

BOJAN BILIĆ
London, UK

“MOVEMENTISING” THE MARGINAL. RECRUITMENT TO THE ANTI-WAR CAMPAIGN OF CROATIA

The operation of the *Anti-War Campaign of Croatia* has remained under-theorised in spite of its importance for the present-day human rights oriented civic scene in this post-Yugoslav country. This paper draws upon in-depth interviews and documentary sources to examine both structural and motivational factors that propelled individuals towards participation in the *Anti-War Campaign*. Given that the war in the 1990s was perceived by the Croatian authorities and the general public as an act of aggression, the anti-war undertakings of its citizens were precarious and dangerous activities. In accordance with the McAdam model of recruitment to high-risk activism, this paper shows that the participants in the *Anti-War Campaign* were already involved in an extensive network of activist ties. The anti-war engagement was closely related to prior civil rights activity as well as to biographical availability. The Croatian anti-war activists in the early 1990s were predominantly urban university students or recent graduates occupying the narrow niche between freedom from parental supervision and the absence of adult responsibilities.

Key words: *Anti-War Campaign of Croatia*, high-risk activism, recruitment

Even twenty years after its establishment, the *Anti-War Campaign of Croatia* (AWCC) has remained surprisingly under-theorised. This organisation was founded in July 1991 as a network of individuals and civic initiatives that opposed the wars of Yugoslav succession and attempted to lessen their consequences. The *Campaign* had intended to operate throughout the entire Yugoslav territory, but this proved impossible to realise by the end of 1991. Although it does not exist anymore in its initial form, the AWCC has left in its wake a political legacy which

is highly relevant for understanding the processes of both Croatian and regional civic organising during and after the Yugoslav wars.

This paper draws upon documentary sources and in-depth interviews with the AWCC protagonists to illuminate an important aspect of the *Campaign's* operation – the mechanisms of *recruitment* to its activities. Organising and taking part in anti-war civic initiatives is particularly complex if done in a community which perceives itself as a victim of armed aggression. In such circumstances, dissenters assume a distinctly unstable position: they affirm their commitment to the society in which they operate by arguing in favour of a value system different from the one widely accepted (Bilić 2011). High-risk contention taking place in a volatile political climate, as the one in which the AWCC operated for years, can bring activists' well-being in danger. That is why this kind of engagement accentuates the importance of the question of *differential recruitment* (Jenkins 1983:528). Why is it that some individuals – who, in principle, oppose the war – decide to become involved in hazardous civic undertakings about the effects of which they are completely incognizant, while others opt for conformity and lack of action? What are the (micro-)structural and individual features that distinguish participants from abstainers?

Factors responsible for variation in movement participation have been central for a considerable amount of social movement research in the last four decades (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Jenkins 1983; McAdam 1986). However, the overwhelming sociological focus on low-risk instances of activism taking place around the globe on a daily basis has obscured the possibly different recruitment dynamics of high-risk public engagement. Recruitment patterns are influenced by the potential costs associated with political contention and one could assume that a combination of structural and attitudinal variables guiding participation differs from one form of civic activism to another.

Social Movement Theorising across Countries and Cultures

This paper approaches Croatian anti-war activism from a social movement perspective which has not been sufficiently employed in studies that document instances of resistance to the wars of Yugoslav succession (e.g. Dević 1997; Fridman 2011). The activists generally dispute the use of the term *movement* when referring to the Croatian/Yugoslav anti-war contention because of its quantitative marginality. Nevertheless, this practice should not deter researchers from employing the conceptual apparatus which has been developed within the Anglo-Saxon field of social movement studies. The vast majority of intellectual means – concepts and theories – that we have at our disposal for understanding contentious politics stem from the socio-political

context of Western democracies whose structural similarities enable relatively unproblematic comparisons (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi *et al.* 1995). Although this scholarship has enriched our knowledge of political contention, one wonders about the extent to which it is applicable to a variety of un- or semi-democratic political environments in which an appreciable number of contentious events take place around the world.

Tarrow (1998:19) observes that “political process models were seldom systematically applied outside the liberal democracies of the West”. Such a lacuna has been noticed by other researchers as well, and it has been recently given more attention within the *dynamics of contention* research programme (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2004). This agenda summarises and advances previous research on the operation of social movements with an increasing emphasis on high-risk factors influencing activism outside of its most frequently documented milieu (Alimi 2009).

Analytical comparisons and contention theorising across countries and cultures is possible due to the fact that people all over the globe – in both national and trans-national arrangements – are coming together in public space urging for a change. Their numbers, discontents, aspirations and methods vary as a function of the nature of any single political setting. They are shaped by the traditions of the environment in which collective engagement takes place. Whereas in some countries people may dispute decisions that do not substantively impact on their lives, in others they go into the streets to defend fundamental values, such as peace and freedom. Whatever their motivations, the underlying processes of coming together, marshalling resources, choosing among strategic options, forging group cohesion, pressurising authorities as well as professionalising or disintegrating are basically the same. This is so even when taking into consideration Tilly’s argument (2005) that each of these groups at any single time in history has at its disposal a finite amount of culturally conditioned protest methods (‘repertoires of contention’). Gordy (1999) maintains that nationalist-authoritarian countries are neither so unique nor isolated in today’s world to resist comparisons with contemporary liberal democracies which also have their control mechanisms and marginalised alternative elements. That is why he points to the necessity of appreciating cultural developments which cannot be channelled and expressed through the institutional apparatus of insufficiently democratic states.

Although this paper cannot compare protest recruitment patterns across countries – which would constitute a worthwhile enterprise – I depart from the argument that it is not impossible to transfer contention concepts developed within Western academia to a culturally and politically different setting. As a matter of fact, such a “cross-fertilisation” between Western conceptual means for studying civic engagement, on the one hand, and the non-Western episodes of contention, on the other, can be fruitful if it is appreciative of the geographical and historical

specificities of the environment to which the concepts are introduced. Thus, drawing upon and testing a recruitment model stemming from the Anglo-Saxon political context, this paper promotes cross-cultural exchange within the sphere of social movement studies.

Such a conceptual dialogue is all the more important given the fact that the preponderance of the Anglo-Saxon social movement scholarship has led to a specific *bias* in anti-war engagement research. Anti-war activism which takes place in Western democracies is, in principle, removed from war-torn areas. These civic enterprises have to do with the activists' efforts to pressurise governments to withdraw from military involvement in far-away places which are not under their sovereign jurisdiction. Protestors in the West operate within relatively stable legal systems which, while prescribing sanctions for law infringement, assure the right to non-violent political contention. Given that political authorities are the primary targets of such grievances, I call this form of engagement *indirect anti-war activism* (Bilić 2011).

The current paper offers an account of anti-war contention recruitment taking place in an environment in which an armed conflict actually occurred. In unstable political climates and in states of emergency during war, there is a further restriction of human rights and freedoms (which in such milieus might not be fully respected even in times of peace). This makes the dynamics of political contention undertaken by Croatian anti-war activists different from that of their Western counterparts (Bilić 2011). Given that their actions and political grievances do not address solely their governments, the general public and those directly affected by the war (soldiers, recruits, conscientious objectors, refugees, etc.), but also comprise interventions (such as in the Croatian case – preventing forceful evictions), I call this kind of engagement *direct anti-war activism*. The AWCC is a good example of direct anti-war contention.

McAdam's Model of Recruitment to High-Risk Activism

McAdam's (1986; 1988) classic work on the 1964 Mississippi *Freedom Summer* project introduces an important distinction between “low-” and “high-risk” activisms and proposes a model of recruitment to the latter. *Freedom Summer* was a political campaign organised in Mississippi in 1964 with the aim to increase the percentage of black voters who were traditionally excluded from participation in American political life. The project brought volunteers (of predominantly white background) from some of the best universities across the United States to help to decrease the level of segregation and develop a grassroots movement among Mississippi's African-American community.

McAdam analysed the applications for participation in the *Freedom Summer* campaign which provided information on organisational affiliations and prior activist experience, records of previous arrests, reasons for volunteering, etc. He realised that the research on recruitment processes generally did not take into account the fact that participation in some civic initiatives is more costly/risky than in others. He claimed that “cost refers to the expenditures of time, money and energy that are required of a person engaged in any particular form of activism” whereas “risk refers to the anticipated dangers – whether legal, social, physical, financial, and so forth – of engaging in a particular type of activity. While the act of signing a petition is always low *cost*, the *risk* of doing so may, in certain contexts, be quite high” (McAdam 1986:67).

With the distinction between low and high-risk/cost engagement in mind, McAdam posited that the recruitment process is closely related to the (perception of) levels of risk/cost that a certain civic action entails. He went on to claim that micro-structural factors are crucial in differentiating between participants and non-participants or withdrawals. For example, the eventual participants in the *Freedom Summer* programme – an instance of high-risk action – scored higher than withdrawals on measures pertaining to the strength of their integration into activist networks. *Structural location* in relation to the project’s objectives – the scope of person’s ties to other applicants and already known activists – was the strongest predictor of campaign participation. Those applicants who had close friends participate in the programme were themselves more likely to take part in it.

However, this finding should not undermine the relevance of the applicants’ attitudes and values for their chances of participating in high-risk contention. On the basis of the result that both participants and withdrawals show similar levels of support on attitudinal measures, McAdam argued that attitudinal affinity and *biographical availability* are necessary, but not sufficient reasons for taking part in high-risk activism. Entrance into risky civic enterprises is a consequence of a combination of structural and individual motivational factors. Strong ideological identification needs to be accompanied by a prior history of activism as well as by a supportive position within the already existing activist networks. Thus, McAdam generally expected that participants in high-risk political contention would have a prior history of activism, express commitment to the ideology of the movement (attitudinal affinity), be members of more or less tightly organised activist networks (structural location) as well as be free of personal or professional constraints which would make their engagement problematic (biographical availability).

By following and “testing” McAdam’s model, my analysis of high-risk activism recruitment in the early 1990s Croatia replicates a methodological shortcoming which has plagued a lot of social movement research: it – to employ statistical terminology – samples on the dependent variable. This is to say that scholars

studying social movements tend to take into consideration only movement “members” when enquiring about the characteristics which separate movement sympathisers from abstainers. Such a research design, which has been recently corrected (e.g. Beyerlein and Hipp 2006), does not consider the general population and cannot account for the difference(s) between the two groups.

Given that I am aware of this shortcoming, it is not my intention to come up with statistical generalisations or examine more recent recruitment models that also sample from the general population. Rather, I use the theoretical advances in the area of differential recruitment as guidelines for collecting and analysing my empirical material. I look for the ways in which Croatian anti-war activists negotiate the path that took them to anti-war contention during the wars of Yugoslav succession and I examine this empirical corpus through the lens of McAdam’s theoretical considerations.

***Svarun* – the Main Precursor of the AWCC**

Svarun was a small Zagreb-based activist organisation founded in 1986 and named after the Slavic god of the Sun, fire and sky. It defined itself as *Radna grupa za ekološke, pacifističke, feminističke i duhovne inicijative* (Working Group for Environmental, Pacifist, Feminist and Spiritual Initiatives) and gathered a younger (post-1968) generation of Croatian political activists who were at that time students at the University of Zagreb. This group was a Croatian reaction to the global revival of the 1980s feminist and ecological movements and it was active in improving environmental awareness, publishing brochures, and organising protests against the use of nuclear energy. Towards the end of the 1980s, anti-nuclear initiatives were quite popular in Yugoslavia (especially after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986) and *Svarun* activists gathered signatures for a petition against the construction of a second Yugoslav nuclear plant which was supposed to be located near Zagreb. As two members of the group remember:

Activist 1: Svarun was formed by a small group of friends. The Chernobyl catastrophe played a very important role in mobilising people and making them understand that ecological concerns were justified and that all of us had to pay attention to them.

*Activist 2: I think that the links from the 1980s were crucial for our activism... we all had personal acquaintances and the core of the *Anti-War Campaign* was created on the basis of these acquaintances from the 1980s and then other people somehow joined... then, also within the AWCC, I found people with whom I could cooperate and develop friendships.¹*

¹ Interviews with the author, Zagreb, July 2011.

Aside from environmentalist issues² which, as in other places, were inherently political, *Svarun* was concerned with the promotion of the idea that conscientious objection was a human right.

People who, due to their religious, humanitarian or philosophic-political convictions cannot bear arms or serve in the military are punished and imprisoned for up to ten years. Once they are freed, they are drafted and then imprisoned again. This can go on until they are 30 years of age [...] We think that the work of these young people in health, social or similar institutions – which already exists in many other countries – could be more useful for all. (As cited in Oštrić 2010:37)

Although the Yugoslav regime insisted on peace (which was also among the central principles of the Non-Aligned Movement in which Yugoslavia was one of the founding members), serving in the Yugoslav People’s Army was a legal duty of all physically and mentally able men. Refusing military service on the basis of conscientious objection was considered an infringement of the law. Thus, advocating conscientious objection throughout the 1980s was done in a climate in which such activity was still considered threatening to the state and the Yugoslav People’s Army. Throughout the three years of its operation, *Svarun* established links with other representatives of the Zagreb alternative cultural scene (*Kugla glumište*, *Montažstroj*, Boris Bakal) while never abandoning the values of the Yugoslav self-management socialism.³ Even though the group was not formally registered, the weakening power of the Party was increasingly felt, and the activists perceived this as an opportunity for civic engagement.

Within the dynamics of contention research paradigm, *actor constitution* arises as a consequence of a number of interacting mechanisms, the most important of which is *attribution of opportunity and threat*. This mechanism revolves around the so-called *structure of political opportunities* which pertains to the social processes that undermine or promote the assumptions of the political establishment attempting to assure its own reproduction. International political realignments, changes in the nature of the political system (as in the current case, from state communism to political pluralism) as well as wars are all disruptive social elements that impact on the perception of political opportunities, facilitate civic activism, and initiate a protest cycle (Tarrow 1998).

The variable known as *attribution of opportunity and threat* has to do with an identification of an environmental change that leads to a qualitatively new evaluation of opportunities for political engagement. Attribution of opportunity activates mobilisation among both the already existent and dormant (politically conscious) groups as well as among previously inert populations. Rather than

² For a more detailed account of *Svarun*’s operation in relation to the Yugoslav environmentalist initiatives, see Bilić (2012).

³ Tomić-Koludrović (1993:855) notes that *Svarun*’s programme stated that the group intended to “encourage the self-management movement”. See Bilić (2012).

being objective structures, opportunities and threats are a matter of perception: opportunities will produce mobilisation only in those instances in which they are visible to the contenders and perceived as such. By concurrently gauging threats and opportunities, the state and political activists enter into a cycle of reactions and counter-reactions which affects the levels of contention and the conditions for its development.

When approaching the (post-)Yugoslav anti-war initiatives from a social movement/political contention perspective, one needs a conceptual instrument sophisticated enough to capture alternate openings and closures of political opportunities. The official introduction of political pluralism in the former Yugoslavia multiplied political opportunities and opened a space which was “colonised” by many groups and parties. The fact that the new organisations, stretching from one to the other extreme of the political spectrum, appeared on the public scene in a relatively short period of time speaks volumes about how much political conflictuality was brewing beneath the legislative surface. This process of political diversification had different developmental threads across the post-Yugoslav space, but the former communist elites looked for the ways in which to capitalise upon the accrued resources to sway it in their favour. Vesna Janković (Vidović 2010), one of the founding members of both *Svarun* and the *Anti-War Campaign*, remembers:

We were supported by the city youth organisation. The Council of Socialist Youth was at that time a *politically completely empty organisation*. It served only as a springboard for future Party members. However, in Zagreb’s Council of the Socialist Youth there were a few people who found us interesting and who wanted a connection to something alive that we were, in fact, representing. Even today’s Radio 101 owes its legal status to the local Council of the Socialist Youth. We were gathering [...] in the basement of the Faculty of Social Work which had an old hectograph that we used for copying our leaflets. [...] I have a feeling that, in comparison with the 1990s, the end of the 1980s was *much more liberal and much more open towards alternative ideas*. (Emphasis added)

In spite of the increased openness of the political field (which would once again be narrowed towards the beginning of the 1990s), members of *Svarun* were monitored by the Party authorities, some of whom were becoming increasingly concerned about their own power positions. Vesna Janković (Vidović 2010) continues:

We were partly tolerated by the official politics, although many members of *Svarun*, and particularly those belonging to the core of the group, were often investigated by the police, repressed, arrested or taken to a police station for an informative talk. At one point the police took a passport of one of our members. I was myself harassed for a few months [...] They were obviously afraid of international contacts that we started establishing, because socialism was based on the constant construction of fear against the external enemy.

The above extracts point to three important features of *Svarun* operation. First of all, they show that *Svarun* as a civic initiative was articulated by a group of friends. Oberschall (1973:125) concluded that mobilisation does not occur through recruitment of large numbers of isolated individuals, but as a result of recruiting blocs of people who are already highly organised. This recruitment pattern, which he called *bloc recruitment*, is evident in the following extract:

I came to activism through feminism and my women friends... so when the war started they all joined the *Anti-War Campaign*... we joined the *Campaign* as an already formed group working at the *SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence*...

In accordance with McAdam's (1986) findings, the density of the network of ties with other sympathisers and known activists bears a strong relationship to participation. Given that the activists mostly met at the University, then strengthened their interpersonal contacts through *Svarun* activities, the majority of them preserved the same structural location vis-à-vis the subsequently established AWCC. Thus, the Campaign appropriated the core of an existent network of civic activists who had already engaged with some of the *Campaign's* focal ideological points.

Second, towards the end of the 1980s, there were unexpected linkages between the official political structures and independent civic activists, enabled by the general relaxation of the political regime. In her account of alternative culture as a form of political resistance in Croatia, Tomić-Koludrović (1993) characterises civic engagement which developed at that time as *atomised*. Initiatives that can be subsumed under the category of *atomised alternativeness* stay on a personal level and do not grow to form a more socially relevant network. Although such civic engagement was marginal in terms of its numbers (to a different extent at different points in time) and often politically innocuous, I would argue that its main feature was not atomicity, but *hybridity*. *Hybrid activism* appears in an ideologically 'empty' rift between two more firmly consolidated political regimes. It pertains to the impossibility of demarcating the Yugoslav/Croatian "alternative" sphere towards the end of the 1980s. As the Yugoslav communist regime drew to its end, there was an ever greater volatility in the political system which was weakening its ideological grip. Eager to secure more manoeuvring space within the already discernible power restructurings, officials of the Communist Party became more tolerant of extra-institutional forms of political organising or themselves looked for newly created power positions. As a result, there are unusual arrangements in which – as was the case with *Svarun* – members of alternative groups could remain officially unregistered and still find a channel through which to access state resources and infrastructure.

Third, the quotes show that the operation of *Svarun* provided the context for increasingly courageous politically-oriented excursions into the public space. The

collectively shared experience of participation in an “alternative” civic enterprise works towards strengthening the group, clarifying its ideological stance and preparing it for future engagement. In this regard, McAdam (1986:70) claims that

each succeeding foray into safe forms of activism increases the recruit’s network integration, ideological affinity with the movement, and commitment to an activist identity, as well as his receptivity to more costly forms of participation. It is this type of gradual recruitment process that is likely to foster high-risk/cost activism.

In relation to this, we have seen that *Svarun* organised petitions against the use of nuclear energy. The volatility of the Yugoslav political scene(s) throughout the 1980s was actually marked by a proliferation of petitions which were a response to a whole range of political and social issues. McAdam *et al.*’s (2004) distinction between *contained* and *transgressive* contention can help us to understand why this particular form of contentious action reached its apogee in the 1980s. Whereas the employment of transgressive acts is related to surprise and novelty, the use of contained forms of contention is more acceptable for those unwilling to undertake serious risks. Numerous Yugoslav petitions were deemed the right instrument for opening a crack in the ideological monolith of the regime. This contentious action can be positioned between contained and transgressive forms of contention because it constitutes an expression of disapproval, but not in a way which would threaten the status quo.

Svarun withered away by early 1989, after which some group members formed an environmentalist organisation called *Zelena akcija* (Green Action) and entered the Zagreb parliament on an autonomous list in 1990. While still being the strongest initiatives of its kind in Croatia, *Green Action* also provided the “membership core” of the AWCC. As a matter of fact, the *Campaign* used *Green Action*’s office in the first six months of its operation.

Recruiting Agents and Biographical Availability

In terms of *Svarun*’s relevance for recruitment to the AWCC, social movement theory has emphasised the necessity for prior personal contact with a *single* activist who introduces recruits to the movement.⁴ It is a specifically located *recruiting agent* who, due to his/her structural position within the activist networks, links different activist groups. Geographical proximity is important in this regard as in the case of Marko Hren, a Slovenian peace activist, who frequently travelled from Ljubljana to Zagreb to help to organise the *Anti-War Campaign*. Marko Hren is a Slovenian peace activist, the founder and the founding director of the *Mirovni inštitut – Inštitut za sodobne družvene in politične študije* (Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies) in Ljubljana. He acted as

⁴ For classic accounts of this relationship, see McAdam (1986) or Snow *et al.* (1980).

a speaker and coordinator of the Slovenian peace movement throughout the 1980s. At that time, he was also a co-founder and chairman of the Ljubljana network of cultural and social movements, campaigning for a conversion of the Yugoslav Army headquarters into an object for civilian purposes. This building, located in the Ljubljana Metelkova Street became a squat in September 1993 and turned into an autonomous cultural centre – *Avtonomni kulturni center Metelkova mesto*. As one activist remembers:

Marko [Hren] was definitely very important for us... he was a member of the core group of Slovenian peaceniks and played an important role in the constitution of the *Anti-War Campaign*... he helped us a lot to establish contacts with the international peace movement because they already had a few years of experience with them... he also brought the concept of foreign foundations... we did not know that there were NGOs and that the whole enterprise could be formalised...

The contact with the Slovenian activist groups was also strengthened by Vesna Teršelič, a long-term environmentalist activist and the first coordinator of the *Campaign*, who acted as a *linking agent* between the two groups. She is originally Slovene, but she studied and remained professionally active in Zagreb.

Our cooperation with the Slovenes existed first on the personal level. Vesna Teršelič was in charge of the first contacts given that she is partly Slovene and was living for a certain amount of time between Ljubljana and Zagreb. [...] it was also easy for us to go to Ljubljana which is only two hours away from Zagreb, so we went there to support demonstrations and in this way we initiated and maintained communication. That link with Slovenia was important because the Peace Institute helped us to establish international contacts. (Vidović 2010)

Moreover, along with structural location, biographical availability is another factor that McAdam (1986) considers necessary for participation in high-risk/cost activism. The availability argument states that those who have less time or more personal responsibilities would be less likely to take part even in those instances in which they are structurally predisposed to do so. McAdam showed that biographical availability bears a curvilinear relationship to age: individuals are particularly “available” for activism in that narrow range of years between relative independence from parental authority and the absence of adult responsibilities. This was exactly the case with the *Campaign* participants as illustrated by the following extracts:

Activist 1: At the moment when the *Campaign* started, I was still unemployed and my parents were still giving me money from time to time... I was giving German and English lessons and thinking about where I could find some work. Other people were in a similar situation. We had just finished university or some people gave up their studies...we were without jobs... the majority of us younger than thirty years of age... I cannot recall that we had many full-time employed people... there was a university professor who could take some free time or there were other people

older than thirty who lost their jobs, so they could devote more time to the cause... but, in general, we were not able to mobilise employed people...

Activist 2: *Svarun* was important for me, but it was more like spending time with friends [*druženje*], something that you do as a supplementary activity. With the *Anti-War Campaign* it became serious. I remember that after coming back from Kumrovec I had a clear feeling that such a kind of engagement is something that I would like to fully devote myself to. My decision was all the more important due to the fact that at that time I did not have either a job or money, the war was breaking out, and we did not know then that there were some foundations which could finance our activities.

Activist 3: So in 1991, I had no job and I was finishing university. When the *Anti-War Campaign* was initiated, for me it was an existential. The question was whether I will look for a job somewhere with which I would be able to support myself and do activism whenever I have the chance, like once per week... when I realised that it was possible to find some financial resources, I decided to devote myself full-time to activism engagement...⁵

The engagement within the *Anti-War Campaign* for many activists was not only a matter of biographical availability, but of biographical *opportunity*, or even *necessity*. Many of the participants were young and unemployed university students and graduates who did not have very good employment prospects at the beginning of the armed conflict and in their increasingly impoverished country. Thus, activism appeared as a sphere which offered the participants a range of opportunities for engagement. From time to time (in the earliest stages of contention) it provided modest financial means to some participants who may have subsequently decided to stay on the civic scene in professional capacity. Anti-war contention also allowed them to keep in touch and develop a network with other activists regionally and globally.

However, McAdam (1986) did not confirm the hypothesised relationship between biographical availability on the one hand, and protest participation, on the other. He even found that being married or holding a full-time job enhanced the applicant's chances of participating in the *Freedom Summer* project. This was the consequence of the fact that McAdam's sample included only those who already applied for taking part in the programme. Beyerlein and Hipp (2006) resolved this problem by modelling differential participation in high-risk protest as a two-stage process: *willingness to engage and conversion of willingness into participation*. Biographical unavailability shows robust negative effects only at the first stage of the mobilisation process and removes people from the pool of those who are willing to take part in protest. In the first stage of mobilisation, the constraining effects of biographical unavailability must be compensated by strong ideological commitment and integration in the existing activist networks. This was not the

⁵ Interviews with the author, Zagreb, July 2011.

case with the following activist who did not have prior direct ties with *Svarun* or *Campaign* participants and who joined the AWCC in 1998, way beyond the end of the armed conflict:

At that time [in the early 1990s] my children were still very small and I was worried about their security. For that reason, I was watching everything from the sidelines, or at least, I was trying to do so. I knew where the participants in the *Anti-War Campaign* were gathering, and I was giving them my moral support, but I was very afraid of joining them because I was worried about my children. I started working with them only in 1998 after finishing a course in peace studies.⁶

Beyerlein and Hipp’s theoretical advancement can account for the fact that the *Campaign* had a group of older activists who were employed (mostly at the University) and who had families and other biographical constraints which should have, according to the original theory, hindered their participation in high-risk anti-war activism.

Activist 1: My activism began in the early 1970s when I enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb... nationalists were then a predominant force among the students and they were constantly trying to take over our student organisation... they were a really massive nationalist movement enjoying a lot of popular support... so we were some kind of marginal ultra-leftists... I worked for the student newspapers, then I joined the Association for the Yugoslav Democratic Initiative [the first non-Party related political organisation in Yugoslavia] and so on...

Activist 2: There were also people, like Biljana Kašić, Srđan Dvornik, Đurđa Knežević, Ognjen Tus, Nenad Zakošek who were generationally closer to Čičak and Puhovski, but who had much more affinity for a kind of engagement which was non-hierarchical, inclusive, open to all the issues which were thematised by new social movements, who thought that it was not only the goal that was important, but also the process itself...⁷

The older activists’ structural location vis-à-vis the AWCC allowed them to easily pass the first stage of the mobilisation process for which biographical availability is the most relevant. Many of these people were politically socialised as students in the late 1960s and early 1970s and they remained active all the way until the 1990s (Bilić 2012). McAdam (1989) demonstrated that social movement participation can have long-term biographical effects. In his *Freedom Summer* project, the volunteers who were more politically active throughout the 1960s, also remained so twenty years later. Involvement in an emotionally intense political project has a strong influence on personal identity and usually strengthens activist commitment to the cause (Friedman and McAdam 1992).

What is more, McAdam conceptualises *attitudinal affinity* as ideological support for the movement in question that underlines any recruitment pattern.

⁶ Interview with the author, Zagreb, January 2010.

⁷ Interviews with the author, Zagreb, January 2010.

Given that both *Svarun* and the *Anti-War Campaign* gathered activists with different interests, ideological strands, and strategic options (feminists, anarchists, squatters, environmentalists, spiritualists, LGBT), attitudinal affinity here should be perceived as a *meta-identical interest in ideological multiplicity*. Social movement research shows that activism does not tend to be movement-specific (Crossley 2003), but stems from a set of broader values. The disposition towards politically focused civic engagement represents a general platform upon which many diverse causes may be taken up and struggled for. Studies demonstrate that activists tend to move from one to another or be simultaneously involved in multiple social movements (Crossley 2003). This is exactly what we have seen in the numerous activist threads of *Svarun* and the subsequent AWCC. In the first instance, activists come together around a certain issue, but then assume different paths as the salience of their cause subsides or the movement grows large enough to start disintegrating along ideological cleavages that sooner or later emerge within it. Therefore, the same set of skills and strategic options can be employed and adapted for different political objectives.

Trying to develop this line of reasoning further, Crossley suggested that activism should be theorised in terms of “durable dispositions” which he called *radical habitus* (see also Bilić 2010):

The formation of a radical habitus is closely bound up with an individual’s biography, but their biography is, in turn, intertwined with and affected by their social-structural location, as well as broader historical trends and events. (Crossley 2003:51)

Therefore, the concept of habitus points to two important elements of civic engagement: first, it implies that once involved, many activists tend to remain in the field of contention; second, it shows that the “disposition” to participate is shaped and structured through engagement in civic enterprises. This process is crucial for the extra-institutional involvement in political issues because it secures the survival of activism as a social practice. It underscores the recurrent finding that the ways in which young people are schooled into politics is related to their location within the social structure: family, class, educational system and living environment are all suppliers of the means for engagement in political life. Downton and Wehr (1997) demonstrated that people born and raised within a setting in which political issues are frequently on the agenda are more likely to become activists and have more political agency. Therefore, a disposition to engage in political protest is engendered and shaped by a certain type of *biographical exposure* to the formative political experiences or, in other words, by being positioned in and having access to an environment in which political issues are salient. It is within this context that a non-economic kind of participation incentive emerges, namely the one that pertains to existential and ethical motivations behind political engagement. My interviewees – highly educated “middle class” Zagreb urbanites – also claim that participation in anti-war enterprises was inevitable for them, that they could not have done otherwise.

Conclusion

The operation of the AWCC has not attracted a lot of sociologists’ attention in spite of its importance for understanding the developmental trajectories of the both national and regional civic scenes. This knowledge lacuna is reflective of the broader trend of marginalising (post-)Yugoslav anti-war engagement in East European sociological scholarship. The trend of focusing on the post-war dimensions of the armed conflicts as well as the chances of the post-Yugoslav countries to join the European Union has obscured the early stages of pan-Yugoslav anti-war activism undertaken on the basis of previously existing civic traditions. On the other hand, overwhelming focus on the anti-war activism occurring in places that are far away from armed conflicts has obscured the specific dynamics of high-risk anti-war engagement during the state of war. Negotiating objectives of anti-war contention in such circumstances is not unaffected by the potential costs which this kind of activism may incur.

I have drawn upon interviews and documentary material to examine both structural and motivational factors propelling individuals towards participation in the Croatian anti-war contention. In accordance with the McAdam model of recruitment to high-risk activism, I have shown that the participants in the *Anti-War Campaign* were already involved in a network of extensive activist personal ties. Anti-war engagement was closely related to prior civil rights activity as well as sustained contact with the Slovenian pacifist scene. Croatian anti-war activists in the early 1990s were predominantly students or recent university graduates occupying the narrow niche between freedom from parental supervision and the absence of adult responsibilities. Older *Campaign* activists were socialised into contentious politics during the 1960s and 1970s. They could overcome their biographical constraints for participation due to the already developed activist dispositions which make commitment to the activist cause a particularly relevant personal value.

However, as a result of my methodological approach which favours activist self-representation, I have portrayed biographical availability mostly in “generational” terms. Future research could “unpack” the availability category by bringing in its significant, but not easily “capturable”, class dimension which has remained underdeveloped. This would help to restore the idea of class in the regional sociology and work against the illusory assumption that Yugoslavia – ruled by the League of Communists – was a classless society.

Anti-war engagement and different articulations of anti-nationalist sentiment before, throughout and after the wars of Yugoslav succession have been urban phenomena (Jansen 2005), both counting on and generating symbolic and financial

capital.⁸ The over-representation of the middle class and the ways in which the skills and know-how acquired through exposure to and socialisation within a certain social context are masked as natural properties and defined as superior to those of other groups has been by now quite well researched in different cultural milieus (e.g. Bourdieu 1984). The examination of the class aspect of “activist habitus”, thus, would appreciate the role that the appropriation of and exposure to different forms of capital has upon people’s developmental trajectories and their propensities to participate in political activism or, as some Yugoslav activists also did, in professional politics.

In relation to this, it is important to note that the AWCC was not the only source of anti-war contention in the early 1990s Croatia. *Hrvatski helsinški odbor* (Croatian Helsinki Committee) established in March 1993, was active in preventing evictions and defending human rights. *Građanski odbor za ljudska prava* (Civic Committee for Human Rights) was founded on the basis of a couple of previous civic initiatives which included *Odbor za Trg žrtava fašizma* (Committee for the Square of the Victims of Fascism, 1991) and *Demokratski opozicijski forum* (Democratic Opposition Forum, 1990). *Pokret za mir i nenasilje* (Movement for Peace and Non-Violence) was active in Rijeka, whereas *Centar za mir, nenasilje i ljudska prava* (Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights) was established in Osijek in 1992. The latter was a grassroots initiative which developed in a place that was under the direct attack of the Yugoslav’s People’s Army (high-risk contention). In that sense, it played an important role in legitimising anti-war engagement in Zagreb and other parts of the country which were not exposed to military operations. Future research could take a better (both intra- and international comparative) look at the specificities of recruitment in these cases which did not appear in a political vacuum, but continued the already existing civic traditions.

Moreover, there are at least two additional directions into which my analysis can be taken: the first has to do with Walder’s (2009) claim that sociological research exploring the relationship between social structure and political behaviour has been substituted for a breakaway tradition which radically narrows the scope of scholarly interest and “empties” civic undertakings of their political substance by focusing solely on mobilisation processes. Social movement research can only be divided artificially into “compartments” devoted to recruitment, mobilisation capacities and strategies, on the one hand, and ideologies, culture and collective identities, on the other. Good social movement studies cut across such a polarisation by appreciating the fluid and relational aspects of both collective and personal identities. In this regard, the ideological component of activist recruitment into Croatian/(post-)Yugoslav anti-war enterprises could be elucidated through a

⁸ This is not to imply that all anti-war engagement was necessarily anti-nationalist.

closer engagement with the literature on anti-politics both in the Yugoslav context as well as in other (ex-)socialist states.

Finally, the wars of Yugoslav succession and the civic activisms to resist them have a prominent gender dimension (Jansen 2005; Dević 2008; Liht and Drakulic 1996). Thus, it would be worthwhile to examine in more detail how the imminence of an armed conflict awakened extant feminist networks and created new channels through which women were recruited to political contention (see McAdam 1992). Such a focus could be of broader theoretical relevance given the fact that the interactions between gender and social movements have not been sufficiently appreciated within the political opportunity paradigm embedded in the sphere of institutionalised politics to which women have traditionally had restricted access.

REFERENCES CITED

- Alimi, Y. Eitan. 2009. “Mobilizing under the Gun. Theorizing Political Opportunity Structure in a Highly Repressive Setting”. *Mobilization* 14/2:219-237.
- Bilić, Bojan. 2010. “Bourdieu and Social Movement Theories. Some Preliminary Remarks on a Possible Cross-Fertilisation in the Context of Yugoslav Anti-War Activism”. *Sociologija* 52:377-398.
- Bilić, Bojan. 2011. “Hod po tankoj žici. Artikuliranje antiratnog angažmana u Hrvatskoj ranih 90-ih godina”. In *Antiratna kampanja 1991. - 2011. Neispričana povijest*. Vesna Janković and Nikola Mokrović, eds. Zagreb: Documenta, 212-228.
- Bilić, Bojan. 2012. “Contentious Socialists. Precursors of Anti-War Engagement”. In *Towards Open Regionalism in South East Europe*. Paul Stubbs and Christophe Solioz, eds. Baden Baden: Nomos, 47-68.
- Beyerlein, Kraig and John R. Hipp. 2006. “A Two-Stage Model for a Two-Stage Process. How Biographical Availability Matters for Social Movement Mobilization”. *Mobilization* 11/3:299-320.
- Crossley, Nick. 2003. “From Reproduction to Transformation. Social Movements Fields and the Radical Habitus”. *Theory, Culture & Society* 20:43-68.
- Dević, Ana. 1997. “Anti-War Initiatives and the Un-Making of Civic Identities in the Former Yugoslav Republics”. *Journal of Historical Sociology* 10:127-156.
- Dević, Ana. 2008. “Undesirable Peaceniks. Women’s Anti-War Activism and Anti-Nationalism in Yugoslavia’s Successor States”. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/PDFs/Peaceconference/Devic.doc> (accessed 10 September 2011).
- Downton, James Jr. and Paul Wehr. 1998. “Persistent Pacifism. How Activist Commitment is Developed and Sustained”. *Journal of Peace Research* 35:531-550.
- Fridman, Orli. 2011. “‘It was like Fighting our Own People’. Anti-War Activism in Serbia During the 1990s”. *Nationalities Papers* 39:507-522.

- Friedman, Debra and Doug McAdam. 1992. “Collective Identity and Activism. Networks Choices and the Life of a Social Movement”. *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. Aldon Morris and Carol M. Mueller, eds. New Haven: Yale University Press, 156-173.
- Gordy, Eric. 1999. *The Culture of Power in Serbia. Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Jansen, Stef. 2005. *Antinacionalizam. Etnografija otpora u Beogradu i Zagrebu*. Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.
- Jenkins, J. Craig. 1983. “Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements”. *Annual Review of Sociology* 9:527-553.
- Kitschelt, Herbert. 1986. “Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest”. *British Journal of Political Science* 16:57-85.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Ruud Koopmans, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Marco Giugni. 1995. *New Social Movements in Western Europe*. London: University College London.
- Liht, Sonja and Slobodan Drakulic. 1996. “When the Word for a Peacenik was Women. War and Gender in the Former Yugoslavia”. In *Research on Russia and Eastern Europe. Women in Post-Communism*. Barbara Wejnert, Metta Spencer and Slobodan Drakulic, eds. New York: JAI Press, 111-139.
- McAdam, Doug. 1986. “Recruitment to High-Risk Activism. The Case of *Freedom Summer*”. *The American Journal of Sociology* 92/1:64-90.
- McAdam, Doug. 1988. *Freedom Summer*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McAdam, Doug. 1992. “Gender as a Mediator of the Activist Experience. The Case of *Freedom Summer*”. *American Journal of Sociology* 97:1211-1240.
- McAdam, Doug, Sid Tarrow and Charles Tilly. 2004. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oberschall, Anthony. 1973. *Social Conflict and Social Movements*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Oštrić, Zoran. 2010. “Bilješke ostarjelog mirovnjaka”. In *U dosluhu i neposluhu. Pozitivni primjeri izgradnje mira u Hrvatskoj u 90-ima i kasnije*. Goran Božičević, ed. Grožnjan: Miramida centar, 31-48.
- Snow, A. David, Louis A. Zurcher and Sheldon Ekland-Olson. 1980. “Social Networks and Social Movements. A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment”. *American Sociological Review* 45/5:787-801.
- Tarrow, Sid. 1998. *Power in Movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tilly, Charles. 2005. *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
- Tomić-Koludrović, Inga. 1993. “Alternativna kultura kao oblik otpora u samoupravnom socijalizmu”. *Društvena istraživanja* 6/7:835-862.
- Vidović, Dea. 2010. “‘Džepovi otpora’. Interview with Vesna Janković”. Available at: <http://www.kulturpunkt.hr/i/kulturoskop/366/?template=print> (accessed 05 August 2011).
- Walder, Andrew. 2009. “Political Sociology and Social Movements”. *Annual Review of Sociology* 35:393-412.