Visualising the politics of appearance in times of democratisation: An analysis of the 2010 Belgrade Pride Parade television coverage

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Abstract

The 2010 Belgrade Pride Parade represents a critical moment in the story of Serbia's democratisation process and highlights the threat that right-wing extremism poses to democratic rights and personal freedoms. Through a focus on patterns of visibility and visuality in the coverage of different protagonists in the streets of Belgrade, we explore the ways in which distinct communities perform their affinities, their right to be seen in public spaces, and rejection of 'the other'. We conduct a visual framing analysis across four news programmes (RTS, Prva TV, TVB92 and Pink TV) emphasising the stylistic-semiotic choices which work to construct the contested spaces of the city. In shifting attention to how the news images work to create the spaces of political 'appearance' and the potentials for political agency through mediated visibility, the article explores the uneasy ambivalence of the democratisation process for authorities and the resulting marginalisation of the LGBT community in news coverage.

Keywords: Pride Parade, LGBT, democratisation, Serbia, Belgrade, Europeanisation, visual framing, visibility, visuality, television news

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Introduction

This article considers the 2010 Pride Parade in Belgrade as a key mediated moment through which to explore struggles for visibility between distinct actors or communities during a period of democratisation in Serbia. The 2010 Pride Parade has been interpreted as a victory of democracy over illiberal forces, a 'watershed' moment for LGBT rights in Serbia, and a step towards European integration (Mikuš, 2011). However, massive violence not only cast a shadow over the supposed victory but also affected the trajectory of democratisation in the years ahead.

At the heart of this study are concerns around the contested spaces of the city and how such conflicts for recognition in public spaces are represented in the news media. Whilst we draw upon previous research focused on street protest and Pride parades, this study contributes new insights due to both the distinctly non-celebratory coverage of the parade, and the illiberal motives of the protesters who violently opposed the event and its organisers. Through a visual framing analysis of the television coverage of the Pride parade and the protests which sought to disrupt the event, we explore the way in which television coverage constructs this struggle for visibility, but also the spatial politics of the city street where divisions and modes of watching and seeing are enacted through journalistic stylistic conventions and constraints (e.g. of safety, access).

The Pride Parade in Belgrade took place in 2010, after earlier attempts in 2001 and 2009 had been cancelled due to threats from right-wing extremists. 'Belgrade Pride' therefore represented a symbolic test for Serbia's nascent democracy – on one side the LGBT 'community' supported by Western NGOs, the EU and human rights organisations;[1] on the other side, right-wing nationalist groups and numerous conservative organisations, including the Serbian Orthodox Church and several political parties (for example, Serbian Radical Party, Democratic Party of Serbia). Importantly, between the two groups other political parties remained relatively silent, with the police positioned as responsible for maintaining security and protecting the parade from the more violent groups.

Four distinct 'camps' are portrayed in the coverage: the LGBT community, the counter-protesters, the police, and politicians. However, the four news programmes we analyse (RTS, Prva TV, TVB92 and Pink TV) are also political actors in the mediation of the resulting clashes, providing interpretive frameworks in their coverage. In particular we find Rodriguez and Dimitrova's (2011) four-tiered model of visual framing productive for identifying dominant stylistic and symbolic features in the coverage, especially the degree to which protagonists are successful in claiming their right to be seen on the streets of Belgrade. We approach the television news coverage of Belgrade Pride and the subsequent violent protests as offering a window into the mediated 'spaces of appearance' (Butler, 2011), where groups of protagonists make political claims and express a sense of identity, grievance or resistance in the struggle for mediated visibility. In particular we ask: how is the conflict between the protagonists on the streets of Belgrade visualised in the coverage? Who is shown to occupy the city space and what is the nature of the afforded visibility? How is the tension between Europeanisation and Serbian nationhood stylistically and symbolically represented?

It is our contention that emphasising the visual aspects of the coverage provides a nuanced way to examine the stylistic-semiotic processes through which members of distinct communities are portrayed and positioned within the news. Taking to the streets is a symbolic act as well as a public demand for social recognition or change, with media visibility a central objective. It is however in the particular context of Serbian history and society that the Belgrade Pride Parade's 'politics of appearance' take place. Before engaging in our analysis of television coverage, we outline key factors in the political and cultural struggles in contemporary Serbia, showing how Belgrade Pride took centre stage in the discursive and physical battles over Europeanisation and citizenship, but also how aligning LGBT rights with EU accession ironically works to entrench the homophobic nationalist view of sexual minorities as a threatening 'other' needing to be contained (Stakić 2015).

The Serbian context: The meanings and politics of street protest and Pride parades

Our first sub-section below presents a brief overview of the rich symbolism associated with street protest in Serbia, before turning to the more recent tensions sparked by holding Pride parades during a period of often ambivalent Europeanisation, where Serbian authorities have attempted to comply with anti-discrimination legislation whilst pandering to the

'securitisation' discourse that casts sexual minorities as a threat to the 'norms' of Serbian nationhood (Stakić 2015). Following this, we explore the role of visibility and visuality inherent to such proclamations of rights and identities, before turning to the findings of our empirical study.

Street protest in Serbia

There is a rich history of street protest in Serbia where the struggle for the city plays out in highly symbolic performances of identity and belonging. In the mid-nineties, during the authoritarian rule of Slobodan Milošević, the streets of Belgrade became the space for various democratic initiatives. Perhaps the most visually striking street performance was the 'Funeral for the University' in October 1992, representing students' reaction to the newly adopted University Law. Students performed the obituary, stating that 'the University of Belgrade (1838-1992) has died' in a theatrical display (cited in Tomić, 2009: 214). City squares and the streets became an agora for expressing opinions different from mainstream politics during the three-month civic and student protests calling on Milošević to withdraw from power in 1996-97. As Vujović (1997: 142) describes, the streets became an arena where 'opinions were shaped, tastes expressed, collective irony spoken' and where humorous and carnivalesque political culture was born and practiced (see also Mimica, 1997).

Spasić and Pavićević (1997) recognise several key symbols employed during the civic protests in 1996 and 1997 against Milošević's regime. The first symbol they identify is the walk itself: 'Walking through the city, stopping the traffic, conveyed a message of "possessing" the city - not even "conquering" it, since it was already "ours"' (Spasić and Pavićević, 1997: 78). Other visual symbols, such as placards reading 'Belgrade Is the World' along with the flags of political parties, other countries and rock'n'roll bands, were carried during the protest, conveying an important message of Serbia being part of a global community: 'Foreign flags at the protest were clearly meant as an attempt to break this cage, the message being "we are not afraid of the world, we do not accept to be walled in"' (Spasić and Pavićević, 1997: 78-79).

For Dragićević Šešić (1997: 101), the importance of the colourful street walk during the student protests during the 1990s was a 'witty response to the continuing campaign by the authorities who tried to present demonstrations in official media as violent and destructive'. In an initiative clearly calculated as a visually symbolic action, protesters organised a

'cleaning of the public space', using shampoos and detergents to 'decontaminate' the main city square following the arrival of Milošević's supporters at a Socialist Party of Serbia convention (Tomić, 2009: 215).

In presenting this condensed history of street protests during the 1990s our key point is that both the distinctive visuality of the demonstrations and the ritualistic walking through the streets hold potent symbolic power in the Serbian (and specifically Belgrade) context. Following such traditions, Pride organisers clearly connect the right to walk the streets and to celebrate the presence of sexual minorities with a declaration of political agency and urban belonging. As our later analysis shows, the visual framing approach draws attention to the ways in which protagonists are seen to 'possess' the city streets in the televised news coverage. When the 2010 Pride Parade attempts to stride into this contested public space, we can see how simmering tensions relating to EU integration, democratic rights and national pride erupted on the Belgrade streets.

Serbian LGBT rights in the context of Europeanisation

After the fall of Milošević's regime and his extradition to The Hague in 2001, the new democratic government moved towards EU accession. In this context, several LGBT organisations asked the state to allow the first Pride parade to be held in Belgrade. However, this 2001 parade was stopped by the police following violent attacks against the LGBT community. Ultimately, it turned into the 'bloody parade' as the city was demolished, and with policemen and protesters severely injured (Ejdus and Božović, 2016). Clearly, neither the protection of sexual minorities nor freedom of assembly could be guaranteed only a year after the authoritarian regime's fall. During the rule of Milošević, nationalists perceived the LGBT population as a morally corrupt effeminate elite who sided with Serbia's numerous enemies, and homosexuality had continued to be a criminal offence until 1994 (Kahlina, 2013). Being a traitor of 'true' Serbianhood carried a much deeper stigmatisation, related not only to sexual minorities, but also to Kosovo Albanians, NATO and the EU, which heavily influenced the construction of Serbia's democratic character (Papić, 1994).

Alongside extensive reforms and the transferral of war criminals to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the protection of minorities became an integral part of the democratisation process. Under strong EU pressure, the Anti-Discrimination Act was adopted by the Serbian Parliament in 2009, aimed at promoting gender equality and the

protection of minorities. Along with support from EU representatives, this emboldened LGBT campaigners to organise a Pride Parade in September 2009. However, the parade once again had to be cancelled due to security concerns (or lack of genuine support from the government) and homophobic sentiment continued to be exploited by far right and nationalist groups. In the year that followed, the LGBT community worked hard to build stronger ties with human rights NGOs, progressive political parties and the Western international community. The President of Serbia, Boris Tadić, met with representatives of LGBT organisations and supported their efforts to organise the parade: 'The Pride Parade will be a civilising step forward showing that Serbia is a secure place for all citizens' (quoted in BLIC, 2010). This resulted in the announcement of the 2010 Belgrade Pride Parade, scheduled for October and construed as a test of Serbia's readiness to meet the norms and standards of democratic citizenship.

On 10 October 2010 approximately 1000 parade participants started the walk from the park Manjež, encompassed the main streets where the national institutions and the most important government buildings are located, and ended in the Student Cultural Centre. Unable to attack the Belgrade Pride, around 6000 anti-LGBT protesters rioted across the city, when 132 policemen and 25 citizens were injured and 249 people arrested.[2] Nevertheless, the parade was considered a key 'success' and several months later, the Serbian government's efforts were rewarded when the EU Council forwarded Serbia's membership application to the European Commission.

Ejdus and Božović argue that the Serbian government's position during the parades was inconsistent: it tried to 'satisfy the EU and cater to homophobic publics' at the same time (2016: 2). The government had been challenged to show its commitment to fulfill key EU candidacy criteria, namely the respect of human rights, while at the same time dealing with security issues and repeated threats. In the wake of the parade, the national press agency reported the Minister of the Interior Ivica Dačić's statement,[3] which exemplified the ambivalent position of the authorities: 'As a politician who advocates European values and democracy I support the Pride Parade, while as the Minister of the Interior I have a duty to ensure the security of its participants' (RTV, 2010). Despite the instrumental ambivalence of the authorities, the 2010 parade has also been dubbed 'State Pride' by anthropologist Marek Mikuš (2011), due to the 'political alliance' formed between the parade organisers and the authorities. But the resulting militarised space created by the heavy police presence worked

to physically contain the participants and undermine any possible symbolic and subversive message. Therefore, it is clear that the organisation of Pride parades in the first decade of Serbia's democratisation was externally conditioned by the race to fulfil requirements for EU membership rather than internally motivated by the need to improve sexual and human rights more broadly.

But the association of LGBT rights with EU accession played into the hands of those hostile to both. As others have detailed, whilst supportive voices from the European Parliament and western NGOs might have had good intentions in embedding sexual minorities' rights in the language of Europeanisation, such linkages worked to cast the LGBT population as 'other' to those who considered themselves 'true' Serbs, and worked to justify their homophobic attitudes as loyal patriotism (Bilić 2016; Stakić 2015). Stakić (2015: 184) argues that Serbian right-wing extremists are not only associated with the violent attacks and direct threats to the LGBT population, but are also implicated 'in a discursive process of radical othering of the sexual minorities and portraying the LGBTIQ identities as a threat to the Serbian national Self'. This opposition between the LGBT community and the Serbian national self was also supported by the Serbian Orthodox Church which promotes general rejection of homosexuality and sexual minorities, adopting the concepts of pathology, disease and disorder identified in medical discourse (Jovanović, 2013). The uncomfortable ambivalence of the Orthodox Church is also noteworthy here: proponents of disease-related rhetoric but warning on the eve of the Pride Parade 2010 that violence would 'not cure and defeat, but only multiply the evil' (Serbian Orthodox Church, 2010).

Most of the existing academic research on Pride parades focuses on North American, North European and Australasian contexts, which are usually set apart by complex spatial politics, as their often hyper-commercial, racially homogenous and body normative makeup in fact creates an exclusive 'vision' for the gay rights movement in the face of heightened visibility (Johnston and Waitt, 2015; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004). These studies tend to focus specifically on the greater influence of market forces in the Global North, and therefore are less attentive to the influences of conservative political and religious powers on the implications and outcomes of LGBT spaces and marches. But as Francesca Stella argues, Pride parades ought to be read 'as an open-ended signifier whose local interpretation is ultimately dependent on the wider sociopolitical context' (2013: 479).

In comparison to old democracies of the West, the lack of Pride parades in new democracies and hybrid regimes of Southern and Eastern Europe is used to demarcate these states as less European or 'not "European" enough' (Kahlina, 2013: 10). In her article on Romania's first three Gay Pride marches in 2005, 2006 and 2007, Woodcock (2009: 9) notes that '[v]iolent reprisals against non-hetero normative appearances are an everyday part of life in post-socialist Eastern Europe', and that due to constant fear of attack in public space LGBT people have usually been reluctant to being 'seen' in public, if not excluded altogether. For this reason, in such contexts, Pride parades have become associated predominantly with the NGOs' efforts to introduce EU-related conceptions of human rights into civil society and state legislation. Woodcock takes this discussion further by arguing that 'the rhetoric of non-violence in democratic EUrope can be used as a form of violent containment' (17), as the marchers were physically kept from 'seeing or being seen' (20) in the name of (too much) state protection against homophobic attackers in the streets who, ultimately, defined 'Romanian normality' in the face of 'EUropean diversity' (20). As we have outlined above, Woodcock's criticisms resonate with those levelled at the Serbian authorities whose instrumental attempts to sustain and protect the parade only serves to 'contain' Pride in a militarised and unobserved space.

Mainstream media play a critical role in communicating the competing claims outlined above and in visualising the public space where such claims to recognition are asserted and contested. The patterns of coverage of Pride therefore enact forms of containment and freedom, as the parade through the streets of Belgrade becomes a potent but uneasy 'signifier' of Serbia's democratisation and Europeanisation project.

Visibility, visuality and visual framing as a method of analysis

As our summary above suggests, there are complex political, cultural and social forces at play when we consider the troubling dynamics of the parade and the violent protests on the streets of Belgrade in 2010. Our particular interest is in the way in which television coverage constructs this struggle for visibility, but also the spatial politics of the city street where divisions and modes of watching and seeing are enacted through journalistic stylistic conventions and constraints (e.g. of safety, access). Both holding a Pride parade and using tactics of symbolic violence are different ways to perform socially, and to place bodies within

contested and mediated spaces. In a sense, the Pride parade is itself a 'demonstration' whilst the violent protests are 'counter-demonstrations' designed to disrupt and deny the parade. Two distinct groups endeavour to 'appear' on the streets, with the later mediated visibility in mind, and so physically place themselves in potential conflict, where the police become an essential third party with a duty to 'contain' violence and disruption. Responding to the movements occupying public squares around that time (Indignados, Occupy, Tahrir Square), Judith Butler (2011: n.p.) draws on Hannah Arendt's claim that political action requires the 'space of appearance': the right to gather in public space where the 'bodies on the street' also appear to audiences through the media and so become 'politically potent'. Referring to a recent trip to Turkey, Butler notes the 'alliance' of feminists, human rights activists and 'the lipstick lesbians with their bisexual and heterosexual friends' who gather for a march following the International Conference against Homophobia and Transphobia in Ankara:

> To walk is to say that this is a public space in which transgendered people walk, that this is a public space where people with various forms of clothing, no matter how they are gendered or what religion they signify, are free to move without threat of violence (ibid: n.p.).

As Butler argues, this is a 'performative' act in the bodily insistence of moving freely within public space, not only for the individual person but for the broader political claim to equal treatment. But it is the public visibility afforded by media technologies which is pre-visualised by those organising such marches or demonstrations and through which they hope to exert political pressure.

As observed by Butler (2011), it is now commonly recognised that media do not only report on events, but they constitute them, even becoming part of the action through their defining and interpreting power. With our interest in how television news coordinates attention and visually constructs the events in Belgrade, the concept of visual framing offers a useful perspective to identify the ways in which journalistic practices and conventions shape the coverage. We recognise some of the criticism of framing, including its lack of conceptual clarity, but its emphasis on seeking out journalistic selectivity and patterns in coverage, and, for visual framing in particular, on the performative nature of images as powerful yet ambiguous stimuli, provides a lens through which to explore the 'spaces of appearance' and the struggle for visibility. In this case, we follow the iconographic and semiotics-influenced

model offered by Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011). There are two reasons for this. First, we are examining television news coverage rather than print media or webpages. The quantitative, social scientific approach is more suited to still images which can be counted and coded as distinct items, whether or not linguistic material is also included. As an audio-visual medium, the visual television imagery is experienced in unison with the audio track but is also in motion, with image-frames experienced as a televisual 'flow' (Ellis, 1992). Second, our interest in spatial politics of visibility is well served by the model's analytical levels, based on interpreting representational principles such as proximity, symbolism, stylistic conventions and visual motifs.

To briefly outline the four levels of visual framing conceptualised by Rodriguez and Dimitrova, they are: (1) visuals as denotative systems (the literal or manifest), (2) visuals as stylistic-semiotic systems (conventions such as close-ups signifying intimacy), (3) visuals as connotative systems (the culture-bound ideas or concepts attached to the people, things or events depicted) and (4) visuals as ideological representations (how images are employed as instruments of power). The levels (1), (3) and (4) clearly reference Barthes' layers of meaning in his 'Rhetoric of the Image' (1977 [1964]) – denotation, connotation and the naturalising ideology or myth. The third level of 'visuals as stylistic-semiotic systems' encourages researchers to pay attention to the particular qualities of the medium under scrutiny and so, in our case, editing, camera angles, camera movement, narration, proximity and general conventions of television news grammar are also examined for their communicative potential. Drawing on this approach, we conduct a stylistic-semiotic analysis in order to identify visual frames across the TV news coverage.

Television news sample

We analyse four national TV stations to explore how salient news frames emerge across broadcast media. This comprises the main news programme for the public broadcasting service, **Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) (19.30 bulletin),** and the bulletins from three commercial TV stations; **TV Prva (18.00)**, previously owned by News Corporation and associated with the Fox brand before being bought by the Greek Antenna Group, the channel highlights entertainment values but is generally balanced in coverage; **TV B92 (18.30)**, naturally aligned with European values, human rights issues and overall democratisation of the country, although commercialisation has led to some criticism concerning its reduced

watchdog role; and finally, **TV Pink (19.30)**, traditionally considered close to government and one of the leading commercial channels in Serbia. It is not our intention to conduct a comparative study of the four channels, but we will note below where significant differences emerge.

Here we concentrate on a five-day period of 9-13 October 2010, to cover the build-up to the parade and the post-parade repercussions. Due to the well-known threats beforehand and violent clashes on the day, the disruption to the parade was the main story on 10 October, with often around 10 short reports or interviews related to the various conflicts and destruction on each channel, and on average three or four items each on other days. Our focus on the visual is not intended to disregard the multimodal nature of television news. Rather we would argue that our approach places a central emphasis on how patterns of legitimation, marginalisation, containment and conflict are powerfully and performatively communicated through visual means, which is particularly pertinent to events where public spaces become disputed symbolic territory. Indeed, you could argue that the whole point of 'Pride' is to be seen in public (Woodcock, 2009).

Thematic findings: The (in)visibility of the 2010 Belgrade Pride Parade

Here we summarise some of the dominant features in the coverage and especially how the city is visualised, in addition to discussing the 'spaces of appearance' for each of the main protagonists within the news media coverage. What becomes apparent on the day of the parade is that the Pride parade itself almost disappears from the news and certainly from the streets (at least this is the sense from the news reporting). The indoor press conferences are replaced with scenes of violence and destruction as right-wing protesters[4] rampage through the streets vandalising property and attacking the police who attempt to keep them from the parade participants. Below, we initially outline the stylistic-semiotic features (level 3 of Rodriguez and Dimitrova's model), and especially draw attention to three interrelated visual frames: the street as a conflict zone; the ghettoisation of the LBGT community; and the symbolic contest between Serbdom and Europeanisation. Here we use 'frames' in the sense offered by Gamson and Modigliani, as a 'central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events' and which suggests 'the essence of the issue' (1987:

143). Within each of these main organising frames we refer to the patterns of denotation, connotation and ideology represented by levels 1, 2 and 4 in the visual framing analysis.

Stylistic-semiotic features and news conventions: visualising the street as a conflict zone

In the coverage that precedes the parade, we see a number of standard images that signal the preparations for the event – interviews with international and local human rights activists taking place within a press conference setting, the police standing on the streets with riot gear (but looking relatively relaxed), maps of the city and interviews with the Interior Minister. However, another key event also attracts attention; the 'Family Stroll' organised by far-right organisation Dveri as a counter-parade on the eve of Pride. First held in 2009, the Family Stroll organisers explicitly cast homosexuality as a threat to family values and to the Serbian people (Stakić, 2015). It is worth noting the nature of this coverage, as it stands in stark contrast to the next day's reporting of Pride. The Family Stroll participants are interviewed in the street and are shown moving freely, some holding up Serbian flags and banners depicting 'no sex' graphics next to children in prams, alongside church groups holding up crosses, portraits and icons (Figure 1). The stylistic conventions are unremarkable, with vox pops style interviews intercut with crowds walking past the camera at shoulder height.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

The day of the parade offers a very different style of reporting, characterised by a lack of safe access for the news teams and highly focused on the violence and its aftermath. Here we note a number of stylistic features which add to the sense of menace and failing security.

The news reporting for Pride is generally shot from behind police lines or following police running or walking after the hooligans. In addition to groups of rioters throwing missiles, vandalising trams and being arrested, the attention focuses on the aftermath: burnt out vehicles with broken glass along with firefighters and ambulances responding to the scenes of destruction.

Dramatic scenes of rampaging gangs of men, throwing missiles and running from police in otherwise empty streets activities are also captured via high-level CCTV images (with visible time indicators which work to identify the footage with its surveillance function) (Figure 2). Other footage features recognisable conventions of conflict reporting – shaky hand-held

cameras (Figure 3); and another moment where the camera is clearly travelling within a fast moving vehicle (RTS).

[Insert Figure 2 here]

[Insert Figure 3 here]

Street-level scenes are a particular stylistic favourite. This feature is characterised through a low-camera, medium close-up shot showing these destroyed inanimate objects at the centre of the image (Figure 4). Also prevalent are other conventions associated with conflict reporting, such as panning shots up to helicopters overhead. It is not only the visual symbolism of the helicopter here, but their distinctive sound above the city which connotes an emergency situation. Those with injuries are shown lying in the street or being carried away.

The potential threat to the media is symbolised in a vandalised mammography facility sponsored by B92, the media organisation associated with support for democratisation, and whose investigative reporting of the links between football hooligans and the state had led to threats to the journalists' personal safety (Nielsen 2013). There are no moving vehicles on the streets other than armoured vehicles, whilst other cars are shown upturned, smashed up or on fire.

[Insert Figure 4 here]

But crucially there is a complete lack of footage from within the parade (not even amateur footage from a phone) and so this particular perspective is not on offer to the Serbian TV audience.

Another notable feature is the repetition of footage previously broadcast, with bulletins using the same images from 10 October again in their 11 October broadcasts (e.g. TV Pink). There is one notable difference in the 11 October reports: the return of reporters standing in the street and speaking to the camera next to a burnt-out car (TV Pink).

Who gets the right to occupy the street? The ghettoisation of the LGBT community

The leading news item for the day of 10 October is not the parade, but the violent attacks by 'hooligans' on the police who are protecting the city, and in some cases with opening images

depicting the interior minister meeting injured police and security services personnel at the hospital (first item on B92; second item on TV Pink). Lengthy interviews with ministers and other politicians across all channels signal a less 'interventionist media logic' in the Serbian news culture than that observed in other western news channels, despite increasing pressures of commercialisation; an observation which supports Esser's (2008) findings on the enduring importance of national news contexts. The uninterrupted speech afforded to politicians indicates a reporting style which is less independent and less adversarial towards the political class than the UK news context, for example.

But an unusual scene broadcast on TV Prva on 13 October places the frustrations and political agency of the journalists centre stage. Exposing the kinds of arguments which usually remain off-screen, and disrupting the conventions of the press conference event, the journalists are shown in dispute (Figure 5). The first journalist asks the Pride organisers if it was worth the destruction of the city, for them to have the right to walk freely, sparking an angry reaction from a second journalist before the organisers can respond. One claims that the parade organisers have provoked the destruction of the city, whilst another accuses the first journalist of the 'state of mind' that caused the walk to become ghettoised. The journalists' televised dispute reveals not only their own political subjectivities (promoting the 'security first' discourse of the city authorities on one side and endorsing the 'human rights' argument on the other) in a highly emotional exchange, but it also lifts the veil on the news media's own role in constructing the ideological significance of Pride through the series of choices they make based on such subjectivities.

[Insert Figure 5 here]

The invisibility or contained visibility of the Pride parade across most of the coverage reinforces the idea that Serbia's streets were not ready for the Pride parade, and so not ready to include the LGBT community in the agora without threatening the peace. The sense of containment or even ghettoisation is important here – the impetus to placate those who show a tendency to violence inadvertently works to appease political extremism. This playoff between 'security risk' and 'human rights' is a discursive struggle which also played out during coverage of the cancelled 2009 Pride with the effect of maintaining LGBT marginalisation and delegitimisation (Johnson 2012). Once again, condemnation of the

violence is balanced with a simultaneous marginalisation of the Pride parade and what it represents.

It is the police who become the predominant protagonists in the coverage. The various marchers, rioters and helmeted police are filmed in long shots with faces often hidden from view and under chaotic conditions. But the police officers who protect the city receive the most humanised coverage, pictured with visible injuries and meeting the interior minister in carefully choreographed photo opportunities. Despite their militarised presence in the streets – gathered in large numbers with full body armour, on horseback and in armoured vehicles, their bodies are shown as vulnerable in this more intimate footage.

There is a notable absence of imagery from citizens within the parade, but there is one instance of 'citizen witnessing' (Allan, 2013) which contributes to the main 'human interest' story. On 11 October (and repeated on other nights) TV Prva broadcasts a YouTube video of footage from a balcony window depicting police chasing rioters, complete with the website's recognisable logo, layout and a title which translates as 'You came to destroy my Belgrade?' (Figure 6). Through this affirmation of ownership, the city of Belgrade is construed as the main protagonist and a major 'terrain of resistance' in its own right (Jansen, 2001).

[Insert Figure 6 here]

The internet clip displays multi-layered semiotic features, as the video also captures sound (including the bleeping out of swearing) and subtitles, which is then re-mediated through its broadcast within the Prva news bulletin. The police officer, later identified as Saša Čordić, chases the rioters, confronting them with his police baton: 'What, you've come to attack my city, to ruin my city?'. In a follow-up report on 13 October, Saša appears as a named hero, the policeman who said 'no' to hooligans, and who is honoured with an award for courage from the Minister of the Interior. But as indicated by his own angry words and in the politician-initiated photo opportunity, his courage is rewarded for protecting the city and not the rights or values of the Pride parade. Čordić is the true Belgrader in this coverage, keeping the city safe from rural outsiders (the 'unutrasnjost' mentioned in the TV caption of Figure 3). Recalling earlier ethnographic work on 1990s protests, the city can be understood as a 'discursive construct' where political identities are fiercely contested and where claiming a

'right to the city' affirms political agency (Jansen, 2001; see also Spasić and Pavićević, 1997). Ultimately, the city is what must be preserved and even rescued by those who, like Čordić, are seen as having ownership of Belgrade's 'urbanity' (Jansen, 2001).

Symbolic contest between Serbdom and Europeanisation

As Rodriguez and Dimitrova write with reference to Peirce's semiotic system, symbols are thought to evoke strong reactions from audiences due to their 'deep roots in the culture' that produces and sees them (2011: 56). Flags work as powerful metonyms, standing in for the nation or other identity groups – just as burning a flag symbolises a violent threat towards its people, to wave the flag on a march is to proudly claim an allegiance. Such identities are performative in nature and, for the anti-Pride demonstrators, the association with the Serbian homeland is deliberately proprietorial and exclusionary. For Dana Johnson, Obraz's use of Serbian flag colours and Cyrillic script during their 2009 protests 'reinforces the message of "Serbdom" and suggests that Pride not only violates this tradition but that it threatens to be a calamity related to and on the scale of the national "loss" of Kosovo' (2012: 11). In 2010 the Serbian national flag (associated with the Serbian national identity) and Serbian Orthodox Church flags (associated with the religious identity) are held aloft alongside crosses, icons and banners to claim an embodied resistance to the forces of contamination and sin (often aligned with values of European integration which threaten to dilute Serb nationhood). Carrying the colours of the Serbian flag through the streets also constructs the Pride parade as 'other-than-Serbian', a defensive posture against the perceived provocation from outsiders. Conversely, Pride's internationally recognisable rainbow flag symbolises a global movement of solidarity. As Sawer (2007) states, political colours carried on flags, banners and placards are particularly important for activists and social movements, insofar as such visual symbols play a major role in the contestation of public memory and current definitions of belonging and, in doing so, also generate strong forms of emotional identification.

In our case, the rainbow flags of Pride do not feature prominently in the coverage. On 9 October 2010 TV Pink briefly show clips from a promotional video depicting an unidentified couple holding hands, with the rainbow ribbon floating across the screen. This cuts briefly to the Belgrade Pride logo being revealed from beneath the rainbow flag and coloured balloons released. But the images represent an imagined vision rather than the reality on the streets. Due to the violent clashes on 10 October, the parade itself is pushed out of the new agenda,

receiving a few seconds of coverage if any on most channels. Only B92 has a news item focused on the parade where we clearly see the participants walking through the streets, listening to speakers at a rally, and displaying pink badges, rainbow flags and banners alongside Serbian flags. But even on this channel, this story is pushed back to the 10th news item in the bulletin.

Stepping back from the symbolic practices of the Pride and anti-Pride protesters to encompass a wider view, the representation of the city space itself is also highly symbolic. Other symbolic features emerge in metonymic representations of city/street destruction, where we see smashed public furniture and concrete dividers or poles lying on the ground (Figure 4). As discussed in the literature review, walking through the city is associated with 'possessing' it (Spasić and Pavićević, 1997). Protecting the city from (Europeanised) 'others' holds a particular resonance in Belgrade and speaks to the contestation of public memory performed in the streets. It is notable that the city has chosen to leave some of the bombed buildings destroyed by NATO in 1999. These are important memorial sites to that period of being under attack, and so the 'war zone' filming style has particular poignancy on these streets. Where new buildings have been constructed, ruins of ministries remain alongside them and are consciously preserved as remnants of the past. These reminders of being under attack can add to the defensive protective relationship with the streets, which is also used instrumentally by nationalist political organisations.

Conclusions

Our main findings can be summarised thus: the dominant portrayal of the events which occur over 9-13 October 2010 are of violence and extreme vandalism to the city. The perpetrators of this destruction are the 'hooligans' inspired by the rhetoric of right-wing nationalist organisations and who soon turn their attention to the Euro 2012 qualifier match with Italy on 12 October. The other main protagonists, following the violent protesters, are the police and politicians from the Interior Ministry. The police are depicted as heroic defenders of the city whilst the politicians are afforded lengthy interviews without interruption – a stark contrast to the 'soundbite' culture of US or UK news (Esser, 2008). The organisers and participants of Pride are much less visible, with the exception of B92's coverage. Even politicians supportive of Pride tend to be interviewed within the parliamentary offices. With the threat of violence

hanging over them, their 'spaces of appearance' are highly constrained and policed in the mediated coverage, if not omitted entirely. So, whilst the perpetrators of the violence are judged negatively in the coverage, they do however arguably win out in the politics of the street.

For the Parade itself, the news story is one of containment, marginalisation and even disappearance. Whilst other reports indicate that the Parade went ahead successfully with over 1000 people taking part, the TV news reporting appears to conform to the traditional news values of negativity (in terms of both selection of events and the people involved) along with a focus on political elites who appear as sources in lengthy interviews (Galtung and Ruge, 1965).

As suggested earlier, the authorities' ambivalent position is embodied in the statement made by Minister of the Interior Ivica Dačić, in which the support for 'European values and democracy' is balanced against responsibility for the security of participants. As Marek Mikuš argues, this dualistic interpretation allows the state to occupy the apparent moral high ground at the same time as signalling their hesitancy: 'The state stood to gain most from framing the unpopular Parade as a part of the broad Europeanisation policy.[…] this strategy enabled it to (partially) externalise the responsibility for the Parade while taking the credit' (2011: 842-3).

Examining the media coverage through a visual framing and semiotic lens, and with a focus on visibility and visuality, helps us to reveal complexities beyond the sense of a relatively benign portrayal for LGBT activists, cast against the violence of the extremists. In shifting attention to how the news images work to create the spaces of political 'appearance' and the potentials for political agency through mediated visibility, we have revealed an uneasy ambivalence, in which an alignment of the LGBT population with the Europeanisation project reinforces a problematic East-West divide and works to both 'other' them and even make them invisible in the televised coverage.

From 2011 to 2013 the government banned Pride Parades due to perceived or real security risks involved. Each year, only a few days before the Parade, the Government would ritually ban all the scheduled meetings upon the recommendation of the National Security Council. Under concerted pressure from the EU and progressive actors at home, the Serbian Government finally allowed the Pride Parade to take place in 2014. Expectedly, the anti-Pride

protesters led by Dveri gathered one day before in Belgrade. However, this time around, their protest did not escalate into violence the following day. On 28 September 2014, Serbia's LGBT community managed to enjoy their constitutionally guaranteed freedom of public assembly and subsequent parades have now become non-newsworthy occasions. But as Bilić writes, this was yet another 'State Pride' with '7000 policemen, armoured vehicles and police helicopters protecting around a 1000 participants' in a ghettoised parade (2016: 142). A 'peaceful' parade performs a symbolic message, especially for the supportive voices of EU observers, but the heavy police presence only serves to underline the continuing struggle for LGBT people to claim their political agency by 'possessing' the city streets. To add to this complexity, in 2017 growing tensions between LGBT organisations led to the establishment of a rival Pride parade, to be held in June instead of September. This alternative march was held in protest against the 'traditional' parade's lack of inclusivity and increasing role as a display and stage for politicians and NGOs. The June parade took place under strong police presence, though only days after the country's first female and first openly gay prime minister was elected— a move that some defined as window-dressing if not pink-washing in sight of Serbia's EU membership (MacDowall, 2017). It is ultimately against the backdrop of these tensions around the visibility of different political identities in the context of Europeanisation that the city of Belgrade – with its streets, boundaries, and agoras – continues to be at the centre of shifting politics of appearance in times of democratisation.

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Figure 1: TV Prva: The 'Family Stroll' hold up 'no sex' placards, 9 October 2010.

Figure 2: RTS, CCTV footage of rioters, 10 October 2010

Figure 3: B92, shaky handheld camera footage, 10 October 2010

Figure 4: TV Prva, street level images of destruction, 10 October 2010

Figure 5: TV Prva, journalists argue at press conference, 13 October 2010

Figure 6: TV Prva, YouTube footage, 11 October 2010

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[1] We recognise that 'community' is a problematic term and we do not intend to imply a homogenous group by its use. Indeed, some local activists in Serbia are critical of the Pride organisers' detachment from the local population and the negative consequences that the event can have on everyday reality for LGBT people in Serbia (Bilic 2016). However, our interest here is in how the groups are identified and constructed in news coverage and this term is more inclusive than 'activists' but demonstrates a public mobilisation beyond 'population'.

[2] 'Ko "diriguje" hiljadama huligana' (Who "orchestrates" thousands of hooligans), B92, 11 October 2010. http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2010&mm=10&dd=11&nav_category=12&nav_id=464440 (accessed 27 January 2017)

³ Ivica Dačić, Minister of Interior in the Government of Serbia during 2010, was very close to former authoritarian leader Slobodan Milošević during the 1990s and became the new president of Socialist Party of Serbia after its leader Milošević died in The Hague in 2006.

⁴ As we note above, there are a number of groups opposed to Pride, with Dveri, Obraz and SNP Nasi among them. Various descriptors are used to categorise and differentiate between them (extreme, nationalist, far-right, Orthodox). Whilst recognising there are differences between the groups and their strategies in opposing Pride, for our purposes we group them here as 'right-wing organisations'. Those responsible for physically disrupting the Parade tend to be described as 'hooligans' in the news, a term which recognises their violent intent and their intersections with football hooliganism. Indeed, as Pavasović Trost and Kovacevic write, the mission to 'violently threaten and jeopardize' the parade brought together usually warring football hooligans (2013: p1055; see also Nielsen 2013).