



War as an Enduring Determinant of Party Choice in Postwar Southeast Europe

Christophe Lesschaeve

To cite this article: Christophe Lesschaeve (2022): War as an Enduring Determinant of Party Choice in Postwar Southeast Europe, Europe-Asia Studies, DOI: [10.1080/09668136.2022.2150148](https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2022.2150148)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2022.2150148>



Published online: 22 Dec 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 137



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

War as an Enduring Determinant of Party Choice in Postwar Southeast Europe

CHRISTOPHE LESSCHAEVE

Abstract

In postwar elections, voter choices are often shaped by the memory of past violence. Taking Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia as case studies, this study examines war as an enduring determinant of party choice among the age cohorts who lived through the wars of the 1990s, and the cohorts who were born after. Based on a representative survey of over 5,000 citizens, the results show that in Bosnia & Hercegovina, war-related issues and social divisions continue to inform party preferences in the postwar generation as much as they did in the generations that came before. In Croatia, by contrast, war-related issues are showing signs of diminishing political relevance.

THE IMPACT OF WAR IS OFTEN FELT LONG AFTER THE guns have gone silent (Ghobarah *et al.* 2003). Its effects are not only medical or economic but also relate to the nature of political competition in postwar societies. This is evident from the growing body of research that has found war to shape party preferences. For instance, refugees who had fled to Serbia from other former Yugoslav republics to escape the violence showed greater support for the nationalist Serbian Radical Party (*Srpska Radikalna Stranka*) in the decade after the wars (Konitzer & Grujić 2009). In Croatia, Israel and the United States, former combatants have been found to prefer hawkish and nationalist parties (Klingler & Chatagnier 2014; Grossman *et al.* 2015; Lesschaeve 2020; cf. Teigen 2007).

A recent development in this literature has been the suggestion that the impact of violence and war can last for decades, shaping the choices of war-affected communities for generations to come (Lupu & Peisakhin 2017; Rozenas *et al.* 2017; Costalli & Ruggeri 2019). This essentially means that political choices are being made predominantly on the basis of conflicts that happened a long time ago rather than on the basis of contemporary considerations. In other words, if the memory of war continues to dominate political

The research for this article was conducted at the Université du Luxembourg and was supported by the European Research Council under grant number 714589.

Disclosure statement: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

outcomes, postwar societies run the risk of being stuck in the past. The ability of past conflict to retain political relevance long after its end has been demonstrated before in Spain, Ukraine and Croatia. While important, these studies raise additional questions. First, how does the political potency of war memories evolve over time? Does war become increasingly irrelevant in the making of electoral decisions as the temporal distance to the past conflicts increases with each subsequent generation, albeit slowly, or does war underpin the political choices made by citizens who lived through the war as much as it underpins those who were born after? If so, this raises a second question, that of how war retains its political relevance. Is the nature of an enduring war-driven partisanship rooted in social divisions and group memberships made salient or created by the war? Violent conflicts often erupt between opposing ethnoreligious and cultural groups. In addition, wars create refugees, veterans, victims and perpetrators. At its most basic level, war creates divisions between those who suffer and those who do not, or much less. Alternatively, the continued relevance of war can be value-based, that is, embedded in attitudes towards and views of issues that were central in the armed struggle.

To answer these questions, this study analyses the results of a representative survey of over 5,000 citizens of Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia, conducted in 2018. The analyses expose the extent to which people's attitudes towards war-related issues (nationalism, ethnic minority rights and war crimes) and their group memberships on war-related social divisions (ethnicity and war experiences) explain their party preferences, and the differences herein between the postwar generation and previous generations. This is arguably the first time that war-affected age cohorts and their descendants have been compared, adding to our understanding of how the impact of war is transmitted and perpetuated. Having experienced war in their recent histories, these countries constitute ideal cases in which to examine the impact of war on present-day vote choices across different generations. The survey includes highly detailed measures of citizens' party preferences, political attitudes and war experiences. This public opinion survey is supplemented with an expert survey, also conducted in 2018, that includes the policy positions and ideological orientations, including those on war-related issues, of all relevant political parties of both countries. The results show that in Bosnia & Hercegovina, war-related issues and social divisions continue to instruct party preferences in the postwar generation as much as they did in the generations that came before. In Croatia, in contrast, the importance of nationalism, ethnic minority rights and war crimes is lower among younger than among older age cohorts, suggesting a diminishing relevance of war past in political choices. The implications of these findings are discussed in the conclusion.

The legacy of war in contemporary party preferences

When it comes to the determinants of voters' party preferences, scholars generally agree that these can be divided into two groups: ideological and structural (Franklin 2012). The first springs from the rational voter model (Fiorina 1981), which emphasises the role of issues and beliefs, and argues that citizens prefer parties that have beliefs similar to their own. It has been well established that wars can alter political beliefs and attitudes. Massey *et al.* (2003), Strabac and Ringdal (2008), and Dyrstad (2012) find that war experiences in

Croatia are positively related to ethnic nationalism. Canetti-Nisim *et al.* (2009), Hirsch-Hoefler *et al.* (2016) and Canetti *et al.* (2017) argue that psychological stress induced by violence results in a 'conflict ethos', which comprises beliefs related to the justness of goals, victimisation, security, the delegitimation of the opponent, patriotism, unity and peace.¹ This ethos in turn shapes political attitudes. The possibility that war could affect a wide range of policy preferences was suggested by Glaurdić and Vuković (2018), when they found that people with traumatic war experiences were more likely to favour an interventionist role for the government in the economy, possibly due to a greater general aversion to risk.

Not only does war change people's attitudes, it also arguably changes what issues are important in people's electoral choices. In this sense, wars can be considered events that socialise people into considering issues central to the conflict as important. By increasing the salience of certain issues, wars make them more accessible, and subsequently more likely to be considered when assessing political parties (Iyengar & Kinder 1987, 2010; Price & Tewksbury 1997). It is argued here that the Balkan wars of the 1990s increased the political relevance of three interrelated issues. The first is nationalism. Indeed, all regional wars of that decade could be considered as nation-building wars (Ramet 2006). The second issue is that of minority rights and the question of multi-ethnic coexistence. Much of the violence that engulfed the region was fought along ethnic lines, and the wars were often waged in an effort to establish ethnically homogeneous nations (Massey *et al.* 1999). The third issue is that of what happened during the war, including crimes against humanity. In the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars, large numbers of mass graves were uncovered and numerous high-ranking military officers were charged with committing atrocities (Cehajic *et al.* 2008). The first two issues were undoubtedly already becoming increasingly important prior to the outbreak of the wars (MacDonald 2002) and their importance was further amplified by the ensuing violence. In the ideological view of party preferences, wars form people's attitudes to war-related issues, specifically, the congruence between their views and those of parties on these issues, even more important criteria when choosing which party to vote for.

The second group of determinants of voter party preferences revolve around structural or social divisions. The best-known example is the relation between class and party preference. Working class people traditionally vote for parties on the left because of the intrinsic link between labour and socialism (Lazarsfeld *et al.* 1969; Manza *et al.* 1995). While ideological considerations unquestionably play a role in the link between social divisions and party preference, the focus here is on the emotional bond between citizens and parties. In this sense, party choice is an expression of group affiliation. Group members vote for a party because that is what it means to be a member of that group (Green *et al.* 2002; Huddy *et al.* 2015). Which social divisions or group memberships affect party preference depends on their salience. Ethnic group membership has always played a role in the politics of the region. The conflicts surrounding the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s were fought primarily along ethnic lines, greatly increasing their political salience in the postwar period. In Bosnia & Hercegovina, for example, Hadzic *et al.* (2020) find

¹See also Fabbe *et al.* (2019).

that ethnic parties capture a larger portion of the votes in communities that suffered heavily in the 1992–1995 war there. In addition, it is argued here that wars create new social divisions, separating those affected and those unaffected by the violence. Exposure to the horrors of war has a lasting impact. War participants, war victims and communities need social and economic support to undo the damage that has been done (Ghobarah *et al.* 2003). Furthermore, war experiences create a sense of shared history and future. In that way—similar to social class—such experiences are likely to become embedded in people’s notion of who they are (Smelser 2004). This feeling of group membership in turn can create an affective bond with parties which are viewed as the defenders of those who suffered in the war.

This structural view of party preference, which is presumed to result in stable party choices, has been questioned in light of increases in electoral volatility (Dalton 1996; Dalton & Wattenberg 2000). However, scholars have begun to question the degree of volatility and its relationship to the role played by voters’ social characteristics in their party choice. Van der Meer *et al.* (2015) show that while Dutch voters frequently change parties, especially in response to events, they rarely switch to a different ideological bloc. Right-wing voters switch between right-wing parties and left-wing voters switch between left-wing parties. This finding is consistent with the view that voters consider only a limited set of parties as viable voting options, and that they hardly ever alter these sets (Wilson 2008; Oscarsson & Rosema 2019; Rekker & Rosema 2019).

If war experiences can affect party preferences by way of policy preferences arising from the conflict and its aftermath, and by way of the social divisions that they foster, how then can we expect the impact of war on party choice to evolve over time? When conceptualising changes over time and differences between generations with regards to the impact of war, the literature offers two possibilities: the cohort effect and the period effect (Glenn 2005).² The first refers to the phenomenon by which people adopt attitudes and identities in the formative stages of their life, which tend to remain stable thereafter. The formative or impressionable years are typically identified as the years from late adolescence through early adulthood. This effect is probably best known for underpinning Inglehart’s theory of postmaterialism (Inglehart 1984). Period effects refer to changes in society that result in alterations in attitudes and identities that affect all generations. In terms of war legacies, under the cohort effect, war would have a strong impact on the people who were in their formative years when the war broke out, but less so on the people who had already entered the adult stages of their life prior to the onset of the conflict, or people who were born after it ended. War as a period effect has an impact on all generations who live through it, regardless of their life stages and a declining effect on the party preferences of postwar generations.

To summarise, the cohort effect predicts that the relevance of war in party choices is limited to those who were between roughly the ages of 17 and 25 during the war and is less relevant for everyone else. The period effect, by contrast, posits that every cohort

²There is also the life cycle effect, which results in a change in attitudes and in the relevance of social divisions as people age. However, it is not believed to apply to the topic at hand and therefore is not discussed here.

except those born after the end of the war assigns a greater weight to war-related views and social divisions. Given the nature of war, the memories and trauma it can induce and its overall transformative power, its effects on political behaviour would, at first glance, be most appropriately viewed as a period effect. Regardless, both the cohort and period effect predict that war is less important for postwar generations. Yet, this line of reasoning ignores the social, political, communal and family forces working to keep the war alive in people's minds. Indeed, research on this topic has shown that war can have electoral legacies even long after the conflict itself has ended. In Spain, Balcells (2012) finds that victimisation during the Spanish Civil War leads to the rejection of the political identity of the perpetrators, with those who were victimised by Francoist forces voting for either the leftist or Basque nationalist parties, and those victimised by the Republican side voting for the main right-wing party. In Ukraine, areas that suffered greatly under Stalinist oppression were far less likely to support pro-Russian parties in elections more than 50 years later (Lupu & Peisakhin 2017; Rozenas *et al.* 2017). Glaurdić and Vuković (2016) show that the role played by a community's experience of violence in Croatia's 1991–1995 war of independence in shaping its support for the main nationalist party was still felt in 2015. In other words, this study argues that besides a cohort or a period effect, an enduring effect is possible. When an event has become an integral part of social and political life, it may change social and political identities in such a profound way that these changes are transmitted to next generations, creating a self-sustaining dynamic that keeps the memory of war alive not just among those who lived through it but among generations born after.

The mechanisms behind the enduring legacies of war are that social divisions and attitudes are passed down from the generation which experienced war first hand to its descendants through socialisation (Smelser 2004). Studies in this area have identified four principle socialising agents: parents and family members (Aboud & Amato 2003), education (McGlynn *et al.* 2004; Hayes & McAllister 2009), the media (Ajdukovic & Biruski 2008), and political parties (Petrocic 1996; Sekulić *et al.* 2006). Parents in postwar societies frequently discuss the war, both its broader context and their own experiences, with their children. Schools influence the postwar generation through their war-related curriculum, as is evident from school texts in Bosnia & Hercegovina in which interpretations of the war and victimisation are ethnocentric (Torsti 2007, p. 90). In addition, schools often participate in war commemoration services. Thirdly, media are important direct sources of information about the war and serve as indirect catalysts that spark conversations about it (Sekulić *et al.* 2006; Reidy *et al.* 2015).

Finally, and arguably most importantly, parties and political elites often attempt to keep the memory of war alive through their discourse and participation in activities related to the war past. Some political parties, particularly those that led their countries through the war, are seen as 'owning' issues related to the war. As such, they stand to gain electorally from the continued salience of war-related issues and social divisions (Bélanger & Meguid 2008). This behaviour fits within a broader pattern of parties acting as political entrepreneurs in the marketplace of ideas: articulating a particular agenda in search of public support (Sartori & Mair 2005). By increasing the salience or relevance of certain political views or social identities, by trying to keep the war 'alive', parties hope to secure an electoral advantage (Hloušek & Kopeček 2010; Bieber 2020). Through their public discourse and

participation in war-related activities and commemorations, parties in Southeast Europe and in postwar societies elsewhere have maintained the relevance of past conflicts. Indeed, scholars have argued that the war past has become a central part of postwar political culture in certain countries, even decades after the ceasing of hostilities (Lazic 2013; Chirot *et al.* 2014; Ashplant *et al.* 2015). As such, it can be argued that political parties are not only an important driver behind the enduring importance of a war past but also a prerequisite.

Circling back to the distinction between group membership, and political views as the drivers of the enduring impact of past conflicts on contemporary party preferences, it is unclear whether the three mechanisms (cohort, period or enduring effect) work better for one than for the other. While the changing impact of both social divisions and ideological determinants of party choice over time has been examined before (van der Eijk *et al.* 2006; van der Brug 2010), these studies focused primarily on Western countries or non-postwar societies. As such, it is doubtful whether their findings can be transposed to the context at hand. Instead, this study remains agnostic on whether the continued relevance of past conflicts is caused by the social divisions created or made salient by war or the belief systems it engenders. This study's central expectation is thus that the legacies of war are enduring and continue to instruct the party preferences of the generations that were born after the war (Jovanović & Pavlović 2017). From this central expectation, two testable assertions arise. First, that the war-related issues of nationalism, minority rights and war crimes are equally important in explaining the electoral choices of the postwar generation(s) and of the preceding generations. Second, that the war-related social divisions, centred on ethnic group membership and war experiences, are equally important in explaining the electoral choices of the postwar generation(s) and of the preceding generations.

Data and method

To test this expectation, this study relies on a 2018 representative survey of citizens from Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia conducted on a dedicated mobile app and online platform. Respondents were recruited through Facebook's Marketing API.³ This method allows scholars to cost-effectively sample respondents and gives a high degree of control over how subjects are recruited through the targeting of specific subpopulations (Zhang *et al.* 2020). When we contacted respondents, we took into account that an online survey might attract younger rather than older respondents. Given that the samples of Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia mirrored their populations very closely (see Figure A2 in the Appendix), there are arguably no reasons to suspect that the validity of our analysis was negatively affected by our reliance on a Facebook survey. The samples were obtained *via* quota sampling. To ensure a representative sample, a large numbers of social strata were

³Target users were first divided into different predefined population weights (based on age, gender, education and location), drawn from the official national statistics for each country. Users were selected and recruited using Facebook's random algorithm—they logged into the online survey app *via* their Facebook account to verify a unique ID. Each user was selected at random in order to fill in the prespecified quota.

identified in both Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia according to gender, age, level of education and region.⁴ To further reduce discrepancies between the sample and the population, primarily in terms of age and education, survey weights were used throughout the analyses (Kalton & Flores-Cervantes 2003). In the end, after excluding respondents who answered too quickly⁵ or did not answer all necessary questions, a sample of 5,045 respondents was obtained.⁶

These two countries provide scholars with an excellent opportunity to examine the impact of war on party preferences across age cohorts. Following the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, ethnic violence engulfed the region and both countries were profoundly affected by war. At the same time, elections in these countries, while not perfect, can be considered reasonably free and fair (Michael *et al.* 2018). At the time of the survey, the wars in both countries had been over for 23 years, meaning that responses could be collected from the postwar generation as well as the generations who lived through the war. The wars in both Croatia and Bosnia & Hercegovina are best understood in the context of Yugoslavia's disintegration in the early 1990s. Motivated by Slobodan Milošević's growing dominance of Serbian nationalist forces within Yugoslav federal institutions, both republics organised referenda on independence, in 1991 and 1992 respectively, which were approved by wide margins of voters yet boycotted by the Serb populations. Fighting broke out in Croatia almost immediately after the 1991 Croatian referendum when Croatian Serbs sought to secede from Croatia and remain part of Yugoslavia. Though supported by the Serb-dominated Yugoslav national army (JNA), the insurgents were ultimately defeated by the massive Croatian offensive 'Operation Storm'. In 2018, the Memorial Documentation Center of Homeland War reported that the conflict had cost the lives of 15,007 on the Croatian side and 7,204 on the Serb side (Zebić 2018). The civil war also saw hundreds of thousands displaced, and most of the Serb population left the newly independent Croatia for what remained of Yugoslavia (Paris 2004).

Bosnia & Hercegovina experienced a far more bloody conflict, despite being the most ethnically tolerant society in the former Yugoslavia (Massey *et al.* 2003; Dyrstad 2012). Hostilities erupted in April 1992 between constituent peoples of Bosnia and lasted until 1995, when NATO forces brought them to an end. It is estimated that between 100,000 and 200,000 people died in the conflict (Brunborg & Tabeau 2005).⁷ The Bosnian war was also characterised by numerous war crimes, most notably the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, where 7,500 Bosniak men were executed by Bosnian Serb soldiers. The difference between the magnitude of conflict in the two countries was taken into account when analysing the data. For instance, the difference in intensity could have resulted in the war past exerting a greater impact on party preference in Bosnia & Hercegovina than in Croatia. For this reason, the analyses testing the hypotheses were run separately for each country rather than on a pooled sample.

⁴Specifically, 238 strata were identified in Bosnia & Hercegovina, and 294 in Croatia.

⁵There are serious concerns that these respondents speeded through the survey without carefully reading and answering the questions, rendering their answers meaningless and uninformative.

⁶This sample was achieved after excluding 1,118 respondents for not answering all necessary questions, giving false answers or answering too quickly.

⁷See also, *The Bosnian Book of the Dead* (Sarajevo, Research and Documentation Center, 2007).

The purpose of our study was to assess the impact of war-related issues and social divisions on party preferences in Croatia and Bosnia & Hercegovina and to examine to what degree these determinants vary by generation. When operationalising generations or age cohorts, a distinction was first made between respondents born after 1995 and those born before. The remaining respondents were divided into four groups. The first three groups consisted of respondents born between 1986 and 1995, between 1976 and 1985, and between 1966 and 1976, respectively. The fourth group consisted of respondents born before 1966. This approach enabled an assessment of the distinction between respondents who had lived through the war and those born after, while at the same time being as agnostic as possible about how the relation between war-related issues and social divisions differed among age cohorts. Such an agnostic attitude was necessitated by the lack of a uniform definition of where a postwar generation begins and ends (Bellino 2014; Reidy *et al.* 2015). Those born after the end of a conflict are clearly postwar, but those who were born before the end and who were still young when it ended are not easily categorised.

To analyse to what extent war-related issues and war-related social identities instruct party preferences, the research design proposed by Van der Eijk *et al.* (2006) was employed. In this design, party preferences are not measured *via* a vote choice question but by asking respondents to indicate the likelihood that they would vote for a given party in the future on a 0–10 scale. The resulting propensity to vote scores (PTV) are the dependent variable in all analyses. By measuring party preference on a scale instead of as a discrete choice, this approach is much more fine-grained than the alternative in identifying how individual and party characteristics make a party more or less electorally attractive. With these PTV scores, a stacked data matrix was created in which the unit of analysis was the respondent*party combination.⁸ The stacking procedure obviously inflated the number of observations⁹ and rendered the data by definition nested in voters ($n = 5,045$) and political parties ($n = 28$), which raised concerns over the independence of errors (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal 2012). For this reason, a multilevel linear regression with random intercepts was used, with the respondent and party level as crossed upper levels.

For war-related issues, the main explanatory variables were indicators of opinion agreement or congruence between respondents and parties on matters related to nationalism, ethnic minority rights and war crimes (de Vries *et al.* 2011; Lefkofridi *et al.* 2014). Respondents' positions were obtained by averaging answers on five policy statements that measured people's support for a nationalist instead of a cosmopolitan worldview,¹⁰ and their tolerance towards ethnic minorities. Regarding war crimes, a single statement was used to probe respondents' willingness to acknowledge harmful actions taken towards other groups during the war. Figure 1 shows the respondents' positions on these three issues across generations. It is clear that attitudes towards nationalism, ethnic minorities and war crimes committed against other groups varied very little among age cohorts, both in Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia.

⁸Figure A1 in the Appendix visualised this process (also see Van der Eijk *et al.* 2006).

⁹After excluding respondents with missing values for the independent variables, the number of unique respondent*party combinations remaining was 25,866 in Bosnia & Hercegovina and 29,900 in Croatia.

¹⁰The statements capturing nationalism among voters are based on the works of Blank and Schmidt (2003) and Davidov (2011), who argue that nationalism is the idealisation of the nation and belief that one's own nation is superior to others. This is sometimes also referred to as 'blind patriotism' (Adorno *et al.* 2019).

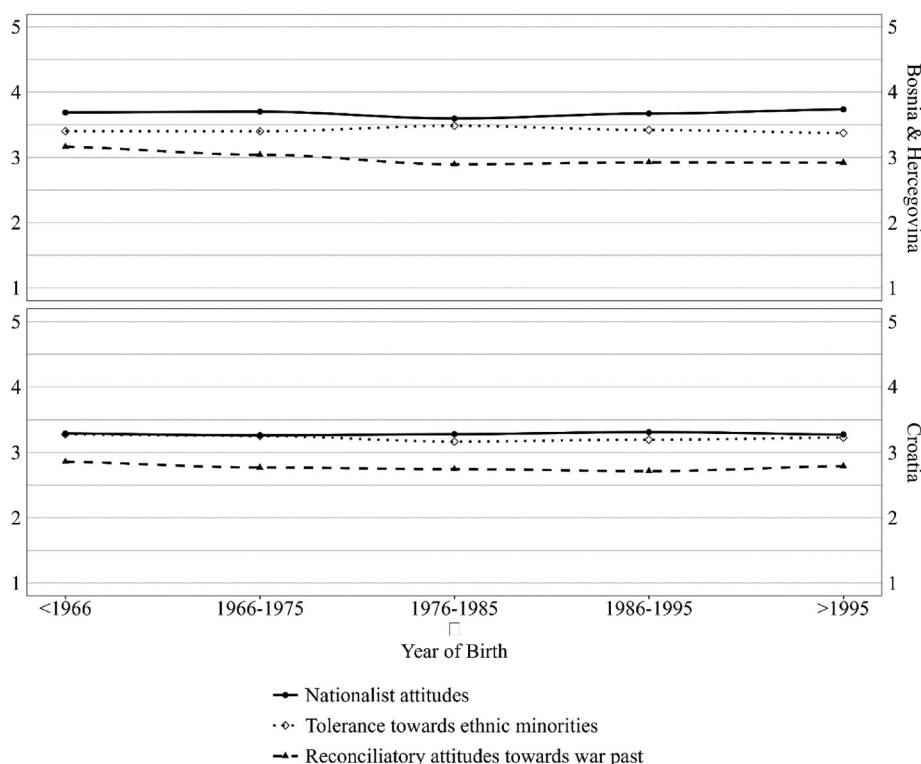


FIGURE 1. RESPONDENTS' OPINION ON NATIONALISM, MINORITY RIGHTS AND WAR CRIMES

Though levels of nationalism are relatively high in both countries, so is the tolerance of ethnic minorities. Reconciliatory attitudes regarding harmful acts and war crimes, in contrast, are substantially lower. For party positions on these same issues, an expert survey conducted concurrently with the voter survey was used. In October 2018, 65 experts, all political scientists from or working on the region, participated in the survey (see Table A1 in the Appendix for the exact wording of questions in the public and expert surveys). While expert surveys are certainly not without their problems (Budge 2000), it has been demonstrated that they provide valid estimates of party positions (Steenbergen & Marks 2007). Opinion congruence was measured as the absolute distance between the respondent and party positions. This distance measure was subsequently reversed to arrive at variables in which high values indicated high levels of opinion congruence and *vice versa*. This process resulted in the first three independent variables: nationalism congruence, minority rights congruence and war crime congruence.

The war-related social divisions in both countries are, as is argued, rooted in ethnic group membership and war experiences. Regarding the first, survey respondents were asked to indicate to which ethnic group they belonged. In Bosnia & Herzegovina, respondents were able to choose between the three main ethnic groups in the country, in addition to an 'other' category. In total, 49.5% identified as Bosniak, 9.2% as Croat, 28.3% as Serb and 13% as a

member of different ethnic group. In Croatia, respondents were asked whether they were Croats or not. Of Croatian respondents, 86.5% answered yes, while 13.5% did not. These numbers corresponded closely with the latest available census data in both countries.¹¹ For war experiences, both personal and contextual experiences were taken into account. Personal war experiences were measured *via* six variables: being a war veteran; having been in physical danger during the war; having been forced to emigrate because of the war; having close family or friends killed during the war; suffering from a war-induced physical disability; and suffering from war-related trauma. While the first five variables were dummies, war trauma was the sum score of respondents' answers to six yes/no questions measuring symptoms of war-related trauma (see the Appendix for the exact wording of the questions). For contextual war experiences, this study relies on the incidence of disability caused by war violence in every municipality in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia. For Croatia, disability data were derived from the 2011 Croatian census, and for Bosnia & Herzegovina the data came from the 2013 census. Figures 2 and 3 show how respondents in the sample were affected by war, per generation. Figure 2 shows the occurrence of first-hand war experiences, while Figure 3 reports second-hand war experiences. Unsurprisingly, the graphs reveal that the war was much more intense in Bosnia & Herzegovina than in Croatia. For instance, in the former, among those born before 1985, around 90% were in physical danger at one point during the war. In Croatia, this number was never higher than 70%. In addition, signs of trauma related to the events of the war remain far more prevalent in Bosnia & Herzegovina, where they are found among over 40% of respondents born after the war. In Figure 3, similar differences are noticeable in the overall prevalence of second-hand war experiences between the two countries. In other words, while the generation born after the war obviously did not experience the violence themselves, they remained affected by knowing someone among their close family or friends or in their community who did.

To relate these war experiences to party preferences, the so-called \hat{Y} -variables were calculated (van der Eijk *et al.* 2006; van der Brug 2010). To obtain them, linear regressions were estimated for each party separately, with the parties' PTV scores as the dependent variable and war experiences (both personal and contextual) as the explanatory variables. On the basis of these regressions, predicted PTV scores, or \hat{Y} , were calculated and used as independent variables. These predicted scores were therefore linear transformations of the independent variables, scaled according to the dependent variable. This resulted in the fourth and fifth main independent variables, 'war experiences'¹² and 'ethnic identity'. This method circumvents that problem. For instance,

¹¹'Population by Ethnicity, by Towns/Municipalities', Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census, available at: https://www.dzs.hr/Eng/censuses/census2011/results/htm/E01_01_04/e01_01_04_RH.html, accessed 2 December 2020; 'Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina', Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013, available at: https://www.dzs.hr/Eng/censuses/census2011/results/htm/E01_01_04/e01_01_04_RH.html, accessed 2 December 2020.

¹²To further clarify the \hat{Y} calculation process, the variable 'war experiences' contains the predicted PTV scores derived from an OLS regression model in which the actual PTV scores of a specific party are explained by the five independent variables explained in the main text: being a war veteran, having been in physical danger during the war, having been forced to emigrate because of the war, having close family or friends killed during the war, suffering from a war-induced physical disability, and the degree to which one is suffering from war-related trauma.

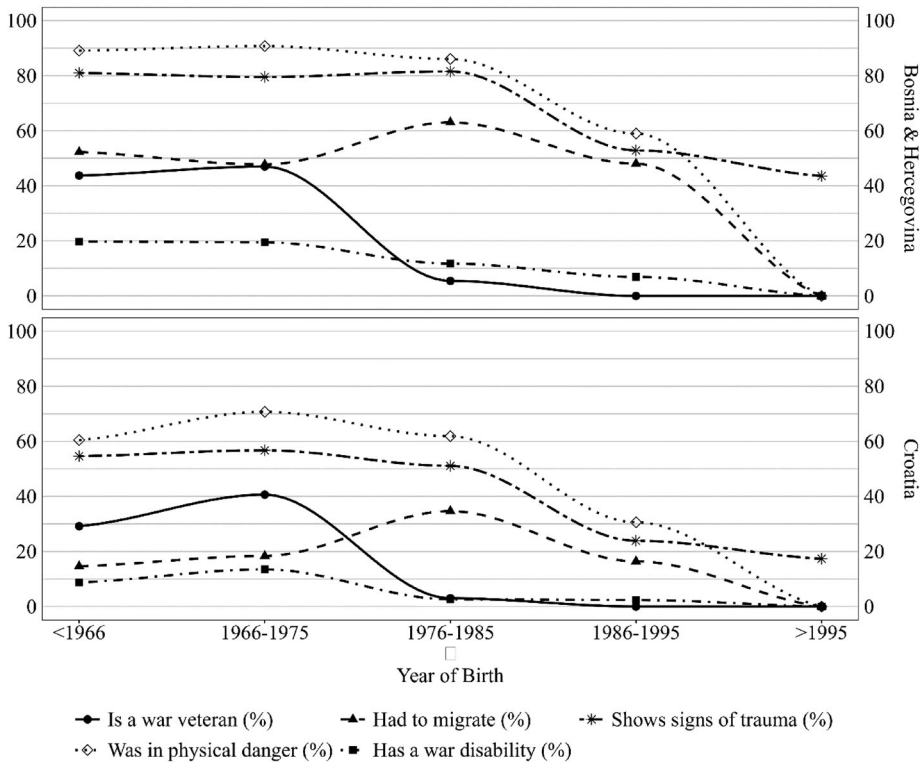


FIGURE 2. RESPONDENTS' FIRST-HAND WAR EXPERIENCES

veterans might be more likely to vote for one party (positive effect), but less likely to vote for another (negative effect). If we try to take the sum total of these two effects, they would cancel each other out, making it seem as if being a veteran has no effect on party preferences even though that is not the case. The logic behind this approach is that if war experience indicators are good predictors of voters' party preferences, the regressions will produce predicted values that come very close to the actual scores.

The analyses controlled for three sets of covariates. The first was political and consisted of opinion congruence measures on three other policy topics. These three topics were socio-economic policies, issues related to the libertarian-authoritarian dimension (for example, respect for authority, gender equality, gay rights, and so forth) and military policy positions. The congruence measures were calculated in a similar fashion as nationalism congruence, minority rights congruence and war crime congruence (see the Appendix for policy statements). The second set of controls consisted of \hat{Y} -variables, calculated in the same way as the variables 'war experiences' and 'ethnicity', based on socio-demographic characteristics. In that way, gender, age, level of education, social class (based on income and employment situation), religiosity (based on membership of a religious/church organisation) and political interest (based on 0–10 self-placement scale) were accounted for. On the municipal level, the models controlled for the economic situation (based on

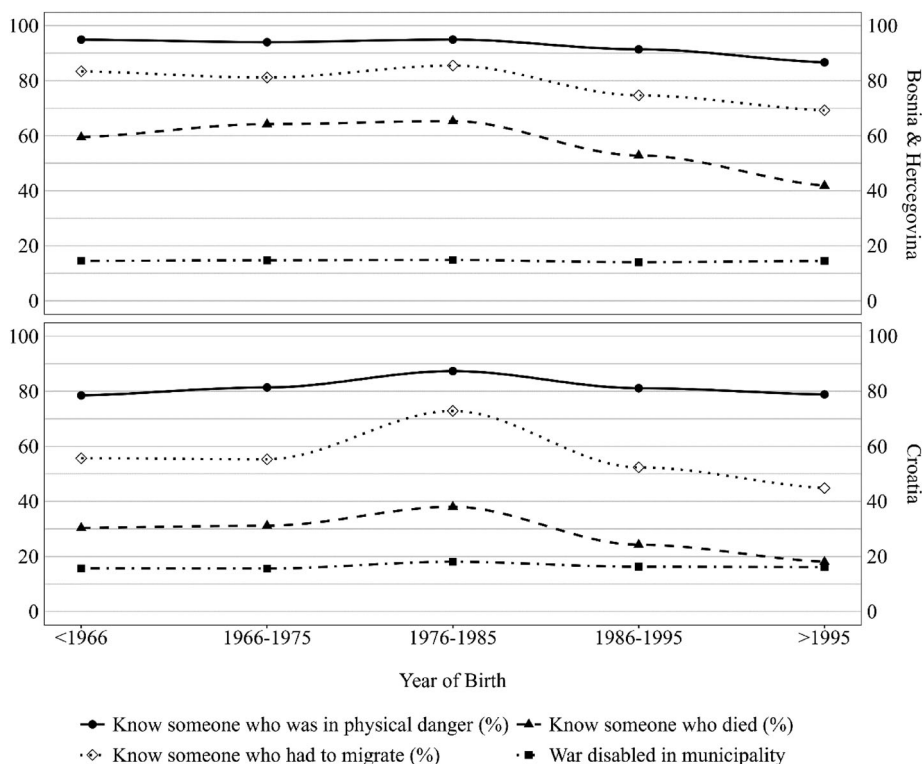


FIGURE 3. RESPONDENTS' SECOND-HAND WAR EXPERIENCES

proportion of active residents, unemployed residents and the average annual income), and for ethnic composition. In Croatia, this was measured through two variables indicating the proportion of ethnic Croats and ethnic Serbs. In Bosnia & Hercegovina, three variables indicated the proportion of ethnic Bosniaks, ethnic Croats and ethnic Serbs. The third group of control variables consisted of two party-level controls: a dummy variable indicating government membership, and another variable indicating the year of a party's founding to account for differences in PTV scores related to the difference between established and new parties.

Results

Before delving into the multilevel regression analyses, the study first examined the degree to which parties offer alternative views on the war-related issues of nationalism, ethnic minority rights and war crimes in Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia. As mentioned before, political parties are one of the driving mechanisms behind continued relevance of war in postwar electoral choices. At its most basic level, this implies that parties need to offer contrasting views on war-related issues, creating an opportunity structure for war to remain 'alive'. Figures 4 and 5 show the violin plots of party positions on the three war-related issues,

with party positions weighted by their seats in parliament (see Table A3 for an overview of all parties). Next to the violin plots are graphs showing the relation between parties' left-right orientation and their positions on the three war-related issues. In both countries, the party system offers a wide range of positions on nationalism, ethnic minority rights and war crimes, and is essentially split into two blocs with opposing views. Furthermore, these positions are strongly related to parties' general left-right views, heavily suggesting that war-related issues are pivotal to the political culture in both societies (Inglehart & Klingemann 1976).

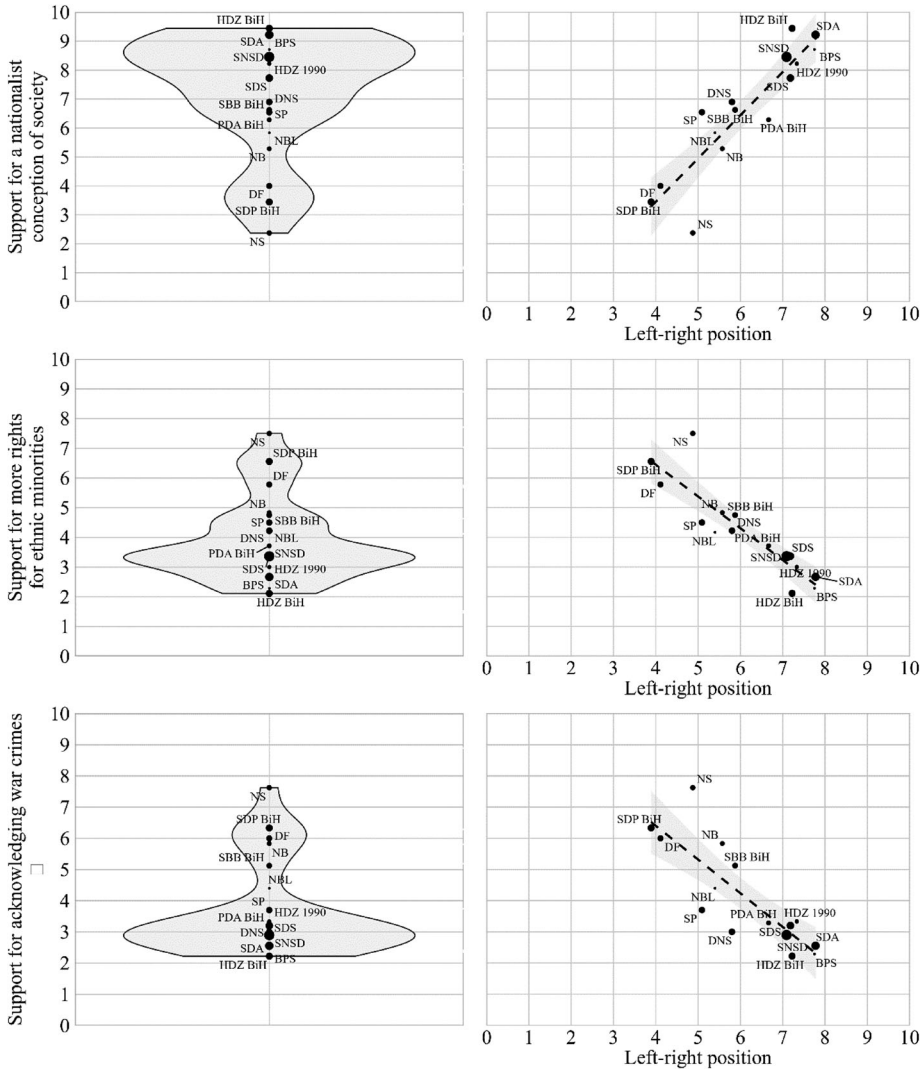


FIGURE 4. VIEWS OF BOSNIAN PARTIES ON WAR-RELATED ISSUES

Note: see Table A3 in the Appendix for a key to all parties listed.

The next step is to examine to what extent voters respond to these party positions by considering them in their party preferences. Table 1 shows the results of multilevel regression analyses that explain respondents' PTV scores in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia, respectively. In the first model, the direct effects of the main independent variables are shown, while the second model reports the interaction effects between the congruence and social divisions measures, and the age cohort dummies. To save space, the coefficients of the covariates are not reported. In both countries, agreeing with a party on issues related to the war increased the likelihood that people would vote for that party.

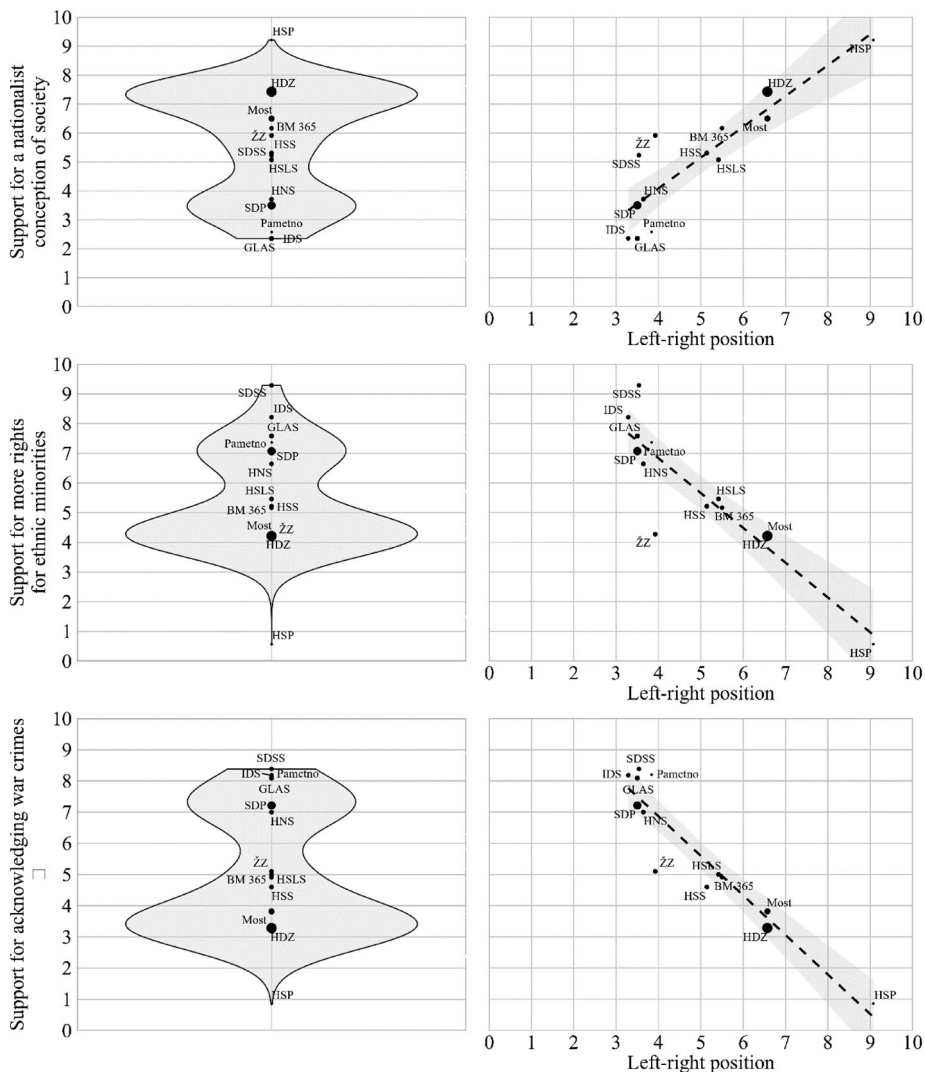


FIGURE 5. VIEWS OF CROATIAN PARTIES ON WAR-RELATED ISSUES

Note: see Table A3 in the Appendix for a key to all parties listed.

TABLE 1
THE LEGACIES OF WAR AND PARTY PREFERENCE IN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA AND CROATIA

	<i>Model 1</i>						<i>Model 2</i>					
	<i>Bosnia & Hercegovina</i>			<i>Croatia</i>			<i>Bosnia & Hercegovina</i>			<i>Croatia</i>		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
War crime congruence	0.40	-0.03	***	0.40	0.02	***	0.39	-0.08	***	0.22	0.06	***
Nationalism congruence	0.33	-0.06	***	0.36	0.04	***	0.20	-0.17		0.07	0.13	
Minority rights congruence	0.17	-0.03	***	0.24	0.02	***	0.00	-0.08		0.17	0.05	***
War experiences	0.55	-0.05	***	0.39	0.04	***	0.46	-0.08	***	0.39	0.05	***
Ethnic identity	0.8	-0.02	***	0.52	0.07	***	0.82	-0.06	***	0.68	0.20	***
>1995 (ref. cat.)												
1995-1986	-0.03	-0.10		-0.2	0.08	*	-0.81	-0.72		-0.58	0.5	
1985-1976	-0.13	-0.10		-0.22	0.09	**	-1.99	-0.69	**	-0.83	0.46	
1975-1966	0.08	-0.10		-0.23	0.09	**	-0.99	-0.70		-1.93	0.46	***
<1966	0.17	-0.10		0.06	0.08		-0.57	-0.68		-1.57	0.42	***
1995-1986*War crime congruence							0.01	0.11		0.08	0.09	
1985-1976*War crime congruence							0.09	0.10		0.15	0.08	
1975-1966*War crime congruence							-0.02	0.10		0.30	0.08	***
<1966*War crime congruence							-0.04	0.10		0.40	0.07	***
1995-1986*Nationalism congruence							0.16	0.22		0.05	0.17	
1985-1976*Nationalism congruence							0.13	0.21		0.14	0.16	
1975-1966*Nationalism congruence							0.25	0.21		0.36	0.16	*
<1966*Nationalism congruence							0.17	0.20		0.47	0.14	**
1995-1986*Minority rights congruence							0.15	0.10		0.01	0.06	
1985-1976*Minority rights congruence							0.27	0.10	**	-0.06	0.06	
1975-1966*Minority rights congruence							0.2	0.10	*	0.19	0.06	**
<1966*Minority rights congruence							0.15	0.09		0.20	0.06	***
1995-1986*War experiences							0.02	0.08		-0.03	0.05	
1985-1976*War experiences							0.1	0.08		0.05	0.04	
1975-1966*War experiences							0.12	0.08		-0.08	0.04	
<1966*War experiences							0.11	0.08		-0.01	0.04	
1995-1986*Ethnic identity							-0.05	0.08		0.05	0.27	
1985-1976*Ethnic identity							-0.01	0.07		-0.22	0.26	
1975-1966*Ethnic identity							0.05	0.07		-0.1	0.26	
<1966*Ethnic identity							-0.05	0.07		-0.16	0.23	
Intercept	-4.84	31.29		-5.18	27.6		-3.91	31.91		-5.94	28.19	

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	<i>Model 1</i>						<i>Model 2</i>					
	<i>Bosnia & Hercegovina</i>			<i>Croatia</i>			<i>Bosnia & Hercegovina</i>			<i>Croatia</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Controls	Yes			Yes			Yes			Yes		
<i>n</i> (respondents/municipalities/parties)	2,721/121/15			2,324/408/13			2,721/121/15			2,324/408/13		
Δ AIC	-4,065.4			-6,815.87			-4,060.8			-6,837.03		

Note: Multilevel regression; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Agreement on whether harmful acts committed against other groups should be acknowledged was particularly strong. The effect of views on nationalism and ethnic minority rights was slightly weaker but still highly significant, as were war experiences and ethnic identity. What respondents endured during the wars and to which ethnic group they belonged strongly affected their voting choices.

While similar results regarding direct effects of war experience and ethnic group membership were found in both countries, the interaction effects in Model 2 revealed diverging patterns. Starting with Bosnia & Hercegovina, the coefficients of the interaction terms were almost all statistically non-significant. One exception is the finding that minority rights were more important to respondents born between 1966 and 1976. This might be a cohort effect resulting from the fact that these respondents experienced the war in their formative years. That the preceding and subsequent generations did not assign a similar prominence to minority rights in their party preferences could be interpreted as indicative of the ethnic tolerance that characterises the republic to the present day, in spite of its violent past (Whitt 2010, 2014). In general, however, these results suggest that the legacies of war on party choice show no sign of losing strength, both with regards to the policy issues related to the war as well as war-related social divisions.

As such, both hypotheses are supported here. In Croatia, ethnicity and war experiences continue to structure party preference across generations. In terms of policy issues, however, the impact of war seems to be diminishing. On all three issues, opinion congruence between respondents and parties was more important for those born before 1976 than for those born after 1995. In other words, policy-wise, the legacies of war are diminishing in Croatia. As such, the Croatian data provide support for the second hypothesis, which predicted that war-related issues of nationalism, minority rights and war crimes would be equally important in explaining the electoral choices of the postwar generation(s) and of the preceding generations. The first hypothesis, however, which predicted the same for war-related social divisions, centred on ethnic group membership and war experiences, must be rejected in Croatia. To summarise, both the structural (that is, group divisions created by war experiences) and ideological underpinnings (that is, views on the war past) of wars' legacies on electoral choice were found to be enduring in Bosnia & Hercegovina, while in Croatia, only war-engendered social divisions remained equally relevant across generations.

To make more sense of these results, the estimated coefficients of the various explanatory variables for each age cohort are depicted in Figures 6 and 7. The trend lines for Bosnia & Hercegovina are all relatively straight, with few discernible patterns to observe except for the increase in the importance of minority rights congruence for the 1975–1966 and 1985–1976 cohorts. In Croatia, a downward trend can be seen with regards to nationalism, minority rights and war crimes. Regarding nationalism, the results even suggest that it has stopped playing a statistically significant role in shaping people's party preferences. In the case of minority rights, the difference between generations is primarily found between those born before 1976 and those born after, rather than being a gradual decline like that seen for nationalism and war crime congruence. In other words, the central expectation of this study, that war-related issues and social divisions are equally important in explaining party preferences across the postwar and prewar generations, is supported for Bosnia & Hercegovina but in Croatia only applies to social divisions, not war-related issues.

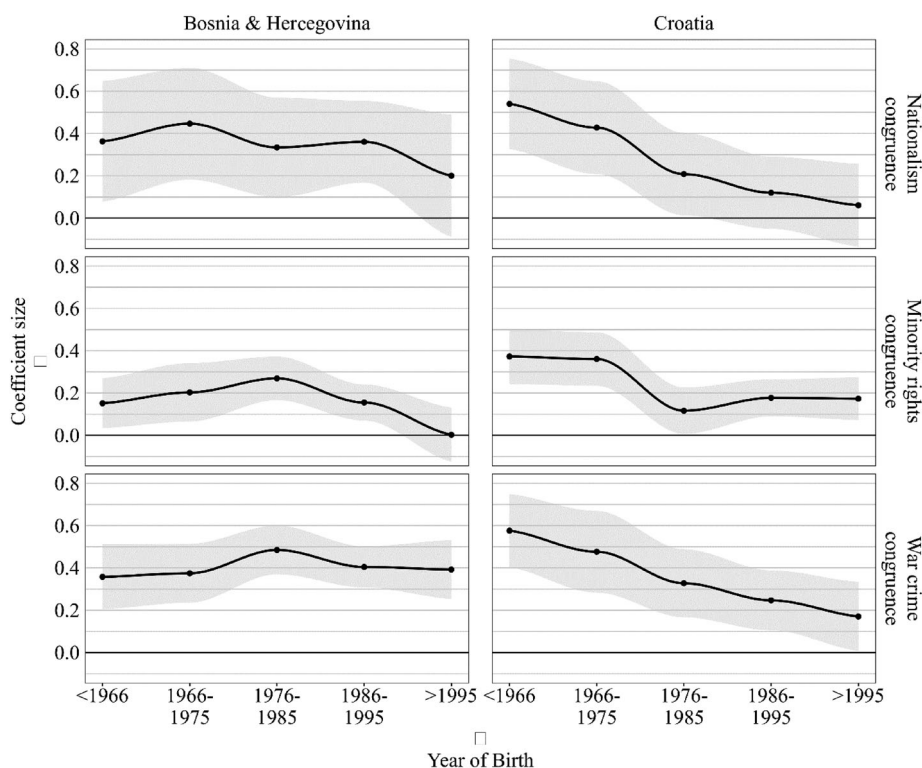


FIGURE 6. PREDICTED EFFECT OF WAR-RELATED ISSUES ON PARTY PREFERENCE IN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA AND CROATIA

This raises the question of what could explain the differences between the two countries. One reason is the previously mentioned differences in the intensity of the war. In Croatia, the war was largely confined to the regions of Dalmatia and Slavonia, with about 20,000 deaths on both the Serbian and Croatian sides (Ringdal *et al.* 2012). In Bosnia & Herzegovina, in contrast, all regions were affected by the war violence, causing the death of 100,000–200,000 people and damaging or destroying over 60% of housing stock (Ringdal *et al.* 2012). The second difference is the way in which the wars ended in both countries. While Croatia won the war retaining its territorial integrity, the conflict in Bosnia & Herzegovina essentially ended in a stalemate, with neither side winning and with many tensions unresolved. None of the three national groups abandoned their original war aims and only accepted the Dayton Agreement out of necessity (Keil & Kudlenko 2015). This was institutionalised by the adoption of an ethnic quota system after the war, increasing the saliency of ethnic identity by priming voters to think of political life in ethnic terms and increasing the supply of ethnic parties (Hadzic *et al.* 2020). The consociational political system that was implemented to avoid violence from erupting again has essentially locked Bosnia & Herzegovina into the lines of conflict, freezing rather than resolving them (Hulsey & Keil 2019; Perry 2019). In addition, the externally imposed

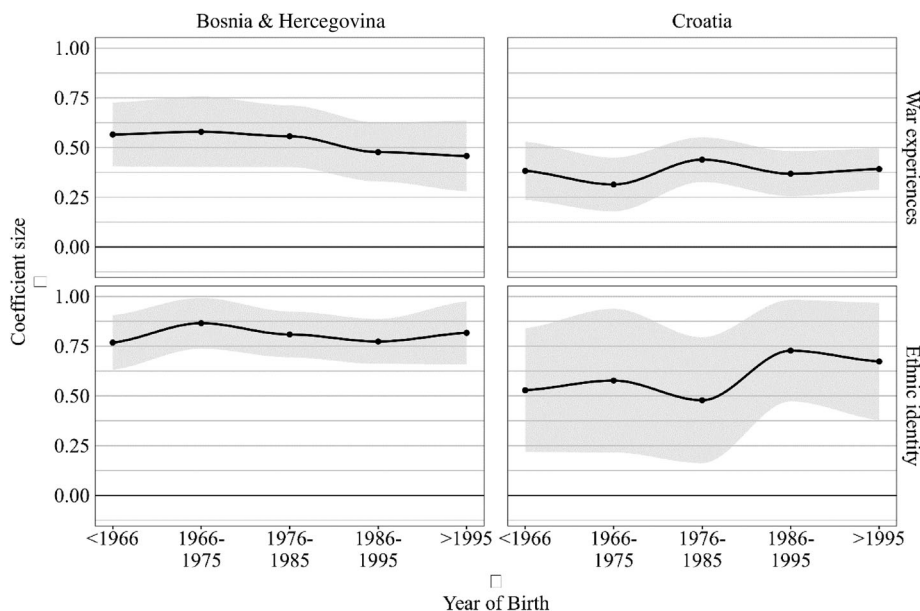


FIGURE 7. PREDICTED EFFECT OF WAR-RELATED SOCIAL DIVISIONS ON PARTY PREFERENCE IN BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA AND CROATIA

nature of the consociational system has created an incentive structure whereby political elites are not encouraged to arrive at post-election compromises that would offset group-centred electoral campaigns (Merdzanovic 2017).¹³ This, in turn, results in politicians having greater incentives to stoke tensions rather than to act as honest power brokers (Merdzanovic 2017). By contrast, after the war, Croatia became a largely ethnically homogeneous country with a reasonably straightforward political system with protections for its ethnic minorities. In addition, the greater intensity of the war in Bosnia & Herzegovina and the institutionalised status of ethnicity in politics explains why the effects of these war-related identities are in general stronger in Bosnia & Herzegovina than in Croatia. The third difference between both countries is that Croatia has a clear European future. In 2013, it became a member of the European Union, and stands to adopt its common currency sometime after 2023. Bosnia & Herzegovina, in contrast, is a member of neither NATO or the EU, and has little prospects of acceding for the foreseeable future. Croatia's European path arguably contributes to the country leaving the war behind.

To further illustrate this difference between Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia, this study also examined how the impact of non-war-related issues and social divisions affected party preferences in the various age cohorts, specifically focusing on opinion congruence on economic issues, social class and education. While the coefficients are

¹³See also Džankić (2015).

reported in the Appendix, [Figure 8](#) plots the findings. With regards to economic congruence, neither country shows any meaningful variation among generations. In addition, the role of economic issues in explaining party preferences is very low and almost irrelevant. By contrast, social class and education are becoming increasingly important factors in Croatia. The importance of social class is greater for those born after 1976, and education is a more substantial determinant of party choice for citizens born after 1995, when compared to older age cohorts. Specifically, the effect of social class and education on party preferences of the age cohort born after 1995 is around twice as high as it is in age cohorts born before 1976, increasing from 0.3 to 0.6 and from 0.2 to 0.5, respectively. In Bosnia & Hercegovina, by contrast, no such patterns can be distinguished. While [Figure 6](#) suggest a declining influence of social class and education on party preferences, going from 0.6 to 0.4 and from 0.4 to 0.2, the

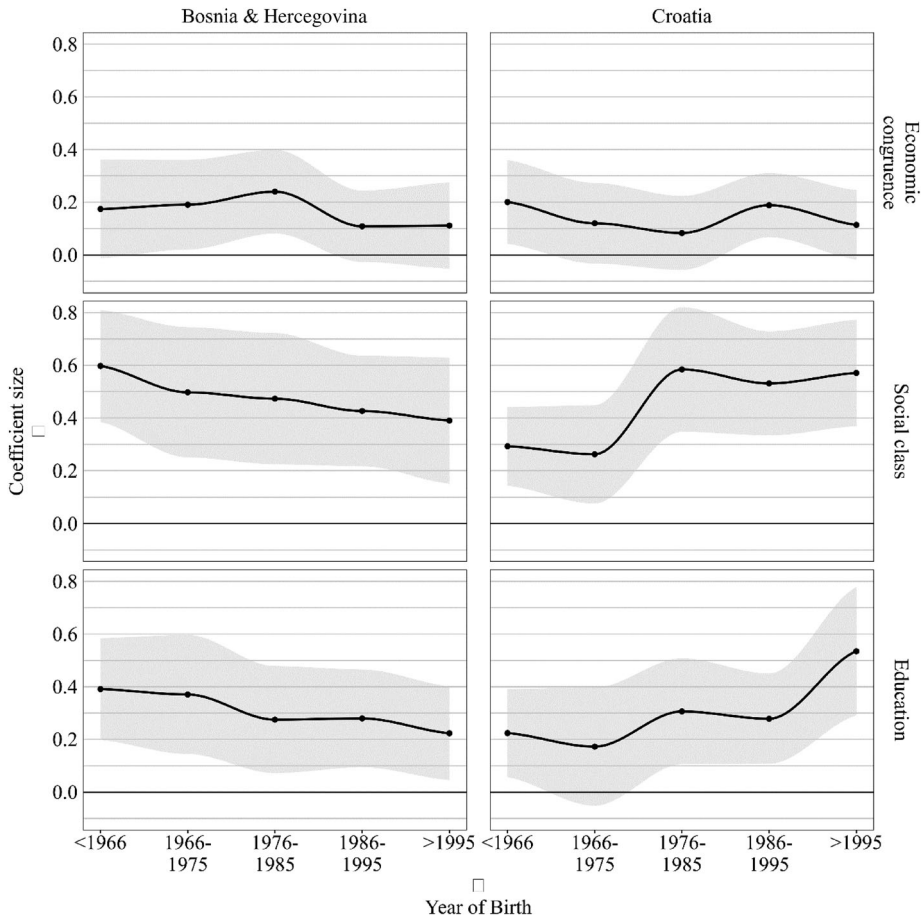


FIGURE 8. PREDICTED EFFECT OF NON-WAR-RELATED ISSUES AND SOCIAL DIVISIONS ON PARTY PREFERENCE IN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA AND CROATIA


differences among the age cohorts are not statistically distinguishable from zero, and thus cannot be taken as a trend.

Conclusion

Political science has only recently begun to fully appreciate the impact of war on the politics of postwar societies (Glaurdić *et al.* 2019). Yet, in almost all studies that examine the political legacies of violence, its impact is found to have been substantial and enduring. The results of this article add to that growing body of evidence. In both Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia, war continues to play a pivotal role in shaping electoral choices, even more than two decades after the end of the conflicts. More importantly, however, the analyses discovered, in line with expectations, that the party preferences of citizens born after the war are, to a large extent, informed by the war pasts of their country, community and family, even though they themselves did not live through the violence. This suggests that war has successfully retained its relevance in those societies.

At the same time, the evidence suggests that the enduring legacies of war are variable rather than given. In Croatia, the extent to which party choices are shaped by attitudes to the war-related issues of nationalism, ethnic minority rights and war crimes has diminished in younger age cohorts, to such a degree that some are no longer relevant in explaining vote choices. It is argued here that the possible explanations behind this trend are to be found in the lower intensity of the conflict, its definitive end and the welcoming of Croatia in regional organisations such as the EU. It is most likely that all three mechanisms are at work here. Disentangling them is beyond the scope of the present study and should be explored by future research. In addition, while Bosnia & Hercegovina and Croatia differ with regards to the effect of war-related issues on party preferences, the roles of war-related social divisions and identities show no diverging patterns between the two countries. This suggests that the enduring legacies of war on political competition manifest themselves primarily through the transmission of social group memberships. In other words, the social divisions created by war are much more lasting than the impact of war on the worldviews of voters. Again, further studies are needed before definitive conclusions can be drawn.

Little good can come from the continued relevance of war in postwar elections. At best, it diverts public attention away from pressing contemporary matters and at worst, smouldering tensions risk reigniting the fires of conflict (He 2007). The results presented in this study give insights into how the legacies of war are perpetuated, and also how the cycle of politicisation can be broken. As such, the conclusions of this study should inspire optimism. An enduring legacy of war is not inevitable, but subject to agency. Through reconciliation, a resolution of underlying grievances and integration in the international community, postwar societies can turn the page on a dark chapter of their history.

CHRISTOPHE LESSCHAEVE, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science, University of Antwerp, Sint Jacobstraat 2–4, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium.
Email: christophe.lesschaeve@uantwerpen.be  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0632-6760>

References

- Aboud, F. E. & Amato, M. (2003) 'Developmental and Socialization Influences on Intergroup Bias', in Brown, R. & Gaertner, S. L. (eds) *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intergroup Processes* (Oxford, Blackwell).
- Adorno, T. W., Frenkel-Brunswick, E., Levinson, D. & Sanford, N. (2019) *The Authoritarian Personality* (London & New York, NY, Verso).
- Ajdukovic, D. & Biruski, D. C. (2008) 'Caught Between the Ethnic Sides: Children Growing up in a Divided Post-war Community', *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 32, 4.
- Ashplant, T. G., Dawson, G. & Roper, M. (2015) *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London, Routledge).
- Balcells, L. (2012) 'The Consequences of Victimization on Political Identities: Evidence from Spain', *Politics & Society*, 40, 3.
- Bélanger, É. & Meguid, B. M. (2008) 'Issue Salience, Issue Ownership, and Issue-Based Vote Choice', *Electoral Studies*, 27, 3.
- Bellino, M. J. (2014) 'Whose Past, Whose Present? Historical Memory Among the "Postwar" Generation in Guatemala', in Williams, J. H. (ed.) *(Re)Constructing Memory* (Rotterdam, Sense Publishing).
- Bieber, F. (2020) *The Rise of Authoritarianism in the Western Balkans* (Cham, Palgrave Pivot).
- Blank, T. & Schmidt, P. (2003) 'National Identity in a United Germany: Nationalism or Patriotism? An Empirical Test with Representative Data', *Political Psychology*, 24, 2.
- Brunborg, H. & Tabeau, E. (2005) 'Demography of Conflict and Violence: An Emerging Field', *European Journal of Population / Revue européenne de Démographie*, 21, 2–3.
- Budge, I. (2000) 'Expert Judgements of Party Policy Positions: Uses and Limitations in Political Research', *European Journal of Political Research*, 37, 1.
- Canetti, D., Elad-Strenger, J., Lavi, I., Guy, D. & Bar-Tal, D. (2017) 'Exposure to Violence, Ethos of Conflict, and Support for Compromise: Surveys in Israel, East Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61, 1.
- Canetti-Nisim, D., Halperin, E., Sharvit, K. & Hobfoll, S. E. (2009) 'A New Stress-Based Model of Political Extremism: Personal Exposure to Terrorism, Psychological Distress, and Exclusionist Political Attitudes', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 53, 3.
- Cehajic, S., Brown, R. & Castano, E. (2008) 'Forgive and Forget? Antecedents and Consequences of Intergroup Forgiveness in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Political Psychology*, 29, 3.
- Chirot, D., Shin, G.-W. & Sneider, D. C. (eds) (2014) *Confronting Memories of World War II: European and Asian Legacies* (Seattle, WA, University of Washington Press).
- Costalli, S. & Ruggeri, A. (2019) 'The Long-Term Electoral Legacies of Civil War in Young Democracies: Italy, 1946–1968', *Comparative Political Studies*, 52, 6.
- Dalton, R. J. (1996) *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (6th edn) (Los Angeles, CA, Sage, CQ Press).
- Dalton, R. J. & Wattenberg, M. P. (eds) (2000) *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Davidov, E. (2011) 'Nationalism and Constructive Patriotism: A Longitudinal Test of Comparability in 22 Countries with the ISSP', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 23, 1.
- de Vries, C. E., Van Der Brug, W., van Egmond, M. H. & van der Eijk, C. (2011) 'Individual and Contextual Variation in EU Issue Voting: The Role of Political Information', *Electoral Studies*, 30, 1.
- Dyrstad, K. (2012) 'After Ethnic Civil War: Ethno-Nationalism in the Western Balkans', *Journal of Peace Research*, 49, 6.
- Džankić, J. (2015) 'The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion: Citizenship and Voting Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *International Peacekeeping*, 22, 5.
- Fabbe, K., Hazlett, C. & Sinmazdemir, T. (2019) 'A Persuasive Peace: Syrian Refugees' Attitudes Towards Compromise and Civil War Termination', *Journal of Peace Research*, 56, 1.
- Fiorina, M. P. (1981) *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press).
- Franklin, M. N. (2012) *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries* (Colchester, ECPR Press).
- Ghobarah, H. A., Huth, P. & Russett, B. (2003) 'Civil Wars Kill and Maim People—Long After the Shooting Stops', *American Political Science Review*, 97, 2.
- Glaudić, J., Lesschaeve, C. & Mochtak, M. (2019) 'Modelling the Legacies of War Violence: Voters, Parties, Communities', *Analitičko društvo politološkog društva časopis za politologiju*, 15, 1.
- Glaudić, J. & Vuković, V. (2016) 'Voting After War: Legacy of Conflict and the Economy as Determinants of Electoral Support in Croatia', *Electoral Studies*, 42.

- Glaurdić, J. & Vuković, V. (2018) 'Post-war Voters as Fiscal Liberals: Local Elections, Spending, and War Trauma in Contemporary Croatia', *East European Politics*, 34, 2.
- Glenn, N. D. (2005) *Cohort Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage).
- Green, D. P., Palmquist, B. & Schickler, E. (2002) *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press).
- Grossman, G., Manekin, D. & Miodownik, D. (2015) 'The Political Legacies of Combat: Attitudes Toward War and Peace Among Israeli Ex-Combatants', *International Organization*, 69, 4.
- Hadzic, D., Carlson, D. & Tavits, M. (2020) 'How Exposure to Violence Affects Ethnic Voting', *British Journal of Political Science*, 50, 1.
- Hayes, B. C. & McAllister, I. (2009) 'Education as a Mechanism for Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland', *Oxford Review of Education*, 35, 4.
- He, Y. (2007) 'Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950-2006', *History and Memory*, 19, 2.
- Hirsch-Hoefler, S., Canetti, D., Rapaport, C. & Hobfoll, S. E. (2016) 'Conflict Will Harden Your Heart: Exposure to Violence, Psychological Distress, and Peace Barriers in Israel and Palestine', *British Journal of Political Science*, 46, 4.
- Hloušek, V. & Kopeček, L. (2010) *Origin, Ideology and Transformation of Political Parties: East-Central and Western Europe Compared* (Burlington, VT, Ashgate).
- Huddy, L., Mason, L. & Aaroe, L. (2015) 'Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity', *American Political Science Review*, 109, 1.
- Hulsej, J. & Keil, S. (2019) 'Ideology and Party System Change in Consociational Systems: The Case of Non-Nationalist Parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 25, 4.
- Inglehart, R. (1984) 'The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society', in Dalton, R., Flanagan, S. & Beck, P. A. (eds) *Electoral Change. Realignment and Dealignment in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press).
- Inglehart, R. & Klingemann, H.-D. (1976) 'Party Identification, Ideological Preference and the Left-Right Dimension Among Western Mass Publics', in Budge, I., Crew, I. & Farlie, D. (eds) *Party Identification and Beyond. Representations of Voting and Party Competition* (London, Wiley).
- Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. R. (1987) *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* (Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press).
- Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. R. (2010) *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* (revised edn) (Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press).
- Jovanović, O. & Pavlović, M. (2017) 'Is it Always us or Them: How do Young Serbs and Bosniaks Perceive Intergroup Borders?', in Pratto, F., Žeželj, I., Maloku, E., Turjačanin, V. & Branković, M. (eds) *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict* (Cham, Springer International Publishing).
- Kalton, G. & Flores-Cervantes, I. (2003) 'Weighting Methods', *Journal of Official Statistics*, 19, 2.
- Keil, S. & Kudlenko, A. (2015) 'Bosnia and Herzegovina 20 Years After Dayton: Complexity Born of Paradoxes', *International Peacekeeping*, 22, 5.
- Klingler, J. D. & Chatagnier, J. T. (2014) 'Are You Doing Your Part? Veterans' Political Attitudes and Heinlein's Conception of Citizenship', *Armed Forces & Society*, 40, 4.
- Konitzer, A. & Grujić, J. (2009) 'An Electorate Adrift: Refugees and Elections in Post-Milošević Serbia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61, 5.
- Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B. & Gaudet, H. (1969) *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (3rd edn) (New York, NY, Columbia University Press).
- Lazic, S. (2013) 'Memory Claims and Memory Constraints. (Re)Negotiating Statehood and Identities in Serbia', *Nationalities Papers*, 41, 6.
- Lefkofridi, Z., Wagner, M. & Willmann, J. E. (2014) 'Left-Authoritarians and Policy Representation in Western Europe: Electoral Choice Across Ideological Dimensions', *West European Politics*, 37, 1.
- Lesschaeve, C. (2020) 'Voting After Violence: How Combat Experiences and Postwar Trauma Affect Veteran and Voter Party Choices in Croatia's 2003 Postwar Elections', *Armed Forces & Society*, 46, 2.
- Lupu, N. & Peisakhin, L. (2017) 'The Legacy of Political Violence Across Generations', *American Journal of Political Science*, 61, 4.
- MacDonald, D. B. (2002) *Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian Victim-Centred Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia* (Manchester, Manchester University Press).
- Manza, J., Hout, M. & Brooks, C. (1995) 'Class Voting in Capitalist Democracies Since World War II: Dealignment, Realignment, or Trendless Fluctuation?', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 21.
- Massey, G., Hodson, R. & Sekulic, D. (1999) 'Ethnic Enclaves and Intolerance: The Case of Yugoslavia', *Social Forces*, 78, 2.

- Massey, G., Hodson, R. & Sekulic, D. (2003) 'Nationalism, Liberalism and Liberal Nationalism in Post-war Croatia', *Nations and Nationalism*, 9, 1.
- McGlynn, C., Niens, U., Cairns, E. & Hewstone, M. (2004) 'Moving Out of Conflict: The Contribution of Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland to Identity, Attitudes, Forgiveness and Reconciliation', *Journal of Peace Education*, 1, 2.
- Merdzanovic, A. (2017) "'Imposed Consociationalism": External Intervention and Power Sharing in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Peacebuilding*, 5, 1.
- Michael, C., Lindberg, S. I., Skaaning, S.-E., Teorell, J., Altman, D., Berhard, M., Fish, M. S., Glynn, A. & Hicken, A. (2018) 'V-Dem Bosnia and Herzegovina-2018/Croatia-2018/Serbia-2018 Dataset v8', Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.
- Oscarsson, H. & Rosema, M. (2019) 'Consideration Set Models of Electoral Choice: Theory, Method, and Application', *Electoral Studies*, 57.
- Paris, R. (2004) *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* (Cambridge & New York, NY, Cambridge University Press).
- Perry, V. (2019) 'Frozen, Stalled, Stuck, or Just Muddling Through: The Post-Dayton Frozen Conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Asia Europe Journal*, 17, 1.
- Petrocik, J. R. (1996) 'Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study', *American Journal of Political Science*, 40, 3.
- Price, V. & Tewksbury, D. (1997) 'News Values and Public Opinion: A Theoretical Account of Media Priming and Framing', in Boster, F. J. & Barnett, G. (eds) *Progress in the Communication Sciences* (Greenwich, CT, Ablex).
- Rabe-Hesketh, S. & Skrondal, A. (2012) *Multilevel and Longitudinal Modeling Using Stata* (3rd edn) (College Station, TX, Stata Press Publication).
- Ramet, S. P. (2006) *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2005* (Washington, DC, Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press).
- Reidy, C. M., Taylor, L. K., Merrilees, C. E., Ajduković, D., Biruski, D. Č. & Cummings, E. M. (2015) 'The Political Socialization of Youth in a Post-Conflict Community', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 45.
- Rekker, R. & Rosema, M. (2019) 'How (Often) Do Voters Change Their Consideration Sets?', *Electoral Studies*, 57.
- Ringdal, G. I., Ringdal, K. & Strabac, Z. (2012) 'War Experiences and War-Related Distress in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo', in Simkus, A. & Ringdal, K. (eds) *The Aftermath of War: Experiences and Social Attitudes in the Western Balkans* (Burlington, VT, Ashgate).
- Rozenas, A., Schutte, S. & Zhukov, Y. (2017) 'The Political Legacy of Violence: The Long-Term Impact of Stalin's Repression in Ukraine', *Journal of Politics*, 79, 4.
- Sartori, G. & Mair, P. (2005) *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Colchester, ECPR Press).
- Sekulić, D., Massey, G. & Hodson, R. (2006) 'Ethnic Intolerance and Ethnic Conflict in the Dissolution of Yugoslavia', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29, 5.
- Smelser, N. J. (2004) 'Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma', in Alexander, J. C., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N. J. & Sztopka, P. (eds) *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press).
- Steenbergen, M. R. & Marks, G. (2007) 'Evaluating Expert Judgments', *European Journal of Political Research*, 46, 3.
- Strabac, Z. & Ringdal, K. (2008) 'Individual and Contextual Influences of War on Ethnic Prejudice in Croatia', *Sociological Quarterly*, 49, 4.
- Teigen, J. M. (2007) 'Veterans' Party Identification, Candidate Affect, and Vote Choice in the 2004 US Presidential Election', *Armed Forces & Society*, 33, 3.
- Torsti, P. (2007) 'How to Deal with a Difficult Past? History Textbooks Supporting Enemy Images in Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 39, 1.
- van der Brug, W. (2010) 'Structural and Ideological Voting in Age Cohorts', *West European Politics*, 33, 3.
- van der Eijk, C., Van Der Brug, W., Kroh, M. & Franklin, M. (2006) 'Rethinking the Dependent Variable in Voting Behavior: On the Measurement and Analysis of Electoral Utilities', *Electoral Studies*, 25, 3.
- van der Meer, T. W., Van Elsas, E., Lubbe, R. & Van Der Brug, W. (2015) 'Are Volatile Voters Erratic, Whimsical or Seriously Picky? A Panel Study of 58 Waves Into the Nature of Electoral Volatility (The Netherlands 2006–2010)', *Party Politics*, 21, 1.
- Whitt, S. (2010) 'Institutions and Ethnic Trust: Evidence from Bosnia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62, 2.
- Whitt, S. (2014) 'Social Norms in the Aftermath of Ethnic Violence: Ethnicity and Fairness in Non-Costly Decision Making', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 58, 1.

- Wilson, C. J. (2008) 'Consideration Sets and Political Choices: A Heterogeneous Model of Vote Choice and Sub-National Party Strength', *Political Behavior*, 30, 2.
- Zebić, E. (2018) *Ljudski gubici u ratu u Hrvatskoj: 22.211 osoba*, *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/hrvatska-ljudski-gubici/28976312.html>, accessed 19 May 2021.
- Zhang, B., Mildenerger, M., Howe, P. D., Marlon, J., Rosenthal, S. A. & Leiserowitz, A. (2020) 'Quota Sampling Using Facebook Advertisements', *Political Science Research and Methods*, 8, 3.

Appendix

TABLE A1
POLICY STATEMENTS IN THE VOTER AND EXPERT SURVEY

<i>Public opinion survey</i>	<i>Expert survey</i>
	War past
We need to acknowledge the harmful acts committed by members of my national group against other groups during the war	How do you estimate the position of each party towards acknowledging harmful acts committed against other groups during the war?
	Nationalism
The first duty of every young person is to honour his/her country's history and heritage	How do you estimate the positions of the following parties towards nationalism? [Promoting a cosmopolitan vs nationalist societal view]
The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like this country	
I would rather be a citizen of this country than of any other country in the world	
It is important that my country performs better than other countries	
School should teach children to love their country unconditionally	
	Minority rights
Minorities should have the right to schooling in their own language	How do you estimate the positions of the following parties towards ethnic minorities? [Supportive vs opposing more rights for ethnic minorities]
Minorities have the right to their own independent TV, news programmes and radio	
Minorities should have the right to have representatives in the legislature	
Minorities should have the right to their own autonomous local government and police in the local communities where they are the majority	
Small territories where most of the people belong to a minority should have the right to completely separate from this country or to join another country	
	Military policy
Mandatory military service should be reintroduced	How do you estimate the positions of the following parties towards the military? [Support or oppose making the military stronger]
Maintaining diplomatic relations is more important than having strong armed forces	
More investments in the armed forces are necessary, even if it means spending less on social services	
Armed forces should demonstrate their strength more often through military exercises and parades	
Our armed forces should have a purely defensive purpose	

(Continued)

TABLE A1 (*Continued*)

<i>Public opinion survey</i>	<i>Expert survey</i>
Economic policy	
Important sectors of the economy should be nationalised	In your view, which position best describes each party's stance on economic issues? [Left or right]
The government should reduce the differences in income	
The government should guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living	
People should receive unemployment benefits until they find a new job	
Public services would work better if they were privatised	
Libertarian-authoritarian values	
The government should make abortion more difficult	In your view, which position best describes each party's stance on democratic freedoms and rights? [Left or right]
The government should be allowed to prevent the media from publishing certain stories	
The government should encourage women to stay at home to take care of the children	
Same-sex couples should be allowed to get married	
Parties should be obliged to have more female candidates on their lists	
Parents should be allowed to spank their children	

TABLE A2
THE IMPACT OF NON-WAR-RELATED ISSUES AND SOCIAL DIVISIONS ON PARTY PREFERENCE IN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA AND CROATIA

	<i>Model 1</i>						<i>Model 2</i>					
	<i>Bosnia & Hercegovina</i>			<i>Croatia</i>			<i>Bosnia & Hercegovina</i>			<i>Croatia</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Economic congruence	0.1	0.05	*	0.15	0.06	*	0.11	0.07		0.11	0.06	
Social class	0.59	0.05	***	0.52	0.04	***	0.39	0.16	**	0.57	0.13	***
Education	0.34	0.09	***	0.35	0.05	***	0.22	0.1	*	0.53	0.2	**
>1995 (ref. cat.)												
1995–1986	-0.03	0.1		-0.2	0.08	*	-0.05	0.63		-0.79	0.46	
1985–1976	-0.13	0.1		-0.22	0.09	**	-1.21	0.63		0.09	0.44	
1975–1966	0.08	0.1		-0.23	0.09	**	-1.21	0.63		-0.24	0.43	
<1966	0.17	0.1		0.06	0.08		-0.38	0.63		-0.62	0.4	
1995–1986*Economic congruence							0	0.08		0.08	0.05	
1985–1976*Economic congruence							0.13	0.07		-0.03	0.05	
1975–1966*Economic congruence							0.08	0.08		0.01	0.05	
<1966*Economic congruence							0.06	0.08		0.09	0.05	
1995–1986*Social class							0.04	0.23		-0.03	0.19	
1985–1976*Social class							0.08	0.22		0.01	0.18	
1975–1966*Social class							0.11	0.21		-0.3	0.15	*
<1966*Social class							0.2	0.19		-0.28	0.14	*
1995–1986*Education							0.06	0.39		-0.25	0.14	
1985–1976*Education							0.06	0.38		-0.22	0.13	
1975–1966*Education							0.15	0.38		-0.36	0.13	**
<1966*Education							0.16	0.38		-0.31	0.11	**
Intercept	-4.84	31.29		-5.14	27.76		-4.25	31.16		-4.8	27.04	
Controls		Yes			Yes			Yes			Yes	
n (respondents/municipalities/parties)		2721/121/15			2324/408/13			2721/121/15			2324/408/13	
Δ AIC		-4065.4			-6815.9			-4141.8			-6818.4	

Note: multilevel regression; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

TABLE A3
OVERVIEW OF ALL PARTIES

<i>Country</i>	<i>Acronym</i>	<i>Original name</i>	<i>English name</i>	
BIH	BPS	Bosanskohercegovačka patriotska stranka	Bosnian-Herzegovinian Patriotic Party	
	DF	Demokratska fronta	Democratic Front	
	DNS	Demokratski narodni savez	Democratic National Alliance	
	HDZ	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica 1990	Croatian Democratic Union 1990	
	HDZ BiH	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine	Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia & Herzegovina	
	NB	Nezavisni blok	Independent Bloc	
	NBL	Nezavisna bosanskohercegovačka lista	Independent Bosnian-Herzegovinian List	
	NS	Naša stranka	Our Party	
	PDA BiH	Pokret demokratske akcije	Democratic Action Movement	
	SBB BiH	Savez za bolju budućnost BiH	Union for a Better Future of BiH	
	SDA	Stranka demokratske akcije	Party of Democratic Action	
	SDP BiH	Socijaldemokratska partija Bosne i Hercegovine	Social Democratic Party of Bosnia & Herzegovina	
	SDS	Srpska demokratska stranka	Serb Democratic Party	
	SNSD	Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata	Alliance of Independent Social Democrats	
	HRV	SP	Socijalistička partija	Socialist Party
		BM 365	Bandić Milan 365—Stranka rada i solidarnosti	Bandić Milan 365—Labour and Solidarity Party
		GLAS	Gradansko-liberalni savez	Civic Liberal Alliance
HDZ		Hrvatska demokratska zajednica	Croatian Democratic Union	
HNS		Hrvatska narodna stranka—liberalni demokrati	Croatian People's Party—Liberal Democrats	
HSLŠ		Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka	Croatian Social Liberal Party	
HSP		Hrvatska stranka prava	Croatian Party of Rights	
HSS		Hrvatska seljačka stranka	Croatian Peasant Party	
IDS		Istarski demokratski sabor	Istrian Democratic Assembly	
Most		Most nezavisnih lista	Bridge of Independent Lists	
Pametno		Pametno	Smart	
SDP		Socijaldemokratska partija	Social Democratic Party of Croatia	
SDSS		Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka	Independent Democratic Serb Party	
ŽZ		Živi zid	Human Blockade	

$$\hat{Y}_{\text{Social class-party 1}} = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2$$

$$\hat{Y}_{\text{Social class-party 2}} = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2$$

Resp. ID	Gender	Age	Ptv score - party 1	Ptv score - party 2	$\hat{Y}_{\text{Social class-party 1}}$	$\hat{Y}_{\text{Social class-party 2}}$
1	0	24	1	7	3	6
2	1	32	4	7	4	9
3	0	67	6	6	5	4

Resp. ID	Party ID	Ptv score	$\hat{Y}_{\text{Social class}}$	Age	Gender
1	1	1	3	24	0
1	2	7	6	24	0
2	1	4	4	32	1
2	2	7	9	32	1
3	1	6	5	67	0
3	2	6	4	67	0

FIGURE A1. CREATING THE STACKED DATASET AND CALCULATING THE \hat{Y} -VARIABLES

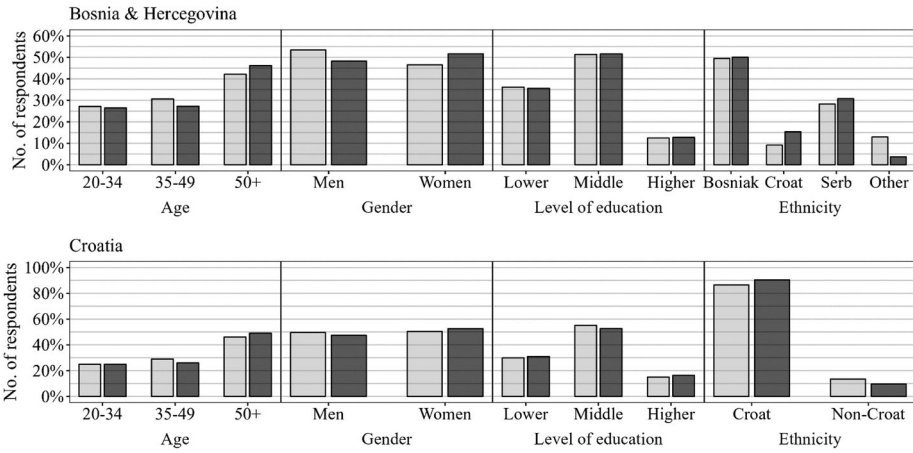


FIGURE A2. POPULATION COMPARISON PLOTS