³⁹⁴ Some records from police files, however, give us an idea also of the post-war activities of the German veterans of the conflict. Such as when in a guesthouse in Brandenburg police found weapons and ammo in the room of Jens Lange, a former pro-Croat foreign fighter.³⁹⁵ A correlation with “mercenary” activity in the war in Yugoslavia was also implied by German media when in the mid-nineties police found arms depots in Bavaria and Hesse that were owned by local neo-Nazis.³⁹⁶

Neo-Nazis

Another characteristic aspect of the foreign fighter’s post-war activity is the continuing occupation in neo-Nazi structures of quite a considerable number of former foreign fighters. First of all, there is the aforementioned Michael Homeister, member of the *Kameradschaft Celle – Hannover 77*, and, according to the magazine *Stern*, one of the most dangerous neo-Nazis in Germany.³⁹⁷ Closely connected with Homeister is Thorsten Heise, leader of NPD (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, National Democratic Party of Germany) Eichsfeld and „litigation-proof“ that he has been a mercenary in Croatia”, according to security authorities.³⁹⁸ Other examples can be found in the NPD in Berlin with Eckart Bräuniger, former chairman in Berlin³⁹⁹, and Oliver Schweigert, who was not only important for the recruitment, but also spend some time in Croatia, according to various sources.⁴⁰⁰ Further, there is the above-mentioned

³⁹⁴ Landtag Nordrhein-Westfalen. *Parlamentarischer Untersuchungsausschuss III. 7. Sitzung*. 16 Apr 2015. URL: https://www.landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/GB_I/I.1/PUA/PUA_III_16_WP/APr_0872.pdf

³⁹⁵ Budler, Kai. „Naziterror in Südniedersachsen.“ *der rechte Rand* 138 (Sep/Oct2012), 12-13. URL: http://www.der-rechte-rand.de/wp-content/uploads/drr_138.pdf

³⁹⁶ „Rechtsterroristische Bestrebungen in Hessen Teil 6 – Die 1990er: Eine neue Generation rüstet auf.“ *Antifaschistisches Infobüro Rhein Main*. 31 Jan 2015. URL: <http://www.infobuero.org/2015/01/rechtsterroristische-betrebungen-in-hessen-teil-6-die-1990er/>; Desselberger, Üben für den Terror.

³⁹⁷ Johnnyantora, Casagrande.

³⁹⁸ „Dressed to kill? Neonazis als Söldner.“ *Antifaschistisches Infoblatt*, 10 Sep 2013. URL: <https://www.antifainfoblatt.de/artikel/dressed-kill>.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Deutsche Söldner im Kosovo; Hasselbach, Fuehrer Ex. 207-9, Schröder, Burkhard. “Das Netz des Berliner Neonazi-Terrors”. *taz*, 04 Aug 1997.

Alexander Neidlein, who today is one of the leading figures of the NPD in South West Germany.⁴⁰¹

The continuing danger that emanates from this group of persons is salient. In 2004, for instance, Eckart Bräuniger was arrested for participating in paramilitary exercises in a Brandenburg forest by a SEK (*Spezialeinsatzkommando*, German special police forces). Moreover, he has strong ties to violence-prone organizations like *Hammerskins*, the biker gang *Vandalen*, or the neo-Nazi band *Landser*. Some of the former fighters, like Michael Kratz, part of *Nationalistischen Front* and the *Anti-Antifa* in Paderborn, were also active in creating *Wehrsportgruppen* (paramilitary sport clubs).⁴⁰² This perspective was affirmed by former neo-Nazi Ingo Hasselbach in his memoirs:

„The more sane and careful ones came back after a few months or a year with valuable training in weapons and explosives. They'd of course also learned what it was like to kill people. Many stayed down there, living in the hills, constantly involved in skirmishes no one ever heard about, and are only now coming back into Germany and Austria and forming the basis of the most militant and dangerous neo-Nazi cells.“⁴⁰³

When it comes to criminal activities, there is evidence to suggest – at least indirect – links to right-wing terrorism in the unified Germany.⁴⁰⁴ Already in 1999, in an internal document of the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution), Thorsten Heise was suspected with the formation of a terrorist organization.⁴⁰⁵ Heise is not the only one, whose connection to the NSU is highlighted by many observers of the scene. Also Michael Homeister is believed to have been closely linked after being arrested for support of NSU.⁴⁰⁶ As one publication, dedicated to the exposure of neo-Nazis activities, put it in perspective:

⁴⁰¹ Funke, Alexander Neidlein.

⁴⁰² Landtag Nordrhein-Westfalen. *Parlamentarischer Untersuchungsausschuss III. 7. Sitzung*. 16 Apr 2015. URL: https://www.landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/GB_I/I.1/PUA/PUA_III_16_WP/APr_0872.pdf.

⁴⁰³ Hasselbach, Fuehrer Ex. 207-9.

⁴⁰⁴ For a background see: Virchow, Fabian. “Für Volk und Nation.” *Die Zeit*, 24 Nov 2011.

⁴⁰⁵ Bundesamt für den Verfassungsschutz. *Gefahr eines bewaffneten Kampfes deutscher Rechtsextremisten – Entwicklungen von 1997 bis Mitte 2004*. Juli 2004. Available at: <https://nsuleaks.wordpress.com/2012/07/09/bfv-gefahr-eines-bewaffneten-kampfes-deutscher-rechtsextremisten-entwicklungen-von-1997-bis-mitte-2004/>.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. In the very same document, the three persons are mentioned that later would become known as the NSU (*Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund*, National Socialist Underground).

“It is indisputable that many neo-Nazis – whether in paramilitary exercises or in Croatia – received weapons training [...] Moreover, circulated in the German Nazi scene since the early 90s writings, advocating the construction of an armed structure [...] The 1991-published "Eine Bewegung in Waffen" is considered in the neo-Nazi scene as a basic guide in matters of setup and activities of a terrorist underground structure. Propagated is the construction of a "werewolf"-network with individual cells, contact men and depots.⁴⁰⁷

Additionally, networks with Croatian right-wing scene seem to be enduring, given the fact that for instance Alexander Neidlein, considered by some observers of the scene as a go-between between Germany and Croatia, repeatedly spend time in Zagreb.⁴⁰⁸ In an article published in 2012 he was quoted as saying "Freedom for Croatia, Germany - and the whole of Europe", and concluding with "Za Dom Spremni" (For the homeland – ready), the infamous salute of the Croatian Ustaša.⁴⁰⁹

Persistence

There are also cases of enduring activities as mercenaries/volunteer. An interesting case is Thomas Franz Kunst, who was shot in South Africa in 1994 after he opened fire on policemen that tried to ransack his car. Originating from the Hamburg red light and underworld milieu where he worked as a bouncer, he went to Bosnia with Alexander Neidlein and a certain Stephan Rays. Later, after stealing weapons and ammunition, they escaped from the front, were „wanted“, raided a post office in the town of Lübeck and fled to South Africa.⁴¹⁰ There they jointed militant Boers and white supremacists, who proclaimed an independent white “Volkstaat” in their struggle after the end of apartheid.⁴¹¹

Others became active in Kosovo, like the above-mentioned sniper Frank. Some continued even after the end of the conflict in 1999. Roland Bartetzko for example was

⁴⁰⁷ <https://www.antifainfoblatt.de/artikel/proze%C3%9F-gegen-kay-diesner>

⁴⁰⁸ Für die Heimat bereit. See also: VVN – Bund der Antifaschisten/ Kreisgruppe Schwäbisch Hall. „Aus für die NPD/JN Landesgeschäftsstelle in Rosenberg/Hohenberg!“ *Linksunten Indymedia*, 20 Apr 2009. URL: <https://linksunten.indymedia.org/de/node/4976>.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. Moreover, Neidlein is in close contact with Markus Frntic, a German-Croatian neo-Nazi with many ties to Croatian right-wing organizations and who was also mentioned in the above mentioned publication of the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* in the context with finding of weapons. See also: Feyder, Franz; Ullenbruch, Sven. „Ku-Klux-Klan, ein rechter Waffenbruder.“ *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 24 Jul 2015.

⁴¹⁰ Funke, Alexander Neidlein.

sentenced for a bomb attack in Pristina that succeeded in killing the head of the *Serbian Centre for Peace and Tolerance*, Aleksandar Petrovic.⁴¹² Also, it was assumed that he possibly was involved in a bomb attack on a tour coach in February 2001 that killed seven Serbs.⁴¹³ In this regard it is also worth mentioning that two former foreign fighters, Falk Simang and Ralf Mrachacz were sentenced to life imprisonment by a German court for one of their deeds in Bosnia. Tellingly, the charge was that they killed two other German comrades from their unit.⁴¹⁴

How global the dimensions of this evolving mercenary, or volunteering scene was about to become suggests a statement of two foreign fighters, claiming that after the war in Croatia, they want to move on, “maybe to Moldova or Georgia”.⁴¹⁵ While some of the other veterans of the Yugoslav wars seem to be joining the Ukraine government or the separatists and even actively form voluntary battalions in Donbas⁴¹⁶, there is also information about one German foreign volunteer being active in the conflict.⁴¹⁷

USDDR

Noteworthy in terms of remembrance work and postwar veterans organization is the *Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Croatian Homeland War* (USDDR), initiated by French- and Englishmen, which organizes reunions and holds annual meetings since 2007, including commemorative acts, ceremonies honoring the fallen foreign fighters and gatherings with local (and national) politicians. Further, through the development of the internet, also their social media representations, most notably on *Facebook*, *YouTube* and on their own personal websites, serve as a platform to reconnect, gather information, and share photos and videos of all kind. According to their website one of their aims is “to remind the world of our contribution and sacrifice for a country’s

⁴¹¹ Grill, Bartholomäus. “Kennzeichen D. Deutsche Rechtsradikale schießen in Südafrika.“ *Die Zeit*, 25 Mar 1994. See also: Spiegel TV Magazin. „Vor 20 Jahren: Neonazi-Söldner in Südafrika“. *YouTube* video, 8:22. Posted [April 2014]. <https://youtu.be/Ao-PnBqUQrk>.

⁴¹² „Handschrift eines Profis.“ *Spiegel*, 30 Apr 2001.

⁴¹³ „Kosovo: Söldner vor Gericht.“ *Spiegel*, 26 Nov 2001.

⁴¹⁴ Bundesgerichtshof. “Urteil gegen deutsche Söldner rechtskräftig.” Press communication Nr. 48/96, 05 Sep 1996. URL: <http://archiv.jura.uni-saarland.de/Entscheidungen/presse96/BGH/strafrecht/deutsch.html>. See also: Report on the question of the use of mercenaries.

⁴¹⁵ Hoeges, Clemens. “Und morgen schon tot.” *Spiegel*, 21 Sep 1992.

⁴¹⁶ Crucial, also for recruitment is the Croatia-based Frenchmen Gaston Besson, see: Besson, Gasson. “Battailon AZOV :Gaston Besson il reclutatore /Full interview English”. *YouTube* video, 2:05. Posted [November 2014]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Gd0vmfXiJg>.

⁴¹⁷ „Azow International.“ *Linksunten Indymedia*, 16 May 2015. URL: <https://linksunten.indymedia.org/de/node/143431>.

independence [and] to get rid of the myth of foreign volunteers as ‘mercenaries’” Their further self-stylization and retrospect justification reads as follows:

“Croatia's towns [...] were shelled relentlessly from air, land and sea. [...] The International Community looked on and did nothing to halt the gross military imbalance, blatant Serbian aggression and the Armies advancing into Croatia [...]. We watched those pictures on television and heard politicians talk of ceasefires whilst Serb paramilitaries marched through Croatian towns. Disgusted by the inability of the international community and our own governments to halt the slaughter, individuals rose to the challenge from every civilised nation, setting aside political, ideological and cultural differences.[...] They were welded by a shared purpose; the prevention of murder, rape and the wholesale destruction of civilian property and cultural heritage. Individuals stood when their own countries turned their backs. These individuals became known as the Foreign Volunteers.”⁴¹⁸

Many of their members settled in Croatia after the war, from where they urge official authorities and politicians in media and elsewhere to recognize them as veterans⁴¹⁹, which would entitle them to receive a monthly pension. *YouTube* channels, most notably the one of Gaston Besson, are full of praising videos, interwoven with patriotic music and decorated with photos and martial words.⁴²⁰ One such video even is dedicated to the killed German Thomas Lindner.⁴²¹ However, while many Germans are active contributors to websites and *Facebook* groups of the organization, it is only Michael Homeister and a certain “Piter” , who seem to actively participate in their annual meetings in Vukovar and Vinkovci, respectively.⁴²²

⁴¹⁸ Zubrinic, 481 foreign volunteers.

⁴¹⁹ Or *branitelj* (defenders) as the Croatian term reads less neutrally. See: Jelinić, Berislav. „Život nakon rata za tuđu domovinu.“ *Nacional dnevno online izdanije*, 24 Nov 2009. URL: <http://arhiva.nacional.hr/clanak/72091/zivot-nakon-rata-za-tudu-domovinu>

⁴²⁰ As an example see: ŽupanjkaD, Internacionalna 108 HVO brigade, from minute 15:00.

⁴²¹ Besson, Gaston. “HvalaVam !- Thomas Otto Reimund Linder - 15.09.1961/ 20.05.1992. - by corpusdelicti88“. *YouTube* video, 3:52. Posted [January 2013]. https://youtu.be/p_EQymayGg8?list=UU-y9nsRc_QbKhsrDrtTEZCg.

⁴²² Homeister, Michael. Facebook post in the group „Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Croatian Homeland War1991-1995“. 19 May 2015.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/874106455981393/permalink/879232778802094/>; Zivkovic, Peter. Facebook post in the group “Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima”. 19 May 2015. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/874106455981393/permalink/879294465462592/>

6.8. Discussion of the Findings

General Facts

German citizens could be found all around the former Yugoslavia, among different military units and forces of different political affiliation. However, as Kaldor correctly points out, “during the course of the war, the forces of each party of the conflict were increasingly centralized and regularized”⁴²³, which also had its impact on the involvement of foreign fighters. For instance, in the case of Croatia and Bosnia it is striking that the bulk of foreign fighters were present mostly in the “wild” years of the conflict, especially up to 1993, and often in irregular or semi-regular forces such as HOS. The view that Westerners predominantly joined the pro-Croat forces can be mostly affirmed in this case study, even though there were exceptions to this general rule.

My findings suggest further that the absolute majority of them do not meet any definition of “mercenary”. Not only had the fewest a considerable military background, the payments they received was also tiny in comparison to other war theatres of the time.⁴²⁴ Instead, we should consider them mostly as idealistic individuals or ideological activists, which were willing to use violence to support a foreign cause.

Considering that even today, in times of the transparent citizen and with the help of modern technology, it was possible to identify only around 60 former foreign fighters from Germany, the interpellation by the Bundestag, which determined the number of *Söldner* in Yugoslavia with “around 100”, seems not to be completely underestimated. However, this number contradicts higher estimations of single federal state branches of the German intelligence service. In the end, as I have shown in this thesis it is less important to ask how high the actual number of foreign fighters was, than to determine their role for the ideologization and escalation of the conflict and the consequent implications of a “mercenary milieu” for security in Germany and beyond.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*, 47.

⁴²⁴ See e.g. the references to the lucrative war theatres in Africa in Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*.

⁴²⁵ Given the scope and the length of the conflicts, it is maybe not a coincidence that the number of Germans without any diaspora background in the wars in the Balkans was similar compared to today’s ideologically or religiously motivated German Foreign Fighters in Iraq/Syria. According to data from mid-2015 they account for around 12% or 86 combatants, see: Van Ginkel, Bibi et al., ed. “The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies.” *ICCT Research Paper 7* (Apr

Distinct Character of the German Subgroup

The somewhat distinct character of the German group, I argue, resulted from a combination of various historical, political and socioeconomic preconditions that were not to the same extent present in other countries during that time. This includes the economic hardship of the early 1990s; the relative power vacuum in the last year of East Germany; the flourishing violence-prone right-wing structures; the proximity of the battle zones; the legacy of historical German-Croatian bonds; and a considerable Yugoslav diaspora in Germany.

The background of the volunteers was in average rather low, and they were often marginalized within their broader societies; politically, because they were members of radical political networks, or economically, as losers of transformation and reunification, for instance when they became unemployed in the wake of post-89 military cuts.⁴²⁶ Just like many German veterans of the Second World War were offered a professional perspective in the *legion étrangère* without a screening of their past, the possibility to wage war on the side of Croatian (para)military units might have been for many a sought way out of unemployment and a chance to utilize their military experience, even if only for a low salary. However, there is not much evidence to suggest that it was boredom, lovesickness or the search for meaning⁴²⁷ that brought most of these individuals to the Balkans, but instead concrete political, social or legal pressure, often coupled with an ideological interest in the conflict.

Right-Wing Sentiments vs. Meaning Searchers

The analysis of the literature has shown that, while among other nationalities experienced professional mercenaries, freedom fighters, and even leftists were common, the German subgroup rather saw a spread of racist, anti-Muslim and Serbophobic views and motives. This said, the general assessment, done by veterans like Gaston Besson⁴²⁸,

2016), 33. URL: <http://icct.nl/publication/report-the-foreign-fighters-phenomenon-in-the-eu-profiles-threats-policies/>.

⁴²⁶ In the German case even more through the dissolution of the East German army, and the merger with the *Bundeswehr*, respectively.

⁴²⁷ Francois; Arielli, Search for Meaning.

⁴²⁸ Already in 1993 Besson spoke of a “mix of former soldiers and idealistic adventures” and only “a handful of neo-Nazis” (“mélange d’anciens soldats et d’aventuriers-idealistes [et] quelques rares neo-nazis”). See: Mari, Moi, Gaston Besson.

that the number of neo-Nazis among the group of pro-Croat foreign war volunteers was very little, cannot be confirmed. In the sparse literature that exists about them, these views were adopted and the foreign volunteers are likewise portrayed as activists, idealists or adventurers. David Francois for instance wrote that “like all their predecessors and their successors, the portrayal of the volunteers in Croatia is full of nuances far from convictions and heroic images, but it does not detract from the significance of their political, moral and especially symbolic gesture.”⁴²⁹ This is, as I argue based on my case study, way too uncritical, to say at least.

When zooming in and scrutinizing individual cases, however, it becomes obvious that there were also confirmed instances of right-wing extremists from a variety of countries, such as Sweden, UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. There were not only individuals but also underlying structures and contacts at an international level.⁴³⁰ It is unlikely that the countless journalistic and autobiographic accounts, which address this issue were all products of monoperspectivism or even antifascist biases. Rather, to borrow the words of Judith Keene’s study on in Spanish Civil War, the Croatian leadership managed, intentionally or not, just like General Franco to “galvanize large sections of the European Right” that were on their quest for a „New Europe“⁴³¹.

Transnational Identity Community

One explanatory approach put forward by Malet and helpful for the case study at hand is the notion of a transnational identity community. I claim that most of the German foreign fighters indeed had a political *Weltanschauung* shaped by the situation at home, and political and social pressure was the push factor for their intervention in the Balkans, where the war theatre’s circumstances gave them the chance to retaliate. They themselves, if not the recruiters, were framing a distant civil conflict as posing a

⁴²⁹ Francois.

⁴³⁰ Réseau d’Etude, de Formation, de Liaison contre l’Extrême-Droite et la Xenophobie. “The Falanges of Black Disorder.” *Reflexes international* 1. Available at: <http://reflexes.samizdat.net/les-phalanges-du-desordre-noir/>

See also : “Il y a 20 ans, c’était des flamands d’extrême-droite qui partaient se battre en Yougoslavie.” *Apache (blog)*, 13 Apr 2013. URL: <https://www.apache.be/fr/2013/04/12/il-y-a-20-ans-cetait-des-flamands-dextreme-droite-qui-partaient-se-battre-en-yougoslavie/>

⁴³¹ Keene, Judith. *Fighting for God*, 211.

dire threat to all members of a transnational identity community⁴³², independently if this identity was understood as “Western”, “Christian” or “anti-Communist”.

Such a group identity facilitates recruitment⁴³³, as it was conducted by international right-wing networks, and sometimes aided by existing anti-Yugoslav émigré circles. A prime example for recruitment messaging is the speech of the neo-Nazi and volunteer recruiter Ewald Althans in “Beruf Neonazi”, in which he connected the fate of Croatia with the struggle of right-wingers at home. The German foreign fighters internalized certain narratives, such as that Croats are historical allies of Germans, who need to be protected, that the international community is standing aside, that Belgrade resembles Socialism that needed to be eradicated, or that a clash of cultures between Islam (and/or Orthodoxy) and the Western World was going to take shape between Drava and Drina.⁴³⁴ What Arielli mentions with regard to the Spanish civil war seems to be equally true for the case of German foreign fighters in the conflicts of the Balkans (if we just replace Spain by Yugoslavia):

“Most volunteers [...] had never been to Spain before the war. They saw the conflict in broader European terms, rather than in Spanish terms, and place it within the political framework of their home context [. It] was an opportunity to fight back.”⁴³⁵

Violence and Crime

All the worries that Bakke voices with regard to contemporary foreign fighters⁴³⁶ may also be justified in the case of Westerners who were fighting in Yugoslavia, German citizens in particular. It was shown that they have complicated attempts at ending the war by supporting divisions among rebels⁴³⁷; they contributed to the ideologization of the conflict, by maintaining the perception, for instance on the Serb side, that history is repeating and Germans come supporting the Croats again; they, intended or not, contributed to the “cyclone of violence”⁴³⁸ that evolved in the former Yugoslavia; and they entailed security implications for the German authorities after their return. Not only

⁴³² Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 4.

⁴³³ Malet, *Transnational Identity* 20.

⁴³⁴ Or – if we include the conflicts in the Southern parts of the former Yugoslavia – between Drava and Drin.

⁴³⁵ Arielli, *Getting There*, 219.

⁴³⁶ Bakke, *Help Wanted*, 151.

⁴³⁷ For example between HVO and HOS, or HVO and ARBiH, respectively.

⁴³⁸ Mueller, *Banality*, 54.

paramilitary, but also foreign fighter milieus continue to develop, as exemplified by the revealing of the intervention of veterans of the Yugoslav wars in Ukraine, including some of its foreign fighters. Also their role in the contraband of arms and ammunition, both into and out of the conflict, deserve some further observation. We can indeed assume that there existed a considerable number of “false volunteers”⁴³⁹ that went to the battle fields of the Balkans for engaging in criminal activity.

Given their number, the foreign fighters in general had hardly any direct military importance on the ground. However, given the atrocities in which some of the volunteers participated (or even initiated), their role in inflaming the conflict should not be underestimated. And this might also apply to those idealists that some political philosophers have called “good mercenaries”⁴⁴⁰. As Petersohn has put it, “it may be very well that all mercenaries fight with the best intentions, but in a consequentialist sense, they do more harm than good.”⁴⁴¹ The study has shown that in the Yugoslav wars German citizens were involved not only in regular combat, but also in the implementation and initiation of serious war crimes, sexualized violence and ethnic cleansing operations. It may well be true that, as David Francois stresses, it is impossible to determine whether these acts of violence are the results of a war-related brutalization, or of criminal temperaments that existed already before the war. However, a criminal background was definitively present among a large number of German foreign fighters in the Balkans. This feature may have not been stronger as compared to their comrades in the militias or other national groups, but most likely compared to the more controlled and disciplined regular armed forces.

In general, the assumption that paramilitary groups, outsiders or simply unpoliced thugs have a big influence on conflict escalation can be hardly contested.⁴⁴² It is the firm belief of the author, and the motivation for studying the subject, that it was the presence of those groups of foreign fighters that were maybe not crucial, but certainly important for the escalation of the conflict.

⁴³⁹ Joachim, *Private Military Companies*.

⁴⁴⁰ Lynch, Tony; Walsh, A. J. „The Good Mercenary?“ *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 8 (2000): 133-153.

⁴⁴¹ Petersohn, *Impact of Mercenaries*, 209.

⁴⁴² As for instance Mueller asserts, “the key dynamic of the conflicts [...] was not the risings of neighbor against neighbor, still less in the clashings of civilizations. Rather it was in the focused predation of comparatively small groups of violent thugs and criminals recruited and semi-coordinated by politicians.” See: Mueller, *Remnants*, 23.

7. Concluding remarks

The thesis identified those Germans, who were fighting in the Yugoslav wars and raised the question whether or not they were specific vis-à-vis their international comrades. I contrasted my findings about the German war volunteers with what is known about their umbrella group of Western anti-Yugoslav foreign fighters, based on scholarly output on the topic. It was argued that nuances are necessary, especially if it comes to origin-based motives, ideological underpinning and perspectives on the conflict. In order to put their appearance in the Yugoslav wars into its proper context and assess it correctly, I further classified this group repeatedly within the history of foreign war volunteering as well as into theories on modern, militia-based and transnational warfare.

The study further aimed at contributing to illuminate the “complex interlinkages between [radical political] networks, [...] ungoverned territories, and transnational identities.”⁴⁴³ We can accurately describe the German foreign fighters in the context of these interlinkages as irregular combatants that found mostly idealistic or ideological justification for their combat in a region that served the eye witness Rob Krott later as a reminder of “Wild West lawlessness”.⁴⁴⁴

In many respects these individuals have to be considered typical examples of combatants in “new wars”. Apart from the fact that they themselves represent transnational combatants, and thus actors, which – alongside goals, methods and modes of financing – changed most significantly in the wars in the post-cold war era, there are elements of “new wars”, carved out by scholars, which are endemic to foreign fighters: Firstly, among of the most striking aspect is the immense targeting of civilians, which Kaldor understands as the expression of the increasing influence of “exclusive and often extreme forms of identity politics” on the outlook of modern warfare.⁴⁴⁵ We have seen that many of the foreign fighters were indeed proponents of exactly such worldviews that support ethnical purification; further, this new form of organized violence has

⁴⁴³ Barak and Cohen, *Sherwood forest*, 14. Note that in the original quote the term “terrorist” is used due to the scholars focus on Syria. However, while I think their approach is helpful for explaining other, non-Jihadist transnational insurgents, I consider the term generally too precarious and too inappropriate for qualifying the radical networks that continue to exist among some former fighter.

⁴⁴⁴ Krott, *Soldier of Fortune*, 150. Or, using the metaphor of Barak and Cohen, self-proclaimed Robin Hoods, fighting for a purported worthy cause in the Croatian *Krajina*, in Herzegovina or Central Bosnia, i.e. the stateless “Sherwood forests” of the Balkans. See: Barak and Cohen, *Sherwood forest*, 14 et seqq.

⁴⁴⁵ Shaw, *New and Old Wars*.

“developed in concert with globalization”⁴⁴⁶, just as the movement of foreign fighters increases through the availability of information and recruitment tools in (social) media⁴⁴⁷; and ultimately, the “profound blurring of the roles of soldier and criminal”⁴⁴⁸ that was a common theme also in the wars in former Yugoslavia. Modern, militia-based warfare resembles in many ways organized crime and a considerable part of the foreign fighters, as I have demonstrated, was seemingly part of irregular armed forces, if not networks with a criminal agenda. There is evidence to suggest that many benefited not only from looting, but also via smuggling and other black market activities. One question that will remain open regards security implications for the countries of origin, including the role of hundreds of Germans and thousands of internationals that were trained in the use of explosives, and the whereabouts of the countless bootlegged weapons.⁴⁴⁹

This approach and topic were chosen in the context of the current scientific and public debate, in which publications are barely concerned with the large numbers of foreign fighters who are *not* Islamists.⁴⁵⁰ As David Malet has stressed with regard to foreign fighters in general, they are often “secular, [and have] neither ties of ethnic kinship nor homeland with the local insurgents they joined.”⁴⁵¹ As I have repeatedly illustrated, the foreign war volunteers in the former Yugoslavia, especially the majority that was not fighting for pecuniary reasons, are part of a long tradition that can be at least traced back to the cross-border support of various anti-imperial uprisings in the 19th century, and exists today most famously in the form of ideologized foreign combatants in the Greater Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and the post-Soviet space.

The findings of the thesis are fourfold: First, it shows that the German subgroup’s appearance shows no anomaly as related to other historical and global groups of foreign fighters, including contemporary jihadists; secondly, foreign fighters should be considered – at an increasing rate – as integral part of modern warfare; further, they show more political and ideological references as assumed by current research on the umbrella group of pro-Croat foreign fighters; and ultimately, it illustrated that future

⁴⁴⁶ Shaw, *New and Old Wars*.

⁴⁴⁷ And, in recent years more and more relevant, the possibility to travel affordably, which is especially true when speaking about transcontinental war volunteering.

⁴⁴⁸ Shaw, *New and Old Wars*.

⁴⁴⁹ Moreover, it is important to consider that, as Klaas Voß has shown, mercenary operations during Cold War have led to the development of a paramilitary subculture within the USA. Voß, Klaas. Plausibly deniable.

⁴⁵⁰ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 15 et seqq.

⁴⁵¹ Malet, *Transnational Identity*, 3.

research needs to focus more on different push and pull factors, such as historical and political connecting lines as well as the home context of the transnational combatants.

The accounts of and about the German subgroup gave us some idea of how interconnected various factors are, both in terms of their biographical and motivational background, and how this all manifests itself on the ground. Hopefully this case study can serve as a modest contribution to the literature on war volunteering in the former Yugoslavia, by compiling sources, adding a considerable amount of data to the research field and enriching the discussion on the complex causes for their combat in the near European abroad.

However, further and more comprehensive case studies of considerable national groups of foreign fighters, ideally based on interviews and archive material, would not only show if my hypotheses can be verified, but would generally be helpful to shed light on a topic that lacks knowledge-based clarity and is mainly depicted in journalism. As Barak and Cohen put it, “the role of these nonstate actors in intrastate conflicts deserves more attention – and fewer generalizations – from scholars and policymakers alike.”⁴⁵² Considering the growing importance of transnationalism in civil wars, the advancing privatization of warfare and the role of foreign volunteerism in such important contemporary conflicts like in Syria or Ukraine, this is a historical chapter that can hardly be studied enough.

⁴⁵² Miodownik; Barak, Introduction, 10.

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Appendix 1: List of German Foreign Fighter in the Yugoslav Wars

Name	(Selected) Source
Oliver Schweigert	Schröder, Burkhard. "Das Netz des Berliner Neonazi-Terrors." <i>taz</i> , 04 Aug 1997.
Eckart Bräuniger	„Dressed to kill? Neonazis als Söldner.“ <i>Antifaschistisches Infoblatt</i> , 10 Sep 2013.
Alexander Neidlein	Funke, Hajo. „Alexander Neidlein (NPD) – Söldner/V-Mann (?), Bankräuber – jetzt NPD-Vorsitzender.“ <i>Hajo Funke</i> (blog), 4 May 2014.
Uwe Herrero- Herker	Krott, Rob. <i>Save the Last Bullet for Yourself: A Soldier of Fortune in the Balkans and Somalia</i> . (Drexel Hill: Casemate, 2008).
Heinz „Hans“ Wiesenack	„Mit dem Tod spielen.“ <i>Spiegel</i> , 16 Aug 1993.
Andreas Kolb	Rob Krott.
Andreas Bühner	Hutt, Simon. <i>Paint – A Boy Soldier's Journey</i> . (Coventry: Panic Press, 2010).
Michael Homeister	Rob Krott.
Falk Simang	UN Commission on Human Rights. <i>Report on the question of the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination</i> . Report nr. A/51/392, 23 Sep 1996.
Ralf Mrachacz	Report on the question of the use of mercenaries
Jürgen Neuberger	Bali, Ante. Facebook post in the group "Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima." 07 May 2015.
Heiko K	Rob Krott.
Thorsten Heise	Dressed to kill
Michael Baatz	Dressed to kill
Nicolas	Hoeges, Clemens. "Und morgen schon tot." <i>Spiegel</i> , 21 Sep 1992.
Lars "Rinklin"	Facebook groups "Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima" and group „Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Croatian Homeland War 1991-1995.“
Ludwig Olaf	Facebook.
Thomas Lemke	Dressed to kill.
Constantin Bieske	Report on the question of the use of mercenaries
Stefan	Dz., Azra. "Psi rata Hrvatskog vijeća odbrane." <i>Cazinnet</i> , 28 Jul 2015.
Thomas Hainke	Und morgen schon tot.
Thomas Franz Kunst	Hajo Funke.
Stephan Rays	Hajo Funke.
Thomas Otto R. Linder	Facebook.
Hans Schtefen	Psi rata Hrvatskog vijeća odbrane.
Peter Hödl	Facebook.
Peter Braunreuther	Zivkovic, Peter. Facebook post in the group "Zahvala stranim dragovoljcima." 19 May 2015.
Piter?	Facebook
Maik Dudek	Spiegel TV, Beruf Neonazi, Facebook Bild
Hans Strassburger	Psi rata Hrvatskog vijeća odbrane.

„Gio“	Zubrinic, Darko. “481 foreign volunteers from 35 countries defended Croatia in 1991-1995.” <i>Croatia.org (Blog)</i> , 24 Jul 2010.
„Christophe”	Zubrinic, Darko. “481 foreign volunteers.
Michael Kratz	Landtag Nordrhein-Westfalen. <i>Parlamentarischer Untersuchungsausschuss III. 7. Sitzung</i> . 16 Apr 2015.
Bremer Gunnar	Facebook.
“Harlan von Besinger”	Report on the question of the use of mercenaries
„Heindrich“	CJ. Entry no 22 in the guestbook of USDDR. 27 Dec 2009.
Mark	Rob Krott.
Matthias	Facebook.
Norbert	Hutt.
Gustav	Hutt.
“Thorsten Marx”	Marx, Thorsten. Facebook post in the group „Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Croatian Homeland War 1991-1995”. 12 Feb 2015.
Thorsten Lehmann	Facebook.
Helmut Gruber	Facebook.
Rene Bergt	Facebook.
Paul Nentwig	Facebook.
Bendix Wendt	Deutscher Bundestag – 13. Wahlperiode. „Entwicklung der militanten Neonazi-Strukturen.“ Drucksache 13/650. 28 Feb 1995.
“Stef”	Bonengel, Winfried. <i>Beruf Neonazi</i> . Documentary. (Potsdam: Ost-Film Hoffmann & Loeser, 1993).
Christian Sennlaub	Thread: „Deutsche Söldner im Kosovo.“ <i>Balkanforum</i> . 22 Jul 2010.
Frank	CapoeraZ. „Deutsche Scharfschützen im Kosovo Krieg.“ 4:50. Posted [Jul 2013].
Roland Bartetzko	„Handschrift eines Profis.“ <i>Spiegel</i> , 30 Apr 2001.
“Sascha”	Nordhausen, Frank. “Ein Berliner, ein Dresdener und ein Däne erzählen wie sie als Freiwillige zu den albanischen Rebellen der UCK kamen.” <i>Berliner Zeitung</i> , 12 Jul 1999.
“Thomas”	Nordhausen, Frank. “Ein Berliner, ein Dresdener.