CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND TRANSMISSION OF ETHNIC TOLERANCE AND PREJUDICE: INTRODUCTION

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This special issue is a collection of selected papers presented to workshops held under the auspices of the RIME (Releasing Indigenous Multiculturalism through Education) project. RIME is an EU funded project under the European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights programme and brings together NGO and academic partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Abkhazia, and the UK. The project had two core aims: to facilitate cross-regional NGO networking and sharing of experiences; and to stimulate dialogue between the NGO and academic communities. This special issue collates a number of research-based papers presented to project workshops in order to stimulate this dialogue. These papers focus on young people's experience of ethnic conflict, postconflict and frozen conflict situations, or of living in multiethnic societies in which the ethnic stereotypes and prejudices of majority groups often go unnoticed and unchallenged.

In this introductory article the editorsⁱ set these papers in the wider context of the academic debate to which they seek to contribute. This introduction thus has three aims: to reflect critically on current debates about 'multiculturalism'; to outline a cultural approach to 'multiculturalism' that challenges the reification of particular 'cultures' by focusing on the everyday practices of multiethnic living; and to highlight (with examples from the individual papers in this volume) how this approach can help us understand the cultural production and transmission of ethnic tolerance and prejudice among young people.

Same State, Different Cultures? Models for Multi-Ethnic Societies

Models for multi-ethnic living are premised on the recognition that societies are racially, ethnically and culturally diverse. They all also share a commitment to balancing the need for a sense of 'collective belonging' at state level whilst allowing ethnic and cultural differences to be articulated and respected throughout society. They diverge from one another, arguably, in relation to both their understanding of the primary unit of that diversity (racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, 'cultural') and in their identification of the key site of social intervention for the eradication of

intolerance. Here we provide a brief, critical review of two models of multi-ethnic societies envisaged and implemented in the twentieth century before outlining their common failings and presenting an alternative approach.

Socialist Models of Multi-ethnic Living

We start with the discussion of socialist models because it is these particular ways of envisaging the parallel promotion of 'national' and 'cultural' difference and political unity that have shaped the experience of the region discussed in this volume. Socialist attempts to create the conditions for harmonious multiethnic living have been rooted in the conviction that it is the (capitalist, imperial) state that is 'guilty' and that its destruction and replacement by a state structure with a professed supra-ethnic identity, alongside the encouragement of 'state-free' cultural production articulating ethnic, linguistic and 'cultural' identities, is able to ensure the tolerance of ethnic and cultural difference. This model foundered, we suggest, not because of profound and ancient 'ethnic hatreds' but because the supraethnic ideology that sought to supersede ethnic particularisms was built on a universalist philosophy which professed that class locations and solidarities prevailed over all others. This proved to be untrue or, more accurately, untrue for the particular historical and cultural conjuncture in which it was enacted.

The internal conflict between the principles of social, economic and political modernisation, on the one hand, and promotion of ethnic diversity and ethno-cultural particularism, on the other, was especially visible in the Soviet model of multiculturalism, which might be defined as ethno-territorial federalism. The Soviet project of social modernisation was accompanied by the manifestation, promotion and creation of reified cultural differences by the institutionalisation of ethnicity through the implementation of the korenizatsiia (indigenisation) projects in the 1920s (Slezkine 1996: 214-225; Tishkov 1997: 27-31) and subsequent official 'affirmative-action' programmes targeting 'titular nationalities' ii (see Gitelman 1992; Martin 2001; Suny 1993). The political and administrative structures in the national autonomies were formed in a way

that reflected the ethnic composition of the region or territory. As a rule, the representatives of titular nationalities predominated among republic or regional officials. The new political classes in the national autonomies were formed by recruiting new members of the Communist Party predominantly from the titular ethnic groups (Suny 1993: 103). As Suny states, in the Soviet Union, '[titular] nationality had taken on a new importance as an indicator of membership in the relevant social and cultural community' (121).

The ethnic self-identification of Soviet citizens was institutionalised through the organisation of government and administration along ethno-territorial lines and by classifying the population by nationality (Brubaker 1996: 30-31). In the final days of the Soviet Union, the world witnessed ethnonationalism emerging from the legacy of Soviet ethno-federalism and the institutionalised personal ethnic identifications of Soviet citizens. In Brubaker's words, 'the Soviet institutions of territorial nationhood and personal nationality comprised a ready-made template for claims to sovereignty, when political space expanded under Gorbachev' (24).

The Soviet nationalities policy and its institutional operationalisation was used to a greater or lesser extent as a template in other socialist countries. The similarities are most evident in the cases of the former Yugoslavia and, to a lesser degree, in Czechoslovakia; both theses states were constituted as ethnoterritorial federations and thus the principle of ethnic/national difference was 'constitutionally enshrined' (Verdery 1996: 58). In these countries, therefore, socialism might be said to have naturalised and reinforced ethnic differences although such differences had been present as a political issue in Central and South Eastern Europe since the growth of nationalism in the region in the nineteenth century. In (former) Yugoslavia, for example, the institutionalisation of ethno-territorial federalism resulted in the redefinition of religious identities as ethnic and national. Thus the ethnic category 'Muslim' was created for Serbo-Croat speaking Muslims in the federative republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and some other areas of Yugoslavia (Poulton 1993: 39). After the disintegration of the Yugoslav state this ethnic category has been transformed into that of 'Bosniak' (Bošnjak); an ethnonyme that has clear reference to the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which is itself a multinational federation) but is used generally only in relation to citizens of Bosnia and

Herzegovina of Muslim faith (as well as the Muslim population of the Sandžak region of Serbia, see Obradović's article in this volume). Echoes of Soviet reification of ethnicity were evident, however, even in non-federated socialist states, like Romania and Bulgaria, for example in ethnic quotas for Party membership (Verdery 1996: 86). In Bulgaria, moreover, the Soviet logic of institutionalised personal ethnic identification was apparent in the compulsory name-changing campaign to which ethnic Turks and other Muslim minorities were subjected by the communist regime in the 1970s-80s (Poulton 1993: 130).

The growth of ethnonationalism in the post-Soviet space, which coincided with profound transformations in all spheres of life, seems to provide evidence supporting Layton's argument that the salience of ethnicity depends on its political usefulness. This, he suggests, increases in unstable conditions, when people fear the current leadership cannot protect them and respond by returning to their local networks (Layton 2006: 135). At the same time, in the former USSR these networks became effective political and economic institutions existing as parallel, and sometimes rival, structures to the state partly because of the successful implementation of the Soviet model of multiculturalism (Suny 1993: 115). Thus, paradoxically, Soviet nationalities policy liberated and modernised the ethnically diverse population of Russia whilst simultaneously promoting the emergence of bounded ethnic entities based on rather essentialist understandings of ethnicity and culture which have been used subsequently to explain, if not justify, inter-group or inter-community tensions.

Western Models of Multi-ethnic Living

Western, post-imperial attempts to address ethnic/racial intolerance focused initially on exposing the 'scientific' underpinnings of racism as erroneous and introducing legislation that protected individuals against racist acts. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, anti-racism was superseded in many western countries by a more proactive notion of 'multiculturalism'. Multiculturalism differs from anti-racism in that it seeks not only to punish, and ultimately eradicate, racial, ethnic and religious intolerance, but also to promote the positive social and cultural impact of interaction and communication between diverse 'cultural' communities (defined, more often than not as 'ethnic minorities'). Thus multiculturalism is rooted in both a recognition of the embeddedness of human experience in

distinct, culturally-structured worlds (in contrast, for example, to cosmopolitan understandings) whilst recognising that every culture is internally plural and that dialogue between such 'cultures' is socially enriching (Parekh 2000 cited in Abbas 2005: 155).

In the post-9/11 context, however, multiculturalism is increasingly interpreted as 'part of the problem not the solution' (Kundnani 2004: 108) to racism and ethnic discrimination. iii In this understanding the 'problem' is not inequality or deprivation of 'minority' communities but self-imposed cultural barriers between communities that hinder the full participation in British society of ethnic minorities and foster racism (ibid; Abbas and Akhtar 2005: 134). This political shift draws directly on academic criticism of the concept of multiculturalism; the Blair government's adoption of 'community cohesion' as a new social priority, for example, picks up on a key criticism of multiculturalism, that is the claim that it equates cultural diversity with cultural relativism. This critique is summarised by Ulrich Beck who argues that, 'The strategy of multiculturalism presupposes collective notions of difference and takes its orientation from more or less homogeneous groups conceived as either similar to or different, but in any case clearly demarcated, from one another and as binding for individual members...Well-meaning multiculturalists can easily ally themselves with cultural relativists, thereby giving a free hand to despots who invoke the right to difference...' (Beck 2006: 67).

Beck goes on to argue that underpinning the multiculturalist vision is the reduction of individuals to mere 'epiphenomena of their cultures' (ibid.) This is a concern shared by others who have accused multiculturalism of failing to eliminate the implicit hierarchies of biologically rooted racial doctrines in favour of cosmetically replacing the uncomfortable notion of 'race' with that of 'culture' or 'identity' (Abbas 2005: 156; Lentin 2001: 98). This has led to calls to replace 'multiculturalism' with revised versions of earlier discourses of the empowerment of individuals - especially human rights discourses - that promote first and foremost the education of individuals as a means of enabling ethnic minorities to challenge the (discriminatory) state. This is indicative of the continued vibrancy of individual liberal (and republican) democracy as alternative ways of envisaging the recognition of ethnic and cultural rights to those political formations (such as

multicultural or consociational democracies) that recognise collective cultural rights (Smooha 2005: 13). However, as Lentin argues, critics of cultural relativism who advocate principles of universal individual human rights as the best means of combating racism and ethnic intolerance are in danger of universalising some purer form of humaneness without questioning the basis of that universal vision which is, in fact, a projection of the White European norms in which it is founded (Lentin 2001: 101).

Beyond Multiculturalism? Models for Multiethnic Living in Post-socialist Europe

Such a recognition of universalism as 'nothing other than a particular that has been universalised' (Bhambra 2006: 36) is central to our theoretical starting point. Moreover, we suggest, the experience of post-socialist Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe over the last two decades has provided an important impulse for such theoretical reflection. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ethnic conflicts and intense ethnonationalist state-building projects that engulfed parts of the post-socialist world from 1989 initiated a new wave of state-building projects in Europe driven by what Smooha calls 'two conflicting organizing principles: democracy for all and ethnonational ascendancy of the majority group' (Smooha 2005: 57). The flip side of these processes has been a myriad of 'minority nationalisms' that develop to counter the emergent ethnocratic These processes have challenged the notion of multiculturalism on both its political and its academic terrain. Politically, as Devic argues, the problem with liberal multiculturalism's assumption that ethnicized culture is the primary basis for political organization of ethnic minorities is that it 'may inadvertently perpetuate the nationalist, i.e. ethno-centred state building agenda' (Devic 2006: 258). Academically, what is often caricatured as the 'resurgence of nationalism' in the post-socialist space has encouraged western theorists to work with, rather than reject, 'nationalism' and 'ethnicism'. Indicative here is Beck's notion of 'realistic cosmopolitanism' (2006: 57), which 'should not be understood or developed in opposition to universalism, relativism, nationalism and ethnicism but as their summation or synthesis'.

These processes have also challenged theorists from the post-socialist region to intervene in the multiculturalism debate.

Mikhail Epshtein seeks to rethink 'multiculturalism' for post-socialist Russia

drawing on 'indigenous' thinkers such as Bakhtin and taking into account both the different patterns of multi-ethnic living in Eastern Europe as well as different visions of what constitutes a good society. This leads him to elaborate the notion of 'transculture' as an alternative to 'multiculturalism' (Epshtein 1995: 300). Like 'multiculturalism, 'transculture' is driven by the impulse to unite different cultures while recognising their multiplicity. Unlike 'multiculturalism' - which Epshtein defines as rooted in the emphasis on the rights and dignity of individuals and as producing a multiplicity of separate and distinct minority cultures which 'may exist side by side without taking the slightest interest in one another' (301) - 'transculture' is rooted in the Russian philosophical tradition that places a premium on wholeness but one which is consciously anti-totalitarian and achieved through a process of moving beyond the limitations of identification with any one culture (298). In this – although by reasserting the notion of 'totality' in contrast to Beck's reassertion of the 'individual' - he agrees with Beck that the prioritization within multiculturalism of cultural (ethnic, racial, religious) collective units condemns society to an eternal dialogue 'across frontiers' and falsely portrays 'the intermingling of boundaries and cultures' as the exception rather than the rule (Beck 2006: 67-8).

The next step in this process of retheorization is to challenge the very principles of multiculturalism as the recognition of (respect for, celebration of) 'others' and their 'difference'. Žižek's criticism (1996) of multiculturalism suggests that the Other which is respected and celebrated in multiculturalism is the 'folklorist Other' which is perceived in accordance with the Eurocentric values of tolerance, human rights and democracy, but any 'real Other' which is 'patriarchal,' 'violent,' and 'fundamentalist' is denounced. Thus the idea of 'respect' for local/other cultures that is central to multiculturalism implies a Eurocentric patronising of the Other, such that 'the multiculturalist respect for the Other's specificity is the very form of asserting one's own superiority' (44). This position makes Bhambra's (2006: 39) call to move beyond simply hearing the voices of more 'others' to challenging the 'initial paradigm in which there was an "us" and an "other" highly pertinent; it resonates strongly with the impulse in the region to challenge 'the West's self-definition as the producer of universal rights' (33). At the same time, however, it begs the question of just how we go about understanding what Žižek calls the 'real Other'

and its role in the (re)production of ethnic tolerance and intolerance.

Amin (2004) also seeks to avoid reification of the 'other' by seeing 'self' and 'other' as mutually constituting identities. He proposes the idea of 'hospitality', manifest in the feeling of empathy between mutually dependent identities of 'host' and 'guest' as a way of understanding our everyday experience of interactions with others in a globalizing world and our need for the stranger as a boundary object (14-16). Whilst the experience of socialist and post-socialist Europe confirms the resonance of the notion of hospitality across Europe, its pertinence as a foundation for tolerance and empathy towards others is also challenged by evidence that 'hospitality' is among the virtues to which xenophobes and nationalists appeal when seeking to assign 'guests' (meaning ethnic minorities, migrants and other 'undesirable others') their place in the 'host country'. As Elbakidze (in this volume) indicates, the peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups in (post-)Soviet Georgia is often represented through narratives of hospitality which at the same time paper over the reality of discrimination against minorities and the inequality embedded in host-guest relationships. iv

Attractive though Beck's 'cosmopolitan vision', Bhambra's call to be 'archivally cosmpolitan' or Epshtein's state of 'transculture' may be, they inhabit an academic space largely untainted by the everyday lives and practices of their imagined subjects. The RIME project environment based on the NGO-academic dialogue described at the outset of this article - in contrast brought our participants repeatedly back to the stark reality of understanding just why, as Anthias (2006: 17) puts it, 'do people with different languages, cultures and ways of life fail to live in harmony?'. In the second part of this article we turn away from the theoretical question of the balance between universalism and particularism that needs to be struck in an increasingly globalized environment to a consideration of the everyday mechanisms and practices that produce, reproduce and/or challenge ethnic (in)tolerance.

Between State and Individual: Understanding Ethnic (In)Tolerance as Part of the 'Circuit of Culture'

Whilst accepting Bhambra's (2006: 37) argument that social theory has been all too ready to address 'issues of cultural difference, heterogeneity and otherness by assuming

difference to pre-exist the processes by which it is produced', we would not envisage this as a problem that is inherent in taking a 'cultural' approach. Rather, we suggest, it stems from employing a static notion of 'culture' that attempts to crudely de-ethnicise 'ethnicity' or de-racialize 'race' without challenging the assumptions underpinning those boundaries. In the second section of this article, therefore, we draw on a different way of thinking about culture – the 'circuit of culture' (Hall 1997: 1) - to understand ethnic (in)tolerance in Eastern Europe. This, we suggest is - as elsewhere around the world - produced, transmitted, reproduced and resisted through the interactions between a range of social and cultural institutions, individual and collective cultural practices.

In this section, therefore, we move the terrain of debate to the realm of everyday cultural experiences and practices in the former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe. In so doing, we attempt to address directly rather than skirt the challenge voiced by Žižek (1996) that while it is wrong that ruling elites exploit a popular desire for primordial identities, the expression of such 'longing' must not be denied nor the substance, passion and 'jouissance' that fill these collective identities. Thus the first part of this section argues against an understanding of ethnic solidarities in the region as being repressed and then 'exploding' as the state withdrew under the collapse of Communism. It does so by tracing the forms and meanings of ethnic association that have developed in postsocialist societies and by asking how this can help us understand both tolerance and intolerance in the region. The second part of the section goes on to consider the role of the West in the construction and reproduction of notions of primordial ethnicity in the postsocialist space and, in particular, the processes by which these discourses – for example of 'Balkanism' - are received, internalised and rearticulated by individuals.

Civil Society and Ethnic Association: (Re)producing 'Primordial' Ethnicities

There is perhaps no clearer example of the dangers of universalising the particular than in the understanding of civil society (Hann 1996: 18) as 'a concrete and quantifiable thing', existing in an institutionalised form. Such a 'hard' vision of civil society fails to recognise as its constituent parts different forms of social solidarity that do not conform to the 'universal' values of tolerance, democracy and liberalism. This is particularly true of

collective activity undertaken on the basis of kinship, religion, ethnic and/or national identities, which has been treated largely with suspicion, if not hostility, by political scientists and philosophers writing on civil society. V In dismissing ethnicity, religion or kinship-based forms of social solidarity as primordial, however, apologists of the 'hard' definition of civil society fail to identify the real social, economic and political dilemmas that people confront during post-socialist transformation and which they often seek to resolve through ethnic, cultural or national affiliation. Furthermore, the exclusive search for liberal and individualist values as indicators of 'true' civil society leads universalists to ignore the potential that other forms of social solidarity have for challenging the state's domination of the 'public sphere'.

Anthropological research has generated substantial evidence of collective civic activities under Communist rule, which might be interpreted, as forms of civil society were a more inclusive approach to be applied. Based on the study of official (and thus to a greater or lesser extent party-controlled) associations (sports clubs, voluntary fire brigades, youth associations, professional and amateur art associations, religious organisations, etc.), politically independent organisations (independent trade unions and political parties) and informal social groupings (such as family and interest groups), Buchowski (1996: 84) argues that in socialist Poland, collective activity took both official and unofficial forms and created 'the possibility of action and the promotion of private or group interests against the authorities'. Moreover, because of the political acceptance and, in some cases, promotion of ethnic associations by the authorities, they occupied a rather public place in society and provide a striking example of how state socialism engendered its own kind of civil society.

We would thus suggest that a relatively broad understanding of civil society be employed along the lines suggested by Robert Layton (2006: 44) who defines it as 'the social structures occupying the space between the household and the state that enable people to co-ordinate their management of resources and activities'. Such a definition allows us to extend the analysis of civil society to all varieties of social groupings, including those that are based on ethnic identity. This is important to the argument we outline in this article because it allows for the possibility that ethnically based forms of association in post-socialist Eastern Europe are neither a product

of the flaring up of ancient hatreds buried and hidden by failed imperial (including socialist) subjugation of ethnic conflict nor purely instrumentally 'whipped up' among an unreflexive 'mass' by 'ethnic entrepreneurs' (Tishkov 1997: 284). While both these understandings of ethnic association assume the pre-existence of formed and 'finished' ethnic identities, we start rather from the position that ethnicity is best viewed as a social construct which can be used strategically by actors for establishing and maintaining social networks, managing economic resources and pursuing political interests. From this vantage point, 'primordial' versions of ethnicity promoted by ethnic associations, including in post-socialist societies is a form of 'strategic essentialism' meaning that it 'aims to produce a particular kind of effect' (Gould 2007: 145). Thus, as Todorova (2004: 181) notes, 'The real question is not that memory and identity can be manipulated (of course they can), but why does the person hear the message at a particular moment, so that he or she can then say that he or she *learned* what he or she has always known, and moreover insist that this is part of a collective memory and a collective identity.' vi

Such a social constructivist understanding of ethnicity has its own challenges; not least the fact that ethnic identities are often understood and expressed by people precisely in primordial terms of blood relationship and cultural rootedness. How and why this should be so is significantly illuminated by the notion of the 'circuit of culture', which can help identify both the processes and the institutions that facilitate this. Layton (2006: 134) - evoking Levi-Strauss' notion of 'bricolage' - for example, suggests that such 'folk primordialism' may be explained by the fact that ethnicities are shaped through the 'intellectual restructuring of existing cultural themes' which brings familiarity, plausibility and naturalness to new constructions. Thus, the 'social construction' of ethnic identities does not mean that they are invented but rather that they are creatively shaped and reshaped from existing 'traditional' forms of identity (those related to language, religion, family and gender) often mediated, and sometimes sponsored, by the state (Beller-Hann and Hann 2001: 32).

The role of ethnic associations is particularly important here since in the late 1980s and 1990s such ethnic associations became the most salient form of citizens' selforganisation and mobilisation in pursuit of their political, economic and cultural

objectives. As such groups compete for economic and political resources with other groups in their regions they often (re-)produce xenophobic stereotypes and discriminatory practices against ethnic minorities. Outlining such a notion of ethnic tolerance and intolerance as – politically and economically contingent - pragmatic choices of members of groups, Hayden (2002: 160) differentiates between what he calls 'negative tolerance' (non-interference) and a liberal, 'positive' reading of tolerance (recognition and respect for others' beliefs and practices). Different groups, he suggests, might live side by side for a long period of time both avoiding overt conflict and maintaining distinction and differences from each other. At the same time they may be involved in peaceful competition, which - if the stakes are suddenly lowered or the possible gains from open conflict suddenly increased - may quickly turn into violence (ibid). Schäuble's ethnographic study of former combatants in central rural Dalmatia provides some empirical evidence of the fact that both traumatising experiences in the past and dismal economic prospects 'pave the way for ethnic nationalism, and have proved to lower the threshold for violence' (Schäuble 2006: 10). In such intermingled communities while close personal interactions are possible, and often inevitable, groups themselves remain structurally opposed and unmixed. The Bosnian institution of komšiluk or neighbourhood to which Hayden refers in his study is one instance of such negative tolerance (162). Another example might be the situation in the Georgian capital Tbilisi during the Soviet period described by Elbakidze (in this volume) when generally tolerant relationships between members of different groups coexisted alongside ethnic stereotypes which conveyed a functional hierarchy of ethnic groups constraining them within a particular professional/social niche in society.

Such negative tolerance allows both close interactions and even intimacy at the individual level and differentiation and opposition at the group level. Therefore the ethnic boundaries in such communities are both blurred and impenetrable. When conditions change, giving way to ethnonationalist ways of representing communities and identities in society, people are ready to accept their ethnic identities as 'primordial loyalties' (Appadurai 2003: 155) because they have been aware of ethnic differences always. However, when these loyalties are articulated at the personalised level of neighbourhood or workplace interactions, people are often surprised to

discover ethnic Others amongst their neighbours, co-workers and friends. Thus former Soviet citizens often convey their feelings about the growth of ethnonationalism during the late Soviet period in terms of a sudden discovery of the ethnic 'Other' which they simply failed to notice when they lived together as 'one Soviet people'. Appadurai (2003) suggests this sense of 'betrayal' having known someone as your 'brother' but suddenly seeing them 'uncovered', 'different', 'other' than that which you knew - as an explanatory factor for the particular brutality of ethnic conflicts in South Eastern Europe. This seems to be apposite for ethnic conflict both in the former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus (including Abkhazia). Moreover, Appadurai's 'hypothesis of treachery', if confirmed, demonstrates a direct connection between the collective identities created, transformed and reified by the state, and individual and group actions leading to ethnic violence and brutality.

Despite such obvious connections between primordialism and nationalism and the complicity of both in ethnic conflict and violence, 'primordial' understandings of ethnicity remain widespread and positively evaluated in post-socialist societies. One possible explanation of this phenomenon is offered by Russian ethnologist Sergei Sokolovski who emphasises the way in which primordialist interpretations of ethnicity were institutionalised within Soviet ethno-territorial federalism and embedded in the personal ethnic identification of citizens via both the Soviet passport system and affirmative/repressive actions of the state against individuals and groups as representatives of ethnic collectives. Consequently, 'having become part of our reality, institutionalised categorisations and classifications were subsequently rarely questioned and, practically unnoticed, they remain a sort of mechanism of orientation and differentiation; a social topology of the world whose legitimacy is no longer doubted' (Sokolovski 2006: 17). From this perspective ethnicity and citizenship are tightly bound together. The rights of citizens are determined by their ethnicity or, to be precise, by the status of their ethnic group in the country/region defined in primordial terms as the connection between people and territory. Almost all the contributions to this special issue provide evidence of the transmission of this primordial vision of ethnicity into the idea of citizenship, whether it is manifested through the Kosovo myth in Serbia (Obradović), the discourse of Apsuara in Abkhazia (Sabirova),

or the rhetoric of 'hosts' and 'guests' in Georgia (Elbakidze). It follows from this that civil society also has a significant ethnic component; if both citizens and the state see ethnicity as the most 'natural' form of solidarity, and ethnic visions and divisions of the social world are institutionalised, ethnic association may become the most effective way of defending 'ordinary' people's rights. However, as David Anderson notes, while ethnic associations seem to express a defence of the 'social rights' of their constituency, these rights 'may be better understood as rights within a citizenship regime' (1996: 110).

Thus the history of the intermingled living of different ethnic groups in the postsocialist space should not be mistaken for 'multiculturalism' in its western understanding, i.e. with 'positive tolerance' (using Hayden's terminology) at its core. Indeed, as Gould (2007: 162) argues, in some regions of the world, including the Caucasus, the racialised concept of ethnicity, incorporating an essentialist understanding of culture, was imported with the process of modernisation in the twentieth century. This is not to suggest that ethnic groups, or people (narody) did not exist in the Caucasus before the twentieth century, vii but that these group/community boundaries were often porous and allowed interaction between and inclusion of individuals from other communities as well as differentiation at the group level. In the Caucasus as well as the Balkans communities are often based on kin structures and/or belonging to religious denominations (Gould 2007; Hayden 2002) and thus allow the incorporation of outsiders into particular 'ethnic' community through marriage and/or religious conversion. viii Thus, it might be argued, the notion of ethnic cultures was not relevant to these regions because communities living next to each other for generations shared many, or in some cases all, 'cultural traits'. Gould (2007: 162) states this even more strongly, arguing that the concept of 'ethnicity' (and indeed of 'race') which 'we learn to project onto the most violence-ridden parts of the non-Western world is specific and unique to the Western modernity'. It follows that western notions of multiculturalism that merely substitute 'race' with 'culture' without actually undermining the essentialising nature of the former (Appiah 2005: 136) as a universal cure from ethnic intolerance may turn out to enhance rather than undermine an ethnicised and racialised vision of the social world.

Positioning the West

The construction and reproduction of notions of primordial ethnicity in the post-socialist space cannot be explained without understanding the complicity of the West. Indeed, one of the advantages of the 'circuit of culture' model outlined above is that it allows not only a means of understanding the role of the West in the original 'colonial representation' of 'the Balkans' (Bjelić 2002: 4) or 'the Caucasus' (Grant 2005: 47, Shatirishvili 2005: 2) but also the processes by which such discourses are re-mobilised for the presentation of current conflicts, received by people in the region, and re-articulated as a defensive 'anti-western' discourse which is itself a central trope of nationalist discourse in post-socialist societies.

There is a growing and fascinating literature on the question of 'Balkanism' (Todorova 1997; Goldsworthy 1998; Bjelić & Savić 2002) to which justice cannot be done in this article. We would note here only that this debate goes significantly beyond simply exposing another form of Western demonisation of the 'Other'. 'Balkanism' is rather a form of knowledge production which works both in a similar way to Orientalism (Said 1997) but also involves distinct representational mechanisms as well as simultaneously presenting itself as a critical study of discourse on the Balkans (Bjelić 2002: 4-5). An interesting comparison is the emergent discussion of the how the Caucasus has been 'imagined' within Russian imperial and post-imperial discourse. Conflict and violence in the history of Russo-Caucasian relations have been romanticised in Russian popular culture since the imperial period and, as Grant (2005: 47) argues, for the Russian audience the Caucasus has become 'an everyday idiom' of a zone of violence where Russians are 'ever the noble victim'.

The re-mobilisation of these discourses for the presentation of current conflicts is also well documented. As Hammond (2005: 139) notes 'The understanding of Yugoslavia as a collection of fractious, malevolent entities was central to the wider discursive recovery of Victorian balkanism'. Central to this discourse are claims to the presence of 'ancient ethnic hatreds' and an unusual 'savagery' in the region (142), which have been exploited widely in western media accounts of the conflicts in former Yugoslavia. Goldsworthy connects this war reporting with historically rooted discursive constructions of 'the

Balkans' thus: 'The defamiliarizing of accounts of Balkan conflicts in the Western media – describing ethnic wars as unthinkable elsewhere in Europe while supplying gory details of singularly "Balkan" butchery to an eager audience – contribute to the perception of the peninsula's ambiguous, "not-yet" or "never-quite," Europeanness' (Goldsworthy 2002: 29). Here too, however, the Balkans is not unique; there are clear connections between the 'image of the Balkans' and the representation of the violence as regional characteristics of the Caucasus in the Russian cultural and political context. Following the Chechen war and other so-called 'ethnic conflicts', the peoples of the Caucasus are often portrayed in Russian and world media as, by nature, violent (Grant 2005: 39). In the contemporary Russian Federation, the quasiethnic concepts of 'Caucasians' (kavkaztsy) or 'those of Caucasian nationality' (litsa kavkazskoi natsional'nosti) operate extensively within the securitisation discourse of migration policy, creating the image of migrants from this region as both corrupt and culturally alien to the 'native', ethnically Russian population.

In the context of this special issue, however, our interest lies less in the representational level than in the processes by which these discourses are received, internalised and re-articulated by individuals. This is particularly important for understanding young people's vision of their national or ethnic 'self' and 'others' described in articles in this issue by Obradović. Elbakidze, Sabirova and Omel'chenko & Goncharova. We are particularly concerned here with the way in which the critical manifestation of 'Balkinism' noted above - the very awareness of the 'Balkanising' mission of the West – shapes post-conflict identities. In former Yugoslavia in particular, the demonising of the region, alongside the experience of particularly painful moments such as the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999, have left a strong trope of 'betrayal' in young people's minds. Illustrative here is the understanding of the historical relationship between Serbia and the West by a young Serbian intellectual interviewed by Volčič as one of profound treachery: 'Europe... yes... the West... has betrayed the Serbs... over and over again throughout history' (Volčič 2005: 155). What is really interesting about Volčič's study of the significance of the West as 'the Other' in shaping Serbian national identity among young people today, however, is what it reveals about the complex workings of the 'circuit of culture'. Receiving and reworking Balkinist discourse, the young intellectuals

interviewed by Volčič develop a countercritique of the West in which the West is caricatured as spiritually empty but culturally, economically and politically imperialistic (163). In some cases this critical perspective takes the form of appropriating this western 'othering' and turning it back on the West through what Volčič (167) describes as a rhetorical strategy of 'self-exoticization'. The qualities ascribed to 'the Balkans' - barbarity, irrationality, passion – are reappropriated and employed as a declaration of freedom and resistance against western oppression and, literally, sold back to the West in the form of a branded 'Balkan art'. As Volčič (171) notes, however, the paradox of this strategy is that, in the very act of unmasking the hegemony of the western social order and negotiating their representations within it, respondents effectively strengthen that order by employing commercial stereotypes of themselves whilst reducing their claims to the 'difference' from the West they ascribe to themselves.

Sites and Forms of the (Re)Production of Ethnic (In)Tolerance: Young people in focus

The focus in this special issue on the reproduction of ethnic (in)tolerance among the younger generation reflects one of the original foci of the RIME project. In this final section we explain the rationale for the focus on youth as well as some of the methodological and ethical issues that it engenders. We also introduce briefly the particular sites and forms of the (re)production of ethnic (in)tolerance discussed in the contributions to the special issue that follow.

It is important to establish that our decision to focus on youth was not rooted in a vision of youth as a symbol of the future or as a 'blank canvas' from which to start over following the 'traumatogenic change' of the collapse of communism (Sztompka 2004: 171). In this, therefore, we fundamentally disagree with Sztompka's vision of the younger generation as 'saved from the anxieties and uncertainties of oppositional combat, the elation of revolution and the early disappointments of transition' and as such 'the carriers of a new culture inoculated against postcommunist trauma' (Sztompka 2004: 193). We see young people, rather, as deeply embedded in these post-socialist contexts and in the articles that follow different aspects of that context and its implications for the production, transmission or resistance of ethnic intolerance are explored.

Epistemological, methodological and ethical considerations

Before introducing those contributions, it is worth noting that the theoretical approach we have outlined in this introductory chapter brings with it a clear epistemological standpoint and a series of methodological consequences that are common to the articles that follow. It envisages ethnic (in)tolerance as socially constructed and as profoundly contextually dependent. This implies that its study needs to be conducted in its natural setting, within the cultural contexts (the family, school/college, friendship, or 'subcultural' youth group, etc.), in which tolerance and intolerance is produced and reproduced. This does not imply that we see something 'pure,' 'untouched,' or 'authentic' in the articulations of ethnic (in)tolerance that are captured through qualitative research, but that in order to understand the production, transmission and resistance of ethnic (in)tolerance we need to recognise and 'learn the language of its everyday cultural practice. We also need to be able to understand (in)tolerance as part of the whole subjectivities of the agents – in this case young people – who produce and reproduce it.

For these reasons, the usefulness of quantitative approaches (reported on, for example, in the articles by Perasović and Elbakidze) which seek to measure national populations' sense of 'nearness' or 'distance' from ethnic 'others' is questionable due to its static, descriptive approach and inability to explain the origins or mechanisms of reproducing ethnic (in)tolerance. Moreover, from an ethical perspective such research may indeed essentialise, solidify and authenticate ethnic stereotypes. This is not to suggest that qualitative methods are without their failings. Amongst RIME project participants, practitioners in particular voiced concern about the 'non-representative' nature of qualitative studies because of their small-scale, case-study approach as well as the potential for the abuse of such findings by the state and other social institutions (such as the media) for the production and manipulation of ethnic 'fears'. Such concern is natural, legitimate, and real; the 'circuit of culture' model discussed above suggests that such research will, inevitably, be received, re-presented and disseminated and become part of the cultural context in which new actors reproduce or resist ethnic (in)tolerance.

A thematic introduction to the case studies

The articles included in this special issue are extremely diverse in terms of the youth experiences they analyse. Nonetheless, their contribution to the overall aim of understanding the (re)production of ethnic (in)tolerance might be envisaged in terms of three key connective strands: structural and historical context; cultural sites or mechanisms of the (re)production of (in)tolerance; active engagement of young people.

The structural and historical context of young people's experience is considered by all authors contributing to this special issue, reflecting the awareness that young people growing up in post-communist societies experience a 'constant feeling of insecurity and existential risk' (Tomanović & Ignjatović 2006: 272). However, in the case studies outlined by some authors - Sabirova, Elbakidze, Obradović - the underlying 'trauma' of 'transition' is overlaid by the trauma of war, ethnic conflict and/or displacement. For these young people the world is far removed from Sztompka's (2004: 193) description of it as 'relatively stable, established, secure, and predictable'. In the contributions by authors to this special issue this experience is dramatically illustrated in the case of Abkhazian youth (Sabirova); the extent to which young people are exposed to nationalist ideologies and violence has become even more evident since the renewal of intergroup violence in the region during the recent conflict between Georgia and Russia in August 2008. However, such insecurity is also identified as an explanatory factor in producing intolerance among 'ethnic majority' youth in Russia (Omel'chenko & Goncharova) where young people who find themselves without any real place or investment in the new system may become resentful of those with greater opportunity or of those 'incomers' who can be easily identified as 'responsible' for thwarted opportunities. Generational experience is far from homogeneous (Pilkington 2006) and as is shown, for example, in the article in this volume by Perasović, whilst, in some cases, young people are able and ready to take up the new opportunities produced by rapid social change, other young people may pick up, exaggerate, innovate, rebel and carry forward either 'regressive' or new revolutionary responses to 'trauma' into the future.

Central to understanding the responses of young people to structural constraint is the role of social and cultural institutions, which mediate between macro

social change and individual experience. Here again our starting point is quite different from that of Sztompka, whose model for overcoming the trauma of post-socialist change assumes that institutions of 'socialization' - the family, school, media, political parties, and civil organisations - are in place, work effectively and have the trust of (young) citizens. This understanding shares the limitations of all functionalist understandings of youth culture and generational reproduction; this is compounded by the fact that, in postsocialist societies, these institutions are themselves only emergent. As noted above, as these institutions (political parties, churches, educational institutions, etc.) compete for economic and political resources they often (re-)produce xenophobic stereotypes. This process is detailed in Elbakidze's article in this volume, as she discusses the mobilisation of the Church and schools that attempt to define and assert the primacy of 'the majority' Georgian ethnic group by proxy of Orthodoxy. Other articles consider the particular role of key sites of cultural production and transmission. In the contributions by Perasović and Obradović, for example, the importance of the role of the media in escalating 'panic' but also in silencing subordinate narratives of events or phenomena is discussed. Families are also a prime site for the reproduction of nostalgias for the past, and this is discussed in the articles by Obradović and Sabirova. Indeed in these two cases the role of the family in interpreting experience takes on additional significance due to the post-conflict situations in which external sources of information are mistrusted or simply absent.

It has been argued frequently that youth in post-socialist societies are civically passive (Wallace 2003: 15). In the case studies presented here, however, authors have approached young people not only as passive recipients of the 'parent culture' (Clarke et al 1976: 15), but have considered a range of cultural spaces in which young people are active and which are jealously guarded by them not only from incursions by the state but to some extent also from an institutionallydefined 'civil society' (Omel'chenko & Pilkington 2006: 547). The political meaning of such cultural engagement may not be writ large, but that does not make it insignificant. Apostolov's discussion in this volume of the meanings of young people's dancing and listening to *chalga* music in contemporary Bulgaria raises many of these issues. Whilst for cultural critics, the phenomenon may be read as evidence of little more than the commercialization and vulgarization of the

youth scene in Bulgaria, it is impossible to ignore the deeper significance of the collective appreciation of a music and dance culture that self-consciously draws on a fusion of a range of indigenous ethnic music. Other youth cultural formations such as (sections of) punk culture articulate more directly their engagement with 'the struggle against prejudice' (Aksyutina 2005: 12) and, as is documented in this volume in Perasović's article, find themselves subject to violence as a consequence. Omel'chenko & Goncharova, moreover, find evidence that even the perpetrators of ethnically motivated violence – such as skinhead groups – are diverse and fractured groupings incorporating both White power and anti-racist elements (Petrova 2006: 189).

Of course we should not be naïve about the political potential of such cultural activism and we would not go as far as Feixa & Nilan in declaring that 'youth cultures have the potential to lead the way in thinking about global conflicts and strategies for resolving them' (Feixa & Nilan 2006: 211). As Les Back (1996) argues, while racially and ethnically mixed youth communities, and the hybrid cultural forms and practices they develop may create cultural spaces in which racism is banished temporarily, they remain subject to hegemonic racist discourse which structures the world outside. Thus Sztompka (2004: 193) is wrong to see the younger generation's culture as 'no longer ambivalent, internally split' and the nature of this frission and ambivalence is explored in the articles by Obradović, Omel'chenko & Goncharova, Perasović and Apostolov as they consider the role of either specific forms of popular culture or of everyday cultural practices and speech in articulating and embedding (often unconsciously) notions of ethnic 'others'. Thus, whilst retaining a strong dose of realism, we suggest that it is important that these cultural responses of young people are not dismissed as 'passive', 'consumer' behaviour but understood as part and parcel of young people's response to the cultural 'trauma' endured as well as their contribution to the reconstitution of the cultural tissue of society.

Conclusion

This introductory article has sought to illustrate how the experience of multi-ethnic co-existence in socialist and post-socialist Europe can inform debates about multiculturalism (and what comes after it). This experience, we have suggested, confirms trends in recent theorising, which are critical of

the implicit universalisation within multiculturalism of a rather particular European vision of the division and relationship between 'self' and 'other'. Indeed, we suggest that this multicultural vision not only positions certain Eastern and South Eastern European 'others' as displaying 'dangerous' primordial ethnic belonging but through its conscious promotion (not least as a key criterion for eligibility for membership of the European Union) may in fact engender such primordial ties as a politics of resistance. In seeking an alternative way of understanding the complex processes of ethnic co-existence and conflict, however, we do not throw out the 'cultural' baby with the 'multiculturalism' bathwater. We reject only a static understanding of culture that is used as a superficially de-racialized or de-ethnicised category or metaphor. The experience of the region considered in this special issue, we suggest, shows that ethnic difference is neither stable, fixed nor subject to repression or mobilisation from above. Rather it is a lived relationship, which at the individual level is embedded in a multitude of everyday cultural practices and at the societal level expresses itself along a continuum of ethnic co-existence through to ethnic conflict and violence. These practices, we suggest, have to be located in their specific structural and historical contexts. In this we concur with Ana Devic (2006: 270) that it is essential not to 'deny or neglect the evidence that before the outbreaks of violence there existed some long-standing forms of multiculture, which could be defined as unstructured multiculturalism, rooted in everyday life and indicating the existence of alternatives to liberal multiculturalism'. Such an 'indigenous multiculturalism', we suggest, holds the potential for the peaceful coexistence of different groups, or even their functional integration, whilst promoting non-violent competition for economic and political resources as well as containing the possibility of violent ethnic conflict. At the same time the 'peculiarity' of experiences of ethnic coexistence in the region should not be reified. We have tried to indicate in this introductory article a range of cultural mechanisms (media representation, popular culture and subcultural affiliation, church, school, family, memory, imagination, intergenerational ties), which connect these individual cultural practices to macro social change. In the individual contributions that follow the workings of these cultural mechanisms are explored in their specific regional and historical contexts.

Notes

- ¹ The editors were the RIME project Principal Investigator and the project Manager and thus write from a position of reflecting on the results of the project as a whole. However, it is important that the volume should not be read as representing the collective conclusions of RIME project participants but as the individual views of authors shaped not only by their varying academic and practitioner backgrounds but also by their relationship to their research subject.
- ² As part of the Soviet ethno-territorialization of national identities, the category 'nation' (natsiia) became defined in ethno-cultural rather than citizenship terms. This primordialist understanding of a nation as an ethnic collective based on commonality of language, territory, economic life and 'mentality' was affirmed in Stalin's early writing on the 'nationality question' (Tishkov 1997: 29). It was elaborated further via Soviet 'ethnos theory', which envisaged the nation as the final stage of the evolution of ethnic communities from relatively 'primitive' (tribes) to more complex formations (narodnosti). The Soviet category 'nationality' is a derivative of this primordialist definition of nation and continues to be used in post-Soviet Russia to indicate ethnic affiliation rather than citizenship. In this volume we, and other authors, use this category when ethnicity-related terminology is translated from the original (e.g. 'nationalities', 'nationality policy', etc.).
- ³ This shift in fact pre-dates the event of '9/11'; civil unrest during the late summer of 2001 in a number of post-industrial northern cities of England had already led to a retreat from the celebration of multicultural diversity and the re-emergence in government lexicon of 'assimilationist language' reminiscent of the sixties (Back, Keith, Khan, Shukra & Solomos 2002).
- ⁴ As this special issue was going to press, a war in South Ossetia erupted (August 2008), effectively 'defrosting' post-Soviet ethnic conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups in Georgia, with or without South Ossetia and Abkhazia, has been jeopardised once more as both Georgia and South Ossetia accuse each other of ethnic cleansing during the military phase of the conflict. Once again the territory of the nation-state (even where that state is internationally unrecognised) has been depicted as ethnic territory and 'home' for a titular nationality, confining non-titular groups to 'alien others'.

- ⁵ For Seligman (1995: 212-213), the liberal-individualist or 'universalist' vision of civil society, which emphasises the legal equality of individuals and is ensured by 'a procedurally just or fair process of democratic decision-making in the public sphere', is categorically opposed to the forms of social solidarity underpinned by relationships of kinship and ethnicity, which he sees as primordial and irrational. Gellner (1995: 33) also insists on excluding from his definition of civil society 'traditional' forms of social organisation (e.g. kinship, religion), which maintain social cohesion and solidarity by 'a heavy ritual underscoring of social roles and obligations'.
- ⁶ However, we would not concur with Todorova's claim (2004: 185) that culture and identity are a wholly 'individual endeavour'.
- ⁷ Group divisions or communities in Hayden's sense of the term have existed in the region for centuries, although it might be argued that the meaning of such divisions being Armenian, for example has been continuously redefined (Gadjiev, Kohl and Magomedov 2007: 136).
- ⁸ In Abkhazia some families still remember how their Sadz, Megrel or Turk ancestors became Abkhaz (Kuznetsova and Kuznetsov 2006) and there is ethnographic evidence of similar family histories among other ethnic groups in the region (see for example Tabukashvili 2004).

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