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# **The Use of Open Public Spaces and Religious Revival at the End of Yugoslav Socialism: Celebrating St. Blaise Festivity in Dubrovnik**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Witnessing the Moment When the Present Detaches from the Past and Heads towards the Future**

This study aims to deliberate what happens to ‘history’ once it is perceived through anthropological experience.<sup>1)</sup> More precisely, it examines the role of history in anthropological research by investigating the process in which the anthropologists engage with the past of the community they study.<sup>2)</sup>

It is my view that in this process, anthropologists are critical participants in the events in which past and present meet. We are the principal witnesses of a very subtle moment when the present detaches from the past and heads towards the future.

This witnessing occurs through anthropologists’ living and moving within the community environs, observing its everyday life, establishing relations with its members, listening to their accounts, and creating written and audio documentation. We also visually record the events the community members organize and participate in and collect the existing data deposited in the public institutions and private archives.

At the very start of the research, anthropologists know little about the true character and dynamic of the community they come to explore. Only after spending longer periods in it and coming back continuously, while critically comparing the situations and events in these different points in time, we are able to identify the changes and relate them to other local, national and global processes.

### **1.2 A Study from Former Yugoslavia: Approach and Focus**

This paper features research from former Yugoslavia at the time of its dissolution (1990–1992), undertaken in the territory of Croatia, as one of the constituent republics. It focuses on three major points.

First, the study elaborates how using historical data and performing fieldwork in a historical city contributes to understanding the anthropological subject matter situated in the present. Second, it portrays the situation in which an anthropologist becomes the witness to significant historical changes. More precisely, it spotlights the shift from the

socialist to post-socialist realities, as they manifested in open public space.<sup>3)</sup> Lastly, the paper shows how the unexpected larger political events can merge into local realities and thus became part of the anthropological fieldwork condition. Moreover, it reveals how an anthropologist's position and experience while undertaking research in a politically turbulent period are affected by the perception of her national origin by the local community in which the fieldwork is performed.

The study deals with the revival of traditional religious festivities at the end of Yugoslav socialism, focusing on the annual St. Blaise Festivity, devoted to the saint protector of the city of Dubrovnik. The overall research shows that the revival of certain cultural (primarily religious) traditions was occurring in parallel with the changes in interethnic relations, which were strongly influenced by political events at global, national, and local levels.

The period in which my research presented in this paper took place (1990–1991), may be characterised by the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), one of the largest countries in Southeast Europe, which existed from 1945 to 1991, comprising six federal republics. The socialist state of Yugoslavia changed its name over time. Initially, Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFY) was formed in 1945; in 1946 it was renamed the Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia, while in 1963 it became the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). After the disintegration of SFRY in 1991, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) was constituted in 1992, comprising only two of the former republics, Serbia and Montenegro. This state existed until 2006 when the Republic of Montenegro proclaimed independence, after which the Republic of Serbia reconstituted itself as an independent state as well. The research in Dubrovnik took place when Croatia, along with Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, ignited a civil war in the SFRY.<sup>4)</sup> This breakup of Yugoslavia was a process that involved national revival movements from within, instigated by the outside pressures of global and regional powers (Bakić 2011: 41–109; 319–343). The civil war ended in 1995 with the military campaigns 'Flash' and 'Storm,'<sup>5)</sup> which expelled hundreds of thousands of Serbs from Croatia, and the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina (Silber and Little 1996; Gow 1997; Guskova 2001; Hayden 2013). What I was witnessing in Croatia was, thus, the birth of a new political entity, which occurred under the circumstances of radical ethno-religious conflict.

## **2. Importance of Dubrovnik's Past for Its Present**

The choice of the Old Town of Dubrovnik as my fieldwork site emerged out of its particular historical, social, and cultural features, but also its morphology and aesthetics, resulting from continual development and care of the local community for their city for at least fourteen centuries.

Dubrovnik<sup>6)</sup> was founded as a fortress town in late antiquity and especially during the expansion of the Byzantine Empire under Justinian I (6th c.). In the subsequent period, it was under partial submission to the Republic of Venice, Kingdom of Hungary, Ottoman Empire, Hapsburg Austria, and French Empire. Dubrovnik was for a long time

a city-state, called the Republic of Dubrovnik (*Dubrovačka Republika*)<sup>7)</sup> with a high degree of independence from the successive ruling powers (1205–1806). Based on inland trade in the Balkan Peninsula and maritime trade in the Mediterranean, as well as intensive cultivation of agricultural land in the surrounding hinterland, the city grew steadily (Carter 1972; Harris 2006). This included the introduction of the orthogonal town plan by the Statute of the Town of Dubrovnik (Lučić 1990 [1272])<sup>8)</sup> and laborious construction of the residential blocks and city walls, often damaged in wars or earthquakes, and in turn reconstructed repeatedly (Beritić 1955, 1958; Vučinić 1999: 21–41).

With time, Dubrovnik developed as a Roman Catholic stronghold situated in a buffer zone between the European (Christian) and Ottoman (Muslim) empires, but also between Western and Eastern Christianity. The political and economic power was concentrated within the narrow circle of noble families, which developed a rational and effective system of government and foreign diplomacy (Vekarić 2011; Lonza 2004; Foretić 2019). Its territories were expanded by land purchase from the powerful medieval Serbian state, ruled by the Nemanjić dynasty (Blagojević 2001: 211). This political, economic, and social order characterising the Republic of Dubrovnik broke down at the beginning of the 19th century when Napoleon's army occupied the city. After WW1 and the fall of the Hapsburg Monarchy, Dubrovnik entered the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1918–1929), subsequently called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929–1941). During WW2, the city became part of the Independent State of Croatia,<sup>9)</sup> a puppet state of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

After the war, in 1945 it entered the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Dubrovnik has a long tradition of cohabitation of residents with different geographic origins and religious and ethnic affiliations. Until the beginning of the 20th century, the major cultural differentiation in the city was by religion, the dominant two being Roman Catholic and Christian Orthodox. For most of its history (starting with 1054 when Christianity divided), the Roman Catholics predominated in the city, primarily due to the influence of the large empires that considered themselves the inheritors of the Western Roman Empire, in which Catholicism was a state religion — the Venetian Republic and the Habsburg Monarchy. By the 19th and especially the beginning of the 20th century, ethnic/national affiliation had started to gain more importance in self-identification and the official notions of citizenship, whereas after 1945, it became the primary census category. Dubrovnik residents declared themselves as Croatian Catholics, Serb Orthodox, or Serb Catholics (Arsić 2019).<sup>10)</sup>

Today, Dubrovnik is a city with a distinctive Catholic identity, expressed both in the religious affiliation of its residents to Catholicism and the overwhelming presence of historical religious objects and institutions of the Catholic Church. The only religious objects of other faiths in the Old Town are the Synagogue and the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral.<sup>11)</sup> The number of Serbian Orthodox residents decreased, especially during WW2 and the civil war of the 1990s. The population that considered themselves Serbs of the Catholic faith disappeared. This was the result of the systematic homogenisation and consequent cleansing of Croatia on religious and national grounds (Silber and Little

1996). At the time of my research in Dubrovnik (1990–1991), the survey data I collected showed that Croats of the Catholic faith were the dominant population (c. 78%), whereas Serbs of Orthodox faith (c. 10%) were a minority.<sup>12)</sup> The 1991 Census data revealed that the Municipality of Dubrovnik had 71,419 residents, while the city of Dubrovnik had 49,728 residents. According to the 1981 Census, the Old Town of Dubrovnik had 4,303 residents.

For this study, it is important to underline that Dubrovnik is a long-lasting, continuously inhabited city, whose built infrastructure, including the city walls and gates, streets and squares, residential blocks, and representative buildings, such as churches and palaces, has been intact for centuries. The reconstructions after wars, earthquakes, and fires, and particularly after the Great Earthquake of 1667, restored a similar urban configuration, with new architectural styles. The surviving residents, who had to move out, mostly moved back in. The exception is the period since the 1990s when many old-timers sold their old stone houses to foreigners.

This long-lasting urban morphology and continual habitation facilitated for the municipal institutions and the city old-timers to pass on the inherited rules of public behaviour to the newcomers from the neighbouring countryside or more distant lands, both in everyday life and festivals. Such enduring cities also seem to induce long memories. Every square meter of the cityscape carries with it a memory of individual and collective daily practices and special events, be it playing with friends after school, participating in the evening promenade, carrying a banner in religious celebrations, or shouting in political protests. Residents of these cities know every citadel at which the enemies were fenced off in ancient and recent past. They know exactly how each side of the main city street or square is used in the evening promenade or the religious procession. They are aware of the location of important institutions where significant public figures work or reside, as well as of leisure places they frequent. They are the guardians of their city's past, present, and future. Since 1979, when Dubrovnik was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, its institutions and residents became official keepers of their antique city. Moreover, after 2010, they also became obliged to maintain the Festivity of St. Blaise as the World Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Owing to its complex historical development and the present socio-demographic features described above, Dubrovnik was an extremely appealing fieldwork location for a research topic closely related to the material and spatial structure of the city.

### **3. Research in Dubrovnik: Studying How Urban Structure Influences Spatial Behaviour**

The research in Dubrovnik, undertaken from January 1990 to August 1991, occurred under very special circumstances. This was the time of the realization of the Croatian secession from the Yugoslav federation. I was a researcher from Serbia, the part of the common country (SFRY) from which the republic of Croatia, where I came to do research, was preparing to separate. Being the only Serbian researcher in Dubrovnik in the summer of 1991 was a psychologically dramatic experience. This duality of status,

that of still 'being a past friend' in the private sense (Serbs and especially Belgraders were among the most welcome summer visitors in Dubrovnik during socialism) to 'suddenly becoming an adversary' in the formal sense (due to outbreak of political conflict in which Croatia pronounced Serbia the enemy). Despite warnings of my colleagues and the worried faces of my family members, I embarked on the exciting adventure of performing my doctoral research in Dubrovnik.

The aim of my research was to determine whether the present urban structure of the Old Town of Dubrovnik influences the spatial behaviour of its inhabitants. More precisely, I was interested in finding out whether the level of the orderliness of different parts of the urban structure in the urban core has an influence on everyday and ritual activities of their residents. The area of Prijeko (on the slopes of mount Srdj) was chosen to represent the regular grid-type urban structure, while the area of St. Maria (on the upper ridge of Laus towards the sea) was chosen to represent the irregular (grid) structure. The focus of my study was to analyse how the urban structure determines the residents' everyday commercial, religious, and social activities, the ritualised promenade along the central pedestrian street, and the main religious ritual known as the St. Blaise Festivity (Vučinić 1999).

As this research problem was situated in-between anthropology, urban sociology, human geography, and history, the research methodology combined different methods, characterising all the named disciplines. My fieldwork, thus, included observation (with partial participation), interviews, and an extensive survey with open and closed questions. It also involved collecting written and visual documentation in the Historical Archives of Dubrovnik, Catholic Bishopric, Bureau for Protection of Cultural Monuments and Nature, and other public institutions. Old civic and church journals and newspapers contained descriptions of the St. Blaise Festivity from the end of the 19th to the early 20th century. A TV station crew from Zagreb, whom I met at the 1990 Festivity, sent me their materials from the previous celebrations. During the 1991 celebration, I attained informal instructions on the festive procedures from the ceremonial masters. Although I found most of the written and visual materials as a result of the intentional search, some of it appeared during fieldwork through spontaneous communication with the participants of the events I followed.

My research was realised within a few successive visits between January 1990 and August 1991. This fieldwork was specific because it took place in extremely unstable political circumstances, resulting from the disintegration of SFRY, i.e. the proclamation of independence of its individual republics, including Croatia. Despite the noticeable tensions, in the first phase of my fieldwork in Dubrovnik (until February 1991), the presence of a 'lady ethnologist from Belgrade' was 'acceptable' to the representatives of various institutions with whom I engaged to acquire data and interviews. Also, in this phase, I came to investigate the St. Blaise Festivity.

Tension towards the citizens of Serbia increased especially during the final period of my research (in July and August 1991), which comprised the realisation of a detailed survey through interviews with some 120 respondents, which included questions about participation in the St. Blaise Festivity. This work was taking place at the time of

intensification of war conflicts in different parts of Croatia. Nevertheless, there were two favourable circumstances. One was that my research topic was not tied to political questions or interethnic relations, and the other was that the warfare reached Dubrovnik sufficiently late (in September 1991) so that I could round up my fieldwork as initially planned. Of course, research at this particular time could not have been possible if I did not have the authorisation of the city mayor who opened the doors of the public institutions for me and provided the assistance of a few reliable and efficient students who helped me conduct the survey (Vučinić 1999; 2013: 15–16)

#### **4. The St. Blaise Festivity in Dubrovnik**

This study focuses on the St. Blaise Festivity (*Festa Svetog Vlaha*), an elaborate town ritual devoted to the city saint protector, occurring every year around 3 February. The research on this celebration took place in two successive years, the first visit being in 1990 and the second in 1991. The initial study of the St. Blaise Festivity aimed at determining how the most significant ritual event in the local community uses the available urban structure to create the space of religious activity. The subsequent analysis, included in this paper, also focuses on the shifting meanings of the celebration in the time of radical political changes, which used the ethno-religious particularities of Croatia as the basis for secession from Yugoslavia.

##### **4.1 Learning about the Past**

The Festa of St. Blaise<sup>13)</sup> is devoted to the patron saint of the city, believed to aid the city in wars, epidemics, and earthquakes. The chronicles tell us that St. Blaise lived in the 3rd century and was known as the physician and Episcopus of Sebastea, historical Armenia (modern Sivas, Turkey). The historical literature and church accounts date the beginnings of the cult of St. Blaise to the 11th century when the Dubrovnik Commune looked for support of the Byzantine Empire against the Venetian expansion (Vučetić 1923). It seems that taking up the saint of 'Eastern origin' was a lucid diplomatic and political decision.

The later historical records describe the Festivity of St. Blaise as one of eight elaborate church celebrations accompanied with processions in the 15th century Dubrovnik (Janeković-Römer 2002). *The Description of the Famous City of Dubrovnik* written by Filip De Diversis (2004) contains the first known account of the St. Blaise celebration. This description reveals the ritual elements that were elaborated in later periods, some of which have lasted until the present. This is how three days before the celebration a pole was placed on Orlando's Column to announce the beginning of the so-called 'Liberty of St. Blaise,' a seven-day right to reside in the Republic of Ragusa for the individuals who were debtors or offenders of the state or its citizens. This legal custom enabled the insolvent citizens to settle their liabilities.

The obligatory parts of the celebration included: the ritual arrival of peasants and sailors under arms in the company of village trumpeters and artisans of all traits, the presentation of the ritual participants to the Rector and the Council in front of the Palace,

the carrying of lit candles into the Cathedral, the procession with relics, the celebratory mass, and folk festivity with occasional *alka* competition. *Alka* competition is an ancient knightly tournament in horseback riding in which alkars, riding on horses in full gallop, try to hit the steel *alka* ring placed in the air (Petrović 1971). The celebration continued with the Eighth Day of St. Blaise, when the procession went to St. Claire's Monastery and back (to honour the altar of St. Blaise within) and ended on the 14th day in the old St. Blaise Church by the Port (De Diversis 2004; Vučetić 1923: 52–54).

The number and richness of Catholic open-air celebrations, as described in local newspaper chronicles, have continued into the 20th century, reaching the period of the Yugoslav monarchy (1918–1941). The only such religious celebration revived after WW2 in Dubrovnik was the St. Blaise Festivity. This unique compromise, made against the general Yugoslav Communist Party decision to forbid any public church celebrations (esp. after 1947 when it definitely opted for an atheist state),<sup>14)</sup> was attained under the condition that the Festa is allowed to preserve its spiritual component, but that her secular component be taken away. Thus, in the 1948 to 1991 period, the Festa was a festivity of the Catholic Church and its believers. Almost until the end of this period, the public religious activities took place inside the churches, with only the St. Blaise Day celebrated with an outdoor procession, encircling the central part of the Old Town.

#### 4.2 Finding Oneself in the Turbulent Present

The radical political changes that occurred with the introduction of the multi-party system in SFRY in 1990 and the victory of the extreme right-wing nationalist party, called the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in the Croatian parliamentary elections in April 1990 initiated major changes in the celebration of St. Blaise Festivity.

In this period, the Serbs became increasingly opposed to the policies of the newly elected president of Croatia, F. Tudjman, due to his overt desire for the creation of an independent Croatia.<sup>15)</sup> They started to defend the police stations from the takeover of the Croatian special police forces in regions where they represented the majority (Pavković 2000). They were also watching how the Croatian territorial defence, initially formed to organize the civilians for protection of the SFRY from war and calamities, was covertly turning into a Croatian paramilitary force. The purchased arms, for which sponsors were found in Germany and among the Croatians in exile, came in through secret routes from all around Europe with the approval of NATO (Schmetzer 1995; Pavković 2000: 132). On 30 May 1990, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) broke all ties to the Croatian parliament (Ramet 2006: 383–384).

In addition, in August 1990, the Serbian National Council in Croatia organized a referendum for the regional autonomy of Serbs in the Serbian Autonomous Region of Knin, known as Kninska Krajina (which covered the municipalities with the majority of Serbian population), where 99% of votes were in favour of the autonomy (Pavković 2000). On 22 December 1990, the Croatian parliament proclaimed the new Constitution of the Republic of Croatia,<sup>16)</sup> which changed the status of Serbs from a constitutive nation to a national minority and changed the name of the official language from 'Croato-Serbian' to 'Croatian.' It also instituted the new national symbols,<sup>17)</sup> among them

a flag closely resembling the one used by the Independent State of Croatia, a puppet-state formed during WW2, which set up concentration camps in which hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, and Roma were killed (Dulić 2006; Kolsto 2011: 234; Greif 2018).<sup>18)</sup>

The civil war broke out in March 1991 when the new Croatian leadership proclaimed illegal the Serb National Council's decision for 'disassociation' of the Krajina Region from Croatia and its intention of remaining within Yugoslavia. In light of the Croatian preparations for the referendum, the Serb National Council held its own referendum for independence, which showed overwhelming support for the unification of Krajina with the Republic of Serbia (Pavković 2000: 135–201). On 19 May, the Croatian Parliament organized a referendum for independence, and on 25 June, Croatia proclaimed its independence, which was not acknowledged by the Federal Executive Council of SFRY. The new state was not internationally recognised until December 1991, when Germany informed the European Commission (EC) ministers that they planned to break ranks with EC foreign policy and recognise Croatian sovereignty unilaterally. Immediately after, the Council of Foreign Ministers convened to settle the recognition by other EC members (Lucarelli 1997: 69–75).<sup>19)</sup>

In mid-September, the Croatian paramilitary units<sup>20)</sup> attacked the Yugoslav National Army stationed around Dubrovnik and they returned fire. In November 1991, the Movement for the Autonomy of Dubrovnik was inaugurated in the town of Cavtat (southern part of Dubrovnik Municipality), aimed to revive the Republic of Dubrovnik. Its members called for the separation of the municipality from Croatia, international recognition, and protection of the future state, as well as her subsequent entry into a novel Yugoslav federation. In April 1993, the Yugoslav army left the battlefield around Dubrovnik and the self-proclaimed Republic broke down, the initiators having to flee Croatia. The civil war waged between the Croatian Army and Yugoslav National Army continued throughout Croatia until August 1995 (Pavković 2000).

Following my research interest on the relationship between the urban structure and spatial behaviour in Dubrovnik, I was present at the St. Blaise celebrations in 1990 and 1991, and thus, found myself a witness to those radical political changes in Croatia. It happened that my first fieldwork took place right before the first multi-party elections in SFRY, whereas the second took place after the victory of the separatist oriented Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and some four months before the new Croatian political leadership unilaterally proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Croatia.

## **5. The St. Blaise Festivities in 1990 and 1991**

The analysis of the St. Blaise Festivity held in 1990 and 1991 aims to show how the symbolic presentation of the desired historical memory and the new structural relationships in the society were incorporated into this major public religious celebration. The famed Dubrovnik festa at that moment became the metaphor for the Croatian state in formation. The overarching change of the 1991 celebration is that St. Blaise Day became the Day of the Dubrovnik Municipality. The organizational framework at that

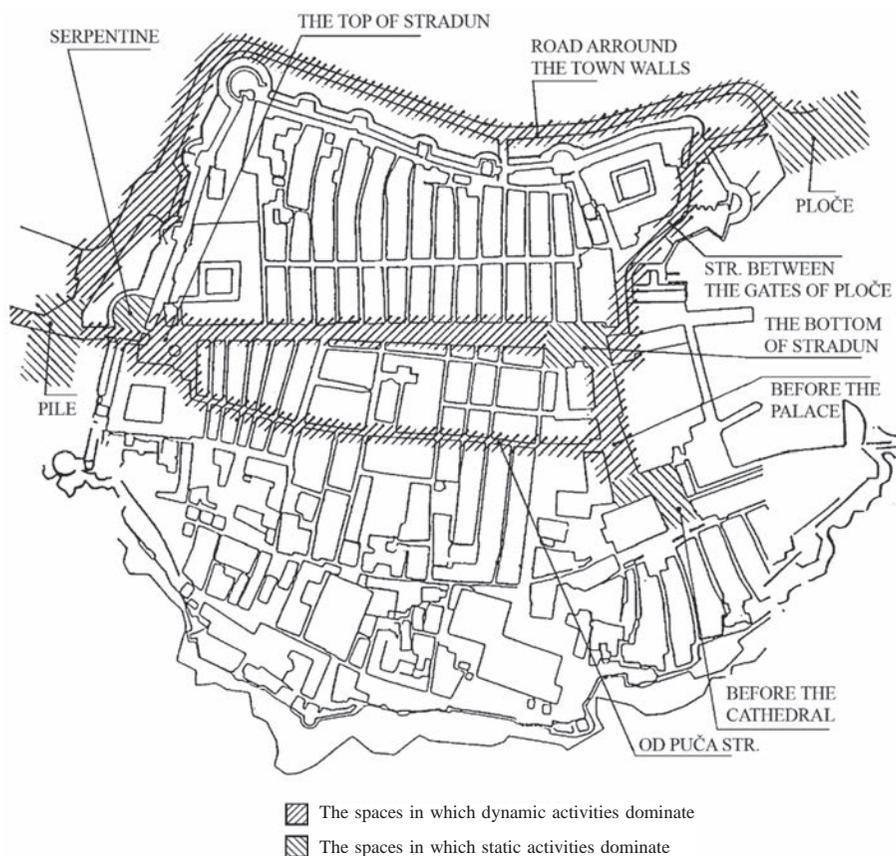
point also changed from being exclusively in the hands of the Catholic Bishopric of Dubrovnik to having three principal organizers — the Rectorate of St. Blaise Church, Dubrovnik Municipal Parliament, and Dubrovnik Festival, the last one being a public enterprise in charge of organizing cultural events. The local priesthood still organized the religious events of the Festa, but the overall program was designed within a novel, secular framework. This included the introduction of a new ceremonial specialist who made a scenario and controlled realisation of the public events and especially, the timing and order in the celebratory processions through the city. The religious events represent the core of the celebration with its preparation, opening, climax and closing. The non-religious events have cultural, entertainment, commercial, or sports content and are considered as accompanying elements to the Festa, which provide the symbolic context in the domain of the secular, thus confirming the old and establishing new meanings to the celebration.

The Festivity of St. Blaise comprises the Three-Day Prayers (30 January–1 February, late afternoons), the Festa Opening on Candlemas Day (2 February, afternoon), the St. Blaise Day (3 February, or the first Sunday following this day for the outdoor celebration, whole day), and the Festa Closing with the Gorica of St. Blaise (a week after St. Blaise Day, morning) (Photos 1, 2, 3, and 4).

The Three-Day Prayers (*Trodnevica*) take place in three consecutive evenings preceding the Festa Opening inside the festively decorated St. Blaise Church. They start with a set of common prayers devoted to Holy Mary, followed by the evening mass and a sermon given by a visiting Catholic priest honoured for this occasion.

The Festa Opening (*Otvaranje Feste - Kandelora*) takes place at the square in front of St. Blaise Church, using its front terrace and steps as the main stage. The banners of all town churches are positioned on two sides of the terrace. The Bishop of Dubrovnik, standing on the top of the stairs in the company of other clergy, opens the celebration by greeting the people crowded in the square. He then receives the fruits of the land from *trznice*,<sup>21)</sup> the young representatives of the villages dressed in traditional clothes, and lets the white doves fly in the air symbolising peace.<sup>22)</sup> The central event is the ceremonial raising of the St. Blaise banner, performed by two ritual masters called *festanjuli*, and accompanied by the ringing of church bells, shots of *torbunjeri*,<sup>23)</sup> and the church choir's singing of the festive hymn.

The novelty in 1991 was that, instead of being brought informally and at individual convenience, a procession for summoning the banners of the town churches was inaugurated. The bearers of the St. Blaise banner and the newly introduced municipal banner led the procession. They positioned themselves along the terrace of St. Blaise Church just before the Festa Opening. The second important novel event occurred in the midst of the 1991 Festa Opening ceremony. Instead of being raised above the St. Blaise Church entrance, the main celebratory artefact, the St. Blaise banner, was raised at Orlando's Column, which stands in the middle of the town square. For this occasion, the shiny new St. Blaise banner substituted the old one, previously taken out of the museum. Another novel feature appeared in the latter part of the 1991 event, when the representatives of the Croatian and the municipal parliaments joined the celebration.



**Figure 1** Spaces of ritual activity during the St. Blaise Festivity (1990 and 1991) (made by author)

Among them was a laureate of the newly installed Municipal prize, known for imprisonment due to his nationalist engagement in the early 1970s, who was given the honour of addressing the public in the square.

The first two novelties symbolise the extension of sacred space beyond the usual church steps during this major religious holiday (Figure 1). The sacred space was, thus, extended into the secular space of the Old Town by two actions, namely the processional summoning of the banners of the town churches (which replicates the processions of the St. Blaise Day) and the raising of the St. Blaise banner in the civic centre of the town.<sup>24)</sup> The raised banner marks the beginning and the end of the sacred time of the festival. Besides the traditional ritual masters, *festanjuli*, the banner raising ceremony was for the first time performed in the company of the costumed medieval court functionaries, including the pages and fanfare players.

The third novelty was manifested in the presence of state and municipal officials on the terrace of the St. Blaise Church, and especially of the Municipal prize laureate, who was now rehabilitated as the hero of the 'emerging Croatian state,' which also

symbolically suggested the merging of the religious and the civic. Even their very act of crossing the street from the Municipal Hall, where the prizes were awarded, to the terrace of St. Blaise Church, accentuates this merging of spaces. Thus, all three novel elements implied that finally, after 50 years, the domain of the church was reconnected with the domain of the state. Communication between the ceremonial and everyday space, i.e. religious and civil participants, was established through the representatives of the 'people of Dubrovnik' with specially delegated ritual roles (banner bearers, *festanjuli*, and *trznice*), but also the representatives of the victorious political party that just came into power.

The St. Blaise Day (*Blagdan Sv. Vlaha*) comprises the most elaborate celebratory activities. It starts in the morning with the procession around the Old Town walls, which summons the church banners from the eastern and western villages of the Dubrovnik Municipality. Following the traditions of the Dubrovnik Republic, representatives of the local communities, dressed in colourful folk costumes, accompany bearers of their parish church banners to participate in the St. Blaise Festivity. Entering the Gate of Pile in the west, they proudly march along Stradun, the most representative town street, towards the St. Blaise Church. The participants in the procession position themselves in the following order: *trombunjeri*, town brass orchestra(s), *festanjuli* (accompanied by the Municipal banner in 1991), bearers of town banners, and bearers of eastern and western village banners with their company. Before entering the Old Town, and subsequently, before entering the St. Blaise Church, the banner bearers salute St. Blaise by ritually waiving their flags, one by one.

The next event is the Concelebrated Mass (*koncelebrirana misa*), which occurs on the specially constructed stage on the side of the Dubrovnik Cathedral,<sup>25)</sup> which is some hundred meters behind the St. Blaise Church. This event was for the first time taken out of the Cathedral and organized in the open air in 1990. While this main religious ritual is usually performed by the Dubrovnik Bishop and other bishops and priests, in the 1991 event, the Archbishop of the Maritime was made the guest of honour. The mass ends with *trznice*, the gift bearers from the villages, approaching the stage and once again symbolising the bond between the church and the agricultural lands that provide the food for the city.

The most celebrated part of the whole Festa is the Procession with Holy Relics (Photo 5) (*svečana procesija sa moćima*). Starting at Gundulićeva Poljana, the nearby green market square, it includes all participants of the morning procession, who are now joined by the Dubrovnik Bishop and the clergy, carrying the relics of St. Blaise and other saints around the heart of the city. The procession moves along the narrow Street Od Puča and turns to the Gate of Pile, the western town entrance. After a pause in front of the gate,<sup>26)</sup> the procession, in the ritual stroll, moves slowly along Stradun, heading towards the main square in front of St. Blaise Church. The people line up on two sides of the street, trying to touch the relics and kiss their bearer's hands. The main square is filled with thousands of people, who after the procession pour into St. Blaise Church to undergo a special blessing of the throats, seeking protection from sickness.<sup>27)</sup> The ritual participants then head off for a festive meal — the villagers have lunch at their town relatives' homes,

while functionaries attend the meal organized by the Dubrovnik Bishopric (in 1990) or by the Dubrovnik Municipality (in 1991). The celebration of St. Blaise Day ends in the afternoon when the villagers ritually depart from the town by waving their banners in front of the Dubrovnik Bishop, who sits in front of the Cathedral. *Trombunjeri* as ritual guards, see them off in a procession walking up Stradun, firing their guns at departure outside the western and eastern town gates.

The comparison of the 1991 St. Blaise Day with the one from 1990 reveals the more elaborate festive scenario. The most important novelty was the participation of the political leadership representatives at the municipal and Croatian parliament levels, who were given honorary places in all the major festive events — especially in the procession with the relics, where they walked in front of the clergy. The number of clergy and their positions were higher than in the previous year. Also, in 1991 the gathering of the banners, especially those from the western villages at Brsalje, the open space outside the city walls by the Gate of Pile, lasted longer and was more elaborate than the year before. Five brass orchestras successively joined the party, the *trombunjeri* were shooting loudly from their archaic short guns, and the banner bearers were competing in their art of waiving the banners in front of the Gate of Pile, to honour the saint's figure standing above the main entrance into the Old Town.

Overall, the whole 1991 Festa was more ornate, complex, and expanded as well as more politically and symbolically charged than in the previous year. These features were evident in its spatial and temporal extension, the richness of festive activities, the increased hierarchical range of ceremonial participants, and the volume of ceremonial artefacts.

The Festa Closing (*Zatvaranje feste*) takes place on a Sunday, one week later, on the day called Gorica of St. Blaise (*Gorica Sv. Vlaha*). Early in the morning, the procession formed in front of St. Blaise Church heads along Stradun towards the western town gate, comes out of the Old Town, and climbs towards the small St. Blaise Church situated on the top of the hill called Gorica. The ritual participants in the procession are *trombunjeri*, *festanjuli*, and town banner bearers, with the town brass orchestra accompanying them in 1991. After the flag waving in front of the church, the mass, and refreshments, the procession returns to the city, where *festanjuli* bring down the St. Blaise banner. This event did not show as many novelties as the previous ones, except these related to the earlier parts of the festivity.

In addition to the religious events described above, a variety of cultural events were organized by the Dubrovnik Municipality and Dubrovnik Festival to complement the 1991 St. Blaise celebration. Their content was also indicative of the changes in the nature of the festivity. Among the most advertised events were the photo exhibition presenting the Blaise Festa celebrated in 1941, the opening of the renovated Ethnographic Museum 'Rupe,' and the concert 'To the City of St. Blaise' held in the Marin Držić Theatre.

The content of the opening speeches at all these festive events, as well as the choice of the concert music, suggested the celebration of reconnecting the 'Dubrovnik traditions' with the 'traditions of national land.' Most indicative were the photos of the 1941 St. Blaise Festa which showed the representatives of the 'people of Dubrovnik' dressed in

elaborate traditional costumes, but also the local hosts of the event with their honoured guests, the dignitaries of the Catholic Church and Banovina of Croatia that came from the capital city of Zagreb. The most prominent place in the exhibition was given to the photos that portrayed the Archbishop of Zagreb and the first Ban (governor) of Banovina of Croatia (instituted in 1939), participating in the Festa Opening and the procession with holy relics. In addition, the organizers of these events placed the flags of the new 'Republic of Croatia,' instituted by the December 1990 Constitution, in visible places, and especially at the concert, where it stood above the stage alongside the St. Blaise banner.

The comparison of St. Blaise Festa in 1990 and 1991 reveals novelties that may be related to actual political and thus, symbolic changes in the overall celebration. They were as follows:

- the Catholic Church celebration became the Dubrovnik Municipality celebration,
- the organization extended from solely the Dubrovnik Catholic Bishopric to including the Municipal Parliament and Dubrovnik Festival,
- the secular concept of celebration aimed to dominate, wherein the non-religious events complemented the religious ones,
- the religious part of the celebration was extended into civic space (through the introduction of the procession summoning the town flags and raising St. Blaise Banner on Orlando's Column),
- the government officials, both at the municipal and state level, participated for the first time in religious events of the Festa, thus merging the civic and the religious space,
- high-status church dignitaries and local clergy were more numerous,
- the civic ritual participants, such as medieval court functionaries were newly introduced, and the number of brass orchestras increased,
- the municipal banner was introduced, and old St. Blaise banner was substituted with a new one,
- the time and space devoted to all the open-air Festa events, which included massive audience/attendants, were extended.
- Lastly, an important change should be added to the previous ones. From 1991 onwards, St. Blaise Day was fully celebrated on 3 February in contrast to the 1947–1990 period, during which the outside celebration with the procession had to take place on Sundays. This meant that, according to the new popular view, St. Blaise got out of its 'socialist strangles' and became a full-fledged public holiday.

Looking back at the preceding socialist period, it became evident that St. Blaise Festivity was elaborated gradually and was especially enriched since the early 1980s. For example, the Festa Opening was inaugurated in front of St. Blaise Church in the 1980s. The bringing the Concelebrated Mass and Bishop's farewell to the village banners in the front of the Cathedral and participation of the Dubrovnik brass orchestra were all

introduced in 1990. Before this time, all events but the two main processions were enclosed in the church. The detailed comparisons with the celebrations after 1991 were not possible, especially not until the civil war in Croatia ended in 1995, but also later when the visitors from Serbia were not received as welcome guests.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Urban Stage and Ritual Performers in the St. Blaise Festivity

When theorised at the level of *longue durée* processes, the previous analysis shows the dialectical relationship between history and urban space, where built and open public spaces serve as a stage for history, present, and future. The open public spaces are stages where the St. Blaise Festivity occurs annually for centuries. The unchanging city plan and buildings as well as the ritual objects serve as a setting in which history is ever-present, but are also available for use by the new generations of ritual participants.

Thus, on one side, we have the city plan, walls, and architectural design that preserve the connection with ‘the past,’ and on the other, the people who make up ‘the present’ and by relying on ‘their history,’ strive for a better future.

The most prominent buildings that serve as a historical setting of St. Blaise Festa at the eastern town square are the Romanesque inner Gate of Ploče, Baroque St. Blaise Church and Cathedral of Annunciation, Gothic-Renaissance Rector’s Palace, Renaissance Sponza Palace, and centrally positioned Gothic Orlando’s Column. In the square at the western end of Stradun the most capturing buildings are the Gothic arches of the inner Gate of Pile and the former Convent of St. Claire, Gothic-Renaissance St. Savior’s Church, Baroque St. Francis Church, and Large Onofrio’s Fountain. Each of these buildings has an intriguing story tied to its long existence, which may span from as early as the 14th century (after 1272 the Dubrovnik Statutes set up the master plan for the orthogonal city), and especially from the end of the 17th century (when the city was reconstructed after the Great Earthquake of 1667). This never-changing aesthetics of the Festa setting enables the blending of the present into the past, and vice versa, of the past into the present.

And yet, the open public spaces that stand in the midst of these historical settings could not fulfil their function of a stage for St. Blaise Festivity without the participants, be it the high functionaries, the clergy, banner-bearers, costumed ritual groups, or common people. Most of them are the residents of Dubrovnik Municipality but many also come from close or distant places. Wearing traditional costumes or carrying ritual paraphernalia, such as holy artefacts, banners, or guns, during the Festa, they step into ‘history’ and become its inseparable part.

The St. Blaise Festa participants make history by following the processional routes around and within the orthogonal town structure, as well as by gathering in town churches and squares for the main ritual events. They walk the steps of their ancestors, stand in places where they stood, and perform ritual activities that had been passed on from one generation to another, for centuries. They repeatedly practice their embodied ritual knowledge every year when the Festa takes place. Integration of these dynamic

(walking) and static (standing) activities creates a common event-space, which blends religious, social, and political activities. It also absorbs the past, present, and future in an intimate whole (Vučinić 1999). The public spaces that the Festa participants occupy or move through may also be seen as ‘containers’ for a variety of feelings and memories whose practice of recollecting have been both stimulated and silenced (Uehling 2018).

The history of St. Blaise Festa consists of memories of every successive year’s participants in the event, but more recently, also of scenes captured in photos and other visual documentation produced by individuals, institutions, and media. Social memory is, thus, ‘externalised’ through different media, which enables bridging individual and collective memory. The visual media serves as a transmitter of ‘shared recollections’ (Uehling 2018). Media have immense power to shape how a public recollects and remembers. Their users, such as the organizers of festivities, curators of exhibitions, or journalists, play a significant role when they select between historical events and shade them with positive or negative valences, thus framing the past in a specific way. The result of such intentional efforts can be that the deliberately selected images of historical celebrations are transmitted to the publics that have experienced the events decades ago, or have not seen them at all, but can grasp them as part of their social memory because of their present political significance.

## **6.2 Present and Historical Significance of the 1941 St. Blaise Festivity**

In recent decades, the visual documentation of the St. Blaise celebration is more plentiful, and if compared from one year to another may reveal certain smaller or larger differences in its form and content. However, visual documentation of further past is not equally accessible; in fact, it is quite rare. Pulling it out from institutional archives asks for an organized effort aimed at projecting a distinct public message. This action may be regarded as ‘restorative nostalgia’ (Uehling 2018), which often permeates national and social movements and attempts a trans-historical reconstruction (Uehling 2018). Such was the case when the photo exhibition of the 1941 St. Blaise Festa was organized in the Municipal House.

In the case of 1991 St. Blaise Festa, ‘the history’ materialised in the photos of the ‘exemplary celebration’ that occurred in 1941. These photos illustrate the presence of the ‘representatives of the people,’ but also the high church and political authorities, regarded by the new Croatian political elite as their ‘spiritual and ideological predecessors,’ the national heroes who contributed to the early struggles for establishing the independent state of Croatia. The key figures participating in 1941 St. Blaise Festa had interestingly diverse life trajectories, which ignited controversial discussions about them in the post-WW2 period. The Archbishop of Zagreb, A. Stepinac, maintained his prelate position during the existence of the Independent State of Croatia, after which the new Yugoslav government convicted him for treason and collaboration with Ustashe, for which he served prison that turned into a home arrest. On the other hand, the Ban of Croatia, I. Šubašić, refused to accept the political leadership over the Independent State of Croatia, and joined the royalist Yugoslav Government in exile to become its prime minister at the very end of the war. Pushed by W. Churchill, the Tito-Šubašić Agreement (1944) was

signed, forming a coalition between the Yugoslav royalists and communists, where Šubašić served as the foreign minister until the elections in March 1945 (Pavlowitch 2011: 113–114).

The new concept of the 1991 St. Blaise Festa illustrated which historical eras were selected for forgetting and which for remembering. Thus, the modelling of this celebration included strife to wipe out from social memory the previous fifty years of Croatia's existence within the socialist Yugoslav state. At the same time, a positive reference was made with Banovina of Croatia (1939–1941) and the Independent State of Croatia (1941–1945).

Even though the new elite of the Croatian Democratic Union despised the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, considering it the 'dark prison of the Croatian nation' (Jović 2011), they obviously recognised the historical significance of the last two years of its existence. These very times, when the newly formed Banovina of Croatia gained a high degree of independence within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, were perceived as the period in which the seeds of Croatian modern statehood were initially planted.

At the same time, the St. Blaise Festa of 1941 was only a few months away from the founding of the Independent State of Croatia. This political formation was already in the plans of fascist Germany and Italy, who had allies among the right-wing Croatian Ustashe Movement of the pre-war times led by A. Pavelić, who happened to be given the leading positions in the war-time puppet state (Bartulin 2014: 127–159). It, thus, becomes obvious that the situations in which the extreme nationalist parties in 1941 and 1991 found themselves was identical. In both cases, the preparations for the proclamation of the new independent state of Croatia were in full swing.

To the new political leadership in Croatia and Dubrovnik, linking the St. Blaise Festa of 1991 with the one of 1941 meant the reestablishment of the continuity with the earlier, pre-socialist forms of Croatian statehood. It also implies the strife of the new political leadership to win, not a partial, but full state independence for its nation. The dominant symbol of this reconnection was the official flag of the 'new Croatian state,' which held close resemblance with the flags of Croatian political formations that existed in 1941.<sup>28)</sup> Thus, keeping the same tri-colour red, white, and blue, the flag received the central coat of arms. Instead of the 'red star,' the central symbol in the flag of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (1945–1990), the new flag featured the coat of arms with the historical 'Croatian checkerboard' (comprising 25 red and white squares), topped with the heraldic crown comprising historical emblems of provinces that were incorporated in the modern Republic of Croatia (officially adopted in December 1990).<sup>29)</sup> The particular type of checkerboard carried a direct association with the flag of Banovina of Croatia (1939–1941), but was also very close to the flag of Independent State of Croatia (1941–1945), with the difference being in detail — the first one started with a red square, and the second with the white square. Thus, the symbolism of the new flag held dual association, namely, with the initial form of the Croatian statehood (acquired at the end of Yugoslav monarchy) and with the fascist Croatian state under the German and Italian occupation.

### 6.3 Dialectical Relationship between the Past and the Present

The previous analysis shows that the dialectical relationship between the past and the present is visible in three domains of the St. Blaise Festivity, namely in religious ritual, ethnic identity, and social memory. First, in the St. Blaise celebration, the present and the past merge through blending the city's historical, never-changing open space and the ritual participants who by performing in the present, make what will become the history for future generations.

Second, ethnic identity constructs itself in a dialectical relationship between the past and present. Ethnicity is a 'lace' where the past and present meet, but in a way that the past is re-examined in light of new social contexts (Zdravković 2005: 106; Pavković 2021: 33). The dialectical nature of ethnicity, according to Jenkins, is already contained in the definition of this phenomenon as practical implementation, and not as a static form, which means that it develops, changes, and endures through inter-group contacts that include processes of inner and outer definition, which in everyday life remain intertwined and in the constant state of mutual conditioning (Jenkins 2008; Pavković 2021: 33).

Third, social memory is the link between the past, present, and future. The memory will depend on the priorities in the present, in which the past always actualises itself (Vasiljević 2008; Pavković 2021: 146). The past, whether created by the institution, an informal group, or an individual, using different devices, such as selective memory, amnesia, telling, or concealing, transforms into reliable and stable valuations, and is always remade to become acceptable for the present (Jansen 2002; Ganguly 1992; Pavković 2021: 146).

At the very end, we might say that this study incidentally caught that subtle moment when the present detached from the past and headed towards the future in all three domains of the St. Blaise Festivity, i.e. in the domain of religious ritual, ethnic identity, and social memory. We should also note that the novel elements of the Festa were an integral part of the overall processes taking place in Croatia of the time.

## 7. Conclusion

At the very end, we come back to the theme of this symposium 'The Logics and Conception of History: From the Fieldworks of the World.' In my understanding, as anthropologists, we should try to respond to the question: How can we critically fuse the synthetic studies produced by the formal historical science (published in monographs and articles), the existing historical documentation that we collect (dispersed written, visual, audio materials and objects preserved in various archives, museums, and individual collections), and the ethnographic material we ourselves create during fieldwork (e.g., observations and narratives)? In addition, how do we combine the academic and popular, formal, and informal constructions of the past?

This paper portrayed how the members of the Dubrovnik political elite and Catholic Church constructed their history for the occasion of the principal municipal festivity at the time when Croatia was leaving one polity and creating a new one. The structure and

meanings of this constructed history were revealed through an anthropological inquiry into what spaces were used, who were the ritual participants and how they were dressed, what they spoke of, which historical moments, events, and processes they referred to, and what accompanying exhibitions and concerts they organized. Such local, momentarily constructed histories are in essence similar to the formal written histories that are produced worldwide. The difference is only in that the first one is enacted as a public performance (using urban spaces as a stage), whereas the second is portrayed as a written script that inspires imagination.

So, what happens here with history and anthropology? Hopefully, I was able to show that material, written, oral, and visual sources telling about the far and recent past (created for other purposes), merge with the ones that are created by an anthropologist at present (during fieldwork). Thus, the final point would be the following. As active participants in creating ‘the present’ and collecting documentation of ‘the past’ of the local communities and large polities we study, we need to be aware that our work, once written and published, becomes part of their ‘history,’ which may also influence their future. In addition, the cities possessing UNESCO appraised cultural heritage and foreseeing their future in tourism, such as Dubrovnik, will increasingly be under the pressure of calls for traditionalisation on one, and modernization on the other hand, in which anthropological expertise may be valuable in finding the right balance (Photo 6). The awareness of such processes demands anthropologists’ professional and individual moral responsibility.



**Photo 1** Festa Opening: St. Blaise banner raised above the St. Blaise Church (photo by author, 1990)



**Photo 2** Festa Opening: Catholic dignitaries and village representatives (photo by author, 1991)



**Photo 3** St. Blaise Day: Joint procession of the banners from the city and eastern villages (photo by author, 1990)



**Photo 4** St. Blaise Day: Concelebrated Mass (photo by author, 1990)



**Photo 5** St. Blaise Day: Procession with the holy relics (photo by author, 1991)



**Photo 6** St. Blaise Festa Opening in the mid-2010s (published by Školski portal) (<https://old.skolskiportal.hr/kartice/sadrzaj/?id=118%20>)

## Notes

- 1) I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers of the MINPAKU Symposium *The Logic and Conception of History: Cross-Field Approaches from around the World*, and especially to Prof. Han Min, who invited me to give a keynote lecture at this extremely stimulating intellectual gathering. I would also like to thank my colleagues from the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology of the University of Belgrade for their support and note that the research presented in this paper resulted from my participation in the project of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (177018).
- 2) It is obvious that the concept known as 'history' has multiple meanings. Among the scientists,

it is mostly understood as a humanistic discipline that records, analyses, and explains past events, as well as a chronological record of (significant) events. The same concept also assumes events of the past and stories about them or any previous experience. The closely related concepts, which should be noted here, are those of the 'past,' as having existed or taken place in a period before the present, and the 'artefact,' as something characteristic or resulting from a particular human institution, period, trend, or individual. These definitions are based on a selection of meanings offered by Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/history>

- 3) I here use the concept of 'open public space' both in terms of physical open-air space and in terms of 'public sphere,' as defined by J. Habermas (1989), which assumes a wider span of meanings. In addition to the spatial aspect, it includes the social sites or arenas where meanings are articulated, distributed, and negotiated, as well as the collective body constituted in this process. Another useful definition is that of N. Fraser, who considers the 'public sphere' to be a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk (Fraser 1990).
- 4) The secessions of these three federal republics of Yugoslavia were proclaimed in the following order: Croatia and Slovenia on 25 June 1991 and Bosnia and Herzegovina on 3 March 1992.
- 5) Two large operations of the Croatian army, in which the retired generals of the US army were engaged to give the logistic assistance, forced most of the Serbian population in Croatia to leave their centuries-old hearths. Operation 'Flash' was organized in Slavonia on 1–3 May 1995, while operation 'Storm' was organized in the Republic of Serbian Krajina on 4–7 August 1995 (Silber and Little 1996).
- 6) The name Dubrovnik came into use alongside Ragusa as early as the 14th century. The name Dubrovnik was first recorded in the Charter of Ban Kulin (1189), a trade agreement signed by the ruler of Bosnia and the Dubrovnik Commune. This name derives from a Slavic word *dubrava*, denoting an oak grove (Gardner 1848). Its Latin name *Ragusa* derives from *Lausa* (from the Greek ξαυ: *xau*, 'precipice'), which was the name of the early island settlement inhabited by the refugees from Epidaurum, the late antique city situated some 25km south. The official change of name from Ragusa to Dubrovnik came into effect after WW1 (Blake et al. 1996).
- 7) Originally named *Communitas Ragusina* (Ragusian Community), in the 14th century it was renamed *Respublica Ragusina* (Republic of Ragusa), first mentioned in 1385, and lasting until 1809 (Harris 2006).
- 8) The Statute of the Town of Dubrovnik (1272) is available in Latin-Croatian translation (1990).
- 9) The Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska*) was established in parts of occupied Yugoslavia on 10 April 1941, after the invasion by the Axis powers. The Ustashe regime targeted Serbs, Jews, and Roma as part of a large-scale campaign of genocide, as well as anti-fascist or dissident Croats and Bosnian Muslims (Pavlowitch 2008; Bartulin 2014; Goldstein and Goldstein 2016; Greif 2018).
- 10) While most of the Dubrovnik residents declared themselves as Croatian Catholics and Serb Orthodox, also a number of them considered themselves Serb Catholics. The Serb-Catholic Movement in Dubrovnik (*Дубровачки србокатолички покрет*) was a pan-Serb cultural and political organization in Dubrovnik, active at various periods between the 1830s and the period

when Dubrovnik was part of the Habsburg-ruled Kingdom of Dalmatia. The group of local intellectuals known as Catholic Serbs embraced strong pro-Serbian sentiments (see Banac 1983; Borak 1998).

- 11) For a very long time, the senate of the Republic of Dubrovnik did not allow the building of holy places of other religions in the city. The only sanctuary that existed beside the Catholic churches and monasteries was the Dubrovnik Synagogue, built in the old town ghetto, legalised in 1408. The first Orthodox Church was built in 1800 outside the city, whereas the Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nicholas, following enormous political and economic effort, was completed in 1877 (Kovačević 2018; Arsić 2019).
- 12) The ethnic affiliation is taken from the 1991 Census, whereas the religious affiliation had to be taken from my own survey data because this category was not included in the Census.
- 13) 'Festa' is the local word for 'festivity or festival.' In this paper, the festival devoted to St. Blaise will interchangeably be called 'Festivity of St. Blaise' and 'Festa of St. Blaise.'
- 14) For further inquiry on the subject, see Radić 2002; Branković 2007.
- 15) Tudjman saw himself as the personification of Croatian unity — through him, national cleavages would be overcome. He tried to foster that unity through his party. The HDZ was founded illegally in June 1989 and announced its first political program in 1990. It announced that it would be a pan-Croatian movement that would mobilize the entire nation by unifying the diverse strands of its political traditions. The rallying call for this mobilization was the fight for Croatian sovereignty. The attainment of sovereignty was the self-declared reason for the HDZ's existence, and some argued that sovereignty and national independence remained its only substantive interest throughout the decade (Zakošek 1997: 38–39; Bellamy 2003: 67).
- 16) For the full version of the 1990 Constitution, please refer to: Ustav Republike Hrvatske. 22 December 1990. Narodne Novine: Službeni List Republike Hrvatske. [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1990\\_12\\_56\\_1092.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1990_12_56_1092.html) (retrieved on 10 July 2020). The English translation is accessible at [https://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/hr01000\\_.html](https://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/hr01000_.html)
- 17) The new coat of arms instituted by the 1990 Constitution is available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist\\_Republic\\_of\\_Croatia#/media/File:Coat\\_of\\_arms\\_of\\_Croatia.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Republic_of_Croatia#/media/File:Coat_of_arms_of_Croatia.svg)
- 18) Literature on the atrocities of the NDH regime and the discussions on the number of its victims are extensive. The references given in the text are only a small part of this literature. However, attention should be drawn to a document produced in 1946 by The State Commission for Establishing of the Crimes of the Occupying Forces and Their Helpers (2013[1946]), called 'Crimes in Jasenovac Camp,' which provides details of the organization and methods of persecution in the largest Ustashe camp in NDH, and among the largest in Europe.
- 19) It should be added that Germany unilaterally recognised the sovereignty of Croatia and Slovenia without considering the views of the other EU member states. This early recognition arrived before the Badinter Commission's opinion as to their qualifications, this in spite of the rules of democracy and human rights used in so far as guidelines in dealing with such matters. For more detail about the whole process, see Lucarelli 1997.
- 20) As mentioned earlier, at this time, Croatia used its paramilitary forces in combat activities. The Croatian Army was officially established on 3 November 1991.
- 21) This act symbolises yet another year of abundance.
- 22) The doves, besides symbolising 'peace' (while being let to fly free), in the initial Christian

- context, symbolise the sacrifice offered at the presentation of Jesus in the Temple by his parents 40 days upon birth (the celebration is known as The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord).
- 23) Trombunjeri are ritual participants in the St. Blaise Festa who carry short and broad rifles on their shoulders and fire them into the air to create festive noise in the most important parts of the celebration. The ‘trombones’ (rifles) they carry stem from mid-18th century Italy and were used to frighten the enemies.
  - 24) This town square is often called ‘the bottom of Stradun,’ and is encircled by the St. Blaise Church, Sponza Palace (initially the Customs House and presently the Historical Archives of Dubrovnik), Marin Držić Theatre, and the Municipal Hall, while Orlando’s Column occupies its central part.
  - 25) The square where the temporary stage for the Concelebrated Mass was constructed is known as ‘Before the Cathedral’ or ‘Before the Palace,’ the second name given due to the fact that former Rector’s Palace (presently a museum) is situated directly across the Cathedral.
  - 26) This square, often called ‘the top of Stradun,’ is encircled by the Franciscan Monastery and the former St. Claire Nunnery (at that time, the Trade Unions Home), while its central part is occupied by the Large Onofrio’s Fountain.
  - 27) Using two crossed candles, between which the believers put their heads, the priests perform the blessing of the throats.
  - 28) It was indicative that the leader of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) at this time (and the latter president of the independent Republic of Croatia) saw himself as the unifier of all the Croats and someone who could connect the conflictual pasts and their representatives. Franjo Tuđman described himself as a ‘Croatian historian, politician, and statesman.’ (Tuđman 1991: 1). As Bellamy stated, ‘Tuđman believed that he could personally bridge the gap between the fascists and communists. Not only did ‘Franjoism’ include a commitment to unite the ‘bright and dark chapters of Croatia’s past,’ it also sought to bring Croats living in Croatia together with those living abroad’ (Bellamy 2003: 67).
  - 29) The list of successive historical flags of Croatia is available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Croatian\\_flags](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Croatian_flags).

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