Pride and Prejudice
A comparative case study on party response to LGBT-rights in Serbia and Croatia

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2013-05-24
Abstract

Substantial research has been devoted to the party systems in Eastern Europe since the demise of the communism, concerning how political parties respond to liberal reform and what competitive patterns it produce. The dominant explanations have been revolving around theories on ‘communist regime types’, explaining the agency of political parties as a product of the structural legacy. Recent empirical findings reveal that political structures in Eastern Europe admit to far higher variation, and argue that federal structures together with ethnic minority relations have informed political competition.

This case study builds on the latter argument and researches the ideological formation in Serbia and Croatia by examining how political parties respond to LGBT-rights. The study has an explanatory design and proposes that party response to LGBT-rights has been framed by preceding conflict over ethnic minority rights.

The empirical material has been collected during two months in the field and builds on in-depth interviews with representatives of minority rights organizations and political parties. The material has been collected to understand how ethnic relations affected the ideological formation and how it is associated with the framing of LGBT-rights.

The findings suggest that party response to LGBT-rights is stipulated by a strong ethnic norm, being a product of ethnic nationalism and a conservative turn following the disintegration of ex-Yugoslavia. The study proposes that the extent to which political parties are affiliated to this norm is the major ideological distinction in capacity of explaining different reactions to LGBT-rights.

Key words: [Post-communism] [political competition] [ideology] [ethnicity] [federalism] [ex-Yugoslavia] [LGBT-rights] [ethnic minority rights].

Title: Pride and Prejudice: A comparative case study on party response to LGBT-rights in Serbia and Croatia
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Semester: Spring 2013
Words: 16901
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1. Introduction

The political systems in Eastern Europe in general, and in the Balkans in particular, are often described as unpredictable and unstable. The atrocities of war in transition and political authoritarianism in ex-Yugoslavia have shocked many and been subject to extensive research. In response to this puzzle, literature has sought to explain the dysfunctional features, sometimes at the expense of overlooking relevant detail to the structure of the political competition.

This inquiry addresses this structure by examining party response to LGBT-rights in Serbia and Croatia, two ex-republics of Yugoslavia that have produced mirroring political structures. While the ‘left’ in Croatia is relatively liberal, the ‘left’ in Serbia is relatively conservative, as the two communist successor parties went down different ideological pathways. The political competition is essentially reversed, forming an ideological paradox where being ‘left’ and ‘right’ have acquired different meanings.

The lion share of scholarship concerned with political structures in ex-Yugoslavia has revolved around the theory on ‘communist regime legacies’, seeing political action as a path-dependent product of the preceding structural legacy. The logic to the divergent ideological outcomes is subsequently explained in terms of institutional differences (Kitschelt, 1995, Kitschelt, 1999).

This argument might underestimate the effect of the most well known significant to ex-Yugoslavia, that is, the emergence of the armed conflict that tore the social and political legacy on which Yugoslav communism once relied apart. Such conflict cannot arise in the absence of social tensions, nor can such conflict occur without persisting political implications. This thesis is deduced from the argument that the rationale to political competition in this case is stipulated by the significance of the federal legacy together with ethnic minority relations – evidently being the main source of distinction in ex-Yugoslavia (Rovny, 2012).

This critically demonstrates how latently embedded social tensions interacted with the communist legacy to inform a structure of party competition, and its tenacity is reflected in present conflicts over emerging social issues. The research illuminates how these prospects are being reproduced as the ideological frame gets translated into new conflicts. This thesis confirms the endurance of this pattern by specifically addressing how party response to LGBT-rights is correlated to this pre-existing ideological structure.

LGBT-rights concern the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Transgendered persons to be able to express their sexual orientation without fear of discrimination, harassment and to have social rights equal to the heterosexual majority (European Agency for Fundamental Rights, FRA, 2013).
A recent report from the FRA shows that 47% of the LGBT-respondents had felt harassed during the previous year, while showing that an additional one in four had been threatened with violence or been attacked within the last five years (FRA, EU-LGBT Survey, 2013).

The status of the LGBT-community in Serbia and Croatia is no exception: statistics indicates that 80% of respondents in Serbia and 52% in Croatia morally condemn homosexual acts (Gallup, 2012). As follows, the status of the LGBT-community has been disputed, and its controversial position reflected in the violent attacks on the Pride Parade in Belgrade 2010 and on the Split Pride Parade in 2011. The LGBT-community hence faces critical challenges and is dependent upon social recognition and political support to break the line of prejudice. As stated by the FRA; “Open support by politicians makes LGBT persons feel more comfortable about living as LGBT persons” (FRA, EU-LGBT Survey, 2013).

This inquiry argues that the political response to LGBT-rights in Serbia and Croatia lies within the ideological paradox that was consolidated as ex-Yugoslavia disintegrated. The structural background of Yugoslavia together with the dynamics of its collapse shaped the ideological frame. It shows how the atrocious conflict following the demise of Yugoslavia, despite its deeply gruesome nature, came out with an ideological structure.

This structure illuminates a broader ideological pattern and reveals a rationale behind party response to LGBT-rights. The overarching tendency is closely linked to prior conflicts and ethnic relations, in which national pride consequently goes together with anti-LGBT sentiments and prejudice.

1.2 Aim

The objective of this research is to account for the divergent structures of party competition in Serbia and Croatia. The inquiry is designed to investigate the ideology of the major political parties, in which party preferences are reproduced in the current debate over LGBT-rights.

The aim of this research is hence twofold:

1) To build a theoretical argument to the ideological conflict in Serbia and Croatia, by testing how ethnic relations have informed the structure of party competition.

2) To illustrate how this conflict has produced an enduring ideological structure, which serves as a frame to party positions on LGBT-rights.
2. Literature review

This section draws upon propositions seeking to explain the overarching variables to post-communist politics. While addressing the centrality of political competition, it discusses the propensity of the established claims in relation to the structuration of party competition in Serbia and Croatia. It finds current theory on ‘communist regime types’ insufficient to the case, which abides by the logic of social cleavages informed by other structures.

2.1 Structured or unorganized: What is particular about post-communism?

The literature on transition from communist authoritarianism to liberal democracy illuminates how communist systems respond to liberal reform and what socio-political outcomes it produces. This has placed scholars in two conflicting theoretical camps; one side claims that the transition produced a lack of political structure, the other side that there is a structure and that it is stipulated by communist legacies.

Parts of the scholarship suggest that post-communist reforms failed, while suffering from high corruption levels and a lack of coherent legislation (Andreas, 2004, Karklins, 2002). Similar arguments put forth that the institutionalization of the party systems is insufficient, where civil society is subordinate to partisan politics, and political systems fluid and inconsistent (Schöpfin, 1991, Biealasiak, 2002, Djurkovic, 2006). Many hence define political competition in Eastern Europe as diffuse and idiosyncratic, with high voter volatility and a lack of differentiation among the political parties (Bielasiak, 1997, Innes, 2002, Ost, 1993).

The dominant counter-argument is informed by the causal effect of communist legacies, i.e. that differences in the institutional structure of communism have produced divergent political outcomes. Parties are accordingly path-dependent and guided through the democratization by pre-existing structural frameworks (Kitschelt, 1992, Kitschelt, 1995). These are broadly derived from two main variables, one being the character of the bureaucratic rule and the other the means by which the system reached civic compliance (Kitschelt et al., 1999, pp. 21-24). This implies that communism eroded former values and that political competition is informed by institutional legacies. The legacies are operationalized as communist regime types, which determine the agency of the communist-successor parties and the strength of the opposition, serving as a structural frame for political competition in comparative research (Bustikova & Kitschelt, 2009, Ishiyama, 1999, Markowski, 1997, Kitschelt, 1995).

This claim suggests that political competition is to be captured in two dimensions, one being economic left-right and the other liberal-conservative on social issues. Whereas the former concerns the balance between economic independence and state
intervention, the latter regards preferences on cultural issues and social practise (Hooghe et al., 2002). The dividing potency of these cleavages constitutes issue dimensions around which ideology is composed between competing poles (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967).

As communist rule aligned economic left with state authoritarianism, the ‘left’ inherently became socially conservative, and the systemic response was that the opposition acquired an agenda of right-wing economic policy and social liberalism (Marks et al., 2006, Hooghe et al., 2002). This entails a causal structure to party competition in CEE, being stretched between a leftist-conservative and right-wing-liberal pole in accordance with the inherited implications of ‘communist regime legacies. Post-communist structures hence abide by the same causality as the West, but have produced mirror-imaging outcomes due to the reversed issue dimensions.

These outcomes are explained in detail in accordance with three different ‘communist regime legacies’: the bureaucratic-authoritarian, the national-accommodative and the patrimonial, serving as a categorization to the variations of the communist systems (Kitschelt, 1999).

*Patrimonial* communism strongly repressed anti-communist sentiments, it obstructed any civic organization as the communist party had been, and remained, the indisputable institution for progress. The transition is hence the competition between a strong communist successor and a dispersed opposition, leading to a state where the communist successor protects its interest and produces weaker prospects for liberal contenders. In contrast, the *national-accommodative* legacy separated party rule from the technical administration of the state, making a more democratic distinction. This legacy served as a fundament for a stronger opposition to the communist rule, as the communist party lacked the ideological hegemony evident under patrimonial communism. This leads to a negotiated transition between communist successor parties and stronger liberal opposition, in accordance with previously organized interests (Kitschelt, 1999, pp. 21-30).

The transition from *patrimonial communism* is expected to generate an outcome of an authoritarian system with a strong conservative communist successor party and dispersed liberal opposition. The *national-accommodative* legacy is expected to produce reform of the communist successor party towards social democracy, in negotiation with organized liberal opposition, to produce a moderate system of proportional representation (Kitschelt, 1999, pp. 32-35). These structural pre-conditions are hence proclaimed to stipulate the balance between liberal vis-à-vis conservative prospects post-communism. These legacies are hence explanatory to the structuration of political competition, being derived from the institutional features of communism.
2.2 Social cleavages in the aftermath of communism

Other research suggests that there is a higher variability in the competitive patterns of East Europe, which points to different relations between party competition and social bases. While scrutinizing the political structures, it suggests that more context-specific variables might be significant in order to comprehend party competition (Evans & Whitefield, 1993, Whitefield, 2002, p. 194-195). It shows that social issues can be superior to communist legacies, or, can interact with communist legacies to co-determine the structure of party competition (Evans & Whitefield 1993, p. 540-541). The ideological formation might hence not be bound to institutional features stipulated solely by the structural features of the communist apparatus, but by social cleavages beyond these factors.

A third set of propositions elaborate on the impact of federal structures, suggesting that central-peripheral arrangements informed different social relations and hence divergent issue dimensions within the federations. This affected social affinities and gave the integration of the communist doctrine contradicting regional implications (Bunce, 1999). An important notion for the related propositions is that the federal structures tended to breed incitements for self-determination, and that it informed conflicting views between centre and periphery following the dismemberment of the federations (Trbovic 2009, Chap. 4, Dorff, 1994, Bebler, 1993).

As communism had made class-identification secondary, federal identities could be a way of acquiring legitimacy that could not be alleged through class (Linz & Stepan, 1992). Later literature elaborates on how these relations increased the cultivation of national identity, which became a cornerstone in communist federations (Bunce, 2004, pp. 417-427). Communism (despite its internationalist agenda) hence enforced the ethnic dimension in order to maintain the federal hegemony, which evolved into an ethnic particularism in the peripheral states. Slezkine eloquently describes the federal nationalism as a ‘communal apartment’, where the different, and ethnically distinguished, republics within the federation occupied different rooms. They were left with a crucial question as communism deteriorated: “Should they convert their living area into a proper apartment?” (Slezkine,1994, pp. 452)

More recent research has devoted attention to how ethnic relations and federal structures have interplayed to compose another issue dimension and hence other ideological prospects. It proposes that political competition is the product of a legacy stipulated by the federal relations and the significance of ethnic relations. The research critically suggests that embedded social affinities interacted with federal structures to produce a different competitive pattern, with conflicts over ethnic minority rights being the most critical. It argues that the legacy of ethno-federalism in some cases challenges the current predictions of communist regime legacies (Bunce, 2005, Rovny, 2012, 2013).
While states without significant ethnic tensions have had successful democratic transitions, some states with ethnic cleavages experienced severe problems. Broad scholarship support that majority-minority relations and ethnic affinity has been central in Eastern Europe, being an important component to the development of the political systems (Kymlicka & Opalski, 2001, Dowley & Silver, 2002) As the ex-republics of ex-Yugoslavia proved highly reluctant to apply a liberal approach to ethnic diversity, they went through a unique and violent transition (Hayden, 1996). The nature of this conflict seemingly goes beyond the more instrumental matrix provided by “communist regime legacies”, while revealing an alternative (ethnic) issue dimension to the ideological prospects in post-communist politics.
3. Problem formulation

In sum there are three sides of the literature: one refers to post-communist politics as a laggard heritage of communism, another side recognizes a structure and attributes it to the details of the structural heritage. The third side challenges these claims, while arguing that the competitive pattern is stipulated by conflicts over critical social divides, in this case - ethnic minority rights.

This inquiry builds on the research of Rovny, who argues that the legacy of ethno-federalism together with ethnic minority relations serve as a frame for political competition (2012, 2013). This qualitative assessment is developed from existing theory to test if the frame of the proposed ethno-federal legacy gets translated into new conflicts. The theoretical contribution hence researches whether this legacy has informed persisting political relations, and is ultimately a test as to whether ideology can travel onto new domains and issues.

The forthcoming theoretical propositions are building on previous theory, but are elaborated in relation to the context. The claims are elaborated in order to approach a more adequate understanding to the ideological mechanisms behind party response to LGBT-rights in Serbia and Croatia, suggesting that these are preceded by, and rooted in, previous conflicts.
4. Theory: The political norm

“Insofar as political actors act by making choices, they act within definitions of alternatives, consequences, preferences (interests), and strategic options that are strongly affected by the institutional context in which the actors find themselves.” (March & Olsen 1996, p. 251)

The inquiry departs from a sociological perspective on institutions, being concerned with how the creation of identities and institutions affects the political structure. This perspective recognizes that political actions are embedded in the institutions and rules that are sustained and interpreted in the political system (March & Olsen 1996). Political action is hence treated in a normative frame, where the identity of the actor defines how she recognizes the situation. The rationale to political action is seen as a product of collective values and rules accumulated within institutions, and the nature of political action is derived from what is appropriate in accordance with these rules. How an actor recognizes a situation and why she takes certain decisions is ultimately stipulated by her identity, i.e. how she identifies herself in relation to the given institutional environment of rules and values. Political actors, and political actions, are ultimately embedded in this matrix of social relations, in which collective norms stipulate logic of appropriate action (March & Olsen, 1994, Weber et al., 2004).

Political competition is an institutionalized conflict over value-commitment, originating from contradicting views on social practise. Conflict occurs over social cleavages, whose polarizing effect is aggregated into the political system. This political contest reflects actors’ internalized perceptions of what is appropriate, and political ideology is the reflexive product of how collective norms and values are interpreted and translated into action (Lipset & Rokkan, 1990, pp. 113-119). This research relies on the notion that political action and institutional structures exercise mutual effect, emphasizing that political action is to be understood as an embedded product of this collective entity.

Political competition and ideological reactions are never taking place in a vacuum, but in a cluster of norms and guidelines. Ideology is always relative to the context, just as social norms. Political competition must consequently be analysed in the normative setting, being explanatory to different positions.

4.1 Theoretical propositions

The forthcoming propositions emphasize that ideology in Serbia and Croatia originates from a pre-existing issue dimension, co-determined by the federal structures of Yugoslavia and the ethnic composition of the ex-republics. These conditions informed a political norm, around which conflicting views are explanatory to ideological positions.
The Yugoslav communism eventually had to collapse in order to democratize, and the wars eventually destroyed most of the legacy on which Yugoslavia was previously consolidated (Magas, 1993). This proposition sees the political developments in the context of institutional breakdown rather than structural path-dependency.

In a metaphorical sense, the dissolution of the authoritarian institutions following the demise of Yugoslav communism is defined as a *structural void*. The *structural void* refers to a lack of coherent legislation and institutional capacity, but is not to confuse with a *general void*, which would resemble a state of social paralysis. The experience of Serbia and Croatia illustrates how the *structural void* particularly accommodated ethnic tensions, which had remained latently embedded under communism. The former suppression of these claims gave birth to a political discourse whose conservative aspects cultivated latent ethnic identities. Ethnic sentiments thus became exploited as a political trajectory, enhanced by the features of the structural void.

Ethnic claims can be essential to the construction of boundaries and the production meaning in the political space, hence being potent to divide certain groups while unifying others (Nagel, 1994, Fearon & Laitin, 2000). The political structuration in ex-Yugoslavia demonstrated these implications and underlines the ideological importance of how ethnic claims were constructed – shown similarly by the structuration of the Yugoslav state and the response of ethnic exploitation following its demise. The consequences are thereby not a clash amongst primordial civilizations, but the devastating outcome of politicized ethnic claims in a state of transitional confusion.

The political incorporation of ethnicity served as a social base for identification, and while ethnic affiliation was cultivated as a social base for self-identification, it also emerged as the natural source of distinction between particular groups and interests within the frames of the *structural void*. This interconnection between ethnic affinity and group interest, or more accurately, the politicization of ethnic identity, required a ‘significant other’.

“Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty” (Connolly 2002, p. 64).

Identity is consolidated through the constitution of difference, legitimized and reassured through the construction of the *significant other* (Connolly, 2002, pp. 11-15). Identity is hence always relational, established in relation to a series of socially recognized differences. These distinctions essentially guide actions, define us in relation to our environment and breed social structures. It is ultimately how we define others and how others define us, a paradox of similarities and differences, that breed consensus and foster conflict (Kearney, 2003, pp. 5-10, Connolly, 2002 pp. 64-68).

While ethnic relations embarked the incitements of the structural void, the position of ‘the other’ was accordingly ascribed to ethnic minorities who lived outside the
domain of their ‘home republic’. This served as a base for political and social self-identification, as an instrument for inclusion and exclusion, eventually as a determinant to the political system of rewards and sanctions. This dictated power relations, whose balance informed the degree to which ‘the other’ could be treated as an integrated part of the political domain. Ethnic claims furthermore have the advantage of making political power exclusive to a particular group (Nagel and Olzak, 1982, Fearon, 1995). This process had an inherited political dimension, in which certain ethnic communities were attributed positive or negative connotations.

Just as the structural void was born as a consequence of radical institutional transformation and collapse, the essence of ethnic tensions was revived in absence of other structures. Conflicting views over minority rights hence embarked the structural void and acquired high significance as a source of political distinction, becoming important to the formation of ideology and a political (ethnic) identity. The construction of ‘the other’ was at the heart of this process, and this inquiry suggests it might have more far-reaching ideological implications.

H1: Conflicting views on ethnic minority rights affected ideological formation and positioned parties in relation to a notion of ‘otherness’.

“It is this proclivity to demonize alterity as a menace to our collective identity which so easily issues in hysterical stories about invading enemies” (Kearney, 2003, p. 65).

The electoral winners in the first free elections in Serbia and Croatia pursued radical nationalism, predominantly used as a partisan political feature to justify authoritarian (ethnic) self-righteousness. The central notion of this proposition is the remark that there was an opposition to the forces behind the authoritarian regimes, and that this dynamic structured the political competition. The views on ethnic minority rights and territorial claims distinguished them in relation to each other. The contest over ethnic minority rights thus became endemic to the structure of the party competition and a characteristic of the political systems (Dimitras, 2002, pp. 186-189).

This is rooted in the demise of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), where the federal duality bred an interest conflict between the federal center in Belgrade and the peripheral states. Conflict erupted as the political majority on both sides bound prospects of self-determination to ethnic affinity, hence polarizing the political structures along ethnic claims to become a source of political and territorial justification. The center-peripheral dispute evolved into an ethno-federal conflict as ethnic claims were enhanced.

The conflict was enforced by the rhetoric of the prevailing political coalitions and informed a state where ethnic minorities and other conflicting interests were treated as threats. These tensions reversed the pre-existing social order, where ethnic groups previously protected by constitutional rights became targets of partisan political response to the transitional challenges (Massey, Hodson & Sekulic, 1999). Ethnic
minorities emerged at the focal point when establishing boundaries and defining the state, while disrupting the proclaimed pattern of ethnic affinity (Rovny, 2012). The systems of Serbia and Croatia hence became authoritarian and illiberal in the sense that ethnic minorities were stigmatized, and that a pluralistic solution to the state was ruled out.

As parties frequently identify and expose the most salient social cleavage in pursuit of their ideology, they become more or less compatible with a pluralist democracy. It terms whether the ideology is inclusive or exclusive, determining the political culture of participation and serves as a predictor for either an authoritarian or pluralistic position (Alford & Friedland, 1985, pp. 61-66). This is reflected in the political competition, and the extent to which groups are given a degree of autonomy the primary characteristic of these political systems. The conflict over ethnic minority rights stipulated, on the one hand, the level of authority and control to partitioned over ethnic minorities, and on the other, the level of autonomy and integrity to be granted.

In this respect it is critical to emphasize that there was an opposition to the authoritarian state of order, primarily characterized as a pro-democratic movement for peace and integration of the civic society. The opposition was diffuse in the sense that the political messages were disparate, but shared the common denominator of being regime critical and opposed to ethnic conflict. As this opposition became politically organized, it antagonized the authoritarian rule by pursuing a pro-democratic agenda. As the political conflict had turned ‘ethnic’, the primary distinction was made in regards to different views on ethnic minority rights.

The political conflict was hence formed around two competitive poles originating from ethnic tensions, one being ethnic-authoritarian and the other pluralist-liberal.

The nature of this issue informed the balance between autonomy and control, and political conflict over ethnic minority rights separated authoritarian and pro-democratic actors. Whereas the ethnic-authoritarian leadership pursued authority and control, the opposition to a higher degree sought to protect the rights of ethnic minorities. This came to define the contradiction between the majority (the norm) and minorities (the other), and while being annexed in political competition structured party positions in accordance with preferences on this overarching issue.

This proposition claims that the ethnic conflict, albeit having the potential to tear down structures, also fostered structuration in terms of different political preferences on the notion of ‘otherness’. It illustrates that ethnic conflict, despite manifesting great potency to organize illiberal forces, also defined the organization of political resistance in each state as more liberal. It critically claims that the systems in Serbia and Croatia are not the combined product of illiberal forces, but the condensed outcome of how political parties positioned themselves during previous conflicts.
The ideological story of ex-Yugoslavia originates from this crossroad, where political parties in Serbia and Croatia diverged in different directions. These pathways entail a broader set of values and serve as a compass to how parties will navigate through ideological junctions ahead. Will they approach or avoid ‘the other’?

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H2: The political contest over ethnic minority rights has, despite its disrupting nature, informed the structuration of party competition and consolidated ideological cleavages.

4.2 An assessment on federalism in ex-Yugoslavia

Broad literature highlights the complex federal composition of ex-Yugoslavia, dating back to the late 19th century as the question of ‘nationhood’ was awoken and the Balkans was torn between the Ottoman Empire in the East and the Habsburg Empire in the West. Borders were re-drawn multiple times in accordance with then existing power relations, eventually followed by the first and second World Wars (Trbovich 2008, pp. 64-92).

The SFRY was created under these conditions, as communist leader Josip Broz Tito was requested by Stalin to instigate a movement of resistance. This appealed to the majority of ethnic groups who were attracted to the proclaimed policy of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’, on which the SFRY ultimately was consolidated. The SFRY inherited the complexity of past events, where internal borders were based upon historical treaties of empires and cultural distinctions, with diffuse demarcations between the federal states.

“The party and the state merged and Yugoslavia's constitutions consequently did not pose legal authority. The legal principles of self-determination, federalism, and minority rights acquired a distorted meaning in the Yugoslav framework.” (Trbovich 2008, p. 141)
The SFRY then consisted of six federal republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia, including Voivodina and Kosovo, the two autonomous provinces of Serbia. Due to the rich history of the region, many groups were living outside of their ‘home republics’ domain. As followed, “individuals retained their national right to self governance even if they lived outside their home nations republic” (Woodward 1995: 36). The focal point of complexity was that national identification (minority languages, proportional representation) was enhanced by the constitution, while expression of political nationalism was strictly repressed. The constitution hence enforced national identities in the republics as a right of equality, while simultaneously promoting a higher Yugoslav identity (Woodward 1995: 29-35, Sekulic, Massey & Hodson, 1994).

The SFRY was stable under the leadership of Tito and had shown relatively high cohesion among ethnic groups (Massey, Hodson & Sekulic, 1999). The implications were revealed first after the death of Tito in 1980 and followed by the disintegration of the SFRY, which exposed the fragility of the cohesion (Woodward, 1995, p. 45-46). As the communist structures deteriorated, and civil society incrementally disintegrated, ethnicity turned into a social cleavage and its salience increased (Linz & Stepan, 1992).

The conflict ignited when Slovenia, followed by Croatia, sought independence and decided to secede from the Yugoslav state, hence dissolving the constitutional structures of Yugoslavia. Serbia (then Yugoslavia), being the federal center, proved highly reluctant to abandon the idea of a united Yugoslav federation. This conflict is, as often made true, not ethnic by nature, but was as much about state autonomy and control, about the status of socialism in relation to liberalization and independence (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007). The political discourse especially aligned ethnic affinity with territorial claims, which evolved into an armed conflict during the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, as the internal borders were subject to conflict (Pickering & Baskin, 2008, Lake & Rothchild, 1996).
5. Method

This chapter introduces the design by justifying the case selection. It furthermore engages in a discussion on how the empirical material is gathered and treated within the study. It is concluded and summarized in a discussion on the strengths and limitations of the inquiry in general.

5.1 Case selection

The definition of what a case study is has been subject to debate among scholars, as the building of a case is subjective. One researcher might interpret a chain of events or circumstances in a certain way, others might frame it differently. This inquiry treats it as “an empirical inquiry that investigates the boundaries between phenomenon and context that are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18).

The phenomenon is party response to LGBT-rights, the context Serbia and Croatia and the boundaries the theoretical propositions of this inquiry. The theoretical core revolves around how ideology is constructed in the post-communist setting; why do political parties adopt certain values and how does it affect their ideological orientation?

The case is selected on the basis that the left-right positions in Serbia and Croatia are associated with different values. The crux of the problem lies within the variation at the party-level, where ‘left’ and ‘right’ has acquired different meaning. Recent empirical findings reveal that the ideological dimensions are mirroring each other, aligning the parties in each state to contradictory values on a liberal-conservative scale.

*Party positions in Serbia and Croatia* (Rovny, 2012)
The graphs illustrate that the communist successor party in Serbia (SPS) is socially conservative, while its counterpart (SDP) in Croatia is the most socially liberal. The same dynamic informs the right-wing positions, with the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) being socially conservative and the Democratic Party (DS) in Serbia socially liberal.

This structure deviates from the propositions of ‘communist regime legacies’, where Serbia is classified as a part of the *patrimonial legacy* and Croatia is treated as *national-accommodative*. It partly contradicts these propositions, as the communist successor party in Croatia is unexpectedly liberal, whereas the successor party in Serbia emerged as radically conservative.

The most striking feature of these findings is that Serbia and Croatia, as two ex-republics of the same federation – with similar experiences of communist rule and shared experiences in terms of a violent transition - have produced completely different structures of party competition. The old ideological hegemons, i.e. the communist successor parties, evidently went down different pathways, towards conservatism vis-à-vis liberalism. In turn, this affected the ideological formation and produced divergent prospects. Whereas the party competition still pends between a conservative and liberal pole, it has aligned the ‘left’ and the ‘right’ in each state to opposite sides. To be ‘left’ and ‘right’ in these cases is hence associated with different values, forming an ideological paradox.

The case-selection has been made in response to this picture in order to propose an explanation to how ideology is constructed and how it affects the ideological framing of LGBT-rights.

**5.2 Delimitations**

It is crucial to state that Serbia and Croatia are two distinctly different states, with differences ranging from socio-cultural aspects to economic development. Most importantly, Croatia is finishing the accession negotiations with the EU, while Serbia is waiting for a date to initiate the accession process. The accession negotiations critically demand the involved political actors to adapt to “European values”, hence to legislate in order with the *acquis communautaire*. Any political party that is serious about European integration hence confess to “European values” and will support the legislation that is required within this process. In this sense, the EU-accession might force certain actors to push issues that can be contrary to their ideological agenda. While a lot of research has been conducted on how parties respond to European integration, this study is not concerned with the extent to which the EU exercises an effect, but with how ideology is constructed and reflected within the cases.
5.3 Case design

This inquiry has proposed that conflict over ethnic minority rights has been the guiding theme to ideological formation and seeks to test if it applies to the framing of new issues. The case is grown out of the ambition to explain how past issues gets associated with new ones, and how ideology is constructed and reflected. The inquiry is hence designed to test the ideological tenacity, by examining how prior views on ethnic minority rights coincide with the framing of party preferences on LGBT-rights.

The material has consequently been gathered to learn as much as possible about 1) how ethnic minority relations interplayed with political structures, and 2) if this ideological structure is reproduced in conflicts over LGBT-rights. The correlation between these two issues is consequently treated as an ideological rationale, being explanatory to how parties react to LGBT-rights and why they react differently.

To collect the material on political parties is the obvious choice as the case is concerned with their ideological preferences, and the parties have been selected on the basis of their theoretical relevance for the case. The parties in scope of this study are the communist successor parties and the major opposition party to the communist successors in each state. The research is complemented with the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), currently the most influential actor in Serbian politics.

The Serbian Socialist Party (SPS)

The SPS is the communist successor party of The League of Communists of Yugoslavia. It won majority the first elections in 1989 under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic and ruled Serbia during the 1990’s, in periods in coalition with the SRS (Serbian Radical Party).

Democratic Party (DS)

DS was funded in 1989 and became the main opposition party towards Milosevic’s SPS-regime, representing one of many actors in a broad spectrum of oppositional forces. As the SPS was defeated in the national elections in 2000, the president of DS (Zoran Djindjic) was appointed Prime Minister of Serbia.

The Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)

The SNS originates from the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and was founded in 2008. The SRS is, and was, ruled by the ex-paramilitary Vojislav Seselj. The SRS was violently nationalist and radical, and albeit currently awaiting trial at the ICTY in Den Haag, Seselj is still party president. As the SNS was founded, it maintained a patriotic agenda, but officially deviated from the radicalism of the SRS. SNS has been a political success story and reached 40% of the popular vote in the 2012 elections.
The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)

The HDZ is a conservative right-wing party that has been in majority from 1990 to 2000 and 2003 to 2010, having been formed in 1989 as a dissident party in opposition to Yugoslav communism.

The Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP)

The SDP is the former successor party of The League of Communists of Yugoslavia and was renamed after the defeat in the 1990 elections. The SDP constituted the opposition to the HDZ-regime, held office from 2000 to 2003 and regained majority once again in the 2010 elections.

5.4 Collection of the material

Political parties aim for power and representation, and are most likely to be successful if they give to the voters what the voters want, while sparing them from that which they fear. The political sphere hence has an inherited nature of not wanting to deal with issues that are sensitive or unpopular, not to mention both. The rights of ethnic and sexual minorities are typical examples of such issues in ex-Yugoslavia. As follows, nothing is written about minority rights in the election programmes, and few controversial statements in a ‘negative’ direction are made officially.

As I wanted to know how political parties de facto act upon and view these issues, I decided to talk to minority rights organizations, given their experience of working with these issues. While the status of minority rights is dependent upon political commitment in terms of implementation and protection, these organizations are all aware of the party positions. As their work is centralized around the monitoring of the legal, social and political status of minority rights, I judge their perspective as being highly valuable to the case. I have had the opportunity to talk to high-level representatives, who provided me with their insights on how political parties stand in relation to their agenda.

The interviews in Serbia were complemented with two interviews with prominent politicians. These interviews served as an opportunity to scrutinize their views on minority issues.

Interviews were conducted with respect to the social process that it is, with the main goal of making it a ‘natural situation’. I hence left it up to the respondents to choose dates and place, and provided an overarching interview guide prior to our meeting. The interviews were recorded and the questions were structured in an open way in order not to inflict any bias, arguing that this leaves space for the interviewees to frame the political positions on minority rights according to their perspective. The

1 The appendices offers a detailed presentation of the organizations and the respondents that has participated in this study.
questions were framed more narrowly towards my propositions by the end – giving the respondent possibility to elaborate on more specific issues. I eventually aimed at concluding each interview in a summary, in order to avoid any arbitrary interpretations or misconceptions.²

All interviews were conducted to scrutinize the political context of how parties profile themselves on these different issues, and additional attention was paid to the political parties in a comparative perspective. In order to get the broad and the specific picture, interviews were conducted with LGBT- and ethnic minority organizations. The biggest advantage of conducting field research was the exploratory process, as the experience allowed me to ask more accurate and challenging questions. The interviews hence relied on a very general interview guide to ensure not to lose track of the research questions, but ruled out a strictly detailed questionnaire. To not adjust and adapt the interview questions would indicate a failure to take advantage of the knowledge earned during the process.

I decided not to include any documents in the study, as very little is written about minority rights, and as very few political parties would write anything that could be interpreted as less supportive or negative in this regard.

5.5 Building the explanation

Whereas the material has been collected to provide information on how the selected parties respond to LGBT-rights, the analysis has been done to stipulate the causal link between these reactions and ideology. The propositions of this inquiry are the product of an iterative process, standing as an explanatory test to the ideological positions on LGBT-rights in Serbia and Croatia.

As the propositions show how ideology is conceptualized and treated within the study, the material has consequently been coded and analysed step by step in relation to the propositions and judged in accordance with these claims. The analytical work is a qualitative test as to whether views on ethnic minority rights have informed party response to LGBT-rights.

The analysis has relied on two strategies, one being precaution to scrutinize the propositions – the other a pathway towards building the explanation. The first strategy was to examine rivalling explanations, as the theoretical claims cannot be confirmed

² All of the respondents gave me the permission to refer to them by their full name in the thesis. Even if LGBT-rights and ethnic minority rights can be a sensitive issue in Serbia and Croatia, I decided to not anonymize the names of the respondents. Given the nature of the respondents’ work and their activism, they are already publicly known for their opinions and the agenda of their organization. The respondents were also positive to this open way of presenting the interviews, as the thesis serves as an opportunity for them to express their views on minority rights. If any of the respondents would have been hesitant or if the social situation would have been more fragile, I would have judged a need for anonymization. As none of the respondents wished to be anonymous I saw few ethical reasons to anonymize, while also judging that the use of full names leads to a more genuine and interesting empirical presentation.
without careful consideration to alternative variables. The second strategy relates directly to the explanation building, which matches the empirically based pattern with the theoretical proposition. (Yin, 2009, pp. 130-143).

I decided to not complement the hypotheses with an analytical model, as ideology is hard to classify into certain categories and measure with accuracy. Instead, I relied on questions in relations to the claims to get the best picture on how political parties are profiled. The results have therefore been presented in narrative form in relation to the propositions, serving as an explanatory picture of the findings in the field.

The results are presented in relation to the propositions, elaborating on 1) how ethnic relations interplayed with political structures, and 2) how this has informed different ideological prospects of LGBT-rights among political parties.

5.6 Strengths and limitations of the study

Comparative politics are commonly subject to quantitative research, where broad patterns are analysed through large-N statistical material. Such research has great potency to paint the broad picture to the relationship between phenomenon and context, but is less valid in terms of explaining how these patterns are manifested in their social context. The major strength of this thesis lies within its design, which brings more validity to the subject while scrutinizing party preferences on LGBT-rights in their natural setting. To have the possibility to explore this relationship in field has been a major advantage as it has allowed for an insight into the social context. To step closer to the studied phenomenon can reveal details and characteristics that are vaguely appearing from a bird’s-eye view, and has potential to bring more clarity to the detail.

But it also puts a critical finger to the most common critique to qualitative research and the case study approach; How to protect the thesis from subjective judgements and personal bias?

Foremost by having ensured that the research is conducted systematically, enabling the reader to follow the process from the building of theory to the analysis of the result. The structure of the process is the mechanism that distinguishes the academic process from standard reasoning, and assumptions from evidence (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, pp. 39-49). The case study is a way to construct validity, under condition that it is clear both where the boundaries of the study are drawn and the steps of how the inquiry is operationalized are presented.

An important step to protect the explanatory case study from flaws starts at the case-selection, as a solid case to a certain extent defends itself. While motivating the choices and demonstrating the research process, this case is made as coherent as

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3 I.e. “Conflict over ethnic minority rights distinguished political parties”. If so, how was this distinction manifested? What were the implications? Are there alternative explanations?
possible. The same measures are an antidote to the risk of inaccurate inference, as substantial knowledge about the case and clearly defined boundaries reduces the risk of confusion (Flyvberg, 2011).

Awareness of these flaws is essentially a pre-condition for the quality, as unawareness would signal a bias in terms of an uncritical way of reasoning (Marshall & Rossmann, 2011, pp. 251-253). A critical way of thinking has guided this research, but despite measures and precautions, this study is bound to have weaknesses - some of them related to the nature of the research, others to the research design.

A weakness of the research problem is the concept of ‘ideology’, whose meaning will always be contextual and relative. It is naturally flexible and entails a set of values that are not necessarily coherent or easily operationalized. Similar difficulties apply to concepts such as ‘norms’ and ‘values’. These concepts are close to the nature of human action and have been discussed in a philosophical tradition far beyond this study. I believe social phenomena can only be coded and operationalized to a certain extent, as it always involves a certain degree of simplification. Consideration to the balance between transparency and structure, on the one hand, and flexibility on the other, has hence been guiding this research process.

This consideration has been done to ensure that the study is credible, by clearly illustrating how the material is treated and how the conclusions are drawn.

Another possible weakness lies within the material, which consists exclusively of interviews. It would have been beneficial to access other sources to strengthen the explanation, but as no adequate documentation was retrievable, it could potentially do more harm than good to the overall quality. At the same time, the lack of documentation on the subject underlines the need for qualitative research.

The strength of this contribution is that it is deduced from recent quantitative evidence on the subject, serving as a strong point of departure for the construction of a valid theory. This theory is the central part of the research design, guided by the aim to comprise the different perspectives of the material into a fair and coherent picture. The study furthermore relies on propositions to ensure transparency, with the ambition of clearly showing how the research problem is treated and whether or not the explanation applies to the case.

The inquiry is driven by the theory to test whether the claims are valid to the case and has no ambitions to generalize beyond these boundaries. It does, however, discuss possible implications of the findings in a wider context.
6. Results

This chapter presents the empirical findings and elaborates on how the material stands in relation to the propositions. The first part illustrates how the politicization of ethnicity informed a norm for political structures, the second part elaborates on how this has informed different ideological prospects for LGBT-rights between the parties in Serbia and Croatia.

6.1 The ethnic norm and ‘the other’

On March 22nd this year I was walking through Belgrade, anticipating the qualifications to the world championship in football. The game was played in Zagreb, about five hours by car from Belgrade. A previous agreement had been made with reference to the fragile security situation, not allowing for Serbian fans to attend. This was the first match ever to be played between Serbia and Croatia, and on each side stood two coaches, Mijailovic and Stimac, previously prominent teammates in the Yugoslav youth team. Then came the war, whose long chain of events made archenemies of the two, creating an outright animosity between them. Now, 23 years later, they might never forgive each other, but both agreed that the game be peaceful, in consensus about sparing coming generations from war that had plagued them and their generation (Niva, March 20th, 2013).

As the referee blew the whistle in Zagreb, the Serbian National Anthem was drowned out by chants from the Croatian crowd. Ustasa songs were sung, praising the fascist regime of the Second World War by which thousands of Serbs were killed. Simultaneously, heavy police resources were patrolling the streets of Belgrade.

"Behavior of people in the stadium was really bad... And you could hear calls like "Kill the Serb, Kill the Serb, Kill the Serbs!" organized by Croatian team fans. Sometimes I feel like the war is not over at all." BJ28/03

This is an extreme example, but ethnic sentiments are still having social and political importance. While some ethnic minorities are at the heart of the political debate, others are seen in a more neutral context. Respondents indicated that contradiction arises only when political power is at stake, whereas the relationship otherwise is less strained, or perhaps, less relevant to political life. Minorities who were not directly involved in the wars are consequently treated in a more neutral sense than those who were having meaning to territorial stability.

As suggested by theory, this is the political aftermath of the ethnic conflict, where the worst events even took the form of ‘ethnic cleansing’, and it was not only evident in Srebrenica but in Krajina in Croatia and other parts of Bosnia. It illustrates how the

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4 The respondents are consequently referred to by [intials + interview date]. Further information about the respondents and the organizations are found in Appendix 1 and 2.
political authoritarianism exploited ethnicity as a means for organization and power. This enhanced ethnic distinctions, which still serves as a fundament for a strong nationalist norm.

“For example, you have to say you’re a Croat to be able to be a vice-president... It is this kind of insane understanding of what human beings are, and reducing that to ethnicity. While the conflict is basically between nationalists and people who wants to be citizens.” JV 18/04

The nature and the extent of this conflict is of big significance, and how citizens declare themselves ethnically is still a determinant to constitutional rights of being able to acquire political office. The political structures are built upon an ethnic nationalism, and the ethnic distinction between certain groups still manifests potency as a political trajectory. This ethnic distinction between different groups seems to have a spill-over effect on the political thought, where issues are not dealt with in a universal perspective, but rather departs from a majority-minority divide. Hence, most social and cultural features that deviate from this norm are subject to some kind classification in light of this majority-minority way of defining these issues.

The first proposition claims that the politicization of an ethnic identity is central to the political developments, the findings indicate that this is reflected in the majority-minority divide. The material furthermore suggests that ethnic identity serves as a normative frame, entailing rules and values that make for this collective ethnic identification. The ethnic distinction hence become salient as a pre-requisite for the constitution of difference, where ethnic relations reveal clear potential as a political trajectory. Ethnicity is the guiding theme to this normative frame, and ethnic identity of the majority is created and consolidated in contrast to ethnic minorities, emerging as ‘the other’.

The respondents suggested that ethnic relations are salient to political structures while serving as a source of identification between the majority and ‘the other’, hence increasing the affiliation between the political sphere and the broad electorate. This affinity is an effective way to build higher political credibility, which is why ideology tends to be aligned to this norm.

“The prevailing tendency, for the entire region, is that we have these pre-political attitudes. There is an ongoing struggle in our countries to identify the citizenship to ethnicity. There is an ethnic nationalism.” MM 03/21

The relationship to ethnicity as such does not reflect a simple standpoint, but critically concerns the affiliation with a cluster of features that adds to an ethnic identity. While the overarching norm is stipulated by ethnic sentiments, it also brought along with it standards for expected and accepted cultural praxis within these frames. The extent to which political parties emphasize this norm tends to inform their views of appropriate action, and vice versa, their reaction to social praxis that falls aside the scope of this
norm. The ideology seems to be stipulated by the ethnic norm, and ‘otherness’ is that what goes beyond these boundaries. Ethnic minority issues are hence salient to the construction of ideology as they constitute a difference, how political parties approach this difference is a clear *value-commitment* and reflect the extent to which political actors recognize ‘the other’.

Ethnic minority rights might not necessarily be denied or rejected, but they always remain minority issues and that constitutes a problem for dealing with core of the problem, as one interviewee put it – “*this segregated multi-culturalism*”. It reveals a persistent obstacle to understand and recognize ‘the other’, sometimes serving as a barrier to anticipate other values. This tendency reappears in the political structures, while it does not only imply segregation of people in accordance with ethnicity, but crucially reveals a tendency to segregate different *values* in relation to an overarching ethnic norm.

As being suggested by the theory, this construct of ‘the other’ is a big point of political distinction, hence influencing the political structures in terms of values.

The debate furthermore shows a tendency to depart from the scope of normality, as clear distinctions between minority and majority relations had been drawn. One respondent meant that this is the general problem with minority rights, that the distance between the communities creates a lack of understanding towards ‘the other’.

> “Everything that is different from the majority of the population is subject to some kind of non-understanding and even to hate. It has come to the extreme that you hate everything what is different, basically. Unlike Sweden, people don’t get the opportunity to see different things; they don’t see different religion that often, and especially, they don’t see different ethnicities.” GM 12/03

The salience of ethnic minority issues has decreased, and it would be to present a tragically misleading picture to claim that elections in Serbia and Croatia revolves back and forth around minority rights. The elections are, as in every state in the world, concerned about taking responsibility for the state and future challenges to come. The major crux is that taking responsibility for the state is associated with different values, much connected to this *ethnic nationalism*, which have bred a competitive fundament for party competition that is not unproblematic.

Interviews importantly indicated that these issues might not appear politically because they are “important to the average citizen”, but become an easy way to distract the general public from a debate over other issues. One of the most obvious roles of ethnic minority issues in the political debate hence seems to be how they constitute value statements that are central to how political parties profile themselves. It critically shows how prior ethnic distinctions develop into ideological differences.
“The whole region is not dealing with those issues in the right way, and it became ideology. Governments didn’t have the strengths to deal with real issues, so they are really always having a cradle in nationalism. Whenever something is wrong, you can go a few steps back and really disturb some minority issues.” MA 24/04

Ethnic relations are not a primordial phenomenon in the context, but there is an ethnic norm that is associated with a certain set of values. The extent to which political parties are affiliated with this norm seems to guide different prospects for appropriate behaviour, and ultimately frame how they recognize ‘the other’. The tendency seems to be stipulated by the degree to which values that deviates from this norm is recognized or rejected, in turn connected to the previous conflicts.

These findings confirm many of the claims, while illustrating how distinctions with reference to the ethnic norm constructs ‘the other’, furthermore that this is a central component in the construct of ideology as such.

Ethnic minority issues have formed persisting social relations, which are accumulated and reflected in the political structures. The conflict over ethnic minority rights has underpinned the political ideology in the sense that it revolves around a strong ethnic norm. The tendency in the material is that the ideological values are stipulated by this ethnic norm and based on the affiliation to these related values.

“You must always think about the war, and the ethnicity is a thing of primary political definition of yourself, so everybody will have and will state their opinion very clearly about it. But LGBT-rights are not seen as Human Rights, so it’s very hard to compare the notion that it is a question like the [ethnic] minority right.” KHC 29/03

The LGBT-community currently manifests a distinct form of ‘otherness’ in relation to the existing heterosexual norm. The notion of LGBT-rights is a highly sensitive subject in Serbia, while also being very controversial in Croatia. The most interesting finding is that ethnic minority rights and LGBT-rights are treated as two completely different subjects in political life in Serbia as well as in Croatia. Interviews indicated that all political parties are aware and understanding to what ethnic discrimination is, whereas LGBT-rights is subject to a lack of understanding and seen in a separate context.

“If you can recognize that it is bad and wrong to talk about Serbs badly in the main newspaper, how can you not realize it is discriminatory to talk in the same way about gays?! People don’t see the parallel.” KHC 29/03

At the same time, the empirical evidence shows that there is a correlation between how political parties respond to LGBT-rights and their prior position on ethnic minority rights. The strong tendency in the material is that the ideological values are stipulated by the affiliation to the ethnic norm, and that this guides the degree to
which other values are accepted. It explains why political parties have chosen different ideological pathways and how they respond to the idea of LGBT-rights.

6.2 Croatia: The ‘Serb issue’ and ideology

As the political parties in Croatia are placed at an ideological crossroad, their choice of direction is guided by conflicting views on ethnic minority rights and post-war stances. The HDZ is oriented towards a nationalism and possible conflict, whereas the SDP takes a quiet and more neutral path. The findings reveal that these pathways end up at different stances on LGBT-rights, and paradoxically, that the neutral path might be the most controversial.

The Serb minority recently caused a big debate, when having applied for bilingual signs in the town of Vukovar. In accordance with the Croatian constitution, any minority within a municipality that constitutes over 30% of the population is entitled to this cultural right. While being treated in the institutional setting, the ruling coalition headed by the SDP saw no problems in implementing the law and give the Serb minority the bilingual rights granted by the constitution. But the HDZ evidently turned it into a problem, and their reaction was strongly affective.

The anti-Serb sentiments inherited since the wars still have an important place in Croatian politics, where the rhetoric has turned intense. Ruza Tomasic, MP of the “Croatian Party of Rights” was recently broadcasted on state-television, declaring that the “Serbs in Croatia are chetnik” and that “Croatia is for the Croats, and all others are guests”. Together with the HDZ, they will be entering the elections for the European Parliament on a common platform on the 19th of May.

This illustrates that minority rights are still a salient issue to the political competition, while also indicating that prior positions on the issue are consolidated. The HDZ has been the guard of national interest, enforced by nationalism since the war of independence. The party largely builds their political ideology on these past actions, as the state-bearing party fighting not only for the interest of Croatia but for ethnic Croats, while relying on the authoritarian legacy. How the party recognizes the present “Serb situation” is linked to an overarching anti-Serb ideology, and subject to affective reactions.

“These blood issues, so, blood identity, in the sense that “this is how you’re born, and this is what you are”. They seem to become much more vibrant and active in pre-election campaign periods.” JB 27/03

Although, the situation admits to higher complexity, as the HDZ might not see other minorities as a particular issue. During the accession negotiations with the EU, the HDZ has dealt with many minority issues, and ruled in coalition with other minority parties, even including the Serb Democratic Party. Many respondents meant that the
HDZ has done most for minority rights in Croatia, while being in government as new legislation was implemented during the accession process. Although the HDZ builds largely on the importance of this ethnic classification, minorities are welcomed to fight for their cause politically, through national councils and other parties than the HDZ. This illustrates a more moderate approach, while still revealing reluctance among the ex-authoritarian HDZ to embrace and recognize ‘the other’.

“The approach of the HDZ is basically, OK, form your own political party and fight, but it’s like they don’t want anything to do with it.” DDO 29/03

The SDP is the main challenger to HDZ, and serves as a liberal alternative. The SDP emerged as a silent opposition in the 1990’s, eventually discredited by their communist past as the wars erupted. This has informed a persisting standpoint, and the party is less concerned with whether someone is minority or majority. The respondents underlined that most minorities voted for the SDP, and that the party never raised problems in this minority-majority perspective. The party also have the largest share of minority members, with many Serbs in official positions. However, the policy of the SDP is to avoid minority issues, and the minority members are members as social democrats, not being encouraged to lift specific minority issues in the party. But avoiding minority issues also caused a disappointment among minority groups, as many claim that the SDP was incapable of pushing important aspects.

This contradiction seems to be a product of the influence of strong ethnic-authoritarian forces headed by the HDZ, painting a picture of the SDP as traitors of the national interest. This discourse seems to have put a straight-jacket on the pluralist-liberal position, while the formerly authoritarian forces still monopolize the nationalist discourse. There is still a strong ethnic sentiment, from which HDZ benefits while having the inherited role as a guard of Croatian interests. This rhetoric is also clearly evident and exposed, used to stigmatize the SDP and the liberal wing as non-patriotic.

There is hence difference in the recognition of the minority issue, rooted in whether it should be seen in ‘ethnic’ or ‘plural’ terms. This cleavage between the parties tends to define their political platform in absence of more salient issues. Whereas the HDZ is aligned to an ethnic agenda, the SDP tends to see the citizenship in plural terms.

“The problem, which we are seeing now, is that the main motivation, from my point of view, why the left and the right is talking about minorities – it’s because it’s the only area that is left to them to define themselves as a left and right.” GB 28/03

The salience of this conflict reveals ideological values beyond whether or not minorities should have their rights, it importantly signals broader social preferences. The recurring tendency is that it revolves around the notion of ‘the other’, and the extent to which ‘the other’ is recognized. Whereas the HDZ is closely aligned to the
ethnic norm, they tend to have a more narrow approach. Contrary, the SDP makes for a more neutral and inclusive approach.

This ideological debate has travelled to present time and is reflected in competing visions on the status of LGBT-rights, where a very similar ideological pattern is reproduced. The HDZ prove reluctant and non-supportive, whereas the SDP is fully committed to LGBT-rights as such. This entails a set of broader values, where the debate has condensed from two extremes (formerly authoritarian vis-à-vis pluralist) to a more moderate liberal-conservative setting.

The SDP recently introduced changes in the health education, which includes sexual education, proposing to remove the catholic values and replace them with more gender-neutral material. This provoked a strong counter-reaction from the HDZ who was being opposed to this material. The discrepancy in these positions illustrates how the ideological structure is reproduced, with the HDZ expressing concerns of tradition and morale, and the SDP defending its position in terms of liberalism.

“Social Democrats don’t emphasize any kind of separate identity, except social democratic or leftist or whatever, I would say it’s very communist, a heritage from the communist time.” MJ 27/03

In contrast, the HDZ increasingly incorporated catholic values as a part of their ideology. The LGBT-rights activists were concerned with the lack of interest and understanding from the HDZ in relation to the Pride, which has been a controversial topic. The HDZ never forbid the Pride Parade, but their rhetoric on the issue is clearly conservative. Respondents meant that the respect for the Pride was much a response to the EU-accession. Particular criticism concerned statements in regards to the attacks on the Split Pride in 2011, which were condemned in terms of “violence is always bad, we don’t respect violence between people”. They hence avoided to speak of this as homophobia, or mentioning the problem with homophobia. Contrary, the SDP has, together with the liberal Croatian People’s Party, shown full support to the Pride, while having representatives present at the Parade and currently being committed to new legislation as regards same-sex partnerships.

This conflict illuminates how the former debate on ethnic minorities and citizenship has expanded and transferred to broader values, with views on sexual minorities being very obvious. The norm of what is appropriate and acceptable hence seems to be labelled in open or narrow terms in accordance with pre-existing ideological preferences. The HDZ, relying on a more conservative part of the electorate, has formed a closer bond to the state by aligning more closely with the church. As it goes, the party shows reluctance to LGBT-rights together with a lack of understanding. The SDP is promoting a more secular state, shows full support for the rights of the LGBT-community in terms of equal citizens’ rights.
“It’s an ideological difference, the relations to LGBT-rights is basically the same that the so-called left and the so-called right have to ethnic minorities.” JB 28/03

This constitutes an example of how the debate over values is structured in a broader perspective in accordance with the ethnic norm. This is critically shown by the emotional and affective reaction of the HDZ, whereas the SDP is promoting a separation between church and state in more pragmatic terms.

An additional important factor that seems to have lasted since the 90’s is also the rules of the game, i.e. the legitimacy to exercise authority and to open sensitive issues. This is closely related to the public trust, and the social democracy and social liberalism still tend to be subordinate to effective emotional arguments from a conservative angle. Many respondents were concerned about “afraid politicians” and the fear of “stirring things up” in the public debate, as this is a moral minefield that the HDZ navigates with higher credibility. It can hence be more controversial to contradict the ethnic sentiment than to embrace it. Why?

The ideology and credibility of the HDZ has been built on this sentiment since the wars, whereas the SDP was more alienated from these values. This structure has stipulated the ideological directions.

6.3 Serbia: LGBT-rights under national grievances

The ideological pathways in Serbia depart from a scenario similar to that in Croatia, but are seemingly restrained by unresolved national grievances. The DS emerged on the path to deal with unresolved issues that was born and sustained under the rule of SPS. The pathways are still clearly stipulated by this conflict, but the direction of the DS, on the one side, and the SPS and SNS on the other, are not as clearly distinguished. LGBT-rights is an archetypical example of an unresolved issue, being on an ideological domain which the DS claim as theirs, and which SPS and SNS are unaware of how to navigate.

“Well, if you want to know if a party is liberal or conservative in Serbia, three simple questions are enough. What’s your position on Kosovo? Was Srebrenica genocide? What do you think about European integration?” LB 03/05

The theoretical propositions refer to a liberal-pluralist pole, whose answer would be recognition of Kosovo’s independence, full responsibility of Srebrenica and anticipation of the EU. The ethnic-authoritarian side would on the contrary be defined by rejecting or taking ambivalent positions on these issues; i.e. Kosovo is an historical part of the Serb entity, Srebrenica was complex and “yes it was a crime but...”, as well as an ambivalent position on European integration.
As suggested by the theory, the approach to these issues is reflecting a broader value-commitment and is highly salient to how political parties are profiled. Respondents have suggested that the approach to these ethnic relations and especially past grievances remain an important distinction in Serb politics. As these issues remain sensitive, they still serve as a watershed between conservative and liberal values and are central to how political parties are profiled.

The DS emerged as the pluralist-liberal alternative during the wars, profiled as the party taking Serbia to the EU and to handle the difficult post-war relations in the region. The party was the major actor in the broad opposition that defeated the Milosevic-regime, and their president Zoran Djindjic became Prime Minister of Serbia in 2000. Many respondents elaborated on the large impact Djindjic had on the Serbian society, with a responsible approach to dealing with the past and the international relations.

"That was the time when you had real progress of protection of minority rights– he understood the concept, for sure. So he understood what are the values of Serbia as a multiethnic country with respect to minorities." MA 23/04

When Djindjic was assassinated in 2003, Serbian politics seem to have experienced a formative moment, as reforms stopped and minority issues were left in a status quo. The DS still remained in power until the 2012 elections, when they suffered a major defeat to the SNS and SPS in coalition.

These parties (together with more radical nationalist parties) have the heritage of the ethnic-authoritarian approach to the critical issues; not being concerned about taking account for previous actions, opposed to Kosovo’s independence, and sceptical to European integration. By rhetoric and previous actions, these ethnically associated issues served as a base for their ideology in terms of prior territorial pretensions and a “Greater Serbia”. This view is influenced by social conservatism, as the Orthodox Church played an important role in this process. The SNS and the SPS have the majority of voters in the poorer, rural areas, which are more traditional. They have constructed their ideology on nationalism and ethnic sentiments, remain conservative and are opposed to take account for previous war crimes. It brings about a critical question: Can those who are not committed to deal with past atrocities, and who used to be strongly conservative, be sensible to LGBT-rights?

"It’s hard to break the prejudice and the attitudes that they have. They were for war, and now we’re expecting them to be pro-LGBT, it’s not going to be easy, it’s not going to happen." JT 10/04

The SNS and the SPS cultivated ethnic nationalism and it as the central part of their agenda. Interviews stated that the creation of this norm enforced conservative values, which presently serves as a barrier to LGBT-rights. As follows, the voting base of these parties consists primarily of those who supported these conservative claims
inherited since the Milosevic-era, whereas the voters of the SNS primarily are former voters of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS). And maybe this is not so unexpected, as the party emerged as a fraction from the SRS, and the current elite in the party is former deputies of war criminal Vojislav Seselj.

“You know, they are very close to those who are very radical, who are really a danger for the society. So they know what those groups are capable of doing, and I think that now, they are becoming more and more afraid of this violence.” MA 24/04

The crucial finding in Serbia is that it is very unclear where these parties stand on LGBT-rights, as the SPS is seen as possibly changed ex-conservatives and the SNS as moderately changed ex-radicals. It is difficult to tell whether it is possible to deviate from a tradition of social conservatism and anticipate new values. All respondents indicated that their heritage in the ethnic-authoritarian tradition made them more alienated from the basic plural values. Hence, their approach to ‘the other’ is dubious, as their ideological legacy allowed for few values beyond the ‘ethnic norm’.

While ethnicity underpinned the political ideology of the SPS and the SNS, it also defined the DS in terms of being opposed to the ethnic claims. The DS has biggest support in urban areas, is more secular, and closer to genuinely socially liberal parties such as the Liberal Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Union. The DS has a legacy of antagonizing the conservative and authoritarian aspects of the ethnic norm in this cultural sense, while emerging as a liberal counter-reaction to ethnic grievances. But as one respondent stated: “If you want to change the society, you have to change the views of people, the institutions and the education system.” MA 24/04

The DS was facing a challenge in terms of the ethnic norm, which was strongly enforced by the authoritarianism under SPS. This involved challenges in terms of dealing with ethnic minority rights, grievances of war and the mentality that had been created. Ethnicity has guided a certain political mentality, and the DS was the main actor in extending that mentality to a plural system beyond the boundaries of these values. To accept LGBT-rights in Serbia critically translates into challenging conservative sentiments, and the progress relies upon how far political actors are willing to do this.

The DS came to power and acquired the opportunity to challenge the conservative mentality and breed better prospects for a pluralist agenda, deviating from the ethnic nationalism to recognize ‘the other’ and hence also recognize LGBT-rights. However, following the assassination of Djindjic in 2003, the DS proved less effective in terms of enforcing liberal values. While in power, they seemed to have lost their credibility as they increasingly played ambivalently with nationalism, populism and democratization.
“When DS was in power, they did quite nothing to improve Human Rights, but they managed to produce completely irrelevant strategies and action plans that were never implemented.” JV 18/04

The DS has emerged at a complex situation, neither being approved by the conservative and traditional part of the electorate, nor by the liberal voters. The conservative voting base assumes the DS is betraying the national interest, and the liberal block sees the party as traitors of the liberal agenda. The lack of a clear direction and liberal reform during the time DS was in power furthermore left an open space for the SPS and the SNS, who managed to take over the agenda that the DS sought to progress. Some of the respondents meant that the SNS is sending the same signals now as the DS, and that they could not tell the difference. The spokesperson of the DS expressed this fact in a quite simple way:

“When you look at the party programs of the SNS and us, you might not see the difference... But there is a fundamental difference in our values and our ideology.”
AJ 24/04

AJ claimed that the DS had a sincere ambition of respecting diversity and liberal values, contrary to the SPS and the SNS who had bred the problematic fundament that the DS sought to challenge. The problem is that the difference that once was fundamental now appears as more marginal. This reflects upon the stances on LGBT-rights, where the DS is clearly supportive but still not wholly committed to translate these values into action.

What had previously been manifested as a distinct competitive pattern between an uncompromising ethnic-authoritarianism and a pro-democratic liberal block is vaguely defined at the moment of writing. It seems obvious that the ideological profile of the DS is more sensible and aware of the concept of LGBT-rights, but previous actions signal no real commitment. On the other side are the ex-radicals and the SPS, whose past legacy has revolved around social conservatism and ethnic grievances.

“The DS really share and really feel these European values. So this is a clear difference between the three of them, the SNS and the SPS on one side, and the DS on the other.” JT 10/04

But the scene where ethnic-authoritarianism and liberalism was clashing into each other seems to have faded, as both camps are oriented towards the (conservative) middle. The competition on LGBT-rights emerge as a typical symptom of this, having been left as one of many sensitive and controversial issues, where the DS is giving positive signals and the ruling coalition is ambivalent at best.
So, when ex-activist and founder of Gay-Straight Alliance Boris Milicevic decided to enter political life and become the first openly gay politician in 2010, he joined the executive board of the SPS in 2010. Why?

“Because with the SPS, you know that they will do what they say. The DS became very populist, and when you become populist in a conservative state... You become conservative.” BM 07/05

BM furthermore said that many activists felt provoked and frustrated when he joined the SPS, as the party has very limited support among minority rights activists. At the same time, Mr. Milicevic is, as many others, not supporting the idea of the Pride in Belgrade, as he did not “want to see broken legs, heads and teeth on state television, it’s a bad message for everyone”. However, no participants were hurt during the Pride in 2010, and critics see the ban as a direct failure of the protection of Human Rights. One could also reason that the decision to not allow the Pride indicates a lack of understanding and commitment to the democratic rights of the LGBT-community.

The remarkable ideological distinction between pro and anti-positions on LGBT-rights is hence to be found further to the nationalist vis-à-vis pluralist side of the political spectrum, where parties as the Liberal Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Union and United Regions of Serbia are showing clear support. On the nationalist side is the populist-conservative Serbian Radical Party and the Democratic Party of Serbia, being strongly opposed to LGBT-rights. This supports the fact that anti-positions on LGBT-rights are rooted in a broader sense, and that the preference on the issue tends to be a reaction with a clear association to underlying views on nationalism and ‘the other’.

“We could see at the Pride Parade in 2010, that it was an attack on the state. They did not attack the gays, they attacked the U.S. Embassy, the mosque and the party head quarters.” JV 18/04

“You know, at the Pride, you will hear them screaming that the participants are Ustasa, they’re seeing their enemy in them.” LB 03/05

For political actors more closely aligned to nationalism, the Pride Parade clashes with the ethnic sentiment as an alien part of Serbian culture. The LGBT-community is seen in similar terms as the Ustasa, the former Croatian fascists, as a threat to the national culture. The liberal side rather sees the ethnic nationalism as a threat, while pushing for an inclusive pluralist agenda. This is closer to the point where the formerly ethnic-authoritarian and pluralist-liberal worldviews still exist and meet in an ideological collision.

The major parties in focus of this study emerge from opposite sides of this clash, but are currently navigating more moderately in between these tensions. The SPS and the SNS were an integrated part of the ethnic nationalism, still being responsible to a
The DS was the contender to the social conservatism that grew under the ethnic norm, but deviated from their agenda in claims for power. As a product, the ethnic grievances and the heritage of war still appear to remain unsolved in contemporary debate, spilling over to the LGBT-community whose destiny is positioned between a conservative norm of appropriateness and disparate mainstream reactions. The parties in focus of this study are currently less distinguished, while showing a clear tendency not to go in collision course with the ethnic sentiments.

The SPS and the SNS once paved the fundament for the conservative norm, in which ‘the other’ was ruled out and rejected. Paradoxically, they are now the ones who are in government and expected to push these boundaries. The DS originated as the pluralist-liberal alternative to challenge the norm, but the party seems to have adapted its ideology to be compatible with a conservative electorate and the ethnic sentiments that comes with it.

Ideological questions of difference and diversity, and social liberalism as such, hence remain more disputed in Serbia. The position of ‘the other’ remains sensitive and unresolved. An event such as the Pride Parade remains highly controversial, as none of the main political parties have shown sufficient ideological commitment to support it. This has opened pathways further out to the extreme ends of the political spectrum, where nationalist conservatives and liberal parties contest the status of LGBT-rights.

The ambivalence towards critical social divides in Serbia is evidently present, and ideology “used and misused” for personal gains. The conflict in Serbia suffers no lack of values or incitements, but more importantly, there is a lack of consolidated representation of these values within the political system. The ideological response to LGBT-rights is constrained within these frames. At the end of the day, the DS is the socially liberal party – but not to the extent that they commit full support to LGBT-rights. On the other hand are the SPS and the SNS, whose lacking tradition the subject make them less credible.

“When you speak about political parties here in Serbia you cannot determine their proper ideology so exactly, because we’re not mature in that sense in political party culture at all so they’re all making shifts regarding to the voting atmosphere.” MM 21/03

6.4 Summary of findings: A comparative picture

Conflicting views on ethnic minority rights has shaped the ideological frame in Serbia and Croatia, but has produced more vaguely defined structures in Serbia. Whereas the positions in Croatia have been polarized along liberal-conservative stances, the political parties in Serbia admits to a similar structure but reflects a more ambivalent response to LGBT-rights.
The communist successor parties in Serbia and Croatia emerged from the common experience of violent transition with shared experiences but with different outcomes. These outcomes can be attributed to divergent issue dimensions, where the Serbian SPS was an active part of the ethnic conflict and the SDP was marginalized to the political periphery. Whereas the SPS turned into an authoritarian institution of Serbian territorial prospects of war, the SDP was discarded as Croatian nationalism grew. As followed, the SDP became (or decided to be) detached from the ethnic-authoritarian conflict that was being pursued and accelerated by the HDZ. The same logic applies to the DS in Serbia, being the pro-democratic contender to the SPS and against the wars.

While the conflict stipulated a structure to political competition, it aligned political parties to different sides of the ethnic nationalism and the conflicts that came with it. These prospects largely concerned ethnic relations and territorial claims, which in turn distinguished parties by the affiliation to an ethnic norm and the values associated within this frame. The Croatian right (HDZ) and the Serbian left (SPS) accelerated the ethnic nationalism that became a major component of this norm, hence becoming closely aligned to these values.

The extent to which these positions still informs current ideological differences has been illuminated in the course of this research, as these values are reproduced in different settings. It manifests potency for these past actions to serve as an ideological compass, being calibrated in accordance with roles the political parties inherited from previous conflicts. It ultimately seems to revolve around how ‘the other’ is recognized, manifested either by an inclusive or exclusive approach in accordance to prior ethnic affiliation. The affiliation to the ethnic norm eventually seems to be the overarching determinant to views on ‘the other’.

These values comprise ideological tendencies, which affect how LGBT-rights are recognized and by which rules LGBT-rights as such are treated. What once erupted as a conflict between ethnic-authoritarian and pluralist-liberal forces now seems to have condensed into moderate liberal vis-à-vis conservative competition.

The formerly authoritarian forces formed a closer bond to the ethnic state alongside the revived religion and conservative values that came with it. The ex-pluralist forces were opposed to this pattern, were more distanced from this process and acquired a more liberal agenda. This is reflected in the contemporary ideological conflict over LGBT-rights, where the formerly authoritarian parties are recognizing and treating the subject in more conservative terms than the former opposition parties.
The revival of ethnicity became a source of distinction and the formerly authoritarian political parties built the ideology around it, political rights hence became exclusive in accordance with ethnic affiliation. Vice versa, the more pluralist parties manifest a tendency to be inclusive, while having been less affiliated with ethnic claims.

The trend in contemporary debate is that the Croatian right (HDZ) and the Serbian left (SPS) show reluctance or opposition to LGBT-rights, treating it in affective terms, rooted in tradition and emotions. Hence, their preferences resemble a more conservative approach. In contrast, the Serbian right (DS) and the Croatian left (SDP) are treating LGBT-rights in a more neutral context, where the status of the LGBT-community is seen in more liberal terms and their status is recognized. It indicates an ideological difference of exclusion and inclusion, determining whether to recognize or to reject ‘the other’.

The political left-right has hence acquired a distorted meaning across these cases, while these positions are associated with different values, largely rooted in the roles the political parties inherited from previous conflict. This illustrates how ethnic relations and prior conflict over ethnic minority rights has been a guiding theme to ideological formation, where ideological differences are being reproduced and reflected in different reactions to LGBT-rights. Hence, the left-right dimension does not explain party response to LGBT-rights – prior views on ethnic minority rights do.
7. Discussion

This section engage a discussion on the findings in Serbia and Croatia, followed by an assessment in regards to how this inquiry stands in relation to previous literature on post-communist politics. The thesis eventually concluded in a few final remarks.

7.1 On Pride and Prejudice

Serbia and Croatia experienced a strong conservative turn under revived nationalism following the demise of ex-Yugoslavia, alongside a process of establishing borders and adapting to a new environment in the aftermath of communism. It was a period of confusion and tension, harvested by partisan political reactions. The radical nationalism allowed for few (if any) alternatives, and ethnic affiliation was exploited. Families of mixed ethnic marriages were disjoined, religious affinity awoken and many ex-Yugoslavs were forced into the wars. What formerly had been a cohesive federation became fragmented under violent circumstances and agitated by ethnic claims. Eventually, thousands of lives were sacrificed in order to clearly mark the borders.

The bloodshed over these borders has left grievances, unresolved issues and a need for reconciliation. The borders might be a geographical distinction, but the socio-cultural demarcations and political implications are significant. The borders were fought for by authoritarian means along ethnic lines, the ethnic norm hence became central to their content. The borders segregated not only people and territory but most importantly values. These values were largely historical, built upon national myths and grievances, and used to enhance the ethnic nationalism.

This process can metaphorically be seen in terms of Pride and Prejudice, Pride as propaganda for ethnic claims and Prejudice towards diverging features. This seems to have been the central component to the formation of ideology: to enforce a collective Pride while similarly building Prejudice towards ‘the other’. The ethnic-authoritarianism relied on ethnic pride, a social conservative view closely related to the values that make for an ethnic identification. The political opposition was seemingly less affiliated to this norm and hence less related to this value-laden discourse.

As the LGBT-community demands equal rights, the right to remain visible and the right to protection - it is dependent upon political recognition and bound to seek political support. These demands place political parties at a junction; do they approach or avoid the demands?

This study has shown that it provokes and clashes with the national Pride, in which both moderate and extreme nationalists forces unite in opposition to the LGBT-rights. These are challenged by liberal forces, being opposed to these values and recognize the political resistance to LGBT-rights as Prejudice.
These values of *Pride* and *Prejudice* are hence associated to organized political stances and entail an ideological cleavage in relation to ‘the other’. It shows how the birth of the seemingly uncompromising ethnic norm also gave birth to a liberal counter-reaction.

### 7.2 On legacies of communism and social cleavages

One part of the previous research has argued that political structures in post-communist systems are a laggard product of the communist heritage. While implying that communism suffocated interests and organization, the ideology post-communism is seen in terms of vaguely defined messages that shifts between elections. It paints a rather dull picture of political life after communism, as the aftermath is perceived as a disparate political blur rather than a structured competition.

The findings of this thesis vindicates that there is a clear political structure in Serbia and Croatia, being stipulated by how ethnic relations and federal structures interacted to inform political prospects. This thesis has theorized upon how this informed a critical social division, and shows that ethnic relations have been a guiding theme to ideological formation. The findings puts a finger on how ideology in Serbia and Croatia is constructed and reproduced, being closely related to how political actors are affiliated to an ethnic norm. The affiliation to these values is eventually a predictor to party response to critical social divides; the ideology is shaped by this conflict and accumulated within persisting standpoints.

This ideological formation creates a structure to a political landscape that one side of the literature treats as unstructured. By strengthening the rationale that is explanatory to party response, this thesis stands critical to the claims of politics in Serbia and Croatia as diffuse and unorganized. The findings indicate that there is a structure to the conflict, but that it does not coincide with left-right positions across the cases, which might be misconceived as a lack of structure.

These findings strengthen the picture that there is a structure, while showing *why* the left-right is associated with different values, while subsequently having explained *how* these values are manifested. It has confirmed that this is connected to conflicting issue dimensions, which entails different ideological directions.

These findings furthermore challenge the validity of the structurally rooted theories, according to which conservative-liberal positions are determined by the variance in communist legacies. While arguing that the ideological outcome post-communism is the product of a structural heritage, it tends to lack consideration to issue-dimensions beyond the structural implications of communism. Ideology is hence perceived as inherited, and political action as instrumentally bound to institutional path-dependence.
While this thesis sympathizes with the claim that political actors are more or less path-dependent, it remains sceptical to the claim that these paths are limited to structural choices.

The findings in Serbia and Croatia illuminates that political parties have chosen different pathways, essentially inconsistent with the communist legacies. It has shown that ideological directions are rooted in the federal structures of Yugoslavia and affected by the dynamics of its collapse. This makes for an alternative issue dimension, where conflicting views on ethnic minority rights stipulated a competitive frame. As this emerged as a critical social divide, it polarized political parties in relation to the notion of ‘the other’ on the one hand, and a strong ethnic norm on the other. The extent to which political parties are affiliated to this ethnic norm furthermore reveals a clear tendency as to how they approach ‘the other’.

This thesis has shown that these positions have an enduring capacity to explain how ideology is constructed, where parties are affiliated to different values that are stipulated by previous conflicts. The persisting ideological implications are reflected in party response to the LGBT-community, acquiring the role of the significant other.

It suggests that the ideology is framed previous conflicts over ethnic minority rights, which stipulated how political parties are affiliated with nationalism. This is furthermore revealing an enduring potency to explain ideological reactions. It entails a structure to how parties react to social cleavages, being rooted in the affiliation to different values, stipulated by previous conflicts. This makes for a more adequate understanding to the political structures of Serbia and Croatia, while clearly illuminating the link between the conflict over LGBT-rights and prior ideological formation.

These findings admit to a richer and more diverse picture of political life in the aftermath of communism, revolving around a clear conflict over values originating from a social dimension. Different social bases evidently interplayed with political structure to inform a dynamic relation in Serbia and Croatia, and party response to LGBT-rights is associated to these values.

The theory on communist legacies gives a rich contribution to the systemic features of communism and their response to change, but to analyse Serbia and Croatia through this structural lens breeds a rather homogenizing picture. In assuming that the character of communism shapes the destiny of political life, there is a risk that the effect of communism as such and the endurance of these patterns are overemphasized.

An important remark is even though that the propositions of this thesis and ‘communist legacies’ do not have to be mutually exclusive. The specifics on the structural legacy might have informed the dynamics between the communist successor party and the opposition, and there is probably institutional detail that is valuable to this picture. Communist legacies are hence not irrelevant, but remain an
interesting framework to be able to understand and theorize upon post-communist structures. But while being limited to structural variables, it leaves few prospects to understand the interplay between social bases and political structures, and hence, between conflict over values and ideological formation.

This thesis indicates that these dynamics have consolidated values that are explanatory to party response to LGBT-rights, which entails a rationale to ideological formation in Serbia and Croatia.

7.3. Concluding remarks

The findings of this thesis have challenged the perspective of ideology in Serbia and Croatia beyond sceptical assumptions on post-communist politics, while also extending the scope of ideology beyond explanations derived from communist regime legacies. It has given a deeper insight as to how ethnic relations guided the formation of ideology, and how it breeds different political prospects for LGBT-rights. While doing so, this thesis has also shown how ethnic nationalism has a potency to obstruct more differentiated plural values. It has shown how the dynamic between these two poles are associated into conflicting reactions on LGBT-rights.

However, it is important to bear the notion in mind that ideology will always be relative to the context, and that social liberalism in this context is relative to the ethnic nationalism. That one actor is liberal does not necessarily translates into uncompromising support for LGBT-rights, and that one actor is nationalistic does not necessarily translate into relentless objections. This thesis has highlighted the broad pattern, sometimes being clearly reflected and at other times more subtle.

The results metaphorically described the ideological orientation as pathways, ending up at a different standpoint towards ‘the other’. These pathways have confirmed the propositions, while simultaneously leading on to a number of interesting side tracks beyond the scope of this thesis. These issues might be in capacity of changing current structures, and as I see it, regards primarily two issues on the state-level.

How will the political system in Serbia respond to Kosovo’s independence? And how will the political system in Croatia develop after the EU-accession?

I believe that the outcome of these questions might have formative implications, being likely to reveal a clear direction to how the political parties profile themselves. I would strongly encourage further research to look into how these issues interplay with the ideological structures, and whether they enforce or undermine the remaining sentiments of the ethnic norm that currently exercise a clear effect on ideological pathways.
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Interviews

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Mazic, Mario, March 21st 2013.
Jurcic, Marko, March 27th, 2013
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Jurisic, Branko, March 28th, 2013
Bosanac, Gordan, March 28th, 2013
Orlovc, David D., March 29th, 2013
Horvat Crnogaj, Karla, March 29th, 2013
Appendix 1: Interviews, Croatia

*Interviews being referred to as [initials + date], i.e. MM 27/03*

**Date:** 21/03  
**Organization:** Youth Initiative for Human Rights  
**Length:** [00:18:26]  
**Respondent:** Mario Mazic, Director

**Date:** 27/03  
**Organization:** Zagreb Pride  
**Length:** [00:38:51]  
**Respondent:** Marko Jurcic, Coordinator of LGBT anti-discrimination policy

**Date:** 27/03  
**Organization:** GONG (Civil Rights NGO)  
**Length:** [00:22:29]  
**Respondent:** Jelena Berkovic, Deputy Executive Director

**Date:** 28/03  
**Organization:** Serb National Council  
**Length:** [00:45:10]  
**Respondent:** Branko Jurisic, Office Coordinator, former Liaison Officer at OSCE Kosovo.

**Date:** 28/03  
**Organization:** Center for Peace Research  
**Length:** [00:17:01] + approx. 15 min off-tape  
**Respondent:** Gordan Bosanac, Head Policy Analyst

**Date:** 29/03  
**Organization:** Roma National Council, Zagreb  
**Length:** [00:39:03]  
**Interviewee:** David D. Orlovic, Director/President

**Date:** 29/03  
**Organization:** Zagreb Queer, Center for LGBT equality  
**Length:** [00:26:17]  
**Respondent:** Karla Horvat Crnogaj, Activist
Appendix 2: Interviews, Belgrade

Date: 12/03
Organization: Civil Rights Defenders
Length: [00:34:03]
Respondent: Goran Miletic, Program Officer for Western Balkans

Date: 21/03
Organization: Youth Initiative for Human Rights,
Length: [00:27:19]
Respondent: Maja Micic, Executive Director

Date: 10/04
Organization: Labris (Lesbian-Feminist NGO)
Length: [00:40:51]
Respondent: Jovanka Todorovic, Policy Coordinator

Date: 18/04
Organization: The Regional Center for Minorities (Minority Rights NGO)
Length: [00:56:52]
Respondent: Jovana Vukovic, Policy Coordinator

Date: 24/04
Organization: Democratic Party (DS)
Length: [00:45:27]
Respondent: Aleksandra Jerkov, Official Spokesperson

Date: 23/04
Organization: YUCOM (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights)
Length: [00:48:21]
Interviewee: Milan Antonijevic, Executive Director

Date: 03/05
Organization: NDI (National Democratic Institution)
Length: [00:45:27]
Respondent: Luka Bozovic

Date: 07/05
Organization: The Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)
Length: [50:09]
Respondent: Boris Milicevic, Member of the Executive Board
Appendix 3: Interview questions

Interview guide

Placing minority rights in the context

* To what extent, according to your experience, is minority rights issues subject to political debate?

- Sensitive?
- Problematic?
- Constructive?

* Does your organization have any prioritized political aims?

The political aspect of minority rights

* Do you have any picture on which political parties that are more open to the agenda of your organization?

- Legislative proposals?
- Public statements?
- Any parties that are specifically opposed?

* Would you say that there is a clear political cleavage between actors who opposes minority rights and those who do not?

- Alliances?
- Disputes?

* Does the position of political parties change over time?

- Are they consistent, inconsistent?
- Predictable?

* Would you say that there is a difference between the political positions on LGBT-rights and ethnic minority rights?

- For example, does one party reject one but oppose the other?
- If so, why do you think that is?

Changes over time and current status of ethnic minority right

* Would you say that the political positions has changed in any way over the years you have been active?

- If so, how?
- To the better or the worse?
* Is there any specific existing legislation or law that has been introduced recently in favour of minority rights?

- What specific political initiatives would you want to see in benefit of better inclusion of minorities?