UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

"Nothing is Going to be Named After You": Ethical Citizenship Among Citizen Activists in Bosnia-Herzegovina

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

by

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2018

The Dissertation of Natasa Garic-Humphrey is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California San Diego

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To:

My mom and dad, who supported me unselfishly.
My Clinton and Alina, who loved me unconditionally.
My Bosnian family and friends, who shared with me their knowledge.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a child back home in Slovenia, I used to soak up pages of the National Geographic Magazine, imagined myself traveling, speaking foreign languages, and exploring other cultures. When I reached adulthood, I spent all my saved money to make that dream happen and quench my thirst for knowledge about other peoples of the world. My first bigger journey brought me to the Four Corners of the American Southwest, a desert environment so different from the green hills and meadows back home, where I lived with a Navajo family in Monument Valley and "grandma" Ada in Chinle, Arizona. Learning how to make fry bread, herd sheep, dye wool, and weave, listening to women's laughter while cooking a feast, and attending ceremonies were just some of the beautiful things I got to experience while there, a journey that later led me to pursue a graduate degree in anthropology. After my Master's Degree and a few years working with Hopi, I found myself constantly thinking of "home," the Balkans, especially of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where my father's family is from. I wanted to better understand what my family went through during the war and learn more about the rising wave of nationalism that was spreading in newly formed states of former Yugoslavia. I consider my journey, although far from being over, coming full circle—I had to learn about people elsewhere to realize there is still plenty to discover back "home."

My Ph.D. work at UCSD is deeply informed by the department's strong standing in political and psychological anthropology. Taking Nancy Postero's graduate course in Citizenship sparked my interest in issues extending beyond the liberal notion of rights under law, which is precisely what I am pursuing in this dissertation. Person-centered ethnography course taught by Steve Parish and Psychological Core class I took with Keith McNeal made me realize of the growing need to look at politics from the perspective of peoples' lived experiences and to use

theoretical orientations of morality, ethics, and subjectivity to better understand how people come to confront issues of power and governance. My first adviser at UCSD was Esra Özyürek, to whom I wish to thank for leading me in the right direction during my first formative years in a Ph.D. program. Although my dissertation topic changed considerably since I wrote my letter of intent to get into a graduate program, this dissertation is also a part of her academically strong guidance and sophistication as a thinker. My most sincere thanks go to Nancy Postero, who, without any hesitation, stepped in as my adviser after Esra left to take on a new position at the London School of Economics. Nancy is the best example of research and teaching accomplishments at the highest level, and I admire her for being an excellent teacher as well as researcher. The quality time she spends with her advisees is unparalleled, she empowers each and every one of us to think creatively, and she is without a doubt my academic role model. Joe Hankins is one of the most sophisticated thinkers I have met and I thank him for pushing me to foreground my ethnographic voice in this dissertation, and for his gentle and wise guidance in this process. The first time I got a chance to talk to Saiba Varma, I knew she would be an excellent addition to my dissertation committee. We connected with ease and I thank her for the extensive and insightful comments to my dissertation chapters. It was noticeable she read every word I wrote carefully and my dissertation is in many ways stronger because of her knowledge and expertise. I am indebted to Martha Lampland who graciously embarked on this rather long journey with me. Her expertise in postsocialist studies was invaluable but the most precious thing I received is her enthusiasm in my research project that propelled me forward every time we met. Last but not least, I wish to thank Patrick Patterson, with whom I share the love for anything and everything Yugoslavian. First time I walked into his office, I felt I was transported back in time, with Tito's picture on the wall and a socialist red couch to sit his students. I learned

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With that I want to turn to wonderful people I got to meet during my fieldwork, which accepted me as "theirs" and graciously shared their knowledge with me. I often feel this dissertation is their work, I just helped put it together, and I hope the wealth of amazing data I recorded about their lives and experiences received due justice in the pages of this dissertation. First, I would like to thank two sisters and amazingly beautiful women, Leila and Alma Šeper, who welcomed me with open arms and quickly became my best friends. I learned so much from both, as I watched them graciously navigate the treacherous Dayton environment trying to make

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My greatest acknowledgements go to my family and friends back home. Only after I became a mother myself, I fully realized the extent of fear and sorrow I must have brought on my parents when I decided to leave home and go to a far-away place. They have supported me

every step of the way, loved me beyond imagination, and taught me the true worth of a strong family bond I can now pass onto my daughter. I owe everything to them! My brother, Igor, his partner Irena, and their wonderful children Sara and Jure show me each time we are together the importance of a loving and warm relationship. I cannot imagine growing up without two of my best friends, Blanka Vodopivec and Urša Podvršič. Despite living far away for 16 years, we never grew apart from each other as such is the true bond of friendship. While living in Bosnia, I spent precious moments with my family and I am forever grateful they had the opportunity to get to know Clinton and Alina better. My cousin, Marija and her family, so graciously helped us settle down in Sarajevo, and my aunt, *tetka Đozi* (Jozefina), tirelessly and lovingly attended to us. It was an immense relief to know Alina was taken care of by the most amazing, vivacious, loving, and caring woman I have ever known. She brightened our home with laughter every day and sacrificed her time to help us out when needed.

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amazing memory and never lets me forget things I have promised her. I grew in so many ways through this experience and I love my family to infinity.

Chapter 5, in part, has been submitted for publication of the material and it may appear in Political and Legal Anthropology Review. The dissertation author, Natasa Garic-Humphrey, was the primary investigator and is the sole author of this article.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"Nothing is Going to be Named After You":
Ethical Citizenship Among Citizen Activists in Bosnia-Herzegovina

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

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Professor Nancy Postero, Chair

Twenty-three years after the end of the war many Bosnians feel they have been stuck in an endless post-war transition, yearning for a better life for so long that an idea of a brighter future is almost unimaginable. While the political elites are focusing their attention on ethnic divisions, the rest of the country is falling deeper into economic regression with high unemployment rates and widespread corruption in politics and business.

This dissertation is an ethnography of contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina that examines the ways citizen activists are widening the cracks between ethnic territories and in that space practicing the kind of belonging that turns residents who are merely sharing a certain space as subjects of ethnic collectivities, to citizens who are members of a shared community going beyond the primacy of ethnic identification. This way, citizen activists are creating an alternative to widespread political focus on identitarian politics by concentrating on social justice for all, positioned against the backdrop of pervasive and institutionalized ethnicization of everyday life and politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, citizen activists are experiencing citizenship differently, not as a legal membership that ties one to the respective ethnic group but as a belonging that ties one to a community of people who have been disenfranchised and who, regardless of the precarious situation they find themselves in, put their bodies to work to create lives worth living by engaging in citizen activism. However, citizen activists are not only rejecting identitarian politics but also positioning themselves as discontent with neoliberalism, where the beneficiaries of political party-family infrastructure are the ones reaping the benefits of an unequal system and accumulation by dispossession.

I call this form of alternative citizenship emerging among citizen activists in Bosnia-Herzegovina, *ethical citizenship*, where the ethics is located in the bodily acts of resistance to the mainstream politics of consensus and part-taking in something one is excluded from. The ethics is also located in the very process of people working on their *selves* and transforming themselves through self-care and self-reflection, in order to obtain a state of normality in their lives. This normality is often lodged in those moments of indignation where citizen activists get to experience, practice, and exercise a sense of control over their lives such as demanding a solution to a problem by trapping public officials in the Parliament, as well as day-to-day, subtler

acts of refusal or resistance. These ethical acts of citizenship are creative endeavors where people are rejecting the way they are supposed to act and responding to a crisis with invention and creativity by building alternative forms of direct citizen action.

This dissertation is based on one year of ethnographic fieldwork working with citizen activists primarily in Sarajevo, with frequent visits to other cities such as Mostar, Tuzla, Banja Luka, and Prijedor.

Chapter 1

Ethical Citizenship

Figure 1.1. Bakir Izetbegović, Bosniak member of a tripartite Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina on April 6, 2014. In the background, citizen activist, Hana, holding a sign that says, "Nothing is going to be named after you."

1.1. Introduction

On April 5, in a neighborhood of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hana and Emir invited a group of citizen activists to their apartment for an evening of hanging out and planning a citizen initiative happening the next morning to commemorate an anniversary of Sarajevo's liberation by the Partisans from Nazi occupation in 1945. After two months of exhausting participation in the daily activities of the social uprising that started at the beginning of February, this initiative was a welcomed break from the everyday trials and tribulations of activist engagement, not just for myself but for other citizen activists as well, all of whom were devoted participants in the February uprising. Sipping wine and taking turns coloring the letters on the protest sign, we brainstormed ideas how we could publicly refute public officials' scheduled tribute to the fallen

victims of Sarajevo during WWII on the morning of April 6. After half an hour of joking around and proposing ideas such as dressing up as Valter[1] and his band of rebels, we decided we were going to block the politicians' access to Eternal Fire Memorial (*Vječna Vatra*) in downtown Sarajevo, while reading excerpts from a book called *Sarajevo u revoluciji* (Sarajevo in Revolution) and pay respect to *real* heroes who fought and gave their lives for the city's liberation. This small but potent initiative had three goals important to this dissertation: (1) citizen activists' rejection of nationalism promoted by those in the positions of power; (2) citizen activists seizing control over their lives; and (3) building a sense of community.

Firstly, citizen activists were making a direct distinction between anti-fascist, and therefore anti-nationalist, heroes who liberated the city in 1945 and today's politicians, who with their nationalist politics of division, represent the exact opposite. Public commemoration was considered to be a slap in the face by today's politicians who, according to citizen activists, do not understand the meaning of the word respectability, accountability, responsibility, and common good, and as such, are not worthy of paying respect to real heroes who sacrificed their lives so that others could live theirs in freedom. At some point during the initiative, citizen activist, Hana, called out my name and signaled to come over to a nearby café. She pulled out a sharpie and quickly started to write on a big yellow poster. While writing, she told me, Bakir Izetbegović, a Bosniak representative of the tripartite presidency and a president of a Party of Democratic Action[2] just arrived at the site. Her motions signaled urgency but I still could not make sense of what she was planning to do. When she finished writing, she told me to follow her, as she positioned herself right behind the above mentioned politician and raised her sign up

[1] Vladimir Perić-Valter was a WWII hero and a Partisan commander in German-occupied Sarajevo. He was the leader of an underground anti-German movement and a great contributor to the liberation of the city on April 6, 1945. He was also one of the last casualties in the liberation of Sarajevo from Nazi occupation.
[2] Stranka demokratke akcije (SDA), a conservative Bosniak nationalist political party.

high. In that instant, I was able to capture one of my favorite moments of the entire fieldwork. As Bakir Izetbegović was being interviewed by the media, Hana stood right behind him with a sign that said *"Po vama se ništa neće zvati"*("Nothing is going to be named after you") (See figure 1.1. above). Bakir Izetbegović is the son of Alija Izetbegović, the first president of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 and one of the three signatories of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. An architect by education, Bakir followed his father's footsteps and entered politics in 2000. At the time of the initiative, he was the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, therefore serving not only as the leader of the largest and most influential Bosnian Muslim political party but also as the head of the state. Among citizen activists and many other Bosnians in general, Bakir Izetbegović is seen as one of those many politicians who have not done anything of significance while holding influential political positions for almost two decades. On the contrary, Izetbegović is seen as a nationalist, closely following the Dayton[3] agenda of ethnic division and focusing, in words, not deeds, only on one segment of Bosnia's population, the Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks.[4] Therefore, in his political agenda, only Bosniaks have suffered great losses throughout turbulent history in this region, only they have kept their morality in the fight of good versus evil, and therefore, only they are the victims of oppressors who tried to exterminate them. Bakir Izetbegović is by no means the only politician who upholds this type of nationalist ideology. Even those who preach a moderate nationalist agenda and show some awareness of Bosnia as a multicultural society during the elections, turn to conservative nationalism after the election. Bosnian politicians of all three ethnic groups[5] are well aware that

[3] Dayton Peace Agreement or General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina was signed in 1995, which marked the end of the war.
[4] Bosnia-Herzegovina also has a large population of Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. After the war, all three ethnic groups received constituent peoples rights in a complex system of power-sharing.
[5] Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosniaks (or Muslim Bosnians).

working on a common vision for a better future would harness hope and, in turn, undermine their own power. In other words, political elites promote ethnic divisions not because they think it is the best agenda for the good of the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina but because by keeping the tension and fear alive they simultaneously maintain their own power. However, Bosnian politicians are not doing this alone, as they have the full backing of the Dayton Accord, brokered by international agents, that ended the shooting but did not end ethnic tensions and division. In fact, with its territorial segregation and consociational power-sharing,[6] it created a fertile ground for the continuation of conflict that often leads to a political deadlock where problems become unsolvable and important decisions get put on hold.[7] In such a stalemate political climate that is obstinately focused on ethnicity, Bosnian politicians have been working diligently to create the "Dayton meantime" (Jansen 2015), a party-family political infrastructure that controls most public resources and private enterprises, leaving very few alternatives for others. This is creating a situation of an endless postwar "transition" where nothing is moving forward and citizens are losing hope that change is possible at all.

The main goal behind the initiative on April 6 and Hana's act of holding a sign was to make a clear distinction between real heroes who were anti-nationalists and sacrificing their lives for the common good *and* today's perpetrators and beneficiaries of the Dayton meantime, who sow fear, division, and hopelessness with their nationalist agendas for the sole purpose of reaping

[6] In order to deter ethnic domination of one group over others, separate collectivities are given segmental autonomy and equal distribution of resources (see also Hromadžić 2015:10-13; Palmer 2005), embracing non-majoritarian system of power-sharing.

[7] The Dayton Peace Agreement was created to ensure power-sharing (Bieber 1999, 2006; Chandler 2000) among the three ethnic groups and to safeguard their vital interests. However, this kind of consociational political organization presumes cooperation among political officials of different ethno-national backgrounds to solve problems, reach stability, and achieve progress, which is not the case in BiH. This kind of power-sharing system is the primary reason for the extreme institutionalized ethnicization of politics and everyday life in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It often leads to a political deadlock because any kind of progress is hindered by the ethnic representatives invoking veto rights, claiming to be "protecting" vital interests of their *constituent groups* (see also Mujkić 2008).

the benefits of power and wealth. All of the citizen activists I worked with have an aversion to nationalist ideology due to seeing its devastating effects during the war and after. They have respect for cultural differences but do not agree with mobilizing them politically in order to divide instead of integrate the population. In most activist initiatives I attended during my fieldwork, there was always, if not an explicit, then an implicit rejection of nationalist politics, institutionalized by the Dayton configuration and sanctioned by political elites. In citizen activists' minds, a focus on nationalism takes the spotlight away from the real problems of everyday lives such as poverty, soaring unemployment, shattered economy, healthcare system, segregated education, and other social services needed to live a normal life.

Secondly, showing up 15 minutes before the scheduled nine o'clock appearance of Bosnian politicians and intentionally blocking their access to lay flower wreaths in front of the memorial, citizen activists were sending their representatives a strong message: "This time, citizens go first and you will have to wait until we are done." Tired of being stuck in an endless postwar "transition" and waiting on the politicians to start making relevant political decisions that will move Bosnia-Herzegovina from a dead point, citizen activists positioned themselves as the ones in control of the situation and forced the politicians to wait their turn. While standing in front of the memorial, citizen activists were taking their time and one-by-one read long excerpts from a four-volume book *Sarajevo u revoluciji* (Sarajevo in Revolution), a historical corpus detailing the peoples of Sarajevo resistance against the occupier during WWII. At first there was some confusion among the politicians, their aids, and the media, about the nature of our tribute until nobody budged to their requests to make room for them. When asked how long our commemoration is going to last, citizen activists responded they are going to take as much time as needed and asked the politicians to be quiet, so they could pay their respects in peace. Of

course, citizen activists were intentionally taking their time and making the politicians wait their turn, just as they have been forced to wait for change for more than two decades. After the police was called in to make way for the politicians, citizen activists again sarcastically responded they are grateful for the police offering them protection from the corrupt crooks (the politicians) but that they have everything under control. Indeed, there was a real sense of control present among citizen activists; no fear, no doubt, and no hesitation. In that moment of public indignation, putting people first, for a change, citizen activists experienced a sense of control over their lives, bringing them a feeling of dignity, respect, and normality. They felt a real sense of achievement because they successfully broke the wall often felt in activism when people's grievances fall on deaf ears. Protesting many times in front of empty government buildings or at a safe distance corralled in an area by head-to-toe armed police, citizen activists seized an opportunity to shame their representatives openly in their presence for running the country and its people to the ground. There was a sense of victory in catching the politicians off guard and telling them directly and publicly what they thought of them and their political engineering.

Lastly, this sense of achievement and taking control of their own lives allows citizen activists to feel some level of hope, where something better becomes imaginable again in the midst of paralysis, stagnation, and uncertainty. It also helps them build a sense of togetherness and community which have been profoundly affected not only by the war and postwar polarization, but by the neoliberal focus on consumerism and individualism as well. Citizen activists are aware that a thriving political culture will need spaces such as neighborhood organizations, voluntary associations, and cooperatives, where people can meet, interact, and start building dreams they can share. This greater sense of community and collective

collaboration has a potential to lead to a more sustainable form of activism that becomes a tangible alternative, helping citizens manage precarious lives.

Standing in front of the memorial on April 6 when Sarajevo was liberated from those who wanted to subjugate its people sixty-nine years ago, citizen activists were rejecting the country's distorted system of values, nationalist discourses, corrupted morality, and disunited citizenship promoted by those in the positions of power. However, there was also a sense of belonging among citizen activists—belonging to a country where good things can still happen but also belonging to a group of likeminded people, who, despite their differences, know something has to be done to make lives better in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They know change will not happen by sitting around but they are at the same time aware of the immense obstacles in their way. They know that in order to make change happen, they will need to be persistent, patient, creative, trusting, and hopeful, and that these values are hard to cultivate in an environment that stifles all forward thinking that is not premised on ethnicity and nationalism.

This dissertation explores the cracks between ethnic territories (Hromadžić 2015) and the Dayton meantime (Jansen 2015), while at the same time not denying the devastating effects of the war and the lack of space left for people to act outside the political mainstream. Lodged in those cracks they are so desperately trying to prop open, citizen activists practice the kind of belonging that turns *residents*, who are merely sharing a certain space, into *citizens*, who are members of a community (Aristotle 1984; see also Brooks 2014:1-2). In this collective space, citizen activists are attempting to create an alternative to mainstream political focus on identitatian politics by concentrating on a common good for all citizens that will generate some normality in their lives and the lives of people around them.

In their rejection of ethnic citizenship promoted by people in the positions of power, citizen activists are building a different way of looking at and experiencing citizenship, not as a legal membership that ties one to the respective ethnic group but as a belonging that ties one to the community—a community of citizens who have been disenfranchised, stuck in an endless postwar transition, lied to time and time again, and who are willing to put their bodies to work to create a better future despite often hopeless situation they found themselves in. Citizen activists are rejecting the kind of legal membership where a Bosnian citizen is valuable only as a member of an ethnic group (Mujkić 2007) and positioning their bodies in protest, an uprising, or a subtler, but just as important, acts of community engagements. Ethno-nationalism is backgrounded because citizen activists see it as a direct and main culprit for the deterioration of economy, health care, education, and other social services, and one of the reasons for the disintegration of community. Therefore, it is not only about a rejection of identitarian politics but also about discontent with neoliberalism and "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey 2004), where the beneficiaries of political party-family infrastructure are the ones reaping the benefits of unequal system and where fear premised on ethnic tensions is used to keep this configuration going.

I call this alternative form of citizenship that is emerging among citizen activists *ethical citizenship*—citizenship where the ethics is located in the bodily acts of resistance and "impropriety" or part-taking in something one is "not entitled" to or is excluded from. These ethical acts of citizenship are creative endeavors where people are rejecting the ways they are expected to act and responding to a crisis with invention and creativity by building alternative forms of direct citizen action. Furthermore, in *ethical citizenship* the ethics is also located in the very process of people working on their selves and transforming themselves (Foucault 1988, 1997), through self-care and self-reflection, in order to obtain a certain state of normality. In this

way, citizens break away from 'the proper' of consensus, which gives them a sense of hope that a better, more just, equal, and multicultural Bosnia-Herzegovina is possible on the ground. Therefore, this dissertation attempts to answer the following questions: In what ways are citizen activists rejecting identitarian politics of consensus and attempting to create normality and how are ways of experiencing citizenship transformed and moral selves reconstituted through grassroots political action? How do citizen activists' experiences of generating a new moral self, shape one's perceptions of government ineptitude and prepare them to engage in citizen-based action to confront political injustices and socio-political reforms? What motivates people to resist, initiate change, and form new senses of themselves as moral actors in the midst of stifling crises brought by discriminatory socioeconomic and political transformations, and other examples of structural violence?

Therefore, when Hana boldly stood behind one of the leading politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina with a sign *"Po vama se ništa neće zvati"* ("Nothing is going to be named after you"), she directly shamed him by making a sharp distinction between heroes who gave their lives for the common good and anti-heroes who are using the power they have accumulated through egocentrism and corruption for their own self-promotion. In that moment, Hana was not asking the politician for anything or trying to appeal to his moral sensibilities because she would not lower herself to his moral standards. She was simply telling him and all other political officials in Bosnia-Herzegovina that their legacy is tainted and that they are not going to be remembered in years to come for anything positive, productive, or constructive. In one powerful act, Hana positioned her body on what she considers to be the moral side of being and in a fearless stance said she is not disposable, not afraid, and not going to allow to be reduced to an ethnic pawn in somebody's separatist agenda. She positioned herself on the side of *ethical*

citizenship, turning in her ethnic membership for ethical belonging to a community where effort is put into building togetherness not separation.

This dissertation, however, is also about the trials and tribulations of citizen activists' endeavors and the difficulty of acting in an environment where the Dayton configuration leaves people either hopeless or complicit in its conviviality. It illustrates the all-encompassing nature of local political engineering, where those that do not conform to ethnic membership are marginalized, labeled as "others," and excluded from certain rights. It also shows how international political involvement in bringing the peace to a war-torn area in 1995, allowed those that started the war to lead the country into "peace." Dayton Peace Agreement was signed by those who orchestrated the war and who wanted to segregate the territory and the population according to ethnicity. The next wave of decision-makers seems to have a particular self-interest in keeping the Dayton configuration alive and untouched, in order to keep themselves in power. Citizen activists I worked with have also been distancing themselves from the ethical stances of *međunarodna zajednica* ("international community")[8] that is full of paradoxes as well. On the one hand, international agents are promoting integration and ethnic pluralism but on the other adopting the politics of segregation by institutionalizing ethnic partitioning (see also Hromadžić 2015). Likewise, they are preaching democratic education but contradictorily appointing an international body (Office of the High Representative) as the ultimate authority in this country that used to make decisions on behalf of the people and their representatives in an undemocratic way. This resembles more an authoritarian regime than human rights under democracy.

Reality on the ground shows the difficulties citizen activists have been facing in such political climate that lead many Bosnians into yearning, since they have been waiting for change

[8] International community is a direct translation of *međunarodna zajednica,* a term used widely by Bosnians themselves.

for so long they now have a difficult time believing change is possible at all. Besides deeming activism as unable to bring about colossal change because the structures of power are too entrenched, many Bosnians are also weary of those who are actively engaged, thereby perceiving activism, even those initiatives that are truly grassroots, as imbued with ulterior motives. Many citizens indiscriminately see activists as *strani plačenici* (foreign mercenaries) or NGO representatives who are considered to be an extended hand of local political parties on one side and tied to foreign grant money on the other. This mistrust is often difficult to deal with for those citizen activists who are pouring their time and energy into initiatives with honest intentions and no hidden drives, other than better future for everybody, and are not making deals behind closed doors with public officials.

Most citizen activists I worked with go through periods of ups and downs in their activist endeavors. At times activism can lead to burnout or disenchantment, preventing them to return into activist arena, where they do not see change as possible anymore under present conditions. Tainted by a lack of trust not only in their political structures and leaders but also among themselves, they at times stop seeing activism as a viable option that can bring about change. There are also generational differences stemming from citizen activists coming of age in vastly different political epochs and influencing somewhat different imaginings of how to achieve change. Many citizen activists also suffer from a lack of resources needed to survive and are unemployed or underemployed despite being highly educated and competent. Feeling there is no space for them in Bosnia-Herzegovina and no viable option for their futures, some of them are forced to seek higher education and/or employment abroad. Others leave public protest engagement behind but get more actively involved in their communities and some even enter politics, thinking they can change things from within. But there are others who continue with

their activist endeavors, trying to make their indignation stronger and more effective. The trajectories of activist engagements are manifold and multilayered, each one specific to the needs and hopes of a particular individual, and not one is more righteous than the other.

1.2. Socialism, the War, and Postwar Endless "Transition"

1.2.1. "Brotherhood and Unity"

In post-WWII, fragmented, and ethnically divided political climate, Josip Broz Tito, the leader of the Partisan resistance movement against the Nazis, had a vision of a modern, socialist federation; a unified Yugoslavia built on the premise of "Brotherhood and Unity" (*Bratstvo i jedinstvo*) (Kolind 2008:102-104; see also Friedman 1996:117-142; Cohen 1993:1-45; Bennett 1995:42-50). Building a unified nation on the foundations of war-torn ethnic animosity[9] seemed like an impossible task. In order to succeed, Tito and members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) had to carefully design a plan strong enough to hold together ethnically diverse population. They were faced with three main challenges: first, to equally distribute the power among all ethnic groups; second, to build some kind of homogenous Yugoslav identity; and third, to rebuild and modernize the region's economy after the devastating effects of the war (Kolind 2008:104). Therefore, Tito and CPY created a socialist federation of Yugoslavia with six

[9] During World War II, the region of Yugoslavia was swept into nationalist tensions and political extremism. The territory was not only occupied by the Nazis but also had its own internal ethno-nationalist struggles. Germany took over Croatia and declared a new Independent Croatian State (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*), a Nazi puppet state that included the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina as well. An extremist movement called Ustashe (*Ustaše*) led by Ante Pavelić was appointed by Germany to focus on the prosecution of Jews, although Ustashe saw ethnic Serbs living in Croatia as their main problem (Kolind 2008:102), which culminated into a Serb-Croat war. In reaction to the prosecution of ethnic Serbs in Croatia, Serbs organized themselves into their own nationalist paramilitary organization called Chetniks (*Četniki*) with Draža Mihailović as their main leader. Their mission was to create ethnically pure Greater Serbia, encompassing the territory of Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Vojvodina, "cleansed… of all national minorities and non-national elements," including Muslims (in Cohen 1996:45). This attitude ran parallel to Nazi's contempt and extermination of non-Aryan populations, especially Jews.

republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia) and two autonomous units (Kosovo and Vojvodina) both within the territory of Serbia. This federation was constructed to balance the power equally among the largest ethnic groups in order to avoid internal rivalry for dominance and keep the peace and stability (Bringa 1995:23). Brubaker calls Tito's Yugoslavia a "precarious national equilibrium" (1996:70) whose structure was easily broken at the beginning of the 1990s. As Kolind states, "[t]he leading principle of the federation was to be so-called Yugoslavism, which was a fusion of socialism, a belief in Yugoslavia as a common project, and respect for the cultures of the different ethnic groups" (2008:104). In order to keep the peace in such a fragile place, Tito focused on erasing the past and building a new future. He hoped that national ambitions would weaken under socialism, since they are primarily a product of capitalist growth (Kolind 2008:104-105).

Before continuing, it is important to recognize that the concept of nationality in Yugoslavia differed considerably from that in the West. For example, in western European countries, citizenship is synonymous with nationality. However, in Yugoslavia, citizenship was different from and additional to national identity, where everybody held Yugoslav citizenship but nobody held a Yugoslav nationality (Bringa 1995:25). However, the ethnic division could not be partitioned as neatly as the borders of different republics. For example, a great number of Serbs lived in Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina was a national home of three different *narodi* (nations)—Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. Interestingly enough, none of them carried an ethnonym connecting them to the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the same way as all other republics had (for example, Slovenes were directly identified with Slovenia, Croats with Croatia, and so on) (Bringa 1995:27). As Bringa claims, "[t]here was no official national identity of Bosnian, which would include all Bosnians whether Muslim, Catholic, or Orthodox…" (Bringa 1995:29).

Yugoslav economic system offered a middle ground between Soviet centralized planning system and capitalism, with its particular brand of market socialism, which was a hybrid between world market system imbued with socialist elements of *workers' self-management* and *social ownership*. This meant Yugoslavia was participating in the world market of production and exchange but with a particular socialist slant where workers had a key role in decision-making of their enterprises, by way of workers' councils that were able to appoint managers. In practice, management guided most of the decisions but workers were especially involved in questions over wages, welfare, and employment (Estrin 1991). People then enjoyed relative prosperity, where most seemed to have enough to live a normal life, were allowed to travel abroad, and where workers were particularly proud of their enterprises competing in the world market.

1.2.2. Revived Separatist Nationalism and War

The Yugoslav credo of "Brotherhood and Unity" was meant to promote a collective consciousness that would be shared by all Yugoslav *narodi* (nations); however, this trend was reversed by the early 1960s as certain political elites themselves started demanding decentralization at the federal level and more power at the local level (Denich 1993:3). Communists' reverting back to the theories of national identity was an oxymoron to previous thinking that socialism was going to weaken nationalist ambitions. Now "…citizens were pressured to declare themselves in ethnic categories and discouraged from declaring their nationality as Yugoslav" (Denich 1993:3). This led Tito to carry out a coup within his own Communist Party system—he removed Croatian and Serbian Party leadership with nationalistic objectives (Denich 1993:3-4) and a new Yugoslav constitution was written in 1974. To maintain political monopoly of the Communist Party, Tito sacrificed the idea of "Yugoslav" nationhood,

decentralized Yugoslavia's federal power, and granted each republic "attributes of statehood, loosely connected by federal bodies within which each republic had veto powers" (Denich 1993:4-5). Under this new constitution, republics started separating themselves from the rest of the group and turning inward in structural terms. After Tito's death in 1980 tensions between republics of Yugoslavia intensified. Republics were controlled by politically corrupt strongmen who did not have to answer to the federal authority due to the new constitutional system. People lost the confidence in the Communist Party's ability to maintain cohesion, which led to its dissolution in 1990 (Kolind 2008:110).

In the midst of the economic and political turmoil, Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević came into power. As was illustrated above, Serbian nationalism existed long before the rise of Milošević, however he opportunistically added fuel to nationalist tensions, which elevated him to a place of important political leadership in Serbia. Milošević's strongest political tool was his use of communication through persuasive rhetoric and mass media. According to Božić-Roberson, he used the mass media for "politicization of ethnicity" (2005:395), meaning he emphasized ethnic differences, furthered the split between "us" and "them," to gain power and carry out political agendas. The author interestingly calls leaders like Milošević "ethnic entrepreneurs," who are given the opportunity in transitional societies experiencing substantial political change, to mobilize ethnicity and turn the psycho-cultural power of ethnic identity into a source of hatred and stereotyping, which often leads to violent nationalism (Božić-Roberson 2005:395). Milošević's political and nationalist discourse encouraged Serbs to see themselves as victims in a national and international conspiracy to destroy Serbia and its people. He deliberately provoked Serbian fears of radical Ustashe in Croatia and Muslim "fanatics" in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Božić-

Roberson 2005:404), which played an active role in starting the war in Croatia first and not long after in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well.

In Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, a leader of HDZ[10] (Croatian Democratic Union), won the election and promoted his version of Croatian nationalism based on the attempt to rehabilitate certain aspects and spirit of Ustashe-led Independent Croatian State (NDH[11]) from WWII. He specified Croatia should reclaim its historical borders that have been drawn by the NDH; doing so meant annexing the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina as well. He revitalized the old ideology that Muslim Slavs are indeed Croats, therefore the two territories of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina should naturally form a geographical and economic entity. Like Milošević, Tuđman used the mass media to promote ethnic hatred, employed antagonistic rhetoric against other groups, and strategically used the fear of growing Serbian nationalism to unify the nation (Kolind 2008:114-115).

Bosnia-Herzegovina and its Muslims were caught in the middle of two political discourses of ethnic, religious, and nationalist antagonism. According to Kolind, the ruling ideologies became "[v]isions of a Greater Serbia or Greater Croatia built upon ethnic homogeneity to be realized through the annihilation of the ethnic Other..." (2008:116). Milošević led a nationalist scare campaign against the Islamic "fundamentalists" and Tuđman stripped them of their rights as an autonomous *narod* (nation). Fearing the possible consequences, Muslims organized themselves in a Party of Democratic Action (SDA[12]) led by Alija Izetbegović with a somewhat contradictory ideology. On the one hand, the party aspired to preserve Bosnia's unique ethnic and religious heterogeneity, on the other, it promoted a strong Muslim ethnic and

[10] Hrvatska demokratska zajednica
[11] Nezavisna država Hrvatska
[12] Stranka demokratske akcije

religious identity (Kolind 2008:117; Bougarel 1997). Unfortunately, tensions grew, nationalist aspiration reached their boiling point, people's paranoia about the intentions of the others was heightened, and with the declaration of the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina in spring 1992, the country was cast into brutal war.

The 1992-1995 war came as a surprise to many people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, who knew problems existed but still thought rationality would prevail. Some people I encountered during my fieldwork referred to the war as "time lost and never to be gained back," others characterized it as "senseless" and "without a valid rational purpose." War experiences of people in Bosnia-Herzegovina vary, as some areas encountered more animosity than others and in some instances people of different ethnic backgrounds actually cooperated and aided each other in their fight for survival. As one of my friends, who was a teenager during Sarajevo siege, explained: "I mostly remember people of all ethnic backgrounds helping each other. We, in the city, were not divided into ethnic groups. Ethnicity did not even cross our minds. If somebody needed help, we all helped. It was as simple as that. This idea of ethnic animosity comes from our politicians…"

1.2.3. Endless Postwar "Transition"

After three brutal years of war, 100.000 people dead, 1.5 million people relocated as refugees, ruined homes and people's possessions, devastated infrastructure, and crushed economy, new political systems emerged. On December 14, 1995, the United States brokered a treaty called The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement) among the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,[13] which brought much needed

[13] After the republics of Yugoslavia started declaring their independence at the beginning of the 1990s, Serbia and Montenegro formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992.

peace to people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, even though the agreement guaranteed a continuation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a legal state, it paradoxically modified its internal structure by dividing it according to ethnicity. Furthermore, to ensure equal power sharing among the three constituent groups, the country is now operating on state, entity, cantonal,[14] and municipal levels which resulted in a dysfunctional system that has "thirteen different operating sets of laws, fourteen executive governments and nearly 160 ministries… consum[ing] over 60% of GDP" (Kurtović 2013:5).

Relocations of people, changed demographics, and residual acrimony led to more segregated communities. People in power are now creating new political, religious, and intellectual discourses, influencing formal and non-formal institutions and media, and thus directing the reassessment process of Bosniak, Serb, and Croat national identities. The nationalist discourses from all three groups have been all-encompassing and have deeply affected people's lives with its ideologically charged themes such as bloodline, territory, language, ancestry, and origin (in Kolind 2008:99; see also Kroskrity 2003; Bauman and Briggs 2003a, 2003b). The war and ethno-national separation of territory led to a re-negotiation of both social and individual identities among all three communities, where ethno-national identity today is important to many people in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, nourishment of nationalist tensions has been a part of the political agenda as well, fueling citizens' anxieties, fears, and nationalist sensibilities. In the process of creating a national consciousness, all three ethnic groups have demarcated the

[14] The country has been internally divided into two entities (*entiteti*): The Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosniak-Croat Federation), occupying 51% of the territory and further divided into ten cantons (*kantoni*), and Republika Srpska, occupying the remaining 49% of the territory. In addition, Brčko, a town in the northern part of the country, is its own administrative unit with distinct laws and institutions and is not a part of Republika Srpska nor the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

boundaries of who they are as nations in respect to each other. This kind of ethno-national engineering gave many a sense of security and belonging in unstable times.

Nowadays, people are feeling they are only "pattering in place at a dead point" (see Jansen 2014:79), "turning around in circles," or "running in place," without a horizon oriented towards a better future. Every time I asked people I worked with a question about postwar "transition," they would sarcastically smile and say, "what transition?" As a friend of mine, Emir, explained: "Everybody keeps talking about transition this, transition that [*tranzicija tamo, tranzicija ovamo*]. But in reality, we are stuck in this never-ending postwar place that is supposed to be transitioning but it is not." Even when I used the word "transformation" instead, many citizen activists responded they cannot talk about transformation either because this postwar period is characterized by sameness. If anything, my respondents would lament, we are going backwards as people are finding it harder and harder to survive. Postsocialist critiques of "transitology" warn us about a unidirectional, unobstructed, natural, and expected flow (Verdery 1996; Berdahl et al. 2000; Bunce 2000; Bunce and Csanadi 1993; Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Wiarda 2001; Carothers 2002; Kennedy 1994; Kideckel 1995, 2002) from something "bad" (i.e. socialism) into something "better" (i.e. democracy and market economy). They stress we should take into account other alternatives such as stagnation, regression, and multi-directional development, and Bosnia-Herzegovina is indeed one of such examples.

The war and postwar struggles of being stuck in an endless postwar "transition" where nothing seems to be moving forward, robbed many of the energy to even think beyond the basic needs of the present, let alone plan for or do anything about the future. It left many hopeless and doubtful of a possibility for positive change. Others, in their need for survival, pragmatically entered a system of conviviality as "potential recipients of clientelist allocations" (Jansen

2015:202; see also Kurtović 2017; Brković 2017a, 2017b) and used party membership or familial/friendship connections (*veze/štele*) to gain jobs and other resources. In this way, people become a part of reproducing a system of domination they so vehemently criticize in the first place and in turn contribute to the *status quo*. The system of domination does not have to change or move anywhere as long as there is a significant number of people complicit in it. Bosnians are inserting themselves into *politika* (mainstream politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina) because this is often the only choice they have to ensure their and their families' survival where other alternatives are usually not available to them. This reproduction and complicity is often criticized by citizen activists as a part of the problem of being stuck in this long interlude without an end in sight. Such postwar trials and tribulations led to some of the biggest protests and uprisings during my fieldwork but also to numerous smaller activist initiatives, some of which focused more on the strength of the message than power through numbers, and others that wanted to attract greater number of protest participants but for various reasons did not achieve that.

1.3. Anthropology of Ethical Citizenship

1.3.1. Identitarian Politics and Nationalism

My ethnographic analysis and arguments have been influenced by and seek to contribute to three fields of scholarly inquiry. First, this dissertation adds to a discussion on identitarian politics and nationalism. In general, there are two widespread and diverging understandings that both cast life, politics, and interethnic relationships in Bosnia-Herzegovina in ways that are too simplistic. The first is an understanding of the Balkan territory as imbued with ancient animosity where people are naturally inclined to hate each other and where hate resurfaces periodically and causes ethnic fighting. A consequence of that kind of thinking, for example, is the Dayton Peace

Agreement where, in order to keep the peace, Serbs, Bosniaks, and Croats needed to be territorially separated from each other. These "cycles of violence" that people supposedly cannot help but get involved in also influenced a kind of *laissez-faire* diplomatic ideology during humanitarian intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, thinking the situation is too complicated, internal, and representative of that area for the foreign powers to interfere. This was primarily the reason for hesitant and rather late response of foreign intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina to help stop the war atrocities in the first place (see also Hromadžić 2015:12).

The other side of the coin of persistent ethnic hatred is an understanding of life in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a multicultural heaven where people of different ethnic backgrounds lived peacefully for centuries and where three different religions—Muslim, Orthodox, and Catholic—paint a mosaic of the kind of paradise not encountered in many other places of the world. Various travelers and foreign observers with limited knowledge and experiences of Bosnia-Herzegovina are mostly impressed with Sarajevo as a multicultural city where synagogues, mosques, catholic and orthodox churches exist side-by-side. However, these kinds of views and understandings are too superficial, romanticized, and fail to see everyday life in Bosnia-Herzegovina for what it really is—people finding ways to negotiate intricate relationships influenced by complex history, cultural differences, political imaginations, and mutual influence (Hromadžić 2015; Bringa 1993, 1995; Jansen 2005; Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007). This type of idealistic understanding is also premised on hopes that a unique Bosnian character, a result of long-term interconnectedness and sharing, will emerge again on the basis of nostalgia for mutual coexistence. This is also where we see one of the greatest paradoxes of international involvement in state-making and nation-building in Bosnia-Herzegovina, preaching

multiculturalism and integration on the one hand and segregation on the other, very often within the same policies.[15]

These kinds of understandings have also been influencing academia, where numerous scholars embraced an approach that assumes the history of ethnic animosity as the primary cause of the recent war (Hayden 2005, 2007; Burg and Shoup 1999; Kunovich and Hodson 2002). For example, in 2007 Robert Hayden published a provocative piece, where he accused some researchers of well-intentioned but nevertheless "morally grounded antinationalist positions" (2007:105) that "skew their observations in such a way as to hinder the understanding of nationalist conflict as a social phenomenon" (2007:105). Hayden then argued the majority people in Bosnia-Herzegovina are indeed nationalists who fought the war to secede from each other, and therefore, want to be segregated in polarized communities. He further claimed that those researchers and foreign observers who take antinationalist positions are imposing their own hopes and dreams on the population who reject them, and that Bosnians created the kind of nation and state configurations they themselves are willing to live under. Of course, critiques to his position ensued, discrediting Hayden for coming to such an extreme position on the basis of non-traditional forms of ethnographic fieldwork, such as census data, opinion polls, and voting patterns, relying on Serb and Croat nationalists' positions, and ignoring the intricacies of everyday life on the ground. Just because Bosnians have been voting for their own group representatives since the end of the war, does not necessarily mean they are all nationalists.

[15] The most representative example of promoting integration and segregation at the same time is the policy of the Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which published an education reform strategy in early 2000. The first pledge of the reform states: "We will ensure that all children have access to quality education, in integrated multicultural schools, that is free from political, religious, cultural and other biases and discrimination and which respects the rights of all children" (in Pašalić-Kreso 2009:78-79). However, rather than working towards upholding the pledge, they resorted to a quick fix and instituted segregation in schools all over Bosnia-Herzegovina under the banner of two schools under one roof, which means students of different ethnicities attend separate classes often at different times of the day.

Hayden conveniently disregarded that the international forces created a kind of postwar state and nation configuration which enabled the proliferation of ethno-nationalist entrepreneurs and their power grabbing, who are now maintaining people's fears of another conflict to stay in power. It is to be expected that Bosnians will vote for their own ethnic representatives, when representatives of other groups intentionally disregard and disrespect them in their pre-election agendas.

I could go on critiquing Hayden's position and lack of ethnographic reality since I work with a group of people, citizen activists, who consider themselves to be antinationalist, therefore antinationalism is an important framework I have to attend to and analyze. However, Hayden's claims nevertheless remind me of the need to be reflexive of my own positionality within fieldwork. It is hard to understand the intricacies of everyday relationships in Bosnia-Herzegovina without experiencing them and even when you do experience them, it is still hard to put them in perspective. I cannot deny ethnoreligious identity has been and still is important to people in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I see this in members of my own family on my father's side, who identify themselves in ethno-religious terms as Croats and Catholics from Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, my aunt, Jozefina (Finka, for short) lived in Mostar during the war, where heavy fighting happened mostly between Croats and Bosniaks. This amazing woman managed to rebuild her life and at the same time did it in a graceful way. It was Bosniak soldiers who forced her out of her own apartment and confiscated all of her possessions, and it was a Bosniak who shot her husband to death, only because he was a Croat. She lived with us for a whole year during my fieldwork, helping us take care of our one-year-old daughter, and I have never heard her say anything bad about Bosniaks or Serbs. But still, she identifies herself in ethno-nationalist and religious terms more so than before the war. When I asked her about it, she said it is hard to

escape it. Since the beginning of the war, everything has been cast in ethno-nationalist terms. Perhaps a Croatian novelist, Slavenka Drakulić, explains it the best (1993:50-52):

> Being Croat has become my destiny… I am defined by my nationality, and by it alone. Along with millions of other Croats, I was pinned to the wall of nationhood—not only by outside pressure from Serbia and the Federal Army but by national homogenization within Croatia itself. That is what the war is doing to us, reducing us to one dimension: the Nation. The trouble with this nationhood, however, is that whereas before, I was defined by my education, my job, my ideas, my character—and, yes, my nationality too, now I feel stripped of all that. I am nobody, because I am not a person anymore, I am one of 4.5 million Croats… I am not in a position to choose any longer. Nor, I think, is anyone else… something people cherished as part of their cultural identity… has become their political identity and turned into something like an ill-fitting shirt. You may feel the sleeves are too short, the collar too tight. You might not like the color, and the cloth might itch. But there is no escape; there is nothing else to wear.

My intent is not to deny the proliferation of nationalism during and after the war or to minimize the importance of people's ethnoreligious identities. I also do not wish to insinuate ethical citizenship is some sort of wide-spread movement taking Bosnia-Herzegovina like wildfire, neither do I intend to position citizen activists on a moral high-ground above others who are not publicly displaying their discontent or who are nationalists. In this dissertation, I hope to show the complexities of citizen engagement and their "messy negotiations" (Hromadžić 2015:13) of everyday lives in Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina, their struggles to act in an environment that reduces people to an ethnic dimension and sows hopelessness amongst them. At the same time, I do not wish to reproduce the ethnonationalist tropes used time and time again in foreign commentary on Bosnia-Herzegovina that cast their object and subject of analysis in identitarian terms (Jansen, Brković, and Čelebičić 2017:6). For example, they would often describe protests in 2013 and 2014 as either examples of resurfacing interethnic solidarity or discrediting them as exclusively Bosniak indignations (Jansen, Brković, and Čelebičić 2017:4). As I analyze in further detail in chapter five, even though it can be claimed protests during

February 2014 uprising were interethnic, identitarian politics was not the primary reason for people's indignation. Instead, people rose up as citizens (*građani*) who are hungry, unemployed, and angry. And yet, those social uprisings ignited many cities and towns in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina[16] but did not bring people on the streets of Republika Srpska.[17] Therefore, with this dissertation I wish to strike a balance between identitarian tropes and reality on the ground. On the one side, the war and postwar politics of ethno-national identification still hold their importance due to persistent institutionalized effects. For example, each time there was a protest in Sarajevo, Croat and Serb politicians would immediately characterize it in identitarian terms as something organized by Bosniaks with a purpose of attacking Serb and Croat constituent people's rights. In those situations when this was not true, citizen activists would have no choice but to respond back in identitarian terms and show the protest was in fact trans-ethnonational. Furthermore, citizen activists I worked with often felt the need to connect grassroots activist organizations across the country to show solidarity. During Bebolucija,[18] for example, people from other towns and cities traveled to the capital in hopes to show the interethnic and pan national character of the indignation. However, on the other side, if one pays attention only to identitarian politics, the intricacies of everyday life and complex relationships and negotiations might be lost on them. For example, for many citizen activists, antinationalism is a part of their identity but was often not the primary reason for why they flooded the streets. It was their citizen consciousness that compelled them to speak out publicly and work on change.

[16] One of the two entities within Bosnia-Herzegovina with Bosniak and Croat majority.
[17] The second entity within Bosnia-Herzegovina with Serb majority.
[18] Bebolucija (Babylution) was the official name of a series of protests in June, 2013, due to an expired law of a Unique Master Citizen Number that prevented babies to travel abroad for an emergency medical treatment because their parents were not able to obtain a passport without the number. This indignation is analyzed in further detail in chapter four.

1.3.2. Citizenship and Citizen Indignation

The second contribution to scholarly inquiry this dissertation seeks to add is in the area of citizenship and citizen indignation. In the last two decades, anthropological work that lead us to better understand the relationship between the state and citizens flourished tremendously. Anthropologists have recognized various contingencies of political membership based on the fact of differentiated humanity and, therefore, established mechanisms for the representation of distinct voices and perspectives (e.g. Rosaldo 1994; Holston 2008; Holston and Appadurai 1999; Petryna 2002; Postero 2007, 2017; Povinelli 2002). In this respect, they have tried to further complicate the classical categorizations of citizenship—that is, *formal citizenship* or the legal membership of a particular nation-state and *substantive citizenship* or the rights and responsibilities of citizens. They added to the discussion some other forms such as cosmopolitan, transnational, and global citizenship (e.g. Ong 1999, 2006) and its city-based formations (e.g. Holston and Appadurai 1999; Lazar 2008). However, in addition to paying close attention to the situated and context-specific character of citizenship in various circumstances, there is a need to observe even more closely the situations where people are completely alienated from externally imposed citizenship projects instituted by policy-makers, national and international governments, NGOs and the World Bank. For example, the Dayton Peace Agreement not only ended the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina but also declared new powers of international involvement to be written into the Bosnian constitution. In this way, the citizenship agenda was to be overseen by outside administrators appointed by the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the International Monetary Fund, and others (Chandler 2000). Hence, the Clinton administration crafted a two-tiered citizenship for Bosnia-Herzegovina (Sarajlić 2013:87)—one on the state and the other on the entity level—written in the Constitution's article 1, paragraph 7, where it says "[t]here shall

be a citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to be regulated by the Parliamentary Assembly, and a citizenship of each Entity, to be regulated by each Entity" (UN 1995:60). Not only that, many Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, also hold Croatian citizenship, besides their Bosnian and entity ones (Štiks 2006, 2010) and since Croatia became a part of the European Union in 2013, the citizenship regime can be extended to that level as well. Similarly, Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina experience strong emotional attachment to Serbs in Serbia as their nation.

The usual academic discussions of the complex nature of Dayton multilayered citizenships in Bosnia-Herzegovina is focusing on top-down legal citizenship formations (Sarajlić 2013; Štiks 2006, 2010, 2015) and the ways these multi-tiered and ethnicized citizenship regimes affect people's social and political participation, especially the youth (Hromadžić 2015). Hromadžić, for example, talks about the processes of postwar ethnicization, creating distinct ethno-national and religious identities and the ways this is contributing to a "detachment of citizens from a common state" (2015:61). Amidst polarized life, Hromadžić finds "cracks between ethnic territories" (2015:102) that provide us glimpses into reconfigured practices of mixing. However, according to Hromadžić, these cracks are minor and ethnic polarization still pervasive, especially among youth encapsulated in ethnicized and segregated schooling system. Although this is somewhat true, if we speak in a general sense, we do need to take a critical look at the ethnicization process and its effects through time and space. For example, Hromadžić's ethnographic site, Mostar, has gone through a process of extreme segregation after the war (Garić-Humphrey 2015:104-105), which was noticeable during 2014 social uprisings as well. Mostar was one of several cities and towns where citizen activists started plenums[19] after the outbreak of violent protests on February 7. However, Mostar plenum

[19] General assembly.

was frequently attacked by those who saw it as a threat to the region's ethno-national homogenization, which was not a major problem during plenums in Sarajevo, for example. Hromadžić's claim of pervasive ethnicization that is emptying the nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is indeed important but also somewhat specific to her ethnographic location and timeframe.

My ethnographic field site was focused on Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a city that was surrounded by Serb military forces during the war but where citizens of all three ethnic groups helped each other to survive, despite ethnically motivated cordon of tanks and snipers positioned on nearby hills, shelling the city on a daily basis. Years after Hromadžić's fieldwork in 2005-2006 are characterized by increased economic crisis, deepening of austerity measures, and people's hardships. Before 2006, local politicians were in danger of being dismissed from their positions by the authority of the Office of the High Representative (OHR),[20] which made the politicians more fearful of possible sanctions and their corruption subtler and slower. After 2006, though, when the High Representative (HR) seized to exercise this power, corruption process by the local politicians was accelerated in the public eye (Begić 2014). This kind of open arrogance and unaccountability of kleptocratic elites coupled with other declining social, political, and economic conditions in the country, led to an increasing citizens' dissatisfaction. It is after Hromadžić's fieldwork that we see some of the biggest protests and uprisings happening in this country and even though they are few and far between, we see more people publicly expressing their discontent and thinking creatively how to build a 'normal life' amidst abnormality.[21] Thus, in response to the top-down citizenship regimes that tie one to the ethnicized group, this dissertation seeks to add to a tremendous gap in the literature on Bosnia-

[20] An international institution that was created in 1995 right after the war and which is tasked to oversee the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.
[21] People in Bosnia-Herzegovina are often referring to the conditions happening in their country as "not normal" or "abnormal."

Herzegovina and the need to investigate specific grassroots and community formations as alternative forms of citizenship that are bringing people together as dwellers in their local environments (a city, in my case), not as ethnic subjects.[22]

The theoretical orientation of a French philosopher, Jacques Rancière, is helpful in this investigation because he sees politics as a process of subjugated people's emancipation. Rancière is known for his critique of the new consensus order emerging after the fall of the Berlin Wall that is premised on a global acceptance of the liberal state and the capitalist market as the foundations of societal organization. In this critique, he brings the term politics into question because of its unequal distribution of power and wealth among those who are considered to be counted parts in a society. Thus, he creates a distinction between *policing* and *politics*. *Policing* refers to an existing order that decides who participates and who is excluded, and distinguishes between those who have a "part" and those who are a "part with no part." On the other hand, *politics*, contests this hierarchical institution by calling attention to the inequality of distribution and exclusion (Rancière 1999). In other words, 'true' politics exists, "when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part" (Rancière 1999:11).

Rancière's definition of politics seems particularly helpful to think through alternative forms of non-representative democracy emerging in social movements all over the world, from Latin America, the US, Spain, Greece, and Turkey, especially since 2011. Non-representative practices have historical genealogies in the Zapatista movement of the 1990s, and the

[22] There is a need to point out here that in recent years there has been a proliferation of publications on Bosnia-Herzegovina that demonstrate the fluidity and intricacies of local community life and complex relationships within them (Hromadžić 2015; Kurtović 2012; Jansen 2015; Jašarević 2017; Brković 2017a; Arsenijević 2014; Helms 2013; Jansen, Brković, and Čelebičić 2017; Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007 and more). I am simply indicating, these wonderful ethnographies have not been investigating specific community formations in terms of alternative citizenship agendas.

EuroMayDay and Alter-globalization movements of the 2000s. However, the social movements of the 2010s have made even greater strides towards the rejection of representative democracy and enactment of equality through practices of horizontality and radical inclusion of 'a part without a part' (Rancière 1999) in decision-making. Inventive practices of occupation, assemblies without leaders, sit-ins, camps, organized infrastructure, and mutual solidarity proliferated in Tahrir Square in Egypt, Casbah Square in Tunis, Syntagma Square in Athens, Occupy movements in the U.S., 15M movement in Spain, and many other places all over the world. These movements broke away from previous practices of appealing to governments to solve people's problems and shifted the goals to invent democracy anew. Even though they have been characterized by some as failed attempts toward change and "zero-degree protests" without a plan and an alternative to replace the given (Žižek 2011), they were nonetheless remarkable because "they *are* the plan in the sense that their occurrence is significant regardless of what they propose" (Arditi 2015:115). The movements might have deserted, moved out, or were forced out of the squares they occupied but many projects initiated during these insurgencies got dispersed into neighborhoods as alternative institutions of education in Spain, actions to strike private debt in the US, community clinics in Greece, and solidarity networks against evictions in many parts of the world.

Rancière's theoretical concepts of politics, democracy, and equality resonate extremely well with the new wave of insurgent movements. His principles are gaining popularity among not only activists but political theorists and researchers studying anarchist versions of radical politics as well. For example, Todd May contends that Rancière's theoretical principles correspond with his own model of nonviolent anarchist politics. He creates examples of how to apply Rancière's principles in practice but disagrees with Rancière's assertion that equality

cannot be institutionalized without becoming a part of the policing order (2008; 2010). For Keith Bassett, the Occupy movement radically broke with the past by adding many new and innovative aspects of practicing politics, and it is in this radical shift that he draws out some of the distinctive elements of Rancièrian form of politics. Bassett recognizes obvious parallels between Rancière and Occupy movement in commitment to radical equality, horizontality, resistance to an ideological framework, insistence on collectivity that is not a unity, and emergence of new subjectivities (2014). Similarly, Benjamin Arditi in his article "Insurgencies Don't Have a Plan - They *Are* the Plan" (2015), takes Rancière's stance in favor of the absence of ideological framing to prove that social movements do not need a plan to be significant. Demands are made on the go because the insurgencies are more about being open to new opportunities and emergent voices than creating a new order or, in other words, creating a new order would mean they have been taken over by mainstream and consensus politics (Arditi 2015:116). Insurgencies, according to Arditi, are "passageways between worlds" or liminal spaces where one already starts to experience what one wants to become (2015:116). In a similar fashion, Isabell Lorey who uses Rancière's teachings to think through the oxymoron between representation and democracy, moves beyond to create a concept of presentist democracy—a democracy of "present becoming," where there is a "simultaneity of break, as an interruption of what has been up to now, and of breach, as the opening up of a possibility space" (2014:17).

Clearly, there is room for Rancière's philosophical teachings in anthropological investigations of new insurgencies that focus on creating an alternative to representative democracy. In this dissertation, Rancière's theoretical framework helps highlight the ways citizens—by challenging the *policing* order, reconstituting *politics*, and reclaiming it—are widening the cracks between ethnic territories. In that space, they are reframing citizenship from

an ethnicized one that ties people to ethnic groups and creates ethnic subjects, to an ethical one that ties people to the community, who are not only disagreeing with the existing order of things (Rancière 1999) but also doing ethical work on themselves (Foucault 1988).

However, Rancière's theoretical orientation is not only important in the ways it highlights subjugated people's indignation but also enables us to consider citizenship outside and beyond liberal notion of recognition under law, which is exactly what this dissertation attempts to do. Granted, in his work, Rancière does not pay that much attention to citizenship, since for him it is an operative category of the policing order (see also Means 2011:33; Ruitenberg 2015:3). Nevertheless, Rancière's thinking suggests a form of "improper" citizenship (see also Panagia 2009:303) or a kind of citizenship where a 'true' democratic citizen "is not the one who passively absorbs that which is assigned to her. She is, rather, the one who actively disrupts this referential operation by taking part in something to which she has no right" (Panagia 2009:303). Thus, it is this very act of impropriety—or part-taking in something one is "not entitled" to or is excluded from—that is the locus of *ethical citizenship*, where a 'true' democratic citizen breaks away from 'the proper' of consensus.

1.3.3. Inserting the Ethical "Self" in Political Theory

As this dissertation illustrates, those uncountable "parts without a part" make themselves visible by assembling their bodies through performative acts of appearance on the street, in the squares, and in front of government buildings (Butler 2015; see also Postero 2017:18). In these spaces, citizen activists perform acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen 2008), such as preventing the politicians from accessing WWII memorial, that reinstate a sense of control over their own lives. But they not only exercise their "performative right to appear" (Butler 2015:11) and insert

their bodies amid the political arena, they also work on transforming themselves (Foucault 1988) to reach a certain level of normality in their lives. Therefore, my third and last contribution is aimed towards the importance of inserting 'the ethical self' within political theory to better understand the effects of those acts where citizens come to confront political organizations and policies.

To explain current confrontations to prevailing forms of state power, scholars have successfully demonstrated growing economic divides between the political elites and the everyday citizens while examining how competing groups with contrasting political ideologies create ethical discourses to establish a durable political identity and a sense of purpose among group affiliates. Scholars have also highlighted the gaps between policy making from above and people's on-the-ground experiences, resulting in citizens' alienation from governmental ideologies, programs, and practices, and explored various ways in which experiences of subjectivity and suffering are shaped within particular contexts of political economy.

This dissertation, however, takes a closer look at the ways people manage to reorient their moral convictions within the context of the policing order, and (re)make their ethical selves to engage in and confront larger political and socioeconomic processes. Therefore, it investigates the ways specific situations, events, and visceral experiences in people's lives evoke moments of self-reflection, engender reorientations towards the self, and inspire courses of action that cultivate a new sense of ethical personhood. By closely looking at people's experiences and their actions in response to injustices, I am able to catch a glimpse of their ethical reflections, negotiations, and reorientations.

Activism has long been characterized as having a sacrificial nature and those who engage in it as unselfish and self-sacrificing in the sense they are engaged in it not because they want to

gain something for themselves but because they want to help others. This is a simplistic view of activism, activist engagement, and its moral/ethical implications. In contrast, this dissertation pays close attention to *care for the self*, as well as *care for others*, as two interconnected ethical forces that often act simultaneously and should not be thought of as mutually exclusive. This argument derives from a specific distinction between morality and ethics, where the former is rules or codes of conduct that a society imposes on its members and the latter as "the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself" (Foucault 1997:263). As Foucault teaches us, we inherited a tradition of Christian morality that tells us the only way to be moral is to reject the focus on the self. However, according to Foucault, the principal activity of caring for oneself is caring for your *soul*, not accumulation of possessions (1988:25). Thus, following Foucault, this dissertation shows citizen activists are doing both—in their unselfish acts of fighting for what they believe is right, they are at the same time working on themselves to discover, (re)make, and (re)orient rules of a just behavior and political action. They are making themselves into *ethical citizens*. Therefore, I locate ethics in both the action of the protest as well as the action of working on the self by carving out codes of an ethical stance and conduct.

In several instances throughout the fieldwork, people protesting on the streets reported they are fighting not just for a better future that would affect everybody, including their families, but for themselves as well. There was a lot of talk about personal suffering and struggles, there was a focus on *I* and *me* as well as *we*, simply because for many this was the first time after the war they could publicly express their bottled feelings and sufferings they have been keeping to themselves, to an audience that understood and could sympathize because of shared experiences. Therefore, in this particular ethnographic case, the ethical citizen not just cares *about* and *for* others (Muehlebach 2012:8), but also cares *about* and *for* the self. As Foucault states,

technologies of the self, "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault 1988:18).

When citizen activist Hana, from the beginning of this chapter, raised her sign up high that said *"Po vama se ništa neće zvati"* ("Nothing is going to be named after you"), she was revealing as much about herself as she was about the mainstream politics and politicians in general. When I asked her, what compelled her to do that, she said she wanted to make a point and show the elites people are watching. In the end, she also said, "I had to do it. It just felt good and right, to do it." Thus, Hana was not just shaming the elites for their kleptocratic and arrogant behavior, but was also making herself into an ethical political actor with a moral orientation different from theirs. For Hana, raising a sign behind one of the most powerful politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was a *normal* thing to do in these abnormal Dayton state of affairs where corruption, nepotism, and nationalist attitudes of those in power have become mundane to everyday people. Hope, as I argue in further detail in chapter four, lies in these moments of *normality* when citizen activists engage in acts of indignation which give them some sense of control over their lives and where they, in turn, (re)orient their ethical selves. There is a notion of Aristotelian virtue ethics in that Hana does not just want to be *surviving* in Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina. Instead, she wishes to live a full life in a place where under normal conditions people would have a chance to thrive, flourish, and live a good life. As Aristotle claimed, a good life is not merely about surviving but about flourishing (in Mattingly 2014:9). That said, there is a need to maintain a careful balance and not insert too much hope into citizen activists' visions

of the future in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Instead, this dissertation illustrates their cultivation of "hope on a tightrope" positioned against immense political and social obstacles.

1.4. On Methods, Places, People, and Positionality

The main bulk of this dissertation research was conducted between May, 2013 and May, 2014, with a follow up visit in the summer of 2015. I also spent summers of 2009 and 2010 in Bosnia-Herzegovina conducting preliminary research to decide on the dissertation topic, familiarize myself with the field site, and make initial contacts. The ethnographic research design I employed used longitudinal participant observation and immersion into citizen activist culture, person-centered interviews with a few key cultural specialists, semi-formal and informal interviews, and everyday conversations, to gather data on the ways people engage with concepts such as nationalism, ethnicity, citizenship, ethical personhood, and more. My fieldwork started by attending one of the biggest protests since the end of the war called by the locals, *Bebolucija* (Babylution), when Bosnian public discovered newborn babies are not able to obtain a passport to travel abroad for an emergency surgery due to ethnic bickering among the politicians delaying the decision on the new Unique Master Citizen Number Law. This citizen uprising lasted throughout the month of June when citizens organized several initiatives such as a parliament blockade, citizen daily gatherings, performances, press conferences, and a concert, all culminating into a protest on July 1st when citizens symbolically fired public officials for their unproductivity and inefficiency. During these protest initiatives, I sought out the contacts I made at the time of preliminary summer research trips and those people introduced me to others, many who were members of a grassroots organization *Akcija Građana* (Citizen's Action) or who joined their already established logistical infrastructure with the intent to help organize protest

activities. When *Bebolucija* subsided, I started conducting semi-formal and informal interviews with those I met at the protests. Throughout the year, I also attended activist meetings, street actions, performances, public gatherings, community initiatives, info sessions, academic lectures, round table discussions, theatre plays, yarn bombing group activities, cases of guerilla activist provocations, informal gatherings at coffee shops, and many other smaller and bigger protests, including a large social uprising that happened towards the end of my fieldwork in 2014.

The wealth of knowledge my interlocutors so generously shared with me, was recorded in the form of field notes, a diary of reflections and feelings, audio and video recordings, and photographs. A big portion of my research involved being immersed in protest activities, including pre- and post-preparation stages and in some of those instances, the use of a camera, either for recording or still photography, and an audio recorder had a potential to be too intrusive, off-putting, and on a few occasions even dangerous. On several instances, when tensions at a protest were high, when undercover cops were filming the protesters, gathering information and evidence of potential illegal activities, and provocateurs were agitating already stressed out public, I would simply observe, interact with people, and write in my journal at the end of the day. That said, activists would at times ask me to record their initiatives and on several occasions the recorded data would help us recount the events for the purpose of in depth analysis and discussions (see also Razsa 2015:12-14). A portion of my data also came from media discourse analysis (TV, radio, and newspaper), online research of social media, discussion forums, and blogs, archives of the Media Center in Sarajevo, fliers, posters, and protest signs. I also did research at the National and University Library in Ljubljana, Slovenia, interested in work that was done in the region by the local scholars.

The bulk of my research was conducted in Sarajevo. Being the capital of the country and

the Federation,[23] it offers a variety of formal and informal civic organizations, grassroots political groups, some of them with diverse membership, which was an aspect I wanted to focus on in my dissertation. Because I was most interested working with citizen activists or, in other words, people that were not necessarily working professionals in formal non-profit governmental organizations (NGO), I thought Sarajevo would have a range of opportunities in that respect. Since 2008, Sarajevo started growing in public indignation and I was interested in creative and innovative ways everyday citizens, especially from a grassroots organization *Akcija Građana* (Citizen's Action), approached issues of inequality, anti-nationalism, Dayton engineering, corruption in the positions of power, and more. In addition, Sarajevo is not only the locus of state and government power but also the hub of international organizations, such as the Office of the High Representative (OHR), acting as the ultimate authority in the country, United Nations (UN), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), The American Embassy, The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and many more. This unique mixture and concentration of local and international powers, make Sarajevo quite distinct in the ways people respond to postwar peace-building and state-making processes. This Dayton machinery employs a big portion of people living in Sarajevo, some of them afraid of losing their jobs, if seen on the street protesting, others feeling secure enough in their futures. Citizens pass by these buildings daily; they are not just abstract places but real, everyday reminders of the dysfunctional nature of their state apparatus and international janus-faced relationship of inclusion and exclusion under the pretext of democratization (see Coles 2007b:259).

Inevitably, once I was there, immersed in fieldwork and getting more familiar with citizen activist culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I realized Sarajevo is just one of several other

[23] One of the two entities.

places such as Tuzla, Mostar, Prijedor, Bihać, Zenica, and Banja Luka, to name just a few, where citizens were thinking creatively and outside of the box in their fight against injustice. On several occasions I visited workshops, roundtable discussions, and academic lectures put together by an activist organization Revolt from Tuzla that was active during February social uprisings as well. It was workers, everyday citizens, formal and informal organizations and groups from Tuzla that created an initial spark of social uprisings and gave other cities and towns all over the Federation, including Sarajevo, the passion to rise up and to gather in plenums or citizen assemblies in order to create change in their communities. I also visited a couple of plenums and protests in Mostar, formal and informal citizen activists' organizations in Banja Luka (*Oštra Nula*) and Prijedor (*Centar za Mlade Kvart* and *Jer me se tiće*), whose brave individuals are working in conditions very different from that in Sarajevo, in the midst of deep-rooted nationalist communities on issues of anti-nationalism, postwar remembering, commemoration, and many other topics swept under the rug by the police, the media, and, of course, nationalists in the positions of power. Their ideas, thoughts, worldviews, and passions are also a part of this dissertation, in the form of argumentation and analysis. Therefore, citizens from smaller cities and towns all over Bosnia-Herzegovina are just as creative and innovative thinkers in their fight against well-established political structures.

My focus on ethical citizenship that is a type of alternative citizenship emerging on the ground and bringing people together as dwellers in their local environments, might, for some, bring to the surface an old local differentiation between a city and a village or between "cosmopolitanism" and "backwardness." Citizenship can be translated in BCS (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian) languages in two ways as *državljanstvo* and *građanstvo*, where the former declares a person's status related to the state, and the latter an activity of a city dweller that is

often, in this region, associated with bourgeoisie. Even though the bulk of my dissertation was conducted in a capital city, often associated by some with upper social class, education, and intelligence of its population, my definition of ethical citizenship does not exclude citizens (*građani*) from smaller cities, towns, and villages. As we could see during the February social uprisings in 2014, alternative forms of direct citizen action not only sprouted in city centers but in smaller towns as well, such as Gračanica, Fojnica, Srebrenik, Maglaj, Konjic, Zavidovići, and elsewhere.

Most of my interlocutors were citizen activists, some with previous activist experiences, others with none, joining together, collaborating, and crafting sometimes successful at other times tenuous relationships with each other. As mentioned before, activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina has an *a priori* aura of efforts led by paid professionals working for formal NGOs. Very often, activist organizations, even those that are truly informal and grassroots, would indiscriminately be considered suspicious and people associated with them as not to be trusted. At times, tensions would emerge among those who were newcomers to protests activities and others who had prior experiences in either formal or informal capacities. This dissertation focuses on those citizen activists who were either members of grassroots activist groups or simply individuals joining a protest movement, although I did not exclude from my observations, interactions, and conversations those that were, at the time of my fieldwork or sometime in their lives, members of more formal NGOs. They were very often present at various activist meetings, round table discussions, workshops, and protest activities. However tenuous the relationship between everyday citizens and those who work or have worked for NGOs, my observations during two of the biggest protests in Bosnian history since the war, lead me to believe, some members of NGO groups that were present at the protests, joined as citizens and not as NGO

representatives. For example, *Bebolucija* (Babylution) protests were initiated by seven citizens, one of them whom I know to be the founder of an NGO group. I firmly believe what compelled that person to come out, block the parliament garage exit with his car, and risk being incarcerated, prosecuted, or at the very least fined and his car impounded, was not his membership of a formal NGO but his status as a citizen and a father. He acted with human compassion and in solidarity with parents of a baby girl, Belmina, whose life was in danger because she could not travel abroad for an emergency surgery due to the government not issuing her a Unique Master Citizen Number (JMBG[24]). I use real names for those interlocutors who explicitly indicated so and pseudonyms for those who opted out.

Lastly, a few words and ruminations on my own positionality as an anthropologist doing fieldwork among citizen activists in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I was born in Slovenia that was at the time one of the six republics of Yugoslavia and watched its collapse from "brotherhood and unity" to a greater focus on nationalism and homogenization. As a young woman and a journalist in Slovenia, I was often bothered by the insensitive public reactions to the refugees from Croatia and especially from Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose population Slovenes often considered to be backward and uneducated. My father was born in a small village in the heart of Bosnia-Herzegovina to a family of nine children and very meager resources. He left his home as a young boy to get a better high-school education in Serbia and then to Slovenia to continue his Bachelor's Degree in engineering without any financial support from his family. He ended up marrying my mother, at reluctance from some members of my mother's family, and becoming a very successful businessman of one of the leading logistical engineering companies in Yugoslavia. For me, my father was always a smart and compassionate man that put his family

[24] *Jedinstveni Matični Broj Građana*

first, yet I was often made fun of in school for having a father "from down south" and, therefore, not being an authentic Slovenian. I was always blown away by how much energy and passion some people put on nationalism, homogenization, and "authenticity," and yet, if we look at our genes, we are all mongrels with generations upon generations of gene mixing. Without a doubt, some of those people that made fun of me at school are mutts as well. This is what fueled my passion for anthropology in general and curiosity about issues of nationalism and ethnicity more specifically.

Even though I never lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I got to know it pretty well through yearly visits to my father's family that lived there, until those trips were interrupted by war. I remember my family, especially my farther, being a nervous wreck during those three years of war, with our hearts racing each time a phone rang. And so, we got sad news of my cousin and uncle being killed in war. Of course, this is nothing compared to the horrific years many Bosnian families lived through and their kin being killed, raped, tortured, and expelled from their homes. I always felt more welcomed and at "home" during my visits in Bosnia-Herzegovina than I did in Slovenia, and that was because Bosnians I had contact with during my years as a child did not seem as burdened by nationalism as Slovenes were and I appreciated that. As a scholar and a human being, I was interested, how one gets from coexistence to killing in the name of ethnicity and ethnic homogenization. I got my answers by scholarly and ethnographic research in this region.

Thus, I embarked on a wonderful journey with my husband and one-year-old daughter, a mutt herself, that for a year lived in a household surrounded by family and where Bosnian, Slovenian, and English languages were spoken to her at the same time. My husband was surprised at first by the ways Bosnians, old and young, and complete strangers, would react to

our daughter, taking her from his arms and without any hesitation engaging her in some sort of playful action. We would often joke, we do not need a babysitter when we go out, because she would end up being entertained by guests at the table next to us while we peacefully sipped our coffee and had a snack. We always thought our daughter's outgoing disposition now when she is six is a consequence of her being brought up by "a village" while living in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Being a mother of a small child while doing ethnographic research was at times challenging, especially because motherhood was new to me and because ethnography is just as challenging as it is fun. I often feared I was missing something important while attending to the needs of a small child. However, I also think the situation made me a better ethnographer in many ways, with better time managements and organizational skills, not to mention, the ease of approaching people, who wanted to interact with my child first and consequently with me as well. Being a mother and being from Slovenia with family roots in Bosnia-Herzegovina opened many doors for me that might have otherwise remain closed. I was often perceived by my interlocutors as *"naša"* ("ours"), although that sentiment had several connotations depending on the context we found ourselves in. *"Naša"* at times meant, you are the same as me/us, because we were born in Yugoslavia *or* you are "ours" because your father and his family is from here *or* you are one of "us" (citizen activists) because you are as passionate about this fight against injustice as we are.

Therefore, I will conclude this chapter with a reflection on my positionality of being an anthropologist and an activist, as I strongly believe one cannot study activism without being immersed in it and yet, it is also good to keep some distance in order to be able to see things from a different perspective. Anthropologist of social movements, Jeffrey Juris, writes from a personal experience in first person plural: "As we marched, powerful emotions, including a

potent mix of excitement, anger, and fear, welled up inside, preparing our bodies for action and enhancing our sense of collective solidarity" (2008:62). Therefore, he writes about the experiences he had marching together with others and the sense of collective emotionality he felt with other participants. Clifford Geertz himself experienced a turn in his fieldwork from suspicion to greater acceptance by the locals when him and his wife attended a Balinese cockfight that was suddenly interrupted by the police. Instead of staying and excusing themselves to the police as naïve foreigners who accidentally stumbled upon this illegal activity, Geertz and his wife chose to run with the natives and by doing so became complicit in it, which consequently helped him get closer to his interlocutors and get the ethnographic data he was there to collect (1973).

Being immersed in activism sometimes means taking part in illegal activities or certain kinds of political provocations that could put an unwanted spotlight on you as an agitator. I feared the possible consequences those events could bring on my family along with the privacy of my ethnographic data, especially video and audio recordings where my interlocutors' identities are revealed. I made a step to the guerilla side of activism carefully when I was asked, if I wanted to be a part of a political provocation at a conference in Sarajevo's Holiday Inn Hotel where International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) organized a two-day event to celebrate tribunal's 20th anniversary. Dissatisfied with the work of the head of the tribunal judge, Theodor Meron, the tribunal's non-transparency, and pressures that Meron put on the judges in Hague to release several most important criminals of the recent war after serving minor sentence in prison, a group of activists, including myself, decided to show their discontent in a unique way. About ten of us registered for the conference and as soon as judge Meron got up on the podium to deliver his speech we stood up and revealed a banner that said, "RIP JUSTICE"

(Rest in Peace Justice). This was a heavily publicized event and all eyes in the conference arena, including the media, were focused on us holding the banner. Of course, the organizers were very upset for our supposed lack of respect of an important international figure, they took our name badges, and we were ordered to be escorted out by the security. The media, instead of covering the talk by judge Meron, ran after us to take our statements. Emir, who organized the protest, told me beforehand to play a naïve ethnographer, who is merely there to observe things for her dissertation work on activism, if I get caught up in the frenzy of discontent and anger or in case they call the police. After giving statements to the press, we settled in a nearby coffee shop and flooded the internet, social media, and the press with the official statement of the protest, explaining in detail what was the reason for doing it. Everybody was happy with the way the protest turned out; we got the attention of the important figures at ICTY and the press, and we delivered the message in a clear way. I, on the other hand, had mixed emotions. On one side, I was filled with the adrenalin from the protest, on the other, I feared the possible consequences such agitation could bring, since they had my name and a clear footage of me participating in it. However, I strongly believe this was a necessary step I had to take to get a closer look at citizen activists' lived experiences, and to experience activism from an affective and emotional perspective. From that point, there was no way back, as I became one of them and citizen activists became a part of me and who I am today.

Chapter 2

Creating Ethnic Subjects and Groups:

Postwar Ethno-National Engineering

Figure 2.1. "It is Important to be a Bosniak" census campaign flier. Top row from left to right: "I am a Bosniak. My religion is Islam. My language is Bosnian." Bottom row: "Be a Bosniak, so you are not "Others.""

2.1. Introduction

In August 2013, Bosnian social media and news channels focused much of their attention on the first postwar population census since 1991. This meant that almost 20 years after the end of the war in 1995, which caused a considerable demographic change and resettlement, Bosnia-Herzegovina still did not know its official demographic information. There were efforts made to spearhead a census in the early 2000s and 2012, but these were derailed due to inability of local political leaders to reach a compromise mainly on questions of ethnic/national affiliation, religion, language, and whether or not to include people living in the diaspora. Some were also afraid what the postwar changes in ethnic structures would reveal, with ethnic cleansing still

persistently denied by leaders of all sides. Two months before the launch of the census, a campaign that resembled more an election than a population count ensued, with local party and religious leaders pressuring the public that declaring their ethno-national, religious, and mother tongue status is a matter of their national duty. Even though I witnessed representatives of all three ethnic groups insisting that the citizens choose their "real" ethno-national identity—Bosniak, Croat, or Serb—this pressure was the most intense among the Bosniaks. They spearheaded a widespread campaign called *"Bitno je biti Bošnjak"* ("It is important to be a Bosniak") that consisted of public lectures, information sessions for citizens, roundtable discussions, YouTube videos, commercials, TV, and other media appearances. At a public forum organized by an activist organization, Revolt from Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Bosniak leader of this campaign, Sejfudin Tokić, passionately addressed the audience:

> We [Bosniaks] have to make sure that the genocide, which happened not too long ago, never happens again. We have to protect ourselves, our children, and future generations, and we have to do this for the existence of our [Bosniak] nation, the most authentic nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Here is our first chance in history to declare ourselves as Bosniaks. First, we had to declare ourselves as either Serbs or Croats, then in 1971, we could declare ourselves as Muslims with a capital M, and now we have a chance to declare ourselves by our rightful name and that is Bosniaks. Have you all forgotten what happened to us [Bosniaks] twenty years ago?

In response to this sort of partisanship, Revolt led a counter-initiative called *"Jer zemlju čine ljudi!"* ("Because a country is made out of people!"). This campaign focused on steering the emphasis away from ethno-national questions, and educating people that the census is first and foremost an important statistical tool that can be used for future strategies of economic planning. The organizers believed that nationalistic campaigns such as this one are not needed, that questions of ethnic/national identity, religion, and language should not be politicized, and that people should have a chance to decide for themselves. It was obvious from the very beginning of

the debate, that the other three discussants—an activist from Revolt, a professor of Bosnian language, and a historian/journalist—did not share nationalistic convictions voiced by Sejfudin Tokić. Soon the forum became heated, with a professor of Bosnian language deserting the discussion table and joining the audience, members of the public leaving the event distraught, and Sejfudin Tokić visibly upset arguing this was a deliberate set up, an attack on his campaign, and an unpatriotic act against Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bosniak people.

For more than two months the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina were caught in a whirlwind of political propaganda, inciting people to once again choose what Mujkić (2007) calls an *"ethnopolis,"* a hyper-politicized "democratic" community, where citizens' membership is determined by their belonging to an ethnic collectivity, and where group rights trump individual rights (2007:115). Therefore, instead of treating the census as a tool to get accurate population data that could help the devastated country with future economic planning, the census was politicized and once again used by local political leaders to deepen interethnic segregation and reinforce intraethnic homogenization.

This chapter analyzes the ways three ethnic collectivities, Bosniak, Serb, and Croat, were engineered and institutionalized in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina, in order to get a better idea of the ways citizens might be pressed to choose their respective *ethnopolis*, since life outside of it is destined to disenfranchisement, discrimination, and marginalization. Not much in Bosnia-Herzegovina nowadays exists outside of the sphere of the Dayton ethnopolitics that consumes people's everyday lives. A homogenous nationalistic subjectivity is being created by downplaying complex intragroup diversity and erasing commonalities. From the moment a child is born, parents have to register him or her with an ethnic identity. If a child is from a mixed marriage, they have to choose between one or the other. Many schools are ethnically segregated

and when they are not, they are segregated according to the curriculum they use. The present separatism is further anchored with the help of the selective highlighting, erasing, and rewriting of the past. Institutions that used to display a shared past and values now stand empty, deteriorating into oblivion. Languages that share most of the same vocabulary and grammar are forcefully altered using nationalist and prescriptivist approaches that are opposite to those linguistic changes that happen naturally and organically. The territory is partitioned into more or less homogenous ethnic enclaves, and Constitutions themselves marginalize those who do not or do not want to belong to one of the three constituent peoples. University system, the media, private and public sector have all been ethnicized. Ethnic partitioning of the government where each constituent group has veto rights often leads to a government deadlock where consensus is hard to reach. This is pushing the country into deep economic regression, mostly affecting everyday working people, who are losing their jobs, pensions, and healthcare security. In the meantime, the politicians and others in the positions of authority and power are focusing their attention on ethnic divisions, taunting each other with referendums of independence. I argue this type of extreme ethno-national political engineering, creates fear, uncertainty, and an ongoing limbo effect, where citizens find themselves caught in a perpetual crisis that is often paralyzing. This nationalist play for power further separates the three ethnic groups and puts citizens in an uncomfortable position where they do not have other alternatives than to seek safety within their own group collective, thereby legitimizing and perpetuating ethnic citizenship. And yet, we shall see in the remaining chapters of this dissertation the ways a number of citizens are resisting disunited citizenship on-the-ground, and are building a new system of ethics and morality amidst postwar struggle, economic devastation, and ethno-nationalist ideologies.

2.2. Ethno-National Engineering of Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina

In the following pages, I show how ethno-national identity came to permeate the Bosnian society at all institutional levels and how it became entrenched in their political system.

2.2.1. The Ideology of Constituent Peoples

The term "constituent" *("konstitutivni")*[25] is usually being used in multinational communities or states that do not have a clear majority (Trnka 2000:50). Asim Mujkić defines it as "extremely obscure" but nevertheless "one of the key terms in Bosnian ethnopolitics" (2007:113). In Bosnian political discourse the term constituent peoples (*konstitutivni narodi*) is used to signal ethno-national identity and "not people (populus) as the sum of individuals [and] citizens of a state" (Trnka 2000:49-50). Many Bosnians have come to understand it as a discursive practice that has been polarizing Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats since the end of the war, and excluding "Others" such as Roma, Jews, those who are of mixed ethnic origin, and even those who identify as Bosnians and Herzegovinians. They believe ethnic political actors deliberately use it in order to obstruct political progress of the country, and create a perpetual crisis, where important political decisions and compromises among constituent peoples' representatives appear almost impossible to achieve. Many argue this political deadlock or *status quo* works in favor of the political elites by keeping them in power, while people fall deeper into hopelessness and paralysis (Hemon 2014:60-61; Mujkić 2007:118). Mujkić even goes as far as to suggest "the politics of Bosnia can be best described as a *democracy of ethnic oligarchies* rather

[25] According to Trnka, etymologically the term "constituent" means central, integral, foundational, vital, deciding. The word is taken from Latin "constituo," which as a verb means to set up, arrange, assemble, constitute, or establish. However, as a noun "constitution" means internal structure, system, organization, institution (political), constitution, or legislation. Using the word in Latin as a foundation, the word "constituent" in French means state-making (*ustavotvoran*), integral, or central. The verb "constituer" in French means to establish, constitute, or consist (2000:50).

than a *democracy of citizens*" or a society ruled by oligarchies that "pretend to represent one of the three *constituent peoples*" (2007:113).

Even though the term constituent peoples has not been explicitly used in official documents until 1991, the main elements and meaning of the concept can be traced back to 1943 when representatives of Serb, Muslim, and Croat people from Bosnia-Herzegovina met in Mrkonjić-Grad and formed the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (ZAVNOBiH). At this meeting, the national question of Bosnia-Herzegovina was defined in the following way (Trnka 2000; Babić and Otašević 1970; see also Gilbert 2008:60):

> Today the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, through their sole political representative, the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina [Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Bosne i Hercegovine] desire that their country, which is neither Serbian, nor Croatian, nor Muslim, but rather equally Serbian and Muslim and Croatian, to be free and unified as blood brothers [zbratimljen], in which the full equality and unity of all Serbs, Muslims, and Croats will be secured.

The spirit of the concept of constituent peoples back then functioned to bring people together, not to segregate them as is the practice today. Anti-fascist Partisan cause and sacrifice was often glorified by the Communist Party in order to promote and legitimize a common Bosnian state and socialist revolution, and delegitimize mono-ethnic, nationalist, and capitalist notions of political organization (Gilbert 2008:61). Furthermore, the Communist Party assured the self-determination of Muslims, Croats, and Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina was tied to a common goal of 'brotherhood and unity' and membership in the socialist community of Yugoslav peoples (ibid.:59). Back then, the individuals were not *ethnic* representatives enacting *nationalist* interests; they were representatives of *party* interests such as multiethnic coexistence and equality (ibid.:64). Through political activity, voluntary labor, and new forms of labor the *working peoples* of Yugoslavia were supposed to guard and strengthen the 'brotherhood and

unity' of Yugoslav nations. As Gilbert argues, "... the socialist system in Bosnia was designed so that it was workers and not ethnic persons that were Yugoslavia's primary political subjects" (2008:65). Gilbert writes (2008:69):

> In important ways, it was *working* peoples who were liberated in WWII, widely represented as a socialist revolution; it was *working* peoples who were given pride of place as constituting the Yugoslav (and Bosnian) states; and it was *working* peoples, their labor, their will and self-government, that were the primary subjects of Yugoslavia's political economy.

After the fall of a single party system, the government in Bosnia-Herzegovina became divided between three major ethno-national parties,[26] initiating a purge of the state administration and filling cadres with people loyal to ethno-nationalist causes. The idea of constituent peoples that was mobilized during socialist Yugoslavia to unite people of different ethnic backgrounds, was now re-contextualized in this critical environment on the brink of war and used for inter-ethnic segregation. For example, the Serb nationalist party, SDS, mobilized this socialist-era concept in order to legitimize its exclusive, mono-ethnic, and separatist national politics and violence, and with that undermined the socialist principles of national equality and unity (Gilbert 2008). The constitutive peoples framework also offered SDS the grounds upon which they could reject the parliament decision of Bosnia-Herzegovina becoming an independent country, because, it violated, according to Serb representatives, their ethnic group's constituent peoples rights (Gilbert 2008:84).

After the war, the term constituent peoples was used in the 1994 Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the 1995 Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace Agreement,[27] the amended version of the Constitution of Republika Srpska, and has become the word firmly

[26] Bosniak Party for Democratic Action (SDA), the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), and the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ)
[27] Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace Agreement is the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

entrenched in Bosnian political discourse. The International Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina readily adopted this term as well, thinking it would promote power-sharing and interethnic integration but not considering the fact that power-sharing would turn into power-grabbing, constitutional deadlock, promotion of ethnic rights, and economic crisis.

2.2.2. Ethno-National Constitutions of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Because of the internal fragmentation of the territory, Bosnia-Herzegovina has fourteen constitutions,[28] all written under the watchful eye of the international community. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will focus only on The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina that was drafted as Annex 4 to the Dayton Peace Agreement; The Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and The Constitution of Republika Srpska. Even though the three documents appear to be inspired by liberal and democratic spirit, and strive for human dignity, liberty, equality, and human rights, they at the same time codify inequality by focusing on ethno-national identity of three constituent groups, instead of *all* citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, even though United States of America is an assemblage of many different ethnic groups, in its Preamble, the constitution focuses on all citizens, stating: "We the People of the United States, ... ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America..." (1787). In Title 1, Article 1 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation it is declared that "The People and the Cantons... form a Swiss Confederation" (1999). In the Preamble of the

[28] There are fourteen constitutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina: The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina that was drafted as Annex 4 to the Dayton Peace Agreement; The Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; The Constitution of Republika Srpska; Statue of the Brčko District, a single administrative unit of local self-government, existing under the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and 10 different Constitutions for each of the 10 Cantons within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina however, the "Others" are literally bracketed from Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs in the following way (UN 1995:59):

> Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, as constituent peoples (along with Others), and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina hereby determine that the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina is as follows...

Although, the Preamble also mentions citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fact that it highlightes constituent peoples, brings the ethno-nationalism to the heart of the constitution[29] (UN 1995). The inequality here is two-fold. First, it recognizes only three major ethnic groups as the constituent peoples and in such a way hierarchically positiones them above other groups. Second, it promotes the importance of ethnic groups above citizens, and therefore, group rights over individual ones. Edin Šarčević writes: "The Constitution institutionalizes some new type of *ethnic democracy* that challenges the values of the European Enlightenment, of the individual as an abstract citizen" (1997:55). Many scholars of multicultural citizenship, most notably Will Kymlicka (1995; see also Kymlicka and Shapiro 1997), argue that decentralization and focus on group rights could be positive in allowing groups to protect their own identity, culture, religion, and language. However, Bosnia-Herzegovina is one example where decentralization allowed local nationalists and authorities to gain more power and control, and in the process

[29] There are many other instances in the constitution where the focus is solely on three ethno-national groups. In the Article IV of Parliamentary Assembly, it is written that the "House of Peoples shall comprise of 15 Delegates, two-thirds from the Federation (including five Croats and five Bosniacs) and one-third from the Republika Srpska (five Serbs)" (65). In Article IV, 3(b), "[e]ach chamber shall by majority vote adopt its internal rules and select from its members one Serb, one Bosniac, and one Croat to serve as its Chair and Deputy Chairs, with the position of Chair rotating among the three persons selected" (66). Furthermore, in Article IV, 3(e), "[a] proposed decision of the Parliamentary Assembly may be declared to be destructive of a vital interest of the Bosniac, Croat, or Serb people by a majority of, as appropriate, the Bosniac, Croat, or Serb Delegates... Such a proposed decision shall require for approval in the House of Peoples a majority of the Bosniac, of the Croat, and of the serb Delegates present and voting" (66). Under Article IV, paragraph 3(f) it is stated, "[w]hen a majority of the Bosniac, of the Croat, or of the Serb Delegates objects to the invocation of paragraph (e), the Chair of the House of Peoples shall immediately convene a Joint Commission comprising three Delegates, one each selected by the Bosniac, by the Croat, and by the Serb Delegates, to resolve the issue..." (66). In the following paragraph 3(g) it is written, "[t]he House of Peoples may be dissolved by the Presidency or by the House itself, provided that the House's decision to dissolve is approved by a majority that includes the majority of Delegates from at least two of the Bosniac, Croat, or Serb peoples..." (66-67).

disenfranchised ordinary citizens. Therefore, in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina a focus on group rights does not bring cultures closer together but it pushes them apart.

This division that recognizes people only on the basis of their belonging to a collectivity merely deepens divisions (see also Maalouf 2003:149). Such a constitution that focuses its attention and in many instances recognizes only Bosniak, Croat, and Serb ethnic interests, legitimizes group political interests and negates the plurality of citizen identities (see also Baksić-Muftić 2001:297). The other two constitutions of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), and Republika Srpska (RS) follow the same premise by putting focus on and giving most political power to the constituent peoples.

The constitutions of the two entities were not always distributing power equally among the three constituent groups. In its earlier version, the Constitution of the FBiH declared only "Bosniaks and Croats as constituent peoples, along with Others, and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina..."[30] with Bosniak and Croatian as official languages and Latin alphabet as official script.[31] The older version of the Constitution of RS, although it does not mention constituent people, declares the entity to be a "State of Serb people and all its citizens..."[32] with Serbian language and Cyrillic alphabeth in official use.[33] This was changed after the case had been presented in front of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1998 by Alija Izetbegović, the first Bosniak member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He claimed that the language of both entities' constitutions was not in harmony with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina drafted as part of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which gave

[30] Article 1 under Establishment of the Federation in the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR [1994] 1997:3).
[31] Article 6 under Establishment of the Federation in the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR [1994] 1997:4).
[32] Article 1 under Basic Provisions in the Constitution of Republika Srpska (OHR [1992] 1996:2).
[33] Article 7 under Basic Provisions in the Constitution of Republika Srpska (OHR [1992] 1996:3).

constituency to all three ethnic groups equally. The constitutional court ruled in 2000 that the language challenged by the plaintiff is indeed unconstitutional and must be changed immediately, and that both constitutions need to be amended to ensure that all constituent peoples are represented equally in both entities (Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2000). Pressured by the High Representative (HR) and other international agents involved in Bosnia's postwar transition, both entities had to change their constitutions to include all three constituent peoples. But "Others" who do not belong to the three constituent groups, who are from mixed marriages, or who refuse to identify along ethnic lines stayed on the fringes of constitutional rights and privileges.

People who are lumped into the category of "Others" are not granted rights to the fullest extent compared to those belonging to three constituent groups. For example, according to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Presidency of the country is determined to consist of three members (tri-partite presidency), one Bosniak and one Croat from the Federation, and one Serb from Republika Srpska. Each voter is allowed to vote for one presidential candidate, with those that live in the Federation voting for a Croat and Bosniak candidate, and those living in Republika Srpska only voting for a Serb candidate (UN 1995:67). This means people under the category of "Others," which includes those of other ethnic minorities (for example, Jews, Roma, or Albanians to name just a few), people of mixed ethnic origin, those who declare themselves as Bosnians and Herzegovinians, or people who refuse to choose their respective *ethnopolis*, cannot compete for one of the presidential chairs or become presidents of the country.

Those who belong to the category of "Others," also do not have the right to propose changes to the Constitution and their consensus on the constitutional amendments is not required.

The House of Peoples of the Federation Parliament is composed of seventeen delegates from each constituent group (fiftyone in total) and only seven delegates from the category of "Others."[34] Additionally, the Constitutional Court of the FBiH consists of eight judges from the three constituent peoples and only one from the group of "Others."[35] Furthermore, the Ombudsmen of the FBiH whose primary function is "to protect human dignity, rights, and liberties as provided in the Constitution," are only appointed from the three groups of consitutent peoples.[36] And lastly, the protection of vital national interests only applys to constituent peoples and not to those belonging to the group of "Others,"[37] who have to seek the protection of their collective and individual national rights through other local and international legislative structures (see also Trnka 2000:41).

The amended version of the Constitution of RS, heavily influenced by international actors, at first glance seems to present an ambitious project of human rights and equality clauses. As such, it designates a slighly higher degree of rights to people from the ranks of "Others." For example, out of six high positions in the government of the RS—the Prime Minister, Chair of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska, Chair of the Council of Peoples, President of the Supreme Court, President of the Constitutional Court, The Republic Public Prosecutor—no more than two may be filled from the ranks of Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, or "Others."[38] Furthermore, the Council of Peoples is composed of eight members from each of the constituent groups and four members from the ranks of "Others," with "Others" having the right to equal participation in the

[34] Article 6 under the House of Peoples in the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH [1994] 2003:9).
[35] Article 9 under the Constitutional Court (BiH [1994] 2003:19).
[36] Article 1 under the General Provisions of the Ombudsmen of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH [1994] 2003:5).
[37] Article 17a under the Definition of vital interests (BiH [1994] 2003:11).
[38] Article 69 under Organization of the Republic in the Constitution of Republika Srpska (Prnjavorac [1992] 2003:18).

procedure of majority vote.[39] However, many states all over the world exhibit a gap between rights proclaimed on paper and rights observed, and RS is no exception. In fact, as Bose asserted, this gap is particularly wide in RS (2002:70). Srđan Puhalo, a well-known political analyst and a vehement critic of the political establishment in Bosnia-Herzegovina and particularly the RS, explained at the Open University[40] roundtable discussion in Sarajevo, that Croats and Bosniaks in RS lack any serious political power, since Serbs became the overwhelming majority in that entity by way of war expulsion and ethnic cleansing of Bosniak and Croat population during the war. Even though, Bosniaks and Croats are constituent groups with protected rights and privileges as proclaimed in the constitutions, they do not have the resources and mechanisms in place to truly influence policy decisions and changes in the RS. Chances of political impact by those who belong to the category of "Others" are slim. In this ethnically homogenous territory, the effects of ethnopolitics run deep, where Bosniaks and Croats lack political power, which pushes them to seek "harbor and safety" in their respective *ethnopolis* for fear of overwhelming Serb nationalism. This is illustrated with the ethnographic example below.

In October 2013, Bosniak parents with their children from Konjević Polje, a small town in Republika Srpska (RS), erected two military tents in front of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Sarajevo, refusing to leave until the public officials grant their children the right to Bosniak ethnic instruction and education in an elementary school Petar Kočić. Parents I talked to expressed anger over this blatant violation of human rights affirmed in both the common-state and the RS constitutions that proclaim "[c]itizens shall be guaranteed freedom of profession of national affiliation and culture, and the right to use their language and

[39] Article 71 under The National Assembly in the Constitution of Republika Srpska (Prnjavorac [1992] 2003:20).
[40] Otvoreni Univerzitet, December 6-8, 2013 in Sarajevo War Theatre (Sarajevski ratni teatar or SARTR).

alphabet."[41] The Constitution of RS also declares rights to all constituent groups, which includes Bosniaks, and their vital national interests such as education, religion, language, promotion of culture, tradition, and cultural heritage.[42] However, because this was a group of Bosniaks fighting for their ethnic rights to language, history, and culture on the territory where Serbs are the majority, the struggle was not framed as a violation of basic *human rights* but as a violation of *constituent group rights*, which shows Bosnia-Herzegovina is instituting a particular kind of *ethnic democracy* (see also Šarčević 1997; Mujkić 2007).

I would pass the protest camp almost every day for four months in the middle of winter, as it was located only a few minutes from my apartment. I would take my daughter Alina there to play with the kids, bring them food and other supplies, help wash their laundry at my friend's apartment across the street, and provide kids with an occasional lesson in English language and Geography. One of the mothers once told me it is really hard for them to accept the fact their kids are learning Serbian language, history, and culture in their school, especially, if one considers the war atrocities that happened to people in this area. During the war, Konjević Polje was seized by Serb armed forces and Bosniak civilian population was either killed, expelled, or fled to nearby areas, including Srebrenica. Some Bosniaks who survived the war came back to rebuild their homes as part of postwar returnee programs, but they have met a lot of resistance not only by the community but RS government institutions as well. Apparently, parents have been petitioning for ten years to the local and entity government institutions in the RS to guarantee Bosniak ethnic instruction and education for their children. The RS entity government kept promising the solution but never did anything about it, so finally, tired of just waiting,

[41] Article 34 under Human Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution of Republika Srpska (Prnjavorac [1992] 2003:9).
[42] Article 70 under The National Assembly (Prnjavorac [1992] 2003:19).

parents decided to pull their children out of school and head for Sarajevo to protest. After almost four months of living in a makeshift camp in front of the OHR, and many negotiations with local and international political officials, no satisfactory solution was agreed upon. The minister of education and culture from RS, Goran Mutabdžija, proposed Bosniak ethnic instruction and education as an extracurricular activity that children could attend for two hours per week, which further enraged the parents and they point-blank refused the offer.

Once again, the local political officials from both Bosniak and Serbian sides focused their attention on ethnic group problems, each side accusing the other of ethnic discrimination. They claimed, if Bosniak students living in RS get the right to their own ethnic instruction and education, then the same has to happen for Serbian students living in the Federation of BiH. Some activists with ethno-nationalist ideologies also saw this as an opportunity to further promote their ethno-political agendas and soon the problem was turned into yet another ethnic duel for power among ethno-national elites with ordinary citizens caught in the cross-fire. The parents were repeating all they want is their rights as written in the constitution, however, since the constitution is written in ethno-national terms, this meant, they were fighting for their constitutive peoples' rights.

What surprised me the most about this difficult situation was that, even though the protestors received support in terms of food and supplies from other Sarajevans, most of the citizen activists I worked with did not want to get involved. One of my key informants and a dear friend Leila told me:

> I understand that the parents are in a difficult position. Life in RS is much tougher than in the Federation, especially for returnees [Bosniaks who have been expelled from this territory during the war but have since returned to rebuild their homes]. But this whole situation is too politicized and it pits one ethnic group against the other; it further deepens the ethnic conflict and divisions I have been fighting against for years. As soon as these parents came from Konjević Polje to Sarajevo

> and put up tents, they created a fertile ground to further divide the population. And the political elites immediately took advantage of that. There are several things happening here. First, the parents are receiving a lot of media attention; they are in the news almost every single day. The Bosniak news channels are presenting this as a discrimination of Bosniak people by Serbs, and Serb media are turning it around and reporting on all of the instances where Serb students are being discriminated against in the Federation. People are watching this every day. Bosniaks blame the Serbs. The Serbs want to protect their own moral integrity and think, it is ok for children and parents in Konjević Polje to be treated like that, because the same is happening to Serb students in the Federation. And so the blame and fear and division continue. We are just running in circles. Second, this gives an opportunity for our wonderful political elites [sarcastic remark] to not only appear as if they are actually doing something, you know, actually working for the good of the people and justly earning their salaries, but they are also taking advantage of the situation and spinning it in their favor. For example, the parents keep repeating all they want is a chance for their children to learn Bosniak language, history, and culture in school. That is it! But the politicians take that and make it about the war, the killings, genocide, and discrimination, and how this is happening all over again. And so, the same story continues for more than twenty years... If they [the parents] were fighting to change the education system, I would be right there fighting with them, but this way, I cannot. They are playing right into this messed up system of ethnic segregation and constituency, instead of trying to change the whole system. I do not know, a part of me understands. These people have been through horrible things in that area close to Srebrenica. But I just cannot, it goes against what I believe our future should be like...

The above story illustrates several issues important to the overall argument of this chapter—which claims that institutionalized system of ethnic segregation pushes people to choose their respective *ethnopolis* that, in turn, further strengthens ethno-nationalist worldview and ideology, and ensures that power stays in the hands of ethno-nationalist elites. In the light of overwhelming Serb nationalism on the territory of RS, Bosniak parents are seeking their safety and rights in the embrace of their constituent group. In the end, parents were offered a temporary solution, not by the RS but by their own constituent group from the Federation of BiH, who allocated some funds to create a makeshift school with a Bosniak teacher from Sarajevo, where students are taught per FBiH curriculum and take their final exams in a school in Sarajevo. Once again, parents are offered a solution only as members of their kinship group. However, given the

gap between rights proclaimed in the constitution and rights observed in day-to-day life, constituent peoples are only able to observe their group rights on the territory where they are the majority—Serbs in Republika Srpska, and Croats and Bosniaks in respective parts of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This leads me to conclude that the problem lies not only in the *constituency* of three ethnic groups but also in the separation of the territory into two entities (FBiH and RS) within Bosnia-Herzegovina both with overwhelming majority.[43] I also wanted to illustrate the ways citizen activists I worked with rejected to deal with the problematic at hand because it went against their anti-nationalist beliefs. This shows that although local and international political agents often treat cultures as homogenous, bound, essentialist, and absolute, and even though this has become institutionalized in such a pervasive way that it pushes people to submit to the system, on-the-ground reality shows that people are a part of overlapping and cross-cutting circumstances, and that we cannot explain one culture without looking at the interconnections between all three.

2.2.3. Ethnicization Through Education, History, Language, and Religion

One of the most pervasive ways ethnicization has been institutionalized in Bosnia-Herzegovina is through education, revisions of history and language, and more assertive post-war religious affiliation. A *national or ethnic imaginary* or a system of cultural representations that differentiates one nation or ethnicity from others based on distinct national/ethnic forms and a strong perception of "us" versus "them" promotes a feeling of exclusive belonging (Ewing 2008:2; Borneman 2004:14). In this way, language, history, religion, and culture separation is

[43] Serbs are the majority in the RS, Bosniaks in the FBiH, and Croats in certain parts of FBiH such as Herzegovina. Even though the census occurred in 2013, there is still no official statistical information on the ethnic composition across the two entities.

used as the leading tool of ethno-national and ethno-religious identity differentiation, accelerated by the nationalist discourses and the effects of the war.

2.2.3.1. Education

The lack of identification with a cohesive nation (Hromadžić 2015:108) especially in the case of Bosnian Croats and Serbs, also stems from a segregated educational system. Adila Pašalić-Kreso writes: "What could not be done in war continues to be attempted in peace by nationalist differentiation of education" (1999:6). The pre-war structure was dismantled and divided into three different school systems each with its own curricula and textbooks. For example, Bosnian Croats and Serbs follow curricula and textbooks from Croatia (Baranović 2001) and Serbia (Rosandić and Pešić 1994) respectively. Thus, after the war education was charged with forced un-mixing of children and youth (Pašalić-Kreso 1999, 2008; Clark 2010; Božić 2006; Baranović 2001; Torsti 2003, 2009; Dimitras 2000; Swimelar 2013; Low-Beer 2001), which, in the last twenty years, contributed to a considerable social gap between them (Hromadžić 2015). According to Baranović, "[i]n such a socio-political context, education, as an important means of socialization, has acquired the role of mediating in the acquisition of ethno-national ideology and cultural values, thus contributing to the formation of an ethnic identity and socialization of the young as members of a particular ethnic group" (2001:15).

Swimelar goes as far as to claim that besides being a socializing tool, education, particularly ethnocentric, nationalistic, and politicized education, can be a potential security threat as well (2013:161). She argues that attempts of one group to attain group security by promoting their own ethno-national identity, causes insecurities in other ethnic groups, who, in turn, respond by attaining security through similar means. While this may seem beneficial for

assurance of security of a particular group, it may have negative consequences of perpetuating further segregation and devaluation of diversity, and affect actual security of the Bosnian state itself in terms of its territorial cohesiveness (Swimelar 2013:162).

While attempting to help the war-torn territory and end the war, the international agents in Bosnia-Herzegovina did not see education as a potential security problem that could further perpetuate conflict and segregation (Swimelar 2013). In the Dayton Peace Agreement as well as the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina no special arrangements and articles are devoted to education. Only "the right to education" is mentioned under Annex 6, Article 1 of "Fundamental Rights and Freedoms" (Torsti 2009:67). This gave the politicians running the two ethnically divided entities and ten cantons in the FBiH the freedom to make political decisions regarding education. Thus, education and power over education has been hijacked by local nationalists and political authorities with mono-ethnic agendas.

Nationalist authorities gained power over education also because the Dayton Peace Agreement created an unworkable and extremely complicated political system. As mentioned before, it divided the territory into two entities, Republika Srpska with a vast majority of Bosnian Serbs, and a joint Federation of Croats and Bosniaks[44] that is further divided into ten cantons, most of which are dominated by one ethnic group or the other. In Republika Srpska, children of other ethnic groups, as is the case in Konjević Polje, are being instructed under Serbian curriculum. The same is the case in those cantons in the Federation where one or the other ethnic group is the majority. This decentralized political system created thirteen different education ministries in a country of 3.8 million people and a paradoxical situation where the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be the main authority coordinating between

[44] The official name is the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

lower level ministries and persuade them to cooperate and comply but it does not (Swimelar 2013:163; see also Pašalić- Kreso 2008:360-361). While decentralization was instituted in order to minimize further conflicts between ethnic groups and give them "equal" share of power in decision-making, this system has, however, created the exact opposite; it solidified intra-group homogenization and inter-group segregation. According to Swimelar, "decentralization has meant greater power for local nationalists and authorities and less involvement by school personnel, parents and students" (2013:163; see also Fischer 2006:301).

In those cantons with fairly mixed population not dominated by one ethnic group, local authorities have created separate facilities or in some cases even 'two schools under one roof'[45] (see Swimelar 2013; Hromadžić 2009, 2015; Torsti 2009; Božić 2006; Clark 2010; Pašalić-Kreso 2008). This means students attend separate classes, in many cases at different times of the day, and therefore have very little to no contact with those from other ethnic groups. The classes are further divided by ethnic curricula and language of instruction; thus, students learn the history, culture, language, and religion of their ethnic group exclusively. Certain historical facts about other groups are omitted and at times when other groups are mentioned in the textbooks and class instruction, they are usually portrayed as enemies and perpetrators, and are racially stereotyped (see also Torsti 2009). According to Pašalić-Kreso (2008:363),

> ... influential local people and representatives of nationalistic parties [are] overemphasizing the value of writers of their own nationalities, modifying historical facts to suit their own interests, changing the names of the former war (aggression versus civil war versus defense), insisting on the use of one language only, (Bosnian, Croat, or Serb), and a single written alphabet (either Latin or Cyrillic), and exaggerating the differences between rather than variations of the same language.

[45] *Dvije škole pod jednim krovom.*

Subjects such as history, geography, literature, and language have gained special political importance and were revised according to the new ethno-national identities. For example, Baranović, who researched history textbooks in primary and grammar schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina, claims that even though all of these groups are a part of the same country, the textbooks mention each other's history in only about 25% of the units. For example, in the case of Bosnian Croat students, they learn more about Croatian history, than history of Bosniaks, Serbs, or even the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina of which they are citizens (Baranović 2001:19). Similar situation is recorded in schools in Republika Srpska. In general, her research shows that ethnically colored textbooks can promote a closeminded and ethnocentric identity in children and act as disintegrative rather than integrative factor in reconstructing post-war life in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Baranović 2001:24).

Many parents indeed support ethnic divisions in education and some are even actively involved in assuring this situation does not change. However, a "significant proportion of parents (totaling between 54 and 79% according to recent polls) do not agree with the policy of dividing and segregating schoolchildren" (Pašalić-Kreso 2008:368). Several parents I talked to during my fieldwork think history, geography, and language books should be standardized across the board, so that children could develop some co-existence with their peers in school. One couple of a mixed marriage expressed their conundrum in raising their children in an environment focused on ethno-nationalism that forces them to make the kind of choice that does not reflect their lived experiences. A mother told me: "What are our kids supposed to be? Which language, history, culture are they supposed to learn? Schools are forcing us to choose between Bosniak and Croat. But how can we choose? I am a child from a mixed marriage and my children are as well. There is no alternative for us to choose. We are not supposed to exist."

Some attempts were made to improve the situation in education with less than satisfactory results. In 2000 a law was passed that forbid the import of school textbooks from Croatia and Serbia into Bosnia-Herzegovina but that did not solve the problem since textbooks written by Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs were merely copies of those from Croatia and Serbia (Torsti 2009:67-68; see also Torsti 2003) and, therefore, extremely ethnocentric and non-inclusive. In fact, Torsti claims her later study shows things had not improved and similar characteristics were still prevalent in 2006-2007 school year history textbooks (2009:68). At the beginning of the 2000s the international community finally made a connection between segregated education and a potential security problem in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Swimelar 2013; Torsti 2009). Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) published an Education Reform Strategy and presented a cooperative and joint framework for the future education in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The First Pledge of the Reform claims: "We will ensure that all children have access to quality education, in integrated multicultural schools, that is free from political, religious, cultural and other biases and discrimination and which respects the rights of all children" (in Pašalić-Kreso 2009:78-79). OSCE, however, is an international aid organization that has experiences in election monitoring without any expertise in education (Torsti 2009:73). As is often the case with international community's involvement in peace-building and state-making in Bosnia-Herzegovina, instead of finding long-term solutions to most pertinent problems, OSCE resorted to a series of "quick fixes" in the field of education reform, one of them being two schools under one roof (see Torsti 2009:73-74; Diegoli 2007:62) and textbook checks, which meant removal or annotation of objectionable material from textbooks by blackening the text or annotating with a stamp that said: "the following passage contains material of which the truth has not been established, or that may be offensive or misleading; the material

is currently under review" (in Torsti 2009:74). A common core curriculum developed by the OSCE was advertised but never actually applied (see Torsti 2009:73-74; Diegoli 2007:62). Many schools did not comply with the changes or did comply but found other ways to get that questionable material across to students, and OSCE failed to successfully monitor and control implementation of regulations (Torsti 2009:73).

2.2.3.2. History

The history has gone through a process of revision as well. Each ethnic group staked their claims to sovereignty and reinforced the notion of a long history on this territory. During the war, much of the cultural heritage pointing to a shared history was destroyed, national histories along with school textbooks were rewritten in regards to their approach and selection of historical events, and the past was carefully re-contextualized to serve particular postwar agendas. According to Andrew Gilbert, the re-contextualized socialist-era norms are being mobilized selectively by local and international actors to serve mono-ethnic and separatist agendas (Gilbert 2008).

Gilbert observes numerous examples of Serb reinterpretation of the "struggle against fascism"—which was an important element of socialist ideology connecting all Yugoslav nations—into the "fight against genocide of the Serb people" and justifying the 1992-1995 war as Serb defense against history repeating itself (2008:94; see also Torsti 2003:124-125). One such example of historical revisionism is notable in the monument called Mrakovica on the summit of Mount Kozara that was originally erected in the memory of fallen Serb, Muslim, and Croat partisans fighting against the Nazis during WWII (see also Gilbert 2008:94). Most other WWII memorials throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina were affected by the recent war, often

completely destroyed. The physical landscape of Mrakovica, however, was largely preserved because there was no fighting in the Kozara area during the 1992-1995 war. Serb forces took control of the region without any resistance and ethnically cleansed non-Serb population from the area. Thousands were imprisoned at nearby concentration camps such as Trnopolje, Karaterm, and Omarska, or buried in mass graves. Today, this region belongs to Republika Srpska, a Serb majority entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and is located in the municipality of Prijedor.

I have heard a lot about the Kozara Offensive (*Bitka na Kozari*) in school and through socialist film propaganda, where outnumbered and outgunned Partisans were celebrated for courageously fighting the Nazis in this mountainous area in the northwest part of the country. It was a beautiful day when I drove up to visit the monument and a museum. I also wanted to hike around this pristine area of dense forest and hilly meadows that Partisans knew so well and which supposedly gave them an advantage when fighting the Nazis. The monument looked exactly how I expected it to look; very socialist-like, over 100 feet-high block of gray concrete. But when learning more about the symbolism of specific features, I began to like it more. The concrete blocks around the monument, which are best seen in some aerial photographs of the monument, represent the Nazi forces put off by the Partisan resistance during the Battle of Kozara. One can also walk inside the monument in between the concrete columns. However, I was most interested to see the Mrakovica Museum as I read about the ways the postwar symbolic meaning and interpretation of the monument on Mount Kozara changed after the recent war (Gilbert 2008; Sahović and Zulumović 2015). In this re-contextualization of a historical event, Serbs are presented as the victims, while Croats and Bosniaks as the perpetrators. This new narrative, often used for political purposes of Serb nationalist propaganda in Republika Srpska,

refers to Kozara as the "mountain of sacrifice of the Serbian Christian people" (in Sahović and Zulumović 2015:218). In fact, the original WWII exhibition was, at the time of my visit, covered by white cloth and the focus was on the new exhibit called "Three Genocides against the Serbs," divided into three historical periods, First World War, Second World War, and the 1992-1995 War in Bosnia-Herzegovina (see also Sahović and Zulumović 2015:220). The original WWII exhibit shows photos of Serb, Muslim, and Croat partisans fighting alongside, accompanied by socialist text of 'brotherhood and unity.' The newer exhibit on the other hand is composed of newspaper clippings and photos focusing on the aggression against the Serb population, displaying gruesome photos of mutilated bodies. Direct parallels were drawn between WWII and 1992-1995 war where photographs of Croat nationalist Ante Pavelić, [46] the leader of *Ustaše* movement in the 1940s, were placed next to photos of Franjo Tuđman,[47] the first president of independent Croatia in 1990s, suggesting nationalist, fascist, and genocidal tendencies of both political figures in Croatian history against the Serbs. Furthermore, images of a Bosnian Muslim religious leader meeting Hitler were shown next to photos of Mujahedin fighters that fought on the side of Bosnian Muslims in the recent war (see also Gilbert 2008:94-95; Sahović and Zulumović 2015:220-221). This is an example of historical revisionism for the purpose of Serb postwar nationalist agenda and a justification of Serb aggression against non-Serb population in Bosnia-Herzegovina as merely a matter of defense against another genocidal attempt of their population. The Serb narratives of genocide foreground an aim that the past and its history are

[46] Ante Pavelić was a Croatian nationalist who led the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), a Nazi puppet state, during WWII with the support of Fascist Germany and Italy. He was also the founder of Ustaše movement whose ultranationalist policies included prosecution of ethnic and racial minorities such as Serbs, Jews, and Roma people.
[47] Some people claim Franjo Tuđman was the key participant in criminal activity of removing Serb civilian population from a self-proclaimed Serb parastate, Republic of Serbian Krajina, located within the territory of Croatia during the Croatian War for Independence. He was also criticized by the international community for fueling the Croat-Bosniak War in Bosnia-Herzegovina and for taking a part in criminal activity against the non-Croat population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, although he was never trialed or indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) before he died in 1999.

best understood through ethnic and national lens of victimhood, rather than in terms of multi-ethnic unity (see also Gilbert 2008:97-98).

Not only has the socialist ideology of 'brotherhood and unity' been displaced from the present but the recent war atrocities continue to be denied by political authorities on all three ethnic sides. This is creating an atmosphere where each ethnic group abides by their own version of "truth" and denies the other two, despite the overwhelming and indisputable evidence of brutalities perpetrated on all three sides. I experienced the chilling silence and denial of atrocities committed in the recent past, while working with a grassroots activist group *Jer me se tiče* (Because it concerns me) that is fighting for a complete and unselective respect for human rights and freedom of *all* citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, regardless of their ethnic belonging. For example, among numerous other initiatives promoting unselective remembrance instead of denial, this group has been fighting with the Prijedor authorities (in Republika Srpska) for several years for permission to erect a monument commemorating those killed in the Prijedor municipality during the recent war, most of whom were Bosniaks. In response, the local authorities headed by mayor Marko Pavić banned all public commemorative gatherings and threatened activists with criminal action, if they continued to use the word "genocide." Another blatant refusal of genocide comes from Rajko Vasić, a spokesperson for *Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata* (SNSD or Alliance of Independent Social Democrats), the ruling party in Republika Srpska that is also the party of Milorad Dodik, the current president of Republika Srpska. In his blog post, Vasić is responding to a public gathering in Prijedor that happened on May 31, called *Dan Bijelih Traka* (White Armband Day), organized in remembrance of May 31, 1992 when Bosnian Serb authorities ordered all non-Serb citizens of Prijedor to wear white armbands and mark their houses with white flags. In his blog post, Vasić writes:

> ... Activism with white armbands, white flags, memorials marking the victims of false genocide, marking of anniversaries of non-existent genocides and similar genocide-related nonsense, is not only political activism of donning a cloak of self-professed victimhood, and not only little projects financed by somebody from the international community, or from Sarajevo... White armbands, memorials and flags of the False Genocide have nothing to do with the victims. Their goal is an ongoing provocation of Serbs and a continuous invitation for a holy Islamic war... [This is] only the first step in the new Ottoman rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina, Christianity, and Serb people. ... [Local authorities] have to publicly deny genocide. Because Bosniak activists have the goal of poisoning the entire territory of Republika Srpska with the [accusation of] genocide... Local governance [must defend] Republika Srpska and Serbdom from the false muslim accusations. Local officials have, after all, been voted in under the slogan 'My Home, Srpska.' If I remember correctly. The truth about the White Genocide is completely dark and opposite. The muslim political and religious leaders have taken the illiterate people, and street gangs, to sacrifice the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These Muslim political leaders and Alija Izetbegović [the first president of a newly independent Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 and a Bosnian Muslim], are the real Address for the claims of Genocide and victims of this crazy and unnecessary war.[48]

In this blog post, Vasić is calling on Serbian local political leaders to stop being silent and non-responsive to "ludicrous" activists' accusations of genocide committed by Serbs on this territory, despite the irrefutable evidence being collected in the last 20 years proving the opposite. In a research study by Adis Hukanović, 3.176 citizens of Prijedor, all of them non-Serbs, were either killed or missing between May and August of 1992. Included in this number are 102 children and 258 women (Hukanović 2015:13-14). The number would be much higher, if the people killed or missing in the neighboring towns such as Kozarac, Kamičani, Čarakovo, Bišćani, and Briševo were counted as well (ibid. 14). Some of the concentration camps located in the area were Omarska, Keraterm, Trnopolje, and others, where around 31.000 prisoners endured torture, many of them killed or transported to other concentration camps (ibid. 13). Numerous

[48] The original blog post is written in Serbian under the title "Perfidna igra Bijelog Genocida" ("Perfidious game of White Genocide") and can be found at http://vasicrajko.blogspot.com/2012/06/perfidna-igra-bijelog-genocida.html. The English translation of this blog post can be found in full at https://www.facebook.com/StopGenocideDenial/posts/312863065463857

mass graves have been found in the vicinity, all with non-Serb victims as established by DNA analysis, the biggest among them being Stari Kevljani (363 bodies exhumed), Jakarina kosa (325 bodies exhumed in 2001 with additional 622 skeletal bones and 2 complete bodies exhumed in 2015), and Tomašica (393 bodies exhumed) (ibid. 16).[49] Even though the concentration camps and mass graves have become the symbols of civilian victims of Prijedor, a less known fact is that more than two thirds of victims were killed in front of their own houses, in villages, and neighboring forests (ibid. 13). In 1995 the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) brought charges against 15 individuals responsible for crimes in the area, the number rising since then with new evidence gathered and available. Many of the accused have been found guilty and sentenced to prison charges (ibid.).

In response to continuous denials of public commemorations by local authorities in Republika Srpska, Seida Karabašić of the initiative "Stop Genocide Denial," delivered a letter to the High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko:[50]

> ... With 31.000 concentration camp survivors, Prijedor municipality holds an infamous record for all of Europe. We had a misfortune of having on these very territories of our municipality the most horrific death camps since World War II. We in Prijedor have 28 citizens convicted of crimes against humanity, which is the greatest concentration of convicted war criminals on the territory of one municipality in the world ever. Eight of the accused had the strength to admit their guilt and have sent their apologies to the victims, but we have never heard Prijedor's official representatives mention that. Currently the case against another nine former policemen is being processed at the BiH Court for crimes against the humanity, and in the following years dozens more will defend their innocence in courts across the region. Regardless of the fact, Prijedor's ruling officials are behaving as if though there were no war crimes committed in our town and region.

[49] Some of these locations are still in the exhumation process, therefore the number of exhumed bodies might be higher with new bodies excavated.
[50] This letter was published on "Stop Genocide Denial" Facebook page on June 13, 2012. Accessed on June 13, 2012. https://www.facebook.com/StopGenocideDenial/posts/319146441502186.

In general, people believed that prosecution of war crimes would positively contribute to the process of reconciliation and peace in the country. Instead, it has been used by political elites to further solidify ethno-national separation by labeling their own ethnic groups as victims, and others as perpetrators. This gave rise to collective and homogenized identities based on ethnocentric interpretation of the past (Hukanović 2015:17) where one group's war hero is another group's war murderer. For example, in June 2014 at the international airport in Zagreb, Croatia, a big crowd of Croatian politicians, priests, nuns, and civilians welcomed with ovation a convicted war criminal Dario Kordić, who was sentenced to 25 years in prison for his war crimes in village of Ahmići in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where 116 Bosniak civilians, including women and children, were killed in or in front of their houses. Dario Kordić was released from prison in Austria after completing two thirds of his prison sentence. A citizen activist I got to know during my fieldwork, Zoran Ivančić, travelled with a friend, Sabina Šabić, from Sarajevo to Zagreb airport to put up a sign protesting an early release of a war criminal. When Dario Kordić came out, Zoran yelled out loud, *Sotono, ubojice!* (Satan, Murderer!) at which moment he was silenced and attacked by a crowd of people who came there to celebrate the criminal's return.

Of course, people from other ethnic groups committed crimes as well. In 2003, ICTY sentenced Zdravko Mucić to 9 years, Hazim Delić to 18 years, and Esad Landžo to 15 years of imprisonment for their crimes and "grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions" (ICTY n.d.) against Bosnian Serb detainees at the Čelebići concentration camp, which was established by Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat forces in mid-1992 near Konjic in central Bosnia-Herzegovina. Close by, in a town called Jablanica, was another concentration camp, where Bosniaks held Croats as prisoners. Even though survivors of this camp claim they have been physically and mentally tortured for several months and attest to some Croats dying in the camp,

none of the perpetrators have been convicted of crimes to this day. At the beginning of 2016, the chief prosecutor of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Goran Salihović, called this concentration camp a "collection center,"[51] purposefully diminishing the crimes some Bosniaks committed there against the Croats. If one looks at the war atrocities in an unselective way, it becomes obvious that all three groups committed crimes against each other.

The work of ethno historians has supported the creation of separate historical consciousness in all ex-Yugoslav states, where social groups' and individuals' remembering of the past is strongly influenced by present perspectives and future expectations (Torsti 2003). Braembussche claims historical consciousness also illustrates how people "deal with the past in the current situation... Thus, historical consciousness 'forgets' parts of the historical experience" (in Torsti 2003:50-51). He further maintains this can lead to historical traumas that, if forgotten, often have a tendency to gain mythical proportions (in Torsti 2003:51), contributing to the process of ethnic separation.

In an effort to create distinct nationhoods, all three ethnic groups positioned their collective memories into a distant history; 14th Century and the Kosovo battle for the Serbs, 9th Century and their first King Tomislav for the Croats, and Bosnian Bogomil church in the 14th and 15th Centuries for Bosniaks who are now trying to establish a continuous nationhood since the Middle Ages (Torsti 2003:123, 127). On the other hand, Bosnian Serbs and Croats have been quick to contest this, claiming Bosniaks are nothing but Serbs and Croats respectively who converted to Islam during the Ottoman empire. In response, Bosniaks are trying to solidify their national roots to the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina by their pro-Bosnian stance, treating Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state and using official state symbols (Torsti 2003:126). However, to

[51] "Sabirni centar" in BCS languages.

distinguish themselves as different from others they are emphasizing their most distinctive characteristic, the religion of Islam. On the other hand, Bosnian Serbs are rejecting Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state and are instead emphasizing Republika Srpska. School maps, for example, are showing either Republika Srpska on its own or Republika Srpska connected to Serbia, "while the rest of Bosnia appears [ ] as a foreign country" (Torsti 2003:124). Bosnian Croats also tend to be anti-Bosnian by following the example of "mother" Croatia. They readily accepted all Croatian nationhood symbols, from the flag to the red and white checkerboard emblem dating back to the Middle Ages, which also served as the symbol of ultra-nationalist *Ustaše* movement in Croatia during WWII (Torsti 2003:125-126). My interactions with Bosnian Croat youth from Mostar, for example, support claims from other scholars who talk about a considerable gap between youth of different ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Hromadžić 2015). Bosnian Croat youth usually hold a dual citizenship (from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) and consider Croatia to be their true homeland, and Zagreb,[52] not Sarajevo, as their capital city. Similarly, Serb youth from Republika Srpska are taught and think of their entity as a separate country, with Banja Luka as their capital. Nationalistically-motivated historical revisionism on all three sides has become a crucial tool of ethno-national division. According to Torsti, "[e]ven well-intentioned scholars are becoming involved in historical manipulation providing historical roots" (2003:146) for the creation on new ethnic identities and new historical consciousness.

[52] Zagreb is the capital of Croatia.

2.2.3.3. Language

Bosniak, Serb, and Croat people in the positions of power have also been using politics of language differentiation to construct a distinct ethno-national identity and a sense of "we-ness." Politicized dialogue surrounding language standardization process is promoting a heightened sense of intragroup uniform identity and creating intergroup diversity and division. This further inflames ethnic tensions and creates polarization among three ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Before the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia the official language used in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro was called Serbo-Croatian. After the fall of communism and disintegration of Yugoslavia the language rifts started to surface as well. The new states arising on the territory of former Yugoslavia published their constitutions in the period between 1990-1993 and with it announced their official languages. Suddenly, Serbo-Croatian language became inappropriate to represent the national consciousness of the new nation-states. Its demise was not caused by a language shift nor the death of its last speaker. It was not disintegrated by a natural language drift but by careful planning and active intervention on the part of linguists, language planners, and policy makers (see also Greenberg 2004:13). Thus, each new nation-state official language now bears a name respective to the name of their country and its people, with the exception of Bosnia-Herzegovina where language split is much more complicated due to its mixed ethnic population and each group claiming to have their own distinct language. Today, there are three official languages in Bosnia-Herzegovina—Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian.[53] Both Croatian and Bosnian languages have Latin alphabet and Serbian language uses a Cyrillic alphabet.

[53] After the war, Bosniak people started calling their language Bosnian. Therefore, Bosnian language refers to the language of Bosniak people.

Creating new linguistic standards was somewhat easier in the case of Croatian and Serbian languages. Serbo-Croatian language was first standardized in the mid-19th century with Vienna Literary Agreement made between Serb and Croat philologists and writers (Greenberg 2004:24-29). However, before that agreement, both languages existed separately. Therefore, Serb and Croat language planners in the 1990s could refer to the times before the efforts were made to create a joint language.

This long philological and linguistic tradition did not exist in the case of Bosnian language as Bosniaks' new linguistic identity was formulated after the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Greenberg 2004:160). In their efforts to solidify a strong link to the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina as their "geographical and spiritual homeland" (Greenberg 2004:141), the new language was deliberately called "Bosnian," a name that Bosnian Serbs and Croats strongly objected to. Nevertheless, the publication of Dayton Peace Accords in 1995 in Bosnian language, along with Croatian, Serbian, and English, legitimized the language and granted it its long awaited international recognition (Greenberg 2004:136). Thus, the Bosnian language erupted suddenly and unexpectedly in the context of the 1992-1995 war together with the birth of a new Bosniak nationhood. To become recognized as distinct nations within Europe with equal rights as all other nations, Bosniak, Serb, and Croat political elites started erasing overlapping characteristics and highlighting differences. This development included erasure of variation within Bosniak, Serb, and Croat ethnic groups.

Language, according to Spolsky, has long been established as a central feature of human identity. It is not only an indicator of someone's gender, education level, age, profession, and a place of origin but also a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity (1999:181). According to Kroskrity, language serves "as the key to naturalizing the boundaries of social groups"

(2003:23). It is a non-neutral medium (Duranti 2011; Bakhtin 1981), meaning it is always infused with politics, hierarchy, inequality, and social interaction between people and groups of different backgrounds. Gal and Irvine argue "[t]he significance of linguistic differentiation is embedded in the politics of a region and its observers" (2003:35).

Boundaries between languages and dialects are socially constructed. Participants in social interaction frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and differences among them, and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities that are significant to them. These conceptual organizations are called *ideologies*, because they are saturated with political and moral issues pervading a sociolinguistic field, and because they are subject to the interests of their bearers' social position (Gal and Irvine 1995:970-971).

According to Western Enlightenment ideology, social and political cohesion of a nation and its people rests on the philosophy of one nation, one language, one culture, and one territory. This ideology is being reproduced not only in the practices of homogenous national policies of language standardization but also in theoretical frameworks that often essentialize groups in this way as well. Many linguists in Bosnia-Herzegovina, who promote a more interventionist approach to Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian language planning and standardization, promote an ideology that is reminiscent of Herderian concepts of essentialism. They argue that language is the most certain way for individuals to protect or recover the authenticity they have inherited from their ancestors as well as to pass it on to the future generations. They assert that language contains all essential parts of ethno-national identity or, in other words, that language embodies the whole culture, history, and consciousness of a nation. In this way, they view language as a bound system, as an object through which a distinct, homogenous, natural, and continuous national consciousness and history can be created.

However, foundational premises of linguistic anthropology teach us that language is best not treated as an abstract bound entity that holds our values and worldviews. Sociocultural patterns—values, ideologies, beliefs, forms of social organization, etc.—are both reflected and constituted in social interaction; they emerge and re-emerge in *uses* of language. There is a general feeling that a specific language should not only index a "we-ness," it must index a primordial aggregate of people, a national "we-ness" of common values, identified within a clearly bound space. It must become a standard code that re-presents the "voice" of ethno-national subjectivity in the way it deictically points to Bosniakness, Serbianess, and Croatianess in its "imagined" homogeneity and pervasiveness. Through engagement with mass dissemination of the standardized code, the three ethnic groups not only pre-suppose their own primordial "voice" but also imagine the code as shared by all people that belong to their group, thus creating a sense of alignment, interchangeability, and likeness between national subjectivities (Anderson 1999).

2.2.3.4. Religion

In the socialist period of Yugoslavia (1945-1990), religions had no official role or public and political influence. The clergymen were not politically active, there was a hard-lined separation between church and state, and many during those times did not receive any religious education. Congregations were small, located in more rural places, and usually served the older generations. Religion was confined to a private sphere and many religious holidays were stripped of their religious component, acquiring a more secularized cultural status. Disagreeing with often excessive wealth some churches possessed, socialist authorities confiscated and nationalized their properties and prosecuted any type of public religious proselytizing, activism, and what

they called "fundamentalist digressions."[54] According to Dino Abazović, "[i]deologically, religion was perceived as a traditionalistic, anachronous, and retrograde phenomenon incompatible with the new progressive 'thought of epoch,' and the religious leadership was seen almost exclusively as anti-revolutionary" (2014:38). What all religions on the territory of socialist Yugoslavia had in common was that they were all equally suppressed, disenfranchised, and none of them was favored by the regime.

This position drastically changed during and after the war in the 1990s. Even the late 1980s, when Yugoslavia was on the brink of dissolution, were marked with a revitalization of religion and nationalism, but this was especially prominent during the war and post-war transition. During the war, religion became a powerful tool of military mobilization against the enemies. Velikonja explains how religious symbols, such as Catholic and Orthodox cross, Crescent, and traditional religious slogans and salutations, such as 'God protects the Serbs,' 'God and the Croats,' and 'Allahu Akbar'[55] gained importance by being politicized and nationalized (2001:6). They were regularly displayed by warring sides on uniforms, military equipment, and flags, and exclaimed when preparing for battle. Religious rituals such as blessing of soldiers and their weapons were performed by clergymen who often visited the troops to perform their services. Political and military leaders were frequently aggrandized with religious importance. For example, a convicted war criminal, Radovan Karadžić, and military leader accused of war crimes, Ratko Mladić, were described as "following the thorny path of Christ" (Velikonja 2001:8; 2003:265). Karadžić was decorated by the Greek Orthodox Church, declaring him "one of the most prominent sons of our Lord Jesus Christ working for peace" (Sells 1996:85; see also

[54] The first president of the independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegović, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for his Islamic activism. In 1988, as the socialist rule faltered, he was pardoned and released after serving five years.
[55] Allah is the greatest.

Velikonja 2001:8, 2003:265). A nun from Croatia, sister Marija, believed Franjo Tuđman, the first president of independent Croatia and commander-in-chief during the war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, had divine qualities, was supernatural and was the "carrier of all aspirations, especially our yearning for freedom" (Velikonja 2003:270). Alija Izetbegović, the first president of independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, was believed to be "sent by God to lead the Muslims along the true path" (Velikonja 2001:8) and was awarded a medal by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia for his "contribution to the spread of Islam" (Velikonja 2003:278). The enemies were demonized and dehumanized, conspiracy myths emerged, and religions other than one's own were considered false, foreign, and sacrilegious. Thus, war atrocities were justified as being made in the name of the holy people and the only true believers. As Velikonja claims: "... the elimination of other faiths—religious and ethnic cleansing—becomes a religious duty. Killing is no longer considered as 'homicide,' but as a 'malicide,' the liquidation of the evil" (2001:11).

This way, religion resurged from the invisible private sphere and infused civic life to the point that the public space became desecularized. Nowadays, people of all three religions (Catholic, Orthodox, and Islam) participate in their religious communities to a greater extent, and clergymen have an increased presence in politics and the media (see also Abazović 2015, 2014, 2010; Velikonja 2001, 2003; Vrcan 2001). All three religious institutions sided with their respective ethno-nationalist political parties and it became important for politicians and those aspiring to have a political career to visit churches/mosques and display their religiousness (see also Abazović 2010: 317-318). According to Abazović, "the early post-socialist period in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been characterized by two powerful and related processes: a *'nationalization of the sacral'* and a *'sacralization of the national'* (2014:38; see also Abazović 2010, 2015). This means that on the one hand political leaders have sought and have been

granted the legitimization for their separatist ethno-nationalist politics from their respective religious institutions and on the other, the religious leaders achieved their goals due to the support from ethno-national parties and politics. Thus, alliances between politics and religion in post-socialist Bosnia-Herzegovina have been of mutual benefit—they both needed and strengthened each other: "religious institutions lent legitimacy to and opened perspectives for chauvinist politics, and vice versa" (Velikonja 2003:288).

In general, religion is supposed to function at different levels: individual, collective, and institutional. It is supposed to manifest itself as a personal conviction, community bound by religious doctrines, *and* institutional structures of leadership (Abazović 2014:39). In post-socialist Bosnia-Herzegovina though, religion assumed a much narrower position. It was "politicized through ethnicization" and "reduced to ethnicity" until "ethnic and religious identities collapsed into each other" (Abazović 2014:39). This was possible because of the neutral position of the socialist rule that left religions unattended. It did not attempt to root them out nor nurture them until "they were eventually planted in the crude soil of ethnonationalism" (Appleby 2002:71; see also Abazović 2014:39). In this collectivization of religion, ethnic identity becomes more important than faith itself and responsibility for one's own collectivity trumps individual accountability (Velikonja 2003:291).

I am not trying to suggest that the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a religious war, nor was it a war between civilizations. It was a geopolitical war over territory with homogenous ethnic makeup as the end goal. For example, when explaining ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Norman Cigar claims it was "a rational policy, the direct and planned consequence of conscious policy decisions..." (1995:4) or "premediated strategy, rather than being an improvisation arising from unfolding events" (1995:47). However, since religion in

Bosnia-Herzegovina has been an extremely important part of ethnic identity and used as ethnopolitical tool of segregation and homogenization, any examination of ethnopolitics in Bosnia-Herzegovina must also address the collective nature of ethnoreligious identity (see also Majstorović 2005).

2.3. Everyday Reponses to Ethnic Engineering

Ethnic citizenship institutionalized in Bosnia-Herzegovina today, is forcing people to above all foreground and assert their ethnic identity as different and distinct from other ethnic groups. Whether they want to or not, people are often faced with making ethnic decisions at the voting polls, census, when faced with education system, at the birth of a child, and every time the politicians are unable to reach a law and policy decisions due to frequent institutional deadlock resting on vital ethnic interests. For many Bosnians I had contact with, ethnicity is not the most important identification, however they often find themselves in a double bind. Many reject ethno-nationalism on the premise that it is not healthy for the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina but are at the same time reaffirming, playing into, and perpetuating the ethno-nationalist regimes. Take, for example, Marina, a thirty-five-year-old citizen activist, who was complaining to me about the political frenzy around the census research. She said, she was tired of *politika* (extreme politicizing of all aspects of people's lives) and that people needed to be left alone. She stressed her disapproval of everyday people being given false information that it is mandatory for them to pick their language, ethnicity/nationality, and religion on the census form and intimidated, by their own political representatives, they will have to pay a fine, if they do not declare that information. Marina was telling me of her friend believing that Hague would not admit there was a genocide committed against Bosniak people, if Bosniaks do not declare themselves according

to ethnic lines, and of another friend who was afraid of losing his job, if he did not identify himself in a particular way that would be agreeable with his employer. “Census data is supposed to be private! It is amazing how much misinformation is circulating around and how many intimidation tactics are being used by party representatives! And people are totally falling for it!” Marina exclaimed nervously. She continued explaining that the ethnicity/nationality question is written wrong on the census form, since nationality and ethnicity are supposed to be two different things. She said: “According to national identity, all people living in BiH and carrying BiH citizenship and passport are by default Bosnians and Herzegovinians. But their ethnic identity might be different (Serb, Croat, Bosniak, Roma, Jew, etc.). This means, according to this census form, ethnic groups are elevated to the status of nations. So, now we have three constitutive nations not ethnic groups living in BiH!” I asked Marina what is she going to do and if she is going to forfeit answering these questions. Her reply surprised me when she said: “No. I’m going to pick “Other,” because, if we get a high enough percentage of people identifying as “Other,” we might have a strong enough incentive for political change and a change of the constitution.”

Marina was rightfully upset. For two months people were fed misleading information where the talk revolved exclusively around questions of ethnicity, nationality, language, and religion. At every census info session I attended, I met people who were exacerbated and confused. The main question, they were asking was: “Are there going to be any negative consequences, if I do not declare my ethnicity?” This is quite understandable, since this was the first census since 1991. A lot has changed in Bosnia-Herzegovina since then and people were honestly and justifiably not certain what kinds of effects a census could bring to their already fragile interethnic relationships. At one round table discussion on census debate, an older man

stood up visibly confused because the three discussants all had diverging views on census functionality. He said: “I came here thinking this will help me figure out what I needed to do. But I am more confused than ever. Just tell me how to vote! [*Recite mi, kako da glasam!*].” One discussant answered this is not the election, there is no voting involved, and that he should do whatever he feels like doing. The other said, “by your last name I am assuming you are a Bosniak and it is your duty as a Bosniak to choose that on the census form!” To that a third discussant exclaimed: “You can’t assume by his last name that he identifies as a Bosniak!” The man from the audience threw his hands up in the air, shook his head, and left the discussion angry and confused.

Others, primarily citizen activists such as Marina herself, thought choosing the “Other” on the census form might create a turn in political thought and discourse. However, these people were also fed misleading information, namely because the census data cannot hold any legal grounding in changing the constitution (i.e. Dayton Peace Agreement). By thinking that it might or could, some citizen activists were sucked into approaching the census solely on ethnic grounds, something they were trying to avoid all along. On the one hand, citizen activists said census should be used to gather data that will help the impoverished country with better economic planning, on the other, they got pulled into the game of ethno-national identification as the primary function of the census. This is just one of many examples, of the pervasive nature of the Dayton political configuration, where it is extremely hard to think, act, and create change outside of it.

There were others who picked their ethnic identity on the census form, simply because they did not see any other alternative. One person said: “There were three options, Serb, Croat, and Bosniak on the census form. I am not a Croat, I am not a Bosniak, so I picked Serb. What

else I am going to do? There are no other choices." As Slavenka Drakulić, a Croat novelist, explained from her first-person experiences of war in Croatia: "One doesn't have to succumb voluntarily to this ideology of the nation—one is sucked into it… in this new state of Croatia, no one is allowed not to be a Croat" (1993:52). It is very similar in Bosnia-Herzegovina where everything is cast in ethno-nationalist terms, therefore it is hard to avoid it. That begs the question about those who cannot or do not want to succumb to ethnic identification.

In general, my own year-long ethnographic research reveals that people in Bosnia-Herzegovina are tired of politicians always playing the ethnic card to entice fear and conflict, and forcing people into an ethnic box. They are frustrated with the system that is designed to force people always to choose one of the three options. The struggles of those who do not fall neatly into the Bosniak, Croat, and Serb ethno-national box (for example people from mixed marriages) and those who refuse to identify themselves according to ethnic lines or think of themselves as something other than Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats, must not be underestimated. Hromadžić calls those who dare to mix across ethnic lines, invisible citizens, who become spatially unmappable in the context of ethnic purity and, therefore, pushed into social and political marginality (2015). All my cousins whose spouses are from a different ethnic group, emigrated abroad after the war, having to start their lives from scratch. When I asked, what was the primary reason that led them to do that, they said they could not imagine their children growing up and living a normal life in today's Bosnia-Herzegovina, because they would be forced to choose one or the other ethnic group.

What about those who dare to step outside the *ethnopolis*? Or those who straddle between both, which is more often the case? This brings me back to the ethnographic example of 2013 census campaign mentioned at the very beginning of this chapter. A Bosniak politician and

nationalist, Sejfudin Tokić, used an intimidation tactic to convince Bosnian Muslims to declare themselves as Bosniaks on the census questionnaire rather than opt out of answering census questions on ethnic identity. He alluded several times this is their duty and their only chance of survival. Interestingly, a young man who was visibly upset with the debate of the roundtable, stood up and demanded to speak. With determination in his voice, he said:

> Sir Sejfudin Tokić, I came to this round table today as a Bosniak and due to your behavior, I am leaving as a Bosnian. You, your pompous nationalistic behavior, and intimidation to instill fear, paranoia, and hatred among us, have just convinced me that I do not want to identify myself according to ethic lines. You just proved to me that ethno-nationalist politics equals hatred and fear, and I do not want to hate nor do I want to live in fear. This constant ethnic animosity only separates us further apart from each other and deepens nationalist sentiments. We have enough of that. It is time for a change.

He continued his passionate address by saying people need jobs, quality health care, and good education, that hospitals need functioning equipment and kids school supplies, and while they are fighting with each other how to mark the census form, the politicians are leading the country into ruin. “This is exactly where they [political elites] want us. The more one group says, we are first, second, and third [by that he meant Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks], the more the others retreat into their separate corners. We are just running in circles. We can’t live like this. People, what are we going to do?!” A woman from the audience replied: “There is nothing we can do but drop an atom bomb on this territory, completely obliterate the whole population, and start over from scratch. The whole society is rotten and the system is so convoluted and impenetrable, there is nothing we can do.” Another woman said sarcastically: “For years I’ve been trying to figure out how to dig ourselves out of this situation unsuccessfully. Please, if you have something enlightened to say, let us know. I can’t wait to hear it.” The young man who started this whole discussion said: “We have to start working together. We must stop getting sucked into ethnic divisions [*etničke podjele*] and realize we are all in the same boat. In the end,

people are starving, we are living on the edge of existence and one cannot satisfy their hunger with nationalism." Another man added: "I agree. Nationalism will not feed us, create more jobs, start factories, build roads, educate our children to be able to compete in the world market. Nationalism will not even bring our loved ones back. It will not give us back those years we lost. We have to do it ourselves. Nobody is going to do it for us." To that, another person in the back shouted: "People have given up hope!"

The discussion captured above is the perfect example of the usual conundrum many people in Bosnia-Herzegovina find themselves in, caught in between hopelessness that paralyzes them and action believing change is still possible. This chapter was meant to show the deep-rooted and permeating power of the Dayton state configuration and political engineering that is often forcing people to engage with its ethnic structure as the only viable way of being in the world.

Chapter 3

Creating Democratic Subjects:

International Involvement in Dayton Engineering

Figure 3.1. Protest camp erected by parents with children from elementary school Konjević Polje (RS) in front of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Sarajevo, 2013.

3.1. Introduction

In 2014, several months before the 7th general election held on October 12 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the current leader of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), an international organization created after the war to oversee the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Valentin Inzko, addressed the Bosnian public. In his speech, he took the opportunity to remind people "elections are an important tool in a democracy" and that citizens themselves hold the power to elect those politicians that will focus on "serving the people, instead of themselves" (2014). Inzko further urged the citizens to use the "pre-election season and the elections themselves to demand accountability from [the] elected leaders" (2014). This was Inzko's response to yet another round of threats from the leadership in Republika Srpska,

"challenging Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity" (Inzko 2014) by intimidating the citizens, politicians from other ethnic groups, and international organizations with a referendum of secession of Republika Srpska from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Attempting to alleviate the situation, Inzko tried to assure the citizens this kind of secession is impossible, unconstitutional, and would never be allowed by the "International Community."[56] He wrote: "There is only one state on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that is Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina is absolutely clear on this point; indeed, this fact is enshrined in the preamble and in the very first paragraph of the very first article of the Constitution. The sovereign state of Bosnia and Herzegovina was unanimously admitted to the United Nations in 1992 and its current internal structure subsequently defined by Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the Constitution" (2014). He also warned the citizens this is a ruse used by ethno-nationalist politicians to distract voters from real problems in the country such as wealthy political class, small rise in incomes, increase in the cost of living, pensions well below the poverty limit, and high unemployment rates (2014). Mr. Inzko was right as such tricks have been used many times before, in order to instill fear and further divide the groups according to ethnic lines. Every time the leadership in Republika Srpska threatens with a referendum of secession, Bosnian Croats start talking about their own independent state, to which Bosniaks respond they are the only "real" Bosnians in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Each side

[56] A conglomerate of international organizations, institutions, and agencies with a role of international intervention, reconciliation, state-building, and nation-making processes in post-war and post-socialist Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is important to remember that the "International Community" is not a singular political entity, even though the term is prevalently used as such in local political and everyday discourse, and by international agents themselves. "International Community" is a complex structure of various overlapping organizations, foreign agents from diverse countries and backgrounds, entrepreneurs, experts, diplomats, projects, and practices (see also Hromadžić 2015:19; Coles 2007a:31). Because of that, I will try to avoid using the word "International Community" throughout this dissertation, however, if I do use the term, I will put it in quotation marks to show this is a "social and political construct" (Coles 2007a:31) that is "too neat to capture the unwieldy myriad of forces and practices that are subsumed within this conceptually diffuse term" (Coles 2007a:39).

reacts by pulling away and the divide deepens. However, Mr. Inzko's address on upcoming general elections was perceived by many Bosnians as yet another moralizing lecture about the proper "democratic behavior" Bosnians have apparently not been able to exercise after so many years of democratic instruction from international agents and various internationally led projects. A good friend of mine I will call Zeka Zela, a citizen activist woman in her late fifties, commented:

> How come he [Valentin Inzko] does not understand democracy and all of the democratic tools that go along with it do not work in BiH?! And that is because the Dayton Peace Agreement, which was brokered by the wonderful International Community [međunarodna zajednica], created a kind of political system where local nationalists can thrive. They've divided us into ethnic groups, territorially separated us, and enshrined the idea of constituent people's rights! And to make matters even worse, the Dayton Peace Agreement does not have an expiration date! Because this kind of political structure is advantageous for corrupted political elites, all they need to do is maintain fear amongst us, which is exactly what Dodik does when he threatens with secession of Republika Srpska. That keeps them in power, so they can get richer and more powerful. In the meantime, our hands are tied. We cannot change things through elections, nor can we hold the politicians accountable, because our corrupt judicial system will never prosecute them.

Right before the election, Zeka Zela posted a letter addressed to the High Representative, Valentin Inzko, on her Facebook page.[57] She also delivered it to the Office of the High Representative, together with her passports. In the letter, she wrote:

> Your excellency,
>
> A couple of months ago, you stated: "On October 12, 2014, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina will hold the Bonn Powers that they should use with voting." I am offended by your statement, because you know the situation in BiH better than me...
>
> Considering that my logical thinking must be distorted [she is using cynicism that is very frequent in Bosnian everyday discourse], today, I do not know what Bosnia and Herzegovina is, who is her nation...!? What is the reason for the presence of the European Union in my state—and does this presence even exist!?

[57] I received Zeka Zela's permission to use her letter in this dissertation. The pseudonym was picked by her.

> I am wondering, if you all received your salaries, just to come to a conclusion that BiH holds the first place in Europe for bribery and corruption!?...
>
> Today, I am returning two expired and destroyed passports, issued by the Republic of BiH, and one passport that is valid until 12/8/2016. I do not have a state [Ja državu nemam].

Zeka Zela renounced her state and citizenship, and surrendered her passport, not because she does not love Bosnia-Herzegovina and its people but because as far as she is concerned, this country does not exist—it is an internationally engineered place where corrupted local politicians can thrive at the expense of everyday people. To Zeka Zela and many other Bosnians, this kind of citizenship that is based on a permanent humanitarian state of exception (Agamben 2005; Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Pandolfi 2010) is meaningless, where one authoritarian regime is replaced by another and where, paradoxically, intervention and complete suspension of people's democratic rights are justified by ethical and moral commitment to protect human rights. It is implicit in her letter, the international post-war involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina created a fertile ground where there is no national unity, especially on the level of politics, territory, constitutional structure, public institutions, and so on, therefore she questions what and who does Bosnia-Herzegovina represent today. She was offended by Valentin Inzko's statement that people of Bosnia-Herzegovina will hold the "Bonn Powers"[58] they should exercise by voting during the elections. It seemed incredibly insensitive to her that he compared "Bonn Powers" to voting, since the former is a type of power in judiciary, legislative, and executive decisions, given to the High Representative by the international organization called the Peace Implementation Council. Voting, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, cannot be compared in any way to that kind of ultimate power. Furthermore, according to many scholars, constitutional

[58] "Bonn Powers" is a document signed in 1997 in Bonn by the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) that gives the Office of the High Representative (OHR) extensive legislative, judicative, and executive power without Bosnia's consent.

lawyers, and Zeka Zeka herself, the "Bonn Powers" are unlawful because the decision was reached without the consent of Bosnia's elected representatives or people themselves. As such, the Bonn Powers are undemocratic and yet, Valentin Inzko is, according to Zeka Zela, moralistically educating the people about the proper use of democracy. "I am fed up with his moralistic crap," Zeka Zela said to me. "He is a demagogue whose actions are led by prejudice he holds towards us. The whole International Community [međunarodna zajednica] thinks all they need to do is teach us, poor and misguided people, about democracy and everything will turn out great! We are *not* [her emphasis] incapable of comprehending what democracy is and how we can use it—that is, how we *could* [her emphasis] use it, if we lived in a normal, democratic state," Zeka Zela explained.

As we shall see in more detail later in this chapter, the international involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina is full of these kinds of paradoxes. In theory, they promote multicultural integration but in practice they often adopt the fundamentals of ethno-nationalist politics of segregation. Likewise, on the one hand, they promote democratic education and often take the stance of the moral high ground, thinking Bosnians are not able to comprehend their democratic rights, but on the other, they act in authoritarian way. For more than ten years after the end of the war, the OHR along with other international institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina acted as the ultimate authority in the country, making heavy-handed decisions and bypassing democratic institutions they built in the first place (see also Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Pandolfi 2010). In 2006, however, they completely pulled back and called on the local political elites and citizens to sort things out themselves, not acknowledging that the system they have helped create produced ethnocracy that prevents people to exercise their democratic powers in the way they are meant to be used. At first their moralizing project of "democratic" education was coupled with making

unilateral decisions that were completely undemocratic, only to later drop the autocratic decision-making but continue with moral education of what it means to be a good citizen in a "real" democratic environment.

All of this, coupled with international conceptualization of war in cultural (i.e. war as a result of ethnic hatred) instead of political terms, attitudes of "wait and see" during the war, and "quick fixes" rather than long-term strategies guaranteeing sustainability after the war, attests to international agents' skewed perceptions of Bosnian "victimhood" as lacking human agency, a stance informed by their essentialized imaginaries of the country and its people. These preconceived notions obscure the fact that no matter what Bosnians do, even when they do act according to high democratic standards expected of them, they will still be considered incapable of behaving in a democratic way. The international agents' heavy-handed state-building and nation-making in Bosnia-Herzegovina coupled with their insistent (however, empty) promises of European Union accession, created a sense of unproductive dependence, where many Bosnians think the only way to create change in the country is by appealing to the international authorities to fix their problems and by acting as good democratic citizens, which results in people's distorted perceptions of what they can do to create change.

In order for this argument to gain more clarity, several questions need to be investigated: What was the role of international institutions and agents in Bosnian war of 1992-1995 and postwar peace-building and state-making process? How did the essentialist division between the West and the Balkans influence the international involvement in the "transition" process in Bosnia-Herzegovina? And lastly, how does the international involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina distort people's perceptions of the ways they can create change?

3.2. The Role of the International Institutions and Agents During 1992-1995 War

The role of the international intervention in conflict prevention and resolution in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s was riddled with reluctance, hesitation, indecisiveness, and belatedness. Some researchers and observers of the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina go as far as to claim that the international failure in preventive diplomacy pushed the country over the edge into war (Rigby 1994:5). In 1991, the European Community (EC)[59] proclaimed it would recognize Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent state, if the referendum showed a simple majority in favor of the independence. This pushed the Bosnian government to call for the referendum prematurely and with that deepened the opposition between the ethnic groups. The referendum received the simple majority and even though it was boycotted by many Bosnian Serbs who did not support independence from rump Yugoslavia, the EC nevertheless recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent country in 1992. With that the EC lost its leverage and any chance to negotiate a political settlement that would prevent war seemed to be gone (Rigby 1994:6). Rigby writes: "[T]he EC expected to play a special role in the recognition of Bosnia, and yet it had no intention of playing a role of protecting it as an independent entity" (1994:6; see also Eyal 1993).

The EC continued to organize peace talks and propose plans, but they were all too vague to satisfy the rival parties. The EC also warned the Serbs, who already started the war in Croatia, against the use of aggressive force in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but without any threat of real consequences the warnings sounded empty to the Serbs and the all-out war began. At first, the United Nations (UN) were reluctant to make any moves in Bosnia-Herzegovina, content on the EC to take the lead role in conflict resolution. Because with every hesitant move on the part of

[59] The European Community is the precursor to the European Union. The European Communities were incorporated into the European Union in 1993.

the international agencies the death toll rose and the Serbs gained more territory, the EC and UN decided to impose sanctions on Serbia, in order to sever the links between Milošević and Bosnian Serbs. However, Serbia was self-sufficient in food and rich in hydro-electric power, and sanctions did not stop the Bosnian Serbs territorial advancements. Thus, the UN finally decided to intervene on a greater scale with a deployment of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), not to engage in combat against the occupying force but to protect the humanitarian aid and its officials. In July of 1992, the Security Council passed a resolution 764 and with it declared that their involvement in this conflict would be of *humanitarian* nature (Rigby 1994:11; see also Young 2001). As Young states, "[t]he relief operation in the former Yugoslavia... took place against a background of political indecision, where humanitarian action became the only form of political action" (2001:786).

By defining the violent conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a "humanitarian crisis" and focusing their attention on humanitarian relief efforts rather than military coercion to prevent or end the war, the foreign political actors excused their inaction and appeared to be "doing something" not by stopping the violence but by supposedly "alleviating" the effects of the war and providing relief to the suffering (see also Gilbert 2008:228-229; Young 2001:788; Terry 2002). Furthermore, the UN imposed an arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia, which affected Bosnian Muslims the most. Bosnian Serbs seized most of the artillery from the former Yugoslavian army and were receiving support from Serbia as did Bosnian Croats from Croatia. Bosnian Muslims on the other hand were left defenseless despite the constant pleas to the international institutions to lift the embargo and allow them the right to self-defense. Former Director of Research at Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières, Fiona Terry, recalls Bosnian Muslims shouting at the humanitarian organizations, "we have no need of you, we need

arms to defend ourselves, your food aid and medicines only allow us to die in good health" (2002:22). In the midst of this international inaction and hesitation to provide more than just care for the civilians, strong Serbian artillery made big territorial advances, which they later used as leverage at the negotiation table.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina also drastically changed the foundation and principles of humanitarian action itself as neutral, impartial, and independent from any force (Gilbert 2008:229; see also Young 2001:789). The efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to deliver relief and with that alleviate the suffering, at the same time enabled people to remain in their homes, which was in direct opposition to the objective of that war to conquer and ethnically cleanse the territory, and thus displace the people of other ethnic groups from their places of residence. This is the very paradox of humanitarian action Fiona Terry talks about in her book *Condemned to Repeat?* where aims to alleviate the suffering can at the same time sustain the conflict and quite possibly prolong the suffering (2002). Humanitarian assistance in Bosnia-Herzegovina became a weapon and thus lost its position of neutrality as a non-partisan humanitarian action (Young 2001:789).

The UNHCR's and the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) humanitarian convoys in Bosnia-Herzegovina were constantly obstructed from delivering aid to the areas in need. The warring parties often denied free movement of relief into the enemy territory, unless a suitable deal would be made and much of the supplies would go to their soldiers, people of their ethnic group, or areas under their control. In 1993, the UNHCR reported to the Security Council they were able to deliver less than half of their projected weekly aid and the ICRC similarly reported only 10% of their relief was delivered to the target destinations (Young 2001:790). Thus, the basic principles of humanitarianism have come into question.

In previous operations, the UNHCR tried to maintain—even if this was not always possible in practice—the principle of delivering the assistance *only* under the circumstances where it could be done safely, freely, based on need, and, by monitoring its end distribution. In cases, where these conditions were not met, the assistance was not provided (Young 2001:790). However, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the UNHCR disregarded its own policies and continued to provide help no matter how dangerous the circumstances (Young 2001:790-791). This was most likely a consequence of the fact that UNHCR was not acting freely and independently of any force or entity. For example, when High Commissioner Sadako Ogata decided to suspend UNHCR's operations in 1993, based on continuous obstructions by Bosnian Serbs to deliver relief to Muslim enclaves, she was forbidden to do so by the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (in Young 2001:788-789).

The UNHCR also seemed to violate its principle of impartiality (distributing aid to all sides based on need). They continued to provide relief in areas where they knew the aid was unevenly distributed, largely bypassing those who needed it the most. Some UNHCR officials used humanitarian aid as leverage to negotiate access to certain areas and traded-off a portion of the aid with the military fractions, so that the rest could reach its destination. Much of the aid ended up on the black market, profited local warlords, and was used for military purposes. Because of that UNHCR humanitarian operation to Bosnia-Herzegovina was often criticized for fueling the war rather than alleviating the suffering. On the other hand, though, in some besieged cities the food and medicines were so scarce and human lives depended on it, that UNHCR authorities did not have much choice than "to use humanitarian aid for political and military purposes" (Young 2001:792). Moreover, all abled males were mobilized into the army during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, therefore, there was no clear distinction between the civilian and the

soldier. This compromised another original humanitarian principle of providing aid only to the civilians caught in the crossfire (Young 2001:792).

"Preventive protection" became a key policy of humanitarian action in Bosnia-Herzegovina, based on the principle that all Bosnian citizens have a right to remain in their homes. In practice, "preventative protection" meant, "monitoring the treatment of minority groups and mediating and intervening on their behalf with the warring parties, monitoring the imminent movement of populations and exposing the practice of forced relocation..." (Young 2001:795). The notion of "preventive protection" was unrealistic, because the organization could not do anything to stop the process of killing and ethnic cleansing, especially with its mission being of humanitarian nature. Moreover, in 1993, the Security Council declared six areas under siege—Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Tuzla, Žepa, Goražde, and Bihać—with large Muslim population, to be "safe areas" under the protection of UNPROFOR and NATO. In reality, these enclaves were far from being safe, a subject to constant bombardment, shelling, and sniper activity by the Bosnian Serb forces, and completely dependent on humanitarian aid without any guarantee of it getting through to the people. "Safe areas" kept people in one place, where they became sitting ducks, waiting to be killed or starved to death, and critics compared them to South African apartheid. In 1994, a former chief of UNHCR's Bosnia operation wrote: "surrounded by enemy forces, without basic shelter, medical assistance or infrastructure, isolated and living under sporadic shelling or sniper fire, these areas are becoming more and more like detention centers, administered by the UN and assisted by UNHCR" (Mendiluce 1994:14). In a report, UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan wrote, "up to 20,000 people, overwhelmingly from the Bosnian Muslim community, were killed in and around safe areas" (1999:6).

Srebrenica became one of those "safe areas" that resulted in a complete disaster as the UNFROFOR, heavily outnumbered, failed to protect the citizens from Bosnian Serb military forces in July, 1995. People of Srebrenica witnessed the genocide of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys, thousands of women and children being deported, and many women and girls being raped. An important piece of the puzzle is also the fact that UNPROFOR soldiers at observation posts defended the "safe area" of Srebrenica and its people by firing overhead at invading Bosnian Serb soldiers. In 1999, the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan wrote in a report on the fall of Srebrenica: "Through error, misjudgment and an inability to recognize the scope of the evil confronting us, we failed to do our part to help save the people of Srebrenica from the Serb campaign of mass murder" (1999:108). In the report, Kofi Annan also questioned the arms embargo imposed by the International Community, which prohibited Bosnian Muslims' right to self-defense. He criticized the persistent refusal by UNPROFOR forces to return the weapons Bosniak's in Srebrenica have been forced to surrender back in 1993 as a part of disarmament agreement that Bosnian Serb forces did not comply with (1999).

Many researchers are of the opinion this strong insistence on humanitarian relief to Bosnia-Herzegovina, "preventive protection," and creation of "safe areas" was done in order to keep Bosnians in Bosnia, instead of having to deal with a mass of refugees seeking asylum in the western countries and settling there (Gilbert 2008:229; Rieff 2002:130; Young 2001:794). As Young claims: "...the aim was to limit the scale of the refugee problem" (2001:794). The international institutions and agents quite possibly believed that a dogmatic insistence on principles would stop the humanitarian operation to Bosnia-Herzegovina and with that halt the need for UNPROFOR, whose duty was to protect the humanitarian aid. If this was to happen, the UN and the EC could not appear to be "doing something" anymore and they might have to

consider real military force or lose face in the public eye and the world of international diplomacy.

3.3. International Engineering After the War

3.3.1. The Dayton Peace Agreement

After more than three years of failed negotiations, several rejected peace plans, and many lives lost and displaced, the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA[60]), brokered by the United States, finally brought an end to war in Bosnia-Herzegovina *and* started a process of externally imposed "democratization" project, where the humanitarian intervention during the war never ended. At the time, very few commentators questioned this external democratization as potentially unstable and counter-productive, because it did not derive from the society itself and therefore was not given a chance to take root and flourish (see Chandler 2000; Stanton 1993; Boutros-Ghali 1996). As Kimberley Stanton argues: "International intervention that sets aside the principle of sovereignty is unlikely to foster democratic political arrangements..." (1993:15; see also Chandler 2000; Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Pandolfi 2010). Even the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, claimed that "each society must be able to choose the form, pace and character of its democratization process. Imposition of foreign models not only contravenes the Charter principle of non-intervention in internal affairs, it may also generate resentment among both the Government and the public, which may in turn feed internal forces inimical to democratization and to the idea of democracy" (1996:4). Because the UN is bound to respect state sovereignty and the DPA clearly violates that principle, the international powers formed

[60] The official name of the peace accord is the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement, because it was initialed by the three parties in Dayton, Ohio, on November 21, 1995 and signed on December 14, 1995 in Paris.

Peace Implementation Council (PIC), comprised of the Steering Board Members[61] and other countries as Members, Participants, and Observers, charged with implementing the DPA in Bosnia-Herzegovina since the end of the war. This shows the level of determination to start a grand experiment in developing strategies of extensive external democratization, even if it meant bypassing the right to sovereignty. The international agents were convinced that the task of democratization process in Eastern European regimes can only be entrusted to Western institutions, based on an assumption that those cultures "are not rational or civil enough to govern themselves" (Chandler 2000:3). In the following pages, I will first show the level of power the International Community granted itself in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina through DPA, followed by a discussion on the ways the 19th century western ideology of the White Man's Burden influenced the democratization process in Bosnia-Herzegovina leading to *ethnic democracy* that is far from the stable liberal democracy originally envisioned by the west.

Dayton was merely an end-result to a long-term peace negotiation process that started in 1991 after Bosnia's independence. It was unique not only because it was imposed from the outside but also because of the level of power the International Community granted itself. Dayton was not a product of people's consensus or popular vote as one would expect in a democracy and many Bosnians curse its existence today. As we shall see later in this chapter, because the OHR decided to pull back its level of power and involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2006 and because the current *status quo* is agreeable with local ethno-nationalist elites, many Bosnians feel any kind of structural change needed in this country is not possible without

[61] PIC Steering Board members are "Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, United Kingdom, United States, the Presidency of the European Union, the European Commission, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which is represented by Turkey" (OHR 1995a)

radically changing the DPA first. But how can the *status quo* change, if the agents who proposed and imposed the DPA and those who prosper from it, are not willing to let it go?

The DPA has eleven Annexes and all of them give the highest power over military, judicial, political, and economic matters of the state to different foreign institutions. For example, Annex 1-A, *Agreement on Military Aspects of the Peace Settlement*, grants NATO complete control over the military activity in the state. In Article VI, paragraph 5, it states that the Implementation Force (IFOR)[62] Commander, "shall have the authority, without interference or permission of any Party [referring to parties who signed the agreement], to do all that the Commander judges necessary and proper, including the use of military force, to protect the IFOR and to carry out the responsibilities listed [in this agreement]..." (UN 1995:18). Furthermore, in the same article, paragraph 9 (a), the IFOR has the right to "complete and unimpeded freedom of movement by ground, air, and water throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. It shall have the right to bivouac, maneuver, billet and utilize any areas or facilities to carry out its responsibilities as required for its support, training, and operations..." (UN 1995:19). In Appendix B to Annex 1-A, NATO personnel is given special privileges and immunities, and are exempt from passport and visa regulations normally applicable to aliens (UN 1995:27).

Annex 2, *Agreement on Inter-Entity Boundary Line and Related Issues*, states that any changes of the line between the two entities, needs the final approval of the IFOR Commander, a NATO-led peace implementation force (UN 1995:48). Annex 3, *Agreement on Elections*, gives the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) complete control over elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As stated in the DPA, the "Parties request the OSCE to adopt and put in place an elections program for Bosnia and Herzegovina" (UN 1995:53) and to

[62] IFOR is a NATO-led peace implementation force to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"supervise, in a manner to be determined by the OSCE and in cooperation with other international organizations the OSCE deems necessary, the preparation and conduct of elections..." (UN 1995:54).

Annex 4, *The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, is a part of the DPA, which means the international powers are written into the Constitution itself. According to Article II of the Constitution, Bosnia-Herzegovina is supposed to adopt the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which has priority over any other law (1995:61). Further along, in Article X of the Constitution, it is stated that the Human Rights and Freedoms from Article II cannot be changed by any subsequent amendment (UN 1995:73). The fact that people are not able to change parts of their own Constitution is unprecedented. Furthermore, forcing Bosnians to accept the European Convention for Human Rights and Freedoms also gave the international agents the mandate to supervise compliance with it. As it is stated under Article II of the Constitution, "[a]ll competent authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina shall cooperate with and provide unrestricted access to: any international human rights monitoring mechanisms established for Bosnia and Herzegovina..." (UN 1995:63). Furthermore, Annex 6, *Agreement on Human Rights*, establishes a Commission on Human Rights with two parts: the Human Rights Ombudsman who is appointed by the chairman of OSCE and cannot be a citizen of Bosnia-Herzegovina or any other neighboring state (UN 1995:85), and the Human Rights Chamber, composed of 14 members, 4 from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2 from Republika Srpska, and 8 appointed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, who also cannot be citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina or any neighboring state (UN 1995:87).

International powers are also written into other parts of the DPA. For example, a Governor appointed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a foreigner, oversees the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with three representatives appointed by the Presidency, two from the Federation (one Bosniak and one Croat, who share one vote) and one Serb from Republika Srpska. However, the Governor casts a tie-breaking vote (UN 1995:72). The constitutional court is supposed to be a combination of 4 judges selected by the House of Representatives of the Federation, 2 by the Assembly of Republika Srpska, and 3 non-citizens by the European Court of Human Rights (UN 1995:70). The list goes on-and-on but the final drop-in-a-bucket, is Annex 10 of the DPA, *Agreement on Civilian Implementation of the Peace Settlement*, that appoints another international agent as the High Representative (HR), who, according to Article V of the same Annex, has the "final authority in theater regarding interpretation of this Agreement [referring to DPA] on the civilian implementation of the peace settlement" (UN 1995:114). Furthermore, Article II, 1 (d) of Annex 10 says that the HR shall "[f]acilitate, as the High Representative judges necessary, the resolution of any difficulties arising in connection with civilian implementation" (UN 1995:112). Although the DPA clearly lays out the parameters of transition of power from the International Community to self-governing democracy, the initial transition time projections were clearly too optimistic. There was supposed to be a partial transition of power in 1996 that was at first prolonged for two years and then extended indefinitely (Chandler 2000:51).

The international agents created this peace agreement and extended broad powers of implementation and democratization process to itself, but they were not the signatories of the agreement and thus are not bound by it. As they placed limits on Bosnian self-rule, they simultaneously left room for flexibility for themselves based on an ethical and moral justification

that they are protecting human rights (see also Chandler 2000:51-52; Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Pandolfi 2010). This flexibility was clearly explained by the first HR in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1997-1999, Carlos Westendorp, when he said in an interview for a Bosnian magazine, *Slobodna Bosna*: "... if you read Dayton very carefully, Annex 10... even gives me the possibility to interpret my own authorities and powers" (OHR 1997a; see also Banning 2014:265; Chandler 2000:52). And so, they did. Since 1997, the HR acted as the ultimate authority in the country, imposing legislation, overriding decisions of the Constitutional Court, and dismissing government officials who were obstructing implementation of new constitutional arrangements or were involved in corruption (Banning 2014:265). For example, in 1997 the HR unilaterally signed a *Law on Citizenship of BiH* without consent of the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In a letter to the Presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina, then HR, Carlos Westendorp wrote (OHR 1997b; see also Banning 2014:266): "In accordance with my authority under Annex 10 of the Peace Agreement and Article XI of the Bonn Document, I do hereby decide that the Law on Citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall enter into force by 1 January 1998 on interim basis, until the Parliamentary Assembly adopts this law in due form, without amendments and no conditions attached."

Total imposition of a law without a chance to amend or appeal it, and with clear sidestepping of democratically appointed Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina "meant the complete subjugation of national legislative bodies to the will of the OHR" (Banning 2014:266). Since 1997, there have been literally hundreds of laws, amendments, and enactments imposed by the HR on subjects such as state symbols, state-level matters, constitutional issues, economic questions, judicial reform, media restructuring, property laws, return of displaced persons and refugees, and decisions relating to individuals indicted for war crimes, all of them circumventing

proper channels of in-state legislation. Perhaps most notable are the *Decision Imposing the Law on the State Court of BiH* (OHR 2000) and *Decision Suspending all Judicial and Prosecutorial Appointments in BiH (except to the BiH and the Entity Constitutional Courts, the BiH Human Rights Chamber, the BiH Court, and all courts in the Brčko District)* as part of OHR's initiated judicial reform (OHR 2002). As a consequence of this decision, all judges and prosecutors had to resign and reapply for their positions (Banning 2014:268).

Since 1998, the HR also brought *ad hoc* decisions to remove public officials such as mayors, party members, directors of state companies, ministers, parliamentarians, even members of the Presidency from their posts and offices. For example, during his tenure as HR, Paddy Ashdown dismissed fifty-eight persons from public office (Banning 2014:268), including Dragan Čović who was removed from his position as a Member of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina (OHR 2005). When the Bosnian Constitutional Court in 2007 found the OHR in breach of the *European Convention of the Human Rights* (ECHR) for the practice of dismissing public officials, then HR, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, annulled the decision and "prohibited any attempt to establish a domestic mechanism to review [OHR's] decisions" (Banning 2014:269). In recent years, the OHR stopped with the practice of dismissing officials, focusing more on lifting the bans assigned in the past, with the last set of removals from public office positions transpiring in 2009.[63]

Local and some international agents were seriously questioning the lawfulness of such extreme measures by the OHR. Tim Banning, who analyzed the legal framework of the Dayton Peace Agreement, especially its Annex 10 that gives the ultimate power to the HR, looked at the terminology used in the agreement and concluded the language used does not support the OHR's

[63] For more information see OHR website under "Decision of the High Representative" and "Removals and Suspensions from Office." http://www.ohr.int/?cat=350

substantial powers they have been exercising in Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1997. Banning wrote: "Clearly powers, such as the *monitoring* of the peace settlement's implementation, the maintaining of close contact with the Parties, the *coordination* of the activities of civilian organization and agencies or the powers to *participate* in meetings and to *report* periodically on the implementation process, are very general and emphasize the OHR's *auxiliary* character. They do not support the view that the OHR possesses substantial executive or even legislative powers" (2014:272).

Besides from calling upon Article V, in connection with Article II, 1 (d) of Annex 10 in making unilateral executive and legislative decisions, the HRs also used the so-called "Bonn Powers." In 1997, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) met in Bonn and in their Summary of Conclusions, under section XI, point 2, it says (OHR 1997c):

> The Council welcomes the High Representative's intention to use his final authority in theatre regarding interpretation of the Agreement on the Civilian Implementation of the Peace Settlement in order to facilitate the resolution of difficulties by making binding decisions, as he judges necessary... on... interim measures to take effect when parties are unable to reach agreement... [and] other measures to ensure implementation of the Peace Agreement throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and its entities, as well as the smooth running of the common institutions. Such measures may include actions against persons holding public office or officials who are absent from meetings without good cause or who are found by the High Representative to be in violation of legal commitments made under the Peace Agreement or the terms for its implementation.

Any decisions made by PIC and OHR that circumvent the DPA seem to be unlawful, because they are done without the consent of the contracting parties that signed the DPA (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia) in the first place. PIC itself is not a part of the DPA, thus it should not exist, because the signing parties did not approve it, let alone allow it to make any kind of important decisions regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina (see also Begić 2014:38). Similarly, Banning claims that PIC was created in 1995 as a body to support the peace process

(2014:290) and, as is stated in *PIC London Conclusions*, paragraph 21 (c), to give "political guidance on peace implementation" to the OHR (OHR 1995b). While OHR's establishment in Bosnia-Herzegovina was negotiated in Annex10 of the DPA, there is no reference or mention of PIC. Therefore, according to Banning, "[t]he PIC is simply a parallel structure to the OHR with no authority over it. It works as a joint diplomatic body which may give advice, but may not grant any powers to the OHR" (Banning 2014:295-296). It seems the international agents initially created a body to support and guide the OHR in peace implementation but then subsequently gave it the power to create its own powers in Bosnia-Herzegovina without any legal precedent or agreement of the DPA signatories, because the power invested in them through the DPA did not match the level of power they have been exercising in the country. It is very likely this had been done in order to speed up the democratization process in Bosnia-Herzegovina but what kind of democracy were they hoping to institute by excluding the democratically elected government in the decision-making and with that the will of the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina? In the following pages, I will show that the kind of power-sharing that the DPA created forces people to find security in voting for their own ethnic constituents. Thus, many Bosnian people feel constrained in the ways they can use their "democratic" power.

3.3.2. Consociation Democracy and Institutional Engineering

The International Community was convinced that the only way for Bosnia-Herzegovina to transition into a peaceful democracy is by decentralizing power, creating multi-ethnic administrations, and ensure power-sharing among the three ethnic communities, which would safeguard the vital interests of their constitutive groups. The DPA preserved the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state and promised to curb ethno-nationalisms, but in order to

decentralize power, the governance was broken into several levels—state, entity, canton, and municipality. Thus, Bosnia-Herzegovina was divided into two entities, both with full state characteristics: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), a joint Croat-Bosniak entity with 51 percent of the territory, *and* Republika Srpska (RS), a Serb majority entity, with 49 percent of the territory. FBiH is further divided into ten largely autonomous Cantons, five of them predominantly Bosniak, three predominantly Croat, and two that contain a mixed population. Each Canton has their own Assembly, a Government, and Ministries. And lastly, the FBiH Cantons and the entity of Republika Srpska (that does not have Cantons) are further divided into municipalities with a system of local self-government such as municipal Assembly, Mayor, and Administrative Services. Despite its good intentions, the DPA created an extremely convoluted and costly type of governance, consuming over 60% of the country's GDP (Kurtović 2012:5). To illustrate this in just one example, on the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina with less than 4 million people, there are fourteen ministries of health care and social protection, one on the state level, two on the entity level (one in FBiH and one in RS), one in each of the 10 Cantons of FBiH, and one Department of Health and Other Services in Brčko District, which is a self-governing administrative unit. The same goes for all other ministries and governing bodies.

This complex system of governance creates further distance between the state and its citizens. Citizen activists I worked with, frequently had difficulties figuring out which administration is responsible for a particular problem they wanted to address. They would often get sent into a spin by administrations passing off the responsibilities between themselves. People in the positions of power frequently take advantage of this, especially when passing dubious legislations benefiting them and not the people or simply not doing anything about addressing a pertinent problem. Citizen activist, Leila, and I often had conversations about the

lack of communication channels between the citizens and the public officials. On one occasion, she commented:

> It is often not clear who is responsible for what, who to contact in the case of filling a complaint or trying to point out a problem that needs to be addressed. And if one tries to find out, the administrators often do not pick up the phone or answer e-mails, and if, on the off chance, one does get to speak to them, they either do not know who to refer you to or they purposefully refer you back to the office that you just talked to and where they said this thing is not under their jurisdiction. They are sending us back and forth like a ping-pong ball... the politicians are hiding behind the complexity of Dayton.

To ensure equal representation, the International Community created a system of power-sharing. They pushed for consociational form of democracy that is, according to Lijphart, based on four key characteristics supposedly bringing success to governing in deeply divided societies: the sharing of executive power, group autonomy, proportionality, and veto powers (1990:494-495; 2002). Although proponents of consociational political system such as Lijphart believe that it calms and neutralizes ethnically-charged environments, critics argue that it "codifies and institutionalizes ethnic categories... and discourag[es] the emergence of alternative dimensions of politics of multi-ethnic parties" (Hulsey 2010:1133; see also Norris 2008; Garry 2009). In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the consociational system proved highly problematic, leading to a form of *ethnic democracy* at best and further polarization between ethnic groups. A natural manifestation of this model pushes people to vote only for their own ethnic representatives, since, in the current atmosphere of ethnic segregation in politics, the use of war rhetoric by politicians, minority discrimination, and denial of crimes perpetrated during the war, everyday Bosnians have trouble believing that a representative from another ethnic group would properly and rightfully represent interests of a group he/she is not a part of. If Bosnians' trust in the political representatives from their own group is extremely low, it is going to be even harder for them to believe that a representative from another group has their best interest in mind.

The international agents strongly believe the electoral politics can bring about positive change not only in Bosnia-Herzegovina but other countries transitioning to a democracy as well. International organizations spent billions of dollars and many years operating and tinkering with the electoral process in Bosnia-Herzegovina, hoping that through elections the power would transfer from ethno-nationalist parties to more moderate ones that do not "attempt to mobilize people along ethnonational lines" (Manning 2004:61). However, international agents did not realize that due to the division of the territory according to ethnic lines the need for moderate parties becomes obsolete.

3.3.3. Electoral Process

The first post-war elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina were held in 1996, where nationalist parties ensured the elections would solidify wartime ethnic cleansing. Three main pre-war and post-war nationalist parties, the SDS (Serbian Democratic Party), HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union), and SDA (Muslim-led Party of Democratic Action) fought to gain control over their constituent groups and government positions, using party-controlled media, proselytizing the rhetoric of ethnic animosity used during the war, and voter fraud (Manning 2004:64). Since then, the International Community attempted to push for the emergence of more moderate parties committed to multiethnic Bosnia by changing the rules, forcing parties to modify their strategies and platforms, and even dismissing ethno-nationalists from party positions who were not committed to integration but instead pushed for segregation. While some gains have been made, the balance of political power nevertheless remains with ethno-nationalists.

There are several reasons for this. First, wartime nationalist parties control the economic resources, which is extremely important in this shattered post-war economic situation, therefore,

changing the electoral system will not prevent them from defining the political arena. Second, the country's precarious security dilemma (i.e. will the country be able to survive in the current configuration or will it implode by Serbs pushing for independence and Croats for their own entity) allows nationalist parties to exploit the fear of their constituents and push for ethno-nationalist agendas and segregation. Third, ethno-nationalist parties' long existence in postwar Dayton political arena allowed them to solidify their power and gain strength and control, making it difficult for alternatives to grow and prosper. And fourth, changes within the Bosnian electoral system are often done by foreigners who are frequently unaware of the multitudes of local factors and conditions, and are overwhelmed by complex constitutional arrangements, resulting in the kind of changes that often lead to more segregation (see also Manning 2004:69-70).

One would expect that ethnic parties, especially those representing Serb and Croat population, since they are in minority, with 33 and 18 percent of the pre-war population respectively, would have to adjust their strategies, targeting multiethnic audience in order to win. However, this did not happen. Instead of appealing to a broad segment of the population across ethnic lines, nationalist political parties reinforced their separatist strategies by focusing their attention on segmented and primarily mono-ethnic communities where they could win the majority. It is Bosnia's decentralized and fragmented territorial and constitutional structure that segments electoral marketplace along ethnic lines and allows political parties to remain separatist (see also Manning 2004). For example, most of the Bosnian Serbs live in the entity of Republika Srpska, thus, Serb political parties simply need to preserve its autonomy and focus on getting a majority among its constituents. While there are some Serbs living in the other entity of FBiH,

are a minority there, and their rights are affected accordingly, most Serbs live in places where they are a majority.

Thus, when Bosnians hear the HR lecturing them about making good use of their democratic rights before the general elections in order to create change themselves, this solidifies people's thinking that the international agents after all of these years interfering in Bosnian politics and life do not understand the extent of the complexity of the system they helped build. As Mirko said: "What good is democracy to us, when they [international agents] instituted ethnic segregation which prevents us from exercising the very democratic rights they are promoting" and "There are no alternatives for us to choose from at the elections. They are either nationalists or they are corrupt, and in most cases, they are both—corrupt nationalists." Thus, why do Bosnian voters continue supporting nationalist parties?

My ethnographic fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina ended in May of 2014. Later that year, Bosnia held its 7th general elections. Two important events happened that election year. First, in February 2014, social uprisings erupted in thirty-two cities all over Bosnia-Herzegovina, largely focusing on economic and social issues, and citizen dissatisfaction with allegedly corrupt political representatives. Second, in May of the same year, devastating floods affected much of the country where the government once again showed a complete lack of action to help people in distress. A few citizen activists I worked with were optimistic, thinking people's dissatisfactions with public officials will show some change at the polls, although sceptics knew change under Dayton is not likely to happen. When I asked everyday people, if they think this political turmoil citizens have been expressing on the street will make an impact on the outcome of the election, most were doubtful. My cousin said: "We will vote for ours, they will vote for theirs, and so on [… *i tako dalje*]." I asked him how he was going to vote. "For ours, of course. What else I am

going to do? Listen, our political representatives are just as bad as theirs and I am not a nationalist. But I do fear Croats would be misrepresented and discriminated against, if we decide to vote for other politicians. As long as the politics is separated into us and them [*mi, vi, oni*], there is nothing we as voters can do. At least, I don't see a way. Everybody will vote for their representatives, which means I have to vote for ours. That's the way things go here in BiH." Thus, nationalist political parties won the most votes yet again. Even some people in Bosnia-Herzegovina are often surprised over the same results time-and time again, since there is a general and overall discontent with political elites putting so much attention on ethno-national identity and, in the meantime, disregarding more pertinent socioeconomic problems in the country. Yet, when it comes time to vote citizens seem to retreat into their segregated *ethnopolis* and vote according to ethnic lines.

I argue, several conditions would have to be met before we can expect voters to be the agents of change. First, the citizens would have to enjoy a full access to civil liberties and political freedoms (Manning 2004:67), which is still not the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Much of the media is party operated and divided along ethnic lines, servicing the citizens biased information. Civil society, which has been an integral component of international intervention as well, remains underdeveloped, mainly because the international concept of civil society is at odds with the actual local circumstances, challenges, and needs. Moreover, the citizens do not have many solid alternatives to choose from at the elections. As mentioned before, wartime nationalist parties have resources, experience, and know how to navigate this Dayton postwar environment to their advantage. As Manning suggests, "... the effects of those first elections may have entrenched the wartime nationalist parties to the extent that it became nearly impossible to dislodge them" (2004:68).

Second, the electoral competition among ethno-nationalist parties clearly reinforces ethnic divisions. Nationalist parties with longstanding experience in politics purposefully use the rhetoric of war to instill fear, divide the electorate, and conquer their ethnic votes. As mentioned before, the divided nature of Bosnia-Herzegovina instituted by the DPA, allows nationalist parties to thrive by simply targeting votes from their own ethnic constituents. Arapović and Brljavac, who conducted an analysis of pre-election rhetoric in Bosnia-Herzegovina, examining 5 daily newspapers, 6 TV stations, legislative bodies, and rallies, concluded that during the 2010 election campaign the candidates of nationalist political parties extensively used negative rhetoric of enticing conflict, addressed not only to their political opponents but entire ethnic and religious groups as well (2012). This ethnic animosity further divides the electorate according to ethnic lines, as people do not feel inclined to vote for a candidate who is speaking of other ethnic groups in a hateful and discriminatory way. Bosnia is a place where people still have not come to terms with the effects of the war, mainly because neither of the three sides have admitted the culpability for atrocities they committed.

Third, the international community's naiveté that a good dose of democracy will fix everything (see also Bildt 1998:254), ignores the fact that wartime nationalist parties control most of the resources people need to survive (see also Manning 2004:68), especially in these economically challenging times. Trading Economics estimates unemployment rate in Bosnia-Herzegovina at 42.73 percent (2015) rising to 57 percent among youth (The World Bank 2013). During the war, the strongest nationalist parties seized control of a large portion of valuable economic assets (Manning 2004:68) that were publicly owned before the war. During the process of transformation to market economy, these assets were privatized according to ethnicized party-family infrastructure and bought for a fraction of their real value. Thus, these large public

employers that provided much needed security to people before the war, are now falling apart due to corruption and mismanagement, and what little employment is still available in some of them, usually depends on the "access to the political interests that control them" (Manning 2004:68). In an environment like this, people are fighting for what little resources are available and continue to vote for nationalist parties, thinking this might improve their chances of accessing resources needed for their survival. While some improvement has been made in respect to the electoral process in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where massive voter fraud from 1996 elections does not happen anymore, it is not unusual for parties to engage in political clientelism during the election campaign with often explicit *quid pro quo*. These events, where meagerly services or goods are provided by party representatives are also heavily advertised, to make sure people all over the country see their seeming generosity, which wanes as soon as they are elected into office. Zlatan Begić, a law professor from Tuzla, says, "[e]very day we see prime ministers, assembly presidents, envoys and other senior public officials appointing their closest relatives as directors of public companies. We see the government giving grants from public funds to private firms run by spouses of ministers who work in that same government, or employing immediate family members in public institutions and companies" (2014:39). This also creates a situation where people occupy important leadership positions but do not possess the experiential nor the educational expertise. Citizen activists I worked with, many of whom were unemployed, often complained that qualification requirements in the job advertisements often do not match the expertise normally required for a specific job. Based on years of experience on the job market, several citizen activists complained the only way to get a job is through connections (*veze/štele*), where unexperienced people end up in positions that require a type of education and expertise very different from those they possess.

The fourth reason for why people keep voting for nationalist parties despite their open and wide contempt of ethno-nationalist politics is because the fragmented electoral system and ethno-nationalist political context create a dilemma that "leads them to choose the nationalist status quo despite the fact that they would prefer a different path in Bosnian politics" (Mujkić and Hulsey 2010:144). There exists a large segment of the population in Bosnia-Herzegovina that would prefer to vote for non-nationalists but end up voting strategically for their own, even though they are aware this will not bring them the desired outcomes. There are three possible outcomes in voting: (1) people of all groups voting for their own nationalist parties and perpetuating the *status quo*, (2) each group voting for the other ethno-nationalist parties, where there is a high chance those nationalist parties in power would then pursue goals at the expense of others, and (3) people of all groups voting for non-nationalists where there is a possibility everybody would benefit from change. Due to the fact that neither side knows exactly how others will vote, the dominant strategy for each group is to vote nationalist, and therefore, continuing the *status quo*, because, at the very least, their situation will not get any worse than it already is. Thus, "the players play it safe and each receives a poor outcome" (Mujkić and Hulsey 2010:148). As Mujkić and Hulsey write, "[i]n the ethno-nationalist conception of politics, voters risk the interests of their entire ethnic group when they choose to vote for multi-ethnic parties, because it weakens the overall strength of their group as opposed to the other groups. Voting behavior is driven by fear of finding one's self on the wrong side of a zero-sum game and living under the domination of other national groups" (2010:148). This voting strategy becomes understandable, especially in the climate of extensive ethnic animosity used by political parties during election campaigns. Because of the current segregated ethno-nationalist politics in the country, the voters from one group cannot trust that others will vote for change as well, and in

the case they do not, they risk being misrepresented by political representatives who spent most of the election campaign attacking their ethnic group.

3.4. International Essentialization of Bosnian Society

Although Bosnia-Herzegovina was not colonized by western imperial powers, postcolonial critical framework might still be beneficial to conceptualize the effects of international politics in this region. Politicians, academics, popular culture, and the media all play a central role in producing essentialized imaginaries of Bosnians, who are not only from the Balkans but also forty percent Muslim. These perceptions in many ways correspond to the stereotypical understandings of the "East" and its subject as inferior, voiceless, despotic, irrational, and backward, which is often juxtaposed to the West's view of itself as democratic, rational, moral, dynamic, and progressive (Said 1979, 1993; Spivak 1987, 1988; Bhabha 1990, 1994; Ewing 2008; Bringa 1995; Helms 2008).

At first the dividing line existed between the Western and the Oriental Europe but, since the dissolution of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, a new division was created between Western democracies and the communist East, until the fall of the Berlin Wall. However, both divisions still exist today. This can be seen not only in naturalized stereotypical perceptions of Islam and Muslim people, but also in the categorization of Eastern European countries as *not capable* of a proper democratic transition. Dimitris Keridis argues that "[t]he breakdown of the Berlin Wall erased the East-West dividing line, but eventually created a new division, between Europe and the Balkans" (in Bokova 2002:24). However, Europe-Balkan division is not a new creation. The Balkans have been objectified and differentiated from Europe since at least the

beginning of the 20th century (Coles 2007b:258) and this division continues today, despite democratic changes in the area since 1989.

Bakić-Hayden and Hayden consider "Balkanism" to be a part of the orientalist context because they both share the "underlying logic and rhetoric" (Bakić-Hayden 1995:920; see also Bakić-Hayden and Hayden 1992). They see Balkanism as a variant of Orientalism (Bakić-Hayden 1995:920), since the Balkan used to be under the Ottoman/oriental rule, and is therefore distinguished from Europe as the "Other." According to Bakić-Hayden, the rhetoric of essentialization in India such as lack of reason or subjugation is prominent in much of the writing by western travelers to the European east as well, who often compared the region to Western colonies. In opposition to this view, Maria Todorova proposes that "Balkanism" should be contextualized as a separate and an independent rhetoric/paradigm, not "merely a sub-species of orientalism" (1994:454; see also Todorova 2007; Helms 2008). She argues that because of its unique geographical, political, religious, and cultural position, Balkanism developed its own rhetorical repertoire, and is therefore concrete and not intangible as the Orient. However, the above positions need not be in opposition but building on each other. Orientalist theoretical framework can still be used to critically evaluate Western involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, together with more specific and unique historical and geographic context.

The relationship of international agents with Bosnia-Herzegovina is often extremely janus-faced, where inclusion and exclusion are happening at the same time, or, in other words, Europe's attempts at including Bosnia-Herzegovina into the pan-European identification often comes with a price of essentialization, differentiation, and exclusion (see also Coles 2007b:259, 2007a). During my fieldwork, I read a Bosnian novella called *Sahib*, written by a local writer, Nenad Veličković (2005), which uses perspectives of postcolonial critique in a postsocialist

context to satirically illustrate the politics of exclusion and difference created by international aid and relief workers in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Imperial politics of foreign intervention is not only obvious in the author's use of irony and black humor but also in his choice of a name for the main protagonist of the story: *Sahib*,[64] an Englishman working for an international organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina that is in charge of various projects in order to solve the country's problems but does it from a position of arrogance, ignorance, fear of the unknown, lack of respect, and in a patronizing way. He is quick to differentiate between the 'International Self' and the 'Bosnian Other' and often takes the moral high-ground. *Sahib* believes everything international agents do in Bosnia-Herzegovina is from a righteous stance of moral education, where backward Bosnians, who are still very much entrenched in ideologies of immoral socialism, need to be educated by the west on the proper moral behavior and human rights. This colonial story would not be complete without a patronizing relationship between a master and his subordinate. *Sakib*,[65] his driver, often challenges his employer's observations about Bosnia-Herzegovina and its people with cleaver and sarcastic remarks but is never taken seriously. In fact, most of his comments are interpreted by *Sahib* as ignorant and dumb. However, *Sakib*, cleverly and quickly realizes Europe's main incentive in Bosnia-Herzegovina is profit and capitalism disguised under the pretext of ethics and human rights.

Although sometimes blown out of the proportion, as all satires are for the sake of humor and getting the main point across, this novella powerfully illustrates a complicated relationship between the agents of the international organizations and the local population. Bosnians are seen as people in dire need of moral education and cultural transformation mainly because the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was conceptualized in cultural not political terms, believing the ancient

[64] A form of respectful address for a European man in colonial India.
[65] An Arabism in Bosnian language meaning "a clever and intelligent person" (Nuhić 2009:248).

ethnic hatred and not differing political ideologies was responsible for the conflict (Gilbert 2008:15-16). On a discursive level, international agents constantly promote Europe as a goal and a benefit that Bosnians should work and aspire to. However, in practice the mechanisms of differentiation and exclusion manifest themselves on at least two levels: (1) the separation of international agents, above and beyond the Bosnian society (see also Coles 2007b:265) and (2) the perception of the local population as not capable to accept democracy and become modern, which results in "exclusion of Bosnians from an imagined European-ness" (Coles 2007b:257). On the one hand, international agents think Bosnians need to take ownership of their own future, but on the other they see them as incompetent, passive, dependent, and unable to foresee problems and provide solutions (see also Coles 2007b:270). As Coles writes, "[t]he dominant narrative is that Bosnians simply do not have the 'proper attitude'" (2007b:269).

I have seen this duality in play during my fieldwork. In February, 2014, after the eruption of social protests all over the country, HR, Valentin Inzko, on the one hand commended the citizens for rising up to the political elites but on the other criticized them for using violence, and burning and destroying of government property. Again, he retorted with moral education, instructing the citizens that only change achieved through non-violent protest is the kind of change that is proper of a democratic behavior. He also warned the public that EU troops will be called upon, if the situation worsens, unsurprisingly misinterpreting the nature of indignation as having ethnic conflict component, which was far from the truth. One must ask, why are Bosnians held to such a high moral standard? Is it not true that people in other Western countries periodically resort to violent protest as well and they are not threatened with troops?

On the other side, local people feel this new order is just as commanding, dictatorial, and imposing as the previous one was and all the ones before that. The European Union's carrot-and-

stick approach of inclusion and exclusion to manifest a desired democratic and moral behavior, reveal the underlying values of Western democracies (see also Pandolfi 2010:155) and skewed international agents' perceptions of Bosnian victimhood as lacking human agency. An unproductive dependence is formed, where many Bosnians think the only way to create change is by appealing to the leading force of the international involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the OHR, when they encounter the unyielding, impenetrable, and unfunctional system where problems become unsolvable. But the international organizations and their agents are just as much a part of the problem that helped build the convoluted system, as local politicians who are taking advantage of it.

The international domineering politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina created a form of dependency and an illusion that foreign agents can fix everything by waving their magic wand and making things happen for the good of the people who are obviously struggling not by their own fault. The citizens have seen them do unprecedented things through the years, such as firing countless politicians, instituting policies and changing laws without consent, and much more. Thus, when Bosnians give up fighting impenetrable and unwavering local institutions referred to as Don Quixote's Windmills—a symbol of something that cannot be defeated—citizens often turn to what they feel is the last resort, the OHR.

This is also the reason why parents from Konjević Polje mentioned in chapter two, who protested for Bosniak curriculum education for their children in Republika Srpska, set up their protest camp across the street from OHR in Sarajevo. After being ignored by institutions in Republika Srpska for several years, they decided to appeal to the "main boss." When I asked the parents protesting, if the HR, Valentin Inzko, responded to them, they said he visited the camp only to tell them he cannot do anything about the situation, since this is not the jurisdiction of his

office. In other words, he directed them to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), another international organization, who has been involved in education reform since the early 2000s. This is exactly what local politicians have been doing to the parents as well, passing on the responsibilities to each other without any solution in sight. "I do not understand," one father said, "why are they [OHR] still here, if they are not helping people. They obviously have the power, because they have been using it since the end of the war! This was our last resort. If this does not work and it doesn't look like it will, I do not know what we are going to do. All we are asking for is what is promised to us in the Constitution that international community [međunarodna zajednica] wrote. I am so disappointed, everything seems to be turned on its head."

At the time of the protest, I stroke up a casual conversation with two foreign workers, one who was working for the OHR and the other for the UN. They saw me working on a Mac computer in a coffee shop and thought I was a foreigner as well. When I explained what I was doing there and where I was from, one of them said: "Oh, I thought, you were one of us." "One of you?" I said. "What does that mean?" I asked. "You know, one of us, internationals, people who are helping Bosnians in this post-war process." "Ha, the war has been over for almost twenty years but we are still referring to Bosnia as post-war," I said sarcastically. My sarcasm was two-fold. Some people still consider Bosnia-Herzegovina as post-war because the war continues to inform socio-political life, others think it is because Bosnians have not been able to "get it together" for almost two decades. I wondered which scenario fit the two internationals I was talking to and it later turned out they had a very skewed view of the country and its people. Something that stroke me the most was their perception of the protest by parents and children in front of the OHR. The young man who interned for the UN said: "… My feeling about Bosnians

is that they got used to getting help from the international organizations and donations, that they are taking advantage of it. Billions of dollars were donated by international institutions to rebuild this country and it is still far from it where it needs to be. Where did all that money go? I think it made the people lazy, to the point where now they are just expecting things to be fixed by us." The other young man, also an intern but for the OHR said: "Yeah, I agree. Look at that protest in front of the OHR. They came all the way to Sarajevo, put up tents, and now they say they are not moving until Inzko fixes the problem for them. They've been there for months!" I was surprised and angered by how little these two young individuals knew about the situation in the country and the ways their misconceptions were informed by prejudice. They considered themselves to be a part of the team that supposedly helps Bosnians in this post-war process but I wondered, what kind of help that is where one is taking a moral high-ground and basing their decisions on stereotypes. Granted, they were just interns, but they also talked about their bosses having the same kind of attitude. From several conversations with them, I noticed, they did not know much about Bosnia-Herzegovina at all, its history, the war, and post-war reconciliation period and, therefore, their thinking of the complex situation in the country was distorted and extremely simplified. Most of all, I was taken back by their skewed notions of Bosnian victimhood as passive and lacking agency, but also lazy, waiting for charity to arrive, and simply expecting for the High Representative to fix everything for them.

First of all, parents who protested in front of the OHR have been unsuccessfully trying to fix this problem themselves, pleading and negotiating with the government in Republika Srpska for ten whole years. Exasperated, they turned to OSCE and only when they failed to negotiate parents' terms for Bosniak curriculum with the minister of education of Republika Srpska, Goran Mutabdžija, the parents turned to what they thought was their last resort, the OHR, an institution

who has been known to exercise executive decisions many times before. It is obvious, these parents have not been waiting for charity but have in turn been extremely proactive fighting impenetrable windmills for years. Yes, they were hoping the High Representative might be able to do something to help their situation but only after years of trying to fix their problem on their own.

Secondly, parents framed their protest in front of the OHR in a moral and democratic way. As soon as they erected the tents, they also put up a big sign facing the OHR building, which they left hanging the whole time of the protest. The sign said:

Konjević Polje
"Svijet je opasno mjesto za život,
ne zbog ljudi koji su zli, već zbog
dobrih ljudi koji ništa ne
poduzimaju."
Albert Einstein
1995 UN
OSCE 2013
OHR???

Konjević Polje
"The world is a dangerous place to live;
not because of the people who are evil, but because
of the *good* people who don't do anything about it."
Albert Einstein
1995 UN
OSCE 2013
OHR???

From the parents' point of view, the international agents are morally and ethically obligated to help them, because of the events that happened in the past. In 1995, the UN Protection Forces failed to defend the "safe zone" of Srebrenica, where thousands of people were massacred by Bosnian Serbs. Many people from Konjević Polje, took refuge in Srebrenica, therefore, they identify with that massacre. In 2013, OSCE failed to negotiate parents' terms for Bosniak curriculum with the minister of education of Republika Srpska. And finally, with the

question marks next to the OHR, the parents are wondering: "Are you going to let us down as well?" With this sign, parents were remarking on international organizations letting them down and failing to carry out their promises. I argue this ethical and moral sentiment parents chose to define their protest is also the main reason why their pleas were so blatantly disregarded by the international agents. This was yet another one of the constant reminders of different ways the international actors have failed during the peace negotiation and post-war rebuilding process. It is hard to be reminded of a moral failure when the international organizations and their actors embody a western attitude of moral superiority against the Balkans and its people.

Thirdly, parents were trying to act in a democratic way, something the international agents have been trying to teach them all along but still think Bosnians have failed. Parents' interesting play on ethics and moral behavior is noticeable in them changing Einstein's quote on the protest sign. His original saying states: "The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it." Parents, on the other hand, inserted the word *good* in front of people, therefore changing it into "… because of the *good* people who don't do anything about it." According to parents I talked to, they were trying to recognize the international actors are in essence good people who have their hearts in the right place and therefore, it should not be hard for them to do what is morally and ethically right. They were also trying, as good democratic citizens, to soften their indignation with a recognition they are dealing with good, not evil, people. It was important to parents to define this protest in peaceful terms as they kept repeating what appeared to be their mantra: "We come in peace, this is a peaceful protest and will stay that way. We just want what is promised to us in the Constitution." Peaceful indignation and a demand for human rights written in the Constitution are the ways a good democratic citizen is supposed to act and yet, international actors

commenting on the protest at the time did not recognize this as a democratic behavior at all. If anything, they acted as if Bosnians are resorting to their extortion tactics yet again, bullying, in an emotional way, their way to a conclusion in their favor, while somebody else does the work for them.

In the meantime, the nationalist political elites from all three sides, coopted this protest and spin it in their favor, further solidifying ethnic divisions. Although often treated as incompetent by international agents, local political officials found a way to congeal their positions, staked their often-illegal claims to resources, built their own empires, and what seems an impermeable system of pseudo democratic governance based on ethnic affiliation. With the help of the international intervention, they institutionalized ethnicity into every little nook and cranny of the Bosnian society, from everyday life, civil society, economy, media, education, public services, to the highest levels of governance. They instilled fear and hopelessness into Bosnian people as a strategy that keeps them in power. They successfully manipulated the system in place to their utmost advantage, keeping the dividing line between ethnic groups, and intentionally maintaining the status quo.

Traumatic disintegration of the utopian socialist order, the horrific war, and often-forced implementation of western values and social, political, and economic models, often result in everyday people's disorientation in navigating the system, and conflicting perceptions of what they can do to create change. Many are pressed with existential matters and do not see a way to make their lives better. They feel stuck in the Dayton Peace Agreement that gives them rights only as members of constituent groups. Since the DPA divides the territory and its people into segregated communities and is therefore agreeable with the nationalist elites' maintenance of power, it is hard for them to fathom how to overturn it. However, as will be illustrated in the

following chapters, everyday people in Bosnia-Herzegovina despite the precarious situation they find themselves in are not void of agency. They find their own unique ways to carve out spaces that transcend segregation and nationalism to make their lives more meaningful by focusing on ethics, morality, solidarity, and activism.

Chapter 4

Between Yearning and Hope:

Citizen Activists Building a 'Normal' Life

Figure 4.1. JMBG protest in June 2013.

4.1. Introduction

On the very first day I arrived in Sarajevo to conduct my year-long ethnographic fieldwork, I tossed the suitcases in the corner of my rented apartment, put my daughter in a baby-carrier, enlisted my husband who needed no persuasion to be on-board, and ran in front of the parliament building to join a protest. "What am I doing?" I thought to myself. "I have not even had a chance to acclimate, slowly introduce myself to the community, and let the community introduce itself to me." It would not be an exaggeration to say my fieldwork started in "warp drive," faster-than-light propulsion, or at least it felt like that. It was June 2013 and the protest was called *Bebolucija* (Babylution) or JMBG, an acronym for *Jedinstveni Matični Broj Građana* (Unique Master Citizen Number), an identification number granted to citizens and indicating

their rights-bearing and claim-making status. On the internet and social media, it sounded as if people, after 18 years of politics of *impasse* (Kurtović 2012), have finally had enough. What brought them all together in massive numbers and determined to force those in the positions of power to do their jobs? Children's lives were put in danger because of an inability of the leaders of three constitutive peoples—Bosniaks, Croats, and Srbs—to agree on the revision of a national identification number law. In May 2011, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared the law unconstitutional because one of its articles did not contain the new names of a few municipalities in Republika Srpska. The Constitutional Court gave the parliament six months to amend the law but ended suspending it in January 2013 due to inability of the parliament to reach a solution. That meant, from February 2013 children were born in Bosnia-Herzegovina stateless and without citizenship. After Sarajevo media reported on a case of Belmina, a newborn baby girl that was not able to obtain a passport to travel abroad for an emergency medical treatment due to not having JMBG, a small group of protesters announced over Facebook they are going to block the exit from the parliament garage with their cars and invited people to join them. Armed with babies, strollers, and baby pacifiers, people indeed came out in large numbers until there were enough to block all exits in and out of the Bosnian Parliament, trapping parliamentarians inside, and demanding them to pass a solution on the amended law. Pressured by the protest, the Bosnian parliament reached a temporary solution, Belmina was issued a passport, and her parents were able to take her to the hospital abroad. However, knowing well that a temporary solution will not suffice, the protesters continued with the blockade, claiming they will not leave until a permanent solution is reached. After an intervention by the High Representative, Valentin Inzko, whose primary interest was to ensure the release of foreign bankers attending a convention in the same building, the protesters

dispersed only to return the next day. Sad news reached the protesters a few days later when another baby girl, called Berina, died in a Belgrade hospital due to loosing precious time delayed at the border without proper travel documentation (she also did not have JMBG). Even more determined, the protesters continued pushing for a permanent solution by gathering every day for several weeks, organizing vigils, daily coffee meetings at 5 till noon (*pet do dvanaest*), and a concert with several famous Bosnian musicians showing their support for the cause.

Bebolucija protests were extremely important, not only because newborn lives were in danger, but because some citizen activists were trying to create change outside of the constraints of Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina. The demands that were crafted by the protesters after the blockade, were not framed in the context of the Dayton structure. They were asking for (1) an immediate and permanent amendment of the law and issuing of JMBG; (2) creation of a state solidarity fund for emergency medical treatment abroad for those children that cannot be offered medical care in Bosnia-Herzegovina; (3) all parliamentarians and ministers have to contribute 30% of their salaries into this medical fund until the end of their term; and (4) a guarantee that there will be no criminal prosecution of those that participated in the blockade. Even though the issue of political stalemate and inability on the side of the politicians to reach a compromise over JMBG law was inherently ethnic,[66] citizen activists that started this protest refused to take an ethnic stance on this. They simply wanted and demanded JMBG to be issued to children but how that was going to be done was not their concern. Of course, not all protesters were on the same page regarding this issue as some saw an opportunity to also make demands for the kind of

[66] Politicians from Republika Srpska demanded the new law to differentiate between citizens from the two entities, which Bosniak and Croat leaders did not want, since, according to them, that would result in further division. It is not news that the leaders of Republika Srpska want to secede from the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina and would have done so a long time ago, if there was not for the Dayton Peace Agreement and the international agents acting as watchdogs for its implementation since the end of the war.

JMBG law that would not separate citizens across entities' line. In contrast to those that refused to play the ethnic game, these citizens positioned themselves within it and were sucked back into the politics of consensus (chapter 5 of this dissertation deals with this issue explicitly).

The politicians, especially from Republika Srpska, stroke back, defining the protests as Bosniak attack on Republika Srpska and casting the demonstrations in an ethnic light, which was far from the truth. Indeed, very little support for the protests came from Republika Srpska and some Western parts of Herzegovina, therefore, it would be wrong to call the protests Pan-Bosnian, but that was never the major goal in the first place. The demonstrators did not set out to show that Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats in a divided Bosnia-Herzegovina can unite and protest side-by-side. The protesters simply rose up as *citizens*, not ethnic subjects, to protect what they hold most precious to them—a bare life of an innocent newborn baby.

Protests in Bosnia-Herzegovina in front of governmental institutions are frequent but they rarely amass thousands of people. Two of the biggest protests in Bosnian post-war history happened during my fieldwork and even those cannot compare to the magnitude of the ones in Egypt, Turkey, and other parts of the world. Most other protests I attended only had a few dozen to a few hundred people or so. It is safe to say that although most Bosnians are extremely dissatisfied with the political organization and leadership of their country, most of them express that anger in the comforts of their homes or over drinking coffee with friends (see also Jansen 2015; Kurtović 2012), instead of publicly by joining the protests. Because of that, they are often characterized by outside observers and many local citizen activists as well as conforming to the *status quo* and a part of the problem of Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina. I have heard numerous complaints against those that are 'drinking coffee,' instead of protesting, sometimes even shaming their nonparticipation by holding sarcastic protest signs that say *"Šutim i Trpim"* ("I am

being silent and I suffer/endure"), *"Nije do mene"* ("It is not up to me"), and *"Bit će bolje"* ("It'll get better"). Apathy or nonparticipation must not be characterized as a complete absence of agency and political participation. As Greenberg indicates, we should ask "*what* people… are opting out of when they do not participate in politics" (2010:63). Nevertheless, according to Jansen, Bosnians are by no means withdrawing from politics even though they rarely express their opinion protesting on the street. He claims Bosnians participate by voting and many of them are members of political parties, even though most of them consider *politika* as a dirty business (2015:200-201). According to Jansen, there is a simple and pragmatic reason behind relatively high rates of political participation among Bosnians, and that is the pursuit of material resources. Jansen's interlocutors "inserted themselves into *politika*: as potential recipients of clientelist allocation" (2015:202), despite the fact that most of them are disgusted with it due to its immoral, kleptocratic, and party-family orientation. Thus, Jansen claims most people in Bosnia-Herzegovina occupy spaces within *politika* because there is no politics outside of it (2015:192). This is not because Bosnians are greedy and want more than they need but because they do not have nearly enough to survive. Therefore, by positioning themselves close to political parties who have appropriated and monopolized all public resources since the end of the war, they are putting themselves in the situation where they might be able to survive from the breadcrumbs falling off the table (see also Jansen 2015). Having a *štela* or *veza* (a connection) in Bosnia-Herzegovina could literally mean a difference between life and death. It is about bare survival and there are no alternatives available to make it possible and likely to decline participation in this kind of conviviality, if the opportunity arises.

In such precarious conditions and struggles for bare survival many Bosnians equate a 'normal life' with a normal state, and since they do not have a normal state, 'normal lives' are

therefore suspended and unattainable as well (see also Jansen 2015). When talking about 'normal lives' Bosnians often evoke the socialist past (the "was") and linked it to their aspirations for the future (the "ought"), however, they generally feel stuck in a time warp and, according to Jansen, *do not hope* for 'normal lives' but *yearn* for them instead, longing to move forward from a dead point. Here, Jansen stresses that if we are to study post-Yugoslav discourses of 'normality,' we should not only pay attention to the descriptive 'is' and the future-oriented 'ought,' but we also need to enlist the 'was' (2015:38).

My argument builds on Jansen's claims and explores citizen activists' yearnings *and* hopes for 'normal lives' under such precarious conditions of Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina. Working with citizen activists, who in contrast to Jansen's interlocutors, did express their anger by taking to the streets in protest, makes it possible to add a nuance to Jansen's argument. Therefore, I argue citizen activists I worked with both yearn *and* they hope, since some level of hope is necessary for an active engagement in indignation. Would citizen activists be able to motivate themselves to act without *hope* that they can or will create positive change? Of course, working, acting, and operating in such a constrained environment as Dayton BiH with very few, if any, alternatives is challenging and citizen activists themselves suffer from burnout, disenchantment, disappointment, and so on. Some leave activism, thinking it is not a viable option and an alternative and others often fluctuate between optimism that things can change for the better *and* disappointment, where they slip into melancholy and yearning. Therefore, I argue that *hope* and *yearning* are closely intertwined in citizen activists' lived experiences as both inform their determination and wavering, fears and confidence, struggles and victories, etc.

I see *hope* as more optimistic, signaling a person's expectation or belief that something whished for will or can indeed happen. *Yearning,* on the other hand, points towards a melancholy

longing for something one does not necessarily believe can or will happen. Therefore, in this chapter, I explore a question, when and how is *yearning* transformed into something more optimistic such as *hope*? I see my interlocutors as often positioned between *yearning* and *hope,* not just longing and waiting for things to get better as many other Bosnians do but at the same time not *filled* with hope either. How could they be in these abnormal conditions of Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina where normalcy is often a precursor to hope and an ability to act? In his article, *Insurgencies Don't Have a Plan—They Are the Plan*, Benjamín Arditi claims "insurgencies are passageways between worlds" (2015:116) where one already starts to experience what one wants to become (2015). This argument implies insurgencies lead to a transformation of the self *from* something *to* something else. There is a hidden implication as well that the transformation is hopeful and positive, even if the political outcome of insurgency is not. Although I have observed this happen with many of my informants, some room should be left open for a possibility where the transformation might not be as optimistic as we would like it to be.

As mentioned above, when young innocent lives are put in danger Bosnians flood the streets in massive numbers, as they did during *Bebolucija*. Babies being born into this dysfunctional Dayton system without basic citizen rights was the last straw and Bosnians could not bear conforming to the *status quo* anymore. Many of my informants experienced a shock, a moral breakdown, or a breach from the ordinary (Zigon 2007, 2011) when they heard the news about baby Belmina. They would express it by saying *"Puko/Pukla sam"* ("I cracked," "I exploded," "I burst," or "I broke down"); *"Poludio/Poludila sam"* ("I went crazy"); *"Sve mi se prevrnulo"* ("Everything in me turned over"), etc. Citizens on the street were also saying, *"To nije normalno, to nigdje nema!"* ("That is not normal, that does not exist anywhere else!"),

expressing their denunciation of abnormal state of affairs in their country, so absurd, irrational, and nonsensical that it cannot possibly exist anywhere else in the world. I would often hear Bosnians use a word *Absurdistan* when referring to the Dayton state, those who lead it, and their failure to create a possibility for a 'normal life.' I argue, protecting innocent lives was a moral tipping point that brought Bosnians together in a collective action to force the leading elites to fix the problem. For a moment, when citizens blocked all entrances and exits to the parliament building and trapped parliamentarians inside, the scales of power were tipped to the side of the citizens and their *yearning* was transformed into a more optimistic *hope*. This *hope* is needed as practices of citizenship are not only about rights and customs but also require citizen participation in building a commons that require *hope* and motivation in order to succeed.

4.2. Yearning in Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina

Our own life experiences, as well as research, reveal the ways people in precarious situations often retreat into the private sphere or escape into the fantasy world in order to distance themselves from the cruel reality surrounding them, but also to maintain a sense of control over their lives, because so many things outside the "safety" of their homes are uncontrollable (see also Bartulović 2012:137). When discussing post-war lived experiences, many everyday Bosnians indeed mentioned they felt paralyzed, unmotivated, and powerless not just because of the war but because they felt they cannot change the situation they found themselves in. "I just don't see how things can change for the better under the current Dayton system" a man I will call Tarik said to me. "Our politicians thrive under Dayton system, so they are not going to give it up. They control everything, even the public resources, and ordinary people have nothing." When I asked, what does he mean ordinary people have nothing, he

answered: “We have no power, we have no leverage, and we are so consumed with everyday survival. We are barely able to make ends meet [*jedva spajamo kraj s krajem*].” “How does that make you feel,” I asked him. “It makes me feel I cannot change anything and I’m frustrated and ashamed. As if I’m not doing a good job taking care of my family. I tried but I failed to provide a more stable life for them. So, now we are forced to survive with what little we have…” “How do you do that? How are you able to survive with so little?” I probed some more. “We are just focused on how to make it through the month, we buy only what is absolutely necessary, like food.” Tarik was in his mid-forties and I first met him one cold and snowy afternoon when giving out meals my friends and I cooked out of surplus food from grocery stores that would otherwise go to waste. Two months later, Tarik approached me at a playground where we both brought our kids to play. He said, he remembered me because of my “unique” cap. It was my niece’s winter cap she did not want to wear because it was bright pink with a huge pom-pom attached to the top. My husband used to tease me, I was going to get arrested at protests just because of that cap. It was very noticeable and hard to miss. At the playground, Tarik confessed, he was extremely embarrassed to take food like that but he had to swallow his pride because him and his family have been struggling. He is married with two kids of eight and thirteen years old. His wife is unemployed and he is working in a small bakery shop (*pekara*) with long hours and meagerly wages, getting paid under-the-table with no benefits and social security. “It is very hard for us to survive with what I make. It’s tough, very tough… This job is temporary, you know, so they can let me go at any time. Our lives are very uncertain, because I do not know if I’m going to have a job next month…” Tarik’s parents are dead and the rest of his family on his and his wife’s side cannot help them financially, as they are struggling as well. “Only my uncle who works in Sweden can sometimes send me some money but he has his own family to take care of,

so I cannot rely on him either… I'm just focused on working, so we have money for food. That is mostly what I'm preoccupied with. There are days when I cannot think of anything else other than will there be enough food for the children, will they have warm clothes and shoes in the winter, will I be able to buy them school books, and medicines when they need them. Most of the time I'm just thinking about that…"

There is something emasculating in struggling to take care of one's family, as Tarik implied. Focused only on getting enough money to feed his family, Tarik's world seems spatially and temporally shrunk, meaning it is hard for him to think in terms of a better future, because day-to-day struggle takes all his energy and time, and he is consumed with thinking only how to keep their heads above the water. Furthermore, his goals seem immediate such as feeding the children, and all of his motivation goes towards finding pathways to make that happen. Arjun Appadurai talks about the capacity to aspire in terms of a navigational capacity, where more privileged members of a society have the opportunities and practices of exploring the future while those less privileged might not (2004:69). Appadurai writes (2004:69):

> If the map of aspirations… is seen to consist of a dense combination of nodes and pathways, relative poverty means a smaller number of aspirational nodes and a thinner, weaker sense of the pathways from concrete wants to intermediate contexts to general norms and back again. Where these pathways do exist for the poor, they are likely to be more rigid, less supple, and less strategically valuable, not because of any cognitive deficit on the part of the poor but because the capacity to aspire, like any complex cultural capacity, thrives and survives on practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture, and refutation.

I see Tarik's situation as more than a constrained navigational capacity. Not only are Tarik's opportunities of experimenting with alternative futures limited but the temporal (see also Platz 2003) and spatial reasoning seem altered as well. Tarik would often imply he does not do anything but work and sleep or go anywhere besides the bakery shop and home. He commented these two decades after the war feel like one hundred years of him being stuck in the same place

and position, unable to get out. He also compared this with life before the war, when he felt spatially unconstrained and time was not slowing down but running its usual pace. Tarik's world seems spatially confined in a literal sense, since he does not have the means nor the time to travel much outside his usual parameter of work and home, but also it is hard for him to see the world as open and available for him to explore as he pleases. The immediacy of survival Tarik is confronted with, does not permit him to look freely into a horizon, a lived space that opens up before him. I am not implying Tarik, and many others like him, do not have the capacity to plan, to aspire, and to wish and want better things for their families, but that their propensity to do that is narrowed in such a way it is hard for them to look toward a horizon and see the world as optimistic, hopeful, and ready to explore.

The effects of poverty were visible on Tarik, not in the ways he dressed as his worn boots were always clean and his coat neatly patched by his elbows. Tarik looked much older than his actual age and he always carried a worried expression on his face. He seemed exacerbated when he talked, taking-in deep breaths, and long pauses in between sentences. Poverty for Tarik meant not only the material deprivation but it also had an effect on his dignity, security, and exposed him and his family to risk and inequality. He expressed to me several times how bad he felt taking food as charity, emphasizing he had never done that before. "I can usually bring bread home from the bakery but kids need more than that. The food you prepared with your friends had a lot of vegetables, which is not something we eat on a regular basis," he explained to me. I tried to make him feel better by saying most of the clothes and shoes my daughter is wearing are hand-me-downs from friends and family, he smiled and said back. "Oh yes, most of the clothes, shoes, and books my kids have are hand-me-down as well, but taking food is something different. If you don't have enough food to put on the table then you really failed." I tried to

convince him there is nothing shameful in accepting help, when one is struggling, especially when it is obvious he is doing everything he can to provide for his family, but he could not be persuaded. When I look at Tarik, I see a man living in precarious conditions, who was failed by the system.

Tarik was also worried about his kids and did not think the future is hopeful for them.

> They are smart and doing good in school, so I don't think they would have a hard time finishing the university. But even, if they get a university degree, I am not hopeful they will be able to find a decent job. Those people that are getting government and other jobs—none of them are experts in the job they have. It is all arranged through connections (*veze*). You see a person that is a school headmaster but has a degree in engineering or a person with a journalism degree running an engineering company, and so on. I don't know people in high places I could ask for a favor for my son or daughter. All the friends I used to have are gone, died in the war or are living abroad and I lost connections with them. I also do not have the time to socialize, I just work and go home. Nothing else. In the bakery where I work, I am in the back, usually by myself, making bread and pastries early in the morning when everybody is asleep. I hardly have any contact with anybody. [After a long pause he said] I'm afraid the kids are going to be struggling as I am…

With youth unemployment rates over 57 percent (The World Bank 2013), it is understandable Tarik does not feel optimistic for the future of his children, not even with a university education. His opportunities to ask for favors are limited or do not exist, and he will most likely not be able to help his children get on their feet. In fact, he is afraid him and his wife would be a burden on their children in old age, as they do not have a pension fund and will probably not be able to afford health insurance or medicines. Tarik and his wife came to Sarajevo as refugees from the countryside, fleeing a massacre in their village during which Tarik was wounded and both of his parents killed. They never felt comfortable living in Sarajevo where there is a sense that folks from the countryside (*seljačine*), who fled their homes during the war, 'ruined' the progressive and modern culture of cosmopolitan Sarajevans (*Sarajlije*) (see also Stefansson 2007). "We always felt folks from the countryside, were looked down on here in

Sarajevo, as if we are backward, stupid, and uneducated," Tarik said. Having his life uprooted during the war, losing most of his family and his possessions, and starting his life from scratch in a place where he did not feel welcomed, Tarik has been living a secluded life and was never able to create a support network around him.

Tarik often said he felt "stuck" (*zaglavljen*), because no matter how hard he tried he could not dig his family out of struggle for survival and bare life (*goli život*). When I asked what his hopes and aspirations were for the future, he said to live in a normal state where he could get a permanent job with pension and social security, but he could not see that happening. "I've been trying for so long, I lost all hope. It is too late for me now, I'm too old. Even if there was a full-time and stable job available out there, they are not going to hire me. The job would most likely go to a relative, somebody's son or daughter, cousin, friend, and so on. Somebody with connections (*veze*)… People here in Bosnia have been *waiting* [the emphasis is mine] for almost twenty years for things to get better and it hasn't. Most of us lost hope. We wish things would get better but cannot see that happening, not in a situation we are right now."

In his ethnography on yearning for 'normal lives' in Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina, Stef Jansen, also finds hope to be in short supply as he writes, "[p]eople seemed to be waiting to be able to start hoping, but the length of the wait made it increasingly difficult for them to believe that there would be anything at the end of it" (2015:47). A lot of people I talked to, just like Tarik, feel stuck or "pattering in place at a dead point" (Jansen 2015:173), mostly due to the *status quo* politics of Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina influencing people's lives since the war. Living in a restrained environment where they are unable to reach their potential, many Bosnians feel their lives are not moving forward. A friend of mine, Stjepan, one night over a beer

compared himself and other Bosnians to a lab hamster, locked in a cage, and endlessly spinning the wheel, therefore moving in place. He elaborated:

> A hamster is a symbol for us, the people, who are being experimented on by the local politicians, first with the war and now with this endless post-war 'transition' [he signaled the quotation marks with his hands]. The international community is experimenting on us as well in all sorts of ways, from peace negotiations and humanitarian actions to possible forms of multicultural society, to see what works and does not work, in order to fix the problems in their own countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina is our cage. We cannot get out, because the west does not want even more Muslims or other Balkan people for that matter amongst them. But there isn't any prospect in Bosnia, because they have ruined it; they ran it to the ground. And so, the hamster does not have any other choice but to stay alive, because it is in his nature. And to spin the wheel. But he is only running in place. He is not moving towards anything better...

When I asked Stjepan, if the hamster can have dreams, hopes, and aspirations, he replied doubtfully, "I guess that is possible, but aspiring for something good is hard in a situation where so much is out of your control. Not to mention, it is very depressing when you run, run, and run but you don't move forward. You are at the same place you were before you started. Sometimes, you even go backwards. That is what this country is doing to us…" The image of a hamster running in place can also be compared to a horse *chasing* a carrot in circles. Indeed, many people I had contact with in Bosnia-Herzegovina, were constantly exasperated from chasing (*ganjati*) something—a certified copy of a form they needed to submit for unemployment status, to arrange a pension status or a war disability, signatures from professors, veteran status, paying bills, or even a connection (*veza/štela*) (see also Jansen 2015:158-59). The list of things Bosnians end up 'chasing' in their lifetime is endless and hours upon hours are spent dealing with bureaucracy. When I asked my aunt who always seemed nervous and agitated whenever she had to visit a government office to arrange for something, why this is so, she explained:

> This is how bureaucracy works here. First you call, because you would like to know beforehand what documents you need to bring. They never answer the phones. Then you call your friends and relatives and ask them, what documents

> they remember bringing when they were doing this and that. Then you take those documents to the office and usually wait for hours. And of course, when it is finally your turn, the lady at the counter says, this thing cannot be arranged today, because I need another document, which I did not think to bring. Then I go home, look for what she told me to bring, go back the next day, wait in line again, see a different clerk that tells me, I am missing yet another document, and so on. Sometimes I think they are doing this on purpose, just so we would never come back.

Citizen activists, I worked with often expressed a similar kind of frustration, whenever they attempted to find out which authority is responsible for whatever they were trying to address. "This chasing here and there (*tamo (o)vamo*) is the most challenging part for me," a citizen activist told me. "They only seem to be efficient, when it comes to prosecuting us for blocking the street during a protest or tearing an election campaign poster from a public space that should belong to the people anyways," a friend added. Even though 'chasing' implies an activity, the need to chase so much in Bosnia-Herzegovina was characterized by Jansen as a "spatiotemporal entrapment" in a system or a lack thereof, causing people to feel they are unable to reach their potential or "not moving well enough" (2015:159-61), since 'chasing' is often accompanied with prolonged periods of *waiting* for something that is uncertain and might never come about.

Just a couple of days ago an activist friend from Tuzla posted on her social media site the following quote: "On this day, 25 years ago, Srđan Aleksić[67] was beaten in his home town of Trebinje, because he carried out his human duty and helped his neighbor! 9 years ago, a request was submitted to the city administration of Tuzla to name one walkway or street by his name.

[67] Srđan was a young man and a soldier in the Army of Republika Srpska. One day during the war, he saw four Serb soldiers harassing and beating his neighbor who was a Bosniak. Srđan tried to stop the soldiers but they proceeded to beat him instead, until he fell into a coma and died a week later in the hospital. In the obituary his father wrote: "Srđan died carrying out his human duty."

We still do not have an answer! I am asking myself, how long will we be *waiting* [emphasis mine]?!"

Waiting for a job or an answer from a government bureaucracy about one's pension, veteran disability, stipend, visa, and so on. *Waiting* to find human remains of loved ones who died in the war and to learn what happened to them. *Waiting* for a permission to build a memorial. *Waiting* to move from a dead point but unable to do so because one's hands are tied. *Waiting* for a 'normal life' and a better future for their children. *Waiting* for the politicians to get their act together and start doing their jobs. *Waiting* for a normal state. *Waiting* to become a part of European Union. *Waiting* to be able to start living, instead of just surviving [*preživljavanje* or *životarenje*]. As a friend of mine said, *To nije život, to je preživljavanje!* [This is not life or living, this is surviving], indicating an inadequate "existential mobility" (see also Hage 2009b). Are Bosnians waiting out the crisis?

On the surface, it does appear so. In his chapter on stuckedness and governmentality, Ghassan Hage is looking at a process where "stuckedness has been normalized" and "transformed into an endurance test," thereby celebrating one's capacity to wait out the crisis (2009b:97-98). This endurance is celebrated for it not only involves "a subjection to... certain social conditions [but] at the same time a braving of these conditions" (Hage 2009a:6). As such, silent endurance can take "heroic forms," which makes it a convenient governmental tool encouraging "a mode of restraint, self-control and self-government in times of crisis" (Hage 2009a:6). As Hage writes: "[E]nduring the crisis becomes the normal mode of being a good citizen and the more one is capable of enduring a crisis the more of a good citizen one is..." (2009b:104). Many people in Bosnia-Herzegovina feel their "existential mobility" (Hage 2009b:98)—a sense that their life is going somewhere or moving forward in the right direction—

is restrained by the environment in which they are unable to reach their potential. As a consequence of living in unpredictable times where so much is out of their control, people feel trapped in a permanent crisis, which intensifies the sense of "stuckedness" (Hage 2009b; see also Čelebičić 2013). However, Bosnians are not celebrating endurance and silently waiting out the crisis, as Hage implies people in his example are. Bosnians are enraged and passionately critique the disorder in their country. And yet, their anger most of the time is not transformed into upheaval or revolutionary force. In fact, as Jansen claims, most Bosnians instead channel *yearnings* for a normalization of the order of things in their country (2015:70-71), whether it has to do with public transport, bureaucracy, water reductions, pollution, and everything else people complain and are angry about on a daily basis. Furthermore, the feeling of "stuckedness" (Hage 2009b), does not seem normalized among Bosnians. Indeed, they have adjusted their everyday practices to life under abnormal conditions, but that does not mean they consider the situation to be normal, hence the popular Bosnian remark I have heard time and time again: *To nije normalno!* (That is not normal!). The Dayton Peace Agreement stopped the brutal war but most people in Bosnia-Herzegovina now see it as an instrumental part of the problem, partitioning the country and institutionalizing nationalist divisions, and most of all, preventing the establishment of a 'normal' state where movement towards something better could be possible.

In such conditions, many Bosnians are doing everything they can to survive and are *yearning* to be able to start living in a normal state with prospects for a better future. However, they have been trapped in this "Dayton Meantime" (Jansen 2015) for so long they are having a hard time believing any positive change will come out of it. My activist friends often talked about the endless 'transition' [*beskrajna tranzicija*], that is in fact an oxymoron, indicating, on the one side, a movement from something to something else that is hopefully better, but because

so many years have passed and so many promises have been broken, this 'transition' is under quotation marks and suspended indefinitely. In fact, many Bosnians I talked to said they are experiencing the same things for twenty years. One friend commented:

> It is like déjà vu! The same politicians are in power; they argue about the same things; they cannot agree on anything but how to divide that which they have stolen from us; they do that under the pretense they are working in the best interest of constitutive people's rights; people are going to vote for their own nationalist parties every four years; the roads are not going to be built; the industry is still gone; lots of empty promises, and so on to infinity. And the Dayton lives on! Long live the Dayton, over and over again! [He said sarcastically while raising his beer to signal a toast to which nobody at the table reciprocated but just smiled cynically].

In such a state of political deadlock spanning over more than twenty years and disintegration of relative pre-war stability, many Bosnians believe a 'normal life' cannot be achieved and lived in this permanent state of 'transition' (see also Jansen 2015). Trapped in the Dayton conviviality people do not see an end to and they themselves are often a part of, hope is not an emotion Bosnians harness in abundance. Similar to white people in South Africa in the last years of apartheid who were "caught in the structure of waiting" (Crapanzano 2003:18) and suffered from "waiting-induced paralysis" (Crapanzano 2003:18), Bosnians cannot envisage a solution to the situation they found themselves in. They know Dayton must go but what is the alternative? Many are afraid that an alternative could lead to another conflict.

If people saw a sliver of "hope," it was almost always connected to membership of the European Union, something Bosnians have been promised time and time again by the international agents, under the condition that "they get their act together." This statement needs further explication. People I had conversations with did not talk about EU accession very much, partly because they did not believe it was going to happen under present conditions, but also because many had doubts that "The Road to Europe" was the best solution for BiH after all. And

yet, even those who did not believe in the EU membership, thought it was definitely better than the present situation and the only chance to move from a dead point, because in order to become an EU member, the country's policies have to be in line with the EU ones believed to be based on higher standards. In general, people tend to think that with EU membership, the level of corruption would significantly decrease and the country might get on the path of becoming 'normal.' For example, when I asked a thirty-two-year-old citizen activist Sandra about her thoughts on EU membership, she started to laugh out loud and said:

> What Europe? Common, look at us. Look at how dysfunctional our country is. Corrupted. Incompetent. It is the 21st century and we are dealing with water and gas reductions in a capital city that is a part of Europe! Do you know what that means? That means you want to cook dinner or drink a cup of water or brush your teeth—very simple, ordinary, everyday things—you turn on the faucet and nothing comes out! Nothing! Not a single drop of water and there is water all around us! We have plenty of water in Bosnia! *Pa, to nije normalno! To stvarno nigdje nema!* (That is not normal! That really doesn't exist anywhere else!).

At that point, Sandra took a deep breath, as if she thought she needed to compose herself, and continued calmly:

> EU is not the right solution for us. We would never be equal partners. They would always look down on us, as primitives. *We* need to create a better future ourselves. Something we can control and not somebody from the outside telling us what to do and how to do it. We've had that experience already and it hasn't worked out good for us. But, guess what? If somebody offered me a chance to join EU right now, I would take it. Absolutely! It would be like winning a lottery, because even though I do not think this is the best thing for us, it is still a million times better than what we have now. Pretty much anything that could move us from this dead point [*mrtva tačka*] is better than living in this Absurdistan.

Sandra thinks Bosnia-Herzegovina does not have the slightest chance of joining European Union because it is nowhere close to the level of organization and governmentality that would be acceptable for accession. She believes other European Union members would not want this kind of dysfunctionality in their midst, for example, where water reductions happen because of government negligence. Sandra, like many other Bosnians I had conversations with, is also

comparing and ranking her country to other 'properly functioning states,' seeing Bosnia-Herzegovina as behind in progress and unable to catch up. The phrase so often used by Bosnians, *"To nigdje nema"* ("That does not exist anywhere else"), also signals a feeling of inadequacy and inability, not on an individual level, as Bosnians strongly believe they are just as capable, innovative, and progressive thinkers as people in other countries, but in terms of institutionalized system not harnessing and investing in the creativity of groups and individuals to propel the country forward in terms of progress and leadership. A friend of mine and a citizen activist, who volunteered for a Regional Fair of Innovation in Sarajevo, was adamant to explain Bosnia has many smart entrepreneurs and innovators, who cannot compete on the world stage because their efforts are not properly supported by the government. "This is the place our government should be investing most of their money, but instead they put that money into their own pockets. They have no conscience…" she explained.

Watching their country go from a fairly modernized state in Yugoslav times, where many firms were able to compete on the world market and workers were proud to be a part of the modernization project, to post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina where no effort has been put into industry's revitalization, Bosnians are afraid modernity will become an object of nostalgic past, 'backwardness,' and undesired future (see also Ferguson 1999). Instead of thinking of their country as able to compete with world leaders, as they did before the war, they are now ranking it below those countries they think are politically unstable and economically 'at the bottom.' Similar to the case of Zambian Copperbelt mineworkers (see Ferguson 1999), a cynical skepticism and disbelief in 'normalization,' has replaced a prewar hopeful orientation toward future. Of course, Bosnians' direction in which they would like to move is not only informed by Westernization but is also specifically authentic to the Bosnian context.

Sandra does not believe EU membership is the best solution for BiH, based on the experience Bosnia had during and after the war with intervention, peace-building, and state-making projects led by international entities. Many Bosnians feel help from foreign institutions is too invasive and aggressive in those situations where it is crucial to be sensitive to the local context and concerns (for example, education), and too laissez-faire when it comes to matters of life and death (for example, the lag in foreign intervention during the war). Sandra thinks even though the 'internationals' might have had good intentions, the attitudes and ways of implementing change were imperialist, insensitive, ethnocentric, and done through the pretense of stewardship. Therefore, Sandra wishes for Bosnia-Herzegovina to stand on its own two feet, where people are thinking and creating for themselves. But she struggles, like many other citizen activists I worked with, figuring out how to do that in the current system that leaves no room for grassroots activity. As many of my interlocutors pointed out, it is hard to create strong alternatives outside of the Dayton system, because one is constantly forced to deal with it, even if one does not want to. Jansen says there is "no politics outside of *politika*" (2015:192), meaning the corrupted play of local party politicians, even though everyday people are disgusted with it. However, this notion can be extended to say there is no outside of the Dayton, meaning Dayton is so absorbing, it is hard for Bosnians to think, act, and create outside of it.

4.3. Hope in Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina

As mentioned before, a few instances when Bosnians flooded the streets in massive numbers, revolved around the issue of young lives being put in danger because of government negligence, unaccountability, arrogance, and irresponsibility.[68] During *Bebolucija*, protecting

[68] In 2008, a wave of protests was inspired by a shocking murder of a teenager, Denis Mrnjavac, by three underage offenders (see Kurtović 2012). Concerned citizens, who noticed reoccurring instances of extreme violence by local

innocent children's lives was the lowest common denominator and a highest moral incentive that shook thousands of people out of *yearning*. In that instance, a new hope was born that surprised everybody, even those who started the protests. As one of the original protestors said to me: "I did not expect this! I just posted an announcement on Facebook, saying I'm going in front of the parliament. I never thought so many people would come! I guess Bosnians still have some fire in them…" I found many people that joined this particular protest, to be lead to the streets by some sort of pure and *visceral* reaction or impulse. "When I heard that a baby is not able to cross the border to go to a hospital because of something so banal and stupid as politicians not being able to decide on a JMBG law, I just knew I had to be there," one protester said to me. "This is so fundamentally wrong, I had to say enough!" said another. My favorite and most telling comment was from a mother who came in front of the parliament with her four-month-old son: *"Pa normalno, da sam došla!"* [Literal translation: "It is *normal* that I came!" It could also be translated: "Of course, I came!"]. The mother continued:

> This is the place to be right now! I had to be here. I would do everything for my son and for other innocent kids that are not able to defend themselves! It is not their fault, they were born in such a messed-up system. Don't get me wrong, I love Bosnia-Herzegovina but what these people over here [pointing to the parliament building] are doing to us is beyond imagination…

As argued in the opening pages of this chapter, for many Bosnians life under normal conditions seems to be a prerequisite for hope and a normal life. When people flooded the streets, spoke out their grievances collectively and publically, and stood their ground until they received what they wanted, something *normal* happened—for that moment people felt they had

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youth, started investigating the issue and discovered that a Federal Strategy for Prevention and Sanctioning of Youth Delinquency, a policy that was passed back in 2006, was never implemented by the government. The public outrage soared, when the cantonal government answered the citizens that they simply "forgot about it" (Kurtović 2008:5; 2012:123) and resulted in massive protests.

the power and control over their lives. As one of my friends and citizen activist, Dalibor, explained:

> Dalibor: It was unbelievable! I felt so good when we blocked the parliament and refused to let anybody out! It affected me. It changed me. I felt like I was in control of my own life, something I never felt before. And for that moment, it felt like everything was possible! I get so excited, even when thinking back to that moment… It's a feeling that gives me goose bumps all over. Like I am getting rid of the bad energy that comes with anger from living in this system. I don't know, it is so hard to explain… [After thinking more about it, Dalibor said] It is like I was whole and normal?
>
> Nataša: [His last sentence was posed as a question, as if he was not quite sure, if 'normal' was the right word to use to describe his feelings, therefore I pompted him to elaborate.] Normal?
>
> Dalibor: Yes, that's right. I felt normal. This is how it is supposed to be, right? People living in somewhat normal conditions are supposed to feel they have the control over their lives, right? They are supposed to feel at least somewhat dignified. Sure, it doesn't happen for everybody, one hundred percent, and perhaps it changes for them throughout their life time. But here it's the opposite, because we are not living in normal conditions.

For Dalibor, feeling *normal* in that moment of indignation meant having some control over his life, which brought him a level of self-respect and dignity. He pondered, it is *normal* for people to have the control over their lives, something he thinks is not the case for many Bosnians. It was perfectly *normal* for people to come out to the streets in massive numbers, as a mother of a four-month-old baby said, and to speak out for somebody who cannot speak yet. People felt a certain purity in this cause that should not be constrained by anything, let alone something as absurd as a Dayton system. In fact, the reason why the original protesters did not want to turn this into an ethnic issue, was two-fold. First, they were being smart and pragmatic. They knew from experience that ethnic bickering is not going to bring about a solution. Not anytime soon, anyway. But time was of the essence here, because babies with a medical problem that needed treatment abroad could not wait. Secondly, many Bosnians offered their

unconditional support for this cause because an innocent child being born into this world should not have to carry a weight of ethnic bickering and divisions, created by adults. Children simply need their citizenship, so they can exercise their claim-making rights. As one would expect, Bosnians thought it was *normal* that a baby born in a country to parents from the same country should automatically get its citizenship upon birth. Likewise, Bosnians thought it was *normal* to stand up for their children.

Therefore, I find hope lodged in these moments of *normality* brought about by collective indignation and, in this particular case, a moment where the power was tipped just a little on the side of the citizens. In that moment, a move forward and towards something better was imaginable in the midst of paralysis, stagnation, and uncertainty. But hope is not only an emotion. For citizen activists, hope, sometimes in intimate relationship with despair, anger, and frustration, is an action of creating lives worth living. After many citizen activists I worked with experienced hope emerging out of indignation, where the door of possibility was suddenly flung open, they sought to experience it again. I do not mean to imply that citizen activists chased hope like 'adrenalin junkies' but that they often compared other protests to the ones that were full of potential and where they felt in control of their own lives. If a similar level of possibility was not cultivated, they often felt discouraged and at times also defeated. Chapter 6 of this dissertation deals with the ways citizen activists manage despair and what are the sources of their motivation that keep them active in greater detail. In this chapter, I wish to further explicate the connection between *normalcy* and *hope*, and citizen activists' position in between *yearning* and *hope*.

I wondered, though, if Dalibor was feeling *normal* in that moment of indignation when he felt in control of his life, how does he feel otherwise? I asked:

> Nataša: Ok, so if you felt normal at the time when you blocked all exits, how do you feel otherwise?

> Dalibor: Most of the time I feel angry and that is not normal. I turn on the TV, I read the newspapers, and I just can't believe what is going on in this country. You would think after all of these years of hearing and seeing the same idiocrasy [*budalaštine*], I would be used to it. I know exactly what they [politicians] are doing, how, and why… I don't know… I guess I go through stages where I feel powerless, like I cannot change anything. I am disappointed in other citizens who complain about their lives to each other over coffee but when it is time to go out on the streets and protest, they are nowhere to be seen. But then, Bebolucija comes along, where people did come out, and that fills me up with hope again. I start thinking some change might after all be possible amongst us. If nothing else, we can at least grow and learn from the experience… But, since we are talking about hope, I cannot say I am filled with hope and optimism all the time. I have my doubts…

To me Dalibor, as well as many other citizen activists I worked with, show some level of emotional maturity and intelligence, where, similar to Gramsci's well-known quote "Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will" (2010[1971]:175), they keep their feet lodged in reality but retain some level of optimism of the will as well. The reality is, Dayton is all pervasive and even citizen activists are having a hard time thinking of possible alternatives that could circumvent it and offer other possibilities to the citizens. When Dalibor says, "[i]f nothing else, we can at least grow and learn from the experience," he is not being pessimistic. On the contrary, he is being realistic about his goals, recognizing that creating long lasting social change in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not going to happen overnight. Activism indeed requires patience and persistence.

It is also interesting, the way Bosnians often say they *just* want a normal life (see also Jansen 2015:1). As Jansen says, 'just' in this sentence denotes a modesty of desire "sharply set off against present conditions, which [are] believed not to allow the fulfillment of even such humble expectations" (Jansen 2015:1). As one citizen activist said, "people in Bosnia are far from a good life... I would be happy with a normal life in a normal state," signaling that modesty

of desire and the fact that the good life cannot be achieved without reaching the 'normal' state of being first. It is as if people thought they needed to achieve some sort of 'normality' in their lives, before they could even think in the direction of a good life. That does not mean people did not aspire but that they aspired for things to get 'normal' before they can become good. I argue, this modesty of desire is in fact beneficial for citizen activists and perhaps for other citizens as well in order to keep a healthy balance between optimism and pessimism. Unrealistic hopes in activism where people often stand against immense structures of power or where problems they are trying to address are well underway and seem irreversible, can lead to a schizoid state of mind where activism becomes a 'black or white,' 'all or nothing' endeavor. This is where hope can also lead to paralysis, not only in situations where one is "so caught up in one's hope that one does nothing to prepare for its fulfillment," as claimed by Crapanzano (2003:18), but also when one creates unrealistic dreams that cannot be achieved, which can lead to crippling anxiety.

This firm engagement with reality and realistic goals, also brings a temporal attention to the present. As Gramsci claims, it is necessary to keep one's attention "towards the present as it is, if one wishes to transform it" (2010[1971]:175). While Jansen's informants in his ethnography on yearning in Bosnia-Herzegovina to a great degree evoked the socialist past when talking about 'normal lives,' yearning for those things they used to have but do not have anymore (see also Greenberg 2011), my informants are making conscious efforts not to dwell on what they had but lost too much. They are more firmly engaged with the present and each action in the present situates and orients them toward a horizon of future actions. One citizen activist, a thirty-two-year-old Sandra, said to me while sitting on a bench next to Miljacka river in Sarajevo: "You know, Nataša, people… we deserve better." She unearthed a small rock from the muddy ground with her boot, picked it up, and threw it in the river with an angry gesture. "When

you say better, do you mean like it was before, in Yugoslavia?" I asked. "No, not necessarily. That was in the past. We must move forward," Sandra answered. "We can take some things that were good in those days and make them work in our context. But just thinking about the past and dwelling on it slows us down. It paralyzes people to the point where they are just waiting for a better tomorrow."

In my ethnographic examples, citizen activists' visions were more focused on the present than the past. This does not mean they never evoked the past when talking about 'normal lives,' since their and their parents' lives in socialism are the only 'normal' frames of reference they can refer to. However, I argue that knowing too well the paralyzing effects of Dayton BiH on many Bosnians, constraining their lives to the point where they do not believe 'normal lives' are possible or attainable under present conditions, citizen activists are making conscious efforts to break away from the attitude of 'waiting' for things to change and not dwelling on the past is a part that. They want to engage with the past, learn from it, use whatever is appropriate for their context, and move on, looking, working, orienting towards the future by actively engaging with the present. Although, they sometimes feel they are not moving forward well or fast enough despite their efforts and are often disappointed with the results or lack thereof, they also think they do not have a choice. They either have to conform to the status quo, which they know will not bring about change, or at the very least *try* to make a difference within or outside of the system. Therefore, citizen activists I worked with are not dismissing talking about the past, in fact they very much engage and learn from it but they do think a good dose of the present is needed when trying to address current pathologies of the state and government in Dayton BiH and their effects on everyday citizens.

Citizen activists that are the focus of this dissertation are aware of the potential damaging effect of "too much waiting and not enough acting," as one of my informants commented on what for him was a real issue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where people *yearn* for a better tomorrow by evoking the past and complaining about the present, instead of making concrete steps in the present towards a better future. Citizen activists consciously differentiate themselves from those that are, according to them, wasting time complaining about the present situation and 'barking' at the politicians from the comforts of their homes or while sipping coffee in coffee shops with friends (see also Jansen 2015:191). For citizen activists I worked with, 'drinking' coffee is not enough anymore (see also Kurtović 2012) and waiting or patterning in place is not an option, as they made a conscious shift from compliance to acting and putting an effort into making tangible steps towards change. Whether or not those steps lead to any transformative social change in the country is not the concern of my dissertation as much as is the shift in the process of people's thinking and acting.

4.4. Between Yearning and Hope in Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina

One of the greatest challenges of activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina is to find creative ways to frame the fight on citizens' terms and not the terms set by the mainstream political structure of Dayton, because as many Bosnians in general are aware of "[a]ll roads lead to Dayton" (Jansen 2015:228). If one thinks a 'normal life' and change is not possible under the present system, then by way of simple logic, an activist should work towards changing that system. This is the usual trap many citizen activists in Bosnia-Herzegovina fall into. Why do I call it a trap? Dayton, with its consociational structure of power-sharing, frequently results in a deadlock. Therefore, if activists engage and play the Dayton game, they themselves get trapped into a place where

problems become unsolvable. For example, during *Bebolucija*, citizens came out to demand immediate issuance of JMBG law, realizing time was of the essence. After a few days, following the game of ethnic bickering back and forth among the politicians on the issue of writing ethnic polarization into the law, many citizens who thought this would further divide the Bosnian people, naturally started thinking in a Dayton frame of mind. Still under the influence of leverage they harnessed during the blockade of the parliament, some took this opportunity and tried to change the goals of the protest into fighting for a specific JMBG law that would not be based on division, and therefore, would strengthen the central governmental organs on the state level. Although, the initial citizen activists who started the protest would prefer the same, they nevertheless distanced themselves from such calls. As one protest organizer wrote on this issue (Ivančić 2013):

> It is important to note that to each and every one of the initial seven citizens who started this, it is all the same whether these numbers [JMBG] will be distributed on the state level, on the entity level, on the district level, on the level of cantons, municipalities, city councils, or house councils. Later, some groups appeared who declared in the media it is only acceptable for everything to be on the state level. That is not us. We simply want JMBG for children. We want elementary human rights and elementary services from the state we pay for. How this will be accomplished, that's none of our concern.

This is a good example of trying to create change outside the political mainstream and not getting wrapped up into a structure where problems become unsolvable. The initial citizen activists who started the protest simply wanted JMBG numbers for children, knowing well that, if they start pressuring the government to pass the law that is not ethnically colored, the game would go into indefinite overtime. By refusing to play the ethnic game, they got the immediate problem solved. They felt this was a small victory, but a victory nevertheless that is even more important in an environment where victories are few and far between. However, despite diligent efforts to keep ethnicity and ethnic issues at bay on the part of those who started the protest,

Bebolucija actually ended on an ethnic note, where an activist group called AntiDayton managed to convince a group of protesters to march from the parliament building to the Constitutional Court and sing an old national anthem "*Jedna si jedina*" ("You Are the One and Only"). This used to be an anthem of Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1992-1998 but was changed due to an order from the Constitutional Court, claiming it excluded Bosnian Serb and Croat communities. This gave the politicians leverage to further substantiate their claims of this being an ethnic protest, organized by Bosniaks to gain control and to impinge on other constitutive people's rights. Publicly, those who started the protest kept focusing on and reminding the public of the successes gained. Privately, though, some were pretty discouraged, especially about the ethnic transgression that gave those in the positions of power the ammunition to discredit them and their efforts. Many who poured their heart and soul into this protest felt the road led back to Dayton. As Dalibor said to me in a candid conversation about hope:

> This is just a reminder of what we [citizen activists] are dealing with. It is so hard here to think in terms other than Dayton, so when this is accomplished on a collective level, I and a lot of people around me start believing that a change forward is possible. That there is hope, however small that change or hope might be. But then, a small mistake like that at the end of *Bebolucija*, which happened in a split second when we let our guard down, probably because of exhaustion, and we are in some ways back at the starting point. I mean, don't get me wrong. I do not want to downplay our accomplishments. We did get JMBG. We remember all too well, how it felt when we blocked the parliamentarians in the building and demanded the solution. We felt powerful and in control. But then a stupid mistake of singing an old national anthem in front of the Constitutional Court by a small group of protestors, returned us back to reality, realizing who we are dealing with and how deeply engrained Dayton is in our society. So, then you get a more realistic picture of activism in Bosnia. Change is possible, but only, when we start thinking as citizens, instead of ethnic subjects. Dayton and those who defend it, will always remind us of it, will always set us traps within it, will always try to poison the public with ethnic spins, and so on. The question is, are we able to think as citizens in spite of Dayton that is trapping us in this perpetual transition?

In this great interview excerpt, Dalibor indicates that *yearning* and *waiting* can be to some extent replaced by *hope* in those moments where citizens feel some control over their lives. *Hope* arises from victories—however small they might be—and victories are usually won in Bosnia-Herzegovina when citizens refuse to engage with the Dayton mainstream. Still, feelings of despair leading into *yearning* can disarm *hope* to some extent, especially when citizen activists are pulled back into political mainstream, when they cannot see change happening within it, and are having a hard time thinking of alternatives to it. During my fieldwork, I have seen some citizen activists go from being hopeful things can change to slipping back into despair and *yearning*, where a change is wished for but again unimaginable. For example, I met a twenty-four-year-old citizen activist, Jasmin, during *Bebolucija* protests, who at the time was very optimistic about the future and change in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He basked in the glory of collective action, brought about by the moment when citizens stood firm against the political elites and demanded the problem to be solved, which gave him hope that an alternative to conformity will finally be generated out of suffering and bare survival. When I met Jasmin at other subsequent protests, tough, he, little-by-little, started to have doubts. After *Bebolucija*, Jasmin joined some other protests that did not harness as much citizens' interest and was very disappointed when citizens showed very little collective support for parents and children of Konjević Polje, who camped out in front of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) for months in the middle of winter, fighting for Bosnian language and culture instruction in a school in Republika Srpska. He could not understand, why people did not show support for their fellow citizens and their struggles. "Where is the spirit we had during *Bebolucija?*" he asked me. "I just don't understand how we can stand so strong and united at one protest and be so divided at another. This protest [referring to Konjević Polje] is about kids as well, the future of Bosnia-

Herzegovina. Where are those righteous activists that protected the babies with such fire and love?" he complained. I explained my point of view, saying *Bebolucija* had massive support because it was not about the three constitutive peoples and their ethnic rights. *Bebolucija* started as a protest for babies and their rights as *citizens*. Konjević Polje protest, on the other hand, was soon hijacked by political officials and turned into a "battleground" for ethnic bickering, even though the parents simply wanted what was constitutionally promised to them. "People are exasperated and tired of dealing with Dayton, because it only results in further divisions. Those righteous activists are sympathetic to the situation parents and kids of Konjević Polje found themselves in, but they do not want to play the Dayton game," I replied. Jasmin came out to show support during the social uprisings in February 2014 as well, but found himself, after initial resurgence of hope, disappointed yet again. This time so-much-so that he told me he was giving up activism, because it is futile. Jasmin said:

> For every step we make forward, we end up taking two steps back. Every time I feel we [citizens/people] have gained some ground and a momentum to really make a change, we end up right where we started or worse. Some people feel even more hopeless than before. They are faced with reality that no matter how hard they try, they just cannot make lives better for themselves. I would like to be a part of change but the more I think about it, the more I do not see change being possible under present conditions…

Many people in Bosnia-Herzegovina share Jasmin's thoughts and feelings and do not believe change is possible within the terms set by the Dayton structure, because it prevents people to think, live, and act as citizens. I have seen some citizen activists going from being hopeful to disenchanted and doubtful that change is possible. Therefore, when Benjamín Arditi alludes to a positive self-transformation during indignation, where one already starts to experience what one wants to become, regardless of the outcome of insurgency itself, I agree, however, I do think we need to pay careful attention to a self-transformation that is more fluid,

instead of a one-way path from something to something else. I see this self-transformation as back and forth, pulling and pushing of an individual in-and-out of *yearning* and in-and-out of *hope*. Also, I am not implying that yearning is completely replaced by hope and vice versa, but that depending on the context and the situation one might be foregrounded while the other backgrounded. Even the most hopeful citizen activists I worked with are often sceptics and would not characterize themselves as extremely hopeful. As one citizen activist by the name of Marija, who was thirty-nine at the time of my fieldwork, said: "Listen, I know this is going to sound strange, because I am committed to working towards improving our lives here, but to be completely honest, I can't say I have a lot of hope, because our situation is complicated and it constraints people from making big change. But I would not be invested in all of this, if I did not have some hope that change is possible."

Many citizen activists I worked with do envision some change being possible despite the constraints of Dayton establishment and Marija is one of them. They would want nothing more than to see Dayton gone, however, they refuse to just wait for this to happen. Thus, they work, little-by-little, towards more effective political participation, and a healthier and stronger civil society. As Marija explained to me: "There is no indication that our present political establishment will ever change, but, in the meantime, I believe I can be a part of small changes in spite of the constraints put on us by this system. I know it is not easy, I know our situation sometimes looks hopeless and never-ending, but within that hopelessness, there is still some hope. If we never try, how will we know, if we can make lives better or not. At least we have to try." To that I replied: "But some people are trying and trying, and then they give up or they stop trying, because nothing changed or change was not big or satisfactory enough. How come you are still in it after all of these years?" Marija answered:

> I've been disappointed many times. We [citizen activists] have made a lot of mistakes over the years in the arena of activism. We've been tricked, played, cheated, and tricked again … But we've also grown from these experiences; I know I have grown. And yes, we still have a lot to learn but you cannot learn by sitting at home and waiting for things to get better. And so, yes, I've been disappointed many times and I know I am going to be disappointed many more times in the future but I am not going to support and conform to this political establishment. So, I am going to keep on trying to do something about it. That's all I can do. I do not blame those who gave up. I completely understand. I also often go through periods of doubt, where I think everything is pointless. But what am I supposed to do, just sit and wait?

Refusing to sit and wait for public officials to get their priorities straight and stop denying the war atrocities, for example, is a moto of a grassroots citizen initiative called *Jer me se tiče* (Because it concerns me) whose citizen activists fight for an unselective respect of human rights and freedoms of all citizens. In May, 2012, Emir Hodžić, one of the citizen activists of *Jer me se tiče*, bravely stood alone in a square in downtown Prijedor, Republika Srpska, to commemorate the civil victims of this town who lost their lives during the most recent war. Prijedor, located in the northwest of Bosnia-Herzegovina, was taken over by Serb army forces shortly after the declaration of war in 1992, when Serb soldiers ordered all Bosniaks and Croats of this town to wear white armbands and to hang white sheets from their balconies and windows. This area is also known for some of the most brutal concentration camps and mass graves located on the outskirts of town, where thousands of Bosniaks and Croats were being tortured and killed. Emir's own father and older brother were captured in Omarska concentration camp and even though, the International Court of Justice only declared Srebrenica massacre to be an act of genocide, thousands of bodies from predominantly Bosniak group found in mass graves in the area of Prijedor, indicate that a similar thing happened here as well. Before the war, Prijedor had about an equal number of Serbs and Bosniaks living there but after the war the number of Bosniaks severely depleted and the town is now overwhelmingly Serb. In May, 2012, several

local organizations prepared to do a commemoration ceremony and lay down 266 body bags and roses, for the number of women and children killed in Prijedor, but the local authorities banned the event. In protest, Emir, decided to see it through, which resulted in him standing in the middle of the downtown square alone for twenty minutes, hoping someone would approach him and ask what he was doing. In an interview, Emir told me he was fourteen when he and his family were expelled from the city and that, after he returned, he was shocked to see officials would not allow public gatherings to commemorate those that were killed. "It is very obvious what they are doing. They are trying to erase the atrocities that happened here. After the generation of those that know the truth will die, it will be as if nothing ever happened. With this protest, I wanted to show them they cannot erase me…," Emir explained.

Refusing to wait for something that might never come about (i.e. public officials allowing survivors to erect a monument to those killed in Prijedor), Emir erected a monument himself, so-to-speak, by positioning his body wearing a white armband in a public place and standing motionlessly in remembrance of civil victims of this town. After his protest, an initiative was started that marked May 31 as White Armband Day to give a voice to victims of mass atrocities around the world in their struggle for truth, dignity, and remembrance. Emir's 'body monument' set in motion very touching temporary 'monument' installations, happening nowadays in Prijedor every single year on May 31. One year, citizen activists positioned 102 white and red roses in a circle in the middle of the downtown square, each rose carrying a name of a child killed in Prijedor. In another, parents or family members of children killed imprinted 102 kids' shoes in several casts, and in yet another, 102 school bags with kids' names and age at which they lost their lives, was set in a downtown square spelling a word *'Genocid?'* (Genocide?). Emir once told me: "I have no idea, if we will ever be allowed to put up a permanent monument

to those killed in Prijedor. If we look at the political climate in Republika Srpska with their very deliberate politics of erasure, it doesn't look very hopeful. You can see yourself, Prijedor has several memorials to the Bosnian Serb army and none to those killed and tortured here. *But*, we can still put up the 'monument' ourselves every year on May 31. And the more we do it, the more people get to know the truth, are forced to confront it, and acknowledge what happened here." Emir is right. Until he erected his 'body monument' in 2012, most of the dialogue about atrocities was between victims and survivors. After 2012, this became a public discourse that is slowly changing the atmosphere in Prijedor. Goran Zorić and Nikola Kuridža, also citizen activists of *Jer me se tiče*, say more and more people are ready to acknowledge, albeit still in private, that perhaps something terrible did happen here in 1992.

This was one of those hard-won victories, where citizen activists' work is stimulating some out of yearning, although still in a limited way. The struggle it takes for people to erect a 'temporary monument' each year, also acts as a reminder of the entrenched ethnicized political climate in Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially in Republika Srpska, and the political unwillinness of all sides to acknowledge atrocities made during the war. Because of indentitarian politics promoted by people in the positions of power and everyday people being engulfed in it on a daily basis, it is extremely hard for *Jer me se tiče* citizen activists to act outside or beyond it. For example, the initiative's fight for the proper memorization of victims of 1992-1995 war in the area of Prijedor that were all non-Serb can easily be construed as ethnically motivated. Time and time again, I would hear those from other ethnic groups reply, "what about *our* victims?" Therefore, it is an uphill battle for *Jer me se tiče* activists who want all civil victims of the 1992-1995 war to be recognized as *human beings*, not as *members of an ethnic group.* "As long as there is a systematic denial, people on all sides will never be able to move forward and create the

future together—as human beings or citizens, not as *Mi, Vi, i Oni* (Us, You, and Them)," Emir said to me. Therefore, *Jer me se tiče* activists set out to commemorate civil victims of all three sides at different crossroads all over Bosnia-Herzegovina but whenever one is bringing up the past of the brutal war, ethnicity always necessarily comes to the surface.

As argued before, citizen activists are not guided by blind optimism as they are well aware of the constraints of acting in Dayton BiH. Their hope is in some respect a paradoxical practice, because the outcome of activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina is often not very positive. Therefore, hope is a strenuous moral endeavor (see also Mattingly 2010), where citizen activists feel they have to act in some capacity and think they have no other choice, since waiting, for them, is not an option. Thus, to act in Bosnia-Herzegovina, necessarily means to be hopeful things can change *and* to be reminded of the difficulty of change, at the same time. In such a way, hope *and* despair work in tandem—if one is hopeful, one is, at the same time, also exposed to possible disappointment (see also Mattingly 2010:3). Many citizen activists I worked with are trying to think of creative ways to make change happen in spite of the mainstream political system's tight grip on power and resources in Bosnia-Herzegovina but they are also aware that big systematic political change might not happen anytime soon, if at all. Experiences taught them they do not have the resources to confront the constitutional setup of Bosnia-Herzegovina (i.e. Dayton) but they can persistently work towards creating smaller tangible changes that are more imaginable and can make a difference to the people on-the-ground. Since 2014, citizen activists in Sarajevo have turned their attention more toward immediate and concrete problems arising within their communities. For example, citizens came out to defend the closure of one of only two hospitals in Sarajevo, a city of half a million people, if we consider the greater area, which public officials wanted to transform into a hotel with some office space. Due to a forceful

pushback from citizens and personnel employed at this hospital, the closure has been stopped until further notice. Citizens also pushed back when water reductions became a daily routine in Sarajevo in 2017 due to public officials' negligence of this problem, and they have been working on informing the public of other austerity measures affecting education and health care system. As Marija said:

> Are we going to be able to change the constitutional setup of Bosnia-Herzegovina? Probably not. At least not right now. Whatever we do on a constitutional level or on the level of Dayton, we have to understand that includes Republika Srpska, and they are not going to back down just because some people in Sarajevo are protesting. For them, Sarajevo is not even the capital, Banja Luka is… We still have a lot of healing and growing to do as a society. But in the meantime, I think there are other things we can do. Every little change matters, even if citizens are involved in setting something up in their immediate surroundings. Or, for example, to follow very closely what the politicians are doing or not doing, and we can call them out on it publicly. For so long, we have been preoccupied with our own survival and healing that these politicians could get away with just about anything; every stupid law, benefit, and policy change that works in their advantage. And they went on unchallenged for many years. It is time to show them, we are paying very close attention to what they are doing or not doing, and let them know they are being watched. Yes, it would be great, if Dayton was no more, but, as I said before, the way it is set up where all three groups have constitutive people's rights, it seems impossible. So, we need to look for alternatives and to me the alternative is making people realize we *can* make lives better to an extent in these absurd times.

At the moment, many citizen activists I worked with are mostly concerned about protecting the very few resources that have not been taken away yet and the further disintegration of basic social amenities, such as education, health services, running water, air quality, and so on. Some are of the opinion the best way to do this is by closely monitoring what public officials are doing and preparing an opposition in those areas they think are most pressing at the moment. As such, hope, for these citizen activists is to a great extent located in the present—hope that has no guarantees, that is grounded in messy struggles, and could be, therefore, called "hope on a tightrope" (West 2008) or a realistic hope that is an arduous struggle

against immense political and social obstacles. This kind of hope, brings citizen activists closer to what it means to live a 'normal life,' a life worth living, as citizens fighting for basic human rights or, as was the case in *Bebolucija* protests, citizenship rights. Furthermore, it brings them closer to their idea of citizenry in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a collective of people that refuses to conform to the *status quo* and demands the right to a 'normal life' by moving beyond identitarian politics of division.

In the next chapter, I turn to analyzing another protest, a social uprising that came about in February 2014, which is in many ways a continuation of the discussion of the interplay between *yearning* and *hope* from this chapter. Again, we see *hope* being generated from forces of social deprivation drawing people of different generations together and the initial complementary nature of their actions. For example, with the use of force, youth opened a much-needed space where members of the middle generation had the opportunity to create alternative forms of political participation. Plenums, in turn, offered members of the older generation a way to engage and be heard. An act of 'true' politics in Rancièrian sense emerged, where the existing *status quo* was challenged by "those who have no part"—citizens who emerged as new subjects, practicing citizenship that is not focused on ethnic belonging but on social equity instead. Nevertheless, members of distinct generations also used different tactics and strategies for achieving their goals. Their thoughts differed on whether violence was necessary to create positive change, whether change should happen within or outside of the political mainstream, and if it should be based on horizontal or hierarchical organization. Therefore, in chapter five, I argue that coming of age and spending most of their lives in different political periods—socialist, immediate post-war, and a period of increased economic crisis—influenced their somewhat divergent views on how to generate change. As such, the social uprising became unsustainable as

different groups pulled it in different directions, and for some *yearning* became once again foregrounded in their struggles for bare life.

Chapter 5

Negotiating 'True' Politics:

Ethical Citizenship and Intergenerational Dynamics During Social Uprising in Sarajevo

Figure 5.1. Social uprising in Sarajevo, February 7, 2014.
Courtesy of Mehmedalija Agić.

5.1. Introduction

At the beginning of February 2014, social uprisings sprang up in thirty-two cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although not as numerically massive as protests in Egypt, Turkey or Greece, this was nevertheless the biggest civil unrest in the country since the 1990s. The initial spark started in an industrial city of Tuzla, where workers took to the streets demanding to get their pensions, healthcare, and 50-months back pay. Many of them had lost their jobs during the corrupt privatization process of several major industries. Within the first few days of the protest, the workers received large support from the general public, especially youth, and the uprising culminated into a clash with the police and the setting on fire of Tuzla's government building. Many other cities and towns followed suit and soon newspaper headlines were announcing that Bosnia-Herzegovina is burning again.

When I arrived at the site of the protest in Sarajevo on February 7, the tension was electrifying. Police were lined up in front of the protestors, armed with protective clothing, helmets, batons, shields, tear gas, and rubber bullets. Young men wearing hoodies and bandanas were congregating in groups, stashing rocks in their pockets, and hiding Molotov cocktails. A few older women stood in front of the police cordon, calling on them to stop protecting the corrupted political elites and refrain from violence. Soon the streets turned into chaos. Police charged at the protestors, pushing them towards the river and forcing a few to jump in. Minutes later, I saw the police running away from young men as they stroke back with fervor. When the police, heavily outnumbered, finally retreated, people of the older generations stood back as the young ones set the government building on fire, pouring out every little ounce of frustration and anger towards the current political establishment.

It is important to mention that most of the rioting in February 2014 occurred in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as protests and plenums were almost completely absent in Serb and Croat majority territories.[69] Nevertheless, people rioting were not all Bosniaks and there was an obvious lack of focus on ethnic belonging. In other words, the protests had nothing to do with ethno-nationalism, the way media tried to spin the news in the first few days of the uprising, but rather with high unemployment, lack of social benefits, and a wish to overthrow the unproductive and self-serving government. This does not mean, those who did not join the protests, are nationalists, with jobs, social security, and a positive view of the Bosnian political establishment. Many people in Republika Srpska and a few Cantons in the Federation with Croat majority, are just as disenfranchised and unsatisfied with political elites running their institutions as people who took to the streets. However, the stakes of rebellion, especially in Republika

[69] There were a couple of small protests in Republika Srpska, a Serb majority territory, and a fairly large protest in Mostar, with about half Bosniak and half Croat population.

Srpska, are much higher, because of the authoritarian rule of its current President Milorad Dodik[70] and lack of freedom of press[71] (Bieber 2017).

Furthermore, as I experienced in the field, some people have given up hope that anything can change under the current Dayton establishment, or fear losing jobs and resources, some of them gained via party membership, nepotism, or clientelism. I met people during protests in Sarajevo that avoided being photographed or videotaped by the media for fear of being recognized in the news by their current employers and I talked to students whose own professors and deans disapproved of the protests. At the beginning of every plenum in Sarajevo, the moderators, whose role was to facilitate the smooth functioning of the plenum, asked the media present to stop recording in order to allow people to participate free of fear and possible negative repercussions. Some people were turned off by the violence on the first day of the uprising, others were warded off by the call to the first plenum that clearly excluded party members from participation. Nevertheless, it was the media and the police steered by political parties that did most of the damage to the participation in the uprising.

As the initial vigor of the uprising lost its strength by mid-April, the media immediately took the opportunity to portray the protestors as running out of steam, and lacking personal and intellectual abilities to offer an alternative to the current dire situation. Throughout the uprising, party controlled media reported false information, trying to spin the truth and shed negative light on the events. For example, they reported that police confiscated twelve kilos of speed during

[70] Milorad Dodik is also the president of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (Stranka nezavisnih socijaldemokrata - SNSD), the ruling party in Republika Srpska, that has over the years been publishing controversial literature on conspiracy theories, listing certain people and organizations as the enemies who have been coordinating coups against Republika Srpska. These lists include names of foreign diplomats, other Bosnian individuals, NGOs, and media outlets (Karganović et al. 2008; Ljepojević n.d.).

[71] Many international organizations and NGOs have criticized the limited freedom of press and media in Republika Srpska. For example, in 2015 Republika Srpska adopted a new law that criminalizes social media postings that disrupt social order (OSCE 2015).

protests, overtly insinuating that only people on drugs could do such a thing as revolt against the current establishment. They tried to discredit people involved in the uprising as drug addicts and out-of-control hooligans. The media reported getting this information from the police, whose plan might have been to intentionally spread lies in order to water down the uprising and discourage others from participating. Some politicians, especially in Serb dominated majority territory, tried to twist the events as political provocations spearheaded by Bosniak dominated Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, attempting to shake the stability of the entity of Republika Srpska. This explicitly pits Bosniaks against Serbs, and transforms the atmosphere of the revolt into another ethnic conflict, which was far from the on-the-ground truth. Furthermore, party members used age old tactic of "divide and conquer" by infiltrating their own political agents among the protestors with the intent to cause tension, opposition, and mistrust, and make protestors antagonistic against each other.

In the next few days after the violent confrontation with the police, when the site of destruction was still smoldering and people of Sarajevo were recovering from a shock, the protestors continued to gather daily. Hearing the news of the plenum being held in Tuzla, Sarajevo was determined to organize one as well. I remember how much I appreciated the warmth of the apartment where a large group of citizen activists gathered to set up a plan for the first plenum in Sarajevo. Exhausted from protesting in the cold all day, I took a seat, and saw familiar faces from the street entering the room. Some of them I knew from other protests and others were either complete strangers or fresh acquaintances I got to know by protesting side-by-side in the uprising. There was a nice mix of both female and male protestors, predominantly in their late twenties, thirties, and early forties. Even though I knew other participants were tired as well, there was no talk about exhaustion but instead of potential and opportunity. Everybody

seemed excited of this moment and space to create something anew, from the ground up, and outside of the current political mainstream.

While drafting a call for the plenum that was going to be distributed widely among the citizens of Sarajevo and advertised on social media sites, one of the organizers raised a question, if members of political parties should be welcomed to this event or not. Everybody in the room profoundly agreed that they ought to be excluded and nobody objected. Besides some crucial information about the time and whereabouts of the plenum, the invitation also said:

> **Everybody is welcome, EXCEPT MEMBERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES! This is our space, you have yours in political parties.**
>
> Behind us stand no political parties or organizations. We know best that behind us stand only many years of humiliation, hunger, helplessness, and hopelessness of all of us.
>
> **And because of that, let us say NO to political brokering!** There will be no deals behind closed doors, no chosen leaders. There is only a plenum where citizens, men and women, together negotiate the solutions to the problems regarding all of us. We will not allow anybody to take this civic revolt away from us!
>
> Join us at our first plenum meeting in an open public discussion of equal participants to formulate demands and decisions that will stop the robbery of our society and establish the foundations of a fairer system.
>
> We demand:
>
> 1. POLICE
> Not to take any action that would limit peaceful demonstrations by citizens. The safety of all protest participants must be ensured.
>
> 2. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CANTON OF SARAJEVO
> Considering the irresponsible work of the government so far, **all decisions about forming a new government must be made exclusively based on future conclusions made by Sarajevo Citizen's Plenum.**
>
> 3. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
> **Immediate resignation** of the entire Government, including the Prime Minister.

4. AND THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING!
Let us believe in one another and continue to work for the good of all of us.

This flier illustrates the social uprising in Sarajevo was in many ways an act of 'true' politics in Ranciérian sense. First, the natural order of domination was interrupted by those who have been excluded from meaningful participation in sociopolitical life and distribution of resources. Second, people who rebelled were not defined on the basis of preexisting and already identifiable subjects and groups. They collectively rejected the mainstream political establishment that purposefully maintains the *status quo* or, in other words, while the political elites insist on ethno-nationalism in order to reproduce the existing order that benefits those in power, the rest of the country is falling deeper into economic regression. This opened a space for Bosnians to practice the kind of belonging that turns *residents*, who are merely sharing a certain space, into *citizens*, who are members of a community (Aristotle 1984; see also Brooks 2014:1-2). In this shared space of the uprising, expanding beyond identitarian politics (Jansen 2015; Jansen, Brković, and Čelebičić 2017), citizens searched for a common good focused on social equity. This does not mean ethnic boundaries were erased or people ceased to identify themselves according to ethnic and/or religious affiliation. As pointed out by Kurtović and Hromadžić, even though people created a space "outside" of the political mainstream, they still had to engage and work against Dayton's ethno-nationalist establishment (2017:281). However, I argue, ethnicity as a factor of division and polarization was backgrounded in people's thoughts and actions, and re-contextualized into a focus on equitable social structures and distribution of power. I call this *ethical citizenship*—a move beyond identitarian citizenship institutionalized in Dayton state configuration, where ordinary people stood up to take control of their own destinies and to reclaim space, body, and voice, leading to new social ties and solidarities being "forged, tested, and lived in the street and in the plenum venues" (Arsenijević 2014:7).

Those who organized the first plenum in Sarajevo unanimously and decisively agreed to exclude party members from attending the plenum and potentially hijacking it for their own political gains and manipulations. The protestors wanted to create a space void of political engineering and wrangling, where ordinary citizens who have been excluded from meaningful participation in the society can have a part in decision-making. Thus, the existing *status quo* was challenged by a 'part without a part' (Rancière 1999) or citizens who emerged as new subjects, rising beyond identitarian differences, and in the process, becoming different from any already identifiable subjects or groups.

5.2. Jacques Rancière and a Move Beyond Identitarian Politics

Many political philosophers today critique a broad post-ideological consensus and a shared logic on how to govern the world that emerged after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Eastern Communist Block (Žižek 1999, 2006; Badiou 2005; Rancière 1999; Agamben 2005; Arditi 2007; Crouch 2004; Swyngedouw 2005). This politics of consensus on a global scale is based on a broad acceptance of the liberal state and the capitalist market as the foundations of societal organization. In his critique of this new consensus order, Jacques Rancière argues for politics as the institution where equality needs to be presupposed and continuously reaffirmed, if we are to speak of a genuine democracy (1999; see also May, Noys, and Newman 2008; Bassett 2014). For him, the importance of equality brings the meaning of the term politics into question, therefore he creates a distinction between the *policing* and *politics* (1999, 2004; see also Bassett 2014). *Policing* refers to an existing order of governance that is hierarchical and consensual, and that "confines politics to problems around redistribution of power and wealth among counted, well-defined parts of the community" (Bassett 2014:887). On

the other hand, *politics*, according to Rancière, is an event that contests this hierarchical order of governance and is sparked by dissent striving for equality. In other words, 'true' politics exists, "when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part" (Rancière 1999:11).

In this chapter, Rancière's theoretical framework helps highlight the ways citizens' fight—to challenge the *policing* order and reclaim *politics* into the public domain as a non-hierarchical and non-representative organization—opens a space for them to reframe citizen-state relationship from the bottom-up and in an ethical way. It is important to note that Rancière in his work pays more attention to democracy and *politics* than to citizenship. However, this does not mean the notion of citizenship is absent from his theoretical thoughts and writing. Even though Rancière considers citizenship to be in the hands of the *policing* order, I argue his thinking nevertheless enables us to consider citizenship outside and beyond the liberal notion of recognition under law—as a form of "improper" citizenship (see also Panagia 2009:303) where a 'true' democratic citizen is the one who dares to interrupt the *status quo* or the mainstream politics of consensus through rebellion or part-taking in something one "should not" engage in. This act of impropriety is the nucleus of *ethical citizenship*, where a 'true' democratic citizen breaks away from 'the proper' of consensus. As Rancière claims (1999:27):

> Politics exists because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account, setting up a community by the fact of placing in common a wrong that is nothing more than this very confrontation, the contradiction of two worlds in a single world: the world where they are and the world where they are not, the world where there is something "between" them and those who do not acknowledge them as speaking beings who count and the world where there is nothing.

During the uprising in Sarajevo, those who are excluded from part-taking and decision-making in society, actively disrupted the dominant order of things. In opposition to identitatian

politics and ethnic polarization between Serbs, Bosniaks, and Croats institutionalized in the Dayton state configuration, the uprising in Sarajevo created a new collectivity that was not focused on ethnic belonging. Citizens that participated in the uprising created an alternative to the top-down formulated ethnic citizenship that is detaching citizens from a common state (see Hromadžić 2015). 'True' democratic citizens emerged by claiming their right in decision-making as they assumed responsibilities for each other's lives across and beyond ethnic boundaries.

There was a general understanding during the uprising that ethnic emblems and sentiments are not welcomed and that this is a fight for a better future of *all* citizens. People held banners with slogans *Sloboda je moja nacija* (Freedom is my nation) and *Gladni smo na tri jezika* (We are hungry in all three languages), indicating that the verb *biti gladan* (to be hungry) has the same meaning in all three, Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian languages, and that hunger does not recognize ethnic boundaries. At the second plenum in Sarajevo, a man in his thirties spoke to a microphone about his experience during protests. Towards the end, he said:

> ... I am a Christian, I am a Jew, I am a Muslim. I am a Gypsy, I am every citizen of this city [this statement was followed by a loud applause and cheering]... And so, we are all Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks, and aliens, fifth, tenth [*peti*, *deseti*]. We do not need to divide ourselves at these levels, precisely because they [the politicians in power] want us to do that, so that they could rule over us easier...

In response to provocations from the politicians and the media, insinuating this was a revolt with an ethnic bias, people on the streets firmly replied they were there for everybody that is disempowered and disenfranchised. As a friend of mine I will call Asem, said:

> ...I have new hope now that we will defeat our class enemy and create a society worthy of working class citizens of all ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds... I think we made an important step from being marionettes of our politicians who spread ethnic hatred and do whatever they can to separate us, to being citizens who fight a common battle for dignity and basic rights for all of us...

Here, Asem is recognizing the important move that citizens, including himself, made from hopelessly observing that which was done to them or in their name, to revolting against the consensus politics of inequality and corruption, and fighting a common battle for basic rights, regardless of ethnic belonging. Therefore, the citizens who revolted were going beyond ethnic citizenship of constituent people's rights and moving towards a citizenship based on ethics located in the act of impropriety, indignation, and breaking away from the *policing* order and politics of consensus.

However, this article also maintains a careful balance between the idea of a unifying protest bringing individuals, groups, and communities together in unanimity, and the fact that protest participants occupy various worlds and experience crisis in different ways (see also Athanasiou and Alexandrakis 2016:250), which might set the form, content, and direction of their indignation on distinctive paths (see also Greenberg 2016). There is no doubt assembled bodies (Butler 2015) on the streets of Sarajevo where brought together by experiences of collective struggle but their methods of indignation were sometimes divergent. In comparison to many protests all over the world in the last decade, especially in the Global South, that were heavily represented by youth, the February uprising in Bosnia-Herzegovina was overwhelmingly intergenerational. Participants of different generations in Sarajevo employed somewhat contradicting tactics when addressing their demands, which, I argue, was influenced by them coming of age in different sociopolitical epochs. This led to a negotiation of what 'true' politics is—is it peaceful or forceful, horizontal or hierarchical, and is it making a change within or outside the political mainstream?

This chapter, therefore, focuses on the intergenerational dynamics and pays attention to a nuanced analytical framework of a collectivity created during protests in Sarajevo that was not a

unity. Divergent trajectories can be beneficial in protest as a collectivity is often susceptible to various paths and directions, and does not need to be a unity in order to be successful. In fact, during the Occupy Wall Street movement, "unforeseen trajectories and deviant subjectivities were encouraged by… the need to creatively respond to new kinds of internal and external pressures" (Bassett 2014:894). Various trajectories of different generations in the Sarajevo uprising initially did seize a creative capacity, when people of different generations and ethno-religious backgrounds came together, built on the actions of the other, and gained a momentum that grew into a break with the status quo. For example, the violent confrontation of youth with the police and setting on fire the government buildings created a moment of hesitation and fear among the political elites. This widened the "cracks between ethnic territories" (Hromadžić 2015:102) and produced a space for creating something new and outside of the current political order. Members of the middle generation quickly seized the moment and transformed it into daily peaceful protests and citizen assemblies or plenums. Protests now became more controlled, using tactics of citizen disobedience such as blocking major streets to obstruct the flow of traffic in the city. And yet, it was members of the older generation who mostly took up the space on the plenum podium, which gave them a voice, a sense of purpose, and a chance to be heard. At the same time, when the process of deliberation ensued and citizens were confronted with questions of how to create change, members of different generations employed somewhat divergent strategies for achieving their goals.

5.3. Generations

Even though the uprising cohesively rejected the existing status quo, the emergence of a new subject somewhat differed across different generations. When defining generations that are

subject of analysis in this chapter, I did not take age as the primary guiding factor, since constructing a category only by age would not take the full complexity of the problem into consideration (see Caputo 1995:35; Amit-Talai and Wulff 1995). For example, not only teenagers are youthful and not all teenagers have the characteristics usually attributed to youth. I define a generation as a cohort of individuals who were influenced by shared experiences in a particular setting and a historical period, and who, as a result, developed specific practices, beliefs, orientations, and expectations. I maintain there are some notable distinctions among cohorts that lived through different social, economic, and political circumstances, as there are similarities among members that share the same opportunities available to them at a particular point in time (see also Mannheim 1952; Edmunds and Turner 2002; Yurchak 2006; Rofel 1999). Therefore, when analyzing the social uprising in Sarajevo, I focus on three generations and use criteria of each living most of their lives in distinct social, political, and economic environments, which, I argue, markedly influenced the kind of tactics and strategies they employed and a set of goals they pursued during the uprising. Thus, as will be illustrated below, members of different generations had divergent views on the use of force in the uprising, whether a change should be done within or outside of the mainstream political system, and if that system should have a horizontal or hierarchical organization.

I refer to the older generation as the *Socialist Era Generation*, since they grew up, came of age, and lived a significant portion of their lives in the pre-war political epoch, but also lived through the 1992-1995 war as adults, and therefore, have strong memories of the war period. The generation that lies in between the older and the younger generations is called the *Post-War Transition Generation*, whose members had limited experiences of the socialist era as small children, who lived through the war as children or young teenagers, and were coming of age

during the immediate post-war period of transformation. The *"Absurdistan" Generation* is the youngest generation analyzed in this chapter and includes youth who were either infants during the war and do not have a conscious recollection of it or were born after the war. They have only heard of socialism through discourse led by those older than them and have spent all of their young lives in a period of increased economic crisis, lack of prospect, uncertain future, and a focus on ethno-nationalism. They are children who have been stuck in a time warp (Jansen 2015), where nothing seems to be moving forward and towards a 'normal' life. These youths often say they life in "Absurdistan."

I do not mean to imply that the post-war period of transition and stagnation is not affecting the *Socialist Era Generation* or that *"Absurdistan" Generation* who never lived through socialism and war, are not affected by the periods through intergenerational patterns of influence (see Cole and Durham 2007). I maintain that connections between cohorts cannot be analyzed without taking into consideration the complex generational relationships the actors are embedded in (see also Cole 2007; Durham 2007). DeMartini, for example, distinguishes between two different understandings of a generation: as a *cohort* and a *lineage*. The definition of a cohort assumes that age peers have some things in common that distinguish them from other cohorts, but a lineage focuses on familial patterns of influence and a continuity of sociopolitical consciousness (1985; see also Yurchak 2006:30-31). As Yurchak maintains, and I fully agree with him, these two understandings should not be viewed as contradictory but complementary, as they often coexist in a given society (2006:31).

It is also important to note that the generational categories created and used here are not absolute. They are in many ways generalized, meaning that some people did stray from the categories assigned. For example, not all elders disapproved of the use of violence by youth and

were drawn back to hierarchical order of things. On the other side, not all members of the *Post-War Transition Generation* believed in horizontality and not all members of the *"Absurdistan" Generation* thought the use of violence was necessary. There were also differences in education, class, profession, gender, ethnicity, and religion that are beyond the scope of this chapter but are nevertheless important. Karl Mannheim, who was the first to create an account of the sociology of generations, maintained that generational consciousness that can form as a result of shared experiences in a particular time period, is not necessarily homogenous because of intragenerational differences that form subgroups he called 'generation-units' (1952:306-307). On this note, Mannheim wrote (1952:306-307):

> ... within any generation there can exist a number of differentiated, antagonistic generation-units. Together they constitute an 'actual' generation precisely because they are oriented toward each other, even though only in the sense of fighting one another. Those who were young about 1810 in Germany constituted one actual generation whether they adhered to the then current version of liberal or conservative ideas. But in so far as they were conservative or liberal, they belonged to different units of that actual generation.

Differences within cohorts do exist but that does not mean there are no commonalities that bind the individuals within a group together. For example, working-class youth in post-war Britain shared a common experience as a generation, even though they exhibited distinctive lifestyles as 'mods' and as 'rockers' (Edmunds and Turner 2002:10). One problematic Manhheim did not address in his work, however, is how do generations acquire solidarity, despite divisions within them? Following Durkheim and his thoughts on ritual as effective transmitter of a common culture ([1912] 1995), Eyerman and Turner suggest that generations are formed by collective rituals and narratives through the process of institutionalization of memory (1998) and Schwartz talks about commemoration and celebration of a common experience as important features of generation building (1982).

5.4. The "Absurdistan" Generation

I often encountered a group of young men in their late teens and early twenties in front of our apartment building in Sarajevo, hanging out and talking, sometimes for hours. Jokingly, I would say to them, if they are bored they can come with me to the protests. They joked back, "you do not need us, we are the 'hooligans,'" insinuating, I am better off going alone, for if I take them with me, they might cause trouble. "We are the children of Absurdistan, so we may go nuts at any time," one of them said to me and others laughed out loud. When I asked what "Absurdistan" meant to them, the conversation took on a more serious tone. Twenty-year-old Nikola said:

> Nikola: Absurdistan is a place that is so utterly ridiculous it is hard to believe it exists in real life. You would expect something like that to happen in dreams, bad dreams, but there would be a sigh of relief when you wake up and realize you were only dreaming. But here, we never wake up.
>
> Nataša: What do you think? [I asked one of Nikola's friends].
>
> Friend 1: Even, if you had the greatest imagination possible, you would not be able to conjure up the kind of country and situation we are living in for twenty years. Here, nothing is moving forward. We are stuck in this nightmare and we cannot find a way out of it...
>
> Nataša: Hmmm...
>
> Friend 1: Absurdistan is so absurd there is nothing else for us to do but laugh. That is the only thing we have left.
>
> Nataša: Really?
>
> Friend 1: Yes. Or go insane, smash everything, and start from scratch.

In this particular conversation, my entertaining and revealing interlocutors, were referring to the discourse rampant among the politicians, the police, and the media after the violent uprising on February 7. "The hooligans," as they called them, became a synonym for young people in general that supposedly lack ambition, are lazy, and prone to violence. The media ran

stories about them setting on fire the Cantonal Government building and the Presidency, and the politicians treated the event as uncivilized behavior of out-of-control kids. The public in general was torn between condoning and condemning the violence. Some were upset to see their beloved Sarajevo burn again and made references back to the war when Serb Army forces bombed it daily for several years. Others claimed that the buildings were just collateral damage needed to change the course of misery and corruption in the country.

There were some outcries by other youth against the violence used in the protest. For example, a few university students organized a cleaning initiative the day after the destruction and burning. With an example of youth productivity, their intent was to clean the streets after the protest in response to unproductive and self-serving government. However, this act of cleaning the streets by some "civilized" youth can also be juxtaposed to "hooligans" destroying them the day before. Youth involved in cleaning sided with non-violence and with that disapproved of the use of force to make change. They displayed that only democratic, rational, and moral behavior should be considered productive in Bosnian society.

It was the older generation of Sarajevans that voiced their disapproval with the use of violence the strongest. While handing out protest fliers one day, I had an opportunity to talk to several of them who seemed disappointed with indignant youth. One woman commented: "It's not good, what they did. We did not fight in this war [the 1992-1995 armed conflict], so youth could destroy everything now. We fought, so youth could live in peace." Another older man said: "It is all or nothing with them. They either sit in coffee shops and do nothing or they run amok and burn everything down. They need to figure out how to create change in a different way. It is their turn now to figure things out. We have done our share of fighting in the war."

Jasmina who was twenty-three years old at the time and handing out fliers with me was

barely able to contain her composure. At a coffee break, I asked her how she felt about those comments and she said:

> The elders obviously have no clue how it is to grow up in this dump... At least they experienced better days under socialism that perhaps was not fabulous but was definitely much better than this post-Dayton crazy place that everybody wants to run away from. We are growing up in times of ethnic divisions, partition of territory, corruption, mass grave excavations, war trials, denial of truth, enormous debt, and so on. You see yourself the situation we are in! The system is set up in such a way you cannot change anything, if you are not prepared to break the law and do something crazy. Nobody has got their [political leaders'] attention the way we did a couple of days ago. And they are still complaining! At least in times of socialism, people had something to look forward to. Today we have nothing. The future does not look hopeful to us.

In this direct response to disapprovals of youth's violent indignation by elders, Jasmina alludes to the differences between the two generations, where elders at the very least experienced a time that was relatively stable and happier in comparison to life today. Youth are reminded on a daily basis of the sacrifices the elders made for peace. "I know," Jasmina said, "the war was horrible. But, if they think we live in peace now, they are mistaken. You hear them say 'anything is better than shooting.' But what does that mean? That we must bend out heads forever? Obey? Not say anything? Just keep out mouths shut and go on with our miserable lives?" During the uprising, a Bosnian artist and musician, Samir Šestan, responded to the elders' attacks on youth by accusing the older generation of passivity and submission (2014). According to him, the youth at least "offered something new. Which may not be pleasant, but… surely more productive than hypocrisy, corruption, and conformity" (2014).

Jasmina confessed how hard it is for Bosnian youth to live in a society where elders are expecting them to be the catalysts of change and progress but at the same time preach to them a philosophy of *ćuti i trpi* (shut up and suffer). For Jasmina this is a heavy burden, as progress and conformity are two aspects at odds with each other, and she is struggling to see change

happening in an atmosphere of compliance. She hates living in a place where one can make something out of themselves only by either having *veze*[72] or joining a political party,[73] and where one's education and expertise do not matter that much, as long as one complies with the existing order of things. On the other hand, creating change outside the political mainstream, which Jasmina aspires to do, is much more difficult, especially if you rebel in such a way that you lose the support of some elders. Another friend of mine, Sara, complained of her mother giving her a hard time, because she exposed herself in the media during several protests. Being afraid her daughter is going to have a hard time finding a job, if she is known as being against the current political establishment, she is advising her to stay home and avoid speaking in public. "The only thing that is going to change," her mother said, "is your future employer's perception of you as somebody that he or she should not hire. You might be willing to make that sacrifice now, but you will regret it later." Elders and youth are both stuck in a conundrum of either trying to work the existing system to their advantage or fight the current political structure and risk losing what little opportunities they had in the first place.

For youth I got to know during the protests in Sarajevo, this event was much more than a "violent tantrum." The forceful rebellion was meant to explicitly show the political elites and their corrupted establishment, they are the force to be reckoned with. Years of institutionalized ethnicization from the top produced homogenous ethnic collectivities, where a "Bosnian citizen is valuable *only* as a member of an ethnic group" (Mujkić 2007:119). This created citizens who are constrained to fulfilling two functions, both of them biological in essence—(1) assuring the increase of one's collectivity in terms of reproduction and (2) voting for one's kin in elections to

[72] *Veze* literally means connections or relations. It means knowing people in the right places, who have the power to allocate valuable resources one often needs to survive or succeed (see Brković 2017b:94-108).
[73] For more on that see Kurtović 2017:142-156.

increase the power of a group. In this sense, as argued by Mujkić, "ethnopolitics is a form of *biopolitics*" (2007:120) that produces docile subjects (Foucault [1977] 1995). The youth in Sarajevo were trying to break away from the constraints of ethnopolitics and produce "unruly bodies" (Razsa 2015:12), prepared, by violent means, if necessary, to regain their dignities.

With the rebellion, they were also pointing to the limits of peaceful protest (see Razsa 2015). Many from the younger generation do not believe, peaceful protests are effective and see them as organized by formal NGOs—funded by foreign donors on the one side and having ties to local political parties on the other. They believe them to be *strani plačenici* (foreign mercenaries), functioning under the umbrella of political parties, who get paid to paint banners and stand on the street for a few hours. Under the influence of indignant protest events that day, one young man told me passionately: "This had to happen! I am sick and tired of looking at those peaceful protests, where people gather, hold signs, chant, and think they are going to achieve something!... People need to realize whom they are dealing with!... A civilized protest is not going to get their attention!"

Maple Razsa describes a similar situation in his insightful ethnography, *Bastards of Utopia*, where he talks about Croatian radical activists who reject mainstream NGOs because they are paid professionals and are "sleeping with the enemy" (2015:64), meaning their activism is necessarily constrained by foreign donors' and political parties' wants and needs. However, in contrast to Razsa's anarchists, Sarajevo youth's violent indignation was fairly unorganized, unplanned, and sparked by violent confrontations between the protesters and the police in Tuzla the day before. For many of them this was the first protest they have ever attended and although they could easily be characterized as standing against the current political establishment, they were not following an explicit movement ideology.

Many members of the *Post-War Transition Generation*, who were not engaged in violence during the February uprising in Sarajevo thought it was necessary and something that had to happen sooner or later. Disenchanted by the ineffectiveness of many past peaceful protests they themselves participated in, these men and women welcomed the events that brought new hope of change to Bosnia-Herzegovina. They defended the youth as being products of a schizophrenic, post-war Dayton environment, brought up in a divided country with ethnic tensions and "little feeling of national unity" (Majstorović and Turjačanin 2013:1). The *Post-War Transition Generation* argued the category of the "hooligan" is something that political elites forged themselves by creating hopeless postwar reality and leaving these young individuals marginalized, disenfranchised, and abandoned without any hope and prospects for a better future. For them, the youth are bearing the burdens of war atrocities through intergenerational patterns of influence (see Cole and Durham 2007) shaping young minds. Many of them attend divided schools, where they learn different histories, languages, and cultures. They are being socialized into a society that does not allow multiple "truths" to exist simultaneously and "where togetherness and history are being dismissed as if they had never existed" (Majstorović and Turjačanin 2013:3).

With youth unemployment rates over 57 percent (The World Bank 2013), many of them live with their parents and are unable to provide for themselves. Dependency may cause the state of youth, riddled with ambivalence, inexperience, exploration, and experimentation, to last over an increasing number of years (see Wulff 1995). Due to the onset of deep economic regression in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the youth seldom have the opportunity to travel to other countries and experience different cultures. Youth clubs, sport teams, and other extracurricular associations are poorly funded at best. A few of them that do exist struggle to stay open and offer youth a

sanctuary where they could comingle and learn through experience.

Many youth involved in the violent unrest in Sarajevo were arrested, beaten by the police, subjected to human rights violations, and were facing serious charges of treason against the state. Initially, some citizens responded by rallying in front of the institutions that were keeping them incarcerated and demanded their release. A young woman stood up on the flower box directly in front of the entrance to the Prosecutor's Office of the Canton of Sarajevo and passionately addressed the crowd speaking into a megaphone:

> These young kids do not deserve to be arrested, beaten, and prosecuted! They are not the enemy of this country! They are protecting this country from bandits who have been robbing it for the last 20 years! Taxpayers' money, our money, should be used to prosecute those bandits who are responsible for our misery!

However, the atmosphere of pressure by protest in front of the government institutions quickly turned into a much more subdued citizens' demand voted for at the second plenum in *Dom mladih* (The Youth House) on February 14. It insisted that the Parliament of the Canton of Sarajevo establish an independent committee, which will include members of the Sarajevo Plenum, to ascertain the facts of the events that took place on the day of the violent protest, including the estimate of the damage made, the use of excessive force by some police officers, and battery of those arrested. In response, a couple of plenum participants of *Post-War Transition Generation* addressed the plenum audience, urging people to employ actions that are more dynamic and forceful than a citizens' demand directed at the government. They pressed on people to prioritize the defense of youth being prosecuted. Nermin, a man who was thirty-nine years old at the time, addressed the second plenum audience:

> All of you need to remember we are sitting here today because of one particular group of citizens that committed an extraordinary act of bravery for us! I would like to ask you not to forget them! I would like to ask the police to start prosecuting real criminals, not those hungry kids that came to protest and demand their rights out of sheer desperation! This needs to be our priority...

Despite the pleas, the plenum took on a life of its own. Sifting through hundreds of citizens' demands, addressing the audience at plenums overwhelmingly by members of the *Socialist Era Generation*, and organizing work groups that were supposed to address concrete problems, quickly became a priority. The number of youth attending the protests and plenums dropped, members of the *Post-War Transition Generation* primarily took over the organization of the plenum, and elders seized the opportunity to have their voices heard.

5.5. The Socialist Era Generation

The youth rose up not only for themselves but for the older generation as well, whom they see as paralyzed by fear and stuck in the past. As one young protestor said on the day of the violent indignation: "Our elders do not fight! They have completely given up! They continue to live in fear and pray for a better tomorrow! Maybe this will wake them up as well!" And so, it did, as numerous elders came out to the streets and plenum venues in hopes of creating change.

Nine days after the initial protest in Sarajevo, the second plenum transpired in Sarajevo's *Dom mladih* (The Youth House). The hall where citizens gathered was a shape of an oval amphitheater with a central performance area raised above the floor seating and a slightly tiered seating in the back, circling around and embracing the stage. I remember thinking, this was a perfect venue for such an assembly. Citizen demands were projected on both sides of the stage, where everybody could see them, and below them, people that wanted to speak to the audience signed up in a que with plenum volunteers. People did not seem to be nervous addressing a large audience as the que to speak was getting surprisingly long.

It was predominantly members of the *Socialist Era Generation* that queued in to speak to the audience. They overwhelmingly "occupied" the space on the plenum podium and demanded

to be heard. Some of them disagreed with the violent means of protest by youth and characterized it as uncivil behavior. Although they sympathized with the youth arrested, they tended to focus their attention on the discussion of other issues, such as the pension system, health care, disabilities for war veterans, unemployment, and review of many illegally privatized Bosnian industries. The youth, on the other hand, found themselves feeling let down by the trajectory of the plenum. One day, as I was heading to a meeting, I ran into two young plenum goers. To my question, if they are going to attend the next plenum a young girl replied: "I do not see the point. What are we doing at the plenum other than listening to some old folks complain about the misery of their lives? Our lives are pretty messed up as well and we do not complain." The young man interjected: "I do not hear anybody talking about how we are going to help those arrested and they are the ones that made all of this possible. Nobody cares about them anymore. They have done their part and now we can forget about them," he said cynically, shaking his head. He continued: "All we seem to do is sit, talk, and argue about what is the best way to do things."

The point here is not to argue that members of the older generation did not care for the wellbeing of youth arrested and were motivated by selfish intentions. Bosnians are known for tight-knit family structure where children are the nexus of familial existence and the reason to live, persist, and fight. I believe two things most of all motivated the elders' actions. For the first time in twenty years, disempowered people got the attention of those in power and elders thought it would be best to focus attention on some of the most pertinent issues in the country, trying to create change from within the system. By targeting some of the biggest systemic problems, they were in fact acting with the intent to create a better society not just for themselves but for the young generation as well. Second, the intensity of the suffering the old generation lived through

during the war must not be underestimated. Since the end of the war, many war veterans and civil victims live with undiagnosed and untreated Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) they self-manage with anxiety medicines. For many protest and plenum participants of the *Socialist Era Generation* this was the first opportunity in twenty years to publicly express their sufferings and to be heard. In many ways, they were breaking with the principle of *šuti i trpi* (shut up and suffer) that guided their actions of conformity and quiescence for many years.

Living in fear of another ethnic conflict, still coming to terms with violent effects of the war, excluded from meaningful participation in the society, unemployed, and unable to provide decent lives for their children, many elders have been living paralyzed lives, who after the war fell prey to a "systematic elimination of a common vision for a better future" (Hemon 2014:60). Most of them have been accepting the *status quo*, simply because it appears manageable and much easier compared to war. They have been discouraged by the constitutional deadlock and exhausted by the fact that elections are only reproducing the existing situation by recycling the same political officials since the end of the war (Hemon 2014:60-61). Aleksandar Hemon claims, "[e]lections relegetimise actual disenfranchisement [and] restore hopelessness by ensuring identical outcomes [over and over again]. Hence hopelessness in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not merely a consequence of the war and difficult transition. It is a political agenda unto itself, since any possibility of change undermines those in power…" (2014:61).

In such a depressed environment, many elders have been embodying a category of helpless victims (see Arsenijević 2014:8) created by local and international power structures during and after the war. As Damir Arsenijević, a Bosnian scholar, and a protest and plenum participant in Tuzla, claims, this uprising led to a shift "from being a helpless victim, to assuming responsibility for one's life with no external guarantees. In this, a crucial change took

place: the position of victimhood was discarded" (2014:8). For these reasons, it was an amazing accomplishment so many elders joined the protests and for the first time after the war publicly voiced their indignation and disapproval with the system. Miroslav, a man born and raised in Sarajevo who was sixty-five years old at the time said to me during the protest:

> I think people, especially us the old folks, are still scared that an event like this protest is going to bring violence, escalating into war. I was one of thousands of people protesting in Sarajevo in 1992 against the war. And then, the war happened regardless of what people wanted. And because of all the horrible things that happened to us during the war, I think people just learned to turn the other cheek and stay silent… But, I broke down [*puko sam*]. I cannot go on ignoring the horrible things these politicians are doing to us. I cannot go on disregarding the people on the street that are protesting. I have to do something… If I die tomorrow, at least I will die knowing, I have contributed to something good. That I am not just a person who does nothing.

Miroslav, like many other elders that were protesting on the street and in the plenum venues, refused to be silent, compliant, and submissive any longer. He rejected the *status quo* through a moment of breakdown (*puko sam*) or a breach from the ordinary (Zigon 2007, 2011), which set him on a path of subjective transformation towards (re)claiming dignity and self-control. In contrast to those researchers who see youth as the only transformative force in contemporary global era (Mannheim 1952; Comte 1974; Wulff 1995; Dolby and Rizvi 2008), I maintain that elders can be that as well. For example, when rethinking the generation gap, Sarah Lamb refutes the dominant assumptions that "older persons are simply passive objects, being acted upon rather than acting, incapable of creative agency, critical reflection, and change" (2010:86). She claims sometimes elders *are* actively involved in the "making and remaking of a society" (2010:87) as well. Numerous elders during the social uprising in Sarajevo were indeed involved in an attempt to produce better conditions for a better life in Bosnia-Herzegovina but their strategies and goals somewhat differed from those of other generations. And even though this uprising did not bring any major social change to Bosnia-Herzegovina, I argue that people

themselves changed by critically reflecting upon their own positions in the society. The new and valuable experiences people gained during the uprising, might lead to bigger change sometime in the future.

5.6. The Postwar Transition Generation

For the *Postwar Transition Generation*, the uprising was meant to reject representative form of democracy based on hierarchy and consensus politics, and create an alternative through direct citizen action and horizontality. Following an example from protesters in Tuzla, uprising participants from Sarajevo took the opportunity to channel the collective anger against the political establishment into an alternative space where all engaged citizens could gather, debate, and come up with concrete ways to change the downward spiraling course of their country.

Most members of the *Post-War Transition Generation* justified the violent resistance by youth as indispensable but were not willing to produce "unruly bodies" (Razsa 2015:12) using violence themselves. Instead, their unruliness came in the form of civil disobedience (see Graeber 2002, 2009). For example, on the day of the violent indignation when the streets turned into chaos, one of my activist friends noticed a young man attacking a policeman with a big rock. As the policeman was trying to retreat, he fell to the ground. A friend of mine observing this close by, threw himself on the policeman to protect him, and suffered a blow himself. This was an interesting example of condoning the violence and at the same time protecting a person who is defending the very structures one is fighting against. Emir understood why youth needed to fight the police and destroy the government property. In fact, it was the police who threw the first stone, so to speak, and the protesters retaliated. In a way, Emir welcomed the violent indignation, although he would never engage in it himself. In that split moment of violence, his visceral

reaction was to protect another human being from being hurt. Instead of a policeman who is siding with and protecting the current political establishment, he simply saw a person that needed his help. There was a general sentiment among the protestors that policemen were in the same boat as the rest of the citizens. The protestors asked them to throw down their weapons and join the uprising as this was a common fight against the political elites.

Emir belongs to the *Post-War Transition Generation* that believes more in civil disobedience rather than militant action that can bring about violence. Members of this generation came of age right after the war, in an era of human-rights and peace-building organizations, when the international community was pouring enormous amounts of donations into reconciliation and building a civil society based on neoliberal principles. However, their affinity for peaceful protests is not only influenced by a western ideology that merely nonviolent indignation is considered to be democratic but also by living through the atrocities of the war. Members of this generation were not personally fighting in the war, due to their age, but they vividly remember it through their own experiences. Several citizen activists I got to know during the uprising suffered physical wounds as children or teens caught in an enemy fire or bombing. Some remember having to flee their homes for fear of their lives, leaving family members behind who ended up getting killed or imprisoned in concentration camps. Members of this generation tend to fight using other means, as they strongly believe violence during the war was unnecessary and could have been avoided. They often fight by the stroke of the pen, organizing protest events using means of provocation and shaming, performance, and humor, and lately even putting direct pressure on the people in the positions of power, acting as watchdogs, inspecting every move the politicians make, and exposing their deceptive policies. Some of the members of this generation have been involved in a few guerilla actions during my fieldwork but

those were carefully planned and usually executed during the night in order to avoid potential conflict.

Most plenum organizers of the *Post-War Transition Generation* are educated individuals who have had opportunities to travel internationally and gain experiences by exchanging worldviews and beliefs with others. They are fluent in foreign languages and in-tune with worldwide histories and current events, especially those connected to common struggles. They are antiauthoritarian, antinationalist, antifascist, and refuse to identify themselves according to ethnic lines. They never developed an ideological framework of the uprising, even though some older participants believed it could create a stronger connection and cohesion between people with disparate agendas. At a round-table discussion on direct democracy, protests, and plenums, at the History Museum in Sarajevo on February 14, Asim Mujkić, a distinguished professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo and a supporter of the uprising, suggested the need for an articulation of an ideological stance around which different people could unite. However, plenum organizers wanted to be a part of creating something outside of the political mainstream. They avoided ideological stances precisely because of their disastrous consequences during the war and post-war ethnicization of society. As both Rancière (1999) and Arditi (2015) claim, 'true' democracy and 'true' insurgency must be absent of ideological framing to avoid being subsumed back into consensus politics and the *policing* order.

Most of the plenum organizers of the *Post-War Transition Generation* had previous experiences in various protest activities and have known each other from participating in such events. Because of that, there was a base of trust already established among them, that in turn was not present with newcomers to the uprising. This base of trust was difficult to establish and was another factor that contributed to the disintegration of the plenum in Sarajevo. Due to

infiltration of undercover cops and members of political parties among the protestors to divide the uprising, the atmosphere among the participants was tense, as it was hard to establish who was there for the right reasons. Furthermore, there is a growing mistrust of the civil society sector in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as it is often replete with elitism, corruption, lack of solidarity, project oriented mentality, fulfillment of donors' needs and wants, and negligence of the essential goals these organizations were established on in the first place (Bilić 2014:17). Thus, some newcomers accused plenum organizers of being *strani plaćenici* (foreign mercenaries), working for formal NGOs, and supposedly getting paid by international donors for their involvement in the uprising. Although some of them did work for formal and informal civil society organizations either at the time of the uprising or in the past, they joined the protests and plenums as individual citizens in search for change and not as NGO representatives. Furthermore, the general public tends to put all civil society organizations in the same basket and label people working for them as unethical, primarily interested in making money and not helping people and the communities. However, there are differences between NGOs in Bosnia-Herzegovina as some are more grassroots than others, where much of the work activists do is on a volunteer basis and people are genuinely trying to contribute their time and energy to create change for the better.

The newcomers also spread rumors of plenum organizers' mishandling donations received for protest and plenum activities, and one event in particular was under a lot of scrutiny. The organizers of a protest in Sarajevo on April 9 that united all plenums from different parts of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, were reluctant to handle the money from donations that helped offset the cost of the event advertising and other logistics. They urged the donors to pay the service providers (bus drivers, print shops, etc.) directly, in order to be transparent and

avoid possible accusations. When rumors of mishandling donations nevertheless ensued, one organizer in particular felt it was her responsibility to openly face the accusers. At the plenum when this issue was being discussed, she calmly addressed the audience saying she "has nothing to hide" and that all financial transactions connected to organizing the event are an open book. When I asked her later, if she was offended by the accusations, she responded:

> No, one cannot feel bad for being held accountable. These people have been lied to over and over again for years. It is to be expected that they will demand accountability and transparency... It was stressful and I am burned out from all of this. There was no monetary incentive for me. I did it for all of us that want change in this country. But, we cannot just *pretend* to be doing direct democracy. Accountability, transparency, equality, and so on, are basic things in direct democracy. We have to get used to that, if we want to do politics in an ethical way.

People's demand for greater ethics and morality was not only a reaction against the corruption and opacity in the political corridors of power but a reorientation of the 'self' towards greater accountability and transparency as well. By addressing the plenum in a transparent way, the above plenum organizer not only eased people's minds but gained a lot of respect as somebody who can, from now on, be trusted as credible, dependable, and working in the best interest of the people that want change. However awkward situations like that might be, they are necessary in order to build that base of trust that is essential to successful direct action.

Recognizing the failures of representative democracy, plenum organizers attempted to create an alternative to the existing *police* order. The current system has been depriving citizens of the kind of citizenship that is not ethnicized and, for the first time after the war, plenums have created a political space for people to practice their citizenship that is void of ethnic belonging (Hemon 2014:62). Plenums in Sarajevo were deliberately defined in juxtaposition to the traditional mainstream political structures that are hierarchical—or what Rancière calls the *policing* order of the consensus politics (1999). It was members of the *Post-War Transition*

Generation that put forward the idea of a horizontal organization that was non-representational and non-hierarchical. Therefore, some of the most important plenum goals were *horizontality* based on equitable social structures and distribution of power, and *transparency* of the political action. Sitrin and Azzellini describe this open and horizontal political space, where decisions are deliberated among the people until the consensus is reached, instead of generated by political representatives on behalf of the citizens (2014; see also Graeber 2009; Roberts 2008; Taylor et al. 2011). They claim that the idea of *horizontality* is "... a dynamic social relationship that represents a break with the logic of representation and vertical ways of organizing. This does not mean that structures do not emerge, … but the structures that emerge are non-representational and non-hierarchical" (2014:17; see also Graeber 2009). For these reasons, plenum organizers refused to negotiate with the local and international public officials behind closed doors.

Figure 5.2. Plenum in *Dom Mladih* (The Youth House)
On February 25, 2014. Courtesy of plenumsa.org.

Initially, members of the *Socialist Era Generation* welcomed the idea of citizens having a space to speak freely, propose their demands, and get involved in decision-making. On a superficial level, the discourse of the post-socialist plenum evoked a socialist past, a period in which elders grew up and came of age. After 1948, Yugoslavia began building its own market socialism where businesses were socially owned by their employees organized around workers'

self-management and competing in an open market economy. Workers had a key role in decision-making in their companies; they were "particularly involved over questions of welfare, employment and pay" (Estrin 1991:189). However, plenum during socialism signified large meetings of the Central Committee of the League of Communist Yugoslavia, the only political party in the country. Then, the plenum was not "an embodiment of direct democracy, but more commonly an important meeting of a socialist bureaucratic class which certainly claimed to represent 'the people'" (Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017:15). Then workers had some influence in their workspace but not in terms of a larger political structure that was extremely hierarchical.

In 2014, members of the older generation quickly grew skeptical of a plenum defined as absent of leadership. Some members of the *Socialist Era Generation* kept referring back to the mainstream political structure and demanded the formation of a hierarchical organization, with clear leaders and vertical orientation of responsibility. They saw plenum as a tool to open a direct line of communication and negotiation with the current political establishment and strived to create change from within the existing system. On the other hand, members of the *Post-War Transition Generation* refused the formation of hierarchy, which would mean the plenum has been taken over by mainstream politics or Rancière's *policing* order. In many ways, they strived to re-make politics and produce change outside the existing political system. As one of my informants said, "it is about time people stood up and started thinking outside the box. It is up to us to organize ourselves and create something new and different that belongs only to us, the citizens..."

Scholars of social movements could argue divergent trajectories are often beneficial in protest. Rancière's politics, for example, strives for a collectivity but not a unity (Bassett 2014: 892), knowing that each collectivity is susceptible to various different paths and directions.

Various trajectories of different generations in Sarajevo uprising initially did seize a creative capacity, when people of different generations and ethno-religious backgrounds came together, complemented each other, and gained a momentum that grew into a break with the *status quo*. However, at the end, representatives of the *Socialist Era Generation* seemed to be absorbed back into the *policing* order based on keeping close ties with the hierarchical and representative system of organization. I do not wish to imply that elders are stuck in the past, set in their ways, and passively observing the present changing before their eyes. The uprising is but one example where they were actively involved in trying to create change. However, they did not see that change happening outside of the political mainstream.

5.7. What Comes After the Uprising

Twenty years of post-war institutionalized ethnicization in Bosnia-Herzegovina led by local and international political elites pushed a large portion of people to the edge of existence that culminated in a social uprising at the beginning of February, 2014. This chapter examines the forces that drew people of different age groups together, and the complementary nature of their actions that grew into an uprising imbued with hope for a better future. For example, with the use of force, participants of the *"Absurdistan" Generation* opened a much-needed space where members of the *Post-War Transition Generation* had an opportunity to create alternative forms of political participation. This, in turn, had a healing effect and offered a way out of hopelessness for many participants of the *Socialist Era Generation*. An act of 'true' politics in Rancièrian sense emerged, where the existing *status quo* was challenged by "those who have no part" (Rancière 1999)—citizens who emerged as new subjects, practicing citizenship that is not focused on ethnic belonging, and in the process becoming different from any already identifiable

subjects or groups. However, I observed that members of different age groups also used different tactics and strategies for achieving their goals during the uprising. For example, their thoughts differed on whether or not violence was necessary to create positive change, whether this change should happen within or outside of the political mainstream, and if it should be based on horizontal or hierarchical organization. I argued that coming of age and spending most of their lives in different political periods—socialist, immediate post-war, and a period of increased economic crisis—influenced their somewhat divergent and conflicting views on how to generate change. Nevertheless, the uprising in Sarajevo should not be considered as a failed attempt at social change but instead as a positive endeavor to create new forms of 'self' where ethno-identity is backgrounded in citizen activism. Instead, social-identity is foregrounded by people focusing more on creating equitable social structures and distribution of power.

Many uprising participants feel disenchanted by the trajectory of the uprising. Knowing things cannot continue following the *status quo* and that something must change, many are asking themselves, "where do we go from here?" Do they create a political party from the ground up and confront the political mainstream on their turf or do they start creating change on a smaller level, in their neighborhoods? Do they put pressure on the current political establishment, demand their transparency, accountability, and a 'true' representation of the interests of citizens they are supposed to serve or do they stop asking public officials to solve their problems and start establishing their own control in the communities they live?

Although some researchers and reporters, including many Bosnians themselves, do not see any changes happening in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the aftermath of the uprising, I do. Just because there are no massive protests and movements at the moment, does not mean social activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina encountered a dead end. Several participants from the uprising

continue to be active in different capacities, where they are using experiences gained during 2014 uprising and build on them in other initiatives. For example, during disastrous floods in Bosnia-Herzegovina in May 2014, when the state failed disastrously to help the citizens affected by it, some Sarajevo uprising participants rushed to the affected areas to volunteer their help. The organization of people and aid materials was much quicker, since the logistical aspects were already in place from organizing the protests and plenums. Furthermore, plenum was a good spring board for enacting equality, even though not all uprising participants bought into its horizontal nature. Some of the participants realized that issues need to be scaled down to address emerging community problems. For one thing, Sarajevo plenum was supposed to represent all citizens in the whole Canton of Sarajevo that is estimated to have 442.669 people living in nine municipalities. Serving such big area, plenum quickly became unsustainable and impossible to manage.

Since February 2014 uprisings, public officials in Bosnia-Herzegovina launched a reform agenda focused on austerity measures and are increasingly having problems to disguise their capitalist policies and projects under the pretext of ethno-national interests of three constitutive peoples. On the ground, people and social actors are increasingly focused on the antagonistic relationship between capitalism and labor, illustrated in two examples. The first one points to a new trend of self-organization reminiscent in the factory called *Dita* from Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose workers after years of protest over unpaid wages, health care, and pension contributions, organized and restarted the production of detergents themselves. They received strong support from the local community where volunteers responded by helping with advertising and marketing campaigns, factory cleanings, etc. The second example comes from Sarajevo initiative called *Jedan Grad, Jedna Borba* (One City, One Fight) that focuses on

problematizing questions around public infrastructure and its commercialization. They are addressing problems around water reduction in Sarajevo, lack of functioning heating system and regulation that causes massive pollution problems, especially in winter months, and problems of health care, and education to name just of few. However, for such social fights as the two mentioned above that are focused on class differences to establish roots in the Bosnian society and out voice the well-established and entrenched trope of ethno-nationalism, they need to break through the isolation in which they find themselves. The question of their sustainability does not only depend on them but other left-wing actors in neighboring countries and beyond, whose politics directly influence the political opportunities in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Matić 2017).

Chapter 5, in part, has been submitted for publication of the material and it may appear in Political and Legal Anthropology Review. The dissertation author, Natasa Garic-Humphrey, was the primary investigator and is the sole author of this article.

Chapter 6

Sustainable Activism?

Exploring Interest, Responsibility, and Community Among Citizen Activists

Figure 6.1. Sitting on tram tracks and knitting during 2014 social uprisings in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Courtesy of Zeka Zela.

6.1. Introduction

Shortly after I met citizen activist Leila for the first time, she invited me to join a yarn bombing group. “But I don’t know how to knit,” I said. “It doesn’t matter. I can teach you. It’s easy,” she replied. I eagerly agreed to meet them at their very first session. I thought to myself, this would be a good “meditation” time, where I get to see a tangible thing come to life and give out as gifts to my friends. But soon I came to realize, yarn bombing meant much more to me than that. The action of learning how to knit while doing fieldwork was indeed meditative, but in a way, I never imagined. Being immersed in daily lives and struggles of people I worked with and

being involved in activism with all of its ups and downs, worrying about my own positionality in a "foreign" place, trying to help as best as I could, and often feeling helpless, yarnbombing was *"ispušni ventil"* (exhaust valve) for me, a coping mechanism, a "zen" place of support, peace, and friendship. I was hooked and I could not wait for the next meeting! Knitting became a daily activity and a tool for making a statement every time I took the yarn out of my bag, which now accompanied me everywhere.

For me, yarn bombing was very much connected to people I got to know through this craft. I noticed myself not being able to do it outside of the fieldwork environment as it did not feel quite right without my friends. One of these friends is Leila—a smart, funny, strong woman, and a proud feminist with principles, who is always speaking her mind in a candid and honest way. I have spent numerous hours and days with Leila during my fieldwork, admiring her persistence in fighting for what she thought was right, not bending to conformity, and intelligent and witty way she managed road blocks in her life. But most of all, I admired her creativity and the fearless way she approached tasks she believed in. Leila was only ten years old when the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina started and spent all of her adult life in a place that does not invest much energy into youth and creativity other than indoctrinating them into identity politics of ethnonationalism. When I asked Leila where she learned how to knit and crochet, she said her and her sister, Alma, spent much of their time during the war confined to the house, knitting. In a strange way, knitting then offered them a chance to break away from fear they felt on a daily basis. "We couldn't run free and play outside, but knitting was the closest we could get to being carefree as young children. Our young imaginative minds ran free and wild in various knitting and crochet designs, as the repetitive hand movements and thoughts about the next step in the design made us focused on it, forgetting the horrible things happening outside," Leila explained.

As a mother of a newborn baby girl who was only one year old during my fieldwork, every talk about children struggling immediately turned me into an emotional mess and I could not help feel guilty for having a carefree childhood, planning my next travel adventure or worrying about which concert to go to, while Leila and Alma lived theirs in fear and horror. Soon I learned that many members of Yarn Bombing Sarajevo group spent much of their time during the war perfecting this craft and that knitting offered them a sense of calmness during stressful times.

In an interesting way, knitting continues to be an important part of Leila's life, as she has expanded its scope into activism. First, she spends much of her time knitting or crocheting in public, breaking with the traditional 'confinement' of this craft exclusively to women in the privacy of their homes. Second, with knitting, Leila and other yarn bombers all over the world, often transform sterile and unappealing places into colorful, warm, and inviting spaces that others can enjoy. They also point to social and political problems in their surroundings. In our first activist initiative, Yarn Bombing Sarajevo group members created seat cushions for people to use on the steps of the National Museum in Sarajevo, one of seven cultural institutions that had to close their doors to the public because of being defunded by the government. Even though the museum was officially closed, yarn bombers wanted to show it still exists and invited people to sit in front of it with friends, in order to point to the government's blatant negligence of Bosnian cultural and natural heritage.

Figure 6.2. Seat cushions in front of National Museum in Sarajevo.

Being involved in activism can be gratifying in multiple ways as people often feel good about speaking out against injustices and being actively involved in change. But it can also place those involved in vulnerable situations. When citizen activists pour their heart and soul into protest activities, which often do not result in any major change of this oppressive socio-political establishment, it can take an emotional toll on them. For example, chapter 4 of this dissertation focuses on people's entrapment in an endless transition where nothing is moving forward. In such an environment, many are losing their hopes that anything positive can come out of a collective indignation and those that persist are met with the difficulty of acting within the constraints of Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina and/or creating alternatives to it. Nowadays, hope for a better future is ambivalent and distant, not immediate or near, as it was the case in post-WWII Yugoslavia, where people organized in workers' actions (*radničke akcije*) and volunteered to build roads, railways, bridges, and industry. Hope at that time was experienced through bodily practices, such as digging, building, and creating. In contrast, hope today resides in vague ideas of human rights and is therefore more ambivalent, precisely because of the difficulty to build a tangible and concrete alternative to Dayton BiH. Hope today depends on a distant, future-oriented, and extremely questionable EU membership that is completely out of people's control (see also Čelebičić 2013:79).

Indignation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is made even more difficult when those with resources—people in the positions of power, media, and the police—intimidate the protesters, spin the activities on-the-ground with lies, and try to divide the protesters by infiltrating doubt, skepticism, and paranoia amongst them. For example, during social uprisings in 2014 several citizen activists were arrested, intimidated, and charged with unlawful activities. Citizen activists are also afraid of losing their jobs or not getting jobs in the future because of their engagements,

they suffer from burnout and exhaustion, and fear retaliation against them and their families. Therefore, in this chapter my interest turns to the question and a closer investigation of what keeps some citizen activists motivated to continue with political activity despite an emotional toll and often no substantial change resulting from their indignation.

First of all, I argue that those citizen activists that are more prepared to acknowledge and come to terms with their vulnerability have a better chance of persisting in this emotionally taxing and somewhat dangerous endeavor. Those citizen activists, usually the ones with previous activist experiences, that knew how to take a more balanced response to injustices happening around them and knew when to take a step back and devote time to self-care and reflection, had an easier time coping and getting back in the game. Most of those citizen activists I worked with who still persist and whose activist strategies are getting more sophisticated know how to put the anger and pain in the background when needed, and how to work on a practical project that could bear some tangible results in the meantime, until the time comes to rise in a collective manner again.

The above argument shows a proportional approach to activism, where citizen activists devote time not only to fighting for the collective good but supplement that with recognizing the need for self-reflection and taking care of themselves as well. In a similar vein, citizen activists I worked with are also motivated by *interest*, on the one hand, where they are evaluating the environment for their own well-being and making decisions based on that, and *responsibility*, on the other hand, where they are considering the well-being of others as well. And although, this often culminates in a strong sense of *community* among citizen activists, that can also act as a motivator to keep one devoted to the cause, we cannot talk about a development of *communitas* (Turner 2012) in a broader sense yet. Through protests, gatherings, meetings, and initiatives,

citizen activists are often able to experience a community of like-minded people promoting equality, for example, where ethnonationalism, as sponsored by the mainstream politics, does not matter. Bartulović (2012:138) claims that through these practices citizen activists are able to (re)discover a lost and forgotten experience of solidarity and multiculturalism that existed in the socialist past. Although I see signs of this in my ethnographic data, we cannot assume that citizen activists nowadays are experiencing the same type of solidarity people felt back then. The type of solidarity that existed during and right after the WWII resembles more what Edith Turner calls *communitas* that often arises when "people engage in a collective task with full attention… [or when] they experience a full merging of action and awareness…" (2012:3). As mentioned before, through bodily actions of building a new society rising out of the ashes caused by fascism, people then experienced *communitas* where focus on individualism was inappropriate, ego was lost, and people "rid themselves of their concern for status…" (Turner 2012:1) and prestige. People then knew that only by working together they will be able to reach a good life they deserved. However, this *communitas* experienced through bodily actions of working together for a better future in post-WWII period was promoted and sanctioned by the state, by those very people that unselfishly put their own lives at risk, fighting against fascism, for the good of everybody that stood against it. Nowadays, though, citizen activists are fighting a different battle, living in a society where tension has not stopped yet, where people have not had a chance to come to terms with all they have lost, and where many fellow citizens think they have no other option but to conform in order to at least put themselves in a position where they might be able to reap some benefits they desperately need to survive. Today's Dayton BiH with its mix of politics of polarization institutionalized in its very core, leaving no resources or room for alternatives, and neoliberalist focus on competitive individualism, prevents the creation of

communitas in Edith Turner's sense. That said, citizen activists I worked with do value and did experience some level of community and collective solidarity they felt emerging in some instances, which did play a part in motivating them to persist. Citizen activists I worked with do admire a sense of *communnitas* that rose out of the fight against fascism but are also aware that a similar ideological reproduction or recreation is not going to work in the society they live in now, if they are to be successful in turning activism into a much-needed alternative that can survive in the long-term.

Before delving deeper into each part of the argument, it is important to point out that joining or being a part of a protest, an uprising, or a social movement is not the only way people resist and fight for what they believe is right. More often than not resistance comes in the form of quiet stubbornness and subtle acts of refusal, rejection, or rebuttal (Li forthcoming; Lüdke 1982; de Certeau 1984). Some resist publicly by joining a protest and others in more subtle ways by refusing to vote or to register a newborn child according to ethnic lines. I also do not wish to create dichotomies and look at activism as a polar opposite of apathy, and therefore differentiate those who act from those that do not. People's aversion from political participation can also be a citizen's response to the current distorted system of values in mainstream politics, indicating that people do not want to be a part of something they view as immoral and dysfunctional.

6.2. Self-Care and Self-Reflection

During my fieldwork, I noticed many citizen activists I worked with were supplementing the intense time of being completely immersed in activist endeavors with time for self-care, whether it was knitting, crocheting, practicing yoga, swimming, learning how to play a new instrument, art, or taking frequent retreats into nature. As mentioned before, Leila and other yarn

bombers I met in Sarajevo complemented their need to be actively involved with a craft that often functioned as a coping mechanism and an exhaust valve in times of stress. One yarn bomber once told me, she likes to come to our weekly meetings precisely because that is the time when she can de-stress and not think about politics and injustices happening around her in an explicit manner:

> Yarn bombing feels like I am doing something good. It feels like I am working toward some goal we have decided to do together, be it knitting winter caps, scarfs, gloves, and sweaters for orphaned children, or making a dingy bench more comfortable and appealing to sit on. But while doing that, we do not discuss politics. And I like that. I get enough of it through media and other activist initiatives. I feel like, if I did not have something else to do that does not involve arguing about politics and listening to the stupidity, negligence, and unaccountability of those in the government, I would go crazy.

Figure 6.3. Looking at a collection of winter scarves made by Yarn Bombing Sarajevo group members. Courtesy of Yarn Bombing Sarajevo.

Many others expressed similar feelings as I observed them literally exhaling worries, negative emotions, and stress, and focusing on the practical and doable tasks at hand. Even though yarn bombing can be an individual endeavor, our group in Sarajevo focused on working together towards specific goals. Once we decided what the next initiative is going to be, we all pitched in and could count on each other to complete the task. Soon the word got out, as we were featured on local radio, television, and several newspapers and magazines. People noticed us

knitting in public places, and more and more members, a few men as well, joined our group. There was no ego, no hierarchy, no ambivalence, just mutual support and tolerance. To a reporter's prompt to describe our group, one yarn bomber replied: "We are just ordinary citizens [*obični građani i građanke*], who see each other as *citizens*. There are no divisions amongst us, just mutual cooperation and support. We are proof that if citizens get together and work towards something, things *can* be possible." Another, yarn bomber added: "It feels good to be a part of something good. Something that nobody can divide into three exclusive parts [referring to identitarian politics of three constitutive peoples]."

Similarly, citizen activist, Emir, who is originally from Prijedor, Bosnia-Herzegovina, but was forced to leave his hometown during the war, and who studied visual arts at a university in New Zealand, said he loves art because one can use it to say something about injustice and since art is emotionally charged, people are naturally drawn to it. Therefore art, is a good way to get people to pay attention to what one has to say. However, art can also be a vehicle that helps one breathe in tough situations, much like an extra lung. He said, "you know how when things are very stressful, people's breathing is quicker and shallower? With this extra lung, which in my case is art, but for another person it could be something else, like knitting is for Leila, you can fully exhale all of the pent-up energy. When I create art, it helps me breathe, it helps me focus, it helps me reflect. I see things in a much clearer way and I get new ideas. Not to mention that it is calming and very satisfying when you see the final product come to life."

Furthermore, citizen activists are also trying to stay engaged and keep the impulse to act alive by working on individual projects and molding them according to their needs and wants. For example, citizen activist Zeka Zela has been taking workshops with Mountain Rescue Association and Leila once again coupled her passion for justice, equality, and nonconformity

with making craft beer. *Žene, Pank, i Pivo* (Women, Punk, and Beer) is the slogan of her latest endeavor, coupling craftivism, feminism, and rebelliousness with a hobby of making beer. Her goal is not to make a profit, but to distribute the product she made at activist meetings in order to create stronger bonds and promote a community based on solidarity.

Citizen activists I worked with also choose to spend a considerable amount of time connecting with the natural beauty of Bosnia-Herzegovina. With that they are not only getting away from extremely polluted city centers, an alarming situation they are blaming on the negligence of public officials, but they are also backgrounding the constant presence and engagement with mainstream politics. As Sabina once told me: "Bosnia and Herzegovina can be an ugly place, if you look at our politics, where nothing is the way it should be, but when I hike up the mountain or ride my bike, I am reminded of just how unbelievably beautiful this country is. I enjoy being a part of the natural beauty; it fulfills me and makes me whole again. And I am able to forget about all that ugliness for a moment." However, an actual process of hiking on top of the mountain, just like making a political statement with art or yarn bombing, can also be considered an act of indignation itself, similarly to how Henry David Thoreau retreated to nature and simple life at Walden Pond to cut ties with the government that was wagering a war with Mexico and supporting slavery at the time. It can be seen as an act of civil disobedience, where citizen activists have found ways to work on living 'normally' despite constant attempts by the government to sow hopelessness amongst people in order to reap the benefits of power.

In above examples, yarn bombers point out that knitting and crocheting bring people together as citizens, instead of driving them apart. Citizen activists indicate they like to retreat into nature, art, and craft to clear their minds, reflect, get a clearer perspective, and sometimes even forget about politics influencing their lives for a moment. With such practices, they

recognize their own vulnerabilities not only as citizens of Dayton BiH but also as citizen activists trying to fight the system for a better future. Citizen activist, Svjetlana, once said to me, "You can't just be in this [activism] non-stop. You have to take some time off to think, to take care of yourself, reflect, and when or if you are ready to come back, you are stronger and wiser. You have to clear your head, so you can think straight. If you are in it non-stop, you will make mistakes and you will burnout. And there's no point in that." Being in tune with their vulnerabilities, citizen activists are able to get a more realistic picture of what they are up against, which is also an essential part of successful participation in activism. As Emir once said:

> It is important for us to realize we are not going to create change overnight. We are just planting seeds that hopefully will grow into something bigger and better in the future. We need to realize that any major systemic change would have to involve all three constitutive peoples working together, which is exactly what they [people in the positions of power] are trying to prevent. And they have the backing of Dayton, which is basically our constitution that divides us in the first place. In order for that constitution to change, you would need the green light from all three constitutive representatives in the government, which will never happen. Because that tension keeps them in power. So, Dayton stays the way it is. And that is how we come to an endless transition where nothing is changing. So, forget about fighting the system in a direct way. But what we *can* do, is work towards awakening the citizen consciousness. That is why I said, we are just planting seeds and those seeds start with peoples' consciousness...

However, citizen activists are not only acknowledging their own vulnerabilities, but with their practices of retreating into nature, exercise, and drawing on art and craft to cope, they are also rejecting the distorted system of values of Dayton BiH such as nationalist mentality, disunited citizenship, and corrupted morality. They are aspiring towards *ethical citizenship* where the ethics is located in the process of people working on themselves (see Foucault 1988) and changing themselves into citizens capable to create 'normal' lives in Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina. Self-reflection and self-care not only bring a more proportional and balanced response to injustice and vulnerabilities, but the process of self-care such as a retreat into nature

can be an act of indignation itself, an act of leaving polluted and corrupted city centers behind to work on oneself as a moral person (see also Zigon 2008:44) despite living in Absurdistan.

There was a prevalent view among citizen activists that in order to create change, people have to change as well. One yarn bomber's answer to a criticism posted on Facebook 'But you are not really changing anything with what you are doing' was, "We first have to change ourselves in order to change our society." This working on the *self* (Foucault 1988, 1997) is accomplished not only through political participation in protest activities where people are fighting for change but through self-care and self-reflection as well that provides a proportional response to activists' vulnerabilities. In this balanced approach of both *self-care* and *care for others*, we witness a merging of focus on the self in addition to caring for others. As Foucault has noted in his *Technologies of the Self*, western philosophical views of morality see the self as something which must conform to external moral expectations and where focus on the self is considered immoral (1988:22). During the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King was urging citizens to develop a kind of "dangerous unselfishness," to worry less about one's vulnerability and instead of asking "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?," reversing the question and ask" "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?" (1968). My work with citizen activists shows that a focus on the self and unselfishness need not be mutually exclusive. Foucault argues, ethics is a creative process and working on the self is similar to working on art as he writes "we have to create ourselves as a work of art" (1997:262). For Foucault, there is no original self that has to be released but the self is a product of an ethical work. Therefore, I argue that unselfishness can be a product of working on the self by means of technologies of the self but in order to care for others we also have to care for ourselves and create ourselves into moral persons.

6.3. Interest and Responsibility

A mix of different emotions is usually associated with instigating or motivating people to political action. As van Troost, van Stekelenburg, and Klandermans claim "just being angry is not enough" (2013:186) and Jasper purports "almost anything" can move people to action (2006:157). Among citizen activists I worked with and numerous protest activities I attended, anger, disappointment, outrage, loss, moral shock, but also emotional achievement, collective identity, solidarity, and so on, were all important emotions that motivated citizens to speak out and act upon their grievances. However, in order to continue with the thread from the previous section where I noticed citizen activists supplement their fight for a collective good with self-care, I will focus on two emotions in particular that also act as a motivator for engagement. *Interest*, one the one hand, is an emotion where citizen activists are evaluating the environment for their own well-being, and a sense of *responsibility,* on the other, is where they are acting in the best interest of others as well.

6.3.1. A Person-Centered Model for Motivation

Psychological models of motivation have been largely focused on *biological needs* and *psychological drives* as basic motivational structures for human survival. The basic theory that humans are motivated to eat and drink because they have learned those two activities satisfy hunger and thirst is believed to work analogously with other human needs such as a desire for achievement, for example. Therefore, all humans are supposed to have the same motivations, the only difference is that they "may exert varying degrees of pressure (for example, some cultures foster a high, others a low, need for achievement)" (Strauss 1992:3). Furthermore, in economic

theory, a model of *homo economicus* was a simplification used by liberal reformers to battle aristocratic privilege in 19th century Europe (Jasper 2006:158).

The shortcomings of psychological models and economic theory of *homo economicus* as a person motivated by self-interest and materialism offered other scholars to contribute their thoughts on the study of motivation. Weber turned to reputation and power as motivation, basically reviving the outmoded idea of the human drive for glory and honor (Jasper 2006:158). Durkheim and Parsons focused on the need of societies to transmit dominant values which create motivational states and lead to certain actions that recreate the social order (in Strauss 1992:8). As Claudia Strauss claims, "according to structural-functionalists, if we want to know why people do what they do, we need only look at what they have been taught" (1992:8). However, dissemination of values is not a straightforward matter and our cultural environment is not unambiguous, consistent, and fixed, if so, society's messages would be coherent and understandable to anyone that learned them (Strauss 1992:8).

Practice theory (see Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Giddens 1979) is an improvement over structural-functionalism, where it is believed practices of everyday life are internalized but are not copied exactly in the habitus. Instead, as Strauss writes, "learners unconsciously extract from practice a pattern that can be flexibly and innovatively enacted in new situations" (1992:9). However, this theory considers people's behavior as being unreflective and automaton-like, which is a step in the right direction in the sense that it counters theories that focus exclusively on consciously goal-directed behavior, but nevertheless it is a step too far to the other side (Strauss 1992:9). Therefore, Strauss critiques Bourdieu because he is "ignoring social behavior that *is* consciously goal-directed" (1992:9). In contrast, Strauss proposes a model that is person-centered and considers the complexities of socialization process. According to her model: "(1)

public social messages may change, be inconsistent, or hard to read; (2) internalizing those messages does not mean copying them in any straightforward way; and (3) motivation is not automatically acquired when cultural descriptions of reality are learned" (1992:10). This model does not deny that societies have dominant ideologies, but it does oppose the idea of a "single, clearly defined, well-integrated reality" (Strauss 1992:11). Therefore, according to cognitive cultural anthropology, besides the importance of knowing what information are people exposed to, we also have to study "*how* they internalize that information" (Strauss 1992:11). Likewise, it is not satisfactory to say motivation is "culturally constituted," but we have to explore the reasons behind "why some cultural constructs, but not others, acquire motivational force?" (Strauss 1992:13). To bridge the gap between learning/knowing and being motivated, we need to consider the fact that different feelings are associated with different life experiences, which are remembered, and they in turn produce different motivational structures. As Strauss claims: "Knowing the feelings that people associate with different cultural models as a result of their specific life experiences is crucial in order to understand what motivates them" (1992:14; see also Quinn and Strauss 1993; Rosaldo 1984).

The traditional view on the nature of rationality separated reason from emotion. It was believed that reason existed in a different area of the mind where emotion was not allowed to intrude. Since then, neuroscientists (see Damasio 1994) and cognitive anthropologists (see D'Andrade and Egan 1974; Strauss and Quinn 1993) dismantled this notion and proved that emotion and cognition are two types of mental action that are linked and inseparable in human thought (see also Anderson 2011). In a similar vein, scholars of political action first saw participants in protest as irrational human beings, led by emotions, not reason. A later evaluation of this flawed position, gave participants their rational status at the expense of emotion, as

protest participants were now considered emotionless. Current work on social movements though (Jasper 1998, 2011, 2014; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001a; Yang 2000) is seeing protestors as rational subjects motivated for political action by various emotions.

6.3.2. Emotions in Protest

Until the 1960s, emotions were at the center of the study of politics. However, at that time individuals were thought of being mysteriously transformed by the crowd, easily controlled by instigators, and readily inclined to violence and anger. Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta write, "[c]rowds were assumed to create, through suggestion and contagion, a kind of psychologically 'primitive' group mind and group feelings, shared by all participants and outside their normal range of sensibilities" (2001b:2). Lasswell (1930, 1948) and Hoffer (1951) saw participants in protest as "driven by inner needs" (in Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001b:3), who lack a secure and stable identity, and who are satisfying unfulfilled private needs; as desperate fanatics "who needed to believe in *something*, no matter what" (in Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001b:3; see also Jasper 1998). Driven by emotions or forces outside of their control, protesters were *not* seen as rational agents. Later on, in the decades from 1970 to 1990, the new generation of scholars on social movements took a turn and perceived protestors as rational individuals but portrayed them as *void* of emotions. Following Weber, they often associated emotions with irrationality and thought "rational action could not be emotional" (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001b:2).

In the 1990s, a growing field of *sociology of emotions* gained prominence by emphasizing the ways emotions are controlled, managed, or socialized to minimize social conflict (Kemper 1990). However, this was not sufficient and scholars a decade later recognized the need to pay closer attention to the *emotional experience* in social movements and the *analysis*

of emotions during protests or resistance (Yang 2000; Jasper 1998; Juris 2008; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001a), because when people's moral sensibilities are rattled, they express it through emotions. Thus, in his work on social movements Jasper uses Giddens (1984) and his categorization of human awareness into three levels—discursive consciousness (things we can talk about), practical consciousness (tacit knowledge or knowledge we possess without knowing how to fully articulate it), and the unconscious—to claim that on the contrary to the traditional knowledge of emotions arising only from the unconscious (i.e. irrational), humans are in fact moved by impulses stemming from all three levels often simultaneously (in Jasper 2006:159).

Jasper, for example, distinguishes between emotions that are transitory or temporary responses to events and information (such as anger or fear) and those that are more permanent in nature, often called affect or sentiment (such as loyalty) (1998:399,401; see also Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001b:10). Political activity stirs the production of positive and negative affects towards groups, policies, and actions at every stage of the protest (Jasper 1998:402,404). Some affects explain why individuals join protests or activist organizations, others can be stirred by the recruiters or can emerge during protest activities. Affective ties can develop between fellow members or between people and organizations outside the movement. Affects are often accompanied by transitory emotional responses to events, and political organizers usually appeal to both in order to arouse, manipulate, persuade, recruit, and retain members (Jasper 1998:405).

Both affects and transitory reactive emotions can be an outcome of a "moral shock" caused by a piece of information or a disturbing event (Jasper 1998:409). Reactions to "moral shocks" can be varied. As Jasper explains, most people "resign themselves to unpleasant changes, certain that government and corporations do not bend to citizen protest. But others, through complex emotional processes that few researchers have described, channel their fear and

anger into righteous indignation and political activity" (Jasper 1998:409; see also Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001:16). For example, Larisa Kurtović reports of several activists in Sarajevo who were personally transformed by a "moral shock" they felt due to brutal murders of two teenage boys by their peers in 2008, and governmental negligence and lack of accountability in establishing institutions for youth crime prevention. In 2006, two years before the murders, the Parliament ordered the Cantonal Government to reopen Federal Strategy for Prevention and Sanctioning of Youth Delinquency program but the plan was never implemented (2008). When the Cantonal Government excused this gross negligence with *laissez-faire* attitude that they basically "'forgot' about it" (Kurtović 2008:5), this created a large public outrage. During the protests, some activists reflected on their own transformation in terms of a "visceral overturn or breaking down ('puk'o sam'—I broke down; 'sve mi se prevrnulo'—everything in me turned over)" (Kurtović 2008:11). These events caused an outburst of reactive emotions (anger and outrage) and affective emotions (in-group solidarity and trust) and (out-group hostility towards accountable members of the government).

In my own example of the social uprising in 2014, many protesters, especially from the older generation and those who were new to protest activity, talked about February 7, the day when youth set on fire two government buildings in Sarajevo, as a time when something in them "broke down." For example, a sixty-one year-old-woman and a protest participant told me: "When I saw the government building burning and those young boys pouring every little ounce of their contempt for this establishment on destroying it, my whole body broke into a million pieces. I felt this terrible feeling, oh my god, what have we done to these poor kids!" This lady's moral sensibilities of seeing a collective outrage of young boys taking their frustrations on an empty building that represents a lack of potential in their lives was expressed through an emotion

of her body breaking into pieces. “I could not move,” she told me, “and only then did I realize in how much pain our youth are. And I felt guilty, so guilty and ashamed, for myself and for everybody else that have not done anything about it. But being a part of protests and plenums, and helping create a better future for them, is gluing the broken pieces of my body back together. I mean, we have a lot of work to do, but it is a start, you know...” The moment of witnessing the youth's outrage towards the political establishment shook this protester out of the “everydayness of being moral” (Zigon 2007:133) or “everyday mode of being-in-the-world” (Zigon 2007:137). She was confronted by an ethical dilemma or a moral breakdown that forced her to step-away, reflect upon her moral expectations, and work out the situation at hand.

However, not only can emotions help instigate social movements but they can also keep them going or make them decline. Lofland (1996:237-42) lists many factors for the dissolution of activist groups such as “stigma in the external world, a lack of success, shifting goals of the movement or individual members, factionalism, and long hours [but] [h]e neglects the emotions that accompany most of these: embarrassment, disappointment, and frustration” (in Jasper 1998:416; see also Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001a). For example, in the moment of a moral breakdown that a protester experienced in the ethnographic case above, she felt embarrassed and ashamed of the fact that so many people, including herself, have been standing by idly and simply waiting for the bad conditions to end. Reflecting upon her own moral expectations, she decided to do something about it and work the problem out by not conforming to the *status quo* anymore.

In the following pages, I will focus my analysis on certain aspects of emotions that are largely overlooked in the growing literature on social movements, motivation, and emotion. I will analyze *interest* and *responsibility* as two poles of motivation that can significantly influence

people's impulses to act upon political claims and stay committed to the cause, and show the ways a sense of *community* (*zajednica*) activists get from working with each other can sometimes act as inspiration to continue with participation despite challenges they often face.

6.3.3. Interest as Emotion

In order to be motivated to do something, one primarily has to have an *interest* in it. A psychologist Paul Silvia is one of very few in social sciences that attempts to analyze *interest* and categorizes it as a "curious emotion" (2008). Despite the overwhelming interest in why people do what they do in social sciences, especially anthropology, a comprehensive study of *interest as motivation* has been largely overlooked in the past. Only in the last decade or so, have psychologists devoted more attention to it as a source of intrinsic motivation (Silvia 2006, 2008; Kashdan 2004: Sansone and Thoman 2005).

Interest, according to Silvia, falls under *knowledge emotions* such as confusion, surprise, and awe. Modern theories define emotion according to several components: (1) physiological changes in facial and vocal expressions; (2) patterns in cognitive appraisal; (3) a subjective feeling; and (4) an adaptive ability (Lazarus 1991). *Interest* has all of these components and can therefore be categorized as an emotion. Firstly, our facial and vocal expressions change when we are interested, as when the muscles of the forehead move and the eyes express attention and concentration (Libby, Lacey, and Lacey 1973; Langsdorf, Izard, Rayias, and Hembree 1983; Reeve 1993). When interested, people often keep still and tilt their heads to accommodate better sound reception (Reeve 1993) and to signal an interest in things being said or done by their interlocutors. Secondly, people constantly evaluate or appraise the environment surrounding them and its relevance for their well-being, which results in different emotions (Arnold 1960).

Psychologists consider two appraisal components, a "novelty check" and a "coping potential" as central to *interest* (Silvia 2006, 2008). The first component is not surprising as research shows people are usually interested in new and unexpected events. The second component is less obvious and it involves people evaluating an event in regards to whether or not they have the skills, knowledge, and resources to cope or deal with it (Lazarus 1991; Silvia 2008). Thirdly, *interest* is subjective as people differ in whether they find something interesting or not and lastly, a person's interest will change over time (Silvia 2008).

According to Lazarus, emotions help us manage fundamental goals (1991) and the function of *interest* is to motivate learning and exploration (Silvia 2008). This can be connected to *emotional achievement*, which Yang defines as the "attainment of self-validating emotional experiences and expressions through active and creative pursuits" (2000:594). Setting his argument against Hochschild's notion of emotion management that often produces negative sociopsychological effects (1979:551), Yang sets out to show that individuals also actively seek out and "pursue self-enriching and satisfying emotional experiences" (2000:549), which can influence identity construction and transformation (2000:595). For example, a citizen activist, Amela, once mentioned one of the reasons she likes or is motivated to be involved in activism is because every single protest or initiative changes her for the better. "It corrects my outlook on issues, I learn new things" Amela said, "and, at least I feel it makes me a better human being. I learn more about how this convoluted system works, which gives me confidence that I can find its blind spots. Of course, it is not always as easy as I make it sound, but in general I have a bit more confidence than perhaps somebody else who finds him/herself completely lost in the ways this country functions for example..." After talking for a few more minutes, she looked around a popular coffee shop near History Museum in Sarajevo that was buzzing with chatter and

background music, and said: “Look around. Most of these people are sitting around and waiting for something better to fall in their lap. I am not interested in waiting, I am interested in exploring new things. I just cannot sit around and wait. It is too easy, boring, and it is a cop out, if you ask me.” Another citizen activist, Amir, mentioned how being a part of protests makes him feel alive. “I do not have a job and I’m done with my studies, so I don’t know what I would do with my time. This way, at least I am doing something. It keeps me in touch with the reality here and outside of Bosnia, it keeps me updated, I learn so many new things by reading about other movements around the world. And I think it is important for us to learn that, you know. To be better citizens...”

Both Amela and Amir expressed the need and *interest* they have for learning something new, and being a part of protests and other activist initiatives satisfies that desire and gives them a sense they are moving forward in their lives as opposed to “pattering in place” (see Jansen 2014:79). Amela feels every new activist experience changes her to be a better human being and Amir thinks learning and being involved makes him a better citizen. In fact, being *interested* in learning and experiencing new things is a counterweight, for both Amela and Amir, to feelings of uncertainty and anxiety (see Kashdan 2004). Amela and Amir were both in their late thirties, unmarried, without kids and a permanent employment, occasionally working odd jobs here and there. They both have university degrees but have been unsuccessful on the job market for years. Neither of them is able to receive monetary help from their families to start her or his own business. They are extremely creative, with words and ideas, broadly educated, and self-motivated. Amela told me she feels some of the best years of her life have been practically wasted, not by her *per se* but by the war and post-war situation of living in a place that does not value potential. “I refuse to waste a single minute of my life anymore. I am approaching forties

and I want to live my life to the fullest potential possible, regardless of the circumstances I am forced to live in," she told me.

Amela and Amir are both doing their best to make something valuable out of their lives but life circumstances they find themselves in do sometimes cause anxiety and uncertainty. As Amir explained, "I will never reach my pension status, because I have never had a full-time job with social security. So, yes, I am concerned about what will happen when I get old. I am also concerned about not having health insurance. I try not to think about it and just focus on the positive because it makes me worried and anxious, but sometimes I cannot help it. There are days that I dwell on it but then I remind myself to go out and get involved in something, which helps me be more positive." And Amela said: "Of course, I am worried about my future. But what can I do? It is so hard to find an alternative for people like us in this country [by this she meant people without connections, not inclined to become party members in order to gain upward mobility] but I am doing the best I can. Being active and joining activist initiatives helps take my mind off of things that make me worried by working towards a cause that I think is worthwhile."

On the other hand, Stjepan, a man in his late thirties who does not want to engage in a protest, not only believes that people in this country cannot gain any leverage to tilt the scale to their side but also feels he does not have the skills to deal with the situation such as a protest or an uprising. "I would not know what to do there; I do not know anything about it. To me it just looks like a bunch of people standing in front of a building, holding signs, demanding something, but the next day things are still the same," Stjepan says. After I responded that there are other methods of protesting that can be more affective, he just shook his head and said "this is just not for me. I mean, I am a good man and I care for the people in this country. But activism is just not

for me. I am so consumed with day to day survival and feeding my family. It brings me a lot of anxiety because I do not have a stable job and my wife is unemployed. Being a part of a protest would bring me even more anxiety, I think."

While Amir and Amela's involvement in activist initiatives works as a stabilizer to their feelings of anxiety about the uncertainty of their lives, Stjepan thinks this would make his life even more unstable and anxious. People often get overwhelmed about things they believe they do not have the power to influence and therefore, they avoid getting involved. Stjepan religiously follows the news every day, which makes him extremely anxious, but in the meantime, he can suspend this activity and find some release. Being involved in politics for most of the time like Amir and Amela are would bring him too much anxiety he feels he cannot cope with.

People differ in things they are *interested* in because some find the event or activity comprehensible and feel they have the skills to deal with the situation but others do not. According to modern psychology, *interest* does not only occur when a person is presented with something new or surprising, but it is also influenced by the evaluation of the event's comprehensibility or coping potential. As Silvia claims: "... if people appraise an event as new and as comprehensible, then they will find it interesting" (2008:58). Both Amela and Amir are confident they have the skills to be involved in a protest, for example, and with each new experience their confidence grows. "I used to feel a bit uncomfortable when I first started and I did not quite know how to get involved or what to do other than chant and hold a sign. But now I know I will see friends there and, if there are any tasks being relegated, I know what to do," Amela said. Stjepan, on the other hand, is overstimulated by basic day-to-day survival of having to take care of his family on top of thinking citizens cannot bring about change that his anxiety prevents him to feel confident he can cope with a situation such as a protest.

Stjepan thinks "waiting out" the crisis is the best thing he can do right now for himself and his family. Many people in Bosnia-Herzegovina feel their "imaginary existential mobility" (Hage 2009a:1)—a sense that their life is "going somewhere" or moving forward in the right direction—is restrained by the environment in which they are unable to reach their potential. As a consequence of living in unpredictable times where so much is out of their control, people feel trapped in a permanent crisis, which intensifies the sense of "stuckedness" (Hage 2009b; see also Čelebičić 2013) and makes it a part of the new 'normal.' Thus, endurance as a form of confronting the crisis often takes a form of "waiting out" (Hage 2009a:1) for undesirable conditions to end (Hage 2009a:6).

6.3.4. Responsibility as Emotion

In contrast to the appraisal technique in the above example of *interest* where people are evaluating the environment for their well-being and making decisions based on that, social and ethical *responsibility* on the other hand considers the well-being of others as well. Traditional research on social movements often postulates that participation is almost exclusively motivated by self-interest or, in other words, that people participate in protests because of their own personal material interests. In the last two decades, however, scholars have focused more attention on the frequent desire by activists to act for the benefit of the larger group (Cole and Stewart 1996:132). This social and ethical *responsibility* that many citizen activists I worked with feel toward their communities, brings people together as citizens not ethnic subjects, which is an important aspect of the alternative form of citizenship I observed developing on-the-ground. As one citizen activist explained: "Because of the way things are around here now, where almost every aspect of our lives is subjected to group membership based on ethnicity, it closes us to

people around us, but being citizens opens us up to each other." Furthermore, taking *responsibility* rather than assigning blame creates agents instead of victims (Lambek 2010:63). As Lambek claims, "[t]aking responsibility for historical events, acknowledging our role in them, is not only the way to make peace but also turns people from the victims of history into its agents and finds in suffering not resentment or *ressentiment* but forgiveness and conciliation" (2010:58).

Lambek's claims resonate strongly with the goals of a grassroots organization *Jer me se tiče* (Because it concerns me) that focuses on unselective recognition and respect of all civil victims of 1992-1995 war, regardless of their ethnic affiliation. *Jer me se tiče* activists believe that taking *responsibility* for things that happened in the past and acknowledging our roles in them is an important aspect of reconciliation and an ability to move forward. For example, Germany collectively went through a process of recognition and taking responsibility for the holocaust that was done in the name of a fascist ideology. This kind of recognition did not happen in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where one ethnic group's war hero is another group's war criminal. As Emir, a citizen activist of *Jer me se tiče*, said to me one day over coffee, "I am doing this [activism] because of defiance but also because I have a responsibility to do something about it. Victims of war should be victims of war and not *mine*, *yours*, and *their* victims of war." This is not to say that taking responsibility for what happened in the past does not happen. For example, Zoran, one of *Jer me se tiče* activists from Prijedor in Republika Srpska (Serb dominated entity), explained to me in an interview:

> Soon after the war broke out, Serbs claimed this territory and forced Muslims and Croats into concentration camps. There were many concentration camps just a few miles outside the city and some of the biggest mass graves are found around here as well. People of my own ethnic background did this to innocent men, women, and children, only because they were Muslim or Croat. I can either live in denial or choose to accept and admit the truth of the atrocities that happened. I

> choose to take responsibility for what my "compatriots" did, because I believe that is the only way to move forward and create a future here. If we do not take responsibility, we will never be free; we will be prisoners of our own guilt until the day we die. And we will instill the same philosophy in our children.

Guided by a sense of responsibility, *Jer me se tiče* activists decided to do a guerilla action and "illegally" erect three memorial plaques to victims of war atrocities in those places where public officials have been denying the survivors of war crimes to do just that. First memorial plaque was set in a town called Foča, in front of a sports facility Partizan that was turned into a concetration camp and a raping ground of Bosniak women. Second memorial plaque was set in a town called Bugojno, where Croatian soldiers were kept and killed, and whose remains have not been found to this day. Third memorial plaque was erected in a town called Konjic where Serbian civilians were being kept and tortured in a concentration camp called Čelebići. The writing on all three plaques, engraved in dark marble, said, *Da se ne ponovi. U spomen civilnim žrtvama rata…* (So that it does not happen again. In memory of civil victims of war…). In this guerilla action, citizen activists from all over the country were taking responsibility to do something about the negation of war atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, by paying respect to victims regardless of their ethnic affiliation. Their intent was to redirect mainstream political discourse, which all three sides deliberately use to further divide the population, into a discourse where victims are victims, and not Bosniak, Serb, and Croat victims.

In the spirit of Henry David Thoreau, citizen activists often talked about having a responsibility to disobey laws, when citizen rights are broken. For example, during *Bebolucija* protests on July 1, citizen activists symbolically fired[74] public officials for not doing their jobs, as was the case of an expired JMBG (Unique Master Citizen Number) law. They called on other citizens to refrain from paying bills, shopping, and spending money for a period of time to show

[74] In this particular protest, people gathered under the idea of *Dajmo im otkaz!* (Let's fire them!).

the unaccountable government that their exorbitant salaries are paid by citizen tax dollars, which can be depleted, if they continued playing with citizens' lives. However, citizen activists I worked with did not just blame their political establishment for being stuck in a time warp and not moving forward. They also talked about an ethical *responsibility* they believe all citizens have in creating a better future. Emina, a twenty-nine-year-old woman, said:

> It is just so easy to blame our politicians, because it is obvious they are to blame. But it is much more difficult to acknowledge that we, the ordinary citizens, are to blame as well. We all play a part in creating our future. The elections are a perfect example. You will hear most people in this country complain about political representatives from their ethic group all the time. But when it comes time to vote, everybody will vote for those from their own group again... People need to learn, they are not as helpless as they think they are and that, if things are bad, it is our fault as well. We have to learn to take on the responsibilities for our communities at large, not just for our own lives, families and children...

Emina is of the opinion that the responsibility for a better and brighter future also lies with the citizens, as it is not appropriate to just think of oneself but lend a hand when help is needed. However, according to Emina, that help needs to be extended in the "right way" (*na pravi način*), to fix the root of the problem, not just treat it with a temporary solution. When talking on the subject of responsibility, Emina mentioned how disturbed she was that citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina are often forced to appeal to complete strangers and public at large, when their children have a medical emergency, which often cannot be treated in Bosnia-Herzegovina due to the poor condition of the country's medical facilities and health care system where even routine surgeries and tests are often questionable. Unable to afford surgery and treatment abroad, citizens are often forced to beg for money through Facebook and other means, because their own country is "unable" to invest in up-to-date equipment and medical education. There are two things here that bother Emina. First, for her the root of the problem is that the taxpayers' money is not invested into updating medical facilities, which is forcing people to fend for themselves

and rely on charitable contributions from other citizens. Citizens should be able to get quality medical treatment in their home country that is affordable for everybody, according to Emina. The second problem is that citizens are responding to the appeals by donating their money but not contributing their time to fix the root of the problem above. To Emina, this kind of help is help in the "wrong way" (*na pogrešan način*), where the government once again slips by unaccountable for their actions or inactions. Emina thinks it is easy to donate a few Bosnian Marks for a temporary solution, where the real problem never gets addressed and undertaken, but much more difficult to try to do something about it other than just donating money for individual surgeries abroad. For Emina, it is citizens' responsibility to hold the government accountable, to expose their corrupted maneuvering, and to help create an alternative, so that better and brighter future can be imaginable.

This sense of social, civic, and ethical *responsibility* that goes beyond individualism, self-interest, and responsibility one feels towards family and friends, is based in our *collective identity*, which is not only a cognitive function but also an emotion, "a positive affect toward other group members on the grounds of [a] common membership" (Jasper 1998:415; see also Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001a). Jasper argues that because of this affect, participation in the social movements can be enjoyable and gratifying regardless of the outcomes and results (1998:415; see also Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001a). However, even though Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta talk about *collective identity* that binds group members during social movements, my interlocutors also feel the importance of group membership beyond an activist initiative. Citizen activists I worked with feel *responsibility* as a positive affect towards their communities in general, as they genuinely want to create change that everybody could enjoy. For example, a citizen activist Ana explained: "It is important to me to look beyond these protests,

because protests always end. What is left are the communities we live in. Our struggle and fight cannot end with a protest; that is only the beginning. The real work begins when protest indignation subsides. What are we going to do to help our fellow citizens, those we know and those we do not know? That is the important question to me."

All too often reporters of collective action assume a unity among *all* protest participants. I, on the other hand, maintain a careful balance between the idea of a unifying protest bringing individuals, groups, and communities together in unanimity, and the fact that protest participants occupy various worlds and experience crisis in different ways. My own ethnographic experiences illustrate that a gathering of people who share some common grievances must not be taken automatically for a solidarity in the sense that all protest participants think, want, and act alike. As Othon Alexandrakis explains, during December 2008 uprisings in Athens, his interlocutors did not feel solidarity with others when standing in the streets but nevertheless reflected on the events as important, meaningful, and powerful when at home (2016:3). Furthermore, an uprising might start as imbued with hope and some level of solidarity but later changes its course due to internal and external pressures. Nevertheless, varying degrees of solidarity during social movements often do happen, with a feeling of we-ness and togetherness, whereby individual problems become collective grievances evoking solidarity that have the potential to grow stronger due to shared experiences. This sense of solidarity and like-mindedness can further contribute to *motivating* individuals to stay dedicated to the cause regardless of the problematic group dynamics that might arise, as was analyzed in detail in chapter five.

6.4. A Sense of Community (*Zajednica*)

As was illustrated in pages above, citizen activists' community orientation is intricately tied to a sense of *responsibility* they feel towards the society at large. In this section, I will further analyze the concept of *community* that many citizen activists experience during protests, as it is often a powerful motivator for them to continue participating in future actions. In this respect, my interlocutors often talked about a strong sense of community membership they felt before the war and how this has transformed today.

Before the war, people often worked together in workers' actions (*radničke akcije*) to rebuild a country devastated by WWII. Through work, cooperation, and solidarity, they also built strong relationships and community membership. When reflecting about the past, many Bosnians recollected the time before the war when people's houses were wide open to community members and nobody had the need to lock their doors. During frequent and casual visits between neighbors, many of the tensions would be worked out in a peaceful manner and help would be extended beyond familial ties. This sense of a community signaled more closely to what Edith Turner calls *communitas*, a concept that was first defined by Victor Turner (1995 [1969]) but more recently elaborated by her (2012). According to Victor Turner, communitas is an unstructured state, emerging when people experience liminality together which allows them to share a common experience on an equal ground (1995 [1969]). Years later, Edith Turner also takes on the difficult task of defining the concept (2012), where she sees the potential of communitas spontaneously arising from disaster, oppression, religious movements, conversion, and so on. Communitas, according to her, is a state of being that does not concern itself with status and is free of structures (2012:1-3). Rising out of the ashes of WWII and the fight against fascist ideology, people in former Yugoslavia indeed found themselves in flow with each other,

where they engaged in a common and collective task (to rebuild a normal life after the end of a brutal war) with full attention. The common enemy was defeated and people pulled their heads and strengths together to create a better future. The situation after the recent 1992-1995 war was nevertheless different. At first, there was an upsurge of hope oriented towards a possibility for a better future. "We had the opportunity to start from scratch, to create something better..." a forty-eight years old Aida explained to me. But because post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina was led by those who started the war in the first place, initial hopes soon turned into disappointment. Thus, in this situation, Bosnians did not win a great victory against the oppressor where they could have room to collectively work towards creating a better future, encouraged and supported by the state. As Bosnians nowadays believe, the "war is not over, only the shooting has stopped" and the state in its current form seems to be working very hard to keep people stuck in hopelessness, where a better future is not imaginable anymore.

Nowadays, many Bosnians talk about the erosion of pre-war level of community, although we must not assume it is completely gone. Current ethnographic research nevertheless shows everyday examples where collective organizing, regardless of ethnic affiliation, still exists. Čarna Brković, for example, talks about the ways mothers who have children with developmental difficulties organize to provide much needed services for their children, since a disability policy changes in 2000 dispersed the responsibility for the social protection "from the state towards the "whole community" (*cijela zajednica*)" (2017b:95). Similarly, people often organize with the help of community members, when money is needed for a life-threatening operation, especially in the case of children, which cannot be performed in Bosnia-Herzegovina but instead medical help must be sought abroad. Nevertheless, the sense of community has changed since socialism, even though one needs to be careful not to characterize it as a

transformation from a community of multicultural heaven to a community of fear and hatred, simply because on-the-ground people's experiences are not as straightforward. Some communities have transformed to a greater extent than others with varying degrees of inclusiveness and cooperation between community members.

When my interlocutors talked about changes in their communities and compared them between then and now, they often blamed neoliberalism, capitalism, and a greater focus on individualism, more than they blamed the war and post-war nationalism. For example, a citizen activist, Denis, said: "Here in Bosnia, and many other parts of the world, people are experiencing disintegration of their communities. People are the product of a specific time-period and the world around them. And in these neoliberal times, the concept of a community has been severed to the point that people think of themselves as individuals first and not as parts of a community anymore. And because of that we do not know how to *think* as a community anymore..."

During my days of living in Sarajevo, I would often buy a few snacks in my favorite bakery located close to my house. On the way there, I would pass an apartment building that had a neatly cared-for park in front of it where I often noticed the same man caring for the garden. One day I stopped, offered him a bottle of water, and praised his garden. The man, I will call Dragan, explained that the city does not have that many parks for people to enjoy and that many areas are dirty and littered because the city's trash collection service is inefficient. "They would either have to come and collect the trash more often or put out more trash containers. But this way, we have more trash than containers which are overflowing and littering our community," Dragan explained. "I enjoy gardening and I wanted the create a space that others can enjoy," he added. Then he invited me to sit in the shade, while he brought out some pastry and coffee. In the

next hour, our conversation mostly revolved around the change this man felt within his community, as he explained:

Dragan: Sure, the war changed our communities. A lot of people died and relocated, and our communities today are more segregated then they were before the war. But I think the greatest culprit that is weakening our communities, is neoliberalism and a greater focus on individualism, where people are so preoccupied with their own existential problems. [The man pointed to a small patch a green grass on the side of an apartment building neatly landscaped with flower beds and rose bushes that housed a bench, a table, and a swing for children]. Take, for example, this little park right here. I live in this apartment building. Before the war, all neighbors would work together to make it nice. Today, I am fixing it up myself. For a couple of years, I put out a call to all neighbors, asking them to join me but then I just gave up because nobody came to help. My neighbors enjoy the space. They often bring down coffee and cookies, chat with friends, and watch their children play. And I do not think this is because of the war. I think it has more to do with today's mentality; every man/woman for themselves, you know. I do not know, perhaps they think I will ask them for money for the flowers and a lot of families these days are struggling to pay their bills and buy food. I understand that. There are also some old folks in the building that cannot help. It is not about the money. It would be nice to work together with my neighbors, so we could get to know each other better and build a community. I miss belonging to a community with stronger ties, like I did before the war.

Nataša: Why do you keep on doing it every year by yourself?

Dragan: Because it also makes me happy when I see my neighbors and their kids enjoy the space. At least we have a space other than the elevator and the hallway, to meet. Before the war, my family often had lots of visitors from the apartment building that came by for a chat and a cup of coffee. This is not the case anymore. Lots of people that lived here are either gone, dead or they moved away. So, if it wasn't for this little 'park,' I would not know the majority of my neighbors at all…
A lot of people today struggle to make ends meet. Many are unemployed or receive very small pensions. They are so preoccupied with day-to-day survival that they are having a hard time extending their energies into the community. I mean, it is hard to think about mowing a lawn or planting flowers on a patch of grass that you do not own, when you do not have enough to feed your children. And I think this is because our politicians are ruining this country economically. They are so busy poisoning us with nationalism. But it is also because of neoliberalism and capitalism that is alienating us from each other.

In this long vignette, Dragan raises several important issues. First, he is talking about a shift from thinking more collectively to thinking individualistically. This rise in individualist modes of thought and behavior is typical for Post-Fordism and neoliberalism. As Robert McChesney said: "Instead of citizens, [neoliberalism] produces consumers. Instead of communities, it produces shopping malls. The net result is an atomized society of disengaged individuals who feel demoralized and socially powerless" (in Chomsky 1999:11). A thriving political culture needs neighborhood organizations, voluntary associations, cooperatives, libraries, schools, and community groups where citizens can meet and interact with each other. Under neoliberalism though, the government spending on education, healthcare, and public services is decreased and the role of the government institutions reduced to safeguarding the market. These austerity measures and disenfranchisement associated with the neoliberal crisis produces dispensable bodies. According to Hardt and Negri, the state is no longer the only political machine reducing human life to a disposable body; the advent of neoliberalism has led to a point where people are now exposed to violence from the state *and* the economic powers (2001). This *homo sacer* or an individual experiencing bare life (Agamben 1998; 2005) is a position that is pervasive and infiltrating all corners of the world. The crisis has gone so far that is has become normalized, as Dragan himself talks about situations—such as not knowing your neighbors and not engaging in community organizing—that are not considered strange anymore but have become the norm in some communities. Crisis normality is developing demoralized and disengaged individuals—subjects of competitive economic struggle for survival.

During our conversation and in congruence with the neoliberal crisis, Dragan was also hinting on the enormous debt accumulated by the Bosnian state while borrowing money from the IMF and the World Bank, whose stipulations are forcing government spending to be reduced in

the areas of education, healthcare, public services, and subsidies. Thus, many Bosnians are stripped of their basic needs, while they watch a few fortunate at the top getting rich, since the money being borrowed does not seem to reach many who are disenfranchised and living precarious lives.

Neoliberal crisis is also connected to a process of transition from a socialist economy to a free market. Neoliberal privatization in Bosnia-Herzegovina happened while the war on this territory was still raging. In 1994, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina inconspicuously passed a Law on Ownership Transformation that went largely unnoticed by the public due to the war circumstances. After the war, the workers who defended this country at the front lines and many of them who lost all of their material possessions, also had to face the fact that the socially-owned property they helped build, was now privatized and belonged to somebody else (Begić 2014:35-36). According to Donais, the country's economic transition "has been heavily tainted by ethnic politics and corruption..." (2002:1). Postwar privatization process failed to "de-politicize economic life and [] provide the basis for economic recovery and growth" (Donais 2002:2). Donais claims, "[w]hat international advisors originally envisaged as an apolitical, rapid, and orderly transfer of assets from public to private hands has become a corrupt, ethnicized, and protracted struggle for power, which has done little to stimulate economic growth or promote inter-ethnic reconciliation" (2002:2). Private entrepreneurs belonging to ethnicized party-family infrastructure, bought companies for a fraction of their real value and are now, instead of investing into the future production, declaring bankruptcy, firing workers, and selling companies' properties for their own profits. Thus, these once-large public employers that provided much needed security to people before the war, are now falling apart due to corruption and mismanagement. What little employment is still available

in some of them, usually depends on the "access to the political interests that control them" (Manning 2004:68).

However, while people are relegated to the conditions of redundant bodies and bare life, new forms of agonistic citizenship has been emerging among subjugated groups as ways of confronting the inequality brought by the mix of neoliberal crisis and focus on nationalism. They are mobilizing radical social imagination and often formulating a kind of politics that is not "reduced to the mandates of possessive individualism" (Athanasiou and Alexandrakis 2016:252). Dragan, for example, misses stronger community ties in his apartment building, but he compensates this decline with citizen activist involvement. When I asked him, if he knows of any examples where a stronger sense of community does exist, he answered:

> Yes, I do. I feel it in some ways when I am out there protesting on the street with others who cannot live like this anymore. I have been actively involved in protests since 2008, when a mass of citizens flooded the streets to protest the killing of a teenage boy by his peers, and the government arrogance and lack of accountability in arranging public services for teenage crime prevention. At every protest I attend, I feel a sense of community and organizing that is in some ways similar to what I experienced before the war…

Of course, Dragan is also realistic and he soon qualified his statement above. He added:

> Do not get me wrong. Problems often arise during protests and I am not trying to claim that I make everlasting friendships with everybody. I have met some of my very best friends during protests. But I also lost friends, usually because we did not see things eye to eye and we grew apart. And there were others, whose political motives I did not trust or who were troublemakers, always causing problems and so on. Also, in most of my experiences, protests ended due to internal struggles between participants. So, I am not trying to imply everything is always positive and perfect. But, I have also experienced moments where I could sense a collectivity working together; a kind of sense of togetherness that we are all in this together, you know. I appreciate those times, because the focus is not on nationalism, who is who. We are just ordinary people who struggle…

In the case of Dragan and many other citizen activists I worked with, activist involvement gives them a sense of stronger community ties that go beyond ethnic affiliation. Therefore, group

membership is not based on ethnicity but is inscribed in disenfranchisement, precarity, hunger, and loss of dignity, stability, and connection among fellow citizens. Many of my interlocutors described a stronger sense of community among fellow citizens that is not ethnicized as a source of motivation that helps them continue the struggle to create positive change in their communities.

To avoid romanticizing and idealizing resistance by subjugated groups and stray away from one-dimensional representations, any study of resistance should consider the internal politics within subordinated groups (Brown 1996; Seymour 2006). As Ortner claims: "If we are to recognize that resistors are doing more than simply opposing domination, more than simply producing a virtually mechanical reaction, then we must go the whole way. They have their *own* politics—not just between chiefs and commoners or landlords and peasants but within all the local categories of friction and tension: men and women, parents and children, seniors and juniors... and on and on" (2006:46). My interlocutors themselves did not romanticize their resistance, as their actions were not always imbued with a strong sense of solidarity and power. I observed tensions among citizen activists, distrusting each other's motives, and some even pulling for power.

One cold evening in December, I asked an activist friend of mine to join me for a drink and a chat at Sarajevo War Theatre (*Sarajevski ratni teatar*). Denis was thirty-nine years old at the time, a sincere, forward-thinking man, with roots in punk rebelliousness, anarchism, and anti-militancy, who does not like to be labeled into preconceived categories and identities, because he is well-aware of his own subjective fluidity. He likes to read and learn, to know as much as possible about the world at large and other people's experiences with common struggles. Those

who do not know him well might mistake him for being cynical or pessimistic, but he likes to consider himself a realist. In an interesting conversation, Denis explained:

> You know, one thing about being politically engaged is that moods change like high and low tides. Or even worse, one often feels many different and even conflicting emotions at the same time. For example, I can feel both exhilarated and worried about the trajectory of the protest at the same time. Also, I go through cycles of sometimes feeling positive and sometimes negative. There are times when I am very optimistic that we are making progress and there are times I feel that we will never learn and that I should not subject myself to this kind of torture anymore… I do not want to disregard the positive things that came out of some protests but I also have to acknowledge that there's always problems that arise. As far as I can see, one of the problems citizen activists need to address immediately is distrust among protests participants... For example, we get together as a community because we share common problems but often that community is also fragmented by individualism and distrust. And I think this is connected to the thing we talked about previously, which is a loss of a certain level of community we had before. If we are to be successful in our activism, we must find a way to trust each other... And people have to accept the fact that changes do not happen over night…

"I am not expecting a total unity," Denis also said, "I am just hoping we learn how to accept constructive criticism without getting upset and making a big fuss about it." I also observed mistrust as a weakening factor of protest potential, especially in those circumstances where new protest participants joined the cause. One of the ways the police and people in the positions of power would often attempt to divide the protest, is by infiltrating their own agents and undercover cops into the protest community in order to disseminate tension and distrust. Therefore, it was a real challenge to know who had honest intentions and who was there to divide the crowd on purpose. This often caused paranoia and caution among protests participants but also exclusion, to an extent, of some newcomers in organizing and decision-making process.

What Denis is also referring in the vignette above is the fact that the outcomes of protest mobilizations are not always visible but take time and are often nuanced and of different levels of intensity. Whether the explicit movement goals have been reached or not, there is often a

subtler growth that is just as important. I see many of my interlocutors learning from past activist initiatives, inventing "new idioms of thinking and acting politically" (Athanasiou in Athanasiou and Alexandrakis 2016:252), and experimenting with other forms of political engagement such as guerilla actions, community solidarity, writing newsletters, organizing sit-ins, attending government assemblies, publicly calling-out their representatives, closely following the political machinery, etc. to let the people in the positions of power know, citizens are watching them closely.

Thus, can we talk about a sustainable type of activism emerging among citizen activists and will this lead to a much-needed alternative for those who are subjected to bare life in Bosnia-Herzegovina? If we consider that political change takes time because it involves personal change or self-transformation as well, I would argue there is a chance for a more sustainable alternative that will hopefully move the society forward from a dead point, if not on a large scale,[75] then within subjugated communities. As argued in chapter four, many citizen activists I worked with displayed an emotional intelligence, as they take a proportional, balanced, and realistic approach to activism in Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina. They are able to take a step back and devote time to self-care and self-reflection, relegating, for a period of time, larger systemic problems to the background and foregrounding practical projects that give them a sense of purpose and a solid foundation in reality. Similarly, to climate activists, who know climate change is well underway and beyond their immediate control, Bosnian activists are aware they are dealing with a structural system that is all encompassing, entrenched, and potentially dangerous to meddle with. Therefore, they are more focused on the kind of resistance that will counter Dayton's worse

[75] Remember that Dayton enables local political elites to continue sowing fear, division, and hunger among people, and that in order for the constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina to change, political representatives of all three ethnic groups would have to agree on an alternative, which at the moment seems impossible.

effects and bring people closer together as citizens, building better futures despite stagnation and uncertainty, and not ethnic subjects used by politicians to amass power and resources for themselves.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Figure 7.1. Sarajevo plenum participant volunteering to help evacuate people in flooded Bosanski Šamac. Courtesy of Nana Pilavić.

By April and May 2014, the social uprisings and plenums that so vigorously challenged the existing mainstream politics of consensus and the *status quo*, petered out due to a combination of police pressure, divergent visions on how to create change among members of different generations,[76] and disastrous floods. The worst floods in over a century, displacing 90.000 people and affecting many more, unearthed, what most people in Bosnia-Herzegovina already knew all too well, the mishandling of public funds by the political oligarchy that should be dispersed into communities for infrastructure and civil protection. Many cities and towns all over the most affected central and north-eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina were without running water, electricity, safe sanitation, and while many people waited to be rescued from their flooded homes, the government's response to this natural disaster was extremely slow, unorganized, and in some areas even non-existent. The floods also moved mines set during the last war, and while

[76] I observed this happening during the plenum in Sarajevo, therefore I am not making a claim that generational divide happened in other city's plenums.

large areas of the country have been combed, some of them remain unchecked. Now, a new problem emerged, where the mines from unchecked areas could have moved to those that have been cleared as mine free before the floods.

This event was much more than just a natural disaster. It also shined a light on the government's poor infrastructure management of storm water runoff, river bank and landslide protection, and drainage basin control, among other things. For citizens all over Bosnia-Herzegovina but most of all those living in areas affected by water, this was just another proof of the government's negligence, where most funds are funneled into major city centers such as Sarajevo or end up in the pockets of local tycoons and political elites. Besides this, another issue comes to the center of attention, namely that the poor infrastructure management is not only the result of the cleptocratic, unaccountable, and arrogant elites but is also an outcome of the spatial segregation of the territory where infrastructural matters become "segregated" as well, because they function on the entity, cantonal, and local municipality levels. In other words, the floods were yet another example of Bosnia-Herzegovina not functioning as a cohesive state because the power has been decentralized and dispersed to the entities, which is another consequence of the Dayton Peace Agreement. This could be acceptable, if the entities, cantons, and municipalities were cooperating and coordinating with each other on infrastructural matters and were guided by a unitary plan but they are not. Thus, there are rivers that run through segregated areas but no cohesive plan on how to manage them.

This issue of "infrastructural segregation" is a result of "spatial governmentality," which is not only an "ideological, political, and social mechanism of spatial segregation and disciplining of ethnically conceived peoples" (Hromadžić 2015:11) but includes country's infrastructural apparatus as well that further solidifies ethnic fragmentation in Bosnia-

Herzegovina. As one of my interlocutors, Damir, answered my bewilderment on why do so many people, especially youth, consider Republika Srpska as a foreign country, he not only said it is a consequence of ethnic education, revisions of history, and geographical conduct, but also a product of the entities and cantons not being connected by a functional infrastructure as well. Damir explained:

> Take for example our roads. There are no highways in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that is not only because Bosnia is a mountainous and hilly country with lots of rivers, which is a challenge for building new roads because you have to build tunnels and bridges. It is also not only because our cleptocratic elites pocketed the money that was donated and should be allocated towards road infrastructure. It is also because there is no unitary vision or even a desire for connecting these segregated territories. And so, you have a situation, where it takes me five hours, if not even more because of traffic, to get from Sarajevo to Banja Luke [an administrative center of Republika Srpska and considered by many Serbs to be their capital], which on a highway should only take me less than an hour and a half. So, yes, in people's minds, Banja Luka or Sarajevo for them living there, is far, far away, because it takes us so long to travel there, even though it is only 190 km away [118 miles]. In Europe, you can be in another country in two or three hours, let alone in 5 hours. But in Bosnia, you only move 190 kilometers [118 miles]. I am not even going to go into how long it takes to get from those areas in the south of the country, some of them with large Croat populations, to Banja Luka up north. And Bosnia-Herzegovina is not a large country."

Damir is referring to an interesting issue of spatial and time perception connected to poor infrastructure and a lack of desire among public officials to better connect the areas separated by Dayton. Many people in Bosnia-Herzegovina often talk about road infrastructure, where small sections of highways are being built here and there with no vision of how it will all connect together. Political officials regularly use the opportunity to have their pictures taken cutting a ribbon of 6 miles of highway being built over a long span of time, but those disparate road section have the middle but no beginning and no end. People in Bosnia-Herzegovina often refer to them as "highways to nowhere" and experts who build them complain that the road infrastructure in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not following any rhyme or reason, where one section

will end up in a river, with no bridge or even a plan for a bridge to get across, and the other in a meadow. Experts also say one "plan" was to connect the south of the country with the north in the so-called "Vc corridor" but that officials in Republika Srpska seem to be ignoring it and are building other sections on their territory but not the one that would connect the two entities. The experts are pointing to this as one of many tools of ethnic politics of segregation as well as a political grabbing for power, where politicians are backing those constructions that will benefit their political maneuvering.

Infrastructures enable the flow of goods, knowledge, people, ideologies, power, and often create new social collectivities (see Larkin 2008). Many academics have been criticizing the obscurity of neoliberalism, failing to account for complex histories and multifaceted relationships people create with various power structures such as the state. Looking at the infrastructure as a process that can be analyzed, offers an alternative to the analysis of neoliberalism that can sometimes fail to include people's everyday experiences in specific local contexts. Infrastructures are also important in how people experience space (see Dourish and Bell 2007) and they can reveal power dynamics that transcend the divides between public and private spheres, for example. However, infrastructures, can also create new or solidify the existing boundaries between different collectivities, as is the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, one interesting aspect that could be further analyzed relates to the formation of citizenship through infrastructure, and the power and inequality dynamics based on the allocation of resources such as water, heat, gas, and so on.

Nowadays, Bosnian political officials are having troubles disguising their austerity measures and capitalist agendas under the pretext of ethno-national conflict. For example, water reductions have become an increasing problem in Sarajevo over the years, where it is clear funds

need to be allocated to update the infrastructure and create new water sources to the existing collection center. However, instead of doing that, the officials are voting on higher salaries for themselves, new fleet of government cars at their disposal, building new ski slopes on a nearby mountain, and a slew of other things primarily benefiting themselves and not the public at large. They use ethnic divisions in parliamentary assemblies as an excuse for not being able to reach a solution on pertinent problems affecting the community. One could say water reductions affect the public officials as well, but when they happen, the central areas where the local and international elites live and work, usually do not get hit with a lack of water and pressure coming through their pipes. In such respect, we can talk about the creation of a first-grade and second-grade citizenship, where those in power control the allocation of resources through infrastructures and prioritize themselves over others.

In the face of the natural and political tragedy during the floods, people rallied together and helped each other across the entities' lines. Neighbors were helping neighbors and people traveled from other parts of the country to the affected areas to volunteer. In this critical moment, citizens, who knew they cannot wait and count on the government for help, used the existing networks and infrastructures they so passionately built during the social uprisings and plenums, and quickly organized themselves and aid. These citizen activists' networks were instrumental in saving many people's lives and lowering the death toll. Therefore, in light of completely failed water and civil protection infrastructure that lies in the jurisdiction of the government, citizens' networks took their place and functioned as the new infrastructure (see also Arsenijević in Bosnae 2014).

However, another issue rears its ugly head. This meant people had to fend for themselves yet again as their fight for social justice was abruptly transformed into a humanitarian action.

This is similar to the situation where the government fails to deliver basic health care to its citizens and people have to campaign to raise the money for surgeries in hospitals abroad themselves, through a network of families, friends, and good samaritans. During the floods, people opened Facebook campaigns to gather food, water, money, basic necessities, medicines, and, unsurprisingly, many responded. It was quite amazing to see the level of networking and organization on social media. Many citizen activists also traveled to the affected areas, to deliver supplies they have gathered themselves. This brought citizens closer together, meeting in spaces beyond ethnic divisions and practicing/exercising ethical citizenship. However, basic needs for survival overwhelmed them yet again, as they rallied to provide the help on their own. The social uprisings, even though they started to wane right before the floods hit, nevertheless gathered a momentum where citizens were actively thinking about issues such as class inequality, worker's rights, the rule of law, social justice, 'true' democracy, etc. and analyzing the events from the past couple of months. The government inactivity during floods was yet another crude awakening for them, where people had to switch gears in order to save each other's lives. Unfortunately, this is the usual "state of emergency" people in Bosnia-Herzegovina have been experiencing continuously since the start of the war in 1992.

There are two different and conflicting forms of subjects and citizenships in the making in Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the one side, is the international involvement, establishing democratic forms of governance, producing democratic subjects, and preaching multicultural integration while at the same time instituting ethnic segregation. This allows local political actors ample room to exert their power and further segregate the communities, in turn producing ethnic subjects, oriented towards ethnic group interests. However, an idea of a democratic subject based on a liberal philosophy emphasizing individualism is contradictory to an ethnic subject, where

group rights trump individual ones and where an individual matters only as a representative of an ethnic group. In other words, local and international actors created such a permanent state of exception (Pandolfi 2010)—a state of unending liminality stretching over twenty-three years—that is leaving many citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina disenfranchised, disoriented, and demoralized. Everyday Bosnians are often criticized as perpetuating the existence of ethno-political order by "not being able" to organize a significant resistance to it and in turn would rather "wait out" the crisis than doing anything about it. However, we need to better understand Bosnians' experiences of living in such a permanent state of emergency, where people are often completely overwhelmed with surviving and not being able to live life to the fullest. Disbelieving and anxious citizens struggle to find the impulse to act and even those that do often fall short to find ways to effectively position themselves as a counterbalance and a real alternative to mainstream politics because of the all-encompassing nature of Dayton *politika*.

During the floods, it was obvious everyday citizens in Bosnia-Herzegovina are disposable people, used by political powers for their own gain. As one middle-aged man, Miloje, from Doboj in Republika Srpska that was affected by the floods said:

> It is clear if help wouldn't arrive from the citizens in the Federation [the other entity]; if they didn't bring food, water, medicines, and volunteers from the Federation the death toll would be much higher. If we had to wait on our government from Republika Srpska, we would have died here like rats. So, this constant talk from political elites about ethnic divisions is just talk, it benefits them, not us. Like I said, if they wouldn't have showed up, many here would have died. And I don't think our government cares. They don't care what happens to us. We are just their pawns. It is absolutely terrible when you see water coming so quickly, you know everything you own will get ruined once again, but you also know nobody will help you get back on your feet. Again, we have a lot of work ahead of us. And again, we have to save ourselves… I just can't believe I will have to rebuild this again. First, we lost everything in the war, now the floods. How many times more will we have to start from scratch? This is a constant battle for survival [*bitka za život*], we don't get a break. Fuck that kind of life. That is not life; that is not life…

In this excerpt, Miloje is contemplating on having to rebuild his life yet again, without any help from the government. I first met him on Facebook as I was already back in Slovenia, getting ready to fly over to the United States when floods hit Bosnia-Herzegovina. Trying to figure out a way I could be of help from overseas, I would gather up-to-date information on the situation in many affected areas and the list of necessities they needed, through contact people who were collecting data on-the-ground. I updated the spreadsheet daily and send it to a Sarajevo plenum participant who then send it on via his plenum network. I called Miloje about a month later, when the water receded, to inquire about the situation in Doboj and how to best revise my help to suit their needs. He talked a lot about the lack of government investment in infrastructure, especially the kind that deals with protection from floods. He said, he highly doubts this natural disaster will wake up the public officials. "Our politicians do not learn from their mistakes and I doubt they will invest any money in river bank protection and drainage control. So, this can happen again and with this climate change, it may hit us next year. Nobody knows," Miloje said. When I asked him, if people in his community are working on a plan of protection, he took a deep sigh and said:

> My dear, Nataša. Listen. We will be rebuilding our houses for quite some time. When you don't have resources and help, these things take a long time. So, right now, everybody is just concentrated about getting their homes in such a state they can return. All the energy is going into that. There are people that lost everything. It will take them years to get back on their feet. People's houses are not safe, there's mold, their life as they knew it before is gone. People are mourning. They are recovering from a shock. They are exhausted and demoralized. They can't believe, they have to do this again. I don't know what else to tell you. I have no idea, if they will be able to recover from this. I have no idea, if they will have any will left to fight the political elites and demand the infrastructure improvements to be done. I don't know myself, if I will have any will left. I guess, we'll see when all of this is done.

Miloje alludes to people being in a constant emergency survival mode, having to rebuild their lives from scratch twice, and in the process, many of them losing the will and energy to do

anything about the bigger, structural matters where they need the full attention and cooperation of the mainstream political apparatus. Miloje also said, when the government has people in such constant emergency mode, they know, people will be too busy taking care of themselves and their families, to do anything about systemic problems. Thus, we come to this vicious cycle of continuous crisis self-management, which should be considered before we make sweeping claims about Bosnians not being able to organize an alternative against the existing *status quo* or rather waiting out the crisis than do anything about it. Many of them are doing everything they possibly can, rebuilding their lives and creating stability for their families in an environment where futures are so limited. Miloje ended our conversation saying: "You know, I don't want to sound as if I am feeling sorry for myself and I don't want you to feel sorry for me either. This is our reality and we have to live with it."

A year later, I stopped to see Miloje on my way to Sarajevo. He took me to several houses, where I was able to talk to people about life after the floods. I told him I wanted to apologize, for possibly coming across as insensitive when I asked him, one month after the floods, how is the community going to handle this infrastructural problem and if they have some sort of a plan. He told me, I do not strike him as an insensitive person and that he actually wanted to thank me, because my question, "What are you going to do about it?," has been keeping him going all this time.

> Nobody is going to do it for us. We have to do it, either by forcing the government to allocate resources into infrastructure or find our own resources and do it ourselves. Or suffer the consequences again. If not with the floods, then with something else. But one thing I do know. Whatever we do, we have to do it in cooperation with people in other parts of the country. There has to be a more cohesive plan. Because what we do here affects people downstream from us. We need to get over this ethnic mentality, thinking whatever we do in our communities does not affect others. Because that is not how it works. The politicians want us to believe that but this is not in our best interest. And this is not how we are going to get ourselves out of this misery.

Miloje is being resourceful and creative in his quest to solve a big problem. He is talking to people in his community, consulting experts, networking, learning, and cooperating. He is also taking time to step back, analyze, and self-reflect. He is being patient and understands change takes time. In other words, he is practicing ethical citizenship, an alternative to the conflicting ethnic and democratic citizenships built by those completely disengaged from what life is like on-the-ground. Ethical citizenship is about people working on finding the solution to problems aggravating their communities, no matter how they go about doing that. In the process, they are working on themselves as people belonging to a community of citizens, trying to create lives worth living. This ethical citizenship involves both a care for others as well as the care for the self, as one cannot exist without the other. Will Miloje be able to fix the problem together with his community members is not the central question of ethical citizenship but a sheer fact that he is working on it. What I have witnessed during my vibrant and eventful year of fieldwork, is an abundance of creativity stemming from everyday Bosnians, who are starting to envision, create, dream, and, to some extent, even live the new political imaginary.

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