

THE OTHER WITHIN: GENDER AND NATION-STATE IMAGINATION

By

Korana Radman

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Gender Studies

In partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies.

Supervisor: Professor Elissa Helms

Budapest, Hungary

2011

ABSTRACT

My project is interested in exploring ways in which the Croatian nation-state has been more recently imagined in the media discourses, around a debate of Flower Square project in Zagreb, Croatia. The Flower Square project is a multi-purpose, modern shopping mall that was built in 2011, in one of the Zagreb's downtown squares. The project was highly controversial, contested, and followed by a strong campaign organised to prevent its construction. As I focus my research on the discourses that advocated the project, my analysis of this debate is twofold. First part is concerned with the ways in which the place of Flower Square was represented through discourses about Croatian nation-state and East/West dichotomy. In this process, through production of difference, places and spaces become gendered. Second part of my analysis examines how main actors, the state and the activists opposing the project, were gendered in their representations. I argue that the nationalist narrative that was created around this debate was not just exclusionary, but also gendered in myriad ways. In the end, I maintain that these representations can be seen as a reflexion of the way in which Croatian nation-state is (re)imagined as masculine, progressive and capitalist.

Table of contents

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
THE GENDER-NATION-STATE INTERSECTIONS	4
OF GENDERED SPACES/PLACES AND THE BALKANS	8
SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE FLOWER SQUARE PROJECT	11
<u>SPATIALIZING NATION-STATE AND DISCOURSES OF PROGRESS AND MODERNITY IN THE FLOWER SQUARE PROJECT</u>	17
PLACING THE ARCHITECT AND SPATIALIZING AUTHORITY	21
SPATIAL NOTIONS OF BELONGING	24
DRAWING BORDERS AND EMERGENCE OF GENDERED SPACES	30
<u>‘GENDERING’ THE DEBATE: FEMINIZED ACTIVISTS, MASCULINIZED STATE-POWER, AND NATION-STATE (RE)IMAGINATION</u>	35
THE BENEVOLENT INVESTOR	36
MASCULINE STATE POWER	42
FEMINIZED ACTIVISTS	50
THE OTHER AMONG US: EXCLUSION AND GENDER IN THE CROATIAN-NATION STATE (RE)IMAGINATION	58
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	63
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	66
<u>APPENDIX</u>	69

Introduction

In my project, I explore the ways in which the Croatian nation-state has been more recently imagined in the public discourse in the debate about the Flower Square project. My main research interest in undertaking this topic is to see how media discourses support and enhance the (re)production of the Croatian state as masculine, modern and capitalist against what has been recognized as its feminized Other – the Flower Square project opponents. My project therefore consists of a twofold analysis, where themes of gender and nationalism are two key terms that underpin my analysis. First, I argue that the place of the Flower Square project was created as a site where Croatia was supposed to prove its affiliation and belonging to the Western Europe. In that process, the distinction of East and West, invoked by the media discourses I analyse, and the place of the project where further gendered. Second part of my project is concentrated on how, through media discourses, Croatian nation-state was being (re)imagined as progressive, masculine and capitalist, affecting thus the representation of the opposition as marginalized, feminized Others. Both levels of my analysis relate to each other, as the processes I describe are indicative of the ways in which gender and nationalist discourses still have salience as organisational principles in contemporary nation-state imagining.

This project is result of not just my academic curiosity concerning the processes I describe, but also my personal involvement in the protests and actions against the Flower Square project, particularly in their last phases from winter 2009 to summer 2010. I am both greatly indebted and inspired by the discussions and conversations among the activists, leadership, and everything that I have witnessed during my involvement there. While most of us were dividing the time between work and protesting, which sometimes amounted to sleeping in Varšavska street or waking up in the middle of the night to participate in a street action, I was not completely aware of the implications of the representations I tend to. It was

only later during last year, writing a presentation for one of my courses, that I realized the potential of this case for the study of gendered nationalism. Further on, even though I have personally been involved in actions against the Flower Square project, my analysis is not preoccupied with assessing the value of this project or discussing its impact on both Zagreb and Croatia. In a sense, I am preoccupied with what I thought to be ‘misplaced’ in these media discourses around an issue that seemed like a problem of urban development, rather than that of nationalism or gender, for that matter. It is from that interest in peculiarities of the metaphors used and images invoked that my analysis comes from.

As others have shown, media is one such site where nation-state imagination is at work (Gupta 1995, Gupta 2006, Žarkov 2007). In that sense, images and texts published in the newspapers around certain issues, as Akhil Gupta (1995) has demonstrated with corruption in India, can be considered symbolic and meaningful sites where nation-states are reproduced (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 981). However, my aim here was not entirely to engage with ethnography of the state as James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta propose (ibidem: 995). My project is concerned with the ways in which nation-states are imagined through media discourses as exclusionary and gendered, which only to certain extent engages with the ideas they proposed. In that regard, my focus is more on the symbolic devices at play in media discourses through which nation-state imagining is accomplished. In addition, since nationalistic discourses in Croatia have a long and specific history connected to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the events that happened twenty years ago still seem to be potent in the more recent incarnations. It is precisely because of this that I argue that process of (re)imagination was at play.

With this in mind, I have decided to focus my analysis on the most highly circulated daily newspapers *Jutarnji List* and *Večernji List*, as well as political weekly *Globus*, surrounding the debate on Flower Square project and depiction of the main actors of this

debate. I have over-all analysed articles from the period from 2008 until 2010¹, but since both quantity of articles published and time-span of this debate is extensive, I have devised two different approaches in relation to two differed strands of my analysis. In the space/place analysis, I have concentrated on the articles that were mostly published in 2008 and 2009, as the project was then still in the initial phase. This period was crucial, as it was time when the project itself was being presented to the public, as well when the legitimacy for its scope and design was to be established. In that sense, there were fewer articles to look into, as the issue still has not taken the characteristics of the debate. For the analysis of the representations of the activists, the investor and the state, I have narrowed down my analysis to only daily newspapers, *Jutarnji List* and *Večernji List*, and the period between the January and July of 2010. This was because during that period the campaign against Flower Square project has reached its peak which meant that reports, texts, opinions were published on almost a daily basis, and hence I have decided to narrow my focus only on the daily newspapers, as they have provided me with more material to work with. Among articles that were published, for the analysis I focused more on those that went beyond factual reporting on events, which in most cases meant columns and comments that expressed opinions and particular stands on the issue at stake.

Two different positions in regard to Flower Square project can be detected, and I have named them pro-project discourses and ‘alternative’ discourses. Between the two, I have decided to focus my analysis on the pro-project discourses not only because they were present in the mainstream Croatian press, but also because they placed the weight on issues that seemed ‘out of place’ in a discussion of the problem of gentrification of public spaces, which is basically what Flower Square project was about. In that way, pro-discourses put forward by the media such as *Jutarnji List*, *Večernji List* and *Globus* were deeply invested in framing this

¹ Even though the project was given ‘green light’ in 2007, the media started reporting on it more extensively in 2008, when it became clear that the project is in the process of issuing necessary permits.

debate not just in nationalistic, but also gendered terms. The ‘alternative’ discourses that criticized various aspects of the Flower Square projects were mostly published in alternative media new sites (such as *H-alter*), blogs and newspapers with smaller circulation on national level, such as daily newspaper *Novi List* and political weekly *Novosti*. Attitudes and analysis published on their pages were engaged mostly with problems that surrounded the project, such as legality of the acquisitions of the buildings for the project on Flower Square, mayor Milan Bandić involvement in project, as well the possible impact that such big complex of shops and apartments might impose on city centre. More to the point, they were more preoccupied with issues of corruption and local government fallacies in this case, than anything else. It would be a blatant distortion to say that different opinions were not present in public, and these certainly made a difference when it comes to raising awareness for the dubious issues that surrounded this project. However, these are not Croatian mainstream media. Their public is mostly highly educated and politically more aligned with left, and therefore more likely to empathise with the criticism of the project Flower Square, whereas readers of the mainstream press are more heterogeneous and a more mixed group with diverse political affiliations. My interest here is not with ways in which the public might have read messages that were put forward by the media. I am more interested in the reasoning behind these messages, as well as how they were framed and presented, and in the end how these can be interpreted as attempts in more recent (re)imagining of the Croatian nation-state.

The Gender-Nation-State intersections

It is important to note that until relatively recently in the study of nationalism, gender has been, almost completely overlooked. As Nira Yuval-Davis argues, all the seminal works on nationalism have been written without taking gender into account (1997: 1). In that regard, the study of the ways in which nationalisms are gendered still represents a fruitful enterprise. My analysis follows the theoretical frameworks that have come out of Benedict Anderson’s

concept of “imagined communities” (1991), and works of James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (2002) and Gupta (1995) have been particularly relevant for my project. In their work, Ferguson and Gupta have argued that nation-states are particular cultural products, and in that sense are “constructed entities (...) conceptualized and made socially effective through particular imaginative and symbolic devices” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002:981). In other words, states as well as nations are forms of identities embedded in particular cultures, and more importantly, that can be treated as other cultural artefacts. In that sense, I have used the term ‘nation-state’ throughout my analysis, treating both state and nation as a ‘theoretical amalgam’, even though I am aware that these are concepts of different scope (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989: 3). The processes I describe here as particular (re)imaginings of the contemporary Croatian nation-state, do not require delineation of these terms, especially because nation and state seem to be bound together. In other words, I consider nation-states to be more than just “body of institutions which are centrally organised around the intentionality of control with a given apparatus of enforcement at its command and basis” (ibidem: 5). If nation-states are in themselves cultural artefact that ‘come to life’ through symbolic and meaningful social processes, which does not deny their more material aspect as Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis indicate, then media certainly represents one of the domains particularly susceptible for such imaginings. Gender plays an important role in not just nation-state imagining processes, but also in realizing one’s rights, as men and women are not granted same access to social and political resources of the nation-state (McClintock 1993: 61). Similarly, Susan Gal and Gail Klingman argue that “not only do state policies constrain gender relations, but ideas about differences between men and women shape the ways in which states are imagined, constituted and legitimized” (2000: 4). Akhil Gupta (1995) and Dubravka Žarkov (2007) have both followed and made a similar argument of how media discourses configure imagining of the nation-states, and Žarkov has additionally explored the

role gender and ethnicity play in them. Following on that, my analysis applies the same reasoning in the attempt to theorize about a more recent reworking of nation-state imagination in Croatia.

However, considerable body of feminist literature on nationalism has pointed out that nation-state processes are not only exclusive, but also highly gendered (i.e. Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989, Iveković 1993, McClintock 1993, Nagel 1998, Waetjen 2001, Žarkov 2007,). One of the most important implications of this type of feminist scholarship is the idea that gender should be treated as a relational and mutually constitutive category in analysis of nationalism (Yuval-Davis 1997:1). In many ways, modernistic projects of nationalism and state-building have been strongly associated with hegemonic or dominant masculinities (Nagel 1998: 243). In similar vein, V. Spike Peterson demonstrates how religious and political discourses have reified the “(patriarchal) family”, and naturalized the sexual difference between genders, upon which symbolic and social order is then build (1999: 40). This has a strong consequence as men and masculinity gain considerable advantage in the social hierarchy (ibidem). In a sense, this creates a very rigid and precise gender hierarchical structure, where men are always privileged and women devalued. As Robert Connell points out, masculinity is not located in the wider context of gender relations, but also is “an active social construction, a pattern of social conduct – conduct that responds to the situations (e.g. differences of power, definitions of bodily difference) in which people find themselves” (Connell 2000: 23). In other word, both ideas about masculinity and femininity are relational and situational, and not just pre-given hierarchical ordinal categories. Therefore, even though some themes of masculinity might be echoed in the construction of the nation-state, this does not establish a direct causal relationship between the two. Even if gender is often discussed in singular terms, whereas in social reality there are multiple and competing ideas about both

masculinity and femininity, I am interested in looking how notions of gender get re-appropriated at different time and for different political purposes (see Helms 2008).

Another aspect of nation-state making that is of particular interest for my project, is the process of boundary making, exclusion and Othering. As Suad Joseph has posited, boundary-making processes are always about empowering some and disempowering others (1997: 75). In similar vein, Anne McClintock has argued that nationalist projects, despite the fact that they aspire to unite the nation, are in fact about inventing and performing social difference (1993: 61). The differentiation within the nation-state follows the same logic through which sexual difference is socially created, as significant number of feminist scholars has pointed out (Iveković 1993, Joseph 1997, McClintock 1993, Mostov 1999, Yuval-Davis 1997). Along these lines, Rada Iveković has successfully argued that the Other is not just a constituent part of the nation, as this relationship is based on domination, but also that the Other is often coded as ‘female’ (1993: 115). As I am interested here in exploring the ways in which gender organizes discourses about Croatian nation-state imagination and belonging (see Gal and Klingman 2000: 5), I argue that this process abides to the same gendered logic of exclusion.

In the end, much of the feminist literature on gendered nationalism from the 1990s, as for instance through of Joane Nagel (1998) or V. Spike Peterson (1999), emphasize strongly the role of men and masculinity, as well as violence, in the nation-state formation processes. Nationalism was presented as a ‘masculine endeavor’, and women were cast in the supporting roles, most often as mothers, daughters and nurturers. In that way, the focus was placed solely on masculinity, without acknowledging the ways in which notions of masculinity and femininity are relational. However, more recent feminist scholarship on nationalism has come to see gender categories as mutually constitutive, such as Bracewell (2000), Helms (2008) and

Žarkov (2007) whose work I have benefited here. In that regard, my analysis represents a continuation of such efforts.

Of Gendered Spaces/Places and the Balkans

Discussions about the gendered nature of nationalism, as well as how nation-states are imagined, would not be entirely complete without at least briefly discussing how notions of space and place come into this picture. As nation-states are dependent on boundary making processes, whether material or symbolical, they delineate and determine spaces/places that belong to them, or to which they aspire to belong. As Alan Dingsdale notes:

People do not just locate themselves in space, they define themselves by a sense of place. Places are not just locations on the globe, they stand for a set of cultural characteristics. Places emerge from spaces as they become ‘time-thickened’. They have a past and a future that allows people to identify themselves, share experiences and form communities (2002: 3)

Not only are spaces and places constitutive parts of identity, but they are also created through material and discursive practices (2002: 4). In fact as Doreen Massey argues, spaces are socially constructed sites configured by power, symbolism, and “complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation” (1994: 265). As spaces/places are imbued and created through power relations and complex signifying processes that have important gender implications:

From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit, to straightforward exclusion by violence, spaces and places are not only themselves gendered, but in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood. (Massey 1994: 179)

In that sense, spaces/places are not only important for identity, and thus nation-state making, but also are themselves a reflexion of the symbolic and social order they represent. Gender, as one of the categories that organizes social reality, defines and shapes both ends of these processes. In that sense, my analysis of space and place merits from insights such as those put forward by Dingsdale and Massey, even though they have directly linked it to nationalism and

nation-state imagining. In that sense, Akhil Gupta has noted that post-colonialism and late capitalism significantly impact the ways in which nations are imagined and nationalisms discursively constructed, in relation to spatial notions of belonging (2006: 322) Even though I subscribe that view, what this approach misses is acknowledgment of the ways in which gender also organizes experiences of belonging and nationalism, not to mention post-colonialism and late capitalism. Further on, Gupta suggests that in these circumstances the study of nationalism in relation to spaces has to take into account of the “structures of feeling that bind people to geographical units larger or smaller than nation or that [they] crosscut national boundaries” (ibidem: 323). It is through these processes that local becomes part of the national, which creates the national “master narrative” (ibidem: 329). It is therefore no coincidence that certain places are constructed within this narrative as more or less desirable to belong to.

Belonging to certain spaces, rather than others, has been at the core of how Croatian nation-state was imagined in the 1990s. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991 and after acquiring its own state, Croatia was to be “welcomed back to Europe” were it rightfully belonged “due to its Hapsburg legacy, geographical location, and trade orientation toward Western markets” (Razsa and Lindstrom 2004: 629). As Milica Bakić-Hayden has noted, these ideas originate from the older perception that within Yugoslavia some countries were more developed, like Croatia and Slovenia, and some were considered as a hindrance on their European path (1995: 924). Therefore, the patterns of “nesting orientalism” were very much at heart of nation-state imagining in Croatia after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, where hierarchy of Others emerged:

Thus, while Europe as a whole has disparaged not only the orient “proper” but also parts of Europe that were under oriental Ottoman rule, Yugoslavs who reside in the areas that were formerly the Habsburg monarchy distinguish themselves from those in

areas formerly ruled by the Ottoman Empire, hence “improper”. (Bakić-Hayden 1995: 922)

In other words, during the 1990s, Croatians presented themselves as more European in comparison to their southern neighbours (Rasza and Lindstrom 2004: 630). However, these metaphors gained additional strength when by the end of 1991, as Croatia’s newly acquired state sovereignty was threatened by Slobodan Milošević’s nationalistic expansions. As one third of the Croatian territory soon became occupied, the urge to remove all traces of Yugoslav identity and links to Serbia gained even more salience (ibidem: 634).

In that sense, Croatian national identity was built on differentiation from Serbs, based on their construction as belonging to Balkan more than Orient as such (Jansen 2002: 42). As Stef Jansen points out, during the Tuđman’s rule in the 1990s everything that was designated as belonging to Balkan was negative, which could span from “dark ages of Yugoslav communism” to religious and ethnic divisions, and in fact usually was referring to Serbs (ibidem: 43). In other words:

Defining oneself negatively against the Balkan stereotype was one of the dominant discursive practices in Croatia, one that was enacted through systematic cleansing in the public sphere of all that could be labeled as “Balkan”, and through strong pressure to extend this practice in private space and individual biographies. These interventions were not just limited to party politics and state decisions. “Balkan” was connected to ex-Yugoslavia, to Serbia, or in fact anything that was seen as “non-European”, “non-Western”, non-urban, or just simply undesirable. (2002: 47)

In this way, term Balkan and Serbs came to represent everything negative in the recent Croatian past, but also something that served as a mirror image of Croatian identity in the same way as the Balkan was constructed as the mirror image in opposition to Europe (Todorova 1994: 482). This was one of the many political strategies through which Croatian president Franjo Tuđman attempted to set Croatia’s position in the symbolic geography of Europe, and not the Balkans (Rasza and Linstrom 2004: 645). It is interesting to note here that both concepts of “nesting orientalism” and “balkanism” are applicable in analysing the

complex relationship between Serbs as Others in Croatian nation-state imagining. However, these are not entirely oriental depictions that relate Serbs back to Ottoman, Byzantine or Orthodox heritage (Bakić-Hayden and Hayden 1992: 3). In fact in the most recent incarnations of these themes, a more appropriate term would be the merger of the two – “nesting balkanism”. In a way, the reasoning that was used to exclude Others, in this case Serbs, is not based anymore on their religion or Byzantine (Eastern) culture as it was in the 1990s, but made more in association with their backwardness and ‘lagging behind’ with the West, that is characteristic of the Balkan metaphor. In the end, as more than twenty years have passed since Yugoslavia’s violent dissolution, one might think that the metaphor of Balkans, and especially in relation to the Serbs, might have lost its appeal over time. However, as the case of Flower Square project shows, the way in which Croatian nation-state is being (re)imagined around this issue suggest that some of these ideas still play a significant role in the way they are enacted.

Socio-political Context of the Flower Square Project

In recent years Zagreb's downtown city core has passed through significant urban and architectural changes, most noticeably of its public spaces.² Theatres, cinemas, cafes and other social public places gave way to shopping malls and luxury private apartments, contributing significantly to lack of cultural contents in the city centre. In light of this process, one such project created a heated debate among the citizens of Zagreb and Croatia, activists and local government, about urban planning and management as none of the previous interventions in the city's urban core did. The Flower Square is an architectural project that

² Due to nationalization of all private property in Yugoslavia after the WWII, after its demise the Croatian state and City of Zagreb were the legal successors of considerable amount of previously state owned buildings and apartments. Since the 1990s they were being placed on market and sold either to private buyers or to business companies for further investments. However, as it often was the case, the management of these public spaces was not always very transparent or beneficiary for Zagreb's citizens, as it usually meant depriving the centre of its cultural contents such as cinemas, theatres, art galleries and such.

has been dubbed by its creators as a “lifestyle centre”, or in other words, a multi-purpose complex that consists of shopping mall, private residential zone and garage places for private and public use. Placed in one of the Zagreb’s 19th century downtown squares, after which the project was named, an anthracite glass construction was to be reclined against the surrounding art nouveau buildings dating from the beginning of the 20th century, forming a small intimate square not far away from the Zagreb’s main square. In the tradition of many central European cities in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, such as Vienna or Budapest, small squares such as these are especially attractive and visited public spaces.

The project envisioned by the architect Boris Podrecca and local investor Tomislav Horvatinčić won with the Flower Square project on a national tender in 2007 and immediately started acquiring all necessary permits and paperwork. However, there was reasonable doubt that the investor has acquired the buildings in the downtown block with ‘help’ of the mayor Milan Bandić, who purposefully relinquished part of the pedestrian zone in Varšavska Street so that the project can have a parking garage entrance there. In fact, the buildings the city has sold to the investor Tomislav Horvatinčić were in the process of repatriation, given that they were nationalised after the Second World War. After the sudden ‘change of heart’ from the local government several of the rightful owners, among them Serbian Orthodox Church, decided to sue the investor and claim their rights in court. In a sense, from the beginning of this project the impression was given that the local government wanted to ‘clear out’ the way for this project in a great hurry, so some legal procedures have been ‘skipped’ along the way. In fact, irregularities began much earlier. When the Flower Square project won in the open tender in 2007, it was already in conflict with the Zagreb’s Urban Development Plan, so the latter had to be considerably revised to fit the winning project. This was in itself highly suspicious, as usually project that do not fit the Plan would not be even considered as a viable offer. Furthermore, the changes in the Plan were not done transparently, and permitted

extensive building possibilities in the strict city centre that were in conflict with the previous versions of the Plan. Media was conspicuously silent regarding these irregularities, and general public was kept in dark as far as the conflicts around Flower Square project were concerned.

The entire project would have been built swiftly and without much discussion, if it were not for the two Zagreb based non-government organisations that decided to react. Green Action is one of the oldest Croatian environmental non-governmental organisation (NGO) that has not previously dealt with the problem of management of public spaces, whereas Right to the City is a platform of organisations gathered around precisely the issue of management of public spaces in Croatia. In 2007, they have recognised a common interest in the case of Flower Square project and launched a joint campaign to raise awareness of the irregularities that accompanied the project. The campaign had a 'slow' start during first three years, but as the realization of this project became more certain, the activities intensified from January until July 2010. Their plan was to problematize the ways in which city owned, therefore public spaces, were being managed by the local government. In their opinion, the recent development trends in Zagreb were unfavourable for the city, as they deprived it of cultural contents like theatres, cultural centres and cinemas, and substituting it with shopping malls and luxury housing. In a sense, the Flower Square project became a case in point that embodied everything the organisations considered as wrong in recent urban development of Zagreb. None of these problems were visible in the mainstream media before January 2010. The problematic acquisition, as well as permits issued for construction purposes while all legal proceedings have not been settled, and other irregularities were at the focus of the campaign against the Flower Square project lead by Green Action and Right to the City. The legal processes were still on going, when investor proclaimed towards the end of 2009 that construction work at the site would begin soon. The local government and mayor Milan

Bandić proclaimed the project to be of ‘public interest’, but the Green Action and Right to the City disagreed.

As announced, in January 2010 the construction work on the Flower Square project was due to begin. The two previously mentioned organisations intensified their campaign, in an attempt to postpone the construction until all legalities are settled. This meant that street actions were organised on an almost weekly basis, and protests were more frequent than in the previous three years of the campaign. Actions were innovative to purposefully attract the media attention, as there was a reasonable doubt that the media will ignore issues the campaign wanted to raise. The campaign was successful and highly visible, which helped the cause, but also triggered an intense debate in the media that lasted for months. In all activities, the organisers of the campaign, Green Action and Right to the City, emphasised use of passive and non-violent means, and only on rare occasions individual outbursts of violence happened. On protests that gathered on average several thousands people, this the fact that they remained peaceful and non-aggressive was considered as success.

During the last six months, from January to July 2010, almost a day did not go by when the debate over Flower Square project was not in the media. Soon, it became clear the on the one side of the debate was the Mayor and local government who supported the project, while on the other stood the organisations, who opposed it. As the actions and the protests intensified, Minister of Internal Affairs Tomislav Karamarko got involved, as on several occasions special police forces were called into action to remove the peaceful activists from the construction site. This raised suspicion among general public and some politicians (including the Croatian president Ivo Josipović) whether such extreme actions were entirely necessary. As the campaign progressed, and as activists were successfully delaying the beginning of construction, the tensions arose quickly. The investor, Tomislav Horvatinčić,

was claiming that this is a reflection of the ‘anti-entrepreneurial’ climate in Croatia, while Mayor Milan Bandić kept repeating that the project is of public interest, ignoring the claims of the activists.

However, in May 2010 the Municipal Assembly of the City of Zagreb³ decided to investigate further into the matter. In addition to that, State Attorney’s Office began to investigate the legality of the project and its permits, as well as Mayor’s involvement in the case, which created an additional pressure for the Assembly to promptly react. This was not so much motivated by the realization of irregularities concerning this project, and pressure campaign was enforcing upon relevant institutions to investigate the matter, but more with political bickering between two biggest Croatian parties – Socialist-democrat Party (SDP) and Croatian Democrat Party (HDZ).⁴ SDP has the majority in the City Assembly, but since HDZ is the ruling party on state level, all other functions are in their jurisdictions, such as State Attorney and Ministry of Internal Affairs. In that way, all permits for this project were not only issued by the local government, but also by the responsible institutions such as Ministry of Construction and Environment and Ministry of Culture. To say the least, once the State Attorney began the investigation, the two parties consistently began accusing each other over whose responsibility for this case was bigger. This promoted the Flower Square project to the level of a highly complex national scandal that implicated both SDP and HDZ, as well as work of several state institutions and Ministries.

The Mayor himself was also in an ambiguous position. As Milan Bandić stepped out from the SDP during the presidential campaign in winter 2009, because he decided to run for presidency on top of the official candidate from the party, he also lost the support of the City

³ The Assembly is the governing body of City of Zagreb, and even though Mayor has to abide to its decisions, he still has considerable authority and liberty to make decisions independently of the Assembly due to the Election Law.

⁴ HDZ is the conservative right wing party and SDP is the liberal left wing party.

Assembly where they have majority. This in many ways made his work more complicated. SDP also felt that the opportunity had arisen with the Flower Square project, to politically undermine Bandić and potentially incite premature elections in the city. Furthermore, by placing the blame on Bandić, they have managed to suppress their own involvement in this case, as this Assembly was responsible for passing the changes in the Urban Development Plan that made the project legal. HDZ, on both local and national level, recognised the opportunity to uncover SDP's 'dirty laundry' in Zagreb and begin a premature political campaign for the parliamentary elections due in winter 2011. Besides the fact that Zagreb holds one quarter of Croatia's population and is the centre of political and economical power, and therefore everything that happens in Zagreb becomes of national concern, the involvement of the two largest parliamentary parties also contributed to elevating this debate to the national level.

In the end, the Flower Square project did see the light of day in March 2011. However, the campaign managed to persuade the City Assembly to restore the Urban Development Plan to its previous state, restricting notably the possibility of such invasive architectural projects in the city centre. Further on due to this success, Green Action and Right to the City launched a nation wide campaign that has managed to prevent other instances of corruption and facilitation in management of public spaces through out Croatia.

Spatializing Nation-State and Discourses of Progress and Modernity in the Flower Square project

As I have previously mentioned, the Flower Square project was the first project of that kind to raise such huge debates in the media concerning both issues of urban planning, architecture, cultural heritage, but also corruption and suspicious intersection between local politics and business investments. In this debate, the place of the project Flower Square itself played an important symbolical role in the reimagining of the contemporary Croatian nation-state. At the same time, this particular discursive creation, enabled and influenced the ways in which activists, the state and other important key figures in this debate were gendered, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters. In this chapter, I will analyse media discourses about architect of the project, Boris Podrecca, as well as look at how they were invested in the repositioning of the Croatian nation-state in the symbolic geographies of Western Europe. The discourses I analyse, played an active role in creating the location of the project as a place where Croatian belonging to the Western civilizational space had to be proved, and in return, were invested in further distancing Croatia from the Balkans. This kind of spatial differentiation also has important consequences for the ways in which divisions of spaces themselves can be seen as gendered, an issue to which I turn at the end of this chapter. In that sense, I subscribe to the ideas about the socio-political dimensions of space put forward by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson:

The ability of people to confound the established spatial orders, either through physical movement or through their own conceptual and political acts of reimagination, means that space and place can never be “given” and that the processes of their sociopolitical construction must always be considered. (1997: 47)

The Flower Square project was envisioned and created by the architect of Croatian origin, Boris Podrecca, and local businessman and private investor, Tomislav Horvatinčić. The project was presented as part of larger efforts of local politics to revitalize and introduce new substance to the city centre. It was explained by the local government that the combination of local financial resources and European experience in the urban interpolations⁵ would prove to be a winning formula in restoring the centre's vitality and stand in the best interest of Zagreb's citizens⁶. Since the mall itself was designed in a very different style than the surrounding buildings, to justify this discrepancy, a number of examples from Europe were invoked, where similar things have been done. In addition to that, the interpolations in the other European cities were presented as uncontested and implemented without much discussion. Among many others, as champions in combining contemporary and previous architectural styles in their city centres Vienna, Milan and Frankfurt have been mentioned in the context of the most successful revitalizations. Unlike in the other European cities whose examples of good practices Zagreb should follow⁷, the public discussion that was supposed to accompany implementation of the project Flower Square and the professional opinions of architects and art historians have been either non-existent or invisible in the media⁸. In that way, chances of a more democratic approach to urban planning were avoided, leaving the citizens completely out of the process.

⁵ Interpolation here is used in a sense of combining new building of different, more contemporary style, into a much older block belonging to an older architectural style. It is often mentioned in that context in the discourses that I analyse, but it is also a term used by art historians and architects to describe such architectural interventions.

⁶ For instance, Zagreb's mayor Milan Bandić has proclaimed several times in media that the project is of "public interest".

⁷ An interesting article on that topic was published in the Croatian weekly newspaper Globus, about how urban planning and potential dissatisfaction of citizens is dealt with in Vienna, where i.e. open public discussions and opinion polls seem to be part of their urban management (see Globus, 23.4.2010).

⁸ When I use the term invisible, I am not trying to say that there were no opposing discourses. I am pointing out that alternative views on this debate were not very well represented in the two most mainstream daily newspapers and one weekly, where I follow this debate. In most cases, the alternative views were presented on alternative news portals, blogs and in much less distributed papers such as *Novosti* or *Novi List*.

As a result, discourses on the project Flower Square in its initial phases were created mainly by those who had the authority, political and economical power (the architect, the investor and Zagreb's mayor) as well as easier access to the mainstream media, whereas other opinions were scarce and started emerging eventually during protests in 2010. The mainstream media created the atmosphere where this project was exactly what Zagreb needed to remain modern. More to the point, even on the project's web page, a following description that attests to the general atmosphere that was created around this project:

Today Zagreb needs change in order to remain a place of modern living. Its life, the life of its citizens, needs space to grow. We need new places, new verticals and new polygons for creativity! There is space for the future, even in its centre. Cvjetni⁹ will be one of these places, a modern interpolation made for pleasant living, in an area that has been dormant for a long time, completely alone, covered by the dust of centuries and the sleepy views of nostalgists.¹⁰

In absence of any articulated professional opinions on this subject in the media, the discourses that supported the project were created by journalists and, had little to do with architecture and urbanism but more with symbolic geography. These discourses were actively reconfiguring the new symbolic space of the Croatian state by drawing on imagery that posited the modernistic local project in the heart of Zagreb as a clear marker of the progressiveness of the Croatian nation-state. Ultimately, I argue that this discursive move was not just supposed to affirm the project itself as something beneficial to the entire country, but also to attest to Croatia's modernity and cultural, spatial and civilizational belonging to Europe. This in return meant even further discursive distancing from what is commonly understood as Eastern, belonging to Balkan and the past. In practice, this was achieved through media discourses in two ways. First, the image of the architect Boris Podrecca,

⁹ The original name of the square in Croatian is Cvjetni trg, but people often omit the last word and just call it Cvjetni. The same happened with the name of the project, which was also sometimes just referred to as Cvjetni. However in this case, as this text is published on the official web site of the project, the use of word Cvjetni is intentional. It was aimed at conflating the project with the square itself, as well as giving it a more popular 'ring' that might resonate better with "the people".

¹⁰ <http://www.hoto.hr/en/cvjetni/opcenito> [last accessed: 1st of May 2010]

creator of the project, had to be geographically positioned as simultaneously both Croatian and European. His Croatianess was important because it gave him emotional legitimacy and a ‘guarantee’ that Croatians would recognize the architectural project as their own. On the other hand, his European identity was important because, at least in this context, it served to bridge the differences between Croatia’s ambivalent position on the threshold between West and East and clearly place it on the former side. Secondly, the place of the project was recreated as backward, ruinous and what was perceived as remnant of the Croatian past – one that belonged to the Balkans and state-socialism. This made the intervention offered by the Flower Square project more ‘natural’, necessary and was constructed as more Western European.

Boris Podrecca is an architect with very ethnically diverse family background, spanning from Italy to ex-Yugoslav countries, who became famous through his academic and professional work in Austria, where he resides today. Prior to this project, he was not widely known in Croatia, which to an extent explains why several newspaper articles about his personal life and work were published in Croatian press, as part of a wider campaign for the project Flower Square. Due to his personal emigrant biography, involving multiple sites of belonging to both Croatia and Western Europe, he was represented as the proper authority to bring Zagreb (and Croatia) into the 21st-century Europe, far away from its Balkan past. Once his authority was established, the project itself had to be normalized through discourses about other European urban spatial reconfigurations, where modern architectural interventions in historical cores are understood as a sign of civilizational achievement. Again, what was not being said here in the context of the examples drawn, was the named projects were also heavily debated and contested at the time of their implementations even in the other, more developed European cities.

In order to demonstrate these processes, I look at how discourses about space and place in question were being (re)constructed symbolically and what are the political implications of these processes are (Kuper 2006: 289). I consider how spaces can be socially constructed through contestation over symbolic meanings, and therefore created through exclusions and inclusions of various groups (Harvey 2006, McDonogh 2006, Sibley 1995). In addition, I am interested in examining how spaces are instrumentalized in identity production and notions of belonging (Massey 1994), and connected to other spaces that are seen as Western and civilized (Louis and Wigen 1997). This in return, has some implications for the ways in which spaces are gendered through these processes, a point which I will discuss towards the end of this chapter.

Placing the Architect and Spatializing Authority

When news and polemics started around the project of *Flower Square* in 2008, one of the first responses to criticism was the invocation of the authority of its creator. Boris Podrecca, a renowned architect of Croatian origin was presented to the public as a ‘guru’ of contemporary architecture:

In his castle, in the 17th district in Vienna, resides a higher spirit embodied in the buildings – amid the powerful graphic computers reigns the warlock Boris Podrecca, surrounded by respect that turns into awe. He speaks fluently seven or eight languages; Croatian as a Croatian intellectual, Slovenian as a Slovenian architect, German as a German professor, Italian as his mother tongue, and English as someone whose primary academic habitat was Harvard (...) After his Biedermeier exhibition in Vienna the Austrians cannot perceive themselves anymore as a German sub-race or the province of European West, and his Plečnik exhibition in Pompidou center – the Parisian Beauborg – has elevated this Slovenian genius, the child of Austro-Hungarian ecumenism, to the level of a European Frank Lloyd Wright. (Globus, 7.3.2008)

It is not difficult to see that this enumeration of localities and languages is anything else but arbitrary. Boris Podrecca has been represented here through the hybridity of his identity that Homi Bhabha has referred to as “almost the same but not quite” (1994:86). He is almost

Croatian, as it is rather unclear how he is connected to Croatia if his mother tongue is Italian, but on the other hand he is without a doubt posited as Western European. In the same way as hybrid identities emerged in the colonies as Bhabha has pointed out, ones that could pledge their belonging both to the colony and Empire, Boris Podrecca was being presented as holding a similar hybrid identity that emphasised belonging to both West and East. This in return enabled the discourses that propagated the benefits of this project to capitalize on hybridity of the architect's own identity in order to simultaneously point out his familial and emotional ties to Croatia, as well as his intellectual and creative potential that has been 'Westernized' through work and education. His professional authority is thus geographically depicted – as an architect he was educated in Vienna, where he resides today, and he is in tune with contemporary trends through academic affiliation to Harvard, the symbol of academic prestige. On the other hand, being born in Belgrade from of Croatian mother and Croatian-Italian father, he is emotionally and intimately connected to the East as his place of origin. This creates a potent image of an architect that is a Croatian intellectual, and yet at the same time belongs to the European and global elite, personally and professionally. Emphasis on precisely these points in global and European symbolic geographies of power, knowledge and affluence is not accidental. In other words, to paraphrase Bhabha, he is neither entirely Croatian nor European while being at the same time both, and exactly this hybrid position enabled his ascription as the purveyor of the European values to his supposed homeland. It is interesting to note that these places Podrecca belongs to, the fact that he was born in Belgrade seems to be both omitted and rendered irrelevant for the way in which his identity was being constructed here.

Boris Podrecca's architectural expertise and knowledge is reflected in his professional successes:

Podrecca is the “author of squares”, he has built thirty-three squares in the cities of central Europe, from Verona and Trieste to Piran. A specialist in central European heritage, when old is radically blended in with the new (...) [*talking about the impression Podrecca left on the author of the article*] Remarkable absence of bullshit¹¹ – if this isn’t high civilization, I don’t know what is. Culture spreads through air like microbes. (Globus, 7.3.2008)

He is himself the embodiment of culture and civilization and European-ness, as the author of this article finishes his text with the statement that ‘we’ can proudly consider Boris Podrecca and his family one of the most influential of all Croatian families in Vienna, even if it is not entirely ‘ours’ but more central European (Globus, 7.3.2008). Furthermore, his vast experience as the “creator of squares” in various central European spaces, as put forward by this article, demonstrates that he is professionally capable, through the project of Flower Square, of placing Zagreb steadfastly on the map of Western Europe. More to the point, the fact that Podrecca seems to “breathe in” the Western culture that spreads through air “like microbes”, it makes him all the more better choice to execute this project in Croatia.

What is at play here is what Doreen Massey has recognized as a “stretching out” of economic, political and cultural relations over different levels of locality, from local to global (1994: 154). In other words, it represents a way of inserting a certain kind of simultaneity that connects different geographic localities and that symbolically evokes the paradigm of civilization versus periphery. Boris Podrecca is a key actor in this process; in his persona this simultaneity comes together and this hybridity is presented as potential bridge between the two spaces, those of East and West. It is not just that these relations are themselves imbued with power, as Massey rightfully claims, but to invoke these dichotomies as a reference point is an act of power in itself. Only in this case, it was the figure of an architect that was being created as a supreme interlocutor between different civilizational spaces, one that clearly participates in the “globalized world in motion” (Inda and Rosaldo 2002:3). What is seldom

¹¹ In the original, the author used the Croatian formulation *nevjerojatan nedostatak preseravanja*, wanting to say that the architect was not pretending to be something that he is not.

said in these discourses is that they leave a residue – who is this unnamed and uncivilized Other against whom these discourses are created – a question that I return to towards the end of this chapter.

Spatial Notions of Belonging

To accompany this powerful imagery of famous West European/Croatian architect destined to guide the post-socialist periphery into a better future, symbolic imagining of the location itself had to be enacted. Similar to the case of discourses about its creator, the location site that was supposed to house this project had to be recreated as backward and forsaken:

We are protesting because a rusty backyard will be turned into a lavish arcade, designed by a worldly renowned architect. We are bothered by change. We don't want interpolations in the centre; we don't want to dig below ground because it is supposedly dangerous, even though e.g. a 360 kilometre long subway runs through the wider region of the city of New York. The French let their cars and buses drive directly into the courtyard of the Louvre where they have built, among other things, a modernistic pyramid designed by I.M. Pei and a huge shopping mall *Carusel du Louvre* right in the basement of a former royal palace. (Jutarnji List, 10.1.2009)

Images of rusty backyards of Zagreb's centre posited against shopping malls underneath the cultural heritage site in Paris have very little to do with architecture or interpolations as such. What is emphasized in this discourse is the supposed resistance to change, where change is almost exclusively understood in a sense of opening up the space for private capitalist investments that bring a consumerist spirit to the centre and away from the city's periphery. This is reflected in the discourses that condemn protests concerning this project:

(...) in Zagreb, left, liberal citizens and alternatives are trying to stop the penetration of capitalism into the city centre, prevent a luxury building from being built to prevent a plutocracy which would turn abandoned shops with smuggled shoes into designer boutiques. (...) Let's keep the atmosphere of a remote nest; it would be best if nothing would change because the wealth of the elite does not bring happiness to the people! (Globus, 1.2.2008)

In this way, everyone that opposes the project of Flower Square is seen as backward in terms of challenging the necessary changes in the city's downtown blocks. This goes even beyond just simple opposition to change and unwillingness to bring Zagreb up to date with other European metropolises. What these discourses signal is that all citizens will benefit economically from this change, but more importantly that the opponents of the project are trying to prevent everyone else from catching a piece of the elite's wealth.

To emphasize even more the necessity for intervention, the block hosting the project needed to become a dreary place that simply cries out for intervention, even though there were no such outcries prior to the debate on this project:

In the houses where tenants are literally falling through the ground (...) [where] miserable pensioners, lumpen proletariat and squatters are nesting (...) As long as the centre remains a ruinous ghetto, there will be enough people for these leaders to take into the brighter future, to save the city in its backwardness, in the manner of a Balkan Havana." (Jutarnji List 6. 2. 2010.)

Even though the square and the buildings depicted here as ruinous and in need of restoration, before this project was presented to the public, Flower Square was considered by many citizens as one of the prettiest and most popular of Zagreb's squares¹², home to the oldest cinema and many small cafes and shops. It seems as if almost over night, the square itself became the archetypal image of an old and forsaken city block that is out of place and out of time, an image that frequently appears in the discourse of those who advocated the project Flower Square. The image of Zagreb as a 'Balkan Havana' stands out as a powerful reminder of the unsuccessfulness of the 'socialist project'¹³, one that has supposedly prevented Croatia

¹² One of many examples of such opinions: <http://www.geografija.hr/clanci/print-verzija/1504/cvjetni-trg-glineni-golub-u-streljani-kapitala.htm> [last accessed: May 12th 2010]

¹³ It is an interesting metaphor and again, in my opinion, Havana is not accidentally combined here with term the Balkans. As Havana is the capital of Cuba, one of the prominent members of the Non-Aligned movement that Yugoslavia once belonged to and still proclaims to be a socialist country. However, over time as socialism seem to have lost its salience in the West and Cuba came to be associated with isolation, poverty and geo-political margins, this metaphor might be interpreted as a warning or a reminder to the Croatian public of exactly how Croatia might have had ended up if it had stayed in Yugoslavia and supported the communist ideology. In a

from claiming its rightful place among the European nations right after the dissolution of Yugoslavia (Bakic-Hayden 1995: 924).

This resonates with several of Maria Todorova's observations on the connotations of the term 'Balkan'. Over time 'Balkan' has become "a synonym for reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian" (1994: 453), to which media discourses continually point to when emphasizing the derelict condition of the Zagreb's centre and the opposition to change that condition. On the other hand after the Second World War, as Todorova has argued, the term Balkans was expanded with an additional layer of meaning, as it became known for its communist regimes (Todorova 1994: 478). Similarly, Martin W. Lewis and Karen E. Wigen have argued that, due to Cold War divisions in the symbolic geographies, Slavic countries in the East were designated as communist (1997: 60). In that sense, the term "Balkan Havana" encompasses exactly that conflation, where socialist past and historically established backwardness of the Balkans is presented as almost synonymous.

The idea of ruination as a signifier of backwardness is particularly echoed in Podrecca's own discourse presented in the article entitled "You could have been in the first league, but you have a problem with the tollgate", where he gave his professional expertise on the conditions within the block:

Infrastructure has to follow the project, if the city wants to be vital and vibrant again. The centre of Zagreb, unfortunately, is not like that. The streets are nice, but when you open the gates there you can see maybe a small parlour, maybe some chickens, cardboard boxes – all that in the city centre (...) architecture today is a very powerful thing. You can hide a book you don't like on your shelf, you can turn the painting against the wall, but the house remains there for a longer period of time. This is why Pompidou and Mitterand made the Museum of Contemporary Art and La Bibliotheque National in Paris, because they wanted to leave their mark in history. My project can fail, but that will only turn Zagreb into a disabled city, which is the worst thing that can happen. (Globus, 1.6.2010)

similar vein, others have argued that the term 'Balkan' in Croatian context has been strongly associated with "dark ages of Yugoslav communism" during the 1990s (Jansen 2002:43).

What is being posited here, as a progressive and modern way of approaching urban planning, is in fact a reflection of a particular imagination of Croatia's symbolic position in the geographies of Europe. In this way, spaces and sites are ascribed a certain symbolic value, one that is supposed to reflect the interests and values of the community or group involved (Kuper 2006:258).

In his analysis of public spaces in Paris during the Second Empire, David Harvey has also shown how public spaces gradually became more reflective of private investments, losing their former characteristics as public spaces (2006: 20). More to the point, Harvey analyses how Parisian boulevards became places where the society and state affluence should be demonstrated (2006: 21). In the same vein, the project of Flower Square was presented as one of those sites where, as these media discourses point out, a modern and capitalist-oriented Croatian state had to be reaffirmed. In this case, the Flower Square project became a site that bounds notions of Croatian identity and place, through discursive attempts and spatial reconfigurations that are seen as acts of belonging to the West (see Massey 1994: 168). As demonstrated in his narrative, Podrecca acknowledges the powerful role architecture plays in a society and clearly sees himself as the only option for bringing Zagreb's supposedly abandoned city centre into the European present. More to the point, by comparing his project of Flower Square to two important cultural icons of contemporary Paris as clear markers of civilizational achievements, he further posits his own work as a future symbol of Croatia's progressiveness. Of course, what seems to slip away from this comparison is that both Centre Pompidou and Bibliotheque Nationale are places and symbols of culture, as one is a museum and the other is a library, while it would require a stretch of the imagination to see a complex of shopping mall and luxury apartments as the next grand civilizational achievement. This slippage is an important one, as it signifies a change in values when it comes to management of public spaces, one that resonates with Harvey's analysis of Parisian boulevards in the 19th

century and Low's remarks on the privatization of public spaces (2006). In her analysis of gated communities in America, Low points out "these 'physical' tactics...bolstered by 'legal and economic' strategies in which private interests co-opt the public, placing public goods in the hands of private corporations...as they utilize normative governmental procedures but are manipulated for private ends" (2006: 83). Presenting a shopping mall in Zagreb side-by-side with, for instance, a contemporary museum such as Centre Pompidou in Paris blurs the boundaries between what is private and what is public interest especially when a project like Flower Square are supported by key political actors, which will be even further discussed in the chapter that follows.

As David Sibley has noticed, one of the purposes of architecture is to maintain and reproduce the social values of the majority or those in position of influence and power (1995: 76). In other words, spaces are almost always created through exclusion of those groups whose "spaces of control are too small to interrupt the reproduction of socio-spatial relations in the interest of hegemonic power" (ibidem), as those who opposed had less opportunities to influence the outcome of the Flower Square project debate, in comparison to local government that supported the project. In a similar way, Gary Wray McDonogh has noticed that all urban spaces are characterized by constant creation of divisions and contestations over symbolic meanings that relate groups to particular places (2006: 264). Building on that, I argue that at least two parallel processes are at play here; one that is inclusive and creates affiliation of Croatia to Europe, and the other that excludes its socialist and Balkan heritage. When these discourses draw analogies between similar architectural interventions in their urban centres of Zagreb, Paris and New York, they are significantly investing in the part of Croatian national imagination that clearly sees itself as Western, progressive and European. Therefore, architecture should and has to be able to reflect this affiliation:

Zagreb's civility is based on provincialism, simulation of the centre, which is a remarkable trait. The only thing is that you constantly have to work on that to keep in shape. This means that if Vienna has built a huge parking garage under the Opera, so should we. If they had constructed just on the opposite side of their Cathedral an amazing modernist building such as Haas Haus, on their Ban Jelačić Square¹⁴, in the Graben area, I guess we would have to be able to carry out Podrecca's modest and modern building in the Flower Square, the first work of a famous European architect since Herman Bolle¹⁵ that could be achieved in Zagreb. (Globus, 1.2.2008.)

As I have mentioned before, this implies that in other cities presented here as more developed, these changes were implemented without contestations and public discussions. In other words, this implies that expression of different opinions and opposition to such changes, as could be seen in Zagreb, is somehow unusual and uncivilized. While this fact seems to pass unnoticed, the point remains quite clear – if the Croatians are to consider themselves as Western Europeans, they should emulate the same urban processes that can be acknowledged in other European cities, with compliance and without resistance. Put differently, Zagreb's centre is devoid of European-ness and needs to catch up with the West and compensate for the lost time. It is therefore that the place itself had to be related to the socialist past because, as Todorova has noted, new nation-states in relation to the West tend to analyse their own past in terms of “lack, absences, what one is not, incompleteness, backwardness, catching up, failure” (2005: 160). Again, Vienna rather than Belgrade is used here as an example, because it is supposed to evoke the shared heritage of former Austro-Hungarian Empire from where the legitimacy for Croatia's belonging to Europe is drawn, rather than the more recent territorial space it belonged to - that of Yugoslavia (Bakic-Hayden 1995: 924). Referring to a famous architect from the same period with the claim that there has been no significant architectural work done in Zagreb implies that Zagreb has not developed since 19th century, which is to say the least, an understatement.

¹⁴ This is the name of Zagreb's main central square.

¹⁵ Famous Austrian architect that worked in Croatia during the time of Austro-Hungarian Empire, usually held responsible for Zagreb's 'art nouveau' appearance typical for the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

At the same time, an exclusionary process was at work as well. Emphasizing its belonging to Europe, simultaneously these discourses were distancing Croatia from its Eastern European identity, or rather, the Balkans. As Milica Bakic-Hayden argues, Croatia and Slovenia have always considered themselves as different, more European, from the rest of Yugoslavia, and on those grounds claimed that they should be exempt geographically and politically from the Balkans (1995: 924). It was important for Croatia to deny its socialist heritage as well, due to the fact that socialism has often been portrayed as non-Western and uncivilized (Lewis and Wigen 1997:60). This explains why references to both socialism and the Balkans were consistently made, to even further discursively distance Croatia both in the terms of place (the Balkans) and time (socialism). This attitude is echoed in the descriptions of the devastated and ruinous city centre block that resembles to “Balkan Havana”, but also in how the opposition of the project was portrayed as opposing any changes, as a form of concealed return to state-socialism, as if every criticism of architectural interventions in public space is by default an uprising against capitalism.

Drawing Borders and Emergence of Gendered Spaces

Disputes over symbolic meanings and geographies can become a potent source for examining the relationship between identity, place and belonging, but also gender. The discourses of the proponents of the project Flower Square were set to place Croatia more firmly on a Western European map, rather than that of the Balkans. This was a symbolical gesture that had a very explicit political agenda, and very little to do with the problems of urban politics or management of public spaces. In the same time, through reinforcing its affiliation to Europe, the discourses were drawing the new imaginary borders of Western Europe, further distancing Croatia from the Europe’s East. The notion that capitalism is the most important force driving Croatia towards Western Europe, an opinion abundantly present

in the media discourses, only served to support that spatial distinction. What was maybe less apparent in this case, and what often gets omitted from spatial analysis in general, is the gendered dimension of this spatial division.

As Doreen Massey argues, spaces and places are gendered in many ways, as their organization reflects and impacts the way in which gender relations are structured in a society (1994: 186). In other words, spatial analysis should be sensitive to the ways in which spaces and places reflects, support and prolong gendered values in the society. It is not to say that gender is in itself the most important analytical category when it comes to spatial analysis. What Massey successfully points to is that gender, along with other categories of divisions (such as class), is one of the main organizing principles of societies, one that also has its spatial expressions (ibidem: 182). Her analysis of ways in which spaces are gendered goes beyond just looking at how for instance, women and men are confined to different spaces in different societies. Spaces do not become ‘gendered’ just by virtue of bodies that populate them, but also through “spatial control, whether enforced through the power of convention or symbolism, or through the straightforward threat of violence” (ibidem: 180).

A particularly interesting point in Massey’s analysis is when she addresses the relationship between space and time, and the ways in which through writings of prominent social geographers, they are assigned with different values:

With time are aligned History, Progress, Civilization, Science, Politics and Reason, portentous things with gravitas and capital letters. With space on the other hand are aligned the other poles of these concepts: stasis, (‘simple’) reproduction, nostalgia, emotion, aesthetics, the body. (...) Thus, where time is dynamism, dislocation and History, and space is stasis, space is coded as female and denigrated. But where space is chaos (which you would think was quite different from stasis; more indeed like dislocation), then time is Order...and space is *still* coded female, only in this context interpreted as threatening (1994: 257-258)

What Massey postulates here about the gendered relationship between time and space as opposing principles, compliments my discussion of discourses surrounding the project Flower Square. I have demonstrated how the project itself and its future location were constructed as progressive, modern, placing Croatia on the map of Western Europe along other civilised countries. Following Massey's analysis, these values connected to spaces can be perceived as simultaneously masculine, and at heart of ideas about masculinity circulating in Croatian society. More to the point, these discourses conflated ideas about progress and modernity with capitalism, which has been historically connected to particular kinds of masculinity (Massey 1994: 191-2), as they portrayed urban development exclusively in terms of capitalist private investments. In return, to further gain wider public support for the project, the place where it was designated to had to be depicted as static, 'out of time', chaotic in its disorder to a degree unbefitting of a capital of a West European country. It was therefore feminine in its threatening disorder, in its excess that belonged to unwanted past of the Balkans, and was in every way pleading for intervention. To further illustrate this point of how the building block was consistently marked as 'feminine', even when discourses mentioned the future intervention in the block itself they would refer to it often as the "penetration of capitalism into city's center" (Globus, 1.2.2008), where obviously a different expression might have been used to describe this process.

Terms like intervention and "penetration", often used to describe the Flower Square project, are indeed reminiscent of colonial 'civilizing' interventions and paternalistic sentiments that accompany it. Lila Abu-Lughod has very successfully criticised the attempts made by Western scholars and activists to unveil the Muslim women in Afghanistan and elsewhere, denouncing these types of interventions as paternalistic and aimed at reinforcing a "sense of superiority by Westerners" (2002: 789). Following on that, every similar discourse that claims to bring progress and civilization to a space or place, which is perceived as devoid

of those qualities, should be recognised as an attempt of domination. Furthermore, as Anne McClintock shows, this paternalistic logic is part of the national narrative based on the idea that:

Women, it was argued, did not inhabit the history proper, but existed, like colonized peoples, in a permanently anterior time within the modern nation, as anachronistic humans, childlike, irrational and regressive – the living archive of the national archaic. White, middle-class men, by contrast were seen to embody the forward-thrusting agency of national ‘progress’ (1993: 67)

In that sense, the logic behind the paternalistic intervention found in nationalism, and its claims to bring progress, is inherently gendered. In this way, men are granted the ability to intervene, in the name of the country’s progress and welfare, in spaces that are perceived as being devoid of these values.

To a certain degree, this kind of spatial analysis can be pushed even further. If there are values ascribed to spaces that can be recognized through gender dichotomy, then the distinction between East and West is in itself gendered¹⁶. The same set of values that get connected to time and masculinity are in other instances ascribed to Western Europe whereas, as Todorova and Bakic-Hayden demonstrate, what is constructed as its disvalued, backward feminized Other are the Balkans. This however is not the only possible way in which this dichotomy can be gendered. For instance, among other things, Elissa Helms (2008) has shown in her work on Bosnia how gender can be differently re-appropriated and constructed to fit different nationalistic discourses to designate spatial differences within East/West dichotomy. In the case of Flower Square, unwillingness to change was seen as connected to socialism, and subsequently coded as feminine, because it was juxtaposed to progress and

¹⁶ I am not trying to argue that this is the only way in which this distinction between East (the Balkans) and West can be gendered, nor that there is only one notion of masculinity and femininity that organizes society. Rather I am trying to point out how around this particular debate, gender played an important role in how the debate was portrayed in some media. I can imagine that this debate might have been structured around other existing notions of masculinity and femininity, and that different aspects can be at different times ascribed and interpreted as ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’.

capitalism that was coded as masculine. These examples further show that gender is not just an important category for organizing spaces and human experiences, one that needs to be taken into account, but also that spaces and places can be gendered in multiple ways, depending on the way in which different values get coded as masculine or feminine.

The discourses I analyse here certainly have tried to emphasize and downplay those who opposed the project Flower Square by marking both space and those who obstruct the progression of capital investments into public spaces as ‘feminine’. One of the consequences this spatial and discursive (re)imagination of both the place of Flower Square and its use as a symbol of Croatian progressiveness and Western-ness, is that it enabled the creation of specific and gendered discourses about main actors in this debate. Exactly this is the starting point of my following chapter.

‘Gendering’ the Debate: Feminized Activists, Masculinized State-Power, and nation-state (re)imagination

As I have established in the previous chapter, the place and project Flower Square were being produced in the media discourses as a site where Croatia’s belonging to the West was to be reaffirmed. This was a twofold process; one that emphasized cultural and civilizational belonging to Western Europe, and at the same time one that was placing Croatia outside of the Balkans. I have argued that this intervention in the European symbolic geographies was an exclusionary process in itself deeply gendered, as the ideas about West and East themselves reflect the values that are ascribed to certain types of masculinity and femininity. In this chapter, I continue along the same lines arguing that not only were spatial references in this debate gendered, but that this had direct consequences for the way in which main actors were portrayed in the media discourses. Therefore, here I explore how the investor, those representing state power, and activists were presented in a gendered way, partially echoing some of the gendered discourses of space and place that were previously analysed. Towards the end, I draw out some of the connections and implications of these depictions for the ways in which the Croatian nation-state is imagined, especially in terms of those who get excluded from such particular (re)imaginings.

To further my points, I turn to both media images and discourses published in two most highly circulated Croatian daily newspapers, *Jutarnji List* and *Večernji List*, and focus my attention on the ways in which main actors of this debate were gendered. As far as the main actors in this debate are concerned, I employ different strategies in the analysis of their voices, because not all of them have had the same access or power to put forward their opinion in the media. For example, while investor Tomislav Horvatinčić and Zagreb’s mayor

Milan Bandić have been given considerable amount of media space to express their views on the debate¹⁷, media usually presented the activists only through images and second hand descriptions, which is a result of a certain power asymmetry between them. Therefore, I used images published on the web pages, simply because there were more of them in the on-line versions in comparison to the print version. I use photographs from newspaper portals as an illustration of the analysed discourses, because I believe that they represent an interesting example of the way in which gender can be seen as an organizing principle of the overall discourses on this debate.

The Benevolent Investor

Tomislav Horvatinčić, the investor in the project Flower Square, over the years became known for his various architectural projects in Zagreb and its surroundings. Flower Square was one of his several projects done in the city's centre, which included a business tower and another shopping mall. As an investor and sort of a spokesperson of this project, his visibility increased in the media as the debates around Flower Square project heated up. In a similar manner as with the project's architect, Boris Podrecca, the representation of investor Horvatinčić in the media¹⁸ has had a specific purpose, as far as pro-project discourses are concerned. As I have argued earlier, the figure of the architect Boris Podrecca was used to show how this project would symbolically bring Croatia closer to Western Europe and further from the Balkans. In a similar way, albeit through different themes, masculinity permeated discourses and images of investor Horvatinčić in the analysed media. This in return was echoed in the similarly gendered representations and statements of both Milan Bandić and

¹⁷ This however does not mean that they were always necessarily using that opportunity. As I demonstrate later on, in the case of Zagreb's mayor Milan Bandić, a certain amount of silence on his behalf was strategical, as he clearly at times avoided to elaborate on the debate further, presumably not to jeopardize his position even further.

¹⁸ Again, it is highly peculiar that investor was given so much attention from the media. In this case one man, Tomislav Horvatinčić, came to stand for an entire business consortium, the *Hoto Group*, which is highly unusual due to the fact that even when investment companies are named, they are usually not personified in media reports about such projects.

Tomislav Karamarko, Zagreb's mayor and Croatian Minister of Internal Affairs, as they appropriated the investor's discourse and position in this debate. In this section therefore, I examine both discourses and images surrounding the investor, as well as the state representatives, to demonstrate how links were made between his reasoning about the project and discourses put forward by those representing state power.

As investor Horvatinčić may have been known in certain business circles prior to this debate, he was relatively unknown to the general Croatian population. Therefore, in a similar way as it was the case with the architect Boris Podrecca, the public had to be introduced to his persona and professional success. As work at construction site in Varšavska Street was due to begin in January 2010, just at that time an interview with the investor appeared under the title "Zagreb will be like Milan" (Jutarnji List, 24.1.2010). Under the lifestyle and fun section dubbed "At lunch with Jutarnji", it seems that the interview was supposed to be of culinary nature:

Mister Horvatinčić himself cooked, and named it his risotto, with the accent on the first syllable, as in Dalmatian or Dubrovnik dialect. In any case, men are really from where their wives are, aren't they? In this case, the second wife still very pretty and slim Nela that stayed that day up on the hill in their big manor close to Samobor. There they grow by themselves everything organically, like the green English aristocrats, from chicken and eggs to wine grapes, acacia honey to fruit and vegetables, and literally eat "only Croatian"... (Jutarnji List, 24.1.2010)

Interestingly enough, the discussion about risotto disappears from the interview very fast, and the discourse switches to establishing Horvatinčić as Croatian, masculine and above all, wealthy. Pointing out that his wife is from Dubrovnik, and leaving out his own family background is significant here. Dubrovnik is one of the few places in Croatia that had its own Republic in the 16th-century, gained considerable wealth from commerce with Ottoman Turks, became synonymous with Croatian high culture during the Renaissance, and not less significantly, the Dubrovnik dialect was used in the 19th-century to form the standard for

Croatian language. In a sense, a link to Dubrovnik is a link to the civilizational and cultural achievements of the Dubrovnik Republic, the epitome of Croatian-ness. It is therefore no coincidence that Horvatinčić gets compared to English aristocrats, similar to the high ranking and wealthy classes that used to live in the Dubrovnik Republic. Again, spatial metaphors that link people to certain places are strategically used, as in the case of the architect, to establish both his national identity and authority, here posited through his wealth. Furthermore, that identity is presented as that of the dominant culture and heterosexual, as he is married to a woman, through whom he gains connection to high-class Croatian culture. Again, marriage here is not only proof of his heterosexuality but also respectability¹⁹, since family has through the complicated relationship with nationalism and gender come to be seen as the vanguard of morality (Mosse 1985: 19). His whole appearance in fact reflects his high-class status and refined taste for material things that attest to his masculinity and modernity:

He is always in pressed clothes, polished, dressed in most expensive casual pieces from small Italian manufacturers such as Loro Piana, terrified of dirt like Francis Bacon, who wrote that cleanliness is next to Godliness. Mister Horvatinčić fights deterioration, ruination, and urban decay instinctively like Batman who keeps Gotham clean [from criminals] (...) (Jutarnji List, 24.1.2010)

Horvatinčić is not only himself a distinguished and cultivated man, but he tends to apply his own personal aesthetics to work he does. Hence the comparison with famous graphic novel character Batman, who fights evil and keeps Gotham respectable city by putting criminals to prison and keeps city streets ‘clean’ from crime. Here, Horvatinčić is doing virtually the same job by building a “lifestyle centre” in a place that has fallen prey to nostalgia and decay, as seen from my space/place analysis in the previous chapter. Metaphors of cleanliness and the incentives to ‘clean’ things are in fact, as Mary Douglas noted, a reflexion of the need for reinstating a positive order in our environment (1996:2). Following on that, these metaphors

¹⁹ In a sense, since it is only said and not further elaborated that it is his second marriage, it is not so much the Catholic morals that are being sustained here, but the emphasis is placed on the marriage as such. In other words, as long as he is married the fact that it is his second marriage does not make him look less respectable.

are not only about rebuilding a ruinous city block, but also about order and disorder. Likewise, it is no coincidence that in all the images of Horvatinčić that accompanied the articles, he always appears dressed smartly and casually, serious and stern, often having presumably business conversations on his cell phone. Even though the protests have potentially threatened his investment, at times prolonging or preventing construction work, he never appeared in these images as worried or irritated, even though his financial investment in the Flower Square project was clearly being endangered.

Exactly because of his remarkable contributions to ‘civilising’ Croatia and ‘cleaning the streets’ of ruinous buildings, Horvatinčić should be brought forth to the public. In that tone, journalist concludes with the following description of Horvatinčić:

For all those who have been hiding in the desolate places of the Croatian inland, I will repeat that Tomo Horvatinčić – the builder, developer, Zagreb’s Donald Trump made risotto for us – a person who many of the misinformed Croatians love to hate, as if he had himself robbed the empty state treasury. He is politically unaffiliated, and is today the only tycoon who in the beginning of the Homeland War had 5 million German marks in his bank account. (Jutarnji List, 24.1.2010)

In this way, a certain appearance of Horvatinčić has been created, in spite of the word tycoon that might have negative connotations as well, one that posits him as a high-class, cultured, heterosexual man with a lot of power and wealth at his disposal. His background and his wealth, as well as masculinity and heterosexuality are important, as “the identity of the modern subject – in models of human nature, citizenship, the rational actor, the knowledging subject, economic man, and political agency – is not gender-neutral but masculine (and typically European and heterosexual)” (Peterson 1999: 38). His financial status, especially through comparison with another well known wealthy man, American real-estate tycoon Donald Trump, here stands as an extension of his power and masculinity. Economy and masculinity are tightly bound, as Joan Acker has pointed, and in more recent forms emerge as “hyper-masculinity”:

This masculinity is supported and reinforced by the ethos of the free market, competition, and a ‘win or die’ environment. This is the masculine image of those who organize and lead the drive to global control and the opening of markets to international competition. Masculinities embedded in collective practices are part of the context within which certain men make organizational decisions that drive and shape what is called “globalization” and the “new economy” (2004: 29)

The fact that Horvatinčić gets represented as a wealthy, pro-active businessman, stern, and resolute in restoring the city’s centre, also resonates with Julian Wood’s and R. W. Connell’s point that “hegemonic masculinity” is historically connected to the rise of capitalism and imperialism (2005: 348). In that sense, the men who control the local economy have the privilege to impose “locally hegemonic patterns of masculinity” (ibidem). Following on that, and given how Horvatinčić has been presented as wealthy, successful, and heterosexual man signals that his business success, coded here as wealth, and his masculinity serve to further reinforce his image as a powerful actor in this debate. Ultimately, his role in the Flower Square project was restoring order in a place that succumbed to chaos, and precisely order has been historically constructed a masculine privilege (Peterson 1999: 40). Whether or not the appropriate term for this is “hyper-masculinity” or just hegemonic masculinity can be debated, but it is clear that the representations of the investor Horvatinčić certainly aims at emphasising the interconnections between economic power, wealth, capitalism and masculinity pointed out by Acker (2004), and Connell and Woods (2005).

Besides his masculinity and affluent background, media representations also emphasised Horvatinčić’s national affiliation to Croatia, while he himself had several times expressed concerns whether the problem with the opposition is in fact of a national nature:

Horvatinčić wants to know who will want to invest in Croatia when a local investor is facing such opposition and wonders whether “it would be better to place there a French project and a French flag above Flower Square” (Jutarnji List, 11.2.2010)

In addition to that, he has openly stated that the Croatian public should be more interested to find out who finances the protests against his Flower Square project (Jutarnji List, 11.2.2010),

and some other journalists even speculated whether or not the Green Action and Right to the City were financed from ‘outside’. For example, in one of the articles published around the same time in *Jutarnji List*, a famous Croatian journalist has even stated that these protests are being financed by George Soros²⁰ (“Mistakes in steps for the great investor: Horvatinčić has not learned anything from others?” *Jutarnji List*, 6.2.2010). More to the point, while participating in a talk-show on Croatian National Television, Horvatinčić got visibly aggravated while commenting on the protests and said that he will not be stopped by the “log revolution”, a reference to the Serbian uprising in Knin in the 1990s and beginning of war in Croatia (“Horvatinčić: I will not be stopped by the log revolution!” *Jutarnji List*, 11.2.2010). In that way, Horvatinčić was not just implying that for doing business in Croatia one needs to be politically (nationally) eligible, but also that the protests might be politically motivated. Given that they are directed against a Croatian investor, his emphasis on nationality in the above-mentioned quote, denounces the protests as anti-Croatian. The analogy with the Serbian rebels in Knin in 1991 and activists peacefully protesting against the Flower Square project only served to further support arguments for their exclusion from the Croatian nation-state.

Probably the most prominent theme in the discourses put forward by Tomislav Horvatinčić himself was that the protests and expressed dissatisfaction signals an “anti-entrepreneurial climate” in Croatia:

Attempt to revise an on-going project that has all the necessary permits is a striking example of the anti-entrepreneurial climate. This endangers the rule of law. Who will reimburse the damages we will suffer in the case if project is revised or stopped? (...) says Horvatinčić, who claims that in this economic situation it is completely

²⁰ Mentioning George Soros in this context is not entirely surprising given the fact that a lot of the local NGOs and media critical of Franjo Tuđman's nationalist regime during the 1990s got financial support from Open Society Institute. In a sense, some right wing politicians have seen his investments in Croatia and support of democracy, as interference in state's sovereignty. For example, during the mid 1990s, Soros was negatively portrayed by both state owned media newspaper *Vijesnik*, that accused him of attempts to unify Yugoslavia (<http://www.ex-yupress.com/vjesnik/vjesnik15.html> [last access: 29th May 2011]).

irresponsible to stop a project that employs more than 1000 workers. If this happens, says Horvatinčić, the state would lose 33 million Euros, and Zagreb 5 million. (Jutarnji List, 20.3.2010)

What was actually being said is that if the project falls through, it will not only be a grave loss for Zagreb, but also for Croatian economy. The jobs that the “lifestyle centre” would provide once it is built, and the jobs it is providing during its construction, seem to play an important role in both local and national economy, even though shopping malls have never been portrayed as of direct special interest to the Croatian state. Whether or not this might be the case in reality, the fact remains that the Flower Square project was being presented as such in time of the economic recession in Croatia, is not coincidental. This argument was designed in such way to win over the support of general population for the project, by promising jobs and prosperity, at times when personal financial security seemed to be constantly at risk. The discourses about “crystal palaces” and “fighting against urban decay” are therefore quickly replaced by apparently more influential ones – those of job vacancies in the time of global economic crisis.

Masculine State Power

In this debate, from the position of state authority, two most important people were Milan Bandić, the Zagreb’s mayor, and Tomislav Karmarko, Croatian Minister of Internal Affairs. Both of them on few occasions expressed their support for the Flower Square project, and in addition to that, on several occasions Minister Karmarko was responsible for employing repressive police measures against non-violent protesters, which in itself deserves a closer analysis. The themes such as economic and national state interest in the project Flower Square, as well as those of modernity and progress emerged on those few occasions when they both gave more ample interviews or statements.²¹ In addition to that, underlying

²¹ Through the entire period of January until July 2010, when both Mayor and Minister of Internal affairs made their opinion more public, they were seldom available for comments and statements.

these discourses were notions of gender and nationality. Furthermore, both Mayor and the Minister have argued for the project in the similar manner as investor Horvatinčić, often re-voicing claims that echo similar constructions of masculinity in terms of economic power.

Milan Bandić, Zagreb mayor, has always enjoyed a considerable attention from the media, due to his populist politics and ‘charming’ strategies similar for example to those of Italy’s Prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. In public, he is always well dressed and serious, but also giving and generous, as he is often featured in the front pages of newspapers by opening up new hospital wings, kindergartens, or being godfather to the 10th child born in one family.²² In his long career as mayor of Zagreb, the position he has held for the last 10 years, Bandić has been presented as a strict paternalistic figure, but one that does not shy away from showing emotions and ignorance in public.²³ Citizens of Zagreb have often had an ambivalent relationship with their mayor, due to his constant political gaffs and sometimes too aggressive populism, but in general, he has enjoyed a substantial support over the years. Visually, pictures featured in the articles presented him in myriad ways that varied from serious, stern and angry to worried. He was not always presented in a favourable manner, which is consistent with the ambivalent position he has in public. Unlike the representations of investor Horvatinčić, the representations of the mayor throughout this period were not consistently marked as dominant, which depended on whether or not the media evaluated that his support was growing or declining²⁴. In comparison to investor Horvatinčić, who is always

²² His activities and his successes are often prominently featured on the official web page of Zagreb Municipality (www.zagreb.hr).

²³ For instance, one of his many signs of ignorance was his statement, at the time when he was performing as Mayor and running in the presidential elections in 2009, that he does not speak English by saying “I speak Croatia”. In this case, he did not make just a grammatical mistake; he literally meant that as long as he thinks of Croatia first, his knowledge of English is less important. Nevertheless, that did not stop him from acquiring almost one third of the votes in 2009, as well as sympathies of some of the Croatian citizens.

²⁴ Milan Bandić is in himself an interesting phenomenon for analysis, both from the perspective of his politics and discourses, as well as gender representations. Since he has been the mayor of Zagreb for the last 10 years, he has acquired certain media representational patterns that are broader and encompass more than just the case of Flower Square project, which need more thorough analysis than I can provide at this moment. Furthermore, because of this project Milan Bandić was under a lot of pressure to resign towards the end of June 2010, and

stern and serious, Bandić was at times portrayed as decisive and authoritative, and at other times as troubled and worried. Especially towards May and June 2010 when his mayorship was in question, and as his support pivoted, Bandić was often featured in the pictures looking away from the camera, covering his face, or just generally looking worried. In that sense, as the mayor consistently lost support, so too the images tended to portray him as less decisive, authoritative, and dominant, which might be interpreted as ‘less’ masculine.

When the protests began in January 2010, Milan Bandić seemed as if he had completely disappeared from the daily political life of the city he was governing, which was unusual for a mayor who was ordinarily featured in the newspapers, and who did not shy away from press. He appeared numerous times in public with investor Horvatinčić at social events, and in that sense, they did not hide their friendship. Bandić had nothing but words of praise for the Flower Square project:

“Horvatinčić’s project is of absolute public interest (...) Those who want to live in the Middle Ages, I cannot help them” said Bandić to all the opponents of this project. He added, “in this country, unfortunately, you can get hit on the head only if you are successful and above average.” (Večernji List, 11.2.2010)

Bandić not only proclaimed that the project is of special public interest, but also that it was a modern and progressive interest in comparison to that of those who oppose it, who belong to the ancient past of the Middle Ages. In addition to that, he stated that this investment was more than welcome because “the city does not have the money to revitalize all the downtown blocks, as it was planned” (Jutarnji List, 10.2.2010), which again underlines the economic importance of the Flower Square project. Therefore, all those who work “above average” are clearly living in the present, whereas all those who oppose this project are ‘envious’ non-

because he has lost the support of the City Assembly where his former Socialdemocratic Party (SDP) has the majority, his representation was also dependent on myriad of other political processes that coincided with the case of Flower Square.

workers who belong to the past. This was also intended as a personal reprimand against those who criticise his way of governing Zagreb under the motto “Let’s work! [*Ajmo delat*]²⁵”.

Towards July 2010, Bandić’s position as Zagreb’s mayor was seriously questioned on several accounts, and one of them was his involvement in the Flower Square project. When the Zagreb Municipal Assembly asked the mayor to try to reach a different agreement with the investor Horvatinčić or announce early local election dates, he defended himself by saying:

I will not succumb to this yoghurt-revolution and resign from my function, as my opponents would like me to. These protesters are the same those who protested last year in April in front of the Municipality led by my rivals in the local elections (...) (Jutarnji List, 20.7.2010)

In this way, Bandić was not only implying that the activists belong to his political opposition and that they are using the protests to force him to resign. More importantly, using the term “yoghurt-revolution”, Bandić was referring to the ‘anti-bureaucratic’ revolution of Slobodan Milošević in Serbia, where Milošević had accused the Yugoslav Communist Party bureaucracy of betraying national interests (Bracewell 2000: 578). The implication of this analogy is not just that these are protests that could have violent political consequences. More to the point, this also implied that the activists might be considered as Serbs, those who rose up against the Croatian independence in 1990s. This comes as no surprise, given the fact that prior discourses have established that all those who oppose the project Flower Square are opposing Croatia’s economic well-being and growth, which makes this analogy on grounds of nationality even more ‘natural’, as the memories of those who started the war remain to be present in the public discourse.

²⁵ This slogan was used heavily in his presidential campaign in 2009, but he has often used it while performing his function of mayor of Zagreb as well. Since Bandić has become mayor, Zagreb has gone through significant changes as whole new areas with condominiums and new neighbourhoods emerged out of nothing. In that sense, his understanding of the term “work” is often used interchangeably with “construction work”, as his image in the public was built around him as the builder and renovator of Zagreb.

As the representative of the state, involvement of the Minister Tomislav Karamarko in the debate around Flower Square was not only through his acknowledgment of the project as of economic value for Croatia, but also through using repressive police forces in attempts to prevent the non-violent activists from protesting on the construction site. Minister Karamarko seldom appeared in the media and gave almost no interviews, besides short statements when his position required so. Unlike Bandić, Karamarko was consistently known for keeping away from the media and giving restrained statements. Images of him that appeared accompanying both his interview and other articles on the subject portrayed him as a serious man, always stern, and judging by his statements, ready to ‘defend’ democracy at every expense. Exactly because of that, the interview that appeared after the mass arrest of the activists in July 2010 is even more indicative, as Minister Karamarko speaks about the Flower Square project as a representative of the state. The article appeared under the title “Karamarko: We are not protecting tycoons”, where the Minister evaluated the situation in reference to the police intervention:

On the contrary, I think that this ‘lynch law’ or claiming justice on the streets leads to elimination of democracy. (...) Every politics that advocates this kind of political activism is necessarily working against itself (...) try to imagine how someone would end up if he would try to pull something like that in Manhattan in the same way activists from Varšavska street did? Some people from the diplomatic milieu have expressed their concerns to me because of the way in which certain investments are being stopped in Croatia. (Jutarnji List, 17.7.2010)

Not only did Karamarko compare the right to non-violent protests to lynching and violence, which has negative connotations given the fact that activists were already compared to Serbian rebels in Knin in 1991, but also dubbed protests in general as undemocratic. From the sentences that follow, it is clear that the democracy he is invested in protecting is the one that acts in the interests of capitalist investments, rather than in protection of the right of its citizens to express dissatisfaction with political decisions. In other words, it is indicative from his interview that the state’s primary role in this debate is to protect the right of private

investments, which seem to be in the interest of Croatian state. By expressing these attitudes, Karamarko as a state official merely articulated the official attitudes concerning this debate, and his assessment of the protests as un-democratic has spurred no reaction from either President or Prime minister, who otherwise expressed support of his work. In other words, the state has exercised its authority by reframing the debate and putting the emphasis on protection of investor rather than the cause of protests, and it is symptomatic that the Minister almost literally reiterated the same arguments put forward by investor Horvatinčić and the Mayor. Furthermore, this has significant implications for the ways in which gender, state power and economy are interconnected, a point that I return to later.

The situation was further complicated by the behaviour of police and special police forces in the case of protests against the project Flower Square. On June 15th 2010, the Minister reacted to the appeal of the Department of Constructions of the Municipality of Zagreb to ‘secure’ the construction site of the project Flower Square from the potential threat that activists posed to the continuation of the construction. This triggered an immediate response from the activists who gathered to express civil disobedience by blocking the machinery from entering into the construction site. This resulted in 142 arrested activists (out of an estimated 500 that were on the spot) and the deployment of over 167 members of police and special police forces, which made this action one of “the biggest mass arrests in Croatia in the last 20 years” (“Mutiny in the metropolis” Jutarnji List, 16.7.2010). The Minister’s decision was even more dubious as the activists were not violent and posed no real threat to the construction site. Furthermore, such high mobilization of police forces is usually reserved for high-risk situations (such as football matches or diplomatic visits) and not for protection of the private construction worksite. In that sense, the repressive measures taken against activists can be considered not just extreme, but also as a form of ‘symbolic violence’ by the state over the peaceful activists.

In her analysis of the police practices in Fitzroy, Australia, Allaine Cerwonka makes a relevant point in connection to the ways in which police officers involved in everyday policing practices can not simply be seen as just “extensions of state policy” (Lattas cited in Cerwonka 2004: 194). Her ethnographic analysis “provides insight into the ways in which members of the police contest governmental policy in their practices or reflect cosmologies of the larger middle class, rather than simply reflecting the state” (ibidem: 194). While I subscribe to the view that the relationship between the police as representatives of the state and the state itself is more nuanced and heterogeneous than just simply putting state orders into place, in this case the problem was not about individual police actions and whether or not they are inline with state policies. Given the fact that Minister of Internal Affaires publicly expressed negative attitudes towards protests and activists, and he indeed does embody the state policies, and the disproportionate amount of force that was used to remove the activists from the site, these instances can be treated as signs of the repressiveness of the state and unwillingness to tolerate those who express different opinions. Further more, I propose that the violence in question was symbolic given not only that none of the activists that were arrested were injured, but because of the sheer disproportion of the force used to secure the construction site in comparison to the peaceful acts of civil disobedience.

Given the invoked themes of economic power, national belonging and analogies with the above-mentioned Serbian uprising, this ‘symbolic violence’ has further implications for the Croatian nation-state. First, the economy itself has been historically constructed as the masculine domain, as W. R. Connell points out, “hegemonic forms of masculinity are historically derived from the growth of industrial capitalism and the growth of imperialism” (2005: 348). In this sense, capital oriented economy established “dominance through colonization”, which was structured around “the identification of the male/masculine with production in the money economy and the identification of the female/feminine with

reproduction and domestic” (Acker 2004: 24). It therefore comes as no surprise that the representatives of pro-project discourses in this debate were not just all powerful men, both politically or economically, that all reiterated basically the same idea – private economic investments should not be opposed as it is against Croatian national interests. The investor and the Mayor are the creators of the modern Zagreb and Croatia, one that reflects proper Western role models, and Minister as representative of the state is there to guarantee that such investments are secured from both obstruction and criticism. This relates to the idea that men, and those constructed as masculine, are at the productive end of gender dichotomy. Furthermore, as I have demonstrated with the same themes resonating between investor, Mayor and the Minister, the state itself was represented as masculine and capital oriented.

It is not just that Minister himself was constructed as masculine and authoritative figure, but through the use of repressive force revealed the state’s inability to assume control over the situation with other means than violence. Carol Brown analyses the ways in which states are inherently masculine since they demonstrate features that:

(...) signify, enact, sustain, and represent masculine power as a form of dominance. This dominance expresses itself as the power to describe and run the world and the power of access to women; it entails both a general claim to territory and claims to, about, and against specific “others”. (Brown 2004: 188)

In this case, the power was demonstrated both with excessive use of force and the Minister’s decidedly firm stance to mark the protests, and by extension the activists, as un-democratic. The atmosphere of his interview and resolute decisiveness to fight this ‘disorder’, with pronounced use of ‘we’ signalling the conflation between him, police forces and the state²⁶, is imbued with patriarchal motifs. As V. Spike Peterson has noticed:

²⁶ For example in the following excerpt from the interview: “**Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the police,** relies in their work completely on the legislation and protects the rights guaranteed by the law, an not rights of private investors. So **we** have acted in this case in accordance to article 7 of the Law on Police Duties and

Insofar as (hegemonic) masculinity is constituted as reason, order, and control, masculine domination is reproduced through conceptual systems that privilege male entitlement – to authority, power, property, nature (...) Historically, this normalization is inextricable from the state's interest in regulating sexual reproduction, undertaken primarily through controlling women's bodies, policing sexual activities, and instituting the heteropatriarchal family/household as the basic socio-economic unit. (1999:40)

Following on that, it is not only that the Minister himself embodies 'hegemonic masculinity', but also represents the state that can, through his actions, be seen as patriarchal and masculine. Peterson here points out to the state control over women's bodies and sexuality that are rendered subordinate, but it can also refer to those who are constructed as 'feminine'. Following Brown's points, control can also be interpreted as the power or ability to impose opinions and interpretations over situations, as opinions here put forward by the investor, Mayor and Minister. In these discourses, they were represented as agents of change and progress, those who bring prosperity and order when needed. They were indecisively posited as masculine, and with exception of investor, spoke in the name of higher authority – the city, state or government. Likewise, both Mayor and Minister have reiterated the same reasoning used by the investor, which by extension gave his arguments additional strength as the state placed its interest on the investor's side. In a sense, and from the way it was enacted, the state in this situation dominated through either direct use of repressive force or through signifying which values they are protecting, which both attest the masculine character of the state. This even further complicates the ways in which nation-state is imagined, and has a direct consequence for the way in which activists are portrayed in the same media discourses.

Feminized Activists

As it was previously mentioned, the protests against the project Flower Square were part of a campaign organized by two prominent Croatian non-governmental organizations,

Authorities. Reacting to allegations that **we** are protecting the 'big' capital, **I** can only say (...)" [emphasis is mine] (Jutarnji List, 17.7.2010)

Right to the City and Green Action, intended to draw media attention to the issues at stake, which kept the debate present in the media. Even though the discourses on this debate were diverse, what drew my attention towards these issues is their investment in positioning the activists in a way that invoked both gender and national distinctions. As I have demonstrated in the previous section, pro-project discourses put forward by the investor, Mayor and the Minister were not only more powerful in terms of the ability to impose their view on the debate, but also constructed as masculine. This in return enabled the representation of the activists in similar gendered manner, constructing their position as less powerful and therefore 'feminine'. In a sense, the activists were not openly described as women or feminine, but from the logic of their exclusion from this debate, it can be posited that in fact they were being signified as 'feminine'.

The web sites of *Jutarnji List*, and to a lesser degree *Večernji List*, published a considerable number of the photographs from the protests²⁷ where an interesting representational pattern emerged²⁸. The activists were presented basically in three ways - as marginalized, violent and 'alternative'. Often, the photographs featured a woman (either young or old) passively sitting, standing or expressing emotional distress. None of them were portrayed assuming 'active' roles in the protest, with exception if the actions that could be read as out of control. In them, women were standing, sitting or chatting with other people nearby as if these were images from everyday life rather than a protest. In comparison, some men were featured wearing banners with political messages or shouting, which in this case might signal assuming a more active role in the protest. In a sense, if women assumed the

²⁷ I refer to protests of the 18th and 20th of May and the 15th of July because they were the most photographed protests during the period that I analyse here, which made them suitable as an illustration of the processes that I describe. Further on, for my purposes here I consider the differences between the three protests less important, as I am interested in analysing how the activists were represented through images. It is for this reason that I will refer to them simply as protests.

²⁸ There was not much difference in photographs published on the sites of *Jutarnji List* and *Večernji List*. This is probably due to the fact that both newspapers often buy photographs from the same few independent photographers available. On the other hand, it might be significant to note that it is reflective of the same editorial politics in both newspapers, which obviously aimed at similar representations.

‘active’ positions, they were presented as being violent towards security guards or special police forces guarding the protests. Another way of depicting activist was by featuring older men, who were portrayed as quirky, but basically harmless, for instance when featured wearing ‘silly’ signs (like “Legalize Marijuana”). Both women and older men can be seen as the insignificant and un-productive part of society, and therefore not posing a ‘serious’ threat neither to the local government nor to execution of the project Flower Square. This can be interpreted as a strategy to represent the activists not only as mostly comprised of women, but in a more general way, as a marginalized social group. The fact that women were more featured in general is also a significant given the fact that women, even when assuming political roles, are often presented as irrelevant and marginal actors in the society (Helms 2003: 24). On the other hand, men did not completely disappear from the pictures, but their activities in the pictures from the protest were coded differently. If men were featured on the photographs, they were almost always young and presented as committing a violent act, either towards the special police forces or property²⁹. In addition to that, a lot of the photographs published featured only images of ‘masses’, construction site or considerable amount of both security and special police forces guarding it from the activists. Likewise, a number of photos featured people of both sexes presented as alternative and non-conventional.

As this short analysis of the pictures featured on the web sites of the newspapers shows, the representations of the activist were following particular gender logic, one based on ascribed ‘active’ and ‘passive’ roles. More to the point, judging by the published pictures, they seemed to be a group of young people (probably students) and pensioners that have no better way of spending their time then protesting on the streets, as images of middle aged, working women and men were missing. Based on my own experience of the protests, activists

²⁹ As this was a campaign that used non-violence as its main technique, incidents where activist would end up in physical conflict with either special police forces or security guards where rare. However, on rare occasions when such things did happen, the incidents would be disproportionally represented in the photographs to give the situation a more dramatic undertone.

were a more heterogeneous group than it was presented; one that included students, pensioners, young families, activists from non-governmental organisations, university professors and academics, as well as those with other steady jobs in public service and elsewhere. This is an important point, as the media representations and some of the discourses indicate that people protesting are only those that don't work and have 'too much free time on their hands'. This kind of representation went hand in hand with some of the discourses that were present in the media.

In this process certain themes appeared in the media that found their way into the discourses as well, such as those of political margins, nostalgia for state-socialism, nationality, and endangering of Croatia's economic interests. Some of these themes were also present in public discourse through the voices of state officials and the investor, as I have shown before. Thus, activists were often portrayed as a:

(...) colourful group of young enthusiasts who get easily aroused, and marginalized citizens who feel humiliated by the demonstration of wealth in pauperized metropolis of a sacked country. (...) [Celakoski³⁰] is the patron of these protests, tireless organizer of drumming, marching and monkeying around in cages and similar attempts of anti-globalists and bloodthirsty vegans. (Jutarnji List, 6.2.2010.)

Not only does this clearly posit activists as a marginalized group of ever-angry citizens, but it also compares them to anti-globalist demonstrations that tend to be marked as violent by the media. More importantly, even when these protests are not violent, the media representations still seem to emphasise acts of violence as a dominant way of portrayal (Adler and Mittelman 2004: 192). In addition, representing activists as young and violent seems to be a part of a more general media frame when reporting on protests such as those connected to the anti-globalist movement (ibidem), and there are similar attempts present in the discourses I analyse. In this example, links are also drawn between marginalized activists and non-

³⁰ Teodor Celakoski is the coordinator of the Right to the City and one of the leaders of the campaign against project Flower Square.

conventional lifestyles, such as veganism, in an attempt to further emphasise their marginality. Both associations to anti-globalist movement and veganism in the Croatian context are usually used to mark those who might be considered of ‘extreme left’ orientation, as vegans in public imagination are only linked to animal rights activists, anarchists or other members of similar types of social movements. In that manner, veganism as a nutritional style is fairly unknown in any other context.³¹

At times, these discourses emphasised not only the marginality of the activists, but also their general lack of direction in their overall discontent with ‘everything’:

It is fairly known who are the leaders of “varšavska street³² revolution”, among whom are mostly those who have abundance of free time (...) They are joined by those eternally rebellious young people who can’t wait for a chance to get involved in some mutiny, without taking the time to think whether or not they are being manipulated. In fact, they would protest with equal passion against bad conditions in the Zagreb’s ZOO, unrepaired garbage disposal sites, dismal looks of Dinamo’s stadium or too loud crows on Zagreb’s sky. (Jutarnji List, 13.2.2010.)

Here activists are not only young, but they seem to be manipulated and instrumentalized for political purposes, which they are unable to see through due to their age and lack of experience. In a sense, the fact that a number of these discourses refer to animals and animal-like behaviour can imply that this is not a serious political action if people are “monkeying around”. At the same time, it can also be a reference to those who stand for animal rights, as yet another social movement that is usually seen as marginal and politically left oriented.

Furthermore, what these discourses imply is that the activists themselves have a considerable amount of free time on their hands, which enables them to participate in these

³¹ Veganism, and to lesser extent vegetarianism, are generally poorly known in Zagreb and Croatia that there are virtually no restaurants of this sort in Zagreb. With exception of few macrobiotic restaurants, which do not advertise as vegetarian or vegan, these lifestyles seem very exotic and unknown to many Croatians, who traditionally prefer a more meat based diet.

³² The name of the street where protests were held and where one of the construction sites of the project Flower Square was placed was Varšavska Street. In the original excerpt, the name of the street was written with small capital letter purposefully to diminish the positive implications of the term revolution.

kinds of activities. Having ‘too much free time’ on one’s hands, is how the period of state-socialism was imagined to be:

[the investor] is constantly targeted by a small, but loud group of citizens, some kind of remnant of the ex-Socialist Alliance [*bivšeg Soc. Saveza*]. They believe that they are the only ones who have the right to the city, including the right to call the investor and his famous architect Podrecca social vermin. Resistance to the transformation of rotten sheds into crystal spaces³³ has culminated in the recent violent blockade of the construction site. (Večernji List, 16.2.2010)

The theme of non-working culture as a characteristic of Yugoslav state-socialism appeared in works of Croatian sociologist Josip Županov (1996).³⁴ He claimed that due to the fact that all wages were kept at similar levels, the workers in Yugoslavia were not motivated to put all their efforts into labour, and therefore minimized “their work contribution to the lowest acceptable levels” (1996: 437). This theme was then picked up by the Croatian political and academic elites during the 1990s, and used in academic work and media to account for economic regression or lack of expected progress, that was ascribed to the lingering “socialist mentality” and “bad socio-cultural capital” inherited from the previous period (Prica 2007: 178-179). In a sense, the ‘non-working culture of Yugoslavia’ became a widely known trope used in media to explain Croatia’s unsuccessful attempts to join European union in the mid 1990s. In relation to that trope, the implication of this quote is that the activists were aiming at some sort of regression to the previous ‘evolutionary phase’, i.e. socialism, both because they would then have free time to protest, and because their dissatisfaction with the project is seen as inimical to Croatia’s economic and capitalist interests. In a sense, using references to state-socialism nostalgia is a serious attempt to defame activists as those who live in a past that has

³³ As I have shown in the previous chapter, the metaphors of rotten sheds transformed into crystal spaces was one of the common themes that allowed the place of Flower Square itself to be not just constructed as backward and belonging to past, but also gendered.

³⁴ Županov became widely known and acclaimed precisely for his research on working culture and the specificities of socialist self-management system during state-socialism. He was interested in changes in the Yugoslav economic system and its developments, often pointing out to its fallacies (see Lalić 2005). However, he was not considered a dissident and was enjoyed a tenure at the University of Zagreb as a professor on Faculty of Economic and Faculty of Political Sciences.

no place in contemporary politics of the Croatian nation-state, which was an argument often used and appropriated both in the pro-project media discourses as well as by the state and government officials.

The activists were not just seen as nostalgic towards socialism because of the objection to a private investment, but also because they were blocking the work at the construction site, and therefore endangering the investment itself. This, in turn, was presented as inflicting tremendous damage to the Croatian economy:

Self-proclaimed protectors of the city's interests, urban guerrillas that call themselves Green Action and Right to the City, has managed once more to make life worse for the conductors of the project Flower Pass³⁵ by filing a complaint to the Municipal Office for Constructions, which originally approved occupation of the part of Varšavska street for construction (...) Do we really need this in these times of crisis and recession, when the construction industry is down on its knees and thousands of workers face discharges, another Taliban diversion of the project Flower Passage, which the city proclaimed as its public interest, and which is being built with all the permission and according to the idea of esteemed European architect Boris Podrecca? (Jutarnji List, 22.1.2010)

It is noteworthy that, in the first half of this quote, what gets compared with urban guerrilla warfare tactics is not the blockade of the construction site, but the formal procedure of filing a complaint challenging the legality of the actions undertaken by the investor. The later reference to "Taliban diversion", on the other hand, relates to the blockade itself. The journalist in question clearly implies that any form of action against this project is almost irrational and incomprehensible, which extends even to legal actions that are then perceived as harmful and violent. Likewise, the fact that militant means and groups are evoked here in comparison to activists, and due to the prevailed discourse on "global war on terror", these are warning signs to the readers that the people in question are not just violent and disrespectful, but also a general threat to Croatian nation-state integrity. The comparison is also denigrating

³⁵ Sometimes the Flower Square project was referred to as Flower Pass, because the initial project was imagined as a passage that would connect the Square with another street. However, this was abandoned early in the project due to investor's inability to buy the building from the same block that was necessary for such intervention.

because it suggests that the methods and actions undertaken by activists are somehow ‘primitive’ and unbefitting of Western democracies. It however remains an unaddressed discrepancy, given that activists are posited as a marginalized, radical and small group, how they can be of any serious threat to either the Croatian economy or the execution of this project.

In addition, part of the media discourses was drawing analogies between activists and nationalist tensions in Croatia of the early 1990s, which was also made by the Zagreb’s mayor Bandić and investor Horvatinčić. The same associations are echoed in the statement of Davor Jelavić, Head of the Department for Planning in the Municipality of Zagreb, who stated that these activities against the project Flower Square “remind him of the barricades from the 1991” (Jutarnji List, 5.2.2010), clearly linking current protests to the barricades made by Serbian rebels in the area of Knin in Croatia, on the eve of violent dissolution of Yugoslavia. In similar tone, one of the journalists writes that “compassionate citizens were bringing them [activists] tea and sandwiches, probably yoghurts as well, as befits every ‘yoghurt-revolution’ and ‘happening of the People’” (Jutarnji List, 13.2.2010). Both terms used here originate from nationalistic propaganda of Slobodan Milošević in the early 1990s.

As Nicole Lindstrom and Maple Rasza show, Croatian political elite in the 1990s structured the national identity around issues of victimhood from Serbian aggression, and was invested in producing as much difference between the two nations as possible (2004: 633-634). In that sense since the 1990s, Serbs came to be seen as the violent Others in Croatia. The analogies to Serb rebels in Knin in 1991 and activists protesting against the Flower Square project are very strong. The Serb rebels, or protesters as they are sometimes called, were an armed group of extreme nationalists that occupied and forcefully separated themselves territorially from the Croatian nation-state, forming a new identity of the Republic

of Serbian Krajina. In short, the Serb rebels were heavily armed, violent and above all endangering the integrity of the Croatian nation-state. On the other hand, activists were a group of openly non-violent Croatian citizens who chose to express their dissatisfaction with local politics through peaceful means and passive resistance. Clearly, the discrepancy between the two poles of this comparison is colossal, but the reasoning behind such comparison is even more interesting. As the activists were endangering Croatia's economic prosperity, trying to stop the project from progressing, the metaphors equating the Serbs separatist aspirations, which literally rendered the roads impassable by blocking them with logs, and activists blocking the construction works came as the ultimate attempt to discredit the latter by symbolically conflating them with Croatia's inimical Others. The implications of these analogies are even more serious, as they directly stand not only as a reference to the violent and anti-Croatian rebellion, but also engage with questions of citizenship, national belonging and state imagining.

The Other Among Us: Exclusion and Gender in the Croatian Nation-State

(re)imagination

So far, I have demonstrated in what ways gender was one of the principles through which the debate surrounding the Flower Square project was organized. To put it differently, the manner in which the main actors were portrayed and the pro-project discourses were constructed is indicative of the forms in which gender can be considered as one of the organising principles in society (Massey 1994: 182). In fact, in the discourses I analyse notions of gender and nation-state belonging seem to be inextricably bound, as they often emerge together. In this final section, I address some of the implications of the described and analysed processes, and explore further the intersection between gender and nation-state imagining processes, and its consequences.

As I have pointed out earlier, the reason why I have decided to focus on the pro-project discourses, rather than that which I call ‘alternative’, is because they seemed to be imbued with gender and nationalist themes. Those who advocated and supported the project, such as the investor, the Mayor and the Minister, were constructed as not just powerful figures in Croatian society, but were being represented through their masculinity as well. In fact, topics such as economic development, capital investments and progress of the Croatian nation-state were also presented as strong and masculine values connected with West. In addition, it is not just that the state power was represented through discourses of masculinity, but in practice as well. The Minister’s big ‘no’ to the protests, that were in his opinion threatening democracy, was one such instance where decisive and repressive means served to buttress state masculinity in action. In a sense, the opposing side had to be ‘put in place’ and shown ‘who wears the pants in this house [state]’. This resonates with Doreen Massey’s argument that spatial control, whether symbolic or literal, is reflective of the way in which gender as a category operates in societies (1994: 182). More to the point, this discursively places activists in the same subordinate position in relation to the state, as women are to men since the “conceptual ordering of masculine over feminine is inextricable from political ordering imposed in state-making and reproduced through masculinist discourse (political theory, religious dogma) that legitimizes the state’s hierarchical relations” (Peterson 1999: 40). In other words, state power is not only hierarchical, but deeply gendered as well. In addition, this is not to say that there is only one way in which either actors or nation-states can be related to masculinity, or that there is only one masculinity to begin with, but more how notions of gender at different times get re-appropriated for different purposes; in this case to exclude the opposition that was constructed in return as feminine.

Exactly this led to the gendered representation of the activists in the media that I have analysed here. The media discourses that emphasised mainly women as protests participants,

juxtaposed with a strong narrative from those in power constructed as masculine, were in turn constructing activists as feminine. Further more, in the media discourses they were compared to Croatia's well-known Others – the Serbs and socialism – to further emphasise that their opinion and actions should be disregarded. As Rada Iveković argues, “the symbolic system of nationalism in fact needs the construction of the ‘the Other’ as an indirect means for its domination”, where the domination/subordination dichotomy is organized around gender difference (1993: 115). It is because:

The political and symbolic systems are “male” because the historically dominant gender is male, not in the sense that it is the responsibility of every individual man or of maleness as such. (...) These privileges remain attached to the dominant group like “karma” because the past also constitutes the present. (ibidem: 115)

This can be related to the ways in which media representations presented the investor, the Mayor, and the Minister as masculine, to further emphasise their political and symbolic power in decisions over the fate of the Flower Square project. Even though domination itself is constructed as a masculine privilege, this does not mean that what constitutes ‘privilege’ and ‘masculinity’ does not change over time. In a sense, privilege can be the potential to create images of Others without directly referring to nationalist sentiments, as this creates imaginary borders between groups. The separation is, thus, in itself imbued with gender and power (Sullivan cited in Joseph 1997: 76). In a similar vein, Dubravka Žarkov shows that, in nationalistic discourses in Croatian press during the 1990s, the body of the Other is always gendered and ethnic as a part of the representational media strategy that creates a “particular ethnic geography” (2007: 153). In the case of the representation of activists and the comparison with Serbs, not only to evoke images of violence of relatively the recent war between Serbia and Croatia, but also to remind of the Serbian aggression over Croatia (Razsa

and Lindstrom 2004: 633).³⁶ In a sense, this was the most effective way of arguing that they should be excluded from political decisions. Since Serbs in Croatia were generally represented as a potential threat to Croatia's newly acquired independency in 1991, so too activists were being presented as potentially threatening, since they protested against Flower Square project that was considered of national relevance. In other words, the state was being constructed as powerful and masculine, while activists were being represented as feminized and powerless. This resonates with Joan W. Scott's point that political power relations are inherently gendered, as they at the same time establish "the meaning of the male/female opposition...[as part of the] fixed, outside of the human construction, part of the natural or divine order" (1986: 1073). This can explain why metaphors signalling power domination or submission are 'naturally' accompanied by the gendered representations in the case of the masculine Croatian state and feminized activists.

The other comparison that came up in these discourses 'naturally' referred back to state-socialism or Yugoslavia. The image of 'freeloading' 'feminized' activists that oppose capitalism is an invocation of socialism that has very negative connotations; one that limits individualism, as well as promotes the non-working culture stereotype that surrounds memories about socialism in Croatia. This "ghost of socialism" underlying discourses was very much in line with what Susan Gal has noticed in Hungary, that various social groups legitimized themselves against what they imagine as socialism (1994: 284). The fact that this exclusion of activists was coming from the state was significant because it reinforced its power to decide who gets to be the right kind of citizen in the Croatian imagined community

³⁶ I do not want to pass value judgments here on who was the 'aggressor' and who was the 'victim', or oversimplify the discussion of the complex relationship between Serbia and Croatia after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. However, I am pointing out here that the general perception in Croatia at the time, was that Serbia committed an act of aggression against Croatia. There is no doubt that this perception is supported and promulgated by the mainstream media even today. Similar statements were repeated in the context of recent conviction of the Croatian general Ante Gotovina, for the war crimes committed against Serbs in Croatia during the operation "Storm", at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

(see Joseph 1997:88), and was further normalized by the gendered depictions of the main actors in the media. As I have stated earlier, this differentiation process was visible in the way the place of Flower Square was itself constructed as ‘feminine’, legitimizing therefore the need for intervention of the Flower Square project, one that transforms it into a place where belonging to Western Europe is proved.

Conclusion

In my analysis of the debate around the Flower Square project and the media discourses that surrounded it, I have attempted to demonstrate several points. First of all, I have tried to show how nationalism in the Croatian context is still a powerful discursive mechanism, one that can be constructed around issues that may appear unrelated for its interest. When the debate around the project Flower Square was happening, there was no apparent reason for mobilization of the nationalistic discourses. However, their appearance as well as their structure, has signalled that the Croatian nation-state imagination is still in dialogue with ideas about the Balkans, socialism and recent war with Serbia. It is after all that, the threat of Other, whether constructed as threatening or just simply challenging national interests, that often serves as a catalyst for such nationalistic narratives. Secondly, I have tried to show that these discourses were invoked purposefully to marginalize and exclude those who did not agree with the execution of the Flower Square project. In that regard, they are powerful tools in producing exclusions within a society, as well as gendered national identity. Furthermore, my project is relevant for the study of gendered nationalism in the post-conflict Croatian context, as other have ostensibly discussed only the formation of Croatian national identity in the context of recent wars that followed dissolution of Yugoslavia.

In that sense, I have attempted to argue and demonstrate, along with others, not just that nationalism is one type of cultural discourse that creates and recreates exclusions, “Us” as opposed to “Them”, but that the very nature of these divisions is gendered. In that way, nationalism as a cultural phenomenon cannot be understood without the study of gender relations within the society. However, this does not imply that these are in any way ‘fixed’

positions, or that they rely on one pre-given notions of either masculinity or femininity. Through my project I attempted to show not only how gender shapes the nationalist narratives, but also how different dichotomies, such as progress/tradition, capitalism/socialism, present/past and others that are part of these discourses, get gendered themselves. In that way, these gendered dichotomies further support and construct one side as dominant and powerful, and the other as submissive and powerless. Through these processes, power relations are produced and established, values are imposed, and ultimately gendered imaginations of nation-states are created.

In the end, my intention here was not to either analyse all media discourses on this case, or propose any kind of particular conclusion about the Croatian media as such. Even though this undoubtedly plays an important factor in examining the media representations, and especially reporting on debates such as that of Flower Square project, it would require a much more extensive and rigorous study of not just present narratives but also media ownership structures, authors, editorial politics and more broadly overall media culture in Croatia. Furthermore, my intention was not to suggest anything about how the public might have read or understood these messages, as this would have demanded a somewhat different approach. However, I do acknowledge that this would have made my analysis more complete and holistic, and can be one of the directions in which this research can be broadened. Likewise, I am aware that to a certain extent my analysis of the masculine state and feminine activists is incomplete. Not only are these complex processes that have multiple implications and meanings, but each one of the tropes I have touched upon that links these gendered representations the actors, needs more in-depth examination to fully address all the implications that could be made. Finally, there are numerous other research questions and topics that could come out of this project. For instance, this research has not ventured into the analysis of the politics of public spaces or global socio-economical relations that shape them.

Likewise, my research could be further contextualised within a broader discussion of the complicated relationship between Croatia and European Union, as well as contribute to the discussion about social movements, political culture and development of democracy in post-socialist societies.

In the end, my research has tried to show how both ideas about nation-state, as well as about gender, confound even debates that seem unrelated and irrelevant for the discussion of gendered nationalism. Likewise, I have attempted to disclose the ways in which dichotomies are constructed, naturalized and gendered, and above all crucial for the ways in which nation-states are imagined.

Bibliography

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 783-790.
- Acker, Joan. "Gender, Capitalism and Globalization." *Critical Sociology* 30, no. 1 (2004): 17-41.
- Adler, Glenn, and James H. Mittelman. "Reconstitution 'Common-sense' Knowledge: Representations of Globalization Protests." *International Relations* 18, no. 2 (2004): 189-211.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Anthias, Floya, and Nira Yuval-Davis. "Introduction." In *Woman-Nation-State*, by Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, 6-11. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Babha, Homi. "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse." In *Location of Culture*, by Homi Babha, 85-93. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Bakić-Hayden, Milica, and Robert Hayden. "Orientalist Variations on the Theme "Balkans": Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics." *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (1992): 1-15.
- Bakic-Hayden, Milica. "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia." *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 917-931.
- Bracewell, Wendy. "Rape in Kosovo: masculinity and Serbian nationalism." *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 4 (2000): 563-590.
- Brown, Wendy. In *The Anthropology of the State. A Reader.*, by Aradhana Sharma and Gupta Akhil, 187-211. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Cerwonka, Allaine. "Policing the Body Politic: Mapping Bodies and Spaces in Fitzroy." In *Native to the Nation. Disciplining Landscapes and Bodies in Australia.*, by Allaine Cerwonka, 151-195. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Connell, R. W., and Julian Wood. "Globalization and Business Masculinities." *Men and Masculinities* 7, no. 4 (2005): 347-364.
- Connell, R.W. "Arms and the Man: Using the New Research on Masculinity to Understand Violence and Promote Peace in the Contemporary World." In *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence. A Culture of Peace Perspective*, by Ingeborg Breines, R.W. Connell and Ingrid Eide, 21-33. Paris: UNESCO, 2000.
- Dingsdale, Alan. *Mapping Modernities. Geographies of Central and Eastern Europe, 1920-2000*. Routledge, 2002.
- Douglas, Mary. "Introduction." In *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, by Mary Douglas, 1-6. London and New York: Routledge.
- Žarkov, Dubravka. *The Body of War. Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-up of Yugoslavia*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007.

Županov, Josip. "The social legacy of communism." *Društvena istraživanja* 22, no. 2 (1996): 425-255.

Ferguson, James, and Akhil Gupta. "Spatializing states: toward an ethnography of the neoliberal governmentality." *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 4 (2002): 981-1002.

Gal, Susan. "Gender in the Post-Socialist Transition: The Abortion Debate in Hungary." *East European Politics and Societies*, 1994: 256-286.

Gal, Susan, and Gail Klingman. "After Socialism." In *The Politics of Gender after Socialism. A Comparative-Historical Essay*, by Susan Gal and Gail Klingman, 3-15. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Gupta, Akhil. "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State." *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 2 (1995): 375-402.

Gupta, Akhil. "The Song of the Nonaligned World: Transnational Identities and the Reinscription of Space in Late Capitalism." In *The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture.*, by Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga, 321-336. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson. "Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference." In *Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 33-51. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997.

Harvey, David. "The Political Economy of Public Space." In *The Politics of Public Space*, by Setha Low and Neil Smith, 17-34. London: Routledge, 2006.

Helms, Elissa. "East and West Kiss: Gender, Orientalism and Balkanism in Muslim-Majority Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Slavic Review* 67, no. 1 (2008): 88-119.

Helms, Elissa. "Women as Agents of Ethnic Reconciliation? Womens NGOs and International Intervention in the Post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Women Studies International Forum* 26, no. 1 (2003): 15-33.

Inda, X. Jonathan, and Renato Rosaldo. "Introduction: A World in Motion." In *The Anthropology of Globalization*, by X. Jonathan Inda and Renato Rosaldo, 1-34. London and New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Iveković, Rada. "Women, Nationalism and War: "Make Love Not War". " *Hypatia* 8, no. 4 (1993): 113-126.

Jansen, Stef. "Svakodnevni orijentalizam: doživljaj „Balkana“/ „Evrope“ u Beogradu i Zagrebu." *Filozofija i društvo* 18 (2002): 33-72.

Kuper, Hilda. "The Language of Sites in the Politics of Space." In *The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture.*, by Setha Low and Denise Lawrence Zuniga, 247-263. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Lewis, Martin, and Karen Wigen. "The Spatial Construct of Orient and Occident, East and West." In *The Myth of Continents*, by Martin Lewis and Karen Wigen, 47-72. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

- Lindstrom, Nicole, and Maple Rasza. "Balkan is Beautiful: Balkanism in the political discourse of Tudman's Croatia." *East European Politics and Societies* 18, no. 4 (2004): 628-650.
- Massey, Doreen. *Space, place, and gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.
- McClintock, Anne. "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family." *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 61-80.
- McDonogh Wray, Gary. "Myth, Space and Virtue: Bars, Gender, and Change in Barcelona's Bairro Chino." In *The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture.*, by Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga, 264-283. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Mosse, George L. "Introduction: Nationalism and Respectability." In *Nationalism and sexuality: middle-class morality and sexual norms in modern Europe*, by George L. Mosse, 1-22. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- Mostov, Julie. "Sexing the nation/desexing the body: the politics of national identity in former Yugoslavia." In *Gender Ironies of Nationalism*, by Tamar Meyer, 91-110. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Nagel, Joane. "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1998: 242-269.
- Prica, Ines. "In search of a post-socialist subject." *Narodna umjetnost* 44, no. 1 (2007): 163-186.
- Scott Wallach, Joan. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075.
- Setha, Low. "How Private Interests Take Over Public Space: Zoning, Taxes, and Incorporation of Gated Communities." In *The Politics of Public Space*, by Setha Low and Neil Smith, 81-105. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Sibely, David. *Geographies of Exclusion. Society and Difference in the West*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Spike Peterson, V. "Sexing Political Identities/Nationalism as Heterosexism." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1, no. 1 (1999): 34-65.
- Suad, Joseph. "The Public/Private - The Imagined Boundary in the Imagined Nation/State/Community: The Lebanese Case." *Feminist Review* 57, no. 1 (1997): 73-92.
- Todorova, Maria. "In the Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism." *Slavic Review* 64, no. 1 (2005): 140-164.
- Todorova, Maria. "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention." *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 453-482.
- Waetjen, Thembisa. "The Limits of Gender Rhetoric for Nationalism: A Case Study From Southern Africa." *Theory and Society*, 2001: 121-152.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender and Nation*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Appendix

- Fabrio, Bisera. 2010. Mogli biste biti prva liga, a vama smeta rampa. Globus, 1.6.2010.
- Kovačević, J. 2010. Bandić: Projekt Tome Horvatinčića od javnog je interesa. Jutarnji.hr [Online] 10.2.2010. Available at: <http://www.jutarnji.hr/milan-bandic--projekt-tome-horvatincica-na-cvjetnom-trgu-je-od-javnog-interesa/550939/> [Accessed 15 November 2010]
- Kuljiš, D. 2008. Žele li ustanci s Cvjetnog trga srušiti Esplanadu? Globus, 1.2.2008. p. 114.
- Kuljiš, D. 2008. Arhitektonski guru srednje Europe. Globus, 7.3.2008. p. 50.
- Kuljiš, D. 2010. Greške u koracima veebnog investitora: zar Horvatinčić ništa nije naučio od drugih? Jutarnji list, 6.2.2010. p. 82.
- Malić, G. 2010. Karamarko: ne štitimo tajkune! Jutarnji List, 17.7.2010. p. 1
- Mirković, N. 2009. Zašto nam je i smrt draža od promjena. Jutarnji List, 10.1.2009. p. 26.
- Mirković, N. 2009. Nakon projekta Cvjetni, Zagreb će biti kao Milano. Jutarnji List, 24.1.2010. p. 22
- Pavičić, J. 2010. Hrvatska gibanica: Zašto Urša ne podnosi Tomu. Večernji List, 12.2.2010. p.33
- Penić, G. 2010. Cvjetni – politička osveta ili megazahvat bez strategije? Jutarnji List, 20.3.2010. p. 13
- Vugrinec, G. 2010. Skupština traži Bandićevu ostavku i hitan prestanak radova u Varšavskoj. Jutarnji.hr [Online] 20.7.2011. Available at: <http://www.jutarnji.hr/tomislav-horvatincic--nece-me-sprijeciti-balvan-revolucija/553126/> [Accessed 15 November 2010]
- Žutelija, Ž. 2010. Graditelji na meti razgraditelja grada. Jutarnji List, 22.1.2010.
- Žutelija, Ž. 2010. Lice i naličje Varšavske: Za dobitak partije ponekad se mora žrtvovati figura. Jutarnji list, 13.2.2010. p. 82