Peace for Whom:

Agency and Intersectionality in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis contains no materials accepted for any other degrees, in any other situation. Thesis contains no materials written and/or published by any other person, except when appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

Elena B. Stavrevska Budapest, 09.01.2017

ABSTRACT

Both peacebuilding practice and mainstream literature have predominantly approached the examination of post-war societies is a static and unidimensional manner, portraying events, practices, and actors as fixed in space, time, and identity. In line with that approach, peace and reconciliation have often been understood as a mirror image of the preceding war. Consequently, when the conflict is regarded as a clash between different ethnicities, peace is viewed as a state of those ethnicities coming together, which is then reflected in the decision- and policy-making processes. This understanding, using the prism of *groupism* whereby (ethnic) groups are analysed as the primary societal actors, ascribed with particular characteristics and agency, presupposes homogeneity of the groups in question. In so doing, it disregards the various intra-group struggles and the multiplicity of social identities beyond ethnicity. Furthermore, it also cements ethnicity as the most important, if not the only important political cleavage in the new, post-war reality.

The described tendency contributes to important dynamics, social practices, and intersubjectivities remaining unrecognised. This thesis, thus, grapples with the question of how such understanding of peace, as ethnic peace, affects different actors in post-war societies. What kinds of subjectivity and agency are created and enacted as a result and which ones are excluded and silenced? What relations of power and inequality are consolidated in the process?

The thesis problematises agency at the level of post-war societies and sheds light on the social dynamics, practices of inequality, and modalities of agency that certain peacebuilding initiatives (re)inscribe. In an attempt to highlight the simultaneous situatedness of actors in multiple evolving relational contexts, it uses the concept of intersectionality, which draws attention to intersecting social identities, systems of power, and forms of inequality. It particularly examines ethnicity, gender, class, and age, as some of the major existing axes of social division.

Drawing on a ten-month ethnographic research in Bosnia and Herzegovina, intersectionality is used as a heuristic device in three case studies, with ethnicity, gender, and class as analytic entry points. The first case study looks at the lives and practices of people living near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. The second one zeroes in on women that have taken out micro loans aimed at addressing household poverty and promoting gender equality and female empowerment through entrepreneurship. The third and final case study relates to the subsistence and informal economies, with particular focus on the people working at the Arizona market near Brčko and taxi drivers in various Bosnian towns. Relating the Bosnian examples to macro processes, the thesis offers a number of recommendations for peacebuilding practitioners and scholars.

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Between the fear that something would happen and the hope that still it wouldn't, there is much more space than one thinks. On that narrow, hard, bare and dark space a lot of us spend their lives.

- Ivo Andrić (1978)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCS	Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CSO	Civil society organisation
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally displaced person
IEBL	Inter-Entity Boundary Line
LIP	(World Bank's) Local Initiative Project
MFI	Microfinance institution
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OHR	Office of the High Representative in BiH
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PIC	Peace Implementation Council
RS	Republika Srpska
SFOR	Stablisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

On my very first trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina[1] to conduct a different research in October 2009, on a 12-hour train ride from Budapest to Sarajevo, I had an extensive intense discussion with an elderly man sitting next to me. His personal story aside, two things from that discussion remained imprinted in my memory. The first one was his reaction to my immediate response when asked what my name was, warning me to be careful with answering such questions, because 'a name could kill in this country'.[2] He went on to explain that he was referring to the inter-ethnic violence during the Bosnian war and the assumption that names reveal ethnic identities. The second thing that struck me was how frequently he used the expression 'normal life' and how passionately he argued that the Bosnian people did not want new divisions and new wars, but were merely yearning for 'normalcy' and 'normal life'.

The first of the above impressions resonates closely with what Rogers Brubaker (2002: 164) has labelled as 'groupism', that being 'the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis'. In relation to ethnicity, 'groupism' is the tendency to attribute interests and agency to ethnic groups and to analyse them as separate and distinguishable entities (ibid.). The homogeneity of ethnic groups that such approach presupposes

[1] Bosnia and Herzegovina refers to two geographically distinct parts of the country. While acknowledging this, I refer to the country as BiH and Bosnia interchangeably throughout the dissertation. In addition, even though various studies have used the name Bosnia-Herzegovina, in this thesis I use the name as written in the country's Constitution.

[2] Field notes, Budapest-Sarajevo train ride, 9 October 2009.

leaves little room for a distinction being made between the interests of the ordinary people and those of the nationalist political elites (Pickering, 2007: 10). In fact, it is the lack of scrutiny of these assumptions that allows for the war, as well as the subsequent peace and reconciliation processes to be understood and defined merely in ethnic terms, as processes between different ethnic groups as main actors. With most of the peacebuilding efforts focusing on return and reconciliation as primary ways of 'redressing the wrong' or reversing the consequences of an ethnically understood conflict, there has been a notable disregard of the heterogeneous intra-ethnic understandings of peace and what it could and should entail.

This tendency has been overwhelmingly present in scholars', practitioners' and donors' approaches in engaging with BiH. To that end, while the 'crossings' of ethnic boundaries for Bosnians and Herzegovinians have been mere 'practical dimensions of everyday life', they have often been perceived as 'a vanguard for reconciliation in the foreign gaze' (Jansen, 2010: 36). It is, therefore, hardly surprising that most international donors continue to have separate funding for 'inter-ethnic reconciliation' to date. To name but one example, the 2015 call for civil society and media project proposals of the U.S. Embassy to Sarajevo lists 'inter-ethnic reconciliation' as a distinct funding program (Embassy of the United States, 2015). Discussions with people from civil society organisations point to what appears to be common knowledge: that projects involving different ethnicities are more likely to receive funding. This sheds light to the Sisyphean task that the vast international community in BiH has taken up by shaping donor priorities through such lenses. A poignant indicator in this direction is the now

well-known text *Ubleha za idiote*, explained by its authors as 'an absolutely unnecessary guide to civil-society building and project-leading for locals and internationals in BiH and wider' (Šavija-Valha and Milanović-Blank, 2004), which *inter alia* mockingly hints at the necessity of including an inter-ethnic or 'multicultural' component to the description in order for the project to be funded by the donors.[3]

RESEARCH QUESTION(S) AND MAIN ARGUMENT

I, too, was 'guilty' of viewing Bosnia through a 'groupism' prism when I arrived back to Sarajevo in late 2011 to research resistance to liberal peacebuilding and grassroots forms of peacebuilding that go beyond the ethnic divide. Unaware, I made a common mistake of recognising political agency in occasions that were not political, and certainly not in relation to ethnicity, but rather routines (Kappler, 2013: 130), and of reading resistance into many everyday practices (Brown, 1996: 729) without necessarily taking into consideration people's intentions and experiences. Soon after I realised how many potentially important voices I was omitting from my research both by understanding peace in ethnic terms and by thinking of ethnicity as a homogeneous category. I also realised I was disregarding people's capacity and agency in rebuilding their own lives (Pickering, 2007: 4), but also in navigating the complex governing system of post-war Bosnia.

This realisation, together with the emphasis on 'normal life' that I kept encountering in various conversations, made me wonder how the understanding of

[3] In English, 'Ubleha for Idiots'. The word 'ubleha' is not properly translatable. The text defines it as '[a]uto referential, the highest category of civil society and of contemporary political philosophy. … Ubleha is not stupidity, it is unthought out, and unthought through' (translation: Stubbs, 2007: 228).

peace through ethnic groupism lenses affected different actors in Bosnia and post-war societies more broadly. Addressing that question became the main aim of the research. Furthermore, it informed the research questions that led the process: What kinds of subjectivity and agency are enacted as a result of an ethnic understanding of peace and which ones are excluded and silenced? How does the discourse of peace in these terms, along with other liberal discourses of global governance, enable and circumscribe agency? Equally importantly, what relations and practices of inequality that shape people's lived experiences are introduced and consolidated in the process?

The main argument of the thesis is that understanding peace as a mirror image of the preceding war, which often translates to an understanding of peace in inter-ethnic terms, along with the promotion of a market economy as a necessary component of the liberal peacebuilding project, exacerbates certain inequalities and prevents a significant part of the post-war society from exercising their agency. Furthermore, the findings of the thesis show that for many people the rebuilding of a 'normal life', which primarily relates to socioeconomic concerns but also to a sense of agency, rather than ethnic identity politics, is the basic component for a stable peace. This is not to say that ethnicity as a category and social identity is not meaningful, but simply that it is not fixed. Problematising and reconceptualising agency at the level of post-war societies through an ethnographic narrative of three case studies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, this thesis sheds light on the social dynamics, practices of inequality and modalities of agency that certain peacebuilding initiatives help (re)inscribe. Using intersectionality as

a heuristic device, the research accounts for the multiplicity and complexity of subjectivities that exist beyond the ethnic category.

SITUATING THE DISSERTATION: THE LITERATURE

The thesis is situated at the crossroads of International Relations, looking at outcomes of international interventions, and Social Anthropology, deploying methods that best capture people's and communities' lived realities. In its analysis, the thesis is decisively interdisciplinary, engaging literature and approaches from Peace and Conflict Studies, Gender Studies, Political Economy, Critical Geography, Development Studies, as well as post-colonial and de-colonial literature. Its primary engagement, nonetheless, is with Peace and Conflict Studies and the understandings of post-war societal dynamics.

Having been engaged in peacebuilding projects around the globe for over twenty years, the international community[4] has invested efforts in learning from the different experiences.[5] As part of that process, the role played by the population of the post-conflict society within which the intervention happens has come to the fore. However, rarely has their involvement been examined beyond the engagement allowed by the international peacebuilders. That is to say, against the background of liberal hegemony, the 'locals' have been perceived either as loyal partners in implementing a certain agenda, be that through the institutions, political parties, or various forms of civil society,

[4] 'International community' here and in the dissertation in general, unless otherwise stated, does not refer to a strictly defined community *per se*, but to the multiplicities of actors, including international organisations, coalitions of countries, and individual countries, that have been engaged in peacebuilding activities around the globe.

[5] This is not to say that there were no international interventions before the end of the Cold War. However, the nature of those interventions was different and the purpose primarily was to maintain the status quo.

or as spoilers to the peacebuilding process. Analyses of the roles and the positions of the people of these post-war societies as agents in their own right have been lacking in the mainstream Peace and Conflict Studies literature.

In recent years, there has been a growing critical literature that questions the motives, the assumptions and the activities undertaken in the name of peace. Seeing the interventions as primarily driven by the Global North, an increasing number of scholars have criticised the liberal peacebuilding enterprise as being top-down, dismissive and inconsiderate of local cultures, and most of all, based on a worldview of liberal righteousness. The critical approaches have also implied that peacebuilding is a form of a neo-colonial enterprise. In addition, they have highlighted the necessity to reflect and include the 'local', its context and the everyday in the understanding of peace. In an attempt to understand and analytically tackle the occasions, spaces, and outcomes of the interactions between the international and the local, scholars have deployed concepts such as hybridity (Mac Ginty, 2011; Peterson, 2012) and friction (Björkdahl et al., 2016; Björkdahl and Höglund, 2013). These efforts have shifted the focus and we have been witnessing, what Roger Mac Ginty and Oliver Richmond (2013) have termed, a 'local turn' in studying peacebuilding efforts and post-war societies.[6]

Nevertheless, even though the recent 'local turn' is predicated on the need to include 'the local' in its cultural context and its interaction with conflict governance

[6] Paffenholz (2015) refers to this as 'the second local turn', with the first one being the body of literature that focuses on civil society and appeared a few years earlier. Throughout the thesis, with a few exceptions where it is specified, I primarily use 'local turn' in reference to the most recent turn, as described by Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013).

approaches, such ‘local’ still mainly exists in relation to or rather in opposition to the ‘international’ and is still largely an unpacked concept for the scholars in this field. In fact, while the construction of the international and the local as binary opposites might be with the intention of shifting the analytical focus and emphasising the role played by the latter, this dichotomy largely leaves the power relationship between the two concepts and types of actors unaffected. To that end, some have questioned whether juxtaposing the international and the local does not in actuality recreate the binary that it aims to deconstruct (Paffenholz, 2015) and fail to fully recognise the agency of local actors (Schierenbeck, 2015). In addition, in most of the existing analyses ‘local’ appears to mean ‘national’ (Autesserre, 2014: 492), which implies a certain level of homogeneity of the post-war society population and perhaps unintentionally marginalises important voices and political cleavages within the society. Not less importantly, within this research and emerging body of literature it is mostly the political agency of the post-war society population that has come under scrutiny (Kappler, 2014; Randazzo, 2016; Richmond and Pogodda, 2016), while issues of socioeconomic concerns, basic livelihoods, and everyday practices of normality remain marginalised and understudied.

By taking a particular post-war society in its cultural, social, and historical complexity as a starting point, this dissertation aims to address some of the above outlined gaps in the literature. Zeroing in closely on the population of post-war societies, it builds on the important work of Paula Pickering (2007) who puts forward the concept of ‘self-understanding’ as a valuable prism through which their actions and behaviours could be understood. Taking the issue further, the thesis uses the concept of

intersectionality, which refers to the intersecting social identities and systems of power and inequality and views the actors as simultaneously embedded in multiple evolving relational contexts. In so doing, it not only moves beyond the 'snapshot' and unidimensional approach present in most of the existing literature in this field, but it also allows for issues beyond (ethnic) identity, such as gender, class, and age, to be brought to the fore as factors that can enable or limit one's exercise of agency.

SITUATING THE DISSERTATION: THE EMPIRICS

Empirically, the dissertation is situated in and informed by case studies from Bosnia and Herzegovina in its entirety. As a country that has received both an unprecedented amount of foreign attention, aid, and intervention altogether, and significant scholarly attention, BiH offers a valuable opportunity to juxtapose the novelty of the research approach and its usefulness in the policy domain.

Bosnians and Herzegovinians frequently point out that there was perhaps no other place in former Yugoslavia that better embodied the Yugoslav ideal of 'brotherhood and unity' than the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[7] Populated by no single dominant nationality and bringing together three ethnicities instead, BiH was regarded as the ultimate melting pot in the former federation.[8] Aside of territorially, the peoples of BiH have also been united linguistically using dialects that

[7] Brotherhood and unity (*bratstvo i jedinstvo* in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian) was a popular slogan in former Yugoslavia that first grew out of the united struggle for liberation during the World War II.

[8] In former Yugoslavia, an explicit distinction was made between narodi (peoples) and narodnosti (ethnic/national minorities), with the former being used in reference to the constituent peoples of the republics (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Muslims, and Macedonians) and the latter referring to the national minorities (such as Roma, Vlachs, Albanians, Hungarians, etc.). In this thesis, unless otherwise specified, I use 'ethnicity' in reference to both the constituent peoples of BiH and the ethnic minorities.

belong to the same South Slavic group of languages and are more importantly mutually intelligible (Grubišić, 2003; Okey, 2004). Similarly, the three ethnicities have also developed a common culture based on the system of meanings that has evolved through the daily interactions with one another (Bringa, 1995; Karahasan, 1994; Pejanović, 2004; Tanović-Miller, 2001). Even today one can find examples of Bosnianness in everyday conversations such as the references to Bosnian humour, Bosnian interconnectedness and mixing (*bosanski lonac,* which refers to a stew that is a mixture of many different ingredients), Bosnian coffee, Bosnian house, Bosnian way, and so on (Markowitz, 2010: chapter 7).

That being said, the key identity marker used to distinguish the three ethnicities was and many would argue still remains religion, with the majority of Bosniacs considered Muslims,[9] the Serbs Christian Orthodox,[10] and the Croats regarded as Christian Catholics. It is precisely this aspect of the identity of the different Bosnian peoples that was played up and used as the basis for the 1992-1995 Bosnian war. In fact, religion and ethnicity in the Bosnian context are so intertwined that often people use Bosniac and Muslim, Serbian and Orthodox, and Croatian and Catholic as synonyms for each other respectively.

[9] While Slavic-speaking Muslims were called Bosniacs during the Austro-Hungarian rule of the country, in the Yugoslav Constitution is was the Muslims (with a capital letter) that were recognised as a nationality, without an option to declare themselves as Bosniacs. The term was reintroduced with the Second Bosniac Congress in September 1993 and has been commonly used since, sometimes interchangeably with Muslim. Bosniacs were also officially recognised as one of the three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the post-war Constitution of 1995. There are two different spellings of the term: Bosniac and Bosniak. The former is the spelling used in the BiH Constitution and therefore that is the spelling I will be using throughout this thesis. Importantly, the term Bosnian refers to all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and is not to be confused with the term Bosniac.

[10] In the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language, a linguistic distinction is made between the people who live in Serbia (Srbijanci) and the ethnic Serbs (Srbi).

Commonly labelled as 'the biggest bloodshed in Europe since World War II', the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH, or as it is widely known, the Dayton Peace Agreement or simply Dayton. The Dayton Agreement confirmed the war-established divisions and recognised two territorial entities: the majority Serb entity, Republika Srpska (RS), and the majority Bosniac-Croat entity, Federation of BiH (FBiH). In addition, there was also the Brčko district, which due to its strategic position, dividing RS in two parts, was excluded from the Dayton arrangement and was placed under international tutelage until 2004. Each of the three has its own governing structures. In addition, the Dayton Agreement also created the legal basis for the establishing of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) as the main supervisor of the civilian implementation of the Accords in Bosnia, representing the countries of the so-called Peace Implementation Council.[11] As of 1997, the OHR has been vested with extensive executive powers that relate to the implementation of Dayton, also known as the Bonn powers. These powers were used expensively in the period since their introduction: between 1998 and 2005 alone, the High Representatives had issued 757 decisions, with which 119 public officials were removed and 286 laws or amendments to laws were imposed (Parrish, 2007: 15). In addition to the post always being held by a European diplomat, between 2002 and 2011 the High Representative was double-hatted, also serving as the European Union Special Representative to the country.

[11] The Peace Implementation Council (PIC) was established in December 1995, prior to the signing of the Dayton Agreement with the mission to oversee the implementation of the Agreement until the country is deemed politically stable, self-sustainable, and able to democratically govern itself. The PIC is composed of 55 countries and agencies that are involved in the peacebuilding process in various forms.

Importantly, the ethnic self-determination claims expressed during the war were reflected in the constitutions of both entities. Its Constitution first defined RS as a state of the Serbian people, which was then expanded to include all its other citizens too (National Assembly of Republika Srpska, 1992). Finally, with High Representative Decisions to amend the RS Constitution in 2002, the word 'state' was replaced with 'constitutional and legal entity' and the other constituent peoples of BiH were recognised as constituent peoples of RS as well (Marković, 2011: 93). Similarly, the Constitution of FBiH initially solely recognised the Bosniacs and Croats as its constituent peoples, but it was later amended with a High Representative Decision to include all three constituent peoples of BiH (Constitutional Assembly of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1994; Office of the High Representative, 2002).

The Constitution of the country on the other hand, adopted as Annex IV to the Dayton Agreement, recognised the three ethnicities, Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats, as 'constituent peoples' and ensured their equal representation at the state level (General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995). Curiously, should someone decide to declare themselves merely as Bosnian, rather than Bosniac, Croat, or Serb, they would fall in the constitutional category of 'Others'. At the lower levels of government, in addition to the decentralisation established with the Dayton Agreement, the 1994 Washington Agreement, which was an agreement signed between the Bosniac and the Bosnian Croat leaders, establishing ceasefire and forming the Federation of BiH, set the basis for decentralisation within that entity as well. Namely, with the agreement, the Federation was divided in ten autonomous cantons, the

establishing of which was to prevent one ethnic group from dominating over the other (Washington Agreement, 1994). The whole territory of BiH is further divided into 142 municipalities, which is significantly more than the pre-war territorial organisation of the country. It is important to note that at all levels, against the above outlined backdrop, the decentralisation of power happened by and large along ethnic lines, the outcome of which has been an incredibly complex political structure.

The entire constitutional and institutional setup of the country establishes the three ethnic groups as sovereign power-holders, assuming that they are homogeneous, mappable and above all, fixed. Importantly, this setup has contributed to the cementing of ethnic divisions and has allowed for ethnicity to become the single most important category in the country and a centre of power that is superior to all others, including the state. That has resulted in the spatialisation of ethnicity and the (re)creation of ethnic spaces, as detailed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, but equally importantly, it has also paved the way for peace too to be understood in ethnic terms, among practitioners and scholars alike.

This highlights one of the two 'transition' processes that the country has been entangled in since the war. The first process is, as noted, the post-war 'transition' or the 'transition' from war to peace. As Catherine Baker and Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik (2016: 287) rightly note, 'as a project of reshaping political, social and economic institutions to produce the conditions for peace—however that peace may be understood—peacebuilding presupposes the alteration of what had existed before, and thus transition'. In this regard, the peacebuilding process has also encompassed a

statebuilding process, with efforts to transform and (re)build the state, the society and the market in accordance with a certain agenda.[12] This process in Bosnia has been primarily top-down, with the High Representative having the final say on the implementation of the Dayton Agreement and later on Bosnia's aspirations for EU membership, making BiH resemble more closely an international protectorate than a fully sovereign state (Majstorović and Vučkovac, 2016: 147–148). At the heard of this process has been what Maria Todorova (1997) has called Balkanism. Namely, drawing upon Said's (1978) work on Orientalism, she presents Balkanism as a discourse through which the Balkans have been constructed as an internal, 'semi' Other, an incomplete self (ibid.: 18). To that end, 'the Balkans 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' (ibid.: 188), whereby the Balkans and with that Bosnia carries the association with wars, ethnic cleansing, and nationalisms of which the West and the EU ought to rid them. In that sense, the Western and European 'peacebuilders' have contributed both to the process of peacebuilding and to the perpetuation of the discourse of 'permanent transition' (Pandolfi, 2010) of Bosnia.

The second process, unfolding in the shadow of the first, is the post-socialist 'transition' or the 'transition' from a socialist state and planned economy through a war economy to a market economy. Unlike many other former socialist countries where the disentangling with the past was not as abrupt, in the case of Bosnia, the war was

[12] Peacebuilding is a broad concept and there have been many scholarly and policy debates over its definition. In this thesis, I use 'peacebuilding' in reference to 'liberal peacebuilding' as described in the second chapter. My understanding of the concept as used here includes a wide spectrum of issues and processes, all of which have their own extensive theoretical and case study literatures, and statebuilding is one of them.

perceived as a rupture that clearly distinguished the pre- and post-war economy, among other facets, too. Indeed, the 'bracketing off of state socialism from the present is in part fixed by the total event of the war and its materiality: the empty hulks of factories (fallen idle or destroyed by the war, gutted by war profiteers), the massive demographic dislocations, the rubble of entire villages and neighbourhoods, the minefields, the mass graves' (Gilbert, 2006: 17). In that sense, the international interveners saw the war as having wiped everything clean: not just the economic landscape and the previous class antagonisms, but also any socialist values and perceptions, which were perceived as 'mis-placed, or dis-placed' (Gilbert, 2008: 168) in the new Bosnian reality. The economic reforms that took place in Bosnia in the aftermath of the war were led by the principles of the so-called Washington consensus, which is a set of policy prescriptions driven by Washington-based international financial institutions and based on the belief that the economic transformation of 'transition' countries should be left to market forces (Donais, 2005: 17–18). This economic transformation is pursued through 'macro-economic stability, reduction of the role of the state, the squeezing of collective and public space, a quest for private affluence, and a reliance on privatisation and on exports and foreign investment to stimulate economic growth' (Pugh, 2005: 25).

To that end, as Timothy Donais (2005: 25) points out, regardless of the discourse that portrays Bosnia as some kind of a special case due to its status as an international post-war quasi-protectorate, the economic challenges and struggles that the country has been facing are not significantly different from those of the other post-socialist transition states. Among others, these include shrinking of the previously extensive

welfare system (ibid.: 143), setting up of institutions and social infrastructure, battling against the growing unemployment rate, corruption, and grey economy. It is precisely in such circumstances that the previously noted reference to 'normal life' becomes commonly used. On the one hand, the notion of 'normal life' seems to be based on the idea of a current 'state of exception' in terms of living in 'abnormal' conditions, since it is used to describe both the past, pre-1990s experience and the aspirations for the future (Jansen, 2015: 40). On the other hand, however, this idea of 'normal life' is most frequently linked to notions of family welfare, employment, healthcare, housing, decent living standards, and safety and security (Eastmond, 2010: 11; Jansen, 2015: 41), all of which are concerns from the everyday life. As it will be presented in the empirical chapters, among other things, the idea of 'normal life' also relates to the sense of agency for which people long.

While clearly acknowledging the processes outlined above and analysing their consequences, the thesis attempts to move past the 'state of exception' discourses and is, therefore, situated in what Jansen, Brković and Čelebičić (2016: 3) have called 'mature Dayton BiH'. This spatiotemporal constellation depicts a country that is not immature and whose problems are not conceived of as growing pains that the country will eventually recover from under international guardianship. Instead, this constellation views Bosnia as 'a "real" country that must be understood as no less "in history" than any other country: its conditions shape up in a particular global historical conjuncture' (ibid.). This approach to studying mature Dayton BiH is not only crucial in understanding the ways in which people live their lives and try to make sense of them, but it is

particularly important for ethnographic research, as the one on which this thesis is based, since 'the "where" of lives in BiH today can only be grasped when we also account for its temporal coordinates–its "when"' (ibid.).

CONTRIBUTION

The thesis contributes to both the study and the practice of peacebuilding. Its contribution to the study of (post-)conflict societies is threefold. First, it contributes theoretically to the critical body of literature that examines dynamics and processes in post-war societies beyond the institutions. In some ways the thesis is part of the recent so-called 'local turn' in Peace and Conflict Studies, which zeroes in more closely to 'local actors' (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). The analysis presented here moves beyond the international–local dichotomy, which few of the studies part of this 'turn' do, problematises the concept of the 'local' and unpacks it further. By showing the multiplicity of agencies, identities and localities that people in post-war societies exercise and navigate in their everyday realities, the thesis brings to the fore the importance of taking into account the existing heterogeneity of lived experiences. It also potentially sets the basis for a new research agenda that surpasses the 'snapshot' approach (Kappler, 2015) and manages to better capture the complexities of post-war societies.

Second, examining the everyday, the thesis is methodologically situated in the interpretive tradition, using ethnographic approaches and with that, contributing to the so-called 'ethnographic turn' (Millar, 2014; Richmond, 2011a: 129) in the study of (post-

)conflict societies. While there have been a number of scholars advocating for and emphasising the need to present and represent the lives, practices, and views of the population in post-war societies, which has resulted in the aforementioned 'local turn', only recently have scholars started exploring methodological approaches which can adequately capture these realities. Borrowing from anthropology, there have been only a handful of analyses based on ethnographic research in Peace and Conflict Studies and this thesis contributes to that body of literature. With this being a relatively recent development, the thesis elaborating on the challenges, pitfalls, and lessons learned in undertaking such research could be useful to future ethnographic researchers of (post-)conflict societies.

Third, the thesis also makes an empirical contribution to the studies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and former Yugoslavia more broadly in examining various intersectionalities that exist, some of which are common across the region. There has been no intersectional study done in Bosnia and Herzegovina that focuses on the impact of the initiatives and decisions that have fallen under the 'peace and reconciliation' category, even though Bosnia is a country that has received a significant amount of international attention, funds, and efforts precisely in this domain. While this thesis does not fill in that gap in a comprehensive manner, it certainly aims to initiate a discussion and further research in this direction.

Finally, this relates closely to the contribution the thesis makes to the practice of peacebuilding. Namely, without necessarily questioning the good intentions of the peacebuilding initiatives and the 'peacebuilders' themselves, it sheds light on certain

inequalities that have been created or deepened as a result of the atomistic approach of decision- and policy-makers and the assumption that ethnic groups are stable and homogenous categories. While some of the findings of the thesis have already been translated to policy recommendations pertinent to the Bosnian context, the implications of an intersectional research as the one presented here are applicable in other contexts as well. By understanding and analysing lived realities through various intersectionalities, and with that highlighting the multidimensionality and complexity of human lives, including those in post-war settings, the thesis offers an approach that could allow for a more holistic policy-making at the subnational, national and international level.

OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is organised in six chapters. The first two chapters serve the purpose of positioning the thesis. Chapter 1 is a methodological chapter and zeroes in on the epistemological perspective from which the research was undertaken, the data was interpreted and consequently this thesis was written. It explains the research choices and fieldwork strategies used in the course of the ten-month ethnographic research at multiple locations around the Bosnia and Herzegovina, with most of the time spent in and around Tuzla, Sarajevo and Brčko, in the 2009-2012 time period. These included participant observation, formal interviewing, intensive interviewing and informal conversations, which provided a significantly richer data on the lived realities that was possible through any other available method. It then dwells on my positionality as a post-Yugoslav female 'halfie' and the ways in which it has affected my research,

interpretation, as well as the access to people, occasions, and stories while in Bosnia. Lastly, the first chapter explains how through rigorous reflexivity, I have attempted to confront my own biases in writing ethnography, thereby allowing for the Bosnian voices to be represented as authentically as possible and as the producers of knowledge that they are.

Chapter 2 positions the thesis within the existing literature in Peace and Conflict Studies. It particularly engages with the aforementioned recent 'local turn' in this literature, it shows how it came about, and outlines the major strengths of the existing literature in this direction. This chapter also provides a critique of the literature, highlighting the main weaknesses, assumptions, and gaps that the thesis aims to address. In doing so, the second chapter points to the academic discussions with which the thesis engages.

Chapter 3 lays the theoretical and analytical foundations of the thesis, with particular foci on the issue of intersectionality and its importance in analysing lived experiences. This chapter first contextualises the thesis in the everyday, then grapples with the concept of agency as used in this study. It then draws on existing feminist literature in explaining what intersectionality is, why it is crucial to analyse it, and how it is studied. Finally, the third chapter outlines the three-level analytical model that is used in analysing the three case studies: the individual, the symbolic, and the structural.

The remaining three chapters are empirical chapters, each presenting one of the three case studies of the thesis. Each case study was chosen in relation to one of the

three main categories or systems of power in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society, ethnicity, gender, and class, which have then been used as entry points of analysis.

Chapter 4 starts with ethnicity as an axe of social division in post-war Bosnia in general and as a category that has played an important role in the lives and the everyday experiences of the people living near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line in particular. This group includes a significant number of returnees and internally displaced people. The chapter then zooms in on the intersections of ethnicity, class, and age, examining closely the choices made by the people when it comes to education, pensions, and healthcare and their attempts to navigate the complex system of governance put in place with the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Chapter 5 has gender at its core as a crucial factor in the organising and functioning of the Bosnian society. Particularly, this chapter looks at the case of microfinance for women as a post-conflict tool, whereby the intersectionalities of gender, class, and age are explored through the lived experienced of women who have received micro loans. It highlights how women who have been affected by the declining welfare state view and use the opportunity presented to them in the form of micro loans aimed at promoting female entrepreneurship.

Finally, chapter 6 focuses on class as the main system of power affecting and determining social relations. It focuses on subsistence and informal economic practices, most notably the experiences of the traders at the Arizona market in Brčko and those of taxi drivers at a number of sites around the country. Through their testimonies, the

thesis offers an analysis of the intersections of class, ethnicity, and age in the domains formerly praised as the poster children of the ‘reconciliation through liberalisation’ approach.

The conclusion of the thesis revisits the main questions that the dissertation addresses, summarises the main arguments, discusses its theoretical and empirical contributions and elaborates on the policy implications and recommendations stemming from this research. it also suggests some directions for future and further research.

1 'THERE IS NEVER NOTHING GOING ON': METHODOLOGY, POSITIONALITY AND REPRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION

In the past three decades, in an attempt to direct greater attention to agency, as well as everyday and non-discursive practices (Lie, 2013: 202), there have been a growing number of International Relations scholars adopting and adapting ethnographic methods in their study of global politics (Vrasti, 2008: 279). The same trend has been witnessed in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies recently. The criticism surrounding the way ethnography has been understood and used in IR notwithstanding,[13] ethnographic approaches remain widely seen as crucial in researching the everyday. They pay attention to practices and norms, to actual behaviours and the rules they represent. Critical ethnography and interpretive methodologies go even further in acknowledging the studied 'subjects' as rightful knowledge producers, grasping the situated meanings, and analysing the context-specific meaning-making practices of actors. For this reason, in my studying 'from below' and 'from within' of the selected sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I relied primarily on an ethnographic approach and interpretive methodology.[14]

The concern then was to ensure that this ethnographic study was not micro and ahistorical, but it was instead grasping processes transcending the boundaries of the

[13] See, for instance, the exchange between Vrasti (2010) and Rancatore (2010).
[14] 'Methodology' in this context refers to the logic of inquiry and the presuppositions concerning ontology and epistemology that inform the used methods. On the distinction between methods and methodology, see Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012: 4).

studied sites. In doing so, I went beyond individual responses to social circumstances and focused on explaining the circumstances themselves. In other words, the focus of this research is not inward, zeroing in on the individual and the psychological, but outward, examining the macro. In this process, I draw on Michael Burawoy's (2000: 26-28) elaboration on what allows for an extended case study or any ethnographic study for that matter to be expanded more broadly, in his case, to the globe.

In addition to having observers extended into the world of the participant, rather than bringing 'subjects' into the world of the observer, one aspect that he suggests is extending the observations over time and space (ibid.: 26-27). This aspect is present in my research, too. Namely, the research was conducted over a period of four years, between 2009 and 2012, with a cumulative time of ten months spent in Bosnia. Furthermore, the observations were extended over space by spending time at various sites across the country. These included Sarajevo, East Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bijeljina, Gračanica, Doboj, Teslić, Drvar, Banja Luka, Jajce, Brčko and villages near these towns. I had extended stays in and around Sarajevo, Tuzla and Brčko, as the primary locations of the three case studies. However, it is important to note that for each of the case studies, the observations were gathered from multiple locations, including both rural and urban sites. For instance, in analysing recipients of microfinance for women, I focused on women that received loans from a particular microfinance institution and conducted research in all three areas around the country where they had clients; those being Tuzla, Brčko and Sarajevo, along with the villages and towns in their proximity. In the case of the people living near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, research was

undertaken near Sarajevo, East Sarajevo, Teslić, Doboj, Brčko, and Jajce, as places through which the line runs. Finally, in the case of the people engaged in informal economic activities, the observations were extended beyond the Arizona market, as the primary focus, to taxi drivers from all the above-noted locations across the country where I stayed during my research.

The second aspect Burawoy elaborates on is extending out from micro processes to macro forces and including the geographical and historical context of the field. He suggests that one way to do this is to analyse the micro as an expression of the macro (ibid.: 27). In that sense, my analysis focuses on local representations or expressions of the intersecting of major axes of social division that shape the world and the human experiences. It examines class, gender, and ethnicity, among others, as mutually constructing or intersecting systems of power in the Bosnian context, which has its geographical and historical specificities. Nevertheless, the specific geo-historical context of Bosnia notwithstanding, the thesis shows that it is precisely the failure of 'peacebuilders' to take into consideration macro forces and processes and to have instead approached the country with a narrower, conflict-dynamic informed view of its post-war reality that has contributed to the deepening of certain social inequalities. To that end, in analysing each of the three case studies, the thesis positions the observations in relation to the broader, the macro circumstances.

The third and final aspect is the extension of an already existing theory. Burawoy argues that '[r]ather than being "induced" from the data, discovered "de novo" from the ground, existing theory [should be] extended to accommodate observed lacunae or

anomalies' (ibid.: 28). He further argues that the field should be constituted as a challenge to some theory that the researcher wants to improve. 'What makes the field "interesting" is its violation of some expectation, and an expectation is nothing other than some theory waiting to be explicated' (ibid.). As the subsequent chapters show, I build on or rather expand Paula Pickering's theory on self-understandings, as a concept through which, she argues, people's behaviour is best understood in ethnically-divided post-conflict societies. She particularly focuses on analysing 'how individuals labelled as minorities settle on strategies to rebuild their lives and how they approach integration in the context of the political constraints imposed by the peace plan, international implementers, and nationalist policies' (Pickering, 2007: 11). Rooted in identity-based theoretical approaches, while she takes into consideration people's attachment to various social groups, her theory cannot account for certain variations that we witness among people from the same groups or even the same people across time. In that sense, my thesis also offers an extension to an already existing theory.

Given all the above, it can be argued that while the thesis is based on ethnographic research in one country, the findings and their implications have a much wider application. In order to understand the findings fully, however, it is also important to reveal the research and writing choices made in the process of completing this thesis, as a process of knowledge production. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the methodological approaches and research choices during the fieldwork or while doing ethnography, but it also reflects on issues of positionality and representation as two

important aspects I grappled with in the course of the interpreting and writing ethnography.

1.1 DOING ETHNOGRAPHY: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND RESEARCH CHOICES

In an attempt to study agency in the realm of the everyday, as noted above, my research uses ethnographic methodology and is embedded in the interpretive tradition. In addition, ethnographic methods are viewed as compatible with the study of intersectionality (Carroll, 2004), whose defining characteristic is 'the complexity that arises when the subject of analysis expands to include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis' (McCall, 2005: 1772). To that end, ethnographic approaches help us shed light on the complexities of individual and collective identities, as well as various social dynamics (Narvaez et al., 2009). To put it differently, ethnography enables the study of intracategorical, intercategorical, and anticategorical complexity.

At the same time, it is precisely the core notion of intersectionality, which suggests that social identities and social inequality are mutually constitutive and interdependent, rather than unidimensional and independent, that poses a number of methodological challenges to those who study it (Bowleg, 2008: 312). As a result, the questions we ask also need to be adjusted to this notion. They have to go beyond demographic questions and ought to be intersectional in design, unpacking the interdependence and mutuality of identities, rather than implying that they can be separate and independent, as is the case with the so-called additive approach (ibid.: 316). For instance, the experiences of an elderly Bosniac woman are not a mere equal

to the experiences of an elderly person, a Bosniac person and a woman put together, nor can they be compared since the latter implies that these identities can be ranked.

In my ethnographic research of intersectionality, I deployed a number of different approaches and strategies. These included participant observation, intensive interviewing, informal conversations and formal, semi-structured interviewing. The first, participant observation, as Pickering (2007: 190) notes, helps us 'understand the social relations in real life' and does not treat individuals as lonely atoms. Equally importantly, this strategy allowed me not just to hear people's stories, but also to experience and observe their practices, daily routines and meaning-making processes. For example, I often attended events organised by or for the female micro loan recipients of MI-BOSPO, such as the meetings of the 'Women in business' network and the trade fairs where they sold their products. Another example involves the considerable amount of time during the period in Brčko that I spent at the Arizona market, around and at the stalls of Mersija and Đevad, the two traders whom I met through another Bosnian contact and who became my key informants at the market.

The intensive interviewing strategy often took several hours and the interviewing was repeated during subsequent visits. This strategy was deployed with a lot of the people whose lives and experiences I researched, such as the traders, the taxi drivers, the people living next to the boundary line, the women who were receiving micro loans and their families. With time, people were becoming more and more welcoming and at each subsequent meet-up, the discussions would be longer and more substantial. These discussions would most often be one-on-one, but there were also occasions

when family members and/or neighbours would join the conversation. In fact, sometimes the visit to one person in the village would get prolonged by another villager inviting my host and me over to hear their testimonies, while other times, a curious neighbour would request that she too is talked to, irrespective of what my visit was about. In addition to the oral histories and testimonies collected through intensive interviewing, I also paid attention to what Lee Ann Fujii (2010) has called 'meta-data'. This refers to the 'spoken and unspoken expressions about people's interior thoughts and feelings, which they do not always articulate in their stories or responses to interview questions', and it includes rumours, silences, and invented stories (ibid.: 232). The meta-data is particularly valuable in understanding how the current social and political circumstances shape the domain of what can and cannot be publicly discussed. In some ways, the meta-data relates to what James Scott (1990: 15, 86) has termed the 'hidden transcripts'. The collection of meta-data became easier with time, as I became more closely acquainted with the different social dynamics and as people got to know me and became less guarded in my presence.

The informal conversations, as another research strategy, with some of the people I interviewed, with various acquaintances and with people who became close friends over time helped a great deal both in understanding the social and political landscape and in accessing the so-called meta-data and hidden transcripts. It is, indeed, this kind of relationships and close bonds that reveal the potential of ethnography 'to make explicit the often-overlooked, tacitly known and/or concealed dimensions of meaning-making, including its emotional and political aspects' (Ybema et

al., 2009: 6-7). While all of my contacts were aware of my on-going research, it would be inaccurate to claim that these interactions and friendships solely served research purposes. Importantly, since many of these encounters happened in social occasions or during various rides around the country, I would often look for a place to write down my notes, trying to preserve as much from the data verbatim as possible. Many of the notes were also taken in the homes of the people I lived with or visited, after a meal or a discussion over tea or coffee.

Finally, I also interviewed in a formal, semi-structured manner officials who had experience in and were knowledgeable about the topics covered by the thesis. Thirty semi-structured interviews in Bosnian and English were conducted with three categories of people: (1) Bosnians and expats working for different international actors present in the country, including the Office of High Representative, the Delegation of the European Union, the Office of the EU Special Representative at the time, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and others; (2) officials from different municipal, cantonal, entity and state level institutions working in policy areas that related to the researched issues, such as education, social policy, and healthcare; and (3) civil society representatives, including academics and think-tank experts, that work with the targeted policy issues. Most of the interviews were recorded, depending on interviewees' permission, while the remaining of the data was gathered in the form of field notes, usually handwritten, sometimes computerised.

In addition to these fieldwork strategies, I also closely read and analysed a number of document sources that helped in understanding and explaining the policies,

initiatives, broader structures, and systems of power in place, which are critical in the attempt to disentangle and examine intersectionality. Aside of document analysis, used in the case of microfinance and the case of informal economies, for the case of ethnic spaces, I also had to deploy analysis of spatial representation.

The three case studies were selected in relation to the three systems of power or axes of social division that most significantly shape human experiences in post-war BiH; those being ethnicity, gender and class. In that sense, each of the case studies uses one of these axes as an entry point of analysis: the ethnic spaces case uses ethnicity, and religion, as closely related, the microfinance case uses gender, and the informal economies case uses class as an entry point. The implications of each case study, as noted at the beginning of this chapter and as shown in the subsequent empirical chapters, are much wider than the case studies themselves.

In terms of access, despite the inevitability of being more part of some networks than of others, I aimed to hear as many diverse voices as possible by approaching different key informants and actively pursuing informants from outside the familiar networks. Using various entry points, the selection process initially included snowball sampling, but once I had gained better access to various gatekeepers, I used stratified sampling ensuring that the stories of different categories of people, based on age, ethnicity, gender, class, and location (rural and urban), were heard and gathered. This type of sampling was used in all three cases. While the initial contacts with the women who were micro loan users were made through the network of MI-BOSPO, through snowball sampling and insistence on stratified sampling later on, I attempted to

moderate any possible bias. At a certain point of the fieldwork, patterns started emerging and data saturation was reached.

Lastly, in order to protect the confidentiality of the people observed and interviewed, all of their names have been changed. Where applicable and important, the name chosen as an alias is as closely associated with the person's ethnic background as her or his original name. The hometown, the age and the profession where indicated remain in their original form. With the semi-structured interviews, I have indicated the names of the institutions that the interviewees were representing. All the translation throughout the thesis from Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian to English, unless otherwise stated, is my own.

1.2 INTERPRETING ETHNOGRAPHY: THE POSITIONALITY OF A POST-YUGOSLAV FEMALE HALFIE

Ethnographic representations, like most representations, are both 'partial truths' (Clifford, 1986: 6) and 'positioned truths' (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 469). This is not only due to the positionality of those we research, but also due to our own positionality as researchers. All researchers are positioned by various attributes, such as gender, nationality, age, race, class, institutional affiliation, as well as subjective-contextual factors, such as personal experiences and historical circumstances (Chiseri-Strater, 1996: 115-116). Our positionality determines not only our access to the people whose lives we research, including the way they perceive us and the way we think they perceive us, but also our understanding of the data we gather. In fact, for ethnographers, understanding and writing about the way we are positioned is part of our

data. To that end, Clifford Geertz (1988: 10) rightly points out that '[f]inding somewhere to stand in the text that is supposed to be at one and the same time an intimate view and a cool assessment is almost as much of a challenge as gaining the view and making the assessment in the first place.' This section, therefore, reflects upon my situatedness and its influence on the research process as a whole, the relationships and connections I had with my informants, and equally importantly, my written translation of data to text (Chiseri-Strater, 1996: 119).

My positionality in Bosnia is probably best described as a post-Yugoslav female halfie. The positionality I had informed the selection of questions I was able to ask, the kind of people I was able to talk to, the kind of responses I received and my reading of those responses. My positionality shaped these in four important aspects. The first aspect is being identified as a Macedonian, i.e. coming from a country that not only used to be part of the Yugoslav Federation, but has also been perceived as friendly to both BiH as a state and the various ethnicities within it. Due to this, on the one hand, I was expected to know certain historical aspects and cultural references, which affected the spectrum of questions I could ask. On the other hand, however, it gave me an unprecedented access to people I could speak to, with most of the Bosnian and Herzegovinians I met referring to me as 'ours' (naša). The elderly generations would often speak to me about their travels to, friends or army acquaintances from Macedonia from back in the Yugoslav days, while the younger generations spoke of the Macedonian signer who was very popular and liked across Bosnia. People would frequently invite me to their homes for coffee or dinner and speak freely and openly

about their lived experiences, their hopes and fears. They would speak about their families and neighbours, about the economic state the country is in, and almost inevitably about the war, even if that was not always asked. Curiously, I was most often perceived in opposition to the many foreign researchers and experts of whom there has been no shortage in post-war BiH. This is further elaborated in the subsequent section, but what is important to note here is that the Bosnian and Herzegovinians' criticism of this trend appears to have also affected their perception of my positionality. Along similar lines, coming from Macedonia, even though I correctly presented myself as a doctoral student at the Central European University in Hungary, I was not perceived in any way as socioeconomically superior to them. Many of them asked about the economic situation in Macedonia and my impression from all the interactions was that they associated me more with those circumstances, not that much different from their own, and the circumstances of being a student in their own society, rather than seeing me as somehow economically better off. This is contrary to what Seymour-Smith (1986: 118) notes, namely that

> [i]t is natural enough for people who observe the [researcher], comparatively wealthy by local standards and apparently free to pursue the line of research he or she chooses, to resent what they regard as the exploitation of the local community for the purposes of advancing his or her own career at home, placing the goals of his or her individual research project over and above any commitment to the aspirations and basic needs of the local population.

In that sense, in most cases I was also not expected to provide anything in return, except for the isolated case of an elderly lady from Istočno Sarajevo (East Sarajevo) asking for my advice on how to get a livestock donation from the

municipality.[15] I did, nevertheless, offer help whenever allowed by the circumstances: be it minor assistance to the traders at whose stalls I was most often present at the Arizona market, household chores to the people in whose homes I lived and whose homes I visited, or various logistical issues to the female traders, who were micro loan recipients, during the trade fairs.

The second aspect in which my positionality shaped my research was through my fluency in the local languages. Being fluent in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) enabled me not only to communicate without any major obstacles, but also to take into consideration the nuances and cultural specificities invoked in everyday conversations. In one instance, understanding that 'kultura', which is literally translated as 'culture', in actuality referred to one's manners proved to be crucial in grasping the meaning of the unfolding discussion. In other instances, some of the jokes, rumours and invoked references, which would be difficult to properly explain linguistically and culturally, were key in accessing meta-data. Importantly, I speak the local languages with enough of a distinct dialect not to sound 'too much anyone's', as one of my interlocutors noted, referring to my BCS not sounding too distinctly Bosnian, nor Serbian, nor Croatian, but rather using expressions of all three interchangeably. This was useful in terms of people not associating me with any of the three ethnicities, but recognising rather fast that I was not from Bosnia. On one occasion, in a conversation with an elderly lady I remarked that the village she lived in was 'lepo', which is the Serbian pronunciation of the word for 'beautiful', and she immediately corrected me saying '[d]ear, you don't say

[15] Personal interview, Istočno Sarajevo, 26 May 2012.

"lepo", but "ljepo"', using the Bosnian pronunciation of the same word. Such slip-ups, nonetheless, were seen sympathetically and even with certain warmth as 'after all, [I spoke] good Bosnian for a Macedonian'.[16] In my interpretation of the conversations and situations I had or witnessed, I was mindful to inquire further if I was uncertain about the meaning of a certain expression or lack thereof.

The third aspect in which my positionality affected the research was through gender and age, i.e. through me being a young female. In this regard I was viewed as non-threatening in any way, with people easily opening up, often inviting me to their homes even without us having met before and sharing meals with me. This aspect likely contributed to some of the elderly people I met acting particularly protectively towards me, putting me in touch with their contacts, and making sure I spoke to the people I needed or wished to speak to. Relatedly, it was not infrequent that, upon inquiry about my marital status, some of them would inevitably casually mention that they had an eligible bachelor relative or neighbour.

The fourth and final aspect that I consider critical to my positionality is being a so-called halfie. Borrowing the term from Narayan, Lila Abu-Lughod (1991: 466) describes 'halfies' as 'people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage'. This concept in some ways is embedded in or results from the anthropological discussion over researchers' distance from those they study. For a long time it was considered problematic for researchers to study their own societies, due to allegedly not having enough distance and therefore easily sliding into

[16] Field notes, Trnovo, April 2012.

subjectivity (ibid.: 468). However, this insider/outsider dichotomy appears to ignore the fact that the so-called outside is also positioned in a larger political and historical complex, which informs her or his position in relation to those researched (ibid.). Kirin Narayan (1993: 671) goes further and questions the outsider/insider and the native/non-native dichotomy, suggesting that even those that research their own cultures have 'shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations', and thus the 'loci along which we are aligned with or set apart from those whom we study are multiple and in flux'.

In my case, while I was perceived as an insider in many ways as outlined above, the people I studied did inevitably notice some outsider aspects to my identity as well. More importantly, even if not visible to the Bosnian and Herzegovinians, I occupied a challenging position as a halfie in the sense of being educated and embedded in western academia and literature, while also being born and raised in the former Yugoslavia, being fluent in the language and sharing most of the cultural specificities of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This position was particularly testing in the course of ethnographic interpretation. To name but one example of my biases that I became aware of, my initial understanding and reading of the case of women taking out loans for businesses ran by their husbands, sons or fathers was that they were instrumentalised and were not even aware of that. It was only upon countless discussions and deeper examination of women's motives to use these opportunities in such a manner that I realised how my own views shaped the interpretation of these women's actions.

Lastly, and relating to the section that follows, being a halfie is also challenging in terms of feeling more accountable to how we research and write about the people and the cultures with which we are in some ways affiliated (Subedi, 2006: 574). Abu-Lughod (1991: 469) nicely explains this delicate position that researchers find themselves in:

> Identified also with communities outside the West, or subcultures within it, they are called to account by educated members of those communities. More importantly, not just because they position themselves with reference to two communities but because when they present the Other they are presenting themselves, they speak with a complex awareness of and investment in reception. Both halfie and feminist anthropologists are forced to confront squarely the politics and ethics of their representations. There are no easy solutions to their dilemmas.

I have tried in my interpretation and writing of ethnography, sometimes successfully, other times perhaps less so, not to collapse the politics of ethnography into its poetics. In those attempts, I have remained mindful of my positionality and of the representation of those about whom I am writing.

1.3 WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY: CAN THE BOSNIAN SPEAK?

As Edward Said (1989: 224) rightly points out, 'representations bear as much on the representer's world as on who or what is represented'. In that sense, researchers navigate a thin line between representing and constructing the researched 'others' when writing about them. Sensible to the challenges that arise from this process, I have used two different strategies in writing ethnography.

The first one involves acknowledging the various connections and interconnections, both historical and contemporary, between the worlds of the

communities and the people I am writing about and the world(s) I belong to (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 472). In doing this, I found some of the approaches used by critical development scholars particularly useful and informative. Specifically, making the case for the importance of de-colonial epistemic perspectives, one of the colonial matrices of power that Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) identifies is the control of subjectivity and knowledge, 'which includes epistemological colonisation and the re-articulation of [subaltern] subjectivity as inferior and constituted by a series of "deficits" and a catalogue of "lacks".' Overcoming this challenge in writing ethnography, moving beyond an instrumental view on fieldwork and acknowledging the dialogic relationship between the researcher and the informants requires two things. On the one hand, as elaborated in the previous section, it requires certain ethical considerations by the researcher, which call for 'the "I" [to] be used in a more honest, vulnerable way' and to be 'attentive to "how we see—and how others see us seeing them"' (Jackson, 2004: 40). It also requires rigorous reflexivity on the researcher's part regarding the ways in which she/he has participated in the research and in the production of knowledge (Subedi, 2006: 575). Being cognizant of the way power is linked to language and consciously avoiding some of the linguistic practices that perpetuate subalterity is another important aspect (Richmond et al., 2015).

On the other hand, it also crucially demands approaching the informants, in my case mainly Bosnians, as knowledge producers in their own right. In fact, as nicely detailed by Stefanie Kappler (2013), it is not uncommon for Bosnians, as people whose country has arguably been over-researched, to resist international researchers. To that

end, some of the people I spoke to, particularly in areas that have received a lot of international attention, such as Srebrenica, Sarajevo, and Mostar, shared a sarcastic relief that I was not 'another one of those telling [them] what [they were] like' and complained that 'they all [came] to ask about the war, as if life [had] not moved on since'.[17] They were critical of what Mahmood Mamdani (2011) has labelled as 'consultancy culture', pointing to the pervasiveness of this 'corrosive' culture or the tendency to shape research around finding answers rather than formulating a problem, which is institutionalised through short courses in research methodology and ultimately results in turning the people whose lived realities are researched into pure 'native informants' rather than authentic and vigorous knowledge producers.

Relatedly, the second strategy of writing ethnography that I have used is what Abu-Lughod (1991: 473) calls 'ethnographies of the particular'. This entails acknowledging both that there is heterogeneity in the experiences we study and that the effects of the macro and long-term processes are 'manifested locally and specifically, produced in the actions of individuals living their particular lives, inscribed in their bodies and their words' (ibid.: 474). As a result, when presenting the findings of my research in this thesis, I have made an effort to bring in as much of the actual circumstances and detailed histories of the people as possible. In that sense, the writing highlights the locus of enunciation of the people whose lived experiences I researched. 'Locus on enunciation' refers to

[17] Field notes, Srebrenica, 8 November 2010.

> the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks. In Western philosophy and sciences the subject that speaks is always hidden, concealed, erased from the analysis. The "ego-politics of knowledge" of Western philosophy has always privilege the myth of a nonsituated "Ego". Ethnic/racial/gender/sexual epistemic location and the subject that speaks are always decoupled. By delinking ethnic/racial/gender/sexual epistemic location from the subject that speaks, Western philosophy and sciences are able to produce a myth about a Truthful universal knowledge that covers up, that is, conceals who is speaking as well as the geo-political and body-political epistemic location in the structures of colonial power/knowledge from which the subject speaks (Grosfoguel 2007: 213).

In addition, I have strived to reconstruct people's arguments, justifications, and interpretations in their own words. Their narratives and counter-narratives have been integrated in the thesis in their authentic voices as much as possible. The value of this approach is in the ability to name one's own reality through multiple voices and vantage points (Milner, 2007: 391). Moreover, by drawing on the multiple testimonies of my informants, I tried to avoid my voice dominating the ethnographic narrative.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the methodological concerns that led and were encountered in the course of the research are presented and discussed at length. The chapter begins by highlighting the efforts for this ethnographic study not to be micro and ahistorical, but to analyse the local expressions or representations of macro forces and long-term processes instead. It then elaborates on each of the four fieldwork strategies deployed: participant observation, intensive interviewing, informal conversations, and formal interviewing. In addition, the selection of cases and sampling of informants are also discussed. The next section sheds light on my positionality in approaching, being

viewed, and interpreting people's words and behaviours, which has inevitably affected my research. Finally, the last section examines closely the issues of representation and authenticity of voices amid existing and historical power and knowledge disbalances.

In many ways, placed at the beginning of the thesis, this chapter was intended to serve the purpose of a preface that discloses important information about what is to be encountered in the remaining of the thesis. It tackles the questions of what data was collected, where and when the research took place, what strategies were used in the process, why certain research choices were made over others, how and from what position the collected material was interpreted, who and in what manner translated the spoken and unspoken texts from the informants to a written text. The discussion on the process of doing, interpreting, and writing ethnography, phases that are rarely clear-cut, does not imply any form of superiority of this research, but it merely attempts to provide an account that is as honest as possible and ethically responsible to both the informants and the (other) readers of this thesis.

Importantly, my research and the findings presented here do not claim universality, neutrality, or singular truthfulness. I am, instead, aware that like all knowledges, this one too is partial and positioned. This awareness has, however, allowed me to approach the society and the people whose lives I studied through pluriversal lenses and better grasp the complexity thereof.

2 WHAT LOCAL, WHOSE LOCAL: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND ITS GAPS

INTRODUCTION

A well-known joke in Bosnia depicts perfectly the international–local distinction that has been made in much of the critical Peace and Conflict Studies literature and the agency of the local population, which are two of the core issues discussed in this chapter. The joke is centred on a conversation between a local shepherd and an international consultant. The latter visits the shepherd in the mountains above Sarajevo, suggesting that he receives one sheep if he correctly guesses the number of sheep the shepherd has. The shepherd agrees and upon the correct guess, he lets the consultant pick a sheep. Then the shepherd asks whether the consultant will return the animal if he correctly guesses his profession. 'You must be an international consultant', he says. 'You appear uninvited, you tell me something I already know perfectly well, but you have no clue about the details of what I do, since instead of a sheep, you picked out the dog.'

These jokes are not uncommon in societies that have been the subject of an international intervention and have consequently received significant foreign assistance, both in terms of human and financial resources, in recovering from a violent conflict. The number of societies that have needed and have been the subject of such interventions has been rapidly increasing from the early 1990s onwards. With the proliferation of international interventions and the widening of their scope, to include

anything from peacemaking and peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding, these interventions have received a lot of attention both by scholars and practitioners. Initially, the attention and the efforts were aiming at improving the missions and solving the problems that appeared along the way. However, in the last two decades there has been a number of important criticisms that relate to the execution and the outcomes of the interventions, but perhaps even more importantly, to some of the basic assumptions on which such interventions are based. This trend has, *inter alia*, resulted in a growing critical 'camp' in Peace and Conflict Studies.

One of the main criticisms over the years was the need to better integrate the local population in the various peacebuilding efforts, which the international intervening agencies and actors have attempted to address in practice. This has led to two so-called 'local turns' (Paffenholz, 2015), both of which are reviewed in this chapter. Presenting an overview of the main tenets, issues, and critiques, the chapter first zeroes in on the 'local turn' that had the involvement of the civil society at its core. It later moves to the more recent 'local turn', outlining the central themes and discussions, as well as the various meanings of 'the local' present in the existing literature.

In the final section of the chapter, there is a discussion regarding the shortcomings and the gaps in the literature, which the thesis to a certain extent aims to address. Four main gaps and criticisms are outlined, which include the limits of the international–local binary, the normative implications of the existing binary of demonisition or romanticisation of the different actors, the disregard of socioeconomic realities and their implication on people's agency, and the 'snapshot' approach that

most of the analyses have. By doing so, this chapter positions the thesis in regards to the literature and the on-going discussions within it with which it engages and in regards to venues for potential further research.

2.1 BEYOND AND BELOW INSTITUTIONS IN PEACEBUILDING

It is not uncommon for an overview of peace missions or the development of Peace and Conflict Studies to start with the end of the Cold War.[18] This is by no means to suggest that conflicts or the study thereof did not exist beforehand, but to merely signal the change in nature of most conflicts at the time. Unlike before, when wars were mainly fought between states, the post-Cold War world saw eruption of conflicts that were predominantly framed as fought along identity (usually ethnic or religious) lines.[19] In addition, seen as a new type of organised violence that has made it hard to distinguish between war and gross violations of human rights, along with the growing indistinction between war and criminality, this type of conflicts has been labelled as 'new wars' (Kaldor, 1999: 1-2).[20]

This shift and the uncertainties the new era brought about were also reflected in policy documents, most notably in the seminal 1992 United Nations (UN) report *An Agenda for Peace*. The document presented a comprehensive approach to dealing with conflicts, outlining the various tools the UN envisioned to have at their disposal, ranging

[18] For a comprehensive summary of the evolution of Peace and Conflict Studies, see Dunn (2005).
[19] While this has been the dominant narrative for most of the post-Cold War conflicts, there has been a plethora of critiques and alternative explanations. I elaborate further on these in the case of Bosnia in the subsequent chapters.
[20] Alex Bellamy questions the novelty of some of the phenomena that Kaldor associates with the 'new wars', such as warlordism, centrality of economics, identity politics, and transnationalism, arguing that these were present in the long-lasting Cold War conflicts, such as Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Angola. See Bellamy, 2004.

from preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, to peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding, with the latter defined as “action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict (United Nations, 1992: Section II).” It also placed these approaches in a chronological continuum, from pre-conflict prevention, through peacemaking and peacekeeping, to post-conflict peacebuilding. Ambitiously, the report stressed the need for a broader not only political, but also social and economic engagement, seeking to address the deepest causes of conflict, including social injustice, political oppression, and economic hardship (ibid.: Section I).

This set the basis for what in the course of the 1990s developed into the so-called New York orthodoxy or the New York consensus (Kahler, 2009; Pugh, 2004: 44–47; Richmond, 2005: 154) over a certain template for a form of governance that the interventions in post-conflict areas were expected to ‘build’. Relating to its analogue in economic policy, the Washington consensus, the template involved promotion of democracy, the rule of law, market economy, respect for human rights, and vibrant civil societies in the post-conflict zones. This came to be known as the liberal peacebuilding consensus and the ‘peace’ it produced, as the liberal peace.

As a result, or rather in support of the growing peacebuilding consensus, in 1995 the then UN Secretary-General, Boutros-Ghali issued a report *Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* (United Nations, 1995), which further expanded the concept of peacebuilding. Section III, focusing on the instruments at UN’s disposal, symbolically entitled *Instruments for Peace and Security*, in addition to post-conflict peacebuilding

also noted the necessity of preventive peacebuilding and stressed 'the crucial importance of economic and social development as the most secure basis for lasting peace' (ibid.: Section I). The report was seemingly a mild attempt at tackling both conceptions of peace proposed by Johan Galtung (1969). Suggesting a different understanding of violence, he distinguishes between negative and positive peace. Namely, the commonly accepted understanding of peace as absence of war and physical violence is but a negative conception of peace as defined by Galtung (1964: 2). At the same time, he (1969) introduced the concept of structural violence, closely related to the concept of positive peace. He argues that violence is not only direct, but it can also be present in the structures, limiting or denying people's access not just to physical, but also to social well-being (Fetherston, 2000: 202). Positive peace is thus conceptualised as 'a pattern of cooperation and integration between major human groups' (Galtung, 1975: 29), and while peacekeeping is aimed at achieving negative peace, peacemaking and peacebuilding are understood as the appropriate approaches in addressing the structural causes of violence and establishing positive peace (Galtung, 1976). This has been at the heart of the peacebuilding literature and practice that focus on conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation at levels both beyond and below the state, as well as on non-elite peace processes (Call and Cook, 2003: 235). [21] Importantly, beyond institutions and organisations, these

[21] There has been a considerable deliberation among scholars on the difference between conflict resolution and conflict transformation, with some seeing them as completely different endeavours, having Lederach (2003) going as far as arguing that the former is more short-term and content-centred and the latter is relationship-centred and focused on a longer process of transforming the conflict. Others, however, see them as part of the same endeavour, with conflict transformation being the deepest level of conflict resolution (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2011).

approaches centre on sub-state actors and on individuals, emphasising the importance of human agency in the development of sustainable peace.

2.2 ENTER CIVIL SOCIETY

In a similar vein, John Paul Lederach (1997) has developed a peacebuilding framework presented through a pyramid model, which focuses on achieving sustainable reconciliation in conflict-ridden societies and has significantly influenced peacebuilding practitioners and academics. The pyramid model (ibid.: 39) represents three tiers of leading actors among the conflict-affected population: the top-level leadership includes key political and military leaders, the middle-level leadership are important actors from, for instance, academia, religion, arts, and are well connected both with the top-level and the grassroots, and finally, the grassroots leadership, which are those directly exposed to the struggle for survival and the local inter-group animosities, *inter alia*, including doctors, refugee camp leaders, leaders of grassroots non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc.

As noted, Lederach's approach has informed a large body of literature and crucially, many practitioners' understanding of peacebuilding. Along with the expanded involvement of the development community in peacebuilding, this approach has contributed to a more significant engagement with non-state actors, particularly NGOs and variously defined 'civil society', and an increase in interest studying that engagement. The extent of this is evident in a 2006 World Bank report, which states that '[t]oday the main question is no longer whether civil society has a role to play in

peacebuilding, but how it can realise its potential, what are the roles of various actors, what are critical factors and pre-conditions for their effectiveness, and how can external actors best provide support' (World Bank, 2006: v). The European Union goes even further in linking it to democracy, with a European Commission Communication claiming that '[a]n empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system', within which it 'represents and fosters pluralism and can contribute to more effective policies, equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth, [and] is an important player in fostering peace and in conflict resolution' (European Commission, 2012: 3).

While there is no commonly accepted understanding of what 'civil society' precisely means and who constitutes it, in the literature there seems to be no contestation of it being a space where voluntary collective actions shaped around common interests, purposes, and values take place (Paffenholz and Spurk, 2006: 2). Furthermore, 'civil society' is also understood by many as a sector distinct from those of the state, the family, and the market, composed of various voluntary organisations, which are not solely driven by private and economic interests, are autonomously organised, and interact closely with the state and the political sphere (ibid.: 2–3). The term itself also appears to imply a certain level of civility expected by the organisations that are part of this sector (ibid.: 8). In the liberal peacebuilding framework, the civil society is seen in opposition to the state, from which it is expected to retain autonomy in order to be able to guarantee basic democratic values and principles, to protect the citizens from any despotic tendencies by the state apparatus, to ensure monitoring and

accountability of the state officials, but also to act as a service delivery supplier when the state, in particular the welfare state, is weak (Spurk, 2010: 24; Debiel and Sticht, 2005: 9–10). This understanding of civil society originated in European intellectual discourse and is rooted in liberal individualism (Hann, 1996). Crucially, in the peacebuilding practice, 'civil society' has by and large become synonymous to civil society organisations (CSOs) or NGOs in certain societies. In fact, the aforementioned European Commission Communication draws a clear link between 'civil society' and CSOs, with the latter including organisations that adhere to the liberal democratic political orientation of the EU (Liden et al., 2016).

The seeming focus of the international community on the role of the local population in peace processes has, among other things, resulted in the introduction of concepts such as 'local ownership' and 'local participation' in the peacebuilding practitioners' discourse in the last decade or so. A 2008 UN document, for instance, states that '[n]ational and local ownership is critical to the successful implementation of a peace process' (United Nations, 2008: 36). In practice, 'local ownership' does not imply autonomy, but rather local responsibility for politics, which is disciplined and regulated by international norms (Hughes and Pupavac, 2005). Timothy Donais (2011) further argues that 'local ownership' is key for a lasting peace only if understood as a hybrid concept, rooted in both the 'communitarian peacebuilding from below', often advocated by NGOs, represented through a local social agency, and the 'liberal' vision of peacebuilding, in this case represented by universal norms. Such engagement with

local agency, in whichever form, has not taken place in the peacebuilding practice thus far and has remained but a mere rhetorical commitment (Donais, 2009: 18).

In fact, the international peacebuilding community has by and large failed to engage with local populations in conflict-ridden societies in any meaningful way (Richmond, 2012). As noted before, the main focus of the attempt at engaging the 'locals' has remained the civil society, which as Oliver Richmond (2010: 670) points out, is a 'Western-induced artifice'. This discourse has become so prominent that peacebuilding-via-civil society, along with statebuilding and democratic reform, has been identified as part of the triad of discourses of the liberal peace (Heathershaw, 2008: 603–604).

Exploring the conceptual framing of civil society in the peacebuilding discourse, Chandler (2010: 387) argues that by framing post-conflict societies in liberal democratic terms, as self-governing, autonomous, and rational individuals, the civil society discourse enables an interventionist policy paradigm while 'reinforcing and reinstitutionalising international hierarchies of power and evading responsibility for policy outcomes'. Despite presenting the international intervention as an effort toward preserving the autonomy of the post-conflict subject, through actions under the rubric of empowerment and capacity-building, the discourse nonetheless remains based on the assumption that the intervened civil society, as showcased by the war, lacks the rational and civic qualities that can be found in a Western civil society (ibid.: 384). In addition, the internationals' engagement conceptualised as focused on saving the post-conflict subjects' autonomy in fact leads to subjection. Barbara Cruikshank, for instance,

examining ‘technologies of citizenship’ from a perspective of theories of power and the creation of subjects, argues that people’s empowerment in a democracy is in actuality a measure of subjection rather than of any autonomy from power (Cruikshank, 1999). What she identifies as ‘technologies of citizenship’, working through everyday practices, contribute to the governmental authority being extended. It can be argued that the same holds true for conflict-ridden societies brought under the umbrella of liberal peacebuilding, with the important difference being that it is usually not the national government, but the international peacebuilders whose authority is being extended.

In more practice-oriented terms, the criticism of this civil-society approach has been directed both at a predominantly Western concept being used in non-Western contexts and the practice which has rarely succeeded in understanding the realities on the ground and adjusting the approach accordingly. Overall, scholars have been vocal about the failure of the existing approach to establish a meaningful local engagement by mainly appealing to organisations that are part of the Western civil society imaginary, leading to marginalisation and supplanting of ‘the genuine grassroots local’ or ‘the local-local’, often seen by peacebuilders as corrupt, anti-democratic, inefficient, and neopatrimonial (Richmond, 2011a: 152). By not recognising and therefore excluding local knowledges and traditional forms of societal associations, what is created is a civil society that to a large extent appears alien to the wider local population. This approach, seen as formal and elitist (Pouligny, 2005: 507), has resulted in civil society organisations that have weak membership and are largely divorced from the general public (Orjuela, 2004: 256). These legitimacy issues aside, due to saturation with

international funds in the aftermath of war, the number of NGOs in post-conflict zones has skyrocketed and, in particular, there has been a mushrooming of NGOs whose vision and mission overlap with the liberal peacebuilding agenda (Pouligny, 2005: 499). Such donor-driven NGO-centred civil society that lacks legitimacy among its constituency clearly limits its capacity to create any kind of domestic social capital and ownership over the peace process. All of this leads to the organisations and the local development as a whole becoming dependent on foreign presence (Belloni, 2001: 163).

In addition to the process being approached as a primarily technical dimension, separated from politics, the development of a civil society is also based on the faulty assumption that there exists a clear distinction between the political and the social, or the non-political. Yet, despite this assumed distinction, practice shows that the interventions themselves often contribute to a state-society relationship that in actuality allows for the state to manipulate citizens' representation (Cubitt, 2013). It is, therefore, for all these reasons that scholars and more seldom practitioners have sought to expand the understanding of the local beyond the present understanding of civil society.

2.3 GOING 'LOCAL'[22]

The lack of reflectivity and awareness of the epistemological biases built in the liberal peacebuilding framework, the narrow understanding of who represents the local populations, and the actual engagement with what has been understood as 'civil society' in conflict-ridden societies have been criticised by a number of scholars and

[22] While the thesis in its own contribution goes beyond the international–local binary and distinction, it uses those terms in reference to other existing literature, whereby 'local' refers to the population of the post-war or conflict-ridden society and 'international' is used as synonymous to 'foreign'.

practitioners. While there is a wide recognition of the poor quality of peace and the relapse to violence in many societies that have been subject to international peacebuilding efforts, there is a plethora of studies, analyses, and reports aimed at improving the existing liberal peacebuilding approaches. A smaller number of scholars have, on the other hand, been critical of some of the assumptions that have informed liberal peacebuilding and the kind of political order that has emerged as a result of the interventions. Shahar Hameiri (2010), for instance, argues that it is the very nature of statehood that has been transformed in both the intervened and intervening countries, which has resulted in transnationally regulated states. In a similar fashion, albeit less radically, David Chandler (2006) problematises the issue of political sovereignty and the principle of autonomy in light of the presence, influence, and involvement of external actors in the governing of a country. He further questions the approach in which statebuilding or the building of the institutions is separated from politics (Chandler, 2005). Looking at the consequences of this approach of offering technical solutions to political problems (Bendaña, 2006), Vivienne Jabri (2010) notes that such a superficial transfer of power from interveners to local actors diminishes forms of local agency.

To that end, what appears for most of the different critiques to have in common is the recognition that by reducing it to or presenting the engagement in conflict-ridden and post-war societies as a mere technocratic approach, the liberal peacebuilding ignores the agency and the capacity of the 'local', thereby appearing imposed (Tadjbakhsh, 2011: 3–4). Indeed, the essence of the critique of the liberal peace promoted by Western states and organisations is that it fails to take into account the needs of the

local population, their customs and culture, as well as the traditional and indigenous ways of dealing with conflicts. Prioritising stability and security, peacebuilders have been criticised for ignoring and failing to positively affect the everyday lives of the conflict-ridden countries' citizens (Richmond, 2010). Liberal peacebuilding, having been focused on governance institutions primarily, has failed to 'come to terms with the lived experiences of individuals and their needs in everyday life' (Richmond, 2008: 108). This has been argued to undermine the emergence of a social contract between the state and the society (Richmond, 2009; Tadjbakhsh and Schoiswohl, 2008).

Moreover, liberal peacebuilding has also been criticised for the assumption that political rights are more important to the local population than needs and material gains (Richmond, 2009: 568–569). With such neglect of the socioeconomic realities on the ground, this approach has reinforced inequalities that serve to limit political participation and perpetuate social division (Pugh, 2005). Michael Pugh (2009) also argues that with neoliberal economic policies seen as a technical solution to reconstructing the war-stricken economy, there is no place for discussion of possible, potentially better suited, alternatives for the economy of a post-war society.

Recent cases of peacebuilding have also shed light on the asymmetries of power in global politics and the dominant position of the Global North, as well as on the promotion of Western culture and knowledge at the expense of local culture, resources, and knowledges.[23] This imposed dominance of Western conceptions and peacebuilding

[23] Without any intention of implying homogeneity, this thesis uses 'the West' and 'the Global North' interchangeably in reference to a set of Western-originating values that have been promoted as universal through various intervention and governance mechanisms. 'Western' in this sense also encompasses

approaches at the societal level is argued to have limited the space for any alternative approaches to peacemaking, such as the indigenous and traditional ones (Mac Ginty, 2008). As a result, legitimate local traditions are said to be either sidelined or, when they do get recognised, mainstreamed and instrumentalised (ibid.).

Drawing on many of the issues outlined above, a number of critical scholars see the exercise of peacebuilding as a neo-colonial project, resulting in local resistance (Burnell, 2009; Liden, 2011; Richmond, 2011a). Rarely had it happen before that the locals' involvement was examined beyond their engagement within the limits of what the international peacebuilders had allowed, which has frequently been in the form of CSOs. That is to say, against the background of liberal hegemony, the locals had been perceived either as loyal partners in implementing a certain agenda, as explained in the previous section, or as spoilers to the peacebuilding process. Broadly defined as 'groups and tactics that actively seek to hinder, delay, or undermine conflict settlement through a variety of means and for a variety of motives' (Newman and Richmond, 2006: 1), 'spoilers' and 'spoiling' even in the peacebuilding process can be seen as normative judgements, which strengthen the role and agency of external peacebuilders or 'third-party custodians of a peace process' (ibid.: 17), justifying their use of a range of strategies in dealing with 'spoilers' (Stedman, 1997). As far as the analysis of local agency is concerned, however, the discussion on spoilers remains primarily focused on the political and military elites.

what has been presented as 'European' in the mainstream discourse in the EU and its periphery, which includes Bosnia.

Consequently, the need to engage with 'the local' in the domain of the everyday, thereby relocating politics from international actors and states to local actors exercising their own agency, has been emphasised (Richmond, 2010: 681). This has been the basic premise of an emerging body of literature that has marked the recent 'local turn' in the critical 'camp' of Peace and Conflict Studies (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). As noted by Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013: 769), this comes as 'a recognition of the diffuseness of power (even the "normative" power of the UN, donors, and the EU) and its circulation, of the importance of culture, history and identity, the significance of local critical agency and resistance, of the unintended consequences of external blueprints, and of rights and needs in everyday contexts'.

The importance of this 'local turn' in analysing the role of post-war societies' population as peacebuilding agents in their own right notwithstanding, questions over who 'the local' really is have caused some discussion in this emerging literature. The macro-level approach still appears to be dominant, with the 'local' in most analyses meaning 'national' (Autesserre, 2014: 492). In the micro-level analyses, however, perhaps the most widely accepted understanding is the one presented by Roger Mac Ginty, who uses 'local actors' in reference to 'all levels within the state subject to a liberal peace intervention: national government, municipalities, political parties, militant groups, NGOs and civil society, businesses, communities, and individuals' (Mac Ginty, 2011: 84). On the other hand, in an effort to emphasise a distinction from the non-Western and non-liberal elites part of the liberal peacebuilding process and the Western-defined civil society, i.e. 'the local actors', Oliver Richmond uses 'local-local'

referring to the diversity of communities and individuals beyond these groups who are part of the political society (Richmond, 2011c: 133).

To that end, Isabell Schierenbeck (2015) identifies at least three main conceptions of 'the local' in the recent 'local turn'. The first one is 'the local' understood as local institutions, local governing structures and local officials. This conception disentangles 'the local' from the global–local framework and analyses it solely within a national framework (ibid.: 1024–1025). This conception is used by scholars who analyse, to name but few examples, the emergence of accountable and legitimate local governance, the working of subnational governing units, the decentralisation of power, the processes and outcomes of the use of mechanisms established for consultation and co-operation between the local officials and the citizens.

The second one is the already mentioned conception of 'the local' as agency (ibid.: 1025–1026). Namely, in an attempt to challenge the aforementioned fundamental problem of the liberal peacebuilding, that of depoliticising conflict-ridden societies through technical approaches, scholars have increasingly started to look at the everyday as a site for repoliticisation, whereby local actors or the grassroots local can exercise their agency. Local agency is exercised in different ways and different venues, all of which cannot be easily categorised. Some of the forms of local agency discussed by the existing literature include co-optation, resistance, acceptance, tactical forms of participation, autonomous counter-organisation (Richmond and Mitchell, 2011: 329), assimilation, adaptation, hidden agencies (Richmond, 2011a: 128), and compliance. Each of them relates to power and liberal peacebuilding, presented as an international

endeavour. Local agency in this sense can be exercised not solely by the ordinary people and the grassroots movements and activities (Pogodda and Richmond, 2015), but also by the elites in some settings (Hyden, 2015; Öjendal and Sivhouch, 2015).

The one form of local agency that has received most scholarly attention is resistance. Drawing on Foucault and his well-known statement that '[w]here there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (Foucault 1978), Richmond (2011b: 420) conceives of resistance as an act of power and hegemony being resisted either discursively or through social practices. Referring to Foucault's work, he (ibid.: 422) goes further to explain that

> resistance is not merely an antidote to power but reconstitutes politics according to those who express agency, however diffuse. The point of resistance is to elude power rather than to confront it head on.

In relation to this, he particularly emphasises the agency that becomes visible through the hidden and everyday forms of resistance, a concept advanced through the work of James C. Scott. Scott (1985: 32) suggests that everyday forms of resistance are 'intended to mitigate or deny claims made by superordinate classes or to advance claims vis-à-vis those superordinate classes'.

The third conception of 'the local' is as a process (Schierenbeck, 2015: 1026). This conception highlights the non-static nature of 'the local'. Scholars have emphasised the need to deterritorialise 'the local' and understand it as a contextualised activity and process (Mac Ginty, 2015), while others have drawn attention to the

constant positioning and repositioning of local actors within peacebuilding networks and dynamics, i.e. to the on-going parallel delocalisation and relocalisation (Kappler, 2015).

The above sheds light on the novelty and the importance of the recent 'local turn'. This is particularly the case in it turning the previous analytic approach that focused on a top-down view of governance upside down by zeroing in on how the governance agencies are seen and engaged by the governed and how the agency of the governed transforms governance (Corbridge et al., 2005: 8).

2.4 THE MISSING LINKS

Despite the growing number of studies of peacebuilding dynamics that have accounted for what has been referred to as local agency, the concept still remains somewhat of a 'black box' that needs further unpacking. 'The local' as presented in most of the studies gives the impression of being 'a panacea of legitimacy, and is everything and anything, as long as it fits the image of being in opposition to liberal peacebuilding' (Simons and Zanker, 2014: 5). There are four main criticisms of the existing literature, which also indicate the gap this thesis aims to address.

First, a lot of the literature that examines local agency and processes reinforces the binary of global versus local, or international (and often liberal) versus local (and often non-liberal). Some, in fact, acknowledge that themselves, as is the case with a recent edited volume, where the editors write that all contributing authors 'emphasise the binary division of the world into, on the one hand, a set of liberal actors [...] and, on the other, a set of non-liberal actors' (Campbell, Chandler and Sabarathnam, 2011).

‘The local’ in much of the critical literature continues to exist in relation and juxtaposition to ‘the international’. While these accounts might have aimed at shedding light to the local part of the dichotomy, any analysis of ‘the local’ that exists in such binary ought to also question the power relations contained in the binary itself. In addition, this dichotomy not only risks ignoring the complexity of layers and power structures, as well as plurality and multidimensionality of local actors (Schierenbeck, 2015: 1028), but it also risks ignoring the multiplicity of ‘international’ dimensions, beyond Western perspectives (Paffenholz, 2015: 868).

In an effort to go beyond this binary and to better understand the fragile statehood that emerges as a result of foreign interventions and bring about conceptual clarity, Boege et al. (2009: 24) propose the concept of ‘hybrid political order’, which is the result of the interaction between the formal, or state-related, claim to power and logic of order, the informal, or the traditional societal order, and the logic of globalisation. Postulated in such a manner, formal institutions are assumed to be linked to ideas of modernity and rationality, while the informal logic is linked to tradition, custom, and community (Kraushaar and Lambach, 2009: 4). Maren Kraushaar and Daniel Lambach (ibid.: 5) see the concept of ‘hybrid political order’ as a way of moving beyond the aforementioned dichotomy, whereby the lines get blurred and norms and institutions get interpenetrated and blended, generating new forms of governance.

The concept of hybridity is not new and is perhaps most prominently related to the work of Homi Bhabha. Located in a post-colonial context, according to him (1985: 154)

> [h]ybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the "pure" and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.

In Peace and Conflict Studies, hybridity has been described as 'the assimilation of orthodox peacebuilding and neopatrimony' (Roberts, 2011: 26), as well as 'both the capacity of international liberal and local peacebuilding actors and projects to engage with each other' (Richmond, 2011a: 17). The result of the process of hybridisation, or the outcome of the encounter of the liberal and the local on the ground whereby they modify each other has also been referred to as a post-liberal form of peace (Richmond, 2011a: 117). Importantly, hybridity and hybridisation as concepts are advanced in order to avoid the liberal/international–local binary and to blur these analytical categories. Moreover, hybridity arguably allows for a greater attention to be paid to local agency, with their role in the peace processes being brought to the fore.

However, the criticism directed to Bhabha's 'hybridity' is applicable to the use of the concept in studying peace and peacebuilding outcomes too. Namely, as Jenny Peterson (2012: 13) argues, hybridity refers to the meeting of two defined subjects, in the case of Bhabha's definition - the colonial power and the colonised subject, which are essentially homogenised and approached as definable and recognisable entities. This requires for groups to be essentialised, which is problematic. The same holds true for

the use of international/liberal–local vocabulary in terms of hybrid peace. Furthermore, she argues that such an analysis of hybridity might displace certain power differentials that exist of the ground (ibid.: 14). On the other hand, from a normative perspective, analysing the security sector reform in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular in Liberia, Andreas Mehler (2009: 57) shows that hybrid governance or hybrid solutions are likely to bring on 'more of the same–neopatrimonial instability and inefficiency'. He further suggests that the local population is in some ways more liberal than assumed by the concept, and in that sense, hybridity must not be romanticised.

In addressing some of the criticisms, Mac Ginty (2011: 8) importantly notes that the norms and practices that are analysed are themselves the result of prior hybridisation. At the same time, however, he (ibid.: 46) writes: '[w]hile I do not wish to perpetuate another binary, it does seem that many international peace-support actors are more comfortable thinking about and exercising material forms of power, while local communities in some settings tend to think about power in terms of legitimacy and moral standing'.

Another concept that also grapples with the interaction between the global, or the international and the local is the one recently introduced to critical Peace and Conflict Studies literature, the concept of 'friction'. It is intended to provide a more nuanced approach to the understanding and analysis of the interactions between actors at different locations on the international–local spectrum and the unpredictable outcomes of those interactions (Björkdahl et al., 2016; Björkdahl and Höglund, 2013).

Nevertheless, given the global–local binary that it is based on, the concept of friction can arguably be subject to the same criticisms as the concept of hybridity.

The second and related criticism is that the existing literature contributes to another binary; that is the demonisation or romanticisation of both what is above described as the internationals and the locals. The intersecting of the two binaries essentially leaves us with either a Western liberal international intervener that needs to correct the non-liberal local or an emancipated local that needs to correct the Western international. Roberto Belloni (2012: 23) is vocal in emphasising that both the local and the international are diverse in terms of composition, their goals and approaches, and one is not necessarily incompatible with the norms commonly associated with the other.

Indeed, one of the main pitfalls of the studies of the role of local agency in peacebuilding has been the 'romanticisation' of 'the local', which according to Richmond in actuality constitutes peacebuilding without cultural engagement (2011a: 51). This idealistic vision of 'the local' often leads to an acceptance of all things local without them being subjected to any scrutiny. There appears to be an assumption of a non-state, authentic and traditional local, without questioning whom 'the local' represents. In that sense, there has been zeroing in and praising on indigenous forms of peacebuilding, whereby '[i]ndigenous norms and practices draw on local resources', and '[t]he term "indigenous" usually applies in its common usage to peoples that inhabited a region before it was colonised by actors and technologies from the global north' (Mac Ginty 2011: 49). Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013: 770) warn us against the dangers of romanticising the local and vilifying the internationals, but as Paffenholz (2015: 862)

argues ‘they present a fairly uncritical interpretation of the local because the liberal international already takes the place of the culprit’.

Another aspect of the romanticisation of ‘the local’ is the focus on resistance to liberal peacebuilding in recent critical literature. While it has been pointed out that the local populations are not mere recipients of the intervention, but they also resist some of the initiatives, the motivations and reasons behind those actions have rarely been questioned. In other words, there has been little done to actualise the desire for pluralism in the research through the representation of locals’ views in their political, historical and social context. Emphasising solely the effects of power, as Laura McNay points out, ‘results in a reduction of social agents to passive bodies and cannot explain how individuals may act in an autonomous fashion’ (McNay, 1991: 125). Matt Davies (2006: 220) goes further in arguing that the tendency to view resistance as an automatic response to power and the powerful oftentimes hinders the actual capacity for realisation of transformational and emancipatory projects. Assertions that ‘the poor are a static, inert or passive mass’, as well as analyses that view ‘any nonelite gesture as an act of resistance, without the conceptual tools to specify “resistance to what” or in what ways resistance is different from compliance’ are equally harmful (ibid.).

Ultimately, these discussions and scholarly endeavours appear to remain entrapped by the terms of the liberal peace debate, which has been defined by the juxtaposition of the liberal or the international and the local (Heathershaw, 2013: 277). As a result, scholars have thus far failed to provide theories of peacebuilding or of the partially internationalised rule of post-war societies that shed light on ‘how post-conflict

environments emerge, what kind of environments they are and why these may be stable or unstable' (ibid.: 281). In other words, what we need and still lack is a mid-level theory that explains the relationship between the nature of peacebuilding and its specific outcomes (ibid.: 282), which inevitable ought to move beyond the liberal peace debate. This is precisely why none of the existing approaches can offer a response to the research question behind this thesis.

The third criticism is regarding the predominant focus of this body of literature on the political agency of the people in the post-war societies. In fact, striving to give prominence to 'local' agency, sometimes scholars have read political agency even in acts and events that were not political at all, but mere routines (Kappler, 2013: 130) or as some have called them, acts of nonparticipation (Mac Ginty, 2012). The criticism does not relate to the attention that political agency of the people in post-war societies has received *per se*, but to the frequent disregard of the context within which such agency may or may not be exercised. Seldom have scholars engaged with the socioeconomic realities on the ground (Pugh et al., 2008), the ways in which foreign interventions have affected those (Jennings, 2015), and the ways in which these realities affect the agency of the people and the communities in the conflict-ridden societies.

The fourth and final criticism refers to what Stefanie Kappler (2015) has called a 'snapshot approach' in the existing literature, with the observations portraying fixed images in space and time, not allowing for a fluidity or plurality of positions of the actors. This approach contributes to the perception of homogeneity of the intersecting

categories discussed above. Such perception is present in the literature, as well as in the practice of peacebuilding. This approach disregards the fact that people can occupy and experience multiple temporalities, often simultaneously, and that different interests, needs and experiences inform the reactions in different settings.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to present an overview of the development, the key discussion points, and the main shortcomings of the so-called 'local turns' in Peace and Conflict Studies, and in doing so, to position the thesis in relation to the existing literature. Starting off with the 'local turn' that related to the inclusion of civil society organisations in the peacebuilding efforts, the chapter engaged with the critiques of that local involvement and what it entailed, the definitions of 'civil society' that were put to use, as well as the ways in which the civil society was allowed and expected to (re)act.

In the next part of the chapter, the basic tenets of the 'local turn' that this thesis engages with and contributes to were presented in more detail. This includes elaboration on each of the three conceptions of 'the local' that can be found in the existing critical peacebuilding literature: 'the local' as institutions, as agency, and as a process.

Finally, the last section detailed the four main criticisms and gaps in the ever-expanding critical literature in Peace and Conflict Studies. The primary criticism relates to the fact that most of the analyses, even if critical of it, reproduce the international or global versus local binary. This often prevents the population of the post-war societies

to be seen as agents in their own right, not in response to the foreign interveners. This criticism is closely linked to the second one, which reflects on another binary or dichotomy that is frequent, which is demonisation–romanticisation of actors. Both of these trends point to an inability to move past the liberal peace debate and theorise the relationship between the entire nature of the building of peace and the specific outcomes of that peace, which is something that would be needed to respond to the research questions that have guided this thesis. The additional two gaps in the literature relate to the tendency of the existing research to view actors, events, and processes as fixed in time and space, and the lack of research on the socioeconomic realities of a post-war society that both affect the agency of its population and are affected by peacebuilding interventions.

In conclusion, this chapter indicates the on-going discussions in the critical literature in Peace and Conflict Studies with which the thesis aims to engage, and with that, sets the basis for the subsequent theoretical and analytical chapter. These discussions and literature are also the ones to which the thesis aims to contribute: first, by problematising agency in peacebuilding, and second, by using intersectionality as a heuristic device to analyse and shed light to the plurality of identities, social divisions, practices or inequality, and relations of power that are at play in a post-war society and affect the exercise of agency.

3 AGENCY AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE EVERYDAY: THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

'We are here every day, from dawn until dusk, working to provide bread for our families. Of course we all hang out. The same way the criminals don't care about ethnicity, we, the ordinary people, shouldn't care either'.[24] This was the sentiment a male trader at the Arizona market in the Brčko district shared with me during my time there, while playing chess with the neighbouring traders and instructing his wife to make coffee for all of them. His words hinted at the socioeconomic commonality of people from different ethnicities, but his actions also pointed to the gendered division of labour around their stall. Ethnicity, however, has become such a dominant centre of power in the war and post-war period in Bosnia and Herzegovina that the differences within ethnic groups have seldom been discussed. This, in part, could be contributed to the Dayton Peace Agreement effectively institutionally cementing the ethnic differences and making the three ethnic groups (Bosniacs, Croats, and Serbs) constitutionally the sovereign power-holders, which then trickled down to all levels of government. But beyond the constitutional and institutional setup, the public and the policy discourses in BiH, (re)produced by foreigners and Bosnians and Herzegovinians alike, have been shaped in ethnic 'groupism' terms as well. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, this refers to Rogers Brubaker's (2002: 164) concept, which he defines as 'the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups

[24] Personal interview with an Arizona trader, Arizona, 20 June 2012.

as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis', which in the domain of ethnicity means to treat ethnic groups 'as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed'. In fact, ethnic groupism translated to the conception of peace as ethnic peace has long been at the heart of the foreign peacebuilding efforts in BiH, which have largely focused on reconciliation between different ethnic groups and building an inter-ethnic peace.

It is precisely that essentialisation and homogenisation along ethnic lines that prevents shedding light on the social practices, power differentials, and relations of inequality, in particular those relating to gender and class, which have effectively been consolidated by conceptualising peace along ethnic lines. What the above example, *inter alia*, hints at is that these could include patriarchal subjectivities for women (Jansen, 2010) or class-informed intersubjectivities (Stavrevska, 2016). Additionally, homogenisation blinds us from analysing the particularities of any of the actors involved, as well as the heterogeneity of voices and experiences *within* groups.

Analysing how ordinary people react to social categories, ethnicity included, and how they behave in divided societies, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Paula Pickering (2007: 166) finds that people give varied meanings to ethnic labels, and the other social divisions that sometimes trump and complicate ethnic divisions, as well as people's specific needs that require the attention of the institutions ought to be taken into consideration. She (ibid.: 53) agrees that the war in Bosnia and the post-war environment has made social identity, defined as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge or his membership in a social group (or

groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel, 1978: 63), more salient. Pickering (2007: 55) further acknowledges that social identities for most people include attachments to multiple groups, the importance of which can vary over time. Nevertheless, she (ibid.: 56) argues that it is primarily the individuals, not the groups, who have the power to (re)define 'one's sense of who one is, of one's social location, and of how, given the first two, one is prepared to act' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 17). In that sense, the way ordinary people respond to various peacebuilding programmes is 'guided by their one particularistic understandings of the self and of their social location' (Pickering, 2007: 3).

This perspective helps us understand many of the relations, primarily 'horizontal', within and between groups, networks, and people that are part of them. In other words, it helps us understand the identity constructions. Nevertheless, it sheds little light to the interactive systems, i.e. the 'vertical' power relations and social structures beyond social groups. In a similar vein, Pickering's study offers a rather unidimensional analysis, where the way that people affect peacebuilding programmes is what is at the core, but less attention is and can be paid with this approach to the way peacebuilding programmes affect people's realities, i.e. the processes that unfold. Yet, in order to answer the primary question of this thesis and understand how some of the peacebuilding initiatives have affected the people whose lives have been studied, we ought to be able to grasp all three aspects: the identity constructions, the systems, and the process that are at play.

Addressing these three aspects, while looking at the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina in their own right and through their own experiences within existing systems and structures, in an attempt to tease out further nuances of people's lived realities, the thesis deploys the concept of intersectionality as a heuristic device. This chapter first contextualises the analysis in the realm of the everyday, explaining the specific understanding of the everyday that is used here. It then proceeds to unpack the concepts of agency and intersectionality, presenting some of the key debates about each of the two concepts, the particular understandings deployed, and the reasons for the chosen approach in the context of the research and the thesis. The next two sections explain how the different concepts interact with each other and put forward an intersectional analytical framework for a three-level analysis of the ethnographic data gathered around BiH on the everyday realities and people's agency. The final section elaborates on the selection and the understandings of the three categories used (ethnicity, gender, and class) in the subsequent chapters on the three case studies.

3.1 ANALYTICAL CONTEXT: THE EVERYDAY

The research questions at the centre of this thesis, which inquire about the impact of 'ethnic peace' on people's lived realities and agency, as well as the use of an intersectional analysis, inevitably locate the research and the thesis in the realm of the everyday. The everyday has mostly been absent from the study of international relations, and relatedly, from the literature on peacebuilding. This has been mainly as a result of the everyday being seen as mundane, trivial, and irrelevant, as having little connection to the macro politics and policies. György Lukács (1911) and Martin

Heidegger (1926) have both described it as the domain of inauthenticity, triviality, and error. The everyday has also often been seen in opposition to modernity and everything it symbolises. It had largely been out of scholarly focus, with the exception of few disciplines, until somewhat recently. As mentioned in the previous chapter, with the recent introduction of interdisciplinary approaches, including perspectives from anthropological, post-structuralist, post-colonial, feminist, as well as historical materialist literature, the everyday has also found its way in the study of (post-)conflict societies.

The introduction of the everyday to Peace and Conflict Studies has been part of the most recent 'local turn'. Its value, for the most part, is found in the possibility to engage with the informal and non-institutional realm. The primary understanding of the concept that has been used in this literature so far is arguably the one proposed by Michel de Certeau (see, for instance, Richmond, 2011a). For de Certeau (2000), resistance is at the heart of the everyday. The everyday practices, according to him, are repetitive, unconscious, and a form of resistance to the changes introduced with modernity, rather than a conscious political act (Highmore, 2000: 13). The everyday, as understood by de Certeau, is a site of the individuals unconsciously navigating their way around the institutions of power and creating space for themselves and their activities (Richmond, 2011a: 127). Given that he defines his project in relation to Foucault, it is perhaps unsurprising that de Certeau's focus is on resistance to disciplinary power. However, as elaborated both in the criticism to the 'local turn' in the previous chapter and the conceptualisation of agency in the subsequent section of this chapter, by focusing on unconscious resistance and acknowledging agency only or mainly in

power–resistance registry, we disregard the goals and motivations of the actors and we, therefore, risk omitting important voices from our analysis of post-war societies. This is why relying solely on de Certeau's understanding of the everyday is insufficient in studying critical agency and everyday, including (post-)conflict, experiences.

Henri Lefebvre (1988), another prominent thinker who has grappled with the concept of the everyday, provides a different analysis. In one of his descriptions of the everyday, he writes that '[i]n appearance, it is the insignificant and the banal. It is what Hegel called "the prose of the world," nothing more modest' (ibid.: 87). In his writings, he tried to shed light to the 'extraordinary in the ordinary' (Elden. 2004: 111). For Lefebvre, the everyday is defined and shaped by contradictions. Using the metaphor of a diptych, he explained everyday life in a form of two panels. In it,

> the first panel represents the *misery of everyday life*, its tedious tasks, humiliations reflected in the lives of the working classes and especially of women, upon whom the conditions of everyday life bear heaviest – child-bearing and child-rearing, basic preoccupations with bare necessities, money, tradesmen, provisions, the realm of numbers, a sort of intimate knowledge of things outside the sphere of material reality: health, desire, spontaneity, vitality; recurrence, the survival of poverty and the endlessness of want, a climate of economy, abstinence, hardship, repressed desires, meanness and avarice. The second panel portrays the *power of everyday life*, its continuity, the permanence of life rooted in the soil, the adaptation of the body, time, space, desire; environment and the home; the unpredictable and unmeasurable tragedy forever lurking in everyday life; the power of woman, crushed and overwhelmed, 'object' of history and society but also the inevitable 'subject' and foundation; creation from recurrent gestures of a world of sensory experience; the coincidence of need with satisfaction and, more rarely, with pleasure; work and works of art; the ability to create in terms of everyday life from its solids and its spaces – to make something lasting for the individual, the community, the class […]' (Lefebvre, 1984: 35)

Lefebvre's list of the possibilities of everyday life goes on, but the critical point that he makes is that despite the burdens, the everyday holds a transformative power and some of the conditions related to it are, importantly, material. In that sense, the everyday for Lefebvre is also a site of knowledges that can resist its colonisation by capitalism (Elden, 2004: 118). Adapting Marx, these knowledges are only local, by the virtue of its teleology and ethos, not only in itself but, even more importantly, for itself' (Appadurai, 1996: 181). It is precisely this kind of knowledges and the negotiation of the local manifestations of global processes in the everyday that the thesis is interested in and the research in Bosnia has explored.

Drawing on ethnographic research situated in the Bosnian everyday, the thesis presents people's knowledges and conscious efforts to navigate the systems of power and inequality within which they have to live and function. De Certeau's view of the everyday, as a site of agency and subjectivity, is dubiously 'separate from any structural engagement with the problems of material distribution and economic justice' (Roberts, 1999: 28). To that end, this thesis is firmly postulated in the Lefebvrian everyday, whose understanding of the concept is more useful in allowing us to capture and understand nuances not only of identity constructions, but also of processes of differentiation and systems of domination. At the same time, I remain mindful of the normative aspects of studies such as this one and careful to avoid as much as possible exclusionary practices in studying the everyday (Randazzo, 2016), even though some such practices are inevitable.

3.2 AGENCY: HOW DO WE KNOW IT WHEN WE SEE IT?

Even though a lot has been written about agency in the domain of the social sciences, with the field of Peace and Conflict Studies in general and this thesis in particular being no exception, the concept remains vague and slippery without a commonly accepted definition across or even within disciplines. Significant scholarly attention has been devoted to this concept: some have concluded that it does not exist (Fuchs, 2001; Loyal and Barnes, 2001; Meyer and Jepperson, 2000); yet others have primarily focused on problematising the most prominent, arguably Western, conception of the agentic individual (Alexander, 1993; Cahill, 1998; Collins, 1992). Indeed, grounded within people, with the focus on individual freedom, and individuals at the very core of social action, the concept has undoubtedly been under influence of Western conceptions of the actor (Hitlin and Elder, 2007; Holstein and Gubrium, 2000; Meyer and Jepperson, 2000). Furthermore, stretching over a few decades, the structure–agency debate has been another important discussion related to the concept of agency. This debate has led most theorists to agree that it is practically inaccurate and analytically unbeneficial to assume a strict dualism between the two (Hays, 1994; Sewell, 1992).

Overall, there appears to be a common understanding regarding the necessity to include both freedom and constraint in the analysis of agency (Giddens, 1984). Where theorists' views differ, however, is over what constitutes free actions. Some, in fact, make the distinction between negative freedom, which means absence of external obstacles to expressing self-guided choices and acting accordingly, and positive freedom, which refers to one's capacity to exercise autonomous will (Mahmood, 2001:

207). Importantly, in both cases, the understanding of freedom is centred around individual autonomy, based on a presupposed universal desire to be free of all relations of subordination and domination (ibid.: 2016). This is central to the liberal and progressive thought and is grounded in the Western conception of agency, as noted earlier. Saba Mahmood (2001) provides an invaluable critique of the concept understood in this manner and its applicability in contexts beyond the liberal tradition. Namely, she points out that within this definition of freedom, in order for an individual to be perceived as exercising her agency, 'it is required that her actions be the consequence of her "own will" rather than of custom, tradition, or direct coercion' (ibid.: 207), while in many instances freedom means precisely being able to make a choice following certain customs and traditions. One such example is the ability of Native and African American women to form traditional families in the aftermath of slavery, genocide, and racism, even though the formation of a family was seen as a source of women's oppression by white middle class feminists at the time (ibid.: 208). This is why the concept of agency ought to be deployed carefully. If we are to better understand agency in the context of conflict governance, drawing on feminist and partially post-colonial thinking, we ought to not think of agency strictly as synonymous to resistance to relations of domination, but rather as a capacity for action that is enabled and created through historically specific relations (ibid.). What is crucial from Mahmood's critique for the understanding of agency that was used during the research and the writing of this thesis is the necessity to be attentive to the motivations, desires, and goals of the actors

when exercising their agency, which cannot be captured solely in terms of resistance and/or compliance.

Another point of divergence in the debates regarding agency is the question of how free actions (re)produce social structures. Some of these tensions could be traced back to the 'Enlightenment debate over whether instrumental rationality or moral and norm-based action is the truest expression of human freedom' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 964). For instance, theorists from the rational choice tradition (Dewey, 1922; Mead, 1938), as well as phenomenologists (Schutz, 1978), have emphasised the centrality of interests, purposes, and goal-seeking in understanding and exercising agency. These interests, most of them argue, are not pre-established, but develop within changing contexts. At the same time, other theorists (Arendt, 1971; Gilligan, 1982; Habermas, 1990) have centred their views on agency and action around issues of deliberation and judgement. The so-called theorists of practice, on the other hand, such as Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990) and Anthony Giddens (1984), have approached human agency as primarily habitual and repetitive, whereby humans rely on already established habits and routines. While habits, interests, deliberation, and judgement all play an important role in our understanding and exercise of agency, no single theory captures the full complexity of the concept, the dynamic interplay among its different dimensions noted above, and the variations within different structural contexts. This is precisely the reason why, Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 963) argue, certain aspects of these approaches ought be integrated together and human agency ought to be conceptualised 'as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by

the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualise past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)'. This view acknowledges the multiplicity of temporalities that social actors are embedded in at any given moment, therefore being able to simultaneously take into consideration the past and their habits, the future and their goals, and the present, and orient themselves primarily toward one or the other depending on the emergent situation (ibid.: 964).

These debates highlight the two aspects that are fundamental to the theoretical delineation of this dissertation and its analysis of the ways structural environments and existing systems are both sustained and altered by human agency. The first one is the importance of taking into account actors' needs, desires, aspirations, and socio-historical contexts in their exercise of agency, which allows for an unpacking of this 'black boxed' concept, for shedding light on the plurality and multidimensionality of agency, and for a critical engagement with the researched people and communities as knowledge producers. At the same time, this prevents researchers' biases from driving the interpretation of the intention of exercise of agency. The second one, and related, is the temporal embeddedness of actors, which allows for the analysis to move beyond a spatiotemporally fixed concept of agency and experiences and deploy more dynamic lenses in their examination. In that sense, an actor's actions can be informed both by its past, for instance war-related, experiences, which in Bosnia often centre around issues of ethnicity, but also be oriented towards the future, which seem to be primarily driven by socioeconomic concerns.

To that end, agency as used in the context of this thesis can be defined as a 'temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations' (ibid.: 970).

3.3 INTERSECTIONALITY

In analysing how existing systems affect the exercise of agency and in the process are both sustained and altered, the thesis uses the concept of intersectionality. Widely taken up by scholars, practitioners, activists, and advocates around the world, the term 'intersectionality' has become somewhat of a buzzword (David, 2008) in the early twenty-first century. Originally coined by Kimberlé W. Crenshaw (1989), an American critical legal race scholar, intersectionality was deployed with the purpose of bringing to the fore the struggles and experiences of oppression of women of colour and the ways in which these experiences were based on multiple intersecting axes of social division, including race, gender, and class. To that end, Crenshaw (ibid.: 140) stresses that with the intersectional experience being 'greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated'.

This is not to say that the ideas at the core of intersectionality are confined to North America, or the Global North more broadly, nor that they were absent and unexplored prior to the term gaining prominence. In fact, people in the Global South

have long used intersectionality as an analytical tool, even if they did not use the specific term. Moreover, there is a significant body of literature to attest to the earlier interest that the complexity of factors shaping human experiences had received, most notably, but not only, by black activists and feminists, post-colonial, indigenous, Latina, and queer scholars (see, for instance, Collins, 1990; Valdes, 1997).[25]

Heralded as 'the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far' (McCall, 2005: 1771), there has been no shortage of debates about and definitions of intersectionality. Perhaps the most generally acceptable one is the broad definition that Collins and Bilge (2016: 14) offer:

> Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organisation of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves.

The incredible heterogeneity of the ways people understand and use intersectionality is unsurprising. Some view it as a theory, others as a method, still others as a reading strategy for (feminist) analysis (Davis, 2008: 68). The most common use, nevertheless, is as a concept, a heuristic device or an analytical tool (Collins and Bilge, 2016: 17), which is the way intersectionality has been deployed in this thesis.

[25] For a more detailed elaboration on the history of intersectionality, see Collins and Bilge (2016: chapter 3).

Further debates have tackled the issue of how intersectionality should be conceptualised, whether as a crossroad (Crenshaw, 1991), 'axes' of difference (Yuval-Davis, 2006) or a dynamic process (Staunæs, 2003), to name but a few of the perspectives. Drawing upon insights from the sociology of science, Kathy Davis (2008: 78) convincingly argues that it is, in fact, the concept's 'lack of precision and its myriad missing pieces that have made it such a useful heuristic device'. In addressing the critiques that the concept needs a firmer definition, clearly demarcated parameters, and a corresponding clear-cut methodology, Davis acknowledges that intersectionality as an approach might not fit the sociological common sense view that a theory must be coherent, comprehensive, and sound. At the same time, however, she argues that it is precisely intersectionality's encouragement of complexity, stimulation of creativity, and avoidance of premature closure that motivates scholars to raise new questions, explore uncharted territories, and engage critically with their own assumptions (ibid.: 78–79). Ultimately, as Cho et al. (2013: 795) point out 'what makes an analysis intersectional is not its use of the term "intersectionality", nor its being situated in a familiar genealogy, nor its drawing on lists of standard citations. Rather, what makes an analysis intersectional […] is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference'.

Despite the ambiguities and the diversity of understandings and approaches, Collins and Bilge (2016) identify six core themes and ideas that (re)appear across the different takes and uses of intersectionality. While these ideas are not always present in every research, nor do they appear in the same manner, they do provide useful

guideposts for thinking through intersectionality (ibid.: 40). The first one is social inequality, which within intersectional frameworks is recognised as based on interactions among different factors and categories and the analysis thereof is moved beyond the class-only or race-only approach (ibid.). The second one is power, in the case of which intersectional analyses focus on the interlocking, mutually constructing or intersecting systems of power, such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, sexuality, and others, that shape people's lives and identities (ibid.: 41). Another common idea is relationality, which 'rejects either/or binary thinking and embraces a both/and frame instead', therefore allowing for the analytical gaze to be directed at the interconnections, rather than the distinctions between entities and systems (ibid.: 42). The fourth theme that Collins and Bilge highlight is social context, the attention to which grounds any intersectional analysis (ibid.: 43). The fifth and the sixth core ideas are complexity and social justice. The former points to intersectionality aiming to grasp and analyse the complexity of the world (ibid.). The latter, on the other hand, is perhaps the most contentious of the six ideas, since it is not a requirement, but intersectionality has been used as an analytical tool for social justice as well (ibid.: 45).

The use of intersectional analysis is appealing for many reasons. As Phoenix and Pattynama (2006, 187) rightly note, it foregrounds a richer ontology than reducing people to a singular category, it acknowledges and approaches social positions as relational, and it sheds light on the multiple positioning and the power relations that shape everyday life. At the same time, it produces important epistemological insights,

while pushing against 'hegemonic disciplinary, epistemological, theoretical, and conceptual boundaries' (Dhamoon, 2011: 230).

Studying the lived experiences of people in BiH through intersectional lenses is particularly useful because it moves the analysis past single identities, which in the post-war period has almost exclusively been people's ethnic identity. This approach acknowledges and highlights people's belonging to multiple social categories at the same time, while also investigating the interactions among different existing systems, processes, and social locations. An intersectional approach, to that end, is best suited to address the primary question of the thesis, which is how the understanding of peace in ethnic terms and as a mirror image of the war, i.e. through ethnicity as the single most important axis of social division, along with the other liberal discourses of global governance have affected the various actors and their everyday agency. Intersectionality, in that sense, allows us to shed light on the nuances of human experiences and the unequal impact that various policies and politics have had on people with the same, in the case of Bosnia and this thesis, ethnic identity.

In that sense, the novelty of using an intersectional approach when it comes to Bosnia particularly lies with the structural dimension of intersectionality, which can be thought of as a 'matrix of domination' (Collins, 1990), whereby different 'axes of oppression' operate together to produce different experiences of domination and oppression. To that end, intersectionality acknowledges that different systems of oppression are mutually constitutive, which in the case of post-war Bosnia and

Herzegovina would mean exploring how ethnicity, gender, and class interconnect. This is in line with what Butler (1990, 3) writes regarding gender:

> [i]f one 'is' a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered 'person' transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained.

At the same time, intersectionality also notably leaves room for agency in navigating the different localities one occupies. It is precisely this ability of the concept of intersectionality to shed light both on the agentive and the structural aspects of the processes that makes it a valuable analytical tool in capturing the dynamics that affect people's agency in the Bosnian everyday.

3.4 STUDYING COMPLEXITY: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Intersectional analyses have been carried out in a variety of ways. Indeed, variations of intersectional scholarship can now be found not only across interdisciplinary fields, but also in some more traditional disciplines (Collins and Chepp, 2013). In the existing literature, three main approaches to intersectional complexity can be distinguished. One is the so-called 'anticategorical' complexity. The basic premise of this approach is that 'nothing fits neatly except as a result of imposing a stable and homogenising order on a more unstable and heterogeneous social reality' (McCall, 2005: 1777). The approach zooms in on the ways categories and concepts are constructed, with the goal, according

to McCall (ibid.), being to deconstruct master categories and their normative assumptions. In that sense, the anticategorical approach does not see any single category as more salient than other, but instead it focuses on problematising the various statuses or social locations by shedding light on the relationships between them and the mutually co-constitutive processes (Ken, 2010). The focus is also to socio-historically ground the ways in which the intersections co-construct different statuses at the level of systemic inequalities (Choo and Ferree, 2010). Importantly, according to this approach, performances and understandings of different statuses inevitably change depending on the context.

Another approach to intersectional complexity focuses sharply on a certain group or category in an attempt to bring to the fore their experiences, voices, and perspectives. McCall (2005: 1780) has labelled this approach to complexity as 'intracategorical', defining it as an approach in which the primary subject of analysis is 'typically either a single social category at a neglected point of intersection of multiple master categories or a particular social setting or ideological construction, or both'. Arguing that a specific social group is simultaneously constituted by multiple statuses, the intracategorical approach is meant to focus on inclusion of particular marginalised or previously invisible groups (Choo and Ferree, 2010) and debunk simplistic understandings of categories by casting light on the heterogeneity that exists within groups and categories. This approach is, therefore, primarily focused on reconstructing intersections of single or multiple dimensions on a micro level.

The third of the prominent intersectional approaches to understanding and analysing complexity is what McCall (2005: 1784–1785) calls 'intercategorical', referring to the approach that takes the existing relationships of inequality among already constituted groups as the centre of analysis and attempts to explicate those relationships. This 'structural type process-centred' (Choo and Ferree, 2010: 134) analytical approach is relational in that it focuses on the transformations or the effects of the meeting of different statuses. In that sense, a certain status is seen as being able to have both its own effect on the process outcome and the person's experience, as well as a separate effect in interaction with other statuses. To that end, the various statuses, for instance race and gender, are not seen solely as additively affecting somebody's experience, but the focus is also on how race is gendered and gender is raced. With the intercategorical approach, the saliency of the different categories is identified in advance.

This taxonomy of intersectional categorisation proposed by McCall has been by now widely taken up within the field (Collins, 2015: 13). Each of the three approaches clearly has a different focus, but they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Winker and Degele (2011: 53) view the anticategorical approach as dealing with 'the deconstruction of categories and not with empirical research, instead concerning itself with the implicit assumptions that lie behind every research method', while '[t]he analysis of identity construction is primarily conducted on the micro level' and 'the analysis of the structural positioning of large groups is above all grounded in the macro level'. Bringing all these perspectives together, they (ibid.) propose 'a multi-level intersectional approach that

encompasses differentiation and inequality on the levels of representation, identity and structure.

While there has been a number of recent writings pointing to the limitations of existing intersectionality frameworks and some that have put forward alternative theoretical and methodological approaches (e.g. Anthias, 2012; Bowleg, 2008; Cho et al., 2013; Choo and Ferree, 2010; Collins, 2015; Davis, 2008; McCall, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006), Winker and Degele (2011) are among the few proposing a model of analysis that encompasses multiple levels. It is precisely their model of intersectional multi-level analysis that I have found best suited for grasping the complexity and at the same time teasing out the nuances of people's experiences and kinds of agency in the three case studies from Bosnia.

The three levels of analysis that Winker and Degele suggest are: individual (identity constructions), symbolic (symbolic representations), and structural (social structures). Understanding intersectionality as 'a system of interactions between inequality-creating social structures (i.e. of power relations), symbolic representations and identity constructions that are context-specific, topic-orientated and inextricably linked to social praxis' (ibid.: 54),

In the context of this analytical model, at the individual level, it is the way in which people constitute and are socialised in a certain identity that is analysed. This relates to Pickering's argument about self-understanding. What is analysed at this level is the way individuals constitute their identities by both constantly and dynamically juxtapositioning themselves to 'other(s)' and creating a sense of belonging. This level of analysis

involves a closer look at how people speak about themselves, how they explain both who they are and who they are not, and which categories of differentiation they deploy in doing so. This delineation is not always explicit, but the identification of 'discoverable categories of differentiation that serve as "self-positioners"' should also include the implicit positions (ibid.: 58).

At the symbolic level, the emphasis is on norms, ideologies, and representations that both support and are generated through structural power relations. These are individual beliefs about societal norms, about how one is expected to behave, that strongly shape their social practices. Aiming to make explicit the norms, values, ideologies, and hegemonic representations to which the informants have referred, this level of analysis is guided by the premise that all identities are formed within, rather than outside representation (ibid.: 59). It is important to note that symbolic representations, as norms and ideologies, on the one hand enable identity constructions, thereby being connected to the individual level, and on the other hand, are both a reflection of and support structural power relations, thereby being connected to the structural level.

That brings us to the final analytical level, the structural one, where the analysis is centred on identifying specific relations of power or inequality-creating phenomena and examining their interrelatedness and changes. Here, categories of inequalities that are experienced on the structural level, including class, gender, age and ethnicity as identified as central categories, as well as the power relations that produce these inequalities. This step involves connecting the micro to the macro and meso level by finding references to social structures, which include institutions, organisations, and

laws in which these power relations and systems of inequalities are translated. The discovered references are then allocated to one of the categories studied and it is examined if and how the informants and their testimonies relate to the analysed structural power relations (ibid.).

The usefulness of this rather simple, yet parsimonious analytical model notwithstanding, the question that ought to be addressed is how this model and the three levels help us study the lives and agency of the people in post-war societies that have been affected by peacebuilding initiatives. On the one hand, this approach allows us to a certain extent to disentangle the effects different systems of power relations have on people's lives and with that, on their ability to exercise agency. In post-war societies that have been subject to international or foreign interventions, some of the peacebuilding initiatives have inevitable contributed to the social structures that are under analysis. This is not to suggest that these initiatives are causal factors in and of themselves, but that they are indeed contributing ones.

On the other hand, the model and its three levels are useful in positioning the people whose lives and agency are analysed in the realm of the everyday and better depicting their localities. Namely, as discussed earlier in this chapter, people's ability to exercise agency is affected by a multitude of factors, on which this approach helps us shed light without excluding one or the other. Furthermore, the approach is beneficial in illustrating the heterogeneity of the population of post-war countries and looking beyond the ethnicity-only conceptualisations. Through this type of analysis, it is more evident that individuals have multiple subjectivities that are context- and situation-specific, with

people expressing different combinations of their multiple identities of ethnicity, gender, class, and so on in different circumstances.

But what exactly is the subject of analysis here? There is a multiplicity of aspects of socio-political life that continue to be studied in intersectional work. The four most frequent studied ones are: the identities of an individual or a social group that are marked as distinct, the categories of difference (such as race, gender, ethnicity, etc.), the processes of differentiation, and the systems of domination (Dhamoon, 2011: 233). Operating within systems of domination, i.e. 'historically constituted structures of domination, such as racism, colonialism, patriarchy, sexism, capitalism, and so on' (ibid., 234), the focus of this study is in fact on processes of differentiation, that is 'the ways in which subjectivities and social differences are produced, such as through processes of gendering, racialisation, ethnicisation, culturalisation, sexualisation, and so on' (ibid.). To put it in Foucaudian terms, the analysis does not strictly focus on the individual, the group, or the institution, even though those are also present, but on the techniques of power.

In deploying intersectional analysis in the context of this thesis, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, each of the empirical chapters takes into consideration the identity and categories of difference, on the one hand, and the existing systems of domination, on the other, while focusing on the actual processes through which subjectivities are produced and agency is enabled or curtailed.

3.5 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: INTERACTION OF CONCEPTS AND LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

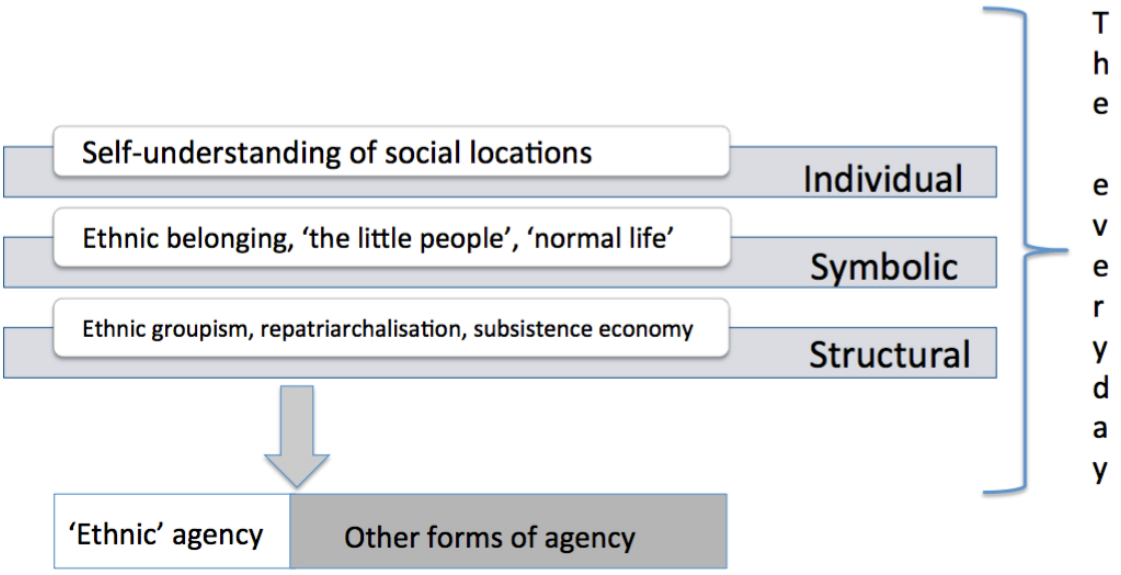
Studying any post-conflict society is in and of itself complex, let alone if one uses an intersectional analysis in approaching that society. The scheme below is used to visually present how the different concepts and levels of analysis interact or are positioned in relation to each other.

With the whole process contextualised within the everyday, the analysis starts off with the individual level, where we find identity construction or, as Pickering suggests, individuals' self-understanding. This can, to a varying degree, include reflections on one's ethnic belonging too.

At the symbolic level, we witness representations and references to that ethnic belonging, but also references to other norms and values, such as the ideas of 'normal life', the humility of 'the little people' as opposed to the rich and powerful, the 'good' wife, mother, daughter etc.

Finally, at the structural level, one can identify the ethnic 'groupism' that Brubaker theorises, the forces of repatriarchialisation and retraditionalisation, as well as the capitalism and neoliberalism, introduced through the process of marketisation.

Looking through these three levels as an intersectional prism, we see as least two types of agency – one which is ethnic or ethnicised, which is agency that is encouraged, in particular if its wealthy and male form, and the other one, which is sidelined and silenced, is agency that is primarily gendered or impoverished.



To that end, in simple terms, while the everyday is the context in which the analysis takes place, the self-understanding is the starting individual point that, together with the symbolic and the structural level, provide the intersectional lens through which, ultimately, the exercise of agency or lack thereof is made possible.

3.6 CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS

This brings us to the question of which categories, inequalities, and systems of power relations should be included in an intersectional analysis and how many there should be. This issue, which Cho et al. (2013: 787) have called the 'et cetera' problem, has been at the core of one of the more heated debates in relation to intersectionality. While some have argued that showcasing endless layers of difference is the 'Achilles heel of intersectionality' (Ludvig, 2006: 247) since it might result in the 'most salient' differences, those being race, class, and gender, being undertheorised (Knapp, 1999;

Skeggs, 1997), Leiprecht and Lutz (2006) have proposed a ‘compromise’ by which race, class, and gender would be the ‘minimum standard’ for intersectional analysis, and depending on context and other research-related specificities, additional categories could be added. In line with that compromise, but also as a reflection of the research findings where these categories emerged as the most salient ones, the three main systems of power relations or categories that are used as entry points to the three case studies and the intersections of which are analysed, as adapted, are ethnicity, gender, and class. In addition, the category of age is also brought into the analysis, as an important factor recognised by many of the people whose lives were researched and described in this thesis.

Before proceeding to the empirical chapters, it is important to outline the understandings of the three main categories, systems of power relations or inequality-creating phenomena as used in the analysis. In my approach, I adapted the definitions of race, gender, and class as proposed by Winker and Degele (2011: 55) to the Bosnian context. *Ethnicity*, therefore, is regarded as a social construct, created through symbolic classification and based on presupposed alleged (natural) differences between in- and out-groups (ibid.). Notably, in the case of Bosnia, ethnicity is also closely associated, frequently even used as synonymous, to religion. *Gender* does not only refer to the male-female binary, but also to the normalisation of that binary, as well as the related ‘naturalisation’ of heterosexuality, also known as heteronormativity. The power relations that are analysed in regards to this category are grounded in the unquestioned assumptions of hierarchical gender relations and a binary gender order (ibid.). Finally,

drawing upon Bourdieu's work (1986), Winker and Degele (2011: 55) define *class* as a category 'derived from the social origin of a person, the cultural resource of education and profession as well as the resource of social networks and relationships', all of which provide the foundations for 'power relations perpetuating considerable income and wealth inequalities'. It is from this vantage point that *ethnicity* was used as a starting point of analysis in the first empirical chapter, which explores the lives of the people near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, *gender* was used as a starting point in the second empirical chapter, which zeroes in on the lives of the women who have received micro loans aimed at female entrepreneurs, and *class* was used as a starting point in the third and last empirical chapter, which examines the lives of the people involved in subsistence and informal economic activities.

Each chapter starts with a detailed elaboration on the social context, within which the complexity of people's lived experiences is analysed. Contextualised in that manner, the analysis involves a closer examination not only of the systems of power relations and inequality-creating social structures, but also of their intersections and relationality. Structured in a manner that first contextualises the issue or category which is looked at, the chapters have sections on the individual, the symbolic, and the structural level, followed by a discussion on the intersectional localities of the particular type(s) or group(s) of people that are analysed.

CONCLUSION

Before proceeding to the three empirical chapters, this chapter explained the analytical lenses and the intersectional framework through which the ethnographic data was interpreted, later reflected in the presentation of the empirical material. The chapter began by explaining Pickering's (2007) argument regarding self-understanding, upon which the thesis builds in moving beyond the homogeneity imposed by the groupism present in the public, policy, institutional, and peacebuilding discourses in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The next section contextualises the thesis in the domain of the everyday, followed by a section on the concept of agency as used within this thesis, as well as a section with a discussion on intersectionality, as the guiding concept of the research. The deployed understanding of some of the concepts might not always be the most prominent or prevalent one, but these choices were always made in relation to the context that was analysed and the research questions that were asked.

In the next two sections of the chapter, the ways of conducting an intersectional analysis were discussed, together with some of the thorny challenges in using intersectionality as a heuristic device. Drawing upon the work of prominent scholars of intersectionality, these parts outlined a model for a three-level analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in Bosnia on people's lived realities and their agency in the localised everyday. The subsequent section flashed out how the different concepts and levels of analysis relate to each other, while the last section elaborated on the selection of categories, inequalities, and systems of power relations on which to

focus, and provided working definitions of each of them, as understood throughout the research and this thesis.

4 TRNOVO BB: SPATIALISATION OF ETHNICITY AND NEEDS

INTRODUCTION[26]

'We're inventing peace as we go', wrote Richard Holbrooke (1998), the main architect of the Dayton Peace Agreement, in the book about his diplomatic efforts in the aftermath of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. It was a sunny morning in May 2012 when I experienced just what exactly that peace was translated into for the inhabitants of the village of Trnovo, through which the Dayton-agreed Inter-Entity Boundary Line runs. As I arrived in the village, whose total population is just over 1,000 (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016), I asked to be directed to the building of the Municipality of Trnovo. An elderly lady asked whether I was looking for the building of *opština* Trnovo or *općina* Trnovo, with the former being the Serbian word for 'municipality' and the latter being the Bosnian and Croatian word for it. Surprised by the question, I was explained that the seats of both were located in the village, making things for visitors somewhat confusing. Positioned along the IEBL, Trnovo was one of the places where I spent a considerable amount of time, discussing over coffee or long walks and closely analysing people's ways of navigating their lives around the invisible line.

The exact location of the IEBL was, in fact, the key issue negotiated in Dayton, with the strategically located Posavina corridor and Brćko district being the toughest questions on which to reach an agreement. The Dayton-established IEBL not only

[26] Parts of the following three sections have been published as part of my chapter to the edited volume 'Where Peace and Conflict Take Place. Analysing Peace and Conflict from a Spatial Perspective' (Stavrevska 2016).

divided the territory of Bosnia to two entities, but it also marked the existence and the borders of two markets and two legal systems.

The primary and immediate objective of the Dayton Peace Agreement, including the Constitution of BiH, was to end the bloodshed and the hostilities, rather than to provide some kind of a stable long-term peace. Today, even the most passionate critics of the Bosnian Constitution and the burden it possess agree that the primary objective of the Agreement was indeed reached. This 'success' notwithstanding, in terms of longer-term perspectives, many scholars of consociational democracy have pointed to how the rigid power-sharing arrangement established with the Dayton Agreement encourages political conflict along ethnic lines, rather that inter-ethnic co-operation (Burg and Shoup, 1999). With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that ethnicity has become such an important system of power relations in post-war Bosnia.

Indeed, the hegemonic framework used for both policy-making and analysis not only of the war in BiH but also of the post-war period remains one driven by the logic of 'groupism'. The term, coined by Brubaker (2002), as explained earlier in the thesis, refers to the tendency to approach groups, including ethnic groups, as the basic units of analysis and the main protagonists in social life, with interests and agency as their attributes. The Dayton Agreement is a case in point in this regard. Namely, the Constitution of BiH, which was adopted by the 'conflict parties' as part of the Agreement, postulates the three ethnic groups – Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats – as the sovereign power-holders in the country. Evidently, such a model of governance is based on the assumption that the ethnic groups are homogenous, fixed, and mappable.

This has set the basis for ethnicity to become the single most important category in Bosnian society. Ethnicity is at present the dominant centre of power, superior even to the state. As a result, we witness a process of 'spatialisation of ethnicity' – that is, the imagining of ethnicity as a category that possesses spatial characteristics. It is imagined as higher and wider than any other category in the society, including civil society, local community, and family. The spatialisation of ethnicity, along with the assumption of ethnicity being mappable, is the foundation of ethnic 'spatial governmentality'. In other words, spatial governmentality refers to the mechanisms used in governing spaces, which is a tendency to separate and isolate, rather than punish certain behaviours and people. These mechanisms combine state practices, including bureaucratic routines and regulations, and individual self-governance. This chapter provides examples of practices and metaphors used in the mutually constitutive process of these two tendencies – the spatialisation of ethnicity and spatial governmentality – resulting in ethnic spaces.

The ethnic spaces are primarily mental, imagined, even though in that imagining, they are also territorial. They are what Harvey (2006) calls 'relational spaces'. These are spaces that are constituted and populated by the way people experience them. In other words, the relationality is closely linked to people's identity. The everyday is the realm within which these spaces are (re)produced. Constituting a set of experiences, practices and interpretations, but also of views, values and interests, aside from the hegemonic ethno-territorial narrative, everyday experiences are also informed by needs and socioeconomic concerns. Interestingly, while examples of the existence of the ethnic

spaces are very much present in the public discourse in BiH, little is spoken of the spaces that are created based on socioeconomic status, both within and across the ethnic spaces.

This chapter primarily analyses people's navigation of ethnicity as a system of power relations, translated here in ethnic spaces and spatial in-betweenness, and the representations and identity constructions that inform the process of navigating ethnicity. The principal focus is on the people living near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, which also includes internally displaced persons, as well as returnees. The process of navigation is observed in relation to three public domains: education, pensions, and healthcare. After contextualising the chapter and explaining the social structures and symbolic representations that relate to the imagining and the governing of ethnicity, the chapter turns to the individual level and people's responses to their specific intersectional localities.

4.1 SPATIALISATION OF ETHNICITY AND SPATIAL GOVERNMENTALITY

Scholars from different disciplines, in particular anthropologists, have long been examining the imagination and production of the state through social practices. An important component of that analysis has focused on the ways in which states are spatialised and people get to experience them as entities with spatial characteristics. Exploring the relationship between state, space and scale, Ferguson and Gupta (2002) shed light on a process that they refer to as 'the spatialisation of the state'. This is the operation of metaphors and practices through which 'states represent themselves as

reified entities with particular spatial properties', which contributes to them '[securing] their legitimacy, [naturalising] their authority, and [representing] themselves as superior to, and encompassing of, other institutions and centres of power' (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002: 981–982). The spatialisation of the state relies on two key principles: 'verticality', which is the idea that the state is higher or above the rest of the society, reflected in the common description of state decisions as 'top-down', and 'encompassment', which is the idea that the state is wider and larger than anything else in the society, including family, community, and civil society (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002: 982; Demmers and Venhovens, 2016). These are embedded in the routinised state bureaucratic practices, through which spatial orders are reproduced.

However, in instances when the state is hollowed out, other categories become politically more salient and are spatialised in a similar manner. A particularly fertile type of state for such processes, for example, are post-war states with a consociational form of government, whereby the state is seen primarily as the negative image of the conflict and a means of managing conflicts between the different, often ethnic, communities in the country. One such case is BiH and the Dayton Agreement, Annex IV of which is the Constitution of BiH, which in addition to successfully ending the war as mentioned before also postulated ethnicity as the sole most salient cleavage in the Bosnian political system. This points to the entire legal framework of the country being a social structure that contributes to the (re)production of ethnicity as a system of power relations and inequality.

As a result, the whole political structure of Bosnia is based on the same identities around which the conflict was constructed. Some 25 years after the war ended, politics in the country remains centred on the issues of ethnicity, political representation, and collective political rights of the three ethnicities, with ethno-territorial politics dominating the public discourse. Therefore what we witness in BiH is a spatialisation of ethnicity, not the state, as the main centre of power and a critical system of power relations.

In terms of verticality, on the one hand, the post-war Bosnian society appears to assume a certain hierarchy whereby ethnicity is the highest category and consequently has the greatest claim to universal significance. According to the Constitution, the country has three constituent peoples (Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats), which share the political power. This leaves the Bosnian society to be governed not as a sovereign political community, *demos*, but as a conglomerate of three different ethnic communities, *ethos* (Hayden, 2005: 226). In that sense it is ethnicity that is seen as the dominant centre of power, which is reflected in countless practices and metaphors, as symbolic representations.

When it comes to encompassment, on the other hand, as a consequence of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Wars resulting both in large overseas diasporas and in ethnic communities now being divided with parts of them residing in neighbouring countries, ethnicity is perceived as a wider category than any other. This is reflected in everyday references to representations of common history, language, religion, and myths of a certain ethnic group.

The operation of these two overarching ideas makes it possible for the people of Bosnia to experience ethnicity as a category with spatial characteristics. Moreover, they are embedded in the bureaucratic practices of the Bosnian state at all levels of government through which ethnicity becomes further systematically fused with territory and particular territorialised spaces. The Constitution, for instance, specifies that the country consists of two entities – the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska – the former of which is later in the text related to the Bosniacs and the Croats, and the latter with the Serbs in the country. As noted above, a few years ago, as a result of an initiative by the international community in BiH, the constitutions of the FBiH and the RS were amended to acknowledge all three constituent peoples within each entity (Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1994; Constitution of Republika Srpska, 1992). Article 1 of the Constitution of RS, for instance, now states that '[t]he Serbs, Bosniacs, Croats, as constituent peoples, Others and citizens shall participate in executing the functions of authority in the Republic equally and without discrimination' (Constitution of Republika Srpska, 1992: Article I, Section 1, Clause 4). Despite that, however, there is a silent understanding among the people about which municipalities, towns and villages 'belong' to which ethnicity. To that end, ethnicity in Bosnia is to a great extent perceived as a mappable category, and the spatial consequences of the ethno-territorial nature of politics in BiH are ethnically conceived territorialised spaces.

Such spaces are produced and reproduced through mechanisms that are a form of spatial governmentality. These mechanisms used for social ordering based on the

regulation of spaces and as a form of regulation dependent on the creation of spaces that are characterised by the consensual, participatory governance of selves (Merry, 2001: 20). In other words, the focus is on managing the spaces people occupy rather than managing the people themselves; the target is a population, not individuals. In that sense, the aim is not to reform certain behaviours, but rather to isolate and separate socially undesirable behaviour. Instead of punishing 'offenders' in an open space, regulations and various security practices make it impossible for potential misfits to enter the 'closed' space. This shows how the structural, symbolic, and individual levels work together on recreating the existing system of power relations.

Namely, in addition to the spatial ordering carried out through practices and regulations, spatial governmentality also involves individual self-governance. It is in fact dependent on the 'neoliberal regime of individual responsibility and accountability' (ibid.: 17). These spaces are thus relational spaces. The relational concept of space, developed by Harvey (2006: 273), views space as intimately linked to the processes that define it, with the very concept of space being embedded in or internal to the process. Interested in the implications of relational spaces to political subjectivities, Harvey (ibid.: 277) argues that '[w]hat we do as well as what we understand is integrally dependent upon the primary spatio-temporal frame within which we situate ourselves'. To that end, while related to various territorial spaces, spatial governmentality is dependent on relationalities. With ethnically conceived spaces, regulations and bureaucratic practices do contribute to the on-going creation of social orders and

identifications that occur as a result of the governing of those spaces (Hromadžić, 2011: 271), but the identification itself is just as important in the governing process.

4.2 GOVERNMENTALITY OF ETHNICALLY CONCEIVED SPACES

One manifestation of the governmentality of ethnically conceived spaces in BiH can be found in the schools, both primary and high schools. In practical terms, this translates to Bosnia being widely known for the 'two schools under one roof' (*dve škole pod jednim krovom*) phenomenon (BBC, 2012). This is a system where two schools with different management and following different teaching curricula function in the same building, with the children of the different schools and therefore different ethnicities attending school in different shifts, or having separate entrances or separate classrooms. This phenomenon is most common in the Central Bosnia and the Herzegovina-Neretva cantons, where the majority of the students are Bosniacs and Croats, studying separately.[27]

Certain separation among the students exists even in places that do not practice this system. That is, even though most of the curriculum content used in the elementary schools around the country has been jointly agreed on to be universally used and was signed into law by the Common Core Curriculum in 2003, there remains a so-called 'national group of subjects' which in most places has included mother tongue, religious instruction, history, geography, nature and society/my environment, and music and art (in the case of the Brčko district) that students attend separately (OSCE BiH, 2009).

[27] Personal interview with Nisvet Hrnjić, former Mayor of the Municipality of Jajce, Jajce, 27 June 2012.

While the situation since 2010 has improved in most places, the subjects of mother tongue and religious instruction almost universally remain ethnicity/religion based. It should also be noted that while in most schools in the FBiH and the Brčko district there is the option of attending an alternative areligious course (usually history of religion, life skills, or culture of religion), most students still opt to attend religious instruction, mainly each ethnicity studying 'its religion'. Such an alternative is not offered in RS.[28] Similarly, places in RS where attending and learning a mother tongue other than Serbian 'is required' are rare. This example shows that while, on the one hand, the education authorities themselves systematically limit the spaces to certain ethnicities only by offering certain courses, the people too participate in the process by accepting the symbolic representations and complying with the governing expectations and not enrolling their children in schools and courses seen as intended for other ethnicities.

Another manifestation can be observed through the use of alphabets. The Cyrillic alphabet inside BiH appears to be perceived and represented as intimately linked to the Serbian people and the Serbian language, with signposts in RS being written first in Cyrillic then in the Latin alphabet, or in some cases exclusively in Cyrillic, as, for instance, the names of the streets in Bijeljina, and vice versa in the FBiH, as in the case of Tuzla. Similarly, as evidence of protest, one often sees the Cyrillic or the Latin place names, depending on where one finds oneself, being crossed out with spray on

[28] Personal interviews with Danijela Kojić and Ivana Idžan, Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska representatives, Banja Luka, 23 November 2012.

signposts. There have also been instances where university professors in Banja Luka would refuse to grade or even accept a written exam that was not written in Cyrillic.[29]

While both alphabets are constitutionally declared as official scripts of the country, and by third grade each child is required to have learnt both, the reality is quite different. Some teachers push for the learning of both alphabets, among other reasons due to the availability of library books in 'the other script',[30] yet there are also teachers who are not familiar with the 'other' alphabet themselves and are unable to teach it to their students.[31] A result of these circumstances there have been a number of incidents like the case when students from Livno (FBiH) were to travel to Mrkonjić Grad (RS) for a school competition and were unable to communicate their exact location to the organisers due to the signposts being written in a script that was unreadable to them: Cyrillic.[32] The spatial governmentality of the linguistic component of ethnic spaces is embedded in the legal framework in BiH. For instance, Article 6 of the FBiH Constitution states that '[t]he official languages of the Federation shall be the Bosniac languages and the Croatian language. The official script will be the Latin alphabet' (Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1994: Article I, Section 1, Clause 1). The majority of people comply with such a vision of linguistic and alphabetic division.

More mundane and symbolic mechanisms of ethnic spatial governmentality involve religious practices and flag display. As noted before, each ethnicity in Bosnia

[29] Personal interviews with University of Banja Luka alumni, Banja Luka, 23 July 2012.
[30] Personal interviews with primary school teachers, Tuzla, 3 and 5 June 2012.
[31] Personal interview with an international organisation representative, Banja Luka, 26 November 2012.
[32] ibid.

has been closely identified with a certain religion, with the majority of Bosniacs perceived as being Muslims, the Serbs as Christian Orthodox, and the Croats as Christian Catholics. In that sense, religion plays an important role in demarcating the different ethnic spaces and the symbolic representation of ethnicity. Every school, as well as various institutions in RS, for instance, celebrate their patron saint day, with many of them having an Orthodox priest present on the day for the ritual of bread blessing.[33] There have also been examples of Catholic priests leading a prayer and blessing bread in Croatian elementary schools in BiH at the school celebration of Bread Day. In addition, in RS the school choirs sometimes prepare and sing at celebrations the anthem of Serbia, *Bože pravde*, the text of which centres on the 'Serbian people and the Serbian lands', which has caused the non-Serbs to leave the choirs.[34]

Another seemingly mundane mechanism is the display of flags. Seeing the BiH state flag in RS is not very common, for example, while the RS flag, and even sometimes the flag of Serbia, can be seen displayed in most places. Similarly, the Croatian flag and even the Croatian coat of arms can be seen all over Mostar, Livno, Jajce, and other places where there is a larger Croatian population. All across the FBiH one also notices the so-called Bosniac flag with golden lilies, but also various Islamic flags, with the green-with-white-crescent-and-a-star flag being displayed on every mosque. This (re)production of ethnically conceived spaces through flag display operates through both institutional and individual practices. The individual spatial self-governance is evident even in less dramatic social routines. By way of illustration, in

[33] Field notes, Teslić and Banja Luka, 20–23 July 2012.
[34] Interview with former students, Teslić, 20 July 2012.

multiethnic places, such as Brčko or Livno, there is a quiet agreement about which ethnicity goes to which bars. While no one should be refused entrance to a bar where they would be a minority, people rarely cross that line.

4.3 THE IN-BETWEENERS

The two entities are separated by the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, established with the Dayton Agreement, which essentially drew the boundary where the war front line was. With one millimetre at the maps in Dayton being some 50 meters wide in reality, in many cases passing through villages, buildings, even people's apartments, the demarcation of the IEBL is yet to take place (Alić, 2012). The line is about 1,150 kilometres long, passing through 630 kilometres of public and 520 kilometres of private land (Radovanović Šarenac, 2010).

Unlike in the immediate aftermath of the war when there was a deliberate effort by the people to avoid crossing the IEBL and visit the other entity, today people cross it in thousands on daily basis. This crossing has certainly been made easier by some of the decisions of the High Representative, such as the adoption of a common currency and common vehicle license plates for all of the country (Armakolas, 2007: 92). Yet, many people only go to the other entity to work, especially if they work in the state institutions, do business or to run errands, without having any more meaningful interaction with the other ethnic groups. Many still avoid crossing the line, feeling the other entity as 'alien' to them.

The post-Dayton institutional and territorial arrangements established a complex political and administrative structure in the country, entailing numerous divisions of responsibility between the various governing bodies. Under the arrangements, issue areas that were not regulated at the state level would be subject to legislation at either the entity or the canton level, which gave both the entities and the cantons considerable autonomy in numerous fields. As a result, several legal, social and educational systems now function in parallel in Bosnia and Herzegovina, often to the detriment of its citizens.

This has been particularly problematic for returnees, IDPs and those living along the IEBL in pre-war municipalities that were divided up under the Dayton Agreement. Such individuals, for example, may find themselves in a situation where their current residence and their former place of employment are now in different entities, and they are consequently ineligible for certain benefits to which they would otherwise have been entitled. In response, many have chosen to register in the entity in which they are eligible for benefits, rather than in the entity in which they actually live. Such a flexible approach had been possible because until mid-2015 when registering it was only necessary to provide an address, but no proof of residency, land ownership or other living arrangements was required.

Things are even easier in villages in this regard. In Trnovo, they used the expression ‘Trnovo bb’ when explaining this. Namely, *bb*, which means *bez broj* or *without number*, is used for addresses in most small villages. Since everyone knows everyone, the streets have no names and everyone’s address is the same – Trnovo bb. So the people simply decide what entity is better to put down next to their shared

address. A middle-aged man called Selja, who describes himself as 'as Bosniac as they come', lives in the RS part of Trnovo, like most inhabitants of the village actually, but is registered and even works for the Federal Municipality of Trnovo.[35] He explains this being possible by saying 'no one is going to hold a candle to my head while I sleep', meaning nobody is going to come to his house and check his exact residence.[36] His colleagues from the municipality, all of whom in fact territorially live in Republika Srpska, but are registered in the Federation, giggle in agreement with this statement.

Such practices, however, have a political downside, in that people are constrained to disenfranchise themselves in the process, giving up their political voice in the entity in which they live in order to access the social benefits they require or secure for their children an education in their mother tongue and religious instruction in accordance with their beliefs. Owing to the large number of Bosnian citizens that fall into the above categories, this is a significant problem – one that is undermining both democratic citizenship and the long-term sustainability of the peacebuilding process by bolstering ethnic divisions. 'This system is not good for me either, but what can you do?' responds one of the few younger inhabitants of Trnovo when asked whether they have reacted to the way the current system affects them.[37]

[35] Field notes, Trnovo, 11 May 2012.
[36] ibid.
[37] Field notes, Trnovo, 11 May 2012.

4.4 INTERSECTING[38]

People opt to formally register themselves in areas where they do not actually reside for a number of key reasons that are analysed below. When they register in a neighbouring entity, however, as mentioned, people lose their eligibility to vote in elections in their place of residence. This distorts political representation, undermines political participation, reinforces ethnic dividing lines, but most importantly, circumscribes people's agency. Though there have been instances where people have registered in a location other than where they live as a form of a protest or resistance, the reasons for this have primarily been based on economic and social factors.

Interestingly, many people register in a neighbouring municipality and a different entity in order to be able to get employment in the public administration, be it based on connections, that is *štela*, or simply based on the mandatory ethnic quotas. This, of course, has budgetary implications. In addition, since the entities have separate budgets and taxes are collected directly, the phenomenon of fictional residence registration directly impacts the tax receipts of the entities. Budgets are also affected by the payments, or lack thereof, of benefits to citizens. Similarly, it often happens that people living near the IEBL pay utilities to different entities. For instance, the electricity in Trnovo is provided by FBiH, while the water is from RS.[39] It is also not uncommon that people living in neighbouring houses have different phone codes, of different ethnicities,

[38] This section of the chapter uses parts that have previously been published in a policy brief I authored, titled 'Ensuring Political Representation in a Restructured Bosnia and Herzegovina' (Stavrevska 2013).
[39] Field notes, Trnovo, 10 November 2012.

therefore making a phone conversation between significantly more expansive than if they were in the same entity or same municipality.

Most importantly, an ethnicity-based system runs the risk of cementing divisions along ethnic lines, especially in cases where people register elsewhere because of the courses offered in schools that their children can attend. The ethnic divisions are so prevalent and evident from early on in life that they often make it even in elementary school students' essays and poems. In her awarded essay at the writing competition on the topic 'A future in Bosnia and Herzegovina as I desire', the 13-year old Sabina from East Doboj, part of the Tuzla Canton, wrote: '"Serbs, Muslims, Croats… reached an agreement" Today. Tomorrow. "My child is not going to that school! My child has his friends! His father is this! His grandfather is that…" […] I want a smile on my parents' faces, I want to be able to walk in the forest by myself, I want for Mujo and Fata to become Pero and Stana, I want to visit my friends on Christmas, I want them to visit me on Eid, I want to believe in God without fear, I want to walk around Banja Luka, I want to hug Sarajevo, I want to swim in Una, I want to eat cookies in Bijeljina! I want a country that I can call a homeland.'[40] In the essay, by the use of symbolic representations, i.e. personal names, religious holidays, and places around Bosnia, she clearly positions her identity as a Bosnian Muslim, desiring to have friends who are Bosnian Serbs and Christians, and to be able to visit places around the country that are not necessarily associated with the Bosniac ethnicity.

[40] Field notes, Tuzla, 1 June 2012.

It is difficult to know precisely just how many people are affected by the system that is structured in this manner. However, the numbers are without a doubt significant. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Bosnia and Herzegovina hosts over 113,000 IDPs (UNHCR, 2013). In addition, while some have exchanged properties and stayed in the places where they sought refuge during the war, many others moved back to their pre-war homes. Equally importantly, the IEBL and in particular the 520 km running through private land, affects the lives of many that live along or near it (Radovanović Šarenac, 2010; Karabegović, 2012).

4.4.1 Pensions

In the post-war period, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska agreed that each entity would be responsible for the pensions of retired people living within their jurisdiction after the war, regardless of where individuals may have worked before the war. This agreement was reached at a time when the numbers of people returning to their pre-war homes remained minimal. Following a legal action by RS, which required for the Federation to pay the pensions of those who retired on its territory before April 1992, the FBiH Law on Pension and Disability Insurance was amended in June 2012. According to the latest amendments, the Federation will cover the pensioners who retired there prior to April 1992 and have returned to live in the Federation (Fund for Pension and Disability Insurance of Republika Srpska, 2012). Those who live in RS, however, remain unaffected by these changes. As a result of the legal complications created by this situation, many people living along the IEBL and in nearby municipalities choose to formally register in a municipality of the entity from

which they receive their pension or, if possible, where they are eligible for a higher pension.

Many such examples can be found in the Municipality of Jezero. Jezero is a municipality on the IEBL. It was formed following the Dayton Agreement and it is now part of RS, even though its territory in the pre-war period was part of the Municipality of Jajce, now within the Federation. Its population, according to the 2013 census, remains predominantly ethnically Serbian, with ¼ of its population declaring Bosniac as their ethnicity (Agency of Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016). Nevertheless, numerous conversations with the pensioners in this municipality reveal that anecdotally some 99 per cent of them are in fact registered in the Federation. Identifying herself as a Bosnian Serb, Mira explains that she worked in what is now FBiH prior to the war, so it is more logical for her to register there. 'But to tell you the truth', she says after a closer connection over a period of time was established, 'of course I would register in the Federation – the pensions there are higher and imagine if I had to go to Banja Luka for medical help. I won't survive the trip'.[41]

This sentiment was shared by many pensioners regardless of their ethnicity. No matter how they self-identified, when it came to registration and with that, to creating space for them to exercise any kind of agency, their priorities were determined by their socioeconomic status and their age. While unlike them, many younger people had other primary concerns, there were some exceptions too.

[41] Field notes, Jezero, 29 November 2012.

Amer, a middle-aged man from Jezero, spoke frankly and without hesitation about the ways in which the different orders of domination that exist in Bosnia, in particular in this 'in-between' zone, have affected him and his decision. At the individual level, he identifies as a Bosnian and a Bosniac, but also as someone who is not well off, who clarifies himself together with 'the little people'.

> I am a proud man, you know, a true Bosnian. When they ask where I was during the war, I don't hang my head in shame. I was here! Why I was here… Well, that is a question that I still ask myself. But I was here. And I am still here. And I can tell you, not much has changed. We are still the little people, we don't live, we try to survive. [My children] weren't any less Bosniac when they studied here, in 'Serbian'. My parents aren't going to be any more Bosniac if they are registered in Jajce. They will simply be alive and fed.[42]

Interestingly, at the symbolic level, the references he used were to being a good father and a good son, even though technically speaking, the fake registration was in fact breaking the law.

> For high school, we had to register in the Federation, that is where the closest school is. You have to be a good father, do what's best for the children. But also a good son, and help my parents register where they have the best and most accessible healthcare, the higher pensions. What can you do, this is how things work, this is what everyone does, this is how this place moves.[43]

There was no shame to what Amer was saying. It seemed accepted as normal; this was the way he was navigating the system and the norms were a reflection of that. In fact, even in my conversations with people who are civil servants, but who ignored

[42] Personal interview with a Jezero resident, Jezero, 29 November 2012.
[43] ibid.

the law on address registration, there was no signs of feeling like they had done something wrong. If anything, the meta-data in the form of a chuckle, as a form of approval, by their colleagues when these stories were told proved the same thing.

At the structural level, Amer referred to the institutional and territorial divisions in the country, but also to the big discrepancies in terms of wealth and power.

> You know this phenomenon, they call it, two schools under one roof?! That is not a phenomenon! It is a crime! Bosnia is actually two countries under one roof. One is the country of the rich and the other is the country of everyone else. I just want for me and my family to live like human beings, but it seems that whichever way you turn it, we are the ones paying the price.[44]

In his attempts to navigate the complex governing system in Bosnia, being a Bosniac male living in a predominantly Serbian place, but being currently registered in the Federation, Amer is unable to vote and affect the policy-makers in the place where he lives, with his agency being curtailed in the process.

> To hell with that! They call it a democracy if you vote. They call it peace democracy I sit down to drink coffee with the people here. You know, the Serbs and the Bosniacs, as if we never lived together before. As if we didn't spend all the summers playing together here when we were growing up. I don't need that democracy. I need to stop fearing if my parents are healthy and can get to the hospital, if they're pensions will get increased, if my children get good education. If that's democracy, I am in for that.[45]

The situation is not much different with those who decide to register elsewhere due to healthcare or education alone.

[44] Personal interview with a Jezero resident, Jezero, 21 June 2012.
[45] ibid.

4.4.2 Healthcare

Indeed, in many instances, decisions on where to register are a question of which side of the IEBL provides medical services that are better and/or more proximate. Many of Bosnia and Herzegovina's existing medical facilities were originally established to serve people who now find themselves living in two different entities, each with its own health system, and they are no longer eligible to access healthcare services wherever they choose. There are, accordingly, instances where the closest hospital is less than 30 minutes away but is located in a different entity, while the nearest hospital in the entity in which the patient is registered is over one and a half hours away.[46] This can give rise to serious problems, particularly for the elderly, which is why many choose to formally register in the entity that has better and/or closer medical facilities. For instance, Afik, an elderly citizen of Trnovo, whose house is located in RS and pays the bills there, explains being registered in the Federation like this:

> I register where I get better benefits, where I have an interest in registering. I was seriously ill a few years ago and I needed good medical care, so I unregistered from RS and registered in the Federation, so I can go to the hospital in Sarajevo. And the prescriptions issued from one entity are not accepted in the other. Imagine that theft![47]

At the individual level, Afik identified himself as Bosniac and the symbolic level, he explained that it was important for the Bosniacs to have a united 'front' at the then forthcoming October 2013 census, first since the war.

[46] Field notes, Jezero, 28 November 2012.
[47] Personal interview with a Trnovo resident, Trnovo, 10 May 2012.

> I fear that we, the Bosniacs, will turn out to be a minority in this census. Just see what is going on on TV – some people will declare themselves Muslim, instead of Bosniac, they will get confused or whatever, and in the end, the Bosniacs will be too few. It is important that we stick together, that there is no confusion that we speak one language, Bosnian, and we follow one religion, Islam. You know, we are a real misery, but they, [the Serbs] are an even worse misery than us. And they are always trying to act all-important, like someone cares.[48]

Speaking of the existing governing system, his identification of the socioeconomic inequalities was less present than in, for instance, Amer's testimonies. He spoke more about how in the aftermath of Yugoslavia and the disappearing presence of the state in the economic sphere, they were all worse off.

> Trnovo used to be known for its factories. People lived and worked here. Imagine, we had everything. And then the war happened and no investor or the state ever looked back at those factories. So the life slowly dried out of here. Now people fight over petty things, over who is from what party, as if they aren't all the same kind of bandits. So yeah, I don't vote here. I don't count here and maybe one day they will even show evidence that there are no Bosniacs in this part and on paper, they won't be lying. I vote there, with the Bosniacs [pointing to the other part of the village], as if that would make any difference. But at least I am closer to the hospital as I get older.[49]

At the end of that sentence, he laughed in a manner that suggested that having access to the healthcare that he did was not too much of a consolation, given the state of the health system in Bosnia.

Sometimes it is also a matter of which entity provides better benefits, as in the case of maternity benefits. While the employers in the FBiH are not obliged to cover

[48] Personal interview with a Trnovo resident, Trnovo, 10 November 2012.
[49] ibid.

maternity leave, the ones in RS have to cover the first month of maternity leave (Rener-Smajlović and Salapura, 2012). For the remaining eleven months of maternity leave, new mothers are covered by the cantons, in the case of the FBiH, except for two cantons where they receive no payments while on maternity leave. The percentage that is covered varies across cantons. In the RS, the Public Fund for Child Protection is the one covering the remaining eleven months of leave and what they offer is in some instances higher than the nearest canton in the Federation. As a result, expecting mothers in Sarajevo, for instance, register in East Sarajevo before giving birth, in order to be eligible for more favourable benefits.[50] As a mother of two, who identifies herself as Bosnian Croat and lives in Sarajevo but registered in RS prior to both pregnancies, puts it: 'This is for bare existence. Do you think I would care about the little that they pay and go through the administrative trouble if I was better off? No way! But for us, every little bit counts, so I do what I have to for my family'.[51]

4.4.3 Education

As noted before, education is an issue that continues to divide post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina – with Republika Srpska, the Brčko District and the individual cantons of the Federation all having their own systems. Owing to the existing linguistic and religious divisions in the curriculum, many students who live in an entity where they do not belong to the ethnic majority travel several kilometres a day in order to attend a school that offers courses in their mother tongue and includes the religion that they practise, even when their own village or town already has a school. This is the case with

[50] Personal interviews with Sarajevo residents, Sarajevo, April 2012.
[51] Field notes, East Sarajevo, 9 November 2012.

many students living near the IEBL. And, to ensure that their children are eligible to attend a particular school, many parents are obliged to formally register in the entity in which the desired school is located.

As an example, the Bosniac children from the village of Trnovo, where the IEBL leaves the school in the RS part, despite having an elementary school next door to them, travel 15 kilometres to the nearest elementary school where they are taught by a Federal curriculum and hence attend 'Bosnian' courses, in the village of Dejčići.[52] On the other hand, there are Serbian families that have returned to the federal part of Sarajevo, yet send their children to school and even university in East Sarajevo 'because of the language difference'.[53] Similarly, the Serbian children from the village of Krtova in the Federation attend a 'Serbian' school in Petrovo in RS, which is some 15-16 kilometres away from their village. However, their parents are not troubled by the distance, explaining that 'there is organised transportation' and 'they can learn in their own language'.[54] Unlike in the cases of pensions and healthcare, where people talk of ensuring 'normal lives' in socioeconomic terms, when it comes to their children education, people often revoked experiences from the war that reiterated their ethnic belonging and the importance for their children to learn 'with their own'. In that sense, in temporal terms, the decision of parents to register in an entity where they do not reside so that their children could receive education that is symbolically representative of their ethnicity appears to a great extent informed by the past.

[52] Field notes, Trnovo, 10 May and 10 November 2012.
[53] Interview with a Serbian family in Sarajevo, Sarajevo, 17 May 2012.
[54] Interviews with a Serbian family in Krtova, Krtova, 7 June 2012.

For instance, Vera, a 36-year old woman from Krtova, who identifies herself as a Serbian, sends both of her children to Petrovo.

> They are in 6th and 9th grade. They are good students. They have transportation to the school, together with the other children from the village, so the distance is not a problem. It is important, we thought, that they studied with their own. The war taught us that – it's always better to be with your own if you have a choice. And this is the only, the right choice we could make.[55]

Some parents also point to examples when their children were actually negatively affected by attending the closest schools, when ethnicity was ignored. One father explains how his child, ethnically Bosniac, attended the closest elementary school, which was Serbian, but then for high school the closest school was in the Federation and as result of the student not knowing the Croatian and Bosnian words for certain terms in physics, he received a low grade.[56] 'Imagine the stupidity!', he says. 'Where did that teacher study that he did not know the words?! Under a rock?! Instead of encouraging the children to learn more languages, we are closing off in our corners of the same language. How idiotic are we?'.[57]

The children of inter-ethnic marriages are a curious example when it comes to the declaration of their ethnicity and the school choice. Given the straitjacket that the BiH Constitution is in terms of ethnic belonging, guaranteeing freedoms to the three constituent peoples, those not strictly fitting in any or only one of the three could be faced with an impossible choice. However, there are also the examples of mixed-

[55] Interview with a resident of Krtova, Krtova, 7 June 2012.
[56] Field notes, Jezero, 30 November 2012.
[57] ibid.

marriage children who declare themselves to be of only one nationality. This is where the intersection between the symbolic representation level and the identity construction level is usually very evident. A young woman from Brčko who lives with her mother, a Bosniac, explains her rationale of why she thinks of herself as a Serb and why she wanted to study by a Serbian curriculum:

> My father was Serbian. During the war this was a Serbian territory, so I am more familiarised with that. I also grew up with my paternal grandparents, celebrating Christmas and Easter, so that felt like the right choice'.[58] Unlike many other mixed-marriage children who usually pick the minority ethnicity when job searching, which increases their chances of getting a job according to the ethnic employment quotas, she says she would not choose the other ethnicity because 'that is simply not who [she is].[59]

Many children of inter-ethnic marriages, however, exercise their agency by resisting the ethnic governmentality. One manifestation is through the declaration of their ethnicity on the forms they have to fill out on many occasions, including the ones before each semester at university. Many of them instead of selecting one of the three constituent peoples and 'neglecting part of their identity', or selecting *other* and 'accepting the marginalisation that they are faced with in the society', choose to enter another category, with 'Chinese, Japanese, Indian, American, Marsian, Jedi' not being uncommon.[60] Despite knowing that that way they would be placed in the category of *others*, they nonetheless choose to mock the categorisation rather than 'allow for

[58] Personal interview with a daughter of an inter-ethnic couple, Brčko, 22 July 2012.
[59] ibid.
[60] Personal interviews with children of inter-ethnic couples, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Banja Luka, 16-21 May, 2-6 June, 23 July 2012.

someone else to make them fit into as narrow a category that one ethnicity is'.[61] Moreover, there are those that are not necessarily from an inter-ethnic marriage but oppose the ethnic categorisation and declare themselves as Bosnian and Herzegovinian.[62] Ironically, this too falls under the category of *others*.

Another symbolic resistance to the ethnic spatial governmentality is also manifested in the usage of the different alphabets. One young woman explains that she signs her name using both scripts because they are both official scripts and she opposes the view that Cyrillic should only be associated with the Serbian language.[63] Another symbolic resistance can be noticed in the approach to going to the other entity. A Sarajevo citizen explains that she goes to RS often 'because otherwise it would mean that they have won and that the division has succeeded'.[64]

CONCLUSION

Starting with ethnicity as a category and a system of power relations that has significantly dominated the post-war Bosnian and Herzegovinian society, this chapter looked at the experiences and the agency of people living near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, the establishment of which is to a certain extent a result of a foreign intervention. The chapter first explained the interplay among the three levels of analysis in creating and sustaining the ethnic spatial governmentality that exists in Bosnia: through the social structures in the form of the entirety of legal frameworks within the

[61] Personal interview with a son of an inter-ethnic couple, Tuzla, 2 June 2012.
[62] Personal interview with a young Sarajevo resident, Sarajevo, 17 May 2012.
[63] Personal interview with a young Sarajevo resident, Sarajevo, 16 May 2012.
[64] Personal interview with a Sarajevo resident, Sarajevo, 16 May 2012.

country, including or rather stemming from the country and the entity constitutions, through the symbolic representations embodied in the form of various practices and metaphors, and finally, through the identity constructions, where most people's first identification is by ethnicity, which when not explicit is assumed based on the name.

Contextualised in this manner, the chapter then looked at how the people living in the 'grey' area between ethnic spaces, along the IEBL, navigate the existing governing system and use their residence registration in relation to pensions, healthcare, and education. The two categories that emerged in the analysis, in addition to ethnicity, were age and class. Elderly people's primary concerns seemed to be access to (higher) pensions and (better/closer) healthcare in their decision where to register, even if that curbed and limited the space for their agency. The younger generations, on the other hand, particularly young parents whose children were of school age, were more concerned with ethnic belonging and registered in the entity where their children could receive education in 'their' language and study about 'their' religion. Again, this too often came at the cost of limited agency. The issue of class was not mentioned perhaps too explicitly, but almost all informants referred to the economic inequality that existed in the country and talked of their actions as 'ensuring survival, not even living proper'.[65] This is perhaps most ironically exemplified by the people who register in a different entity than the one within which they reside due the lower price of vehicle registration, with the

[65] Field notes, Sarajevo, 30 April 2012.

difference in some cases being only 150 Bosnian convertible markas, which is close to 75 euros.[66]

As a young professional who is heading the local branch of a global corporation puts it: 'I don't care about these loopholes with residence registration. And my father fought in the war. But then again, I can afford not to care'.[67]

[66] Personal interviews with East Sarajevo residents, East Sarajevo, November 2012.
[67] Field notes, Mostar, 7 November 2010.

5 'WE JUST WANT A NORMAL LIFE': WOMEN'S AGENCY AND MICROFINANCE

INTRODUCTION

Starting with the early 1990s, researchers started analysing the gendered nature of war and subsequently peace (Tickner, 1992; Enloe, 1990), which slowly gained prominence. However, much of the research done, not to mention most of the peacebuilding initiatives that we witnessed, focused on women as victims of war and of violence. A notable attempt to bring to the fore the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction has been made with the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. In most cases, however, the UNSCR 1325 has been translated merely to ensuring certain representation of women in the policy processes, but often disregarding the larger societal dynamics at play.

In the meantime, some research has also shed light on the way peace processes interact with existing patriarchal and nationalist structures, often resulting in an even more rigid gender hierarchy and diminishing women's agency (see, for instance, the work of Cockburn, 2013; Meintjes et al., 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2008). In addition, there has also been some research published on the experiences of denied agency that women are faced with when engaging in activities that are not within the framework of their expected behaviours and roles (Alison, 2004; Shepherd, 2012). In their joint book,

Sjoberg and Gentry (2007) masterfully delineate three dominant narratives around the issue of women's agency in political violence, those being the woman as a mother, the woman as a monster, and the woman as a whore.

The importance of these directions of research notwithstanding, not much research has been done on the socioeconomic status of women in post-war societies beyond them being recipients of help. Women have, indeed, in post-war periods, post-war Bosnia being no exception, been targeted heavily by a plethora of instruments aimed at economic assistance and recovery. One such instrument has been microfinance for women.

This chapter discusses the issue of women's agency in relation to microfinance as a peacebuilding practice in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, it aims to highlight microfinance practices as one of the sites of contestation where different forms of female subjectivities have emerged and where certain forms of women's agency become excluded, negotiated or reinforced. It first sheds light on the concept of microfinance for women being used as a post-conflict recovery instrument. It then describes the trajectory of microfinance promotion in the Bosnian context and in particular the work of the first local microfinance institution focused exclusively on women, MI-BOSPO. It then proceeds to analyse how the activities related to the two main goals of microfinance for women, those being improved family welfare and gender equality, play out in the everyday lives of MI-BOSPO's beneficiaries. Juxtaposing the two goals and the related consequences, this chapter shows how liberal discourses, such as the one on female economic empowerment through microfinance, which has

disregarded the multiple localities that women in Bosnia occupy, has consequently in fact circumscribed women's agency.

5.1 MICROFINANCE FOR WOMEN AS A POST-CONFLICT TOOL

Microfinance, also frequently referred to as microcredit, although the former is a broader term, was originally intended to provide small loans 'to poor individuals who establish or expand a simple income-generating activity, thereby supposedly facilitating their eventual escape from poverty' (Bateman, 2010: 1). Building on a long small-scale credit history in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, microfinance has been praised as a development tool to fight poverty, to help empower the marginalised, in particular women, as well as to give a bottom-up boost to a struggling economy. A symbolically significant nod to microfinance was the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to the Bangladeshi economist, Dr. Muhammad Yunus, who in the 1970s developed the model of microfinance that has been most widely promoted internationally. In addition, he is the founder of Grameen Bank, established in 1983 to lend to the poor and the flood-affected population in Bangladesh.

Precisely the supposed high repayment rates in Grameen Bank and some of the studies based on those statistics have often been cited as examples of the positive impact of microfinance in addressing poverty and empowering the poor. Nevertheless, a recent study (Roodman and Morduch, 2014) that has replicated and reanalysed the data used in the most influential study of the effects of microfinance (Pitt and Khandker, 1998) points out that what has been used as evidence of microfinance effectively

reducing poverty and being particularly effective with female borrowers is in actuality a result of incorrectly applied statistical analyses. In addition, more recent randomised studies from other countries, such as Sri Lanka and Mexico, have shown that the availability of microcredit increases the average profitability of male-run microbusinesses, but finds no evidence of the same being the case for female-run microbusinesses (de Mel et al., 2008; McKenzie and Woodruff, 2008). Other randomised studies from around the world have also questioned and found no evidence of the claim that microfinance leads to increased household consumption in a relatively short timespan (see, for instance, Angelucci et al., 2013; Augsburg et al., 2012; Crépon et al., 2011).

In addition to this lack of evidence of positive long-term effects of microfinance, the critique has been taken even further to suggest that, the minor short-term benefits notwithstanding, microfinance has an adverse effect on sustainable social and economic development, as well as on sustainable poverty reduction (Bateman, 2010). Moreover, it has been argued that microfinance contributes to the institutionalisation of poverty and underdevelopment (ibid.) Others, yet, have shed light on how the romanticisation of the poor as resilient and creative entrepreneurs, which is at the core of microfinance, in fact harms the same poor individuals it targets (Karnani, 2008).

Development and conflict had long been treated as two separate processes, with the former related to peacetime and the latter to wartime, thereby implying not only linearity of these processes, but also negating their interconnectedness. This approach started changing in the 1990s with the realisation that development is essential in

establishing and maintaining peace. Along with it, the post-conflict reconstruction instruments were rethought. Hence, aside of its use as a development tool to address poverty, microfinance has also increasingly been employed as an instrument of post-conflict reconstruction and even reconciliation. In line with the liberal peacebuilding consensus, post-conflict societies are expected to undergo multiple transitions, including those from war to peacetime market economy and from humanitarian assistance to long-term development assistance (Ohanyan, 2002: 398). Microfinance has been promoted as a contributor to these transitions and its operation in post-conflict settings has largely not been treated any different than its operation in development settings. This is particularly the case with microfinance seen as a tool to help create employment opportunities and boost the economy.

Where the understanding of the role of microfinance in post-conflict societies might differ from that in 'normal' developing countries is the potential to put microcredit to use in building forms of social capital through group-based financial intermediation (Nagarajan and McNulty, 2004: 3). Such policy, however, would entail 'the inclusion of some social groups as beneficiaries, and the exclusion of other' (Ohanyan, 2002: 400), which might actually have the effect of polarising the community (ibid.) and even creating conflict by reinforcing the existing or creating new social cleavages. One such case can be found in Bangladesh, where research focusing on rural women from a particular village highlighted how women's involvement with the Grameen Bank microfinance targeted programme increased their exposure to home violence and aggression (Rahman, 1999: 74). Similar cases are noted with programmes that target

returnees, which is one social group that post-conflict microfinance frequently focuses on, based on the assumption that microcredits would facilitate their reintegration in their pre-war communities.

Another group that has often been targeted are women. They are seen as a particularly vulnerable group, constituting a disproportionally large part of those living in poverty. A 1995 UNDP report states that as many as 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people around the world living on less than a dollar a day are women (UNDP, 1996: 4). In addition, not only is unemployment rate universally higher for women, when they are employed, they are mainly engaged in the lower-paid and informal sectors of the economy. In post-conflict countries, women are additionally perceived as victims, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. All of these aspects have reinforced the argument that women as a vulnerable group should be targeted and assisted by microfinance programmes. As noted by some international organisations promoting microfinance for women, the goal of these programmes is to shift from therapy to income-generating activities (Pupavac, 2005: 397), but also from victimhood to agency.

The selection of this particular target is based on two main assumptions and related goals. First, women are assumed to spend most of their income on their families. The Special Unit on Microfinance of the United Nations Capital Development Fund stresses that it is ‘a well-documented fact [confirmed by several institutions] that women are more likely that men to spend their profits on household and family needs’ (quoted in Cheston and Kuhn, 2002: 8). Microfinance for women is, therefore, perceived as assistance to the whole family and as a poverty-alleviating tool that generates a

multiplier effect. Relatedly, women are seen as more responsible and better at repayment, in some cases partially due to their fear of shaming and negatively affecting the reputation of their husbands and families (Bateman, 2010: 10). In that sense, women's empowerment is also understood to come from them seeing the loan as their responsibility to manage and repay, which is said to boost their confidence (ibid.: 25).

Second, policymakers operating within the neoliberal paradigm, which includes those operating within the liberal peacebuilding consensus, have increasingly been focusing on the linkages between gender inequality and development (Rice, 2010: 42). To that end, the United Nations Development Programme even suggests that '[e]nding poverty means ending feminized poverty' (UNDP, 2006: 5). Going even further, the World Bank calls the investment in gender equality and empowerment of women smart economics, due to its perceived positive impact on economic growth, but also on advancing development goals as a whole (World Bank, 2007: 3). In this regard post-conflict societies are not viewed as different from developing societies and the same logic applies, with microfinance being promoted as an instrument that provides women with employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, thus supposedly addressing both household welfare and gender relations. In that sense, it is assumed that microfinance for women contributes to gender equality by altering the power relations in the household and enabling women to actively participate in the public domain (Altan-Olcay, 2015: 1).

5.2 MICROFINANCE IN BIH AND MI-BOSPO

The war, needless to say, significantly changed the Bosnian economy and the population's socioeconomic status. Not only was the country's economy set to transition from wartime to peacetime economy, but the Dayton Agreement also stipulated its transition from a previously planned economy to a market economy. The pre-war state-operated factories were either destroyed during the war or were set to be privatised in due course, the infrastructure was demolished, the real estate devastated and the industrial production non-existent. In addition to that, the demographics changed dramatically. Of its 4.4 million inhabitants before the war, an estimated one million had left the country, some 250,000 people were killed or were registered as missing, while over 60 per cent of the population were internally displaced (World Bank, 2005: 2). Those that remained in the country were faced with a 75-per cent drop in the GDP per capita between 1990 and 1995 and an 80-percent official self-reported unemployment rate in 1996 (Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2007: 3), to name but a few of the economic indicators. In the years that followed, 19.5 per cent of the population of the country were classified as poor (World Bank, 2002a: 24). Interestingly, however, it was noted that the so-called 'new poor' in BiH had a relatively high education level and a relatively good household physical asset base (World Bank, 2000).

These conditions contributed to the advancement of self-employment and microfinance as priorities for the international donors present in the country. The first major microfinance initiative in BiH after the war was the World Bank's Local Initiative Project I, which took place in the 1997-2000 period. Funded jointly by the World Bank,

the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan, Austria, and Switzerland (Ohanyan, 2002: 405), LIP I targeted demobilised soldiers, widows, returnees, and displaces persons (Welle-Strand et al., 2010: 154), with the goal of overcoming social exclusion. Moreover, the project aimed to 'improve the business and regulatory environment for self-employment, micro- and small-enterprises, as well as the regulatory environment for non-financial [microfinance institutions]', in addition to working on establishing financially sustainable microfinance institutions (ibid.). Implemented through governmental policy implementation units established in FBiH and RS, the project funded 17 non-governmental organisations acting as MFIs with the 21.75 million USD credit committed for this phase (Ohanyan, 2002: 405). Through them, around 20,000 microbusinesses with up to five employees received 50,261 micro loans (Welle-Strand et al., 2010: 154). As many as 50 per cent of the loan recipients were women (World Bank, 2002b). While individual loans were considered as the most successful lending methodology, solidarity groups for women were a close second (World Bank, 2001: 2).

LIP II was launched in March 2002 and aimed to support the further institutional development and financial self-sustainability of the highest performing MFIs (Dunn, 2005: 13). Of the previous 17, eight MFIs were selected for LIP II (ibid.: 12). This phase of the project, with a budget of some 24 million USD, was concluded in 2003 (Welle-Strand et al., 2010: 155). LIP I and LIP II have been considered the cornerstones of the microfinance sector in the country, which has since grown in size and number of MFIs.

One of the organisations supported by the World Bank through both LIP I and LIP II was what is today known as MI-BOSPO. Starting as a Tuzla-based NGO called BOSPO in March 1995 with the support of the Danish Refugee Council, they initially focused on addressing the problems faced by internally displaced persons. BOSPO is known as the first Bosnian NGO working in both entities, at a time when such activity was unimaginable. While dealing with an important issue, BOSPO's activists tried to keep a low profile when it came to refugee return. For example, the very first return of a Bosniac refugee to Srebrenica after the 1995 massacre was organised by BOSPO in a manner that was invisible to the institutions. This kind of purposefully low-profile activism was 'not only crossing over but also traversing the inter-entity boundary […] which was heavily fetishised by the sovereign ethnonationalist (biopolitical) regimes. It was an innovative creation of the "space-between" that refuted the logic and fantasy the nation-state(s) fought for and over the issue of the two entities' (Husanović, 2004: 228).

Selected by the World Bank to be included in LIP I, as of 1996, BOSPO also started a microfinance programme. What made their programme stand out was that it was the first microfinance programme in the country that specifically targeted women.[68] They started off with offering small credits to solidarity groups composed of three women. While initially they only worked with internally displaced women, they soon realised that the mobility of their clients made the credit return complicated, so as a form of security, they tried to incentivise the solidarity groups to include both local and

[68] Personal interview with Nejira Nalic, founder of BOSPO and director of MI-BOSPO, Sarajevo, 22 November 2011.

displaced women by promising faster processing of such group loan applications. This was sometimes presented in some circles under the rubric of reconciliation.

In 2000, the microfinance programme separated from the other BOSPO activities to a distinct MFI called MI-BOSPO. That same year, in addition to solidarity group loans, individual loans were also introduced, with the solidarity group methodology being discontinued in 2009. In addition to the World Bank, MI-BOSPO also received funds from the UNHCR, the Church World Service and Women's World Banking, in addition to raising commercial funds as well. With the average loan offered by MI-BOSPO being 1,000 EUR and an average interest rate of 23 per cent, most of the loans that women receive have been invested 'in improving quality of life'.[69] In 2012 more than half of their clients came from rural communities and the profile of the usual customer was described as 'an insecurely employed woman'.[70]

MI-BOSPO's goal has been stated as '[providing] access to credit and non-financial services to individuals, but especially women entrepreneurs, with low income, in order to strengthen entrepreneurship, and their economic and social status […] By supporting and encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit in women [they] believe that [they] are economically strengthening families and influencing reduction of poverty in the society. [Hence, the vision is to see successful] entrepreneurs, educated and emancipated women in economically stronger families' (MI-BOSPO, 2016). At the same time, having realised that many of the credits taken out by women were in actuality

[69] Personal interview with Nejira Nalic, founder of BOSPO and director of MI-BOSPO, Sarajevo, 22 November 2011.
[70] ibid.

managed by their husbands, or by another male figure in the family, as of 2010 MI-BOSPO started offering individual loans to men as well. Curiously, they do approach the family as something that is 'sacred and try not to disturb the family relations', thereby insisting for a signed confirmation by the husband stating that he is aware of his wife applying for a micro loan.[71]

Even though most women have taken out more than one loan from multiple sources, as the leading and the oldest microfinance institution in BiH that focuses on women, this analysis of the agency of women that use micro loans has exclusively focused on MI-BOSPO beneficiaries. Particularly, it zeroes in on the abovementioned two main goals of microfinance for women, improving family welfare and contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment, and how they have been addressed through this programme in BiH.

5.3 THE MOTHER, THE WIFE, THE HOUSEWIFE

One of the main critiques of microfinance for women has been that rather than challenging and problematising existing gender norms, it can in fact consolidate hierarchical gender roles. Despite one of its goals being women's empowerment, the mainstream microfinance approach, which includes the approach used in BiH, has been criticised for not addressing issues of power, but solely issues of productivity. To put it differently, rather than focusing on the development of and for women, this approach appears to be focusing on utilising women's labour for development (Goetz and Gupta,

[71] Personal interview with Nejira Nalic, founder of BOSPO and director of MI-BOSPO, Sarajevo, 22 November 2011.

1996: 47). In that sense, providing women with access to loans with an improved family welfare as the end goal is in line with the latter, whereby women have been seen as essentialised and instrumentalised for development purposes. However, if one is to focus not on the outcome, but on women's agency, a different viewpoint emerges.

The role that family played in a person's life even during Yugoslavia was very prominent. In fact, family was often considered the centre of economic and social activity (Somerville, 1965: 352). Later on, in the period after World War II, the nuclear family was predominating, including a conjugal pair, both of whom usually employed, children and often the surviving parents of the couple (ibid.: 355). During the war in BiH, however, many families were thorn apart with the males in the families either killed, held captive in prison camps or recruited in the army and the females often killed, displaced or imprisoned. The form of involuntary exodus that the war constituted overwhelmingly affected people's marriages and kin relations. It increased the value of families and communities even further. In fact, similar to what Native and African American feminists have argued regarding slavery and racism (see, for instance, Collins, 1990; Davis, 1983; Lorde, 1984), for Bosnian women in the aftermath of the war freedom and agency, among other things, consisted of being able to form and keep families together.

Relatedly, amid a general decline in trust and solidarity among people in BiH, the Bosnian society is largely dominated by strong family ties, where people of different demographic groups are most likely to trust their family members and immediate network of close friends (UNDP, 2009: 22). UNDP's 2009 National Human Development Report finds that people overwhelmingly, incomparable to the other categories,

predominantly turn to family when in need of help, financial support or someone to talk to (ibid.: 36-37). It comes as no surprise then that the World Bank's website lists 'families' as 'the main source of economic and social welfare for its members [and] the first building block in the generation of social capital for the larger society' (World Bank, 2016).

Edina is a 52-year old woman from Gradačac, a small town in the north-eastern part of BiH, who has her own pasta-making business. On an individual level, she identifies herself as a mother and a wife.

> During the war, I was alone with the children and we were internally displaced. My husband fought in the war and got a head injury. But look at me now, I am a successful business woman.[72]

Symbolically, she makes references to both the value of the family and the memory of the war.

> The war taught me many things. It was a very hard period; not knowing whether my husband was alive, whether the children and I will survive It was tough. So one of the things the war taught me was the value of the family. It taught me that when it is most difficult and you just want to quit, it is the family that pulls you back up. Even now, in the business, I work in my parents' house. Family is everything.[73]

Systematically, however, she makes references to traditional women's roles and the intersection with ethnicity.

[72] Personal interview, Zavidovići, 15 June 2012.
[73] ibid.

> The first micro credit I took for the household. The second was to open up my own business. But with every new credit, I also buy something for the household. It is important for me that I can take out a micro loan and run my own business. My father, he does the accounting and distribution. He is a man, after all, so he should not be around the pasta-making too much. Besides, I am a tough Bosnian woman, a tough Bosniac woman, I am not afraid of working and I know no one other than the family will help me. The institutions certainly won't.

Through her story, she explains how, being at the intersection of being a woman and a Bosniac, she cannot expect much assistance from the state, so in some ways, she exercises her own, even if individualised agency within and in relation to the family business and challenges in some small ways the systems to which she is subjected, even if, purposefully, not patriarchy.

'The only thought that kept me fighting to stay alive was the thought of my family, my children being without a mother. In times like that, you stay alive for them', recalls 61-year old Mirsada from Sarajevo, whose husband was killed during the siege of the city.[74] 'My parents took care of me during the war and up until retirement, now it is my turn to take care of them', suggests Vesna (26) from Bijeljina.[75] The sentiment regarding the importance of family in the war and the post-war period was shared by most women, regardless of their age, ethnic background, socioeconomic status or war experience.[76] To that end, Helms (2003: 174) highlights the importance of family to Bosnian women as the key distinct feature of Bosnian feminism. While women's self-sacrifice for the

[74] Personal interview, Sarajevo, 30 April 2012.
[75] Personal interview, Bijeljina, 29 may 2012.
[76] It should be noted that the war resulted in a number of divorces, too. Most of the interviewed women with such experiences cited husbands' untreated post-traumatic stress disorder as the main reason. Interestingly, however, even those women stressed the importance of family.

family, and the children in particular, contributes to the essentialisation of women in the traditional roles and the reaffirmation of patriarchal gender hierarchies, it could also be empowering for women (Blagojevic, 1997; Helms, 2003: 254).

In line with the above, and exacerbated by socioeconomic uncertainty, the predominant concern for Bosnian women in the post-war period has been providing or contributing to a sufficient family income and adequate wellbeing. 'You have to feed the children, you have to take care of your family', says 67-year old Nazifa from Sepetari, a settlement in the outskirts of Tuzla, who has been investing the micro loans she has taken out in the family livestock.[77] 'I never buy shoes for myself, a dress from the loan', she continues, 'everything is always invested in the children and the family business'.[78] A MI-BOSPO microfinance officer shares that it is common for women to take out micro loans to support their children studying in a different city, emphasising that the idea behind the loans was to empower women precisely by enabling them to contribute to the family budget.[79]

Zumra (59) from Srebrenik conveys that sentiment when she declares she is proud to be able to contribute.

> I am not the same woman I used to be, you know? I now contribute, I go to different fairs to sell my stuff, I meet people. It has changed me. I am the economist in the house now. but my husband, he is still the head, of course.[80]

[77]

[78] Personal interview, Sepetari, Tuzla, 31 May 2012.
[79] Personal interview with Sanja Marinkovic, MI-BOSPO co-ordinator, Bijeljina, 29 May 2012.
[80] ibid.

Post-war BiH underwent processes of repatriarchalisation and retraditionalisation (Majstorovic, 2011: 277) and in the course of the research for this thesis, it became clear that most of the women recognised the male domination that existed. Experiences, in fact, suggest that they sometimes comply with the patriarchy in strategic ways, having their children's and their own security in mind. Three aspects of the micro loan management are particularly important in the analysis of the nexus between existing gender hierarchies and microfinance: the decision to take a loan in the first place, the managerial control of the loan and its use, and the loan repayment.

When it comes to making the decision to take a micro loan, most women suggested that it was done jointly with their husbands and even their children sometimes. In the case of female-headed households, the role the children of age played in making a family decision to take a loan was particularly highlighted. Edisa (35) from Puračić, a small village near Lukavac, for instance, makes the decisions in conversation with her husband, taking into consideration the financial commitments that they have together, as a household.[81] Višnja (55) from Kalesija calls her family her 'safety'.[82] In some instances, women responded that taking a loan was their initiative. 'My husband said I should go ahead and take a loan if needed', says Dijana (42) from Srebrenik, while Aida (40), also a micro loan user, adds that as long as they do not bother the husbands with it, they are free to do whatever they decide.[83] Interestingly, one commonality that emerged during the research was the risk aversion among

[81] Personal interview, Puračić, 07 June 2012.
[82] Personal interview, Zavidovići, 15 June 2012.
[83] Personal interviews, Srebrenik, 24 May 2012.

husbands of some of the interviewed micro loan beneficiaries. 'I am too afraid to die and to not have paid back my dues', says 60-year old Šaban from Srebrenik.[84] Others cite negative experiences with someone in the family being other people's loan guarantor and having had to cover others' debts. Yet, in most cases, the male members of the family had also taken out loans that were made accessible to them. However, irrespective of who made the decision regarding the micro loan, all women emphasised how important the support and the help of their families have been. 'At the end of the day', Hana (57) from Srebrenik says, 'it does not matter who decides; what matters is that we continue growing'.[85]

Regarding the use of the loan, many of the loans have been invested in the household, the house or the children. Additionally, women often took out micro loans to invest in the businesses ran by their husbands or even fathers, such as their auto repair shops or taxi businesses, for instance. This, in fact, was a common practice in the earlier years.[86] Vera (36) from the village of Krtova works as a cleaning lady at the local elementary school, while the micro loan that she took was invested in agricultural machinery so that 'the husband, too, could work'.[87] 'I know that he does not squander the money, but is working for the family', she adds. Nadja (60) took a micro loan to invest in the family craft business that her husband inherited since the loan she was eligible for required less documentation than the other available options.[88] The whole family is involved in their production of Tuzla souvenirs, but she says that it is important

[84] Personal interview, Srebrenik, 24 May 2012.
[85] Personal interview, Srebrenik, 24 May 2012.
[86] Personal interview with Sanja Marinkovic, MI-BOSPO coordinator, Bijeljina, 29 May 2012.
[87] Personal interview, Krtova, 07 June 2012.
[88] Personal interview, Tuzla, 31 May 2012.

to have her husband take the lead and delegate tasks to everyone. When women do take up enterprises, they are mainly in agriculture, livestock, hairdressing, knitting, and other similar activities.

Finally, in terms of loan repayment, many of the interviewed female micro loan beneficiaries strongly stated that they were the ones 'in charge'. Similarly to Zumra's sentiment above, they all shared the stereotypical perception that women were better with finances and more responsible, and it is thus their responsibility not just to take out the loan, but also to ensure its timely payment. The repayment of the loan some women tied to the honour of the family. The meta-data in this instance was important and even overwhelming, especially in the form of gossip. Some women spoke of other women who embarrassed their families, their husbands, by not replaying the loans. This is linked to women's honour in patriarchal societies being viewed as something that is a reflection not only of their character, but also of their household (Leichty, 1995). This sentiment points to the issues of identity constructions and symbolic representations.

Somewhat related to the perception of women being more responsible with finances was the view that the micro loans gave many women a form of economic security and independence in making smaller purchases. Hana explains how her husband has a high foreign pension of 500 EUR, but is not giving her access to much and has a tight grip on the money.

> He is traditional, you know. And stingy, too. He receives a Slovenian pension, but I did not know he would also act Slovenian about it [referring to the

> stereotype of Slovenes being frugal]. So, he doesn't give me much freedom, you know. He is limiting me. So the micro credit gave me a bit of freedom.[89]

Ćamila (49) from a village near Srebrenik says she took a loan and started selling at the market because her husband did not work and they 'had no way out'.[90] She also adds that she prefers not working with her husband, as he tends to be jealous of male customers, but also drinks a lot. In that context, her petty trade activities supported by the micro loan provide her and their children with a financial safety net. I am not proud. I am glad that I am able to work. May God give everyone the possibility to work and earn.'[91]

All the above suggests that family, including motherhood as an important dimension that many of the micro loan beneficiaries highlighted, offers a valuable playground for women's agency and subjectivity, even if limited, in post-war BiH. Agency in feminist theory has by and large been conceptualised as synonymous to resistance to social norms and relations of domination, with the nuclear family seen as a form of male domination. Yet, as noted in the section on agency in an earlier chapter, such a liberatory view of the normative subject renders women's goals, desires, and motivations in exercising agency unrecognised and invisible. Instead, we ought to look at agency as a capacity of action, which is sometimes enabled and even created by certain relations of subordination (Mahmood, 2001: 210). This is what Butler (1997: 83) labels 'paradox of subjectivation', referring to the process of both the becoming of the

[89] Personal interview, Srebrenik, 24 May 2012.
[90] Personal interview, Srebrenik, 24 May 2012.
[91] ibid.

subject and the process of subjection, whereby one's autonomy is dependent on becoming subjected to power. She (1997: 84) writes:

> Subjection is, literally, the *making* of a subject, the principle of regulation according to which a subject is formulated or produced. Such subjection is a kind of power that not only unilaterally *acts* on a given individual as a form of domination, but also *activates* or forms the subject. Hence, subjection is neither simply the domination of a subject nor its production, but designates a certain kind of restriction *in* production.

In that sense, women's agency and subjectivity can exist in a radically dependent relation with family, marriage. and motherhood. Furthermore, as previously noted, that relation can be further intensified by experiences of systemic violence which operates on the breaking up of families, such as the war in BiH.

To that end, the women's utilisation of micro loans that are made available to them for various household purposes or even for businesses ran by the male members of the family, who nonetheless contribute to the family budget, is not a mere instrumentalisation, as it has been labelled in liberal readings and non-war settings (Elizabeth and Larner, 2009; Jenson, 2009). The research has shown that these undertakings can in fact contribute to women's empowerment, be it through them having a say in the decision-making process or their access to funds. In addition, motherhood itself can also have an emancipatory potential (de Alwis, 1998; Helms, 2003; Jeffrey, 1998), which featured very prominently in the findings of this research, too. Therefore, microfinance programmes that target women as a way of improving the family welfare, whether successful or not in achieving the goal of improved household

wellbeing as a whole, offer an opportunity for women's agency to be exercised. The focus, nevertheless, is on individual agency mainly in the family realm and the approach overall does not disrupt practices of isolation within the households. The dynamics between such approach and the goal of empowering women and gender equality are discussed in the following sections.

5.4 THE ENTREPRENEURIAL WOMAN AND 'NORMAL LIFE'

Another declared goal of microfinance for women is women's empowerment and gender equality. In achieving that goal, the focus has been on promoting entrepreneurship among women. USAID, for instance, which has been among the main supporters of microfinance in BiH, has 'gender equality and women's empowerment' listed as one of the foci of its work in the country (USAID, 2016). In terms of women's economic participation, their programme 'Women's Entrepreneurship and Other Employment Opportunities' zeroes in on supporting women-owned and women-managed businesses (ibid.). MI-BOSPO has attempted to translate and locally contextualise that approach by aiming to contribute to the economic empowerment of low-income female entrepreneurs and their economic position as a whole (MI-BOSPO, 2016).

The thinking behind this goal is based on two main interrelated assumptions. First, it is assumed that by becoming involved in income-generating activities and gaining access to financial resources, women will trigger a 'virtuous cycle' and become able to challenge unequal relationships and gendered cultural practices in the society (Mayoux, 1995; Piza Lopez and March, 1990). Essentially, the expectation is that the

relative economic independence women gain through the access to micro loans will spill over and allow them to speak up to renegotiate inequalities in both the public and the private domain.

The second assumption is that gender inequality is a social, not an economic issue (Elson and Catagay, 2000). Such assumption is in line with the neoclassical economic belief that the market provides the perfect mechanism for wealth and resource distribution among rational individuals who freely pursue their self-interest. To that end, 'the desirable entrepreneurial woman exercises choice and agency in identifying a market opportunity; brings together the necessary resources of education, experience, connections, and finance; starts a business; and overcomes obstacles' (Altan-Olcay, 2015: 6).

When it comes to entrepreneurial advancement or success, however, both assumptions appear to disregard the existing structural inequalities and issues with resource distribution in the society, in general, and intersectionality of gender inequality, in particular. They also presuppose that the market is gender neutral. As a result, there is a discrepancy between the imagined, desirable woman beneficiary of a micro loan and the actual woman who reaches out for microfinance assistance. The imagined beneficiary has access to certain economic capital, education and training, as well as support system in regards to household reproductive responsibilities (ibid.: 2).

Case in point here is the abovementioned fact that the actual main beneficiaries of MI-BOSPO's micro loans have been 'insecurely employed women'.[92] In fact, interviews with micro loan officers at various MFIs around BiH revealed that the loans are primarily used for subsistence purposes. A common theme that emerged from the discussions with numerous female micro loan users was the efforts to ensure 'normal life' for themselves and their families. Hatidja (36) from Tuzla, who works as a cosmetics dealer and is the family breadwinner, says that she is satisfied with her business as 'it provides for a normal life'.[93] When asked to explain what 'normal life' entails for her, Zehreta (52) from Brčko defines it as the ability to repay the loans, buy food and prepare preserves for the winter.[94] 'It means not eating beans every day', says Sabaha (51) from the village of Ogradjenovac, who sells homemade rakija, preserves, milk, and fruits.[95] 'Normal life' for many of them, in fact, refers to their ability to affect their own destiny and life course. 'Nobody makes a lot of money. But we have learned to live with little money, so we know how to make do with whatever we have', explains Dijana.[96] These experiences indicate that microfinance for women is more of a coping, than an entrepreneurially empowering mechanism for Bosnian women. International agencies, such as the International Labour Organisation and UNHCR, recognise that microfinance is indeed about aiding people's survival, noting that 'the only possible

[92] Personal interview with Nejira Nalic, founder of BOSPO and director of MI-BOSPO, Sarajevo, 22 November 2011.
[93] Personal interview, Tuzla, 31 May 2012.
[94] Personal interview, Brčko, 21 June 2012.
[95] Personal interview, Ogradjenovac, 21 June 2012.
[96] Personal interviews, Srebrenik, 24 May 2012.

alternative people may turn to in order to earn enough for survival is self-employment through private entrepreneurship' (Goronja, 1999, quoted in Pupavac, 2005: 400).

This additionally points to a disregard for the erosion of state welfare and employment provisions resulting from the international structural adjustment policies that have become part and parcel of the development component in post-war societies and relatedly, the liberal peacebuilding project. Even more so, it points to a disregard for the disproportional impact that these policies have had on women. Namely, under the pretext of 'good governance' and echoing the neoliberal ethos of the so-called liberal peacebuilding consensus, foreign intervention actors and agencies have conditioned economic recovery loans on reforms that have devastated the social sector. The World Bank in particular has been a strong advocate of user charges for education and health services. Unsurprisingly, such curtailment of state responsibility has been promoted as a form of empowerment, self-help and participation, whereby beneficiaries 'get value for their money' (Abrahamsen, 2000: 58). In reality, however,

> Adjustment programmes necessarily mean fewer state services, especially to the poor. [As a result,] the burden of caring for the sick, feeding the poor and so on has increasingly been transferred from paid state officials to unpaid local labour (mostly women). […] By contrast, local people, and women in particular, are expected to make up for the shortfall in public services, to be able to put in more working hours to compensate for the withdrawal of state provisions (ibid.: 58-59).

The above, as feminist economists have long argued, accurately showcases the gender bias of the structural adjustment policies, which operate on the assumption that households can infinitely cope with the withdrawal of the state and the transfer of caring

activities from the public to the private sector (Rankin, 2002: 10). Moreover, given that globally women, irrespective whether they are employed or not, provide a larger part of caregiving and household labour and that poor women, such as those targeted by microfinance, are additionally unable to outsource household responsibilities (Altan-Olcay, 2015: 5), women microentrepreneurs in post-conflict societies are faced with time poverty (Warren, 2003). 'We have to work, there's no time for breaks', says Ćamila whose day, filled with both household and microbusiness tasks, starts at 6 a.m. and does not end until 1 a.m.[97] Mirsada (55) from Odžak is the sole provider for her family. Explaining that she does not like men around the kitchen, she wakes up every morning at 5 a.m. to prepare lunch for the day and tidy up the house, so that by 7 a.m. she is ready to go to the market where she sells preserves and fruit juices.[98] Her day continues with household tasks, including taking care of her husband's ailing father.

Considering the small loans that the MFIs offer and that women are eligible for, along with the high interest rates and the low purchasing power in BiH, coupled with women's caregiving responsibilities and time poverty, it is unlikely that micro loans would result in initiating anything bigger than a small-scale household production and engaging in petty trading. Encouraging women's, and in particular lower-income women's labour force participation through entrepreneurship, as feminist sociologists and economists have indicated, reduces women's empowerment to a mere participation in the labour force (Beneria, 1999, quoted in Altan-Olcay, 2014: 239).

[97] Personal interview, Srebrenik, 24 May 2012.
[98] Personal interview, Zavidovići, 15 June 2012.

In sum, microfinance for women in post-conflict societies, including BiH, boils down to an insecure employment possibility for women in their quest for 'normal lives' for them and their families. In other words, women's involvement in microenterprises is 'a form of disguised unemployment' (Pupavac, 2005: 402). With the state welfare systems shrinking as part of the structural adjustment policies, microfinance for women plays the role of a safety net, prevents the harmful policies from being challenged (Roy, 2010; Weber, 2002) and normalises a number of neoliberal norms (Altan-Olcay, 2014: 237). In such circumstances not only do female entrepreneurs experience the double burden and related time poverty, but women's agency is atomised, isolated, prevented from possible collectivisation and removed from the public domain.

5.5 INTERSECTING

The peacebuilding endeavours in any post-conflict society are based on a redistribution of power and resources. Thus the new order holds the prospects for either transforming gender relations or reinforcing the existing hierarchies (Hudson, 2011: 9). Zeroing in on microfinance for women as a post-conflict tool, it becomes clear how deeply rooted it is within a liberal gender mainstream approach. This suggests that gender has simply been implanted onto already existing power structures (ibid.). In other words, liberal feminism focuses on 'amending gender discrimination, while leaving unchallenged the normative construct of the woman' and refusing to connect 'gender issues with larger forms of oppression' (Sa'ar, 2005: 689).

In the case of BiH, there has been a triple burden complicating gender relations to a great extent: the strong patriarchal tradition and related repatriarchalisation and retraditionalisation in the post-war period, a number of depoliticisations that took place during the communist period and the war causing outburst of exclusionary identitarianisms (Husanović 2010: 127). Thus far, there has been no repoliticisation of gender in BiH. The political discourse in the country and the region has been 'historically grounded in the traditional folkloristic or epic imaginaries', with the system of 'heroic patriarchy' above and beyond at the core of its 'symbolic matrices and communication models' (ibid.: 125). Given the ethno-nationalist regimes of power and knowledge that constitute the presently dominant framework, not much has changed in post-war BiH.

The introduction of microfinance for women in post-Dayton BiH has seen little problematisation and consideration of the various oppressive facets of the systems the targeted women are embedded in. Its two main goals, reduction of family poverty and empowerment and gender equality through entrepreneurship are noticeable indicators of this. The research has shown that women who are micro loan users consider family support to be absolutely essential for their utilisation of a micro loan. In addition, given the socioeconomic constraints women in BiH are faced with, as explained above, when engaging in any form of microenterprises women are often forced to rely on family ties and support, in addition to usually only being able to focus on activities that perpetuate isolation within the household.

Telling her story, 46-year old Dragica from Bijeljina explains that she sees herself primarily as a mother and a wife, not as an entrepreneur. Referring to both the individual and the symbolic level, she says:

> It was tough working for someone else for little money. And our children were growing up fast and we couldn't make ends meet. So we took a credit. First the husband, so we could renovate the house, and then me, so we could buy pigs. It was out of necessity. So I am not pretending to be some big time business owner when we really do this to ensure a normal life for our family. When the family is fed, my heart is fed. You know how it is, as a mother, as a wife, you would do anything to see your family happy.

At the structural level, in a less explicit manner, she spoke of the difficulty of raising children without any support. At the same time, however, like all other female informants who used micro loans and faced time poverty, she constantly referred to not working.

> When the children were younger, it was harder. I had no one to leave them with, so of course I stayed at home. To be fair, it's not like anyone was offering me a job, but I couldn't look for one anyway. So I stayed at home. And there is so much work around the house. Then we took the loans, so I had to work even harder, to pay them back. You have to help the children with their homework, you have to make lunch, clean the house, feed the pigs, clean for the pigs, and by the time you turn around, the day has passed and you have done nothing. I can only imagine how those women you work manage this. Or the women who have time to go out for walks and coffee with their female friends. How do they find the time? They are either magicians, very rich or bad housewives.

Here, too, like in the case with the loan repayments, there was gossip about which women in the neighbourhood had time to go out of their households and be social or active. Effectively, Dragica's agency beyond the household was non-existent and she

argued that she no time to be both a good mother and wife and somehow societally active on top of everything.

This exposes the contradiction between the ideological underpinnings of the microfinance programmes encouraging women's entrepreneurship, whereby women are thought of as rational and self-sufficient individuals who have entrepreneurial capacities to earn a living (Altan-Olcay, 2014: 240) and the reality on the ground, whereby women are embedded in a system that makes relying on, but also providing for the family essential. Importantly then, as highlighted by previous examples, women's microfinancial activity in BiH is not driven by their entrepreneurial potential, but by their entrepreneurial obligation to their families. Furthermore, it hints at the wrongful dichotomy present in most economic analyses, presupposing a clear boundary between self-interested actions in the marketplace and self-sacrifice or altruistically driven behaviour in regards to one's family (England, 1993). As the Bosnian case has shown, women take micro loans to ensure, even if only temporary, employment for themselves, but in doing so they are most often driven by concerns that relate to family wellbeing.

The logic behind microfinance for women, thus, turns a blind eye to the multiple localities and temporalities that Bosnian women occupy in the post-war period. On the one hand, informed both by tradition and the past war experience of family-targeted violence, forming and maintaining a family has become even more important for women and a valuable site where women's agency is exercised. It could, of course, be argued that these practices in fact reinforce structures of male domination, but any analysis of women's agency ought to take into consideration and avoid rendering invisible the

motivations, desires, and goals of those analysed. On the other hand, informed by their socioeconomic concerns for the future, in a system of declining social welfare and increased gendered caregiving burden, women decide to engage in microentrepreneurial activities to ensure a 'normal life' for themselves and their families.

The intersection of these two temporalities sees women's, in particular low-income women's agency silenced and removed from the public domain. To clarify, while women do find micro loans empowering in the realm of the family, the effect of that empowerment is diminished by the time poverty they face and the nature of economic activities they are engaged in, which are primarily confined within the household. This leaves very little room for any form of collective women's agency to emerge, for more stable economic independence to materialise, for greater cognisance of women as labourers to develop and for empowerment that challenges gender inequality in a meaningful way to occur.

CONCLUSION

The entry point of analysis for this chapter in its intersectional approach was gender as a system of power relations and inequality that affect the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society in a significant manner. With the primary focus in the post-war period in Bosnia being on ethnicity and related issues, gender (in)equality has hardly received any attention. In addition to that, existing gender hierarchies have been blatantly disregarded by the economic policies introduced as part and parcel of the liberal peacebuilding project. In that context, the primary aim of this chapter was to bring to the

fore the multiplicity of subjectivities that female recipients of a particular type of micro loans in Bosnia can have and the ways in which microfinance, as an initiative informed by the liberal peacebuilding consensus, can affect women's agency in post-war societies.

Set against the backdrop of micro loans for female entrepreneurs, the chapter highlighted the three levels of analysis: the level of identity construction, by looking at women's primary identification with their roles as mothers, wives, and sisters; the level of symbolic representations, by teasing out from women's testimonies the values and norms resulting in imageries of a financially responsible, family-oriented, frugal, and modest woman, within which the previously mentioned identities are constructed and embedded; and the level of social structures, by outlining the parallel processes of repatriarchalisation of the society and the erosion of state welfare and employment provisions as a result of the transition to market economy and the economic component of the liberal peacebuilding project, both of which have contributed to an increase in women's caregiving responsibilities and time impoverishment.

In addition to gender, two more categories were predominantly present in the women's narratives. One was the category of class, by most of them being 'unstably employed women' and undertaking subsistence activities to ensure 'normal life' for their families, in which context normal life primarily referred to having a home, being able to support the children's education, and being able to provide food for the family. In some case, 'normal life' was used in regards to their ability to affect their own lives. The other category that was somewhat present was age, or rather marital status.

The main conclusion of this chapter is that while women's agency and subjectivity can exist in a dependent relation with family, marriage, and motherhood, particularly in post-war societies, the type of women's agency that the microfinance for female entrepreneurs has encouraged in the existing system in Bosnia is an atomised agency, isolated within the household and with that, removed from the public and the political domain.

6 'I DON'T NEED A LOT. I JUST NEED ENOUGH': SUBSISTENCE ECONOMIES

INTRODUCTION

The liberal peace is commonly seen as being based on several concepts that include 'democratisation, the rule of law, human rights, civil society, marketisation and development' (Richmond and Franks, 2008: 186). Many of these aspects to the liberal peacebuilding enterprise go unquestioned. In the case of BiH, for instance, while the main goal of the Dayton Peace Agreement was to end the war, which it did, and establish the political system of post-war BiH, almost through a 'footnote' of the document, it also chose the future path for the country's economy. Namely, the preamble of the new BiH Constitution, agreed in Dayton and unaltered to this date, aside of listing all the principles that the country is to uphold, also states the desire 'to promote the general welfare and economic growth through the protection of private property and the promotion of a market economy' (General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995).

Nevertheless, marketisation of a post-conflict society ignores the fact that war leads to changes in the employment, production and prices, all of which have destabilising effects on the country's economy. In other words, '[t]he ensuing collapse of market entitlements for large groups of people makes it highly dangerous to rely exclusively on the market to allocate resources, set prices and fix factor incomes' (Nafziger, 1996: 45–47). To that end, the liberal peacebuilding not only ignores the

socioeconomic problems a society is faced with in the aftermath of a war, but further adds salt to the wound by increasing the vulnerability of certain sectors of the population. Rajagopal (2006) concludes that development, and by proxy peacebuilding efforts have caused further division through 'social costs, through such devices as forced privatisation of key national industries and increased unemployment, speculative bubbles in international finance transactions that have massive impact on real estate and housing markets, displacements of vast populations, great waves of migrations including to urban areas, elimination of subsidies for food and services and the introduction of user fees'.

The link between socioeconomic inequality and conflict or political violence has long been studied, with most scholars agreeing that there is a positive linear relationship between the two (Muller, 1995; Nafziger and Auvinen, 2002; Russett, 1964). That is, there is a scholarly consensus that inequality produces conflict. At the same time, little attention has been paid to what role historical structures of class and inequality can play in peacebuilding processes. The vast majority of the post-war economic statebuilding and peacebuilding efforts since the end of the Cold War, informed by neoliberal logic, have focused on creating capable governing institutions and liberalising markets. However, this is based on the false premise that the war has left a clean slate, including various inequalities, mentalities, traditions and priorities from before, and what was left was a *tabula rasa* which can be filled in accordance with the current agenda (Gilbert, 2006: 17). Research, nevertheless, suggests that the war in actuality accelerates the

on-going processes of socioeconomic differentiation and class formation (Cramer, 2008).

Taking class as the entry point for an intersectional analysis of the experiences and lived realities of people who are in one way or another involved in subsistence and informal economic activities, this chapter presents empirics from the research undertaken among the traders at the infamous Arizona market in Brčko, the taxi drivers at various locations around the country, as well as among neighbours, whereby the concept of *komšiluk* (neighbourhood) provides a subsistence basis for many.

6.1 SOCIALIST PAST AND SENSIBILITIES

The remains of the previous socialist system seem to be a crucial part of today's Bosnian and Herzegovinian society and are critically important in the shaping of the lived experiences, knowledges, and sensibilities of the people who continue to dominate all spheres of life in Bosnia (Kurtović, 2010). 'Certain socialist values, as well as "old" understandings of ethics, politics, unity, are often an integral part of the post-war expectations, hopes and fears, that frequently conflict with the experiences from the war and the post-war period' (ibid.). As a result, we witness a clash between these values and the emerging practices and developments, with them co-existing awkwardly along certain neoliberal practices.

But two of the many examples where one can notice the influence of the socialist past are people's mentalities when it comes to the functioning of the public institutions, as well as the economy. Regarding the former, it is not uncommon to come across

elderly civil servants whose approach is still based on an assumption of the centrality of the state and the role it plays in the funding and the functioning of the various institutions. One example includes the closing of the National Museum in Sarajevo. Namely, a few years ago it was decided that only a certain portion of the museum budget would be covered by the state, while the rest should come from various projects that the management of the museum secures. With that turn of events, aside of being responsible for the cultural aspects of running the museum, the management was expected to act managerially and entrepreneurially in securing funds too. However, assuming that the state is responsible for the functioning of the cultural institutions in the country, as it always has been, the director of the museum refused to seek external funds, which ultimately led to the closing of the museum (Lovaković, 2012).[99]

As for the latter, the mentality of subsistence economy, invoking the notion of 'normal life' and of having 'enough' is still widely present in the Bosnian society. This yearning of most of the ordinary people in BiH for 'normal life' is due to two reasons. One is the already mentioned socialist past. The other is that, in addition to undergoing the war-to-peace transition, Bosnia has also been in somewhat of a limbo that the transition from planned economy to market economy presented. As Jansen (2015) very illustratively and in detail explains, most people live in perpetual expectation for things and their situations to change. This yearning was a common theme that emerged from the discussions with many people living both in urban and in rural areas. They shared a goal of ensuring 'normal life' for themselves and their families. The notion of 'normal life'

[99] Personal interview with OHR representatives, Sarajevo, 7 November 2012.

itself, however, is unclear. In most cases it relates to food safety, healthcare, education and other basic social services. In that sense, the common struggle and goal of survival or 'normal life' that the people from the same socioeconomic stratum experience appears to have offered a point of commonality, on which isolated number of communities have built small islands of solidarity.

In addition, based on the research with the groups presented in this chapter, but not only, I would argue that the notion of 'normal life' also reference to the lost sense of agency, in particular among people who lived during Yugoslav times. The nature of the former governing regime notwithstanding, it appears that most people felt more in control of their own lives, and in addition to that were able to be active contributors to the society, at that time than what they feel now. This tendency to associate normalcy with a sense of agency is not uncommon in the post-socialist countries (see, for instance, Greenberg, 2011).

6.2 THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE ARIZONA MARKET

Located in the Brčko District, which has a special status, on the Tuzla-Orašje highway, which connects BiH with Croatia and Serbia, the market attracts shoppers from all parts of BiH, the former Yugoslav republics, as well as other places in Europe. The history of Arizona is telling, bringing together the international peacekeepers and the local population. Namely, the market started at a roadblock created by the Stablisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Soon, this checkpoint became an informal meeting place where cigarettes and cattle were traded and coffee was served at the roadside (Informal

Market Worlds, 2015). According to some accounts, the local commander in 1996 saw this as an opportunity for the previously warring parties to interact with each other and encouraged the establishment of a 'free-trade zone'. Consequently, SFOR soldiers set the basis for the largest informal market for goods in this part of Europe by clearing the mines, levelling the land and supplying the building materials. '[W]ith wooden huts, improvised stalls, smuggled goods and bootleg versions of brand-name goods', Arizona became a place where '[t]extiles, food, electronic products, building materials, cosmetics, car accessories and CDs could all be purchased at favourable prices' (ibid.). The market was both unregulated and protected, for which it became famous. Praising Arizona, where Bosniacs, Serbs, and Croats traded side by side, as the ultimate melting pot and a showcase of how market economy can contribute to the establishment of peace, the international community present in the country turned a blind eye to the illegal activities happening there. Arizona went from a 'poster child' to a 'basket case' once the attention of the wider international community was attracted by the human trafficking and prostitution taking place alongside the trading (Haynes, 2010: 1781). It soon became a well-known fact that many peacekeeping and other internationals were involved in 'purchasing sex, buying women, and sometimes even selling them' (ibid.: 1796). Just as all the hopes were being lost that this market could ever become regulated, the Brčko District announced an international tender for rebuilding a brand new market place where Arizona would be located. The then High Representative Paddy Ashdown officially opened the market in 2004. Since then, most of the illegal activities have been eliminated and the traders have been legally registered.

Nevertheless, what remains at stake at Arizona is 'the distinction between the formal, neoliberal, and the informal, traditional or transitional trade of petty vendors', and 'the morally condemned, criminal networks that underlie the market', but even more so 'the differentiation between subsistence and an unchecked accumulation of profit' (Jašarević, 2007: 296). What is so unique about Arizona is that, in the words of Larisa Jašarević (ibid.: 292–293), it

> speaks bluntly of the ongoing reshuffling of the Bosnian economy away from formal production to informal trade, of social fluidity outside the clear markers of urban and rural and away from ethnic or national distinctions […] At Arizona, traders call for equality and welfare as well as the kind of independence that the Yugoslav socialist state bestowed on the landowners, whether producing peasants, peasant workers or urbanite landowners making weekend pilgrimages to their land […] Thus, the traders do not merely reinvent customary (socialist, peasant) expectations but instead invent novel customs and claims.

This is not to say that those that are profit-driven are rare, but they are also looked down on by a large part of the traders at the market. Spending time among the traders, it is impossible not to notice how those people are perceived. 'Those that want summer houses, and jeeps, and apartments, those are always easily irritable and are bothered by everyone; the rest of us, we do hang out', says a middle-aged female trader from Srebrenik.[100] The sentiment among most traders is the same. 'I have earned enough, I do not need more; to have enough to cover the costs, and to have for food, that is all I need', says an elderly male trader from Brčko.[101] From the many discussions with the traders, the sentiment is overwhelming that they only invest in regaining the

[100] Personal interview with an Arizona trader, Arizona, 19 June 2012.
[101] Personal interview with an Arizona trader, Arizona, 14 November 2012.

basic things and the commodities they used to have, before the war, such as having an apartment, a modest car, maybe even being able to go on a holiday; simply regaining some kind of a 'normal life', as they say.

In their quest for 'normal life', the traders employ various strategies to elude state control, such as employing unregistered workers and using ever more sophisticated ways to import goods, to name a few. The estimate was that in 2007, for example, there were some 30 million US dollars in unpaid taxes and on-going unrecorded trade (ibid.: 286). Many of the traders have unregistered employees or have two booths, which are in actuality two separate entities, registered as one company. 'I am the one always trading here, but I cannot register. If I register as an employee, they will cut the pension I have inherited from my husband. How will I survive then?' rhetorically asks a trader from Srebrenik.[102] The priorities between the more elderly traders and the younger ones differ slightly in the concerns regarding pensions and healthcare.

'We eat beans every day, that is how good we have it. I will not be able to feed my children if I had to register a separate company on top of everything', adds another, a mother of two.[103] 'We manage somehow, cutting from one place, sewing at another. What has to be done, has to be done. [The authorities] do their job, we do ours. We do not have a choice', explains their between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place situation another one of the traders.[104]

[102] Personal interview with an Arizona trader, Arizona, 19 June 2012.
[103] Personal interview with an Arizona trader, Arizona, 19 June 2012.
[104] Personal interview with an Arizona trader, 20 June 2012.

Seina, who is from Srebrenik, has been working at Arizona for 13 years and she self-identifies as an Arizona petty trader.

> I am a petty trader. I sell petty things – socks, underwear, towels, small things like that. My brother has a booth near me, over there, so we go to get our stuff from Hungary and Turkey together. It's easier when you have someone. But someone you can trust.[105]

When it comes to the symbolic, she says:

> Well, I have my own customers, other people have their own, there is enough for everyone, everyone wants different things. No one will get richer, no one will get poorer. I don't need more, just enough for some kind of a normal life, to have food on the table, to have a salary. If I earn 20 KM in the day, that's enough to eat and drink, so I go home.[106]

Finally, at the structural level, she talked about the economic system within which she functions.

> My prices are fair, I think. On the basic cost, which includes customs, food and travel, I add some 10%. That's fair, right? Well, nothing is fair these days, but I think this is fair. Both my husband and I work, but I am registered as employed in our independent trade store, that's what they call it, and he is not. He is a war veteran, so he will lose that if I register him. Then I will have to bump up my prices 20%.[107]

She laughs at the end. Here, too, as in the case with the fake registration along the IEBL, the topic of non-registered workers does not seem taboo. To the contrary, it seemed like the default option for most traders and it is openly spoken about. In fact, in

[105] Personal interview with an Arizona trader, Arizona, 19 June 2012.
[106] ibid.
[107] ibid.

terms of meta-data, some traders made snarky comments about why anyone would possibly risk another income, such as a pension, if they could simply avoid registering that person.

6.3 'WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WHAT THE PRICE IS?"' THE LIVED REALITIES OF BOSNIAN TAXI DRIVERS

The same mentality as at the Arizona market is noticeable among the taxi drivers in many places in BiH. For instance, in places, such as Tuzla, Srebrenik, Brčko, Doboj, and Jajce, there are fixed prices of the taxi ride, which in some cases have been established by the local municipality, while in others through an agreement of the association of taxi drivers. The dialect aside, a certain sign that someone is an outsider to the town is asking how much the taxi ride costs. What is interesting, however, is the approach of the taxi drivers towards such fixed prices with many of them considering it to be 'enough', explaining that everyone's standards are low these days, or that they are not going to get richer or poorer because of those few markas.

Another curious example is the silent agreement that exists among the taxi drivers in some places, such as Brčko, over who covers what spot (e.g. bus station, hospital, city centre, etc.), even though they each work for themselves.[108] There is also co-operation among them, with some taxi drivers passing on customers to others if they are not in that area at the moment of the call, even if the customer agrees to wait. 'Let him earn something today too, I have already made enough', says one of them.[109] The

[108] Personal interviews with taxi drivers, Brčko, 19 June 2012, 21 June 2012, 14 November 2012.
[109] Personal interview with a taxi driver, Brčko, 21 June 2012.

co-operation in Doboj is arranged by the local municipality, with them having divided the taxi drivers in four groups of six drivers, each group covering a different location every day. 'Those that are at the train station today will earn less, but tomorrow when we rotate they will be at the bus station and they will compensate for the previous bad day', explains a Doboj taxi driver. 'We have to co-operate so that there is something for all of us, even if each of us is registered as a separate firm', he adds.[110]

Their specific intersectional locality is perhaps best explained through the example linked to the existence of two markets in BiH, an RS and an FBiH one, with different regulations and with different authorities. As a result of the two markets, those taxi drivers that are registered in one entity, for instance, are not allowed to collect passengers from the other entity. The road between Doboj (RS) and Teslić (RS) passes through the Federation, and if one was to take passengers from one place in RS to the Federation or to the other place in RS, that taxi driver is not permitted to collect passengers from the federal part on her way back. Yet, despite the strict controllers and being aware of the risks, taxi drivers still collect passengers in the other entity if an opportunity presents itself. 'I have a family to feed. I cannot just pass on a chance like that. If they catch me, I will pay the fine, but if they do not, I have earned something today', says a Doboj cab driver.[111] This, too, naturally is explained through the quest for 'normal life'. At the same time, however, there appears to be no opposition to the divided economy, as a result of which the above fines exist, or the overall division of the country. 'What did we fight for if we now go back to living all together', remarks another

[110] Personal interview with a taxi driver, Doboj, 21 November 2012.
[111] Personal interview with a Doboj taxi driver, Doboj, 21 November 2012.

taxi driver who has the same attitude to collecting passengers from the other entity.[112] The sentiment of their ethnic belonging is ever stronger when they speak of anything that relates to the recent past, yet the socioeconomic concerns that relate to 'normal life' pop up immediately once they turn their gazes to the future.

6.4 KOMŠILUK

The phenomenologist Schutz (1967) distinguishes between four different types of spatial and temporal intersubjectivity: predecessors, successors, contemporaries and consociates. The last ones, in reference to people living at the same time and occupying the same space, are of interest here. Consociates are people who inhabit the same place and space, and live with each other. In the words of Carrithers (2008: 167),

> Consociates are people we grow old with, whose lives we participate in, whom we know intimately and in their own terms. We are entwined with them; we are able to join in their absolutely individual life story, and to that extent, we see beyond any generic designation to particularities of attitude, experience, and reaction. We have, with consociates, a 'thou-relationship', an intimacy and mutual knowledge of one another face to face, and a 'we-relationship', in that we have experiences in common with them.

This is precisely where the phenomenon of *komšiluk* (neighbourhood) fits in. In pre-war Yugoslavia, places of residence were usually allocated by employers. Aside of the ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, this also resulted in neighbourhoods, settlements and apartment blocks that were populated by working class families, usually of the same socioeconomic status. Given the relative poverty in Socialist Yugoslavia,

[112] Personal interview with a Doboj taxi driver, Doboj, 20 July 2012.

neighbourhoods were also structures for people to collectively solve practical problems they were facing. To that end, *komšiluk* also played an important role in people's coping strategies at the time. As Slavenka Drakulić (1993: 183) notes, '[b]ecause there is no such thing as a self-sufficient communist household, you depend fatally on your neighbour for all kinds of favours, from borrowing coffee, … or cursing politics… to getting your child enrolled in a better school'. In that sense, the tradition of *komšiluk* promoted and encouraged cooperation among consociates, irrespective of their ethnic identity. *Komšiluk*, to that end, implies a certain level of closeness and community, a group of consociates. It 'consists of bonds, relations and imagination that are cultivated in the flows of everyday sociality' (Henig, 2012: 10).

The pre-war stories of harmonious neighbourhood life aside, the traumatic experiences of the war have taken their toll in terms of trust between neighbours too. The war, along with the corruption, the competitiveness, and struggle for bare life that came in the aftermath of the war and the never-ending transition to liberal economy have resulted in a general decline in trust and solidarity among people in BiH. As noted in the previous chapter, the Bosnian society is largely dominated by strong family ties.

Despite that trend, some neighbourhoods remain, as isolated as they may be, in-between spaces where solidarity is practiced. Being more prominent in rural areas, an important proviso regarding solidary neighbourhoods relates to the large migration of younger people to the country's urban centres. This has left such rural spaces primarily (re)created by and among elderly people, or at the very least people who lived together prior to the war and have a certain socioeconomic commonality, reflected in common

values and interests. The young people, on the other hand, remain by and large within the ethnic spaces. Thus most of those living in these pocketed spaces of solidarity are retired working-class people.

Fata from a village near Tuzla explains how she shares seeds with her Serbian neighbour, Anica, and how them facing similar challenges by living in the same village has brought them closer together. Similar examples can be found along the IEBL, either in the villages that the line runs through or those in its immediate proximity. Omar (65) from Trnovo explains how after the war some of his Serbian neighbours would not greet him, but he also adds that he understands them, since they lost close relatives in the war. 'But enough time has passed. Now I don't ever lock the door, we go to *kafana* together, we depend on each other with all the factories closed and most of the people having moved to the city', he clarifies.

To that end, Pickering (2007: 114) rightfully argues that *komšiluk* plays a more prominent role in the rural than in the urban areas, primarily due to those living in the latter having plurality of socialising opportunities beyond the neighbourhood, but also less time for socialising as a whole. In the rural areas, it is particularly common for neighbours to assist each other with different work and activities, but also to have a strong personal bond. This appears to be the case even in those villages and neighbourhoods with an ethnically heterogeneous composition. Along those lines, it has been argued that in heterogeneous rural areas the well-known everyday ritual of neighbourhood coffee visits has contributed to the promotion of practical exchanges, interethnic communication and multiple collective identifications (Bringa, 1995: 66).

While, as Stefansson notices, working or having coffee together does not necessarily symbolise deep love or friendship, it is nonetheless an expression of respect and an acknowledgement of a certain commonality (Stefansson, 2010: 68–69), which in some cases is a shared socioeconomic status.

The basis that shared socioeconomic concerns provide is perhaps best illustrated by the statement of an interlocutor from Drvar, a predominantly Serbian town located in a predominantly Croatian canton in the FBiH, who said: 'We no longer care who is Serbian and who is Croatian; we will all likely have to leave the town because of unemployment anyway. We are united in our struggle to ensure subsistence. United in our tragedy'.[113]

The reliance on each other within the neighbourhood has, *inter alia*, been affected by the decline of the state welfare. Consequently, in BiH people often rely on their neighbours for assistance in the caretaking responsibilities, in particular in instances when their immediate families do not live nearby. 'I have known little Marko since he was a baby. Of course I help. His parents have to work. Imagine in this situation to have his mom not working. They would never make ends meet'. This is the sentiment of 62-year old Ermira, a Bosnian Muslim, who takes care of 9-year old Marko, the son of her Croatian neighbours, while the parents are at work. In this sense, the fact that many people depend on their neighbours to ensure mere subsistence has contributed to komšiluk providing a platform for the development and nurturing of solidarity, be it inter- or intra-ethnically.

[113] Personal interview with a Drvar citizen, Drvar, 24 November 2012.

Another important subsistence dimension of *komšiluk* is the social capital associated with it. It is important to distinguish that 'social capital' here is not used in reference to the romanticised notion as presented by the major international donor agencies, whereby '[s]ocial capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together' (World Bank, 2016). The World Bank website goes further to list the main arenas within which a person's social capital is generated. Among others, it lists 'communities', explaining that '[s]ocial interactions among neighbours, friends and groups generate social capital and the ability to work together for a common good. This is especially important among the poor as social capital can be used as a substitute for human and physical capital' (ibid.).

To the contrary, drawing on Marxian literature, and in particular the work of Pierre Bourdieu, social capital is not to be understood as a benign category, but rather as a site of possible conflict and contestation. In that sense, social capital is not generated by individuals, but rather exists within the social structure. Hence, dependent on their positionality, different individuals experience associational life differently, with unequal distribution of the costs and benefits among the individuals participating (Bourdieu, 1977).

Bourdieu's critique goes further to suggest that economism should not be understood merely as economic practice, but rather as economics of practice, where

those involved also possess certain social, i.e. symbolic capital through shared cultural norms and social networks (ibid.: 177-178). To that end, Bourdieu recognises the mutual embeddedness of economic and social life and highlights the ideological dimensions of social capital, as well as the modes of domination that are inherent in some forms of reciprocity and association. For instance, regarding gifting practices within a patronage system, he (1997: 195) notes:

> Goods are for giving. The rich man is "rich so as to be able to give to the poor," say the Kabyles. This is an exemplar y disclaimer: because giving is also a way of possessing (a gift which is not matched by a counter-gift creates a lasting bond, restricting the debtor's freedom and forcing him to adopt a peaceful, cooperative attitude); because in the absence of any juridical guarantee, or any coercive force, one of the few ways of "holding" someone is to keep up a lasting asymmetrical relationship such as indebtedness, and because the only recognized, legitimate form of possession is that achieved by dispossessing oneself – i.e., obligation, gratitude, prestige, or personal loyalty. Wealth, the ultimate basis of power, can exert power, and exert it durably, only in the form of symbolic capital…

Importantly for this analysis, he suggests that among equals, gifting practices and acts of generosity in some way provide an economic guarantee since they oblige a return. While somewhat instrumental in the approach and not leaving much room for acts of solidarity, this kind of understanding of social capital is important in highlighting the mutual interconnectedness and collective reliance that the nexus of class, when viewed horizontally, and social capital set the basis for. In that regard, the dependency of equals on each other is closely connected to the understanding of *komšiluk* as a coping mechanism.

6.5 INTERSECTING

Employing Schutz's understanding of consociates as a type of intersubjectivity whereby they are people living with each other – ones that have a 'we relationship', the everyday predicaments analysed here through the different examples shed light on how through everyday experiences, this dimension of life that is often seen as fuelling conflict – class structure – could create experiential conditions of possibility to overcome ethnic divisions and conflict.

For instance, there is a sense of commonality among the traders at the Arizona market. While a competition does exist, many of the traders discuss and agree on the prices of similar goods. 'We used to come here as Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs. Now we all come here merely as people, wizards really, who try to make ends meet and feed their families. We all struggle for a normal life. Nothing more, nothing less', comments a middle-aged man while sipping from his coffee and chatting with a neighbouring trader.[114]

Longing for the former Yugoslavia, the 60-year old cab driver Petar from East Sarajevo says: 'We, the little people, are ignored by this state. Why would I be bothered by someone being Bosniac or Croat? For me what is important is to have something to eat, to have some kind of a normal life, as do most little people of other ethnicities too. And we have nowhere to complain but to each other'.[115] His colleague Amer from Sarajevo shares the sentiment and adds: "It is the politicians. They divided the people so they can control us better. We have to come together and fight. We, the little people'.[116]

In another example, Nikola (50) from a village near Brčko says that he fixes his neighbour's tractor for free; 'irrespective of him being Bosniac', as he says. 'Then fall comes and he and his whole family come to the field and help us pick the grapes. That's what we do, we help each other. We are no politicians, we are ordinary folks for whom

[114] Personal interview with an Arizona trader, 25 June 2012.
[115] Field notes, East Sarajevo, 9 November 2012.
[116] Field notes, Sarajevo, 14 November 2012.

it's not economically smart to stay apart. We just want to live a normal life again', explains Nikola. Much of the people in his neighbourhood seem to share the same view on exchanging and free-of-charge providing goods and services.

CONCLUSION

This chapter grappled with examples of subsistence economies around Bosnia and Herzegovina, whereby the quest for 'normal life' and the shared socioeconomic concerns have become the basis for solidarity. The examples have also highlighted people's intersectionality, as well as the temporalities that they occupy, with ethnicity often revoked in reference to the past experiences and socioeconomic commonalities brought to the fore in regards to the future.

Like the other chapters, this chapter, too, attempted to present the three levels of an intersectional analysis. Attention was, on the one hand, paid to the structural level, by explaining the somewhat hybrid economic system that exists in post-war Bosnia, with socialist values and practices co-existing with regulations and rules that encourage the establishment of a market economy. At the symbolic level, on the other hand, the references to the Yugoslav times teased out some of the norms and values that produce the localities and inform the behaviours of the people whose lives were subject of analysis. Finally, at the individual level, in the analysed cases the identity constructions did relate to the structural and the symbolic level in having the socioeconomic concerns at their core.

In addition to class, the other two categories that were present in the people's testimonies were ethnicity, especially in relation to co-operating economically across ethnic lines, and age, especially in relation to concerns regarding pensions and healthcare access.

Ultimately, the main conclusion of this chapter is that in their longing for 'normal life', many of the people whose experiences were analysed, also long for their lost sense of agency and the past feeling of being able to actively participate in the shaping

of one's own life and society. At the same time, however, in a curious way some of these people seem to exercise their agency through solidary actions with neighbours or fellow traders and taxi drivers, albeit not always in the public domain.

CONCLUSIONS

'Don't, don't, don't live under this dream that the West is going to come in and sort this problem out. Don't dream dreams!' This is the infamous advice that Lord David Owen, the European Union's chief peace negotiator in the former Yugoslavia at the time, gave to Sarajevans and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina during his visit to the besieged city in December 1992. Many Bosnians and Herzegovinians still remember this, as the footage from that statement has been shown widely and frequently.[117] In fact, several of my informants in BiH referred to this statement when talking about the international involvement in the country.

Despite Lord Owen's sentiment, however, the West ultimately not only intervened in bringing the war to an end, but it has also been heavily involved in the country since then. Perhaps the three main ways of foreign involvement in Bosnia since the war come in the form of: (1) the Office of the High Representative, who still has executive powers, even if not frequently used; (2) the Special Representative of the EU to the country, who is also the Head of the EU Delegation and is arguably the most influential diplomat in BiH at present, given the country's aspirations for EU membership, and (3) the large amounts of foreign assistance, both human and financial, that have been sent to the country since the war to aid its 'permanent transition'.[118]

[117] This statement was also included in the lyrics of a song titled 'Democracy' by the popular Bosnian music band Dubioza Kolektiv, which provides a strongly worded critique of the international involvement in ending the war and establishing the new political system.

[118] By some accounts, Bosnia has received more foreign aid per capita than any European country under the post-World War II Marshall Plan (Pasic, 2011). The US alone provided more than 2 billion dollars in aid in the period 1993-2010 (Woehrel, 2013: 9). Initially, the foreign assistance went to rebuilding and

In addition to the foreign policy and financial attention, the country has also received a lot of scholarly attention. There is no shortage of research and studies on various issues related to Bosnia, the Bosnian war, and post-war Bosnia in particular. Nevertheless, with most of the conflicts in the post-Cold War era being by and large perceived as ethnic or nationalist, the dominant analytical framework used for most conflicts, with Bosnia being no exception, has been one characterised by 'groupism' (Brubaker, 2002), whereby (ethnic) groups are conceived of as entities and examined as actors in their own right.

With the war in Bosnia understood in ethnic terms, that is, as a conflict between different ethnic groups, the Dayton Peace Agreement defined the post-war state as somewhat of a conglomerate of the three ethnicities, which in the Constitution are referred to as 'constitutive peoples', the Bosniacs, the Serbs, and the Croats. Consequently, ethnicity appears to be the most significant political category, superior even to the state, and to have the greatest claim to universal value and significance in the country. It is therefore perhaps no surprise that we witness the aforementioned tendency of ethnic 'groupism' and that policy-makers, peacebuilding practitioners, as well as many scholars and journalists continue to approach ethnicity as a fixed, internally homogenous and often mappable category. Along those lines, peace in Bosnia has been conceptualised as a mirror image of the war, with the peacebuilding

reconstruction, but since 2000, the main focus has been on issues of governance and institutions (Pasic, 2011). Even though the aid has significantly decreased in recent years, the EU remains the largest donor. For instance, for 2013 the Union had budgeted 111.8 million euros for political and economic reforms in BiH under its Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (Woehrel, 2013: 8).

efforts by and large being shaped around the goal of the three biggest ethnic groups coming together.

It is precisely this tendency that provided the initial spark for the main research question of the thesis, which is how the understanding of peace in ethnic terms affected different actors in Bosnia and post-war societies more broadly. The curiosity around this issue informed the other questions that led the research process: What kinds of subjectivity and agency are enacted as a result of an inter-ethnic understanding of peace and which ones are excluded and silenced? How does the discourse of peace understood in this manner, along with other liberal discourses of global governance, including market economy, enable and circumscribe agency within a post-war society in general and the Bosnian society in particular? And what relations and practices of inequality that shape people's lived experiences are introduced and consolidated in the process?

Grappling with these questions, the thesis is organised in six chapters, in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. The first chapter was a methodological one, importantly disclosing to the reader early on from what epistemological perspective the research was planned and undertaken, the data was gathered and interpreted, and ultimately, the thesis was written. It tackled issues of doing, interpreting, and writing ethnography. This chapter first explained the research choices and the fieldwork strategies that were used while conducing a ten-month ethnographic research in the 2009-2012 period, at multiple sites around Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the focus on Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Brčko, as well as their surroundings. The strategies included

participant observation, formal interviewing, intensive interviewing, and informal conversations, and the chapter elaborated on the use and value of each of these strategies. The other important aspect that the first chapter outlined was my own positionality as a post-Yugoslav female 'halfie' and the ways in which I believe it affected my research, interpretation, and access to people and narratives in the course of the fieldwork. In its last section, the methodological chapter discussed the challenges I faced regarding issues of representation of Bosnian voices as authentically as possible in writing about their lived realities.

The next chapter zeroed in on the debates and gaps in the existing literature, in particular the literature in Peace and Conflict Studies, which is where this thesis is positioned. The chapter explained the two so-called 'local turns' in peacebuilding literature and practice: the first one in reference to the focus that civil society, understood mainly as civil society organisations, received and the second in reference to the more recent turn to the 'local' everyday and agency in societies subject to international interventions. The latter turn and the debates within it is what this thesis aims to contribute to, thus the second chapter particularly engaged with this literature, identifying four main criticisms or weaknesses that the thesis addressed to a certain degree.

The third and longest chapter presented the theoretical and analytical bases of the thesis. Starting with an explanation of Pickering's (2007) argument about self-understanding on which the thesis built and expanded, this chapter particularly focused on contextualising the thesis in regards to the everyday and engaging with the two key

concepts used in the analysis – agency and intersectionality. The chapter then turned to the importance of intersectionality as a heuristic device and the ways in which an intersectional analysis could best capture the complexity of people's lived experiences, and in particular the lived experiences in post-war settings. Drawing upon feminist literature and specifically the work on Winker and Degele (2011), chapter 3 presented the multi-level model of analytical framework used in interpreting the data on three different levels: the level of individual identity constructions, the level of symbolic representations, and the level of social structures. This chapter also outlined how the different concepts interact with each other within the analytical model and defined the three main categories or systems of power relations analysed in the empirical chapters.

The remaining three chapters were empirical chapters, with each of them presenting one of the three case studies from Bosnia. All three empirical chapters shed light on the multiple positionalities people occupy and the multiple systems of power relations and inequality that are always at play. The case studies were chosen in relation to the three main categories around which life in Bosnia (and not only) is organised: ethnicity, gender, and class. Each of the three categories served as an entry point of analysis for a case study.

The fourth chapter, therefore, used ethnicity as a starting point. This chapter provided examples of the existing so-called 'ethnic spaces' in Bosnia and the mutual constitution of spatialisation and governmentality through metaphors and practices. Further exploring these spaces, which are relational, meaning that while being territorial in nature they are in a mutually constitutive relationship with the processes that define

them, the chapter showed how the relationalities provided an ordering system for both individual and collective thoughts, as well as perceptions and feelings. It then analysed the mechanisms of spatial governmentality used to manage the aforementioned ethnic spaces, which is dependent both on bureaucratic practices and regulations and on individual self-governance. Within such system, chapter 4 shed light on the lives, experiences, and agency of the people living near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line in particular. Zeroing on the intersections of ethnicity, class, and age, the chapter analysed people's views in relation to education, pensions, and healthcare and their attempts to navigate the complex governing system of post-Dayton Bosnia.

The next chapter started with gender as an entry point. Chapter 5 examined closely the lives of Bosnian women who had received micro loans aimed at promoting female entrepreneurship. Focusing on the intersections of gender, class, and age, this chapter brought to the fore the effects that microfinance for women as a post-conflict tool had in a patriarchal society with a declining welfare state. Furthermore, it presented the experiences of some of these women and their views on using the opportunity presented to them in the form of micro loans.

The third empirical and final chapter of the thesis, chapter 6, took class as the starting ordering system of power relations and inequality. Analysing the lives and practices of people involved in subsistence and informal economic activities, primarily in the form of petty trading at the Arizona market near Brčko and taxi driving, this chapter cast light on how the intersections of class, ethnicity, and age, affect people's lives and

agency in a field that was long regarded as a success case for the introduction of market economy in Bosnia, *inter alia*, as a vehicle for reconciliation.

The thesis has two main arguments. First, framing peace in inter-ethnic terms and focusing on ethnic groups as not only the main actors of social and political life, but also as homogeneous and stable entities, together with the economic 'arm' of the liberal peacebuilding enterprise, contribute to the deepening of inequalities and circumscribes agency of a significant part of the post-war society. In fact, it can be argued that ethnic peace and market economy as a peacebuilding mechanism are strange bedfellows, since the former is based on the assumption that a form of commonality can be produced around a shared ethnic discourse, which can subsume class differences and inequalities, while the latter is based on the assumption that market forces and the economic interest generated through and around market activities will make ethnicity less salient of a political cleavage. As the empirical chapters have shown, such approach to peacebuilding and the merging of the two exacerbates inequalities. This is specifically the case because social identities, in particular social identities in post-war societies, are always multifaceted and acknowledging solely one aspect of them, while ignoring others that are just as important, reinforces certain exclusionary practices and limits people's agency. As one of my key informants likes to point out, she is 'not just a Bosnian Muslim, but also a Bosnian woman',[119] which is something that the overall approach to peacebuilding in BiH has largely ignored.

[119] Field notes, Sarajevo, 30 April, 2012.

Second, *peace* for most people in post-war societies is synonymous to *normalcy* and *normal life*, which on the one hand means breaking away from the 'abnormality' of the 'permanent transitions' and longing for a better future, often in relation to the past socialist experiences, but on the other hand, it also importantly means better socioeconomic conditions and a sense of agency in their own lives and the broader processes. 'Normal life' was primarily defined in terms of employment, social welfare, living standards, and safety net. At the same time, however, a thread present in most informants' testimonies appeared around the lost self-perception of being active actors in their own lives and in the (re)making of the political and economic fabric of the post-war society. They argued that the everyday facts of their precarious lives made it impossible for them to have any agency whatsoever. In that sense, as Jessica Greenberg (2011: 89) notes in relation to her research on Serbia, '[a] loss of normalcy points to a loss of a particular understanding of agency, in which there is a correspondence between one's desires, the effects one's actions have in the world, and the ability to manage the reception of those actions by others'. This is an important point in a society where there has been an entrenchment of mass unemployment, resulting in the formation of a new 'underclass' and a vast number of permanently unemployed people without proper access to education, social security, and healthcare. In that sense, it comes as no surprise that the majority of the protesters in the February 2014 wave of social protests were young people, many of whom had no experience or expectation of what the exercise of agency could mean in a different system. This brings us to the question of depoliticisation of post-war societies. As David Chandler

(2006: 63), among others, has argued, Bosnia has experienced a 'double move of depoliticisation central to the export of democracy under the rubric of good governance'. He recognises the removal of politics from the peacebuilding process as the main reason for this. Politics in this sense follows Chantal Mouffe's (1996: 247) understanding who defines the political sphere as a sphere of struggle and contestation. Recognising the role played not only by the liberal peacebuilding approach in policy terms, but also by the dominant discourse of Bosnia's 'permanent transitions' and 'state of exception', this thesis adds another layer to the reasons for depoliticisation and casts light on the link between that process and socioeconomic concerns within post-war societies.

When analysed in terms of certain macro process, the findings of this study highlight the necessity for some of them to be rethought carefully. For instance, the peacebuilding processes and initiatives that are taking place around the globe following the same blueprint model ought to be rethought in light of the long-term needs of the citizens. As the chapter on ethnic spaces clearly shows, conceptualising peace solely in terms of political rights of the warring parties, in this case the three ethnic groups, potentially excludes large segments of the society not only from the peace processes, but from being active citizens altogether. In that sense, peacebuilding efforts often make a distinction between political and socioeconomic aspects, disregarding the reality that the socioeconomic, too, is political, as indicated by all three empirical chapters of the thesis. By divorcing the two, post-conflict societies where liberal democracy is promoted are faced with an 'empty democracy', where the political right to vote is irrelevant if it

comes at the cost of some form of a socioeconomic stability. It is precisely with this in mind that both the statebuilding and the peacebuilding processes must be rethought.

Relatedly, statebuilding and peacebuilding cannot be reconceptualised without reconsidering the neoliberal aspect of what is currently promoted as a liberal democratic peace. Individual self-reliance and economic efficiency in a free-market capitalist society is something that has been strongly promoted, even if not always entirely overtly, in post-war Bosnia. A clear example of this was an instance in Banja Luka, when I met with OSCE personnel working with the neighbourhood communities, *mjesne zajednice*, which are local, neighbourhood structures intended as the lowest level of government. The OSCE personnel, from Banja Luka themselves, complained that people were not very active and were not attending the meetings of the communities. When asked if they themselves were active participants of their own neighbourhood communities, they both shrug, saying they worked long hours and had no time to get involved after work. In that sense, by disregarding the time poverty that most Bosnian families experience in neoliberal times, the valuable statebuilding initiative fell on deaf ears. To that end, it is important to recognise how processes of neoliberalisation, in fact, impede on people's active contribution to governance processes.

Finally, the introduction of micro loans for women can be seen as a representation of the macro processes of financialisation, which go hand in hand not only with peacebuilding initiatives, but particularly with interventions at the periphery. That said, processes of financialisation in post-conflict societies, specifically those tools that are 'sold' under the banner of empowerment and contributing to equality must be

reconsidered in a holistic manner, acknowledging the existing patriarchal power structures. As the case of micro loans for Bosnian women shows, while assisting short-term, without challenging the existing structures or even creating the necessary conditions for it, and without considering the shape of the social state in the country, this post-conflict financialisation tool in fact subject women to a double burden. To that end, it is of paramount importance that initiatives targeting women in particular and gender equality in general also address state support systems that both enable women to enter the labour market and encourage men to engage in household labour. This, inter alia, would also allow women to become more actively engaged in collective activities outside the households and exercise their agency more vocally.

The contribution of this thesis is aimed to be threefold. *Theoretically* or analytically, the thesis talks to the critical 'camp' within Peace and Conflict Studies. Acknowledging the importance of the significant scholarly effort made to focus on the receiving end of the numerous peacebuilding initiatives that have taken place and engage with issues of 'local' agency, including 'local' everyday resistance, the dissertation contributes to this literature in a number of ways. On the one hand, breaking away from the international–local binary and approaching the population of a post-war society in their own right as knowledge producers and within their socio-historical context, the thesis problematises or rather unpacks 'the local' by bringing to the fore the heterogeneity of the population, the plurality of voices, and the multiplicity of perspectives on the ground. On the other hand, relying on ethnographic research and deploying intersectionality as an analytical tool, the thesis puts forward an alternative

approach to studying complexities of post-war societies at multiple levels, which differs from the current so-called 'snapshot' approach and allows for a better and less simplistic understanding and portrayal of the post-war lived realities. Having said that, the thesis also opens venues for future research that would contribute to further theorising of intersectional approaches to analysing (post-)conflict societies. Lastly, perhaps the less significant contribution of the thesis is to the 'ethnographic turn' in Peace and Conflict Studies. By discussing the challenges, the research choices, and importantly, the ways in which I as a researcher believe I have been part of the research, the thesis not only provides input potentially valuable to other ethnographers focusing on post-war societies, but it also encourages a more honest approach to the politics of research and the positionality of the researchers.

Empirically, the dissertation contributes to an already vast body of literature on Bosnia and Herzegovina. There has been no shortage of studies, and importantly anthropological and ethnographic studies and edited volumes (see, for instance, Bougarel et al., 2007; Jansen et al., 2016), depicting various aspects of people's lives in post-war Bosnia. Many of the existing studies have been incredibly valuable sources of information and inspiration in the course of my research, especially given my lack of anthological training. Nevertheless, most of them focus on either a single category or a single locality. To that end, the specific empirical contribution of this thesis is in presenting testimonies of three broad groups of people, each of which is usually 'invisible' and falls between the cracks of the complicated post-war system of governance in Bosnia, and intersectionally analysing them, on multiple levels and in

relation to multiple categories. In that sense, this dissertation could also serve the purpose of providing a starting point for a comparative analysis both across cases and within categories.

Finally, the thesis findings have *policy* implications and related recommendations as well, some of which are specific to Bosnia and its various levels of government and others that have wider implications for peacebuilding efforts globally. In terms of Bosnia, the main policy implication or lesson is that the ethnicity-first system of governance has contributed to the marginalisation of a large part of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society. This is not to disregard the fact that many ordinary people are sometimes strategically essentialist, to borrow the term from Gayatri Spivak (1996), whereby they perform a certain ethnic identity depending on the context and the need. A common example includes people declaring a certain ethnicity solely for the purposes of getting a position in the public administration, where employment is determined using ethnic quotas. The policy lesson, however, refers to addressing the problem at its root. Emphasising certain forms of identity, and with that, certain inequalities, over others, while disregarding the interrelatedness of identities and inequalities leads to citizens' disenfranchisement in various forms. This stresses the need of deploying an intersectional approach in policy-making and equally importantly, in reforming the welfare state and the social services of the country, the entities, the cantons, and the municipalities alike.

The immediate policy recommendation then, other than using an intersectional approach to law- and policy-making, is the need for better co-ordination, co-operation

and legal harmonisation not just among the different levels of government in Bosnia, but also between the two entities.[120] To name a few specific recommendations in that direction, this could involve an agreement between the Federal Pension and Disability Insurance Institute and the Fund for Pension and Disability Insurance of Republika Srpska that guarantees Bosnian citizens the right to receive their pensions from the entity where they worked (and retired), irrespective of where they now reside, co-operation among the Federal Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of RS, the RS Fund for Health Insurance, the Federal Institute for Health Insurance, and the cantonal institutes for health insurance to make regional medical centres along the IEBL available to the citizens of both entities and the Brčko district, without additional costs or bureaucratic procedures, as well as coordination between the RS Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the FBiH Ministry of Education and Science, and the cantonal ministries of education in organising elementary school mother tongue and religious instruction courses for non-majority students in places along the IEBL where survey shows demand, thereby allowing students not only to attend school in their place of residence, but also to study together and interact with peers of other ethnicities on a daily basis. These policy recommendations are based on the assumption that the governing structure established in Dayton is unlikely to change significantly in the foreseeable future. Another two recommendations in line with that assumption relate to: (1) the need for the IEBL to be clearly demarcated in its entirety, given that 1mm on the Dayton map represents around

[120] The following recommendations are taken from an earlier policy brief I have prepared on the issue (Stavrevska, 2013).

50m on the ground and the demarcation process has still not been completed, and (2) the urgency for completion of the implementation of Annex 7 of the Dayton Agreement, that is, the Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons.

In terms of broader policy implications and recommendations, there are several takeaways for the international network of actors involved in peacebuilding processes around the world. The first and most evident one is not to approach the peace process as a process of 'undoing the war' and a process that is defined strictly along the same identity lines as the war, thereby disregarding the multifaceted nature of social identities. In that sense, I echo Pickering's (2007: 166) suggestion when she writes that foreign actors involved in peacebuilding activities 'must realise that [the initiatives] will take root only if they take into account the varied meanings that ordinary people give to ethnic labels, the social divisions that sometimes trump and always complicate ethnic ones, and the concrete needs that common people desperately require [the] institutions to address'.

The second takeaway is that socioeconomic concerns play a critical role in the post-war period both for the recovery and for the reconciliation process. As Eastmond (2010) also points out, the common view among people is Bosnia is that 'improving the socioeconomic situation would facilitate inter-ethnic relations, and for many individuals this way of rebuilding a "normal life" [is] a far greater motivating force than what can be referred to as "identity politics"'. In examining conflict societies, there has been a lot of research that shows a positive linear relationship between socioeconomic inequality and war. Nonetheless, the role that socioeconomic issues, in particular historical structures

of class and socioeconomic commonalities, play in the post-war period has not received sufficient attention. Not only is the assumption that the war has wiped everything clean, including class differentiation, false, but evidence in actuality suggests that war accelerates class formation and social strata differentiation, which arguably is not best responded to by a complete withdrawal of the state from the social and economic sphere. Moreover, even if an initiative aims to address the economic position of a certain part of the society, the foreign peacebuilders ought to be mindful of the overall context within which that initiative takes place and sometimes, in collaboration with other actors in the society, to work in parallel on advocating for complementary legal and policy changes.

The third takeaway is in regards to institutional post-war arrangements. The Bosnian case has shown rather clearly that political institutions have their own path dependency and once set up, they are not easy to change. To that end, setting up institutions immediately after the conflict on the assumption that the society is ethnically divided could be detrimental. This is not to suggest that the other extreme would prevent some of the inequalities from occurring. To the contrary, the lesson from Bosnia is that a *media via* of institutions that both recognise the political rights of ethnic groups and encourage co-operation at the upper levels, while not discouraging participation at lower levels is something to strive towards. In fact, if we are to judge based on the international engagement in post-conflict Kosovo and Macedonia, it could be argued that this is a lesson already learnt, even if proper implementation in some aspects is lacking.

Lastly, both scholars and practitioners must not neglect that the norms of peace and related discourses are never neutral and that these concepts translate differently in different contexts. Ultimately, the success and stability of peace does not depend on a checkbox list of peacebuilding initiatives, but on how the peace process and their outcomes serve the needs of the population of the post-war society and how much they encourage exercise of agency and engagement of the population.

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