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Nationalism and Collective Memory: A Qualitative Analysis of Yugo-Nostalgia and Trauma in Bosnia-Herzegovina

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Abstract

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This doctoral thesis aims at highlighting the possibility of nostalgia for an over-arching supranational identity even in ethnically traumatized societies. In other words, it seeks to understand the reasons of supranationalist sentiments among members of distinct ethnic groups that have first-hand traumatic memories of ethnic polarization. To that aim, I ask: *Is it possible for certain ethnic groups to not demonstrate nationalistic sentiments?* If so, *why does the collective memory of certain ethnic groups not display nationalistic sentiments?*

In the light of this research question, I come up with three theoretical assumptions: (A1) *Experience of supraethnic/national identity might undermine nationalistic feelings.* (A2) *Some ethnic groups might value their socio-economic statuses more than their ethno-national identity.* (A3) *"Ethnically" motivated wars or polarizations might not destroy supranationalist memories of pre-war periods.*

To test these assumptions empirically, I focus on the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the members of its constitutionally recognized ethnic groups since the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995 (Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats). Via a historical point of view, I trace their Yugo-nostalgic sentiments and the emergence of Yugo-nostalgia in the form of supranationalism and also anti-nationalism. Therefore, the analysis depends on the literature of nationalism, ethnicity, collective memory, and the political history of socialist Yugoslavia, where ethnic identifications did not carry as much importance as they do in current day post-Yugoslav countries.

Methodologically the thesis builds on (online) in-depth interviews with witness generations who lived through both the socialist period of Yugoslavia and the dissolution wars, which

started in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 and ended with the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. I talked with 55 participants, whose ages range between 33-62. Out of these 55 participants, only 37 were willing to let me share their experiences in detail in my thesis (Bosniak: 14, Bosnian Serb: 11, and Bosnian Croat: 12). Participants are generally white- and blue-collar workers or retired public employees, who are urban inhabitants. I reached them via social media, NGOs, webpages of the local universities—especially of University of Sarajevo, University of Banja Luka, and University of Mostar and their networks—and local news portals. Through my participants' narrations on socialist Yugoslavia, I show that some members of Bosnia-Herzegovinian society demonstrate supranationalism and also anti-nationalism despite the ethnic polarization that has characterized their society for almost thirty years.

In light of my findings, I claim that my participants from witness generations yearn for the period of socialist Yugoslavia *consciously* and *unconsciously*, and their nostalgic sentiments clash with nationalistic sentiments despite the ethnically traumatized recent history and their current ethnic affiliations. As such, the thesis brings a fresh perspective to the existing literature, which mostly highlights the ethnic fragmentations in Bosnia-Herzegovina in relation with the dissolution wars.

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To the memory of Stjepan Filipović

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Introduction

"…I clearly remember his writing -as I remember my tears while reading- that for him the destruction of the bees was worse than having left Sarajevo and losing everything in the war. What kind of people, he asked, would kill bees for no reason? The annihilation was not just of the apiary, but of the entire family tradition, of our presence in Vucijak, of his life there." (Cited from Aleksander Hemon's autobiographic book, *My Parents: An Introduction*, 2019: 58)

Semezdin Mehmedinovic, Bosniak writer who stayed in Sarajevo during the dissolution wars of Yugoslavia (1991-1995), published his famous book *Sarajevo Blues* in 1992 by narrating his own observations on the warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina[1]. He refers to the first day of the war when he had a plan to meet with his friends to play football, but for the first time one of his friends did not join them (2009: 23). After the football match, when he went back home by trolleybus, a group of people with their kalashnikovs crossed his path. He narrates how he was shocked, confused, and how he could not understand what was happening. Further, tragically, he saw his friend who did not come to the football night with a kalashnikov in front of the trolleybus. He says that this was the beginning of everything for him: the beginning of the nationalist tensions within his society: from supra-ethnic socialist period to ethnic divisions.

In his book, Mehmedinovic also clearly shows how the people of Bosnia faced a massive destruction quickly, and how daily mortality statistics became the central topic among conversations (2009: 39). He says that all corpses had to wait to be properly buried because some ways and streets just consisted of endless corpses and endless mourning (Ibid. 40). Almost thirty years after the nationalist conflicts in Bosnia, victims of this quickly activated war still mourn for their losses. According to BIRN Bitter Land's database of mass graves from the dissolution wars of Yugoslavia, research on new mass graves and findings is still ongoing.[2]

[1] I am using Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bosnia interchangeably.

[2] https://massgravesmap.balkaninsight.com, accessed in July 26, 2021. The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) is a network of local non-governmental organizations. It aims at providing reliable sources for the contemporary history and current issues of the Balkan countries.

In this thesis, I aim to understand traumas in Bosnia brought about by the nationalist dissolution wars and their effects on people's lives. To that end, I ask whether it is possible to trace the remnants of supra-ethnic identity and its (in)visibility in Bosnia, a current hotspot of salient ethnic identities. Although socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1991) witnessed co-existence in its six republics—Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia—and in its two autonomous regions—Kosovo and Vojvodina—the dissolution wars changed the entire picture for former Yugoslavs, especially in the epicentre of the wars: Bosnia-Herzegovina. Polyethnic structure of Bosnia was quickly polarized during the aggression of Serbian nationalist elites through their manipulative effects on their ethnically Serbian friends and their statuses in Bosnia. In such an environment where individuals' ethnic identities have become more rigid with the dissolution wars, especially in the polyethnic Bosnia, I ask: *is it possible for certain ethnic groups to not demonstrate nationalistic sentiments?* If so, *why does the collective memory of certain ethnic groups not display nationalistic sentiments?*

Mehmedinovic (1992) claims that the war in Bosnia started overnight. Is such a claim also observable in the collective memory of witness generations among distinct ethnic groups of Bosnia? If yes, to what extent are they ethno-nationalists thirty years after the dissolution wars? This thesis aims to understand the construction process of ethnic identities and belonging in Bosnia, not just by focusing on traumas like many former studies have done (Denitch 1996; Sells 1996; Bieber 2002; Velikonja 2003; Ramet 2006; Volcic 2007). I also aim to understand the atmosphere in Bosnia at the onset of the war and how it is remembered in the collective memory of Bosnians in order to address the question of whether it is possible to detect a yearning for a supra-nationalist identity even in a current hotspot of nationalism.

Guided by these questions I conducted 55 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Bosnians who witnessed the wars either as a child or as an adult. I talked with 55 participants, whose

ages range between 33-62. Out of these 55 participants, only 37 gave me permission to share their experiences in detail in my thesis (Bosniak: 14, Bosnian Serb: 11, and Bosnian Croat: 12). Participants are generally white- and blue-collar workers or retired public employees. All participants are urban inhabitants. The importance of this thesis depends on these participants' main narratives on socialist Yugoslavia and their war traumas, and how the participants still demonstrate anti-nationalist sentiments despite intense ethnic polarization in Bosnia.

In addition to interviews in autumn 2021, I visited Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, to trace the demonstration of war and war time atrocities in museums. Since museums are like "a complex sociological and psychological construct assembled from a myriad of sources" (Falk 2010: 153) I thought that museums' narration of the war would also emphasize the story of ethnic fragmentation in Bosnia, however the narrations I detected display collective trauma among distinct ethnic groups without prioritizing Bosniaks' traumas. I selected the capital and its museums because Sarajevo is the historical centre of ethno-religious co-existence in Bosnia, and is still home to Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats and other minorities despite its Bosniak majority. Although there are many studies that focus on ethnic divisions in post-war Bosnia, I aimed to highlight the possibility of a Yugoslav prism in some museums of Sarajevo where pains and traumas of Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats are also exhibited. In quest of Yugoslav-style representation of sorrows, I selected a public museum and three private museums (as public or state-sponsored museums mainly exhibit the Bosniak narrative).

> *(Bosniak-witness-generation: 50) War started in one day in Bosnia. I had no idea what I had to do; I had no idea about who to protect against whom. I was a Yugoslav citizen, now how would I call myself with another name? Bosniak? Or Muslim? Who was I? Why did state elites not want to live together anymore? Should I stop talking with my Serbian friends? Why did some Serbs walk with their weapons in the streets? Why did they buy them? I had a million questions in my mind in the first weeks of the war.*

As this quote, by one of my Bosniak interviewees, demonstrates, one could argue that some people started to fight not by knowing the reasons of the tension in their state. Therefore, one could also ask whether everything was so perfect in the pre-war, socialist Yugoslavia, that the possibility of the armed conflict was seen impossible? How could some people be unaware of the tension within their society? How can then scholars of the Balkans explain this suddenly erupted chaos?

I argue that some Bosnians' first reaction vis-à-vis the warfare might be directly related to the destruction of their quotidian practices in onset years of the conflicts, therefore a socio-anthropological analysis of socialist Yugoslavia could provide distinct clues for tracing some Bosnians' anti-nationalist critiques of the war. Analysing whether some members of witness generations (who witnessed both the socialist regime and the war years) embrace a nationalist discourse and sentiments (or not) would pave the way for a better understanding of the importance of the socialist regime in people's collective memory. As I mentioned above, Bosnia has a multi-ethnic structure, and Bosniaks (ethnic majority), Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats are the constitutionally recognized ethnic groups since the Dayton Agreement of 1995, which ended the war in Bosnia. Bieber states that after the war, other ethnic groups; such as Albanians, Jews, Roma people, and Turks, (*ostali*) were *de facto* excluded from society, and it is hard to reach them to conduct either online or in-person interviews due to their fragile position in their society (2006).

In looking for a common pattern via collective memory of my participants from witness generations, I assume that they may unconsciously compare their past and present, then they might draw a *nostalgic* conclusion on their socialist past. In other words, there might be visible *Yugo-nostalgia* among the participants, and its borders may also reflect their desire to turn back to their "anti-nationalist"[3] past despite all polarizing traumas and regardless of the

[3] National questions were also traceable in Yugoslavia since national conflicts emerged among political leaders of federal republics even in the 1960s due to the introduction market socialism (Ramet, 2006). On the other hand,

"irreversibility" aspect of nostalgia (Ange and Berliner 2015). Doubt and Tufekcic argue that consolidation of fictive kinships and malleable ethnic identities were one of the main purposes of socialist Yugoslavia, and the socialist state was successful in its goal as cross-ethnic relations during its rule were clearly observable (2019). Sudden eruption of the ethnically motivated conflicts in the region, especially in Bosnia, paved the way for the eradication of peaceful co-existence practices. However, I argue, witness generations of former Yugoslavia may still miss and remember their socialist past with romantic connotations, and this remembrance might then turn into a way of resistance against nationalist arguments and dogmas.

Empirical puzzle, research question, and main assumptions

While scholars of post-war Bosnia usually focus on the traceable polarization in the Bosnian society and the rise of ethno-nationalism (Denitch 1996; Sells 1996; Bieber 2002; Volcic 2007; Swimelar 2013), whether anti-nationalist sentiments are observable in Bosnia is not discussed too much. There are several studies that centralize legacies of socialist Yugoslavia across former Yugoslavs, and these studies show that people yearn for their socialist past, especially for its specific features such as co-habitation practices (Kostovic 2001; Boerhout 2007; Vuckovic Juros 2018). Further, there are some works that display Yugo-nostalgia since former Yugoslavs fiercely miss their socio-economic opportunities (Lindstrom 2005; Boskovic 2013). In parallel with these studies, my intention is to demonstrate the existence of Yugo-nostalgia among witness generations from distinct ethnic affiliations in Bosnian society. Yet, in contribution to the existing literature, I would like to go one step further and inquire, through in-depth interviews, whether my participants have anti-nationalist sentiments, ideas, and perspectives, and if so, why they feel that way. If my participants from distinct ethnic groups display similar anti-nationalist sentiments and refer to similar nostalgic points in terms of supra-

those conflicts did not emerge in the form of atrocities and violent polarizations until the 1990s, and they did not damage anti-nationalistically formulated supra-ethnic structure of the regime.

ethnicity, I aim to discuss how certain groups demonstrate the constructed essence of nationalism even in a fragile and ethnically-divided society.

To answer this question, I have come up with three working assumptions: (A1) *Experience of supraethnic/national identity might undermine nationalistic feelings.* (A2) *Some ethnic groups might value their socio-economic statuses more than their ethno-national identity.* (A3) *"Ethnic" wars or polarizations might not destroy supranationalist memories of pre-war periods because ethnic wars or polarizations might be economically motivated.*

I will discuss the main findings of my thesis in relation to these assumptions. But, firstly I would like to talk about the historical background:

Dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia

In explaining the quick activation of the conflicts in the region, scholars who focus on orientalism in relation to Eastern Europe refer to a continuation of warfare in the Balkans since the Middle Ages up until today (Kaplan 1993; Todorova 1994; Wolff 1994). However, it would not be wrong to argue that the socialist regime (1945-1991) was successful, at least to a certain extent, in consolidating cross-ethnic relations among distinct groups (Palmberger 2005; Ramet 2006). In parallel with existing studies on orientalism and Eastern Europe, some nationalist approaches to the dissolution wars of Yugoslavia (Kaplan 1993; Sells 1996) highlight the "ancient origins" of the conflicts. For example, Sell argues that "Christoslavism" is the core of "Serbness" since the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, and that Christoslavism basically aimed to exclude Turks and Bosniaks, who were converted to Islam during the reign of the Ottomans in the Balkans, which was seen as a betrayal in primordially narrated Serbian nationalism (1996: 51). Yet another reason given for the dissolution wars is the Serbo-Croat conflict, referring to the historical competition between Serbs and Croats to rule the region (Sekulic 1997: 177). Did numerous generations' collective memory indeed carry these ancient hatreds for the centuries?

If yes, how did socialist Yugoslavia manage to successfully construct an overarching identity to a certain extent?

Keeping these questions in mind, scholars put forward other explanatory factors to understand dissolution wars. For example, the constructivist school of nationalism (Barth 1969; Brubaker 2002; Chandra 2009; Bonikowski 2015; Tudor 2018; Wimmer 2018; Mylonas and Tudor 2021) displays how nationalism is politically activated through artificial reasons. Levin states that differentiations among Croat Catholics, Orthodox Serbs, and Slavic Muslims in the Western Balkans resulted from modern nationalism, rather than ancient reasons (1992). In line with Levin, Gagnon argues that political and economic reforms in the beginning of the 1990s and the disintegrative results of these reforms initiated the conflicts (2009). Similarly, I argue that primordial nationalism (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1971, 1985; Geertz 1993; Smith 1998; Van Evera 2001) was used to sharpen ethnic identities during the dissolution wars by masquerading the constructivist essence of ethnicity through nationalist figures, such as Slobodon Miliosevic, Radovan Karadzic, Milan Babic, and Ratko Mladic, who were the main architects of the dissolution wars through their political and military policies.

Gagnon notices that "these wars were largely the result of long-term political struggles between elite factions over economic and political reform" in socialist Yugoslavia (2009: 23), and he states that:

> In the face of growing reformist successes by the mid-1980s, embattled conservatives resorted to a strategy of conflict, first with the goal of recentralizing the Yugoslav party and state, and then, from 1990 onward, destroying that state in order to maintain their control over and access to resources, which was threatened by the proposed reforms. Exactly because of the strength of reformists, conservatives resorted to violence as a means of preventing these fundamental changes. This conservative strategy led to the outbreak of open warfare in 1991 and 1992, continuing until 1995 (2009: 24).

These reforms provided liberalization in political and economic structures, but these also increased the visibility of the ideas of irredentist and nationalist conservatives within the state; therefore, class-based society understanding was damaged since nationalist conservatives aimed to polarize ethnic identities for realization of their demands (Hodson et al. 1994: 1536).

It is also necessary to remember that although reformists aimed to adopt liberal policies for the sake of the state and its future, both the reformists and conservatives planned their agendas according to their own interests, except some who aimed to keep capitalist processes under control through economic stabilization programs (Gagnon 2009: 26; Suvin, 2018: 170).

Furthermore, the conservatives of the era of the reforms in the beginning of 1990 were former socialists and party members, and they thought that liberalism would replace socialism they aimed to protect. In other words, they wanted to conserve their national units, such as Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro etc., against the risk of liberalization waves through exclusionary nationalism (Ibid. 27). As such, it is crucial in order to understand the importance of the clash between the reformists and conservatives and its direct effects on the construction of ethnic identities in the beginning of 1990, especially in Bosnia and Croatia where ethnically mixed demography was traceable.

On the other hand, the conservatives against the reforms in Serbia were more radical because Serbian economy was divided between two sides, and the two opposite sides needed opposite policies: reformist and statist policies (Ibid. 29-30). Reformists asked for more liberalization and statists asked for more statist policies in political and economic arenas. Therefore, Serbia was more open to polarization between reformists and conservatives, and expectedly conservatives' method of nationalization to fight against liberalization waves was more palpable in contrast to other republics or autonomous regions of Yugoslavia (Ibid.). This also influenced Serbian-dominated parts of Yugoslavia, like Bosnia.

Existing studies demonstrate that either the reformist spirit of the 1990s sealed the end of the socialist regime (Dragovic-Soso 2002; Ramet 2006; Gagnon 2009; Vujacic 2015) or ancient and orientalist motivations were the main reason of the dissolution wars (Denitch 1996; Sells 1996; Volcic 2007). Gagnon's interpretation and analysis on the dissolution wars of Yugoslavia display re-construction of nationalism in the region due to a political conflict within the two

sides. In other words, ethnic identities were activated during the dissolution wars in order to create an artificial polarization within the Yugoslav societies, especially in Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia, where Serbians were mostly populated. Under the escalation of the tension between the reformists and the conservatives, Ramet argues that "socialist Yugoslavia was already dying" because "many federal employees were as much as three months behind in their salaries; some agencies of federal government had been shot down for lack of funds; and the army had failed to deliver its annual report to the federal Assembly as required by law in 1990" (2006: 9). Economically devastated Serbia, under the influence of nationalist elites, had started to stockpile arms (Ibid.), and activation of ethnicity was the most proper method to start a conflict in the mind of the nationalist elites to found "Greater Serbia". Serbian nationalist elites' project was also in line with Tilly's argument since Tilly argues that the process of war making is elimination of their rivals like in the process of state making (1985). Ramet argues that Serbia's aggression was also related to the system's legitimacy problem; in other words, the federal structure could not gain legitimacy through its fragments in the beginning of the 1990s, and then the state of disorder emerged (2006: 15). Therefore, the socialist state was also seen as one of the causes of warfare due to its ill-planned system. Hence, nationalism found a room in the 1990s as a result of economic liberalization policies.

Hegemony of nationalism

Anastasiou states that nationalism is generally "employed to invoke its 'reactionary' variant" (2018: 2). In other words, the rise of nationalism or the activation of nationalist dogmas mainly aim to polarize distinct groups within societies or between (nation) states. Hobsbawm clearly shows that national identity and sense of belonging in Europe emerged as late as the first part of the 1800s (1975). Therefore, construction of nationalist ideas, references, even primordial references, mainly depends on the re-formulation of national histories in the modern periods (Hobsbawm 1983; Ozkirimli 2017). Although many youth movements in the first part of the

1800s aimed and organized to draw imagined borders between their ethnic (or ethno-religious friends) and ethnic others *à la* Anderson, there were still latecomers such as Turks through the construction of (ethno) national identities (Akcam 2016). But, Ottoman States in the Balkans (Turkey-in-Europe) followed the nationalization pattern in the 1800s through their independence movements. However, nationalist uprisings of the region were not only specific to the 1800s but also continued in the 20th century.

The initiation of the First World War in Sarajevo, when a Bosnian Serb militia, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated Franz Ferdinand, archduke of Austria-Este, in 1914 for the sake of the anti-colonial struggle of Bosnia, the subaltern position of Bosnians in the Yugoslav Kingdom during the inter-war period, and the hegemony of the Croatian fascist units in the Second World War demonstrate the endurance of nationalism in the region in the 1900s. After the nationalist burdens of the 1800s and 1900s, an era of supra-ethnicity started with the end of the WWII with the ultimate victory of the communist Yugoslav (South-Slavs) partisans. The motto of socialist Yugoslavia, "Brotherhood and Unity", penetrated Yugoslavs' lives, especially the lives of Bosnians formerly accepted as subaltern, mainly Bosniak Muslims (Hoare 2013: 2).

Re-activation of nationalist ideas and dogmas, especially through primordial references by Serbian nationalist elites in the beginning of 1990, showed that nationalism was alive in the region after almost forty-five years of co-existence. Yet, the rupture of the socialist regime has also shown that nationalism is not primordially embedded in societies. Instead, it is used instrumentally to cover modern tensions and reasons of the conflicts by political elites, and it was re-narrated accordingly (Brass 1979). End of the Cold War and Iron Curtain in Europe expectedly caused structural political and economic changes in the region, however the rise of nationalism mainly took place in the borders of former Yugoslavia since political elites purposely aimed at deterioration of ethnic identities for their interests. Therefore, nationalism

literature focuses in detail on Eastern Europe (Hayden 1992; Bakic-Hayden 1995; Stroschein 2014; Bieber 2000).

The intersection of religion and ethnicity is crucial in the context of nationalism and in the Balkans even more so due to the existence of minorities across the regions; however, Bosnia-Herzegovina and its polyethnic structure would be the most iconic example in the entire Balkans because of the co-existence of distinct ethno-religious groups in Bosnia for centuries (Zilic 1998; Alic and Gusheh 1999). Socialist Yugoslavia aimed to constitute an overarching socialist identity, and the socialist regime was suspicious of religious identities since they were seen as the antithesis to "Brotherhood and Unity" (Oddie 2012: 36). Further, Velikonja states that "religious institutions—because of the interwar collaboration of some clergymen with the occupiers and their inciting nationalistic and exclusivist policy—lost much of their prestige, reputation, and legitimacy" in the period of socialist Yugoslavia (2003: 186). Therefore, religion, like in different examples, has sharpened nationalist movements and ideas (Turkmen 2021), and "antireligious attitudes" of the Yugoslav regime also aimed to eradicate the remnants of nationalism in the region (Velikonja 2003). On the other hand, in the beginning of 1990s, Serbian clergymen referred to "Christoslavism", and signified Bosniak Muslims as the enemies of Serbness and traitors to inflame nationalism (Sells 1996: 86-92). Therefore, socialist Yugoslavia's former attempts to alleviate the influence of religion in nationalism came to the surface during the dissolution period.

Gaps in the nationalism and ethnicity scholarship

In this thesis, I aim to contribute to the constructivist debates about nationalism. I believe there are currently three important gaps in literature:

(1) There is almost no research exploring how ethnic groups evaluate primordialism, in other words, whether they locate themselves in the primordialist category or the constructivist category.

(2) There are only few works that look into ideological and supra-ethnic experiences to analyse how inter-ethnic social interactions and individuals' relations can be more significant than ethnic ties and belonging.

(3) There are several works that focus on supra-ethnic identity and nostalgia for it, but they do not aim to demonstrate whether there is a rank (which groups miss the past more and less) among ethnic groups, in terms of their ardent nostalgia of the past. It also displays the conceptualization of nostalgia among persecutor or victim ethnic groups.

I aim to contribute to this literature by focusing on the Bosnia-Herzegovinian case. Because it is just one case there could be a critique on its applicability to other cases, however Bosnia-Herzegovina is not a unique case in modern politics. There are several ethnic groups that experienced collective traumas like massacres (Jews and Rwandans) and there are many others that were under the umbrella of a supra-ethnic identity (the former empires, the USSR, and Czechoslovakia). Bosnia has experienced both the trauma of ethnic genocide and the epoch of supra-ethnic identity in the modern period. Hence, the Bosnian case can demonstrate the impact of both, and it is easy to reach the witnesses of both in Bosnia, because it is a recent case. Therefore, findings from the Bosnian case, especially witness-generations' narrations, can contribute to the overall nationalism and ethnicity scholarship with its emphasis on ethnic genocide, on the one hand, supra-ethnic identity, on the other.

Although Schuman and Rieger (1992) and Zerubavel's analyses (1996) claim that people who have not experienced certain cases can also be a source of collective memory, Schuman and Corning criticize this claim (2016). They argue that even though next generations (or cohorts) can remember former events, such as wars and collective traumas, but witness generations are more likely to remember them in detail (2016: 10-13). They give the examples of "the Vietnam

War" and "9/11" for an American sample group, and they further contend that the people who witnessed or experienced the Vietnam War (the older ones) are more likely to have a collective memory about that war (2016: 10) while younger generations are more likely to remember 9/11 and its impact on themselves collectively (2016: 12-13). Hence, for this thesis's purposes, I focus on witness generation(s).

Definition of ethnic groups, ethnicity, nationalism, nations, and collective memory

There are ongoing discussions on the basic concepts of the nationalism literature in different branches of social sciences. For example, sociologist Max Weber defines ethnic groups "as the belief of social actors in common descent based on racial and cultural differences" (Jackson 1982: 5). Historian Eric Hobsbawm mainly refers to the "invention of historic continuity" in the definition of ethnic groups (1983: 7). On the other hand, in the political science literature, Horowitz talks about ascriptive characteristics of certain groups who embrace a common historical myth, and claims that ethnicity "cannot be explained by a bloodless theory" (1985: 17-18, 140). In contrast to Horowitz's definition centralizing the primordial roots of ethnicity, some scholars define ethnicity with its flexible borders and its modern re-construction cycles among people who share a common ancestral tie, cultural features, and socialization rituals (Barth 1969; Brubaker 2002; Chandra 2009; Bonikowski 2015; Tudor 2018; Wimmer 2018; Mylonar and Tudor 2021). To understand distinct ethnic groups of Bosnia and their peaceful co-existence periods in history, except armed conflicts in 20th century, constructivist theories that underline the modern construction of formerly flexible borders among distinct groups are important. In this thesis, I mainly refer to their arguments in order to understand the importance of social ties, connections, and relations among distinct groups, especially because primordialists' arguments fail to explain the existence of palpable cross-ethnic relations in polyethnic societies.

While primordialists try to read nationalist conflicts by referring to ancient roots and myths (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972, Horowitz 1971, 1985; Geertz 1993; Smith 1998; Van Evera 2001; Gorski 2003), constructivists refer to apply to the "invented" modern borders and reasons of nationalism *à la* Hobsbawm (Brass 1979; Anderson 1983; Chandra 2005; Bonikowski 2015; Ozkirimli 2017; Blouin and Mukand 2019). Artificially invented roots of the dissolution wars due to the clash between the reformist and the nationalist conservatives demonstrate the importance constructivist theories in relation to Bosnia.

A discussion of different nationalism theories in analysing the conflicts in Bosnia requires paying attention to the distinctions between ethnicity or ethnic groups and nations. There is a lack of consensus in the literature in regarding definition of ethnicity, but it is mainly defined as a historical affiliation through primordial, cultural, or boundary based characters between "self" and "other" (Levine 1999: 167). In this thesis, I mainly refer to Barth's definition on ethnicity and ethnic groups, and subscribe to his view that, "boundary defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (1969: 15). On the other hand, defining the "nation" is more complex than defining ethnic groups or ethnicity. Connor argues that, "the essence of a nation is intangible. This essence is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other people in a most vital way" (1978: 397). Therefore, nation is a more broader umbrella term that may consist of one or more than one ethnic (or ethno-religious or religious) groups through a loyalty tie and without concerning certain micro boundaries. This thesis does not aim to discuss the Westphalian nation-state understanding and its main characteristics or the definitions of "the nation-states" since I aim to observe the construction of ethnic groups and their nationalist sentiments through collective memories. Therefore, nation-states and their legitimacy dilemmas are not discussed.

I could have brought in a discussion of the centralization of nation-states' memory and official history through national history writing or interpretation of national belonging. However, the

scope of this thesis is the investigation of oral history through distinct ethnic groups' narrations because "the individual has the potential to criticize and evaluate his or her own traditions" (Kattogo 2009: 377). Therefore, I make use of in-depth interviews. Furthermore, Kattago discusses oral history (memory) and states that:

> Studies of oral history, post-colonialism, histories from below and histories of everyday life offer different perspectives and narratives about the past. Multiculturalism and attention to ways in which national and ethnic identity are shaped are deeply part of the democratization of history (2009: 378).

Thus, focusing on "histories from below" through unofficial narrations of nation states opens a window of opportunity to detect artificial ruptures and continuities within societies. As such, collective memory becomes an important factor among peripheries or distinct groups of societies to reflect on unknown or omitted parts of official histories. As Portelli puts it, "oral history has made us uncomfortably aware of elusive quality of historical truth" (1991: viii-xi).

Tracing pivotal points of oral history pushes researchers to find common patterns among distinct purposive groups to refer to a hegemonic narrative that comes from below; therefore, in this thesis, I also apply Jan Assmann's "communicative memory", which "includes varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications" (1995: 126). Remembrance of the past by witness generations through transfer of memoirs also shape oral history and borders of collective memory. Furthermore, combination of nationalism theories and collective memory studies demonstrates the central link between the construction of ethnic borders and nationalist sentiments by force and their remnants in collective memory. On the other hand, this link also pushes researchers to think about the multidimensionality of identities, and when/how an identity is activated.

Multidimensionality of identities vs. salient ethnic identities: how to trace them in qualitative studies

Weber argues that an identity simultaneously produces different identities (1978: 17). For example, "race" as an identity "creates a group identity" or a sense of belonging to a larger

group, and "this happens only when a neighbourhood or the mere proximity of racially different persons is the basis of joint" (Ibid.) Imagination of the "other" constitutes borders among identities but people might own different identities at the same time (Maalouf 2000), then do people have different "others" per each identity?

Chandra argues that shifts in individuals' identities are not generally about certain changes in the rates of death, migration or having different "others"; instead, individuals may "redefine" their identities (2012: 3). When masses re-define their identities, even ethnic identities, there might be observable identity shifts within societies (Ibid.) From a historical point of view, defining herself as a subject of Ottoman State for a Croatian peasant after occupation of her lands by the Ottomans is a certain change on the individual's identity. Or after the emergence of the sense of national belonging a formerly Ottoman subject might define herself as an Armenian, or after an inter-ethnic marriage a person might acquire a different ethnic identity. Therefore, like many different identities of people, ethnic identity might be acquired and left.

Furthermore, an individual or a group of individuals might have supra-ethnic identities. One of the most iconic examples of supra-ethnic or overarching identities are socialist/communist identities. According to Polese et al., construction of supra-identities is also "the construction of alternative makers" because these possible alternative makers "contribute to the renegotiation of a national identity" (2018: 3). On the other hand, people might also give their supra-ethnic identities up, either voluntarily or by force. Hence, national elites, societies, re-emerged norms or re-interpreted histories might influence activation of identities. However, this does not necessarily mean that there is no invisible but alive identity within societies. In other words, newly emerged or formerly used identities of people might still be influential despite the saliency of ethnic identities. Yearning for socialist identities and remembrance of the practices of the socialist state have been discussed by the literature on post-socialist/communist nostalgia (Ekman and Linde 2005; Lindstrom 2005; Todorova and Gille

2012; Prusik and Lewicka 2016). Nostalgia for such a past may also show how and why individuals might not prefer embracing their ethnic identities and nationalist sentiments.

How to detect and trace the borders of salient identities in qualitative studies then? Quantitative works mainly refer to the correlation between "exploration" and "commitment" and aim to measure sense of belonging among groups through questions about loyalty, historical ties, and cultural practices (Phinney and Ong 2009: 51). On the other hand, qualitative studies discuss the ruptures and continuations among individuals' narrations and experiences to observe the main elements and changes in ethnic or supra-ethnic identities (Assmann 1995; Zarubavel 1996; Wengraf 2001; Immler 2012; Golubovic 2021; Turkmen 2021). One of the main aims of this qualitatively designed thesis is to trace changes or continuities in identities in the context of Bosnia.

A hotspot of ethnicity: Bosnia-Herzegovina

Kaldor focuses on "the role of war in constructing nationalism" in the Bosnian context (2004: 175), and argues that "conditions of insecurity" and "violence" constructed nationalism among different ethnic groups of Bosnia in the 1990s (2004: 168). In other words, according to Kaldor, nationalism is not the main reason of the war among rank-and-file members of Bosnian society. Instead, the war triggered the emergence of ethnic lines since Bosnians co-existed in pre-war years. On the other hand, Volcic and Erjavec argue that even the media is still shows the war "as a struggle between the former Yugoslav nations", especially in Bosnia as extensions of the warfare in the 1990s (2015: 87). Further, Swimelar signifies the importance of the current education system in Bosnia-Herzegovina to display how de-centralized education "promotes competing visions and identities" (2013: 162). Swimelar also refers to the education system during the reign of socialist Yugoslavia, especially during the period of Josip Broz Tito, and notes that education was used to unify and solidify "a Yugoslav identity" (2013: 162-163).

While this main narration changed in the Yugoslav education system on the eve of the war, polarized structure of polyethnic Bosnia sharpened the nationalistic discourse (Ibid.).

Dyrstad demonstrates that the visibility of nationalism in Bosnia became "higher shortly after than before an ethnic civil war" (2012: 819). This also tells us that pre-war conditions in Bosnia were not as polarizing as generally thought to be. This pushes one to think on collective traumas of Bosnians, especially Bosniaks, due to their victim position during the war years. Dyrstad summarizes that:

> About one million people fled from Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. After the war, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was established to investigate the war crimes, notably the Srebrenica massacre, where at least 7,500 male Bosniaks were executed in 1995. No agreement exists on the total number of casualties. Early estimates reported about 200,000 victims, while a more recent report estimated 100,000 victims (2012: 821).

Thus, massacres and injustice have sharpened ethnic borders within the Bosnian society especially through the discourse of today's ethnic majority, and the main victim of the war years, Bosniaks (Bozic 2017: 3). At the same time, today's Bosnia has a divided structure between the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and *Republika Srpska* where Serbs have dominated since the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995.

During many war crimes and atrocities that were committed by Serbs, Bosniak men were systemically exterminated, and mass rape camps were established by Serbian paramilitary units, especially by 1993 (Taras 2019: 292). Therefore, traumas and pains of Bosnians are expected to be still palpable. Further, Taras states that "Slav Muslims faced ethno-religious exclusion due to conflating religious demonization and ethnicity" (2019: 284), and thus their ethno-religiously formulated current identity became more fragile due to the pains of the recent past.

Despite all existing traumas, when I started to write this thesis, I expected to see visible Yugo-nostalgia, regardless of the participants' ethnic affiliations. Especially Lindstrom's study supports the existence of Yugo-nostalgia by referring to Yugoslav pop-culture and its current

popularization (2005), but what I wanted to see is whether Yugo-nostalgia exists in the form of anti-nationalist sentiments among the participants. When I started to reach out to the participants from distinct ethnic groups in Bosnia, I was aware of the burdens of their traumas, therefore I was very careful during the interviews. However, the younger generations who witnessed neither the socialist period nor the wars, especially the Bosniaks, criticized the design of the interviews, as in their minds, there is no distinct ethnic affiliation in the Bosnian society. According to their main testimonies, every individual/citizen is "Bosnian" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and cannot define themselves as Serb, Croat, Albanian, and Turk etc.

I tried to talk with the younger (secondary) generations to be able conduct my interviews with their elderly relatives (witness generations), and I detected that younger Bosniaks mainly refer to exclusionary nationalism in their society and just accept the existence of different religious affiliations, but not the ethnic ones. Therefore, in-depth interviews with witness generations have been more helpful in tracing the existence of the yearning for the Yugoslav state and its nostalgization in the form of anti-nationalism among the participants since younger generations do not have any direct experience about the socialist regime.

Ethnicity and memory

Halbwachs states that "forms of collective conscious" emerge among distinct groups and units, and in line with Halbawchs's argument (1939: 818), Olick argues that "memory and the nation have a peculiar synergy. Even when other identities compete with or supplant the national in postmodernity, they draw on the expanded role for memory generated in the crucible of the nation-state" (1998: 379). Therefore, a classic tendency in collective memory studies displays the hegemonic role of nation states during the construction of (official) memory and narrations. On the other hand, Nora refers to the "brutal realization of the difference between real memory-social and unviolated" and "dictatorial memory" (1989: 6). Further, Passi states that "identity symbols and memories are not merely packed in museums, archives or landscapes, they are

also part of everyday life" (2020: 62). Hence, the understanding of "history from below" paves the way for analysis of collective memory among individuals instead of nation-states.

Furthermore, Lipsitz underlines that "the changing nature of working class identity" might also re-produce collective memory, and gives the example of migrant-worker families in the USA and the transformation of their collective memory from the 1940s to 1950s (1986: 369). Thus, collective memory is not static and has a capacity to reflect societal changes, especially through intersectional narratives and perspectives. In some cases, collective memory may embody "plural experimental memory" through commemorative rituals, traditions, artifacts, or performing arts (Jambresic Kirin 2004: 126). For example, Jambresic Kirin discusses the role of socialist Croat women during the WWII against fascist units in contrast to main narration of women's fragile position during warfare (Ibid.). Kirin demonstrates how it is a milestone narrative among Croats, and collective memory scholars might remark how different identities have a potential to be remembered and conserved through memory.

In the context of Bosnia, investigation of collective memory among distinct ethnic groups refers to both memoirs of their socialist identity and their recently emerged ethnic identity. Because the dissolution wars ethnically polarized and *de facto* divided the Bosnian society, I employ in-depth interviews among witness generations of distinct ethnic groups in order to trace the construction and destruction processes of distinct identities.

In line with the official narration of the dissolution wars of Yugoslavia, one could expect collective memory of today's distinct ethnic groups to reflect clear polarizations, but there is a more complex story in the case of Bosnia due to the possible influence of socialist identities even in the post-socialist and ethnicized environment. I sampled ethnic groups in order to constitute purposive groups for in-depth interviews since post-socialist society might reflect its ideological and anthological legacy, in that socialism is probably less palpable while ethnicity is the salient identity among individuals. Therefore, I stuck to today's groupism, which became

dominant just thirty years ago. While the traumatic atmosphere has triggered the emergence of nationalistic sentiments and ethnic borders in the Bosnian context, might there also be yearning for a de-ethnicized environment?

Trauma and nostalgia

Trauma is one of the central points of this thesis in order to trace nationalism because nationalism in the Bosnian society was mainly constructed on traumas of individuals. And if I detect regret, yearning, and positive remembrance of former Yugoslavia among my participants despite those collective traumas, there might be a possibility of socialist nostalgia that may carry anti-nationalist connotations. Naghibi states that "loss of childhood or home or cultural identity" is classic examples of societal traumas after certain polarizations, wars, massacres, genocides, or revolutions (2009: 88). In the case of Bosnians, "loss of home" and "loss of cultural identity" (or socialist one) are the results of traumatic wars in their society. Their collective memory is expected to display the remnants of their traumatic experiences, but at the same time I assume that they might yearn for their "lost cultural identity".

In the literature on nostalgia, one of the main thematic points is related to the "irreversibility of time" (Ange and Berliner 2015: 2). Individuals or members of social groups may nostalgize their past, but they have an awareness of the lost opportunities (Lankauskas 2015; Bach 2015). On the other hand, nostalgia might also exist in the form of imaginary fantasy and preference to be able to live in the past through the reconstruction of lost home (Boym 2001). Todorova and Gille notice "the elements of disappointments, social exhaustion, economic recategorization, generational fatigue, and quest for dignity, but also an activist critique of the present using the past as a mirror" might be main catalysers of socialist or communist nostalgia (2012: 7), therefore an unconscious comparison between the past and the present might also be expected during in-depth interviews, ethnographic studies, or participant observations among

participants, and this thesis depends on narrative accounts that drive from this unconscious comparison.

Plan of the thesis

In Chapter 1, I will first focus on theories of nationalism in relation to collective memory studies in order to highlight the importance of the former works in understanding the relation between nationalism and collective memory. I will also focus on the relationship between ethnicity and collective memory. Then in Chapter 2, I will present the historical background of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Further in Chapter 3, I will also trace the construction of ethnic identities in the 20th century Bosnian society by referring to former studies. This section is also important to understand official or popular narrations of Bosnians regarding ethnic affiliations and nationalist sentiments. Therefore, I will also look at collective traumas of Bosnians regarding the war, and I will theoretically analyse the possibility of Yugo-nostalgia in Bosnia. In Chapter 4, I will focus on the methodology. Then in Chapter 5, I will delve into data from in-depth interviews with my Bosnian participants, from three distinct ethnic affiliations. This chapter aims to display the influence of collective trauma on their identities, as well as the possibility of Yugo-nostalgia and anti-nationalist sentiments via narrations of the participants. Finally, I will conclude the thesis with a discussion of its contribution to the nationalism and ethnicity literature, in light of my findings.

Chapter 1 – Theoretical framework

"…These astonishing changes are consequences of identity shifts among individuals, not exceptional rates of fertility or migration. Individuals often redefine the ethnic identity categories that describe them. When large numbers do this, the result can be large-scale changes in the distribution of identities in the population as a whole." (Cited from Kanchan Chandra's book, *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*, 2012: 3)

1.1. Theories of nationalism

1.1.1. Overview

Nationalism theories are key for tracing the distinct explanations on the formation of national identities and ethnic groups. In the nationalism literature, there is no one perspective to locate and discuss national movements, ethnic conflicts or any nationality-based inter/intra-state case. The main distinction derives from whether ethnic (or ethno-national) identities are rigid, salient, and the main reasons for conflicts or not. In other words, the two contrasting schools on nationalism explain ethnic identities differently from the very beginning. In this section, I will demonstrate this main distinction to constitute a theoretical background in relation to collective memory.

1.1.2. Primordial nationalism and collective memory

The first school of thought, primordial nationalism, was the dominant theoretical framework to discuss ethnicity and ethnic groups especially in 1970s and 1980s, and it still resonates in the current analyses (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1971, 1985; Geertz 1993; Smith 1998; Van Evera 2001). This superiority is interconnected with historical problems, which are thought to be the causes of violent ethnic wars and polarizations in distinct disciplines of social sciences, such as anthropology, history, sociology, and political science. According to the primordialists, "nationality is a natural part of human beings", and expectedly historical references, such as "antiquity", "golden age", "recess", and "national hero", are the main catalysers of nations (Ozkirimli 2017: 51-54). Then, it has a sharpening effect to demarcate borders between distinct

ethnicities as a micro-component of nations. Hence, according to the primordialists, ethnic groups assumed that wars or regional conflicts are legitimate for the sake of their ethno-national past and identities due to the priority of their ethnic identity.

Perennial nationalists constitute very similar arguments with the primordialists. For example, the main focus of the perennialists is about "constant" and "fundamental" features of human life which directly refer to people's ethno-national identity from antiquity to now (Smith 1998: 159). Therefore, there is no essential difference between the primordialists and the perennialists as two different schools. Gravlee and Sweet's research shows that even in the anthropology literature, ethnicity has been used as a rigid and ascriptive title of certain groups for many years (2008). On the other hand, despite previous works on ethnicity and its borders in different branches of social sciences, Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov argue that even censuses that are one of the most rigid political form of ethno-national categorization cannot draw borders between people because they just "classify people anonymously and fleetingly; they do not permanently assign individuals to categories, or attach enduring, legally consequential identities to specific persons" (2004: 34).

Rabushka and Shepsle state that peaceful co-existence of different groups in a society is not long-lasting because cultural plurality, intrinsically, tends to cause conflict and instability (1972). Furthermore, they argue that "although other issues may affect politics in plural societies, we here assert the pre-eminence of ethnicity" (1972: 65). Thus, they clearly insert that ethnic identities are leading titles of the people that shape politics especially in the ethnically diverse societies. This is in line with the primoridalist argument in terms of sacralization of ethnic identities. On the other hand, the essence of their main argument cannot explain peaceful co-habitations in ethnically diverse societies.

In light of Rabushka and Shepsle's arguments on salient and conflictual nature of ethnicity, Donald Horowitz, one of the leading primordialists, contributed to the literature by focusing on ethnic groups, ethnic political parties, and secessionist movements. For him, there is a "centrifugal" competition among the distinct ethnic groups, and this is a naturally inevitable part of ethnic politics (1985: 141-228). Moreover, he argues that distinct ethnic groups are possible enemies of each other, and he explains it by referring to the different degrees of self-esteem among different ethnic groups. He explains "why the masses follow by arguing that stereotyped backward groups engage in hostile behaviour toward the advantaged to retrieve their self-esteem" (1985: 181). According to him, economic conditions and differences are not the main reasons of conflicts because conflicts are initiated for the maximization of ethnic groups' self-esteem, which is their "ancient" feature and lost during a period of "recess". Thus, Horowitz has repeated the importance and salience of ethnic identities and their conflictual tendency.

While primordialists discuss the issue of ethnicity and ethnic identities/groups to interpret them as reasons of conflicts and polarizations, Clifford Geertz focuses on ethnicity and ethnic groups from a culturalist point of view (1993). Geertz was an anthropologist who worked on symbols, religion, and cultural systems to demonstrate their influence and embeddedness in societies. For Ozkirimli, he does not argue that "the objects of primordial attachments are given; rather, they are assumed to be given by individuals" (2017: 57). However, Geertz still suggests that historical "affinity" is pivotal during the formation of group identities, and "religion" is core in the cultural systems (1993: 245-260). Religion establishes "a cultural system" that is long-lasting and embedded in societies (Ibid). Moreover, religion is accepted as a milestone concept that shapes identities from ancient times up until now instead of referring to any social exchange and movement and their possible impact on identity formation. Thus, Geertz's ideas

are significant to see the rigidity of ethnic identities in terms of time, sharpening effects of religious identity, and cultural accumulation.

Among the modernist thinkers, Anthony Smith's books are classics, and they clearly trace how primordialism/perennialism is part of ethnic politics and modern nationalism. In the words of Bell, Smith "tries to synthesize the arguments of the cultural primordialists and the modernists, claiming that although nationalism is an ideational product of modernity, and that most nations are indeed modern constructs, the strength of their claims for allegiance results from their being rooted in the 'myths and memories' of actually existing (and far older) ethnic communities, or ethnies" (2003: 68). Furthermore, Smith defines ethnic communities as "collective cultural units claiming common ancestry, shared memories and symbols, whether they constitute majorities or minorities in a given state" (1999: 126). Hence, he indicates that even after modernity, the roots of ethnicity should be searched in the mythical features that constitute ethnic communities' characteristics and borders.

In light of several structural criticisms on the primordialists, as will be discussed in this chapter latter, Stephan Van Evera draws attention again to the visibility of ethnic identities during the conflictual periods. He states that "ethnic identities are hardened by violent conflict with others" (2001: 20-22). To consolidate his argument, he refers to "the emotional impact of recorded national memories" (Ibid.). In other words, he tries to bridge the national past and present to demonstrate the durability of ethnic identities and their hegemony over other identities. While he conceptualizes ethnic identities in a rigid form, he mainly refers to war times or conflict periods as evidences to trace the importance of ethnic belongingness, however he does not focus on environmental and social factors that push to people for ethnic unifications during those periods.

Primordialists' claims are assumed to be applicable for understanding the continuity of ethnic roots and the reasons of conflicts. However, constructivist nationalism, the second school in the nationalism literature, criticizes primordialists for their ontological assumptions on national or ethnic identities from different perspectives (Brass 1979; Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1983; Brubaker 2002; Chandra 2009; Bonikowski 2015; Ozkirimli 2017; Tudor 2018; Wimmer 2018; Mylonas and Tudor 2021). Ozkirimli states that primordialists dismiss the impact of social and political interactions during the formation of identities that is the milestone identity maker according to the constructivists (2017: 63). The role of social and political relations is also important for understanding ruptures and continuations in collective memory of ethnic groups because collective memory construction is an inevitable part in ethnic boundary-making. I will describe and analyse the features of the constructivists in this Chapter later, but before I will talk about the term of collective memory to display why it is also important in nationalism studies and for this thesis.

Maurice Halbwachs introduced the term "collective memory" to the literature. To Halbwachs, people remember their pasts via social interactions, and their individual memories are affected and shaped by their social affiliations (1980: 24-32). Thus, people's memories are named as "collective" due to the terms' capacity to reflect memories of certain groups. In the words of Jan Assmann, "*communicative memory* includes varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications" (1995: 126). According to Assmann, it is clear that "everyday communication" demonstrates interactions of certain groups' members, and it constitutes a collective memory. Furthermore, Pierre Nora, writer of *Realms of Memory*, which is a milestone research in terms of linking identity constructions with memory sites in France, argues that collective memory can serve to revive the past "in the future" (1989: 20). Therefore, collective memory is a cultural product, which has emerged due to social interactions. From a Gramscian perspective, it is also a certain type of cultural counter-hegemony against archive-

based history (Gramsci 1975). Moreover, Graham Dawson points to the mutual relation between group formation and collective memory constitution (1994: 23).

Collective memory underlines how change is inevitable during interpretations of certain historical cases even among different generations of the same groups. In other words, preservation of mythical references is almost impossible through generations without certain changes. According to Schuman and Rieger, "the (collective) memories can be of individual experiences that many shared, such as watching the broadcast (or reply) of the Challenger explosion, or feeling grief and shock on hearing of the assassination of John F. Kennedy" (1992: 323). Moreover, they also inquire "how people think about a past they know only second-hand" (Ibid.). They argue that "the early and mid-20s" are essential to tracing how social and political events shape people's future decisions, lives, perceptions on their pasts (1992: 324). All these arguments of collective memory literature highlight the importance of social experiences and changes, hence their central point directly constitutes a counter-argument to the essence of primordialism, which suggests the rigidity of group identity. Therefore, many studies on collective memory might be against the main arguments of primordialists.

Many works on collective memory literature also consolidate the constructivists in terms of their main focus on socialization process through the constitutions of changes in ethnic identities. In line with the existing research on collective memory and constructivist view, in this thesis, I state that although "ethnic" wars, especially the ones that caused polarizations and massacres, are more likely to be explained by ethnic tensions of the regions, certain ethnic groups that experienced wars and ethnic polarizations are more likely to remember their chaotic past in terms of its social, political and economic burdens instead of ethnic animosity. I also argue that there can be a supra-ethnic identity overarching people's ethnic identities, such as the identity of the USSR and socialist Yugoslavia. While both the USSR and socialist

Yugoslavia collapsed, I contend that when we focus on supra-ethnic memories of those ethnic groups that had fragile experiences, it is possible to see that these people are more likely to remember their pasts with *de-ethnicized* patterns. In other words, one may not observe ethnic fragments and references while analysing certain ethnic groups' memories about the periods of their lives when they carries a supra-ethnic identity. Moreover, their remembrance of supra-ethnic identity can reach the level of nostalgia that is a crucial term for this thesis to detect yearnful connotations for a supra-ethnic period. My assumptions derive from the main arguments of the constructivists, which I explain in detail below.

1.1.3. Constructivist nationalism and collective memory

Paul R. Brass criticizes the primordialists by highlighting the "instrumental" character of nationalism (1979). He claims that reconstruction process of ethnic identities are continuous because manipulative and nationalist leaders benefit from the flexibility of ethnicity to trigger people's nationalist sentiments, that's why they attach new meanings to them according to their political concerns, especially in the modern era (1979: 20-40). In line with this argument, Denitch clearly demonstrates how Milosevic mobilized "traditional Serbian nationalism" to supress Albanians' nationalist demands in socialist Yugoslavia (1996: 60). For Bieber, during the manipulation and mobilization of nationalism, primordial myths are triggered by the leaders. He underlines "blurring the distinction between the past and the present" for the sake of re-constituting historical myths (2002: 98). This is also an example of how (primordial) national sentiments serve as tools in the hands of the manipulative leaders.

Massive part of collective memory literature explains how members of groups might prevent "blurring the distinction between the past and the present", or they construct alternative pasts to the official narrative (Ibid. 98). Zerubavel states that "a visit to the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City clearly 'connects' present-day Mexicans with their Olmec,

Mayan, Toltec, and Aztec ancestors" (1996: 293). In other words, just one individual who has not even experienced the past can be part of the collective memory and its re-construction process via its group affiliation without time confusion. According to him, collective memory "involves the integration of various different pasts into a single common past that all members of a particular community come to remember collectively" (1996: 294). Hence, the focus on "individual's memory" and its location in a group or community is essential for the formation of collective memory and group boundaries.

Linking modernism and nationalism, constructivist school refuses the primodialists' claims on ancient features of nationalism and ethnicity. Benedict Anderson, in his classic book, *Imagined Communities*, demonstrates socially constructed features of nationalism and, intrinsically, ethnicity by referring to them as products of modernism. He argues that nations and nationalisms are "cultural artefacts", and "the creation of these artefacts" are observed "towards the end of the 18th century" in the continent of "Europe" (1983: 3). Furthermore, "print capitalism", such as religious books, national newspapers or journals, influenced members of nations to acquire a sense of belonging to a certain group of people who can read these publications and who share similar feelings when reading them (Ibid.). Hence, according to him, the phenomenon of nationalism is the result of the structural changes of the 18th century. Furthermore, he claims that "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members" (1983: 6), but they might share similar ideas and perceptions. This is presented as further evidence by him to understand how the concept of nation is an imagined term, and how nationalism cannot be an umbrella term since "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members" (1983: 6). On the other hand, the emergence of a sense of belonging influenced ethnic groups due to their much more sharply shared common values and relatively small population in comparison with nations.

Ernest Gellner, a classic name in the nationalism literature, stands his ideas on nations and nationalism in line with Benedict Anderson. He states that, "nations are artifacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities" (1983: 7). He refers to "cultural and voluntarist merits" of nation formation (Ibid), and it is a clear demonstration of nations as a product of the people and human interaction process in a consensus. Also, he defines nationalism as an "organization of human groups into large, centrally educated, culturally homogenous units" (1983: 35). This definition indicates the importance of the educated people, or *high culture*, for the construction of national identities. For example, Lawrence (2013) and Tudor (2013) distinctly focus on post-colonial spaces and nationalism, in French colonial Africa and British colonial India consecutively, and in their distinct studies, primary focus is the rise of educated native elites during the quest of national independence movements. Therefore, national elites are significant in the detection of the emergence of ethno-national sentiments and its spread among natives. Gellner also adds that nationalism is "striving to make culture and polity congruent, to endow culture with its own political roof" (1983: 43). Hence, he shows how nationalism is not embedded in antiquity, and how it can be transformed for the sake of political goals and conciliations by several actors, such as national elites.

For the measurement of ethnicity and ethnic identities, Kanchan Chandra is the leading name in the domain of comparative ethnic studies (2009: 250). She generally focuses on ethnicity from the dimension of its institutional forms, mainly ethnic parties. Firstly, she argues that "individuals have multiple ethnic options with a choice of which one to activate in a given context" (2009: 250). Hence, for her, even ethnic identities are fragmented just for an individual, and people can automatically own distinct identities which are hierarchized in different orders. She argues that, the broader "population" determines the hierarchy of identities and when to activate them (Ibid). Thus, societal interactions are the main factors in the formation and attachment of identities. For the case of ethnic parties, she states that an ethnic

party “may champion the interests of more than one ethnic category, but only by identifying the common ethnic enemy to be excluded” (2005: 236). Hence, from the institutional point of view on ethnic identities, such as analysis of ethnic parties, she demonstrates that inclusion of different ethnic groups is possible due to malleable characteristics of ethnicity even in constituencies of ethnic parties.

One of the most influential British historians, Eric Hobsbawm, is also a member of the constructivists in terms of his interpretation of and arguments on nationalism. Hobsbawm states that “the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the invention of tradition” (1983: 14). He clearly associates invented traditions and rituals with the characteristic features of nations; hence he demonstrates how nations, nationalism, and even rituals of ethnic groups are re-constructed through the accumulation of pivotal historical cases, and these cases should not have to be primordial or pre-historical. For him, even “the mass production of public monuments” can serve as invented traditions that highly contribute to the constitutions of nations (or ethnic groups) and nationalism (1983: 270).

In light of the dissonance between the primordialists and the constructivists, I ask *why does the collective memory of certain ethnic groups not display nationalistic sentiments?* Primordialist arguments fail to explain why. Therefore, I will benefit from the constructivists’ argument to answer this question. Furthermore, the literature does not focus on collective memory, concerning specific periods, to measure flexibility of ethnic identities. Hence, this thesis aims to connect the nationalism literature and the existing research on collective memory to demonstrate the constructedness of identities. Turkmen argues that “embarrassing events” are generally “denied” or “re-written” in line with the main arguments of the majorities of the nations, hence nationalism and collective remembrance or forgetting are organically linked to each other during narrations of histories (2013: 675)

I assume three possible explanation to find a reliable answer to the question above: (A1) *Experience of supraethnic/national identity might undermine nationalistic feelings.* (A2) *Some ethnic groups might value their socio-economic statuses more than their ethno-national identity.* (A3) *"Ethnic" wars or polarizations might not destroy supranationalist memories of pre-war periods because ethnic wars or polarizations might be economically motivated.*

I use (online) semi-structured interviews with members of three distinct ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While I analyse their collective memory on the Bosnian genocide and the Yugoslav era qualitatively, I try to stick to the generations/cohorts who have witnessed both. I discuss case selection, sampling, and methodology in Chapter 4. In the next section, I focus on importance of individually narrated memories of distinct ethnic groups in constituting collective memory.

1.1.4. Ethnic group(s) and collective memory

To discuss collective memory of distinct ethnic groups and to understand the influence of collective memory on ethnic group formation, contrasting definitions of ethnic group are significant. The two main definitions derive from the classic dissonance in the nationalism literature: primordial ethnic identity (Horowitz 1985; Smith 1996) and constructed ethnic identity (Barth 1969; Brubaker 2002).

I explained above the main dissonance in the nationalism literature in detail. However, to comprehend the mutual relations between collective memory and ethnic groups from different perspectives it is necessary to re-indicate scholars' main definitions of ethnic groups. In this thesis, I stick to Barth's definition of ethnic groups that centralizes *boundaries* among different groups and boundary constitution process to understand ethnic divisions (1969). Further, in this section, I will explain how researchers focus on the linkage between collective memory and

ethnic groups. This section does not only contain several examples from Bosnia-Herzegovina and its ethnic groups, it also demonstrates different ethnic groups from different part of the world to draw a larger and deeper framework for correlating collective memory with ethnic groups (Confino 1997; Takei 1998; Roudometof 2002; Griffin 2004; Francis 1976; Kaufmann 2010, Bakalian 1993; Burke 1989; Winter and Sivan 1999; Farhat et al. 2014).

Horowitz states that ethnic groups are formed according to their ascriptive differences but "ascriptive differences that include colour, appearance, language, religion, or some other indicator of groups might be more myth than reality" (1985: 17-41). Further, one of the leading scholars of the perennialists, Anthony Smith, argues that "many nations are formed on the basis of pre-existing ethnies and the ethnic model of the nation remains extremely influential today" (1996: 447). Overall, for them, mythical past, historical roots, and ascriptive features constitute ethnic groups.

In contrast, as an anthropologist, Fredrik Barth claims that social and economic roots of ethnicity draw the boundaries between different ethnic groups (1969). In other words, "boundary defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Ibid. 15). He clearly identifies that "the boundaries to which we must give our attention are of course social boundaries, though they may have territorial counter parts" (Ibid. 15). His claims on ethnic groups or boundaries are central in this thesis because the question of how certain ethnic groups might not demonstrate nationalist sentiments can be discussed by analysing their ethnic identities and affiliations as socially canalized. Furthermore, Marxist and Neo-Marxist interpretations of ethnic identities demonstrate that economic structure and classes are significant for tracing ethnic borders (Cox 1945; Bonacich 1972) because they are more likely to coincide with each other. Therefore, their main argument also consolidates Barth's formulation of ethnic groupism.

Later, Rogers Brubaker has developed Barth's ideas and claims on ethnic boundaries. Brubaker states that ethnic groups are "basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis" (2002: 164). Therefore, social construction process of groupism is an inevitable part of ethnic boundary making. Remembrance of the past with de-ethnic and socio-economic references is also a function of collective memory by distinct ethnic groups. However, the literature focuses less on the later function.

In this thesis, I aim to focus on remembrance of the past with de-ethnic and socio-economic references to draw more attention to the social construction process of ethnic identities with collective memory. I analyse the existing qualitative and quantitative works on the different functions of collective memory and the mutual relations between collective memory and ethnic groups. Mainly, there is empirical evidence about the use of primordial ethnic memories and mythical references for collective memory construction by eliminating historical consistencies and meaningful transitions from one period to another for depicting a primordial framework, instead of constructed identities (Confino 1997; Takei 1998). Those mythical references are also combined with historical ethnic differences to analyse how collective memory mobilizes (primordial) ethnic groups. Further, regional differentiations (Roudometof 2002; Griffin 2004) and the capacity of diasporas are discussed to re-vitalize collective memory of ethnic groups according to their ethnic distinctions (Francis 1976; Kaufmann 2010; Bakalian 1993).

There are several works on the linkage between collective memory and (primordial) ethnic identities that aim to show how mythical and historical cases are repeated to differentiate ethnic groups via collective memory. According to Confino, mythical legendary past of France turns into part of French identity, and the French people becomes unable to face their dark past, such as the Vichy Regime and the extermination of the Jews during the Second World War in France

(1997: 1390-1395). For Confino, “unfinished mourning” paves the way for characterization of French identity and collective memory (Ibid. 1394). Further, Takei analyses the Cambodian case, and he argues that several groups can give up speaking the language of their ancestors and can change their religions, but “if they retain the distinctive collective memory that sets them apart, they remain members of the group” (1998: 60). Then, he gives the example of Khmer, “Pol Pot attempted to destroy much of Cambodia's culture, yet he remained Khmer (Cambodian) because he retained a certain collective memory that an ethnic Vietnamese would not share” (Ibid. 60). Thus, certain groups might try to conserve historical accumulation of ethnic experiences in their collective memory, and ethnic experiences foster collective memory for distinct group boundary-making, so that there is mutual relation between the two in terms of their (re)construction process.

Furthermore, regional differentiations and diaspora groups consolidate the primordial arguments in the literature to connect collective memory with the sense of belonging to ethnic groups. For Barth, boundaries define ethnic groups, not cultural ties, so that regional differentiation is key for tracing the formations of the distinct groups. However, primordialists explain the process of regional differentiations as historical legacies and one of the mythical parts of ethnic identities. Hence, for them, regional differentiations in the modern period cannot cause a distinction among the members of the same ethnic group. For example, Roudometof argues that Greece did not recognize the Macedonian identity after the establishment of independent Macedonia because Greek state elites do not accept a distinct Macedonian ethnic identity belonging to people who live in the same geographical region with them (2002: 124). For them, there could be a distinct Macedonian identity, but it had existed in the ancient times, and if they have been co-existing for a certain period of time in the modern epoch, Macedonians must have been assimilated by Greeks in the Greek lands, hence Greece does not prefer to call and stratify Macedonians directly (Ibid.). For Griffin, those regional differentiations are

detectable in collective memory of ethnic groups. In other words, one ethnic group can be fragmented in terms of its daily practices and culture due to the regional differentiations (2004). Griffin analyses collective memory of Americans between the South and the North, and he argues:

> The past seems especially salient, as both memory and as historical significance, to people whose identities and social awareness were crystallized during and because of sweeping historical events. *Where* (italic in the original) events happen also influences memory, perhaps as much as *when* (italic in the original) they occur in a person's life, because place conditions the personal relevance of events, such as the Civil Rights movement, that are intensely spatialized (Ibid. 555).

Hence, responses or vulnerabilities of members of one ethnic group can differ within the group as a result of regional differentiations via their collective memory.

Further, Francis categorizes immigrants and diasporas as secondary ethnic groups because homeland also becomes part of their mythical memories, and they may have less cultural cohesion due to their immigration either forcefully or voluntarily (1976: 6). Kaufmann calls diaspora groups' collective memory and certain demands to continue their ethnic rituals and habits by referring to past as "diaspora consciousness" (2010: 14). This consciousness directly reminds one of historical cases, victories, and traumas. According to Bakalian's research, 95 % of Armenian-Americans have talked about atrocities during the expulsion of the Armenians as if they remember and experienced 1915 (1993: 354). This is a clear indication of the politization of an ethnic group in line with its collective memory.

According to Esman, "ethnicity cannot be politicized unless an underlying core of memories, experience, or meaning moves people to collective action" (1994: 14), and the memory of the genocide among the members of the Armenian diaspora is excessively politicized and consolidates the main arguments of primordialists by constituting direct ethnic references in their collective memory. Collective memory is shaped continuously by historical mourning, and ethnic references of historical mourning come to the surface because of collective memory.

However, it is necessary to indicate that historical attachments and mythical references shape collective memory according to political concerns of daily or modern politics as the cases mentioned above. Hence, artificial nature of collective memory with historical patterns is also traceable. Furthermore, collective memory mobilizes ethnic groups who prefer to define their borders with primordial myths, hence there is an instrumental usage of collective memory with primordial arguments by some groups.

If collective memory of certain ethnic groups does not demonstrate nationalistic sentiments, this will be an unexpected result in light of the former research on the linkage between collective memory and primordially-constituted ethnic groups. Further, if ethnic groups who have experienced or witnessed traumas remember the past with de-ethnic motives, a puzzle clearly emerges in the literature. Therefore, onset atmospheres of ethnic conflicts/traumas/polarization should be researched in-depth. In this thesis, this in-depth research process indicates witness generations of distinct ethnic groups. Also, few former studies constitute certain arguments on the function of collective memory that does not cause ethnic mobilization and polarization (Burke 1989; Winter and Sivan 1999; Farhat et al. 2014).

Burke focuses on collective forgetting, instead of collective remembrance (1989). According to him, "at the collective level, the parameters to the phenomenon of forgetting potentially reveal much about the processes of remembering" (Ibid. 232-233), hence collective forgetting can function to hierarchize our distinct identities in the collective memory by demonstrating what is worth remembering and what not, and can prevent ethnic polarizations (Ibid.). Further, Winter and Sivan state that collective memory is a generic name for peoples' social remembering, and those people are, primarily, members of certain social groups (1999). For example, Farhat, Rosoux, and Poirier argue that possible tensions among distinct groups of Belgium derive from the embedded inequalities and past injustices, and collective memory

helps people remember the inequalities and injustices from one generation to another, not only focusing on ethnic lines (2014: 395-396). Hinojosa and Park state that collective remembrance of inequalities among different social groups might be also about religion-centric exclusions and isolations within diverse societies (2004). Therefore, it is also necessary to rethink how ethnicity and religion differ.

1.1.5. Ethnicity vs. religion

Ethnicity is generally defined as an umbrella term in both primordialist and constructivist schools because of its inclusive usage vis-à-vis distinct groups (Horowitz 1985; Chandra 2005). Rabushka and Sheple argue that cultural plurality is one of the main threats within societies because cultural distinctions make borders of ethnic groups visible (1972). Although this argument primordially defines ethnic groups, it also signifies that ethnic groups are distinct cultural units. According to Geertz, "religion" plays the main role during the formations of cultural systems and ethnic identities (1993). Toft also (2007) states that a community of followers is an intrinsic element of religions; therefore, a sense of belonging to religion evolves in a similar manner to that of an ethnic group. Further, Hanf argues that religion is a working tool that reinforces ethnic identities because of their mutual relation and similar sense of belongingness (1994). Although many scholars find that religion has a crucial role during ethnic identity formation (Grosby 1991; Mitchell 2006), Turkmen discusses that ethnically divided but religiously united groups might also be polarized (2021).

Moreover, Turkmen argues that "since the early 2000s there has been a rapid increase in the number of works focusing on religion and civil wars" (2019), and the nature of those civil wars tells us that they are intra-state conflicts between distinct ethnic groups. Therefore, while analysing ethnic polarizations and conflicts, religion may affect polarizations because of its sharpening effect on ethnicity. However, as I mentioned above, religion and ethnicity are

different concepts. Still, ethnicity is commonly used by scholars as an overarching title while referring to cultural and religious differences. Although it is hard to define religion, Horton basically defines it as "belief in spirits" (1960: 204); therefore, during the primordial construction of ethnicities, religion helps their forms by re-narrating myths and attachments to groups. This does not mean that followers of a religion must share the same mythical ethnic past since under the banner of a religion there might be ethnically heterogeneous believers (Turkmen 2021).

During the forced population exchange between Turkey and Greece, ethnically-Turkish Orthodox Christians were deported to Greece because of the central role of religion as an identity maker in the early Republican period of Turkey (Lewis 1968: 255). On the other hand, Albanian nationalism includes all ethnic Albanians by not referring to religious differentiations (Endersen 2015). Therefore, religion might be either an important component of ethnicity or an irrelevant concept.

In the case of Bosnia, Abazovic states that "ethnicized religion" caused certain polarization during the dissolution wars of Yugoslavia (2015: 1). This is reminiscent of one category in Turkmen's four-fold typology, ethno-religious identity, while tracing the Kurdish and Turkish conflict (2021). Either ethnicized religion or ethno-religious identity signifies the leading role of ethnicity over religion. In other words, followers of a religion are associated with a certain ethnic group, or an ethnic group insists on its superior role among co-religionists. Ethnicity and religion might go hand in hand, and they might be complementary, but they are not necessarily the same concepts. Muslim Greeks, Christian Kosovars, Bosnian Jews, and Protestant Turks are direct examples of their distinctions.

In the next chapter, I will mention Bosnians and their history in detail, and when/how Bosnians have started to draw borders between their ethnic others and their ethnic self. Further, I will also look at religious differentiations.

Chapter 2 – Historical background and literature review

The map of socialist Yugoslavia[4]

The map of Bosnia-Herzegovina (after the war and Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995)[5]

Bosnia demonstrates both *longue durée* peaceful co-existence and escalation of tensions in line with ethnic boundaries respectively in the modern periods. Therefore, it is still seen as a living case and a radical form of ethnic hatred due to its quick construction and activation process. That's why I focus on the Bosnian case. In addition I believe that the constructivist arguments

[4] Retrieved from Xhambazi's unpublished master's thesis.
[5] Retrieved from Toal and Maksic's article.

open a window of opportunity to detect how ethnicity is less significant than is usually assumed to be. Hence, Bosnians' nostalgia of the past and interpretation of their dissolution traumas are more likely to demonstrate the influence of the onset atmosphere of the war among its distinct groups. In this chapter, I will present a brief historical background of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

2.1. From the medieval period to the shadows of the empires: a political history of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosnia has an important position in both medieval (Lavrin 1929; Jelavich 1983; Alic and Gusheh 1999) and contemporary (Armour 2009, Hoare 2013, Wolff 2020) epochs. Its position can be explained by referring to its religious traditions, from Bogomilism to Islam, its geographic position in the Balkans, and nested ethnic groups that had lived without conflictual tensions or visible polarizations for centuries. In this section, I aim to show why Bosnia and its ethnic groups are central to this thesis. To do so, I benefit from different historical studies from different disciplines to legitimize the case selection. Mainly, I refer to Barbara Jelavich's book, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, and Marko Atilla Hoare's book, *The Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War: A History*, to highlight pivotal historical cases in Bosnia from the medieval times until 1945. Further, I also focus on post-1945 and post-1995 eras to understand ontological ruptures and continuations in the case of Bosnia and its ethnic groups (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden 1992; Denitch 1996; Torsti 2004; Kalyvas 2008; Onsoy 2011; Boskovic 2013; Stroschein 2014).

Jelavich focuses on Slavic settlement in the Balkan peninsula in the middle ages and she notices that "the Slavic invasions of the sixth through the eighth centuries brought these people into the peninsula as permanent settlers" (1983: 1). It is necessary to underline that today's "South Slavs" migrated to the region without distinct ethnic differentiations since there was no clear-cut ethnic labelling in that period (Ibid.). Then, she refers to the first and primary dissonance among the Slavs in the region: the Great Schism of 1054 (Ibid.). Today's Orthodox

Serbs or Montenegrins and Catholic Croats or Slovenes owned their sectarian identities due to the theological distinction between Eastern Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church in 1054. This was assumed as a primordial root and reason to interpret several conflicts in the 20th century. Therefore, the first differentiation had a religious colour through the debates among the clergymen.

Locating Bosnia's religious or sectarian identity is relatively harder in comparison to Serbia, Slovenia, or Croatia because:

> In the second half of the 12th century Bosnia came, for a short while, under the rule of the Byzantine emperor, Manuel I Comnenus, who apparently intended to use that part of the Balkans as a stepping-stone for further conquests in the West. It was at that period that Bosnia came into direct contact with Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Bogomils (Lavrin 1929: 272).

As a result, a massive part of Bosnians were converted to Bogomilism which dogmatically rejects the main doctrines of the Orthodox Church, and that signifies a possible tension or a chain of tensions between the Orthodox and Bogomils (Ibid.). According to the centre of Orthodox Christianity, Constantinople, "Bogomilism is first reported as an active danger to the religious and political order in Constantinople itself" (Gress-Wright 1977: 164). Furthermore, the clergymen of the 12th century also conceptualized Bogomils as one of the main reason of the sharpened distinction between Catholicism and Orthodoxy because of Bogomils' spread in today's Europe and its role on constituting a room between Catholicism and Orthodoxy (Ibid. 169) However, the reign of Bogomilism was also interrupted by another empire and its direct influence in the Balkans since the 14th century: Ottoman Empire and its conquests (Jelavich 1983: 1).

Although the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 was a major affair in the Balkans due to the introduction of the hegemony of Ottomans to the region, after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Mehmed II aimed to advance in the entire Balkans. Therefore, the conquest of Bosnia in 1464 was just one of the goals of Mehmed II, and the conquests caused a structural change in the region. Ottomans brought their *millet* system -distinct judgement procedures according to the peoples' confessional community- to the region, but this system was more than

establishing and conserving a community via their religious boundaries (Jelavich 1983: 2). In the *millet* system, all taxes were also collected according to peoples' religious affiliations. In other words, Muslims paid less than Christians or members of other religious communities, and it was a tactic of Ottomans to encourage and motivate conversion to Islam. In such an environment, "Bosnia, Albania, and Crete converted to Islam" (Ibid. 2), and many Bosnians again followed and internalized a different religious pattern in the region. This could be read as marginalization through the lenses of Christians in the Balkans when they re-formulate their histories in the modern period. Although Bosnians converted to Islam, it does not mean that all Bosnians became a part of the Muslim community; for example, the Franciscans, founding fathers of Catholic Christianity in Bosnia, conserved their religion according to *ahidname*, a legal documentation of certain privileges given by the Ottomans to certain groups or communities, between Andeo Zvivdovic, a Catholic friar, and Mehmed II in 1464 (Antal 2013: 211-12).

Sells argues that Serbian political elites referred to this historical religious differentiation between Muslim Bosnians and Christ-Slavs in the nexus of ethnicity during the escalation of the tensions in the 20th century (1996). Sells underlines that Muslim Turks, today's Muslim Bosnians or Bosniaks, killed Prince Lazar in the Battle of Kosovo; hence "Turkness" or "Bosniakness" becomes a "Christ-killer" ethnic affiliation, and in light of that, the Serbian Orthodox church commended the Bosnian Serbs to "follow the hard road of Christ" in the dissolution wars (1996: 82). Hence, primordially constituted religious animosity owned ethnic characteristics in the modern times.

However, as I mention above, Ottomans preferred to conserve cultural fragments of Bosnia for different groups. For example, "the Catholic merchants from Dubrovnik (Raguza) built a church within their district of Latinluk (Bosnia)" and "the Sephardic Jews, following expulsion from Spain, established a community in Sarajevo and built their first synagogue in 1580 at the

western end of the precinct" (Alic and Gusheh 1999: 8). Hence, civic co-habitation continued for centuries in Bosnia under the reign of Ottomans (Zilic 1998: 15; Macdonald 2002: 230-231) until the rise of corruption in the 19th century.

Corrupt local administrative units of Ottoman Empire influenced the relations negatively (Ibid. 3) and initiated local rebellions in the entire region against Ottomans in the beginning of the 19th century. Firstly, those rebellions did not aim at any secession from Ottoman Empire, but they were one of the main reasons that led to the construction of imagined communities, *à la* Anderson, along with national lines in the 19th century (Greenawalt 2001: 57-59). The 19th century was significant because many Balkan states decided to re-codify their national histories for the sake of their independent state formation. Hence, imperial hegemony of Ottomans faced a counter-hegemony that came from the below. This is a clear example of how socio-economic concerns (rebellions) that were directly related to unfair tax collection and corrupt administrations of local governors turned into national movements in the zeitgeist of globalization of nationalist ideas (Hobsbawm 1975: 9). Unlike in Serbia and Croatia, in the case of Bosnia, regional secessionist rebellions (1875) were not supported by the majority of ordinary people they were generally Muslims, and had to pay less tax than Serbia and Croatia; rather, its national destiny was sealed by empires.

The last quarter of the 19th century changed the balance of power in the region in favour of tsarist Russian Empire. Pan-Slavism turned into an oral manifesto of tsarist Russia to encourage national movements and the emergency of new independent Slav states to damage Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity. Pan-Slavism was more likely to be unreliable for Slav people and their futures due to tsarist Russia's self-seeker foreign policy understanding, but as a motto, it was fairly popular and reliable among Slavs (Isci 2017: 546-547).

Also, Bosnia's geographic position was important for Austro-Hungarian Empire to protect one of its regions, Dalmatia, against any possible external attack. However, a binary comes to

the surface in the foreign policy of Austro-Hungary (Armour 2009: 629). After the *Ausgleich* of 1867, the establishment of the dual monarchy with the two leading nations (Hungary and Austria, not just unique hegemony of Austria anymore), a fragmented foreign policy turned into a problem for the empire: Hungarians vs. the emperor, Francis Joseph I of Austria. In other words, the new partner of the empire with the *Ausgleich* of 1867, Hungarians, were not willing to obey the emperor and his council's foreign policy. The rise of national movements in the 19th century also affected the empire and due to the massive efforts of Lajos Kossuth, the leading figure of Hungarians in the 1848 Revolution, Hungarians became a legitimate partner of the empire with *Ausgleich* (*Kiegyezés* in Hungarian). Then, the Bosnian question for the territorial integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire caused a dissonance between Hungarian state elites and Francis Joseph and his supporters.

Hungarians thought that the annexation of Bosnia was more likely to cause another national minority movement against the empire, and it could damage their own position. On the other hand, Dalmatia's conservation was significant for the future of the empire. Hence, according to the balance of power, Austro-Hungary needed Serbs as allies because any possible Serbian attack to get Bosnia could change all balances, and Serbs were absolute allies of tsarist Russia due to the Christ-Slavic ties. Austro-Hungary had to act with Serbs, and finally "Austria-Hungary engaged to preserve a benevolent neutrality vis-à-vis Serbia" (Ibid. 678).

While Ottomans were losing their lands in Europe, Austro-Hungary wanted to change the entire picture according to its interests and to solve the Bosnian question. The war between the Ottoman Empire and tsarist Russia in 1878 ended with absolute victory of Russians and opened a window of opportunity for Austro-Hungary, which rejected the Treaty of San Stefano mainly between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire with Britain to prevent consolidation of Russians in the region (Jelavich 1983: 7). Then, a new agreement, as a result of the Congress of Berlin in 1878, was signed, and "the right to administer and occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina"

(Ibid. 7-8) was given to Austro-Hungary, and after 30 years of 1848 Revolution it annexed Bosnia. All steps were taken by Austro-Hungary to protect its territorial integrity by avoiding the animosity of Russians. However, the annexation of Bosnia turned out to be destructive for the European politics and the ethnographic borders in the Balkans.

In the beginning of the 20th century, a polarized Europe was clearly traceable. As an organic legacy of nationalist movements in the 19th century, the issue of nationalism and a quest for independence of ethnic groups initiated the First World War in 1914, and it was about Austro-Hungary's colonization of Bosnia. Babuna explains that Bosnians were listed as a distinct national group first time in a 1906 report by Austria-Hungary (2000: 15). In other words, in Bosnia, emergence of ethnic belonging started to be visible during under the influence of Austro-Hungary. Hence, national awakening of Bosnians would influence both domestic and international politics. On 28 June 1914, Gavrilo Princip, a militia-member of *Mlada* (Young) Bosnia, killed Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo to protest colonial and imperial domination of the empire on Bosnia (Subotic 2017), marking the beginning of the WWI. Princip was a Bosnian Serb, hence Pandora's box opens. During the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the European lands, annexation of those lands by other empires, and the emergence of new small nations, ethnic lines were not strictly aimed to be conserved (Wolff 2020). Hence, there were no clear-cut ethnic borders among different small nations.

2.2. A quest for nationhood

It is necessary to understand how small nations constituted their (nation) states after the end of the First World War in 1918. As mentioned-above, Woodrow Wilson and his 14 Points to draw the ethnographic boundaries in Eastern Europe were significant to analyse the ethnically mixed Bosnia's future (Ibid.). After the war, all three empires were dissolved and there was a power vacuum in Eastern Europe. Wilson aimed at the establishment of ethnically homogenous nation states by referring to the 14 points and, most importantly, the right to self-determination

of the peoples (Ibid.). For the case of Bosnia, there was an attempt to create a new state by Bosnians, and it is necessary to remind that all ethnic groups of Bosnia were nested historically. Further, Wilson supported the idea of a Yugoslav Kingdom (1918-1939), mainly dominated by Serbs and Croats, for the future of Bosnians (Ibid. 120-121). However, this idea of a Kingdom did not have a unitary and equalitarian form among all ethnic groups, and it replicated the international order of the 19th century, so it was doomed to fail in Europe dominated by nation states.

Wilson's ignorance on ethnic maps was not unique for Bosnia while aiming to create small and ethnically homogenous states. For example, Hungarian minority problem in Romania, as a newly emerged nation state in post-1918 atmosphere, turned into a chronic case between Hungary and Romania. However, the case of Bosnia is different than his other failures because of the preservation of a multi-ethnic kingdom in the region. From 1918 to 1939, Bosnians (Bosniaks) had felt themselves as subalterns of the kingdom, and they saw the Second World War (1939-1945) as an opportunity for constituting their own nation-state (Hoare 2013: 3). But, many Croats, known as Ustashe, initiated an alliance with fascist powers, Germany and Italy, for their hegemony in the region although Bosniaks aimed for independence, too.

> The launch of the 'Muslim Movement for the Autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina' was sparked by Dzafer Kulenovic, leader of the main Muslim party, the 'Yugoslav Muslim Organization, who demanded at a press conference on 6 November 1939 that an autonomous Bosnian unit be established within Yugoslavia (Ibid. 8).

Hoare argues that although Bosniaks were with Ustashe in the beginning of the war for their (possible) independence, the massacres of Ustashe against Serbs, Jews, and Roma changed the minds of Bosniaks soon (Ibid. 9). As such, one can claim that Bosnian society did not demonstrate ethnic animosity in their quest for independence.

Therefore, Bosnian independence was thought as an affair of just Bosniaks. However, Communists or Partisans who fought against Ustashe, Germans, and Italians, also supported the idea of independent Bosnia, and virulent nationalism and its destructive effects were

eradicated from the region because victory belonged to the Communists-the Partisans-by defeating all fascist units at the end of the Second World War (Ibid. 3).

2.3. Tito's Partisans: the emergence of socialist Yugoslavia

Who were the Partisans? They consisted of distinct ethnic groups, such as Serbs, Slovenes, Croats and Bosniaks. They did not just fight against the fascists, they also "succeeded in conquering Yugoslavia without either destroying its cities and towns or driving out its civilian population (except in the cases of Yugoslavia's ethnic German population and part of its ethnic Italian population, which were expelled through deliberate policies)" (Ibid. 3). After victory, they obtained the right to establish a new state: socialist Yugoslavia. Further, the leader of this new state would be the leading figure of the Partisans, Josip Broz Tito. At the Second Session of the Antifascist Council for the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia in 1943 they proclaimed independent socialist Yugoslavia, consisting of six republics-Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro-and two autonomous regions-Vojvodina and Kosovo-.

The era of the socialists was known as unity of disunity, and it demonstrates how each unit was ruled distinctly under a federation. It was in line with the motto of the state, *brotherhood and unity*. Expectedly, a newly emerged independent Bosnian republic was seen as an achieved goal for all Bosnians (Ibid. 2) (Characteristics of the socialist period will be discussed in the next section). The turning point for the Bosnians was the official recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a distinct "nation" in the 1971 census (Golubovic 2019: 6).

Socialist Yugoslavia lived more than Tito, but after his death in 1980, a domino effect shook all Yugoslavia. Among the nested ethnic groups of the entire Balkans, ethnic hatred was clearly traceable during the Second World War years, but Tito tried to clean the remnants of this conflictual period under the umbrella of a socialist state. For example, Velikonja underlines that the socialist rule firstly aimed at eradicating the position of clergymen and religious

institutions due to their collaboration with the fascist units during the WWII (2003: 186). Tito's death was not the immediate reason that caused the dissolution of Yugoslavia via conflicts, as the conflicts spread all around Yugoslavia almost 11 years after Tito's death. Although there was a historical binary on conceptualization of the leadership of Tito, he was mainly accepted as a hero for the Yugoslav folks, especially among Bosnians (Borneman 2005: 158). Although economic problems had come to surface during the 1970s and the last years of Tito's rule, after Tito's death, socio-economic problems became harsher day by day, and they triggered the dissolution wars by polarizing different economic models and their supporters (Kalyvas 2008). Expectedly, Yugoslavians' loyalty to the state weakened. Slobodan Milosevic, a Serbian nationalist manipulative leader, used this power vacuum to consolidate Serbia's position by playing the ethnic card in the region, triggering ethnic animosity.

2.4. Nationalism and the end of Yugoslavia

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Serbian state elites supported their arguments by referring to national historical myths, such as the Battle of Kosovo, and they fuelled hatred by framing the Serbs as the losers of the Balkans (Denitch 1996: 60-62). Serbs used their socio-economically weaker position as an excuse to establish greater Serbia by ethnically cleaning all others in the Yugoslavian regions where Serbs have been living. Concrete aggression of Serbia, especially via the discourse of the state elites, pushed economically developed parts, Slovenia and Croatia, to secede from socialist Yugoslavia in 1991 (Boskovic 2013: 56). As such, these cases fit Horowitz's "advanced region" secessionism (if ethnic differences and economic hierarchy exist in the same region, economically advanced one prefers to secede to protect its own economy) (1981: 194). Bakic-Hayden and Hayden's analysis supports Horowitz's argument because, according to them, these two states, Slovenia and Croatia, have historically nested orientalism to isolate themselves from the "backward" Balkans (1992: 1-3).

The dissolution wars did not ruin Slovenia, but Croatia suffered from Serbian aggression due to its Serbian population. However, iconic massacres happened in the lands of Bosnia. Although all ethnic groups were nested there, Serbs believed Bosnian lands to be one of their homelands due to Bosnia's geographic position, in the centre of the Balkans, and its Serbian population (Figure 1). Furthermore, Serbian state elites selected the Bosnian Muslim population (generally called as Bosniaks) as the main national enemy in line with primordial myths, which escalated the tension between the sides, especially with the declaration of the independence of Bosnia in 1 March 1992. Hence, the clashes between Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs can be seen as ruptures in Bosnian history, ending the co-existence of distinct ethnic groups without traceable conflicts.

The war years (1991-1995) are generally known for several disasters that Bosnians faced. "It generated massacres and ethnic cleansing, culminating in Srebrenica in 1995, the mass destruction of cities such as Vukovar (a Croatian city), Mostar, and Sarajevo, the latter of which was under siege for almost four years" (Boskovic 2013: 54). Serbian state elites' ethnic card worked successfully in polarizing the society under the economically polarized environment, but the entire process, from the beginning of the wars in 1991/2 to the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, proceeded quickly because ethnic identities were re-constructed to demonstrate them as the main reason for peoples' socio-economic problems. "There were over 200,000 deaths and approximately 3 million refugees and war-affected people in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone" (Ibid. 54). A Bosniak schoolteacher explains the general framework:

> We never, until the war, thought of ourselves as Muslims. We were Yugoslavs. But when we began to be murdered, because we are Muslims, things changed. The definition of who we are today has been determined by our killers (Hedge 1995: 4).

Although the Bosniaks had awareness about the initiation of the war, their former identities, and the sharpening effect of religion on their ethnic polarizations, the wars influenced reconstruction of their ethnic identity and perception on Serbs. Torsti argues that "a banal presence of history can have a strong impact on the identity and historical consciousness of Bosnians" (2004: 142).

Figure 1. 1991 Population census of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Accessed from Ethnic composition of Bosnia-Herzegovina population, by municipalities and settlements, 1991 Census. (*Zavod za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine* - Bilten no. 234, Sarajevo 1991)

Ethnicity	Percent
Bosnian Muslims	43.47%
Serbs	31.21%
Croats	17.38%
Roma	0.20%
Jews	0.01%
Others	7,46%

The Dayton Peace Agreement was not able to establish a new multi-cultural state in Bosnia. Currently, there are three ethnic groups, Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats according to the Constitution, and Jews, Roma or others (*ostali* in BSC) are not accepted as distinct ethnic groups. While they constituted the Dayton, external authorities, such as the EU, the UN, and the USA, argued that this Lijpartian consociational structure would work effectively in Bosnia. However, Stroschein states that "this marginalization of others is a product of both the consociational structures and the proportional representation electoral system" along with clear-cut ethnic boundaries (2014: 111). Although ethnicity is still a problematic issue among the distinct ethnic groups and they hope to solve their socio-economic

problems by integrating themselves to the west, according to Onsoy, “poverty and unemployment rates are higher than ever” and membership process to the EU and NATO turns into an endless and exhaustive process for the Bosnians (2011: 143).

Overall, Bosnia and its nested ethnic groups co-habited for centuries without any visible conflict and the empires decided on the future of Bosnians. Zilic underlines that the Ottoman Empire gave asylum in lands of Bosnia to the Jews who were expelled from Spain, and they started to live together with different ethnic groups of Bosnia (1998: 15). Bieber also states that “armed conflicts did not occur before the twentieth century” among different ethnic groups in Bosnia (2000: 271). Furthermore, Palmberger argues that there is a paradox in the Yugoslavian region because it is really hard to trace how “the sudden eruption of violence” is possible just after “decades of peaceful co-existence under Tito” (2005: 525). In other words, the nationalism movements in the 19th century, its kingdom period, and the Ustashe experience failed to polarize permanently the Bosnian society in ethnic lines until the dissolution wars.

On the other hand, there are several studies that focus on the posture of people in the Balkans, also in relation to Bosnian history, from an orientalist perspective. These studies are important to see the primordially narrated reasons of nationalism in the context of the Balkans and Bosnia; therefore, I will also show several examples of these studies. Further, I will try to demonstrate why relying on these studies to understand ethnic relations would be problematic.

2.5. Orientalist perspectives

Although I tried to display ethnic (or ethno-religious) relations and in the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the previous sections, the entire history of the Balkans (especially Eastern Europe) is also discussed through orientalist perspectives (Todorova 1994; Bakic-Hayden 1995; Krivokapic 2014). In other words, there is an observable hierarchization in the narration of the history of the Balkans. This hierarchy-based history writing depends on the visibility of

two opposite sides and highlights certain dichotomies: developed-underdeveloped, civilized-uncivilized, advanced-backward, and rural/urban nations.

Edward Said's book *Orientalism* discusses hierarchy-based distinctions among different nations (or ethnic groups), especially in the nexus of colony and colonizer (1979). Imperial legacies and differentiation between levels of development are very significant in detecting orientally-narrated histories of "the others". In the case of the Balkans or the region of former Yugoslavia, there is a certain degree of hierarchization vis-à-vis Western Europe. Hence, orientalist perspectives are not unique to colonial studies. There are ongoing orientalizations within different parts of the world (Bakic-Hayden 1995).

It is also necessary to indicate that cultural re-production cycles are important during studying orientalist perspectives because a hierarchy is also imagined among different cultures between culture of the orient and culture of the occident (Said 1979). For example, describing a nation or an ethnic group with an intrinsic tendency to fight as its cultural characteristic is also a hierarchization: primordial backwardness (Wolff 1994). Therefore, primordial nationalism and primordial features are seen legitimized through orientalist studies (Todorova 1994; Wolff 1994). In other words, orientalist perspectives have a tendency to refuse constructivist features of nationalism among different tribes or ethnic groups.

Orientalist history of the Balkans or Eastern Europe emphasizes differences between the Balkans, Western, and Central Europe. According to Wolff, ideological distinction between Western and Eastern Europe did not precede the orientalist differentiation between the two parts of Europe (Wolff 1994: 3). Rather, Wolff states, "an intellectual history invented the idea of Eastern Europe" "as a work of cultural creation" (1994: 3-4). Therefore, hierarchization between Western and Eastern Europe became palpable through the narratives of Western Europeans and their capacity of imagination of the East (Ibid.).

Furthermore, Wolff argues that Western Europeans invented "Eastern Europe" to create their "shadowed land of backwardness" (Ibid.). Wolff's classic book *Inventing Eastern Europe* clearly discusses the "orientalist" posture of Eastern Europe, especially the Balkans, as I demonstrated above. Hence, it would not be wrong associating the Balkans with bloody wars, exclusionary nationalism, and chaotic everyday practices through an orientalist history interpretation. If one embraces orientalist perspectives in order to understand the history of Bosnia, especially the dissolution wars, one would run into a series of analyses that put forward primordially narrated reasons for the wars. However, orientalist studies, in the case of Eastern Europe, inflicts realities of the region, such as historical habitude of co-existence.

Orientalization of the Balkan lands is not just a process vis-à-vis the Westerners. Central Europe also re-produces orientalist narratives on Eastern Europe to imagine its backward other (Neumann 1993). In other words, there is a multi-layered orientalization of Eastern Europe. Orientalism scholars see this as a pyramid within the European societies, and Eastern Europeans are at the bottom of this "civilization" pyramid (Neumann 1993; Todorova 1994; Wolff 1994). At this point, it is also necessary to define what civilianization is and how it should be defined. Wolff refers to the definition of Mirabeau in the context of orientalism studies and defines civilization as "the increase of wealth and the refinement of manners" (1994: 12); hence, orientalist definition of the Balkans emphasizes the "barbaric and uncivilized" features of the locals, and how they prefer to solve their problems through conflicts in accordance with primordial historical references (Ibid.).

Todorova specifically conceptualizes "Balkanism" in the context of orientalism studies, and she argues that "the Balkans became, in time, the object of a number of externalized political, ideological and cultural frustrations and have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the 'European' and 'the West' has been constructed" (1994: 455). Therefore, the Balkans are also imagined within Eastern Europe

as another segment or another layer of orientalization. For Todorova, orientalist narration of the history of the Balkans is the most visible in the comparison of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the dissolution wars through international committee by the "Western" experts (1994: 457) since Western experts analyse the Balkans as a pot of endless conflicts in accordance with its "nature" (Ibid.). This again displays how the Balkans are hierarchized through orientalist studies, and conflicts in the region are read by referring to primordial features of ethnic groups or nations.

Moreover, Todorova's historical series of analysis demonstrate that the dichotomy of "urban/rural" among the people of Europe also affected orientalization of the Balkans vis-à-vis the Westerners (1994: 470). Therefore, historical and cultural references are attached to the characteristics of the Balkan people, and this makes the border between the West and the East more visible and produces a more visible distinction between "the civilized world" and "the pot of endless conflicts". Direct references in the sources of the Westerners on Ottoman Empire and its legacy of backwardness (The Balkans: Ottoman Empire-in-Europe) also helped the imagination of an external other within Europe (Ibid.).

Bakic-Hayden applies her classic concept "nesting orientalisms" to nations of former Yugoslavia (1995). Bakic-Hayden refers to a Bosnian Croat official's argument during the dissolution wars, "it is necessary to distinguish the essentially different mental make-up and value system of the writer of the Islamic declaration [an allusion to Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic] and his followers from those of European-oriented Christians, even if the latter are on the margins of civilization" [an allusion to Orthodox Serbs] (1995: 929). Therefore, it is observable that the orientalization pyramid is produced by putting Muslim Bosniaks at the bottom of it, by forgetting collective peaceful co-existence periods, and by dismissing regional realities. Further, religion becomes an important factor in creating the dichotomy of the orient

and the occident, and this makes it easier to re-produce orientalist arguments in the polyethnic-religious societies.

Bakic-Hayden also draws attention to the "ancient hatred" "of the south Slavic peoples, so often referred to in the western media" (Ibid.), and this displays how multi-layered orientalism embraces primordially nationalist discourse. Bakic-Hayden also highlights the main discourse of Slovenia and Croatia in accordance with the western media during discussions on the dissolution wars (1995: 924), and she argues that "nesting orientalisms" within certain regions also primordially hierarchize different nations and ethnic groups to demarcate their "occidental" borders against their inferior neighbours who have similar traditions, everyday practices, and even the same language. Therefore, orientalist perspectives make it almost impossible to interpret the existence of nostalgic sentiments because they centralize historical traumas as a continuation of "the history" of the orient.

Orientalist perspectives and the construction of "the orientalist others" also depend on the Western travelers' agendas and interpretation of the East (Todorova 1994: 468). However, it is important to state that Western travelers' individual interpretations actually have political concerns that would be used by their own governments, especially in their foreign policies. (Ibid.). Therefore, many Western travelers had a mission to demarcate the cultural borders between themselves (the occident) and the orient in order to write their own civilized history. Scholars of orientalism studies generally refer to these historical narrative accounts on travelers' voyages. For example, Todorova refers to Mackenzie and Irby's work *The Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-In-Europe* (1877) in which they talk of Bosnia-Herzegovina as "the constant and harrowing recurrence of the cruel outrage" (Ibid. 469).

Further, Krivokapic signifies Pico Iyer's explanation and states that "'real travel' is not about discovery but about the travelling subject's awareness of their own 'position in relation to an

exterior world'" (Graulund 2011: 54). Hence, imagination of the others through travellers' accounts turns into a method of hierarchization. Krivokapic also argues that "the travel writing initiates developments of discourses of power and the global policy", and the hegemonic discourse of the West has a tendency to produce "various Western fantasies" over Eastern Europe (2014: 139-140). These perspectives on orientalization of the Balkans are also discussed in detail in several books; especially Rebecca West's work *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) and Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* (1993) are crucial to trace how and to what extent travellers' narratives reflect West's interpretation of Eastern Europe, especially the Balkans.

West's book mentions pre-WWII atmosphere, especially in the region of Yugoslav Kingdom. Rebecca West was a British writer and her book has a specific genre: travel book. In her book, she generally locates the Balkans as a source of violence and barbaric behaviours (1941: 21). Further, she narrates the Balkan people like shadows of the real people (Ibid.). Her six weeks adventure in the lands of Yugoslav Kingdom contains her empirical references depicting the Balkans through western lenses, and her main arguments were derived under the tension between *Ustase* (Croat fascist units) and Serbs, hence her observations directly aimed to display the Balkans as the fatherland of fascist and exclusionary dogmas and practices. Her travel agenda is also an example of Bakic-Hayden's "nesting orientalisms" since she skipped Slovenia in her travel route because she might have located Slovenes as part of Central Europe, that's why her trip was just concerned with the real lands of the "uncivilized east". Although Croatia and Slovenia are both narrated as continuation of Central Europe due to their historical ties with the Habsburgs (Bakic-Hayden 1995), West directly refers to Croatia as one of the main parts of Eastern Europe (West 1941). According to Kaplan, this is about Croatia's invasion by the Ottomans in its history and the Ottoman legacy in the Croat lands (1991/1992: 65).

Furthermore, West, in accordance with Bakic-Hayden's argument, conceptualizes the Serbs as the margin of Western civilization since "Eastern Orthodoxy-a legacy of Greek Byzantine" shaped Serbness as "barbarous East" (Kaplan 1991/1992: 65). Direct influences of the imperial legacies are clearly traceable in West's book although it mainly depends on her observations for 6 weeks in the region of Yugoslav Kingdom. This also demonstrates how travel book is not a simple genre because it might directly aim to connect historical facts to observed concepts through anachronic analysis. Further, travel books might analyse ethnic relations a primordial and orientalist perspective, and this approach then becomes problematic in analysing ethnic relations and nostalgia of local people.

West's book analyses the region of the Balkans, especially the lands of the Yugoslav Kingdom, just before the WWII started. Robert Kaplan's book *Balkan Ghosts* has a similar story because Kaplan's book was published in 1993, just before the wars totally dissolved socialist Yugoslavia. Further, Kaplan also narrates the Balkans through his perspective as a traveller journalist. Almost after fifty years of the publication of West's book, Kaplan aims to affirms West's findings and orientalist perspectives in his book. This shows how the period of the socialist regime is dismissed in Kaplan's narrative in order to consolidate orientalist arguments. As I will demonstrate in the next sections, the socialist regime is generally known for the strong social ties, cross- ethnic relations, and fictive kinships that were formed during that period; yet, Kaplan does not refer to the socialist period in his book. In other words, he mentally locates the Balkans as a centre of conflicts without a rupture.

Cooper argues that Kaplan's book is a "dreadful mix of unfounded generalizations, misinformation, outdated sources, personal prejudices and bad writing." (1993: 592). Further, Cooper detects many translation and spelling mistakes, and false interpretation of the political discourses throughout Kaplan's book (Ibid.). One of Kaplan's most polemical analyses in his

book is about Nazism and its Balkan origins (1993). “Nazism, for instance, can claim Balkan origins. Among the flophouses of Vienna, a breeding ground of ethnic resentments close to the southern Slavic world, Hitler learned how to hate so infectiously” (Kaplan 1993 [2014]: 1i). His argument clearly demonstrates how the Balkans are conceptualized through the lens of an American journalist by rejecting the co-existence of distinct ethnic groups. Furthermore, Kaplan argues that continuation of ethnic resentment and polarized environment of the WWII were palpable in the 1990s Yugoslavia because “Tito’s Communists kept the wounds fresh” (Kaplan 1993 [2014]: 5). His claim, which builds on the late period of socialist Yugoslavia, ignores the rituals of Yugoslavism and socialism due to the incomplete historical references and orientalist perspectives of the writer.

All these narrations of the orientalist scholars, journalists, writers in their traveling agendas aim to demonstrate the “primordial conflictual nature” of the Balkans; therefore, they clash with the constructivist claims on nationalism. However, there is a massive focus on the relation between identity construction and the dissolution wars in the context of Bosnia among the constructivists. Although these studies aim to show how ethnic identities are very important in the polarized Bosnia as the legacy of the war years, they do not refer to orientalist perspectives. Before starting the literature review on identity formation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I would like to present a communist historiography of Yugoslavia as a counter scholarship to Orientalism that focuses on ideological distinctions among the communists as the main reason of the dissolution.

2.6. Orientalism and blindness: distinctions among the socialists

As I displayed in the previous section, orientalists directly refer to primordial nationalism in discussing and explaining the conflicts or polarizations within the region: ancient hatred and its extension in the form of behavioural patterns. Therefore, there is a mutual relation between

orientalism and primordial nationalism especially in relation to the imagination process of Eastern Europe through Western lenses. On the other hand, one could claim that conflicts, mobilizations, revolutions, or even the state of peace is mainly about local politics and ideological manoeuvres (Bauman 1994; Malksoo 2012). In other words, political actors and organizational schema matter in understanding ruptures and continuations. As such, the argument of embedded historical hatred among the folks of Eastern Europe requires further proof especially in the light of the co-existence practice one could detect in the region.

In the case of socialist Yugoslavia and its dissolution, nationalism and ethnic polarization are repeatedly discussed due to the nationalist arguments of political actors since the beginning of the war years (Denitch 1996; Sells 1996; Bieber 2002; Volcic 2007). It is necessary to indicate that the dissolution wars owned an ethno-nationalist character because the groups were polarized in line with their ethnic friends and enemies (Kalyvas 2008). Although this reminds us of van Evera's interpretation of primordial nationalism that signifies how ethnic identities are primary and superordinate (2001), the background of the polarization process might show the constructed essence of nationalism, and one shall not search for this background only in the 1990s or in the ancient periods.

During 1992-1995 there was a quick activation of ethnic animosity among the folks of Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina's certain parts populated by Serbs. However, the construction of nationalist mobilization had started as early as the 1960s-70s and that's why violent conflict might have been formed quickly.

There is almost no research that conceptualizes and analyses the nationalist atmosphere and conflicts in the 1960s-70s because nationalist mobilization did not cause concrete violent polarization during that period. However, the roots of nationalist divisions among the communists in the in 1960s in Yugoslavia due to economic tensions and underground

organizations although many Serbian intellectuals and politicians thought that their Yugoslav identity was always the primary identity, and the Serbness was a source of shame due to Serbs' war crimes in the Second World War (Budding 1997).

During the Second World War the establishment of the (Serbian) *Chetnik* units who collaborated with the fascist forces was a collective trauma for the Yugoslav Serbs, and that's why many Serbs had evaluated their ethnic Serbian identity as a violent boundary (Ibid. 407).

Even though public opinion in Yugoslavia aimed at preserving Yugoslav identity in the 1960s-70s, there were some contra actors that aimed to display the importance of national identities, such as Serbness and its superiority over supranationalism or over socialist/Yugoslav identities (Guzina 2003). However, those actors' nationalist references or tendencies did not aim to bring about violent conflicts or the end of the Yugoslav regime, that's why it is difficult to understand the historical background of the polarization steps through orientalism and primordial nationalism.

Nationalities question was always associated with decentralization in socialist Yugoslavia, especially by Josip Broz Tito and Edward Kardelj, a former member of presidency of Yugoslavia. Jovic states that "Tito was confirmed as the Party secretary, and Kardelj was elected to the Politburo" in the Fifth Party Conference in Zagreb in 1940 (2009: 69-70). So, Tito and Kardelj were the leading names of the socialist regime even before its foundation, and their utopian Marxist ideas would shape the issue of nationalities in Yugoslavia: more freedom for the republics and autonomous regions.

Especially Kardelj's dream on decentralized Yugoslavia entered into the 1974 constitution. Expectedly, some Serbian politicians and intellectuals who publicly started to defend Serbian nationalism, even before the amendments of 1974, were against this idea because it was

ontologically in contrast with Serbian nationalism, which was irredentist in the regions where Serbs were a majority (Budding 1997: 416). But, who were the defenders of Serbian nationalism even in 1960s-70s?

Josip Broz Tito and Edward Kardelj were not alone in the process of the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia. Many former Partisans shared the same goal with them. Especially Aleksandar Rankovic, the first vice president of Yugoslavia, was always seen as one of the founders of the socialist regime. During the Second World War, his wife and his brother were killed by *Chetnik* units; therefore, he was also a victim of Serbian nationalism despite his Serbian ethnic origin (Piljak 2014: 159). The constitution of 1953 increased the power of Rankovic, and he "had control over the federal and republican security services" (Ibid. 162). There were no members from different ethnic groups in the State Security organization of Serbia in 1960s and Aleksandar Rankovic was in charge of arranging those members; in other words, he tried to ethnically homogenise the State Security organization although he was a former victim of Serbian nationalism (Sekulic 1989: 272-273). Furthermore, Rankovic consciously supported Serbian migration waves in Kosovo and Metohija (Cvetkovic 2017: 130), and his pro-Serbian acts caused his dismissal from office in the Brioni Plenum of 1966. Aleksandar Rankovic was accused in this plenum of undertaking secret efforts to create "a-state-within-the-state" and (Budding 1997: 410). Therefore, the case of Serbian nationalism entered into state's agenda as an issue of discussion.

Rankovic and his supporters were labelled as defenders of anti-decentralization, which was directly in contrast with anti-nationalist essence of the regime because decentralization aimed to eradicate any problems about nationalities and nationalism (Prpic 1969: 41). Although his removal was a significant step in underlining how national(ist) movements would be stopped, it also demonstrates that the Yugoslav way of communism insisted on its dogmas, such as the

issue of de-centralization. Therefore, any actors who focused more on the importance of reforms or other concerns than decentralization were also seen as the internal enemies of the regime (Jovic 2009: 124). In other words, Titoist[6] politics did not just aim to clean the state of nationalist figures. When Titoist politicians also became suspicious of "liberal" communists, it was paradoxically the beginning of the rise of the power of the nationalists in Serbia in the late 1960s and in early 1970s (Guzina 2003: 93).

As it is traceable that Titoist ideas and policies were the dogmas of the regime, and that's why there were almost no opportunity of alternative voices for any manoeuvre. Therefore, Titoism had a sharpening effect on possible polarizations, and when economic and national concerns overleaped in Yugoslavia among Serbs, this would be end of the regime. As I indicated before, these ideological divisions among the communists of Yugoslavia became most apparent on the issue of economic reforms, thus paving the way for the emergence of financial debates, but not necessarily nationalist ones. However, conservative Serbian communists who were generally against economic reforms had also nationalist ideas, as they thought that the reforms would not be beneficial for the Serbs. There was also a shadow state organization in Serbia that was against the reforms since they consolidated their position through their anti-reformist rhetoric (Ramet 2006).

Although the spirit of the 1960s-70s were pro-Yugoslav identity as I indicated above, the rise of Serbian nationalist actors and their politics paved way for the construction of a nationalist mobilization in the 1990s. Thus, orientalist scholars or writers cannot fully explain the background of the war, which was also about the divisions among the communists. Moreover, the issue of the rise of Serbian nationalism was not just bound to the borders of the Republic of

[6] Titoism is the interpretation of communism in former Yugoslavia by Josip Broz Tito and other founding names of the socialist regime. Distinction from the Soviet Union, a quest for decentralization, and self-management-based economy were its most important components.

Serbia during the time of Yugoslavia. Ethnically mixed population of Bosnia-Herzegovina would also suffer from this problem since Serbian nationalism was provoked through irredentist goals for the sake of Greater Serbia (Budding 1997). This is not unique to Serbian nationalism since references to "antiquity" and "golden age" and historical glorious power and larger lands (Ozkirimli 2017: 51-54) are often used to activate nationalist ideas by nationalist groups. On the other hand, anti-nationalist "liberal" communists among Serbs and their discourse show how they might have prevented the rise of Serbian nationalism if Titoist politics had not supressed them.

There were important "liberal" communists in Yugoslavia, especially in Serbia, in 1960s-70s The focus on Serbia is also significant because those liberal names and their anti-nationalist ideas were seen as a threat by nationalist voices in Serbia. At the same time, Titoist politicians also saw "liberal" communists as a threat because of their reformist rhetoric and agenda.

Koca Popovic, Mijalko Todorovic, Latinka Perovic, Marko Nikezic, and Petar Stambolic (the "liberal" communists of Serbia), and their dismissal from their office paved the way for the consolidation of nationalist conservatives in Serbia in the next decades. Especially Marko Nikezic was a crucial name because he was a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia and the 6th Chairman of the League of Communists of Serbia between 1968-1972, and he was also one of the founding names of the socialist regime. Nikezic's reformist politics I will display below turned into a polemical issue despite his focus on anti-nationalism.

Flere and Klanjsek argue that "Nikezic explicitly considered that republics, not nationhoods, were constituents of Yugoslavia" (2019: 136). In other words, according to him, nations or nationalities should not be popularized since the main fragments of the regime were republics that were main constitutional administrative units. Furthermore, Vegel underlines that "Nikezic incessantly emphasized that the primary goal of Serbian communists must be to resolutely fight

the resurgent Serb nationalism" (2005: 172). While Nikezic insisted on reformist policies for citizens of socialist Yugoslavia, he also believed that problems of ethnic minorities, such as the problems of Croatian Serbs, should have been solved in their regions, in Zagreb not in Belgrade (Jovic 2009: 133). Hence, even though his anti-nationalist voice was in a harmony with the essence of the regime, his liberal ideas in favour of economic reforms were not appreciated by the ruling elites (Guzina 2003).

His and other "liberal" communists' dismissal from their position in 1972 demonstrated that the division among communists on fiscal issues were prioritized over the polarization between nationalist and anti-nationalist fronts. Although nationalist Serbian figures who defended Serbian nationalism publicly were categorized as the enemies of the regime, relatively hidden figures of Serbian nationalism started to dominate the public offices in 1970s (Budding 1997: 415).

Probably one of the most iconic examples of the rise of Serbian nationalism is the content of a session in the Law Faculty of the University of Belgrade in 1971 when "liberal" communists were also excluded despite their anti-nationalist discourse (Ibid. 416). This session highlighted Serbian nationalism aimed to re-establish of Serbians' "own nation state" (Ibid.). This discourse was too much assertive in the 1970s' Yugoslavia, *but* it also shows that how the roots of nationalist mobilization obtained an intellectual colour even in the 1970s. Bifurcated politics among the communists of Yugoslavia formed a basis for the rise of nationalists since the issue of nationalism became a secondary concern, that's why Serbian nationalist discourse could be heard in distinct platforms.

Although reformist voices were eliminated from Yugoslav politics in early 1970s, Serbian nationalists did not stop blaming them. According to those nationalists, reformists also aimed to support "historical enemies" of Serbia, and the ancient anxiety of Serbia was re-narrated in

the hands of the nationalist actors of 1970s (Gagnon 1994-5: 143). Gagnon's research underlines that the rise of Serbian nationalism was palpable especially in the rhetoric of some Serbian intellectuals:

> Conservatives in Serbia also set the groundwork for a longer-term strategy, for example by allowing Dobrica Cosic, who had been purged for denouncing reform as anti-Serbian in 1968, to continue to publish his nationalistically-oriented works. Thus throughout the 1970s he constructed a very specific version of Serbian nationalism, whose theme was that Serbs were the greatest victims of Yugoslavia, portraying them as a "tragic people." See for example his popular four-part series of historical fiction, *Vreine Smrti*, published in Belgrade between 1972 and 1979, which chronicles the tragedies of Serbia during World War I (during which it lost 25 percent of its population and 40 percent of its army), and which portrays Serbia as the innocent victim of its neighbours, its supposed allies and other Yugoslav ethnic nations (Gagnon 1994-5: 144-145).

Primordial anxiety of Serbia entered into the agenda of Serbs in 1970s; however, the story of 1960s displays that economic concerns have initiated the process of the rise of Serbian nationalism through anachronic references and anxiety. The state of ethnic co-existence quickly turned into the state of polarization in the Yugoslav context. Although Horowitz claims that the risk of exclusionary politics is generally so high in ethnically diverse societies, even in the state of horizontal ethnic relations (1971: 234), I argue that polarization in diverse societies might not be so high just from the very beginning. Environmental factors, social relations, and economic concerns influence the fall and rise of exclusionary ethnic politics as it is traceable in different examples in some regions where ethnic conflicts destroyed societies (Mazur 2021). These diverse factors could be seen proof of nationalism's constructed essence since there are numerous reasons that cause the re-narration and re-popularization of nationalist claims.

Furthermore, the constructed essence of nationalism shows why orientalist attachments are insufficient in explaining ethnic conflicts because orientalism would follow the same path of primordial nationalism: continuation of ancient hatred without the state of peaceful co-existence among different ethnic groups. However, as I mentioned above, peaceful co-existence and internalization of the Yugoslav identity was the story of even the Serbs in early 1960s. Therefore, peaceful time slots falsify the generalizations of orientalist thinking.

Lendvai also argues that “after the Second World War and up to the I970s, Yugoslavia was regarded as an exception among the communist countries of the crisis-ridden Eastern bloc” (1991: 251). Hence, the conceptualization of 1970s pushes one to think about nationalism and its rise even during that period. Moreover, the distinction between reformists vs. conservatives, or nationalists vs. anti-nationalists, or centralists vs. decentralists resonated with Croatia too. Thus, Serbian nationalism also influenced the rise of other micro nationalism(s) in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and a mutual race started between Croatia and Serbia for nationalization. For example, “in I967, when the intellectuals of Croatia came forward with a declaration in favour of the constitutional recognition of the Croatian language in place of Serbo-Croat, there followed an equally rapid and sharp response from Belgrade” (Lendvai 1991: 256). During the same period, introduction of Cyrillic in local broadcasting entered into the agenda of Serbia for revival of “Serbian” language and its differentiation from Bosnian-Serbo-Croatian language (Budding 1997: 413). Hence, economic debates caused visible nationalist tensions that were not discussed before the emergence of dichotomy between reformists vs. conservatives in both Serbia and Croatia.

Although the rise of Serbian nationalism is detectable in the early 1970s’ Yugoslavia, there was no evidence for a preparation of violent conflict in the discourse of both nationalist politicians and intellectuals. The goal of “Greater Serbia” was for the sake of ethnic co-existence of all Serbs in the same land (Guzina 2003: 91). After Tito’s death in 1980 the extension of the 1970s’ tensions influenced all Yugoslavia but especially regions populated by Serbs. That’s why, the rise of Croatian nationalism is also important since Serbs have also lived with Croats in the Croatian Republic.

Croatian National Movement or Croatian Spring aimed to influence “spheres of culture, education, foreign affairs, domestic security and the military, inter-ethnic relations,

constitutional politics, and so on" (Perica 2000: 533) in the same time slot when the "liberal" communists publicly declared their reformist agenda. While Serbian nationalism was in the quest of Greater Serbia even in 1970s, Croatian nationalism aimed to get rid of the "Balkan burden" (Ibid. 534). In other words, the rise of Croatian nationalism wanted a rupture from the Balkans in contrast to Serbian nationalism in the early 1970s.

Furthermore, although Orthodox Church of Serbia directly supported Serbian nationalism, especially in the 1990s (Sells 1996), Croatian branch of the Catholic Crouch indirectly supported the Croatian national movement (Perica 2000: 534). "Prominent nationalist leaders Franjo Tudjman and Marko Veselica pleaded for the church's support" (Ibid.). Their support highlights that even in the 1970s there was a goal for mass mobilization or movement for the Croatian secession in line with the rise of nationalism in Serbia. Religious figures of Croatia started to support ethnic nationalism publicly by criticizing the Titoist regime and Titoist politicians' "overreaction" to patriotic concepts (Ibid. 537). Then, a silent religious rebellion was initiated by some Croatian clergymen, who aimed to contribute to the rise of the Croatian nationalism. They manifested the lands of Croatia as a historical centre of Catholicism in the region and organized a propaganda campaign by circulating their agenda (Ibid. 540).

Despite the fact that reformist politics of "liberal" Serbs was supressed by the socialist regime, the rise of Croatian nationalism was certainly evaluated as another threat against Yugoslavia. Like Serbian nationalism Croatian nationalism did not emerge with the aim of bringing about violent conflicts, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina where a significant Croat community existed in the 1970s.

In Serbian nationalism, anti-nationalist figures were punished because of their reformist policies, which were contrasted with the dogmas of the socialist regime. In comparison with the dismissal of the liberals, there was no stark exclusion policy against all Serbian nationalist

by the Yugoslav regime. At the same time, the direct legacy of Jasenovac, the concentration camp in Croatia in the WWII, its rehabilitation process among Croats made the idea of nationalism less attractive in Croatian perceptions (Jurajda and Kovac 2021). Many Serbs were exterminated in those camps during the WWII, and this extermination process also influenced how they narrated their history, emphasizing their victimized position. Therefore, although Serbian nationalism was also fostered through those legacies, but the Croatian nationalism could not rise as intensely as like the Serbian one due to Croats' persecutor position (Ibid.).

Furthermore, Titoist intervention blocked the rise of Croatian nationalism in 1972. Thus, the year of 1972 was an important moment to get rid of different units who had counter arguments against the regime. Then, the period between 1973 and 1989 was known as "Croatian silence" due to the state-centred oppressive policies on possible national movements especially in the lands of the Croatian Republic (Perica 2000: 534). Although Croatian nationalists were supressed in 1972, only well-known Serbian nationalist figures were repressed in the case of Serbia because Serbian "liberal" communists were thought to be more dangerous. However, this situation led to the emergence of a more consolidated Serbian nationalist front that was under the influence of the 1970s' nationalists. Therefore, 1980s, especially the period after the death of Tito, formed a basis for Serbian nationalists to voice out much braver and more assertive claims. On the other hand, this does not mean that Croatian nationalism was totally eradicated, it continued to rise after the Croatian silence, but Croatian nationalism mainly asked for secession, that's how it differed from the Serbian one.

The rise of Serbian nationalism, especially in the 1980s, paved the way to many problems across the region. Magliveras displays that nationalist polarization of the 1980s and its reflection in the form of violent conflicts in socialist Yugoslavia led to both national and international crimes, specifically among nationalist Serbs (2002: 676). National crimes refer to

corruption and “abuse of power”, which could be seen as the continuation of Rankovic style Serbian politics after a rupture: manoeuvres in favour of Serbs and maximization of their power via illegal decisions (Ibid. 676; Budding 1997). At the level of international crimes genocide and crimes against humanity were the main accusations against the Serbian war persecutors.

Slobodan Milosevic is the leading political name of the architects of the Bosniak genocide, and he was responsible for many war crimes. Further, he was not alone in his nationalist propaganda for the dream of Greater Serbia. Radovan Karadzic, Milan Babic, and Ratko Mladic also consciously organized and committed war crimes against the humanity in the regions where Serbs populated for “ethnic cleaning” that would remove the obstacle against the dream of Greater Serbia (Sell 1999: 13).

The spirit of the 1980s also reflected the ongoing discussions on reformist and conservative policies at the time. Those reforms aimed for liberalization because postponed solutions for the Yugoslav economy made the financial system more fragile. While reformist politicians aimed to apply more liberal solutions, the nationalist front of Serbia was more aggressive against their ideas and policies. As a critique of liberal policies and decentralization motto of the regime, during the reign of president (of the Serbian Republic) Ivan Stambolic, the nationalist front “produced the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy” in 1986 (Budding 1997: 416). This memorandum was on grievances of Serbs and the failures of the politics of decentralization. The memorandum document would act as a “blueprint” for Milosevic soon especially during his tenure as the president of the Serbian Republic (1989-1996) (Budding 1998: 53).

Croatian reformist Ante Markovic, president of the Croatian Republic (1986-1988), and Slobodan Milosevic were the symbolic figures of the clash between reformists and conversatives in the political arena (Gagnon 2010). In light of the Serbian Memorandum of 1986, Milosevic also referred to the issue of decentralization as a threat against the Serbian

unification (Ibid.). Although conservatives hid behind communism when they criticized liberal policies, their intention was similar with the 1970s' nationalist spirit: preservation of Serbian economic actors and maximization of their power (Ramet 2006).

While conservative Serbian nationalists focused on their ethnic friends' position and future, they also started to alienate and exclude ethnic others, such as Bosniaks, and contra-movements, such as workers' demonstration for more reformist political economy (Gagnon 2010). Furthermore, conservatives made use of authoritarian politics and discourse against fake enemies of Serbness and communism (Ibid.). Milosevic and Serbian nationalist front consciously used the nationalist card during the polarization between conservatives and reformists, and this time there was no powerful political figure, like Tito or Kardelj, who could insist on decentralization, and could supress the popular names of nationalists among both intellectuals and politicians in Serbia. That's why Milosevic as the president of the Serbian Republic was able to go to Kosovo Polje to speak as the president of the Serbian Republic and to flame Serbian nationalism in an autonomous region of socialist Yugoslavia in 1989. Therefore, the root of ethnic animosity in a diverse society, between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs in Kosovo, was consciously constructed with an artificial tension between reformist and conservative politicians and intellectuals of Yugoslavia.

Milosevic's speech in Kosovo was the signal of the tensions that would be traced in the future of socialist Yugoslavia because ethnically Serbian population was isolated in their regions through the extermination of their ethnic others. Bosnia-Herzegovina, as I indicated and discussed above, had (and still has) a multi-ethnic population, where Serbs lived with ethnic Bosniaks, Croats, Jews, Turks, Roma people during both the socialist regime and the Bosnian Republic. When Serbian nationalist front started an extermination policy in the early the 1990s

in majority-Serb regions, and Bosniaks resisted against this nationalist uprising, a turning point in the national history of Bosnia-Herzegovina took place.

In this section I aimed to demonstrate how orientalist accounts emphasizing "historical hatred" would not suffice to explain the dissolution wars of Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina where Serbian nationalists selected an "enemy" for their irredentist goals as a result of the extensions of economic tensions. Hence, ideological distinctions and clashes among communists were significant to understand the activation of the nationalist card in the hands of the Serbian figures. This also shows that ideological fathers of Serbian nationalism and their ideas in 1970s influenced 1980s politics as a violent extension of micro nationalism. Therefore, the rise of Serbian nationalism and its exclusive agenda directly affected Bosnia-Herzegovina and the identity formation among the folks of Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially among the main victims of the wars, Bosniaks.

In the next section I will display how Bosnians live or try to survive in the post-war politics and atmosphere.

2.7. After the war

After the war, people of Bosnia-Herzegovina could not recover quickly. Peaceful co-existence practices have not been easy to trace in this post-war zone. Ethnically-divided institutional structure also caused more rigid problems among distinct ethnic groups. The question of "how to come to terms with the war years?" turned into an emotional affair among the people of Bosnia due to the burdens of the recent past, especially among witnesses.

Karcic argues that war crimes led to a collective traumatization in Bosnia since people eye-witnessed violent crimes, and had to live under the influence of those crimes (2022: 5). Karcic also lists those crimes:

> … Other men beaten, tortured, sexually abused, and starved. Women and children were kept together in separate camps, where they usually spent a shorter amount of time than the men. The woman and girls were raped and sexually abused. Occasionally public ritual executives would take place. Children were threatened in front of their mothers and family members (2022: 5).

A healthy transition from both the socialist period and the war years to the present requires that all war survivors, who have first-hand experiences, come to terms with the war years. However, the people of Bosnia still live with their perpetrators today, which makes them remembers their traumas vividly:

> The cleansing process was conducted on a municipal level, and in the majority of cases the perpetrators knew their victims. The rapists knew who they were raping. The murderers knew who they were killing. This was a very personalized crime. This can be easily concluded through eyewitness testimony and by identifying the status of the perpetrators (Karcic 2022: 7).

Accumulation of those individual pains resulted in the emergence of a fragile society, which is troubled by endless questions.

For example, when talking about the effects of the Bosnian war Henig states that:

> In rural areas, the effects were devastating. Villagers' responses to pervasive precarity and marginalization have oscillated between outmigration to the cities, casual labour opportunities, informal economic activities, and subsistence farming and foraging. The post socialist, post-war years have been dramatic and harsh. (2020: 25)

At the nexus of urban and rural life, there was a drastic change for all inhabitants, not only in terms of the emotional impact of the war, but also in terms of economic practises and their organizations. Considering these issues, Gilbert claims that coming to terms with the socialist period and its anomalies might be an effective starting point because pre-war conditions might have influenced Bosnian peoples' perceptions (2006).

Although the socialist period was associated with ethnic co-existence under the umbrella of the red flag, there were also several problematic issues, such freedom of religion and suppressive characteristics of the regime (Velikonja 2003; Vuckovic Juros 2018). At this point,

Gilbert states that the collaborators of the regime, or spies, and their connections might be revealed to discuss crimes of the socialist period, but his findings, especially his interviews with today's intellectuals in Bosnia-Herzegovina, display that revealing the crimes of the socialist regime might not alleviate the past:

> One prominent intellectual in Sarajevo told me he would rather live in a society with such 'informers' than in the company of people like Radovan Karadzic, whose name was also among those to be monitored and not among the collaborators. An editor of one of Bosnia's daily newspapers in Banja Luka said that coming to terms with the Yugoslav past would not offer a catharsis for the collective trauma of the war, which was much worse than anything that had happened before (Gilbert 2006: 14).

This quote was not unique in his study. Gilbert refers to the arguments of another Bosnian intellectual:

> … He added that he himself did not think any differently about colleagues at Sarajevo University whose names appeared among the list of collaborators. Moreover, he was unsurprised by the general lack of public reaction: because life in the previous system looks so much better than the present, people who may have participated in securing the previous regime don't seem that bad (2006: 14).

Hence, one can argue that the previous "good" period should not be discussed, criticized, or its suspicious names should not be targeted. During my interviews, I also focused on the question of whether socialist Yugoslavia and its supporters were guilty or not. But before demonstrating my results, let me provide a more detailed discussion on the question of how to come to terms with the war in Bosnia.

Several studies focus on how to cope with the problems of the war years in today's Bosnia (Hayden; 2007 Onsoy 2011), and as Gilbert's article underlines, there is "a post-socialist scandal with little impact" which is about the spies of the regime, especially among the public intellectuals and academics (2006). However, the main concern shall be finding a solution for the re-co-existence of distinct ethnic groups in the same region despite war traumas.

One of the important components of a health co-existence is the healthy return of Bosnian refugees who had to flee during the war and who now constitute an important diaspora (Boskovic 2013: 54). In today's Bosnia, the return process is still complex as it has not been well-defined or planned by the Bosnian institutional agencies and international actors.

Eastmond states that "considerable resources with a focus on housing and the restitution of property, especially to promote returns of minorities to their home areas, attest to the strength of the international commitment in this respect" (2006: 142). Although international actors have a say over Bosnian politics and they seem to support returnees, at least on the face of it, the return of the refugees is not a smooth process because of the impact of ethnically-divided state structure in Bosnia. Furthermore, as Stroschein argues, consociational democracy in Bosnia between the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serbian Republic excludes other ethnic groups and their rights (2014). Therefore, refugees from the *ostali* (others) might not be willing to go back to their country in the post-war atmosphere.

Eastmond's interviews with the Bosnian refugees, especially in Sweden, shows that dual citizenship makes easier the return process since there is still a divided structure in Bosnia:

> … The eldest daughter has since returned, married a man from Sarajevo, and is now employed there by a Scandinavian NGO. Her younger brother attends university in Sweden. He intends to settle there with his Bosniak girlfriend, feeling that it offers the greatest security for starting a family, and also for assisting their parents, if necessary, when they grow older. However, the educational choices of this young couple, aiming for skills that may be attractive in both countries, reflect their openness in terms of future settlement. Their ideal is to be part of both contexts. These families felt that approval for Swedish citizenship made their return to Bosnia a viable move (2006: 149-150).

While dual citizenship makes the return process easier in that there is more than one option, Eastmond also states that many Bosnian refugees or displaced persons, including members of the Bosniak majority group, do not want to return to Bosnia since:

> The difficulties of establishing life at home after return and the need to be able to re-migrate are quite real, not only for minority returnees but also for those who are

> qualified and return as members of the majority ethnic group. Some of my informants found that securing a livelihood and negotiating one's position in the new place rely not only on ethnic identity and formal qualifications but also on one's social networks (Ibid: 150).

Therefore, collapse of the social structure in Bosnia also influences the return process, and changes, such as the need for social networks or stronger meritocracy, demonstrates why post-war Bosnia cannot provide even the basics for its citizens.

After the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, international actors aimed to re-establish a new federation between Bosniak-Croats and Serbians, but this only helped demarcate borders within the Bosnian society. Furthermore, the Dayton Peace Agreement estableshed new institutions:

> The Dayton agreement established the Office of the High Representative to oversee implementation of the peace accord. The high representative has thus far been a senior European diplomat or politician chosen by the country's major donors and peace process sponsors, organized as the Peace Implementation Council (PIC). The high representative has final authority in theatre on civilian aspects of implementation, including the power to impose legislation and remove public officials from office for obstructing provisions of the Dayton agreement. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was given authority to organize elections. Civil authority was backed by a 32,000 strong stabilization force, known as SFOR, led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Manning 2004: 62).

Therefore, one can argue that there was a systemic effort to re-build Bosnia-Herzegovina and its state structure through the Dayton, but re-construction of the Bosnian society is the challenging task. On the other hand, the Dayton and the new Bosnian constitution that was attached to the agreement are not simple roadmaps to apply to decision-making procedures because the Bosnian state was divided into cantons and municipal governments. Moreover, this new structure did not prevent the rise of the nationalist actors and parties:

> In accordance with the Dayton agreement, six elections had to be held just to establish state, entity and municipal governments. After a scramble, OSCE held the 1996 elections at state, entity and cantonal levels, but postponed municipal elections for another year. As predicted, the wartime nationalists won those first elections by sizeable margins and thus legalized their control of the levers of the state at all levels (Manning 2004: 63).

Hence, even from an institutional point of view, it was not possible to end ethnic divisions and the rise of nationalism, and today nationalistic agencies are still active in the political arena. Although witness generations of the socialist regime experienced co-existence and neighborhood relations, the generations who born during the war years and in the post-war atmosphere have only experienced ethnic polarizations.

In order to understand the mindset of young people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, one can look at Wien's case study of Brcko, a city in Bosnia. In it, Wien highlights the family, especially the parents, as the most important factor in shaping young people's views on the issue of ethnic polarization:

> I often asked young people what they saw as the main obstacles to achieving reconciliation in Brcko, and in a majority of the cases the immediate answer was the same; "the parents are the biggest problem". There seemed to be a widespread understanding among youth in Brcko that parents who experienced the war reproduce skepticism and intolerance towards people of other ethnicities. The abovementioned statement would usually be followed by: "my parents never taught me to hate, but I know about others where that was the case". Most of the young people I talked to thus seemed to think that many people had parents who reproduced ethnic intolerance (Wien 2017: 75)

Under the influence of both divided politics and transformed everyday practices, witness generations of the war might show ethnic intolerance in line with the above-mentioned research (in contrast to the finding of my in-depth interviews). Resultantly, a resistance mechanism against nationalism among the next generations may not be possible, especially during the elections or everyday interactions.

Baranovice argues that the revised education system and curriculums also conserve the borders among distinct ethnic groups in post-war As a result, younger generations learn the history of their own ethnic group and their grievances via texts that exclude the others of their society (2001):

> The laws that were passed on in 1990 regarding primary, secondary and university education, and which were applied uniformly throughout the whole territory until the onset of war, only remained in effect in the territory with the Bosniac majority during the war, but the laws were amended. On the territory of the Croat Community (Herzeg-Bosnia) special regulations were passed in 1992 and, consequently, "all the competencies relating to the development of school networks, founding, énancing, pedagogical standards, curricula, and schoolbooks were transferred to the authority of the Croat Community". In this manner, the educational system was adapted to the one existing in Croatia. The same happened with respect to the school education in *Republika Srpska*, which was also changed and adjusted to match the one in Serbia (Baranovice 2001: 15-16).

In other words, Croatia and Serbia owned de facto authority over history books of Bosnia for their ethnic peers, and one can claim that this also triggers polarization in post-war Bosnia. Furthermore, history books pave the way for popularization of biased narratives, especially among younger generations:

> In contrast to the Bosnian textbooks, Croatian and Serbian textbooks portrayed national history through the history of their state, territory and the people, including the Croatian and Serbian people living in present day Croatia and Serbia. Consequently, in the Croatian textbooks, Bosnian history is discussed within chapters on Croatian history as a part of Croatian national history. Mediaeval Serbian history is presented as the main focus when discussing Bosnian history in the Serbian textbooks (Baranovice 2001: 19).

Therefore, kin-states, Croatia and Serbia, become integral part of Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs' history books in Bosnia, and one can argue that younger generations who receive education via these books might be exposed to polarizing connotations and purposes in the post-war atmosphere. Baranovice's article also shows that post-war history books of Bosniak, Bosnian Croat, and Bosnian Serbs rarely refer to historical co-existence periods and cultural similarities, and this is in line with the spirit of post-war Bosnia (Ibid. 20).

Torsti explains that rigidity of ethnic identity and dominant ethnic politics in today's Bosnia is also due to destructive effects of the war on the culture of tolerance:

> One of the characteristics of the Bosnian war was the systematic destruction of mosques, churches, graveyards and other religious and cultural monuments in an attempt to erase the evidence of Bosnia's rich, diverse heritage. The total number of destroyed objects has been estimated in several sources. According to (incomplete) data from the Institute for the Protection of the Cultural, Natural and Historical Heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1454 cultural monuments were destroyed or damaged. Of those, 1284

> were Islamic sacred and other objects, 237 Catholic, and 30 Serbian Orthodox. Other figures cited refer to over 1100 destroyed mosques and Muslim buildings, over 300 Catholic churches and monasteries and 36 Serbian Orthodox churches (Torsti 2004: 143).

Following these destructive incidents, Torsti argues, Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs aimed to re-write or traditionally re-constructed their own ethno-national history culture[7]:

> Among Bosnian Croats the new symbols of history culture followed the example set by "mother" Croatia. President Tudjman of the Republic of Croatia adopted harsh nationalistic rhetoric in the early 1990s, which was reflected in the symbols that appeared in parts of Bosnia in 1990s. His regime encouraged the public display of the *sahovnica*. Although this red and white checkerboard emblem dated back to the Middle Ages, it served more recently as the main symbol of the Ustasha movement and fascist state of Croatia during WWII. Similarly the name of the new currency, *kuna* (literally meaning marten), while dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries, was also used by the Ustasha state for its currency (Torsti 2004: 146).

Illustration of sahovnica.

For the case of Bosnian Serbness after the war, Torsti states:

> Characteristic of the new Bosnian Serb history culture is the rejection of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state and an emphasis on the Bosnian Serb Republic (RS), Serbia, and Yugoslavia. Bosnian flags and other official state symbols appear nowhere on the territory of the RS. For example in the autumn of 2001 at a border crossing between Bosnia (Serb Republic) and Croatia, the Serbian flag (old Yugoslav flag without the star) flew and the passport stamp bore no mention of Bosnia and Herzegovina, only the name of the border town written in the Cyrillic alphabet (2004: 145).

On the other hand, Bosniakness refer to Bosniannes in the new understanding of Bosnia because of the dominant Bosniak group and their victim position during the war year (Ibid.) Although

[7] Torsti defines "history culture": "By history culture I refer to that part of public culture where people are confronted with claims about the past in their daily lives" (2004: 142).

ethnic intolerance and differentiation is the leading problem of Bosnia after the war, gender dimension of the post-war period is also significant to understand current picture.

Despite the fact that the famous architects of the war are male, and the armed conflict happened between groups of men, there is also a gendered perspective of the war. While this gendered perspective is usually discussed via an emphasis on war time rapes, women's possible role in initiating the war is also recurring theme in post-war Bosnia. According to Helms's field research in Bosnia, "the active role of women in starting the war" is a repeated trope within everyday discourse although women in Bosnia are generally narrated as "apolitical and humanitarian" (2010: 21). Helms conducted in-depth interviews with the women of Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially women who work in the NGOs. One of Helms's interviewees argues that:

> But in Bosnia it was purely this provocation (*prepucavanje*) between women and their neighbors... If something starts up, some trouble, who is it that runs around gossiping, talking, getting people riled up? I'm not talking about in public life but within the family and we know that's the main cell of society. When it all bursts then women return to their role and the men go off to fight the war. With men it's guns and cannons; with women, talking and blabbing (2010: 21).

In the discourse of this interviewee, women are portrayed as the main actors inflaming ethnic animosity during their quotidian interactions. Therefore, in post-war Bosnia, especially Serbian women have been alienated due to the double emphasis on their ethnic and gender identity, that highlights their "possible" role in the escalation of tensions through their daily rhetoric/interactions (Golubovic 2019).

Another interviewee of Helms also adds:

> … They are the ones who bring up the children. If they don't teach their children tolerance, but instead obsession with the past, prejudice and intolerance, those kids, especially boys, will turn out that way (2010: 21).

Therefore, being "mothers who teach some values to their children" make women of Bosnia suspects for the start of the war, and that pushes Bosnian Serb or Croat women to peripheries or to hide their identities (Golubovic 2019).

Furthermore, the picture of "guilty women" also changes in the narrations of Helms's participants when religion comes onto stage:

> You don't see women in politics among the Bosniacs. But look at the Serbs. Look at Mira Markovic; and Biljana Plavsic; and others. They had lots of women in politics. Women have lots of influence (2010: 22).

From Muslim Bosniak point of view, one can also argue that gender and ethnic identities commonly describe the perpetrator, and there is no policy or attempt for a further reconciliation among those different groups in the post-war Bosnia.

Another important point to keep in mind when discussing gender in post-war Bosnia is that women who lost their husbands in war cannot easily start a new life (Skjelsbaek 2006; Robertson and Duckett 2007). Robertson and Duckett, in their ethnographic research, argue that being a displaced mother causes a deeper isolation in the post-war Bosnia due to endless mourning rituals and societies pressure (2007).

> Participants explained that after a husband's death, the widow usually remains with her mother-in-law and that even a young widow "is expected to live in grief forever." They all agreed that if their husbands did not return it would not be acceptable to move on, fall in love, and marry again. One mother explained that the loss of her husband meant that her family also had lost status in the community. "A woman who loses a husband is nothing. A child without a father is nothing. It would be all lost" (2007: 471).

As a result, these women can neither integrate into Bosnian society nor start a new life. Under such pressure, it is also pretty difficult for these women to take part in any reconciliation attempts.

Skjelsbaek focuses on physical traumas of the Bosnian women, and Skjelsbaek argues that starting a new life or reconciliation is not a possible *façon* among these women (2006):

> I will tell you everything and you can ask me. Here you can see what they did to me. They put cigarettes here [points to her body] and they bit me here [points to her body]. [She then recounts details of where she came from, where she was imprisoned, and what happened to her fellow villagers.] Since I left the concentration camp I take sedatives (Skjelsbaek 2006: 381).

In the post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, the mental and physical trauma are concrete for the survivors, especially for those women who have to mourn according to their gender identity and position within their society and women who suffered during the war years due to their gender. In Robertson and Duckett 's in depth study (2007), "all participants identified children as the most important person(s) and the disappearance of husbands as the most important event in their lives", and expectedly dealing with their recent past is not easy.

On the other hand, there are some ongoing successful reconciliation efforts in the Bosnian society. Especially in the domain of sports, there is both an internal and external effort to unify ethnic groups and make sport competitions much more diverse under the flag of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Open Fun Football Schools are one of the generic examples of the successful reconciliation process in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

> Open Fun Football Schools were first organized in the communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina that were divided by the recent conflict. By the end of the 2003 season, there were 99 Open Fun Football Schools in the country, involving 20,000 children and almost 1,700 trainers. Over 60 per cent of the municipalities in the country have participated in the programme (Gasser and Levinsen 2004: 461-462).

Coehoorn underlines that Open Fun Football Schools are still effective for the reconciliation of different ethnic groups, and Coehoorn refers to testimonies of the children who join Open Fun Football Schools to display how ethnic animosity cannot find a room among those children (2017).

Therefore, one can argue that there is a detectable effort among the folks of Bosnia to come together with their historical neighbors in the post-war period despite polarizing narratives and policies in the Bosnian society.

Although Open Fun Football Schools are successful in terms of re-construction of ethnic co-existence in the Bosnian society, there is more to be done to ensure peaceful and inclusive inter-ethnic relations. Especially trade unions and workers' collective actions could be de-ethnicized like they were during the socialist period.

For example, the 2014 Bosnian Uprising demonstrated how an ethnically divided society can come together and protest collective socio-economic inequalities. During the Uprising:

> Bosnian protesters were demonstrating precisely what they thought about catastrophic rates of unemployment, rising poverty and various forms of favouritism that have placed the dominant political parties at the centre of complex and vast systems of patronage. 'Who sows hunger, reaps rage' (*Ko sije glad, zanje bijes*). The message's unknown author offered that the protests emerged out of a deepening sense of post-war precarity, whose inevitable result was militant popular indignation. Its addressees were the domestic post-war elites, which control the economy and populate the swelling ranks of this internationally designed state, which has fallen short on fulfilling the regulatory and biopolitical responsibilities towards the populations it claims to serve (Kurtovic 2015: 639-640).

According to Kurtovic, both internal and external observers argue that these protestors "were violent, non-nationalist and eventually sought to recuperate alternative, (post)socialist forms of mass political participation" (2015: 642). Furthermore, Kurtovic and Hromadzic argue that:

> 2014 Bosnian revolt represents a grassroots effort to use historical materials to (re)imagine, evoke and activate a new kind of popular politics in Bosnia, which – all the while not completely divorced from the ethno- national matrices of the Dayton regime – seeks to rearticulate grounds for collective agency through socio-economic rather than identitarian forms of solidarity (2017: 266).

Thus, acting under a supra-national identity, through class consciousness, is not s totally eradicated form of behaviour in today's Bosnia, although coming to terms with the war crimes is still contested within the society.

A healthy multi-ethnic co-existence and reconciliation in Bosnian society requieres, first and foremost, a successful coming to terms with the war years and the war crimes, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section. Hence, to what extent the perpetrators have been arrested or punished is a starting point to see the influence of the international law and justice in Bosnia. The Dayton Agreement also established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and international actors got involved in this trial process. Humphrey explains the prosecutions in the ICTY in detail:

> Prosecutions by international criminal tribunals are not merely interventionist. They are necessarily designed to be re-constitutive of national law. It is not enough just to substitute international for national judicial enforcement; it is necessary to create the very possibility of re-creating moral social relationships and community and therefore national justice. The emphasis on the restoration of national justice is reflected in the trend to support national courts to enforce international law in preference to international judicial intervention (Humphrey 2003: 498).

Although the ICTY aimed to re-construct social relations in line with justice, Humphrey also claims that:

> When prosecutions seek to individualize responsibility for mass atrocity they necessarily end up, for practical and political reasons, as selective. The sheer number of offences makes the prosecution of every offence impossible. The practical problems of time, expense and the volume of evidence required to prosecute all offences means that neither all perpetrators can be prosecuted nor all victims compensated. In addition, political obstruction by states that refuse to extradite indicates or prevent access to evidence, or simply the lack of sufficient evidence to undertake successful prosecutions, only serves to increase the selectivity of prosecutions. And because the prosecution of large-scale atrocity is necessarily selective and can never be universal it turns prosecutions into politically and symbolically managed events which must seek to maximize public acceptance of the trial process itself, the story revealed through the testimonies of victims and the justice of the judgements (2003: 499).

Thus, Karcic's argument of "living with their perpetrators" turns into an everyday reality of the folks of Bosnia (2022: 7) due the selective nature of the ICTY and the tremendous amount of individual crimes during the war years.

Are the symbolic punishments satisfactory for the victims? The answer of this question relies on insufficient reconciliation attempts and living traumas of the witnesses. To what extent the

post-war atmosphere also influences identity construction is another important question. In the next Chapter, I will focus on the importance of collective memory during the identity construction from different prisms in the case of Bosnia.

Chapter 3 - Literature review on identity formation and collective memory in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The literature on identity politics discusses different aspects of Bosnia-Herzegovinannes and (ethnic) identity construction process, such as the Bosnian War (Shannon 2005; Halilovich 2013), the Bosnian refugees (Bikmen 2013), public monuments (Torsti 2004; Hayden 2007), and split memory (Ringelheim 1997; Jacobs 2017). All are vital in understanding current Bosnian identity. On the other hand, existing research mainly underlines the importance of the legacies of the war years for understanding the mutual relation between Bosnian-Herzegovinian identity and collective memory.

First, as I mentioned above, Bosnian war is assumed as a turning point to re-write, re-locate, and re-constitute all ethnic group identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) due to its destructive effect on peoples' quotidian practices as I mentioned above, especially in the section of after the war. Connotationally, there are three different ethnic groups constitutionally in BiH: Bosnian Muslims (majority), Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats. However, there are also minority groups, such as Turks, Albanians, Jews and Roma people (although they do not have minority rights according to the Bosnian constitution). Some of these groups have historically been among the socially excluded groups of Eastern Europe, like Jews and Roma people, but their ethnic and ethno-religious fragmentation were not a concern during socialist Yugoslavia. "The majority of Bosnian Muslims and many of the other Bosnians – Serb, Croat, Jew, Gypsy, and others – rejected the identification of religion and nationhood. These people considered themselves Bosnian" just from the very beginning of the war (Sells 1996: 8).

To Shannon, the war also destroyed "those groups' collective memory", and during the war years, "personal, collective, and archival memories were all manipulated so that historical memory too might be changed" (2005: 1-4). Hence, collective memory turns into a more

ethnicized term because of the war among different ethnic groups, and its main function changes for the sake of constituting an ethnically-driven history dictation. Furthermore, Halilovich signifies the tie between memory and identity, and he argues that "memory and identity are embodied experiences of real people and the communities they belong to" in BiH (2013: 1). He also claims that the onset of the war has a distinct collective memory and the pre-war life in BiH is essential evidences to understand that "Bosnian cultural diversity is not the source of the conflict" (2013: 4). During the burning of the National Library in Sarajevo in 1992, some Croats, Serbs, Muslims and Jews "were willing to risk their lives to save" many books and manuscripts (Sells 1996: 2). It shows that at the start of the war the society in BiH was not necessarily ethnically fragmented.

Secondly, the refugees of the war are important because there is a radical change in internal homeland, and it leads to the emergence of small external places for the co-habituation of ethnic friends. Hence, their collective memory also serves the purpose of tracing identity re-construction processes and imagination of new "others" because they are still members of their ethnic groups despite their forced migration. For Bourhis, Turner and Gagnon, salience of belonging to an ethnic group requires an attempt to re-interpret behaviours of out-groups continuously (1997). Bikmen states that Bosnian refugees and immigrant are more likely to remember their pasts by referring to their peaceful co-existence with different ethnic groups, but now "Bosnian Muslims (refugees and immigrants) they surveyed were unlikely to forgive Bosnian Serbs for their behaviour during the war" (2013: 26). Expectedly, even the population who faced less conflicts have re-shaped collective memory in line with ethnic animosity.

Destruction of historical monuments and architectures during the war are also part of the re-construction process of collective memory and ethnic identities. According to Torsti, the destruction aimed to ruin material heritages of Ottomans in Bosnia in the dissolution wars. "One

example is Banja Luka, the capital of the Serb Republic in Bosnia, where all sixteen historic mosques were destroyed" (2004: 143-144). Further, the destruction of *Mostar* Bridge, the iconic symbol of the Bosniaks, by Bosnian Croats in the war has led to fragmentation and traumatization of Bosnians memories. For Hayden, "old Bridge can never be renewed and restored to what it was" (2007: 109). Thus, those material attacks can be interpreted as a permanent damage in the collective memory of Bosnians. Those attacks have also re-constructed Bosniak identity by alienating Bosnian Serbs and Croats.

Further, one of the most contested issues is gendered collective memory of the war in the literature. For Ringelheim, there is a "split memory" in genocide societies during commemorations (1997). This gendered perspective is also detectable in Bosnian War memories. Jacobs argues that "while men are recalled through their deaths, their remains, and the cemetery that commemorates their loss and sacrifice, women are remembered as tragic figures of motherhood" in the memorial at Srebrenica (2017: 10). Furthermore, rape and any sexual assaults are systematic gendered war crimes, and their post-war memorialization destroys pre-war collective memory, which had relatively less patriarchal references.

As mentioned-above, the main reference in the literature is the Bosnian War and its impact on the formation of Bosnian identity. Therefore, in light of existing research, certain ethnic differentiations are inevitable for understanding "Bosnianness". However, although these works do not refer to orientalist perspectives, they do not discuss the peaceful co-existence periods during socialist Yugoslavia either. Nor do they focus on identity formation under a supra-ethnic rule and its extension in today's practices among Bosnian people. Moreover, co-habitation of distinct ethnic groups is not analysed in terms of their socio-economic relations/positions and political rights during the Yugoslavian era to see the main characteristics of this supra-ethnic identity and its possible remnants in the current atmosphere. That's why in

the next section I will look at the issue of identity construction in the context of Bosnia in a much more narrow space: museums.

For Falk, museums are like "a complex sociological and psychological construct assembled from a myriad of sources" (2010: 153). Therefore, museums are micro-spaces to trace changes, ruptures, or continuations in identities, and I aim to demonstrate how either private and public museums reflect the war years and draw the borders of identities. After critical analysis of the existing studies, the expected result is the exhibition of demarcated ethnic borders in the narratives of museums. However, I will also draw attention to how museums can also reflect the extension of the co-existence habitude.

3.1. An example: identity formation and collective memory through the museums in Sarajevo

In Autumn 2021, I visited Sarajevo to decide which museums I need to analyse and to re-visit the selected museums for a complete analysis. I selected the capital, Sarajevo, because Sarajevo is not just the official capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it has also been the cultural capital for centuries. Today, there is a consociational democracy in Bosnia between the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serbian Republic, and although Sarajevo is a part of the Bosniak-Croat federative structure, it is also the capital of the entire state. Thus, despite the Bosniak majority, there are still Croats and Serbs in Sarajevo.[8] But, is their existence reflected in the museums of Sarajevo? Or, to what extent does collective memory have a Yugoslav prism in the museums of Sarajevo?

When I started conducting my research on the history of identity construction in Bosnia, the narrative was constituted on the sorrows of Bosniak people in the literature as I demonstrated

[8] https://epthinktank.eu/2014/01/27/bosnia-2013-census/, accessed in October 19, 2021.

above. However, the mental legacy of the former Yugoslavia might still exist in the memory spaces of Bosnia, such as in the museums. Thus, I decided to empirically analyse a bunch of private and public history museums in Sarajevo through my personal visits: War Childhood Museum, Museum of Crimes against Humanity and Genocide, and History Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina. After distinct visits and expeditions, I decided on these museums due to their comprehensive repertoires.

Banjeglay argues that "museums are, on the one hand, political spaces related to questions of representation and power, while on the other, they are also critical spaces that open the possibility to re-interpret the past and negotiate (political) identities" (2018: 2). This has pushed me to think of the possibility of equal (more or less) representation of sorrows or tragedies of distinct ethnic groups. James also notices that the main interpretation of the president, organizer, designer, or curator is generally embedded in the narrations of the museums (1996: 20), and to avoid that risk, I also focused on private museums that were designed in collaboration with different voices, not via state-sponsorship. Further, Falk states that "a visitor's prior knowledge of and experience with the setting" (2010: 153) might cause a biased interpretation, that's why I visited the selected museums many times and tried to directly reflect their narrations through direct citations and empirical objects.

My guide in Sarajevo, Nedim[9] (Bosniak, 24), helped me in understanding the narratives of the demonstrations. During our trips, we talked about the war years and the socialist period in former Yugoslavia, and he mainly referred to his father's memories. His father was a voluntary fighter in the Bosniaks' army "to defend his country" against "meaningless attacks" and the "ridiculous war". Nedim told me an interesting story on our way:

[9] In this section, I use these names with permission.

One of my father's Serbian friends, Zoran, escaped from the Yugoslav Army (under the control of the Serbs) two times. The third time, he was lucky enough because he escaped to the Bosniak side. He camouflaged himself for a period; then, thanks to help from his Bosniak friends and my father, he escaped to abroad before the end of the war. So, as you see, there were also Serbs who were against the war and all conflicts. There was not just black and white in the war, and radical Bosniaks were another evidence of it.

His father's memory opened another window for me to think about the possibility of recognition of the pains of distinct ethnic groups in Bosnia thanks to the ties, memories, and experiences of Yugoslav times. In addition, because Nedim is a member of the second-generation, he would be classified as a member of anger generation, according to Immler's categorization, since he learned about the pain of the war through the victims and through his family (2012: 271-275). Therefore, the fact that he told me about his father's Serbian friend shows even the members of the second-generation could not be generalized as ethno-nationalist.

War Childhood Museum

My first destination was the War Childhood Museum because I was curious about the inclusivity of its comprehensive representation. For example, does it really represent children of Sarajevo regardless of their ethnic affiliations? To find an answer this question, I visited the museum. It is a newly-founded museum (2017) in the Old Town of Sarajevo by Jasminko Halilovic. After my arrival, a guide directly mentioned its history and purpose and Jasminko Halilovic's book: *War Childhood: From Sarajevo to Syria, Memories of Life and Hope.* The writer and founder of the museum, Halilovic, certainly aimed to include the pain of all children during the war years regardless of their ethnic background. When I started to explore the museum, I realized that Halilovic purposefully represents the Sarajevo spirit in his private

museum, in other words sorrows and traumas of children are demonstrated without referring to an ethnic group as “the victim" or “the persecutor”.

I also detected the demonstration of similar pain among children war survivors in the museum. In this section, to show how ethnicity is not the main theme in the museum, especially in the narration of children’s perspective, I will display some photos[10] I took of testimonies of children survivors of the war that I took during my visits. To understand the children’s ethnic affiliation I mainly refer to their name since in Bosnia babies are generally named according to their ethno-religious communities’ names (Colic-Peisker 2005: 627). As I demonstrated in the “Ethnicity vs. religion” section, although ethnic and religious identities are not the same concepts, they almost overlap in the Bosnian context.

[10] In this part I will re-write the sentences in the photos if they are not readable.

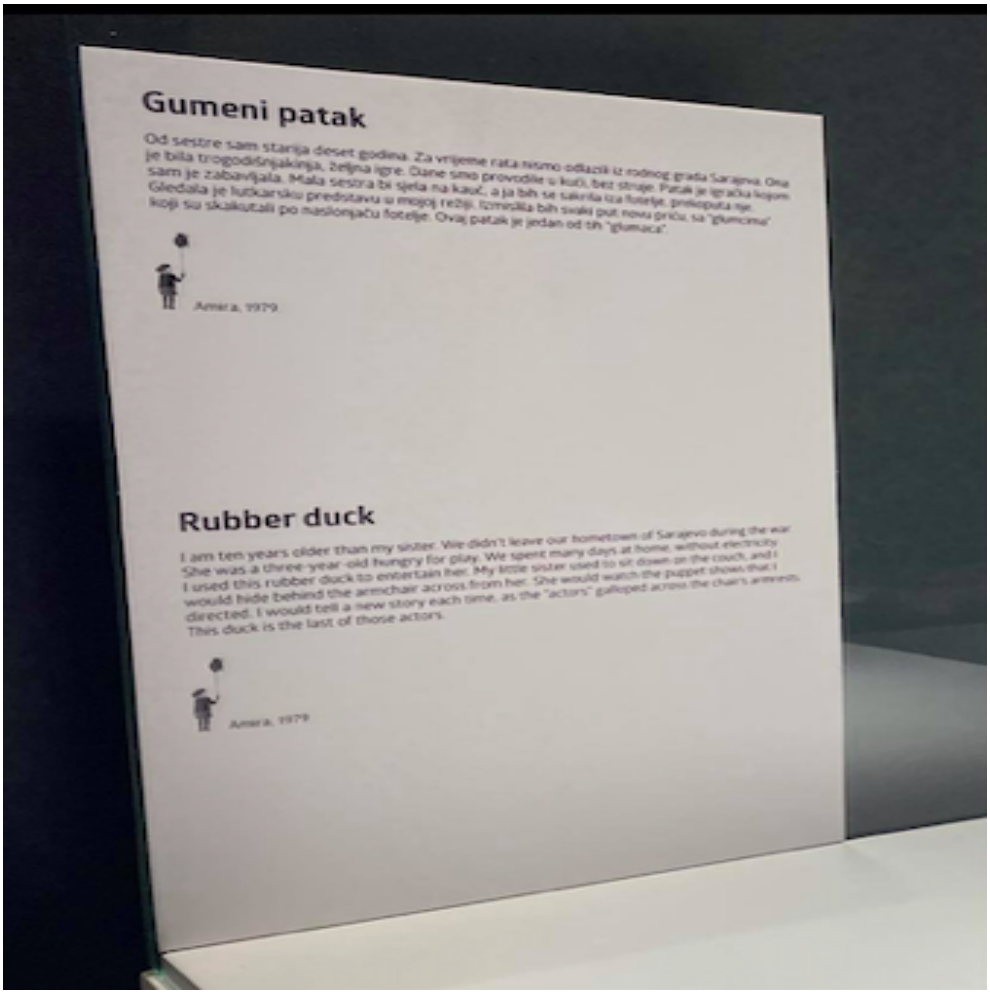


Photo – 1 – Amira, 1979 – Bosniak name – Rubber duck “I am ten years older than my sister. We didn’t leave our hometown of Sarajevo during the war. She was a three-year-old hungry for play. We spent many days at home, without electricity. I used this rubber duck to entertain her. My little sister used to sit down on the couch, and I would hide behind the armchair across from her. She would watch the puppet shows that I directed. I would tell a new story of each time, as the ‘actors’ galloped across the chair’s armrests. This duck is the last of those actors.”

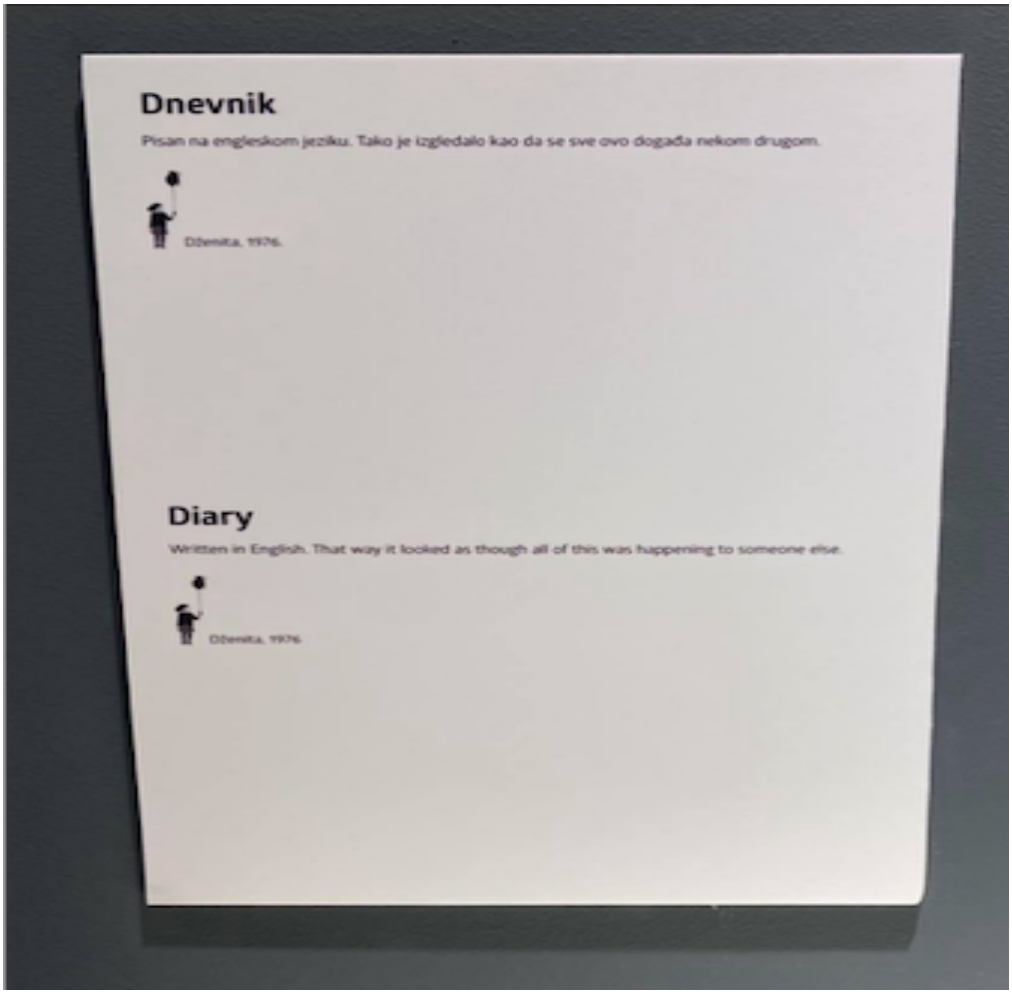


Photo 2 – Dzenita, 1976 – Bosniak name – Diary “Written in English. That way it looked as though all of this was happening to someone else.”

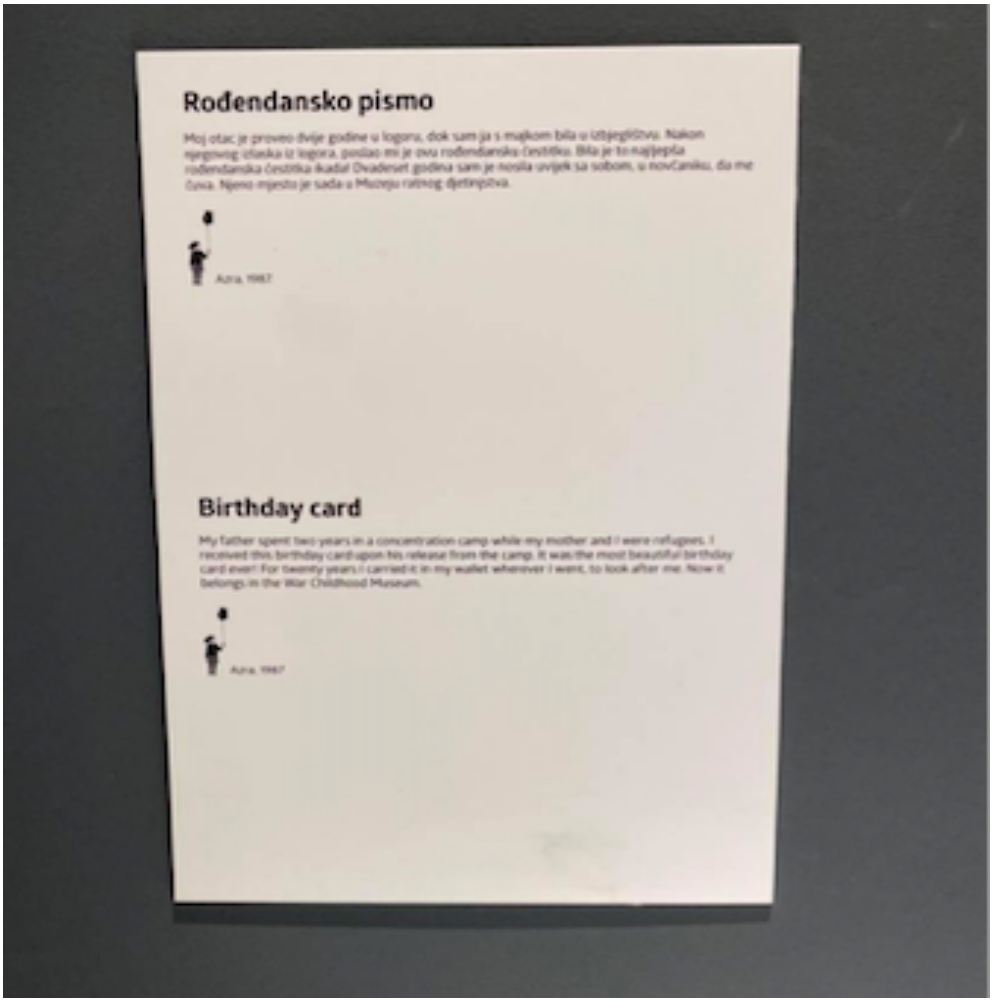


Photo 3 – Azra, 1997 – Bosniak name – Birthday card – "My father spent two years in a concentration camp while my mother and I were refugees. I received this birthday card upon his release from the camp. It was the most beautiful birthday card ever! For twenty years I carried it in my wallet wherever I went, to look after me. Now it belongs in the War Childhood Museum."

These painful testimonies of the children survivors of the war years were not categorized according to their ethnicity, I just understood their ethnicity by looking at their names. This is not a rigid rule, but their names are generally mirror of their ethnicity (Ibid.). The above-demonstrated photos contain testimonies belonging to Bosniaks; one of them, Azra's testimony, gives us a clue for understanding his family's origin because of his father's victim position in the concentration camp like many Bosniak men. There are also other testimonies, which belong to the children survivors who have Serbo-Croatian names, and their sorrows are clearly displayed without any reference to their ethnicity in the museum:

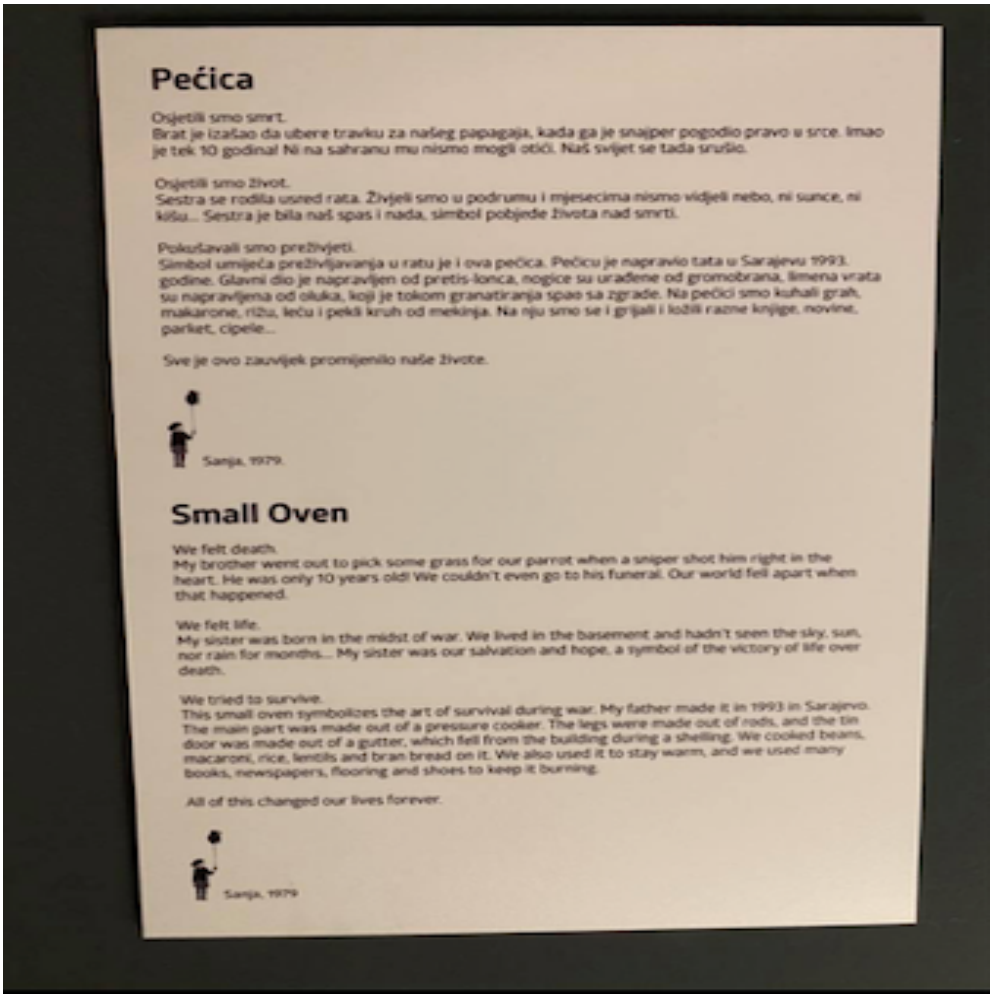


Photo 4 – Sanja, 1979 – Serbo-Croatian name – Small Oven – “We felt death. My brother went out to pick some grass for our parrot when a sniper shot him right in the heart. He was only ten years old! We couldn’t even go to his funeral. Our world fell apart when that happened. We felt life. My sister was born in the midst of war. We lived in the basement and hadn’t seen the sky, sun, nor rain for months… My sister was our salvation and hope, a symbol of the victory of life over death. We tried to survive. This small oven symbolizes the art of survival during war. My father made it in 1993 in Sarajevo. The main part was made out of a pressure cooker. The legs were made out of rods, and the tin door was made out of a gutter, which fell from the building during a shelling. We cooked beans, macaroni, rice, lentils and bran bread on it. We also used it to stay warm, and we used many books, newspapers, flooring and shoes to keep it burning. All of this changed our lives forever.”

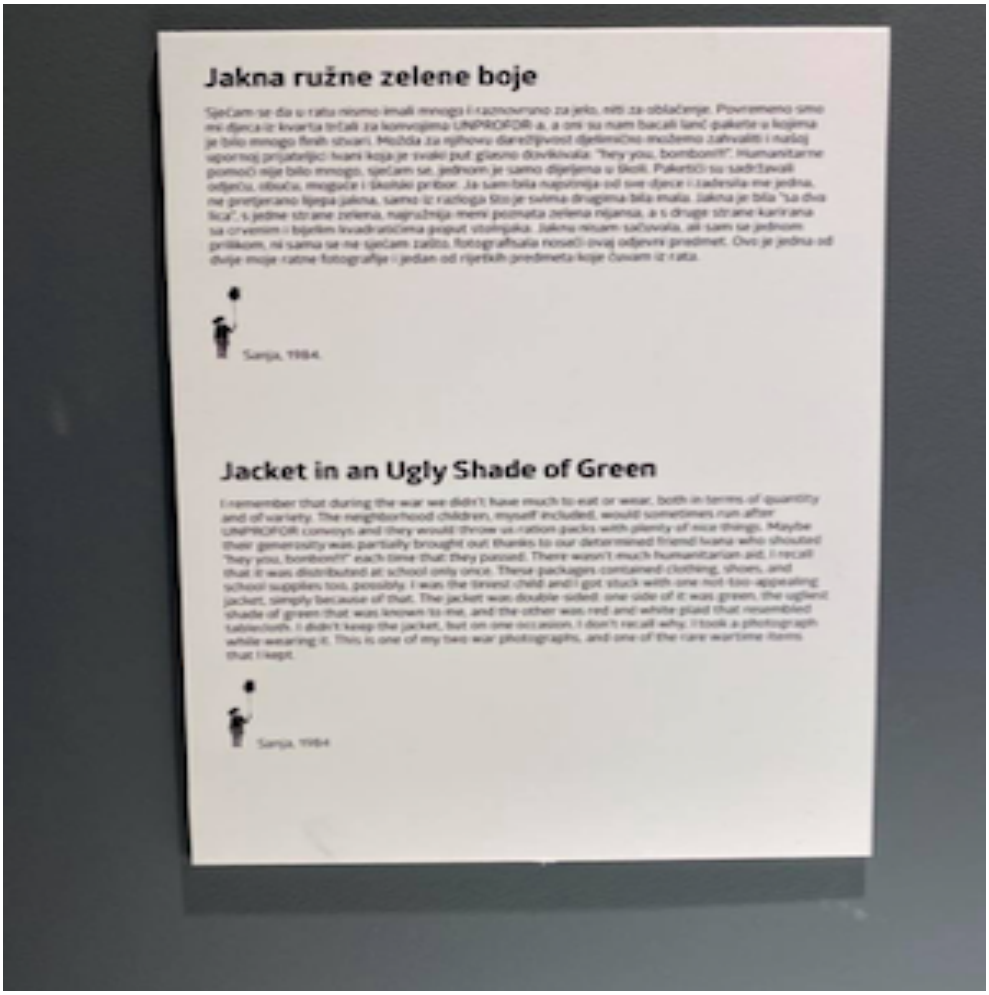


Photo 5 – Sanja, 1984 – Serbo-Croatian name – Jacket in an Ugly Shade of Green "I remember that during the war we didn't have much to eat or wear, both in terms of quantity and of variety. The neighbourhood children, myself included, would sometimes run after UNPROFOR convoys and they would throw us ration packs with plenty of nice things. Maybe their generosity was partially brought out thanks to our determined friend Ivana who shouted 'hey you, bonbon!!!' each time that they passed. There wasn't much humanitarian aid, I recall that it was distributed at school only once. These packages contained clothing, shoes, and school supplies too, possibly. I was the tiniest child and I got stuck with one not-too-appealing jacket, simply because of that. The jacket was double-sided: one side of it was green, the ugliest shade of green that was known to me, and the other was red and white plaid that resembled tablecloth. I didn't keep the jacket, but on one occasion, I don't recall why, I took a photograph while wearing it. This is one of my few war photographs, and one of the rare wartimes items that I kept."

This narration of sorrows and pains among Serb and Croat children is an example of a narrative that dissolves ethnic borders although they are rigid in today's Bosnia. Further, there are many examples in Halilovic's book that contain distinct war narratives regardless of ethnic origins.

Museum of Crimes against Humanity and Genocide

Brown and Millington argue that genocide museums or memory spaces aim "to reinforce the legitimacy of the new government" (2015: 31). In the case of Bosnia, the issue of

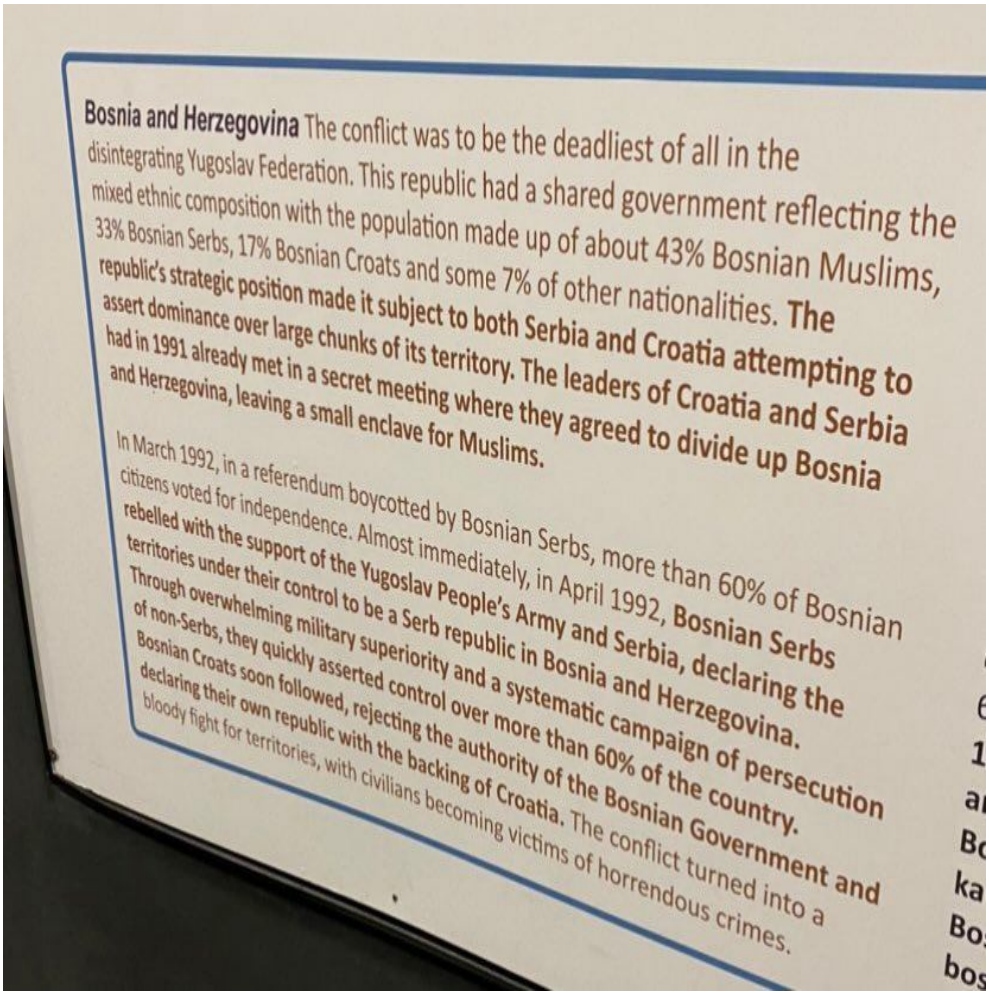
"reinforcement" might be connected with visibility of ethnic identities since they are one of the most concrete results of the war. Therefore, when I entered the museum, I knew that this genocide museum would directly centralize the victims, today's ethnic majority Bosniaks, by highlighting their pains. On the other hand, although conflicts and systematic persecutions caused Bosniak genocide, people from other ethnic affiliations were also victims of the war.

Museum of Crimes against Humanity and Genocide is another newly-founded museum (2016), again in the Old Town of Sarajevo. Further, like the War Childhood Museum, it is a private museum. There are collected items and testimonies of the genocide survivors, especially from the concentration camps in the museum. In addition, there are official records and documents of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. During my visit to the museum, I planned to ask some questions about history, motivation and the main aim of the museum to the person who sells the ticket because there was other employee. However, I could not ask these questions because a genocide survivor was visiting the museum at the time. She was very fragile and emotional and the sole employee of the museum was helping this old lady. After she went outside, the ticket seller came to me, and started to speak:

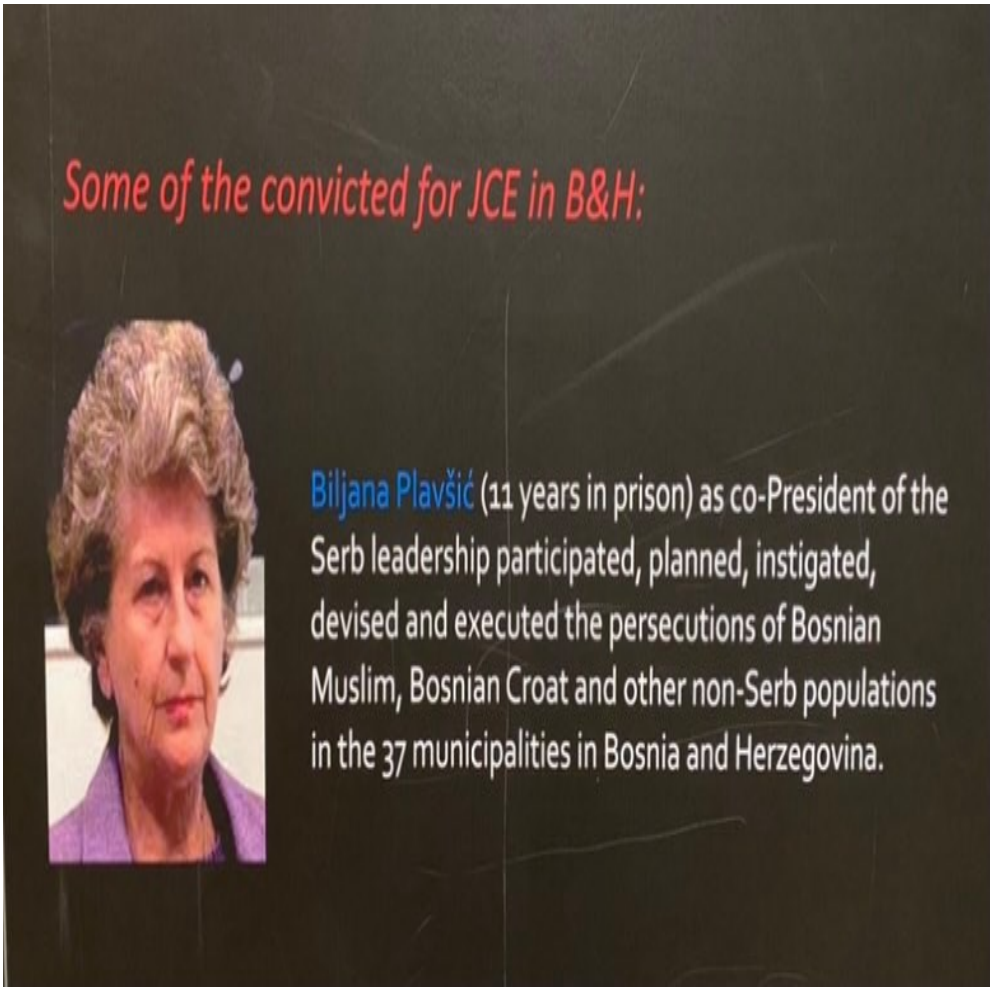
> *I have been working here for a year, but I never experienced something like that. This lady is a genocide survivor, and she donated many things to the museum. She lost many members of her family in front of her eyes. I felt too many things, but also I felt nothing when she was crying in the museum.*

After these words, I could not bring myself to ask anything about the perception or narrative of the museum. The atmosphere did not permit me to ask anything about victimization. Therefore, in this part I will directly demonstrate the empirical testimonies or citations to discuss the conceptualization of the museum.

The first narration I would like to discuss is about the perception of victimhood in the museum. In contrast to the War Childhood Museum, the museum aims to exhibit the pains and traumas of mainly "Bosniaks" and then "non-Serb":

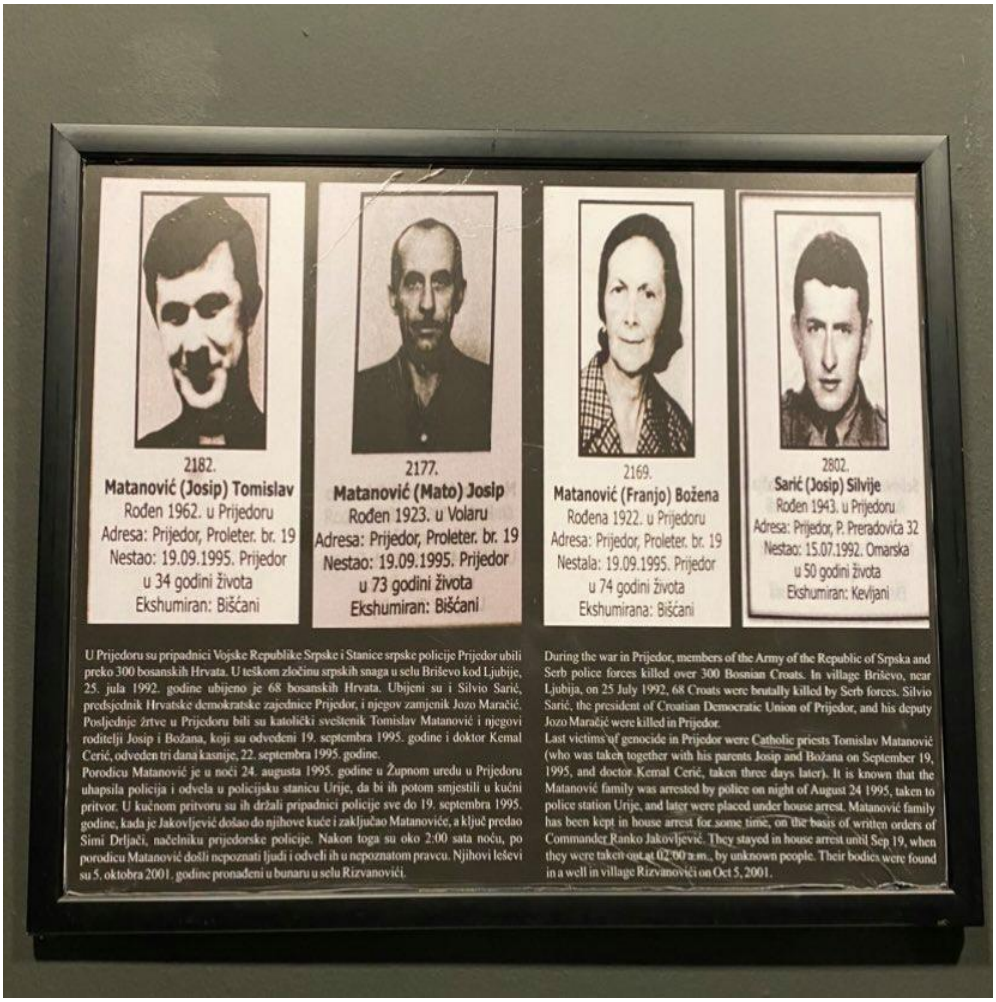


As this photo demonstrate, the beginning of the war is associated with the decisions of "the leaders of Croatia and Serbia", and "the systematic campaign of persecution of non-Serbs" underlines the borders of the "victims" by eliminating the Serbian experience. As I mentioned above, this is expected in a genocide museum. This narration is reinforced with other illustrations:



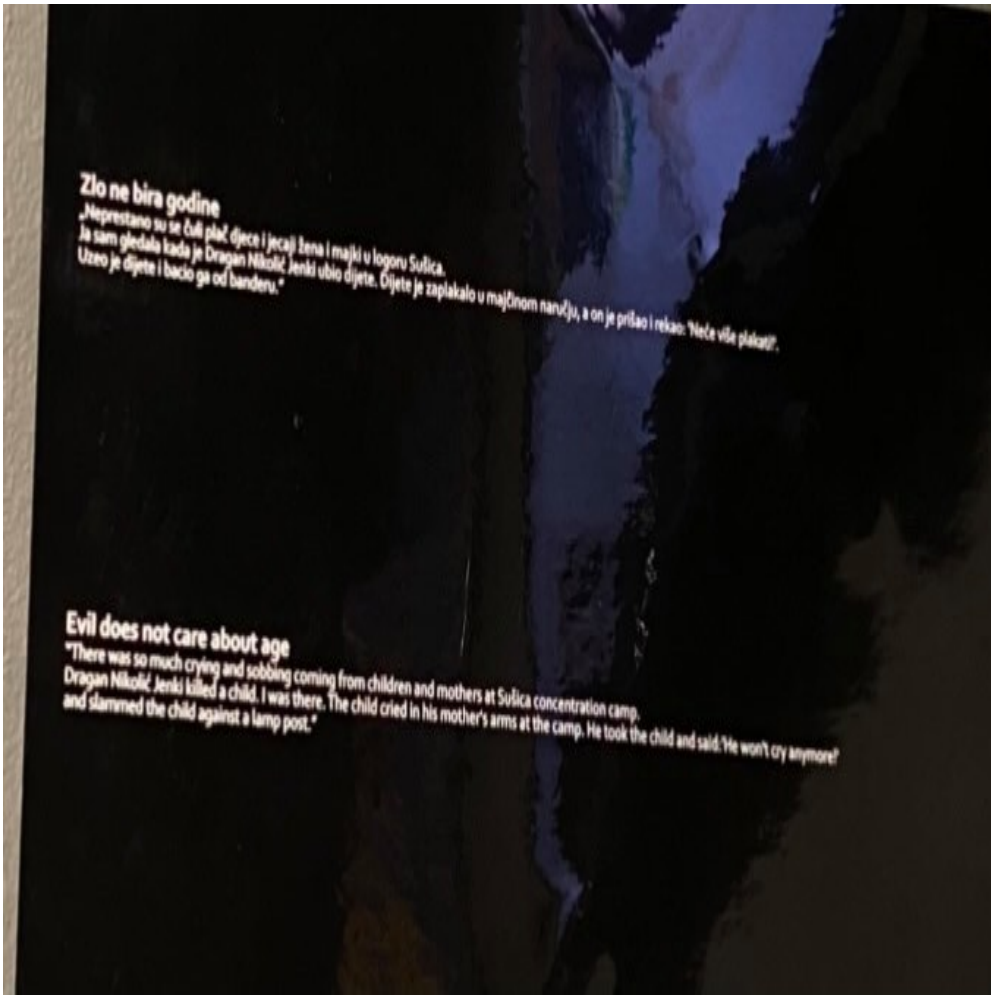
The nationalist leaders and their decisions that caused genocide are openly displayed. Further, the focus on "non-Serb" victimhood is reinforced via distinct illustrations and explanations.

Yet, although the testimonies mainly centralize Bosniaks' experiences and traumas, there are also several exhibitions that focus on the sorrows of the Bosnian Croats:



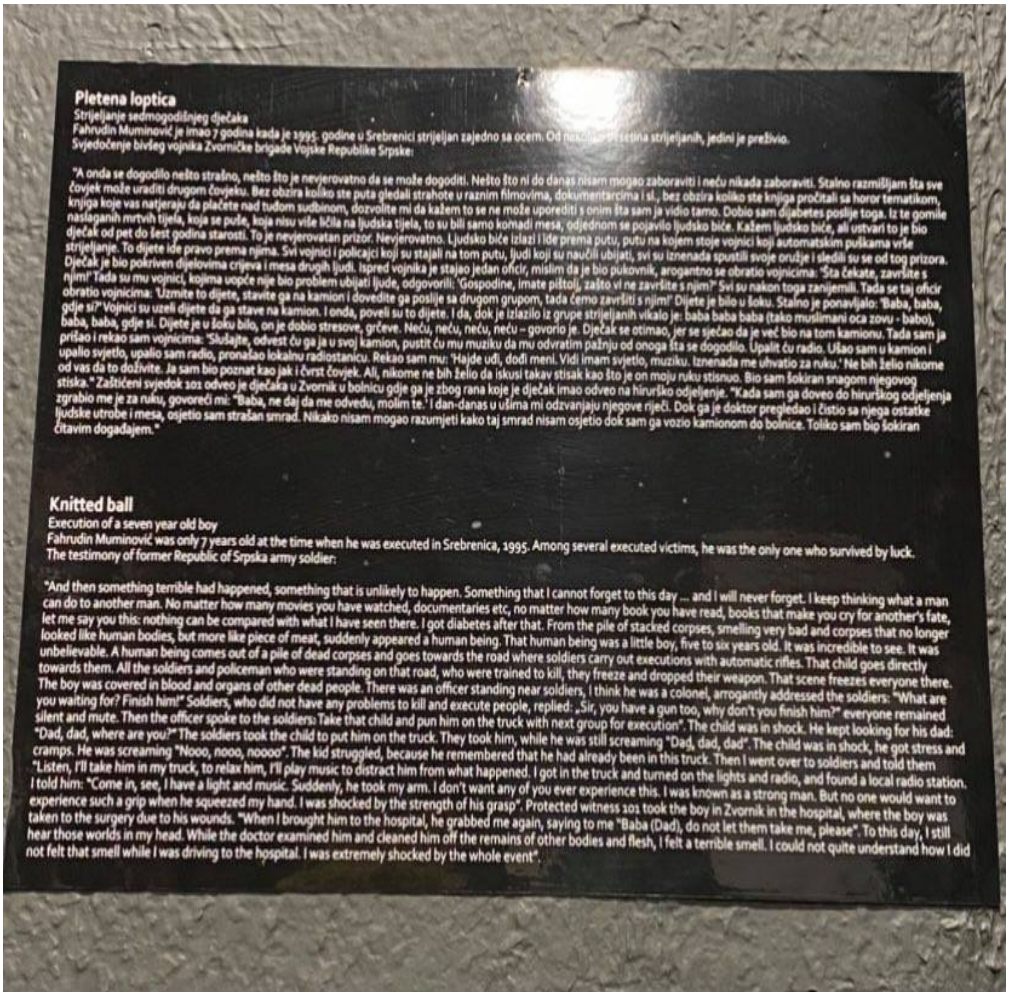
"During the war in Prijedor, members of the Army of the Republic of Srpska and Serb police forces killed over 300 Bosnian Croats. In village Brisevo, near Ljubija, on 25 July 1992, 68 Croats were brutally killed by Serb forces. Silvio Saric, the president of Croatian Democratic Union of Prijedor, and his deputy Jozo Maracis were killed in Prijedor. Last victims of genocide in Prijedor were Catholic Priests Tomislav Matanovic (who was taken together with his parents Josip and Bozana on September 19, 1995, and doctor Kemal Ceric, taken three days letter). It is known that the Matanovic family was arrested by police on night of August 24 1995, taken to police station Urije, and later were placed under house arrest. Matanovic family has been kept in house arrest for some time, on the basis of written orders of Commander Ranko Jakovljevic. They stayed in house arrest until Sep 19, when they were taken out at 02.00 a.m. by unknown people. Their bodies were found in a well in village Rizvanovici on Oct 5. 2001."

As this quote underlines, Bosnian Croats are also framed as victims of the genocide although "the leaders of Croatia and Serbia" are presented as the main catalysers of the nationalist wars, to the extent that some of them are called "evil":



Evil does not care about age – "There was so much crying and sobbing coming from children and mothers at Susica concentration camp. Dragan Nikolic Jenki killed a child. I was there. The child cried in his mother's arms at the camp. He took the child and said: 'He won't cry anymore!' and slammed the child against a lamp post."

This victim directly recalls the persecutor's name, Jenki (his nickname), a war criminal and one of the nationalist Serbian figures in the dissolution wars, and classifies Jenki as "evil". At the same time, even on the side of "the evil" there are some dissonant voices that are even exhibited in the museum:



Pletena loptica

Strijeljanje sedmogodišnjeg dječaka

Fahrudin Muminović je imao 7 godina kada je 1995. godine u Srebrenici strijeljan zajedno sa ocem. Od nekolicine preživjelih strijeljanih, jedini je preživio.

Svjedočenje bivšeg vojnika Zvorničke brigade Vojske Republike Srpske:

"A onda se dogodilo nešto strašno, nešto što je nevjerovatno da se može dogoditi. Nešto što ni do danas nisam mogao zaboraviti i neću nikada zaboraviti. Stalno razmišljam šta sve čovjek može uraditi drugom čovjeku. Bez obzira koliko ste puta gledali strahote u raznim filmovima, dokumentarcima i sl., bez obzira koliko ste knjiga pročitali sa horor tematikom, knjiga koje vas natjeraju da plačete nad tudom sudbinom, dozvolite mi da kažem to se ne može uporediti s onim šta sam ja vidio tamo. Dobio sam dijabetes poslije toga. Iz te gomile naslaganih mrtvih tijela, koja se puše, koja nisu više ličila na ljudska tijela, to su bili samo komadi mesa, odjednom se pojavilo ljudsko biće. Kažem ljudsko biće, ali ustvari to je bio dječak od pet do šest godina starosti. To je nevjerovatan prizor. Nevjerovatno. Ljudsko biće izlazi i ide prema putu, putu na kojem stoje vojnici koji automatskim puškama vrše strijeljanje. To dijete ide pravo prema njima. Svi vojnici i policajci koji su stajali na tom putu, ljudi koji su naučili ubijati, svi su iznenada spustili svoje oružje i sledili su se od toga prizora. Dječak je bio pokriven djelovima crijeva i mesa drugih ljudi. Ispred vojnika je stajao jedan oficir, mislim da je bio pukovnik, arogantno se obratio vojnicima: 'Šta čekate, završite s njim!' Tada su mu vojnici, kojima uopće nije bio problem ubijati ljude, odgovorili: 'Gospodine, imate pištolj, zašto vi ne završite s njim?' Svi su nakon toga zanijemili. Tada se taj oficir obratio vojnicima: 'Uzmite to dijete, stavite ga na kamion i dovedite ga poslije sa drugom grupom, tada ćemo završiti s njim!' Dijete je bilo u šoku. Stalno je ponavljalo: 'Baba, baba, gdje si?' Vojnici su uzeli dijete da ga stave na kamion. I onda, poveli su to dijete. I da, dok je izlazilo iz grupe strijeljanih vikalo je: baba baba baba (tako muslimani oca zovu - babo), baba, baba, gdje si. Dijete je u šoku bilo, on je dobio stresove, grčeve. Neću, neću, neću, neću – govorio je. Dječak se otimao, jer se sjećao da je već bio na tom kamionu. Tada sam ja prišao i rekao sam vojnicima: 'Slušajte, odvest ću ga ja u svoj kamion, pustit ću mu muziku da mu odvratim pažnju od onoga šta se dogodilo. Upalit ću radio. Ušao sam u kamion i upalio svjetlo, upalio sam radio, pronašao lokalnu radiostanicu. Rekao sam mu: 'Hajde udi, dođi meni. Vidi imam svjetlo, muziku. Iznenada me uhvatio za ruku.' Ne bih želio nikome od vas da to doživite. Ja sam bio poznat kao jak i čvrst čovjek. Ali, nikome ne bih želio da iskusi takav stisak kao što je on moju ruku stisnuo. Bio sam šokiran snagom njegovog stiska." Zaštićeni svjedok 101 odveo je dječaka u Zvornik u bolnicu gdje ga je zbog rana koje je dječak imao odveo na hirurško odjeljenje. "Kada sam ga doveo do hirurškog odjeljenja zgrabio me je za ruku, govoreći mi: "Baba, ne daj da me odvedu, molim te.' I dan-danas u ušima mi odzvanjaju njegove riječi. Dok ga je doktor pregledao i čistio sa njega ostatke ljudske utrobe i mesa, osjetio sam strašan smrad. Nikako nisam mogao razumjeti kako taj smrad nisam osjetio dok sam ga vozio kamionom do bolnice. Toliko sam bio šokiran čitavim događajem."

Knitted ball

Execution of a seven year old boy

Fahrudin Muminović was only 7 years old at the time when he was executed in Srebrenica, 1995. Among several executed victims, he was the only one who survived by luck.

The testimony of former Republic of Srpska army soldier:

"And then something terrible had happened, something that is unlikely to happen. Something that I cannot forget to this day ... and I will never forget. I keep thinking what a man can do to another man. No matter how many movies you have watched, documentaries etc, no matter how many book you have read, books that make you cry for another's fate, let me say you this: nothing can be compared with what I have seen there. I got diabetes after that. From the pile of stacked corpses, smelling very bad and corpses that no longer looked like human bodies, but more like piece of meat, suddenly appeared a human being. That human being was a little boy, five to six years old. It was incredible to see. It was unbelievable. A human being comes out of a pile of dead corpses and goes towards the road where soldiers carry out executions with automatic rifles. That child goes directly towards them. All the soldiers and policeman who were standing on that road, who were trained to kill, they freeze and dropped their weapon. That scene freezes everyone there. The boy was covered in blood and organs of other dead people. There was an officer standing near soldiers, I think he was a colonel, arrogantly addressed the soldiers: "What are you waiting for? Finish him!" Soldiers, who did not have any problems to kill and execute people, replied: „Sir, you have a gun too, why don't you finish him?" everyone remained silent and mute. Then the officer spoke to the soldiers: Take that child and pun him on the truck with next group for execution". The child was in shock. He kept looking for his dad: "Dad, dad, where are you?" The soldiers took the child to put him on the truck. They took him, while he was still screaming "Dad, dad, dad". The child was in shock, he got stress and cramps. He was screaming "Nooo, nooo, nooooo". The kid struggled, because he remembered that he had already been in this truck. Then I went over to soldiers and told them "Listen, I'll take him in my truck, to relax him, I'll play music to distract him from what happened. I got in the truck and turned on the lights and radio, and found a local radio station. I told him: "Come in, see, I have a light and music. Suddenly, he took my arm. I don't want any of you ever experience this. I was known as a strong man. But no one would want to experience such a grip when he squeezed my hand. I was shocked by the strength of his grasp". Protected witness 101 took the boy in Zvornik in the hospital, where the boy was taken to the surgery due to his wounds. "When I brought him to the hospital, he grabbed me again, saying to me "Baba (Dad), do not let them take me, please". To this day, I still hear those worlds in my head. While the doctor examined him and cleaned him off the remains of other bodies and flesh, I felt a terrible smell. I could not quite understand how I did not felt that smell while I was driving to the hospital. I was extremely shocked by the whole event".

Knitted ball – Execution of a seven year old boy – Fahrudin Muminovic was only 7 years old at the time when he was executed in Srebrenica, 1995. Among several executed victims, he was the only one who survived by luck. The testimony of former Republic of Srpska army soldier: "And then something terrible had happened, something that is unlikely to happen. Something that I cannot forget to this day… and I will never forget. I keep thinking what a man can do to another man. No matter how many movies you have watched, documentaries etc, no matter how many book you have read, books that make you cry for another's fate, let me say you this: nothing can be compared with what I have seen there. I got diabetes after that. From the pile of stacked corpses, smelling very bad and corpses that no longer looked like human bodies, but more like piece of meat, suddenly appeared a human being. That human being was a little boy, five to six years old. It was incredible to see. It was unbelievable. A human being comes out of a pile of dead corpses and goes towards the road where soldiers carry out executions with automatic rifles. That child goes directly towards them. All soldiers and policeman who were standing on that road, who were trained to kill, they freeze and dropped their weapon. That scene freezes everyone there. The boy was covered in blood and organs of other dead people. There was an officer standing near soldiers, I think he was a colonel, arrogantly addressed the soldiers: 'What are you waiting for? Finish him!" Soldier, who did not have any problems to kill and execute people, replied: 'Sir, you have a gun too, why don't you finish him?' everyone remained silent and mute. Then the officer spoke to the soldiers: 'Take that child and put him on the truck with the next group of execution.' The child was in shock. He kept looking for his dad: 'Dad, dad, where are you?' The soldiers took the child to put him on the truck. They took him, while he was still screaming 'dad, dad, dad". The child was in shock, he got stress and cramps. He was screaming 'Nooo, nooo, nooooo". The kid struggled, because he remembered that he had already been in this truck. Then I went over to soldiers and told them 'Listen, I'll take him in my truck, to relax him, I'll play music to distract him from what happened". I got in the truck and turned on the lights and radio, and found a local radio station. I told him: 'Come in, see, I have a light and music. Suddenly, he took my arm. I don't want any of you ever experience this. I was known as a strong man. But no one would want to experience such a grip when he squeezed my hand. I was shocked by the strength of his grasp. Protected witness 101 took the boy in Zvornik in the hospital, where the boy was taken to surgery due to his wounds. 'When I brought him to the hospital, he grabbed me again, saying to me "Baba (Dad), do not

let them take me please". To this day, I still hear those words in my head. While the doctor examined him and cleaned him off the remains of other bodies and flesh, I felt a terrible smell. I could not quite understand how I did not feel that smell while I was driving to the hospital. I was extremely shocked by the whole event."

Exhibition of this testimony inherently underlines that even on "the evil"s side there might be more humanitarian and less evil figures. Although the genocide museum clearly demarcates the border between ethnic victim and ethnic persecutor, there are some testimonies like in the above example blurring that border.

History Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina

History Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina is the only public museum I selected. Founded in 1945 the museum's main theme was always changed in accordance with the distinct political atmospheres in Bosnia. The one employee of the museum during my visit told me that its name also changed according to the main political narration of the museum; and currently it focuses on the political history of Bosnia, especially its siege years (1992-1995). My motivation to select the History Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina derived from its historically comprehensive repertoire and its changing spirit as a public museum. I focus on the siege part of the museum in order to understand the importance of the ethnic conflicts in the identity formation. In the exhibition part one can find collected items of IGOs and NGOs, posters, photos in the exhibition part. Although it is a public museum, Banjeglay's in-depth research on this museum highlights that "from 1995 until today, the museum has had no legal status. It is one of the seven institutions that have been left floating in the air"[11] (2018: 7). Thus, it makes its position much more special in terms of the construction of narratives and representations of identities.

[11] "None of the ministries or levels of government have taken over responsibility either for appointing the museum management or for its finances" Banjeglay (2018: 7), and that's why the museum's legal status is questionable although it is a public museum."

The first narrative I detected in this museum is about the survival capacity of the folks of Sarajevo. During the siege, Sarajevo people did not give up their cultural activities and practices:

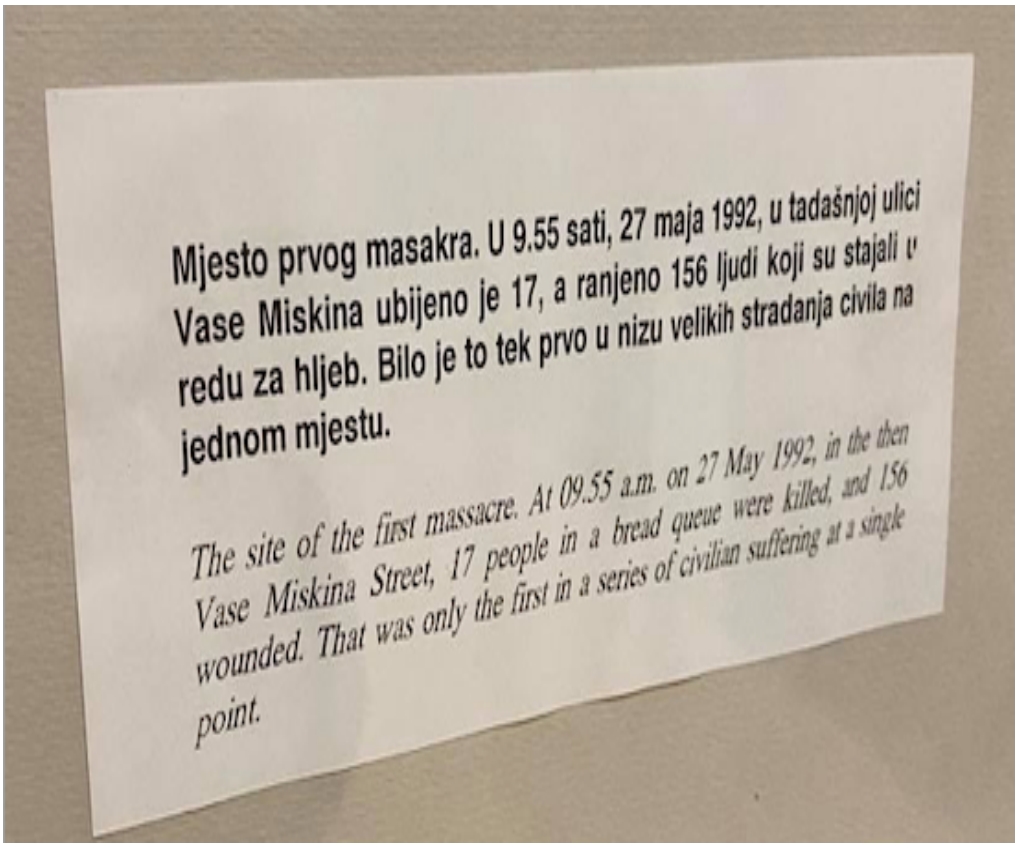
Bell's study underlines that all folks of Sarajevo insisted on keeping their rituals despite all chaotic experiences:

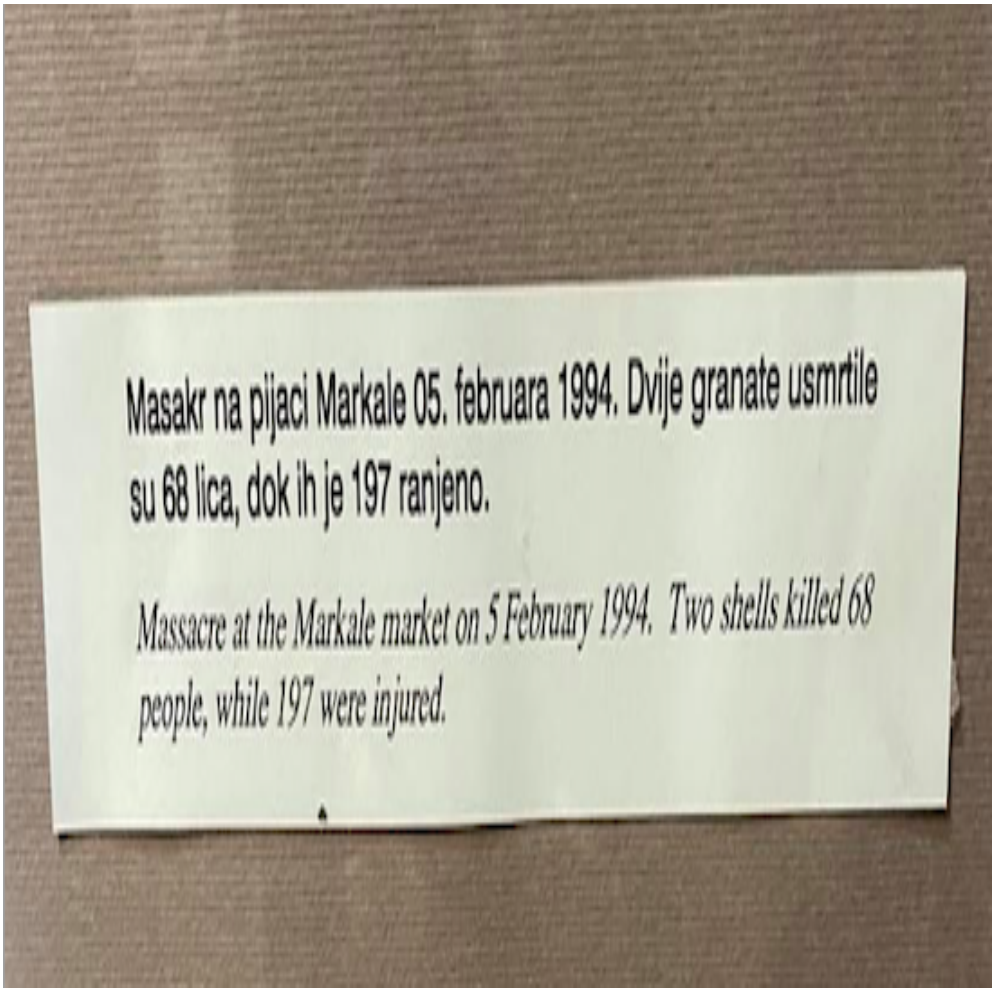
> Susan Sontag was invited to Sarajevo in 1993 to direct a production of *Waiting for Godot*. Because there was no electricity, the play was performed by candlelight. She wrote, 'Bombs went off, bullets flew past my head. . . . There was no food, no electricity, no running water, no mail, no telephone, day after day, week after week, month after month'. Far from it being frivolous to put on a play in such extreme circumstances, she saw the continuance of arts activities during the war as a 'serious expression of normality'. (2009: 137)

Another pattern that one can spot in this museum is the lack of emphasis put on ethnicity or religious identity. For example, in the below photo Bosnians' belief for the peace is demonstrated without any reference to ethnicity:

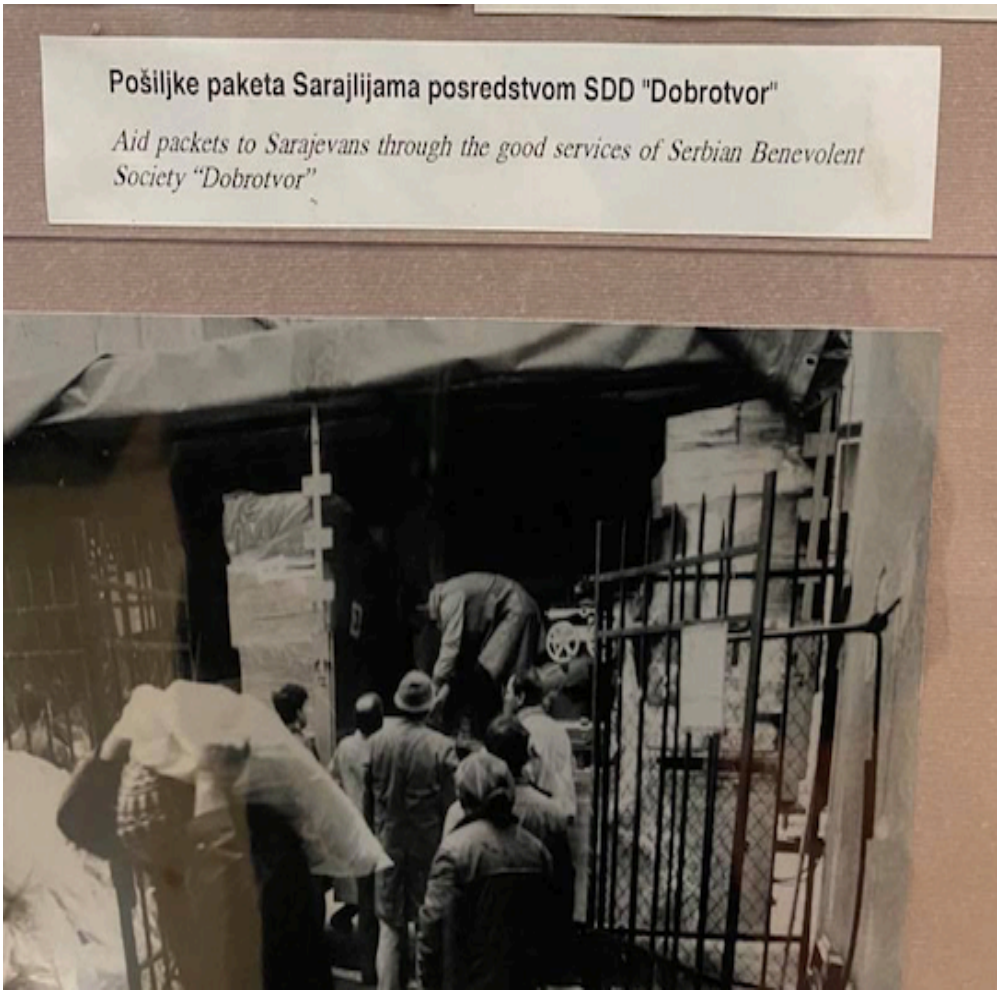
In the next photo, too, the folks of Sarajevo and their sorrow are narrated again without any reference to ethnicity and by focusing on a general "Bosnian victimhood":

Sve je ranjeno, i fasade, i duše, i ...
Everything is wounded, facades, and souls, and...


Mjesto prvog masakra. U 9.55 sati, 27 maja 1992, u tadašnjoj ulici
Vase Miskina ubijeno je 17, a ranjeno 156 ljudi koji su stajali u
redu za hljeb. Bilo je to tek prvo u nizu velikih stradanja civila na
jednom mjestu.
The site of the first massacre. At 09.55 a.m. on 27 May 1992, in the then
Vase Miskina Street, 17 people in a bread queue were killed, and 156
wounded. That was only the first in a series of civilian suffering at a single
point.



These photos I took during my visits further display that ethnicity or distinct religious communities are not demarcated in this museum while narrating the war. What I found most interesting in this museum was the depiction of a Serbian NGO, operating out of Serbia, and its helping Bosnian people during the siege:



All these items from different museums in Sarajevo show that the prism of museums about the Bosnian War is not demarcating ethnic borders in the pre-war and wartime Bosnia, and this challenges the main narrative of identity formation in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the war. Vivid Yugoslav prism in the narrations of the museums I discussed above opens a window of opportunity for analysing the existence of Yugo-nostalgia and its imagination in the form of anti-nationalism, especially among witness generations who experienced both the socialist period and the war years.

In the next section, I will analyse a possibility of collective nostalgia for supra-ethnic Yugoslav identity by focusing on its social, political, and economic features to comprehend the frame of Bosnian identity in the pre-war period. Such an analysis is also necessary for understanding

how and why certain ethnic groups in Bosnia are more likely to miss their Yugoslavian period. Then, I will discuss ethnic genocide as a collective trauma and how it contrasts with the collective nostalgia for a supra-ethnic identification in Bosnia

3.2. An example of collective nostalgia: Yugoslav identity

Social scientists have started to focus on post-communist or socialist nostalgia after the Cold War and the transition process from communism to neo-liberalism in the former republics or satellites of the USSR and socialist Yugoslavia (Ekman and Linde 2005; Lindstrom 2005; Todorova and Gille 2012; Prusik and Lewicka 2016). Etymologically, nostalgia derives from *nostos* (return to home in Greek) and *algos* (pain in Greek). Since its etymological origin shows a very general framework, before analysing the above-mentioned perspectives concerning post-communist or socialist nostalgia, it is important to examine Boym's two-pronged typology. Boym argues that nostalgia cannot be equated to a simple remembrance of the past by individuals or groups, rather, it can be either a choice to prefer living in the past because of its conditions (*restorative*) or the commemoration of the past with all its dimensions (*reflexive*) (2001). In the reflexive one, nostalgic agencies postpone imaging reconstruction of their home, but restorative nostalgia directly centralizes this possibility of reconstruction (Ibid. 20). In this thesis, I aim to demonstrate how distinct ethnic groups yearn for the past *restoratively*. I believe that their *restorative* nostalgia can help demonstrate the fluidity of ethnic boundaries in the Bosnian case.

For Ekman and Linde, the identity-driven nostalgies are the results of positive experiences during the communist period (2005). In line with that, Todorova and Gille state that the sum total of "the elements of disappointments, social exhaustion, economic recategorization, generational fatigue, and quest for dignity, but also an activist critique of the present using the past as a mirror" can be the definition of nostalgia in post-communist geography (2012: 7). Further, Prusik and Lewicka examine the case of Poland, and they argue that post-communist

nostalgia is a way to understand "happy youth" of the people who have experienced the communist periods (2016: 678). In the case of Yugo-nostalgia, there are currently several studies that demonstrate the positive images of socialist Yugoslavia through the collective memory of Yugoslav people (Maksimovic 2017; Volcic 2007). Therefore, post-communist or socialist societies' patterns of nostalgia constitute another puzzle: why did the people give up their collective communist or socialist identities?

To answer this question, the pivotal features of the communist and socialist regimes should be analysed in detail. In the case of socialist Yugoslavia, the concept of Yugoslav ideology also defines the characteristics of the socialist period. "The *theory* of socialist Yugoslavism, as set out in the 1958 Party Program, remained essentially unchanged in the years after 1966" (Budding 1997: 410). In the words of Lindstrom:

> A dominant ideological principle of socialist Yugoslavia was that the differences between the constituent Yugoslav peoples were not significant. Differences were not denied; on the contrary, SFRY was a federal state, comprised of republics defined in terms of their dominant national group. Yet "Brotherhood and unity" was based on the formal policy of equality among its constituent republics and nationalities (2005: 234).

Further, Perica states that brotherhood and unity was the Yugoslav civil religion among all republics and autonomous regions (2002). Hence, a collective identity becomes a supreme one over ethnic identities and belongings.

Teofil Pancic, writer for the Serbian weekly *Vreme*, states that Yugoslav identity was unique in terms of its qualities:

> We traveled wherever we wanted— where now we have to get a visa for almost everywhere. Concerning living standards, we used to say that we had everything—whereas *they* [citizens of other communist states] basically had nothing (cited in Lindstrom 2005: 235).

Yugoslav identity and its material forms, such as the Yugoslav passport, had a value among its members. Because Tito preferred to stay neutral during the Cold War, and he became one of the main figures of the non-alignment movement, Yugoslav identity opened a window of opportunity for the free movement of its citizens in a polarized world.

According to Estrin, Yugoslavia's self-managing economy also consolidated the peoples' belonging:

> A self-managed firm can be defined as a production unit in which the labor force as a whole take all the economic decisions through some democratic process. This group, which will henceforth be referred to as the collective, assumes the entrepreneurial role, and in return for bearing this organizational function and risk, receives the surplus of revenue over cost which is distributed among the group according to some pre-arranged mechanism. Moreover, the Yugoslavs have shown that democratic control of the work place is feasible (1983: 1-12).

Under the federative umbrella of socialist Yugoslavia, especially Bosnia was the centre of the peaceful co-existence of distinct ethnic groups during the socialist period:

> There was the socialist interpretation of Bosnia as a symbol of a united Yugoslavia. In this view, the state of Bosnia gained particular symbolic significance since its ethnic mix and history of multicultural existence was compatible with the highly promoted socialist slogan of *brotherhood and unity* (Alic and Gusheh 1999: 12).

Considering this positive atmosphere, why did the people give up their collective communist or socialist identities? As I have displayed in Chapter 3, ethnic hatred was triggered quickly as a revenge of economic depression of the 1970s and 1980s. Levin argues that "the sharp distinction between Croat Catholics, Orthodox Serbs, and Slavic Moslems in the Western Balkans seems to have been an outgrowth of modern nationalism, rather than ancient loyalties" (1992). Moreover, structural economic depression caused radical differentiation between "the centre" and "the periphery" of Yugoslavia (Kunitz 1996: 258-159; Girn 2019: 198), and workers' strikes turned into "large-scale popular mobilizations" (Bacevic 2014: 46). All economic agitations led to the polarization of Yugoslav society at the nexus of "self" and "other", and unifying function of the supra-ethnic identity was blurred.

The roots of the dissolution could also be found in the economic and social liberalizations of the 1960s and 1970s, which paved the way for questioning Yugoslav identity. "In 1965, Yugoslavia's ruling party, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) had indeed taken a 'liberal' turn, which consisted of a gradual process of economic liberalization in order to develop and modernise the country's industrial apparatus and link it to the Western European

system" (Zaccaria 2018: 221). This trend of liberalization continued in both economic and social spheres in the 1970s. Large-scale mobilizations of the 1980s originated from modernization and developments of the 1970s that caused the crystallization of ethnic groupism instead of class identities (Hodson et al. 1994: 1536) (in accordance with Gagnon's classification between reformists and statists during the liberalization years). For example, Dobrica Cosic, Serbian novelist, stated that Yugoslav identity is "a social and not a national category" in the late 1960s (Budding 1997: 409). This could be accepted as the first discursive attempt to hierarchize identities but the atmosphere of the 1960s was not about secession or conflictual tendencies.

Crystallization of ethnic groupism led to the marginalization of the "economically loser" Serbs in the 1970s:

> During their time in office, the liberals mounted a sustained effort to disentangle Serbia from Yugoslavia, and Serbian from Yugoslav identity, to free Serbia from its 'ballast of Yugoslavism.' The whole of their program is summarised in their slogan, A modern Serbia (Ibid. 412).

Therefore, the idea of modern Serbia turned into the idea of great Serbia by constituting exclusionary nationalism in the 1990s.

The main victims of Serbian aggression was the Bosniaks, but historically Serbs had more conflictual relations with Croats, and Godina argues that:

> The 'Serbo-Croat case' is an instructive one. Both Serbia and Croatia had their own, distinctive, and in some ways totally opposite historical, political and religious traditions. Serbia and Croatia had (before their integration into pre-war Yugoslavia) very different historical traditions (belonging, respectively, to the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires). Their religious traditions were also distinctive (Catholic and Orthodox), and their historical heritage, especially the political one from pre-war Yugoslavia, was one of conflict. Most historical analyses of pre-war Yugoslavia ('old' Yugoslavia) have foregrounded this Serbo-Croatian political conflict as one of the most - if not the most - important disintegrative characteristic of pre-war 'old' Yugoslavia (1998: 411).

On the other hand, Lampe states that their differences have historically been fluid and not as visible:

> After Napoleon's invasion in the Balkans, the French administrators of the Illyrian Provinces rejected the legitimacy not only of the old empires, but also of all medieval entities, the Croatian and Serbian states included. They saw Croat and Serb peasants speaking nearly the same language and displaying enough ethnic similarities to consider them as one people (1994: 74).

Hence, the polarization between Serbs and Croats was not about their minor and socially differentiated characters. The process of polarization was also constructed from up to bottom.

Despite this cleavage in Serbo-Croatian relations, Bosniaks were chosen as the main "other" by Serbs during their aggression in line with Serbian mythical references. As I explained in the former section, Bosnia's location in the Balkans, large Serbian population, and resistance against Serbs also hardened the tensions between the two. Serbian aggression in Bosnia reached its peak between 1992 and 1995, and the war was highly destructive for Bosnians. European states, all of which witnessed the Holocaust, failed to prevent another genocide from taking place in Europe. This genocide has been crucial in forming today's Bosnian identity, especially the Bosniak one.

Despite this collective trauma, is nostalgia for the socialist past possible? If so, how? Popovic argues that "a political generation born in the 1970s and 1980s" are possibly remember the Yugoslav past as an important period of their lives, but the members of this generation are unlikely to be Yugo-nostalgic (2017: 45). Yet, in my semi-structured interviews, I spotted to see a certain degree of nostalgia, especially the restorative one, for the socialist past among the members of the Bosnian society thanks to the conditions of that period. This nostalgia for a supra-ethnic period might demonstrate the people's less nationalistic sentiments and their belonging to the pre-trauma and ethnically differentiated period.

3.3. An example of collective trauma: genocide

Etymologically, the word trauma derives from the ancient Greek, and it means *wound*. In a collective sense, trauma is the wounds of a group who have commonly witnessed a case or a chain of cases in a violent and destructive manner. Social science literature considers genocide

to be the most visible and deep type of collective traumas. According to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, there are distinct definitions in accepting an act as a genocide:

> *a. Killing members of the group;*
> *b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the groups;*
> *c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
> *d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
> *e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.*
>
> United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (*https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml*)

Since all these acts traceable in the Bosnian case, according to the UN definition Serbia can clearly be said to have committed the crime of genocide during the dissolution wars. The legacy of the wars have then turned into the collective trauma of Bosnian people. In 1995, thanks to the efforts of the international community to initiate a normalization process in Bosnia, Dayton Peace Agreement was signed by the leaders of the three ethnic groups but Boerhout states that:

> BiH's peace agreement effectively institutionalized the ethno-national divisions that had been exacerbated during the war. The Dayton Agreement split the territory into two semi-autonomous entities headed by a weak central government: the Bosnian Serb-dominated *Republika Srpska* (RS) and the mainly Bosniak/Bosnian-Croat-dominated *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (FBiH) (2016: 179).

Hence, the post-war atmosphere could not heal the injuries of the Bosnian society because of demarcation of the ethnic borders within the society through the Dayton.

From the recent historical point of view, Bosniaks declared their independence in 1992, but this act hardened the Serbian nationalist aggression. The leader of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, and the leader of Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadzic, who "gained popular support in the 1980s, a period of economic and political instability following the death of Marshal Tito", played the ethnic card to escalate the tension for the sake of great Serbia (DiCaprio 2009: 75). On the other

hand, international community tried to be an inevitable actor in the region to prevent any possible crimes against the humanity from taking place:

> In April 1993, when the Bosnian Serbs were on the verge of capturing Srebrenica, the UN established Srebrenica as the first of six UN "safe areas" intended to protect Bosnian Muslim civilians from Bosnian Serb military operations (the other five: Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihac, Gorazde, and Zepa) (DiCaprio 2009: 78).

However, the UN's "safe area" initiations could not prevent the mass killings in Bosnia, especially in Srebrenica. Boskovic states that "Serbian aggression generated massacres and ethnic cleansing, culminating in Srebrenica in 1995, the mass destruction of cities such as Vukovar, Mostar, and Sarajevo, the latter of which was under siege for almost four years" (2013: 54). Therefore, this collective trauma has directly influenced ethnic identification across the entire Bosnia.

As I mentioned-above, the main reason for the dissolution wars was not about historical ethnic animosity among the groups. Rather, ethnic hatred was triggered during the war years to harden the tension. According to Fearon and Laitin:

> The conditions that favour insurgency – in particular state weakness marked by poverty, a large population, and instability – are better predicators of which countries are at risk for civil war than are indicators of ethnic and religious diversity or measures of grievances such as lack of democracy or civil liberties, or state discrimination against minority religions or languages (2003: 88).

Their argument derives from their quantitative (Large-N) research that measures the correlation between ethnicity and civil war, and ethnicity is coded as an independent variable. As a result, they claim, ethnic identities play an insignificant role in causing insurgencies or guerrilla warfare in diverse societies (Ibid. 88). I will argue that, in accordance with Fearon and Laitin's findings, the Bosnian genocide was the result of structural problems that were intensified by people's distinct ethnicities.

Further, Kalyvas argues that if ethnic identities are hardened during the (civil) wars, it is an explanation that consolidates the arguments of primordialists (2008). According to him, ethnic

identities can be also be neutral or softened during the civil wars in accordance with people's belief and ideologies (Ibid. 1046). For example, although Serbian nationalists forced all Serbs to kill Bosniaks, "Serbs in Serbia evaded military service in large numbers" (Sells 1996: 78). Therefore, the protests of Bosnian Serbs against the siege in Sarajevo are the demonstrate how ethnic identity was secondary or less important even during the war years. On the other hand, in her analysis of Bosniaks' memories on the wars, and Boerhout finds out that Bosnian Serbs who were against Serbian aggression are eliminated from Bosniaks' memories through nation-building due to the association of atrocities with Serbness (2016: 182).

Another case is the partial justice in the Bosnian society. Selimovic analyses that the Bosnian Serbs insist on an inclusive justice for the war crimes, including that were also committed against Serbs (2015). During the building of a nation, description of an "other" is inevitable, but in the Bosnian case, the "other" is selected according to modern national tensions, retrospectively. This is an expected legacy of the wars for Bosniaks who were the main targets of Serbs, but did this collective trauma change the entire social relations of the Bosnian society? Do all Bosnians display nationalistic sentiments during the post-war period?

Markowitz argues that the new Bosnian society is suspicious of "hybrid" identities that indicate ethnic mixtures because every ethnic group has its own imagined ethnic other (2007: 68). On the other hand, Boerhout states that "Sarajevan spirit" is not just a historical concept that can be seen as a legacy of the socialist period since there is currently an ongoing reconciliation process among the groups despite the consociational structure (2016: 181). Further, Kostovic argues that, despite all disasters they have experienced, the people of Sarajevo still call their city as the "Jerusalem of Europe" after all disasters (2001).

In the next chapter, I will explain my research design and provide details about what extent I could reach the people of Bosnia to analyse their own collective memory of both their socialist identity and the war years, and how to scrutinize them.

Chapter 4 – Research design

This chapter provides detailed information about the methodology. In light of the theoretical debate and the research puzzle, I came up with three assumptions, and I selected the method of semi-structured interviews to see whether those assumptions hold in explaining malleable ethnic groupism in the Bosnian case. How I collected and analysed my data is also the subject of this chapter, and it is quite important to connect my findings with the nationalism and nostalgia literature. Further, this chapter demonstrates the formulation of the semi-structured interview questions, constitution of the sample groups, and interpretation of the responses for understanding the source of the data, representation of the sampling groups, and reliability of the main findings. I had planned to conduct the interviews in person in several cities in Bosnia, but I had to switch to online interviews due to Covid-19.

4.1. Main research question

As I demonstrated in the introduction, collectively traumatized societies are more likely to differ in line with their ethnic affiliations, therefore strong nationalistic sentiments against "the other" within the same society is an expected situation in the post-trauma period. The Bosnian case is also a modern example of ethnic identity construction due to the immense effect of the dissolution wars of socialist Yugoslavia. Especially Bosniak people's victim position led to re-imagination of "the others" within the same society (Golubovic 2019: 2). Golubovic underlines that there are still suspects, stigmatizations, and exclusionary atmosphere in today's Sarajevo against Bosnian Serbs, which force them to change their daily rituals that may reveal their ethnic identities (Ibid.). In other words, Bosnian Serbs try to hide their ethnicity because of the traumatic legacy of the war in their lives. This is also observable for the different ethnic groups of Bosnia because they have their own narratives and experiences about the wars (Bozic 2017). Thus, they have also constituted their own victimhood narratives since the war years.

However, ethnic groupism with clear psychological borders might not be visible even in a fragile society due to the artificialness of the nationalistic sentiments, and tracing the collective memory of different groups is important in seeing where the borders of nationalism lie. Therefore, I ask: *why does the collective memory of certain ethnic groups not display nationalistic sentiments?* This question aims to highlight a function of collective memory for detecting how nationalism might not be a natural and historically linear reaction.

There might be a differentiation among ethnic groups in terms of their nationalistic feelings even within the same society, but I argue that some ethnic groups may not demonstrate nationalistic sentiments even in a fragile society that experienced genocide and "ethnically" motivated wars. In-depth analysis of the war years and the onset atmosphere of the war in these societies might be important in explaining the flexibility of the nationalistic feelings. In making my assumptions, I resort to the writings of the constructivist school (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1983; Chandra 2009; Wimmer 2018; Mylonas and Tudor 2021). Empirically, I focus on Bosnia-Herzegovina due to the co-habitation of distinct ethnic groups in it before and after the war years.

4.2. Main assumptions

I have come up with three working assumptions to find a reliable answer to the research question above:

(A1) *Experience of supraethnic/national identity might undermine nationalistic feelings.*

The first assumption aims to look at the former identities of the Bosnian society. The people (or *narod*) of socialist Yugoslavia gave their socialist identity up and preferred the conservation of ethnic borders between newly emerged nation-states and distinct ethnic groups within the same society. Therefore, supra-ethnic socialist identity might be interpreted as a cause that

activated nationalistic feelings and secessions. However, I argue, to the contrary, that anthropological and sociological legacy of the supra-ethnic identity in question may, paradoxically, undermine nationalism in the Bosnian case. Class-based structure turns into a motif through perceptions of the people, and their collective memory prevents (ethnic) identity-based interactions and realm. That's why I tried to include among my participants from the members of the witness generations since their previous daily rituals might reveal their ideas and perceptions on nationalism, polarization, and supra-ethnic identification.

(A2) *Some ethnic groups might value their socio-economic statuses more than their ethno-national identity.*

Collective memory reveals people's differentiated living conditions and daily political concerns in the recent past, especially collective memory of people who witnessed certain significant periods (Schuman and Corning 2016: 10-13). Socio-economic framework of socialist Yugoslavia and a comparison with the conditions of post-war period might lead to a nostalgia of the socialist period due to current social conditions and economy (Onsoy 2011: 143). Hence, socio-economic framework may hierarchize people's identities, and make people's national belonging less important than their socio-economic positions. That's why I selected my participants from among both white- and blue-collar workers and retired public employees.[12] All participants are also urban inhabitants, which ensures comparison between their life standards in the socialist period and today. This selection is also important since they reflect the perceptions and experiences of the middle class, which constituted the main body of the socialist regime.

(A3) *"Ethnic" wars or polarizations might not destroy supranationalist memories of pre-war periods.*

[12] Inclusion of upper-class participants into this thesis was tricky because citizens of former Yugoslavia were mainly members of middle-class. Therefore, it was hard to reach them for interviewing. Their inclusion into this thesis might have displayed to what extent there was a connection between the nationalist actors of the regime and upper-class individuals.

Although dissolution wars are traced and discussed in line with ethnic groups, they might be mainly economically motivated (or initiated) as discussed-above. Therefore, I argue that economic destruction is one of the important factors that have caused ethnic groupism and tension, and ethnic mobilization might not influence pre-war memories of people from different points of view, such as through remembrance of former economic conditions.

4.3. Data collection and measurement

To test these assumptions I employed online semi-structured interviews, and the data depend on the narratives and experiences of the interviewees. I selected semi-structured interviewing instead of the structured one because fixed questions may result in passing over crucial points (Kumbetoglu 2019: 76). Therefore, I asked different questions out of the list according to the dynamics of conversation in the semi-structured one. After asking my questions to members of distinct ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I analyses their responses (nationalistic sentiments) via thematic analysis and interpretivist process-tracing. I discuss both in detail below.

4.3.1. Sample groups

I designed my sample groups via "purposive sampling", which allows the selection of the interviewees according to specific criteria in line with the content of the research (Black 2002). Karmel and Jain argue that "the aim of sample design is to provide a sampling scheme that uses the available information most effectively to produce estimates of population parameters" (1987: 52). Therefore, purposive sample groups should represent the population (more or less), that's why my interviewees were the members of middle-class during the socialist regime since the dominant socio-economic class was that. At the same time, I aimed to emphasize borders of ethnic groups and ideas of members of those groups, hence selection of interviewees according to their ethnic affiliation was also designed purposively. According to the last census in BiH, the majority of the society is Bosniak (around 50%), then Bosnian Serbs (around 30%),

and Bosnian Croats (%11) (the other ethnic groups are less than 10% of the entire society) (Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013 Final Results, 2016).

I conducted my interviews with members of these three different ethnic groups: Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats. They co-exist within the same society, but they also live in specific locations where the majority is one ethnic group, such as Bosnian Serb-dominated Banja Luka and Bosnian Croat-dominated Mostar. These three groups are constitutionally recognized ethnic groups of Bosnia. On the other hand, Bosnian Jews and Bosnian Roma are the members of *ostali* (others); in other words they do not have all constitutional rights as a distinct ethnic group in Bosnia although they have been recognized as a minority (McGarry 2014: 766). Further, Bosnian Albanians and Bosnian Turks also face similar constitutional exclusion, too. But in this thesis, I did not select an ethnic group from the *ostali* because it is a difficult task to reach them via online interviews.

My interviewees' age range between 33-62, therefore all experienced the Yugoslav era and war years either as an adult or as a child. I got in touch with them via social media, NGOs, webpages of the local universities, especially via University of Sarajevo, University of Banja Luka, and University of Mostar and their networks, and local news portals randomly to prevent any social biases. I posted the announcement of the interviews in both English and Bosnian-Serbo-Croatian, or posted an online questionnaire to be able to reach and know my participants on different websites. I used *Odliv Mozgova*, *Sarajevo Nekad i Sad*, and *Sarajevo Young Expats* named pages to reach them on social media (Facebook). In many cases, the younger generation helped me reach their parents or relatives for the interviews.

I conducted interviews with 55 participants, but I will only use 37 participants' responses due to their willingness to share their answers in my thesis. In final, I interviewed 14 Bosniaks, 11 Bosnian Serbs and 12 Bosnian Croats between November 2020 and January 2021 and I will

share and discuss only their narratives in the part of analysis. Before asking for their approval to speak to me, I explained to them in detail the scope of the thesis and that their identities would be anonymous during the writing up and publication. Online interviews generally lasted for 40 minutes. Participants are generally white- and blue-collar workers and retired public employees (middle class), and all participants are urban inhabitants as I indicated above. I asked the same questions to each, but open-ended part of the interviews displayed differentiations in their collective memory. On the other hand, several participants preferred to respond to the questions by writing their own answers on the file (14/37). Firstly, I did not offer an alternative to respond to the questions by writing, but when I tried to reach participants, they specifically requested it from me because of their vivid and emotional memories.

Not only the Bosniaks, the main victims of the war years, but also some Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs preferred to reply to the questions without conducting a face-to-face interview. Therefore, I can clearly conclude that sensitivity of the research topic and living trauma of the people led to that, and it demonstrates how the memory of socialist era and the war years still influences the people of Bosnia.

4.3.2. Informative explanation and consent

First, I introduced myself and talked about my academic affiliation, and I explained the scope of the research, why I aimed to conduct this interview with them, and how this thesis was important for nationalism studies and the Bosnian society. I also clearly asked for their permissions to record the interviews. Upon their approval, I clarified the expected time of the interviews (40 minutes) and the structure of the questions (semi-structured and open-ended). As a final step, I indicated that they could end the interview whenever they would like to stop due to the sensitive content of the questions and the general framework. I conducted interviews in Bosnian and English, and a Bosnian translator was present during the interviews, therefore I also asked for the interviewees' permission for participation of the translator in the interviews.

I also transcribed all responses after the record, and if I needed help, the translator also helped me in transcribing.

4.3.3. Semi-structured interview questions

How is it possible that different ethnic groups within the same society demonstrate less nationalistic sentiments even after an ethnic trauma? While trying to solve this puzzle, I analysed my interviewees' collective memory on the socialist period and the war years in line with my assumptions. Further, I constituted my theory questions (TQs) by encapsulating those assumptions; therefore they helped answer the main research question by focusing on different possible explanations. "The TQs largely determine the design of the initial informant questions (IQs) and accompanying stimulus materials" (Wengraf 2001: 152-157). Therefore, I constituted three theory questions, and they have fragments (informant questions) that I directly asked the interviewees. In other words, informant questions are clues that bring forward the answers of theory questions, and theory questions demonstrate the relevancy of my assumptions.

(TQA) *Is it possible for an experience of supra-ethnic identity to undermine nationalistic feelings?*

(IQ1a) *Did you ever define yourself with your ethnic identity during the socialist era?*

(IQ2a) *Did you ever define yourself with your ethnic identity during the war years?*

(IQ3a) *During the socialist period, did you ever experience exclusion or discrimination?*

(IQ4a) *Were you taught the importance of nationalism in line with your ethnic ties during your compulsory education in the socialist era?*

(IQ5a) *When getting your own your ID card, passport, or visa, did you have to define your ethnic identity in the socialist era? If so, did you face any problems?*

(IQ6a) *Did you ever feel the need to explain your ethnic ties during your everyday life and practices in the socialist era?*

(TQB) *Do some ethnic groups value their socio-economic statuses more than their ethnic or national identity?*

(IQ1b) *Could you compare your current economic situation and social life with the socialist era and the war years? Could you rank your welfare among these three periods?*

(IQ2b) *Did you face fierce economic problems during the war years?*

(IQ3b) *If you actively fought during the war, what was your main motivation?*

(IQ4b) *When you think of the war years, what is your most concrete memoir?*

(TQC) *Is it possible for non-nationalistic memories of pre-war periods to survive "ethnically" motivated wars?*

(IQ1c) *How do you commemorate the socialist era?*

(IQ2c) *Do you miss the socialist era and the benefits of your socialist identity? If you think there were any?*

(IQ3c) *Do you think that the socialist era was just a short-term artificial period, and after the war, you reached your own real (ethnic) identities?*

(IQ4c) *Would you say that you or your family and friends had less nationalistic sentiments in the socialist era?*

(IQ5c) *Do you think you continue to demonstrate similar (less nationalistic) motives and behaviours today? If yes, would you say that this is a socialist era habit?*

Questions in Bosnian

(TQA) *Da li je moguće da nadnacionalni identitet potkopa nacionalistička osećanja?*

(IQ1a) *Da li ste ikada pokusali da odredite svoje etničko iskustvo tokom vašeg života u periodu socijalizma?*

(IQ2a) *Da li ste se ikada odredili etničkim identitetom tokom godina rata?*

(IQ3a) *Da li ste tokom perioda socijalizma imali iskustvo sa iskljucivanjem ili diskriminacijom?*

(IQ4a) *Da li su vas ikada učili važnosti nacionalizma, u vezi vašeg etničkog porijekla, tokom osnovnog obrazovanja u vrijeme socijalizma?*

(IQ5a) *Da li ste ličnom kartom, pasošem ili vizom istaknuli vaše etničko porijeklo I imali zato problem u vrijeme socijalizma? Ako jeste, jeste li se suočili s bilo kakvim problemima?*

(IQ6a) *Da li ste morali odrediti ili istaknuti etničko porijeklo tokom vašeg svakodnevnog života u vrijeme socijalizma?*

(TQB) *Da li su neke etničke grupe vrednovale vise njihove soc. - ekonomske statuse od njihovih etno-nacionalnog identiteta?*

(IQ1b) *Možete li uporediti vašu ekonomsku situaciju I društveni život u vrijeme socijalizma, ratnih godina i danas? Možete li rangirati dobrobiti u sva ta tri perioda?*

(IQ2b) *Da li ste imali ozbiljne ekonomske probleme tokom ratnih godina?*

(IQ3b) *Ako ste se aktivno borili u ratu, koja vam je bila glavna motivaciju za to?*

(IQ4b) *Kad se sjetite rata, koje vam je sjećanje najjasnije?*

(TQC) *Da li je moguce da nenacionalisticka sjecanja na predratne periode prezive "etnicki" motivisane ratove?*

(IQ1c) *Kako se sjećate perioda socijalizma?*

(IQ2c) *Da li vam nedostaje period socijalizma I beneficije tog soc. identiteta iz tog vremena? Ako mislite da ih je bilo?*

(IQ3c) *Da li mislite da je vrijeme socijalizma bio samo jedan kratkoročni period I da ste nakon rata tek ostvarili svoje prave etničke identitete?*

(IQ4c) *Da li biste rekli da ste vi ili vaša porodica i prijatelji imali manje nacionalističkih osjećaja u socijalističko doba?*

(IQ5c) *Mislite li da i danas pokazujete slične (manje nacionalističke) motive i ponašanja? Ako da, biste li rekli da je to navika iz socijalističkog doba?*

4.4. Analysing the data

While analysing the data (recorded responses of the interviews) and scrutinizing nationalistic sentiments of the participants, I employed thematic analysis and process-tracing. I explain below in detail the reasoning behind the selection of these two methods in analysing the data.

Thematic analysis: In the words of Wengraf, thematic analysis investigates "narrative accounts", and "may look, quite rightly and very productively, at units of analysis that have been carefully separated into non-adjacent spaces" (2001: 41). Hence, analysis of different or disconnected experiences should be made carefully in order to find relevant references for the scope of the research.

Thematic analysis is also an effective method because it "allows greater flexibility with regard to theoretical frameworks" (Guest et al. 2012: 18). In other words, interpretation of the responses makes easier to maintain the relevancy of the formulated theory because there might be different meanings behind the responses, but I analysed them in the light of the theoretical context. Furthermore, it opens a window of opportunity to understand the reality of the people in their everyday life (Evans 2017: 3) because their entire speeches or conversion have thematic evidences that may lead to constitute a pattern, and this pattern might show the relation between the degree of nationalism and collective memory about the everyday life of the recent past.

Process-tracing: I also applied the method of process-tracing while analysing the data because some clue should be traced and must be combined in a process to find meaningful results, and the method of process-tracing allows to do that from a historical (or chronological) path by demonstrating each step "within-case" (Rohlfing and Schneider 2013: 223). In other words, the method of process-tracing clearly shows the meaningful relations behind the chain of events (Collier 2011).

In this thesis, I expected to see the meaningful narrations of the members of the distinct ethnic groups on their lives under the flag of a socialist state by tracing their collective memory, therefore constitution process of the individual narrations is the central chain of events for this research. Further, their collective memory can demonstrate how the war years influenced their ethnic boundaries within the same society, and transitions from one period (the socialist era) to

another (the nation-state with clearly distinct ethnic groups) constitute a certain process that must be investigated by tracing changes (events) in the lives of the individuals.

In the next chapter, I analyse the responses of the interviews in accordance with the above-mentioned research design. During the interviews, some interviewees stopped talking, preferred to skip a question, or after the interviews some of them did not allow being quoted in my thesis (18 participants out of 55). That's why in accordance with the research ethic, I did not refer to those parts. Further, I totally excluded them from the thesis and its data section. Finally, after the interviews some interviewees changed their answers and preferred a revision in my transcription before I started analysing and codifying them. I also accepted their revisions, and I stuck to their final narration and ideas because of research ethic.

Chapter 5 – Analysis

I transcribed all of the interviews and added the responses of some participants who preferred to reply to the questions by writing their answers, instead of responding to them in the online interviews. Tavory argues that realist and interpretivist analysis of the given responses is important for an objective research (2020: 450), and I applied both realist and interpretivist analysis to be able to demonstrate possible truths for the members of different ethnic groups who participated in my interview. On the other hand, Tavory signifies "some rare contexts" that "are hermetically closed" (2020: 462), in other words, those contexts should be analysed "within the bounds of the interview" as much as possible in a realistic approach and inference (2020: 450-456). I also tried to stay within the bounds of the interviews when "the closed moments" happened, such as remembrance of sensitive memories.

While I was trying to reach possible participants via social media, I thought that reaching the younger generation would be effective for the initial contact and later to be able to communicate with their parents or relatives who probably experienced the socialist period and the war years in Bosnia. However, this method demonstrated another discussion in the context of Bosnian nationalism. The younger generation of Bosnian Serbs and Croats volunteered to provide their parents' conduct details for the interviews, but the Bosniak young generation was not generally willing to do that, except my guide Nedim. Immler analyses the second-generation of the Holocaust survivors in Austria, and argues that "second-generation" is actually anger-generation because they know the stories of the persecution as told by their families, and those stories make them angry about a period that they did not experience (2012: 271-275). This situation is also traceable among many young Bosniaks, who directly refused the participation of their parents or relatives in my interviews. This is interesting for the case of the Bosniak

people because the first generation (witness-generation or transitional-generation who experienced the past even as a child) was really responsive during the interviews.

When the younger Bosniaks saw the content of the questions, many thought that this research was biased because it accepted the existence of Bosnian Serbs and Croats who are constitutionally recognized ethnic groups of Bosnia. The younger Bosniaks insisted on calling them with their religious affiliations, such as Bosnian Catholics (instead of Croats) and Bosnian Orthodox (instead of Serbs). However, all members of the first generation I conducted my interviews with and explained its scope and aim to told me this is the proper naming for constitutionally recognized ethnic groups of Bosnia: Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats. It also demonstrates the difference in the degree of ethno-nationalism between the two generations of Bosnia, especially among the Bosniaks, because later generations suppressed the recognition of other ethnic affiliations. Immler argues that the members of anger-generation in Austria are daily activists, human right defenders, and minority rights supporters due to the Holocaust experiences of their families (2012: 276). On the other hand, the second generation of Bosniaks did not generally raise awareness on ethnic-minority rights and statues in their state. It might be about living traumas of their Bosniak ethnic friends, and currently they are the majority in Bosnia in terms of ethnic demography; therefore, they might see Bosnia as their own nation-state. Furthermore, the political environment in Bosna-Herzegovina is still polarized; for example, the president of the Serbian Republic (*Republika Srpska*), Milorad Dodik, repeatedly refers to the secession of the Serb-dominated regions from Bosnia-Herzegovina:

> *Milorad Dodik (February 2020) We will do this [secession], and will not be stopped by the US or anyone else, because we believe that the [1995] Dayton Agreement*

[ending the 1992-5 war in Bosnia] has been broken, primarily by the intervention of an international factor.[13]

Milorad Dodik (October 2021): The agreement we have given for the defence law, the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council and the Indirect Taxation Authority will be withdrawn. These decisions will be annulled. The Republika Srpska's National Assembly will pass regulations and conclusions on how to regulate that.[14]

Milorad Dodik (October 2021): We will challenge all this [the West and current political authority in Bosnia-Herzegovina], there is no authority in the world that can stop us.[15]

In the light of Dodik's several speeches-demonstrated above, Bosniak younger generations might think about the possibility of a new war, and they have already started to live in a polarized structure. On the other hand, what do the members of witness generation think about all those fragmentations?

In this chapter, I aim to demonstrate the narratives of the participants to be able to discuss nationalism and collective memory/traumas of different ethnic groups in Bosnia. I conducted interviews with 55 participants, but I will only use 37 participants' responses due to their willingness to share their answers in my thesis. Moreover, as I mentioned above, I classified the participants according to their socio-economic class, affiliation to an ethnic group in Bosnia, and their age. Vuckovic Juros argues that witness-generations might have differentiated memories and experiences due to their age and changed social environment (2018: 2). I also

[13] https://balkaninsight.com/2020/02/13/dodik-unveils-fresh-threat-of-bosnian-serb-secession/, accessed on November 5, 2021.
[14] https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/serbs-say-they-will-pull-their-region-out-bosnias-army-judiciary-tax-system-2021-10-08/, accessed on November 5, 2021.
[15] https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211022-bosnia-s-serb-leader-dodik-unveils-plans-to-dismantle-failed-country, accessed on November 5, 2021.

stick to this age-based distinction among the participants to be able display the main characteristics of socialist Yugoslavia and the war years for the members of the generations who were either adults or children during the socialist and war periods. Therefore, I use Vuckovic Juros's distinction between "witness-generation" and "transitional-generation" (2018: 2-4). The term "witness-generation" refers to the people who clearly remember the past and can reply the questions via their own experiences. On the other hand, "transitional-generation" also remembers the past, but they have blurred memories due to their age, and they mainly refer to their families' experiences. Furthermore, there is no certain age that separates these two groups, witness-generation and transitional-generation, from each other. Their separation and distinction depend on their memories and capacity to remember the past. In accordance with this generational distinction, I mainly observed similar memories for the same past between the two generations (witness and transitional), thus there is no massive difference on their memory and interpretations of the past in contrast with some members of the second generations who did not experience these periods and who display the characteristics of anger generations. In the next section, I will demonstrate the characteristics of socialist Yugoslavia through the memory repertoire of the "witness generations" in Bosnia.

5.1. Ethnic groups are remembering: the characteristics of socialist Yugoslavia

There is a binary in the literature on the main characteristics of socialist Yugoslavia in the narratives of the people, especially in terms of the existence of Yugo-nostalgia (Volcic 2007, Maksimovic 2017, and Vuckovic Juros 2018). This binary signifies that the people of socialist Yugoslavia remember differently the socialist past, either with positive memories or negative references. In this thesis, the responses of the participants show that the three ethnic groups in Bosnia generally remember the socialist period positively, with romantic references, although negative narratives are also traced. Maksimovic refers to "emancipatory potential of Yugo-

nostalgia" (2017: 7), and according to my findings, inclusionary policies of the socialist period are clearly remembered among the participants from three different ethnic groups (regardless of their ages). In other words, witness-generation and transitional-generation mainly refer to superiority and inclusiveness of their socialist identity, instead of ethnic identities, in their answers. To demonstrate the thematic points, I will present several responses in this section. Many of the participants preferred to reply the questions in Bosnian-Serbo-Croatian. I then translated their answers into English (with a revision of my translator).

When I asked the participants' ideas on the general atmosphere about the socialist regime, they started to list their positive memories in an exciting manner as in the example-below:

> *(Bosniak-witness-generation: 50) The social situation during socialism, seen from today's perspective (was) very eventful and dynamic! And, brotherhood and unity were present in all spheres of life. We were drinking together, eating together, listening our favourite music bands together. We were brothers of the Balkans. Today we are just silent enemies of each other. As if there was an invisible tension among Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats, we wait to fight again. I am so sorry for this picture. The young do not know too much what we faced during the war years, but still they do not support inclusive movements.*
>
> This participant was actively involved in the war that ended the socialist regime, but he generally compared the socialist period and today's conditions in his responses to refer to positive features of the Yugoslav state and condemned the possibility of war. It also demonstrates that involvement in the conflict as either a soldier or a guerrilla might not be a matter of choice. He explained just in the very beginning of the interview that he was a guerrilla on the Bosniak side, then I asked whether he volunteered to join the army when we were talking about the war years:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 50) I had to do something for my family since my relatives were dying. I got involved in the conflict to be able to sleep-well at night. This does not mean I wanted to end the regime. I just tried to protect my family. But I still think why we were part of this ridiculous nationalist game. Unfortunately this ridiculous game continues today, especially at the political level. The young just listened to their families' chaotic memories of the war years, so they just know how to be polarized. But we are not an extension of hateful folks. We were happy together.

His answers show that even the ones who actively fought during the war might not be an enemy of the regime. Participation in the war was a systematic pressure and not a matter of choice because he remembered the socialist period with positive references. Then, I asked him how Tito's death influenced their society, and to what extent they heard the first voices of the conflictual years:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 50) I remember darkness in our society for months and months, like a crash or rupture. Everything became terrible after Tito, specifically the economy. The others who ruled our state after Tito could not understand the core of his different and more inclusionary socialist principles. Furthermore, people started to talk louder. They started to criticize harshly. They provided a background for a more polarized society.

As this quote demonstrates, even in the beginning of our interview, the interviewee does not select "the other" (or the perpetrator) of his society among distinct ethnic groups. This demonstrates another dichotomy within the Bosnian society: pro-socialist camp, and anti-socialist, anti-Titoist camp.

In response to the same question about the spirit of socialist Yugoslavia, a participant from the transitional-generation tried to remember the ideas and expressions of his mother on the Yugoslav state; at the same time, he also agreed with his mother's ideas:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 36) My mom and the older generation respect Tito. During his life, everything was kept in control. Even before his death, thanks to his political colleagues (such as Dzemla Bjedic) and all pro-Bosnian communists, the regime allowed Bosnia to get more political power within the Yugoslavian state and to be strong and equal among all republics. Actually this is not unique for Bosnia, for example Kosovo obtained the right to be an autonomous region during former Yugoslavia. But, it is especially important for Bosniaks because we were nationless children of these lands due to our religious identity, but thanks to the egalitarian principle of Tito's Yugoslavia, we became more independent, and we found our home which was constitutionally recognized.*

The superiority and inclusiveness of the Yugoslav state was pretty certain in the Bosniaks' collective memory due to its hegemony over other identities. Although independent Bosnia-Herzegovina was established after the war, the participant referred to Tito to thank for the independence of Bosnia. Upon his answer, I asked if he or his family associated egalitarianism with the state practices of the socialist rule, or it is an extension of the historical habitude:

> *(Bosniak-transitional generation: 36) We have been living here for centuries. We have co-existed for centuries. However, we know our modern history, such as the WWII. Fascist rule of the Ustasa polarized our society, and there is still ongoing investigation finding out new mass graves from the WWII. Despite this trauma, we again started to co-exist in the region, under the umbrella of socialist Yugoslavia. I cannot choose the*

correct words, but socialist Yugoslavia was like a father who unified its family members, and this father was so egalitarian among his all children. Maybe former periods also influenced our people to live together, but I do not think that former regimes, kingdoms, or empires were like the socialist rule. The Yugoslav regime was the most egalitarian one.

Then I asked a question on Tito and how Tito's death changed the spirit of Bosnia and Bosnians:

(Bosniak-transitional generation: 36) I was around 5, but I remember that day we lost Tito. I thought that I had to cry. On that day, I did not cry. But, in the coming years, I understood that why almost everybody were sad when we lost Tito. He was a unifying figure, and after him, we faced many problems especially economic issues. But, we never thought that our friends from other communities would kill us.

Like in the narration of the previous interviewee, this interviewee does not refer to a certain ethnic group as the perpetrator. The interviewee also signifies the direct transition from the peaceful period to the war years. However, in contrast to the previous interviewee, this interviewee does not refer to economic polarization after Tito because of (probably) her age.

On the other hand, some participants told that inclusion was not always the case when I asked them the general atmosphere during the socialist regime and their critiques on that period:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 60) I had to hide when I went to the mosque for religion lectures, and I think it was a systemic attack on my identity. But, this does not mean that I do not miss Yugoslav times. Yes, religious people were not able to speak publicly for their freedoms, but everybody was respectful each other. My (Christian) Orthodox friend knew that I was going to the mosque when I saw him in front of his souvenir shop.

Yes, the regime did not prefer to conserve religious affairs, and consciously suppressed our religious identities, but we were still happy.

While this participant was responding, he did not wait to hear the end of my question. Prohibition of publicly-religious events and ceremonies by the socialist regime was the first story that he told me just at the very beginning of the interview. At the same time, the participant was not totally critical of the regime and continued to list what he liked about the regime and what he (probably) misses. Velikonja's research (2003) underlines how the socialist regime eradicated the position of the religious institutions due to their cooperation with the fascist units in the WWII, and this participant's testimony also demonstrates that suspicion on religion and religious identities turned into a ritual in the socialist regime. Therefore, the regime's inclusion capacity and policies turned into a debatable issue. I also asked the same participant whether there was a visible change in terms of exclusionary state practices against the religious citizens of former Yugoslavia after Tito's death:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 60) Tito established this suspicious regime against our religious identities, but after Tito, nothing was different until the war. We just felt that we were becoming poor day by day. I did not think that I would experience chaos because of our religious identity, but everything was well planned by our enemies.

As this participant's narration shows, economic disaster became more palpable after Tito, but polarization, especially on the nexus of ethnicity and religion, was not clearly traceable until the conflicts. Hence, the war architects ("our enemies") had obviously covered their real intentions.

When I also asked about their discrimination stories during the socialist period by the regime, another Bosniak participant from the transitional generation rejected the existence of

discrimination during the regime with her gestures, but then as she talked more, it became clear that there was discrimination against religious people:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 38) Generally, I did not have such experiences. However, every ex-Yugoslav I met can clearly and honestly say that there was a clash between the communist rule and religious affairs. I mean, the regime did not approve publicly demonstration of religious concepts or ideas. Of course the Yugoslav state did not forbid entrances to the mosques and churches or synagogues, but we knew that you should not talk too much on whatever you believe in.*
>
> Upon her answer, I asked her ideas about the possibility of a hierarchy between religious orders and communist rule, and she responded to my question:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 38) Communism had no god, and it had a power to push the others' gods to their homes. No religious symbol in the streets, except mosques or churches, and in the social life. It was a kind of code of the Yugoslav elites. However, my father told me the fanatics of the distinct religious communities became powerful during the last periods of Yugoslavia because of the certain support of the bloody nationalist elites. Then, some members of the religious communities got the power to push communism, but communism is not a belief system. So it was a kind of revenge of the nationalist religious authorities against communism.*
>
> She clearly referred to the superiority of socialist regime, but this time inclusiveness was not the case in her narrative. On the other hand, she narrates how religious authorities became powerful even more than communism, and how the end of socialist Yugoslavia is also connected the rise of religious and ethno-nationalist figures.

While the communist rule (interchangeable with the socialist rule in the Bosnian context) aimed to constitute a supreme identity over all Bosnians for better social and equal lives, the suppression of religion led to negative memorialization of the socialist times. This was not limited to Muslim Bosniaks and their religious practices though. People from other religious traditions also experienced such discrimination:

> *(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation: 47) My experiences about discrimination were from elementary school years. We were ridiculed sometimes. When I say "we", actually it means a bunch of people who went to religious education in the church. I didn't understand that; then, I did later during the war. The Yugoslav state elites did not prove divisions among identities, but we were Catholics for centuries, and we did not want to cover our identities.*
>
> He was not angry but upset, and he re-lived that memory when he was replying. Further, as demonstrated by this quote, the suppression of religious identities was also traceable against the Christians. However, the participants did not refer to "ethnicity" or any discrimination story about their ethnic identities. They perceived their religious identities as distinct from ethnic identification, and for them, the religious one was suppressed. Socialism was a substitute for ethnic identities but not for religious identities. On the other hand, positive remembrance of the characteristics of socialist Yugoslavia was also observable in the collective memory of the Christians, such as this Bosnian Croat participant when I asked about the positive features of the socialist regime:

> *(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation: 47) … On the other hand, the regime in itself provided many things for me and my family. For example, we never paid rent for our*

house because my mom and father were workers for the state, so the state was gentile for my family. Today, it is impossible. I think that the issue of religion was the sole problem of former Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, this issue sharpened people's ethnic identities in the 1990s. I wish that we had not lived the 1990s. Despite everything, I always remember the regime nostalgically and with my lovely memoires, with my friendships and welfare.

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The narration of this participant shows that negative sentiments against the regime due to suppression of religious identities did not prevent the constitution of nostalgic attitude. Another participant described the general atmosphere through his lens:

(Bosnian Croat-transitional-generation: 41) Under socialism, the father worked alone and fed a family of five, built a cottage and bought seven new cars. Today my wife and I work, and we have one child, and we barely bought a ten years-old car! Smart enough. It also tells us that people mainly focused on their daily lives or social affairs. They earned enough money, and they lived, they did whatever they wanted. So, ethnicity or polarizations were not one the agenda of the people.

This quote demonstrates the economic conditions of the socialist regime without any-ethnic (or religious) discrimination. He was also angry at the current conditions in Bosnia because, in his mind, today's Bosnia was the result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Upon his answer, I asked whether there was a richer segment of the society in the period of socialist Yugoslavia:

(Bosnian Croat-transitional generation: 41) I never observed a richer class within the Bosnia context or any part of Yugoslavia, may be some bureaucrats, but really I don't

know. Almost all were the members of the middle class, but this middle class membership is different from today's Bosnia and its assurances. We knew that we were equal in each part of the life. We could spend our money not by thinking tomorrows. This is impossible in Bosnia today. I miss living style in the socialist period. Today we cannot mention powerful trade unions, however I know that trade unions were game-changer during the Yugoslav period. Today we cannot find an authority to ask "why we are poor although we work too much", but there were always people who supported our rights in the socialist regime. How do not I miss Yugoslavism?

In response to the same question, another participant said:

(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation: 47) The time of socialism... I remember it as a period with more justice and solidarity in society for all of us.

This participant also remembered the inclusiveness of the socialist regime without discriminatory references. Her voice got tired when she talked about it probably because she remembered the Yugoslav period nostalgically and thought about the absence of "justice" and "solidarity" in today's Bosnia.

Upon those responses, I can argue that benefits of socialist Yugoslavia did not just crystalize in the Bosniak collective memory. Solidarity among different ethnic groups and practices of the Yugoslav state to constitute a society in harmony are still traceable in the memoirs of the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat participants. This is also valid for Bosnian Serbs:

(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 43) Before 1991, I remember, we were living a happy and comfortable life. My parents, both with university degrees and well paid jobs, had a wide network of friends from all walks of life, and they went out in the evenings,

and we often joined family trips. Both my younger brother and I played sports, and we were members of many clubs (literary club, dance school etc.). We were all equal and happy children. I never heard hate or resentment among my Serbian relatives or others. We were just happy, and appreciated the regime. But I remember, after Tito, something started to change, but my family and I never thought there would be bloody polarizations within our society. How could I think of killing my neighbor? That was crazy. I wish that there was a magical touch, and the 1990s must be forgotten. Then, after this impossible amnesia, maybe we would continue to live like in socialism as I really miss my home which is Yugoslavia, and I am so desperate to bring it back.

Upon the answer, I asked if the participant had a relative who was pro-war or not:

(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 43) My nuclear family never committed a crime during the war years. However, I have also several relatives who actively engaged in the war. If you ask them "why people fight", I am so sure that they do not have a proper and rational explanation. I think that they did not forget why they fought because just from the very beginning of the war they did not know the main reason of the conflicts. In other words, they did not have an option. They had to fight; otherwise, they could be named as traitor. I know that some Serbs escaped from Bosnia, especially Serb-controlled regions during the war. However, it was not also an easy decision. They left their homeland, their many relatives, almost all friends. I am also so sure that they fiercely mourn for their previous life and social ties in period of Yugoslavia.

Social life was one of the iconic features of the socialist regime because of the unitary forms and practices of socialism, and it was clearly traced in the different answers despite all local traumas, too:

(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 43) When I think of socialist times, I remember free education and healthcare, no social discrimination, affordable food, clothing, entertainment etc. without any reference to our ethnicities. All were great benefits that today we can only dream of having.

As demonstrated by this quote, social and economic life was in the centre of the participant's remembrance, regardless of ethnic affiliations. Bosnian Serbs had also a tendency to remember positively the socialist times although they are generally classified as the main persecutors of the war years due to the crimes they committed during the Bosniak genocide. This is a clear evidence of how the guilt of the past might not be shared among all members of an ethnic group. One could argue that ordinary people demonstrated how they did not volunteer to fight by depicting their pre-war memories in a positive manner. They did not want to fight, and they expressed it by their love and respect to the socialist times. In other words, they tried to demonstrate that they were not perpetrators or war criminals because they were satisfied during the socialist regime.

Bozic argues that Bosnian Serbs interpreted the dissolution war in Bosnia as "fatherland war" (2017: 9). However, my participants did not claim a historical right on Bosnia. This was also valid for Bosniaks and today's minority group Bosnian Croats. Socialist Yugoslavia was accepted as a country regardless of their ethnic affiliation(s) of its people. Socialist identity did not have a polarizing manifesto in lines of ethnicities, but religious practices turned into a problematic case due to the suppression of publicly religious events through the lens of the religious people. However, the suppression of those publicly religious practices did not prevent the people of Bosnia from remembering socialist times positively (the case of religion in the socialist period will be discussed later in this chapter).

The responses I provided above are from the first part of my interviews. When I asked deeper questions in light of my structured ones, I traced that the participants' responses did not just aim to list several features of socialist Yugoslavia. Nostalgia and an awareness for their nostalgia to socialist Yugoslavia were also noticeable in their responses in both realist and interpretivist analyses. "That is, whether interviews should be primarily understood as an active interpretive construction that takes place in the bounded interview-situation, or whether interviews should be understood as a window into other contexts of action" (Tavory 2020: 450). This demonstrates how critical they were of the start of nationalist wars and pre-war nationalist atmosphere all around Bosnia.

5.2. Nostalgia for a supra-ethnic identity

Former research on nostalgia for a supra-ethnic period or identity mainly focuses on romantic and positive images of the past via the memoirs of the witness-generations (Ekman and Linde 2005; Ange and Berliner 2015). For the case of socialist Yugoslavia and its remembrance in Bosnia, positive references that are associated with the socialist times are visible, but to determine whether this type of remembrance is nostalgia or not requires looking at deeper experiences and memoirs of the people. Therefore, I asked several structured questions to the participants without referring to their ethnic affiliation. I expected to see an unconscious comparison between the past and the current conditions of the participants to trace their nostalgic yearning. Nostalgia might also be detected through the accumulation of the materials, music taste, celebrations or (collective) commemoration rituals. However, I aim to see Yugo-nostalgia in the form of anti-nationalism in accordance with the essence of the Yugoslav regime, thus I also questioned supra-ethnicity and its location in the memories of the participants through certain questions on their sense of belongings and their re-constructed identities.

Etymologically, nostalgia derives from *nostos* (return to home in Greek) and *algos* (pain in Greek). Its etymological origin shows a general framework, hence it is also important to

examine Boym's classic two-pronged typology on nostalgia (2001). Boym argues that nostalgia cannot be equated to a simple remembrance of the past by individuals or groups (Ibid). It can be either a choice to prefer living in the past due to its conditions (*restorative*) or the commemoration of the past with its all dimensions as much as specifically (*reflexive*) and without referring to reconstruct the "lost home" in contrast with the former one (2001: 41-43). In this thesis, I aim to demonstrate how those three ethnic groups yearn for the socialist period by comparing their past with their present (*restorative*). Therefore, as I mentioned above I aimed to trace the participants' desire to "rebuild the lost home" through their narrations on Yugoslavia, especially by focusing on their former social ties and rituals.

On the other hand, Maksimovic discusses the main characteristics of nostalgia, and she argues that nostalgia might be about imaginary and dreamed past, not a real period of time (2017: 3). In other words, people may miss the past that they did not experience, but when they remember, they ascribe a meaning to it. However, the witness-generation of Bosnia for the periods I try to understand to see the construction of nationalistic feelings did not refer to imaginary points and opportunities about the socialist times. In other words, their main references and narrations overlap with the former literature on the characteristics of supra-ethnic state formulation of the regime as I discussed in Chapter 2, and they referred to their own experiences. "Unfulfilled dreams" and "lost opportunities" were central in their responses about the socialist period, hence "past fantasies" emerged via their memory (Maksimovic 2017: 3). Therefore, I can clearly trace Boym's *restorative* nostalgia (2001) among the participants' narratives. Furthermore, Ange and Berliner argue that nostalgia means a romantic remembrance, but "irreversibility of time" might be the central part of nostalgia because nostalgic groups may not prefer to turn back to conditions of the past (2015: 2). Therefore, nostalgia might be just a way of severe remembrance. However, my participants did not centralize "irreversibility of time" when they remembered. Their *restorative* nostalgic culture was the superior one.

Furthermore, in the words of Maksimovic, "the nostalgic culture" shows a certain degree of "emotion-laden nostalgia" (2017: 4), and this is also the story of the Bosnian people. Among almost all participants from three ethnic groups, missing the past fiercely is the main similarity in terms of remembrance of their socialist regime. They compared their life during the socialist period with the pre-war conditions. One can claim that they miss *similarly* and *similar concepts* that they do not have today. Hemon's book on his biography clearly reveals what concepts about the socialist period might be yearned: "the experience of unbridled optimism, joy, love." (2018: 8).

I asked my participants what they missed most about the Yugoslav period:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 36) We were proud Yugoslavs and could travel around the world with our passports, this made us happy and satisfied, and today this is impossible. We were proud because our Yugoslav identity opened many doors for us without any reference to our ethnic divisions. This was observable in the international arena because Tito's Yugoslavia was more credible than the West's allies or the Soviet bloc. I miss my proud, my credible and respectful identity. Today we are just losers of the war. Yes we have our own independent state, but we are not lucky enough anymore because being Bosniak or Bosnian does not mean being a part of powerful family.*
>
> "Proud Yugoslav" signifies the participant's feelings for her socialist identity, and how she perceived it. This participant also made a certain comparison *unconsciously* between the socialist past and today's Bosnia although I did not ask anything about the current conditions of Bosnia. When I also asked what her family missed the most about the socialist regime (because she was from the transitional-generation), I traced a similar nostalgic tone:

(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 36) I know that my mom misses socialist time, too. She says that she could live and effort all the basics for a decent life from her salary, today a simple worker or a person cannot afford to have this.

Upon her answer I asked how her family talks about socialist Yugoslavia:

(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 36) They mourn on each 4th of May, the day Tito died. When I was a teenager, you know, in the beginnings of my 20s, I thought that they mourned because they felt that they had to mourn. But now, I understand that they mourn for their lovely days, their youth, peaceful and cool times. They also still celebrate the 25th of May, Dan Mladosti (Day of Youth), birthday of Tito. It was celebrated in former Yugoslavia and my family still celebrates that day. There is no public ceremony now, but they salute their president through the celebration of the 25th of May. But if you ask me which sentences about the socialist regime are repeated most by my parents, I would say that their chance to get good-education thanks to principles of the socialist rule.

Expressions of this participants demonstrates, one could argue that there might be a living nostalgia among Bosniaks for their socialist times and for Tito although they became the main victims of the dissolution wars and although the regime was not respectful for their religious identities.

When I asked this question to a participant form the witness-generation, I noticed another dimension of nostalgia:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 50) I always miss the social life, hanging out, friendships. Today these are not possible in Bosnia. We were drinking with our friends or going to

cinema or swimming each day. We always respected each other's differences because the regime wanted it.

Upon his answer, I asked why this was not possible in today's Bosnia:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 50) Even though I knew where I belonged to in socialism, after the war I built myself completely into an ethnic identity like others. Of course I am happy about being a Bosniak. But when we owned our ethnic identities and dissolved the supreme one, the socialist one, everything went terrible. Today you cannot easily see a Bosniak woman marrying a Serb man because everybody, every group, demarcated each other. This is so wrong. We were children of Yugoslavia. We should not be polarized at that level. We experienced horrible war years, nobody can deny it, but we know how to live together.

His answer shows that people also started to name and classify themselves with their ethnic affiliations after the war, and this destroyed cross-ethnic social relations in Bosnia. On the other hand, today's ethnic majority group of Bosnia, Bosniaks, did not accuse the socialist period, its administrative staff or rituals for the dissolution and rise of nationalism. They did not see them as reasons of the war during the interviews. Nationalist wars destroyed their socialist system, but in their perception the system in itself was not guilty. Comparing Bosnian history with today's Bosnian politics, one can understand this attitude: they owned their political rights and statuses during the socialist period, therefore the memory of the genocide did not eradicate the romantic position of socialist Yugoslavia for them. This is also traceable in the case of Bosnian Croats with regard to my question about yearning:

(Bosnian Croat-transitional-generation: 36) Happy period when my parents and I went for a walk for ice cream in Egypt (confectionery in Sarajevo) at the weekend. Playing with friends in front of the building… A person can understand when s/he lived the most excellent times of his/her life. Now I understand and feel it. May be you will not believe me but I understood it just at the very beginning of the conflicts. It was a kind of end for folks of Yugoslavia.

Happiness of the participant was palpable during the interview when she was replying to this question, and it demonstrates that the rise of nationalism in socialist Yugoslavia was not visible for some people.

To the same question a member of the witness-generation gave the following response:

(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation: 41) The socialist period was a fairy tale that will not be repeated, but I really want to re-live in my lovely state. Ethnic identities were irrelevant because we could have been born on the other side of the world, and our regime was completely different in a more unifying sense, not nationalistic. Today if you go to the Serb-dominated parts of Bosnia, as a Croat, you will be discriminated. I remember that we were playing football with my friends and we never knew or asked or tried to understand people's ethnicities. I think all these ethnic distinctions and their appearance processes are ridiculous. If the writers of our history books in the socialist regime saw what are we experiencing today, they could not believe their eyes. We thought that anti-fascism and anti-nationalism would live for centuries.

Positive images and a possible demand to live in the past due to its conditions were observable through the memory of today's ethnic minority group, Bosnian Croats, too. Therefore, pre-war memories are not differentiated in line with ethnic affiliations according to the nexus of majority-minority groups. Vuckovic Juros notices that "both Tito's and the Partisans' role in

the Second World War were now re-evaluated (after the dissolution of Yugoslavia) in terms of their crimes against the Croats, and the Yugoslav-specific type of socialism was interpreted primarily within the framework of the failed federal project and the Serbian dominance that manifested in the exploitation and victimization of Croats" (2018: 2). However, Bosnian Croat participants did not prefer to isolate their socialist past and did not remember socialism as an evil ideology due to the successes and benefits of socialism.

As "the official other" of Bosnians in the prism of modern politics, Serbs are selected as internal other due to their war crimes during the nationalist war years. On the other hand, a similar nostalgia for the socialist past was also spotted among Bosnian Serbs. Like Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats, they did not just list several positive features about the socialist period, they also missed it and unconsciously compared it with the present conditions:

> *(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 47) The socialist era is, for me, like a period of prosperity, brotherhood and unity, love, collegiality, solidarity, patriotism. This is opposite to today's reality. I cannot deny the crimes of my ethnic friends, but I did not choose this identity. I started to know and classify myself as a Serb with the war. During the socialist regime, we were just partners of the regime like all other folks. We were enjoying similarly around a wedding table without thinking of people's ethnicities. My wife and I are ready to return to those days, and we are ready to do anything, but politics will never allow us, and we will continue to miss our socialist motherland where we were all equal.*

To the same question another Bosnian Serb participant gave the following answer:

(Bosnian Serb: witness-generation: 43) In my case, socialism is equated with childhood and early adolescence, and I remember it as a happy and carefree period of my life, as a unique period. Today we just suffer from many economic problems and minority issues. I mean, the Dayton agreement could not bring peace and prosperity to Bosnia, and Bosniaks saw us as their ultimate enemy. They have really legitimate reasons. I still see a Bosniak friend, but his children and wife do not know about our meetings. From Yugoslavia to these days… I do not want to accept how we came to these days. I miss my freedom, and freedom to choose my friends.

Bozic argues that in the wars of memory of Bosnia, Serbian victimhood is the milestone reference through Serbian narrative of the dissolution wars (2017: 2). However, my participants' nostalgic memorization of the socialist past did not reflect any nationalistic sentiments of either being the victim or being the persecutor. The beginning and the end of the wars and individual experiences were separated from the socialist past, therefore transition period from the socialist times to the war era was so quick, and this was noticeable too through the memories of the witness generations (collective traumas of the Bosnians will be demonstrated in this Chapter later). On the other hand, Volcic focuses on negative remembrance of the co-existence times in the former Yugoslavia. She illustrates one of the examples from her interviews. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, a Slovenian says "no more South Slavic languages" to express his happiness (2007: 81). Similar reaction to drawing national and linguistic borders was not observable among Bosnians I interviewed. This might be because nested ethnic groups did not prefer to differentiate themselves from others in line with the legacy of the socialist period. However, some participants were critical of socialist Yugoslavia and its rituals:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 67) During the socialist times, I knew that I was a Bosniak Muslim, even it was very repressed in public.

The suppression of religion again came to the surface in this religious participant's expression. Upon the answer, I asked the participant about their ideas on the socialist rule:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 67) The regime made a huge mistake and denied the importance of the clergy. This caused its end because the nationalists benefitted from the fragile situation of the clergy. I had no problem with the ordinary supporters of the regime. We were co-habiting in harmony, but I knew that the regime had not approved of the religious ones, and I was always suspicious of it.

Furthermore, there were other types of suppression within the regime:

(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation: 62) I was born in that order, I did not know about others until I grew up and went to a world where I saw the importance of freedom and democracy. Then, I saw that the socialist regime had certain problems, but we were happy, and we were never discriminated in any segment of the society by individuals. The state never banned religious institutions, but we knew that it was always suspicious of these institutions. However, people from distinct religious communities were always inclusive. The regime was problematic in some aspects, but we did not deserve this end. I will never forget my Muslim neighbors' names. I have no idea where they are now, or if they live or not. But, we were living in peace in the same quartier, and I had to say that this was the success of the regime although religious people felt excluded from the state offices.

Upon his answer, I asked the main reason of the fear toward the socialist regime:

(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation: 62) If you were not a communist or if you were rejecting its doctrine, you immediately became an internal enemy. This is not a proper environment to talk about our liberties.

This quote demonstrates the strictness of the regime against its citizens who were critical of communism (or socialism). As I traced among the responses of the participants, the suppression of religious identities was the milestone example of associating former Yugoslavia with fear. Furthermore, those responses that were critical of the socialist rule were not about ethnic isolation from today's perspective. In other words, they criticized the socialist rule for its suppression of several freedoms. Yet, there was no critique of its supra-ethnical inclusion.

5.3. This is not about socialism and ethnicity: religion

Barth argues that social and economic roots of ethnicity draw the boundaries between different ethnic groups, therefore the concept of ethnicity signifies imagined borders among distinct segments of societies (1969). Furthermore, while Brubaker defines ethnic groups as "basic constituents of social life" (2002: 164), there are several components that characterize ethnicities, such as linguistic differentiations, religious practices, and daily rituals of the socialization processes. In the case of Bosnia and the distinction process of its nested ethnic groups, religion plays a significant role. Some people prefer to define their religious identities as their primary identity, and I clearly traced this tendency in the collective memory of Bosnians.

Conspiracy theories and drawing the borders of the ethnic self against "the other" might also demonstrate the importance of religious identities (Malesevic 2020: 6). For example, Malesevic discusses that the identity of Jewishness was meant as a description of an internal other in the medieval times of Europe, and it signifies religion-based exclusion vis-à-vis the Jews of the

European societies by referring to the conspiracy theories (2020: 5). After the emergence of national borders in the 17th century, national and ethnic identities crystalized, and they were selected as primary identities of the people, therefore religion turned into a component or sharpener of ethnic identifications (Malesevic 2020: 5-7). Currently, ethnic identities play a vital role in the re-formulated conspiracy theories through which societies select their "other". However, a lack of ethnic labelling is traceable in the case of Bosnia among its ethnic groups while analysing their collective memory about the socialist period and the war years. This is also about the capacity and influence of the socialist era practices that prohibited ethnic identification by legitimizing a supra-ethnic identity as a substitute for ethnic identity. On the other hand, religious identities were conserved during the socialist period, but they were suppressed by the Yugoslav state. Thus, a lack of substitute identity for religious identities and state-based suppression of religious practices open the Pandora's box.

Flere and Klanjsek's research highlights suppressive and totalitarian features of the regime, and they argue that although suppressiveness and totalitarianism are frequently referred to in "public speeches" among ex-Yugoslav nations, official documents and "competent authorities" do not prefer to use these terms while describing the Yugoslav period (2014: 237). Furthermore, Flere and Klanjsek state that "although Yugoslavia was not a model of respecting human rights, the question (or the questionable thing) is whether it was totalitarian" (2014: 242); therefore, suppressiveness and totalitarianism are separated from each other as distinct concepts, and their research lists certainly-suppressive characteristics of the regime: "repression toward religious institutions" and "a general control of the intelligentsia" (2014: 243). Dimitrijevic argues that the 1974 constitution of socialist Yugoslavia aimed to preserve individual rights and freedoms; however, the lack of a "bill of rights" led to the emergence of the stronger political elites, and embedded obstacles on freedoms and rights came to the surface among the practices of ordinary citizens (1994: 28-29).

Vuckovic Juros displays religion-based suppression in socialist Yugoslavia via her interviews with the Croats, and she shows that "marriage in the church" and "baptism" were secret events because people would lose their jobs if they did that publicly (2018: 7). I also listened to similar stories when I asked questions concerning religious life in the socialist regime:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 36) My mom says that they, Muslims, felt discriminated in the higher education and politics in the Yugoslav state. They especially felt discriminated if they defined themselves as Muslim believers, who wanted to join the Communist party. This was not allowed nor appreciated.*

As demonstrated in this quote, suppression of religious practices and identities was not just against a certain religious community, and this demonstrates how religious people were in doubt about the socialist regime and its inclusionary policies. On the other hand, suppression of religion and publicly religious practices did not lead to the rise of nationalistic sentiments during the socialist era. In other words, people did not have a nationalist tendency when criticizing the suppressive Yugoslav state in terms of religious affairs. The same participant also said upon my question of the artificialness of Yugoslavia:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 36) Yugoslavia was a great and powerful country, not artificial. We should be all proud Bosnians, first, like in the Yugoslav state, not ethnically Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. There was no threat against our any identity, even religious one, in the socialist order. We just knew that we had to live our religious world just at our homes or in the mosques. I am sure that you will ask whether this is a sort of suppression or not, and yes this is a certain symbol of suppression resulting from*

the regime's suspicion of religious authorities. However, we were never alienated because of our ethnicity.

Another participant stated upon my question on the religious dimension of the war:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 67) Those who were against the socialist state and did not define themselves as socialists worked and secretly prepared to cleanse us, Bosniak Muslims, by committing a genocide.

Although this participant was accusing the internal others who were the main persecutors and war criminals, he did not select an ethnic group as the perpetrator. The perpetrators were, according to him, the internal enemies of the socialist regime. In his words, the victim was obvious. Another response by this participant demonstrates that his individual trauma, or collective trauma that was commonly experienced by his ethnic friends, have not led to rise a in his nationalistic feelings:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 67) … I am not a nationalist after all that polarizing recent past. The persecutors had to find a group to attack, and Muslim Bosniaks were chosen. If you ask me why, I cannot tell you, because we did not know, either. If there was a concrete problem in our society, we would have felt it through our friends. This was a kind of planned game of the enemies of Yugoslavia to end our co-existence by targeting the most fragile group of our society: Bosniak Muslims.

Upon his answer, I asked why he thought Bosniak Muslims as "the most fragile group" of the society. Is it about being Bosniak or Muslim?

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 67) We had no distinct nation-state as Bosniak Muslims. We live in a multi-cultural society, but Bosniak Muslims have just Bosnia-Herzegovina.

And if you ask me if either being Bosniak or Muslim made us fragile, it is a story of harmonization of Bosniakness and Muslimness for centuries, so I cannot separate them. And the persecutors wanted to kill both Bosniakness and Muslimness.

He referred to "Bosniakness" as the chosen target ethno-religious identity during the war years by focusing on the complementary role of the Islam on Bosniakness. Although the participant defined himself as an anti-nationalist, I thought that he could show his nationalistic feelings while replying to other questions. Then, I asked some questions about his life, as a Bosniak, during the war years:

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 67) It was very difficult. Only the war profiteers were well. The war was for nothing, and we still try to eradicate its social and economic burden.

The fact that he did not try to justify the nationalist wars, although his co-ethnics were the main target, could be seen as another evidence of his anti-nationalist position.

Long-lasting peaceful co-existence turns into a motive the collective memory of Bosnians I intervieweed, and nationalism cannot easily find a room in the minds of the members of those distinct ethnic groups in my sample despite the ethnically motivated dissolution wars. In other words, the experience of the multi-ethnic Yugoslav state seems to be consolidating people's non-nationalistic feelings and perspectives.

Suppressed religious identities and their remembrance via collective memory are traceable in this thesis, and in existing literature, in the narratives of Muslims and Christians. However, Bosnian Serb participants, mainly members of the Orthodox Christian community, did not criticize socialist Yugoslavia's suppressive policies against religion. Although studies on Serbian nationalism show "Christoslavism" to be the central part of Serbness, and the main

internal other among the Slavs to be Muslims (Sells 1996: 51), I did not trace a similar reference in the responses of Bosnian Serb participants.

Primoradial arguments of Serbian nationalism centralize the Ottomans and Muslims, mainly Bosniaks, as a subject of hate. This is because Serbian nationalism dogmatically defines the Ottomans (defined as "Turks" then "Bosniaks") as Christ-killer because of the Kosovo War and death of their prince Lazar in this war (Ibid. 45). However, I did not notice any belief about historical dogmas and nationalist references in the collective memory of Bosnian Serbs among my participants. Unlike Serbo-nationalist state elites in the dissolution wars, their responses, directly or indirectly, did not reflect any discrimination story because of their Serbo-Orthodox identities, and they did not have any exclusionary idea or experience against their ethnically different neighbours in Bosnia:

(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 52) We were living together in peace. If you wanted to go to an Orthodox church, you would go. It was also valid for others: mosques or synagogues. The war years cannot be explained by referring to ordinary people's religion or religious rituals. There was a more embedded thing among bloody elites, and what they wanted to get. Maybe territory or power. However, as an ordinary Yugoslav citizen, as a member of a Yugoslav family, we never cared anybody's life or background.

While the participants of this thesis from different ethnic groups did not demonstrate nationalistic behaviour and ideas, it is necessary to remember that the reality of these people have all experienced of the Bosniak genocide and many war traumas due to the nationalistic wars. The next question then is about the memory of genocide and its location in their collective memory, in the framework of nationalism.

5.4. Before the genocide, after the genocide

In this section, I will try to understand the memory of the genocide and its possible effects on people's nationalistic attitudes. In other words, I will trace how the members of three ethnic groups remember the traumatic war years (1992-1995), and how those traumas affect their nationalistic feelings. Therefore, collective memory is still crucial for detecting common experiences and wounds of the people and for seeing fluctuations in their nationalistic sentiments and references.

Although the (*restorative*) Yugo-nostalgia, in the form of anti-nationalism, is present among the members of three ethnic groups, the experience of genocide might divide them in line with their ethnic identities, and they may prefer to protect their imagined ethnic borders against internal others because of the wounds of the past. Doubt and Tufekcic show protection of imagined ethnic borders might be unlikely in the Bosnian context due to embedded fictive kinship among the ethnic groups (2019: 63).

Bozic argues that the dissolution war is perceived as a struggle for "liberation" by the Bosniaks (2017: 13). In line with this argument, when I listened to the Bosniaks' individual stories and narration about the war years, I could see that they did not hesitate to tell their experiences because they did not see themselves as perpetrators, and they did not initiate the war. They were victims; thus, when I asked them their most palpable memory about the war years they did not feel the need to hide their memoirs although they were quite sensitive and personal:

> *(Bosniak-transitional generation: 36) I saw the Chetniks, Serbian extremist soldiers, who also fought for Hitler, by using that name, during the WWII. When we wanted to leave the city during the war, they stopped us on our way, and my family in our car. He said [one of the Serbian Chetniks] to my dad, named Mustafa: "Muta (nickname), where are you going?" Then, they killed my father. The sad thing was that he [his father] knew these people. My father went to the same school with him (the Chetnik), worked with*

him, hung out with him, and suddenly he turned into a Chetnik in order to kill Turks. Serbian Chetniks call us "Turks", all the time.

Upon the participant's answer, I asked how he feels with the psychological demarcation of the borders among distinct ethnic groups in Bosnia as a result of the war:

(Bosniak-transitional generation: 36) The persecutors have to be punished, each of them! But we are punished today through divisions. I am always respectful for all ethnic groups in my society, and we have to re-learn how to live together, not focusing on nationalist arguments.

As the former quote demonstrates, primordial national feelings, like referring to Bosniaks as Turks due to the memory of the Battle of Kosovo and the rule of the Ottomans, were traceable among the perpetrators and war criminals. Therefore, one can claim that there were primordially-motivated reasons for the war among the perpetrators composed of nationalist leaders. This might be also connected with "Christoslavism" that defines the core of Serbness through primordial readings, but the Bosniak participant, despite his victim position in the war, did not conceptualize his sentiments or all Serbs with primordial connotations. Furthermore, the later quote demonstrates that this participant, as a certain victim of the war, does not prefer to refer to the importance of nationalism; instead, there is a critique of the divisions in the Bosnian society. I also demonstrate other narrations that directly reflect the Bosniak participants' traumas:

v

(Bosniak-witness-generation: 54) I just remember the loss of the closest family members and friends. I cannot count or list their names because there are many. I feel that something in my heart also died with their migration from this world to other world.

(Bosniak-witness--generation: 44) Refugee years… Lucky I was out, but a constant worry about my family… Always watching the news and heart-breaking emptiness and sadness inside for all dead people in Bosnia…

I also asked the same questions to these participants, how they feel with the psychological demarcation of borders among distinct ethnic groups in Bosnia as a result of the war, and their answer was the same: a complaint about today's divisions and nationalism.

Bosniak interviewees clearly expressed how their lives and daily rituals were affected during the war years, and how their individual narrations had traumatic references. Yet, despite collective war traumas, Bosniak participants also have nostalgic and anti-nationalist sentiments as I have demonstrated above.

On the other hand, Serbs, the main persecutors of the war, also missed the socialist times. According to Bozic (2017: 9), the dissolution wars were also interpreted as the war for "the fatherland" by Bosnian Serbs, however some of the participants were not always willing to talk about their war traumas. This unwillingness might have two reasons. The first one is about the degree of their wounds, and how they are still under the influence of those memories. The second one is about the shame and guilt they feel on behalf of their ethnic group. In the responses of those who have preferred to answer this question, I could trace that they had similar wounds with Bosniaks:

(Bosnian Serb-transitional-generation: 35) I remember the reduction of departures from Sarajevo, in mid-April 1992. Sarajevo airport was full of panicking people trying to get on a plane that evacuated civilians from Sarajevo. We had to run to board on the plane, because, shortly before that, Muslim soldiers had shot at the airport. I sat with

people in tears in a crowded plane. That April night was also the last time when I saw Sarajevo.

This narrative clearly demonstrated how the war was a period of pains and wounds for ordinary people in Bosnia, regardless of their ethnicity and ethnic ties.

Two other participants answered the same question in the following way:

(Bosnian Serb-transitional-generation: 33) The war means my family's deportation from Sarajevo. I turned back to my town after the war but without my family. Everything had changed, and I had nothing in Sarajevo now. This, for me, is more terrible than the war years for me.

(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 53) My only war memory is just escaping to Belgrade. If you did not prefer to kill the innocent people, like many Serbs did, you had to escape. Yes, we went to Belgrade to protect our family, but also to protect our humanitarian feelings.

Upon this answer, I asked when the participant turned back to Sarajevo and how he felt about his return:

(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 53) In 1996, I came back to Sarajevo, Banja Luka, but this was not my Sarajevo. We were divided in our territory, under the rule of one state. There was no trust among people against ethnic others. This was terrible for us because we had never cared about anybody's ethnicity, we even did not know [each other's ethnicity]. Today's Bosnia is not different from the post-war Bosnia, unfortunately.

These responses show that Bosnian Serbs were also negatively affected by the war. The later quote also demonstrates that members of the Bosnian society might not be happy

with certain ethnic divisions regardless of their ethnicity, and it shows how they might miss their socialist period and its supra-nationalist design.

The same experiences were also observable in the Bosnian Croats' answers to my question about their war memories:

> *(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation: 62) All my memories about the war years are so concrete; I also remember the most painful murder of two young men, one in Vukovar at Ovcara in 1991 and the other in Bosnia in 1992. I never forget that. I do not who they were, but a human cannot commit these crimes. I wish I could forget what I saw during the chaos years.*

Another participant also had a similar experience:

> *(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation: 42) My most intense memory is a massacre I witnessed in 1993, when three shells fired by Serbian armed forces killed 6 kids. I will never accept the reasons for the war or the motivation of the persecutors. From an amazing country where people shared everything with their neighbours to a real hell…*
> Like many civilians in Bosnia, Bosnian Croats were also traumatized by the war years as the people they knew turned into victims of the war years. Further, they did not try to legitimize the war in their narrational accounts.

To sum up, members of different ethnic groups have all been traumatized by the war years and the memories of those years. Although Bosniaks were more willing to tell and narrate their stories (because they saw themselves as the victims and the war as their national liberation), members of the other two ethnic groups also experienced the terrible face of the war. During the interviews, they did not try to accuse one particular group (except extreme nationalists) nor did they present the socialist experience as a reason for the dissolution war.

Might it be that socio-economic benefits of the Yugoslav regime lead to the positive commemoration of it despite the above-mentioned collective traumas? To answer this question I also look into the economic framework, and I argue that a comparison of the participants' economic welfare during the socialist period and the post-war era might also demonstrate the borders of identities.

5.5. Economy and welfare

The people of Bosnia who experienced the socialist regime and the war mainly romanticized the Yugoslav regime and its practices by referring to their own experiences, rather than attempting to fetishize the past with imaginary references. Maksimovic discusses the possible reflections of nostalgia among different societies, and she notices that nostalgia might also emerge by the dismissal of past experiences and by ascribing new meanings to the same past (2017: 3). When I listened to my interviewees' distinct stances on the Yugoslav economy, I realized that Maksimovic's arguments might be valid in the case of Bosnia because some people miss and nostalgize the economic features of the socialist regime while others criticize its economic policies harshly although all participants come from similar economic backgrounds: middle class white- or blue-collar workers and retired public employees. Before and during the interviews, I specifically asked how interviewees define their economic background during the Yugoslav period, and I realized that white- or blue-collar workers and retired public employees deemed themselves as middle-class. After numerous interviews, I can say that there was no nostalgia for a fictional past among these participants. There were just different views in the society regarding economic benefits and welfare.

During the interviews, I heard different stories told from participants, and ethnic lines did not necessarily overlap with people's economic backgrounds or socio-economic classes. This contrasts with Bonacich's main assumption: members of proletariat are from ethnically-isolated groups (1976). While Bonacich's main assumption that members of the proletariat are generally

from the same oppressed ethnic groups. While Bonacich's argument represents classic Marxism, neo-Marxist interpretation of ethnicity focuses on the relations between social movement/mobilization and ethnicity "that are relatively autonomous from class relations" (Solomos and Back 1995: 412). At the same time, neo-Marxists argue that ethnic differences and inequalities are crucial for the rise of capitalist accumulation (Mejer 2012). According to Malesevic, class is just a part of the repertoire that draws the borders of ethnic groups (2019: 37). I also claim that ethnic affiliation and economic class are different concepts, and people might come together under the banner of the same ethnicity despite their different economic backgrounds.

In my participants' narratives one could trace an emphasis on the economic deprivation that affected distinct ethnic groups differently in the Bosnian society during the socialist reign. Yet, despite economic deprivation and suppression of religion, nostalgia for the socialist regime's supra-ethnic structure was still palpable. On the other hand, it is necessary to indicate that there was no collective remembrance of economic problems, which demonstrates an economically fragmented society. Furthermore, experiences on economic devastation were not associated with the failure of different ethnic units. According to the participants, as I demonstrated-above, rights and statuses were owned easily and in an egalitarian manner in Yugoslavia, but there were countable exceptions in terms of economic failures and wounds that people experienced and that were separated from ethnic incidents.

> *(Bosniak-witness-generation: 50) The economic situation during socialism, seen from today's perspective, was very bad, and we did not know that during socialism. It was very bad because we could not be rich or we could not purchase whatever we wanted. We thought that everybody was living like us. Actually, it was true among our relatives and friends.*

For another question about social interactions during the Yugoslav regime, the same participant also said:

> *(Bosniak-witness-generation: 50) I always miss the social life, hanging out, and friendships. It was the picture of the socialist Yugoslavia for me. Today we do not have it. Maybe we can reach some international or imported products easily, but Yugoslavia was more than that.*
>
> This was a clear example of superiority of social ties and relations over advantages of economic life. Another participant also agreed:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 35) During socialism we weren't rich, but we were happy. I wish it could be back again. People are really sick and tired of all post-war nationalist incitement. Furthermore, there was a real middle-class that was created by the regime. Nobody wanted too many things. Today, people want to earn much more, but this is impossible although there is no socialist regime anymore. We are sunk into darkness. Darkness does not just refer to economic deprivation. It also refers to ethno-nationalist suspicion and fear.*
>
> This response demonstrated the destruction of cross-ethnic relations in post-war Bosnia. Moreover, one can argue that neo-liberalism and consumerism did not influence the Bosnian Society of Yugoslavia due to the socialist principles and its effects on the folks. Thus, this participant stated that "*nobody wanted too many things"*. I also heard similar stories about the economic framework in the socialist regime:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 38) During socialism, economic life was more affordable for almost everyone. Social life was superbly sociable*.

For another question about social interactions during the Yugoslav regime, the same participant also said:

> *(Bosniak-transitional-generation: 38) It was an economic and social heaven for us. I cannot say additional things because it was the summary of socialist Yugoslavia for me and for family.*
>
> During the interviews, when I asked the Bosniak participants about their socio-economic background in Yugoslavia and in Bosnia, almost all located themselves in the middle-class (either via negative or positive memories) of Yugoslavia while they hesitated to choose an economic class to locate themselves in today's Bosnia. This was also traceable among Bosnian Croats and Serbs, and there was no direct overlap between socio-economic classes and ethnic groups of Bosnia:

> *(Bosnian Croat-transitional-generation: 43) In total, and mostly according to the testimony of my parents, the period of socialism was much more stable and people could count on their jobs and maintaining living standards. During the war, certainly no one had anything because everything was destroyed, while the post-war years were marked by constant stagnation, insecurity, unemployment, worries, and lack of money.*

Another Bosnian Croat had a different experience and perception:

> *(Bosnian Croat-witness-generation 63) We had to satisfy with what the regime gave us. But today, we have many sources. However, of course I miss the culture of neighbourhood and tradition of co-existence of all folks in my quartier. The issue of the distribution of wealth was terrible, but we never blamed other groups in our society.*

As can be seen Bosnian Croats' individual accounts of their economic opportunities in Yugoslavia also varied. Some participants thought that the socialist period was economically very advantaged, while other individuals emphasized economic problems although they all considered themselves as middle-class.

Bosnian Serbs also had similar personal thoughts and stories:

(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 48) I come from a family that belongs to the middle class in Yugoslavia, and from childhood until today I was progressively successful. This progressively means that both in my childhood and in college. During the war, I was satisfied with what I had, which was very little. Now I am so satisfied because I have been working at the university for 25 years, I have two real estates, I travel, etc.

While this participant argued that economy was not better in the socialist period than today's Bosnia, another participant stated that:

(Bosnian Serb-witness-generation: 47) In the time of socialism we had a decent economic standard, during the war everyone suffered economically, with the exception of war profiteers; and finally, today my economic status is much worse than it was, even though I have progressed intellectually and status-wise.

As these quates demonstrate, according to Bosnian Serb participants, there were economically satisfied and relatively unsatisfied people in Yugoslavia, and that is also the case today. On the other hand, people did not associate the Yugoslav regime with economic problems. Therefore, one could argue that flawless economic structure is not a necessary condition for feeling nostalgic.

Overall, “social life”, “friendship”, and “carefree times” were very significant references for describing the Yugoslav state in my participants’ narratives. Abolition of ethnic groups and ethnic naming led to visible social interactions and consolidated ties among the people, regardless of ethnic identities, during the socialist era. However, economic hardship or economic inequality did not come up as much in my participants’ answers. Rather, there were diverse narrations on it. In addition, (*restorative*) Yugo-nostalgia was mainly framed via supra-nationalist sentiments and connotations in the participants’ testimonies.

Chapter 6 – Discussion and results

6.1. Discussion and results

In this section I will discuss the main findings of my thesis. Although primordial school in the nationalism literature argues that national (or ethnic) identities are rigid just from the very beginning, and they are reflections of mythical pasts (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1971, 1985; Geertz 1993; Smith 1998; Van Evera 2001; Gorski 2003), I argue that boundaries between different ethnic groups, their cultures, and their rituals are malleable in the Bosnian context. Furthermore, nationalism is artificial, and national (or ethnic) identities are activated by nationalist political leaders (Bieber 2002: 98). My research question, *why does the collective memory of certain ethnic groups not display nationalistic sentiments?,* focuses on observation of nationalism through collective memory in a traumatized society, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the dissolution war of socialist Yugoslavia led to the emergence of ethnic lines in Bosnia, nationalistic sentiments are not palpable among the participants of my research from distinct ethnic groups. Further, I find that a collective nostalgia of the socialist period prevents the formation of nationalist feelings, attachments, and ideas despite collective war traumas.

I have come up with three working assumptions to find a reliable answer to the research question above: (A1) *Experience of supraethnic/national identity might undermine nationalistic feelings.* (A2) *Some ethnic groups might value their socio-economic statuses more than their ethno-national identity.* (A3) *"Ethnic" wars or polarizations might not destroy supranationalist memories of pre-war periods because ethnic wars or polarizations might be economically motivated.* I will discuss the main findings of my thesis in relation to these assumptions.

Former studies mainly focus on the rise of nationalism in Bosnia in the post-war atmosphere (Denitch 1996; Sells 1996; Bieber 2002; Volcic 2007). Bozic argues that victimhood narration

(Bosniaks), persecutor narration (Bosnian Serbs), and collaborator narration (Bosnian Croats) are the official and dominant narration account in Bosnia among the majority of the population, Bosniaks (2017). Therefore, these narrations might be consolidated with mythical or primordially national references among Bosniaks to make ethnic borders more visible. Moreover, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats also have their own victimhood narrations that may also be amplified with historical nationalistic discourse. However, I detect among my participants that witness generations of these three ethnic groups, who witnessed both the socialist regime and the war years, do not use primordial references or arguments, and they do not highlight nationalistic interpretations or ideas. Thus, my first assumption, (A1) *Experience of supraethnic/national identity might undermine nationalistic feelings,* and my third assumption, (A3) *"Ethnic" wars or polarizations might not destroy supranationalist memories of pre-war periods because ethnic wars or polarizations might be economically motivated*, have been confirmed, which led me to focus on the socio-cultural anthropology and history of socialist Yugoslavia to trace the roots of these non-nationalistic sentiments.

In order to understand the socialist period, a look at the social and economic framework of the Yugoslav state is also important. Thus, my second assumption, (A2) *Some ethnic groups might value their socio-economic statuses more than their ethno-national identity*, aims to analyse how and to what extent witness generations miss their socio-economic conditions during the socialist past, and how their nostalgia suppresses their nationalistic feelings. 32 Participants (out of 37) demonstrated positive feelings and attitudes toward the socialist period when probed to remember about it during the interviews, and their yearning might also be interpreted as a "nostalgia".

Boym's concept "restorative nostalgia" refers to an imaginary chance to be able to live in the past instead of present (2001: 42-3). In the interviews, I traced similar ideas and comparisons between the socialist past and today's conditions in Bosnia among the participants from three

ethnic groups. Participants, regardless of their ethnic groups, generally defined the socialist period as "*a happy and carefree period" as "a unique period*", "*a period of prosperity, brotherhood and unity, love, collegiality, solidarity, patriotism*", "*a fairy tale*". Furthermore, they also think that "*today these are not possible in Bosnia*", and "*today a simple worker or a person cannot effort to have this*". These comparisons demonstrate the participants' willingness to live in the past and yearning for the Yugoslav state. The socialist past also means fictive kinships and liquid ethnicity, and I asked several questions about the participants' feelings on the era of supra-ethnicity.

The motto of socialist Yugoslavia "brotherhood and unity" and the Yugoslav state's main policy to dissolve ethnic identities in order to build a supra-ethnic identity for all folks, *socialist identity*, were effective and accepted by the society as discussed in Chapter 2. However, liberalization waves, economic depression, end of the Cold War and communist regimes influenced socialist Yugoslavia and its multi-ethnic structure (Hodson et al. 1994: 1536; Gagnon 2010). After the dissolution wars, supra-ethnicity and cross-ethnic relations could not be conserved in the Bosnian society due to certain polarizations and warfare. As I traced among the second generations, especially among Bosniaks, the younger generations have a tendency to refer to nationalistic references and interpretations because they were probably born in the atmosphere of "bloody wars". However, witness generations I interviewed do not highlight nationalistic sentiments and remember the socialist past especially with an emphasis on vivid social relations.

"*Very eventful and dynamic*", "*a period with more justice and solidarity in society*", "*no social discrimination*", "*irrelevant ethnic identities*", "*hanging out and friendships*", "*superbly social life*" are some of the answers from the interviews, and those answers were not specific to an ethnic group. Participants from all three ethnic groups gave these answers in response my

questions. Their answers show that there is nostalgia for supra-ethnicity and cross-ethnic relations despite all the ethnically traumatized memory.

Inclusionary politics of socialist Yugoslavia is still alive and traceable in collective memory of the participants, therefore nationalistic sentiments cannot find a room among my participants' ideas. However, repression of the socialist regime of religious practices and rituals, especially in the public, led to a dichotomy on how to commemorate the Yugoslav state. Some participants referred to their negative experiences during the socialist epoch due to the state's pressure on religious affairs because supra-ethnic socialist identity could not substitute for religious identities. However, their individual experiences and narrations do not mean that the participants do not yearn for the socialist period, or social inclusion was not a case in the socialist regime. Despite these narrations, majority of the participants favoured social inclusion and the supra-ethnicity of Yugoslavism.

Legacy of social inclusion of the socialist regime is even palpable in the war narrations among the participants. Although Bosniaks are generally accepted as victims of the dissolution wars due to the Bosniak genocide, all Bosniaks from witness generations, among my participants, are unwilling to accuse an ethnic group. For example, a Bosniak participant directly refused to name all Serbs as persecutors and said: "*The others, who were against the socialist state, secretly prepared to cleanse us"*. This is important as it provides an opportunity to inquire about the possible traumas or experiences of Bosnian Serbs, too. "*Deportation from Sarajevo*", "*escaping to Belgrade*", and "*the last view of Sarajevo*" are crucial narratives demonstrating how the Bosnian Serb participants are also victim of the war years, albeit in a different way.

Although "Christoslavism" is seen as the main formulation of Serbness from a primordial perspective (Sells 1996: 51), Bosnian Serb participants did not refer to primordial myths when I asked questions about nationalism and the socialist regime. This also demonstrates how historical narrations are not always internalized.

While my participants, regardless of their ethnic affiliations, yearn for social interactions and social ties of the Yugoslav period, economic characteristics and welfare of the socialist regime are not missed in a similar manner because the welfare of the Bosnian society was not linear although all they defined themselves as members of the middles class. However, different perceptions and all experiences of Yugoslav economy did not prevent the emergence nostalgia of cross-ethnic social relations among the participants. Therefore, I suggest that economic characteristics or welfare is not a mandatory criterion to romanticize an epoch.

Yugoslav identity substituted for ethnic identities in socialist Yugoslavia. Influence of Yugoslavism on the witness generations I interviewed prevents the constitution of palpable nationalistic sentiments regardless of official narrations and ethnic affiliations although Yugoslavism could not substitute for religious identities. Furthermore, Bosnia has a nested multi-cultural structure, and the socialist regime consolidated this multi-cultural and polyethnic structure, therefore we cannot trace a nationalist pattern among witness generations I interviewed. However, there are also limitations in my research.

6.2. Limitation(s): measuring nationalism via collective memory

The design and methodology of my research allowed me to draw some conclusions on behalf of my sample groups and their (non)nationalistic sentiments and feelings. On the other hand, there are some limitations in my research design that might affect its results and applicability to excluded ethnic groups of Bosnia.

The first limitation concerns thematic analysis. Although interpretivist process-tracing helped to bring little pieces of the puzzle together, thematic analysis is the main method that I applied to categorize and interpret participants' answers. Thematic analysis is an effective qualitative method to trace theoretical coherence in the answers, however "it does not allow the researcher to make claims about language use" (Nowell et al. 2017: 2). In other words, I could not analyse the participants' discourse due to my direct the focus on thematic aspect of the answers,

therefore I could not make an inference on the rhetoric while tracing the borders of nationalism through participants' answers.

Nowell et al. also argue that "while thematic analysis is flexible, this flexibility can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data" (Ibid.), therefore thematic interpretation might demonstrate irrelevant results in contrast to developed theories. However, semi-structed interviews balanced the impact of this limitation because I designed the structured part of the questions to solve my research puzzle. The second limitation that derives from my research design is the unstructured part of the questions. I could not ask deeper questions about war years or traumas of the participants because of the sensibility of the issue. Thus, I could not focus on the saliency of ethnic identities during the war years in the Bosnian context.

The last limitation concerns the design of my sample groups. I included participants from the major three ethnic groups in Bosnia, and I did not consult narrations and experiences of the members of the *ostali* (others)-all other ethnic groups of Bosnia. Their memories and traumas might have helped me trace nationalism in the Bosnian context (Price and Murnan 2004: 66). However, reaching to the members of *ostali* through online interviews is not easy because of their minority and fragile position in the society since the post-Dayton atmosphere. Despite these limitations, I was still able to draw some important conclusions on nationalism in Bosnia based on the interviews I conducted.

6.3. Nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina

There is no agreement on when Bosnians started to be named with their ethnic affiliations, but Babuna argues that Austro-Hungarian Empire labeled Bosnians, all ethnic or ethno-religious groups in my sample, as a distinct nation in 1906, especially in the official-archival documents (2000: 15). Furthermore, Hoare demonstrates that the WWII is the turning point among distinct ethnic groups of the region to name (or categorize) themselves ethnically (2013), but Robinson

and Pobric state that different groups of today's Bosnia-Herzegovina were "ethnicized by the recent conflict" (2005: 241). Therefore, reaching a consensus on when Bosnians started to build a sense of belonging to their ethnic groups is not easy despite massive research on the effects of current political prism in identity-building among Bosnians.

One of the most important scholars on identity-making in Bosnia, Robert M. Hayden, states that effects of the dissolution wars cannot be healed due to the effects of traumas on the people (2007: 109). Therefore, the rise of nationalism within the Bosnian society is not unexpected. Robinson and Pobric argue that "for many outside observers the conflict's sharp ethnic segregation between Croats and Bosniaks was symbolized in the destruction of the Stari Most Bridge. Hence, its rebuilding has been hailed as a representation of reconciliation, reuniting two opposing parts of the city" (2005: 243). Collective healing might be an effective lens to trace non-nationalist sentiments in Bosnia, however I argue that collective nostalgia among the members of the witness generations, at least among my participants, is another crucial lens to understand non-nationalist sentiments. As the interview data demonstrate, the case of Bosnia might also be deployed to display that nationalism does not have to be nested in the society.

My research also shows that participants from witness generations are more inclusive and pro-supra-ethnicity than second-generations. Practices and rituals of socialist Yugoslavia are embedded in both their experiences and narrations. Therefore, I suggest that the participants' direct ideas and interpretations are important in tracing the embracement of non-nationalistic discourse and habitude, to prevent polarizations, and to conserve social interactions within the Bosnian context.

6.4. Contribution to the literature

With this thesis I strive to fill the three gaps I've detected in the nationalism literature. Experiences and individual narrations of witness generations are important for observing nationalism and for a reliable research. Although Schuman and Rieger (1992) and Zerubavel's

(1996) analyses claim that non-witness generations can also be a source of collective memory, Schuman and Corning disagree (2016). They argue that non-witness generations (or cohorts) can also remember the former events, such as wars and collective traumas, but witness generations are more likely to remember them in detail with their collectivistic characteristics (2016: 10-13). In line with this claim, collective memory of the witness generations I interviewed, which were sampled according to their ethnic affiliations, helped me to fill these gaps:

(1) There is almost no research exploring how ethnic groups evaluate primordialism -in other words, whether they locate themselves in the primordialist category or the constructivist category.

- I found that Bosnian participants of my research have direct constructivist claims on nationalism despite their ethnicized traumas.

(2) There are only few works that look into ideological and supra-ethnic experiences to analyse how inter-ethnic social interactions and individuals' relations can be more significant than ethnic ties and belonging for people.

- I found that former supra-ethnic experiences might reach the level of nostalgia due to strong social ties of the period, and the emergence of this nostalgia plays an important role in preventing nationalistic sentiments.

(3) There are several works that focus on supra-ethnic identity and nostalgia for it, but they do not aim to demonstrate whether there is a rank (which groups miss the past more and less) among ethnic groups in terms of their ardent nostalgia of the past. It also displays the conceptualization of nostalgia among persecutor or victim ethnic groups

- I found that although there are ethnically polarized groups within the Bosnian society, my participants from the leading ethnic groups yearn for the socialist period *similarly* and with *similar concepts* without a rank.

These findings contribute to the constructivist nationalism literature by highlighting the fictive features of nationalism. Building on these findings I come up with a response to my research question, *why does the collective memory of certain ethnic groups not display nationalistic sentiments*, and I argue that socialist nostalgia prevents nationalism within the Bosnian society. My findings also refute several studies that aim to show how ethnic differentiations and polarizations are traceable in the Balkans for many years.

6.5. Further research

This thesis has aimed to highlight the collective memory of Bosnians to discuss whether supra-ethnicity and anti-nationalist (or non-nationalist) sentiments survive in a post-trauma society. Future studies could look at other ethnically traumatized post-communist, post-socialist societies to see whether they can spot the existence of anti-nationalism and supra-ethnicity in those societies as well.

Other former five republics of socialist Yugoslavia-Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Montenegro-and former two autonomous regions-Kosovo and Vojvodina-have not experienced the dissolution wars and its destructive effects as much as Bosnia-Herzegovina did. On the other hand, there are still ethnically fragmented parts in these formerly socialist states, especially in Kosovo. Retrospective grievances seem more an indication of the present than an evaluation of the past. This may be an important symptom that connects the present with the past and is worthy of further analysis. Future studies may also look at their ethnic relations and legacy of

socialist period through distinct individual narrations. Researchers may also prefer to look at post-Soviet spaces, too.

Conclusion

Contrary to many works on the history of ethnic polarization in Bosnia-Herzegovina (interchangeable Bosnia) in the post-war period, this thesis aims to discuss how an ethnically divided society might not necessarily be an epicentre of exclusionary-nationalistic dogmas and ideas. Former studies mainly analyse ethnically-divided relations (Hayden 2007) and governance (Bieber 2006; Stroschein 2014) of Bosnia, and they show that there is an embedded division in the Bosnian society because of the legacy of the violent dissolution wars of 1992-95. However, I argue and demonstrate that, despite their collective traumas, not all members of an ethnic group or a community display nationalistic attitudes; therefore, this thesis directly contributes to the constructivist school (Barth 1969; Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Chandra 2009; Wimmer 2018) in nationalism studies, especially in the history of Europe, by framing and discussing the artificiality of nationalist attitudes and ideas through in-depth interviews with participants from Bosnia. In contrast to the constructivists, the primordialists mainly refer to ethnic or national identities as ancient and rigid, and they consider these identities as ethnically-mobilizing powers in the divided societies (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1971, 1985; Geertz 1993; Smith 1998; Van Evera 2001). Yet, the findings of this thesis push us to rethink the claims of the primordialists' claims.

Before the visibility of ethnic identities in the 19th and 20th centuries, distinct religious identities have been existed, and religions demarcated the borders of groups in Bosnia (Hobsbawm 1983).There is no consensus on exactly when Bosnians acquired their ethnicized identities, but many studies display the importance of the dissolution wars and their influence on ethnic divisions in Bosnia (Robinson and Pobric 2005; Bieber 2006). However, looking solely at the war period and post-war relations is not enough to understand the Bosnian society. Pre-war years in Bosnia correspond to the period of socialist Yugoslavia and its supra-ethnically

codified state practices. Therefore, one could argue that witness generations of Bosnia might remember fluid ethnic identities and fictive kinship periods, and those generations might demonstrate less (or anti) nationalistic sentiments. After Tito's death in 1980, there was power a vacuum across the entire Yugoslavia since Tito was a unifying figure and a symbol of supra-nationalism. After 1980, ethnic polarization might have not started quickly in Bosnia although economic deprivation became palpable during 1980s according to testimonies of my participants. Upon a deeper analysis of the socialist regime and today's ethnically polarized Bosnia, a research puzzle emerges: *is it possible for certain ethnic groups to not demonstrate nationalistic sentiments?* If so*, why does the collective memory of certain ethnic groups not display nationalistic sentiments?*

There are three constitutionally recognized ethnic groups in today's Bosnia: Bosniaks (majority), Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats. For other ethnic groups, such as Bosnian Jews, Roma, or Turks, there is no specific reference in the Bosnian constitution, formulated in the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995, and they are named as *ostali* (others) without referring to their minority rights and positions. When I started to look for participants for my thesis, in addition to witness generations I also tried to contact second or younger generations in the hopes that they could help me reach their parents or relatives who could be members of witness generations who lived through both the socialist regime and the war years. However, there was a deadlock I had not expected: According to these younger generations, there is no ethnically-fragmented structure in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Especially Bosniak members of younger generations did not prefer the usages "Bosnian Serbs" or "Bosnian Croats" because they thought these groups should be named after their religious affiliations, such as "Bosnian Orthodox" instead of "Bosnian Serb". Therefore, one could argue that the post-war atmosphere is indeed characterized by exclusionary nationalism and an anti-pluralist attitude by ethnic majority, which suppresses the ethnic identification of minorities. On the other hand, my

Bosniak guide, Nedim who helped me during my expeditions in the museums, is an exception, despite being a younger Bosniak. In such a fragmented context, why is the above mentioned research question worth examining after all, one might wonder? My answer is embedded in collective nostalgia and its resistance capacity against nationalism in the Bosnian context (Ange and Berliner 2015: 5).

After the genocide, which took place in Srebrenica and in different cities of Bosnia, Bikmen asks how Bosniaks, the main target of the genocide, have forgiven Serbs or how there could be cross-ethnic relations (2013: 26). On the other hand, we know that co-habitation is a tradition among Bosnians since the medieval times, and the socialist regime specifically constituted "socialist" identities for its citizens to dissolve all other ethnic identities. Therefore, the legacy of the socialist period and its cultural anthropology might be well and alive among witness generations of Bosnia.

To figure out whether this is so, I interviewed 55 Bosnian citizens I reached my participants via social media, NGOs' platforms, social media and webpages of local news' portals. Among them are those who experienced both the socialist period and the war years. I recruited them according to their ages, socio-economic class, and ethnic groups. I had to leave out the members of the *ostali* because of their fragile position in the post-Dayton or war period; hence, I talked with Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats. I talked with 55 participants, whose ages range between 33-62, but only 37 contested to my sharing their experiences in my thesis because some of them have changed their options later on. Age-based distinction depends on my participants' capacity to remember the past. In other words, members of direct witness generations remember both periods, but members of transitional generation (Vuckovic Juros's classification) were children or teenagers during the socialist period and the war years, and they had blurred memories. As a result, they generally cited from their parents and relatives'

experiences. Overall, 32 of the participants said that they felt threatened during the war years, regardless of their ethnic affiliations, and they have nostalgic memories of the socialist regime, which, I believe, contributes to the internalization of anti-nationalistic sentiments.

Scholars of nostalgia studies generally conceptualize nostalgia as "the irreversibility of time" (Byrant 2008; Ange and Berliner 2015), and suggest that fetishized remembrance does not necessarily mean a preference to live in the past, instead of present, because of the past's conditions (Hann 2015: 96). However, my participants directly compared the socialist era and today, and preferred to live in the past. In this, they demonstrated what Boym calls *restorative* nostalgia (2001: 41), where people might yearn for the past and their "lost home" because they are not satisfied with the present. Among my participants, restorative nostalgia for socialist Yugoslavia is not just nostalgia for a period or a land, it is also nostalgia for a supra-ethnic, socialist identity.

Yugoslav interpretation of socialism was different from Soviet-style communism (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden 1992); it was combined with further liberties and welfare (Luthar and Pusnik 2010: 10). Tito's leadership shaped "Yugoslavism", and being a member of Yugoslavia was equated with free movement all around the world, an occidental posture, economic rights, and cross-ethnic relations. All those benefits helped construct an oral anti-nationalist manifesto among citizens of socialist Yugoslavia. Therefore, yearning for the socialist past might tell us why witness generations do not demonstrate nationalistic sentiments.

In order to observe my participants' ideas on ethnic polarization, I designed semi-structured interviews, and I analysed them thematically. A native translator helped me while conducting the interviews. Some Bosniak, Bosnian Serb, and Bosnian Croat participants were former guerrillas who were active during the dissolution wars, and despite that, they highlighted a preference for socialist Yugoslavia when I asked their ideas on the socialist period. Their

responses directly centralized the importance of cross-ethnic relations and strong social ties that remind them of the socialist period. They also (directly or indirectly) said that supra-ethnicity was not an empty signifier of Yugoslavism because inclusive policies of Yugoslavism was quite palpable in their memories.

Therefore, I can claim that Yugoslavism substituted for ethnic identities for some citizens of former Yugoslavia, and it was welcomed according to testimonies of my participants from different regions and ethnic groups of Bosnia. If there is such a traceable nostalgia for the socialist regime, how can scholars then explain the quick activation of ethnic identities? Was the main reason of the war primordial? Upon this inquiry, Brass's explanation on nationalism (1979) can be helpful. Brass argues that ethnic or national identities are just one of the identities of people or social groups, and ethnic identities are politically designed; therefore, they can be used instrumentally for political purposes (1979). It could be claimed that Serbian state elites who wanted to establish a more powerful Serbia in each cycle of the liberalization of socialist Yugoslavia (Hodson et al. 1994: 1536), used ethnic differences to divide Bosnians and to construct "modern Serbia" (Budding 1997: 409), then "great Serbia" (DiCaprio 2009: 75), and finally "greater Serbia" (Guzina 2003: 95-96). After Tito, Serbian political actors ruled militaristic and police forces of Yugoslavia, and they manipulated all those offices through their nationalistic claims and arguments. Although the war suddenly erupted, nationalistic Serbian figures flamed nationalism especially in crucial positions that caused a quick societal mobilization (Ramet 2006).

Although the main persecutor of the war years is mainly accepted as Serbs, one of the Bosniak interviewees told me that it was the "enemies of socialist Yugoslavia" who planned the bloody end". Further, many Bosniaks thought that the pains and traumas of the war years were shared within the Bosnian society, regardless of ethnic affiliations. Such narratives by my participants

demonstrate that the chaotic war years and collective experiences of witness generations were not able to polarize the entire Bosnian society according to their ethnic lines. Furthermore, many participants argue that war years brought economic devastation for all, except profiteers of the war. Therefore, it is understandable that the war was ethnicized, but there were also different dimensions of it, such as economic motivations, and obviously witness generations among my participants were aware of that.

Primordialists argue that ascriptive characteristics of certain groups divide societies, and those groups have a tendency to be polarized (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972); according to this claim, such groups also justify their attacks or aggressions by combining their current demands with historical claims. Sells mainly refers to Serbian nationalism and how historical religious narratives sharpened the rise of Serbian nationalism in the 1990s (1996). Furthermore, Bozic argues that the dissolution wars, for Serbs, are "the fatherland wars" (2017: 9). Is Serbness primordially-exclusionary just from the very beginning? It is easy to falsify such a supposition if we look at Serbian population of Bosnia who rejected to fight and helped non-Serbs during the dissolution wars in Bosnia (Boerhout 2016: 182). Bosnian Serb participants also mainly referred to modern and artificial reasons of the wars, and they had a tendency to not accept the validity of primordial narratives on Serbness, especially in relation to the dissolution wars. Therefore, it would not be wrong to claim that ascriptive features and demands are not traceable in the testimonies of my participants, as well as in their ideas and experiences.

While ethnic differences are not primordially conserved and polarized within societies, Lampe also argues that ethnic differences were not even salient in the Balkans of the 19th century (1994: 74). Religious difference was the main reference point for borders among distinct groups, but intense linguistic similarity, similar everyday practices, and traditions (Ibid.) push us to re-think of the modern division of ethnic identifications among Bosniaks,

Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats. Although I do not aim, in this thesis, to re-locate different historical epochs of Bosnia and their direct influences on today's Bosniannes, those former periods and tradition of co-habitation within the Bosnian society among different groups help to constitute a background for understanding how supra-ethnicity in socialist Yugoslavia was a success story: an extension of historical habitude (Markowitz 2007: 68 and Boerhout 2016: 181). On the other hand, Golubovic argues that Bosniaks' victimhood position leads to re-imagination cycles of internal others in everyday practices (2019: 2), however the witness generations I interviewed, even Bosniaks, were reluctant to take part in the re-imagination processes of othering within their society. Voices and answers of my interviewees demonstrate a certain degree of tiredness of isolations and otherings within their society despite their collective and individual traumas. This does not mean they do not prefer to belonging to an ethnic group, but most of them blame the polarization process for the increasing saliency of ethnic affiliations.

While my data comprise semi-structured in-depth interviews, the realm I try to analyse is collective memory of my interviewees. Collective memory is an essential aspect of the construction of nations or nation-states (Grosby 2005). Although collective memory literature provides important empirical evidence for the constructivists, the primoridialists also benefit from collective memory to emphasize the continuation of historical ideas and claims (Bakalin 1993). Schuman and Corning argue that collective memory of witness generations brings us the complete picture of a certain case or a period because of their living memories and experiences (2016). Transfer of memory also helps social scientists, especially oral historians, to work on experiences; but, this is more tricky because each transfer might change the real picture, add some unreal references. Primordialists do not refer to this dimension of the debate in memory and nationalism studies. On the other hand, constructivists argue that even one individual's complete, consistent or changed memory and narratives might tell us how borders are re-

invented. For example, Zerubavel's classic example on museums and witness or second generations shows the re-construction of a bridge between past and present by referring to the testimonies of the witnesses who visit the museums (2016: 293).

It is also necessary to indicate that collective memory also reflects social, religious, cultural, and economic relations in a certain time slot; therefore, tracing collective memory is a hard task that necessitates an in-depth research on a certain case or time period. In order to understand borders of collective memory and its reliability, I also critically analysed former studies on identity construction in Bosnia. Although I tried to understand ethnic groups and their collective memory to trace nationalism among the interviewees, I did not directly refer to "ethno-nationalism" because in line with former studies, I detected that religion plays a complex role in the Bosnian context while studying ethnicity and nationalism. Abazovic argues that Bosnian nationalism should be discussed under the umbrella of "ethnicized religion" (2015: 1) because ethnicity has a superiority over religion and religious culture. However, Velikonja refers to "religio-national" identification in Bosnia and signifies the role of religion during the construction of national sense of belonging (2003: 287). There is a mutual relation between religious and ethnic (or national) identities, but based on the testimonies of my participants I argue that ethnic differentiations are clearly distinct from religious affiliations for most of today's Bosnians. A Bosniak does not have to be a Muslim, or a Serb does not have to be an Orthodox Christian. Further, my interviewees clearly stated that socialism had substituted for their ethnic identities, and then it was only after the end of Yugoslavism that their ethnic identities became visible. Therefore, one of the most important claims of the primodialists (Geertz 1993), combining religious myths while claiming historical-national rights, becomes less palpable when one takes into consideration the answers of my interviewees. Further, when the interviewees narrated their traumas on the dissolution wars, ethnic references were salient.

Working on both trauma and nostalgia is also tricky because I had to ask equally-weighted questions about my interviewees' positive memories and pains. Kattago argues that while researchers try to understand social histories and rituals of societies, they should know that "the individual has the potential to criticize and evaluate his or her traditions" (2009: 377). Therefore, the recognition of the individual pains and individual interpretations are important to understanding the borders of collective traumas. At the beginning of the interviews, I thought that I would just listen drastically traumatic stories of the Bosniak participants because of their victim position in the bloody wars. However, I detected *similar* individual traumas among members of different ethnic groups I interviewed. In other words, witness generations I interviewed have similar traumatic memoirs: losses, being refugees, witnessing violence and poverty. Therefore, I was able to trace a collective trauma about the war years, regardless of ethnic affiliations.

Remembrance of positive experiences about the pre-war years, while simultaneously talking about trauma, is a hard process for the interviewees; therefore, I tried to ask the questions as chronologically as possible. Unstructured questions sometimes pushed me to jump over periods and change the sequences of questions, but I tried to preserve the chronological order of the events. Therefore, I was also able to listen to specific memories on the socialist period because I first talked about the socialist regime, then collective trauma years. Further, to demonstrate whether the witness generations' nostalgia is a real nostalgia for a real period, I also listed the main features of Yugoslavism in this thesis, and I could not find an "unreal" nostalgic narrative for an "unreal" past (Maksimovic 2017: 3). Romantic references for Yugo-nostalgia tell us that imagined communities (even the ones that are no longer) might be conserved with living memories and with the witness generations' willingness to turn back to their former unity. This also challenges Ernst Renan's classic claim on nation and nationalism. Renan argues that shared sorrows, pains, and traumas of societies are more powerful than common victories or glorious

periods during the construction of national belonging (Anderson 1983). The case of Yugo-nostalgia demonstrates how social welfare and joyful periods are also important for the continuation of a sense of belonging.

For Lankauskas, nostalgia is not always a pathologic way of romantic remembrance of a time or a case (2015: 47). It might also be an embracement of a past with its living burdens (Ibid.). This type of nostalgia generally helps to remember the pains of the past, and generally post-communist space is analysed to trace this type of nostalgia (Hann 2015). People's remembrance of their past with fetishized patterns, either with romantic references or negative connotations, is called as "endo-nostalgia" (Berliner 2015: 21). When I tried to scrutinize the endo-nostalgia of the witness generation I interviewed, I realized that the hegemonic narrative is the celebration of inclusive social relations. There was no critique of the socialist regime's social practices. Although not all my participants remembered the economic structure of the regime positively, they did not see the regime in itself as a source of economic problems.

As I mentioned above, collective nostalgia works as a resistance mechanism in rejecting nationalist dogmas among the witness generations of three ethnic groups I interviewed. On the other hand, many studies focus on collective healing to understand social reconciliation among different groups (Robinson and Pobric 2005; Kattago 2009). Collective healing has a potential to heal the injuries of the past, but scholars who focus on ethnic division and polarization in Bosnia argue that the political system in itself was designed as problematic in the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995 (Bieber 2006; Stroschein 2014); therefore, healing cannot be long-lasting. In the interviews, I did not trace any belief or indirect pattern of collective healing, such as a collaborative effort for the reconstruction of bombed bridges, monuments, or villages. Witness generations I interviewed preferred to internalize the social rituals of the socialist regime;

therefore, they prefer to remember their lovely past. This is their tactic of struggling with nationalism.

Through in-depth interviews, I drew some conclusions on the borders of nationalism, collective nostalgia and trauma among my participants in the Bosnia society. On the other hand, from a methodological point of view, online in-depth interviewing had some restrictions for this thesis because I could not ask deeper question on sensitive issues since I could not perfectly estimate the participants' reactions. Participant observation could also be effective if I went to the field, but I could not design and conduct field-based research, except the museum visits, due to Covid-19. Although I faced some limitations because of online interviewing, it was effective in terms of time management, and I was still able to observe my participants through their answers, sounds, and gestures. Their answers during online interviews clearly demonstrated that there was a traceable awareness of the distinction between ethnic and religious identities and how socialism substituted for ethnic identities. However, public religious rituals and religious affairs in the socialist regime and their remembrance among religious Bosnians contributed to this thesis in terms of re-thinking of the borders of Yugo-nostalgia.

Oddie argues that "religion was considered the antithesis to 'Brotherhood and Unity'" (2012: 36) among the state elites of socialist Yugoslavia, especially when they planned the principles and values of a socialist state just after the end of the WWII. Therefore, trivialization of ethnic identities was undertaken for the sake of a more inclusive socialist identity; but religion "as an antithesis" was more tricky because of the difficulty of repressing religious identity. Flere and Klanjsek state that although it is hard to classify socialist Yugoslavia as a totalitarian regime, they highlight that "repression toward religious institutions" and "a general control of the intelligentsia" (2014, 243) were observed during the reign of the socialist regime in different

cases. As mentioned above, and especially in the Analysis chapter, a collectively nostalgic tone for blurred ethnic identification was visible when I asked questions about discriminations and isolations in socialist Yugoslavia; however, I also listened to some stories about the repression of religious identities by the regime.

The socialist state's control on certain public religious events, and prejudices among state units against religious people also affected the collective memory of religious Bosnians. My religious participants' answers show their negative remembrance of the socialist regime in terms of its policies concerning religious affairs. This demonstrates how ethnicity and religion had different connotations in the socialist regime, how socialism was able to substitute for ethnic identities, and how the socialist regime conceptualized religion as the main menace for the society. Therefore, rather than trying to construct a supra-religious identity, the regime, aimed to eradicate religion completely from the public and private spheres. Sell argues that, when ethnic identities were activated during the dissolution wars, religion became both palpable and invisible because nationalist elites benefited from the intersection of religious identities with ethnic ones (2003: 309). Expectedly, religious participants among my interviewees demonstrated negative sentiments against the regime when they remembered their isolation or discrimination stories, regardless of their ethnic affiliations. In other words, both Bosnian Christians and Bosnian Muslims faced similar discrimination due to their religious affiliations in the socialist regime. Interestingly, despite those negative memories, these participants were also nostalgic for the socialist regime, except its policies on religious affairs. They also emphasized how the regime successfully constructed cross-ethnic relations across former Yugoslavia. This also shows us the influence of the regime's benefits, even among excluded groups.

The infinitive of nostalgia in Hungarian, *visszasírni* (cry back), and the yearning it expresses directly explains the Yugo-nostalgia among my participants for own recent past which is endo-nostalgia. While endo-nostalgia is the remembrance of people's own past, generally with yearnful connotations, exo-nostalgia refers to sentiments, ideas, discourse, and dreams of other people's past or loss (Ange and Berliner 2016: 4).On the other hand, German communist *ostalgie* carries Western-centric connotations, and shows how exo-nostalgia, nostalgic culture among the ones who did not experience a certain period, is not similar with an example of endo-nostalgia (Bach 2015: 124) because communist *ostalgie* is constructed by both Western and Eastern Germans. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of an endo-nostalgia also demonstrates the elimination of Western or Euro-centric biases.[16] Different examples of nostalgia among post-socialist spaces in Europe also display how local groups interpret the dominant ideologies, their direct effects on their lives, and how a period is thought to be worthy of yearning.

For example, communist period in Hungary and its remembrance constitute a debate within the Hungarian society (Aydogan 2020). Hungarian interpretation of communism, especially in the post-Stalin period, opens a window of opportunity to reflect on yearning for a localized communism (Nadkarni and Shevchenko 2015: 62-63). Monuments that reflect communist legacies and Hungarian way of communism (Aydogan 2020) demonstrate how Hungarians might be proud of both their communist past and practices in the post-communist period. On the other hand, nationalization of Hungarian history, especially through textbooks, and greater emphasis on the injustices in Hungarian history (Hann 2015: 103) push us to re-think on the possibility of nostalgia among Hungarians for their socialist past. Nadkarni and Shevchenko argue that "Hungary's membership in the EU gave the term 'irreversibility of time'", hence Hungarian way of nostalgization of the past started to carry Western connotations by dismissing

their communist history. Hungarian example is important in showing how this thesis aimed to focus on endo-nostalgia among witness generations without a concern for Europeanized beliefs or patterns. Therefore, tracing Yugo-nostalgia among witness generations paved the way for understanding how "irreversibility of time" is not an accepted and repeated pattern among interviewees since they fiercely yearn for the conditions of the socialist period. Relatedly, Westernization and conservation of the norms of their nation-state is not a primary concern in their narrations. When I asked them to compare their belonging to their nation-state with their belonging to the socialist state, I observed unhappiness and desperate silence as borders within today's Bosnian society contribute to flaming their anti-nationalist sentiments and their yearning for Yugoslavism.

While I tried to combine nationalism and memory with nostalgia and trauma in this thesis, I aimed to show the importance of Yugo-nostalgia through collective memory of Bosnians against the legacy of the dissolution wars. Therefore, I directly aimed to contribute to the nationalism literature, and asked the question of *why does the collective memory of certain ethnic groups not display nationalistic sentiments?* in the Bosnian context. I have come up with three working assumptions to find a reliable answer to the research question above: (A1) *Experience of supraethnic/national identity might undermine nationalistic feelings.* (A2) *Some ethnic groups might value their socio-economic statuses more than their ethno-national identity.* (A3) *"Ethnic" wars or polarizations might not destroy supranationalist memories of pre-war periods because ethnic wars or polarizations might be economically motivated*, I was able to spot (A1) and (A3) in the narrations of my participants. As for (A2), massive part of my participants prioritized social relations and ties more than their ethnicized environment, but economy was not central to their construction of Yugo-nostalgia. Hann argues that "people may still cry back privately, and not only for economic reasons" (2015: 118), and this is also relevant to my study on nostalgia.

Finally, this thesis contributes to the literature in three ways. First, I found that, despite ethnicized traumas, Bosnian participants in my research put forward constructivist claims when discussing nationalism. Secondly, I found that former supra-ethnic experiences might reach the level of nostalgia due to strong social ties of the period, and the emergence of this nostalgia plays an important role in preventing nationalist sentiments. And lastly, although there are ethnically polarized groups within the Bosnian society, my participants from the leading ethnic groups yearn for the socialist period *similarly* and for *similar concepts*.

Upon these contributions and the main discussion of this thesis, researchers and scholars could look at the nexus of nostalgia and nationalism through collective memory in the post-socialist and post-Soviet spaces. Moreover, they can design further research on the malleability of ethnic groups in places with a history of supra-ethnic existence such as Kosovo, Romania, Hungary, or Ukraine.

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